

Julian Hirsch
on Stereo Imaging

APRIL 1980 • \$1.25

Stereo Review

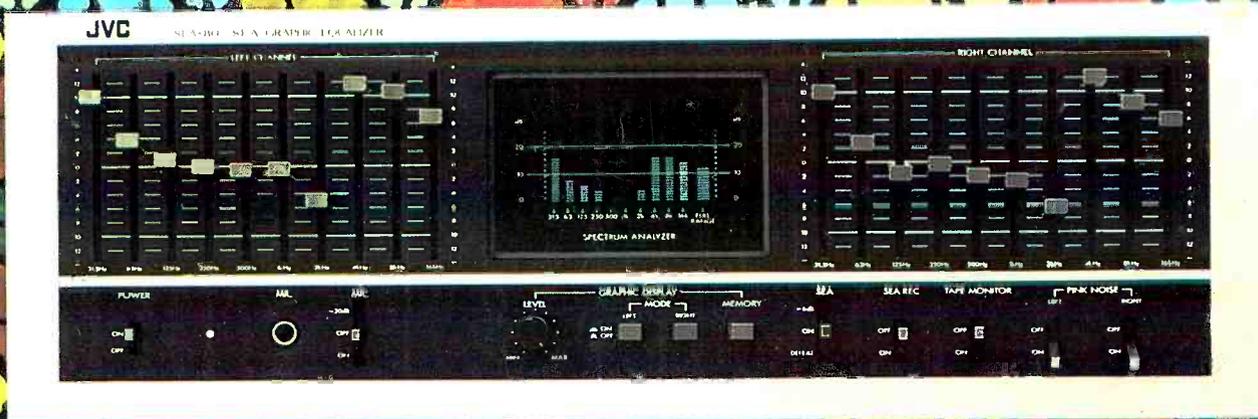
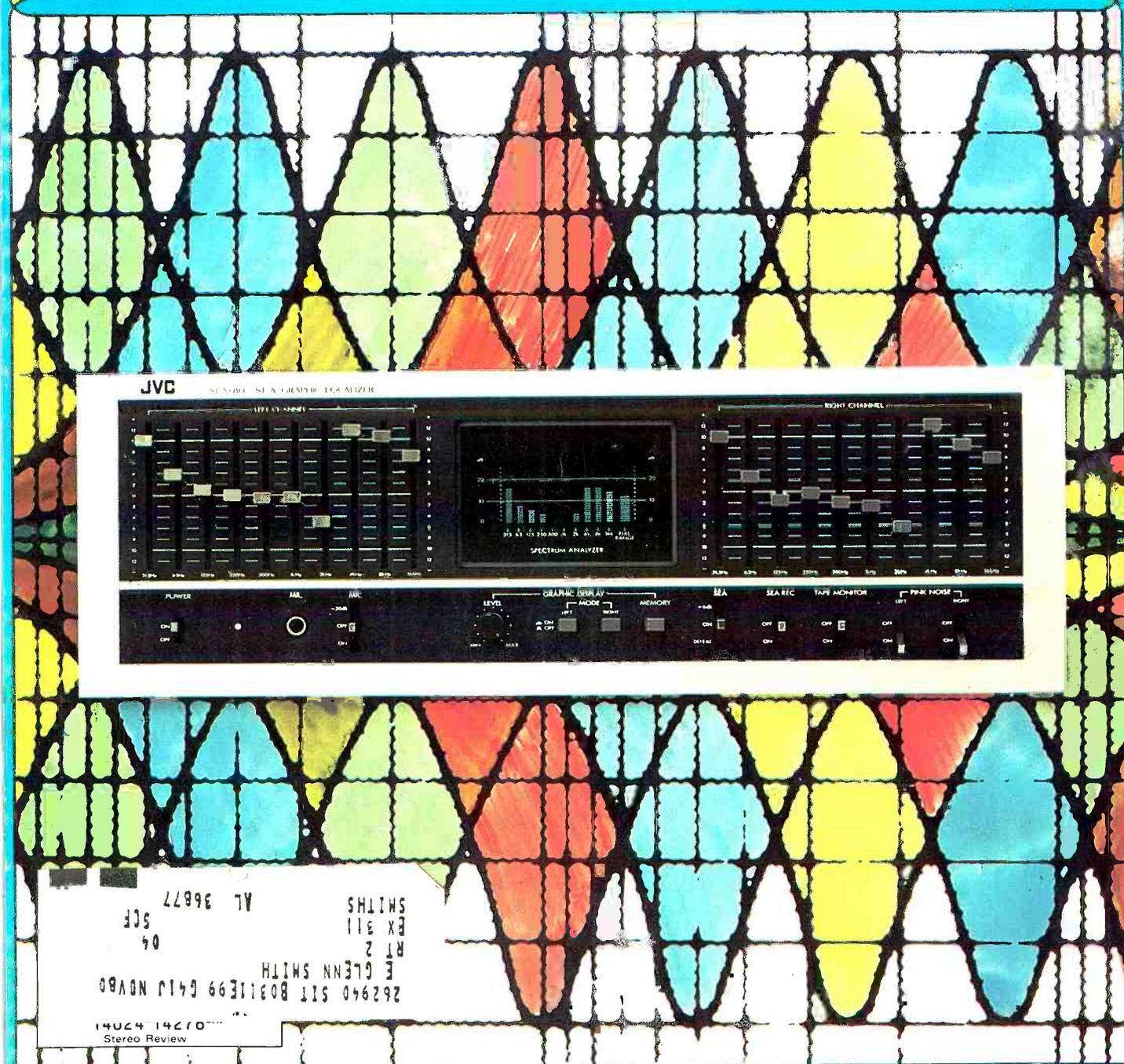
More progress on the noise front: dbx-encoded digital discs
KENNY ROGERS: He's got the music-game odds all figured out

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS: Eumig FL-1000 Cassette Deck

KLH 1 Loudspeaker System • Philips AH 180 AM/FM Stereo Tuner

Sonus Dimension 5 Phono Cartridge • Spectro Acoustics Model 200SR Power Amplifier

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WITH ONLY ONE EXCEPTION, THIS IS THE MOST REMARKABLE TAPE DECK IN THE WORLD.



But without exception it's the most remarkable cassette deck.

Today, a thousand dollars or more is standard fare for a professional quality cassette deck. But when Pioneer designed the new CT-F1250, they not only raised the performance standards of high quality decks, they also lowered the standard price.

Metal tape capability is something most new high quality cassette decks have in common. But while many of them have just been modified for this advancement, the Pioneer CT-F1250 has been specially designed for it.

Instead of the two heads found in most metal capable tape decks, the CT-F1250 has three. And it's these three heads that keep us way ahead of the competition.

Our new "small window" erase head makes a big difference in making sure all metal tapes are wiped completely clean. And our Uni-Crystal Ferrite recording and playback heads give you greater frequency response and better wear-resistance than the ordinary ferrite and Sendust alloy heads you'll find on most other tape decks.

But you don't get distortion-free recordings just by using your heads.

Instead of the single capstan tape transport system you'll find on some tape decks that are nearly twice the price, the CT-F1250 has a closed-loop dual capstan system, similar to that found in our remarkable RT-909 open-reel deck. This system

keeps the tape in perfect contact with the heads at all times. So you are assured of getting everything that's on

the tape. Nothing more; nothing less. What's more, the CT-F1250 has a Quartz-Locked Direct Drive capstan motor that senses the slightest deviation in speed and automatically corrects it to keep wow and flutter down to an unbelievable 0.03%.

It's engineering innovations like these that make the CT-F1250 so remarkable. But equally remarkable are the features that make the CT-F1250 so easy to operate.

Like our specially engineered Tape Calibration System that lets you quickly set bias level, Dolby adjustment, and record equalization for the best possible signal-to-noise ratio, the lowest distortion, and the best high frequency response.

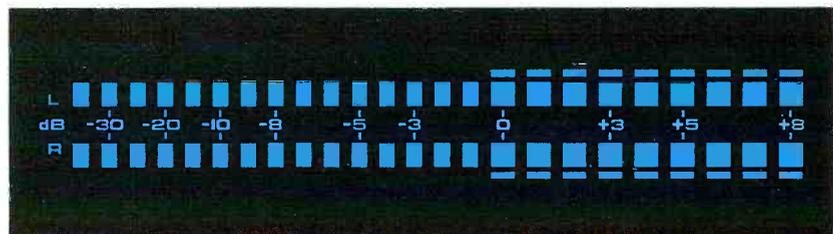
And our 24 segment Fluroscan meter that works on Pioneer's own microprocessor to give you a more accurate reading of what you're listening to. It even has Peak, Peak Hold, and Average Buttons that let you record without fear of overload.

In addition Pioneer's CT-F1250 has a digital brain with a memory that controls four different memory functions. Plus pitch control. Mic/line mixing. Independent left/right input/output controls. And more.

By now, it must be obvious that the CT-F1250 was designed to push up the limits of cassette deck performance. But only Pioneer would do it, without pushing up cassette deck prices.



Metal tape capability for far greater dynamic range and far less distortion.



Pioneer's 24 Segment Fluroscan Meter gives you an instantaneous picture of what you're listening to.

PIONEER
We bring it back alive.

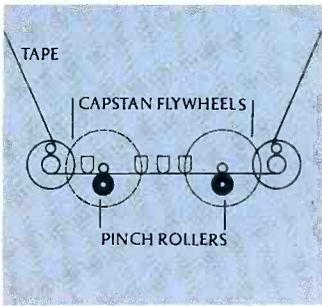
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Pioneer's easy-to-use Tape Calibration System guarantees optimum performance from every tape.

WITH ONLY ONE EXCEPTION, THIS IS THE MOST REMARKABLE TAPE DECK IN THE WORLD.





Pioneer's Closed-Loop Dual Capstan Tape Transport System ensures constant tape-to-head contact.

But without exception it's the most remarkable reel-to-reel.

Today, many audio manufacturers are putting a lot less into their tape decks and charging a lot more for them. But when Pioneer designed their new RT-909 open-reel tape deck they made certain it had every conceivable feature an audiophile could expect.

And one feature that was totally unexpected. A reasonable price.

Even if you pay \$1500 or more for a so called "professional" quality tape deck, you'll probably still be getting a

conventional single capstan tape transport system that is prone to wow and flutter.

Pioneer's RT-909 has a specially designed closed-loop dual capstan system that isolates the tape at the heads from any external interference. So you get constant tape-to-head contact. And constant, clear, accurate sound.

And while many of the expensive new tape decks have old fashioned drive systems that drive up heat and distortion, the RT-909 doesn't. Instead, it has a far more accurate DC motor that generates its own frequency to correct any variations in tape speed. And keeps wow and flutter down to an unheard of 0.04% at 7½ ips.

What's more, the drive system of the RT-909 is unaffected by fluctuations in voltage. So a drop in voltage doesn't mean a drop in performance. The RT-909 also has a logic system that ensures smooth, accurate speed change.

Most professional quality tape decks are designed for use outside the home. So the convenience features

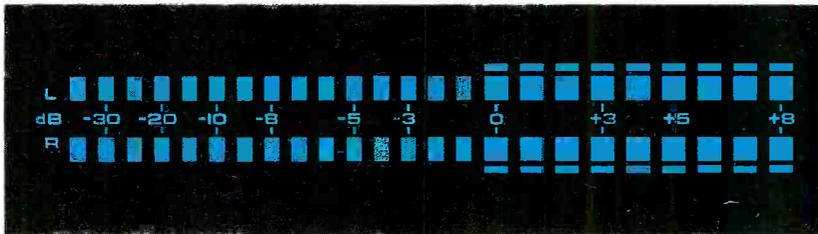
most audiophiles enjoy are nowhere to be found. The RT-909, on the other hand, offers automatic reverse, automatic repeat, and a timer controllable mechanism that lets you record a midnight concert even if you can't stay awake for it.

Examine our heads and you'll see Pioneer engineers at their very best. Our playback heads, for example, have a new "contourless" design that makes them more sensitive. They increase frequency response upwards to 28,000 hertz, and extend it all the way down to 20 hertz. So you not only get greater range than any other tape deck, but also any other musical instrument.

Of course, these features alone would make Pioneer's RT-909 quite a remarkable tape deck.

But the RT-909 also has a Fluroscan metering system that gives you an instantaneous picture of what you're listening to. A pitch control that lets you listen to music in perfect pitch even if it was far from perfectly recorded. Four different bias/equalization selections so you can use many tapes and get maximum performance from them all.

Obviously these advancements are very impressive. But there's still one thing even more remarkable than the technology we feature. It's the price we feature.

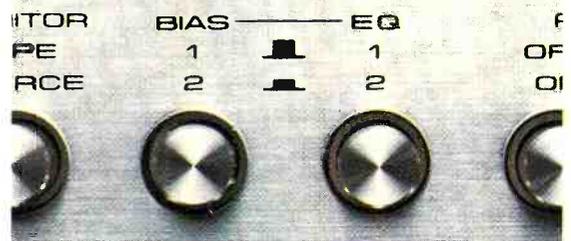


Pioneer's 24-Segment Fluroscan Meter gives you an instantaneous picture of what you're listening to.

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COVER: Design by Borys Patchowsky; photo by Bruce Pendleton. Equalizer is JVC's SEA-80, background is a graph representing the range of response variations an equalizer can produce. See also page 76.

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WITH PROVEN VALUE:

The uniquely styled Discwasher handle is constructed of hand-rubbed walnut which will long outlast "plastic wonders". This easily held handle is lightweight because of an integral cavity which conveniently holds the D3 Fluid bottle. A special brush to clean the directional-fiber Discwasher pad is included without charge, and also fits inside the handle cavity.

WITH GENUINE SATISFACTION:

Only Discwasher gives immediate performance, long-term record safety, pleasing physical characteristics and a price that hasn't changed in five years.

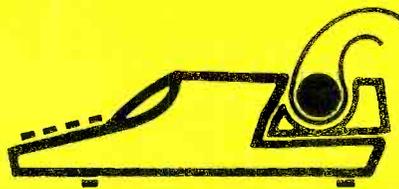
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Stereo Review BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

● IMPROVED AM AND FM BROADCAST QUALITY is the goal of the NRSC (National Radio Systems Committee) just formed by the National Association of Broadcasters and the Electronic Industries Association. First considering AM stereo and FM technical standards, the committee will examine equipment design and operating practices to assure the best possible service quality. Since today's home receiving equipment is generally capable of better performance than broadcast equipment delivers, this is welcome news.

● JVC'S "VIDEO HIGH DENSITY" VIDEODISC system has been adopted by Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. (marketed in the U.S. as Panasonic and Technics) and Victor Company of Japan, Ltd. (JVC) "for development and production." VHD discs are read by styli but contain no grooves. Audio and video information is carried in pits on the discs' surfaces, and tracking signals guide the styli servo mechanisms. The system permits random access, slow motion, still frame, fast forward, and reverse. VHD discs can be manufactured using basically the same facilities as used for conventional vinyl audio discs. The VHD system is compatible with neither the Magnavox system nor RCA's SelectaVision.

● "SWITCHED-ON BACH," performed on an electronic synthesizer by Walter Carlos, is the largest-selling classical album ever released in the United States, according to CBS Records. The company claims sales of 1.25 million copies of the album in the U.S. alone in the twelve years since it was released. CBS has just released a two-disc album, "Switched-On Brandenburgs," a version of Bach's Brandenburg concertos played by the same synthesist, who, following surgical reassignment, is now known as Wendy Carlos.

● RELEASE OF AUDIOPHILE RECORDS WAS UP 100 per cent in 1979 over the preceding year, according to the Schwann Record & Tape Guide, which lists direct-to-disc, digital, and other specialty recordings released by forty-two labels. Overall, however, industry statistics reflected the general state of the economy. New Schwann listings for 1979 totaled 8,690, down from 10,557 in 1978.

● ACTRESS BO DEREK AND THE MOVIE 10 have made Ravel's Boléro a current hit. Composed in 1927, Boléro (not named for Bo) is among the classical pieces most frequently recorded, and there are more than forty versions currently available. The first to hit the charts was not the soundtrack from 10 on Warner Bros., but the performance by the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Seiji Ozawa (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 475). On its Privilege label, DG is now releasing "Great Film Classics" (2535 436), an album of classical music used in such movies as Sunday Bloody Sunday, Elvira Madigan, 2001, Clockwork Orange, and 10. On this disc Boléro is conducted by Herbert von Karajan.

● COUNTERFEIT LP'S, PIRATED TAPES, and illegal duplicating equipment valued at more than \$50 million were confiscated in 1979 as a result of anti-piracy efforts of the FBI, the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America), and local law-enforcement agencies. An additional \$5 million worth of raw materials, machinery, and counterfeit software was destroyed by court order in connection with prior confiscations. Further progress reported by the RIAA at the end of the Seventies included strong anti-piracy statutes in New York and California, both key states in the recording (and piracy) industry.

● THE ASPEN AUDIO-RECORDING INSTITUTE, a three-week basic workshop, will be held three times this summer at the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado. The faculty this year will include Thomas Frost, director of Masterworks at CBS Records, and James Progris, former director of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences Institute, and there will be guest lecturers from Ampex, J. B. Lansing Sound, and other manufacturers. Sessions begin June 23, July 14, and August 4. Enrollment is limited to ten students per session; tuition is \$400. Write Aspen Music Festival, Suite 401, 1860 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023. For similar courses at the Eastman School of Music, write Jon Engberg, Associate Director for Academic Affairs, Eastman School of Music, 26 Gibbs Street, Rochester, N.Y. 14604.

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



CULTURE MANAGEMENT

WHEN the giant Warner Communications combine set out late last year to do some premature spring housecleaning at its Nonesuch Records subsidiary, it probably thought it would be a private affair entailing no more fuss than deep-sixing the family pussycat. Instead, it ended up facing a damp, enraged, and very public tiger. The firing of director Teresa Sterne and her staff elicited a storm of indignant protest from the critical press (see, for example, "Going on Record" for March), music-business professionals, and at least a few uncomfortably articulate members of the laity. Though the continuing brouhaha may look from the West Coast like only one more instance of the workings of the inscrutable mind of the East, the reasons for it seem quite clear from this vantage point.

First, Nonesuch had become, through Sterne's repertoire policies, a pet of the mu-

sical community. It had in fact behaved as any responsible cultural instrument should, impartially and catholically documenting American musical history (ragtime, Foster, shape-note hymns), preserving a dizzying variety of exotic musics in its Explorer Series, giving a hearing to early (Schoenberg), middle (Babbitt), and late (Maxwell Davies) modern music as well as rehearings to everyone from Rameau and Clérambault to Haydn and Schubert—all in sterling performances and on what appeared to be a spartan budget. In the process, it even made some money. Nonesuch, in short, was doing what all classical critics and a-&-r men worth their salt know *should* be done, and they took comfort in knowing that *someone* was doing it even if they couldn't. The upheaval at Nonesuch rudely unsettled this complacency, raising the specter of a similar massacre of the innocents at RCA or

Columbia (rumors have circulated for years that one or the other was about to "get out of the classics").

There is a good deal of understandable hypocrisy attending the subject of classical music at the "majors." Though lip service is dutifully paid to classical "product," particularly when it comes to rubbing up against the kind of social cachet that attaches to such eminences as a Rubinstein or a Bernstein, when it comes to the bottom line managers must still explain to wondering stockholders why classical music never pays the dividends pop music does. Unfortunately, we seem to be fresh out of musical statesmen persuasive or tough-minded enough to make it clear that the popular-music business is but cultural strip-mining, that a record company *lucky enough to find itself in the classical business as well* has an enviable public trust: the happy privilege and serious responsibility of putting something back, of *making a capital investment in our cultural future*. Sadly, though American corporations are very good at ordinary accounting, they are (largely) very bad at this *social* accounting, seemingly impervious to the idea that they might have other duties besides making money.

Though we can't do much more than explore this collective Philistinism, we can be tigers when we encounter benighted *individuals* who score low on cultural accountability. We must refuse to remain silent when some pipsqueak popstar too ignorant to imagine any time frame other than the narrow one he lives in declares Beethoven, all of opera, Shakespeare, and the whole of history "irrelevant." We must be just as outspoken with classical exclusivists who express contempt for popular music while doing all they can to keep the classical club a small one. No culture is safe whose members believe any of its parts to be expendable; all are interdependent pieces of a precious mosaic, and the more hands—and minds—they rest in the better. □

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ST-R22U Stereo FM/AM Tuner
SA-C22U Stereo Preamplifier
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SYSTEM III AC 120/240V or DC 12V
SD-L22BH Stereo Cassette Deck
ST-R22BH FM/AM Stereo Tuner
AA-16BH Stereo Integrated Amplifier

SYSTEM IV CC-1BH
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SD-L22BH Stereo
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SC-E20Y Stereo Speakers
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Battery and Charger
CB-20Y Carrying Case

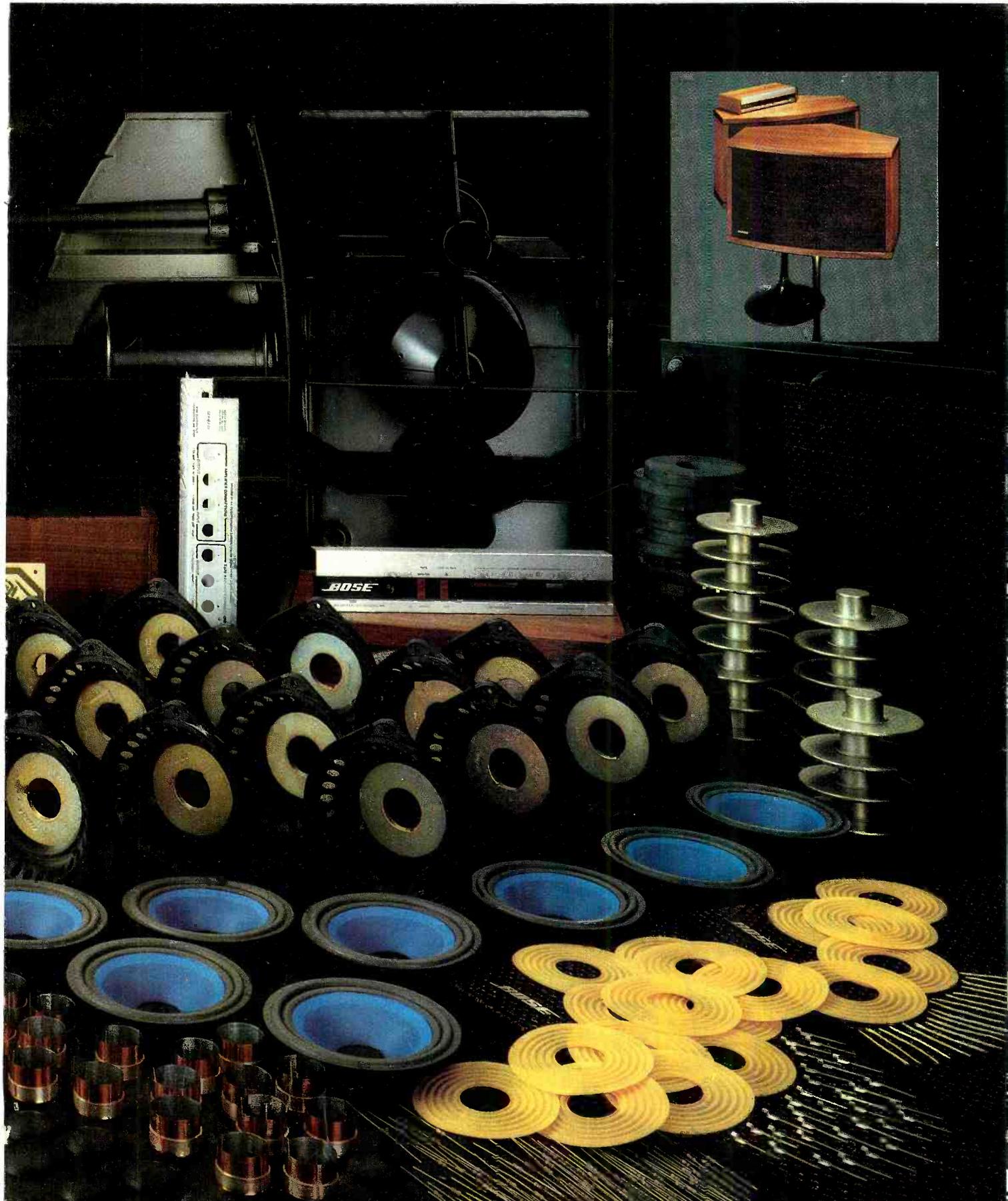
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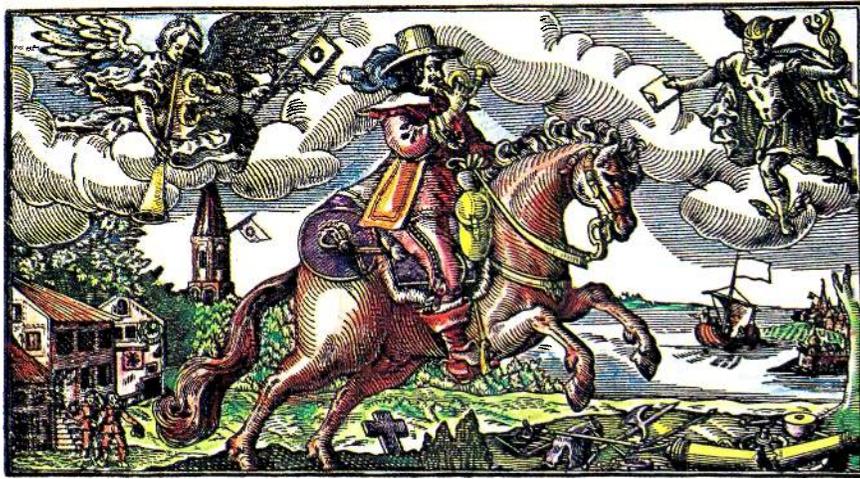


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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Earl Hines

● I enjoyed Stanley Dance's interesting and informative article on Earl Hines in the February issue. Hines certainly deserved STEREO REVIEW's award for outstanding contributions to American music, and you selected the right man to write about him. My jazz collection contains dozens of albums with liner notes by Stanley Dance, and I have always been impressed by his thoroughness, interesting "inside" information about the recording sessions, and avoidance of hollow promotional verbiage.

DONALD F. SWENSON
Minneapolis, Minn.

● I don't know from jazz, but I am certain from STEREO REVIEW's cover story on Earl Hines that he is unique. On page 72 of the February issue he is both "eighteen when he went to Chicago in 1924" and "seventeen in 1926"! Truly a timeless man!

CLARK CHAMBERLAIN
Welsh, La.

The photo incorrectly captioned "Earl Hines at seventeen" was made in 1926, when he was either twenty or twenty-one (he was born December 28, 1905). Sorry.

Cabaret

● William Anderson's "Missing Ingredients" (February "Speaking of Music") is a marvelous piece: he has been there, and he says it like we wish we could.

The cabaret artist, as Mr. Anderson says, is often better when seen and heard than when just listened to. Ronny Whyte and his impeccable taste in songs are best in person. The Tubeside Cabaret may be the answer, although I suspect TV and its bountiful presentation of musical performers have contributed to today's rude audiences. The TV Tony Bennett doesn't complain when we talk about our day at the office, so we might as well talk about this year's Elks convention while pretending to listen to him in a club. Also, audiences today are performers! It is important to let the next table know we have been visiting the Pierpoms in Majorca. At New York's Carlyle, Marian

McPartland may stop in the middle of *While We're Young* to say, "There's a cheap bar three blocks down the street; you might like it there!" But only Marian, with her Queen Elizabeth accent, can get away with it.

LOONIS MCGLOHON
Charlotte, N.C.

Monstrous Installation?

● Horrors! It is bad enough that a man who claims to be both an audiophile and an antique collector has the bad taste to cannibalize a "still functional" 1919 Victrola in order to house his modern gear in its cabinet. It is shocking that STEREO REVIEW would choose this as an "Installation of the Month" (February 1980). A functioning Victrola is a marvelous piece of audio gear in itself. Would you advocate installing a cassette recorder in a Stradivarius violin? Or the works of a modern small piano inside the cabinet of a functioning antique harpsichord? I really had hoped that this type of disregard for the past died out with the Fifties, which was the last time I encountered this particular monstrosity.

ROBERT E. LUPP
Mercerville, N.J.

The Editor replies: I hope Mr. Lupp is being hyperbolic for effect when he compares old Victrolas to Strads or antique harpsichords; they are, after all, musical instruments, and the Vic merely an obsolete reproducing agency. Given enough time, practically anything seems to acquire an antique charm, but has that time really come for the Vic? Personally I have always found it an ugly little beast, waterfall oak, bow legs, and all.

ELP, 'ELP!

● I didn't think much of Steve Simels' review of Emerson, Lake & Palmer's "In Concert" ("ELP: The Band That Wouldn't Die," February). I didn't think it was funny or informative. I think it was a waste of time. He didn't say anything about the record, just about his weird friend who went

insane listening to it. So how am I to tell if it's worth buying or not?

S. M. BOLLAS
North Royalton, Ohio

● Thanks for Steve Simels' "The Band That Wouldn't Die." It was very well written, though in a rather bizarre style for a stereo magazine. I wonder how many readers of STEREO REVIEW are H. P. Lovecraft buffs and understood the in jokes or recognized the Lovecraftian style Mr. Simels used. But the review stands on its own merits, and you don't have to be familiar with Lovecraft to understand its message: the album is bad!

TERRY L. RISING
Saugus, Calif.

● As an avid and unfortunately die-hard ELP fan, I have to respond to Steve Simels' rather sick but humorous article, "The Band That Wouldn't Die." When I read the title, I expected it to be a tribute to one of the best rock bands of the past decade. But no, he had to spoil it! I haven't read anything like that since the last time I opened *Creem* magazine. Doesn't anybody have anything nice to say about this band?

CAROL CECOTTI
Oradell, N.Y.

● Steve Simels' review of ELP "In Concert" was simply wonderful! He brought off that which is nearly impossible to do: an allegorical satire that takes care of two pomposities at once. I admire the result and only wish I'd thought of it first.

HARRY PEARSON
Sea Cliff, N.Y.

Digital Decade

● I want to express my appreciation for the cover story, "Digital Decade," by Steve Traiman in the January STEREO REVIEW. It was a no-nonsense summary of the developments in audio that will, in effect, make much of present broadcasting and receiving equipment obsolete. Maybe if the FCC got off their butts and made it mandatory for the manufacturers to agree on a standard, for once the consumer would get a halfway decent break. (I still have my Pioneer QX949 quad receiver sitting on the shelf because of the lack of standardization.)

S. S. BOONE
Armonk, N.Y.

● Laudable as the many articles and news tidbits about the coming digital revolution may be, I think record manufacturers should be put on notice that consumers are about to boycott their products until we have permanent, unscratchable, ultra-high-fidelity records like the Philips Compact Disc. I have stopped purchasing records, except for those being discounted or deleted, because it does not make sense to build a library of clicks and pops that can only grow worse after each playing.

What is holding back all-digital discs and players from being on the market right now? Agreements on standards? Horsefeathers! Surely quad was a lesson on that. Technology? Programming? Nonsense! Being familiar with microprocessor-based con-

(Continued on page 12)

Auto Sound Just Got Serious

The Voice of the Highway™ from Altec Lansing

Are you content to use toy loudspeakers with front-end gear that sells for \$300 and more? If you are, good luck. If you're not, read on.

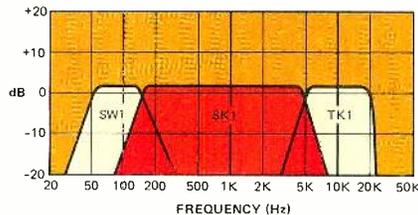
Altec Lansing has been solving the world's most serious sound problems for 43 years. So when we turned our minds to the problem of putting quality sound on wheels, we meant business.

A quick look around showed us that it hadn't worked to merely adapt conventional speakers to car interiors or make miniature versions of hi-fi components. So we began with the *car*—not the components.

We thoroughly explored the car's uniquely difficult acoustical environment. Then we designed *The Voice of the Highway*: A group of speakers that work with *any* car sound system, are adaptable to a wide variety of body styles, and produce quality sound that, until now, was impossible to achieve in a car.

It's a system of options. Separate high-frequency (TK1), extended range (SK1), and sub-bass (SW1) speaker components that together produce optimum results. And they can be mixed or matched to fit a variety of space needs and sound desires, or enhance a currently installed system. Plus, there's a 6" x 9" full range Duplex speaker that *installs easily in the door*.

And we built all Voice of the Highway speakers to be efficient so their clean, clear, tight sound gets through traffic noise without pushing even modestly-powered amplifiers past their limits.



*The Power Bass and TK1
Restore the Music You're Missing.*

And they complement virtually all quality automotive stereo systems, either as a complete speaker system or as add-on accessories.



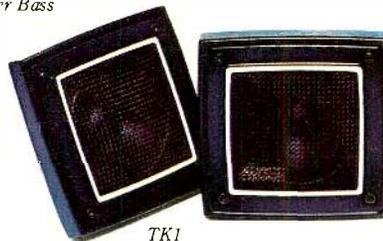
Rear view of the Power Bass, showing built-in amplifier. When added to any tape player or radio, the Subwoofer bi-amplifies the system, improving the dynamic range and reducing distortion.

*The AL1 System
includes a pair of TK1s,
a pair of SK1s and a SW1
Power Bass.*



SW1 Power Bass

The SW1 Power Bass self-powered subwoofer gives deep bass to auto sound where none existed before. It is destined to become THE automotive sound accessory of the eighties. Its control module balances the bass output to the rest of the system. The Power Bass' unique die cast structure houses a 40-watt power amplifier, electronic crossover, balanced inputs and active equalizer, and functions as the amplifier's heat sink.



TK1

The TK1, 3" high frequency driver covers the very top of the musical spectrum adding brilliance and clarity.



SK1

The SK1, 5 1/4" extended range speaker can stand on its own where installation space is extremely limited.

If you're serious about putting quality sound on your wheels, contact your local Altec Lansing dealer, or Altec Lansing.

The Voice of the Highway from Altec Lansing. Auto sound just got serious.

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trol systems, I know there are no barriers to immediate availability. We keep on hearing about digital recordings being made right now in the field. Why not digital playback at home? My guess is that the only thing the digital revolution is waiting for is a clear signal from consumers that they've had enough of the hundred-year-old technology of analog recordings. My message to record companies and hardware manufacturers is that I'm mad as hell, and I won't buy it any longer!

MALCOLM DEAN
Toronto, Canada

The Editor replies: My guess is that what killed quadraphonics was the very rush to

market Mr. Dean recommends for digital audio. Standards for digital recording have, in fact, just been promulgated by Japan's Electronic Industries Association (see last month's "Audio News"), but a wholesale replacement of the record catalog is (sensibly, I think) years away. And now, of course, is the time to be stocking up on those artists who won't be around when digital recording becomes the rule rather than the exception. How many priceless 78-rpm performances never got duplicated on LP? In any case, all the bugs are not out of the digital recording process, the equipment is enormously expensive, and there aren't yet even enough skilled tape editors to go around.

After reading David Ranada's "A Dozen Digital Demo Discs" in January, I ordered the Telarc recording of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture. I had to wait a couple of weeks and the price was high, but it was worth it. Mr. Ranada's and the manufacturer's cautions about the power of the disc were justified. The record exceeded my expectations. I attend the Tanglewood Festival every year and make it a point to hear the performance of the 1812 Overture, and this disc has captured it totally.

GERALD CARON
Berkley, Mass.

Evita

I wish to differ with parts of Peter Reilly's review of the Broadway-cast recording of *Evita* in February STEREO REVIEW. I saw *Evita* in London, and I was most impressed with Elaine Page's portrayal of Eva Peron. Mr. Reilly misquotes the lyrics to the song *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*. He says that the line after "I kept my promise" is "You kept your distance," which I agree is gibberish. But in the London production and in every recording I have heard the lines are "I kept my promise/Don't keep your distance," which certainly makes sense.

Mr. Reilly also says that the rendition of this song he prefers is Olivia Newton-John's. I haven't heard Patti LuPone sing it, but I have heard Newton-John, Julie Covington, Elaine Page, and Shirley Bassey. All my friends and I agree that no one else can match Shirley Bassey's rendition.

CAREY R. MILLER
Robbinsdale, Minn.

Vladimir Horowitz

Since it is generally accepted that Vladimir Horowitz is one of the most important pianists of this (or any other) century, it seems safe to assume that future generations will examine his recordings carefully in search of clues to his unique pianistic genius. It would follow, then, that Horowitz's rather infrequent recordings call for careful and thoughtful analysis.

What, then, is one to make of Eric Salzman's insipid discussion (in the February issue) of Horowitz's latest recording of Schumann, Rachmaninoff, and Liszt? About 98 per cent of Mr. Salzman's review deals with the music rather than with the performance—and in fact reads as though it had been cribbed from the record jacket. Only one sentence fragment gives any clue to Horowitz's playing: "... the piano sound strikes me as hard." Of course, Mr. Salzman does coin the critical term "bardic" to describe Horowitz's playing, but one is hardly enlightened to learn that this means Horowitz "plays the piano the way a great storyteller tells stories." If Mr. Salzman finds reviewing piano recordings un congenial, he ought to leave the task to others.

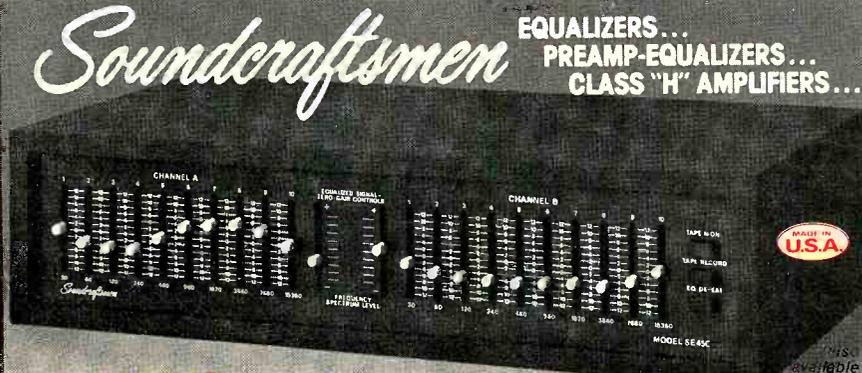
DONALD H. CROSBY
Ashford, Conn.

Music Editor James Goodfriend replies: Horowitz, far from being an infrequent visitor to the recording studios, has built up

(Continued on page 14)

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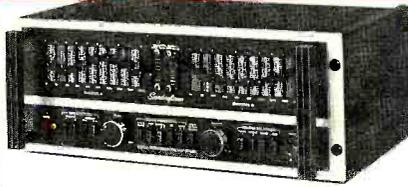
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*Manufacturer's suggested retail price for GS Model shown. S Model \$7495. Slightly higher in California. Actual prices established by dealers. Taxes, license, freight, optional equipment and any other dealer charges are extra. (Wide alloy wheels shown \$275-\$295.) All prices subject to change without notice.

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a considerable catalog of recordings to document his distinguished career. A critical assessment of his pianism is possible only through adding up one's responses to many of his recordings, some of which provoke more thoughtful analysis than others. In the meantime, Horowitz is still playing music, and that may also be worth talking about.

against "technical excess") is incorrect. This claim seems frivolous in the face of the intelligent and constructive use of modern technology in the music of the New Wave. The idea is to implement technology in such a manner that almost anyone *can* make music that is individual and of good sound quality.

ALAN ROSIENE
Middletown, Conn.

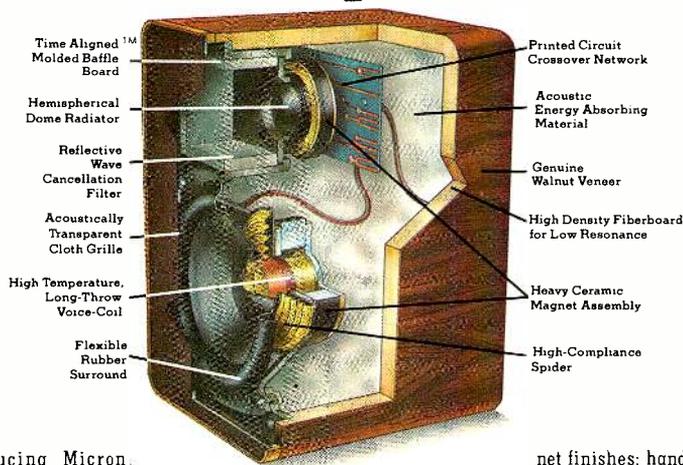
Eighties Pop

● Lester Bangs' "Pop Music in the Eighties" (January) was both insightful and well written. I believe, however, that one of his critical prognostications (a coming reaction

● Lester Bangs' January article, "Pop Music in the Eighties," seems to be an organized observation of the present and future state of musical affairs. Given how music has progressed up to now, punk rock does seem to be the next logical step.

DOUG CRAWFORD
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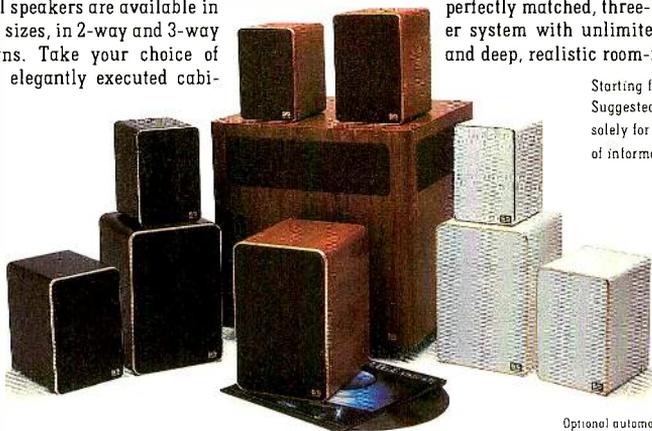


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Christmas Present

● Amen to Thomas Corum's January letter regarding the helpfulness of STEREO REVIEW in choosing what albums to buy. Unlike Mr. Corum, however, I simply haven't time to read *all* the reviews, so I find especially helpful the policy of highlighting certain albums (reviews of which I might not otherwise take time to read) by giving them feature reviews or designating them "Recordings of Special Merit." For example, because it was a feature I read William Anderson's review in December of "A Christmas Together" by John Denver and the Muppets. The review was most intriguing, and after rushing out to buy a copy my wife and I nearly played it to death all through the Christmas season. Move over, Mormon Tabernacle Choir!

FRANK MOYER
Albuquerque, N.M.

Young Composers

● May I make a belated response to the Editor's "Advice to Young Composers" in the September issue?

I agree that composers are "often too vulnerable . . . to the news of what their peers are up to all over the world." Therefore, by all means avoid modern-music concerts and other composers, and do not teach at a university. But *don't* "move to New Zealand." Any isolation from the mainstream of our contemporary society and culture will put a composer out of contact with the realities of the world in which he lives. What great art does not reflect some aspect of the contemporary world as seen through the eyes of the artist? So *do not* sell your record player, TV, or radio. Listen to what audiences are hearing and reacting to and enjoying. Then go and write your compositions—in New Zealand if you must, or wherever you work best.

FREDERICK STEINWAY
Amherst, Mass.

Price Correction

● The retail price of the Denon/PCM two-disc digital-master recording of Schubert's Ninth Symphony (OB-7350-51-ND) is \$18, not \$28 as was erroneously stated in a review in the February issue.

Crystal-clear reasons for receiver-size separates.

If you're trying to choose between a receiver and separate components, we have a suggestion: Settle for both.

Now you can have the compact size of a receiver with the quality of separates.

Sony's new ST-J60 tuner and TA-F40 amplifier are a slim, dynamic duo no larger than a medium-size receiver but with crystalline, powerful separate-component qualities.

The tuner is quartz-crystal locked with a digital synthesizer for drift-free stability and speedy touch tuning. Distortion is virtually non-existent and our slim-line music lover is an FM specialist.

Convenient auto tuning lets you preset eight stations. Simply press the appropriate button and an LED light blinks as the tuner searches for the "memorized" station.

Two other buttons let you manually scan the broadcast scale in either direction. And a Calibrated Tone feature assists you when recording with a tape deck.

Our new thin-line TA-F40 integrated amplifier snuggles up to its tuner partner for extremely clean, noise-free sound in a beautifully sized package.

Total harmonic distortion (THD) is one of the lowest in this class of amplifiers. Fifty watts per channel

surge through a newly developed Pulse Power Supply (PPS). And Sony's exclusive Heat Sink with Heat Pipe ingeniously drains away heat to reduce distortion.

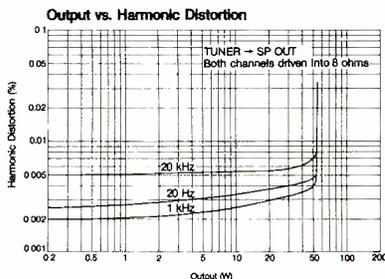


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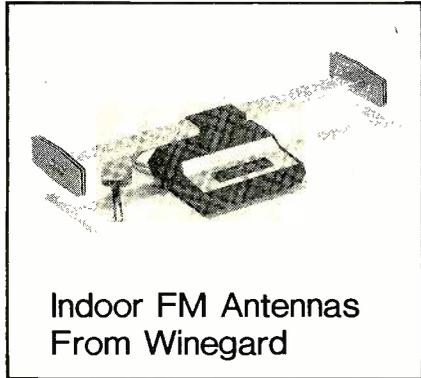


LED peak power indicators pinpoint output in six steps for each channel. Light-touch function switches give you smooth control for any stereo mission. And the TA-F40 is so quiet you can even use



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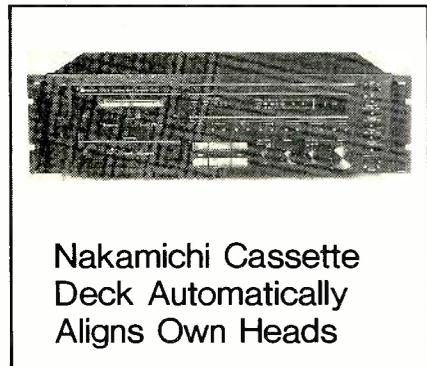
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**Indoor FM Antennas
From Winegard**

□ Winegard's Stereo Ceptor FM-2400 indoor FM antenna has a bidirectional reception characteristic with a gain of -9 dB compared with a standard dipole. The FM element is rotatable for fine tuning, and triple "multipath reflector" bars are claimed to increase the directivity of the unit. The housing is of black Cyclocac with protective rubber feet. Antenna output is at 75 ohms. A short length of coaxial cable is supplied along with a 75- to 300-ohm matching balun. The FM-4400 version (not shown) contains an FM amplifier with a gain of about 15 dB, for an overall antenna gain of +6 dB. The FM-4400 requires a.c. power but is otherwise similar to the FM-2400. Both units measure 19 x 6½ x 4½ inches. Prices: FM-2400, \$39.95; FM-4400, \$69.95.

Circle 120 on reader service card



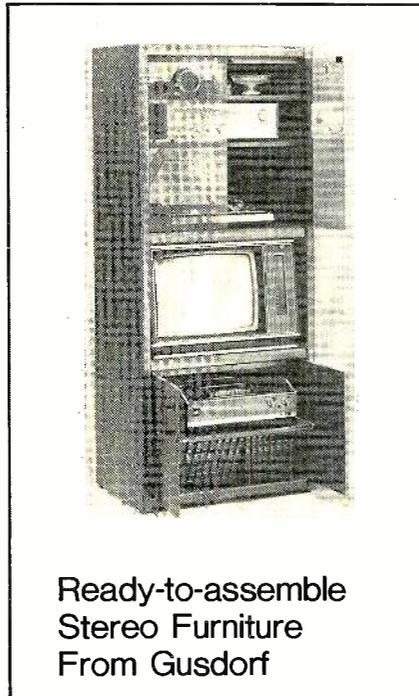
**Nakamichi Cassette
Deck Automatically
Aligns Own Heads**

□ The Model 680ZX cassette deck from Nakamichi has an Auto Azimuth Alignment system using a servomotor that manipulates the record-head mounting base until the head's gaps are parallel with those of the playback head. During the alignment operation (which takes about two seconds), a 400-Hz signal is recorded on each track. A phase comparator measures the phase error between the two channels and drives the servomotor until precise head alignment is achieved. The 680ZX uses the same dual-capstan, diffused-resonance transport as the earlier Model 680; like the 680, it will play and record both at the standard cassette speed of 1⅞ ips and at half speed (1⅝ ips).

Frequency response at the higher speed is 10 Hz to 22 kHz, ±3 dB (10 to 15,000 Hz at 1⅝ ips). Weighted-rms flutter is less than 0.04 per cent at 1⅞ ips.

The 680ZX has settings for metal, chrome, chrome-equivalent, and premium ferric tapes as well as separate record-level calibrations for each tape type. These calibrations ensure proper Dolby-circuit tracking. Timer operation is possible in either the record or play modes. Fluorescent level indicators (which may be switched between VU, peak, or peak-hold ballistics) provide continuous program-level monitoring over a range of more than 50 dB. Price: \$1,550.

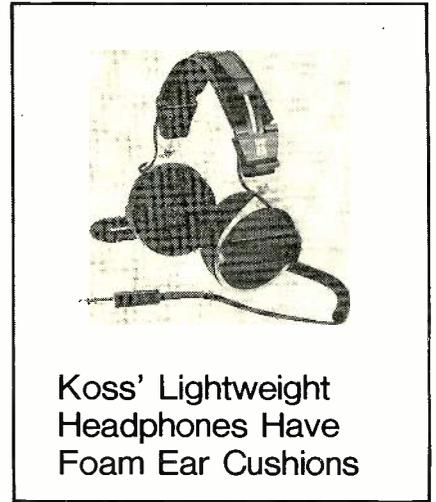
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**Ready-to-assemble
Stereo Furniture
From Gusdorf**

□ The six pieces in the Gusdorf "Status Pro" collection of "electronics furniture" all have a protective walnut-tone finish, 1½-inch-thick sides, continuously adjustable shelves, concealed fasteners, sculptured molding, solar-bronze tempered safety-glass doors with magnetic catches, and hooded, double-wheel casters. The Model 1990 6½-foot-tall tower (shown) is designed to house both audio and video equipment. Behind the glass doors there is space for up to five shelves (supplied), each deep enough for a turntable. Below this is a section for a television set. At the bottom is a two-door enclosed compartment with a removable slide-out shelf for a videocassette unit. Record dividers and a rack-mounting kit are optional. The tower is 20¼ inches deep and 27 inches wide. Price: \$300. Gusdorf Corp., Dept. SR, 6900 Manchester, St. Louis, Mo. 63143.

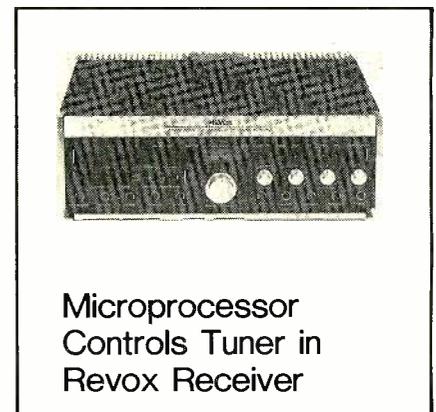
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□ Unlike most other lightweight headphones, those in the Koss HV/X series have ear cushions that fit around the ears instead of resting on them. Each (removable) ear cushion is made up of a material that is acoustically transparent at its perimeter but denser as it reaches the center. This variable-density design provides a pattern of acoustical resistance that creates a seal for portions of the bass range without inhibiting venting action at middle and high frequencies. Rated frequency response is from 15 to 35,000 Hz. Weight is about 7¾ ounces. The HV/XLC has a volume/balance control in each ear cup, the HV/X (shown) does not. Prices: HV/XLC, \$79.95; HV/X, \$69.95.

Circle 123 on reader service card



**Microprocessor
Controls Tuner in
Revox Receiver**

□ The tuner section of the Revox B780 FM receiver has pushbutton tuning with an accuracy of ±0.005 per cent. Eighteen pre-selected stations can be stored in the unit's memory with instantaneous recall available through front-panel pushbuttons. There is no tuning knob; tuning is accomplished by pushbutton scanning through the FM band in 25-kHz steps. The IHF sensitivity is

(Continued on page 18)

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Well balanced sound.

Optimum Dynamic has all the sound characteristics you've been looking for. Super flat frequency response and sensitivity with a wide dynamic range. Lower noise and higher output at critical levels. For example, you'll now be able to capture the full dynamic complexity of a classical performance as well as the sustained higher output characteristic of contemporary music. In every way, Optimum Dynamic will deliver a well balanced, reference quality normal bias performance. And you'll hear it, unflinching, for years to come.

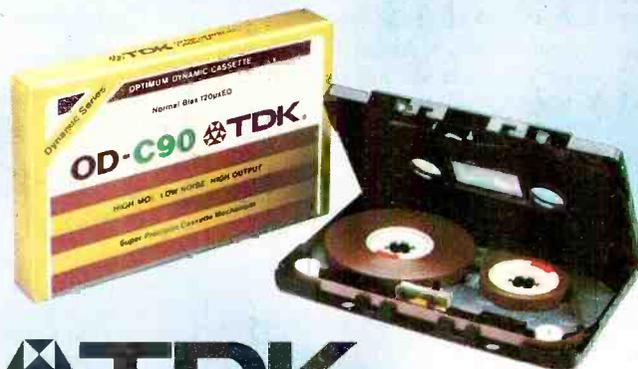
Optimum Dynamic has the same Super Precision Mechanism as the SA cassette, protected by TDK's full lifetime warranty.*

Supplier to the U.S. Olympic Team



The test of success.

We believe we've been highly successful in fulfilling the need for a normal bias reference standard. But there's a simple test. Listen to an Optimum Dynamic just once. Compare it to anything else you've been using. From then on, you may want to use it as a reference.



TDK
The machine for your machine

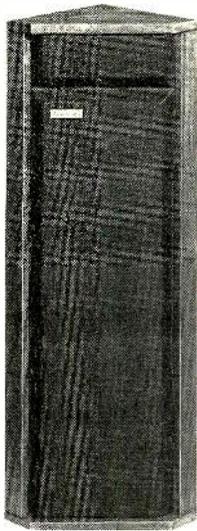
© 1980 TDK Electronics Corp., Garden City, New York 11530

*In the unlikely event that any TDK cassette ever fails to perform due to a defect in materials or workmanship, simply return it to your local dealer or to TDK for a free replacement.

CIRCLE NO. 58 ON READER SERVICE CARD

ALLISON: THREE

The Elegant Solution



With few exceptions, loudspeaker systems have always been designed to have flat response in anechoic chambers (test rooms with completely sound-absorptive boundaries).

This is odd, because loudspeakers are hardly ever used in anechoic environments. Most are used in domestic living rooms. Recent research shows that a real room changes a loudspeaker's performance drastically, and designing for flat response in an anechoic chamber simply doesn't make sense any more.

The most intense room effects occur when a loudspeaker is used in a corner, where reflections from the nearby room surfaces can cause a variation of 20 dB in acoustic power output. A corner, therefore, is the worst place to put a conventional loudspeaker system.

But if a corner imposes the most severe penalty for a misdirected design, it also gives the reward of maximally enhanced performance for a loudspeaker system correctly matched to that location. The woofer's radiation load, when stabilized by proper design, will be at its peak value in a corner.

The ALLISON: THREE™ Room-Matched™ loudspeaker system is the only high-fidelity speaker designed for proper use in a room corner that we know of, except for very much larger and more expensive corner horn enclosures. It is the elegant solution to the loudspeaker/room interface problem.

Price of the ALLISON: THREE system is \$290.* Descriptive literature, complete specifications, a statement of Full Warranty for Five Years, and a list of dealers are available on request.

*Higher in the South and West because of freight cost.

ALLISON ACOUSTICS

7 Tech Circle, Natick, Massachusetts 01760
CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

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rated at 2.5 microvolts (13.2 dBf); 50-dB stereo quieting sensitivity is 30 microvolts (34.8 dBf). Alternate-channel selectivity is 78 dB, and total harmonic distortion (THD) in stereo is 0.25 per cent. Capture ratio is 2 dB, AM suppression 70 dB, and the ultimate signal-to-noise ratio 78 dB.

The amplifier section has provisions for tuner, phono, auxiliary, and two tape inputs. The stepped tone controls offer ± 8 dB adjustment at 120, 3,000, and 8,000 Hz. The power-amplifier section is rated at 75 watts per channel into 8 ohms with no more than 0.04 per cent THD from 20 to 20,000 Hz. Dynamic headroom is 1 dB. The receiver measures 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 6 x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches and weighs 38 pounds. It can be used with European, Asian, and U.S. station allocations and de-emphasis curves and with any standard a.c. line voltages. Price: \$2,699.

Circle 124 on reader service card



Sony's Lightweight Portable Stereo Cassette Player

□ The 13 $\frac{7}{8}$ -ounce Sony "Soundabout" portable stereo cassette unit (Model TPS-L2) plays standard-size audio cassettes through a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce set of headphones (supplied). The Soundabout comes with its own carrying case and strap, and can be hung from a user's shoulder, neck, or belt; an optional accessory nylon pouch has four-way adjustable straps allowing the unit to be used while the user is running, jogging, skating, dancing, etc. Separate volume controls adjust the stereo balance, and a tone-selector dial adjusts the treble response. The player also has cue-and-review capabilities. A built-in microphone lets a user talk or sing along with a cassette and hear the results through the headphones.

Since two pairs can be plugged into the Soundabout at the same time, this feature also permits phone communication between persons sharing the unit while riding the same motorcycle or other vehicle.

The MDR-3L2 phones that come with the Soundabout player feature samarium-cobalt magnets in the drivers. They are available separately and can also be used with other audio equipment. Dimensions of the lightweight player are approximately 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Prices: Soundabout player with one pair of MDR-3L2 headphones, \$199.95; extra headphones, \$50 each pair.

Circle 125 on reader service card



Technics Turntable Has Linear-tracking Tone Arm

□ Technics' SL-10 quartz-controlled, direct-drive turntable has a dynamically balanced, motor-driven linear-tracking tone arm mounted in the upper half of its die-cast aluminum cabinet. The two halves of the cabinet are sealed together during operation. The motor and arm are so designed that the unit can be used either in the normal horizontal position or in an upright, vertical position. Automatic turntable operations include disc-size/speed selection and repeat, cueing, search, muting, stop, and return functions. Weighted-rms wow and flutter is 0.025 per cent; rumble is -78 dB (DIN B-weighted). The unit measures 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches and weighs 14.3 pounds. It can operate from alternating line current or 12 volts d.c. from a car battery. The turntable comes with a switchable moving-coil-cartridge pre-preamp and a Technics 310 MC moving-coil cartridge. The cartridge has a frequency response from 10 to 60,000 Hz (10 to 10,000 Hz, ± 0.5 dB), compliance of 12×10^{-6} cm per dyne, and an output level of 0.2 millivolt with a 5-cm/sec groove velocity. Channel separation is greater than 25 dB at 1,000 Hz, and channel balance is within 1 dB. Price: \$600.

Circle 126 on reader service card

(Continued on page 21)

TAKE IT TO THE LIMIT.



Simulated LED readout*

Been misled into thinking that you're limited when it comes to factory-engineered auto sound systems? Well look again! Delco-GM has the sophisticated, high-technology receivers, tape players, speakers and equalizer/boosters that can take you right to your limits in auto sound. The Delco-GM ETR™ electronically tuned receiver — available on selected GM models — features Keyed Automatic Gain Control, Quadrature Detection, Phase Locked-Loop Stereo Decoder, Audio Processing, Impulse Noise Blanking and a Frequency Synthesized Tuner. Delco-GM circuitry handles adjustments on the inside. Automatically. It eliminates the need for things like separate local-distant or

stereo-mono switches.

With Delco-GM, you get sound. Not switches. Want to hear more? Try Delco Sound™ dual-cone extended range speakers for improved high-fidelity performance. And the Delco-GM Graphic Equalizer/Booster, which doubles the power output of our receivers.

Delco-GM has more than 40 years' experience in designing sound systems that move. We know there's a lot more to it than putting home hi-fi on wheels.

So if you're ready to take it to the limit, see your Chevrolet, Pontiac, Buick, Oldsmobile, Cadillac or GMC dealer and hear all of the sound Delco-GM has to offer.

Delco-GM Sound. A moving experience.



JBL'S NEW L150: ITS BOTTOM PUTS IT ON TOP.

JBL's new L150 takes you deeper into the low frequencies of music without taking you deeper into your budget.

This short-tower, floor-standing loudspeaker system produces bass with depth, power and transparency that comes incredibly close to a live performance.



A completely new 12" driver was created for the L150. It has an innovative magnetic assembly, the result of years of research at JBL. It

uses a stiff, heavy cone that's been coated with an exclusive damping formulation for optimum mass and density.

And it has an unusually large 3" voice coil, which aids the L150's efficiency and its ability to respond to transients



(peaks, climaxes and sudden spurts) in music.

There's even more to the L150's bottom—a 12" passive radiator. It looks like a driver but it's not. We use it to replace a large volume of air and contribute to the production of true, deep bass. Bass without boom.

If you're impressed with the L150's lows, you'll be equally impressed with its highs and mids. Its powerful 1" high-frequency

dome radiator provides wide dispersion throughout its range. And a 5" midrange transducer handles high volume levels without distorting. The maximum power recommended is 300 watts per channel.

The L150's other attributes include typical JBL accuracy—the kind that recording professionals rely on. Maximum power/flat frequency response. High efficiency. And extraordinary time/phase accuracy.

Before you believe that you can't afford a floor system, listen to an L150. While its bottom is tops, its price isn't.

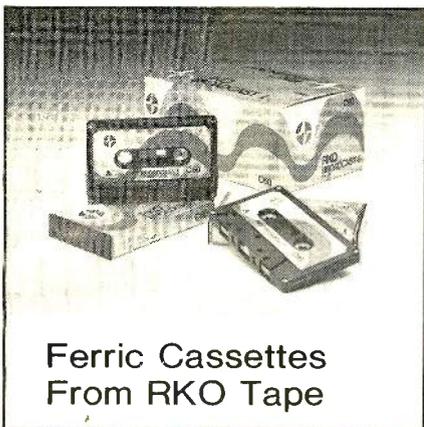
James B. Lansing Sound, Inc., 8500 Balboa Boulevard, Northridge, CA 91329.

**FIRST
WITH THE
PROS.**



New Products

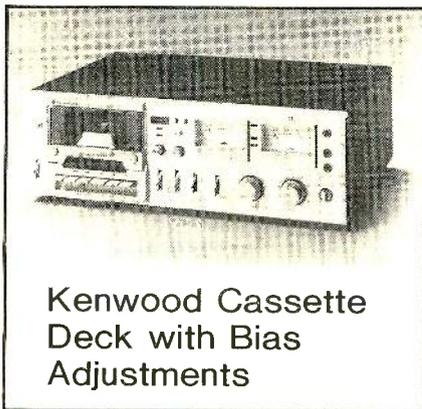
latest audio equipment and accessories



**Ferric Cassettes
From RKO Tape**

□ Broadcast I ferric cassettes from RKO Tape give optimum performance at "normal" bias settings. Available in C-60 and C-90 versions, the tape has a highly calendared mirror finish for extended and consistent high-frequency response. The tape housing uses a five-screw construction with ultrasonically sealed plastic tape windows. Prices: C-60, \$3.79; C-90, \$5.75. RKO Tape, Dept SR, 3 Fairfield Crescent, West Caldwell, N.J. 07006.

Circle 127 on reader service card

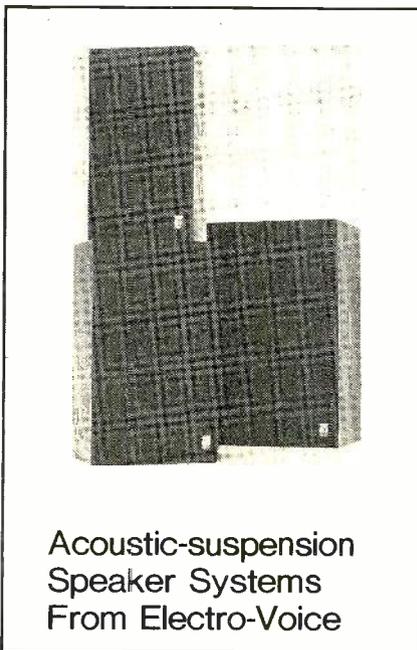


**Kenwood Cassette
Deck with Bias
Adjustments**

□ The KX-1060 stereo cassette deck from Kenwood has a variable bias control and a built-in test oscillator allowing the user to adjust the deck for optimum results with pure-metal, chromium-dioxide, or ferric tapes. The unit has three ferrite heads for extended frequency response (30 to 18,000 Hz \pm 3 dB with chromium-dioxide or pure-metal tape) and improved playback sensitivity. Separate record and playback Dolby circuits are included for off-the-tape monitoring while recording. Signal-to-noise ratio is 65 dB (Dolby circuits on, pure-metal tape). An electronically controlled d.c. servomotor drives the capstan; the wow-and-flutter specification is 0.045 per cent. Other features include a tape-counter memory,

dual VU meters with a peak-level LED, and a stand-by setting that permits starting the deck with an external timer. Dimensions: 17 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 6 x 14 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Price: \$450.

Circle 128 on reader service card



**Acoustic-suspension
Speaker Systems
From Electro-Voice**

□ The Encore loudspeaker line from Electro-Voice is claimed to combine the low-frequency performance associated with acoustic-suspension speakers with efficiency that approaches that found in vented-enclosure designs. The three models in the series are capable of handling the output of 150-watt amplifiers; their nominal impedance is 8 ohms. All Encore systems come in walnut-grain vinyl-covered cabinets. The smallest, the 21 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch Encore 33, weighing 20 pounds, has a frequency response of 50 to 18,000 Hz with an output level of 89 dB with a 1-watt input measured at 1 meter. Drivers are an 8-inch woofer and a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch tweeter; crossover is at 2,500 Hz. The Encore 55 uses a 10-inch woofer and a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch tweeter in a cabinet measuring 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; weight is 23 pounds. Frequency response is 40 to 18,000 Hz and output level is 92 dB. The three-way Encore 77 uses a 12-inch woofer, a 4-inch midrange, and a 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch tweeter; crossovers are at 700 and 3,000 Hz. It has the same output level as the Encore 55 but a frequency response extending from 30 to 18,000 Hz. Its cabinet measures 25 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches, and it weighs 31 pounds. Prices: Encore 33, \$135; Encore 55, \$195; Encore 77, \$239.

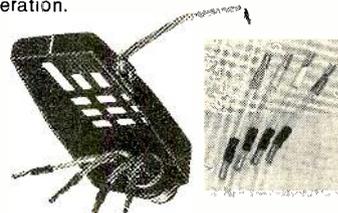
Circle 129 on reader service card

(Continued overleaf)

The better your ear,
the more you
need new
Audio-Technica
VITAL
LINKS!

Every wire, every connection in your stereo system is a source of trouble, a chance for losses which can keep your system from achieving its full potential.

Introducing three new Vital Link wire sets from Audio-Technica... each a positive step toward ideal performance and trouble-free operation.



Start at the cartridge with the AT609 Head Shell Wire Set. Color-coded, insulated wires with 14 strands of pure silver Litz wire, terminated in corrosion-free gold terminals. No losses, no intermittents. Easy to install. Just \$6.95 and worth every penny.

Between turntable and amplifier (or any two stereo components) use new AT610a High Conductivity Cable. A stereo pair 60" long, plus an independent ground wire with lugs. Each gold-plated plug is color-coded. Both resistance and capacitance are far below ordinary cables. Only \$9.95.

For the most critical installations use our AT620 Super-conductivity Cable Set. Two individual cables, each 48" long, with heavily gold-plated plugs. Inside the wire shield is a second conductive layer of polypropylene shielding. Special foam dielectric keeps capacity low, while superb conductivity is assured by using Litz-wire inner conductors with maximum surface area which reduces high frequency losses. The set lists for \$29.95.

From phonograph cartridge to loud-speaker, each audio system is a chain, no stronger than its weakest link. Connect your system with Vital Link cables from Audio-Technica. At your A-T dealer now. Or write for our complete audio accessory catalog.

 **audio-technica**
INNOVATION □ PRECISION □ INTEGRITY
AUDIO-TECHNICA U.S., INC.
Dept. 40F, 33 Shiloh Avenue
Fairlawn, Ohio 44313

CIRCLE NO. 9 ON READER SERVICE CARD

FREE

details... A DIFFERENT KIND OF RECORD CLUB

You can now own every record or tape that you may ever want... at tremendous savings and with no continuing purchase obligations. You can get valuable free dividend certificates, you can get quick service and all the 100% iron-clad guarantees you want.

Now you can stop price increases that leave you with less music for your record and tape budget. You can guarantee yourself more music for less money through membership in Discount Music Club.

Look at these benefits:

TREMENDOUS SAVINGS

on every record and tape in print—no "agree-to-purchase" obligations of any kind.

DISCOUNTS OF 43% TO 73%

off mfg. suggested list... special catalog features hundreds of titles and artists.

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lists thousands of titles; classical, pop, jazz, ballet, opera, musical shows, folk, rock, vocal, instrumental, country, etc.

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happenings in the world of music; concerts, critiques, new releases... special super-sale listings at discounts of up to 73%.

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Discount Music Club is a no-obligation membership club that guarantees tremendous discounts on all stereo records and tapes and lets you buy what you want... when you want... or not at all if you choose.

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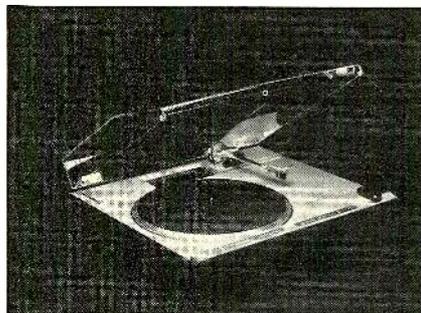
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CIRCLE NO. 16 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

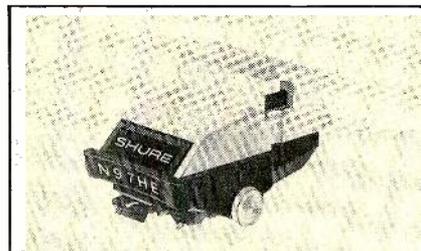
latest audio equipment and accessories



Tangential Tone Arm
In Phase Linear
Turntable

□ The Phase Linear Model 8000 turntable uses a linear electric motor to drive its tangentially tracking tone arm. A cadmium-sulfide photocell detects the arm's departure from tangency and controls the arm-deflection servo system. It is claimed that the arm is sensitive to deflections as small as 0.2 degree. The quartz-locked direct-drive turntable has a wow-and-flutter specification of 0.013 per cent and a speed deviation of less than 0.0002 per cent; it reaches speed in less than 0.6 second. A double-isolation suspension system separates the turntable from floor vibrations. The controls—all mounted outside the dust cover—include switching for power, speed, disc size, and arm elevation. A cueing knob allows lateral movement of the arm to any portion of a record. Dimensions are 19½ x 6 x 17½ inches and weight is 26½ pounds. Price: \$749.95.

Circle 130 on reader service card



Shure Cartridges
With Dynamic
Stabilizers

□ Shure's M97 Era IV series of phono cartridges all employ a viscous-damped dynamic stabilizer and a telescoped stylus-shank structure. These design elements are said to increase tracking ability at low tracking forces. The cartridges have a sty-

lus-protection device that withdraws the stylus assembly into its housing if the stylus is subjected to excessive side thrust. The top of the M97 line, the M97HE, is fitted with a hyperelliptical stylus, which is claimed to reduce both harmonic and intermodulation distortion. The M97HE is designed to track at ¾ to 1½ grams. Two other cartridges in the series track at the same force—the M97ED (elliptical stylus) and M97GD (spherical). The M97EJ (elliptical) and M97B (spherical) require 1½ to 3 grams. The styli (indicated by an "N" prefix) of all models in the series are interchangeable. Prices: M97HE, \$112.50; M97ED, \$99.50; M97GD, \$79.50; M97B, \$67.50.

Circle 131 on reader service card



AAL's Portable
High-power
Disco Speaker

□ The Disco Tower Series II loudspeaker from American Acoustics Labs is said to be compatible with amplifiers as powerful as 250 watts per channel. The minimum recommended amplifier power is 20 watts. The 46¾ x 21 x 16-inch speaker produces a 103-dB sound-pressure level at 1,000 Hz measured 1 meter away. The nominal impedance is 8 ohms. The drivers include a 15-inch woofer, a 12-inch midrange, and four 3-inch piezoelectric tweeters. Crossover frequencies are 1,500 and 7,000 Hz. The cabinet is made of ¾-inch particle board with a heavy-duty scuff-resistant vinyl covering; weight is 135 pounds. Connections may be made either with push terminals or with ¼-inch phone jacks. Price: \$499. American Acoustics Labs, Dept. SR, 629 West Cermak Road, Chicago, Ill. 60616.

Circle 132 on reader service card

NOTICE: All product descriptions and specifications quoted in these columns are based on materials supplied by the manufacturers.

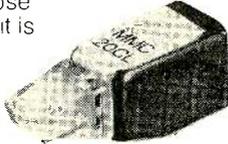
Domestic inflation and fluctuations in the value of the dollar overseas affect the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that prices quoted in this issue are subject to change.

YOUR TURNTABLE PROBABLY DESERVES BANG & OLUFSEN.

If you've spent a fair amount of time and money on your audio system, it's likely your turntable is ready for the new MMC 20CL cartridge. You do need a tonearm which can track successfully at one gram, one that has its own resonance well damped, and one which features minimal horizontal and vertical friction. Many of today's higher quality units meet these criteria: more likely than not so does the one you own.

THE MMC 20CL, A REFRESHING PERSPECTIVE IN CARTRIDGE DESIGN.

Critical acclaim has identified the MMC 20CL as an exceptional cartridge. It is. It will not only give you more music from your records, but will insure those records last significantly longer. However, it is not one of those 'astounding breakthroughs' that always seem to be hovering around cartridge design and its promotion. No, while the 20CL does incorporate new thinking, new materials, and new manufacturing methods, it should be reasonably viewed just as it is: simply one step closer to the theoretical ideal. When we introduced the first stereo cartridge to Europe over 20 years ago, we knew that someday we would have the 20CL. Our approach to cartridge engineering tells us that 20 years from now we will have something significantly better.



SINGLE CRYSTAL SAPPHIRE, BECAUSE THE CANTILEVER IS CRITICAL.

Unlike aluminum and beryllium, single crystal sapphire transfers the motion of the stylus tip without adding any measurable vibration, and hence distortion, of its own. The absence of this vibration and flexure in the cantilever means the undulations in the record groove are transferred exactly and generate an exceptionally accurate electrical signal. Music is no longer lost between the stylus tip and the armature. Your records open up and music unfolds with new clarity, definition, and spaciousness.



Give your turntable what it deserves. The MMC 20CL with our new universal connector can be mounted directly on most high quality tonearms.

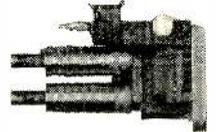


REDUCING EFFECTIVE TIP MASS, BANG & OLUFSEN'S ENGINEERING TRADITION.

As early as 1958, our research demonstrated that effective tip mass (ETM) was the single most determining factor behind record wear and the loss of high frequency sound information. While some manufacturers are now beginning to realize the importance of this specification, only Bang & Olufsen can look back upon a continuous chain of improvements in this critical area. Today, the MMC 20CL with its Contact Line, nude diamond, ultra-rigid sapphire cantilever, and the patented Moving Micro Cross armature features an ETM value of only 0.3mg.

LOW INDUCTANCE, OUTPUT REMAINS CONSTANT REGARDLESS OF LOAD.

As you know, low inductance in a cartridge is related directly to the strength and constancy of the electrical signal fed to your preamplifier input. What you may not know is that the MMC 20CL has an inductance among the lowest of all high quality cartridges available today. This is due to a design which incorporates an exceptionally powerful permanent magnet and coil cores of very low permeability. This design results in very low cartridge induced noise. Subsequently you receive an excellent signal-to-noise ratio without being required to use auxiliary equipment.



INDIVIDUALLY CALIBRATED.

When you manufacture very high quality cartridges, each unit must be tested — not one out of two, or ten, or twenty, but each one. This is why when you purchase the MMC 20CL, you will receive the test results for your individual cartridge. These results include: output voltage, channel balance, channel separation, tracking ability, and a frequency response graph for each channel.

THIS TIME MAKE THE RIGHT CONNECTION

Bang & Olufsen

For Information Write To: Sandy Renquest

Bang & Olufsen of America, Inc., 515 Busse Road, Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007

CIRCLE NO. 8 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Performance and reliability. That's what radio stations look for in a turntable and that's why 73 of the top 100 radio stations that use turntables use Technics direct drive. In fact, of those stations surveyed by Opinion Research Corporation, Technics was chosen 6 to 1 over the nearest competitor.

Why station engineers choose Technics.

"Latest state of the art." "Reliability and past experience." "Low rumble, fast start." "Wow and flutter, direct drive and constant speed." Those are just a few quotes from radio station engineers. And what they liked about Technics direct drive you will, too.

The D-Series: Unsurpassed performance for the price.

Consider 0.03% wow and flutter and -75 dB rumble. Those are the kinds of specs you may find in more expensive turntables, but Technics gives them to you for \$125* in the SL-D1 manual, for \$150 in the SL-D2 semi-automatic and for \$170 in the SL-D3 fully auto-

matic turntable. So if you thought you couldn't afford the performance of Technics direct drive, think again about the D-Series.

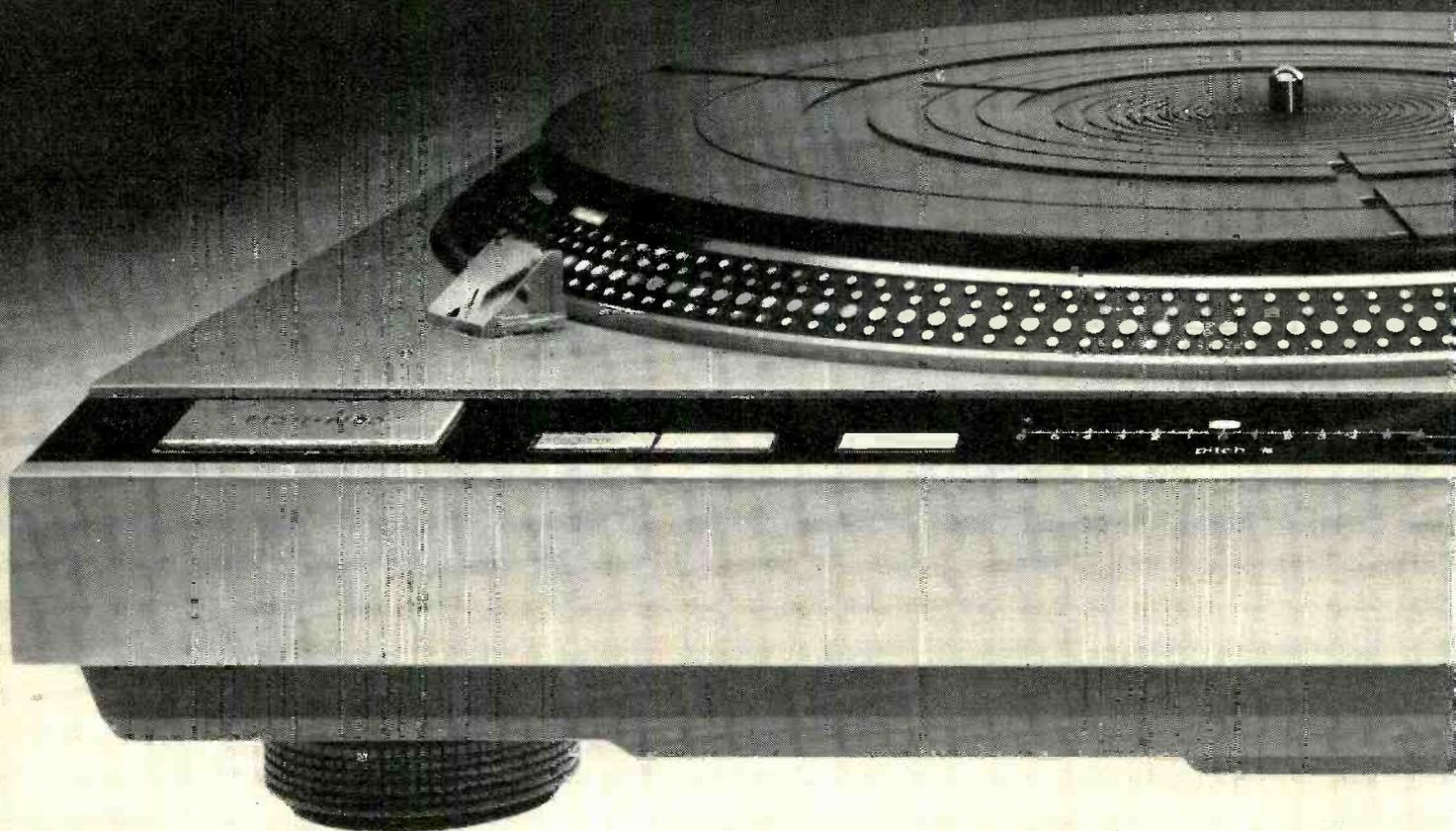
The Q-Series: Quartz accuracy.

With speed accuracy of 99.998%, wow and flutter of only 0.025% and rumble of -78 dB, it's no wonder that so many radio stations choose Technics quartz-locked turntables over any other. And when you consider the prices—\$190 for the SL-Q2 semi-automatic and \$220 for the SL-Q3 fully automatic—you'll choose Technics, too. Especially when you compare the Q-Series specs, the tonearm and the suspension system to other seemingly comparable turntables.

The MK2 Series: Torque and quartz-locked pitch control.

A startup time of 0.7 seconds, or 1/4 of a revolution. That's torque. Quartz-locked pitch control. That's accuracy. Those are two reasons top radio stations use Technics turntables. You'll get both with the MK2

You should buy a Technics direct same reasons 73 of the top 100



Technics

Series along with an aluminum diecast chassis and a double-isolated suspension system. Technics SL-1800 MK2 manual at \$300, the SL-1700 MK2 semi-automatic at \$350 and the SL-1600 MK2 fully automatic at \$400. Each proves you don't have to be a radio station to afford performance good enough for a radio station.

The SL-10: The turntable of the 80's.

Not much bigger than a record jacket, the SL-10 has a quartz-locked direct-drive motor, a moving coil cartridge with a pre-amp, and a servo-controlled linear tracking arm which results in virtually zero tracking error ($\pm 0.1^\circ$). What's more, the SL-10 couldn't be easier to operate. Simply place a record on the platter, close the cover and it automatically plays, even on its side or upside down.

Now that you know what radio stations look for in a turntable, shouldn't you look at the turntables 73 of the top 100 radio stations use. Technics direct drive.

* All prices are Technics recommended prices but actual price will be set by dealers.

CIRCLE NO. 59 ON READER SERVICE CARD

drive turntable for the radio stations did.



Audio/Video News

By David
Ranada

Associate Technical
Editor Ranada tries to
make himself heard with
an oversize dummy of
an Audio-Technica mike.



NOW: DBX-ENCODED DIGITAL DISCS

THERE can be scarcely an audiophile worth the name who has not by now sampled some of the exciting new digitally recorded (but analog-pressed) discs available from an increasing number of sources. And there can be scarcely one of those audiophiles who is not already wondering how long it will be until *true* digital discs—digitally recorded *and* digitally pressed—will be his to hear, when he will be delivered from the noise and distortion that have plagued analog recording and playback from the beginning. That day may not come this year or even next, but in the meantime it is possible to sample its promise through a transitional technology that produces sound of almost the same quality.

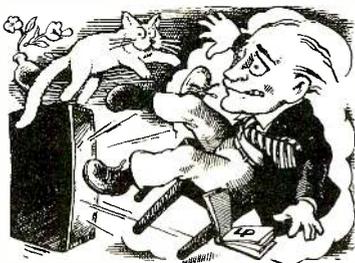
Last year saw the introduction of the dbx-encoded-disc system which took quality master tapes (analog-recorded) and converted them into *encoded* discs that, when played through the proper dbx decoder, delivered sound with previously unobtainable (from vinyl, at least) dynamic range and signal-to-noise ratio (see November 1979 STEREO REVIEW, page 40, for a complete description of the system). Now, from dbx and M&K Realtime Records (an audiophile record company), come the first three recordings made with a digital master recorder (a sixteen-bit Sony PCM-1600) and pressed with dbx disc encoding. These records are even more spectacular than both the earlier, much-praised digitally mastered but analog-pressed discs and the analog-mastered, dbx-encoded variety.

THE dbx disc system essentially increases the dynamic range of a conventional vinyl pressing from a best-case 60 to 65 dB to around 90 dB. This 30-dB increase reveals itself in two important ways: (1) the peak levels coming out of the disc decoder are *much* higher than the average levels, thus placing stringent demands on a power amplifier's peak-power capability; and (2) the noise from the disc itself is greatly reduced. Indeed, I heard no noise in playing the three M&K/dbx records that could be attributed to the discs. And the pressings themselves were thick, flat, and flawless, a rare conjunction nowadays.

Analog-mastered dbx discs have some-

times given evidence of the operation of the dbx process through a subtle "pumping" of the hiss level from the analog master tape. With these *digitally* mastered discs, however, hiss, the main clue to improper dbx operation, is gone. (There is some very low-level noise in certain cuts, but it comes, I presume, from the mike preamps or the mixer.) In brief, I heard no evidence of dbx misbehavior, even on headphones.

What I *did* hear was incredible! In respect to dynamic range, these are the most realistic recordings I have *ever* heard short of a direct playback of a digital master tape. I was just as impressed by the total lack of noise (except that made by the musicians) during the pauses in the music as I was by the unstrained intensity of the fortissimo passages.



The digital recording process is, in truth, a kind of sonic X-ray that reveals both the technical strengths *and* weaknesses in the production of a recording. In classical music, the heart of the producer/engineer's art is microphone choice and placement. Ken Kreisel, the producer of these discs, sensibly chose a very simple setup. As he explained it to me, he used a crossed cardioid (XY) pair, supplemented by a cardioid microphone on each side of the orchestra. In general, the sound pickup is clear, but there are a few anomalies, at least to my taste. First, I find the winds too prominent. I usually like a "forward" wind section, but in these recordings that has been accomplished at the expense of the body and "air" of the string tone. Second, several instruments are too "on-axis," and an unnaturally close, over-

bright sound is the result. This happens with some of the high percussion instruments and most annoyingly with the harps. (All of these "faults" are of course a matter of taste, but they are in any case a direct result of the directional properties of the microphones and of their placement.) On the other hand, imaging is generally excellent, with the instruments quite firmly fixed in their perceived locations—however unusual some of those locations might be!

Musically, the performances are not all they might be. Most successful are the Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet* Overture, the Ginastera *Panambi* Suite, and Dukas' *Sorcerer's Apprentice*. In these, the overwhelming sound more than compensates for any shortcomings of the orchestra or the interpretation. Some of conductor Zoltán Rozsnyai's mannerisms disturbed me in the Chabrier, Berlioz, and Debussy pieces (and does *no one* but Monteux slur the trumpet fanfares in *Fêtes* as Debussy clearly marked them?). I was quite disappointed also at the lack of truly *soft* playing, and I would have liked a bit more subtlety of dynamic shading in the Debussy *Prélude*—*all* the available dynamic range should have been used.

FINALLY, a word about repertoire. It is reasonable to assume that only the most familiar blockbusters will get digital recording in general—and dbx encoding in particular—off the ground commercially in these early days. All the works here fall in that category, with the exception of the Ginastera (a sort of Argentinian *Scythian Suite* containing a stupendous second movement with low brass, several types of drums, cymbals, and tam-tam). But audiophiles listen as much for the sound as for music. The repertoire of sonic spectaculars can and should be expanded. What better way is there to exploit a wide-dynamic-range playback system such as the dbx disc than to introduce the audio community to the heaven-storming gongs and brass of Messiaen or to Webern's intense and passionate whispers?

And a final reminder: dbx-encoded discs, whether derived from analog or digital masters, are playable only through a dbx decoder. You *could* run them through your system without one, of course, but you wouldn't like the results.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Romeo and Juliet, Overture-Fantasy; Nutcracker Suite (Op. 71A, excerpts)*. Philharmonia Hungarica, Zoltán Rozsnyai cond. M&K/dbx RT-201/PS-1002 \$16.

DUKAS: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. **CHABRIER:** *España*. **DEBUSSY:** *Nocturnes—Fêtes; Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un Faune*. Philharmonia Hungarica, Zoltán Rozsnyai cond. M&K/dbx RT-202/PS-1003 \$16.

GINASTERA: *Panambi Suite*. **BIZET:** *Carmen, Prelude*. **BERLIOZ:** *Rákóczi March*. **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Mlada—Procession of the Nobles*. **BRAHMS:** *Hungarian Dance No. 5*. Philharmonia Hungarica, Zoltán Rozsnyai cond. M&K/dbx RT-203/PS-1004 \$16.

All three discs are available through dbx dealers, selected record stores, and directly from dbx, 71 Chapel Street, Newton, Mass. 01295. □

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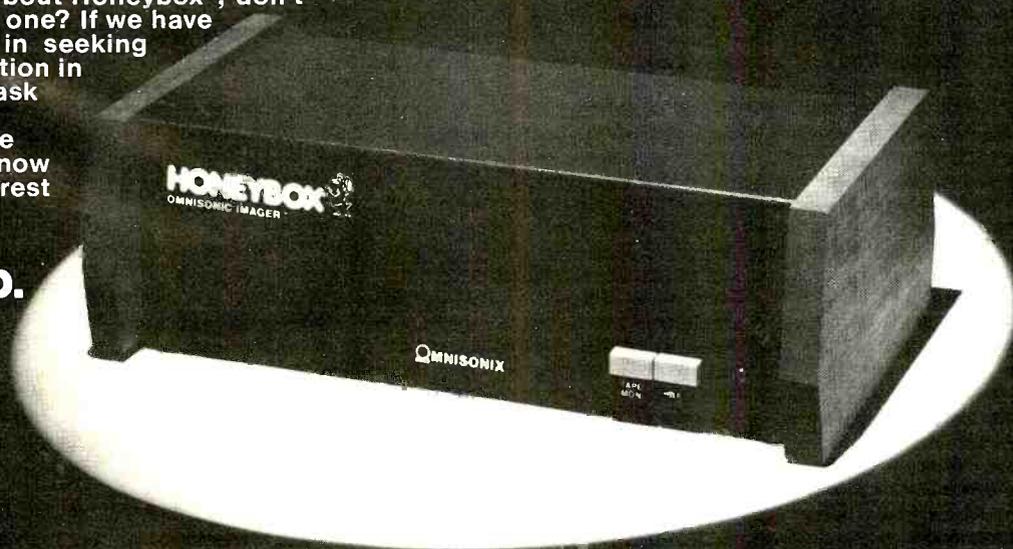
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CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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Series II It sounds like music.

Interface: C Series II is the fulfillment of our six-year association with optimally vented speakers based on the theories of A.N. Thiele—speaker designs first introduced by Electro-Voice in 1973. The Interface: C offers you a unique combination of high efficiency and high power capacity—the only way to accurately reproduce the 120+ dB peak sound pressure levels found in some types of live music.

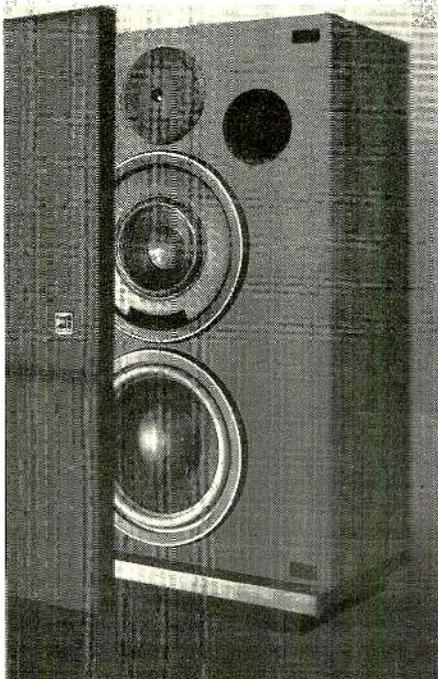
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Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein



Shrink Wrap

Q. *I have been warned of the dire consequences of leaving the cellophane wrapper on my albums after I buy them. However, I have been taping the wrappers onto my precious album covers for nearly a decade now, and I have noticed no adverse effect on my records, which I store vertically, pressed tightly together. Is this cellophane-warping-the-record story just a lot of bunk?*

ESTELLA WYATT-WALLACE
Dunkirk, Md.

A. The question is simply whether the cellophane "shrink wrap" applied at the time of packaging continues to shrink after the wrapping has taken place. It seems that in some cases it does and in other cases it doesn't, probably depending on local temperature and humidity conditions as well as the type of plastic used. In any case, if you find the shrink wrap stretched tautly around the album cover, you can assume that it is putting undue stress on the record inside. If it is somewhat less than skin tight, there's no problem—though one might develop later. It is possible that your storage method may have something to do with preserving records whose shrink wrap is too tight from the peril of warping.

Questions Question

Q. *Sometimes there is a little notice at the end of your column stating that only questions selected for use will be answered. How do you select questions for use, and why not answer the others?*

NEIL LARSON
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

A. I'm glad you ask the question(s). The Qs that may or may not produce an A in this column fall into several different categories.

There is a certain number of perennial questions that require at least an annual answer for new readers or those who were not paying attention the last time. Questions about, for example, power requirements, Dolby adjustments, and acoustic feedback fall into this category.

Another type of question regularly finding its way to our in-box (if not this column) asks about some new hi-fi technology featured in a product advertisement. I usually have no ready answer, because in many cases only time will reveal whether the new device or approach is a breakthrough, merely an alternate way of doing something, or a sophisticated solution to a nonexistent problem. (If readers sometimes have difficulty determining whether a given product represents the bluebird of hi-fi happiness or merely some manufacturer's technical wild-goose chase, so do we.)

Questions of the "which is best" variety do not get column space at all. In general, we confine our remarks on product quality to the test-report section of the magazine. It would be manifestly unfair, given the market clout of STEREO REVIEW, to express opinions based on hearsay, manufacturers' literature, personal prejudice, or anything other than laboratory tests and/or a controlled listening session. Any reader who wants to know how we feel about a piece of equipment will have to get that information from a test report. If there wasn't any report, it is likely that we know little or nothing more about the product than anyone can discover from the manufacturer's literature. (A complete index to all the products we have tested since 1965 is available for 35¢ in coins or stamps plus a stamped, self-addressed long envelope sent to STEREO REVIEW, Dept. TRI, 1 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016.)

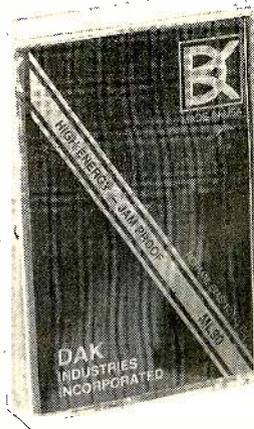
Another category of question can be distilled down to "I have a hi-fi something that doesn't work right. What's wrong and how do I fix it? . . . or modify it? . . . or match it properly to some other hi-fi something?" All these questions get a form reply that says, in part:

"Unfortunately, the best we can do is suggest that you write directly to the manufacturer of your unit. Because of his familiarity with his own products, he is in a far better position to advise you on the specifics of your particular question or problem than we could possibly be."

It's a mystery to me why so many component owners write to us *first* when they have troubles. Anyone having any familiarity with electronics knows that most products

(Continued on page 30)

INCREDIBLE CASSETTE OFFER!



a \$5 LCD digital WATCH

Try 10 DAK high energy cassettes risk free for only \$2.19 each and get a beautiful \$69 value LCD digital watch for only \$5.

It's your choice. Think about the kind of music you like. You don't want to think about cassettes jamming, loss of high frequency response or tape hiss.

DAK manufactures a cassette that you can really forget about. Great sound, and no problems. And, for only \$5 we hope you will think a lot about your new LCD digital quartz watch.

YOUR TIME IS PRECIOUS

Imagine yourself just finishing recording the second side of a 90 minute cassette and horrors, the cassette jams. Tape is wound around the capstan, your recorder may be damaged and you've just wasted 90 minutes of your time and perhaps lost a great recording off FM.

Enter DAK. We manufacture over one million units of cassette tape each month in our North Hollywood factory. Many of our tapes are used for high speed duplication where they are recorded at speeds up to 8 times normal. This is the ultimate stress for cassettes and causes more failures than any other use.

MOLYSULFIDE

We developed polyester slip sheets with raised spring loaded ridges to guide each layer of tape as it winds. We coat them with a unique formulation of Graphite and a new chemical, molysulfide.

Molysulfide reduces friction several times better than graphite and allows the tape to move more freely within the cassette. The molysulfide is tougher and makes the liner more resistant to wear. Evidently 3M and TDK were hot on our heels, because they have now also come out with new liners.

Hi frequency protection! Tape is basically plastic, and as it moves within the cassette friction causes the build up of static electricity, much as rubbing a balloon against your hair, or scuffing your shoes on a carpet in dry weather.

Static electricity within the cassette is drastically reduced by the low friction of the molysulfide so that its tendency to erase very high frequencies is drastically reduced. A very important consideration for often played tapes.

MAXELL IS BETTER

Yes, honestly, if you own a \$1000 cassette deck like a Nakamichi, the frequency responses of Maxell UDXL or TDK SA are superior and you just might be able to hear the difference.

DAK ML has a frequency response that is flat from 40cps to 14,500cps

±3db Virtually all cassette recorders priced under \$600 are flat ±3db from 40cps to about 12,500cps, so we have over 2000cps to spare, and you'll probably never notice the difference.

No apology. We feel that we have equaled or exceeded the mechanical reliability of virtually all cassettes and offer one of the best frequency responses in the industry. Maxell UDXL is truly the Rolls Royce of the industry, and DAK is comparable to the 100% US made Cadillac or Corvette!

Price DAK manufactures the tape we sell. You avoid paying the wholesaler and retailer profits. While Maxell UDXL 90s may sell for \$3.50 to \$4.50 each at retail, DAK ML90s sell factory direct to you for only \$2.19 each complete with deluxe boxes and index insert cards.



A \$5 LCD WATCH?

Of course not! This is an incredible offer. Countless stores throughout the country sell LCD quartz crystal watches like this for up to \$69.

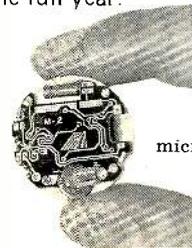
This beautifully styled slim silvertone watch is loaded with features. LCD means that the time in hours and minutes always shows without having to push buttons. Push the button once, and you'll see the date in months and days, and push the button again and the watch shows seconds.

Night light. Usually only found in the most expensive watches. Simply push a button and the entire time section lights up for convenient night viewing.

Quartz crystal accuracy means constant time within 1 minute per month. Crystals use little electricity, so the battery should last up to a year, and may be easily changed by any jeweler. Stainless steel band for long life and

comfort. No cheap imitation, a first rate locking adjustable band.

It's guaranteed. This fine watch comes with a manufacturer's limited warranty for one full year.



a rugged micro-computer

DAK TAKES A RISK

Obviously giving away quality watches is not going to make DAK rich. Even giving away cheap watches wouldn't help. We are betting that you will buy our cassettes again, and we are putting our money where our mouth is!

Customers like you are very valuable in the form of future business. We anticipate receiving over 6000 orders and 4500 repeat customers from this advertisement to add to our list of over 57,000 actives.

TRY DAK ML90 CASSETTES FREE

Try these high energy cassettes on your own recorder without obligation for 30 days. If you aren't 100% satisfied for any reason, simply return the tapes and the watch to DAK for a full refund.

To order your 10 DAK ML 90 minute high energy cassettes at \$2.19 each and the \$69 value watch with your credit card, simply call the toll free number below, or send your check for \$21.90 plus \$5 for the watch and \$3 for postage and handling for each group of 10 cassettes and each watch to DAK. (Calif. residents add 6% sales tax)

DAK unconditionally guarantees all DAK cassettes for one year against any defects in material or workmanship.

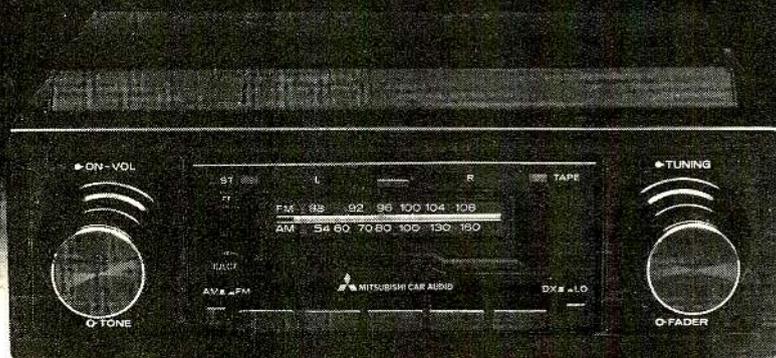
Why not order an extra group of 10 DAK ML90 cassettes for yourself or a friend? We will add one free ML90 cassette to each 10 you buy and of course you can buy one \$69 value watch for \$5 with each group you buy.

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The RX-73 In-Dash AM/FM/MPX Cassette

Value.

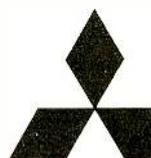
A word you don't hear as much as you'd like. But the RX-73 has it written all over it.

It's an in-dash AM/FM cassette deck with 8 watts per channel, left-to-right balance *and* front-to-rear fader control, low-level outputs for easy hook-up to control amplifier or graphic equalizer and a short chassis depth.

Some of these features you might find on other units, but it's unlikely to find them all. And even more unlikely to find it priced like the RX-73.

"Value" is again becoming a household word.

Sounds reasonable. If you've been considering a new car stereo system, listen to reason. Listen to the RX-73.

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CIRCLE NO. 40 ON READER SERVICE CARD

are likely to have some characteristic "failure modes," and the factory repair people are the first to know what those are and what to do about them.

Then there are those optimistic souls whose five-page, single-spaced, typewritten letters detail their personal hi-fi histories (apparently from the moment they learned to hear) as a preface to their asking me to choose several optimum setups from an included list of thirty or so models. Some readers hasten to add that they will be glad to pay any charges incurred, but others seem to think—or at least hope—that such a service ought to come free with their purchase of a copy of the magazine or a subscription. I guess I could go into detail here as to why we can't oblige our more than a million readers in this regard and still put out a monthly magazine—but is that really necessary?

In any case, all mail is at least *read*, and some of it is answered directly with a form reply or a marginal note. Obviously, those readers who enclose a stamped, self-addressed return envelope stand a far better chance of getting a response than those who don't. It seems appropriate to end with another quote from one of our forms:

"We appreciate the confidence you have expressed by writing to us and regret that we cannot be of more specific help." And we really do!

Companders vs. Dolby

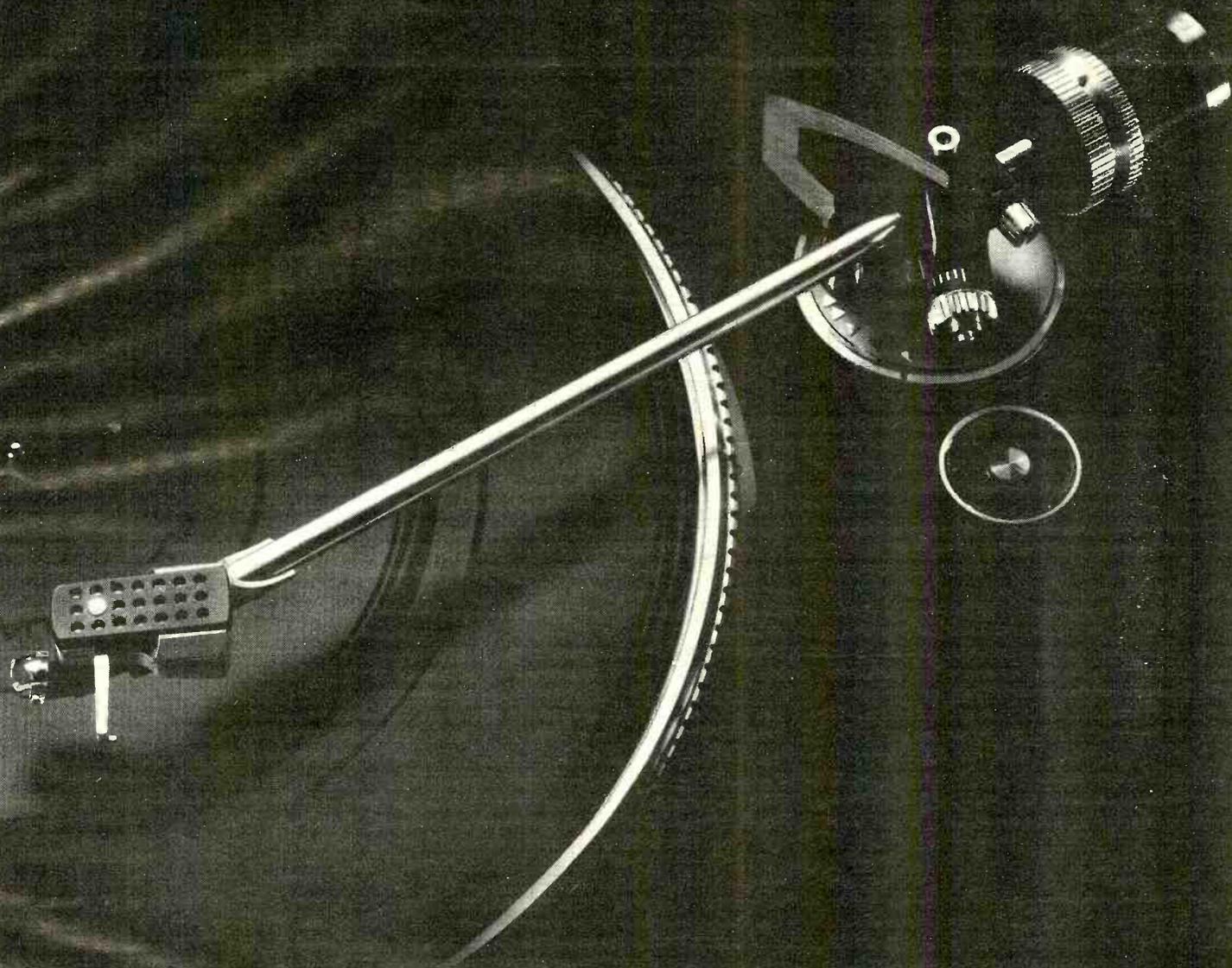
Q. *What is the difference between the Dolby-B system and the component companders that are produced by several other companies?*

ROBERT WARD
Laurelton, N.Y.

A. The Dolby-B system actually is a type of compander, a compander being a device that compresses a signal's dynamic range when it is recorded (or transmitted) and expands it back to its original form on playback. The Dolby system, unlike most of the other systems, compresses and expands only the low-level, high-frequency part of the signal. In effect, it operates only on that *part* of the signal where hiss is a problem. The usual compander operates on all levels of the signal and over the entire frequency range all at once.

Dolby's view is that by ignoring the loud signals, which tend to mask noise anyway, the risk of audible encode/decode errors is greatly reduced. And by operating only on a part of the frequency range, noise-modulation effects are greatly reduced. ("Noise modulation" describes a situation in which the audible noise in one part of the frequency range goes up and down with the signal level of the music in another part.) On the other hand, the amount of noise reduction the Dolby system provides (about 10 dB in the hiss region) is less than most companders provide under low-signal conditions.

Basically, then, both types of compander incorporate trade-offs. The Dolby system is generally considered to be error free, and it is less likely to misbehave. A wide-band compander can provide more noise reduction but may be less tolerant of recorder deficiencies or may need careful adjustment to avoid audible side effects.



The 731Q is the finest turntable Dual has ever made.

There is always a special attitude at Dual about the turntable that is to represent the most advanced thinking and accomplishments of Dual's designers and engineers.

The materials, the care in manufacturing, assembly and quality control must exemplify all that has made Dual precision and reliability so highly regarded throughout the world.

And in every measure of performance, this model must set the standard by which other fine turntables are judged. Even more, it must make a significant contribution to the art of record playback.

This year, the quartz PLL direct drive 731Q, with its ultra-low-mass (ULM) tonearm and cartridge system, expresses our attitude perfectly.

If your other components and your record collection warrant consideration of such a turntable, we invite you to visit your franchised Dual dealer. And if you have a record that is warped to marginal playability, but too valuable to discard, bring it with you.

That's all you will need to share our attitude and sense of pride about the Dual 731Q.

For the complete ULM story, please write directly to United Audio, 120 So. Columbus Ave., Dept. Q, Mt. Vernon, New York 10553.

Dual



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"From the beginning, Koss has been involved in creating unique listening environments to enhance the enjoyment of recorded music. With the invention of Koss stereophones, we created a uniquely private and singularly personal listening environment.

"Now, we are delighted to utilize our in-depth experience in acoustic and psycho-acoustic phenomena in the development of a home listening environment that is virtually a perfect replica of the actual environment in which the live performance took place. In other words, we've brought home not only the orchestra but your seat in the concert hall as well.

"Through the magic of the latest computer technology, Koss engineers have developed a 16,384 bit computer circuitry system that has been programmed to permanently store, in digital format, four ideal live performance rooms: a club, a theatre, a concert hall and an auditorium. Thus, with the K/4DS hooked into your system, all you have to do is simply turn the selector switch to the setting that corresponds to the most natural environment of your recorded material. The K/4DS will automatically delay the recorded material to conform with the optimized ideal room stored in the computer and play it back through a set of secondary or ambience speakers located at the sides of your listening room. Believe me, what you'll hear is the most life-like and realistic illusion of a live performance you've ever heard.

"To further match, as accurately as possible, the acoustics of a live situation, the K/4DS

features a special cross channel circuitry that delays and channels portions of the right audio signal to the left ambience speaker and vice versa. In addition, portions of the delayed signal are recirculated through the system again and again to simulate the actual decay rate that occurs during a live performance.

"Unlike most delay systems on the market, we've designed the Koss K/4DS with its own built-in amplifier. You need only add a pair of speakers that operate adequately up to 8,000 Hz to transform your current stereo system into an unbelievably exciting sound experience.

"For versatility, we've provided a speaker selector with three

settings: K/4DS 4th dimension sound, stereo only, and stereophones only. There's also an EQ switch to enhance the bass response of your ambience speakers and to roll-off the bass response below 50 Hz in order to eliminate possible distortion. And, of course, the K/4DS wouldn't be Koss without dual stereophone jacks, special built-in phone amps, and a 4th dimension to stereo comparator switch.

"Our new Koss K/4DS Digital Delay System has been carefully designed to offer the best possible in-home live sound experience at an affordable price. To achieve this goal, we've made the K/4DS an easy-to-operate, factory optimized digital delay system. You won't need to be an audio engineer to recreate at home the realism of the live performance.

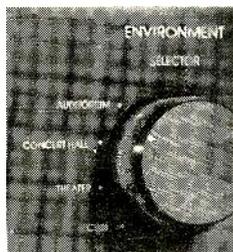
"I urge you to hear the Koss K/4DS Digital Delay System at your favorite audio dealer. And to take advantage of our special \$20 introductory discount. Never since the introduction of stereo has a product so dramatically increased the listening enjoyment of recorded music. It's truly a remarkable achievement in sound reproduction and one I know you won't want to miss?"

John C. Koss
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Take this ticket to your audio dealer for \$20 off the purchase price of a Koss K/4DS. This offer expires Jan. 31, 1980.

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hearing is believing™

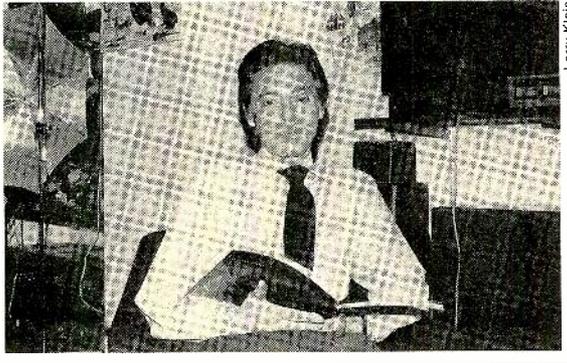
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CIRCLE NO. 33 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Basics

By Robert
Greene



PREAMPLIFIERS

PREAMPLIFIER," or "preamp," is a term often used (especially by novice audiophiles) with no real idea of just what such a device is. The picture it all too often conjures up is a box that has a lot of knobs and switches and looks like the front part of an integrated amplifier. That isn't totally wrong, but what is being thought of is in actual fact a preamplifier-control unit, and preamplification is only one of its many functions.

Preamplifiers came into the home audio picture with the advent of the first commercially popular magnetic cartridges. Until then, crystal cartridges were in general use, and crystals generate an electrical signal of about the same strength as a tuner. The magnetic cartridge, though, was quite a different creature: if a magnetic cartridge were substituted for a crystal, playing a record would produce only a thin, weak sound since magnetics have far less output voltage than crystals and require bass boost for flat response. The few thousandths of a volt (millivolts) produced by a magnetic cartridge are just not enough to drive an amplifier originally meant for crystals to anywhere near full output. What is needed is additional amplification between the phono cartridge and the amplifier to compensate for the amplifier's inadequate gain, or the cartridge's inadequate output, depending on how you look at it.

The first home units for this purpose were little one-tube affairs made by G.E. (they made the magnetic cartridges, so they obviously had to provide the equipment to make them usable). These units went into the circuit before the amplifier, hence *preamplifier*. The idea was by no means new; preamps were (and still are) used in a variety of commercial applications. But these new units had to do more than merely boost signal strength. The inherent response characteristics of the magnetic cartridge are quite different from those of a crystal, so equalization (bass boost and treble roll-off) to compensate was included. Immediately, then, these were (properly speaking) preamplifier-equalizers. These little outboard preamps were only a stopgap measure for hi fi, however: they became redun-

dant as soon as new amplifiers appeared with preamp functions already built in.

At about this time, hi-fi component design took two separate paths. One of them resulted in an "integrated" amplifier with a built-in preamp; the other removed the controls, switching, and first stages of amplification and put them into a separate, remote unit (often powered by the main amplifier). The little magnetic-cartridge preamp was incorporated into these remote units (as it was into the single-chassis amps), thereby establishing for the home user the multipurpose module now known simply as a "preamp."



Initially, the controls were just the basic ones then in use on most integrated amplifiers: volume, bass, treble, input selector, and, perhaps, a loudness switch. As home systems became more sophisticated and complex, more and more control functions became necessary or at least desirable. Switching appeared for remote speakers, and facilities for tape decks were added when these became popular. Now it is possible to find units that can accommodate two or even three tape decks (as well as a couple of turntables) for a really elaborate system. Stereo, of course, added another batch of controls: channel balance, left-

right reverse, mono-stereo, etc. In time, many units began sporting switches for choosing the turnover points of the tone controls, and some even added a third tone control for the midrange.

For a long while, if one wanted maximum flexibility and quality, the separate preamp-control unit was the way to go, but the use of miniaturized circuitry changed this. It became practical to incorporate a respectable number of controls and a pair of power amplifiers on one chassis of relatively convenient size. Today, even receivers, once not even considered real "audiophile" equipment, are available with enough controls to keep the knob-happiest of us busy.

In a way, the size problem is still with us, though. On a receiver or integrated amplifier the number of controls will be proportional (mostly for marketing, not technical, reasons) to the power output and price of the unit. Anyone requiring only a low- or medium-power amplifier but a great variety of controls should therefore look for a separate preamp; an integrated amplifier or receiver with maximum control facilities could prove too large and/or expensive because it would likely be the most powerful in the manufacturer's line.

With the growing popularity of such outboard units as equalizers (see page 72), noise-reduction units, time-delay (more correctly, *signal*-delay) devices, and other types of signal processors, there are now a number of "preamps" available that go well beyond the basic control functions. Some preamps now not only allow you to change the volume of your music but will alter the acoustic ambience of your listening room and correct for compression in recordings; a few even include graphic equalizers. Also, lo and behold, we now have another kind of phono cartridge (moving coil) growing in popularity that usually requires a *pre*-preamplifier. These pre-preamps (also known as *head* amps) are now being built into preamplifiers. (You *are* following all of this, aren't you?)

NOT to complicate matters, but there are those audiophiles who don't really hold with any of this. Their belief is that any interference with the audio signal, even that of a tone control, constitutes distortion. This is not the place to go into the philosophical complexities of this position except to point out that there *are* two controls we really can't do without: the volume knob and the mode selector, but even these might be open to argument. However, there are some few preamps available that have minimal control facilities, and this is a case of less *not* being cheaper: the units are generally of a quality that commands a high price.

"Preamplifier," then, has become a generic term covering a rather wide variety of units. What's right for you depends on your own situation. There is no stock solution, but here are a few factors to consider: all-in-one units cost less (per feature) than separates, but they may be less versatile; smaller separates (individual, non-integrated components) could be easier to handle physically than large all-in-ones, but may also represent considerably more money; perhaps the particular functions you want are available only in separates. As usual, you'll have to find the point at which the scales balance best for you. □



The Eumig FL-1000: The world's only computer-compatible cassette deck; your best interface with the world of music.

Capturing the full richness of music on a cassette requires an extraordinary cassette deck. It takes extraordinarily wide frequency response. Incredibly smooth tape motion. And an undistorted dynamic range at least as great as that of your musical source. It takes the Eumig FL-1000.

You need the ability to use the latest metal-particle tapes, of course. And separate record and playback head elements that permit each to be designed specifically for its function and that let you monitor the actual recording as it is being made. You need the kind of innovative engineering that produced the exclusive Eumig Opto-Electronic capstan drive, which automatically corrects motor speed 15,000 times every second. And the fast, easy-to-use Computest® system to optimize record bias and Dolby* calibration for individual brands within each tape type. And you need extraordinary technical performance: a full-range 20-20,000Hz (± 3 dB) frequency response; a 0.035% (WRMS) wow/flutter rating; and a 70dB signal-to-noise ratio.

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A peak-reading fluorescent display shows the exact, instantaneous signal level being fed to the tape, and is equipped with switchable peak-hold, 6-dB attenuator, and 2-position

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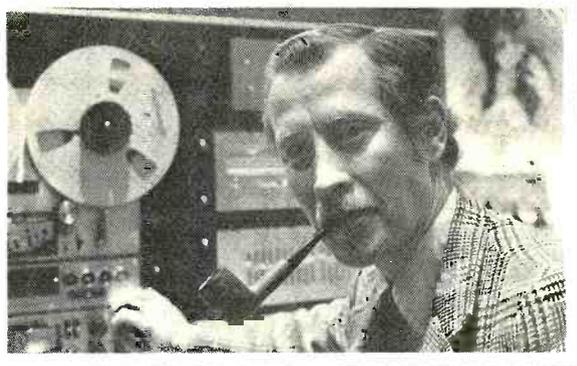
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CIRCLE NO. 37 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Output

Q. *My receiver's tape input is rated at 250 mV with a 100,000-ohm impedance, and the manual says to use a tape recorder of 250 mV or greater output. I've looked all over. Are there any?*

JAMES J. DODSON, JR.
Chino, Calif.

A. I think you're misinterpreting the tape-recorder input/output specification. Your receiver's requirements are well within the normal range—and they are compatible with all normal recorders!

The specified 250 mV (which is the same as saying 0.25 volt) or higher is the *output from the tape recorder*, which you plug into the *receiver's tape input*. Almost all decks have outputs in the range of 0.5 to 1 volt (500 to 1,000 mV). In contrast, the majority of tape decks have *line-input* sensitivities (the amount of signal needed to achieve a 0-VU recording level) in the vicinity of 100 to 200 mV, and I suspect that this is the rating you've been looking at.

Dropouts

Q. *What exactly causes tape "dropouts"? Can the home recordist do anything about them?*

SHIRLEY BOTHELL
Princeton, N.J.

A. A "dropout" is a momentary interruption of the signal being picked up from the tape. Often the low frequencies may seem unaffected, but for an instant there is a noticeable loss of high frequencies. In most home recorders dropout is experienced more frequently in the left channel than in the right, and while the primary cause is defects in the tape, badly worn heads or misaligned tape guides can aggravate the problem.

Contrary to what many people believe, most dropouts are *not* caused by tiny holes or "voids" in the tape's oxide coating. Rather, what is heard as a dropout is most frequently caused by a small *protrusion* that momentarily pushes the tape surface away from its normally intimate contact with the recorder's head gap. (The protrusion

may be formed from a tiny bit of grit, dust, or an oxide clump.) Similarly, the undulating edge that results from a dull slitter when the tape is cut to width during manufacture can push the edge away from the head. Since the outer-edge tracks are used for left-channel information both in stereo cassettes and quarter-track open-reel decks, poor slitting also causes dropouts.

While tape dropouts were once a serious audio problem, modern oxides and coating technology make them serious only for the more critical video and data-processing tapes. If you find a large number of dropouts with the brand of tape you're using, I'd suggest trying another well-known brand. If the problem persists, then have a service technician check your deck.

Wearing Away the Highs

Q. *With use, LP records lose high frequencies and gain surface noise. Do cassettes suffer in a similar way, not only with use but with age as well?*

PAUL MILTON
New York, N.Y.

A. Yes, but . . . Years ago, when phono-stylus tracking forces were much higher than they are today and record wear was an obvious problem, it came to be believed that tapes were immune to the ravages of time and use. But, as Molly used to say to her husband, Fibber, "T'ain't so, McGee."

Robert K. Morrison, then manager of the Ampex Standard Tape Lab (which produces calibrated alignment tapes used throughout the world), noted, in a 1967 article in the *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society*, that "short wavelengths [that is, high frequencies at slow tape speeds] . . . are fugitive" and that "a tape recording at slow speed (3¾ ips or less) which is flat today may well be lacking high frequencies after storage or a number of playings."

Everyone who has used calibrated high-frequency alignment tapes professionally knows that they gradually deteriorate with age and use. One high-quality cassette-deck manufacturer I know claims that he dis-

(Continued on page 38)



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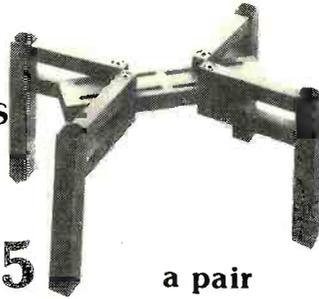
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cards calibrated tapes that have been played more than ten times, though I think this is a bit extreme. On the other hand, beyond twenty-five playings I can't trust a “calibrated alignment tape” because it is likely to read low by 2 dB or more on its highest frequency band, as compared with a fresh sample. I'm sure that the experience of other testers is similar.

Does this mean that a frequently played tape quickly starts to sound like a worn-out disc? By no means. To judge by my own experience, it may well be true that, with top-quality equipment, high frequencies on LPs and tape may deteriorate at a roughly similar rate in terms of time and use, but the noise level (surface hiss, ticks, and pops) on my discs becomes unbearable reasonably quickly, whereas I have yet to discard one of my master tapes because of a higher noise level.

Four-channel Cassettes?

Q. Why can duplicating plants simultaneously record all four tracks on a cassette tape (the “side two” tracks being recorded backwards) while no consumer product makes this option available?

LAWRENCE LITTLE
New York, N.Y.

A. Actually, there are several consumer cassette decks, designed to permit recording and playback in both directions without turning the cassette over, that already incorporate the same kind of four-channel heads used by duplicators to speed up the copying process by recording all four tracks simultaneously. Assuming you could do without built-in erase facilities (by using a bulk-erased or blank tape for copying, for example), these “bidirectional” machines could be used—with a second set of record electronics—in precisely the way duplicators have been using them for years.

Legally, however, the situation is somewhat different, for Philips of the Netherlands, as the inventor of the cassette system, can dictate the terms under which a deck manufacturer is licensed to use the phrase “Compact Cassette.” Philips has always tried to maintain the position—progress notwithstanding—that, as far as consumer applications are concerned, any cassette should be playable on any cassette deck, whether that deck be the original \$29 mono “sound camera” or a \$2,000 stereo high-fidelity component. According to reliable reports, both Dolby-B processing and the development of CrO₂ (and similar) tapes strained Philips' Doctrine of Compatibility.

Tapesponding Lives!

In a previous column I answered a reader's question about the existence of tape clubs, whose members exchange correspondence via tape, lend each other tapes of old radio shows, etc., by saying that they seemed to have petered out.

I stand corrected! The oldest of them all, the Indiana Recording Club, is alive and well in Indianapolis. Readers interested in their activities should address inquiries to Bill Davies, Secretary, IRC, 1729 East 77th Street, Indianapolis, Ind. 46240.

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STEREO REVIEW

The dawn of a new recording era

Auto Azimuth Alignment

Undoubtedly the most advanced and sophisticated innovation in cassette-recorder technology, *Auto Azimuth Alignment* launches a new era in high-fidelity recording. For the first time, you can be assured of perfect record-head azimuth alignment—on any cassette—at the flip of a switch. And, with that perfection comes an unprecedented frequency response—22 kHz at standard speed, 15 kHz at half speed! *Auto Azimuth Alignment*—designated by the ZX in the model number—is available now on three revolutionary decks—the 680ZX, 670ZX, 660ZX. Each features exclusive Nakamichi Discrete 3-Head technology, 4-Motor, Dual-Capstan, Asymmetrical, Diffused-Resonance Transport, Random Access Music Memory and 22-kHz response at standard speed. And, the 680ZX—joining the popular 680 with manual alignment—matches its unique *half-speed* recording response of 15 kHz! *Auto Azimuth Alignment*—Nakamichi's commitment to excellence in the fine art of recorded sound.



680ZX Auto Azimuth Alignment

The premier Model 680ZX—half-speed response that rivals that of other decks at full speed! And, at standard speed, a full 22-kHz! High-resolution, wide-range FL level indicators and 18 program RAMM. Choose your speed, choose your program. The 680ZX does it all!

670ZX Auto Azimuth Alignment

Full off-tape monitoring facilities with Double Dolby* and two complete sets of electronics. Single-speed operation to an astounding 22 kHz! Nine program RAMM and wide-range, peak-responding meters. Outstanding performance.



660ZX Auto Azimuth Alignment

Performance identical to the 670ZX. Every feature except off-tape monitoring. Exclusive Nakamichi *Auto Azimuth Alignment* and Discrete 3-Head design. Master record-level fader too. An extraordinary value!

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tech talk:

45 Watt RMS minimum per channel into 8 ohms.
From 20 to 20,000 Hz. With no more than 0.03% THD.

explained.

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The first sentence above tells you that 45 watts are the least amount of continuous (RMS) power the amplifier portion of the 3248 will deliver to each speaker channel when hooked up to 8 ohm speakers.

The second sentence states that at least 45 watts of power will be delivered over the entire audible range of sound frequencies. From 20 to 20,000 vibrations per second (20 to 20,000 Hz).

The last sentence contains the most important information of all. It tells you that under these conditions the unwanted overtones or harmonics will not exceed three hundredths of one percent of the output signal (0.03% THD or total harmonic distortion).

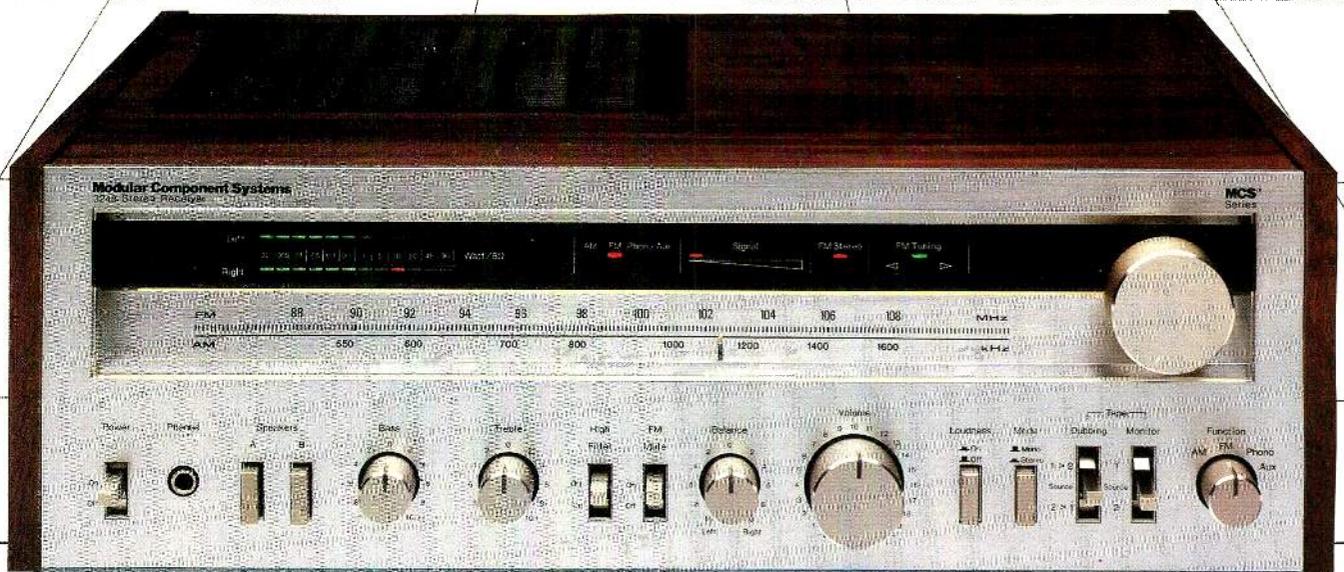
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Full 5-Year Warranty on MCS® Series speakers. Full 3-Year Warranty on MCS Series receivers, turntables, tape decks, tuners and amplifiers. If any MCS Series component is defective in materials and workmanship during its warranty period, we will repair it—just return it to JCPenney.

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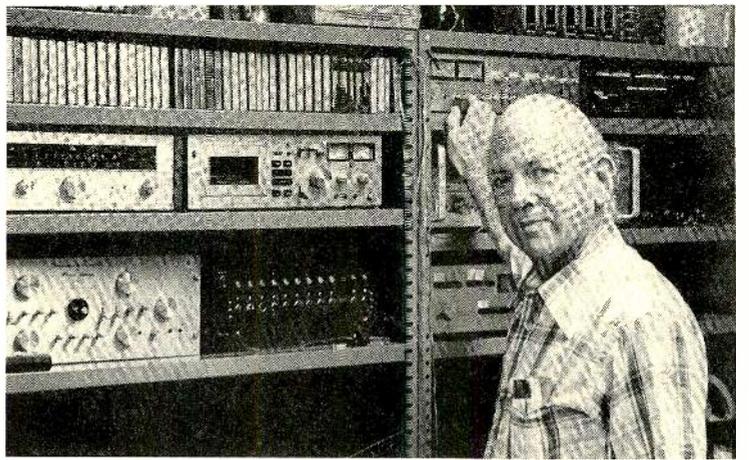
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Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



• More on Stereo Imaging •

WHEN I wrote about stereo imaging in this column for October 1979, I did so partly as a devil's advocate to see what response might be elicited from readers; nonetheless, I meant just what I said. The response was heartwarming, for I now know that there are quite a few independent thinkers out there reading these pages. I received a host of letters taking me to task for my "tin ear," lack of acoustic judgment, and inability to appreciate the finer points of sound reproduction. Apparently I touched a nerve in some of those readers who wrote me, and perhaps in many others who did not bother to write. I think some clarification is in order, although I doubt that we will come to any meeting of the minds on this matter, which is surely more controversial among audio enthusiasts than either politics or religion (although it seems to contain elements of both, judging from the indignation often expressed).

I do wish, however, that my respondents had read what I said with the attention they devoted to taking me to task for supposedly saying something else. I did *not* say that I prefer to sit in the rear of the auditorium, but rather that *half* the audience (actually, more than half if one includes the balconies) sits in the rear half of the hall. This seemed to me such an obvious statement, requiring no more than grade-school arithmetic for its proof, that I was taken aback at its misinterpretation. Yet, *every one* of the letters I received upbraided me for my supposed preference!

I will stand by what I wrote about the degree of localization of sound that I hear from such locations. I gather that none of my correspondents would be caught dead in

the no-man's land behind the median row, which makes me wonder how they can be so certain they can identify the position of every instrument so precisely from back there (most of them made such a claim, or else strongly implied it). I will not dispute their claims, but I must decline to say that I hear things when I do not; I cannot admire the emperor's new clothes when I can't see them.

ONE correspondent, a performing musician, assures me that he can localize instruments on stage. Of course he can, but that is not what I was talking about. Can he do that from behind the auditorium's median row, where the less fortunate masses will presumably be found? Actually, he says he *can* do just that, for which ability I envy him: the psychoacoustics of the situation indicate that his talents border on extra-sensory perception. In any case, it is a talent I do not have.

Incidentally, I do not like to sit "way "up front" because I do not enjoy the high sound levels that exist close to the orchestra; I prefer to be far enough away to hear the orchestra as a performing *group* rather than be made aware of each instrument. (I wonder if my critics prefer to watch TV from a two-foot distance so that they can resolve the line structure and pronounce critical judgment on the video deficiencies of the picture, or are they willing to sit back at a reasonable distance and see the entire picture, literally as well as figuratively?)

In the same vein, when I visit an art museum I like to stand far enough from a painting that I can appreciate what the artist was trying to say, rather than examine

it at close range, studying each brush stroke. But I suppose either approach is valid—what it comes down to is what each of us hopes to get from experiencing a work of art, in which category a musical performance is certainly included.

Another writer made a different point, claiming that phase coherence throughout a system (including the loudspeakers) is vital for a natural perspective and imaging of the sound. Since I have written on numerous occasions that I am not convinced that phase coherence in loudspeakers has much to do with their ultimate sound quality, he sees an irony in my strong positive reaction to the Carver C-4000 preamplifier. Why have an elaborate electronic means of providing spatial effects that (he says) can be obtained directly from the record with a phase-coherent playback system?

Why, indeed? No reason, except that although I can't hear the reputed beneficial effects of speaker phase coherence, I *do* hear discrete images through the Carver C-4000. I have spent many hours listening to it to learn what it can and cannot do.

Since the "holographic" effect depends on critical phase modifications of the acoustic stereo signals reaching the listener's ears, it functions at its best only with reasonably phase-coherent speakers. With these, the C-4000 produces a set of images whose positioning is positive and most impressive. Difficult as it may be for some people to believe, even I can hear these images with no difficulty. But—and this is crucial—I do not hear, nor have I ever heard, that effect at a performance of live music. I *like* the "Sonic Hologram" effect—it is fascinating and sounds the way I

Tested This Month

KLH 1 Loudspeaker System • Sonus Dimension 5 Phono Cartridge
Philips AH 180 AM/FM Stereo Tuner • Eumig FL-1000 Cassette Deck
Spectro Acoustics Model 200SR Power Amplifier

always wished live music would sound—but (to me, at least) live music seldom sounds that way! Sorry about that, purists—but I'll continue to listen to it and enjoy it anyway!

One point made by several of my correspondents is the totally subjective nature of the listening experience. Nonetheless, if I hear things differently, or do not react to something the way they do, I am deemed to lack some essential quality or talent! Even when they acknowledge, as most of them do, that different people simply *prefer* different listening experiences, they are adamant in defining their own preference as being the *correct* one! I am afraid I lack the arrogance to make a similar claim for *my* personal choice. To each his own, but I must listen where and how I please, and describe what I hear in my own words. Every one of us has the same right, but I would suggest that no one is any more or less "right" in his views than anyone else.

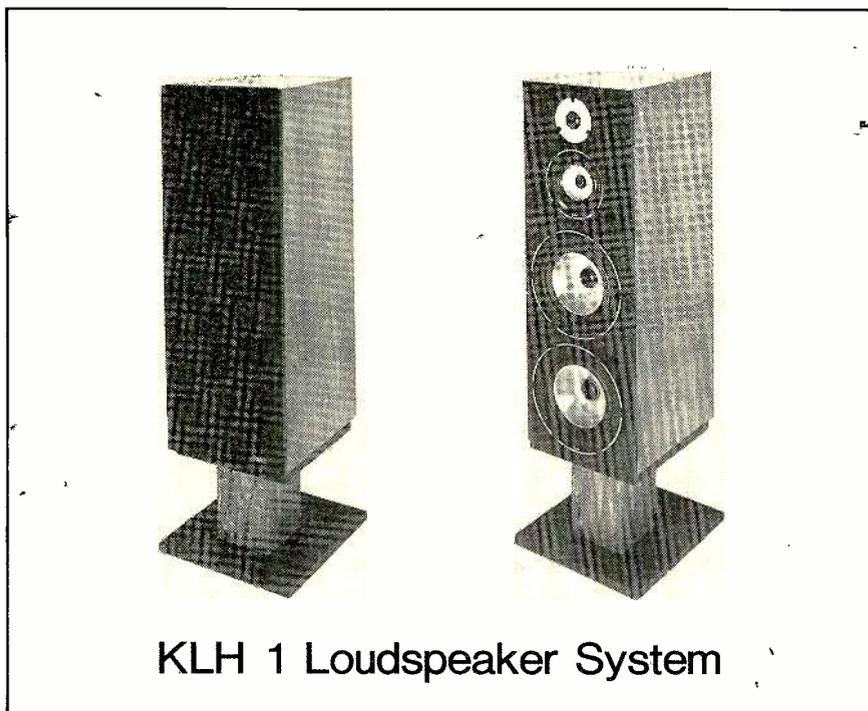
One letter, from a reader active in the recording industry, raised a number of extraneous points that suggest to me an unwillingness to understand what I was trying to say. For example, he made the obvious statement that from the positions occupied by the recording microphones, *anyone* can identify the locations of the performers (anyone, that is, who does not mind hanging from a wire 20 feet above the orchestra, or, conversely, having his head 4 feet away from an instrument). This is true, but does it have anything to do with the issue at hand? Mikes are placed for very practical reasons associated with the recording art, and I am amazed that anyone would consider such a location suitable for listening to a live performance. Another red herring was thrown into the argument when he stated that he has shown that home music systems are capable of creating *phantom* images when provided with proper program materi-

al. Agreed—that is one of the things the Carver preamplifier does very well, and, given the right recording, any number of more conventional stereo components could doubtless do much the same thing. My contention is that this situation does *not* exist in the typical concert hall, at least beyond the near-field sound of the performers, and that, in any case, is not what the present argument is all about.

FEAR it is impossible to resolve this matter here, since in respect to sonic imaging, as in so many other aspects of life, it all comes down to a matter of individual preference. It should be a source of gratification that high-fidelity systems today can create almost any sonic image that one might wish to hear, even if no two people hearing the result would agree on just what they were hearing—or even whether they enjoyed hearing it. □

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



KLH 1 Loudspeaker System

second crossover to the tweeter takes place at 4,000 Hz. There are no external level or balancing adjustments on the speaker. The front panel of the speaker cabinet has a layer of acoustically absorbent foam plastic around the midrange and high-frequency drivers to reduce sonic-diffraction effects.

The two identical woofer sections are designed as a sixth-order equalized system to give a response that is down only 3 dB at 30 Hz. The necessary equalization is supplied by an external module, which KLH calls an Analog Bass Computer, or ABC. Although one of the major functions of the ABC is to supply the low-frequency equalization needed to generate a bass output flat to 30 Hz, it has additional important duties. For one thing, the required bass boost could result in excessive drive—or even damage—to the woofers. To prevent such mishaps, KLH has designed the ABC to be connected into an amplifying system as part of an external feedback loop going from the amplifier's speaker outputs to an earlier stage of the amplifier, typically the tape-monitor input of the preamplifier section. The circuit inside the ABC contains variable-gain amplifiers (separate for each channel) whose gains are electrically controlled by the amplitude, frequency content, and duration of the audio signal.

Until a given low-frequency threshold level is reached, the ABC acts as a simple equalizer, boosting the response below about 150 Hz to a maximum of about +16 dB at 33 Hz and cutting off sharply at low frequencies. As the threshold voltage is exceeded, the low-frequency response of the equalizer is progressively altered, reducing the amount of boost and shifting the frequency of maximum boost upward. Ultimately, the gain at 33 Hz can be reduced as

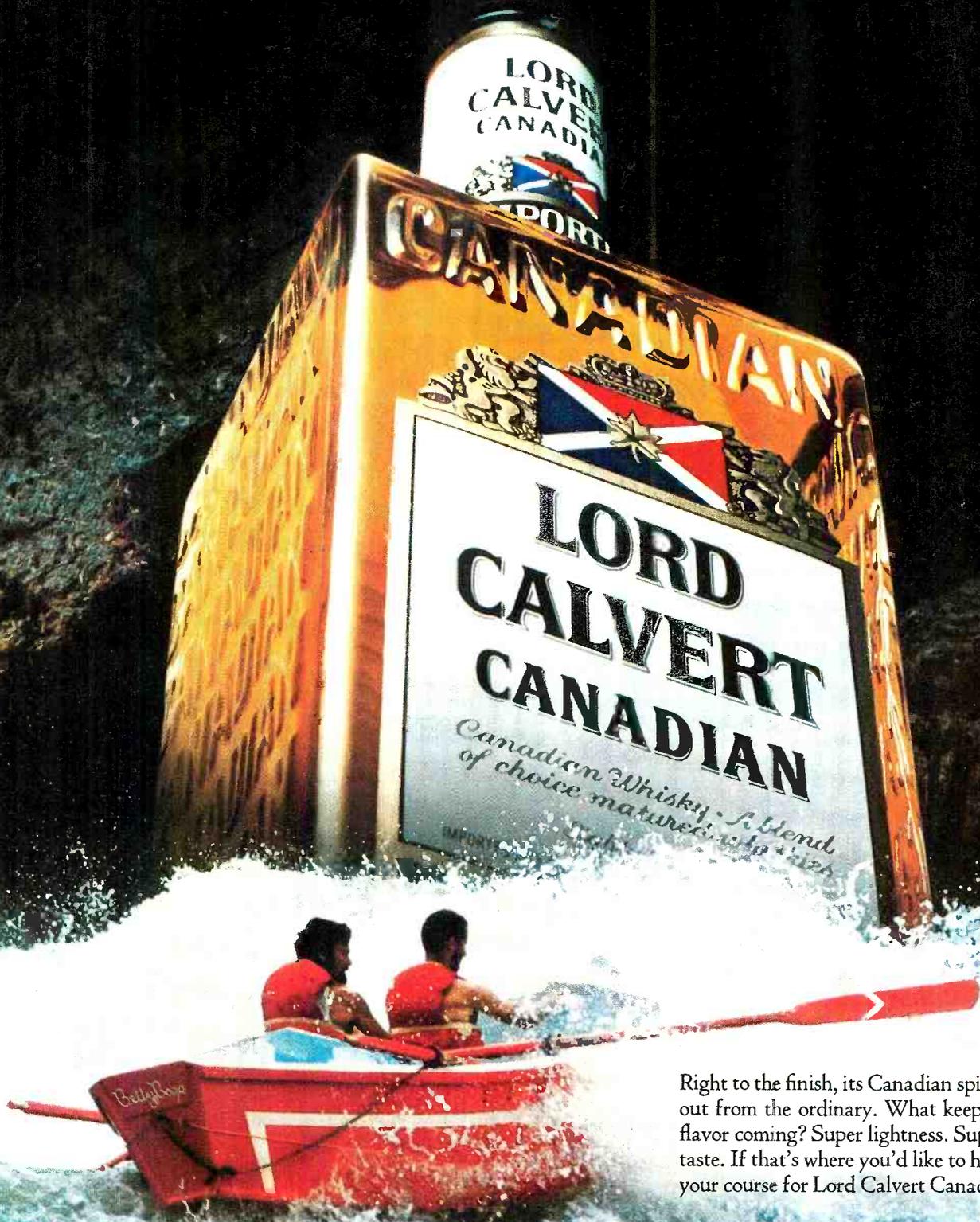
(Continued on page 44)

HEADING the new line of KLH "computer-controlled" loudspeakers is the KLH 1, a compact, floor-standing three-way system whose modest size and unobtrusive appearance bely its acoustic performance. The KLH 1 is constructed in a columnar format, its walnut-veneered enclosure measuring 30½ inches high, 10¼ inches wide, and 11 inches deep. It is furnished with a separate pedestal stand that places the top of the cabinet some 40 inches

above the floor. The speaker system weighs about 50 pounds.

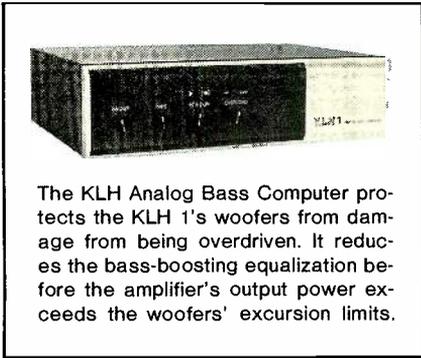
The four drivers are aligned vertically, with two identical woofers (nominally 8 inches in diameter) at the bottom and the 4-inch cone midrange driver and 1-inch dome tweeter above them. Each woofer is in its own isolated compartment, vented to the front through a duct about 1¼ inches in diameter and 4 inches long. The crossover to the midrange driver is at 500 Hz, and the

IMPORTED CANADIAN WHISKY - A BLEND - 80 PROOF - CALVERT DIST. CO., N.Y.C.



Right to the finish, its Canadian spirit stands out from the ordinary. What keeps the flavor coming? Super lightness. Superb taste. If that's where you'd like to head, set your course for Lord Calvert Canadian.

The unique spirit of Canada:
We bottled it.



The KLH Analog Bass Computer protects the KLH 1's woofers from damage from being overdriven. It reduces the bass-boosting equalization before the amplifier's output power exceeds the woofers' excursion limits.

much as 30 dB and the equalizer response rolls off below 100 Hz instead of rising. However, this condition is not reached until the amplifier output reaches 50 volts at 30 Hz, corresponding to an output of more than 300 watts into 8 ohms! At all times the response above 150 Hz is flat and not affected by signal level.

This woofer-excursion control is the major dynamic function of the ABC, serving to protect the woofers against damage from any conceivable drive signal. The controller action is rapid compared to the response time of the woofers to avoid possible overload on the leading edge of a bass transient, but its decay time is about 1 second.

There is also a separate, very-long-time-constant gain-control loop in the ABC, with a different threshold level that provides built-in long-term thermal protection for the woofers. Although the woofers cannot be damaged physically by sudden program-level peaks, prolonged exposure to very high power levels would heat their voice coils, and the ABC responds to such a condition with a suitable reduction in gain (we assume this to be at all frequencies to preserve sonic balance, although it is not specifically so stated by KLH).

The operating time constants and threshold levels of the ABC are established by the known properties of the drivers in the speaker system. KLH makes two smaller models that also use an ABC for controlling their operation, and each of those controllers has its own specific characteristics to match its companion speaker system. Although the operation of the KLH ABC might seem similar in some respects to a motion-feedback system, it does not actually derive any information from the speakers themselves. Instead, it automatically adjusts the amplifier frequency response and output to conform to the needs and limitations of the KLH woofers.

The KLH 1 Analog Bass Computer is a small black and silver unit 10½ inches wide, 6 inches deep, and 2½ inches high. It is powered from a small external supply that plugs into an a.c. outlet (like the a.c. adaptors of some electronic calculators). On the front panel are four buttons. The IN/OUT button turns on the ABC and bypasses its circuits in the OUT position (which might be needed if another type of speaker were to be used on occasion, since the KLH 1 must never be operated *without* the ABC and the ABC should never be used with any other type of speaker). There are two red LEDs, one of which serves as a pilot light when the ABC is turned on; at program levels that operate the controlling circuits, another

light next to it comes on and the regular light goes off, a lateral flickering of the lights indicating that the computer is functioning properly. Next is a TAPE button; since the ABC is normally connected into the tape-monitoring loop of the amplifier, the monitoring function is duplicated on its panel. The POSITION button modifies the bass response to compensate for speaker placement against a wall (the preferred location is at least 3 feet from a wall; any closer placement will enhance the bass output of the speaker, which must then be reduced by the IN setting of the POSITION button). The last button is an OVERLOAD indicator with two red LEDs above it. The AMP LED glows when the amplifier output exceeds a level (between 20 and 200 watts) set by a control in the rear of the ABC. Next to it is an HF light, indicating that the drive to the mid- and high-frequency drivers is approaching unsafe levels. With the button out, the overload lights are not functional.

When the black plastic grille is snapped off a KLH 1 speaker, it can be seen that the cones of the bass and midrange drivers are formed of a translucent plastic. This is polypropylene, chosen by KLH for its stability, freedom from internal resonances, and reproducible physical and acoustic properties. The drivers are assembled on heavy cast baskets and use unusually large magnet structures. The price of the complete KLH 1, consisting of two speaker systems, two pedestals, and the Analog Bass Computer, is \$1,100.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** All our acoustic tests of the KLH 1 speakers were made with the Analog Bass Computer in use; the input to the ABC was maintained at a constant level for each test. The woofer response was measured with a close-spaced microphone at the cone and at the port opening. The two curves were combined after adjustment for the relative areas of the cone and port, and the bass-response curve was spliced to the reverberant-field meas-

urement of mid and high frequencies made in the back of the listening room.

The bass curve sloped upward with decreasing frequency from the 500-Hz upper limit of the woofer's operating range to a maximum of about +12 dB (above the midrange level) at 35 Hz. Below that frequency the output dropped rapidly, but at 20 Hz it was still above the midrange level.

The mid- and high-frequency response also sloped upward from its minimum point in the 500- to 1,000-Hz range, but much more gradually. At its maximum output (+5 dB), the frequency was about 12,500 Hz, and the output fell off at higher frequencies to reach the midrange reference output at our 20,000-Hz upper measurement limit.

Splicing the two curves was difficult because of their shapes in the region of overlap. In the end, we had to resort to listening to give us the necessary clues, and the final curve we obtained was reasonably representative of what the speaker sounded like in our room.

Our initial reaction to the sound of the KLH 1 was that it was exceedingly bass-heavy. Prolonged listening convinced us that, although the system was indeed somewhat overpowering in the bass, much of our initial shock was owing to the fact that we do not expect speakers of this size (or *any* size, for that matter) to develop a full-strength output in the lowest audible register. Other speakers with a similar high-frequency response sounded bright compared with the KLH 1 because they did not have a similar bass output to balance their highs. It is hard to say which is "right," since the final result depends so much on the room and many other factors.

As we have pointed out frequently, the composite frequency-response curves we develop from our speaker measurements are just that—*composite*. They show an approximate reverberant (power) response in a typical room above several hundred hertz

(Continued on page 46)



"I told you we're going to keep going until we find one with a Gucci label on the grille cloth!"

The new Sansui G-4700.



A double-digital receiver with all the right numbers.

Digital readouts and digital circuitry. Great specs. And the best price/performance ratio in the business. All the right numbers. That's the new Sansui G-4700. Just look what we offer:

Double-Digital Design: The front panel of the G-4700 has a bright electronic digital readout that shows the frequency of the station you've selected; and behind the front panel is one of the most advanced tuning systems in the world.



Sansui's patented Digitally Quartz-Locked Circuit uses a precise quartz crystal time base to keep your station locked in, even through many hours of listening or if you turn the receiver off and back on again.

Conventional quartz-controlled receivers use analog phase comparison circuits that can become inaccurate because of harmonic interference. Our system uses a new LSIC (Large Scale Integrated Circuit) digital processor that actually counts the vibrations of the quartz crystal to compare to the tuned frequency. The frequency is perfectly locked in the instant you find the station you want.

With this unique Digitally Quartz-Locked system, the G-4700 delivers high sensitivity (15dBf, mono); a better signal-to-noise ratio (75dB, mono);

and a better spurious rejection ratio (70dB).

DC power amplifier: Power is ample for almost any speaker made, with 50 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000Hz with no more than 0.05% THD.

And the wide bandwidth DC power amp circuit responds quickly to transient music signals for the most accurate and pleasing music reproduction. What you hear is clean and sharp, just the way it was recorded.

Electronic LED power meters: Don't worry if your present speakers can't handle 50 watts. The array of fast-acting LED's (Light Emitting Diodes) on the Sansui G-4700 lets you monitor and control the output level so you don't damage your speakers.

Electronic tuning meters: Two fluorescent readouts help to zero-in on each station with accuracy and ease. Both the signal strength and center-tune indicators operate digitally for precise station selection, and the nearby LED verifies that the quartz circuit has locked in your station.

Superb human engineering: A full complement of genuinely useful knobs, switches and jacks gives you complete control over what you hear and how you hear it.

Ask your authorized Sansui dealer to demonstrate the G-4700. Listen to the music. You'll love what you hear. Look at the numbers. You'll love what you see.

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In Canada: Electronic Distributors

CIRCLE NO. 49 ON READER SERVICE CARD

and the equivalent of an anechoic response below that frequency, making them, in a technical acoustic sense, neither fish nor fowl. They do, however, indicate quite well the sort of sonic balance one can expect from the speaker in some reasonable listening environment, and they make possible a fair comparison between speakers—at least in respect to their power output over the audio-frequency range.

In this case, the total variation in output was about 13 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz, and it was quite smooth throughout, most of the change being in the form of almost linear slopes above and below the middle octave. The raw response curves from the left and right speakers diverged above 9,000 Hz because of the directivity of their tweeters. However, the differences were similar to those we have measured from most speakers using 1-inch dome tweeters.

The woofer-distortion measurement presented us with a problem associated with any equalized speaker system. We established the reference woofer drive level at 100 Hz, where it was set at either 2.83 or 8.94 volts (1 and 10 watts, respectively, into an 8-ohm load). Then the input signal to the amplifier was maintained at a fixed level so that the amplifier output to the speaker was free to follow the equalization supplied by the ABC. The low-frequency boost inevitably resulted in higher distortion readings than would have been obtained from similar speakers without equalization.

The distortion was measured separately at the cone and port, but when the response curves were combined it was evident that the major part of the output (above 40 Hz) was from the cone. The final distortion data therefore really reflect the performance of the cone radiation with no significant contribution from the port. At 1 watt, the distortion was only 0.21 per cent at 100 Hz, rising to 1 per cent at 70 Hz and 7.5 per cent at 40 Hz. At a 10-watt drive level, the distortion was typically two to three times as high as at 1 watt, and measurements were not practical below 50 Hz because of the very large low-frequency boost of the equalizer. These measurements were made with the "wall-mounting" setting of the POSITION button on the ABC, since that gave

about 7 dB less boost at 33 Hz than the "free-standing" setting.

The speaker sensitivity is rated at 87 dB sound-pressure level (SPL) measured at 1 meter for a 1-watt input at 1,000 Hz. Our measurements, using an octave of noise centered at that frequency, showed an output of 85 dB from one speaker and 87 dB from the other.

The speaker impedance reached a maximum of just over 40 ohms at 50 Hz (there was apparently another peak below 20 Hz, where it could not be measured). The impedance dropped to about 5 ohms over most of the frequency range above 120 Hz. Actually, it varied between 4.5 and 6 ohms except for a rise to 8 ohms at 20,000 Hz.

● **Comment.** In recent times, there has been a "sameness" to the sound of all really good speakers. Some people view this as evidence of an overall mediocrity, but in our view it simply reflects the rather high general level of performance now available from the better products produced by the speaker industry. It does pose a problem, however, when we try to describe the various differences we usually hear between speakers, since they tend to be of a subtle character that may really be reflecting the effects of the listening environment as much as the inherent quality of the speaker.

As mentioned earlier, on first hearing the KLH 1 we felt that something must be wrong—where were the highs? Careful listening established that everything was there—and for the most part in the correct proportions—but the bass was undeniably overpowering. Even with the speakers located 3 feet from the wall, as recommended, they had a sole-tingling, gut-shaking deep-bass response that carried over into the middle and upper bass, giving male speech a heavy quality that we usually associate with speakers having an upper-bass emphasis to camouflage a lack of real bass response.

KLH, in a brochure about this new series of speakers, discusses their characteristics with admirable objectivity. They say the speakers are "good by any standard, and unique for their size." We agree. They will take a lot of power (emphasis theirs), being rated for use with amplifiers delivering

from 40 to 200 watts per channel. KLH also states that "There may be minor audible side effects from the dynamic action of the ABC." This can be said about *any* dynamic signal processor, but we did not hear such effects in listening to the KLH 1.

We drove the speakers with a 200-watt-per-channel amplifier, and after we gained some confidence in the efficacy of the ABC as a power controller, we were fascinated to see and hear what happened when we played very deep, high-level organ pedal notes (or other high-level, low-bass material) as the amplifier gain was increased. After a while the output indicators of the amplifier reached a plateau, and no amount of further gain increase made any change in their readings. So, with a silent prayer, we cranked the gain to maximum and sat back to experience an amazing sonic massage. The low-bass output of these speakers is difficult to believe, especially in view of their size and weight. Nothing else we had on hand (or have had, in recent memory) could even come close to matching the strength and depth of their bass performance.

This capability carries with it certain potential problems. There is an increased possibility of acoustic feedback to a record player, which will experience acoustic levels perhaps 15 to 30 dB higher in the deep bass than it would with other speakers. We did not have trouble from this source, but it certainly must be recognized as a possibility. What we did find was that objects in the room buzzed and rattled at times as their mechanical resonances were excited. If you hear strange and unpleasant sounds when using the KLH 1, it is not necessarily the amplifier or speaker crying "uncle," but more likely a resonance being excited by the prodigious bass output of these speakers. An adjective such as "prodigious" should be used sparingly, but it seems like a rather mild description of what we heard and felt from the KLH 1.

With the gain at maximum, our sound-level meter (at the back of the room some 15 feet from the speakers) read between 100 and 110 dB, which is a truly lease-breaking level and far louder than we would normally prefer to listen. However, we heard no signs of distress from either speakers or amplifier, nor did the amplifier blow a fuse. After a while, we came to accept the fact that although both the AMP and the HF warning lights on the ABC were glowing most of the time, neither the speaker system nor the amplifier was in any real danger of being damaged.

As we listened to the KLH 1 with various types of program material, we soon found ourselves accepting its bass output as the norm (which may present a problem for the next speaker we test!). It is, at least in our room, too heavy-sounding for male voices, but most other sounds are reproduced very pleasingly. The bass tone control on any good amplifier should be able to tame the bass very nicely (one of the few times when a tone control can really correct a speaker response). And even with the bass heavily rolled off in this manner, the KLH 1 will put out more deep bass (under 50 Hz) than most speakers.

Incidentally, for those who wonder if the bass dynamic compression of the ABC will audibly restrict the impact of deep bass, it

(Continued on page 50)



"... Now come listen to the fantastic bass in this sweetheart!"

We don't like to brag. But with the new ADC Integra Series: Integra XLM-III, Integra XLM-II and Integra XLM-I, it's hard to resist.

Let's start with basic design. That's what our engineers did. Though what they finished up with is far from basic.

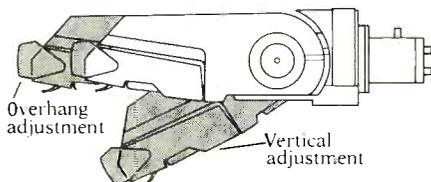
The new ADC Integra is the first all carbon-fibre integrated headshell/cartridge designed to minimize tracking angle distortion two ways.

OVERHANG DIMENSION ADJUSTMENT

As your tonearm "sweeps" a record, the angle the stylus makes with the record groove constantly changes. The result is offset angle error.

Is it serious? An error as little as 2° can more than double cartridge distortion! That's serious! And that's why the new ADC Integra

was designed so you can set the optimum offset angle simply by adjusting the overhang dimension. It's easy. We've even included a Tracking Angle Gauge.



VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE ADJUSTMENT

Nearly all records are cut with a vertical tracking angle of 20°. That's the way they're made. That's the way they're meant to be played. Sounds simple. But when you see how tonearm heights vary, from turntable to turntable, getting the exact vertical tracking angle suddenly isn't simple anymore. Unless of course you chose a new

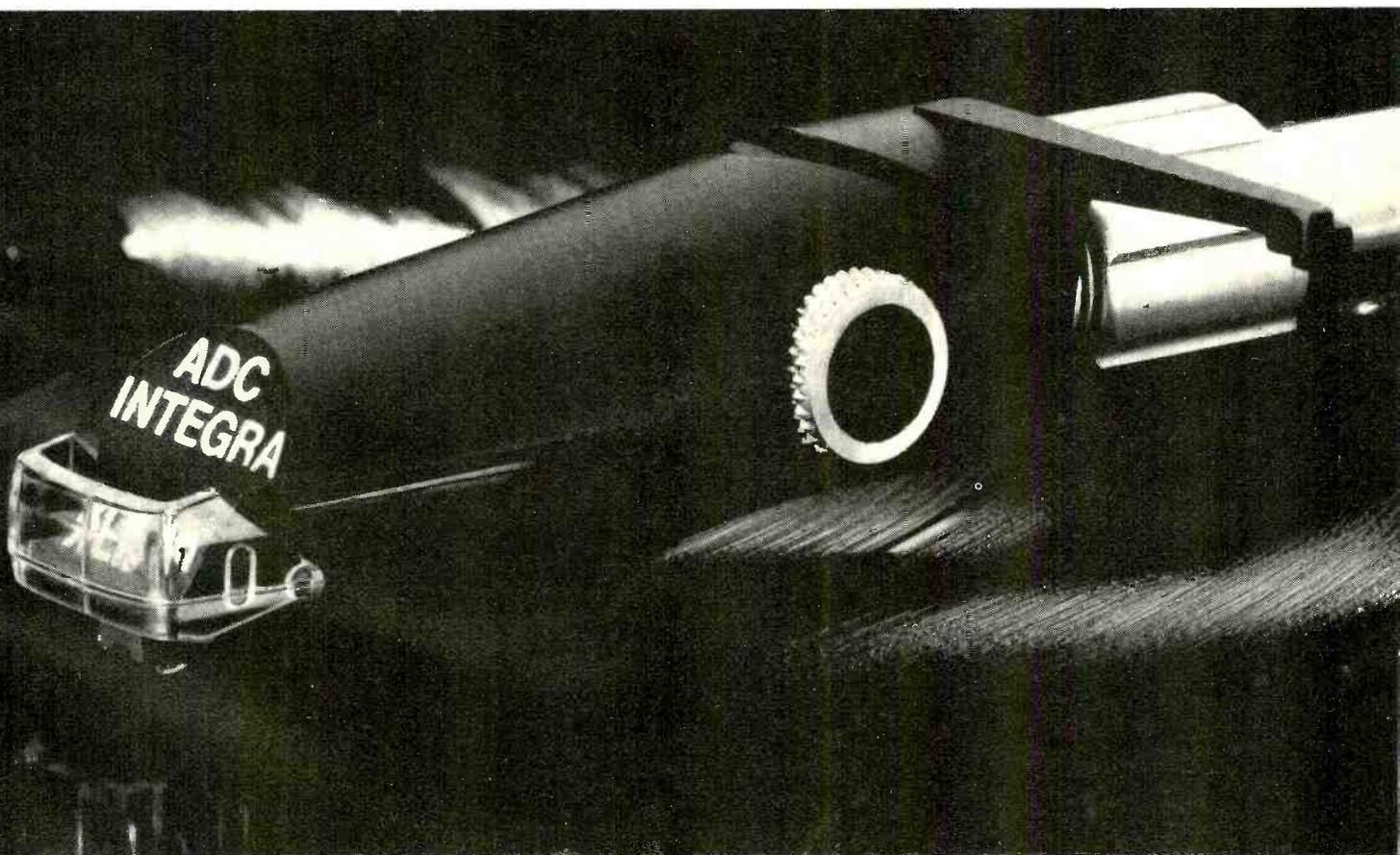
ADC Integra. Its vertical tracking angle is adjustable. In calibrated degree increments from -8° to +8°. Enough to compensate for all bayonet-type tonearm heights. Including changers.

If all that sounds impressive, wait until you hear how the new ADC Integra Series actually sounds. By minimizing what you don't want to hear, we've obviously maximized what you do want to hear. Music. The new ADC Integras' response is clean, effortless and often astonishing. But why listen to a description? Audition a new ADC Integra for yourself at your nearest ADC dealer.

After you've heard us, we'd like to hear from you. Write or call the Customer Service Dept., Audio Dynamics Corporation, Pickett District Road, New Milford, Connecticut 06776. 800-243-9544.

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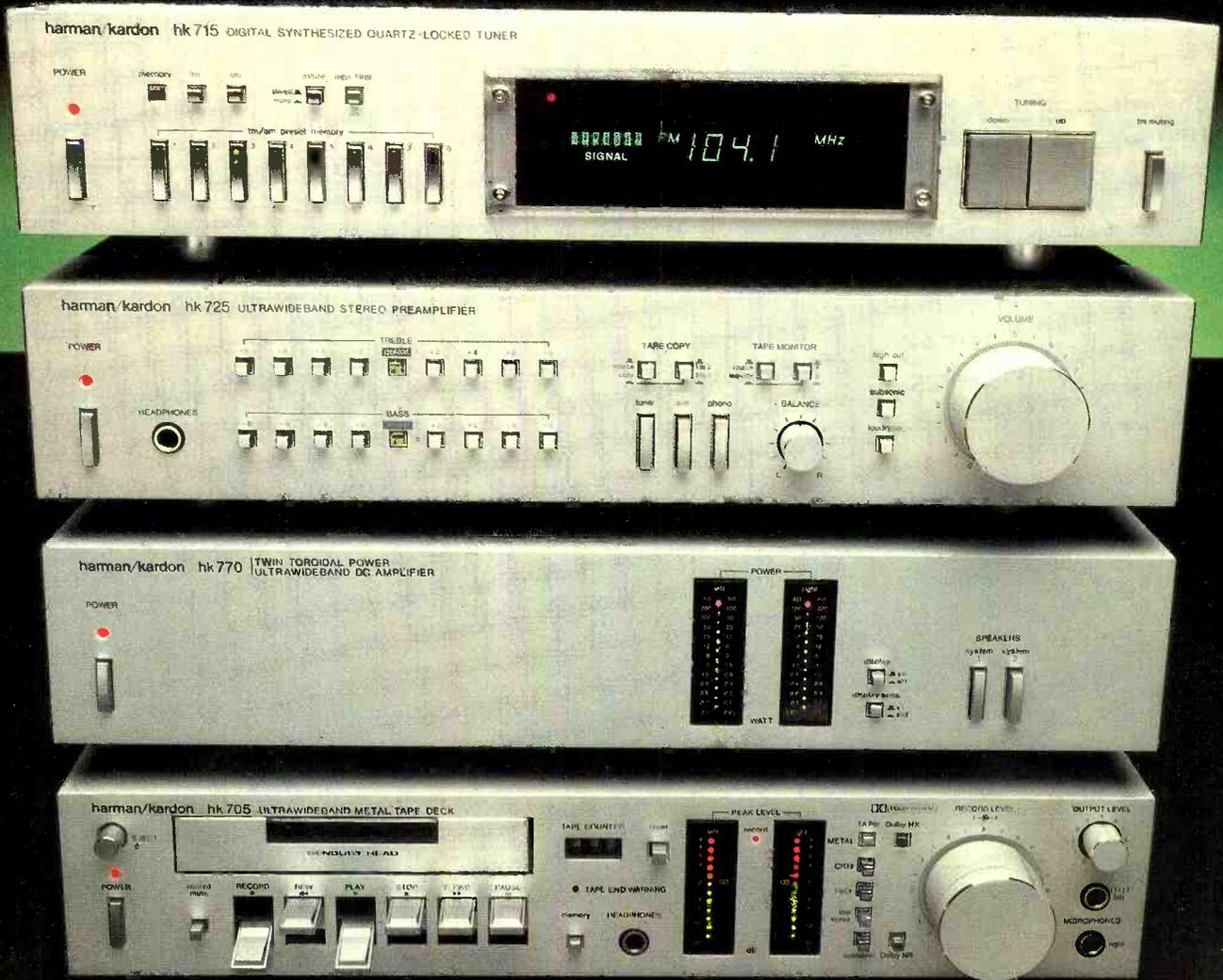
**A LOT OF PEOPLE
TALK ABOUT TRACKING ANGLE DISTORTION.
THE NEW INTEGRA DOES SOMETHING ABOUT IT.**



A D C
A BSR COMPANY

Now there are two approaches
to low THD.

Ours gives you better sound.



Harman Kardon introduces low negative feedback design. High Technology Separates with low THD and inaudible TIM— for incredibly clean, open sound.

For the last few years, audio manufacturers have been rushing to bring you newer, lower THD (Total Harmonic Distortion) levels in their amplifier sections. And every year, they've accomplished this objective the simplest way they could. By adding more and more negative feedback, a form of electronic compensation that feeds the amplified music signal back through the circuit.

Unfortunately, this universal "cure" for THD—high negative feedback, typically 60-80 dB—creates a new form of distortion. It's called Transient Intermodulation Distortion, or TIM. And it's much more audible than THD. TIM causes music to become harsh, metallic and grating. And the spatial relationship of the instruments to become vague, smearing the image.

At Harman Kardon, our new 700 series amp and preamp give you low THD figures, too. But we did it the right way—by properly designing the amplification circuitry to deliver low THD even before we apply negative feedback. That keeps our negative feedback at just 17 dB. And our TIM level at just .007%. Well below the audible threshold.

The result is pure, clear, transparent sound and stereo imaging that places instruments and vocals precisely.

Beyond TIM.

Of course all the Harman Kardon components incorporate our traditional ultrawideband design, which provides fast transient response and phase linearity. We also use discrete components instead of integrated circuits, because ICs create their own IC distortion.

But beyond these major design considerations, we've also paid attention to all the small details.

In the hk725 preamplifier, for instance, we used fixed resistor pushbuttons for tone controls. They introduce less distortion than rotary knobs. We also incorporated DC coupled FET front ends in both our 8-stage phono section and our high level stage. Again, less distortion, and improved signal-to-noise ratio.

On the hk770 power amplifier, we used two separate toroidal power supplies, which eliminate cross-talk and hum. And DC coupling which provides tighter, more articulate bass.



Performance matched separates.

Once we designed the heart of our new 700 series High Technology Separates, we addressed the remaining components just as carefully.

The hk715 digital quartz-locked tuner gives you a full complement of features. It locks in to the channel center every time. And stays there, drift-free. It also has a memory subsystem that lets you store up to 8 stations and recall them instantly at the touch of a button.

We designed a linear phase analog tuner as well. The hk710. With an improved version of the phase-locked circuitry we introduced to the industry nearly 10 years ago. It remains the industry standard today for quality tuners.

The first cassette deck with Dolby* HX.

In 1970 Harman Kardon introduced the first cassette deck with Dolby NR. In 1980, we're bringing you the first cassette deck with the new Dolby HX headroom extension circuitry. The hk705. With the Dolby HX headroom extension circuitry, you get an added 10 dB of high frequency headroom, as well as a 68 dB signal-to-noise ratio. That's comparable to open reel decks that cost twice as much. And thanks to Dolby HX and metal tape capabilities, the 705 provides an impressive frequency response of 20-19,000 Hz (± 3 dB).

Once we finished the inside of our components, we went to work on the outside. To bring you a striking system of modular separates. Each measuring a compact 15" wide x 3" high.

These performance matched separates stack beautifully. They give you a noticeably cleaner, clearer, less distorted sound than any system anywhere near the price.

We suggest you audition them. But only if you're serious.

Once you hear the difference, you'll never be satisfied with anything less.

(For the location of the Harman Kardon dealer nearest you, call toll-free 800-528-6050, ext. 870.)

**"Dolby" and the double-D symbol are trademarks of Dolby Laboratories.

harman/kardon

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In Canada, E.S. Gould Marketing, Montreal.
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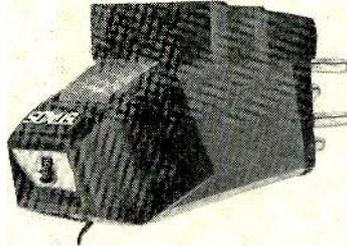
should be pointed out that the compression does not even begin until the amplifier output exceeds about 15 watts in the low bass. Under normal listening conditions there is no compression and the ABC serves merely as an equalizer.

Needless to say, the virtues of the KLH 1 are not limited to the low bass, although that is its most spectacular quality. As we write this, the KLH 1s are generating a very satisfying string-orchestra sound with no obvious signs of an overactive woofer at

work. It is an impressively smooth, easy-sounding speaker that we find as enjoyable at a listening level of 70 as at a level of 110 dB.

Circle 140 on reader service card

Sonus Dimension 5 Phono Cartridge



THE Sonus Dimension 5 phono cartridge from Sonic Research differs from previous Sonus cartridges principally in the design of its moving system (the stylus, its cantilever, and the moving-iron armature). A primary goal in the design of the Dimension 5 was to obtain the most accurate tracing of the record groove over the full audio-frequency range and beyond in order to extract the potential sonic qualities of the latest discs, whether recorded directly or from digital master tapes.

The special qualities of the Sonus Dimension 5 begin with its highly polished stylus jewel, which the manufacturer calls the "Lambda" stylus. Its contours resemble those of a cutting stylus as closely as possible so that it can trace high-frequency, high-velocity groove modulation accurately. The cantilever is a very short, thin-walled aluminum tube with an opening at its free end into which the square shank of the stylus tip is cemented.

The design of the Dimension 5 is claimed to provide a single transmission path from stylus to armature and correspondingly more accurate phase response. Also, the short, stiff cantilever and its "micro-machined" armature resonate in the 35- to 40-kHz region, well above the audible range. Because there is little recorded energy at that high frequency, very little damping is used in the stylus system, permitting low frequencies to be tracked at low vertical forces. The armature is mounted in a ring-shaped elastomeric pivot that gives it equal freedom of motion through the full 360 degrees around the cantilever axis as well as supplying some damping.

The fixed coils of the Dimension 5 have fewer turns than those of most cartridges, resulting in lower than average inductance and resistance (respectively, 150 millihenries and 300 ohms per channel). A benefit of this feature is the relative independence of the cartridge frequency response from load-capacitance effects. A minor disadvan-

tage is the relatively low output voltage (compared to many moving-iron cartridges) of about 3 millivolts.

Like other Sonus cartridges, the Dimension 5 is highly compliant (rated at 50×10^{-6} cm/dyne). It is designed to track at forces from 1 to 1½ grams, and the cartridge weighs 5.5 grams. The vertical stylus angle is 20 degrees, and the frequency response is specified not only in the audio range, but up to 40 kHz (the cartridge can be used for playing CD-4 discrete four-channel records). Physically, the Dimension 5 resembles other Sonus cartridges, with a molded plastic body and a user-replaceable stylus. The suggested retail price is \$250.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We installed the Sonus Dimension 5 in a medium-mass arm (effective mass of 14 grams). The recommended cartridge load is 47,000 ohms in parallel with not more than 400 picofarads (not more than 250 pF for CD-4 records). In our test setup, the load capacitance was 275 picofarads, but we also checked the response of the cartridge with higher values of capacitance.

Preliminary tracking tests showed that the Dimension 5 could play the highest levels on our low-frequency test records at its rated minimum force of 1 gram, but that middle- and high-frequency tracking benefited from a higher force. We operated the cartridge at its rated maximum of 1.5 grams throughout our tests. At that force, the 300-Hz test section of the German Hi Fi Institute test record could be played only to the 80-micrometer level. The cartridge output was 2.5 millivolts per channel at a 3.54-cm/sec velocity with a 1-dB level imbalance between channels. The measured vertical stylus angle was 24 degrees.

The frequency response of the Dimension 5 with the CBS STR 100 test record was flat within better than ± 1 dB from 40 to 13,000 Hz and rose smoothly at higher frequencies. Since the response was still rising

at 20,000 Hz, we also measured it with the JVC TRS-1005, a record which sweeps from 1 to 50 kHz. This showed a relatively undamped resonance peak of some 7 dB at about 30 kHz and a rapid fall-off of output above that frequency. The channel separation (with the STR 100 disc) was a very good 25 to 32 dB in the midrange, 15 to 20 dB at 10,000 Hz, and 12 to 15 dB at 20,000 Hz. Tests with the JVC record showed a good 10 dB of separation all the way to the disc's 50-kHz limit.

The immunity to capacitive-loading effects resulting from the low-impedance windings of the Dimension 5 was convincingly demonstrated by the identical frequency-response curves (up to 20,000 Hz) we measured with loads of 275 and 375 pF. The low-frequency resonance in the test arm was at 8 Hz with a 6-dB amplitude.

The tracking-distortion measurements with the Shure TTR-102 and 103 test records showed that the Sonus cartridge could track very high recorded velocities without significant distortion. This was particularly true in the case of the intermodulation-distortion test using the TTR-102 record. The distortion varied only slightly over the full range of velocities on the record (from 7 to 27 cm/sec) and remained between 1.5 and 3 per cent at all levels (there was no mistracking even at the maximum level, which few cartridges can track cleanly). The 10.8-kHz tone bursts of the TTR-103 record were also tracked cleanly, and the distortion rose smoothly from 0.8 to 2.3 per cent over the velocity range from 15 to 30 cm/sec.

The square-wave response from the CBS STR 112 record showed ringing, but this is mostly a property of the test record and is normally visible only in the output of a moving-coil cartridge whose frequency response is not limited by the interaction of its coil inductance and load capacitance. In this respect, and in its overall frequency response, the Sonus Dimension 5 behaved very much like a typical moving-coil cartridge.

● **Comment.** Subjective tracing tests of the Sonus Dimension 5, using Shure's "Audio Obstacle Course" records, roughly confirmed our measurements. Although the Dimension 5 is unquestionably a very fine cartridge, it does not necessarily excel in every aspect of tracking ability. The older ERA III record could be played in its entirety without audible mistracking except for the beginnings of a "sandpaper" quality on the highest level of the sibilance section. The ERA IV record, a more severe test of a cartridge's tracking ability, elicited sounds of distress from the Dimension 5 on the
(Continued on page 52)

Our best.



And here's why.

The Jensen R430 AM/FM Stereo/Cassette Car Stereo Receiver is our top-of-the-line. Our best. And for a lot of very good reasons.

Its functions.

Advanced functions that really make a difference in your music.

Functions like Dolby® Noise Reduction for clearer reproduction of Dolby-encoded cassettes and FM broadcasts.

And a function like Loudness Compensation of +6dB at 100 Hz to improve bass at low volumes.

Interstation FM Muting lets you tune out annoying between-station noise when tuning. While an FM Local/Distant switch allows you to optimize the receiver's sensitivity for strong or weak signals.

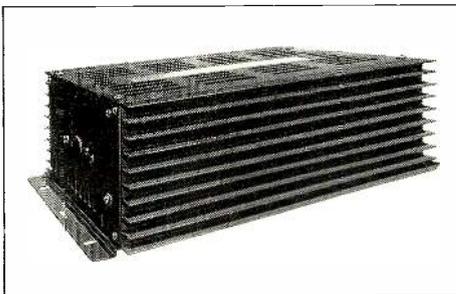
The R430 even offers separate bass and treble controls.

Bi-Amplification.

It's a function worth knowing about. Because of the real difference it can make in your music.

The Bi-Amplification func-

tion of the Jensen R430 uses a low level passive crossover to split the audio signal into low- and high-frequency bands. The low frequency signals are then sent to one set of amps. And the high signals are sent to another set of amps.



From these amps, the high signals are fed to one set of speakers. And the low signals are routed to another set of speakers. A

much more effective use of power.

But what does bi-amplification mean? It means the R430 will provide lower distortion... and higher listening levels... with a given power input. No small feat.

It gives you a second, completely different way of listening to your music. With the option right at your fingertip.

A separate power amp.

Actually four OTL amps; two for each channel. This trunk-mounted unit accompanies the R430 to deliver a Continuous Average Power Output of 30 watts per channel. Plenty of low-distortion power,

excellent heat dissipation, an ideally suited component to handle the R430's bi-amp mode.

More features.

Electronic feather-touch switches command a whole array of functions.

LED indicators glow when they're engaged.

And a unique Automatic Tape Alarm helps prevent damage that causes wow and flutter. If a cassette remains engaged when the ignition is turned off, lights flash and speakers beep, reminding you to remove it.

Respectable specs.

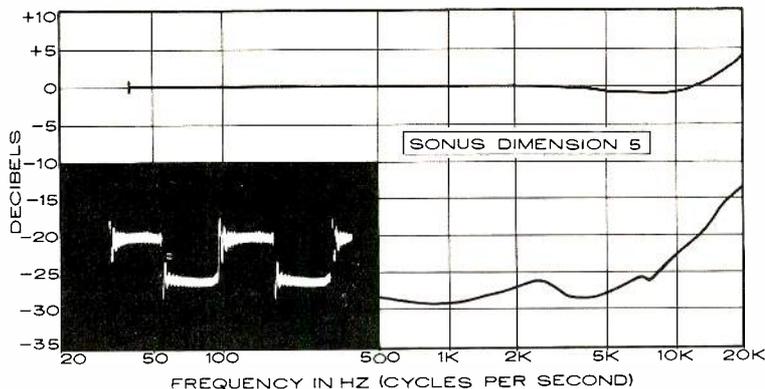
Great sounding music is the result of great specs. And with specs like the R430's you can imagine why we're so proud of its sound.

Total Harmonic Distortion is 0.4% at 52 watts; 1kHz. The Frequency Response measures out at 30 to 18,000 Hz (-3dB). And the Weighted FM Signal/Noise Ratio (less Dolby) is 68dB.

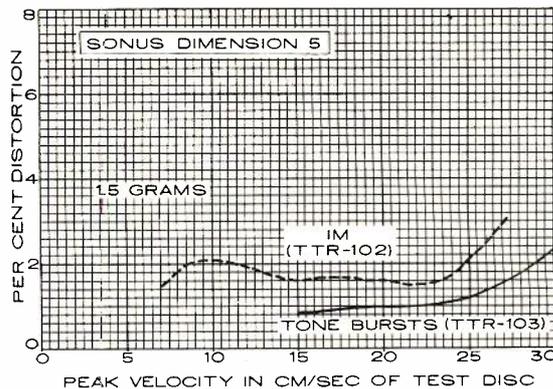
Is it any wonder why we say the R430 Receiver is our best?

JENSEN
SOUND LABORATORIES
AN ESMARK COMPANY

CIRCLE NO. 31 ON READER SERVICE CARD



In the graph at left, the upper curve represents the smoothed, averaged frequency response of the cartridge's right and left channels; the distance (calibrated in decibels) between it and the lower curve represents the separation between the two channels. The inset oscilloscope photo shows the cartridge's response to a recorded 1,000-Hz square wave (see text), which indicates resonances and overall frequency response. At right is the cartridge's response to the intermodulation-distortion (IM) and 10.8-kHz tone-burst test bands of the TTR-102 and TTR-103 test records. These



high velocities provide a severe test of a phono cartridge's performance. The intermodulation-distortion (IM) readings for any given cartridge can vary widely, depending on the particular IM test record used. The actual distortion figure measured is not as important as the maximum recorded-signal groove velocity at which the cartridge is able to track before a sudden and radical increase in distortion takes place. There are very few commercial phono-graph discs that embody musical audio signals whose average velocities are much higher than about 15 centimeters per second.

highest levels of most of its sections, although these were usually heard as "strain" rather than obvious mistracking.

As might be expected, none of the music records we played taxed the tracking ability of the cartridge as severely as these specially made high-level recordings, and we never heard any of the telltale signs of mistracking in our listening tests. What we *did* hear was a crisply defined, occasionally slightly bright sound, particularly with speakers and records with exaggerated high-frequency characteristics. Many people prefer that type of high-end response, which imparts a sense of definition to the program material. On the other hand, the strong high-frequency output of this cartridge is an ideal complement to the naturally rolled-off highs of many speakers and the high-frequency absorption in most listening rooms.

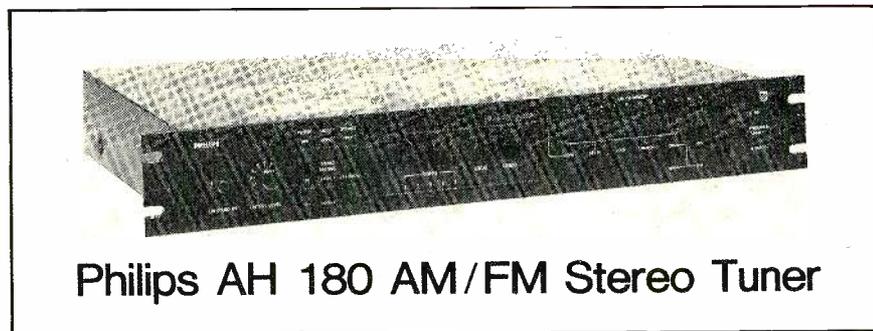
We found the total effect to be almost universally pleasing when we played various records through different speakers that were on hand in our listening room. The Dimension 5 does *not* exaggerate record hiss, because most of its output rise is above the audible range.

If one were to examine only the measured performance of this cartridge and then listen to it without knowledge of its construction, it would be easy to believe that it was a high-quality moving-coil cartridge. However, it has better tracking ability than most moving-coil cartridges, more output, and a replaceable stylus assembly. The Dimension 5 shares with most moving-coil cartridges a very high-frequency, undamped stylus resonance and immunity to external loading effects. It has the clarity and definition that have made moving-coil cartridges

so popular in recent years among dedicated audiophiles.

As with most audio components, there are many facets to the total performance of a phono cartridge. It is deceptive to judge a cartridge by a few of its specific measured characteristics. These really tell only a part of the story; the proof of a good cartridge design is in the listening. In evaluating the Sonus Dimension 5, we first tried to listen for anything that would corroborate or enlarge upon our measurements or even contradict them in some way. Very soon, we found ourselves just listening for the pleasure of it. This might seem to be a dilution of the critical process, but it is really the essence of it. Listening to the Dimension 5 was an unadulterated pleasure.

Circle 141 on reader service card



THE Philips AH 180 AM/FM stereo tuner is part of the new "Sound Series Eighty" line of rack-mounting de luxe audio components. It is a digitally synthesized

tuner combining excellent basic performance with one of the most versatile control and tuning systems available to the audiophile. With the exception of a small knob

for adjusting the audio-output level, all the controls of the Philips AH 180 are pushbuttons, most of them the very-light-touch, positive-action type similar in feel to those used on digital calculators.

The frequency display, behind a window in the center of the panel, shows the tuner frequency in half-inch red numerals. The selected band is identified by AM or FM, kHz or MHz appearing next to the numbers. Below the frequency readout is a row of five green LEDs that light up with increasing signal strength to form a line. A red LOCAL legend appears to the right of the level display when a very strong local signal is received on FM. Simultaneously, there is an automatic attenuation of the signal entering the tuner to prevent overload of its r.f.-amplifier stage. Adjacent to the LOCAL
(Continued on page 56)



Today's hottest recording group.

Latest sales figures show that Maxell is the fastest-growing brand of recording tape in the country today.

It's not surprising.

Every type of Maxell tape, from LN to UD-XL is designed to give you the widest frequency response, the highest possible signal-to-noise ratio and the lowest distortion.

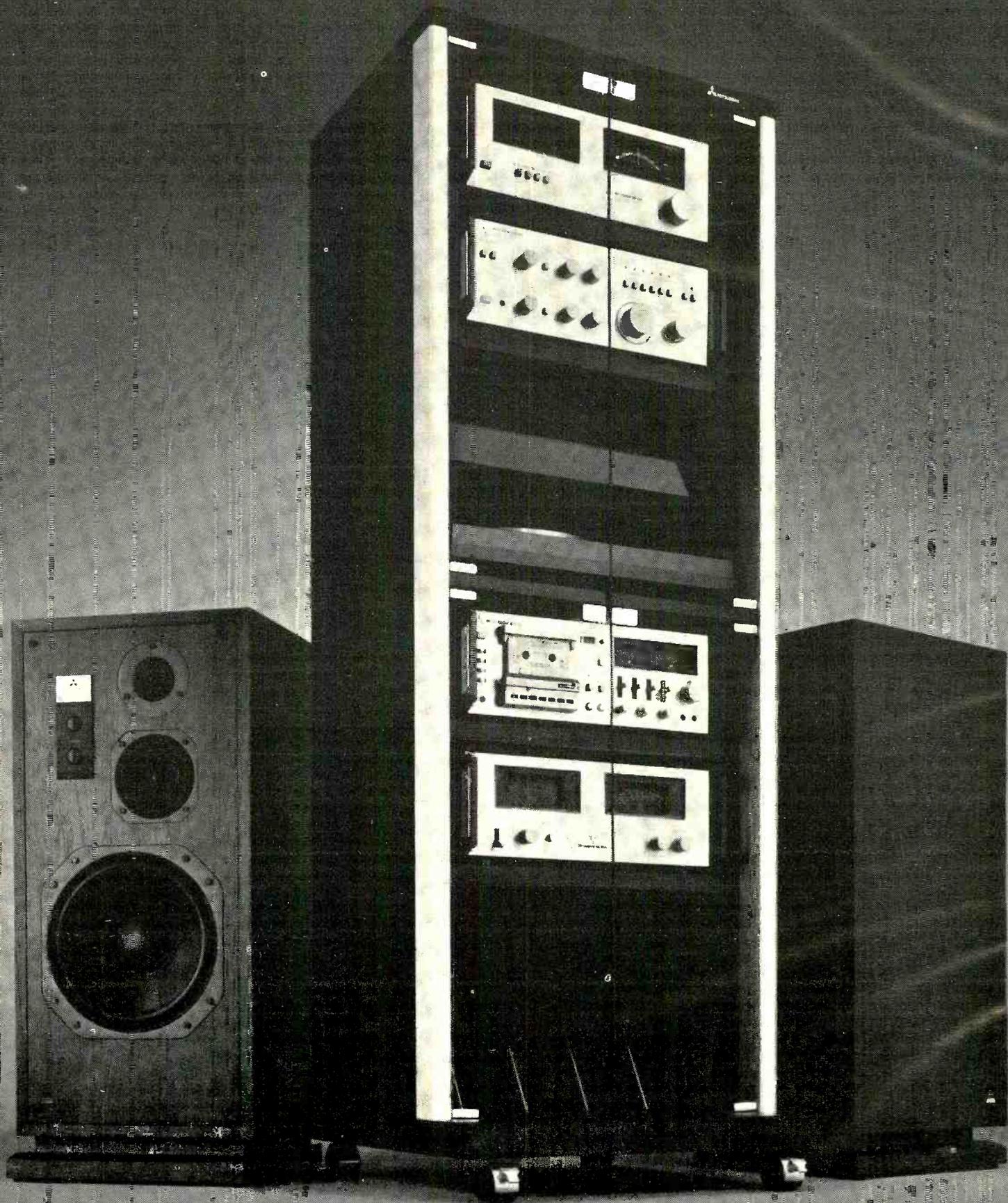
So no matter which tape you play in the group, you're assured of a great solo performance.

Pick up a few and put together a group of your own.



Maxell Corporation of America, 60 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074

CIRCLE NO. 13 ON READER SERVICE CARD



The Ritzy Mitsubishi.

It's called The System,
from Mitsubishi.

And we don't call it ritzy
simply to justify its price.

Because as anyone who
knows woofers from tweeters
will tell you, there's more to
ritzy than mere expense.

There's a pre-amplifier
with complete dual-monaural
construction and a built-in
head amp for moving coil
phonograph cartridges.

A 75 watt, 100 watt, or 150
watt amplifier, each capable of
80 dB inter-channel separa-
tion, a high signal-to-noise
ratio and low distortion.

A Logic Control Turntable
that breaks every record in
the industry for completely

automatic operation. Not to
mention its specially designed
high-resolution, low-resonance
tone arm for faultless sound.

A three-head, closed
loop, dual-capstan drive tape
deck, complete with feather
touch controls that let you
record professional quality
cassette tapes.

Impressed? There's more.

An AM/FM stereo tuner
with a quartz-PLL synthesizer,
plus LED's and digital read-
out, for the ultimate in tuning
accuracy and convenience.

Peak meters that can dock
with the amplifier and monitor
your equipment channel by
channel. So you can maintain
perfect balance and protect
the system from overload.

And last, but not least
ritzy, our exclusive new MS-40
loudspeakers.

They completely eliminate

the spurious vibrations caused
by conventional paper cone
speakers, because they aren't
made from paper.

Instead, we make our cone
with an aluminum honeycomb
core in a sandwich of glass
fiber. The honeycomb structure
is rigid enough to maintain
its shape, yet light enough to
be exceptionally responsive.

Put each of these remark-
able components together in
one handsome rack, and you've
got The System.

One name. One look.

From one company, with
one standard of quality.

Excellence.

 **MITSUBISHI**
AUDIO SYSTEMS

light there is a green STEREO indicator light.

To the left of the display are pushbuttons that control the MPX filter (blending the two channels at high frequencies to reduce noise on weak stereo FM signals), select MONO or automatic STEREO operation or STEREO ONLY (which unmutes the tuner only when a stereo signal is received), and control the MUTING functions. There are two buttons for the MUTING functions; one turns the muting on and off, the other selects either of two threshold signal levels at which an FM signal becomes unmuted. A sixth button, $\Delta F > 50$ kHz, is used to verify that an FM station is actually tuned on-center by the synthesizer-controlled tuning when it is set to 50-kHz spacing.

ered in about 9 seconds in this mode. A group of twelve small momentary-contact buttons forms a row above the tuning-mode buttons. They are numbered from 1 to 12, and above each a small red LED shows when it has been selected. These buttons operate the tuner's digital memory system, which can store the frequencies of up to twelve stations, either AM or FM, and return the tuner to any of them instantly at the touch of the corresponding button.

To store any frequency to which the tuner has been set, one touches a STORE button which lights a red LED light for a few seconds. While the light is on, a touch on any of the preset buttons transfers the tuner frequency data to that memory position, where

pairs of audio outputs. One is controlled by the front-panel level knob, and the other is at a fixed level.

The Philips AH 180 is manufactured in Japan to Philips' specifications and distributed in this country by Philips High Fidelity Laboratories. It is a surprisingly compact unit in view of its exceptional circuit sophistication and control versatility. Finished in flat black, it measures only 19 inches wide, 13½ inches deep, and 21¾ inches high; it weighs about 12½ pounds. The suggested retail price is \$559.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The stereo performance of the Philips AH 180 was nearly ideal, with a frequency response flat within ± 0.2 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz and exceptionally uniform channel separation—between 47 and 50 dB from 30 to 4,000 Hz, falling smoothly to 42 dB at 10,000 Hz and 35.5 dB at 15,000 Hz. The audio output (fixed or maximum variable level) was 1.8 volts.

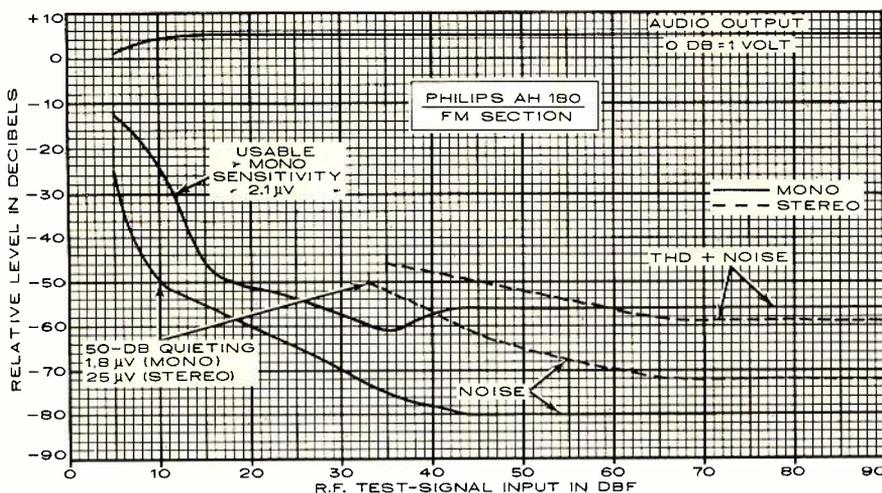
The IHF usable sensitivity (mono) was 11.8 dBf (2.1 microvolts, or μV). The quieting curve of the tuner was so steep that the mono 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 10.3 dBf (1.8 μV). In stereo, the usable sensitivity was set by the stereo switching threshold, which was between 35 and 29 dBf (30 and 15 μV). These figures represent the signal level needed to switch the tuner from mono to stereo and the level at which it would switch back to mono as the signal strength was reduced. The stereo 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 33 dBf (25 μV). The selectable muting thresholds were 17.7/12 dBf (4.2/2.2 μV) and 38.3/29.8 dBf (45/16 μV). The signal-strength lights came on at levels from 20 to 78 dBf (5 to 4,000 μV). The LOCAL light was not activated by our maximum available signal input of 111 dBf (200,000 μV).

The ultimate signal-to-noise ratio of the Philips AH 180 at an input of 65 dBf (1,000 μV) was a very good 80 dB in mono and 71 dB in stereo. The distortion at that input level was 0.15 per cent in mono and 0.135 per cent in stereo. The capture ratio was about 2 dB, and AM rejection was 53 dB at an input of 45 dBf (100 μV) and a very good 68 dB at 65 dBf. The image rejection was a very high 100 dB, as rated. Alternate-channel and adjacent-channel selectivity measurements were, respectively, 71 and 5 dB. The 19-kHz pilot carrier in the audio outputs was suppressed to a barely measurable -86 dB, reflecting the use of a highly effective pilot-signal canceler in the MPX demodulator instead of the more common low-pass filter. The tuner hum level was -66 dB. The AM frequency response was down 6 dB at 60 and 3,500 Hz, typical of most AM tuner sections.

● **Comment.** The measured performance of the Philips AH 180 shows it to be very good or excellent in every respect, and outstanding in such characteristics as pilot-carrier and image suppression and signal-to-noise ratio.

In operation, the tuner worked exactly as it was supposed to, and no "bugs" or idiosyncrasies were encountered. The preset station memory held its information over weekends when power was completely removed from the tuner. All tuner control op-

(Continued on page 58)



The actual tuning of the AH 180 is carried out principally with two flat, square momentary-contact buttons at the right of the panel. They are marked UP and DOWN to indicate the direction of the frequency shift that touching them will produce. The specific tuning mode is selected by a group of buttons along the bottom of the panel. One selects AM or FM on alternate touches, and next to it is a button that selects either a 50-kHz or a 100-kHz tuning interval for FM. The 50-kHz steps are needed in Europe, but in North America only the 100-kHz steps are used. When 50-kHz intervals are chosen, a smaller numeral 5 also appears in the digital frequency display.

If the SEARCH button is engaged, a touch on one of the tuning buttons will start an automatic scan in the indicated direction; this will continue until a signal with enough strength to overcome the muting threshold has been acquired. During the scan the audio is muted, regardless of the setting of the MUTING button, and the program is heard only after a station is tuned correctly. Next to SEARCH is a LOCK button; pressing it after a station is tuned in will prevent the tuner frequency from being changed by any operation of the front-panel controls.

If the SEARCH button is not pressed, the tuning keys will change the frequency by the selected interval (50 or 100 kHz) each time they are pressed momentarily. Holding a key down for about one second will cause the frequency to scan very rapidly until it is released. The entire FM band can be cov-

er is available for recall at any time. The same preset buttons are used for still another tuning mode, operated by the KEY IN button below them. When this is touched, the frequency display changes to read 00.0. Any frequency can be selected by touching the corresponding numbered preset buttons in sequence (using the "10" button for "0"). As each is touched, the selected digit appears on the display. When the selection is complete, a touch on STORE instantly transfers the tuner to that frequency and unmutes it. If desired, the setting can be transferred to one of the preset memories or held with the LOCK button. If the selected frequency is outside the assigned band, the tuner goes to one of its limits (108 or 87.5 MHz for the FM band) and does not un-mute. All of the described tuning functions apply equally to the AM band, except that there is no muting, the tuning increments are 1 kHz, and the band limits are 525 and 1,605 kHz. The AM band can be scanned in about 40 seconds by holding down the tuning key.

At the left of the panel is a pushbutton marked ON/STAND-BY. This is the power switch, and the absence of an "off" marking refers to the fact that the memory circuits are kept active as long as the tuner is plugged into an energized a.c. outlet. Even if power is lost temporarily or the unit is unplugged for any reason, the memory is held for about two days. The rear of the AH 180 contains the antenna terminals, a hinged AM ferrite-rod antenna, and two

Why Yamaha speakers sound better than all the others. Even before you hear them.

To make a speaker that produces accurate sound is not simple. It requires painstaking attention to detail, precise craftsmanship, and advanced technology.

And that's where Yamaha comes in. We build all our speakers with the utmost precision in every detail.

As the premier examples of Yamaha loudspeaker craftsmanship, read what goes into the two speakers shown, the NS-690II and the NS-1000M. Then you'll understand why Yamaha loudspeakers sound better. Even before you hear them.

Precision Yamaha crafted cabinetry – (1) The walls on these, and all Yamaha speaker cabinets, are sturdily braced and crossbraced at every possible stress point. (2) The corner seam craftsmanship is so fine that it looks like the cabinet is made from one continuous piece of wood.

The back panels on these speakers are flush-mounted for maximum air volume within the cabinet. (3) Inside, a 3/4" felt lining "decouples" the cabinet from the drivers to achieve acoustic isolation of the woofer from the cabinet. (4) Thick glass-wool also aids in damping the woofer for maximum performance.

Lift one of these Yamaha speakers. It's uncommonly heavy and sturdy. (5) We even glue and screw the woofer cutout from the baffle to the inside rear panel for greater cabinet rigidity.

Now knock on the cabinet. It will sound as solid and substantial as it is.

Precision Yamaha Drivers – (6) The drivers are mounted on computer-cut baffle boards with exacting, critical tolerances to insure precision fit. All Yamaha speakers are acoustic suspension design, and this precise fit is critical for an airtight seal and optimum woofer recovery.

The drivers on these, and all Yamaha speakers, are flush-mounted on the baffle board to avoid unwanted diffraction of the sound waves. (7) This is especially important because all our tweeters and mid-high range drivers are the maximum-

dispersion dome type for the most natural reproduction of voice and instruments.

(8) We use chrome-plated machine screws (rather than wood screws) with two washers (regular and lock) to insure an unyielding mounting.

(9) The speaker frames shown are die cast rather than stamped. That's so they won't twist and alter the voice coil alignment during assembly and use.

Other Precision extras – All terminals are quick connect, screw-mounted assemblies.

(10) The wire leads are carefully soldered, not clipped.

All our speakers use full LRC crossover networks. These crossover networks are among the most advanced available.

Precision that stands alone – There's more. Much more. But, there is another fact of Yamaha loudspeaker construction that simply stands alone in the industry. Each component used in the two Yamaha speakers shown is manufactured by Yamaha. From the hefty die-cast speaker frames to the unique, ultra-low mass beryllium dome diaphragm.

That's a statement no other manufacturer can make.

And therein lies Yamaha's story. If we put this much care and craftsmanship into the making of our components and cabinet structures, then imagine the care, precision and craftsmanship that go into the quality of the final sound. A sound built upon Yamaha's unique 98-year heritage as the world's largest and most meticulous manufacturer of musical instruments. From our most economical loudspeaker to our top-of-the-line models shown here, Yamaha retains the same attention to detail and craftsmanship.

Look before you listen. You'll be convinced that Yamaha loudspeakers sound better than the rest.

Even before you turn them on. Then ask for a personal demonstration of these and

other Yamaha loudspeakers at your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer, listed in the Yellow Pages. Or write us: Yamaha, Audio Div., P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622.



erations were both impressively silent and smooth.

The most positive and negative qualities of the Philips AH 180 are (in our opinion) one and the same—its almost overwhelming operating flexibility. Short of being interfaced with an external computer, it is hard to imagine any FM or AM tuning mode that this tuner cannot handle. For example, the last selected frequency remains in the memory when the tuner is shut off, so that it comes on at the same frequency next time power is applied (very convenient for making unattended tape recordings off the air with a timer switch). It can tune to any frequency, worldwide, that is used for FM or MW (broadcast band) AM transmission.

Even a possible future change to 9-kHz AM channel spacing would not faze this synthesizer, which operates in 1-kHz steps instead of the 10-kHz steps used in some other synthesizing tuners. If FM channels should be changed to 150-kHz spacing instead of the present 200 kHz (another—but slight—possibility under consideration by the FCC), the AH 180 would still be completely usable.

One price of this freedom from obsolescence is a rather complicated operating procedure. With a few minutes' study of the instruction manual (a veritable Rosetta stone written in ten languages from English to Finnish), one would have no problem using the tuner. However, we can attest from

personal experience that anyone encountering it for the first time, without access to the manual, would be very lucky to get the station of his choice, much less utilize all the versatility built into the tuner.

In spite of this complexity (or perhaps because of it) we found the Philips AH 180 to be a most fascinating tuner to use. Needless to say, it sounded just as good as the broadcast program permitted. We guarantee that any confirmed button pusher or knob twiddler will get his money's worth from this tuner just from playing with its controls (but he would be missing a lot if he neglected to listen to it as well).

Circle 142 on reader service card



Spectro Acoustics Model 200SR Power Amplifier

THE Spectro Acoustics Model 200SR power amplifier is described by its manufacturer as a "medium-power" model, based on its FTC power rating of 110 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.08 per cent total harmonic distortion. However, they also point out that it is effectively and audibly more powerful than its rating suggests because of its unusually large IHF dynamic-headroom rating of 3 dB. In other words, it can deliver short-term unclipped peaks of 220 watts to 8-ohm loads, which makes it for most purposes almost the audible equivalent of a 200-watt-per-channel amplifier.

The Spectro Acoustics Model 200SR is a fairly large amplifier for its power rating, with a rack-mounting panel 19 inches wide by 7 inches high and a depth behind the panel of 12 inches. It weighs 26 pounds. Solid-oak or walnut side panels are available for installations where the amplifier will not be mounted in a rack or a system cabinet.

The amplifier circuits are constructed in the form of two physically separate mono amplifier modules. Each is on a single plug-in circuit board, from the differential op-amp input stage to the four output transistors mounted on a metal plate that transfers their heat to large finned radiators (also in-

tegral with the amplifier module) extending from the rear of the amplifier.

Although the output stages of the Model 200SR do not have the usual current-limiting protective circuits, they are thoroughly protected against overload or improper operation. On each amplifier module is a pair of fast-acting power-supply fuses as well as a load-line limiter that protects the output devices against unsafe operating loads. On the rear of the main amplifier are separate speaker-line fuses and a single a.c. power-line fuse. The speaker-output terminals are insulated binding posts on 3/4-inch centers that accept dual banana-plug assemblies, and the signal inputs are standard phono jacks.

The most obvious feature of the front panel of the Spectro Acoustics Model 200SR is a large display window which measures 13½ inches wide and 2 inches high; it occupies most of the upper part of the panel. The power display consists of twenty pairs of LEDs that light sequentially at power outputs from 0.3 to 200 watts (into 8-ohm loads). The LEDs are recessed and easily visible only from about eye level. Above and below the window cutout are output calibrations from -25 to +3 dB (0 dB being the rated output of 110 watts). Between the parallel rows of LEDs are calibrations in watts. From 0 to +3 dB the

LEDs are green, while at lower levels they are red. The power display is capable of responding to signal peaks of a few milliseconds' duration.

Since most listening is done at relatively low power levels, two pushbuttons on the front panel increase the display sensitivity by 10 or 20 dB. A third button serves as the power switch. The Spectro Acoustics Model 200SR is priced at \$600. The same amplifier less all the switches and the power display is called the Model 200S and is priced at \$400.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The one-hour preconditioning period at one-third rated power left the heat sinks of the Model 200SR too hot to touch for more than a moment, but the rest of the amplifier was not unduly hot. Driving 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz, the outputs clipped at 153 watts per channel for an IHF clipping headroom of 1.43 dB. The Model 200SR is not rated for operation at other load impedances, but into 4 and 16 ohms the clipping powers were, respectively, 203 and 105 watts per channel (the line fuse blew just at the 4-ohm clipping point). The 5-ampere speaker fuses would be expected to limit the continuous output to 100 watts into 4 ohms and 50 watts into 2 ohms regardless of the amplifier's ability to deliver current to those load impedances. It was probably coincidental that the line fuse blew in our tests before the speaker fuse had a chance to react to an excessive output into 4 ohms.

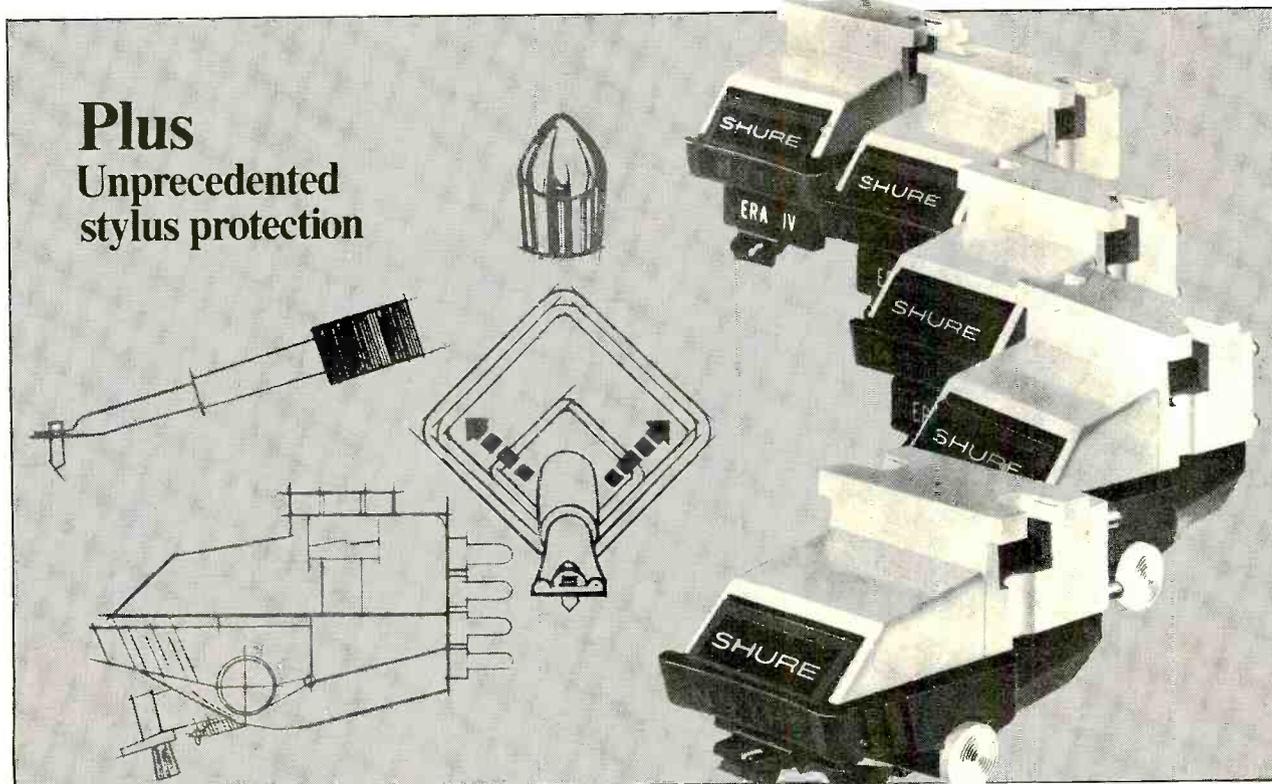
The absence of conventional current-limiting circuits in the 200SR accounted for its exceptional performance when driving low load impedances with the 20-millisecond tone bursts used for the IHF dynamic power measurement. The 8-ohm power at clipping in this test was 215 watts, for a rating of 2.9 dB. With 4-ohm loads, the dynamic power was 340 watts, and into 2 ohms it was a most impressive 472 watts (per channel in each case).

The Model 200SR would not be considered a "fast" amplifier by current standards, although it certainly handled audio and low ultrasonic frequencies with no difficulty. The IHF slew factor was 2 (the wave-

(Continued on page 62)

fact: five new Shure Cartridges feature the technological breakthroughs of the V15 Type IV

Plus
Unprecedented
stylus protection



the M97 Era IV Series phono cartridges

Model	Stylus Configuration	Tip Tracking Force	Applications
M97HE	Nude Hyperelliptical	¾ to 1½ grams	Highest fidelity where light tracking forces are essential.
M97ED	Nude Biradial (Elliptical)	¾ to 1½ grams	
M97GD	Nude Spherical	¾ to 1½ grams	
M97EJ	Biradial (Elliptical)	1½ to 3 grams	Where slightly heavier tracking forces are required.
M97B	Spherical	1½ to 3 grams	
78 rpm Stylus for all M97's	Biradial (Elliptical)	1½ to 3 grams	For 78 rpm records.

Shure has written a new chapter in the history of affordable hi-fi by making the space-age technological breakthroughs of the incomparable V15 Type IV available in a *complete line* of high-performance, moderately-priced cartridges: the M97 Era IV Series Phono Cartridges, available with five different interchangeable stylus configurations to fit every system and every budget.

The critically acclaimed V15 Type IV is the cartridge that astonished audiophiles with such vanguard features as the Dynamic Stabilizer—which simultaneously overcomes record-warp caused problems, provides electrostatic neutralization of the record surface, and effectively removes dust and lint from the record—and, the unique telescoped stylus assembly which results in lower effective stylus mass and dramatically improved trackability.

Each of these features... and more... has been incorporated in the five cartridges in the M97 Series—there is even an M97 cartridge that offers the low distortion Hyperelliptical stylus! What's more, every M97 cartridge features a unique lateral deflection assembly, called the SIDE-GUARD, which responds to side thrusts on the stylus by withdrawing the entire stylus shank and tip safely into the stylus housing before it can bend.

NEW! M97 Series Era IV Phono Cartridges...
Five new invitations to the new era in hi-fi.



Shure Brothers Inc., 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60204 In Canada: A. C. Simmonds & Sons Limited
Outside the U.S. or Canada, write to Shure Brothers Inc., Attn: Dept. J6 for information on your local Shure distributor.

Manufacturers of high fidelity components, microphones, sound systems and related circuitry.

CIRCLE NO. 43 ON READER SERVICE CARD



IN ONE RESPECT, YOUR EXPENSIVE STEREO IS NOT MUCH BETTER THAN A DIME-STORE RECORD PLAYER.

Sure. Your system reproduces the tonal balance of live music, with flat frequency response from 20Hz to 20KHz.

And it gives you good spatial perspective, thanks to stereo and time-delay systems.

But those are only two of the elements that make live music sound live.

There's a third: Dynamic range.

Dynamic range is the difference in volume, measured in decibels, between the loudest and quietest passages in a piece of music. It's what gives live music depth, impact and drama.

And the simple fact is, your records don't provide the dynamic range they should. Due to conventional recording limitations, they fall at least 30dB short.

Buying the latest equipment may get you a little extra dynamic range. But no matter how much you spend, the best you can hope for is what's on the record.

Now, however, there's something you can do about the problem. Because at dbx, we've developed a new technology that lets you hear the full

dynamic range you've been missing.

We offer a range of products that you can take home right now. Connect to your system. And improve the sound of your music so dramatically, it's almost unbelievable.

THE STATE-OF-THE-ART IN DYNAMIC RANGE.

The most realistic sound ever achieved on record comes from our new Digital dbx Discs, which combine dbx technology with the state-of-the-art in studio recording – digital mastering.

The sound of these records will stun you.

Because they actually deliver the full dynamic range of a live performance—90dB or more. That's 50% better than the finest conventional audiophile records you've ever heard, whether direct-to-disc or digitally mastered.

And while our dynamic range reaches new highs, our record surface noise reaches new lows. Clear down to an unheard of -85dB (relative to 0dB, 7cm/sec peak velocity at 1KHz). Much quieter than any previous audiophile record.

So for the first time you can hear the full impact of live music. Everything that was on the digital master tape. Played against a background of virtual silence.

You'll find our first releases of Digital dbx Discs in stores right now. Along with our existing library of dbx Discs, which are stunning in their own right. Because they deliver the full dynamic range of conventional studio master tapes. And virtually no record surface noise.

Best of all, you don't need expensive new equipment to enjoy the incredible dbx sound. All you need is a dbx Model 21 Decoder, connected to the tape monitor loop of your receiver or amplifier. (You can also play dbx Records if you own a dbx Tape Noise Reduction System Model 122, 124, 128 or 224.)

**THE MAXIMUM
DYNAMIC RANGE
YOU CAN GET
ON TAPE.**

If you're into recording, dbx offers the state-of-the-art for you, too: The new dbx Recording Technology Series Model 224.

It hooks right into your present tape system. And it lets you record a new level of dynamic range on tapes. Up to 85dB on open reel and 80dB

on cassette. So you can make live recordings that capture virtually all the dynamic range of the original music.

And the 224 is the only system that lets you tape fine audiophile records without losing any of their dynamic range.

The Model 224 also reduces tape noise far better than Dolby®* (30dB compared to just 10dB). And it includes the dbx Decoding System, so you can use it to play your dbx Discs as well as your tapes.

**NEW REALISM
FOR
CONVENTIONAL
RECORDS AND
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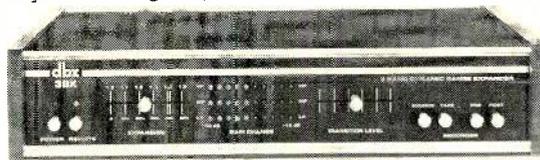


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Rack-mount kit optional.

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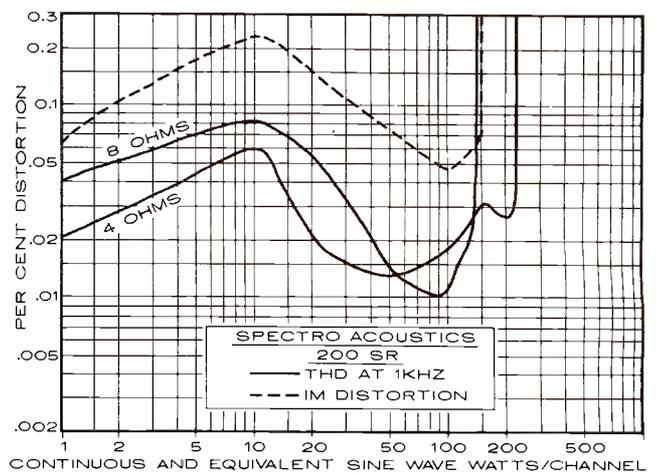
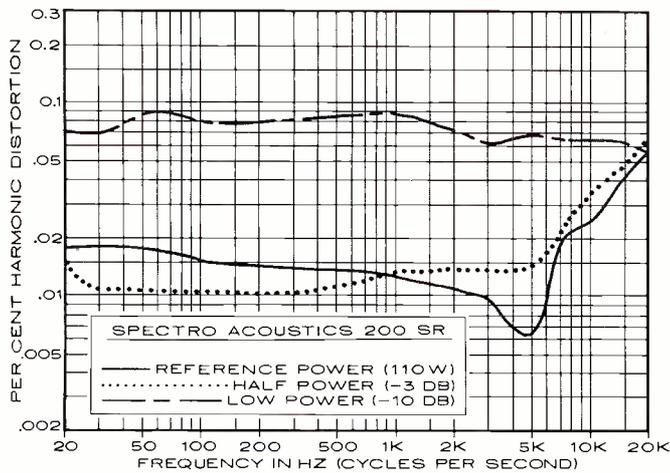


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form suddenly changed to a triangle shape at 50,000 Hz when the amplifier was driven at the same level that produced rated output at 1,000 Hz). The slew rate was 14 volts per microsecond, and the rise time was 2 microseconds. The measured low-level frequency response was perfectly flat through the audio range and down no more than 0.4 dB at 5 and 50,000 Hz (the -3-dB response frequency was 235 kHz). At 1,000 Hz, an input of 0.12 volt drove the amplifier to a reference output of 1 watt; A-weighted output noise was 89 dB below 1 watt.

The distortion characteristics at 1,000 Hz were unusual in that maximum distortion (0.08 per cent) was reached at about 10 watts output and the minimum (0.01 per cent) at either 100 watts (8 ohms) or 50 watts (4 ohms) output. We did not make 2-ohm measurements because of the constant fuse replacement that would have been required. At low power levels, the distortion was in the 0.02 to 0.04 per cent range. The IM distortion curve was similar in shape, with a maximum of 0.22 per cent

at 10 watts and a minimum of 0.05 per cent at 100 watts.

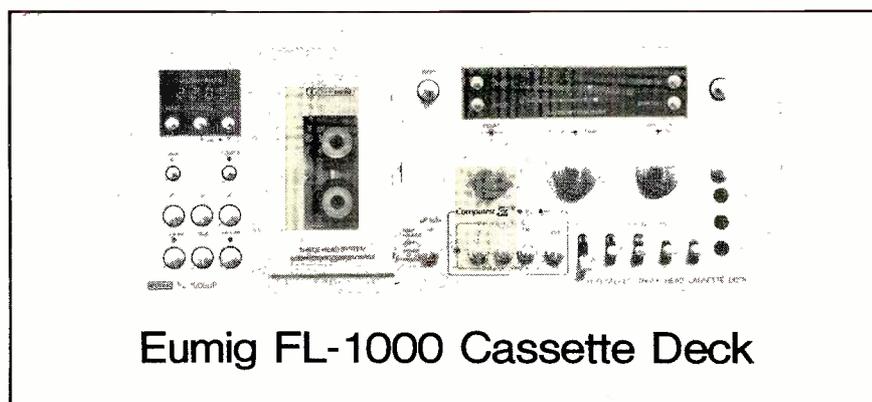
The distortion was nearly constant with frequency, measuring typically 0.01 to 0.02 per cent from 20 to 7,000 Hz at rated power and half power, and rising to about 0.06 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At one-tenth power the distortion was an almost constant 0.06 to 0.09 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The power-display lights responded very rapidly, so that on most program material they appeared as a set of dancing lights whose positions changed almost too rapidly to follow. However, on steady-state signals the calibrated indications were typically three to ten times the actual power output into 8-ohm loads.

● **Comment.** In actual use, the Spectro Acoustics Model 200SR worked exactly as we would expect a silent and essentially distortionless amplifier to work (none of the distortions we measured was sufficient to be audible with even the best program material). Also, there were no switching transients

or thumps heard when the amplifier was turned on or off, making it a truly unobtrusive component.

Even if the power indicators had been accurate and easily visible, we would question the utility of such an elaborate and expensive visual display. A simple overload indication or a warning of impending overload would have been more useful, in our opinion. The Spectro Acoustics Model 200SR is not an inexpensive amplifier, considering its FTC-rated power output, although in terms of true listening power it is essentially a "200-watt" amplifier. In fact, it is one of the very few amplifiers that will drive even the lowest-impedance speaker load on musical material to very high levels without clipping or serious distortion. Considered in that light, it is priced quite reasonably. And, if one is willing to forgo the flashing lights, the basic version (Model 200S, without lights and switches) is something of a bargain at \$200 less.

Circle 143 on reader service card



INTEGRATED-CIRCUIT (IC) microprocessor "chips" are increasingly being used to perform various switching and control-ad-

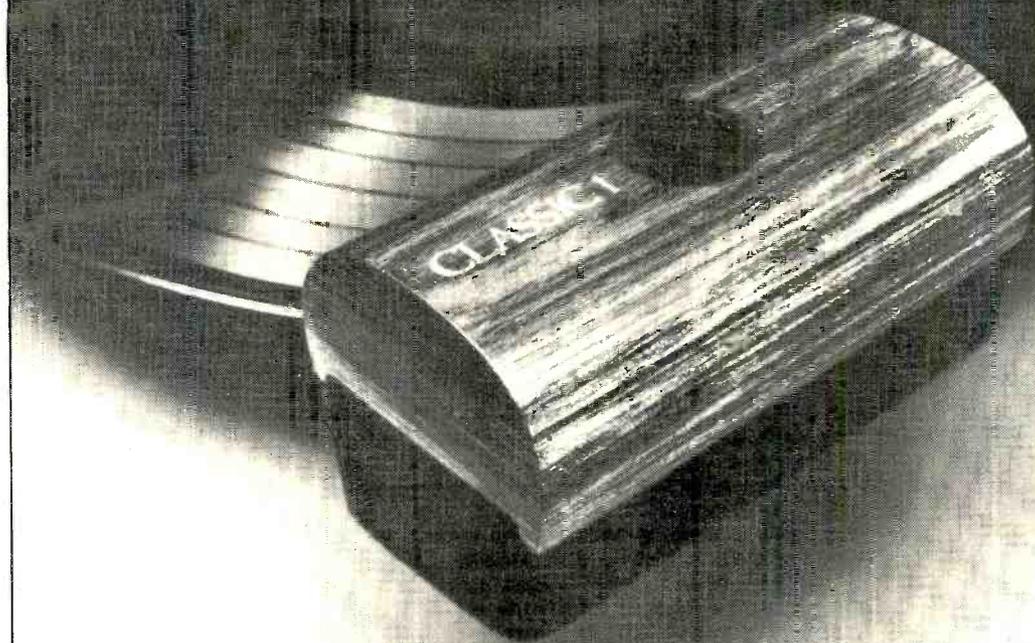
justment functions in high-quality audio equipment. In units we have tested previously, however, the role of these "chips"

has been confined strictly to internal operations—as it is, for example, in a hand-held calculator. The Eumig FL-1000 is the first hi-fi component we have encountered whose internal microprocessor is also able to communicate directly with popular home microcomputers such as the Commodore Pet, the Apple, and the Radio Shack TRS-80. Although one doesn't need a computer to operate the FL-1000, if you have one it opens up entirely new applications for the deck, some of which are discussed in a separate section of this report.

The Eumig FL-1000 is a front-loading deck with separate record and playback head elements contained in a single housing, and in addition to its computer interface it incorporates a number of unique design features—a capstan-drive system, for example, which eliminates the need for heavy, speed-stabilizing flywheels. The FL-

(Continued on page 64)

discover . . .



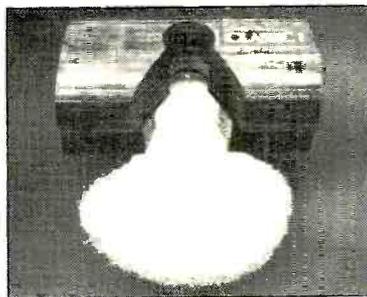
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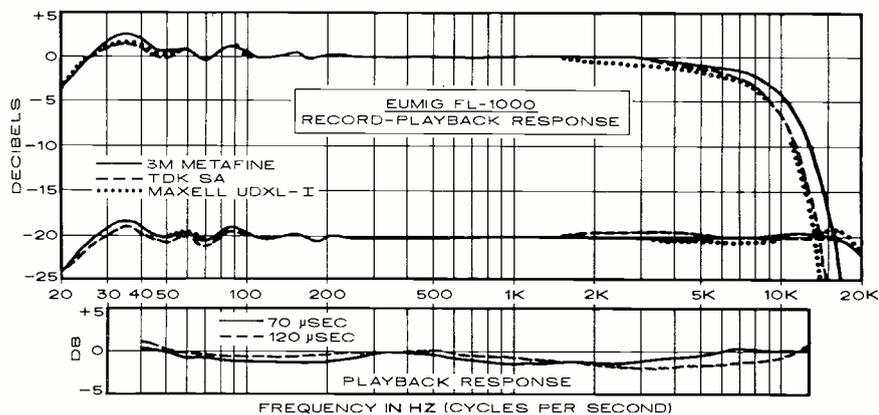


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1000 uses an optical servo system to control a low-inertia, coreless d.c. capstan-drive motor. A second, similar motor is used to drive the reel hubs, shift the head assembly and pressure roller against the tape, and operate the brakes.

The front-panel pushbuttons used to activate the transport modes (REWIND, PLAY, FAST-FORWARD, PAUSE, STOP, and RECORD), select tape or source monitoring, and set the four-digit electronic tape counter display are additionally labeled with numerals 0 through 9, reflecting their dual purpose. A user can "punch in," as on a calculator keyboard, any four-digit tape location and, by pressing the GO TO pushbutton, cause the machine to fast-forward or rewind to that precise location.

When the EJECT button is pressed, the lid of the cassette well swings open approximately 30 degrees; cassettes are inserted much in the way one would put a letter in an envelope. The cassette well is illuminated, and a transparent panel permits viewing the cassette label and the amount of tape remaining on a side. The lid itself is removable for periodic head cleaning and demagnetizing.

The FL-1000 utilizes an "equalized" peak-reading fluorescent display to indicate record levels. This means that, within the accuracy of the fourteen calibrated steps (from -20 to +8 dB) registered on the display, the recordist can monitor the exact signal level, including the effect of the record-equalization circuits, being sent to the tape. The level indicator also includes a two-position brightness switch, a peak-hold switch that retains the highest reading over a period of time, and an attenuator that lowers all meter readings by 6 dB (it may be useful with metal-particle tapes, which require a somewhat higher-than-normal drive level). Also located in the display section of the front panel is a switchable limiter that prevents distortion on peaks if the record-level controls should be set too high. Though it is principally designed for voice recording, we found the limiter useful in background music as well.

Concentric controls for left and right channels provide mixing facilities for two stereo sources (two line-level inputs or a pair of microphones plus a high-level source). An additional pair of concentric knobs provide overall recording level control plus a cross fader that permits a gradual transition between the two inputs. A "Computest" facility provides test tones of

400 and 14,000 Hz for adjustment of the Dolby-sensitivity level and the bias current for optimum performance with different brands of ferric, chromium-dioxide (or equivalent high-bias), and metal-particle tapes. A rotary MICROPROCESSOR AUTO switch sets the deck for various rewind-and-repeat and timer-activated functions, and additional lever switches control the selection of tape type, transfer of reverberation from one channel to the other, microphone sensitivity, operation of the Dolby noise-reduction circuits, and the use of a multiplex filter for FM dubbing. An output-level control governs the signal level both for the front-panel headphone jack and for one pair of the two sets of output jacks.

The rear panel of the Eumig FL-1000 has two sets of line-level inputs and both fixed-level and variable-level recorder outputs. A DIN connector is provided for European-style equipment, as is a separate ground terminal. For computer connections

a ten-pin DIN-type connector is provided. The rack-mounting FL-1000 measures 7 x 13 x 19 inches, weighs 26.5 pounds, and is available with either a black or a silver panel. Price: \$1,550.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Eumig supplied the specific cassettes used for factory adjustment of our sample of the FL-1000 (Maxell UD XL-I, TDK SA, and TDK MAR for the ferric, CrO₂, and metal switch positions, respectively), but the built-in Computest facility enabled us to adjust the deck for equivalent responses with a very wide variety of tapes, including: 3M Master I, TDK OD, Memorex MRX₃, and BASF Professional I (ferric); Maxell UD XL-II, 3M Master II, and Memorex High-Bias (CrO₂ position); and 3M Metafine, Fuji metal, BASF metal, and Maxell metal. The metal-alloy tape category is particularly significant in this respect, as we have found that rather wide variations in required bias levels are needed in order to optimize their frequency response. As far as overall record-playback frequency response is concerned (taken at a record level of -20 dB), Maxell UD XL-I, TDK SA, and 3M Metafine performed essentially identically. High-frequency response did not drop by more than 2 dB until approximately 18 kHz. The low-frequency response irregularities (head bumps) did not exceed 2.5 dB at their most prominent point (approximately 35 Hz) and are typical for the "sandwich"-type head construction used.

Playback-only response was checked with a TDK AC-337 test tape. Response was within ±2 dB throughout the 40- to 12,500-Hz range of the tape; the slight "sag" (1.6 dB) in the mid-frequency range was too small to be audible on any prerecorded materials we listened to.

Computer Operation

WE first encountered the Eumig FL-1000 at the fall meeting of the Audio Engineering Society, where, in a demonstration of fully automated radio broadcasting, some sixteen of the machines were being simultaneously controlled through a standard Commodore Pet home microcomputer. While one deck was "on the air," others automatically cued themselves up to the proper starting points for various selections within their cassettes (complete with commercials and station breaks) to be played in any chosen sequence. When one selection ended, another deck was automatically switched "on air," while the first rewind and either stopped or cued itself up for another selection from its cassette. Other decks were busy dubbing updated news items or recording selections for later airing.

While such a setup is obviously well beyond the needs of the home recordist, it gives some idea of the operational flexibility that computer interfacing with the FL-1000 can achieve. According to Eumig, similar programs, with the variations required by other popular home microcomputers, will shortly be available, and complete technical data

are already published for those enthusiasts who wish to make up their own specialized programs.

Using the Eumig-supplied program, we were able not only to control both machines from the computer keyboard—telling machine 01 to go to counter location 2504 and begin recording there while machine 00 was playing the third selection of a previously recorded tape, for example—but we were also able to call up on the computer's screen a complete index listing of all the selections on a prerecorded cassette, with starting and ending counter readings, performers, titles, running time, and any other comments we might want to recall later. This is because, when connected to a computer, the FL-1000 can read and write (that is, play and record) digital information, using the first few seconds of the cassette.

In addition, Eumig informs us that it now has a "sort" program (developed subsequent to our tests) which will permit codifying *all* the indices on *all* one's cassettes, then sort through them electronically by whatever category one chooses—performer, title, or whatever—so that one can instantly find precisely which cassette and which selection on that cassette the deck should be directed to play.

Though it is not marked as such, the 0-dB point on the fluorescent record-level indicator corresponded exactly to a 200-nanowatt/meter Dolby-level test tone. Distortion at this level measured 0.22, 1.2, and 1.6 per cent using 3M Metafine, TDK SA, and Maxell UD XL-I cassettes and a test frequency of 1 kHz. Increasing the record level to obtain 3 per cent third-harmonic distortion (the traditional measuring point for signal-to-noise ratios) revealed a headroom margin of 3, 4.5, and 3 dB, respectively, for the three tapes. Relative to this level the unweighted signal-to-noise ratios (S/N) measured 53, 54.5, and 51.4 dB—or 59.8, 60, and 56.2 dB with IEC A-weighting. With Dolby processing and CCIR/ARM weighting, the signal-to-noise ratios for the three tapes measured 68.6, 68, and 64.2 dB, respectively. Both the headroom and the S/N improved by 1.5 to 2 dB when using a more standard 315-Hz tone instead of our customary 1 kHz.

Measured wow and flutter were exceptionally low—so much so that we had to use a combined record-playback measurement technique in place of test tapes. On the DIN peak-weighted flutter measurement we registered 0.048 per cent, with even less (0.046 per cent) on the Japanese weighted-rms scale. Dolby tracking was excellent: within ± 0.5 dB up to 18,000 Hz at recording levels of -20, -30, and -40 dB. The multiplex filter was unusually sharp and did not affect frequencies below 16 kHz.

An input-signal level of 96 millivolts was required to produce a 0-dB record level, and this sensitivity could be increased 6 dB by rotating the cross-fader control to its extreme position away from the center detent. In the two microphone settings ("near" and "distant"), sensitivity was 2.2 and 0.24 mV, respectively. Microphone overload was not encountered until the signal level reached 24 and 180 mV in the two positions, and the microphone circuitry did not add any measurable or audible noise to the system. Output from the FL-1000 was 740 mV for a 0-dB indication.

The limiter, which has a red LED indicator that glows during its operation, controlled signals to within a -3- to -1-dB display indication over a 23-dB range, and its attack and release time constants were well chosen so that its operation was inaudible. Headphone volume was more than adequate with either low- or medium-impedance headphones.

● **Comment.** Listening tests confirmed what the excellent measurements implied: the Eumig FL-1000 is a superb performer. Dubbing from FM or phono discs revealed no audible differences between the original and the copy, and even FM interstation noise—our most severe test—could be recorded and played flawlessly up to levels of approximately -5 dB. The Computest adjustment for different brands of tape was not only accurate but contains a built-in rewind mechanism that returns the tape to the precise point where you began your adjustment. The counter was the most accurate we have ever used. And for people who are "into" computers, the one-of-a-kind (so far) Eumig FL-1000 cassette deck opens up endless possibilities.

Circle 144 on reader service card

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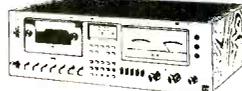
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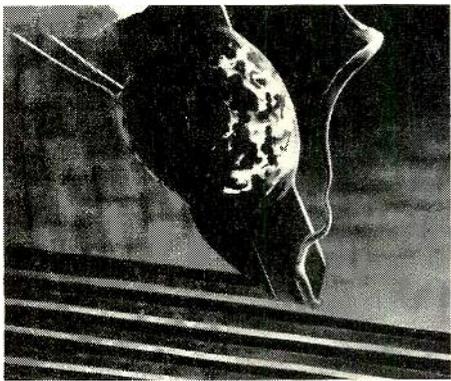
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CIRCLE NO. 44 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



THE PAST RECORDED

It says something about the continuity of culture in the western world that virtually every great public collection of art or artifacts has as its core the once private collections of one or more individual connoisseur collectors. Those who espouse the socialist point of view that all art belongs in museums would do well to keep that fact in mind. And so it is no great surprise to me that even in 1980, in an era of unprecedented accumulation of objects by government and other nonprofit institutions, a public collection is to be vastly enriched by the gift of a private collector and citizen. A recent news release from the Library of Congress tells of the collection of 40,000 records and 500 cylinder recordings presented to the Library by Mr. Jim Walsh of Vinton, Virginia, a retired reporter and columnist for *Variety* magazine and, for thirty-eight years, the writer of a column on early recordings for *Hobbies* magazine.

The Library of Congress itself began to collect recordings only in 1925, and the bulk of Mr. Walsh's collection is of pre-1926 material. It is not a collection of arias by golden-age opera stars, however; apart from documentary recordings of speeches by Wilson, Harding, Taft, Pershing, and the like, it consists largely of popular entertainment of the day—jazz, pop songs, vaudeville, humorous monologues, and show tunes. The names of many of the artists involved—Billy Murray, Irving and Jack Kaufman, Ada Jones, Henry Burr—are hardly familiar to us today, but they were top stars of the early years of recording, and their work is part of both American sociology and American musical culture.

By the purest coincidence, I had just requested for possible review, from Merritt Sound Recording (223 Grimsby Road, Buffalo, New York 14223), a few cassettes of old-time popular material—Billy Murray, Ada Jones, Moran and Mack—and they arrived simultaneously with the Library communiqué. These privately produced, hand-labeled cassettes are little concerts of the records of the artists involved, introduced and narrated by one or another enthusiastic expert and collector. How neat to find the two cassettes of Billy Murray narrated by Mr. Jim Walsh of Vinton, Virginia!

I don't want to intimate that you will be as excited by the performances of Billy Murray as Mr. Walsh is, but you may have some fun with some of these cassettes. The repertoire is one that senior citizens will actually remember and that juniors will have had introduced to them through records by Joan Morris and Bill Bolcom and Lucy Lowe (see "Best of the Month," March 1980). It is a repertoire that deals (strangely, or even perhaps obnoxiously, to us today) with the diversities and dialects of American life: the Irish number, the Jewish number, the "Cherman" song, the black song, the Midwestern epic, the cowboy song, the Indian chant, and the Bowery ballad ("Hully chee!").

The singers were all rather expert in dialect (or what passed for typical German, Jewish, Irish, English, black, cowboy, or tough-guy dialect in those days), and they all had the sort of supremely clear diction that primitive recording equipment seemed to demand. At any rate, you will have far less trouble understanding the words than with any Joan Sutherland recording. To me, they all, in spite of their reputations (Ada Jones was the first really big female recording star) seem to lack strong personality. All, that is, except for the non-singing duo of Moran and Mack, who, under the name Two Black Crows, give us some embarrassing moments but also some comic routines and plays on words that are every bit as classic as the famed "Who's on first?" Abbot and Costello masterpiece. Jones and Murray (the Irving Kaufman material was not available when I asked) also have some spoken routines, but not in the same class. You can hear them at their best in such musical numbers as *Waiting at the Church*, *I've Got Rings on My Fingers*, *Oh By Jingo*, *The Irish Were Egyptians Long Ago*, *The Cubanola Glide*, *Heine, You'd Be Surprised*, *Come Josephine in My Flying Machine*, and *When Francis Dances with Me* ("Hully Chee!"), with all the verses as well as the chorus. Different recordings are available in different formats: disc, cassette, cartridge, reel. You might write to Merritt, at the address given above, for their informative little catalog. □



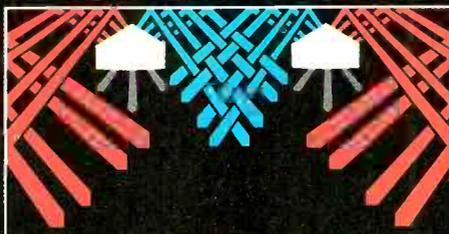
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KENNY ROGERS

"I'm on a hot spell right now, and I figure I've got two and a half years left on it."

By Alanna Nash

ON the cover of a recent album, Kenny Rogers stares coldly, defiantly, resolutely into the camera, like a man who knows what he wants and how to get it. His hands are full of money, and the eyes of those around him are brimming with excitement and greed. With the chips piled high, the dealer flips a card. But the outcome is predictable. Kenny Rogers, "The Gambler," as it says on the frame above his head, is on a roll.

The latest payoff came last October, when Rogers played host for the Country Music Association awards show and took home three of the top honors, for Male Vocalist of the Year, for Duo of the Year (with Dottie West), and for Album of the Year, "The Gambler." If he was disappointed at not being named Entertainer of the Year, for which title he was nominated,

Rogers could take some comfort in the fact that the Academy of Country Music bestowed that honor upon him several months before, and its Top Male Vocalist award as well. At this writing he is up for a slew of Grammys (his first, in 1978, was for "Lucille"), and his single of *The Gambler* has already been certified gold. The album of the same name went double platinum and threatened to turn triple platinum, selling in excess of three million copies by last Christmas.

Fittingly, although *The Gambler* had been recorded by no less than a dozen artists (including the likes of Bobby Bare, Johnny Cash, and its author, Don Schlitz), it took the grainy, low-life voice of Kenny Rogers to drive home its sad irony and deliver the hook that would set toes a-tappin' all across America. Then again, maybe it was



Bank Lempore/Rogers and Cowan

Fate, a matter of the right song waiting for the right singer, for Kenny Rogers has always been a gambler, switching from one musical style to another in search of the combination that would bring the big payoff. As he sang in the now immortal refrain, "You've got to know when to hold 'em/Know when to fold 'em/Know when to walk away/ And know when to run."

ONE of eight children of a Houston shipyard worker, Rogers signed his first recording contract while still in high school. "When I first got started in music," he said before a show in Indianapolis recently, "I think Sam Cooke and Ray Charles made the two biggest impressions on me. To this day, I think I try to sing like Ray Charles in some situations, and a lot of my phrasing would still be attributable to

Sam Cooke." Hit songs were to come early to Rogers, who, in 1956, along with his do-wop band "The Scholars," had a million-selling record with *Crazy Feeling*, produced by Rogers' brother. The country influence was not to be ignored, though. "I was Kenny Rogers I, because George Hamilton IV was very big at the time, and I thought if it was good enough for him, it was good enough for me," he remembers with a self-mocking smile.

While studying music and commercial art at the University of Houston, Rogers sang and played upright bass with the Bobby Doyle Trio, which he describes as an "avant-garde jazz" band. After six years, he joined a popular folk group, the New Christy Minstrels. But a year and a half later, in 1967, Rogers and several others of the Minstrels—Mike Settle, Terry Williams, and Thelma Camacho—split off to form the First Edition and record *Just Dropped In to See What Condition My Condition Was In*, a contrived little ditty (with a Glen Campbell reverse-track guitar solo) that Rogers' high-school friend Mickey Newbury wrote to cash in on the growing trend toward psychedelia and acid rock.

LIKE much of the material Rogers performs today, the songs of the First Edition did not fit neatly into any one category. Ostensibly a Top-40 rock group, the band built most of its fame with several country-flavored numbers, the most memorable being Mel Tillis' *Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town* and *Reuben James*, written by Alex Harvey, a high-school band teacher whose finely crafted songs were to show up on Rogers' albums with increasing regularity for the next ten years. In retrospect, it appears that the First Edition played a not-too-small but largely unheralded role in helping bridge the gap between country and rock.

"When you look at most of our big hits, they were really country records," says Rogers. "But Warner Brothers, the label I was with at the time, did not have a country-music department, so they merchandised us as a pop act, or a rock act, because this was the time when the Jefferson Airplane and Vanilla Fudge and all those groups were around."

After nine years, four gold albums, nine gold singles, and a syndicated television show, *Rollin'*, that played on 192 stations in the United States and Canada for two years, the First Edition called it quits. "We reached a point of what I call creative stagnancy," Rogers recalls. "We had done about everything there was, and there was just no fresh

input. If we'd stayed together, I think we probably would have gone downhill, because there was so much misdirection in that group. We had many different talents, and everybody was pulling his own way. There was never a unified approach to anything. Terry wanted to go be a rock-and-roll singer, and I have always been and will always contend that I have always been a country singer.

"I think that during those days I may have been searching for an identity," admits Rogers, now a clean-cut L.A. type who leans toward velours V-neck sweaters and expensive gold jewelry. "First of all, I had to grow a beard to get into the First Edition, because I was seven or eight years older than the other guys, and they didn't want me in the group because I was too old. They were looking for a young surfer kind of guy. So I was trying to find a way to look younger. The beard helped, and I ended up at one point with an earring in my ear."

In 1976, Rogers headed down to Nashville in search of a solo career. His third marriage had just broken up, "and I'd given up everything I'd made in my last career because I didn't want my ex-wife involved in my future." Clearly, Rogers was figuring on making a killing, and to ensure it (as he told a reporter in 1977) he and United Artists producer Larry Butler "put our game plan together, and it worked." The first hint of solo success came with *Love Lifted Me*, followed by *Home-made Love*, *While the Feeling's Good*, and *Laura*.

ROGERS wasn't to foresee just what a star he would become, however, until 1977, when he and Butler struck gold with a classic country story-song, *Roger Bowling* and Hal Bynum's *Lucille*. By then the formula by which he and Butler plan all their albums was already in evidence—a little contemporary folk, a little pasteurized country, a little half-baked rock-and-roll, a few string-swathed love songs and ballads, and lots of good-natured congeniality.

"Not everybody's gonna like everything," Rogers surmises correctly, now sitting in a tune-up room backstage in Louisville, "but the trick is not to turn off anybody with anything. So I do some pseudo rock-and-roll and some country things and try to find a nice balance in between." The Kenny Rogers image, then, is a non-image, or that of the proverbial Nice Guy who has no rough edges to his homogenized music and does nothing to offend anyone either on stage or off. Gregarious and witty, he's the perfect guest for the *Mike Douglas Show* and *Hollywood*

ROGERS...

Squares, and his live shows, with his tambourine-tossing brand of casino rock, make him a natural shoo-in for the gaudy showrooms of Vegas. Or, actually, for just about anywhere. Not so long ago, President Carter invited him to the White House on the occasion of the signing of the Egyptian/Israeli Peace Treaty.

Rogers is, in fact, so visible on the tube and at public-relations functions these days that at a recent press conference a reporter asked him how he ever finds time for his music. To his credit, Rogers pulled no punches. "The way I record is totally unique from anybody I've ever seen," he said. "When I come into Nashville [on one of his two private jets], Larry Butler will have collected an enormous amount of songs for me and weeded them down to about thirty. I'll sit down with him in the morning and listen to those thirty, and we'll weed them out to four. And then we'll go in the studio that night and record them. I learn the songs when the band learns them. But I've found that by doing that, there's a certain spontaneity that happens. Once I do a song for five or six months, I get bored with it. So I get the most out of a song the first few times I do it. I probably *sing* it better later, but I don't think it does the song as much good."

FOR the last ten years, the man masterminding Rogers' career has been Ken Kragen, an L.A.-based artists manager. Together, Kragen and Rogers have achieved some sort of record. In September, when Rogers' gold star was placed on Hollywood Boulevard, Capitol Records gave him a special award acknowledging \$100 million in record sales since 1976. (Rogers' new album, "Kenny," shipped platinum.) According to Kragen's PR, the \$100 million mark has been hit only once before—by the Beatles.

"My manager is always warning me not to talk about music in terms of dollars or in terms of investments—he says people don't like that," Rogers told reporter Bob Allen in 1977. But Rogers appears to have forgotten that since then, because despite recording Alex Harvey's wonderful *Making Music for Money*, which lambasts the commerciality of "the music machine," Rogers constantly refers to his career from a businessman's point of view. When he isn't talking directly about money, he emphasizes the strategy, methodology,

and calculation entailed in making him a star. When his tour stopped in Chicago last summer, he said, "That's something that I thoroughly enjoy about this business, the *manipulation*—uh, bad choice of words—the *maneuvering* involved. It's like, if I can get on the *Tonight Show*, that gives me enough exposure to do such and such; and if I can *host* the *Tonight Show*, that will make me a headliner in Las Vegas. Those kinds of things." A few days later, in Indianapolis, he added, "I really study all this . . . it's kind of a game with me." From there, he rattled off the latest "demographics," and when asked if he might do another television series, answered, "You name me someone who has a weekly TV show, and I'll name you someone who doesn't sell records."

The reason for all this? "I'm on a hot spell right now, and I figure I've got two and a half years left on it," he

"You can't stay as hot as you are. You have to attempt to get hotter to maintain. If you don't, you will get colder."

admits. "The rule of thumb is about three years, because the record-buying public changes on that three-year cycle. By then I won't be as hot as I am now, but I'd be a basket case if it kept goin' any longer than that . . . and I'll be ready for it then. My wife [Marianne Gordon, a regular on the syndicated TV show *Hee Haw*] has made me realize that my career is not the most important thing in the world to me. 'Til my hot spell ends, though, I feel that I owe her the benefit of whatever I'm capable of doing. And I love what I'm doing. I would do it for a lot less money. But you've got to amortize your income over a lot of years, and my feelings are that it would be very unfair of me to end up with my wife and we're sixty-five years old and say, 'Honey, I've had a great time. I'm sorry we're broke.'"

Rogers is not embarrassed by any of that, nor does he feel uncomfortable discussing the strengths and weaknesses of his talent. "First of all," he starts, his fingers poised at the tip of his salt-and-pepper beard, "we've been really lucky in finding hit material. That seems to be our biggest single

factor. I've never felt I'm a particularly good singer, but I've always felt that I have a very *commercial* voice. Actually, my voice is probably my weakness. There are certain types of songs that I can't do because I don't have a great deal of range any more. And I have that country, Texas twang which eliminates me from doing a lot of things. But I think I have an excellent ear for hit songs. I try to find songs that have a hook, that have something to say, that touch people, and then I do that song the way I think it should be done. And that's been very successful for me. Primarily, I don't consider myself a singer or musician. I consider myself an entertainer. And I think as long as I can keep that attitude, I'll be able to do okay and survive. I'm willing to give as long as I get something back. I need that feedback from people."

Having broken more than thirty attendance records at state fairs last summer, Rogers is at no loss for feedback. He doesn't need an overabundance of it, however, such as when he's showering in a motel and the pianist from the lounge band insists on meeting him, or when he and his wife are out shopping for antiques for their twelve-room Bel Air home and run into a herd of autograph seekers. For that reason, he says, "I'd just as soon not get any hotter. But unfortunately this business is one of those where there's no such thing as status quo. You can't *stay* as hot as you are. You have to attempt to get hotter to maintain, and if you don't attempt, you will definitely get colder."

To guard against that, Rogers, whose second network TV special, *Kenny Rogers and the American Cowboy*, was aired last November, has his first dramatic acting stint lined up. Come spring, he'll play the title role in a made-for-TV film based loosely on "The Gambler." At forty-two, Rogers will play a character sixty-five years old, and, more surprisingly, he will not sing.

BUT there is something even more daring on the horizon. "I'm not really aesthetically oriented," Rogers says, "but I'm doing a new project now that'll be out in April or May that's very aesthetic. It's a concept album, written by Kim Carnes and her husband, Dave Ellingson, who were both with me in the New Christy Minstrels. It's called 'Gideon,' and it's about a guy who was a cowboy. It starts at his funeral and ends at his funeral, and through the course of it there are little vignettes of things that happened to him in his life. It's very moving, and I love it." □

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EQUALIZERS

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- tame a wild acoustic environment (or wake up a comatose one)
- second-guess a recording engineer's equalization decisions
- supply a discreet little boost or cut to less-than-ideal amplifiers or speakers
- help you sharpen your ears for more discriminating equipment evaluation

By Donald Sheffield

Equalizers top to bottom:
SAE Model 2800, Phase Linear
Model 1100, Technics SA-9010,
Sansui SE-7, Nikko EQ-1,
Lux G-11, ADC Sound Shaper Three,
Pioneer SG-9800, Soundcraftsmen
AE2420-R, and MXR Stereo Graphic
(photo Bruce Pendleton).

ADVERTISEMENTS for the increasingly popular audio components known as equalizers have been making some hard-to-believe claims about what the latest models can do. They claim that an equalizer can: (1) upgrade the sound of a stereo system without requiring new amplifiers or speakers, (2) cut down on tape hiss and other types of noise, and (3) "reshape" the sound of existing recordings to accentuate certain instruments. Skeptics will be surprised to learn that all these claims are true, that an equalizer *can* do all that—and more.

During the past several years there has been a steady growth in the numbers of equalizer brands and models on the market as this useful audio accessory caught the fancy of the hi-fi public. But along with audiophile interest there inevitably came a certain degree of confusion about the various *types* of equalizers (graphic, parametric, octave, one-third-octave, etc.), about just how they worked, and what they could do for the *average* listener. For one thing, it became clear that the equalizer, more than most other components, requires some understanding of the science of acoustics (in addition to a grasp of conventional audio technology) if it is to be used effectively.

For starters, an equalizer can be considered as a rather fancy set of tone controls that adjusts not only the bass and treble but also the deep bass, upper bass, midrange, lower treble, high treble, and so on. It can therefore do a variety of things ordinary tone controls can *not* do, such as decreasing lower-treble sounds while simultaneously increasing upper-treble sounds to, say, give a feeling of liveness to cymbals and guitars. (Ordinary tone controls cannot do this because any attempt to cut back on the lower treble will also reduce the upper treble range.)

Small changes in equalizer settings can have very noticeable effects on a musical program because equalizers actually modify the *proportions* of high-, middle-, and low-pitched sounds (see chart, "The Frequencies of Music," on page 75). Detailed scientific studies, many of them carried out over the last few years, continue to confirm that the ear is extremely sensitive to frequency response, so this factor is among the most important things to be considered in optimizing the sound fidelity of a stereo system. As a matter of fact, many of the sonic aberrations audiophiles think of as colorations or distortions are sometimes rather small (perhaps less than 1 dB) variations in frequency response.

Among equalizers, the *graphic* units are the most common. They have slide

(instead of rotary) controls, and the term "graphic" comes from the fact that the slider knobs, when in their desired positions, form a rough graph of the frequency-response modification. There is no great disadvantage to using rotary controls, by the way, and some equalizers (especially professional ones) use them to save space.

Parametric equalizers allow the user to vary the frequency center as well as the amplitude (volume) of each band of frequencies controlled. Thus, a band centered at 1,000 Hz can be shifted to use, say, 900 or 1,200 Hz as its operating center. Further, the width of the band of frequencies affected can also be varied in some models. This characteristic may not be useful to people who set their equalizers by ear, but it *is* necessary for precise adjustments. If the object is to flatten out a ragged room response, for example, a parametric equalizer can make the curve flatter than any ordinary equalizer can, but only if the operator is able to monitor the response with instruments that show *where* the peaks and valleys are on a detailed response curve.

It is a simple fact of life that a recording being played back in a home listening room is not going to sound the same as the live original. Aside from what may have happened to the fidelity of the audio signal between the time of the original performance and its embodiment on a tape or disc, the listening room itself contributes an assortment of unwanted effects (which we will get to in a moment). An equalizer can overcome these effects to a large degree, making the sound more like the original or, failing that, at least more agreeable.

Most professional recordists use equalizers to shape the frequency-response curves of the recorded material for what they hope will be the most positive listener response. This means, of course, that rock, disco, and classical music may all get different equalizations, and different engineers are likely to have differing notions as to the preferred EQ (equalization) for any given recording anyway. But despite (or maybe because of) all this in-studio equalization, the listener often finds a recording is not all it could be when it is played through his own equipment.

Room effects are among the major contributors to the way any playback sounds. The sound waves coming from the loudspeakers inevitably reflect off walls, ceilings, and floors, and multiple reflections cause what are called "standing waves" at frequencies that depend on the size of the room. At a particular spot (or areas) in the room

some one low note will likely be reinforced because the sound waves reflected from two opposite (parallel) walls will meet each other repeatedly at that spot and substantially increase the note's intensity. At other points, however, the sound waves will be out of phase and will cancel each other instead.

The frequencies (itches) to which your own room is "tuned" depend on the distances between each pair of parallel walls and between floor and ceiling. Say, for example, that your room length is 20 feet. To find the frequency that will be enhanced by this spacing, divide 565 by 20. (The number 565 is the speed of sound in air, in feet per second, divided by two—for half a wavelength.) The lowest, or fundamental, resonance for that room length is 28.25 Hz, and if your speakers produce that frequency it will have its maximum acoustic energy at the far ends of the room and little in the middle. Standing waves also occur at multiples of a room's fundamental resonances. In the case at hand, at 56.5 Hz (a tone much more likely to be encountered), *three* areas of maximum energy are produced: two at the far walls and one at the room's center.

There are other enhancements, and also cancellations, for each wall-to-wall spacing in the room. All of this adds up to a fairly jagged response curve for the *overall* playback system that includes the listening room. A typical example of such a curve is shown in the figure on page 76, which plots the frequency response of a high-quality playback system measured from a specific spot in a normal room. Most of the peaks and valleys are caused by the room's standing waves, and these variations would very likely be different if the position of the measuring microphone were changed, even by as little as a few inches.

Aside from the *measurable* room effects, the *audible* effects may include a mushy, boomy mid-bass sound or, conversely, a weak or thin mid bass that is lacking in warmth and body. At the treble end, rooms provide sound enhancement (as a result of reflections from hard walls, panels, and windows) or sound absorption (by rugs, drapes, and upholstery) at various frequencies. Again, the equalizer can help compensate for the unwanted effects.

Loudspeakers and phonograph cartridges—the electromechanical, or "transducer," devices in your system—are likely to be the weak links in the reproduction chain not only because of their own internal flaws but because of problems that may result due to incompatibilities with the associated equipment. Thus, while individual compo-

EQUALIZERS...

nents may have reasonably flat frequency responses under laboratory conditions, the real home system in which they are used together can nevertheless suffer from a variety of frequency aberrations large and small. The best solution is therefore to equalize the system as a whole for minimal deviation from flat response. (Note that an equalizer can compensate for *electronic* frequency-response aberrations everywhere in the room, but *acoustical* problems can usually be compensated for only in *one* chosen listening area.)

What You Need

The question most often asked about equalizers is "How many frequency bands do I need?" Consumer models are offered with anywhere from four to twelve bands. Some have the ability to control the left and right stereo channels independently, which immediately doubles the number of controls; other models have frequency controls that handle both channels at once. For many prospective buyers, even this ground-level decision involves a bewildering variety of brands and models.

The main thing to be considered in choosing an equalizer is the *amount of flexibility you need, want, and can use* in your system. For people who have the ears, the time, the talent, and perhaps the response-monitoring equipment to do the job properly, units with ten or more frequency bands per channel are appropriate. But listeners who don't want to put up with all that expense or complexity will be happier with six or fewer bands that can be adjusted by ear, and they will seldom need individual left- and right-channel controls.

Not entirely apart from the question of complexity, there is a decision to be made about cost. A higher-price equalizer often has a better "feel" to its controls (smooth, tight action), greater reliability, and a more appealing, up-to-date appearance. Reliability, too, is not a trivial matter in equalizers, for the controls in cheaper units tend to become noisy after a few years. In addition, the more expensive units sometimes provide a flatter response when their controls are set to zero or "flat." Some models have detents (a mechanical "notch") at the zero positions, making the "flat" setting easy to find by feel alone.

All audiophile (rather than studio) equalizers have switching that permits installing them in a receiver's, ampli-

fier's, or preamplifier's tape-monitor loop (substitute tape-monitor switching is provided), and some have additional switching that permits equalization of the signal going to *or* coming from the tape recorder. Some equalizer models have level controls that enable the user to adjust the equalized signal to the same subjective loudness as the unequalized signal. This is important if you want to do an A/B comparison between the two so as to judge the precise effect of your equalization efforts. Several units also have LED indicators that show when the input and output signals are equal—to reinforce the judgment of your ears.

The less expensive equalizers usually have a poorer signal-to-noise ratio, expressed in the specifications as a *lower* number of decibels. Is this important? Not for most users. Even the cheapest of today's equalizers have lower noise than most recordings, and by a factor of about ten. The noise in even the worst-case equalizers would be noticeable only as a soft hiss at very high volume levels, in a quiet room, and with very low noise in the associated equipment. If *that* level of noise bothers you, then you may want a signal-to-noise ratio of 90 dB or better. Similarly, an equalizer's usually very low harmonic distortion will be masked by the much worse distortions in other links of the audio chain.

Some of the new models have built-in readouts and/or signal sources that aid

in making adjustments by instrument rather than by ear. Several models also have a plug-in microphone as well as LED indicators for each frequency band to show the actual sound level in the room. The user plays "pink" noise (a random "shushing" sound containing equal energy within each octave) and sets the equalizer controls so the LEDs light up in a straight line; the system/room response has then been flattened to a high degree—at the location of the microphone, that is.

Using an Equalizer

Although I may find myself accused of heresy, I believe that there is actually no need for the average home listener to spend a lot of time fine-tuning his equalization. Anyone only moderately interested in technical matters should simply play some music with a wide frequency range, adjust the equalizer *by ear*, and then mostly *leave it alone*. The difference in sound quality achieved with that kind of adjustment as opposed to the best *instrumented* adjustment is small indeed. Instrumented adjustments are for people who enjoy the *process* of tuning and who take pride in feeling they have achieved the *best possible* result. But my advice to most people is, "Do it by ear." Ten-control equalizers can be set up initially by adjusting two adjacent controls at a time, thus simulating a five-control type. The right and left channels should also be

EQUALIZER MANUFACTURERS

FOLLOWING is a list of companies making equalizers for home use. The list does not include those producing only car-stereo, sound-reinforcement, speaker-system, and recording-studio equalizers.

- Ace Audio, 532 5th Street, East Northport, N.Y. 11731
- Audio Control, 6520 212th Street S.W., B-1, Lynnwood, Wash. 98036
- Audio Dynamics Corp., Route 303, Blauvelt, N.Y. 10913
- Audio Reflex International, 11 Progress Avenue, Unit 15-16, Scarborough, Ontario M1P-4S7, Canada
- Crown International, 1718 West Mishawaka Road, Elkhart, Ind. 46514
- Heath Company, Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022
- JVC, 58-75 Queens Midtown Expressway, Maspeth, N.Y. 11378
- Lux Audio, 160 Dupont Street, Plainview, N.Y. 11803
- Marantz, 20525 Nordhoff Street, Chatsworth, Calif. 91311

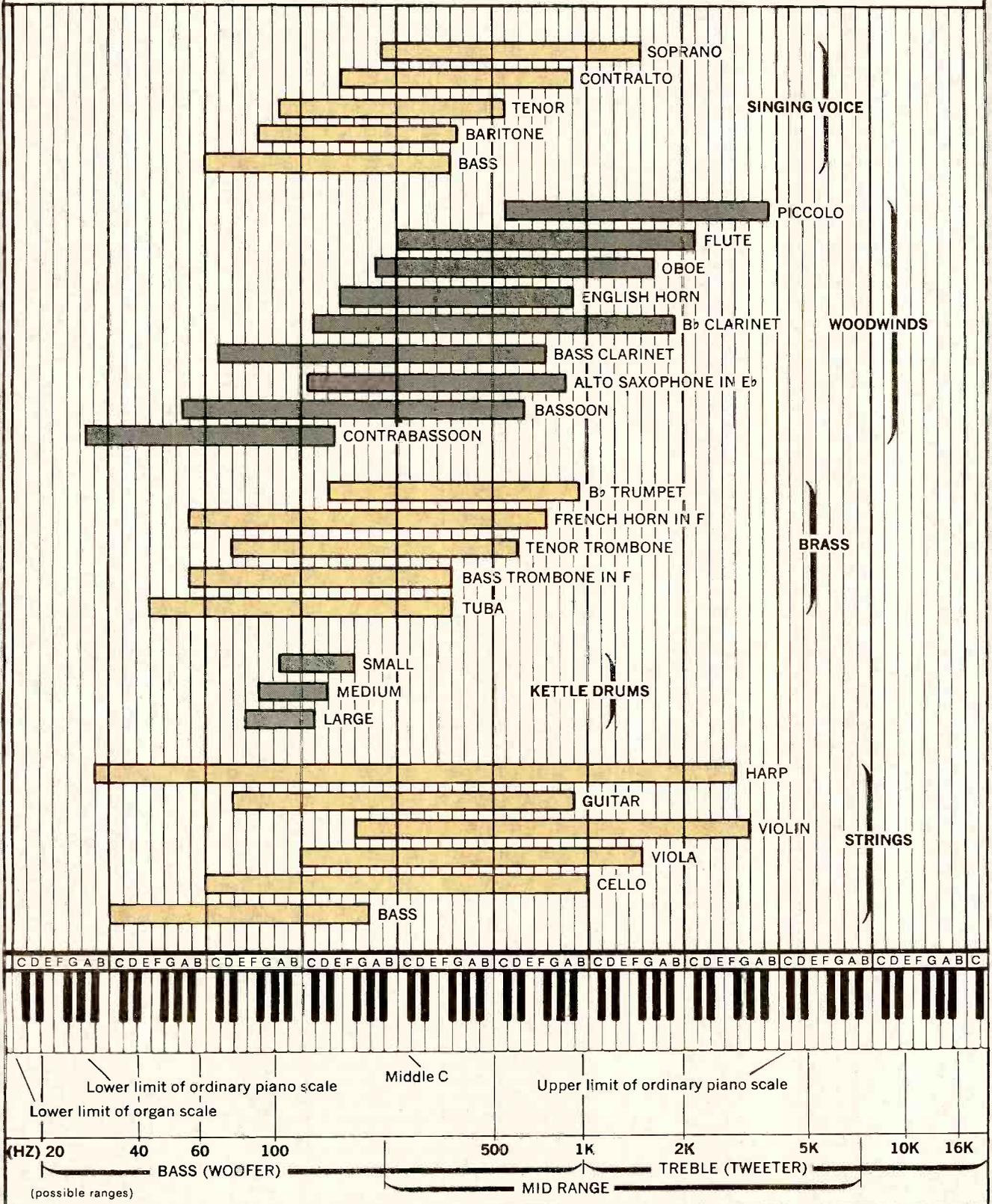
- MXR Innovations, Inc., 247 North Goodman Street, Rochester, N.Y. 14607
- Nikko Audio, 16270 Raymer Street, Van Nuys, Calif. 91406
- Onkyo, 42-07 20th Avenue, Long Island City, N.Y. 11105
- Phase Linear Corp., 20121 48th Avenue West, Lynnwood, Wash. 98036
- Pioneer, 85 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074
- Radio Shack, 1400 One Tandy Center, Fort Worth, Texas 76102
- Rotel, 1055 Saw Mill River Road, Ardsley, N.Y. 10502
- SAE, 701 East Macy Street, Los Angeles, Calif. 90012
- Sansui Electronics Corp., 1250 Valley Brook Avenue, Lyndhurst, N.J. 07071
- Soundcraftsmen, 2200 South Ritchey, Santa Ana, Calif. 92705
- Spectro Acoustics, Inc., 3200 George Washington Way, Richland, Wash. 99352
- Superex Electronics Corp., 151 Ludlow Street, Yonkers, N.Y. 10705
- Teac Corp., 7733 Telegraph Road, Montebello, Calif. 90640
- Technics, One Panasonic Way, Secaucus, N.J. 07094

THE FREQUENCIES OF MUSIC

(Ranges of the fundamental frequencies of instruments and voices)

The harmonic frequencies generated by instruments and voices extend off the right side of the chart, though at volume levels far

below those of the fundamental frequencies shown. The A above middle C is usually set at the standard tuning pitch of 440 Hz.



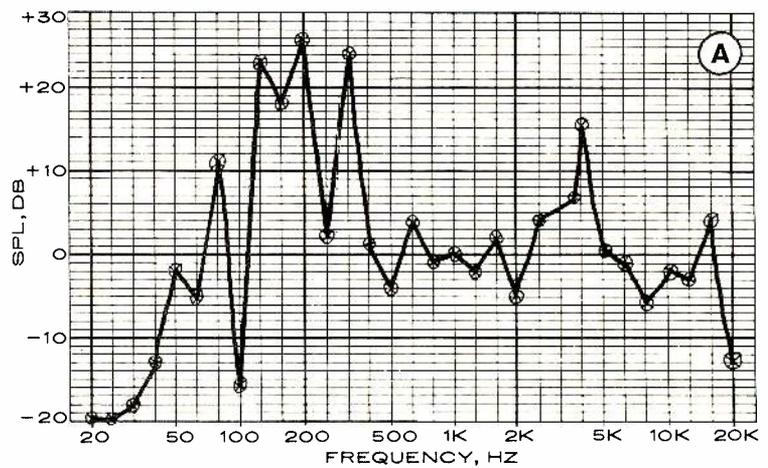
EQUALIZERS...

adjusted simultaneously initially (assuming separate adjustment is possible). Fine tuning can then be done afterward as required with individual control adjustments.

Some recordings will sound best with additional boosts or cuts, especially in the treble area. Most loudspeakers could use a little deep-bass boost—provided it does not lead to overload. One should be careful about overdriving tweeters also, because the overload condition might not be evident until the moment the tweeter burns out. Therefore, any boost beyond 3 dB or so should be applied very cautiously unless your speakers are known to be *very* robust. Keep in mind also that every additional 3 dB of boost means *doubling* the power demand on the amplifier. That being the case, it's easy to find yourself asking more of an amplifier than it is capable of delivering. When an amplifier is driven beyond its power rating it "clips" the waveform, and such clipping (which generates much high-frequency energy) is the prime cause of tweeter burnout even if the boost is applied in the bass or midrange rather than in the treble range.

So much for adjusting by ear. For those who prefer working with instruments, the best place to start is the owner's manual supplied with the equalizer, following the procedures outlined therein very carefully. A test record is the usual signal source, and a calibrated microphone is used to make measurements.

If the results of an instrumented adjustment are disappointing, try moving the microphone or sound-level meter around to several positions within a foot or so of where your head is normally located while listening. Make *averaged* settings for these positions rather than relying on only one position. The reason for this was mentioned earlier: a room's standing-wave pattern can change radically with small changes in position. And since the ear's directional- and binaural-perception characteristics are not duplicated by a microphone, be prepared to fine-tune the equalization by ear. Also, distortion bothers the human ear, and its presence may therefore dictate a treble cut; the microphone, remember, responds only to frequency. Some experimentation and a little ear training are all that are required in order to use an equalizer to solve many of the sonic problems that arise during recording in the studio and during reproduction in your home. □

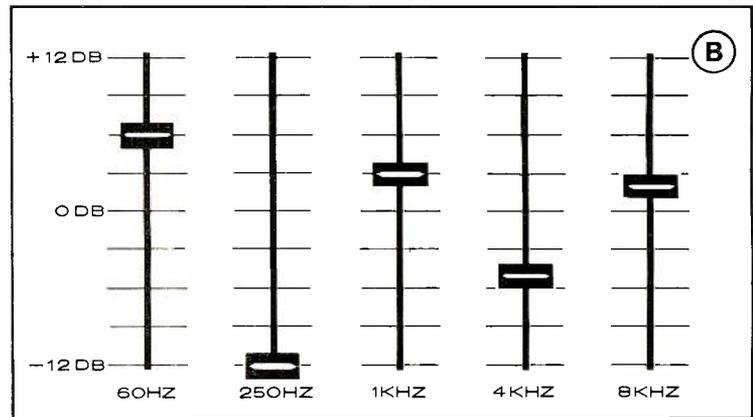


Provides disco "punch" to drums

Adds warmth

Enhances solo voice, adds presence

Adds "liveness," enhances high-frequency transients



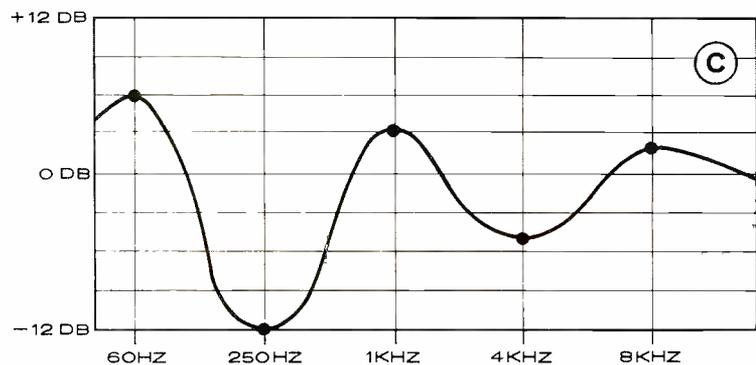
Cuts back hum or heavy low bass

Minimizes boomy or "chesty" quality

Eliminates nasal or excessively forward quality

Minimizes harshness, shrillness

Reduces record and tape noise



(A) A hand-drawn curve showing the frequency response of a typical room-plus-equipment combination. The narrow dips and peaks (at frequencies basically determined by microphone placement and room dimensions) are not as audible as the major "trends" such as the rise between 70 and 400 Hz. (B) Compensating equalization is applied by a typical five-band equalizer in an effort to flatten the response of the room-plus-equipment setup of (A). Specific control settings are determined by the characteristics of the equalizer used. (C) Curve of the (approximate) compensations applied by the equalizer. (Noted for each of the five equalizer controls is the subjective audible effect of boosting or cutting each band of frequencies.)

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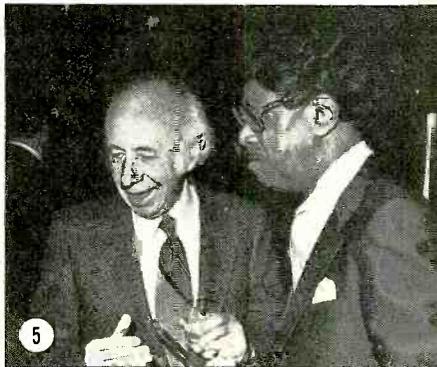
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Stereo Review Throws a Party...

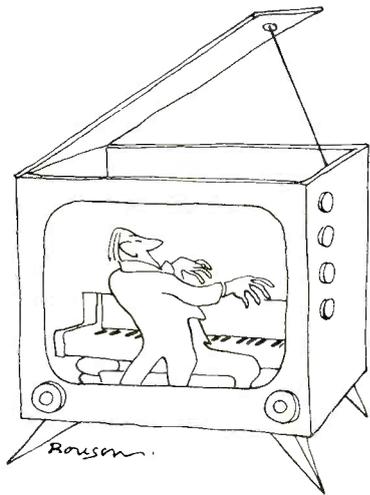
... to celebrate its Record of the Year Awards for the 1979 publishing year at New York's St. Regis Hotel on January 9. There were twelve awards and twenty-six honorable mentions (see February 1980 issue) to toast, as well as the recipient of our Award of Merit (for outstanding contributions to the quality of American musical life). This year that honor went to beloved jazz-piano superstar Earl Hines, who is seen (1) accepting the framed certificate from Katherine Handy Lewis, daughter of the composer of *St. Louis Blues*, and the original cover art for the February issue (by famed caricaturist Al Hirschfeld) from STEREO REVIEW's Publisher, Edgar Hopper. (2) Another jazz piano wizard, George Shearing, offers Hines his congratulations along with Charles Bourgeois of the Newport Jazz Festival. Hines poses with (3) singer/pianist Steve Ross and Ruth Ellington, sister of the late composer, (4) Roxanna Gordy, head of Jobete Music, Motown Records' music-publishing wing, (5) popular composer/conductor Morton Gould, (6) young pop singer Brenda Bergman of ditto and the Real-Tones, (7) *Soap Opera Digest* columnist Phoebe Tyler (a.k.a. stage, screen, and TV actress Ruth Warrick), and STEREO REVIEW Contributing Editor Ebet Roberts.

At (8) on the facing page are pop-music publicists David Salidor and Beth Wernick, and at (9) are Horace Burrell of Atlantic Records' publicity department and Bernice Hollinger—also in publicity, but with Warner Communications. (10) An apprehensive Paulette Weiss (STEREO REVIEW's Popular Mu-

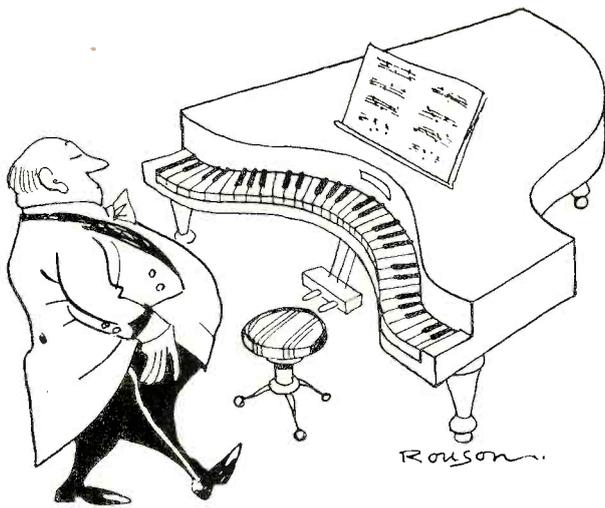
sic Editor) in the grip of notorious rock critic (and sometime musician) Lester Bangs; at right is publicist Jeffi Powell. (11) Critical standoff: harpsichordists (and critics) Igor Kipnis and Stoddard Lincoln are referred by Karl Reuling, managing editor of *Ballet News*. (12) Andy McKaie, national publicity director of Arista Records, with STEREO REVIEW's composer (and critic) in residence Eric Salzman, pop singer Phyllis Hyman, and jazz critic Chris Albertson. (13) Amanda Ruben (left) and Richard Gordon (right) of Casablanca Records' publicity department with Production Editor John Harrison. (14) Pop Music Editor Weiss is comforted by Dennis Fine, VP, Arista publicity. (15) Cabaret singer Peter Dean with protégée jazz vocalist Jeanne Churchill. (16) Tenor Jon Vickers admires his award for the Philips recording of Britten's *Peter Grimes* as Editor William Anderson looks on. (17) Another pair of vocalists, thrushes Barbara Lea and Susannah McCorkle, surprised with Research Editor Richard Sarbin. (18) All smiles are Publisher Hopper and Stephen Sondheim, whose musical *Sweeney Todd* garnered yet another award. (19) Executive Editor William Livingstone admires the tiny ruby heart gracing the cheek of Suzzi Roche of the award-winning Roche sisters. (20) And finally, singers Phyllis Hyman (her latest is "You Know How to Love Me," Arista AL 9509) and award winner Cory Daye ("Cory and Me," International BXL1-3408) (Credits: Ebet Roberts, 1, 3, 8, 13, 14, 17, 20; C. Zumwalt, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 18; Raymond Ross, 7, 9; Charlyn Zlotnick, 19.)

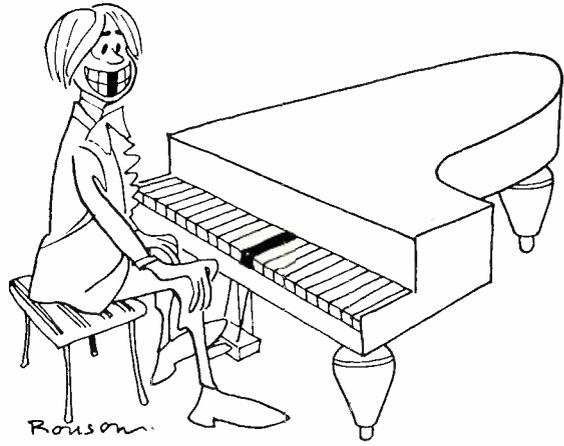






Rousson





at the Keyboard





Dexter Gordon
(Photo by Ronald G. Harris)

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH



● A Great Encounter with Hornist Dexter Gordon ●

A CERTAIN amount of jazz of the old, unfused, unadulterated, acoustical kind is always around, of course, but its dedicated players have for some time been seeing progressively fewer new faces in their audiences as the major record companies and the mass media either gave their music a back seat or ignored it altogether. One result of this neglect is that a generation of Americans has grown up believing a lot of second-rate funk to be a modern form of jazz; another has been the migration of some of our finest musicians to Europe, where jazz fans are still prepared to support players who deliver the genuine article.

High-ranking among the jazz men who crossed the Atlantic in search of proper appreciation is Dexter Gordon, now back living in the U.S. If young fans today are finally discovering that horn players who bypass printed circuits and electronic tone generators can lend their own individual, highly distinguishable (and distinguished) voices to music, it is in large measure owing to the push given Gordon by Columbia Records since his return to the States. Though it is true that we have had some of his peers in our midst all along, anyone not seeking out the pleasures of jazz with a single-minded passion could easily move about the country twiddling FM tuner knobs and clicking TV channel switches for a month or more without ever coming within hearing range of their music.

"Great Encounters" is Gordon's fourth Columbia release in as many years, and it captures the now fifty-seven-year-old tenor man in splendid form and in great company. Throughout side one that company is Johnny Griffin, another tenor man who moved to Europe in the Sixties and has recently found a new and responsive audience at home. Tenor duets (or *duels*, which is

perhaps more descriptive of what actually goes on) have been "fought" by Messrs. Gordon and Griffin for many years. They occasionally engaged each other in these crowd-pleasing skirmishes while on the Continent, and both have taken on other formidable opponents in their American past. In fact, Gordon faced another tenor as far back as 1947, when he teamed up with the late Wardell Gray to make, among other marks, a Dial recording called "The Chase," a classic example of the

"... a generation of Americans has grown up believing a lot of second-rate funk to be a modern form of jazz."

genre. Subsequent Gordon challengers have included Teddy Edwards, Leo Parker, Don Byas, and Ben Webster; according to witnesses, and judging by the recordings that exist of some of these meetings, the score for all of them is just about even.

Griffin is best known for his long association with former Basie tenor player Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis. It was

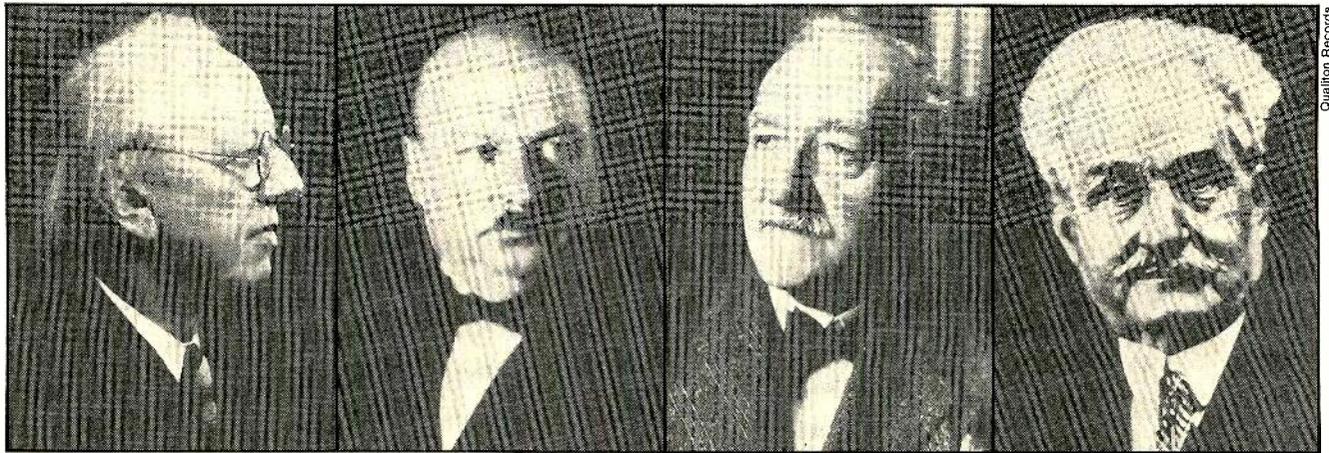
as co-leader with Davis of a foot-stomping, goosebump-producing quintet that Johnny Griffin first gained wide attention in 1960. The Griffin/Davis group lasted some two years, and it was immediately following its breakup that Griffin made his move to Europe.

The present Gordon/Griffin encounter was captured for posterity at New York's Carnegie Hall on September 23, 1978 (coincidentally, the date would have been John Coltrane's fifty-second birthday), and it starts off with *Blues Up and Down*, a tune that was created and recorded (for Prestige) by tenorists Gene Ammons and Sonny Stitt in 1950 and has since become a warhorse of tenor battles. It gets a rousing reading as Gordon and Griffin trade bars in a fashion that makes their repeated quotes from Irving Berlin's *Anything You Can Do (I Can Do Better)* the most apt of interjections. Here, as on *Cake*, the Gordon tune that completes the first side of the album, the spotlight remains on the two tenors throughout for a surging display of proficiency, style, and acrobatic grace.

The other half of the album features the same rhythm section as side one—pianist George Cables, bassist Rufus Reid, and drummer Eddie Gladden—with Woody Shaw, Curtis Fuller, and singer Eddie Jefferson added on two selections, *Gordon's Diggin' In* and the 1933 standard *It's Only a Paper Moon*, both of which are heard with special Jefferson lyrics. Sandwiched in between these is the album's only slow selection, a beautiful quartet reading of Thelonious Monk's *Ruby My Dear*.

Eddie Jefferson was the first to take an improvised instrumental solo and turn it into a vocal vehicle; his special adaptation of a James Moody solo, *Moody's Mood for Love*, was written nearly thirty years ago, but it still sounds current. These tracks were re-

DEXTER GORDON: *Great Encounters*. Dexter Gordon (tenor saxophone); George Cables (piano); Rufus Reid (bass); Eddie Gladden (drums); Woody Shaw (trumpet); Curtis Fuller (trombone); Johnny Griffin (tenor saxophone); Eddie Jefferson (vocals). *Blues Up and Down*; *Cake*; *Diggin' In*; *Ruby My Dear*; *It's Only a Paper Moon*. COLUMBIA JC 35978 \$7.98, ©JCA 35978 \$7.98, ©JCT 35978 \$7.98.



Vítězslav Novák

Oskar Nedbal

Josef Foerster

Leoš Janáček

Qualiton Records

corded last year, just six months before Jefferson was murdered in a Detroit incident yet to be fully explained. At the time, he was enjoying renewed popularity, having finally found a fresh audience for his highly personal delivery and lyrics. Here he gets wonderful support from the augmented quartet, and his vocal performances are laced with solos that are in themselves a joy.

“Great Encounters” was probably not conceived as a whole, but it works as one, giving us a portrait of the great Dexter Gordon in three eminently suitable frames. Jazz has not yet, it seems, been synthesized out of existence.

—Chris Albertson

Violinist Josef Suk and Pianist Jan Panenka: Exquisite Partners in Czech Violin Sonatas

THE names Vítězslav Novák (1870-1949), Oskar Nedbal (1874-1930), and Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859-1951) will not ring many bells with American music lovers. The Czechs have a performing string quartet named for Novák, but many may have assumed the ensemble’s name came from that of its leader, Antonín Novák. *Composer* Novák’s *De Profundis*, a World War II piece for organ and orchestra, has circulated here on Supraphon import 50476. Nedbal’s operetta *Polenblut* was available in the Fifties on Urania, and his *Kavalier Waltzes*, conducted by Anton Paulik, may still be heard on Vanguard Everyman SRV-1505D. The long-lived

Foerster, remembered as a friend of Mahler (especially at the time of the composition of Mahler’s Second Symphony), is the only one of these three composers listed in the current Schwann—recordings of a wind quintet (Orion ORS 76254) and his Fourth Symphony, called *Easter* (Nonesuch H-71267). These three unfamiliar names come up now because each of these composers wrote at least one large-scale sonata for violin and piano, which Josef Suk and his longtime associate (in the Suk Trio as well as in duo recitals) Jan Panenka have recorded, together with Leoš Janáček’s three works for their instruments, in a two-disc Supraphon set labeled, reasonably enough, “Czech Violin Sonatas.” They are all fascinating discoveries, and the impact of discovering them all together is therefore all the more striking.

Novák and Nedbal both composed their respective violin sonatas at about the time they turned twenty. Both were pupils of Dvořák, and Novák’s sonata was his first major effort in that master’s class. Foerster, like Saint-Saëns, not only lived to a remarkable age but was active in several other fields besides music; he composed two violin sonatas in his twenties, but produced the *Sonata Quasi Fantasia* recorded in this set when he was eighty-four (only thirty-seven years ago). The Novák and Nedbal sonatas, as one would expect from young composers in the 1890s, are both exuberantly romantic, charged with the most direct expressiveness and filled with astonishingly handsome tunes. Each is in three substantial movements. The finale of the Novák has an especially intriguing theme, rather in the shape of the *Ride of the Valkyries*, which alternates with fanciful folk-flavored material—the surprise being that the folk flavor sounds less like Novák’s famous teacher, or anything we might recognize as Czech, than like the Nor-

wegian pieces by Edvard Grieg. This unexpected likeness turns up in the Nedbal sonata as well, but in both cases it is only incidental to an effective outpouring of a nature more personal than nationalistic.

The more mature sonata of Foerster, as one might also expect, is more trim in its dimensions and more controlled in its expressiveness, but its nature, too, is highly romantic—in this case with an emphasis on sweetness and nostalgia rather than the sometimes impetuous drama of the two youthful works just discussed. The Janáček sonata, of course, is a relatively familiar work, recorded most recently by Sergiu Luca and Paul Schoenfeld in another collection of “Czech Music for Violin” (Nonesuch H-71350), together with works of Dvořák and Smetana, which was one of the highlights of Teresa Sterne’s final year or two as Nonesuch’s remarkably creative director. Suk and Panenka give an incredibly eloquent and deeply felt performance of this work—and give us, in the bargain, Janáček’s two shorter works for violin and piano, the Romance in E Major (which I don’t recall encountering on a record before) and the *Dumka* in C Major (once available on an old Westminster mono recording by Walter Barylli and Franz Holetschek).

It is interesting to speculate on whose idea it was to record all these works. Perhaps some Czech musical authorities felt it was time to unearth them and asked Suk to do it. From the sound of the performances, though, I would imagine the project came about on Suk’s own initiative, born of long acquaintance with the material and genuine affection for all of it. No violinist active today has a sweeter tone than Suk, none can manifest more passion on behalf of music he really believes in, and the exquisite completeness of his partnership with Panenka is by now an

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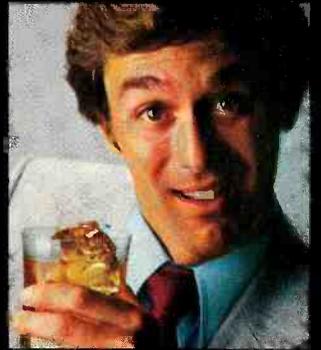
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old story. We are reminded of all these things in this set, but what stamps the music as fully worthy of such exalted musicianship is that the strongest impression of all is the one of shared discovery of so much enchanting music. The recording itself, made in September 1975, is absolutely first-rate in terms of both richness and balance, and the disc surfaces are clean.

—Richard Freed

NOVÁK: *Sonata in D Minor for Violin and Piano*. **NEDBAL:** *Sonata in B Minor for Violin and Piano, Op. 9*. **FOERSTER:** *Sonata Quasi Fantasia for Violin and Piano, Op. 117*. **JANÁČEK:** *Romance in E Major for Violin and Piano; Sonata for Violin and Piano; Dumka in C Minor for Violin and Piano*. Josef Suk (violin); Jan Panenka (piano). SUPRAPHON 1 11 2341/2 two discs \$17.96 (from Qualiton Records Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Aaron Copland's Solo Piano Works in Illuminating Performances By Leo Smit

AARON COPLAND's solo-piano repertoire comprises three major works (the Variations, the Sonata, and the Fantasy), a couple of early pieces (notably the Passacaglia), and several little-known shorter works (notably the Four Piano Blues, which has been unac-

countably neglected). If we rule out the two early works, the rest fall neatly into one of two categories: the shorter pieces are in a more or less popular mode, while the big works are in Copland's "serious" style.

The 1930 Variations sounds quite modern today, and the Fantasy is strongly influenced by serialism and twelve-tone music. In his serious moods Copland is not to be trifled with: these are big, heroic pieces, and the Variations, at least, is an unquestioned masterpiece. But the *magnum opus*—literally—is the Fantasy, a half-hour of tremendous musical seriousness and scope. When it came out in 1957, pundits wagged their tongues: Copland has given in to the serialists, they muttered. Well . . . yes and no. By now it is obvious that a big, dissonant, block-like harmonic style was an integral part of Copland's musical thinking much earlier. And so was hard-driving rhythmic music—it is very close to the Short Symphony and not so very far removed from the "popular" ballet scores. The Fantasy receives a very dynamic large-scale performance in a new Columbia recording by Leo Smit—perhaps the most remarkable in a two-disc set of impressive performances.

Remarkable too, in its own way, is the pianist's reading of the early Passacaglia, a piece that achieves the status of a major Copland work through this solid performance. Smit is on less sure ground, however, with the occasional pieces. There are a surprising number of them, including several bits of obvious *Gebrauchsmusik* written for young pianists, a charming group of piano blues written over a period of more than twenty years, and, finally, a curious *Night Thoughts (Homage to*

Ives). This most recent work—it was written in 1972 for the Van Cliburn piano competition—is a curious amalgam of popular style with serious, dissonant elements. Perhaps this reflective, somewhat melancholy piece really belongs with the big serious works—a fourth to be added to the Big Three. It is not as immediately impressive as the others, but it does seem to grow on you. Copland's output in recent years has been very slight, so a work like this, full though it may be of sweat and gloom, is doubly precious.

Leo Smit, an important composer "in his own right" (to quote another, rather different, contemporary composer), is also a teacher, writer, conductor, birder (!), and, not least, an excellent pianist. He first presented the piano works of Copland as a full-evening concert program in 1977, and it has achieved an appropriate recorded form here.

This is such an important and (by and large) successful production that I hate to quibble, but the piano sound is only "all right"—close and often rather ugly. Also, it would have been useful to know more about the music. Columbia has chosen instead to print a transcript of a discussion between Copland and Smit that proves to be far less illuminating than the music and its performances are.

—Eric Salzman

COPLAND: *Music for Solo Piano. Scherzo Humoristique—The Cat and Mouse; Passacaglia; Four Piano Blues; Piano Variations; The Young Pioneers; Sunday Afternoon Music; Piano Sonata; Midsummer Nocturne; Piano Fantasy; Down a Country Lane; In Evening Air; Night Thoughts (Homage to Ives)*. Leo Smit (piano). COLUMBIA M2 35901 two discs \$11.98.

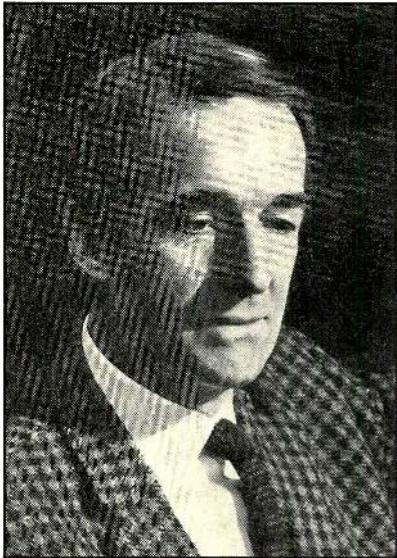
George Malcolm Conducts the Bach Orchestral Suites For Modern Tastes

AMONG the more than a dozen available recordings of the Bach orchestral suites (or *overtures*), a newly released Merlin album of the last two by George Malcolm and the New Chamber Soloists is outstanding. Malcolm is best known as a harpsichordist,

Composer/pianist Leo Smit
talks with composer Aaron Copland



Jim Houghton/Columbia Records



Lotte Meiner Graf/Hilber int.

GEORGE MALCOLM: a fine conception

in which capacity he still plays an instrument of a type now much frowned upon by purists, one with pedals to manipulate its colorful variety of stops, including a sixteen-footer. Malcolm's instrumental background has acquainted him with historically authentic performance practice, but personal preference has encouraged him to adapt the old style to modern taste as well. As a conductor, he has done precisely that in this Bach recording with a chamber orchestra of modern instruments.

The first movements of the suites—the *overtures* proper—are particularly striking; double dotting is effectively employed, and the tempos, rather brisk ones, achieve a perfect compromise between vitality and dignity. Fortunately, this aura of “rightness” is true of the ensuing movements as well. Moreover, it is a pleasure to hear Malcolm's fine conception of the music executed by a group of top-drawer performers. The articulation is clear but not exaggerated, and, most important, the grand line is preserved. The work of the trumpets is especially exciting; the players have cultivated two styles of playing, and they both add brilliance and blend unobtrusively into the delicate textures of the dances.

Merlin is a small British label and the album is an import. Though not quite as exceptional as the performances, the recording and pressing are excellent. Perhaps \$16 might seem a little high, but be assured this record is worth it.

—Stoddard Lincoln

J. S. BACH: Suites for Orchestra, Nos. 3 and 4 (BWV 1068-69). New Chamber Soloists, George Malcolm cond. MERLIN MRF 78901 \$16 (from Merlin Records, 1827 General Beauregard, Baton Rouge, La. 70810).

Chrissie Hynde and The Pretenders: A Hot Little Group That Packs a Wallop

THE Pretenders are an English band, but they are fronted by an expatriate American named Chrissie Hynde who just happens to be one of the most physically striking rock-and-roll women in recent memory. More to the point, she also happens to have what I think is the finest white female rock singing voice in the history of the music. A fairly astonishing claim, I admit, but I think you'll agree after hearing about fifteen seconds of her band's debut.

She's a highly theatrical singer, to be sure—a vibrato so lush you could drown in it (if she didn't use it so sparingly) and heavy breathing that makes Donna Summer sound as chaste as the Singing Nun. None of this passion ever seems faked, however, and it is coupled with an uncanny ability to suggest the styles of more great rock and r-&-b singers, famous or obscure, than you can probably remember. At various times on this frequently brilliant record Chrissie conjures up the Shirelles' Shirley recalling what her *Mama Said*; Claudine Clark heartbroken because she sees the *Party Lights*; Brenda Holloway coming to the depressing conclusion that *Every Little Bit Hurts*; Ronnie Spector *Walking in the Rain* and falling hopelessly in love; Sandi Shaw, blonde, barefoot, and oh-so-cool on *Shindig*, warning that the *Girl Don't Come*; the pre-women's-lib Dusty Springfield putting her hair in curlers as she sits *Wishing and Hoping*; Sandy

Denny, regal and passionate, spitting out the tragic tale of *Matty Groves*; Joni Mitchell pining away in front of the radio in a *Rainy Night House*; and even Patti Smith curling your toes with the impossibly beautiful dream lust of *Kimberly*. So evocative is her sound that the list could go on and on. And yet, astonishingly, she always comes out sounding like herself, perhaps because, unlike most of the women listed above, Chrissie is not afraid to let you know that she knows how *good* she is. For confirmation, just check out this album's *Brass in Pocket*, a sensational neo-disco thing in which she tells a prospective beau in no uncertain terms that she deserves his attention because she is, quite frankly, “special.” From anybody else that would be obnoxious, but Chrissie has the goods to back up the claim; in fact, it seems so obvious you wonder why the guy is bothering to play hard to get. Who *is* this dummy daring to resist a Force of Nature?

The other Pretenders have the unenviable job of trying to keep up with Ms. Hynde, and the wonder is that they succeed at all, let alone practically all the time. Quite apart from Chrissie's heartskips-a-beat vocals, this is one of the hottest little rock bands going, one capable of moving from the pop heaven of the utterly gorgeous *Kid* (those tomtoms! that Duane Eddy guitar!) to the sizzling metallic hard rock of *The Wait* to the Phil Spectorish glories of their remodeling of Ray Davies' seldom-heard *Stop Your Sobbing* with equal kineticism and style. Which is to say that this is a group that packs quite a wallop. I'd go out on a limb and call them the first great band of the Eighties if it weren't for a few niggling little criticisms.

To begin with, the songs here that

PRETENDERS: Chambers, Hynde, Farndon, and Scott



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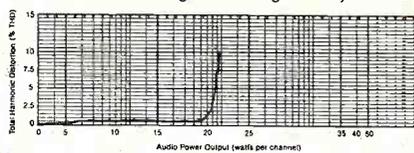


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have already had exposure as English singles are a little too obviously superior to the rest of the material, which probably doesn't bode well for their writing in the future. Second, and more damningly, for all the trendiness of the package (this isn't New Wave or Power Pop exactly, but it's close enough), there is a lingering air of arena-act excess here. I suspect a lot of that comes from Chrissie, who as an American Midwesterner has probably seen enough gross heavy-metal pros to know the value of pandering to an audience. In other words, there's a real schizophrenia at work here, as if the band hadn't sorted out whether they want to be the unique Sixties Brit/American r-&-b/pop-rock synthesis their better numbers suggest, or merely an Aerosmith clone with a tough chick standing in for Steve Tyler. It's my hope, of course, that they'll opt for the former.

But none of this should dissuade you from getting this album immediately. Even its low points are worth hearing if only for Chrissie's r-&-b *authority*, and as for the rest . . . well, be good to yourself: let yourself fall in love with the most seductive voice you've ever heard riding effortlessly over a wall of loud guitars and drums. —Steve Simels

PRETENDERS. Chrissie Hynde (guitar, vocals); Pete Farndon (bass, vocals); James Honeyman Scott (guitars, keyboards, vocals); Martin Chambers (drums). *Precious; The Phone Call; Up the Neck; Tattooed Love Boys; Space Invader; The Wait; Stop Your Sobbing; Kid; Private Life; Brass in Pocket; Lovers of Today; Mystery Achievement.* SIRE SRK 6083 \$7.98, ©M8S 6083 \$7.98, ©M5S 6083 \$7.98.

The High-Flying Emotions: Technical Facility Applied to Quality Music

THINK it likely that as long as the Emotions continue to use Maurice White as their producer, they will remain among the top popular singing groups of the day. Their innate talent is attested to by a long professional career that dates practically from infancy (these three sisters from Chicago were once known as the Hutchinson Sunbeams), but it is White who has pressed them to explore the outer limits of their vocal abilities. This is in keeping with a

pattern he established long ago with his own vocal-instrumental group, Earth, Wind and Fire.

Not since the days of the castrati have men attained such spectacular soprano heights as the members of EW&F have, and the fact that White has been able to encourage women to sing, without apparent strain, in even higher registers is more remarkable than it might seem. Most popular artists simply cannot stretch their voices in this way, but if there is the slightest hint that the ability exists, White will have them reaching for the sky.

Employing another device he found effective with EW&F, White has

is that the merits of one or two tracks are usually so outstanding that everything else in the set seems to be designed principally as a setting or a build-up for them, and such is the case here. Although the title track, *On & On*, and *Layed Back* are good songs that wear well with repeated listenings, the peak is reached with *Where Is Your Love?*, clearly the best song the Emotions have recorded since *Best of My Love*, the number-one hit that firmly established the trio back in 1977 as something more formidable musically than "just another girl group." Ross Vanelli is the composer of this one, but it is the Maurice White touch that



THE EMOTIONS: Jeanette, Sheila, and Wanda

taught the Emotions to sing percussively. They attack each of the notes swiftly and decisively, as if they were targets, punching them out with such precision that the music simply rings. These vocal effects are echoed in the instrumentals, with their complementary emphasis on crisp, percussive rhythms.

None of this technical facility would mean much, of course, if the music itself were not quality stuff. That it definitely is in the group's new Columbia album "Come into Our World." It is made up of the sort of briskly invigorating and tuneful songs that reach right out and grab your ear. One characteristic of the song-album format, however,

makes it such a knockout, with its almost pyrotechnical display of musical swoops and sweeps. Still, though White may well be the Svengali behind this trio of Triblys, none of his magic would work if it were not for the energy and polish supplied and applied by the Emotions. —Phyl Garland

THE EMOTIONS: *Come into Our World.* The Emotions (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *What's the Name of Your Love?; Cause I Love You; Come into My World; On & On; I Should Be Dancing; Where Is Your Love?; The Movie; Layed Back; Yes, I Am.* COLUMBIA JC 36149 \$7.98, ©JCA 36149 \$7.98, ©JCT 36149 \$7.98.

Popular Discs and Tapes



Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • EDWARD BUXBAUM • NOEL COPPAGE • PHYL GARLAND
PAUL KRESH • PETER REILLY • STEVE SIMELS • JOEL VANCE

AEROSMITH: *Night in the Ruts.* Aerosmith (vocals and instrumentals). *Reefer Head Woman; Cheese Cake; Mia; Three Mile Smile; Remember (Walking in the Sand)*; and four others. COLUMBIA FC 36050 \$8.98, © FCA 36050 \$8.98, © FCT 36050 \$8.98.

Performance: **Crud**
Recording: **Loud**

You may have noticed a photograph of Aerosmith's Steve Tyler appearing at an anti-nuke benefit concert in January's "Pop Rotogravure." Tyler is apparently concerned about energy, so I'd like to make the following proposal: since record vinyl is a petroleum byproduct, let Aerosmith retire and allow all of its existing albums to go out of print. I don't know how much oil this would save, but it would probably be enough to keep Aerosmith's fans warm through one more winter. This noble sacrifice will serve humanity, the U.S., and a reviewer who has tried, with Christian charity, to be good-natured about the group's execrable writing, sloppy playing, and bristly offensive noise level. *J.V.*

JOHNNY CASH: *A Believer Sings the Truth.* Johnny Cash (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Wings in the Morning; Gospel Boogie; Over the Next Hill; He's Alive; I've Got Jesus in My Soul;*

When He Comes; I'm a Newborn Man; Oh Come, Angel Band; and twelve others. CACHET CL3-9001 two discs \$10.98, © CL8-9001 \$10.98, © CL9-9001 \$10.98.

Performance: **Coffee-table classic**
Recording: **Very good**

It is logical that Johnny Cash, with that idiomatic voice, should do a gospel album, and that he'd give it often-rollicking secular arrangements in the manner of Willie Nelson's "The Troublemaker." But this is so *big*. Well, it came out just before Christmas, and no doubt many of Cash's long-term hard-country fans—much of the gospel-album market—saw it as a dynamite alternative to the coffee-table book as a gift to give or (better still) receive. And indeed it is. It should have some appeal beyond the gospel-album market also, for it includes some off-beat, modern-slant songs as well as standards, and the guest talents include, among others, the lovely voices of Cash's sister-in-law Anita Carter and his daughter Roseanne Cash.

The pieces range from the folkie, Weavers-oriented *Children Go Where I Send Thee* through several Baptist and Methodist standards to new songs by the likes of Billy Joe Shaver and Cash himself. The instrumental backing is simple and right; horns are brought in where horns are needed, and a single acoustic guitar is about all you hear where *that* is appropriate. And Cash's singing is convincing. He is indeed a believer—a big supporter in recent years of fundamentalist preacher Jimmy Snow, son of country music's Hank—and he *sounds* like a believer. But he's not preachy about it. Sentimental, perhaps—he dedicates the album (on a new label) to his mother and writes, "This is my proudest work"—but not preachy. The album cycles through various states of reverence, but its consciousness is basically everyday-life secular, and, all in all, staunchly musical. *N.C.*

DAVID ALLAN COE: *Compass Point.* David Allan Coe (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Heads or Tails; 3*

Time Loser; Gone; Honey Don't; Lost; and four others. COLUMBIA JC 36277 \$7.98, © CACHET CL3-9001 two discs \$10.98, © CL8-9001 \$10.98, © CL9-9001 \$10.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Above average**

This is Coe's best since "David Allan Coe Rides Again," and the most impressive thing about it is how straightforward and free of claptrap the production is. The thing was recorded in Nassau (Coe lives in the Florida Keys nowadays and likes to spruce up his image with nautical garb), but they brought in Billy Sherrill—he of the Nashville Sound gimmicks and string sweetening—to produce. Lo and behold, he just let Coe's band, which is a pretty good modern country ensemble, play. So the sound behind Coe has the feel, often including the spontaneity, of a club date. The songs themselves aren't as wild or as exciting as some of Coe's earlier ones. They're also straightforward, often derivative and workaday, but they're solid; there isn't an embarrassment in the batch. The problem, of course, is that Coe has set us up to assume that being outrageous is what he's good at, and now he seems less interested in being outrageous. In that sense, this one is listenable enough to at least start changing people's expectations without turning them off. Coe deserves more success than he's had, but he also, I feel, can do better work than he's done so far. Maybe this is a kind of gathering of energy. *N.C.*

TYRONE DAVIS: *Can't You Tell It's Me.* Tyrone Davis (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Can't You Tell It's Me; Be with Me; Heart Failure;* and three others. COLUMBIA JC 36230 \$7.98, © JCA 36230 \$7.98, © JCT 36230 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good, but . . .**
Recording: **Good**

I don't think I've consciously heard a Tyrone Davis record since *Turn Back the Hands of Time*, a hit single from the 1960s. Davis struck me then as a smooth and ingratiating singer, and he's lost none of his

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = open-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓢ = stereo cassette
- Ⓢ = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓢ = digital-master recording
- Ⓢ = direct-to-disc

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓢ

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

touch on this outing. What spoils the album is a programming gimmick so old and ineffective that I thought it had been retired years ago: they've put all the ballads on one side and all the jump stuff on the other. Since the upbeat material is halfhearted disco it's a total flop—disco is an all-or-nothing affair. This side's being unlistenable came as a rude disappointment, since I thoroughly enjoyed Davis' skillful handling of the ballads on side one and was looking forward to more. *J.V.*

THE EMOTIONS: *Come into Our World* (see *Best of the Month*, page 91)

DAN FOGELBERG: *Phoenix*. Dan Fogelberg (vocals, keyboards, synthesizers, guitar, percussion); instrumental accompaniment. *Tullamore Dew; Gypsy Wind; Face the Fire; Beggar's Game; Longer;* and five others. EPIC FE 35634 \$8.98, © FEA 35634 \$8.98, © FET 35634 \$8.98.

Performance: **Easy and familiar**
Recording: **Good**

Dan Fogelberg makes familiar, predictable music—on a surprisingly high technical level—that goes down as easily as a cheeseburger and fries. It's about as memorable too, even though he has a distinct fondness for strained lyrics ("I saw her first in a beggar's game/Her eyes were wild but her laugh was tame . . .") and even though his synthesizer work often reaches virtuoso heights. The best song here is the title track, but even that sounds like something you might have heard ten or twelve years ago (and enjoyed very much then). Y'know, like that really great cheeseburger you had in a little joint in . . . well, you can't remember exactly where, but you do remember that you liked it. As cheeseburgers go.

P.R.

DOBIE GRAY. Dobie Gray (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *In Crowd; Stumblin' Back to You; Sunny Day to Rain; You Can't Keep a Good Man Down; Fool, Fool;* and four others. INFINITY INF 9016 \$7.98, © INFT 9016 \$7.98, © INFC 9016 \$7.98.

Performance: **Comfortable**
Recording: **Good**

Something about Dobie Gray reminds me of an affectionate lapdog. His records of late have been dependably good, emphasizing soothing fare about sunny days and love affairs getting better or worse. Stylistically there is an easygoing, countryish feel to them. They are comfortable. Gray has a rounded, almost cushiony voice and a ring of sincerity in the way he handles lyrics. Of course, this is not the most *exciting* kind of musical company to have, so for contrast here he makes a stab at an up-tempo number, an extended disco version of his old hit *The In Crowd*. It feels like a shoe on the wrong foot. Perhaps he should just stick to being comfortable. *P.G.*

TOM T. HALL: *Ol' T's in Town*. Tom T. Hall (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *The Last Country Song; Old Habits Die Hard; Jesus on the Radio (Daddy on the Phone); The Old Side of Town; Greed Kills More People Than Whiskey; The Different Feeling;* and four others.

RCA AHL1-3495 \$7.98, © AHS1-3495 \$7.98, © AHK1-3495 \$7.98.

Performance: **Getting back**
Recording: **Clear**

Tom T. Hall's muse, who's been moping around like a walleed calf through a few albums, seems here to be getting back to business, recasting Hall in the role that suits him—pop sociologist/cracker-barrel philosopher of the New/Old South. Hall isn't as subtle here as he can be—although the directness and plainness go with the rather hard country sound and flavor he's given the album—but at least he's back to noting what goes on in the world. Noteworthy among his notes are *Jesus on the Radio (Daddy on the Phone)* and *Greed Kills More People Than Whiskey*. The former illuminates a familiar scenario in the Good

Old Boy culture, in which the Little Woman, who's got or always had religion, has the task of policing Daddy, who likes to drink beer in bars. The latter is a Tom-listening song, of the *Faster Horses* mode, in which a grizzled elder lays down some wisdom: ". . . he was a cowboy, about fifty years old in a big Western hat/I said, 'Sir, did you say greed kills more people than whiskey?/ If my taxi don't come tell me more about that.'"

The Last Country Song warns cryptically about dissension in the genre, but the main thing about it is the lively, catchy sound it has. The whole first side of the album, in fact, will keep you entertained as well as informed. The second side sags, though, with inconsequential love songs; its two exercises in pop-soc, one about a marriage breakup and one about its aftermath



BMI/Paul Schumacher

John Williams with 20th Century-Fox music director Lionel Newman (yes, of those Newmans) at a reception following Williams' Carnegie Hall debut as new conductor of the Boston Pops.

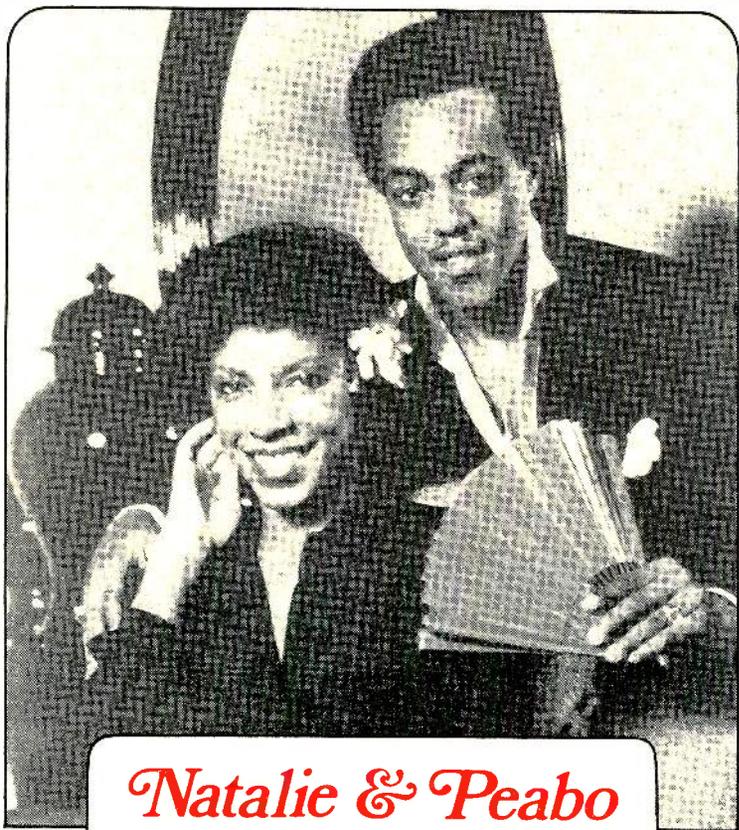
John Williams' "1941"

I HAVE not seen the "comedy spectacular" *1941*, which apparently treats World War II as the greatest fun war since the Crusades, nor, taking my cue from the few movie critics I trust, do I intend to. But I have heard John Williams' introductory *March* for the soundtrack, first as an encore at Mr. Williams' debut as new permanent conductor for the Boston Pops Orchestra at Carnegie Hall on January 22, and subsequently on the soundtrack recording itself. It is, in brief, an absolute wowser, the best thing on the whole Carnegie Hall program, and all you need to hear of the film score (it is really a kind of overture that contains the thematic seeds for the whole works). It is gorgeously orchestrated, no surprise for anyone who has heard Mr. Williams' other film scores, and such a sassy, wise-cracking *American* musical utterance that you want to stand up and cheer. It contains sly intimations of the immortal *Col. Bogey*, *Stars and Stripes Forever*, and other touchstones

of the march genre, plus the most graceful interpolations of jazz inflections imaginable—the whole studded with repeated reminders that the march is, after all, a dance rhythm (don't be surprised if it turns up in your local disco). Mr. Williams seems to have rather a flair for this kind of thing (the *Superman* march was also on the Carnegie program), and I would not be at all surprised if what we have here is (among other useful things) a New American March King—in which case this album will soon become a collector's item.

—William Anderson

1941 (John Williams). Original-soundtrack recording. Orchestra, John Williams cond. *March; The Invasion; The Sentries; Riot at the U.S.O.; To Hollywood and Glory; Swing, Swing, Swing; The Battle of Hollywood; Ferris Wheel Sequence; Finale.* ARISTA AL 9510 \$8.98, © A8T 9510 \$8.98, © ACT 9510 \$8.98.



Capitol Records/Flye

Natalie & Peabo

In the past, few black singers managed to cross over the thin but clearly defined gap separating identifiably black music from the popular mainstream where a broader audience and greater commercial rewards might be reaped. Probably the most successful of all was the late Nat "King" Cole, an excellent jazz pianist and singer who, more than twenty years ago, managed to bridge that gap while holding his grip on audiences on both sides. Today his daughter, Natalie Cole, has accomplished much the same remarkable feat, though hers is a smaller talent being marketed in stylistically far less restrictive times.

Her albums and singles commonly cross over, for everybody seems to like her—and not only because she's Nat's daughter. Though her style owes more to such soul predecessors as Aretha Franklin than to the silken warblings of her father, Natalie Cole sings with a buoyant effervescence that makes all her albums welcome visitors to the turntable. She has sufficient taste to know exactly how far she can go without forcing or overdriving her material, which is carefully tailored to suit those who like their soul with a touch of class. Yet a feeling of spontaneity prevails; her singing never seems studied or stilted. Hers is a fine act for other aspiring crossover artists to emulate—or to latch onto.

On her new Capitol album, "We're the Best of Friends," she is paired with Peabo Bryson, my choice as the best male soul balladeer to emerge within the past two years. Partnering Natalie Cole is a promising

course for him to pursue, as he is a sweet singer who often incorporates a lyrical softness into the songs he writes. Bryson is sufficiently gifted in his own right to stand tall with Ms. Cole on this outing without having to coast along on her vocal coattails.

On several tracks each takes a chorus as soloist, then they join in some deliciously pleasing harmony. On others, they strike out together at a healthy pace, strutting through the song like a dance team that has worked together for years. They are almost equally represented with original compositions, and Bryson also produced several selections. The hit opener, *Gimme Some Time*, a Cole original, is catchy but forgettable. Other pieces seem to have more staying power, such as Cole's and Marvin Yancy's *This Love Affair*, which best showcases the vocal clarity and control of both singers, and *Your Lonely Heart*, an ideal crossover number with a countryish flavor.

Natalie Cole's star is already firmly set in the pop firmament, and this seamlessly smooth collaboration should aid Peabo Bryson in finding a suitable place to hang his.

—Phyl Garland

NATALIE COLE/PEABO BRYSON: *We're the Best of Friends.* Natalie Cole, Peabo Bryson (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *What You Won't Do for Love; We're the Best of Friends; I Want to Be Where You Are; Love Will Find You; Let's Fall in Love/You Send Me; This Love Affair; Your Lonely Heart; Gimme Some Time.* CAPITOL SW-12019 \$7.98, © 8XW-12019 \$7.98, © 4XW-12019 \$7.98.

(in which the daddy can't get into his former house to see his child), are too sentimental to indicate that Hall's muse is fully recovered. The country, acoustic-dominated back-up is generally better than the average nowadays, and sometimes much better. There's a back-to-the-basics motif to this one, and such moves have awakened muses before. Now to prod the old girl back to her former alertness. N.C.

HEAD EAST: *A Different Kind of Crazy.* Head East (vocals and instrumentals). *Specialty; Keep a Secret; Feelin' Is Right; Lonelier Now; Morning;* and five others. A&M SP-4795 \$7.98, © 8T-4795 \$7.98, © CS-4795 \$7.98.

Performance: **Okay**
Recording: **Good**

Head East represents some kind of acme of geographic pluralism. The band started in the Midwest, but it's managed by a Los Angeles firm; this album was recorded in Atlanta, but the mastering was done in New York; the Head East fan club is in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Head East's sound is a mixture of L.A. smoothness and Midwestern primitivism. The group is competent but not startling, average by L.A. standards, better than most of the current Midwestern outfits—for whatever that's worth. J.V.

HIROSHIMA. Hiroshima (vocals and instrumentals). *Lion Dance; Roomful of Mirrors; Kokoro; Long Time Love;* and four others. ARISTA AB 4252 \$7.98, © A8T 4252 \$7.98, © ACT 4252 \$7.98.

Performance: **Okay**
Recording: **Good**

Hiroshima is a group of Japanese-American youngsters playing a variety of Eastern and Western instruments. Their overall sound is polite pop/jazz with an occasional reference to rock thrown in—something on the order of Sergio Mendes. It's pleasant enough to listen to until it fades into the background of the consciousness as most mood music does. The vocal styles are based on Sixties lounge-act jazz warbling, which also fades pretty fast. Not a bad album, but ten minutes after listening to it you've forgotten most of what you heard. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RUPERT HOLMES: *Partners in Crime.* Rupert Holmes (vocals, keyboards, saxophones, synthesizers); instrumental accompaniment. *Escape; Nearsighted; Lunch Hour; Drop It; Him;* and five others. MCA/INFINITY MCA-9020 \$7.98, © MCAT-9020 \$7.98, © MCAC-9020 \$7.98.

Performance: **Magical**
Recording: **Good**

Rupert Holmes is no newcomer to vinyl. In addition to his four previous LPs, which have garnered a sizable cult following, he is known as a producer, most notably for Barbra Streisand (he produced her "Lazy Afternoon" album, and he's guilty of writing some of the music for *A Star Is Born*). More than anything else, though, he is a songwriter, a musical craftsman with a sense of style and a sense of humor.

"Partners in Crime," Holmes' fifth al-

bum, is full of magic tricks, rhyming rabbits jumping out of funny hats. His recent Top-10 hit, *Escape*—about two people who get together through the personal columns because they like piña coladas—is only part of the picture. Other gems here include the title song, *Answering Machine* (the handy little devices do have their drawbacks), the lilting *The People That You Never Get to Love* (about those attractive strangers who always get off the elevator before you do), and a haunting ballad about Holmes' own poor eyesight ("I won't change my point of view/Nearsighted, all I need to see is you"). There are no happy endings here, just happy middles. Holmes casts a keen eye on the entanglements of contemporary life; he's a musical journalist, an urban storyteller who pokes fun—in all seriousness—at all our relationships. Add to that lyrical base some strong melody lines, an appropriately sparse production, and a voice that sounds like the best of the rest of us in the shower, and you've got a new musician for the masses, for all of us who spend our days battling life's machinery and wondering why the real thing just doesn't measure up to the movie version. —Rick Mitz

HORSLIPS: *Short Stories/Tall Tales.* Horslips (vocals and instrumentals). *Summer's Most Wanted Girl; Soap Opera; Amazing Offer; Rescue Me; Ricochet Man;* and five others. MERCURY SRM-1-3809 \$7.98, © 8-1-3809 \$7.98, © 4-1-3809 \$7.98.

Performance: **Uneven**
Recording: **Uneven**

This Irish pop-rock band turns in some good performances here that are undone by poor programming. *Ricochet Man* is a standout, but it's buried as the fourth cut on side one, all of whose other songs are ho-hum. Side two has the three other winners—*Summer's Most Wanted Girl, Amazing Offer,* and *Rescue Me*—all in a row, followed by *The Life You Save,* a toss-up, and *Soap Opera,* a certifiable dud. The sound is not all it could be either. The vocals are not clear enough, being mixed too closely with the thick overall band sound. The only exception is *Rescue Me,* which has a folk arrangement using only a guitar and an accordion. In all, then, there are some nice moments here, but you have to dig for them. J.V.

MAHALIA JACKSON: *Amazing Grace.* Mahalia Jackson (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Amazing Grace; A Satisfied Mind; I Complained; The Man Beyond the Clouds; God Is So Good to Me; The Bible Tells Me So; Somebody Bigger Than You and I;* and five others. COLUMBIA SPECIAL PRODUCTS/ENCORE P 14358 \$7.98.

Performance: **Historic**
Recording: **Very good**

When Mahalia Jackson died in 1972, at the age of sixty-one, she was called "the Queen" and known as "America's greatest gospel singer"; her performance of *Amazing Grace* was once described as "the pinnacle of noble expressiveness." Born in New Orleans, the daughter of a stevedore who was also a Baptist minister, Mahalia began singing in church choirs as a child. In 1927

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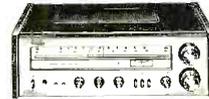
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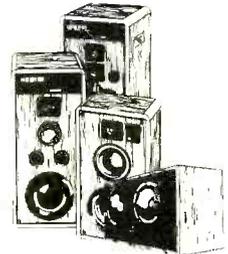
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Warner Bros. Records

LITTLE FEAT: as they were, left to right, Payne, Hayward, Clayton, George (seated), Barrère, Gradney

she went to Chicago, where she survived doing mostly menial jobs but kept singing with Baptist church groups. Her joyous gospel style was a secret not to be kept from the public forever, and her reputation slowly spread all over America and to the principal cities of Europe, leading to a famous series of Carnegie Hall concerts in the Fifties, TV appearances, and best-selling albums. In her later years she worked closely with Martin Luther King in the civil-rights movement, but she never stopped singing at jazz festivals, in concert halls, and on records, spreading through music the gospel in which she so devoutly believed.

Mahalia Jackson would never sing jazz or the blues, only gospel, but she sang that better than anybody else in the world. This reissue offers a generous sampling of the songs she most favored, from such familiar ones as *Amazing Grace*, *The Bible Tells Me So*, and *Lead On* to less familiar ones such as *There Is No Color Line Around the Rainbow* and *The Man Beyond the Clouds*. The fervor of her florid voice on this disc—with lovely backing by the Fall Jones Ensemble and the Jack Halloran Singers in several numbers—makes it hard to believe she ever really left us. It is good to hear her again. *P.K.*

LITTLE FEAT: *Down on the Farm*. Little Feat (vocals and instrumentals); Bonnie Raitt (vocals); other musicians. *Six Feet of Snow*; *Perfect Imperfection*; *Kokomo*; *Be One Now*; *Straight from the Heart*; and four others. WARNER BROS. HS 3345

\$8.98, © W8 3345 \$8.98, © W5 3345 \$8.98.

Performance: **Reined-in**
Recording: **Good**

I believe that this project, "the real last Little Feat album," was partly finished when Lowell George, who was producing it, died. In an interview with Mikal Gilmore published in *Rolling Stone* in April 1979, just before George's solo album came out, George said of the Feat: "We've attempted things outside of our reach before, with poor results." The album seems to go out of its way to help him remedy that, often assigning the Feat's sophisticated rhythm section to gentle funk-cooking, putting in more holes, augmenting the newly restrained guitars-and-slide front end with r-&b-style horns, and of course using a number of low-profile songs that seem at home in such a setting. The ones that go best on the radio are *Straight from the Heart*, written by George and keyboardist Bill Payne, which does let the guitars work out a little bit, and the title song, a novelty thing by Paul and Gabriel Barrère that gets the album off to a quirky start with a frog saying "ridip" and a person saying "shut up" for a few seconds. Beyond that, it is curiously devoid of hooks. It is deceptively simple, and it does grow on you; still, you'd probably have to be a fanatic about Little Feat to give it the time it seems to need. *N.C.*

JOHN MAYALL: *No More Interviews*. John Mayall (vocals, guitar, harmonica);

vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Hard Going Up*; *A Bigger Slice of Pie*; *Stars in the Night*; *Take Me Home Tonight*; *Wild New Lover*; and four others. DJM DJM-29 \$7.98, © DJM8-29 \$7.98, © DJMC-29 \$7.98.

Performance: **So-so**
Recording: **Good**

This is John Mayall's umpteenth album, and for the umpteenth time I hear little of interest in the latest installments of the apparently endless saga of a garrulous British blues singer who takes himself and the form too seriously. There is one good cut—*Hard Going Up* by Bettye Crutcher, who wrote some of the early Johnnie Taylor material on Stax in the Sixties—but the rest, all by Mayall and his band, is pretty dull stuff. Mayall's outfit is primarily a touring band, a second-circuit act, and they will probably forever be playing Saturday nights somewhere and sporadically releasing albums on various labels. It's not exactly a cruel fate, but it's not what I'd call exciting. Neither are the records. *J.V.*

SERGIO MENDES/BRASIL '88: *Magic Lady*. Sergio Mendes/Brasil '88 (vocals and instrumentals). *I'll Tell You*; *Let It Go*; *Magic Lady*; *Summer Dream*; and four others. ELEKTRA 6E-214 \$7.98, © ET8-214 \$7.98, © TC5-214 \$7.98.

Performance: **The pits**
Recording: **Fair**

Brasil '88 is the new name for the Sergio Mendes group that started out as Brasil '66. After experiencing this album I began to wonder whether the numbers indicate Mendes' musical I.Q. rather than the years—but that doesn't work, because this record certainly doesn't indicate a twenty-two-point improvement. I won't bore you with how good he was years ago; let me just warn you that these performances are the very pits, and Mendes' production and arrangements serve only to make them sound gummier. *P.R.*

FRANK MILLS: *Sunday Morning Suite*. Frank Mills (piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Peter Piper*; *Most People Are Nice*; *Ski Fever*; *After You, Mister Trumpet Man*; *Interlude*; *Piano Lesson*; and five others. POLYDOR PD-1-6225 \$7.98, © 8T-1-6225(A) \$7.98, © CT-1-6225(A) \$7.98.

Performance: **Bland**
Recording: **Good**

It's something of a shock to hear an instrumental album so unabashedly aimed at the background-music market. This is the kind of aural goo that's piped into elevators, airports, and fast-food emporiums, and it comes complete with liner notes that gush about how the artist and his audience go so well together.

Frank Mills is a Canadian pianist who had a hit single last year with *Music Box Dancer*, a cute ditty about as substantial as a puffball. The American market hasn't been penetrated by such a trifle since the late Sixties (rock's heyday!), when there were two: *Alley Cat* by Bent Fabric (a Dane) and *A Walk in the Black Forest* by Horst Jankowski (a German production). But now we have Frank Mills. Almost
(Continued on page 98)

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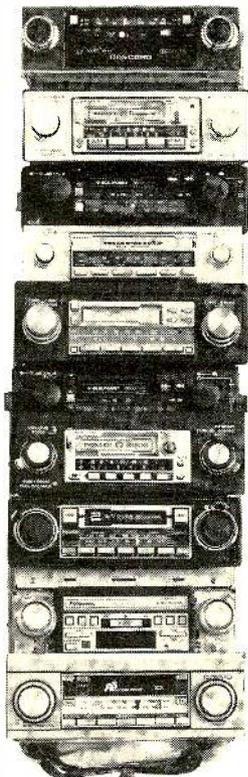
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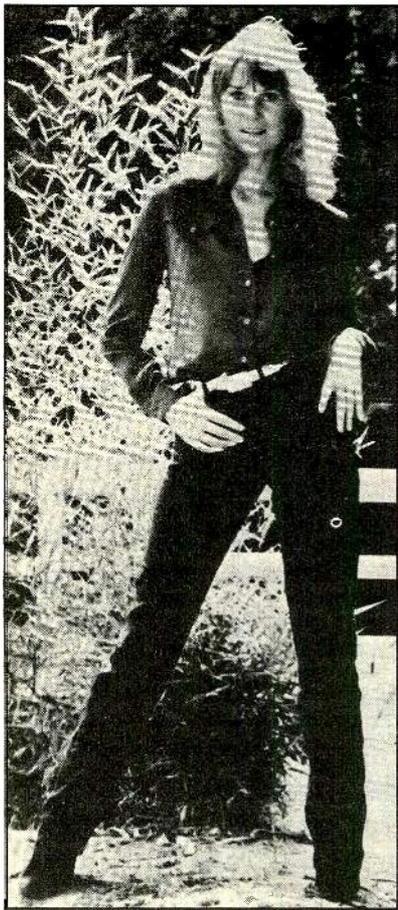
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Warner Bros.

Gail Davies Springs Up Full-grown

PEOPLE at Warner Bros. think Gail Davies, coming more or less out of nowhere, may be the first woman in the history of the world to produce her own country album. The distinction may be slightly technical: Dolly Parton is said to accomplish something similar through hirings and firings, and Emmylou Harris, who also suddenly appeared before us as a fully matured talent, is married to her producer. Nevertheless, it's a rare position to be in—and Gail Davies seems absolutely natural there. She has the soul, the writing and singing talent, and the savvy about music generally to pull off a lot more than this before she's through.

For the moment, though, "The Game" should keep us occupied. It is the freshest so-called country album by a woman since Roseanne Cash's excellent "Right or Wrong." I say "so-called" not pejoratively this time. It is country, here and there, but it is also rock here and there, and there are other things so engaging they cause one to postpone indefinitely the tedious job of la-

beling the music. It is just *good*: plenty of melodies, fairly simple but adult lyrics, arrangements (by Davies) with enough sparkle in the basics that they can stand the occasional string sweetening—which never gets heavy anyway—and a voice you can believe.

It's a "pretty" enough voice, with clear, warm tones and never a hitch in phrasing, but that's not the thing about it. The thing about it is that it sounds *experienced*. You can be as jaded and cynical as a pop-music critic, and it will still reach you because you can hear certain credentials. This singer has lived; she does not come peddling a certain dangerous innocence you would have to use some energy to deal with—you can just listen. You can trust her. She knows something about what it's like out there.

Davies' voice has none of the patented country-girl-*Angst* whine that came with several generations of newcomers trying to imitate Tammy Wynette. Emmylou and Crystal Gayle had just about wiped out that fashion, and Davies should put the quietus to it. Like Emmylou, she comes to country from outside the territory. She was born in Oklahoma but grew up in Seattle, listening to Hank Williams and Patsy Cline records. She has done a little jazz singing somewhere in her past, which also included a Lifesongs album and a single (called *Someone Is Looking for You*) some people have heard. Country singer Zella Lehr recorded one of her songs, and her writing has already attracted a small group of Davies watchers. Her brother Ron wrote *Long Hard Climb* for Helen Reddy and *It Ain't Easy* for Three Dog Night.

BUT mostly she seems to have sprung up full-grown before us with "The Game." Fittingly, it was Emmylou, who did the same thing, who called her to the attention of Warner Bros.' movers and shakers. The album isn't *like* one of Emmylou's, or anybody else's; I didn't know there was a vacuum there until the album filled it. The thing is eminently civilized, even delicate and lacy sometimes (there's a lovely bit of filigree on acoustic guitar by Pete Carr in *Never Seen a Man Like You*), yet it is also tough and knowing. When it is romantic, as in *Careless Love*, it absolutely kills you softly with its melody, but the muse behind this never goes across the line to become mawkish. We could use a little deeper lyric in a couple of songs, but, all things considered, it is clear that Gail Davies has put the right person in charge: Gail Davies.

It's been quite a while since I added a new name to my little bitty list of Real People, but here goes. —Noel Coppage

GAIL DAVIES: *The Game*. Gail Davies (vocals, guitar); Jeff Tassin (guitar); Randy McCormick (keyboards); Joe Allen (bass); other musicians. *Blue Heartache; The Game; Good Lovin' Man; Careless Love; Love Is Living Around Us; Sorry That You're Leavin'; Never Seen a Man Like You; Like Strangers; Drown in the Flood; When I Had You in My Arms.* WARNER BROS. BSK 3395 \$7.98, © M8 3395 \$7.98, © M5 3395 \$7.98.

everything he plays is a harmonic variation—and not that much of one—on *Music Box Dancer*, and all require a keyboard reach between the index finger and pinkie of one hand. I am frankly amazed that such music is still being recorded. Indeed, I stand in awe of such a proud display of innocent mediocrity. J.V.

JOHNNY PAYCHECK: *Everybody's Got a Family—Meet Mine*. Johnny Paycheck (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *The Cocaine Train; Ragged Old Truck; Drinkin' and Drivin'; Billy Bardo; Fifteen Beers;* and five others. EPIC JE 36200 \$7.98, © JEA 36200 \$7.98, © JET 36200 \$7.98.

Performance: **For fans**
Recording: **Good**

Is Johnny Paycheck just another pretty face or pretty set of tattooed arms or what? Actually, he's a honky-tonk singer, but at the opposite end of that small spectrum from George Jones. Where Jones expands the form, Paycheck compresses it. What he does well, basically, is sing about getting drunk and beat up in bars. Sometimes the beater is a man and sometimes a woman, but Johnny is almost always the beatee. A rather narrow act, I agree, but on this album he has the good sense to be simple and bluesy, and the backing instrumentals are gutsy and alive. Taken one cut at a time and not taken too seriously, it might help put your Dan Fogelberg and Phoebe Snow records in some kind of perspective. I use it myself to clean Kenny Loggins out of my system. But taken as a whole, it's strictly for fans—the big ones that hang down from the ceiling. N.C.

WILSON PICKETT: *I Want You*. Wilson Pickett (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I Want You; Love of My Life; Groove City; Superstar;* and three others. EMI/AMERICA SW-17019 \$7.98, © 8XW-17019 \$7.98, © 4XW-17019 \$7.98.

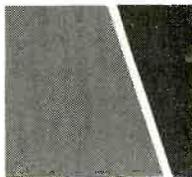
Performance: **Fair**
Recording: **Good**

Wilson Pickett's long-dormant career might be revived by this expedient plunge into extended ballads and disco whoopers, but time may already have passed him by. Even in his palmy days in the Sixties his vocal style was derivative of the Little Richard/James Brown axis, and what propelled him was a combination of his undeniable energy with superior songwriting, back-up musicians, and production. Black music has become more clinical, more frankly commercial, and much more blasé in the last ten years, and Pickett, like other black artists of an earlier generation, has had trouble adapting. When he sets up a howl it is no longer a novelty. Mere howling won't suffice the way it used to; today it just seems decorative instead of instinctive. The songwriting, accompaniment, and production on this album are not particularly inspired, nor am I by listening to it. J.V.

PRETENDERS (see Best of the Month, page 88)

LOU RAWLS: *Sit Down and Talk to Me*. Lou Rawls (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. (Continued on page 100)

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niment. *One Day Soon You'll Need Me; Ain't That Loving You; When You Get Home; Old Times; You Are;* and three others. PHILADELPHIA INTERNATIONAL JZ 36304 \$7.98, © JZA 36304 \$7.98, © JZT 36304 \$7.98.

Performance: **Predictable**
Recording: **Satisfactory**

Maybe I'm a hard-luck snob, but I much preferred Lou Rawls back in the days before he became so comfortably predictable. About a dozen years ago, when he still seemed to be surprised by his evolving success, his material reflected the dues he'd paid. Everything he sang was laced with the pungently realistic flavor of the blues, of hard times on Chicago's South Side and nights of dodging "the hawk," as the Windy City's wintry blasts are called. But it is a long way from his memorable renditions of *Stormy Monday* and *Tobacco Road* to the bland, superficial songs he's been dishing up lately.

Since Rawls is a pro, he sings well here and tries to inject some meaning into songs that are seldom worth the effort. This is standard Philly International fare, and, though for a time I liked much of what Gamble, Huff, and Co. produced, the formulas are beginning to wear thin. The names of the featured artists change from album to album, but there is a tedious sameness to the songs. Probably only a few combinations are possible when you work with limited elements to produce so much for so many so often. Lou Rawls certainly isn't benefiting from this treatment.

Only two songs here even begin to show what he can do. The best track is a Bunny Sigler/Ronnie Tyson number, *When You Get Home*, that puts Rawls in the blues-like context where he belongs, and *Old Times*, a Dexter Wansel contribution, is a light but

appealing tale of love lost. The rest is glossy but dull. P.G.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CLIFF RICHARD: *We Don't Talk Anymore.* Cliff Richard (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Doin' Fine; Monday Thru Friday; You Know That I Love You; Rock n Roll Juvenile; Sci-Fi;* and five others. EMI/AMERICA SW-17018 \$7.98, © 8XW-17018 \$7.98, © 4XW-17018 \$7.98.

Performance: **Bright and boisterous**
Recording: **Excellent**

"I wanted to make an energy-packed album," Cliff Richard says in the notes scribbled, in his own handwriting, on the back of this album, which turns out to be not only full of energy (what pop record nowadays isn't?) but full of intelligence as well. Thanks to lively tunes, literate—sometimes even witty—words from his lyricist, B. A. Robertson, and his own willingness to sing those words with a clarity rare to the rock scene, Richard engages and sustains the listener's attention. His performing style is matched by a supple voice that manages to retain its appeal even in falsetto reaching for a high note. There is a refreshing absence of self-pity in these songs—*Doin' Fine*, for example, is about how good it feels *not* to feel bad, *Sci-Fi* is a kind of miniature *Star Wars* in a couple of spaced-out stanzas, and *Language of Love* celebrates the universality of tender passion—that lifts "We Don't Talk Anymore" out the ordinary. The title song, an afterthought added because Richards had just completed a single of it, is the only sour note in a sweet serenade further distinguished by fresh, uncluttered arrangements and a clever use of stereo imaging. P.K.

CLIFF RICHARD: *energy and intelligence*



EMI/America Records

TURLEY RICHARDS: *Therfu*. Turley Richards (vocals, guitar, saxophone); Mick Fleetwood, Kenny Malone (drums); Bob Welch, Jack Williams (bass); Reggie Young (guitar); other musicians. *You Might Need Somebody; All Over the World; When I Lose My Way; Baby, Please Don't Go; Stand by Me*; and five others. ATLANTIC SD 19260 \$7.98.

Performance: **Decent pap**
Recording: **Clean**

A little note on the sleeve here says, "This album has been arranged for the majority of the mass in order to stimulate their innermost forces and bring it to the surface where they can play with themselves . . . not like the minority who rush off into dark and lusty canyons to fill their emotional pockets with rocks of love." You'll notice I left out a whole passel of (*sic*)s that ought to go in there; subject-verb agreement is not that much of a problem in the lyrics—lack of ambition is what holds sway there. The album does indeed seem engineered for the masses, although I doubt whether anything about it is deep enough to stir their innermost forces. More likely, it will cause a majority of feet to tap a few times, as it is tuneful and the performances are tight and disciplined. Richards sounds like a cross between Dave Loggins and the Cate Brothers, and the backing seems to be mostly Nashville under the influence of Mick Fleetwood ("executive producer"), yielding a calm but personable blue-eyed-soul sound that seems to benefit from being under a tight rein. Still, all it wants to do is pleasantly kill some time. In most moods I'd rather do that with Bullwinkle and Dudley Do-Right. N.C.

THE ROCKETS: *No Ballads*. The Rockets (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Desire; Don't Hold On; Restless; Sally Can't Dance; Takin' It Back*; and five others. RSO RS-1-3071 \$7.98, © 8T-1-3071 \$7.98, © CT-1-3071 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good, but . . .**
Recording: **Fine**

I've said it before, but it bears repeating: live, the Rockets, some of whom used to be members of the lamented Detroit Wheels, are a classic hard-rock outfit, but they have yet really to cut loose for a whole record in a manner befitting their potential. On "No Ballads," as on their previous albums, they do it only a couple of times: on an appropriately spiteful version of Lou Reed's *Sally Can't Dance*, a song I would not have suspected was worth covering, and on drummer John Badanjek's *Takin' It Back*. Everything else here is likable, flashy without being obnoxious, but utterly conventional. Badanjek remains the most exciting Sixties r-&-b-influenced drummer around (I've said *that* before too), and I'd pay money to see these guys work out in a grungy bar somewhere. But the album is a profound ho-hum. S.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROOT BOY SLIM & THE SEX CHANGE BAND WITH THE ROOTETTES: *Zoom*. Root Boy Slim (vocals, harmonica); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *World War III; Do the Gator; The Loneliest Room*

in the World; Dare to Be Fat; Motel of Love; Dozin' and Droolin'; and five others. ILLLEGAL/I.R.S. SP 006 \$7.98.

Performance: **Kowabunga!**
Recording: **Very good**

Root Boy Slim, the sleazy darling of Washington, D.C., and environs, erupts for the second time, and on a new label. His previous album, two years ago for Warner Bros. (BSK 3160, already out of print), was startling, vulgar, ribald, hilarious, and—unfortunately—not widely heard. Let's hope this one is more successful. It is a dose of rock-and-roll nihilism that inspires laughter and clears the brain.

Visually, Root Boy is a caricature of the slob mob-rock audience (your basic booze-and-pot types). His guttural vocals are somewhere between Howlin' Wolf's and Captain Beefheart's, with a mixture of Wolf's farmland savvy and Beefheart's elfin fantasies. Hearing him a second time is not as overwhelming as the first time, but as the initial shock wears off it is easier to appreciate not only his humor but how well his band supports him—and how necessary that support is. There are no melodies in his material; he yawps, grunts, and throws in spoken *sotto voce* asides while the band frames his acting with arrangements that describe what the "song" is about. Sometimes the band provides emotional counterpoint to what Root Boy is saying, as on *She Wants to Move In*, where the arrangement implies sympathy with the poor girl who's daffy for Root Boy, who doesn't want her except for an occasional bounce.

While Root Boy excels in comic descriptions of the sexual hunt, whether successful or not, he also offers ditties (which I guess are autobiographical) on the delicate subjects of jail time and mental health. These are not exactly bitter or morbid, but they do have the chilling flavor of unvarnished recall. Root Boy presents himself as not only an experienced fool but a brutalized one. All in all, though, he's quite a fellow. If you didn't hear his first album, I suggest you be sure to catch him this time around. J.V.

THE SLITS: *Cut*. The Slits (vocals and instrumentals); Budgie (drums). *Instant Hit; So Tough; Spend, Spend, Spend; Shoplifting; FM*; and five others. ANTILLES AN 7077 \$5.98.

Performance: **Tortured**
Recording: **Good**

The Slits, in case you hadn't heard, are for quite a few critics this week's Future of Music, which should make you suspicious right away. Actually, they strike me more as updates of the fictional heroines of the late, lamented mid-Seventies TV series *Rock Follies* in that they're obviously college-educated, they're older than their audience, and they make absolutely all the right moves. The right moves in 1980 terms, of course, means that they play a doomy, dissonant, metallic music several light years beyond minimalist, sing deadpan lyrics about oh-so-modern relationships, and overlay the whole thing with just the slightest reggae influence—reggae being to British art/punk what the blues was to British progressive rock: the motherlode. I'd call it all horribly nonmusical and a real grind to listen to. (Continued on page 104)



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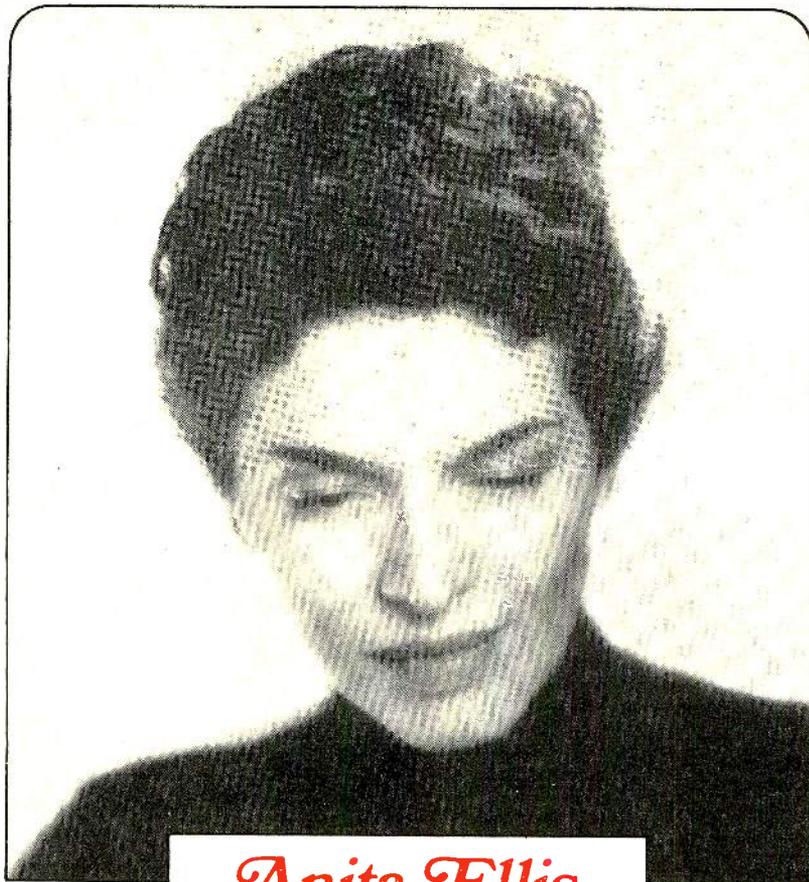
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Anita Ellis

A HOT bit of "inside" gossip in the olden, golden days of Hollywood fandom—a part of which also encompassed my own golden youth—was that certain Star Delectables, although represented as past mistresses of the art of song, were actually only moving their glossy lips while Someone Else did the actual singing. It was whispered that Someone Else, not Rita Hayworth, was the sultry voice panting through *Put the Blame on Mame* in *Gilda* and in all the subsequent films Hayworth made at Columbia. That it was Someone Else who sang for Vera-Ellen in both of her films with Fred Astaire at Metro. It didn't make much difference to us who adored—a Star didn't have to do anything, she only had to be there—but others read it as classic Hollywood exploitation. Little Someone Else was being Abused By The System, forced to use her God-given talents anonymously in the slave pits of the industry.

Well, surprise, surprise! Guess who just put out two fine new albums? Someone Else, that's who. The by-now legendary Anita Ellis is with us again, spreading joy all over the place, in "Echoes" on the Michael's Pub label and in "A Legend Sings" on Orion. Dubbing was, of course, only part of the Ellis career. She was the star of her own radio show during that medium's heyday in the 1940's, her small but avidly collected catalog of recordings is a part of any serious popular-music collection, and, of late, she

has resumed in-person performing in selected clubs.

What is the rare Ellis magic? Part of it has to do with a superbly trained and maintained voice (at one time she studied for opera); part of it is musicianship of a caliber rare in the pop world; part of it is her ability to siphon personal meanings and motives from even the most shopworn lyric and communicate them to the listener. The sum of all these parts, however, is her truly unique, almost magical ability to cast and control mood. Cole Porter's *What Is This Thing Called Love* must have been sung by everyone from Eleanor and Jane Powell to Raymond and Ilona Massey, and by all the Sinatras. It's a great song, to be sure, and most singers of Ellis' stature approach it as a work of light art to be restored to its original grandeur and left clean, cold, and perfect, ready for display as if in a brightly lit museum. Anita Ellis attends dutifully to the restoration during the first few bars, but even then one senses something else bubbling underneath. By the time she lets out her full, passionate voice on the lines "Who can solve its mystery?/Why should it make a fool of me?" it's clear that Ellis' artistic choice is hardly the moony regret that custom has encrusted on the song, but instead a massive, purplish mood of sexual rage—Havelock and Anita Ellis, one might say. It all works superbly, of course, not only because it is a legitimate, valid approach but

because Ellis has the technique *and* the intelligence *and* the heart to make it work. On lesser-known but no less worthy material, such as Sondheim's poignant *Anyone Can Whistle* or Willard Robinson's *Four Walls and One Dirty Window*, Ellis still peels away at the expected until she is at the Triangle One of stark lyric, bare music, and dramatic impulse that seems to be the starting point of all of her interpretations.

I hope that the implied celebration of all this doesn't give you the impression that Ellis is some sort of pop diva intent on microscopically examining each opus so that other members of the club can nod appreciatively. No, it is more that she is obviously a *thinking* listener's singer. She must go to the very root of a song to get the purity and unity of effect that she so consistently achieves. How else could she wrench such vivid, electric performances from such now-greying material as *Early Autumn* and *Anywhere I Hang My Hat Is Home*?

ORION'S "A Legend Sings," Ellis in tandem with Ellis Larkin at the piano (these paired names are going to get to me yet!), has a slight edge in my affections here, but only because the repertoire is more to my taste. "Echoes" benefits from the enlarged accompaniment and it contains *Ta Luv*, my favorite of all the tracks, but it is marred for me by the occasional performing presence of Larry Kert, Miss Ellis' brother. Mr. Kert, better known for his creation of the leading male role in the original *West Side Story* and in later years for performing several thousand push-ups in rapid succession on the *Johnny Carson Show*, may well be a fine Broadway singer, but on recordings he sounds tense and braying. Otherwise, it's roses all the way.

Anita Ellis, even in her days of being Someone Else (which, incidentally, was an extremely lucrative non-career while it flourished), was the kind of natural perfectionist, blessed with enormously communicative emotional gifts, who owned your ear the moment you heard her. She still is.

—Peter Reilly

ANITA ELLIS: *Echoes*. Anita Ellis (vocals); Larry Kert (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Pleasure of Your Company; Dance of Life; Drinking Again; Big Red Apple; Echoes; Ta Luv; Early Autumn; Guitar Country; If Someday Ever Comes; Anywhere I Hang My Hat Is Home; Good Companions.* MICHAEL'S PUB EPM2-151627 \$7.99 (plus postage and handling charge from Liberty Music, 450 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022).

ANITA ELLIS: *A Legend Sings*. Anita Ellis (vocals); Ellis Larkin (piano). *A Flower Is a Lovesome Thing/Spring Will Be a Little Late This Year; Anyone Can Whistle; What Is This Thing Called Love?; Four Walls and One Dirty Window; Who Can I Turn To?; Lazy Afternoon; Prelude to a Kiss; I Hear Music; Summertime; Wait Till You See Him; But Beautiful; I Wonder What Became of Me; Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child.* ORION ORS 79353 \$6.98.

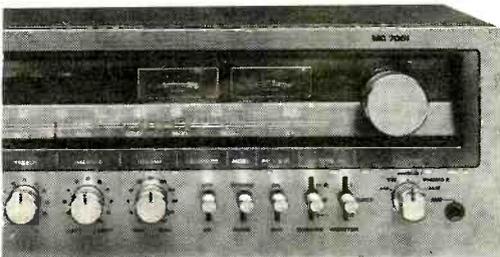
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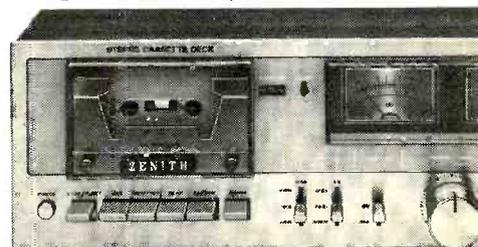


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Reiner/Paul Cox

Millie Jackson

THE cover of Millie Jackson's new album, "Live and Uncensored," bears a small, perhaps censorial label indicating it is intended "For Mature Audiences Only" and warning that it "contains explicit language which may be considered objectionable by some listeners." No wonder, for this double-disc set, recorded live last summer during an engagement at the Roxy in Los Angeles, finally presents the *real* Millie Jackson, free of any restraints that might have inhibited her, however minimally, on previous recordings. Over four sides, this bad-talking, Georgia-born siren (who's now at home in Teaneck, New Jersey) mixes lustily rousing soul singing with racy raps on sex and life that are absolutely hilarious in their bluntness and black (ethnic) humor.

In this respect, the album is somewhat like those forbidden "party" records comedian Redd Foxx used to make in the years before he was emasculated by television. But it accomplishes far more than merely showcasing what just might be the dirtiest mouth in captivity. The performances on this recording were a major breakthrough in Ms. Jackson's career, for some local critics were inspired by them to rate her above such reigning pop divas as Bette Midler, Donna Summer, Diana Ross, and Linda Ronstadt. It was about time, for Millie Jackson has a winning quality those others do not. Disdaining posturing and cute contrivances, she comes across not like a star but as a woman much like those in her audience—with one exception: she is willing to air all of *her* funky linen in public.

And air it she does, in the colorfully fractured English laced with profanity and irony that is commonly heard in the bars, beauty shops, and apartments of America's black ghettos. You always get the impression listening to Ms. Jackson that just before hitting the stage or stomping into the

studio she had rolled out of bed with some man. Yet mere semi-pornographic titillation is never her objective. She successfully taps the reservoir of humor in male-female relations, which transcends racial lines. One needn't be black to appreciate her tales about wives who would like to lay a different log on their fires or frustrated women involved with married men who are unavailable on holidays, even Halloween. And one need not be a woman to be rocked by her raunchy intensity. She attains a kind of delightfully bawdy universality.

No doubt the sexually suggestive nature of Ms. Jackson's patter (or "rap") has been an impediment to broader acceptance. Some of her best numbers are so explicitly descriptive they cannot be played on the radio, where so many potential record-buyers do their aural browsing. Furthermore, her style and material automatically limit even the cuts that *can* be aired to black-oriented radio stations, which are currently caught up in an orgy of disco. But, a true individual, Millie Jackson has chosen this period of plastic conformity to revive traditions that date back to the gloriously open-minded era of the so-called "classic" blues, which set a high standard in *double-entendre*.

ON the new album, which closely follows a successful collaboration with Isaac Hayes (see review in February "Best of the Month"), she ranges all over the pop-music terrain, interspersing Rod Stewart's *Da Ya Think I'm Sexy* and Kenny Rogers' *Sweet Music Man* with items that are distinctively her own, such as *All the Way Lover*, *It Hurts So Good*, and *Never Change Lovers in the Middle of the Night*. Some of them have been on her earlier albums, but they never sounded quite like they do here. Hollering out in a rough, froggy-bottomed voice, she mixes in some of the most impassioned shrieks to be heard on discs since James Brown and Wilson Pickett transformed screaming into an art form nearly a decade ago.

Though some live albums cheat the fan by overplaying audience response at the expense of the music, this one has a proper balance between the artist and those on the other side of the footlights. As on good blues recordings, their back-talking responses obviously serve to spur the performer on to greater heights. And the heights Millie Jackson scales are definitely impressive.

—Phyl Garland

MILLIE JACKSON: *Live and Uncensored*. Millie Jackson (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Keep the Home Fire Burnin'*; *Logs and Thangs*; *Put Something Down on It*; *Da Ya Think I'm Sexy?*; *Just When I Needed You Most*; *Phuck U Symphony*; *What Am I Waiting For*; *I Still Love You (You Still Love Me)*; *All the Way Lover*; *The Soaps*; *Hold the Line*; *Be a Sweetheart*; *Didn't I Blow Your Mind*; *Give It Up*; *A Moment's Pleasure*; *If Loving You Is Wrong (I Don't Want to Be Right)*; *The Rap*; *Never Change Lovers in the Middle of the Night*; *Sweet Music Man*; *It Hurts So Good*. SPRING SP-2-6725 two discs \$11.98, © 8T-2-6725 \$11.98.

ten to, but I don't want to sound like my parents. S.S.

REX SMITH: *Forever*. Rex Smith (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Tonight*; *To You*; *Saturday Night*; *Superhero*; *Everytime I See You*; and five others. COLUMBIA JC 36275 \$7.98, © JCA 36275 \$7.98, © JCT 36275 \$7.98.

Performance: **Okay**

Recording: **Good**

Rex Smith has sung with regional bands as well as on tour with Ted Nugent, Boston, Foreigner, and other major groups. His last album, "Sooner or Later," based on a TV show in which he appeared as an actor, and his single *You Take My Breath Away* both did very well. And he's good looking. What it adds up to is that he is today's David Cassidy, another preteen/midteen heart-throb, good for maybe a couple of years of heavy exposure, in the great line that began in the 1950s with Fabian. Smith writes and sings mass-market pop stuff, and he does it pretty well, but for anyone over eighteen this is kid stuff. J.V.

SYLVAIN SYLVAIN. Sylvain Sylvain (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Teenage News*; *What's That Got to Do with Rock 'n' Roll?*; *I'm So Sorry*; *Emily*; *Without You*; and five others. RCA AFL1-3475 \$7.98, © AFS1-3475 \$7.98, © AFK1-3475 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good try**

Recording: **Dry**

Sylvain, of course, is an alumnus of the New York Dolls. Like David Johansen, his former partner in musical crime (and totally unlike Johnny Thunders, the other celebrity Doll), Sylvain has been, uh, cleaning up his act of late. Although his musical and lyrical concerns remain much the same as they were in the Glitter Era, these days, with the help of an almost slick little band, he makes bright, professional, catchy pop/rock with a certain amount of wit and style. Granted, he doesn't reach the depths Johansen occasionally plumbs, but he has a good ear for the hook, and as a result this debut solo album is fairly promising even though the best thing on it (*Teenage News*) is a five-year-old leftover from the Dolls' Red Chinese period. It's all as lightweight as can be, to be sure—an asthmatic's wheeze could blow it away—but it rocks, and it's kind of cute. Which, at least this early in 1980, will do. S.S.

THE UNDERTONES. The Undertones (vocals and instrumentals). *Family Entertainment*; *Girls Don't Like It*; *Male Model*; *I Gotta Gotta*; *Teenage Kicks*; *Wrong Way*; and ten others. SIRE SRK 6081 \$7.98, © M8S 6081 \$7.98, © M5S 6081 \$7.98.

Performance: **Believable**

Recording: **Okay**

If you can imagine the unlikely pairing of Buddy Holly with the Ramones you might get an idea of what the Undertones are up to here. Within the three-chord amped-up limitations of a mainstream punk format, these Irish youngsters manage actual melodies, hooks, and lyrics about teenage concerns, mundane and otherwise, that ring as

(Continued on page 106)

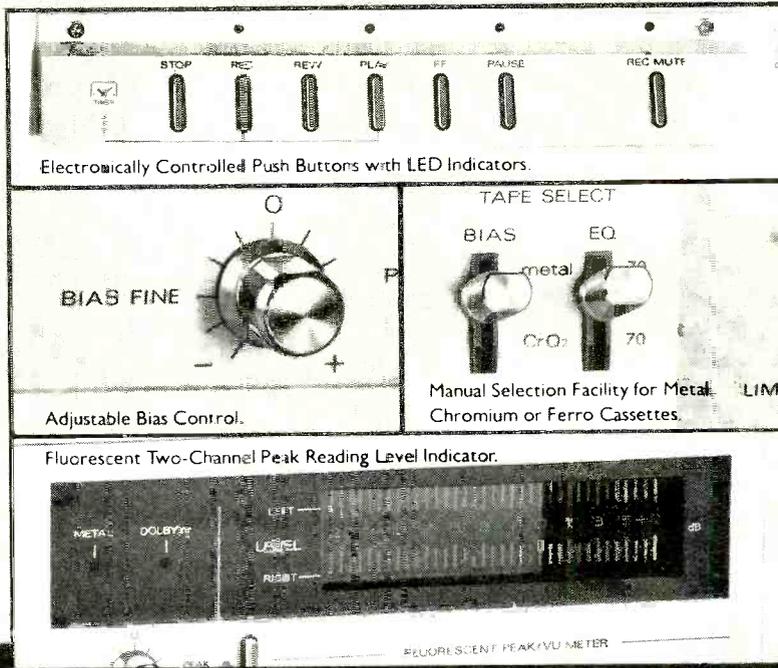
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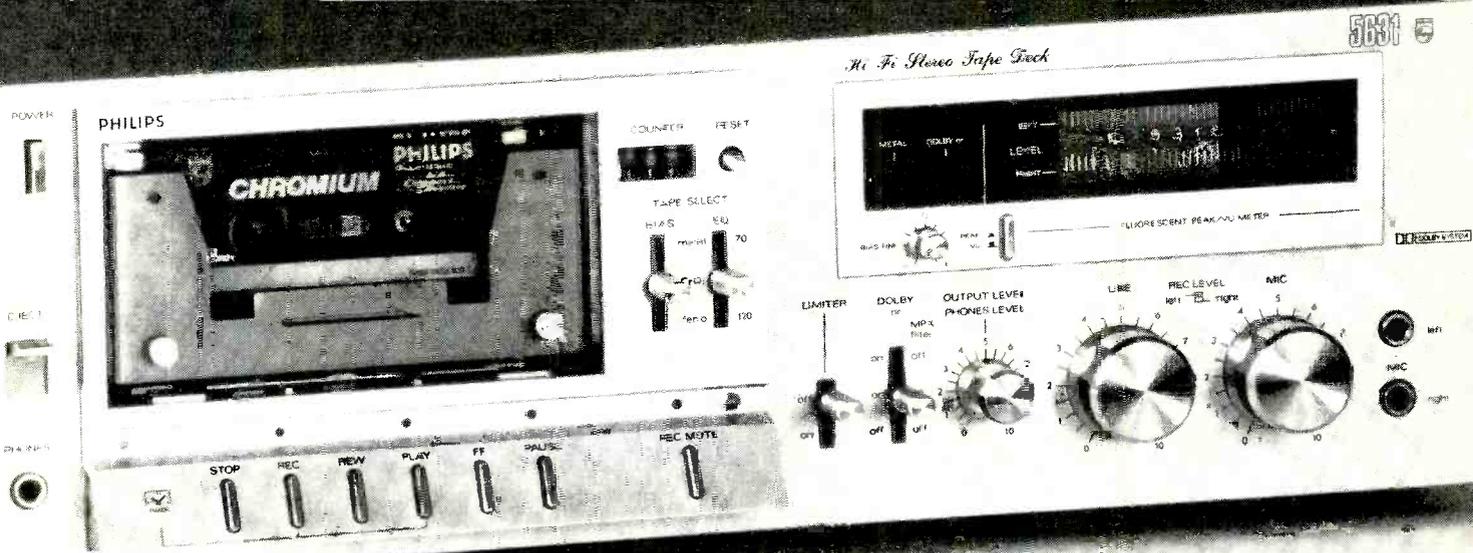
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THE WHISPERS: *soothing soul*

unerringly true in their touching adolescent romanticism as anything in the Holly catalog. Furthermore, lead singer Feargal Sharkey (that's his name, honest) sings it all in a most distinctive choked manner, sort of like a prepubescent Noddy Holder for those of you who remember Slade. *Jimmy Jimmy*, the tragic tale of a Mommy's Boy, is the classic here (although the Undertones lack

the instrumental genius, I'd compare it with the great early Who track *I'm a Boy*), but almost everything is fun on some level. If the Ramones' glue-sniffing pinhead act puts you off, you might just find the Undertones an appealing alternative. S.S.

BOB WELCH: *The Other One*. Bob Welch (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Rebel Rouser; Love Came 2X; Future Games; Old Man of 17; Hideaway; Don't Let Me Fall*; and four others. CAPITOL SW-12017 \$7.98, © 8XW-12017 \$7.98, © 4XW-12017 \$7.98.

Performance: **Dull**
Recording: **Good**

Since leaving Fleetwood Mac to go solo, Bob Welch has had a few hit singles here and there, but he hasn't really established himself as an individual performer. I doubt that "The Other One," his new album, will add much to his reputation. It disconcertingly reminds me of Gerry Rafferty's last album; both Welch and Rafferty are skillful guitarists without a particularly arresting vocal style. Their material tends to be rather ho-hum, and just about anything they sing comes out sounding equally bland. The trouble with musicians like them is that they have nothing to say—and keep on saying it over and over. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE WHISPERS. The Whispers (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *A Song for*

Donny; My Girl; Lady; Can You Do the Boogie; and four others. SOLAR BXL1-3521 \$7.98, © BXS1-3521 \$7.98, © B XK1-3521 \$7.98.

Performance: **Vocally gorgeous**
Recording: **Good**

Somehow, in the midst of all the hyperfrenetic hullabaloo of ten thousand hopefuls struggling to have their terrible songs played loudly enough on tacky radio stations to become hits, the Whispers manage to remain cool. They simply *sing*, with the velvet harmonies that have been difficult to find in r-&b since the Miracles and the Temptations were scrounging around for carfare to get to their gigs. However their soft, soothing music is described—the laid-back Southern California soul sound?—it's balm to jangled nerves, and I hope no one ever comes along to change it.

This album is about two-thirds rhapsodic vocal gorgeousness and one-third adequate dance fluff. The outstanding track is the opener, a tribute to the late Donny Hathaway with lyrics by Carrie Lucas. I don't know which one of the five Whispers sings lead here, but his sensitive interpretation catches the essence of Hathaway's artistry. Recommended listening. P.G.

WIRE: 154. Wire (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *I Should Have Known Better; 2 People in a Room; The 15th; The Other Window; Single K.O.; Indirect Enquiries; A Touching Display*; and six others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3398

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Performance: **Up to the concept**
Recording: **Excellent**

Some inspirational verse from Wire's *The Other Window*: "The seat was hard/The carriage fetid/He was dressed for summer/But still he sweated." Actually, all of "154" is like that. You respect the intelligence behind it (despite the drag, these guys are far too well educated to be punks), but . . . well, a bundle of laughs it's not. Come to think of it, Wire's doomy, apocalyptic minimalism (not to mention the critical yammering it's inspired; they're a lot of rock writers' favorite band) generally strikes me as the late-Seventies/early-Eighties equivalent of the self-conscious psychedelic overreaching we all went wild over for about a week in 1967. Along the lines of, say, the Clear Light album, or the first Strawberry Alarm Clock LP—which, believe it or not, was briefly considered "experimental." On the other hand, perhaps this music is the future of something or other. We'll just have to wait a few years to see. S.S.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

NEIL YOUNG AND CRAZY HORSE: *Live Rust*. Neil Young (vocals, guitar, harmonica); Crazy Horse (instrumentals). *Sugar Mountain*; *I Am a Child*; *Comes a Time*; *After the Gold Rush*; *The Loner*; *Lotta Love*; *Sedan Delivery*; *Cortez the Killer*; and eight others. REPRIS 2AX-

2296 two discs \$13.98, Ⓜ 2W8-2296 \$13.98, Ⓞ 2W5-2296 \$13.98.

Performance: **Unpretentious**
Recording: **Generally very good**

It's awfully hard to improve on what Steve Simels once said about Neil Young: he may be a bozo, but he's a *great* bozo. Young has come to mean so much more to many of us than the sum of his talents. Most of the negative stuff said about him is said affectionately, as when a jock in my region said of this album, "He sings on key most of the time." In fact, in "Live Rust" Young's sense of pitch is pretty good, and he handles himself well on the guitar, switching back and forth between acoustic and electric and playing the lead most of the time. He's not a great singer or a great guitarist, and he probably isn't even a great songwriter—although he does have a good, strong, healthy, dependable voice as a writer—but there's an extra ingredient that can transcend this technical-provess stuff, and Young has it. Nobody can quite describe this quality—one can circle around it by saying Young has style and soul, which is true but not the whole truth—but it is easy to recognize. It comes shining through "Live Rust," which has the unpretentious air of a "typical" concert (this one interrupted at one point by a rainstorm) by a band on the road, an unfussy approach that's hard to get in two-record live albums. It has a sense of proportion, and it works both as a well-balanced album and as a retrospective by one of the few hippie musicians who haven't sold out. N.C.

DISCO



BRASS CONSTRUCTION: 5. Brass Construction (vocals and instrumentals). *It's Alright*; *Watch Out*; *Music Makes You Feel Like Dancing*; *Shakit*; and three others. UNITED ARTISTS LT-977 \$7.98, Ⓞ EA-977 \$7.98, Ⓞ CA-977 \$7.98.

Performance: **Souped-up funk**
Recording: **Just souped up**

I don't know why the nine men in this group call themselves Brass Construction. The arrangements are not particularly brassy. What they are is heavy funk, souped up and disciplined enough to work for a wide disco audience as well. The busy, even hectic orchestrations are supported throughout by the beat—the basically sexy bump of funk. *Music Makes You Feel Like Dancing* gets its energy from a combination of brass and percussion. *Right Place* sets a big-band horn section against violins. *Get Up to Get Down* opens with the guys singing a *cappella* and goes on to feature the album's best

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freewheeling vocal work. *It's Alright* spotlights a sexy bass voice mixed way up front and has an insane percussion interlude I'd give anything to hear in a real disco atmosphere. The trouble with all these songs is that the good moments are too fleeting. The group too quickly drops an idea to rush off to something else. The best cut, *I Want Some Action*, is the only one in which a single musical idea is sustained and developed; moreover, the busy arrangement is pulled back just enough that the voices, in attractive close harmony, have more of a chance to be heard. There's nothing really wonderful here, but there's also nothing that's less than solid dance music. If you like your disco souped up and funky, you'll have a good time with this. *E.B.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FESTIVAL: *Evita*. Festival (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Don't Cry for Me Argentina; Buenos Aires; She Is a Diamond; Eva's Theme; Lady Woman*; and three others. RSO RS-1-3061 \$7.98, © 8T-1-3061 \$7.98, © CT-1-3061 \$7.98.

Performance: **Inspired**
Recording: **Excellent**

What an opportunity for a rip-off! Splash "Evita" across the jacket and you could probably sell any junk record these days. But producer/arranger Boris Midney has clearly been inspired by the music from the rock opera turned Broadway hit, and he has worked hard to produce wonderful disco versions of six of its songs, plus a new one of his own. The album is crammed with vigorous arrangements, gutsy vocals, dramatic electronic augmentation, and driving, high-energy, dance rhythms. Best of all, it is beautifully paced; the orchestral bridges mesh perfectly with Andrew Lloyd Webber's original music, and the richly varied arrangements show more imagination than nine out of ten other disco releases. "Evita" is, in fact, well worth listening to even when you don't feel like dancing.

Some high points: when *Buenos Aires*

rides out on "I'm just a little stuck on you" and moves, uninterrupted, through dark chords and terrific percussion into a bouncy rendition of *I'd Be Surprisingly Good for You*; the bell-like synthesizer tune that runs through *High Flying, Adored*; the epic opening to *Rainbow High*; and every single second of *Don't Cry for Me Argentina*. Midney's new song, *Lady Woman*, gets the busiest arrangement of the bunch, and, though it has as solid a dance beat as the rest, it adds more noise than substance to the album. Points off for this, but not enough to make Festival's "Evita" anything less than a superb achievement. *E.B.*

DELORES HALL. Delores Hall (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Never Needed You Anyway; Snapshot; Sing a Happy Song; Like a Promise*; and three others. CAPITOL ST-11997 \$7.98, © 8XT-11997 \$7.98, © 4XT-11997 \$7.98.

Performance: **Aborted talent**
Recording: **Imbalanced**

What Delores Hall has is a gospel-strong voice. It is a dynamic instrument with no discernible upper limit and a focus guaranteed to make each listener feel it is directed at him or her alone. This kind of voice *should* work well with disco, especially in arrangements as juicy as these, which have everything from swirling strings to syncopated sticks, bells, chimes, and a huge horn section. And all the cuts have an up-tempo that can seem downright joyous. So what's wrong? As too often happens in disco productions, the singer gets lost. The engineering and arrangements rob Delores Hall of all command, largely restricting her vital, vibrant voice to the middle and lower registers and leaving us with an anonymous vocal performance.

There are some good moments. *Born to Be Free* is a good song (disco or no) with a superior orchestral break marked by jazz-like piano and bass solos. The album's longest number, *Snapshot*, builds lots of energy, thanks mainly to the simply terrific back-up vocal work ("Come on and take it,

take it, take my picture") and the driving beat. And for all-around good spirits, it would be hard to top the joyful *Sing a Happy Song*. But these successes have more to do with the superb production than with the singer. I was left exhilarated by the album's dance power but with no feeling for who Ms. Hall is as a performer. *E.B.*

DAN HARTMAN: *Relight My Fire*. Dan Hartman (vocals, keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Hands Down; Relight My Fire; Just for Fun*; and three others. BLUE SKY JZ 36302 \$7.98, © JZA 36302 \$7.98, © JZT 36302 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good, but . . .**
Recording: **Bright**

Disco's answer to Billy Joel is back, with his piano, a gang of friends, and a new LP that is, in its best moments, a reprise of *Instant Replay*, Dan Hartman's big hit of a year or so ago. *Free Ride, Relight My Fire*, and, especially, a little number called *Hands Down* all recapture precisely the same gleeful high spirits, and they are all performed at the same fast, driving tempo with the same party atmosphere. But only the title song here manages to be something special. Otherwise, it's all just good dance music with little to distinguish one song from the next or Hartman from other performers.

The guy really works hard, at least. The energy in these cuts is enormous, but too often the result seems relentless rather than energizing. And, sadly, when Hartman tries to do something different, as in the Stevie Wonder-inspired *Love Strong*, it just reveals his vocal limitations. *E.B.*

M: *New York-London-Paris-Munich*. M (vocals and instrumentals). *Pop Muzik; Moderne Man/Satisfy Your Lust; That's the Way the Money Goes*; and five others. SIRE SRK 6084 \$7.98, © M8S 6084 \$7.98, © M5S 6084 \$7.98.

Performance: **Spotty**
Recording: **Good**

Protest-disco? Well, not quite. M is a New Wave group, and, although the album has a dance beat (*Pop Muzik* was a big rock-disco hit as a single), the arrangements are satiric. Robin Scott wrote and produced the album and is also responsible for the arrangements and lead vocals, which are not sung but spoken in a voice like a British tour guide's. The material mostly says that society, the great bugaboo, ruins our lives. Some of Scott's material is funny; most of it is predictable and repetitive. *J.V.*

WALTER MURPHY: *Discosymphony*. Discosymphony Orchestra, Walter Murphy cond. *Bolero; Mostly Mozart; Classical Dancin'*; and three others. NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL BXL1-3506 \$7.98, © BXS1-3506 \$7.98, © BXX1-3506 \$7.98.

Performance: **Ordinary**
Recording: **Ditto**

If Disney's *Fantasia* could help introduce a generation to Bach, Beethoven, and Stravinsky, one might reasonably argue that Walter Murphy's "Discosymphony" will lead the disco generation to Mozart, Brahms, and Ravel. Perhaps. Murphy's ninety-piece orchestra discos its way with
(Continued on page 110)



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I HAVE seen the future and it smirks. That's what I *should* have said the first time I encountered Todd Rundgren's "music," which is to say his engineering and synthesizer programming and general modernizing of every tone that occurred to him. The idea that the music of the future will be less and less touched by human hands is popular with some science-fiction writers and with a lot of grade-B movie makers—they've been going at least as ape as Rundgren does on the subject ever since they were given the theremin—and has gone so long unchallenged that a group like Devo can incorporate it into a whole *career* of satire. Now—follow me carefully—here's Rundgren's band, Utopia, with "Adventures in Utopia," which carries favor

twang. The other impression that keeps recurring is that Utopia actually *tried* for a raw sound—apparently by applying still more engineering tricks—and failed.

As for trying for credence with people like Devo (or perhaps with people who are vaguely aware of people like Devo), there's a full-blown ditty on the subject: *Last of the New Wave Riders*. Really, now. Reacting against people like Rundgren was largely what *created* the New Wave, and here he is singing, "So I packed up my Fender and ran down the hall/Back to the fields and forests/Now I am one of them." That needs no comment.

You might get the idea from what I've said so far that this piece of work has no redeeming value, but there are, in fact,



Utopia: Future Smirk

with such groups as Devo while at the same time continuing the "futuristic" shtick that made such groups guffaw and satirize in the first place. Still, I think the damned thing is smirking, *knowing* it's turning a teenybopper head or two and fooling enough of the people enough of the time.

All the material in it originally was performed for the television production *Utopia*, which hasn't been shown in my area. By "futuristic" I don't mean the lyrics actually set the little cycle of songs in the future, and by "Utopia" the band apparently doesn't mean a place with no problems. But the main jacket decoration is a TV test pattern, and the lyrics (hewing, as usual, to Rundgren's semi-articulate teenager language) are printed by some kind of computer-like device, and the impressions mount up fast when you add the production, which has the gritty, hissy quality of turned-up treble—but without much *real* grit or hiss (in addition to being hard-surfaced and shiny, the future is *clean*, especially when it comes to fingerprints). The impression you're left with is that most of the sounds are squeezed through as much electronics as possible. There's some recognizable electric guitar, of course, but almost never is there anything as organic and old-fashioned as a

some nice washes of sound and vocal harmonies in it, and there are quite a few catchy tunes. Overall, though, the thing not only fails to sound raw but lacks immediacy; the sense that *music* is being made here is missing. Like everything, it's a matter of degree. The future no doubt will include the synthesizer, but *making music* will also continue to involve musicians bouncing off each other in the most existential, least-programmable manifestations of mood and moment. It is this essence, whatever the instrumentation, that eluded Utopia here. I happen to see no reason why acoustic guitars couldn't coexist with space travel or gleaming cities, but then I'm more the *Walden II* type when it comes to utopias. The point is, whatever you play, if you want it to come out music, you have to play it like a musician, not like an engineer.

—Noel Coppage

UTOPIA: *Adventures in Utopia*. Utopia (vocals and instrumentals). *The Road to Utopia; Set Me Free; Second Nature; Shot in the Dark; Caravan; Last of the New Wave Riders; You Make Me Crazy; The Very Last Time; Love Alone; Rock Love*. BEARVILLE BRK 6991 \$7.98, © M8 6991 \$7.98, © M5 6991 \$7.98.

disarming faithfulness through a collection of well-loved classical themes. Bits of Mozart's Symphony No. 40 emerge from the twenty-two violins with a semblance of true symphonic style, *Malagueña* begins virtually straight before the beat enters, *Boléro* (Ravel) leads off with perfectly authentic woodwinds, and so on.

Unfortunately, an awful lot of the *new* music here is extraneous filler. Except for *Boléro*, which goes on almost as interminably as the original, the extracted melodies are sandwiched between great slabs of faceless dance-rhythm stuff. The power of such arrangements to move a novice to explore classical music is even more questionable since everything here, from Tchaikovsky to Mozart, ends up sounding pretty much the same. And if what you want is to *dance* to this record, be prepared for a sedate evening. These arrangements are for suburban supper clubs, not disco joints. **E.B.**

NARADA MICHAEL WALDEN: *The Dance of Life*. Narada Michael Walden (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *You're Soo Good; Lovin' You Madly; Crazy for Ya'; Tonight I'm Alright;* and four others. ATLANTIC SD 19259 \$7.98, © TP 19259 \$7.98, © CS 19259 \$7.98.

Performance: **Relentless**

Recording: **Fine**

Everything in this album sounds the same. It's all relentlessly aggressive disco with heavy arrangements and more horns blaring at you than you'll ever need. Only in spurts is there sufficient ingenuity to lift the material out of the ordinary. The songs, all written by Walden himself, are undistinguished wistful lost-love songs with repetitious lyrics that never dig, surprise, or amuse. There are some bright spots in the arrangements. The Chic-like *Tonight I'm Alright* is the best song, but the hand-clapping middle of *I Shoulda Loved Ya'*, with its syncopated piano, comes closest to being fun. And the one purely orchestral work, *The Dance of Life*, may be impossible to dance to, but it's pretty music, with a simulation of Far Eastern bell and gong sounds and a simple melody on a sitar-like electric guitar.

Unfortunately, most of the album is less interesting. Song after song blasts away, and Walden sings them almost in a shout. The one ballad shows him to have a pleasant, husky voice when he doesn't push, but, like the album, it lacks distinction. **E.B.**

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● **TALKING HEADS: *I Zimbra*.** SIRE PRO-A-846 disco disc \$3.98.

(List compiled by John Harrison.)

(Continued on page 112)

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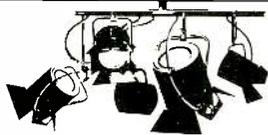
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DIGITAL SPACE: SPECTACULAR MUSIC FOR FILMS (see *Classical Discs and Tapes*, page 141)

THE ELECTRIC HORSEMAN. Original-soundtrack recording. Willie Nelson (vocals); instrumental accompaniment; chorus and orchestra. COLUMBIA JS 36327 \$8.98, © JSA 36327 \$8.98, © JST 36327 \$8.98.

Performance: **Willie's fine**
Recording: **Good**

I haven't seen *The Electric Horseman*, which was directed by Sydney Pollack and features Jane Fonda, Robert Redford, Wil-

lie Nelson, and Valerie Perrine. I can tell you, though, that the album plays on the dichotomy between the electric now and old-time cowboy imagery. Willie Nelson sings about cowboying on side one, and Dave Grusin's movie program-music disco score takes over side two.

Nelson's side is just fine except for one or two annoying intrusions of string sections. Mostly it's just him and a few pickers doing familiar "outlaw" songs. But Grusin's side is dull as hell without the pictures and may be even *with* them. As an album this has too neatly split a personality and contains far too much garbage. *N.C.*

PIANO BAR (Rob Fremont-Doris Willens). Original-cast recording. Kelly Bishop, Karen De Vito, Steve Elmore, Jim McMahon, Richard Ryder, Joel Silberman (vocals); orchestra, Joel Silberman cond. ORIGINAL CAST OC-7812 \$8.95 (plus \$1 for shipping from Original Cast Record Company, P.O. Box 496, Georgetown, Conn. 06829).

Performance: **Coy but clever**
Recording: **Very good**

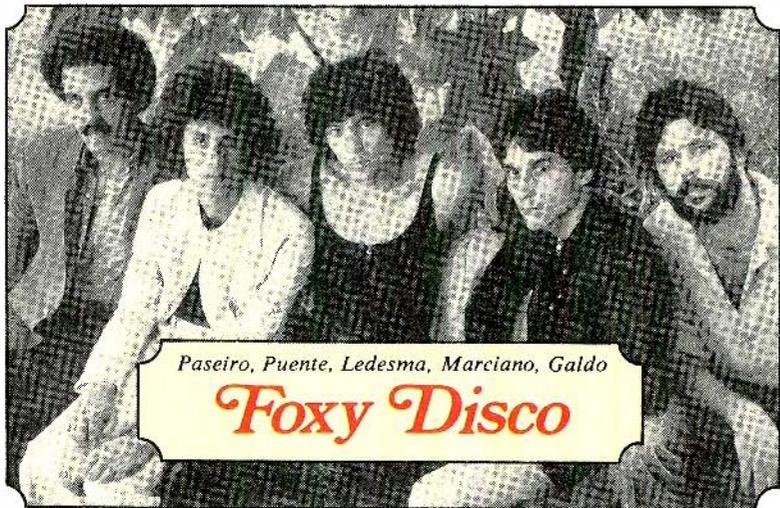
Piano Bar is one of those gentle, unpretentious musicals that used to abound off-

Broadway and could be relied on for an evening of unforced diversion. It has the same overly knowing, arch approach to life that used to plague this kind of piece—a little like being trapped on the contest page of an old issue of *New York* magazine—yet it has virtues too.

A simple book about the happy-hour habitués of a bar called Sweet Sue's allows the characters to develop through the songs they sing. True, they don't develop very far, and the songs are not the kind you go away whistling later, but, like Stephen Sondheim's, the ballads have certain dour charms. Despite such rueful ditties as *Pigeon Hole Time* and *Scenes from Some Marriages*, *Piano Bar* ends happily: the two couples who met when the lights went up stay on when they finally go down. And, despite a preoccupation with human frailties, on disc the musical has the kind of disarmingly innocent sophistication that makes for pleasant listening. *P.K.*

THE UMBRELLAS OF CHERBOURG and THE GO-BETWEEN (see *Classical Discs and Tapes*—LEGRAND, page 133)

(Continued on page 116)



FOR many of us discomanes, it truly began to change when Rod Stewart released *Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?* By "it" I mean, of course, the music we dance to. Stewart's record was clearly rock, but it was also hot dance music. Suddenly a distinction was clear between "disco" as a kind of music and "disco" as a kind of dancing—free, self-choreographed dancing with an aura of erotic ritual. And ever since then folks have been talking about "the death of disco" in one or the other (or both) of these senses.

All this is by way of introduction to a new record that provides rock-solid proof that, whatever we call the music or however we describe the ritual, America is going to keep right on dancing through the Eighties. Some guys who call their group Foxy have come up with a pure-rock dance album called "Party Boys."

The group's leader, Ish Ledesma, wrote all the songs. He comes to Foxy from a rather less-than-glorious solo career in rhythm-and-blues. As the title suggests, the album is meant for dancing. But Ledesma's roots show on virtually every cut. The group opens easy with *Girls*, a syncopated item punctuated with percussion and sung largely in a toughened-up version of standard r-&-b falsetto. A touch of scat singing distinguishes the opener, but only after Foxy moves into a much heavier set starting with *Let's Be Bad Tonight* do they hit their stride. This number is rock-'n'-roll pure and simple, with a ride-out that has all the energy of a live concert performance.

The stage is now set for some virtuosity. A good-natured hyper-samba, *Sambame' Rio*, and a simple, effective ballad with Ledesma doing a very good job as vocalist, *I*

Belong to You, show off Foxy's versatility and pave the way for the real heart and soul of the album. Four tremendous cuts follow, building steadily from *She's So Cool* (check the moment in the middle of this when the group's voices are set against an electric guitar), through the exciting, free-wheeling vocalism of *I Can't Stand the Heat and Rrrrock*, and on to the best of the bunch, *Fantasy*, which really lets 'er rip.

WITH *Fantasy*'s last two words we're suddenly, dramatically into a lovely ballad, *Pensando en Ti*. This beautifully programmed transition illustrates Ledesma's idea of making an album flow like a concert. And the concept carries through right to the end. Foxy sends us "home" smiling with the title song, the closest thing to standard disco (music) on the album. It's my nominee for the Donna Summer Soundalike award, with its hypnotic *Sunset People* synthesizer and a lyric that echoes *Bad Girls*.

I know, I know: there are soaring strings in the background of *Rrrrock*, and every once in a while someone picks up the beat by blowing a police whistle. Rock purists will have none of this. But, as we move into the future, it becomes clearer every day that no music idiom remains "pure" for very long. The list of hyphenated rock styles grows and grows. Welcome, everybody, to good old hyphenated dance-rock.

—Edward Buxbaum

FOXY: Party Boys. Foxy (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *Girls*; *I Can't Stand the Heat*; *Let's Be Bad Tonight*; *Sambame' Rio*; *I Belong to You*; *She's So Cool*; *Rrrrock*; *Fantasy*; *Pensando en Ti*; *Party Boys*. TK/DASH 30015 \$7.98, © 30015 \$7.95, © 30015 \$7.95.



Breakthrough

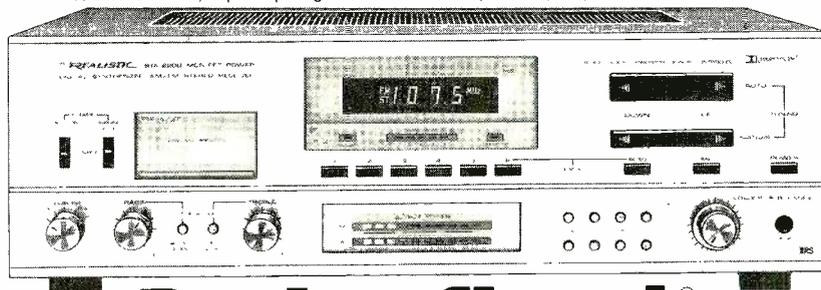
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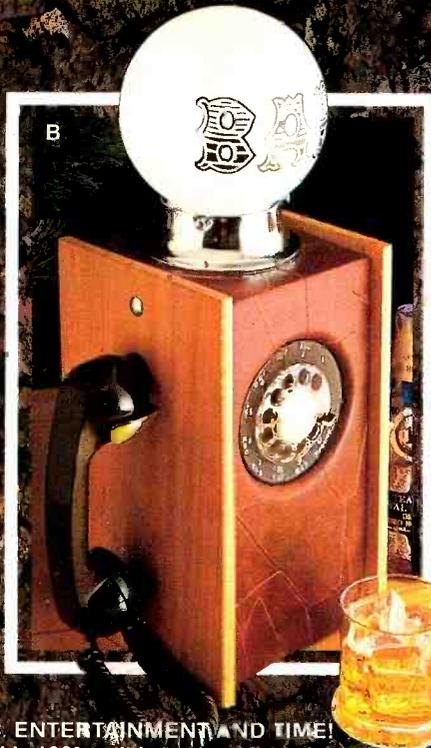


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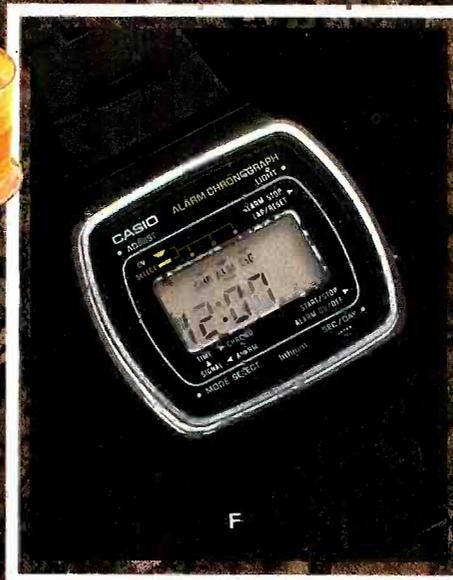
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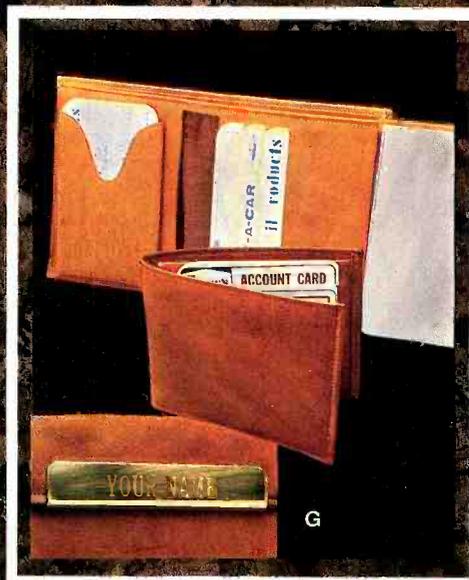
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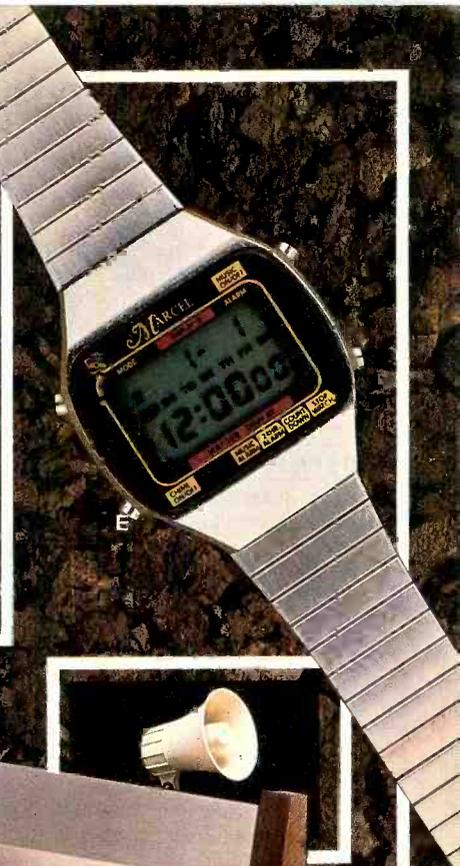
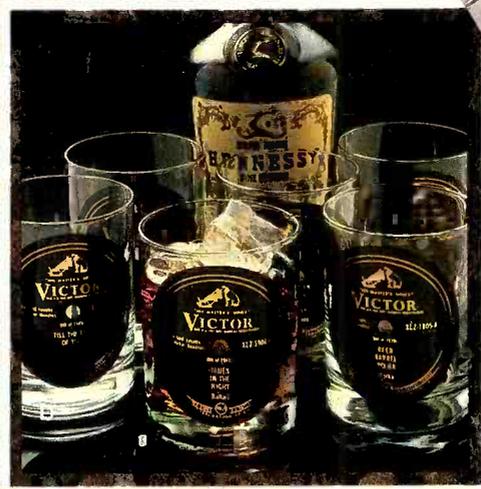


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JAZZ



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RON CARTER: *Pick 'Em*. Ron Carter (bass, piccolo bass); Kenny Barron (piano); Buster Williams (bass); Ben Riley (drums); other musicians. *All Blues; Tranquil; Eight;* and three others. MILESTONE M-9092 \$7.98.

Performance: **Pick 'em, play 'em**
Recording: **Very good**

It had been one of those bad days when each record I fed my turntable seemed worse than the one I had just removed. Under normal circumstances, I would have done the humane, sensible thing and stopped those dreadful discs in their opening tracks, but a record reviewer must resist such impulses and listen from beginning to end. How wonderful it was, then, after a series of nonmusical assaults, to hear an album as tastefully conceived and exquisitely performed as "Pick 'Em." Of course, I was not at all surprised by this quality, for excellence is what one has come to expect from Ron Carter, the self-proclaimed "Mercedes-Benz of bass players." Even on an off day his music will in some measure appeal to one's aesthetic senses. This album was made in December 1978 on days when the Muses were clearly smiling.

The basic personnel consists of Carter, pianist Kenny Barron, bassist Buster Williams, and drummer Ben Riley—in other words, Carter's splendid quartet of recent years. But there are also four strings and, on a couple of tracks, contributions from Hugh McCracken (harmonica and guitar) and Ralph McDonald (percussion). One of the most effective cuts, however, is Carter's alone: *B and A*, on which he plays to his own dubbed-in bass accompaniment. With the overdub at times sounding more like a guitar manipulated by the feathery fingers of the late Teddy Bunn, or by Freddie Green, the result is a well-rooted, body-bopping romp. Apropos roots, Carter dips into his Miles Davis past on the opening track, his own Gil Evans arrangement of *All Blues*, a tune Miles featured on his "Kind of Blue" album twenty years ago and which Carter recorded with him in concert five years later ("My Funny Valentine," Columbia CS 9106). I dare say that some of the music in this album goes beyond the shores of jazz, but never too far. When Ron Carter builds a bridge to distant genres, one can look across it and behold something spectacular. "Pick 'Em" is good listening. C.A.

DEXTER GORDON: *Great Encounters* (see *Best of the Month*, page 82)

BILL HENDERSON: *Street of Dreams*. Bill Henderson (vocals); Joyce Collins (vo-

als, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Whisper Not; Angel Eyes; My Funny Valentine; Sorry Seems to Be the Hardest Word; Your Smiling Face;* and four others. DISCOVERY DS-802 \$8.98.

Performance: **In a mellow groove**
Recording: **Very good**

If you recall Horace Silver's 1958 hit *Señor Blues*, you must also recall hearing Bill Henderson, who delivered the lyrics. Some Henderson albums followed (on Vee-Jay), and I remember being particularly fond of his version of *Bye, Bye, Blackbird*, which appeared on an album containing a popular item of the day, *Joey*. Henderson never made a big name for himself, but he was well known in jazz circles and his highly personal sound became common fare on FM, which in those days mostly reached people who considered themselves above the current rock-and-roll scene. Anyway, Bill Henderson sang in a sort of FM mode that today, twenty years later, sounds just as hip against the slow fade of disco thumps. When the last of those thumps disappears into the land of fads past, Henderson's mellow voice and relaxed delivery will still be palatable.

This is Bill Henderson's second album on Discovery, a small Los Angeles-based label, and it is for the most part a joy to listen to. My complaints are actually minor. I think it is a mistake to end each side with close to a minute of something called "Artist's Spoken Autograph," which translates into Henderson telling us what and who is on the album. That may be cute the first time around, but only then, and it is quite unnecessary considering that the same information can be read on the back cover. Also, I am bothered by two tracks featuring Henderson and Joyce Collins singing *quodlibets*, that is, two different songs simultaneously (*The Gentleman Is a Dope/My Funny Valentine* and *Angel Eyes/This Masquerade*); it's somewhat confusing, especially since the lyrics aren't really related. Then, too, Henderson and Collins sing their respective songs so pleasantly that one easily focuses one's ears on one and begins to resent the intrusion of the other.

All that aside, "Street of Dreams" is well worth acquiring, especially if you seek relief from the let's-git-down-and-shake-our-booty minimalist style. It offers literate lyrics

and creative melody lines from the pens of Jerome Kern, Benny Golson, Richard Rodgers, Elton John, James Taylor, Leon Russell, Victor Young, and others; articulate delivery of same; and the splendid, swinging accompaniments of a group that includes, to its great advantage, tenor saxophonist Pete Christlieb and drummer Jimmie Smith. C.A.

ART HODES AND HIS WINDY CITY SEVEN: *Echoes of Chicago*. Art Hodes (piano); Ernie Carson (cornet); Charlie Bornemann (trombone); Herman Foretich (clarinet); Spencer Clark (bass saxophone); Jerry Rousseau (bass); "Spider" Ridgeway (drums). *This Could Be My Lucky Day; It's the Talk of the Town; Makin' Whoopee; Sunday; You're Driving Me Crazy;* and four others. JAZZOLGY J-79 \$6.98.

Performance: **Bright**
Recording: **Clean**

Art Hodes is a veteran pianist who started out as a kid in the early Twenties playing a varied repertoire of pop tunes. He was introduced to jazz late in that decade and by the late Thirties had been typed as a Dixieland or "Chicago-style" keyboarder; as a result, he's rarely had a chance to play the *haut-pop* material he most likes. This February 1978 session presents a relaxed Hodes playing a pleasing array of standards in company with other seasoned musicians. The performances are warm and cozy, with Hodes displaying a light and delicate touch. Charlie Bornemann's trombone has just enough of a rough edge, cornetist Ernie Carson punches out a sprightly lead, and Spencer Clark's bass sax gives an extra oomph to the proceedings. Hear and enjoy. J.V.

AHMAD JAMAL: *Genetic Walk*. Ahmad Jamal (keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *Pablo Sierra; La Costa; Bellows; Spartacus Love Theme;* and four others. 20TH CENTURY-FOX T-600 \$7.98.

Performance: **An old tinkle**
Recording: **Good**

It was in the Fifties that Ahmad Jamal tinkled his way to recognition with *Poinciana*, which he played in a style that straddled the fence between jazz and cocktail piano. Except for his 1976 album "Live at Oil Can

RON CARTER QUARTET: left to right, Carter, Barron, Williams, Riley



Harry's," which was a pleasant, swinging surprise, Jamal has barely had his toes on the jazz side of that fence in the past twenty years, at least as far as recordings are concerned. "Genetic Walk," his newest release, continues that pattern. Sure, there are strongly jazz-flavored passages here and there in this collection, but they are of the stock variety. Much of the album is devoted to keyboard tinkles amid crippled arrangements for lifeless horns, soupy strings, pallid voices, and what sounds like an old Bob James rhythm track. Is this what you want on your turntable? C.A.

ROD MASON JAZZ BAND: Stars Fell on Alabama. Rod Mason Jazz Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Monday Date; Black Cat; Bugle Boy March; Crazy About My Baby; Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me; Silver Dollar*; and four others. JETON © 100.3302 \$16.95 (available in audio stores or from Jeton Records, 505 Burns Avenue, Hicksville, N.Y. 11801).

Performance: **Derivative**
Recording: **Terrific**

This will necessarily be, in part at least, a condescending review, for I can't believe that very many Americans will buy this record for the music on it. This kind of revivalist jazz is taken far more seriously in England than here where there are enough original practitioners and enough of the tradition still going to obviate the need for rootless re-creations. And perhaps only an English group could bag together, as here,

pseudo-Bix, straight-ahead Dixieland, a passable imitation of an Armstrong vocal (*Monday Date*), Berigan-like cadenzas, and a sung calypso number (*Don't Try to Keep Up with the Jones's*).

That much said, don't dismiss the record. The Rod Mason Jazz Band plays perfectly listenable (in most places) if unmemorable jazz, and they do have the ability to raise a real rumpus on the final choruses. Their efforts provide the material for a spectacularly fine direct-to-disc recording, clear, crisp, beautifully balanced, and with all the sizzle on the instruments you could wish. This is demonstration quality, and, to use an old English cliché, for those who like this sort of thing, this is exactly the sort of thing they'll like. —James Goodfriend

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CECIL McBEE: *Alternate Spaces*. Cecil McBee (bass); Joe Gardner (trumpet); Chico Freeman (soprano and tenor saxophones, flute); Don Pullen (piano); Allen Nelson (drums); Don Moye (percussion). *Sorta, Kinda Blue; Come Sunrise; Consequence*; and two others. INDIA NAVIGATION IN 1043 \$8.98.

Performance: **Worthy notes**
Recording: **Very good**

The India Navigation label continues along the right track, recording musicians whose dedication to their art is unflinching. I am particularly pleased to see that bassist Cecil McBee has been given his own album, and I

am happy to report that "Alternate Spaces" is a fine one. That really doesn't surprise me, because McBee first caught my attention in the early Sixties when I heard him play with Paul Winter's group, and he has been among my favorite bass players since I heard him merge virtuosity with daring imagination as a member of Yusef Lateef's group some five years later. He has developed even further since then—as, of course, has the music to which he has dedicated himself—and he comes to this, his second album as a leader (the first, "Mútima," appeared on Strata-East 7417), with an impressive background that includes more than casual working relationships with such estimable colleagues as Jackie McLean, Sonny Rollins, Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard, and Wayne Shorter.

Speaking of impressive colleagues, this album features a number of them, including saxophonist Chico Freeman, an extraordinary player whose work does much to thwart any rumors of jazz music's impending demise. Then there are pianist Don Pullen and percussionist Don Moye, two men who can leap far ahead musically without losing touch with their roots. I am not familiar with Joe Gardner, the trumpeter on this date, but his work is impressive in this program of sounds spanning the last four decades. If some passages seem overly fragmented (and they will), hang in there; it all comes together in the end. Lead on, McBee! C.A.

(Continued on page 119)

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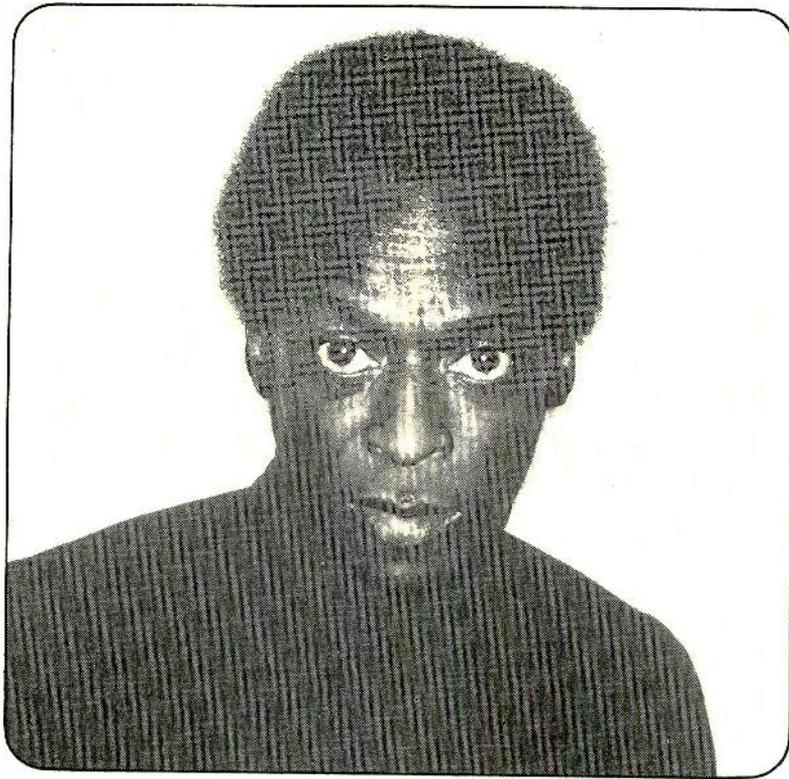
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Prestige Records

Worth Waiting For: Vintage Miles

WHATEVER became of Miles Davis? Being more than peripherally involved in jazz, I am often asked that question these days, but I have heard so many conflicting stories that I'm afraid my guess would be as good as yours. A Columbia Records spokesman assures me that Miles was consulted regarding the release of its new "Circle in the Round" two-disc album, yet the notes—by James Isaacs—clearly indicate that when it comes to knowledge of Miles' current status Columbia is as much in the dark as the rest of us. I heard from an impeccable source within the company that Miles actually showed up for a Columbia recording session a few months ago but that he recorded only about fifteen minutes of music before abruptly walking out, canceling the rest of the date and, for all intents and purposes, disappearing.

When I first heard about "Circle in the Round," I thought it might contain the salvageable minutes of that last brief encounter with a Columbia microphone, plus some of the miles and miles of Miles tapes amassed by producer Teo Macero in past sessions (during his electronic period Miles recorded some five minutes for every one released). I was particularly interested in hearing the new material because after so long an absence (the last-issued studio session took place in 1975) he was almost certain to return with his horn pointed in a different musical direction.

Well, you guessed it, the brief return of Miles Davis to a recording studio is *not* documented on "Circle in the Round." A disappointment, to be sure, but one that is quickly overcome as track after track of well-aged, hitherto unreleased Miles is uncorked. The recordings span the period of 1955 to 1970, years that saw this prickly, moody successor to Dizzy Gillespie move from Prestige to Columbia (leaving in his wake the now-classic quintet recordings with Coltrane), ascend to marketable jazz-star status, and, in his mid-forties, turn an electronically embellished horn in the direction of youthful audiences, becoming even more marketable as he and his young band began the fusion that blasted jazz as we knew it into what some of us consider to be an orbit orbit.

AT first it was refreshing to see Miles at the Fillmore East and West, dishing out his "Bitches Brew" to the flower children right in their hallowed halls. But Miles had a bit too much of the stuff himself after a while, and, as his band of players began to venture out on their own, the ideas that had sounded so refreshing under Miles' control became increasingly stale. Perhaps Miles realized he had Pied Pipered himself and some really promising musicians into a dead-end street; he may have pulled the disappearing act to gather his energies for some future re-emergence.

In the meantime, we can be thankful for "Circle in the Round." One selection—*Love for Sale*, from a 1958 date that contributed to the "Milestones" album—was briefly available on a thrown-together 1975 album called "Black Giants." It is a treasure, like the rest of the material in this set, and I wonder how Macero (shamefully left out of the credits here) resisted for so long the temptation to get this splendid music on the market. He did release some sensational things—just think of "Sketches of Spain," "Filles de Kilimanjaro," and "In a Silent Way," albums that continue to grow in importance—but what he held back and has only now released in many cases surpasses what we were privileged to hear in the past.

VIRTUALLY all the great Miles Davis sidemen are represented in these delectable remnants, and there is not a track that Miles can't point to with pride. This is an album filled with Miles Davis truths, too rich in content for me to praise in detail here, too vibrant and extraordinary for you to pass up if you value your jazz collection. In fact, the title piece alone, which takes up all of side two, is among the most devastatingly beautiful Miles sides I have ever heard. It stems from a December 1967 date that seems to have eluded even the most thorough discographers. The notes here don't say if any other material resulted from that session, but if so, I doubt it could approach the hypnotic beauty and drama of *Circle in the Round*. What a fantastic twenty-six-minute voyage this is! Imagine Miles' horn riding side by side with Wayne Shorter's tenor across the loping rhythm of Joe Beck's Spanish-tinged guitar and Ron Carter's plump, assertive bass, with occasional travel notes from Herbie Hancock's celeste, the leader's own chimes and bells, and Tony Williams' drums, which speak with haunting urgency and punctuate the discourse with the clashing and tinkling of perfectly timed asides.

"CIRCLE IN THE ROUND" is certainly worth waiting twelve years for, though I still don't see why we had to and can only wonder about other treasures hidden in Columbia's vaults. I wonder too if that recent Miles Davis session I mentioned at the beginning will also seem worth waiting for—when we finally get to hear it. Any bets on when that'll be?
—Chris Albertson

MILES DAVIS: *Circle in the Round*. Miles Davis (trumpet). Various other musicians, including John Coltrane, Cannonball Adderley, Wayne Shorter, Bennie Maupin, Hank Mobley (reeds); Wynton Kelly, Bill Evans, Red Garland, Joe Zawinul, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock (keyboards); George Benson, Joe Beck (guitars); Ron Carter, Paul Chambers, Dave Holland (bass); and Tony Williams, Philly Joe Jones, Billy Cobham, Jack DeJohnette (drums). *Two Bass Hit; Love for Sale; Blues No. 2; Circle in the Round; Teo's Bag; Side Car I; Side Car II; Splash; Sanctuary; Guinnevere*. COLUMBIA KC2 36278 two discs \$11.98.

HAZEL SCOTT: *Always.* Hazel Scott (vocals, piano); orchestra. *Let Me Hold You; Be What You Are; Do You Feel Alright?; No Greater Love;* and four others. IMAGE 1M-307 \$7.98.

Performance: **Interesting**
Recording: **Good**

Hazel Scott belongs to the same generation as Lena Horne and Billie Holiday. Back in the Forties, she was, like them, black, beautiful, and allowed a certain token stardom. More of a musician than Horne (she has a solid background of classical training and concertizing), less of a presence than Holiday, she built a solid career that has lasted over forty years, through a spectacular marriage to the spectacular Adam Clayton Powell, a brief but intense fling at films, and a decade of expatriation in Paris. At the time of this writing, she is appearing regularly at a Manhattan club, and this record indicates that at least her style has scarcely changed or aged at all. Never very strong as a vocalist, she's still galvanic at the keyboard, as she demonstrates here in such ripsnorters as *Just the Way You Are* and *No Greater Love*. Scott also still has the tendency to alternate between being ravenously sultry and mindlessly cheerful in performance. That gets to be a bit boring on a recording, when you aren't able to gaze upon her extraordinary good looks. All in all, though, this album is an interesting souvenir of a woman who is a legend in the black community and who still has a lot to offer as a veteran entertainer. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CAROL SLOANE: *Cottontail.* Carol Sloane (vocals); Benny Aronov (piano); Norris Turney (alto saxophone); George Mraz (bass); Joe LaBarbera (drums). *Baby, Don't You Quit Now; Jackie; Some Other Spring; Something Cool;* and four others. CHOICE CRS 1025 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sleek and sexy**
Recording: **Good**

Snazzy, sexy Carol Sloane was given a major label push over fifteen years ago. But, with typical jazz singer's luck, she got her push the same season that the same label was also pushing a gangling newcomer from deepest Brooklyn known as Barbra Streisand. Carol Sloan's recorded offering never did reach a very wide public. It's a shame, too, because she's an immensely sleek, stylish singer who certainly deserves more recognition than she's gotten.

Happily, Sloan is still as good as she ever was, and this new recording shows her to have lost nothing vocally and to have gained a good deal in authority and assurance. She's also developed an intriguing slurred pout that adds a great deal to such songs as the two by Ellington, *Cottontail* and *Tomorrow Mountain*, and is nothing short of sensational in her version of the old Billie Holiday hit, *Some Other Spring*. She's even able to bring some sort of staggering life to *You're a Bad Influence*, surely the dreariest song Cole Porter ever wrote. "Cottontail" is a very good album by a very good singer who, despite being eclipsed by one of the brightest stars of the century, has continued doing her own special thing and now does it to a fare-thee-well. P.R.

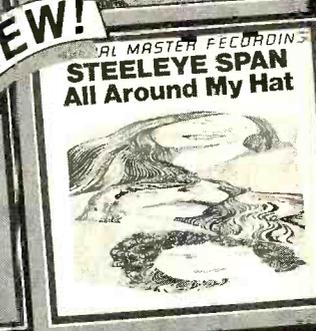
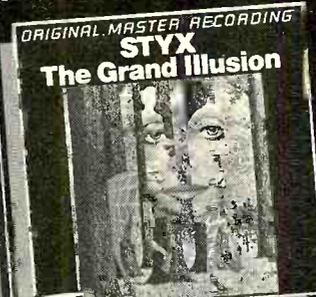
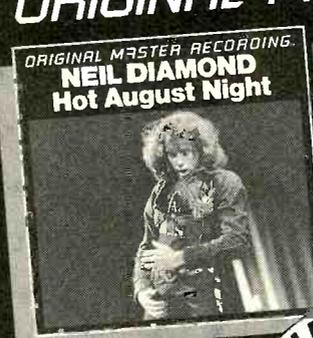
SARAH VAUGHAN: *Linger Awhile.* Sarah Vaughan (vocals); various orchestras. *As You Desire Me; While You Are Gone; I'll Know; East of the Sun; Linger Awhile; Time;* and six others. COLUMBIA SPECIAL PRODUCTS/ENCORE Ⓜ P 14364 \$7.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Good**

Sarah "Sassy" Vaughan was the Aretha Franklin of her day, and she had an enormous influence on younger singers who followed her. Sassy's strong, vibrant voice was used to serve a highly personal style, a style developed in a youth spent singing gospel. Unfortunately, also like Aretha, she was all too ready to submerge herself in music-biz

commercialism once she hit big. The recordings here are from 1949-1953, when she was associated with Columbia and trying to bend her unique gifts to fit the pop market. Most of the excitement had been carefully manicured out of her voice and projection by this time, but it's still astonishing to hear what she could do, on a purely technical level, with a bit of fluff such as *If Someone Had Told Me*. The immaculate diction, the glorious downward swoops—like a trapeze artist coming *that* close to the sawdust—and the incredibly warm and resonant tone of the voice itself all show a gift that perhaps ought to have been held in higher regard by its possessor. Still, there are some lovely sounds here. P.R.

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CBS Records

□ Shown here in a revolutionary inflation-fighting move are New York's **LAUGHING DOGS** (Columbia JC 36033) performing as their own opening act at the Bottom Line. Billed as the Kojaks, the quartet premiered an arresting set of

police-oriented material, including such classics as the Beatles' *Helter Skelter*, Elvis Costello's *Watching the Detectives*, and the Ramones' *Blitzkrieg Bop*, renamed *Blitzkrieg Cop* for the occasion. Who loves ya, baby?

POP ROTOGRAVURE

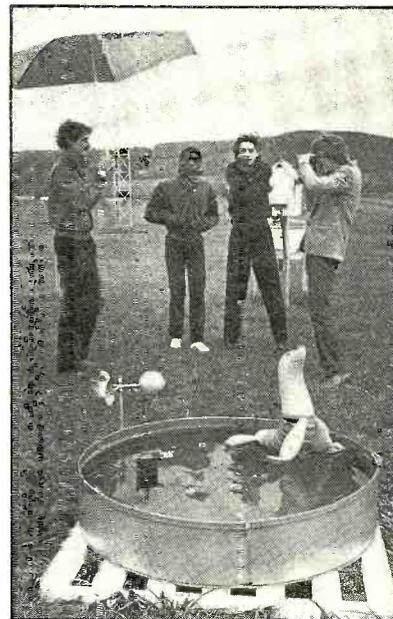
By Steve Simels

□ Although "Tusk" (Warner Bros. 2HS 3350) does not appear to be the sales behemoth that "Rumours" was, **FLEETWOOD MAC** is still pretty highly regarded in L.A. circles. Proof? Here's the

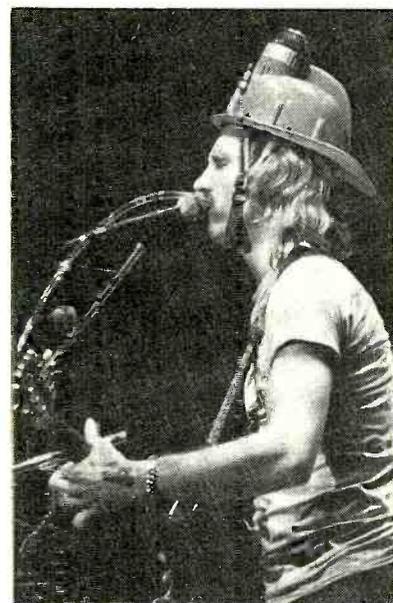
band receiving their very own star on Hollywood Boulevard as part of Fleetwood Mac Day. In case you're counting, the Mac are the 1,714th recipients of this sidewalk immortality.



Sam Emerson



Jon Reis



Joseph Sia

□ The rich, F. Scott Fitzgerald once observed to Hemingway, are different from the rest of us. Confirming the truth of this aphorism is the Eagles' irrepresible (and extremely rich) **JOE WALSH**, shown here performing in his birthday hat in New Haven recently. Joe can be seen (and heard, too) without the hat on the Eagles' "The Long Run," Asylum 5E-508.

□ Fresh from his highly publicized trouncing of David Bowie in a London restaurant, here's **LOU REED** ("The Bells," Arista AB 4229) backstage at the Bottom Line, attempting to pick another fight

between sets with his old friend Garland Jeffreys ("American Boy and Girl," A&M SP-4778). Fortunately, it appears Lou Left his gloves at home this time.

Sheri Lynn Behr



Arista Records

□ Meanwhile, in related boxing news, we have The Greatest planting a wet one on the appreciative cheek of **ANGELA BOFILL** ("Angel of the Night," Arista GRP 5501) during a—no fooling—Dental Hygiene for Children rally in Washington, D.C. So where are those Pepsodent smiles?

□ Yup, that's Canada's Sweetheart **ANNE MURRAY** ("I'll Always Love You," Capitol S00-12012), at a recent Year of the Child fund-raiser, in the company of none other than Her Highness Princess Anne of Great Britain. The reason they're laughing? Seems a nervous photographer had just violated protocol by asking the princess "How's your sister?" To which the lady ad-libbed, "She's still Queen." Honest.



I.R.S.

□ "Everybody wants to get into the act" is an old show-biz complaint, but apparently not for the **BUZZCOCKS** ("Singles Going Steady," I.R.S. SP 001). As pictured here at a recent

performance at the Santa Monica Civic Center in Los Angeles, the group's fans really, er, throw themselves into the spirit of things—or maybe they just think they're at a wrestling match.

United Press Canada

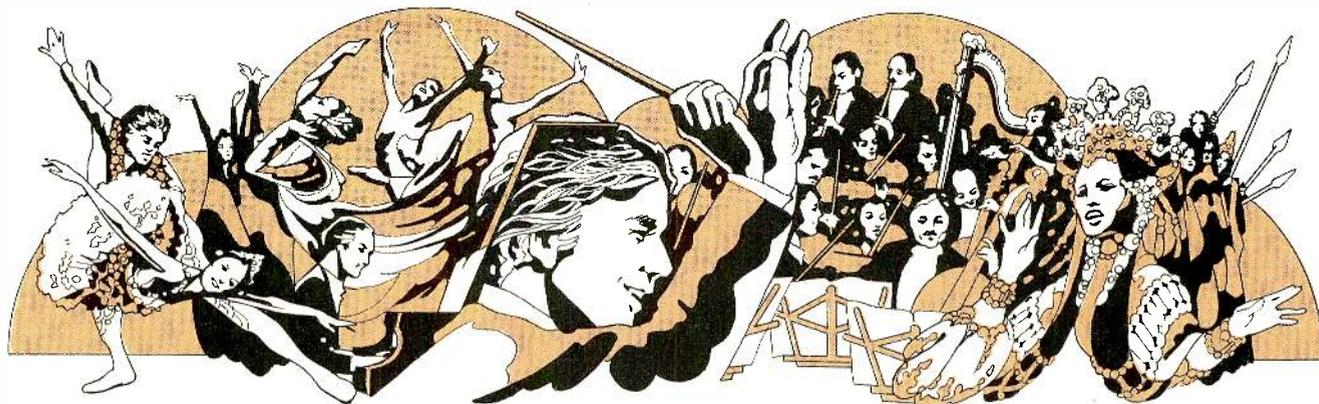


□ The Punk Meets the Godfather: The Huntz Hall lookalike on the left is, of course, Cheap Trick's **RICK NIELSEN** (Cheap Trick's latest is "Dream Police," Epic FE 35773). The geezer with the schnozzola on the right is (also of course) the Who's redoubtable **PETE TOWNSHEND** (check the soundtrack of *Quadrophenia*, Polydor PD-2-6235). During the groups' recent joint tour Townshend labored in vain to convince Nielsen he looked nothing at all like Leo Gorcey, while Nielsen, despite the Cheap Trick sweater, the Cheap Trick bow tie, the Cheap Trick cap, and the Cheap Trick police badge, attempted to persuade Pete that Cheap Trick would not for a moment succumb to commercialism.

CBS Records



Classical Discs and Tapes



Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH
STODDARD LINCOLN • ERIC SALZMAN

ARNOLD: *Three Shanties* (see NIELSEN)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

C. P. E. BACH: *Württemberg Sonatas, Op. 2, Nos. 1-6*. Bob van Asperen (harpsichord). TELEFUNKEN 6.35378 EK two discs \$19.96.

Performance: **Superb**

Recording: **Superb**

Of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Mozart exclaimed, "He is the father, we are the children." Haydn confessed a diligent study of his works, and Beethoven sought out his keyboard music not only for "sheer pleasure" but also as "something to be studied." Despite such fame during his life, C. P. E.'s reputation declined severely: only one collection of his keyboard music is now listed in Schwann, and it is a rare keyboard player today who presents his works to the public. Bob van Asperen's splendid new recording of the six magnificent *Württemberg Sonatas* is, therefore, a more than welcome addition to the catalog, for it gives us a chance to hear the passionate utterance of a truly pioneer composer.

Written in the early 1740s, the *Württemberg Sonatas* are transitional works displaying an intriguing mixture of Baroque and Classical stylistic elements. The rich harmonies, contrapuntal textures, and bold

rhythms of the Baroque are interlaced with sighing *Empfindsamkeit* melodies, provocative pauses, and sinuous lines. The music, almost spastic in its wild contrasts and bold rests, is an exemplar of the German *Sturm und Drang* movement.

Written in an idiom that invites a piano technique, the sonatas are fiercely difficult on the harpsichord despite having been written for that instrument. Only a superb sense of phrasing can overcome the problem of legato double notes on the harpsichord, and only a dramatic sense of scaling can hold so many disparate elements together in a musically cohesive single movement. Bob van Asperen has both. He also understands the true meaning of rubato, which allows the many contrasts and pauses. Also beautifully worked out are Bach's plethora of unusual ornaments and the required improvised cadenzas in the slow movements.

The harpsichord used for this recording, a Rainer Schütze modeled on a J. D. Dulken of 1745, is perfect for the music. The tone is rich and clear, and the damping system allows for an after-ring of the sound that helps the legato. Each register has its own individual characteristic sonority, which is effectively exploited by Van Asperen, and the ensemble sound is well blended and powerful. The combination of music, artist, and instrument add up to an album of the highest quality.

S.L.

J. S. BACH: *Cantata No. 140, Wachet Auf, Ruft Uns die Stimme; Cantata No. 148, Bringet dem Herrn Ehre Seines Namens*. Elly Ameling (soprano); Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); Theo Altmeyer (tenor); Hans Sotin (bass); South German Madrigal Choir and Consortium Musicum, Wolfgang Gönnerwein cond. SERAPHIM S-60328 \$4.98.

Performance: **Slow and dull**

Recording: **All right**

J. S. BACH: *Chorale Prelude, Ein Feste Burg Ist Unser Gott (BWV 720)*. Frederick Grimes (organ). *Cantata No. 80, Ein Feste*

Burg Ist Unser Gott. Diane Higginbotham (soprano); Jacqueline Pierce (mezzo-soprano); Gene Tucker (tenor); Daniel Pratt (baritone); Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Bach Choir and Orchestra, Frederick Grimes cond. *Chorale Prelude, Nun Danket Alle Gott (BWV 657)*. Nancianne Parrella (organ). Lutheran vespers conducted by the Reverend A. James Laughlin, Jr. HOLY TRINITY CHURCH HTL 1979 \$6.95 (post-paid from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 65th Street and Central Park West, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Badly balanced**

Despite a cast of fine singers in excellent form, Wolfgang Gönnerwein's old-fashioned approach to Bach plunges this exuberant music into a funereal mood. Everything is slow and stately, and the orchestra strives to make Bach sound like Brahms. The wonderful urgency of the opening chorus of *Wachet Auf*, for example, is completely lacking. The tempo is far too slow, the excitement of the dotted rhythms is swallowed up by inarticulate playing, and the syncopated figurations lack drive. And so it goes for the entire record.

The Holy Trinity Church recording of the Reformation Cantata, No. 80, is rather special in that the album includes an entire Lutheran vespers service. Hearing the cantata in a liturgical context is of great interest, for one becomes aware of the use of the organ prelude, the processional, and the various elements of chant and recitation that were so intimately associated with the cantata. The performance is a spirited one, full of joy and strength. The soloists are a brave lot, with tenor Gene Tucker being especially outstanding. His voice is light and supple, and his interpretations reveal a deep understanding of Bach's difficult vocal style. The chorus sings clearly, but the various parts don't seem to blend because the singers are pushing, which in turn causes a rather wide vibrato, especially among the women. There are also balance problems with the instruments: the trum-

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = open-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- ⓐ = stereo cassette
- Ⓛ = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓛ = digital-master recording
- Ⓛ = direct-to-disc

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

pets simply drown out everything else; the strings are all but lost, especially in the great orchestral jiggle that surrounds the chorale verse "Und wenn die Welt voll Teufel wär'."

Whether the vespers service comes across on the record as a religious service is questionable. Frankly, I find the recorded sound of a liturgy meaningless because so much depends on sight and atmosphere as well as sound. Nonetheless, here *is* the sound for those who feel otherwise. S.L.

J. S. BACH: Magnificat (BWV 243). Anna Tomowa-Sintow (soprano); Agnes Baltsa (alto); Peter Schreier (tenor); Benjamin Luxon (bass); Chorus of the German Opera, Berlin; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. **STRAVINSKY: Symphony of Psalms.** Chorus of the German Opera, Berlin; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 048 \$9.98, © 3301 048 \$9.98.

Performance: **Bach excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

There is a logic to this pairing: both works are spiritually intense, and at the time of the *Symphony of Psalms* the slogan "Back to Bach" was actually associated with Stravinsky's neo-Classicism. Nevertheless, it takes but a moment to recognize the essential differences between a composer who distills the faith and intense feelings of a whole era and civilization in a personal way and one who attempts to externalize and objectify personal and very private religious feelings as an artisan.

The Baroquisms in Bach's music, even the passionate form of the utterance, are not pure personal style but are characteristic of his age, part of the common musical speech. Bach's own contribution was his extraordinary mixture of scholarly virtuoso technique, extravagant exaggeration, some almost painful introspection, and a unique jumble of German, French, and Italian styles—all held together by the force of a personality that made no attempt at originality and yet achieved it at every moment. (Such a mixture is supposed to be impossible, or at least unacceptable, according to the Romantic clichés that hang on in music criticism today.)

Stravinsky, on the other hand, is all deliberate style, even in a work as deeply felt as the *Symphony of Psalms*. There are no real curlicues or ornaments here (Bach is full of them), only structure built on an idealized past. Bach, we might say, is an Aristotelian, finding form in things as they are; Stravinsky is a Platonist, constructing things according to an Idea of pure form, abstracting essences like his Cubist painter friends.

These differences are reflected in the performances here. Karajan is a brilliant Bach conductor, and, assisted by an extremely fine and sensitive group of singers, he has recorded a crystalline and moving account of the Magnificat, one of Bach's great works. But Stravinsky's essences mean nothing to him; he doesn't have any feeling for the sharp edges, planes, and corners of the *Symphony of Psalms*. This is Stravinsky's most moving work, but you don't communicate its feeling by softening it, by trying to make it more tender, more lyrical.

The sentiment is in the cutting edge, in the musical weight; it lies beneath the abstraction, under a tight, tense, suspended exterior. Karajan misses all this just as certainly as he grasps the essence of the Bach. E.S.

J. S. BACH: Suites for Orchestra, Nos. 3 and 4 (see Best of the Month, page 87)

BEETHOVEN: Missa Solemnis in D Major, Op. 123. Edda Moser (soprano); Hanna Schwarz (contralto); René Kollo (tenor); Kurt Moll (bass); Hilversum Radio Chorus; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 110 two discs \$19.96, © 337 029 \$19.96.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Good**

There are several first-class recordings of the *Missa Solemnis* in the catalog, with the

names of some of the world's most eminent conductors attached to them, but none can be called an absolute triumph. The reasons are more technical than musical: the work's complexities seem almost impossible to capture in realistic balance and perspective. Of the versions I have heard, I prefer Klemperer's (Angel S-3679) and Solti's (London 12111), and listening to this second recording of the work by Leonard Bernstein has given me no reason to alter that judgment.

Bernstein's performance here, however, does have much to commend it. The Kyrie seems a shade too deliberate for my taste, but thereafter the music moves along at traditional tempos. It is a dignified and committed performance, free of excesses and undue theatricality. In contrast with Klemperer's more robust approach, Bernstein's is characterized by soft contours and rounded edges. The vocal and orchestral

(Continued on page 125)



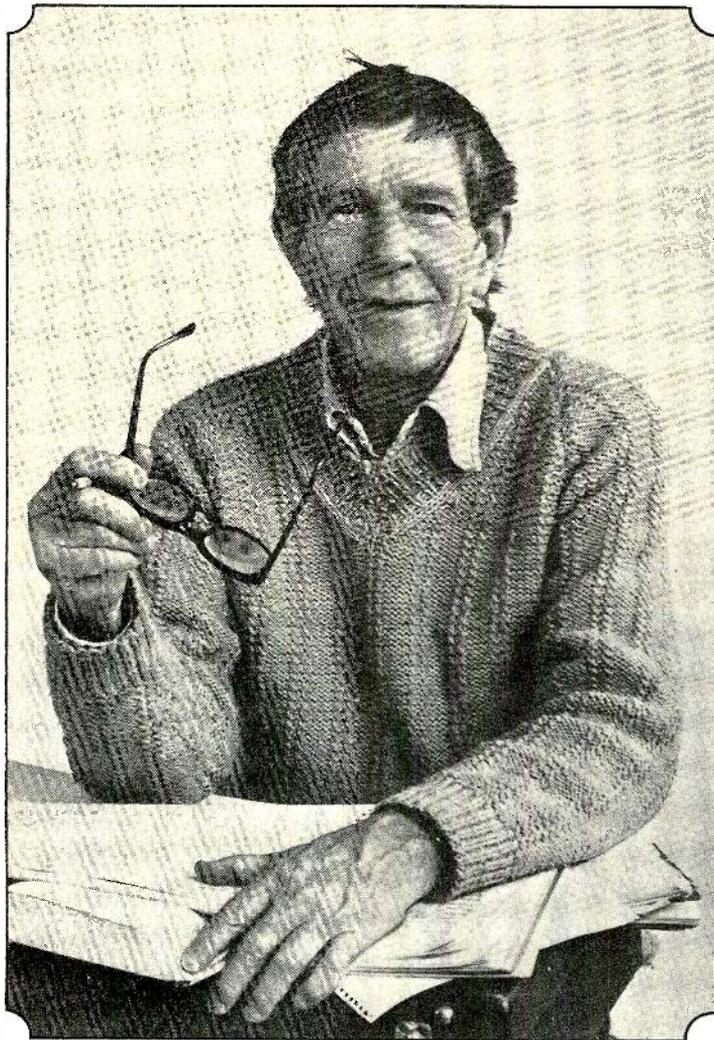
Angel Records

Giulini's Mozart Requiem

THE Mozart Requiem is a work with which Carlo Maria Giulini has especially identified himself, and his stunning new performance for Angel is one of the finest things he has given us in years. It is on a very grand scale and unabashedly dramatic, somewhat like the rather *Don Giovanni*-ish Karajan remake on Deutsche Grammophon (2530 705) that has been my stereo preference lately. But after hearing Giulini's, I find that Karajan's sounds oddly aggressive. In part this has to do with a certain hardness in DG's sonic focus, in contrast to Angel's more judiciously balanced richness, but it has more to do with the greater sense of involvement in the new version, and with Giulini's greater willingness to let the music breathe naturally and find its own shape. The trombone solo in the *Tuba Mirum* is less winningly played on Angel than on DG, but that is the only

point, I think, that I can complain about here. The respective solo quartets are both quite good, but Christa Ludwig, even with an occasional mannerism, makes a much stronger impression than Karajan's Agnes Baltsa, and the Philharmonia Chorus, directed by the Vienna State Opera's Norbert Balatsch, is simply superb. There are other approaches to this frequently elusive work that may appeal more to certain listeners, but among recordings now available I can think of none more deeply felt or more satisfying than this one. —Richard Freed

MOZART: Requiem Mass in D Minor (K. 626). Helen Donath (soprano); Christa Ludwig (mezzo-soprano); Robert Tear (tenor); Robert Lloyd (bass); Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini cond. ANGEL SZ-37600 \$8.98, © 4ZS-37600 \$8.98.



Performing Artservices / Alex Kayser

John Cage

It is not easy to think of John Cage as the elder statesman of American music, but that is what he is. Perhaps "statesman" is the wrong word for this intellectual anarchist without connection to any state—except states of being. "Philosopher-king" is more like it.

Cage is best known for having established the role of chance in contemporary music (and contemporary art generally). But his early work was carefully composed in a delicate, brush-stroke style that owed a great deal to Oriental art. The best-known music from this period is in the big sets for prepared piano, but there are other scores, some of which are offered on a recent Tomato Records release. *She Is Asleep* is a two-part work consisting of a vocalise for voice and prepared piano followed by—are you ready?—a quartet for twelve tom-toms! This work is sandwiched on side one of the disc between two versions of *A Room*, the first for conventional piano, the second for prepared piano. All these works share a common rhythmic structure, and they are strikingly performed here by pianist Joshua

Pierce, the Paul Price Percussion Ensemble, and Jay Clayton, "voice." Clayton is a jazz singer with a simple, clear, expressive sound that is singularly affecting and wonderful for this music, which impresses the listener by its profound simplicity and calm—far above the fray.

In the early Fifties Cage began, in the notorious *Book of Changes*, to use the ancient Chinese oracle book the *I Ching* and other devices to involve the element of chance in his music. Side two of the same release holds, along with a couple of short prepared-piano works from the Forties, the *Two Pastorales* of 1951 and the *Seven Haiku* of 1952, both prepared-piano pieces made in similar ways. The gentler, pulsating style of the Forties pieces is replaced here by something harsher, more angular; a soft, rhythmic landscape has become a Zen garden of rocks and rough stones.

By the Seventies Cage was using star charts as well as the *I Ching* to fix locations of notes. A two-disc Tomato release offers Nos. 1-16 of the thirty-two *Etudes Australes* of 1974 (an album of the remaining

sixteen will be released soon). This is a kind of music of the spheres and orbs of the Southern Hemisphere: sparse, harsh, coldly beautiful. Pianist Grete Sultan plays them very neatly, and, like the other Tomato release, the album is nicely put together. Cage, always true to his philosophical view of the world, would probably not object to noise in the grooves of his records. But the people at Tomato obviously do, and the Cagean silences here are probably as quiet as any you might find these days on American-made discs.

Cage's *The Seasons*, commissioned by Ballet Society for his long-time collaborator Merce Cunningham, was first performed in 1947 in—of all places—the Ziegfeld Theater in New York. Now available on disc from Composers Recordings, Inc., it is a rare example of an orchestral work by Cage. Given its date, its being based on an East Indian interpretation of the seasons, and its use of rhythmic patterning and orchestral color, one might expect it to be one of those rippling, pulsating pieces in the prepared-piano manner. But by and large *The Seasons* has a fragmented, detached quality that hovers between exoticism, Satie-ism, and a sort of proto-avant-gardism. Lest this description be interpreted as a put-down, let me say that the piece is quite memorable and, like all the best of Cage's music, quietly sensuous.

SIDE two of the CRI disc holds Charles Wuorinen's *Two-Part Symphony*. Both it and *The Seasons* were recorded live at Alice Tully Hall in Lincoln Center in December 1978. The contrast between them is obvious: Wuorinen's work is as tense, high-strung, and complex as Cage's is calm, laid-back, and simple. And, for all its twelve-tonery, the Wuorinen seems very close to traditional Western symphonic music. I don't think this impression results only from the comparison with Cage, and I don't think it is merely because our ears are getting accustomed to these sorts of sounds. Wuorinen, like many other composers of his generation, is working closer to the tradition all the time. For better or worse, this music sounds like updated Hindemith.

Both the Cage and the Wuorinen works receive impressive performances by an excellent orchestra devoted to new music under the direction of the redoubtable Dennis Russell Davies. Both are well recorded too. —Eric Salzman

CAGE: *A Room (two versions); She Is Asleep; Seven Haiku; Totem Ancestor; Two Pastorales; And the Earth Shall Bear Again.* Joshua Pierce (piano, prepared piano); Jay Clayton (voice); Paul Price Percussion Ensemble. TOMATO TOM-7016 \$8.98.

CAGE: *Etudes Australes, Nos. 1-16.* Grete Sultan (piano). TOMATO TOM-2-1101 two discs \$11.98.

CAGE: *The Seasons.* WUORINEN: *Two-Part Symphony.* American Composers Orchestra, Dennis Russell Davies cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CRI SD 410 \$7.95.

forces are in good balance, and the four soloists are nicely blended, with individual strengths noticeable at the top (Moser) and the bottom (Moll). Beethoven's extremely demanding part writing is well executed by the chorus, if not spectacularly so.

Technically, the results are not extraordinary. The Klemperer set of more than ten years ago offers warmer sound and greater immediacy, with brass and woodwind details more sharply registered. Furthermore, Kurt Moll is inaudible in his portion of "Et incarnatus est." A thorny challenge, this *Missa Solemnis*, but then it was never meant to be routine repertoire. G.J.

BEETHOVEN: Piano Sonatas: No. 1, in F Minor, Op. 2, No. 1; No. 2, in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2; No. 3, in C Major, Op. 2, No. 3; No. 4, in E-flat Major, Op. 7; No. 5, in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 1; No. 6, in F Major, Op. 10, No. 2; No. 7, in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3. Bernard Roberts (piano). NIMBUS \odot D/C 901 four discs \$60 (plus \$1.50 postage and handling from Audio-Source, 1185 Chess Drive, Foster City, Calif. 94404).

Performance: **Poised and virile**
Recording: **Very clean**

With six stereo sets of the thirty-two Beethoven piano sonatas currently listed, plus the historic mono set by Arthur Schnabel, and with Vladimir Ashkenazy's new cycle nearing completion, one may wonder about the need for a premium-price set of sixteen (instead of the usual thirteen) discs by a pianist who is little known outside of England. Does the direct-to-disc recording, together with all the tender loving care that goes into manufacturing an audiophile product, give results unusual enough here to justify the cost? I have my doubts. Nevertheless, all but the last of the four tastefully produced four-disc albums have been released in England, and the first is now available in the U.S.

Forty-six-year-old Bernard Roberts is not a major figure on the international concert scene, but he is well-known and highly respected in Britain, and his Nimbus Beethoven cycle is an outgrowth of his concert performances. Except for the Op. 7, the longest of the first seven sonatas, the allotment is one to a disc side here. Thus, the A Major and C Major from Op. 2 and the great D Major that concludes Op. 10 demand twenty-five or so continuous minutes of errorless playing apiece. For Mr. Roberts, or any other pianist for that matter, to meet such demands and still produce interpretations of character and depth is, I think, something of a minor miracle.

As the album notes point out, Roberts is a pianist somewhat in the Wilhelm Backhaus mold: there is very little caressing of phrase to underline lyrical expression, but there is a very straightforward rhythmic pulse, a big-scale treatment of the fast movements, a cool elegance to the dance-like pieces—as in the minuet of Op. 2, No. 1—and a fine poise to the slow movements. On the other hand, I miss the poetry and humor that, say, Ashkenazy or Brendel brings to these early works. For all the bigness of scale and virility of Roberts' performances, they are for me a bit too square and rough-hewn.

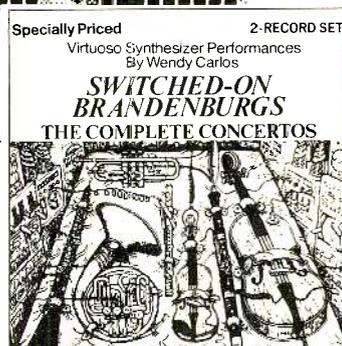
As for sonics, the Steinway D comes through with crystalline clarity of tone and

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Debut Recording



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Granger Collection

Janáček's "Makropulos Case"

KAREL ČAPEK, author of the play *The Makropulos Case*, did not think it suitable for operatic treatment. "I've too high an opinion of music," he wrote to Leoš Janáček when he learned of the composer's plan to make an opera of it, "and especially yours, to imagine it linked to such a conversational, highly unpoetical and garrulous play as my *Makropulos Case*. However, . . . I don't regard the fiction of an eternal, or 300-year-old, person as my literary property, and therefore won't stand in the way of your using it as you see fit."

In his excellent notes for London's new recording of the opera, John Tyrrell discusses in some detail Janáček's success in reducing the lengthy (though thought-provoking and hardly "garrulous") play to operatic proportions while adding elements of eloquence and compassion to enrich Čapek's essentially ironic and skeptical view of the human condition. What resulted is an opera that remains quite conversational, but it is so enhanced by Janáček's orchestral idiom—with its flashes of haunting motivic fragments, stabbing reiterations, and constant unexpected turns—that interest never sags. If anything, the opera is *underwritten*; like Puccini, Janáček believed in concision. The action moves quickly, at times suddenly, but the transitions are convincingly managed. And, of course, Janáček was right: this absorbing story *can* be operatic—if it is reshaped by hands that combine its realism with a certain nightmarish quality.

The lead role of Emilia Marty—a woman who has miraculously lived for centuries and has experienced all human feelings but dried up emotionally in the process—is an ideal vehicle for Elisabeth Söderström's unique interpretive art. Her performance on the new recording is simply the last word in

dramatic illumination and kaleidoscopically colored singing. Her associates are first-rate, particularly Peter Dvorský, who brings passionate lyricism to the large role of Albert Gregor and manages the taxing musical requirements impressively. For the other roles, intelligence and ensemble spirit count for more than individual singing skills, but no member of the cast falls short of expectations, and the veteran tenor Beno Blachut does a brilliant cameo in the role of Hauk-Šendorf, one of Emilia's lovers from the distant past.

Conductor Sir Charles Mackerras equals his triumph in the same composer's *Katya Kabanova* two years ago, securing magnificent playing from the Vienna Philharmonic. He should be encouraged to give us more Janáček, whose music he serves with a revelatory dedication.

IHAVE some reservations about the recording perspectives. Unquestionably, the orchestral writing is the most fascinating musical element in this opera, and it must be kept in clear focus. Nonetheless, the vocalists must not be obscured, and in my view London's production team did not altogether succeed in achieving a balance in which the voices are sufficiently forward.

—George Jellinek

JANÁČEK: *The Makropulos Case*. Elisabeth Söderström (soprano), Emilia Marty; Peter Dvorský (tenor), Albert Gregor; Vladimír Krejčík (tenor), Vítek; Vaclav Zitek (baritone), Jaroslav Prus; Zdeněk Švehla (tenor), Janek; Dalibor Jedlička (baritone), Kolenatý; Beno Blachut (tenor), Hauk-Šendorf; others. Chorus of the Vienna State Opera; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Charles Mackerras cond. LONDON OSA 12116 two discs \$17.96.

impact and generally excellent balance throughout the range. The midrange seems a trifle glittery, at least on my playback equipment, but I am inclined to ascribe this to the somewhat hard acoustic character of the recording environment. The pressing of the discs is excellent—if still not *quite* the equal of the best Japanese product in terms of surface noise. *D.H.*

BERIO: *Allelujah II*. BBC Symphony Orchestra, Pierre Boulez and Luciano Berio cond. *Concerto for Two Pianos; Nones.* Bruno Canino, Antonio Ballista (pianos, in concerto); London Symphony Orchestra, Luciano Berio cond. RCA ARL1-1674 \$8.98.

Performance: **Presumably right**
Recording: **Okay but hissy**

Nones and *Allelujah II* date from the early Fifties, when new music was indeed new and startling. This is serial music in the post-Webern manner, but it is serial music of a very incisive sort. *Allelujah II*, in particular, makes a very striking impression in a concert hall, partly because its five instrumental ensembles are scattered all around the audience—an acoustical surround that is only slightly suggested in this two-channel recording. Here is a piece written for quad, but, alas, the boom came and went without a four-channel record of it.

The concerto—written for Janice and Norman Rosenthal to play with the New York Philharmonic but actually premiered by Bruno Canino and Antonio Ballista, the artists on this disc—was composed almost two decades later, and the differences are quite striking. Instead of the very fractured, abstract surfaces of the earlier works, the concerto has a wall-of-sound quality—highly punctuated, articulated, built-up, even dramatized, it is true—that allies it much more to contemporary avant-gardism. Like its predecessors, however, it is very abstract and rather tough going.

I haven't seen the scores, so judgment of these performances is essentially meaningless. These are the composer's own readings, and, unable to separate work from performance, we must assume he knows what he wants and is able to achieve it! There's more hiss than we're used to these days (I'll bet the master tapes go back a few years), but otherwise the recordings as such are okay. *E.S.*

BORODIN: *Polovtsian Dances* (see DE-LIUS)

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 7, in E Major.*
WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll*. Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink cond. PHILIPS 6769 028 two discs \$19.96, © 7699 113 \$19.96.

Performance: **Uneven Bruckner, lovely Wagner**
Recording: **Very good**

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 7, in E Major.* Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Kurt Masur cond. VANGUARD VSD 71242 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Could use more presence**

Bernard Haitink's 1967 Concertgebouw recording of the Seventh Symphony was one
(Continued on page 128)

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of the less satisfying of his complete Bruckner cycle, so it is not surprising that he would want to have another go at it. For good measure, the fourth-side filler is the Wagner *Siegfried Idyll*, the same piece Herbert von Karajan used to fill out his own remarkable 1977 reading of the Bruckner Seventh for Deutsche Grammophon. I will say straight out that Haitink has the edge on Karajan in Wagner's miniature masterpiece, communicating its tenderness with a conviction and warmth worthy of the late Bruno Walter in his prime. The Concertgebouw Orchestra's first-desk horn and woodwind players also deserve special plaudits here.

The Bruckner, though, is again disappointing throughout the first two movements. Haitink's reading is cool, measured, and carefully controlled, as is his wont, and the result, for my ears, is too bland, the beautiful sonics notwithstanding. Only in the scherzo do things really get going: the phrasing and rhythmic articulation have genuine vitality, and the music begins to show genuine character. This improvement continues through the finale, which is treated with both great verve and loving care in the fine details.

Kurt Masur's Leipzig Bruckner cycle continues apace on the Vanguard label, and having the Seventh Symphony on a single disc at a \$7.98 list price is a tempting bargain, even with the necessary turnover midway in the slow movement. Moreover, there is nothing bland about Masur's handling of the opening movement: the arching first

theme is superbly effective in phrasing and nuance. Interesting and convincing too is the treatment of the subsidiary material, which is brisk without being brusque. The slow-movement reading shows Masur's emphasis on legato flow, including the great climax, here rendered without the controversial cymbal crash employed in most other currently available recorded performances. The scherzo moves along with a fine swing and a telling feel for textural detail.

In the finale, however, there is a sharp contrasting of tempos, even sharper than in the opening movement. Masur gives a distinctly meditative treatment to the secondary thematic material and goes in for much tempo fluctuation in the development of the minor-mode unison theme derived from the opening bars. This free handling is fascinating, but it may not be wholly convincing to many—me included. As with the other recordings I have heard in this series, the sound is ultraspaceous, but regrettably at the expense of ensemble presence, and the result is a dilution of the music's inherent intensity and ruggedness, particularly in the two final movements. *D.H.*

COPLAND: *Music for Solo Piano* (see Best of the Month, page 87)

COTEL: *August 12, 1952: The Night of the Murdered Poets*. Eli Wallach (narrator); Richard Hein (French horn); Ronald Gibbs (vibraphone, xylophone); Mark Goldstein (percussion); Dennis Masuzzo (double bass); John McCauley (piano). *Piano Sonata*

fa. Morris Moshe Cotel (piano). GRENADILLA GS 1051 \$7.95.

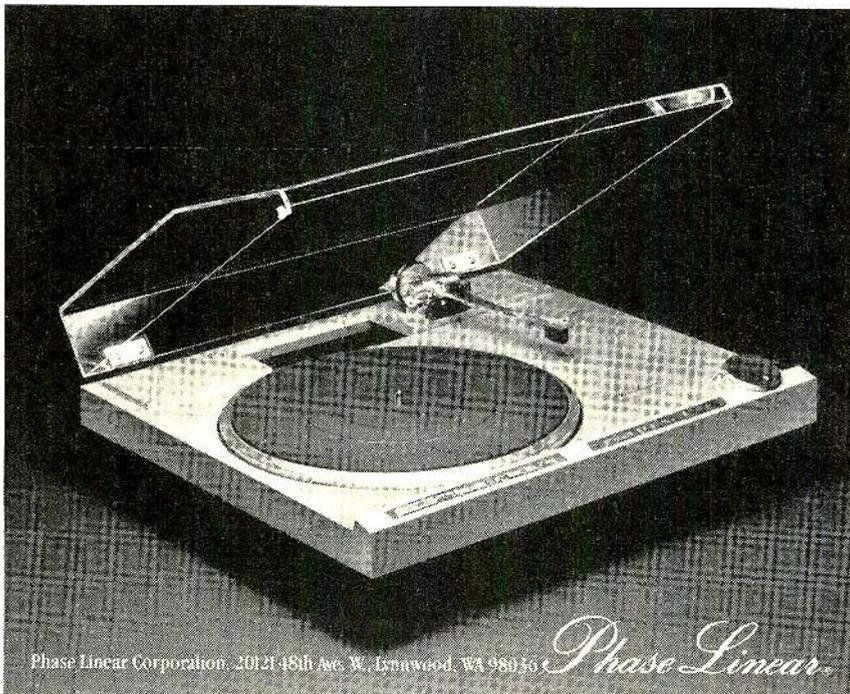
Performance: **Stirring**
Recording: **Poorly balanced**

On August 12, 1952, twenty-four of Russia's leading poets, writers, and intellectuals, who happened to be Jews, were taken to the basement of Lubyanka Prison in Moscow and executed. The purpose of this mass murder was to destroy Jewish culture in the Soviet Union, a kind of final blow climaxing the liquidation of synagogues and Jewish schools, magazines, newspapers, and publishing firms. To commemorate that infamous event, composer Morris Moshe Cotel has set poems by the murdered poets and other texts related to the persecution of Jews in Stalinist Russia. The work begins with the last words of one of the poets, David Bergelson, "Earth, oh earth, do not cover my blood!" and culminates in an appeal to "let my people go" by the son of another of the victims, Peretz Markish. The score, cast in a restless atonal idiom, presents in broad strokes a raging, raucous background to the agony of the poetry and the polemics of the prose texts.

The work had its première in New York in 1978 with Richard Dreyfuss narrating and the composer conducting. The composer again conducts on this record, sponsored by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, and Eli Wallach is the speaker. Wallach is a powerful performer but could have used some restraining direction. On the technical

(Continued on page 131)

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side, there is an imbalance between the actor's voice and the stormy instrumental forces, which tend to drown him out from time to time. Nevertheless, this is a hauntingly impassioned performance. Side two is devoted to Cotel's Piano Sonata of 1976, a big, intricate work in which Cotel, an expert pianist, uses plucked strings, cluster bars, and other modern devices to convey the ferocity of his highly emotional music. *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DELIUS: *Songs of Sunset*. BORODIN: *Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances*. Maureen Forrester (contralto, in Delius); John Cameron (baritone, in Delius); Beecham Choral Society; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham cond. ARABESQUE © 8026 \$6.98.

Performance: **Distinctively Beecham**
Recording: **Good mid-Fifties mono**

Although Delius specified soprano and baritone for his *Songs of Sunset*, all the recordings known to me have been made by altos. Sir Thomas Beecham made an extraordinary recording of the work with Nancy Evans, Redvers Llewellyn, and the BBC Chorus in November 1946, but, as far as I know, it has never appeared in this country. Neither, until now, had his 1957 version on this new Arabesque disc; it may not be quite as magical as the older one, but it is magical enough, at the very least, to show what is missing in the prosaic performance under Sir Charles Groves (Angel S-36603). De-

lians will not have to be advised to welcome this unexpected release as a treasure, and many who have not yet warmed to this composer's choral writing may well find themselves converted in a single exposure. The sound on this long (29:20) side is quite good and a little smoother than on the 12-minute Borodin side, which is perhaps a little brighter but also a little harsh; most of the choral contribution (in English) is far less clear than in the Delius. All that is offered here is the big set of dances that concludes the opera's second act. This, too, was a remake of something Beecham had recorded on 78s, but in this case the older version (mid-Thirties) is superseded in every respect. The Dowson texts for the Delius songs are printed with no indication of where the divisions fall, and no text is given for the Borodin. No matter. Beecham had few peers in performing colorful Russian music, and none at all, of course, in performing Delius. *R.F.*

K. AND F. DOPPLER: *Valse di Bravura, Op. 33; Fantaisie sur des Motifs Hongrois, Op. 35; Rigoletto Fantaisie, Op. 38; Andante et Rondo, Op. 25*. Per Øien, Robert Aitken (flutes); Geir Henning Braaten (piano). Bis LP-128 \$9.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Ravishing**
Recording: **Excellent**

The Doppler brothers, Karl and Franz, were virtuoso flutists in the mid nineteenth

century; they also composed, together, music for flute duo, and Franz wrote a half-dozen operas (one of them with Karl) and fifteen ballets. They were apparently as keenly interested in how they looked as in how they sounded, for when they performed together Karl played with his flute pointing to the left, thus being in perfect symmetry with his brother. Be that as it may, their music is in the highest salon tradition: light, graceful, ornately figured, and, above all, *dazzlingly brilliant*.

The performances here by Per Øien and Robert Aitken are likewise dazzlingly brilliant. Many of the roudades are written in thirds, and their two instruments sound like one. As in much other salon music, sentimental rubatos abound, and here, too, the flutists play with perfect ensemble. Everything is discreetly accompanied by the gentle and attentive piano playing of Geir Henning Braaten.

It's all fine for listeners who enjoy transcriptions, rondos, and sentimental waltzes. The *Rigoletto* Fantasy is something you will either love or hate; there is no middle way with it. If you do like this sort of thing, the album is a joyous one to be played on special occasions; if not—but don't be too sure you won't without giving it a listen! And if you *love* it, Bis has two more volumes available. *S.L.*

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DUKE: *Five Songs for Soprano; Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening; Ten Poems*

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I am particularly taken with the Supraphon recording of the Czech Philharmonic under the baton of Gaetano Delogu, winner of the 1968 Dimitri Mitropoulos Competition. There is a wonderful elegance and crispness to his treatment of the opening movement of the *Italian* Symphony, with an almost chamber-music-like transparency of texture throughout. The Czech wind players have never sounded better. The second movement (the so-called "Pilgrim's March," marked *andante con moto*) is paced slightly faster than is usual, and Delogu adopts an intriguing *détaché* phrasing for the second and third notes of the main theme. The *Saltarello* finale (marked *presto*) is less hectic than in some recordings but no less effective. Delogu's reading of the *Reformation* Symphony is just as fine. The delectable scherzo is super-elegant, and I am delighted to hear the finale, based on the *Ein' Feste Burg* chorale tune, shorn of

its bombast while retaining its vigor. The recorded sound is superb all the way, and I hope this level of quality is maintained in the forthcoming budget-price issue of the same recording on Quintessence.

Leonard Bernstein and the Israel Philharmonic players were in superb form for their live concert recordings of the *Italian* and the *Reformation* on Deutsche Grammophon. The presence of an audience (quiet as mice!) seems to have done a lot to warm the ambiance, which has seemed rather hard to me in many past recordings by this orchestra. Bernstein's way with the opening movement of the *Italian* is considerably less tigerish than on his 1968 New York Philharmonic disc. The middle movements fare especially well, with lovely nuances in the "Pilgrim's March" and an exceptionally warm lyric feeling in the third movement. The *Saltarello* is properly full of vim and vigor. In the *Reformation* Symphony, Bernstein takes a decidedly more dramatic, even militant view of the end movements compared with Delogu. The scherzo is notable for the crisp work of the woodwinds. The recording job is first-rate.

ANDRÉ PREVIN'S performance of the *Italian*—recorded with the London Symphony on Angel—falls midway between Delogu's elegance and Bernstein's romantic warmth. The reading is characterized by precision of execution and careful pointing of phrases throughout (in the opening movement particularly), yet the *Saltarello* is the most fiercely aggressive of the three. Like Bernstein and Delogu, Previn opts for the first-movement repeat of the exposition, thus giving us the lovely transitional music all too often lost in both concert and recorded performances. Instead of the *Reformation* Symphony, the second side of this disc holds three overtures, among which the best performance is of the not very interesting *Ruy Blas*. The *Herbrides* Overture is somewhat over-fast, and the *Midsummer Night's Dream* Overture (taken from Previn's 1977 complete recording of the whole work) is not quite poetic enough. But the symphony performance is outstanding, and, as with the other discs, the sonics are excellent.

—David Hall

MENDELSSOHN: *Symphony No. 4, in A Major, Op. 90 ("Italian"); Symphony No. 5, in D Major, Op. 107 ("Reformation")*. Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Gaetano Delogu cond. SUPRAPHON 1110 2430 \$8.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

MENDELSSOHN: *Symphony No. 4, in A Major, Op. 90 ("Italian"); Symphony No. 5, in D Major, Op. 107 ("Reformation")*. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 097 \$9.98, © 3301 097 \$9.98.

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by Emily Dickinson; Four Chinese Love Lyrics; Four Poems by E. E. Cummings. Carole Bogard (soprano); John Duke (piano). CAMBRIDGE CRS 2776 \$6.98.

Performance: **Brilliant**
Recording: **Excellent**

Some day wider audiences will come to appreciate the rich repertoire of the American art song. There are whole fields of such buried treasure waiting to be discovered. John Duke, born in 1899, was a student of Bernard Wagenaar and—as what serious American composer hasn't been?—of the late Nadia Boulanger. He has been setting poetry, much of it American poetry, to music since 1920. At last count, he had written 210 art songs, along with choral works, chamber music, operas, and operettas—all within the limits of tonality, but surprisingly fresh and adventurous on their own terms.

Twenty-four of his songs are heard on this recording, brilliantly yet subtly interpreted by soprano Carole Bogard, and there isn't a lemon in the lot. Exceptionally apt are the astringent settings of ten poems by Emily Dickinson—some of them not yet suffering from overexposure in the popular anthologies. Every one has something more than the kind of recitative that passes for song in the smaller works of composers less sensitive than Duke to the requirements for making words sing. The first six were composed in 1968, the last four in 1975, but as a set they form a seamless whole. So do the five songs for soprano based on excerpts from Sara Teasdale's *From the Sea*, which have a somewhat more Debussyan flavor, and the exceptionally delicate settings of a group of Chinese love lyrics. The program comes to a lilting close with earlier settings of four poems by E. E. Cummings, the best of which, with the already musical lyric of *In just-spring*, is as exhilarating as a sunny April day. The record company apologizes for the rather maddening absence of texts, blaming "excessive demands" from the copyright owners. You'd think they'd have the sense to realize that this might be the last chance some of these poems are going to have.

P.K.

DVOŘÁK: *Symphony No. 8, in G Major, Op. 88*. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 046 \$9.98, © 3301 046 \$9.98.

Performance: **Richly inflected**
Recording: **Close focus**

DVOŘÁK: *Symphony No. 8, in G Major, Op. 88*. Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 9500 317 \$9.98, © 7300 611 \$9.98.

Performance: **Accent on volatility**
Recording: **Very good**

Both the conductors and production crews offer distinctly contrasting views in these two new recordings. Carlo Maria Giulini's basic approach is intense and highly inflected throughout the entire work. His pacing of the first movement may seem a trifle overdeliberate, but it works in the context of the reading as a whole. The most striking passage is the elaborately nuanced section of the fourth movement just before the headlong close. The recording tends to rein-

force every aspect of Giulini's view of the score, even to the point of some overemphasis of the brass and woodwinds in the first movement. The woodwinds are also well forward, though not obtrusive, in the trio of the delectable *Sousedská*-style scherzo, but I would have liked just a shade more stereo depth there.

Colin Davis takes a more extroverted view of the G Major's end movements and is, in my view, a mite hasty in his pacing of the first movement. He treats the minor-key outburst that precedes the slow-movement coda somewhat stodgily, but he makes up for it all in a brilliantly scintillating finale. The sound represents the Concertgebouw and its orchestra at its very finest, rich in presence and ideal in ambiance. *D.H.*

FIBICH: *Symphony No. 2, in E-flat Major, Op. 38.* Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra, Jiří Waldhans cond. SUPRAPHON □ 4 10 2165 \$8.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Likable**
Recording: **Good**

Some forty years ago Zdeněk Fibich's *Poème* was fitted out with English words and became a successful popular song, *My Moonlight Madonna*. In that form, it was probably the only music by this compatriot and contemporary of Dvořák to get much of a hearing in our country. Fibich's name is not in Schwann, but imported Supraphon recordings of his works, such as this new one, are sometimes available. Not too long ago there was a very attractive coupling of his Quintet in D Major for violin, clarinet, horn, cello, and piano with his Piano Trio in F Minor (1 11 1617), and a couple of decades back there was an earlier recording of the Second Symphony, conducted by Karel Šejna. I never got to hear the Šejna performance, which may well have been more persuasive here and there than the one conducted by Jiří Waldhans, but if Waldhans doesn't quite make the work irresistible, he does make it attractive enough to appeal to anyone with a liking for the Bohemian flavor manifested in the music of Suk and Foerster and some of the lesser works of Dvořák and Smetana.

The second of Fibich's three symphonies dates from 1893 (the same year as Dvořák's *New World*), when the composer was forty-two and in love with Anežka Schulzova, the librettist for the last three of his seven operas. Motifs from a piano cycle commemorating his declaration of love are heard in the slow movement and finale, and the "motto" introduced in the first movement probably represents Anežka herself. The scherzo, which contains a theme similar to one in the corresponding movement of Felix Draeseke's hardly better-known *Symphonia Tragica*, could do with a bit more animation than Waldhans provides (until the last bars), but otherwise this is a most agreeable performance, as likable as the music itself—and, one might say, as unexceptional. Nothing to get excited about, perhaps, but enjoyable enough, especially with a cozy fire going on a damp, chilly day. The sound is adequate. *R.F.*

FARKAS: *Ancient Hungarian Dances* (see NIELSEN)

FOERSTER: *Sonata Quasi Fantasia for Violin and Piano, Op. 117* (see Best of the Month, page 84)

HINDEMITH: *Kleine Kammermusik, Op. 24, No. 2* (see NIELSEN)

IBERT: *Trois Pièces Brèves* (see NIELSEN)

JANÁČEK: *Music for Violin and Piano* (see Best of the Month, page 84)

LEGRAND: *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg, Symphonic Suite; The Go-Between, Theme and Variations for Two Pianos and Orchestra.* Michel Legrand, Robert Noble (pia-

nos); London Symphony Orchestra, Michel Legrand cond. CBS M 35175 \$8.98, © MT 35175 \$8.98.

Performance: **Soaking in sentiment**
Recording: **Excellent**

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg was the big movie musical from France in 1963. What made it different was that there wasn't a word of spoken dialogue; the whole thing was sung. In fact, it was really a cinematic operetta, photographed in chic, soft-focus color in a formal Gallic style. People either loved it and wept shamelessly or hated its sentimentality—and especially the flowery, cloying, clinging score by Michel Legrand. Nonetheless, the love song known here as *I*

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Will Wait for You became a hit all over the globe.

Now Legrand has recast the music into a suite for orchestra with harpsichord and jazz rhythm and brass sections. Those who hated the music in the first place (I could scarcely sit through it) will hate it in this form more than ever; those who swooned at the sound of the original will love this version also. Side two of the album is devoted to a theme and variations for two pianos and orchestra based on Legrand's score for *The Go-Between*, a 1971 movie that, like *Umbrellas*, won the Cannes Film Festival Grand Prize, though it did less well in release. The music in this case is more severe and even provides something of an antidote to the lush excesses of the first side of the disc. The whole album has been sumptuously recorded. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 5, in C-sharp Minor; Symphony No. 10, Adagio.* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Klaus Tennstedt cond. ANGEL SZB-3883 two discs \$17.96, © 4Z2S-3883 \$17.96.

Performance: **Expansive**
Recording: **Excellent**

The recently reissued Rafael Kubelik recording of Mahler's Fifth (Privilege 2726 064) remains for me the most compelling version in the catalog, but of course so vast a work can sustain a variety of approaches. Klaus Tennstedt's view of the work is perhaps the most expansive of all, and yet there is no hint of self-consciousness in his new recording, and certainly no sense of dragging, even though he chooses tempos slower than everyone else's but Wyn Morris' (Peters International PLE-100/101) in nearly every one of the five movements. He invests his reading with a weight that not only sustains but actually calls for the broader pacing, so that I was hardly ever aware that he was taking the first two movements so much more slowly than Kubelik. Moreover, the level of playing Tennstedt draws here from the London Philharmonic compares very well with that of the Berlin, Philadelphia, and Chicago orchestras; the burnished brass and the bloom on the strings evoke the quality we associate with the Vienna Philharmonic in Brahms and Bruckner.

Either Tennstedt or the recording engineer must have worried that the harp might be overlooked in the famous adagietto, for it is given almost solo prominence in the movement's opening, as if to assure us of its presence. Tennstedt's view of this movement may strike some listeners as curiously detached, but just as many, I'm sure, will feel that his relaxation of emphasis makes for the sort of free-floating serenity that provides the most appropriate transition from the intensity of the previous movements to the brightness of the finale. The adagio from the Tenth Symphony is splendidly done, utterly convincing without a trace of obviousness. The sound is excellent all the way through—rich, clear, without any tendency to overload. All in all, this now seems the strongest version of the Mahler Fifth after Kubelik's, and those who like a more expansive and voluptuous approach may even prefer the Tennstedt reading. R.F.

MARTINŮ: *The Epic of Gilgamesh.* Marcela Machotková (soprano); Jiří Zahradníček (tenor); Václav Zitek (baritone); Karel Průša (bass); Otakar Brousek (speaker); Czech Philharmonic Chorus; Prague Symphony Orchestra, Jiří Bělohlávek cond. SUPRAPHON 1 12 1808 \$8.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Okay**
Recording: **Good**

Bohuslav Martinů's *Epic of Gilgamesh*, written in 1955 in Nice, is based on an English translation (the work is sung here in the composer's native Czech) of the Assyrian epic that is perhaps the oldest page—clay tablets, actually—in world literature. Martinů's once major reputation has faded now almost everywhere except in his native land, whence this recording comes. The setting evokes something long ago and far away, not only distant in time and space but also dreamlike, as if out of some psychic depths. But, in spite of its rich atmosphere, the music is disappointing because it seems constantly poised to soar vocally but never does. E.S.

MASSENET: *Sapho.* Renée Doria (soprano), Fanny Legrand; Ginès Sirera (tenor), Jean Gaussin; Gisèle Ory (mezzo-soprano), Divonne; Adrien Legros (bass), Césaire; Elya Waisman (soprano), Irène; René Gamboa (baritone), Caoudal; Christian Baudéan (tenor), La Borderie; Jean-Jacques Doumène (bass), Innkeeper. Choral Stéphane Caillat; Orchestre Symphonique de la Garde Républicaine, Roger Boutry cond. PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 129/31 three discs \$23.94.

Performance: **So-so**
Recording: **Good**

If anyone had told me a few years ago that I would be sitting here singing the praises of Jules Massenet, I would have laughed. But *Sapho* is a work of real charm and sentiment—and I mean that as praise. This is not what I'd call a great performance, but I enjoyed it even so.

Sapho was produced at the Opéra-Comique in 1897—just at the height of the composer's career. The work has nothing to do with Greece but comes from a novel by Alphonse Daudet about contemporary French life. *Sapho* is the nickname of a beautiful artists' model who falls in love with a young provincial lately arrived in Paris to make his fame and fortune. Eventually he finds out about her past. There is a great spitting fight scene—complete with lurid old love letters, his discovery that she has had a child, and an exchange of invective that climaxes when she calls him "bourgeois." He walks out on her. She begs him to come back and he refuses. Eventually he finds he can't stay away from her and returns, but this time, while he sleeps, she steals away forever.

Sapho is one of Massenet's few contemporary genre pieces, and it makes one wish he had done more. It is a kind of sentimental French *verismo*, reminiscent in many ways of *La Bohème* (one thinks of Puccini and Massenet as a generation apart, but *La Bohème* appeared a year earlier than *Sapho*). The difference is that Puccini concentrates on the picturesque color of Parisian

Bohemian life and the counterpoint between the two pairs of lovers while Massenet focuses resolutely on the two main characters, Sapho herself in particular. She is a distinguished member of Massenet's gallery of operatic heroines. The portrait of a slum goddess turned *femme fatale* and now desperately trying to hold on to the one real love of her life is a strong one—worthy of an old Bette Davis movie!

A good deal of the credit for the effectiveness of all this goes to Daudet and the librettists—this is way above most opera librettos in quality—but it is Massenet's setting that commends it to our latter-day attention. Many clever remarks have been made about Massenet's mixture of Gounod and Wagner, of sex and sentiment, sweetness and sensuality; certainly those are the principal elements of *Sapho*. I don't find that a cause for complaint. On the contrary, I sometimes wish he had avoided all pretense to anything else; we would think of him as a greater master if he had. What is annoying is that there are constant intimations of higher things, of climaxes and profound statements to come—but they never arrive. If we overlook this defect, if we refuse to let Massenet raise our expectations with his skill and theatricality, then *Sapho* is a very satisfying work in the old-fashioned manner and contains one of the great female personages on the operatic stage.

I wish I had as much good to say about this recording. The playing and conducting are adequate, but the singing is, to put it kindly, mediocre. The tragedy of French opera has always been the state of French singing (and the difficulty of French style for non-French speakers). But we are not likely to have a better *Sapho* soon, and this one is better than none.

E.S.

MASSENET: *Werther*. Plácido Domingo (tenor), Werther; Elena Obraztsova (mezzo-soprano), Charlotte; Kurt Moll (bass), the Bailiff; Franz Grundheber (baritone), Albert; Arleen Augér (soprano), Sophie; Alejandro Vazquez (tenor), Schmidt; László Anderko (baritone), Johann; others. Cologne Children's Choir and Radio Symphony Orchestra, Riccardo Chailly cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 091 three discs \$29.94, © 3371 048 \$29.94.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Excellent**

This recording was realized through one of those intelligent collaborations between broadcast networks and major record companies that seem to flourish in Europe, particularly in Germany. Such ventures seem unthinkable here, but then our American companies lost their leadership position in the recording industry a long time ago. Cologne, where this particular recording was made, is not very far from Wetzlar, the original locale of *Werther*, but, Goethe notwithstanding, this is a *French* opera, and Deutsche Grammophon's otherwise first-rate production loses sight of that. There are *no* French singers in the cast, unless we so consider Arleen Augér, an American artist of French ancestry who sings the role of Sophie very well.

I like the work of Italian conductor Riccardo Chailly, though. His leadership is dynamic and incisive, effectively counteracting the opera's sometimes excessive senti-

mentality. The orchestra is excellent, and Chailly lets it soar magnificently in the big moments but without overpowering the singers.

Plácido Domingo's rich tenor sound and secure musicianship are always assets. He sings beautifully here throughout, scaling his tones to delicate dynamic levels whenever the music or the situation calls for it. Though not an ideal choice for a French Romantic role, vocally Domingo is never less than pleasurable. I cannot say the same for Elena Obraztsova, though she is unquestionably an artist of the first rank. Her Charlotte has some moving and impressive moments, but few truly delicate ones. Her main problem, however, is excessive vibrato and tonal unsteadiness.

The sonorous Kurt Moll, as the Bailiff, stands out among the supporting singers, who are all competent or better except for the weak-sounding tenor who sings the part of Schmidt. Technically, the recording is beyond reproach, and the packaging conforms to DG's laudable standard. Prospective buyers should note that another *Werther* is scheduled to be released, on Angel, in the near future, with Alfredo Kraus and Tatiana Troyanos in the lead roles. Meanwhile, Angel SCL-3736, with Nicolai Gedda and Victoria de los Angeles, though sonically less luxuriant, offers the kind of idiomatic rightness and consistent vocal excellence the present set does not.

G.J.

MENOTTI: *The Telephone*. THEM MEN: *Shelter This Candle from the Wind*. Paula Seibel (soprano); Robert Orth (baritone, in Menotti); Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester cond. LOUISVILLE LS-767 \$7.95.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Good**

Gian Carlo Menotti's clever little one-acter *The Telephone* may not have been in the headlines much since its Broadway première more than thirty years ago, but I am told it is one of the most frequently performed operas in college and semiprofessional theaters. The royalties it thus produces may go a long way toward assuaging the composer's wounds from the slings and arrows of his occasionally outraged critics.

Ben, a young man with marriage on his mind, cannot seem to get his message across to Lucy because she is always on the phone. In desperation, he leaves and proposes the only way he can—by phone. While such a simple and innocent plot has a dated sound nowadays, the opera is a pleasantly entertaining example of a genre that extends from Pergolesi through Wolf-Ferrari to Menotti. With two pleasant and youthful-sounding singers and sympathetic conducting, this recorded performance stands up well against the recently reissued original (*Odyssey Y2 35239*, coupled with Menotti's *The Medium*), and with considerably brighter sonics.

"Shelter This Candle from the Wind" is a line by Edna St. Vincent Millay, five of whose highly singable poems have provided the text for Ivana Themmen's orchestral song cycle. The songs are written in a high tessitura, with wide upward leaps reminiscent of Richard Strauss. They are in a conservative idiom, gratefully written for the voice, and deserve to be taken up by other recitalists. Paula Seibel performs them very

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A Problematic "Don Carlos"

HERBERT VON KARAJAN'S Salzburg production of Verdi's *Don Carlos* has received much comment in the international press since it was first mounted in 1975. It has now reached us in recorded form on the Angel label, and I find it, like the Austrian maestro's previous Verdi adventures, quite problematic. His preference for the four-act version of the opera is not in itself objectionable—it was sanctioned by Verdi himself, which is justification enough. Nor is this a case similar to Karajan's *Otello* (Angel SX-3809), with its uneven vocal contributions, or *Il Trovatore* (Angel SX-3855), in which the singing is downright poor. The vocal performances in this *Don Carlos* range from good to outstanding. The problem arises from Karajan's own eccentricities of tempos and dynamics and from the strange audio perspectives imposed.

Karajan is obviously a sincere champion of Verdi's music, but he serves that music in unpredictable ways. His distended tempos frequently defuse tension (as in the scene between the king and queen in Act III, "*Ardita troppo* . . .") or rob the music of impetus (the queen's aria, "*Tu, che le vanità*," in Act IV). At times he is so determined to stress lyricism that rhythmic vitality is sacrificed (the introduction to Eboli's Veil Song in Act I, Scene 2). The recorded sound is often hazy, lacking in immediacy, and wayward in dynamics. Pianissimos are virtually inaudible at normal volume settings, and the balances are questionable. José van Dam is an artist who can raise the Friar's brief part to a commanding level, but here we must strain our ears to focus on his remarkable singing. And surely Verdi did not place six baritones on stage as Flemish deputies to have them deliver their heartbreaking message *sotto-voce*! I could cite other damning examples, but, in all fairness, Karajan also gives us moments of penetrating insight that reveal details less

painstaking performances gloss over, instances of phenomenal ensemble precision, a uniformly excellent orchestral execution, particularly by the Berlin Philharmonic brass section, and some magnificently theatrical climaxes.

THE singing, as I said before, is quite distinguished. Nicolai Ghiaurov no longer commands the vocal solidity he exhibited in his previous recorded portrayal of King Philip under Solti (London OS 1432) more than a dozen years ago, but his characterization has become more subtle and more moving with age, and it remains undeniably regal. Piero Cappuccilli is not a thrilling Rodrigo, but an intelligent and thoroughly satisfying one nevertheless. His long-breathed, *piano* rendering of the death scene is beautifully done, and he gets exemplary support from Karajan. Agnes Baltsa is simply a magnificent Eboli; more need not be said.

Ruggero Raimondi's performance as the Grand Inquisitor is more debatable. His smooth, rich *cantante* style, easily encompassing the high tessitura, ravishes the ear but fails to suggest the cruelty and fanaticism we associate with the character. Furthermore, this supposedly nonagenarian cardinal sounds decidedly younger than his kingly opponent. Even more questionable are Karajan's choices for Don Carlos and Elisabetta. Mirella Freni floats some wonderful phrases, but the climaxes of the first-act duet and the "*Tu, che le vanità*" aria are too taxing for her essentially lyric voice. José Carreras, in the title role, also strives for a volume that nature denied to his very appealing instrument, and he sounds definitely tight and uncomfortable above the staff. In the smaller roles the casting is nothing short of luxuriant. José van Dam's Friar has already been mentioned; Edita Gruberova, a major artist, shines as Tebaldo, a barely noticeable part, and Barbara Hendricks, as the Heavenly Voice, sounds just that.

IN sum, this *Don Carlos* is a worthy achievement partly compromised by directorial capriciousness. In comparison, Angel's earlier five-act version under Carlo Maria Giulini (SDL-3774) is better engineered, is firmly and less willfully conducted, and offers a more appropriate pair of lovers in Montserrat Caballé and Plácido Domingo. The other singers in the new set are either equal to Giulini's or, in the cases of Ghiaurov, Raimondi, and Van Dam, clearly superior.

—George Jellinek

VERDI: *Don Carlos*. José Carreras (tenor), Don Carlos; Mirella Freni (soprano), Elisabetta; Nicolai Ghiaurov (bass), King Philip II; Piero Cappuccilli (baritone), Rodrigo; Agnes Baltsa (mezzo-soprano), Eboli; Ruggero Raimondi (bass), the Grand Inquisitor; Edita Gruberova (soprano), Tebaldo; Barbara Hendricks (soprano), a Voice from Heaven; others. Chorus of the Deutsche Oper, Berlin; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL SZDX-3875 four discs \$36.92, © 4Z4X-3875 \$36.92.

well indeed. Only the disc surfaces mar the otherwise consistently high level of this release.

G.J.

MILHAUD: *La Cheminée du Roi René*, Op. 205 (see NIELSEN)

NEDBAL: *Violin Sonata in B Minor*, Op. 9 (see Best of the Month, page 84)

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

NIELSEN: *Wind Quintet*, Op. 43. FARKAS: *Ancient Hungarian Dances*. IBERT: *Trois Pièces Brèves*. ARNOLD: *Three Shanties*. Frösunda Wind Quintet. Bis LP-136 \$9.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Vivacious**

Recording: **Close and crisp**

NIELSEN: *Wind Quintet*, Op. 43. HINDEMITH: *Kleine Kammermusik*, Op. 24, No. 2. MILHAUD: *La Cheminée du Roi René*, Op. 205. Danish Wind Quintet. UNICORN RHS 356 \$10.98.

Performance: **Idiomatic**

Recording: **Superb**

What a delicious dilemma these two discs present! I'm sure they offer the two most persuasive versions of the Nielsen Wind Quintet available at present, and it just might be easier to find reasons for investing in them both than to choose between them. The young Swedes in the Frösunda Quintet (only one member of which has reached the age of thirty) give a performance distinguished by spontaneity and vivaciousness, while their slightly senior Danish colleagues exhibit a bit more subtlety and polish—especially in the opening of the middle movement and toward the end of the last, the long set of variations on Nielsen's own hymn *Min Jesus, Lad Min Hjerte*. Both performances are superbly recorded, though the striking presence on the Bis disc comes from a focus so close that one hears a bit of key clatter from the clarinet. The pressings, from Germany's Teldec for Bis and from Holland's Philips for Unicorn, are both excellent. I think I would opt for the smoother and subtler work of the Danish Quintet, which also offers similarly first-rate accounts of the wind-quintet classics of Hindemith and Milhaud, but many collectors might be happier with the somewhat more adventurous coupling on Bis. Ferenc Farkas' set of five *Ancient Hungarian Dances* has surprising substance and appeal, and Malcolm Arnold's jolly settings of three familiar sea shanties is no mere make-weight, either; the Ibort, of course, is no less a classic in its own right than the longer works by Hindemith and Milhaud.

The names of at least three members of the Danish Wind Quintet, by the way, suggest rather distinguished musical lineage, though no information is given on any of them in the album notes. The flutist is Verner Nicolet, who may or may not be a member of the famous Swiss family, the oboist is Bjørn Carl Nielsen, and the clarinetist is Søren Birkelund, presumably the son of the famous flutist Poul Birkelund—who took part in the first recording of the Nielsen quintet to reach our shores (on London) nearly thirty years ago.

R.F.

NOVÁK: *Violin Sonata in D Minor* (see Best of the Month, page 84)

ORFF: *Street Song (Gassenhauer)*—*Selections from Schulwerk*. Tölz Boys' Choir; instrumental ensemble, Carl Orff cond. QUINTESSENCE PMC-7127 \$3.98, © P4C-7127 \$3.98.

Performance: **Authoritative**
Recording: **Good**

The descriptions above were applied when this recording was first released here (as BASF HC 25122) and reviewed in the October 1975 issue of STEREO REVIEW; they still fit. *Gassenhauer (Street Song)* is simply the first of the twenty intriguing little pieces from Orff's *Schulwerk* that were selected for this sequence. The boys' choir takes part in only one number (*Diminution-Schrei*), while fifes, recorders, and rhythm instruments of Orff's own design predominate in most of the others; one is performed entirely by clapping hands (the *Klatschondo*, or *Rondoapplause*). As before, I would like to have some pictures, or at least descriptions, of the instruments involved, but the Quintessence remastering is very successful, the new price is certainly attractive, and it is especially good to have this collection in cassette form. A nice surprise to slip into a preteen's rock pile. R.F.

PALIAHVILI: *Absalom and Etery*. Irakli Shushaniya (bass), King Abio; Liana Tashvili (mezzo-soprano), Queen Natela; Surab Sotkilava (tenor), Prince Absalom; Zisana Tashvili (soprano), Etery; Lamara Chkoniya (soprano), Marich; Shota Kiknadse (baritone), Murman; others. Large Chorus and Symphony Orchestra of USSR Radio, Didim Mirzchulava cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 094 three discs \$29.94.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Good**

Here is a real oddity: an opera from Soviet Georgia based on a Georgian legend and performed with dedicated enthusiasm by a native cast. I cannot help thinking it would make a singularly apt present for an opera lover who thinks he has, or at least *knows*, everything. The fact is, most of us know very little about the native cultures of the various Soviet republics, and the essay by Knut Franke that comes with this release is a handy primer on Georgian music.

The unhappy love of Prince Absalom for the beautiful commoner Etery is the subject of a folk legend that has many versions. The operatic treatment by Zakhary Paliashvili (1871-1953), a pupil of Sergei Taneyev, combines Oriental folklore with Western forms and traditions. Paliashvili's music is rather conservative for 1919, the year the opera was introduced, and the prevalence of unison writing (derivative from church traditions) tends to underline its conservatism. Listeners familiar with the Oriental excursions of such Russian composers as Balakirev, Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakov will recognize the style, but, unlike his better-known compatriots, Paliashvili never departs from it. Unison choruses, ornamented, melismatic vocal writing, and exotic instrumental colors are the essence of his music, which bears a certain similarity to the Armenian strains distilled in the works of

Khachaturian and Hovhanness. Much of the opera is hauntingly beautiful, though at times repetitious.

The performance not only sounds authoritative but is quite effective. Tenor Surab Sotkilava brings a poetic, melancholy style to the music of Absalom, and his mellow, lyrical tones recall such illustrious Russian predecessors as Sobinov and Lemeshev. Etery is appealingly sung by Zisana Tashvili. There are several other attractive voices among these unknown Georgian singers, and not one is downright unpleasant, though baritone Shota Kiknadse is at times unsteady in the important role of Murman, the villainous warrior whose magic spell separates the lovers, and Irakli

Shushaniya's resonant bass wobbles a bit in his regal pronouncements as King Abio. The chorus and orchestra are fine; the recorded sound, though entirely acceptable, is not up to DG's usual level in terms of clarity and immediacy. G.J.

RESPIGHI: *Ancient Airs and Dances for Lute, Suites Nos. 1-3*. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 891 \$9.98, © 3300 891 \$9.98.

Performance: **Flashy**
Recording: **Excellent**

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rected works by Monteverdi and Vitali, preparing them for modern performance, and it was from ancient scores that he fashioned his dazzlingly orchestrated suite *Gli Uccelli* (*The Birds*). He also put together, at various times between 1917 and 1932, three suites based on Italian and French lute music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and these *Ancient Airs and Dances* are among the most charming of all his works.

The suites frequently turn up individually on discs, and the set has been felicitously recorded by Neville Marriner and Antal Dorati on earlier releases. On this album, with the Boston Symphony players at their most glowing and Ozawa responding with a special fervor to Respighi's gorgeously colored orchestration, the music is more ingratiating than ever. While Marriner stresses the antiquity of the material, Ozawa exults in the composer's exploitation of the full resources of the modern orchestra; the results are ravishing. *P.K.*

SCHUBERT: Sonata in B-flat Major, Op. Posth. (D. 960). Lili Kraus (piano). VANGUARD VSD-71267 \$7.98.

Performance: **Molto moderato**
Recording: **Good**

There is a rumor that Brahms once wrote a tempo marking *Molto moderato ma non troppo*. Well, Schubert actually did mark the first movement of his B-flat Major Sonata *Molto moderato*. As this performance proves, even in matters of *moderato* there is such a thing as *troppo*, and even Lili Kraus cannot sustain the *molto moderato troppo* she begins with throughout the twenty-minute movement. Lingering over the interpretive details, lovely as they may be, only weakens the structural foundations. The other three movements here are wonderful, Schubertian magic à la Lili Kraus. A stronger first movement would have created a much deeper, more unified impression of this glorious and difficult masterpiece for piano. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHUMANN: Violin Sonata No. 1, in A Minor, Op. 105; Violin Sonata No. 2, in D Minor, Op. 121; Intermezzo from "F.A.E." Sonata. Jaime Laredo (violin); Ruth Laredo (piano). DESTO DC 6442 \$7.98.

Performance: **Eloquent, impassioned**
Recording: **Close up**

Of all Schumann's major works, his violin sonatas are probably the least known. They have never caught on very well with the public and have had little attention even on records. The old Busch/Serkin mono recording of the two sonatas is available on Odyssey (in Y3 34639), and the Musical Heritage Society offers them with Roman Totenberg and Artur Balsam on MHS 3414. I have not heard the latter, but I'm happy to have the new Desto: the performances here are both eloquent and impassioned, and the Schumann sonatas need just such champions.

The package is not quite Schumann's "Music for Piano and Violin (Complete)," as labeled. He composed two movements of a Third Sonata and a finale as well as the intermezzo recorded here for the "*Frei aber*

Einsam" Sonata produced jointly with Brahms and Dietrich for Joseph Joachim in 1853. (The annotation mentions none of these additional pieces and offers virtually no information on the works that *are* on the record.) The recording, which must have been made several years ago (I don't think the Laredos have performed together since 1974), is very close up, and such miking has a way of making roughnesses appear in even the smoothest string playing, as it does here from time to time. But neither this technical misjudgment nor the documentary lapses can reduce the effectiveness of the performances, which make a most ardent and appealing case for this music. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STRAVINSKY: Les Noces. Jann Jaffe (soprano); Isola Jones (mezzo-soprano); Philip Creech (tenor); Arnold Voketaitis (bass); Paul Schenly, William Vendice, André-Michel-Schub, Mary Sauer (pianos); Ravinia Festival Percussion Ensemble and Chamber Chorus, James Levine cond. *L'Histoire du Soldat, Suite.* Members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, James Levine cond. RCA ARL1-3375 \$8.98, © ARK1-3375 \$8.98.

Performance: **Lively**
Recording: **Clear, pretty**

It used to be said that Stravinsky's real popularity began and ended with the early ballets, but that category must now be extended to include the remarkable and imaginative group of works that stand between *Le Sacre du Printemps* and his neo-Classical period. The familiarity of these pieces is even more surprising considering their unconventional forms. Stravinsky at least extracted a chamber suite from *L'Histoire du Soldat*, but *Les Noces* is a big vocal work that is inextricably tied to its astonishing four-pianos-and-percussion instrumentation. And still it is performed.

Music festivals and recordings provide the best ways for unusual works with unusual instrumental requirements to be heard. This album is labeled "Music from Ravinia, Vol. 2," the Ravinia Festival being the summer home of the Chicago Symphony. James Levine is its music director, and he here shows that he can conduct Stravinsky very well indeed. These are vivacious performances that have style and wit, and they have been recorded with admirable clarity and sensitivity. I will not vouch for the authenticity of the singers' Russian in *Les Noces*, which sometimes sounds as if their mouths are full of potatoes, and, as often happens, I have a little trouble with the sophisticated, preachy, overly cultivated tone of the women soloists. But these are minor flaws, and these exciting recordings rank with any others of these works now available. *E.S.*

STRAVINSKY: Symphony of Psalms (see J. S. BACH)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TANEYEV: Oresteia. Viktor Tchernobajev (bass), Agamemnon; Lidiya Galuschkina (alto), Clytemnestra; Anatoli Bokov (baritone), Aegisthus; Nelli Tkatchenko (soprano), Cassandra; Tamara Schimko (so-

prano), Elektra; Ivan Dubrovin (tenor), Orestes; others. Chorus and Orchestra of the Byelorussian State Opera and Ballet Theater, Tatiana Kolomijzeva cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 097 three discs \$29.94.

Performance: **Good Russian provincial**
Recording: **Not bad**

Now here is an oddity. Sergei Ivanovich Taneyev was born in 1856 and died in 1915—during World War I and just a year or two before the Revolution. He was a man of immense musical and general culture, a member of none of the schools or factions of Russian music, and regarded as something of a Westerner and an academic. The *Oresteia*, his *magnum opus*, is a very grand operatic setting of the Aeschylus trilogy. It seems to have been performed at the Maryinsky Theater in 1895 and then never again. Until now, that is, for here it is, rescued out of history's dustbin by a provincial Russian opera house, a talented woman conductor, and a German record company.

All the books—even the program notes accompanying this set—say the same things: that Taneyev had talent, taste, and immense skill; that he avoided all implication of Russianism; and that he was a severe and classical contrapuntalist without much charm or warmth of inspiration. I wonder whether any of these writers—including Deutsche Grammophon's annotator—actually heard this music. True, there is no fiery nationalism *à la* Mussorgsky or exotic color *à la* Rimsky or heart-on-sleeve sentimentality *à la* Tchaikovsky. But Taneyev's *Oresteia* is one long lyric outburst that is very much in the Russian mode and as deeply felt as anything else in the literature. The melodic inspiration, the handling of the chorus, the solo writing for the voice, the orchestration, the setup and pacing of the scenes, the balance between dramatic scenes and lyric numbers are all handled with consummate artistry. There is nothing in this work that isn't worth listening to, and its best moments are not only inspired but well earned.

Taneyev's weakness is his strength. His very breadth of style and technique militates against the kind of instantly recognizable stylistic identity demanded by modern critical taste (this wasn't a requirement in the old days). And yet Taneyev is no mere imitator or facile eclectic; everything here has real character.

His other mistake was in choosing an uncompromisingly classical subject—classical tragedy not *à la* Strauss/Hofmannsthal but *à la* Gluck, with a last act that has no dramatic movement. Taneyev's music sounds perfectly Russian to me, but it certainly belongs on the classical side of Russian art (so does the work of Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky, and lots of other Russians). Taneyev can also be grouped with those late-nineteenth-century composers who tried to synthesize the achievements of Romanticism with a conscious revival of Classicism—Brahms, Busoni, and a few others. We understand this kind of eclecticism today—we are having a revival of it of our own—and it doesn't seem difficult for us to appreciate this work for exactly what it is: an odd, fascinating, dignified, and attractive side-path off the main road of operatic history—something between Gluck, Glinka, and Busoni!

There is another discovery here besides the work itself. The conductor, Tatiana Kolomijzeva, is obviously a very gifted woman. Working with provincial forces, she succeeds in bringing this long-dead work back to life. In order to enjoy authentic Russian opera one must endure Russian singing, not always a wonderful experience even in the best of circumstances. As usual, the men here are better than the women. In the big tenor role of Orestes, Ivan Dubrovin is a big-sound, meat-and-potatoes singer with more vocal brawn than beauty, more bravura than brains. Nevertheless, at the end, when the dramatic structure melts away, leaving nothing to sustain Orestes in the opera except Taneyev's *deus ex machina* music, Dubrovin holds up, well, heroically.

The chorus is excellent, the orchestra so-so, the cast adequate, and the recording quite good. There is a synopsis but no libretto—and it is sorely missed. *E.S.*

TELEMANN: Suite in A Minor for Flute and Strings; Concerto in G Major for Viola and Strings; Concerto in F Major for Three Violins and Strings. Severino Gazzelloni (flute); Cino Ghedin (viola); Felix Ayo, Arnaldo Apostoli, Italo Colandrea (violins); I Musici. PHILIPS 9502 011 \$9.98, © 7313 011 \$9.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Excellent**

TELEMANN: Suite in A Minor for Flute and Strings; Concertos in G Major and C Major for Flute and Strings. James Galway (flute); I Solisti di Zagreb. RCA ARL1-3488 \$8.98, © ARK1-3488 \$8.98.

Performance: **Dashing**
Recording: **Muddy**

For Telemann fanciers, here are two recordings of the perennial Suite in A Minor for Flute and Strings and a clutch of concertos for flute, viola, and violins. Both I Musici and I Solisti di Zagreb are first-class string ensembles and both play on modern instruments in an unabashedly twentieth-century fashion. The results in both cases are strong, clear, and straightforward. It must be pointed out, however, that while the use of *notes inégales*, old bowings, and added ornamentation is not essential to the performance of early music, the convention of double dotting the slow sections of an *ouverture* movement is indispensable. Neither group subscribes to this last practice, and therefore both readings of the *ouverture* to the A Minor Suite are flabby and characterless. From that point on, though, the performances are generally very fine. Severino Gazzelloni's flute playing is clearly articulated and rhythmically vital; James Galway's is facile verging on the glib, though he does treat us to some fine ornamentation in the *Air à l'Italien* of the suite and in the serenade-like slow movement of the G Major Concerto.

Turning to the second side of I Musici's offering, violist Cino Ghedin's interpretation of the slow movements of the Viola Concerto are *too* slow and fussily romantic to be effective. The fast movements are as crisp and starchy as they should be. The string playing in the Concerto for Three Violins is luminous, even though the music is slight. On the second side of I Solisti di Zagreb's collection, the G Major Concerto

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is marred by pushy tempos that make the piece sound rather more skittish than it really is. The C Major Concerto is a ravishing piece beautifully played, easily worth the whole album, especially if you are a Galway fan collecting his entire output. S.L.

THEMMEN: *Shelter This Candle from the Wind* (see MENOTTI)

WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll* (see BRUCKNER)

COLLECTIONS

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Polka. Pipers from the Caledonian Highlanders; Band and Trumpeters of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall, Lieut. Colonel Trevor le M. Sharpe cond. UNICORN RHS 354 \$7.98.

Performance: **Stirring**
 Recording: **Excellent**

The better part of two years in a U.S. Army band left me with a permanent distaste for marching but a considerable interest in military music. Those who share my trumpet-and-drum addiction will find this a fascinating record, though admittedly uneven in musical quality and interest.

Kneller Hall has been the home base of British military music since 1857, and it is a pity that its musicians have appeared on records so seldom. This excellently recorded disc gives us some idea of their quality and a really fine view of the variety of tone color that can be derived from a military wind and percussion ensemble. The outstanding piece is the antiphonal *Music for an Investiture* (that of the Prince of Wales) by Sir Arthur Bliss. It is, of course, mostly fanfares, but the sheer sound of twenty-three trumpets, snares, and timpani is enough to build castles in your mind. The medley of

national airs (including *The British Grenadiers*, *St. Patrick's Day*, *Highland Laddie*, and *Men of Harlech*) that makes up Colonel Sharpe's *Ceremonial Occasion* is diverting enough, and an eighteen-minute "History of the March" on side two includes an authentic-sounding Jeremiah Clarke trumpet voluntary (called here *Prince Georg of Denmark*), one of Beethoven's marches (played at an unusually fast tempo), an excellent *With Sword and Lance* by Herman Starke, and a rather idiosyncratic performance of Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. None of this is really important music and some of it is pure dross, but the sounds are gorgeous, the rhythms infectious, and the power of evocation considerable.

—James Goodfriend

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PETER CHRIST: *Oboe Recital*. **Thompson:** *Suite for Oboe, Clarinet, and Viola*. **Persichetti:** *Parable for Solo Oboe*. **Schmidt:** *The Sparrow; The Amazing Mr. Avaunt*. **Still:** *Miniatures for Flute, Oboe, and Piano*. Peter Christ (oboe); Alan de Veritch (viola); David Atkins (clarinet); Gretel Shanley (flute); Sharon Davis (piano); Valeria Vlazinskaya (narrator). CRYSTAL S 321 \$7.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
 Recording: **Excellent**

Some of the most delightful music for the oboe since the eighteenth century can be heard on this carefully assembled disc program. Randall Thompson's *Suite for Oboe, Clarinet, and Viola* is a work of considerable charm, folksy in tone and generous in its melody and jaunty rhythms. Another aspect of the oboe's personality is drawn out in Vincent Persichetti's *Parable* for the oboe alone, in which a simple musical idea germinates and flowers absorbingly. William Schmidt offers settings for narrator and oboes of two poems by William Pillin. *The Sparrow* is about a case-hardened city bird who regrets nothing as she sings, in the "pale winter sunshine," of the supreme importance of love in her precarious life. Valeria Vlazinskaya is an ideally world-weary narrator, and the oboe music is superbly witty. So is *The Amazing Mr. Avaunt* that follows, a spoof on every cliché in the avant-garde armamentarium. Completing the program in high spirits is William Grant Still's set of ingratiating miniatures based on folk tunes. The playing by Peter Christ and his colleagues displays throughout not only the strongest grasp of technique but a flexibility in moving from one musical idiom to another that is little short of astonishing. Good sound, too. P.K.

CONSORTIUM CLASSICUM: *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. **Rudolf von Österreich:** *Serenade for Clarinet, Viola, Bassoon, and Guitar in B Major*. **Diabelli:** *Two Pieces for Flute and Guitar*. **Goepfert:** *Sonata for Bassoon and Guitar, Op. 13*. **J. Kreutzer:** *Trio for Flute, Clarinet, and Guitar, Op. 16*. TELEFUNKEN 6.42171 AW \$9.98.

Performance: **Elegant**
 Recording: **Very good**

In the 1960s the clarinetist Dieter Klöcker spent much of his time in the libraries of

Europe looking for old musical scores. He traveled all the way from London to Lenin-grad on his researches, and he turned up so many charming pieces of music that he decided to found his own ensemble, the Consortium Classicum, to play them.

On this new disc from Telefunken, guitarist Sonja Prunnbauer and members of the Consortium Classicum (Klößker, clarinet; Robert Dohn, flute; Karl-Otto Hartmann, bassoon; and Heinz-Otto Graf, viola) play some of the obscure but winningly crafted chamber works Klößker came upon in his travels—an eighteenth-century serenade, a sonata, and so on—all featuring the guitar as a solo instrument. There's a serenade by the Archduke Rudolph of Austria that won the approval of Beethoven; two pieces by Diabelli, the composer whose waltz gave rise to Beethoven's famous variations; a four-movement sonata by Karl Andreas Goepfert, a clarinet virtuoso who evidently knew as well the resources of the bassoon; and a trio by Joseph Kreutzer, no relation (as far as I know) to the fellow Beethoven named that violin sonata after, but no mean Viennese stylist in the chamber-music department. Unusual music of its time, exquisitely played and scrupulously recorded. But how unsettling to find a record called "*Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*" without *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. P.K.

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DIGITAL SPACE—SPECTACULAR MUSIC FOR FILMS. Gould: *Windjammer*. Williams: *Star Wars*. Newman: *Airport*. Copland: *The Red Pony: Morning on the Ranch*. Bliss: *Things to Come, Epilogue*. Rózsa: *Tribute to a Badman, Suite; That Hamilton Woman, Love Theme*. Moross: *The Big Country*. Vaughan Williams: *The 49th Parallel, Prelude*. Walton: *Spitfire, Prelude and Fugue*. London Symphony Orchestra, Morton Gould cond. VARÈSE SARABANDE ● VCDM 1000.20 \$8.98.

Performance: **Stunning**
Recording: **Spectacular**

Not all movie music is contrived to be absorbed subliminally, to punch up—perhaps all too often even to telegraph—events on the screen. From the beginning, serious composers have written seriously for motion pictures, and some of their efforts have found new life as concert suites and in recordings of highlights. With the superb forces of the London Symphony and the startling fidelity of digital recording to enhance the results, Morton Gould has put together a stunning concert of film music. Starting with Gould's own bracing main-title music for the sea epic *Windjammer*, the program is satisfying from start to finish. No excerpt lasts longer than a few minutes, so the dull stretches that are the usual course of soundtrack albums are automatically eliminated. The most sublime moments are in Copland's music for *The Red Pony*, the main title for *The Big Country* by Jerome Moross, the exalted epilogue from the remarkable score by Arthur Bliss for that precient 1936 film of H. G. Wells' *Things to Come*, Ralph Vaughan Williams' prelude for *The 49th Parallel* (1941), and William Walton's music for *Spitfire* from 1934. To be sure, there are also less inspired passages from sentimental Hollywood efforts by

Miklós Rózsa and Alfred Newman, and by this time some of us have had enough of John Williams' hard-breathing music for *Star Wars*. But it still adds up to a fascinating hour. P.K.

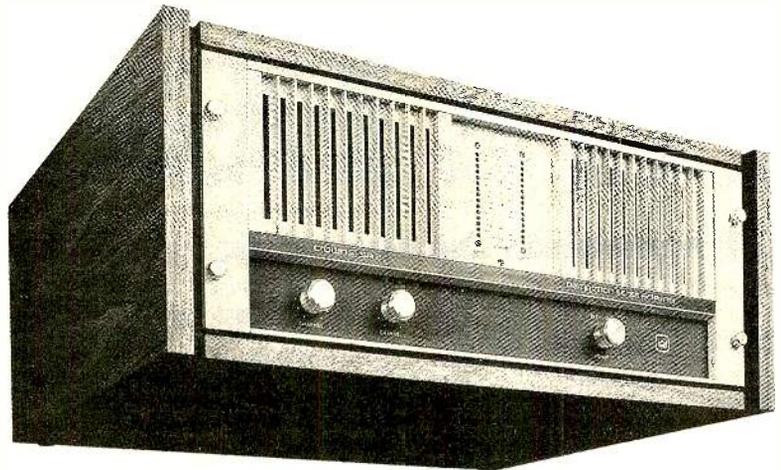
BRADFORD GOWEN: Exultation. Evett: Chaconne. Perle: Six Etudes. Cowell: Exultation. Keeney: Sonatina. Goossen: Fantasy, Aria, and Fugue. Adler: Sonata Breve; Canto VIII. Bradford Gowen (piano). NEW WORLD NW 304 \$8.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Very fine**

Bradford Gowen was the winner of the 1978 John F. Kennedy Center/Rockefeller Foun-

ation International Competition for Excellence in the Performance of American Music. According to a note on the cover, this record of Gowen playing his winning program is being offered to the public in the hope that "audiences and managers [will] come to regard this music as part of the standard repertory, a literature still dominated by pre-twentieth century European music." This is a worthy aim, but it is one that this record is unlikely to help effect. A good deal of Gowen's repertoire is "still dominated by pre-twentieth century European music." The ghost of the eighteenth century hovers over the myriads of chaconnes, fugues, sonatinas, and sonata breves produced in this country—at least until

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recently—and the examples on this record are typical.

Several of these composers are obscure. Wendell Keeney and Samuel Adler were among Gowen's teachers, and Frederic Goossen is his colleague at the University of Alabama. Perhaps that kind of relationship is as good a way as any to find repertoire, and I am sure that Gowen firmly believes in the music. But that is just what is so depressing. This country is full of music professors turning out perfectly competent, charming, even up-to-date music that Bradford Gowen can and will play extremely well and that Rockefeller/New World will record—but hardly anyone will ever actually listen to. Deep sigh.

I do an injustice to Samuel Adler. His early Sonata Breve has character, and his recent, crashing, smashing *Canto VIII*, the one concession here to the avant-garde, is a brilliant timbral fantasy, quite liberated from the past. George Perle's Six Etudes are also striking and among that original composer's most satisfying music. They are more likely to make their way among the piano fraternity than any of the other works here—with, of course, the exception of the brief and witty Cowell *Exultation*, which is the only "authentic" piece of Americana here.

Gowen is, without a doubt, an excellent pianist, and he puts his soul, his heart, and his fingers into everything—regardless of

style or musical weight. It is not Gowen or the music that I question but the meaning of the worthy and earnest foundation enterprise that makes it all possible. And just remember, Gowen's program was deemed *the best of eighty-nine contenders*. As I said, depressing. *E.S.*

PRO CANTIONE ANTIQUA: Medieval Music. Sacred Monophony; The Play of Herod. Pro Cantione Antiqua, Edgar Fleet cond. PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 114 \$7.98.

Performance: **Supple**

Recording: **Alive**

Listeners who have heard the New York Pro Musica recordings of *The Play of Daniel* and *The Play of Herod* or the more recent Pro Cantione Antiqua recording of *Daniel* under Mark Brown's direction (Argo ZRG 900) will find this new version of *Herod* on the austere side in comparison. On those earlier recordings, various instruments and percussion devices were used to add color and drama to the original monophonic chant, which is not done here. Listeners may also miss the strong rhythms that were read into much of the music in those versions. Turning their backs on instruments and favoring the flowing, unmeasured approach of the Solesmes school, the Pro Cantione Antiqua here gives us a *Herod* that is severe and undramatic. Accepted as pure plainchant (with some improvised counterpoint), however, the singing is superb. The vocal sound is beautifully produced, and the molded contours of the melodic line flow with endless grace and subtlety. This performance simply demonstrates another, totally different approach to early liturgical drama.

The collection of sacred chants on side one of the album is of great interest. It includes music from the Byzantine, Gallican, Mozarabic and Ambrosian traditions. Various rhythmic interpretations are tried, all of them explained in the scholarly jacket notes (the album is an Oxford University Press production). One can judge the purely musical results for oneself, but in any case the recording should be of great use to scholars and students, since the selections are all printed in the Medieval volume of the *Oxford Anthology of Music*. *S.L.*

SYLVIA SASS: Dramatic Coloratura. Bellini: Norma: Casta Diva . . . Ah! bello a me. Verdi: La Traviata: Ah, fors'è lui . . . Sempre libera. Il Trovatore; D'amor sull'ali rosee. Macbeth: Vieni! t'affrettata! . . . Or tuttiorgete; La luce langue. Ponchielli: La Gioconda: Suicidio. Sylvia Sass (soprano); National Philharmonic Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli cond. LONDON OS 26609 \$8.98.

Performance: **Interesting**

Recording: **Very good**

When I reviewed Sylvia Sass' first London recital (OS 26524) about two years ago, I was impressed but wondered if the young Hungarian soprano would eventually become another Callas—or another Suliotis. Callas' influence on Miss Sass is still evident in the present recital; though such influence can be constructive, it can also be dangerous if it leads an artist to take unwise

(Continued on page 145)

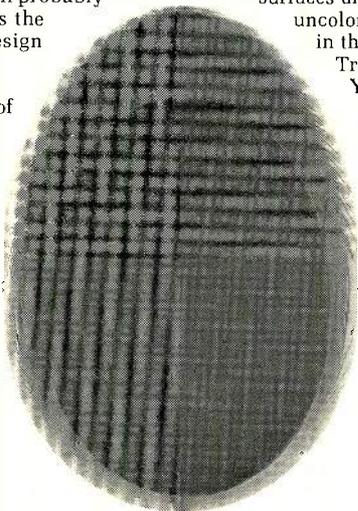
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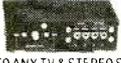
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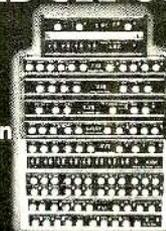


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risks. Thus far, the evidence indicates that Sass' vocalism is built on a sounder technical foundation than that of Elena Suliotis, another Callas disciple who is now, alas, artistically a burnt-out case.

Callas aside, Sass projects a great deal of individuality in her singing. She is an interpreter of considerable range, intelligently responsive to dramatic detail, and she knows how to imbue words with expression, even if some of her effects (such as the line "*Ai trapassati regnar non cale*" in Lady Macbeth's "*La luce langue*") seem overdone. Her singing does not always sound spontaneous, but it is always guided by artistic instincts. Tonally, it is lovely in the midrange and even above it; the topmost register is brave but unrefined, and a waver often creeps into her sustained notes *at forte* levels. Sass is unquestionably a major artist, but one still in the process of realizing her potential.

I have long admired Lamberto Gardelli's conducting, but here I find it curiously unhelpful to the singer. As a result, the *Norma* scene has some tentative moments, and the "*Sempre libera*" lacks the feeling of abandon. Only in the *Macbeth* arias do conductor and singer meet fully in the spirit of fruitful collaboration. G.J.

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It is interesting to compare the vocal personality of today's Renata Scotto, the mature dramatic interpreter of La Gioconda, Adriana Lecouvreur, Desdemona, Maddalena (*Andrea Chénier*), and similar roles, with the young coloratura specialist who appears on this souvenir of her operatic beginnings (Everest's reissue is drawn from complete opera initially released on the Mercury label about twenty years ago). Today's artist, although occasionally unpredictable in purely vocal terms, is a stage-wise performer with an assertive personality that commands attention and, usually, admiration. The dramatic skills she displays in these early recordings are rather conventional except for her lively sense of comedy in the Pergolesi excerpts. Illuminating rays of insight and individuality are not noticeable, but the vocal achievement is exquisite throughout: limpid tones of beautiful quality, pure intonation, accurate and fastidiously executed *fiorture*.

I recommend the disc wholeheartedly. Nowhere can the Pergolesi arias be heard so charmingly done, and the familiar Verdi and Donizetti sequences rank with the best. The sound is clean early stereo with good surfaces. "*Tutte le feste*," however, was carelessly edited, and the listings fail to identify composers or conductors and misspell some of the titles. G.J.

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Simels Live

By Steve Simels



Shrapnel: new commandos of rock-and-roll?

DODGING THE SHRAPNEL

THOSE of you who find something of a void in your life now that you don't have Dick Nixon (a true pop genius, cartoonist Jules Feiffer called him) to kick around any more may recall some of the loose talk that used to emanate from the vicinity of the Watergate White House—specifically, the stuff about the sinister left-wing cabal that controlled the country's media. Myself, I always found this somewhat mystifying; it was difficult to visualize, say, the editorial chambers of the New York *Times* as a den of aging Trotskyites.

Still, though I doubt Spiro Agnew had the rock press in mind when he made his famous "nattering nabobs of negativism" crack, in their case he would have been right on target. No one has ever, to my knowledge, conducted a poll on the subject, but if you've ever read *Rolling Stone* and other lifestyle journals for any length of time you'll know that rock critics as a group are, and traditionally have been, creatures of the Left.

Which brings us to punk, specifically the English variety. Despite Joel Vance's February assertion to the contrary, the thrust of English punk has also been almost entirely left-wing, give or take a conservative anomaly or two like the Jam. While not entirely innocent of cold-blooded marketing concerns, English punk was a calculated attack on the status quo that had quite a lot in common with the countercultural movements of the late Sixties, no matter how much the punks themselves professed to hate hippies.

In the light of what subsequently happened to punk as a "movement," the general alarm with which it was greeted seems fairly paranoid now (as Lester Bangs put it, "These little nerds yelping 'please kill me' were going to threaten *this* society?"), but it also helps explain the glee with which American rock critics by and large jumped on the bandwagon: *they were being offered a second childhood.*

The irony, of course, is that punk at its American inception—by which I mean the Ramones and *Punk* magazine—was anything but the kind of music calculated to hearten old campus radicals. It was, in fact, a reaction against everything they stood

for—the music, if you will, of their kid brothers. Punk was a glorification of American teenagers as the Master Race. Punk said that Trash was the closest America had come in the way of producing a real culture; punk theoreticians to this day will spend hours discussing the symbolic intermingling of characters on *Green Acres* and *Petticoat Junction*. And what punk finally said was that if you couldn't relate to all that, you were either a commie or a faggot—or a disco freak, in which case you were both.

Which leads me to the reason for this historical ramble. There is a very popular little band currently working New York City and environs that has suffered a virtual press blackout because they flirt with attitudes the old lefties of the rock press apparently deem unacceptable even as satire. They're called Shrapnel, they're from New Jersey, they're all in their late teens, and they happen to be one of the cleverest, most energetic outfits I've heard (at CBGB's most recently) in a while. They're a sort of *Raw Power*-period version of the Stooges, but with real melodies, pop hooks, and an instrumental prowess that belies their years. So why don't they get written about? Because they dress up in combat drag, write songs about military subjects, and give the impression that they either don't remember or don't care about Vietnam.

Now I'll grant you that as a gimmick this is pretty one-dimensional, but if you accept it in the context in which it's being offered—which is that these guys grew up reading comic books like *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos*—it is also pretty funny. And I find it both a little sad and a little weird that the same writers (the aging radicals mentioned earlier) who conveniently overlooked the much more disturbing but equally cartoonish Nazi trappings of the early Ramones are utterly outraged when Shrapnel's lead singer Dave Wyndorf brandishes a toy machine gun on stage. I suppose it's sort of the punk equivalent of the "we are not amused" school that insists on taking Randy Newman's satire seriously, but it's as dumb as hissing Larry Hagman on the street because the character he plays on TV's *Dallas* is a lousy s.o.b. □

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