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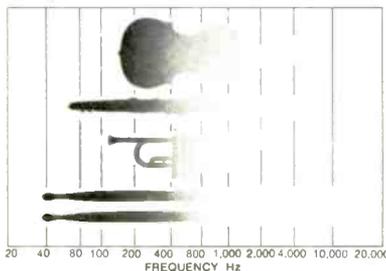
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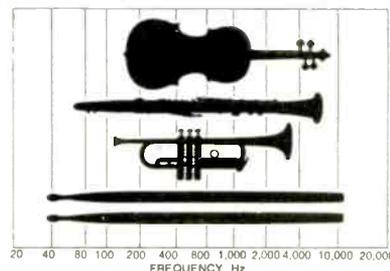
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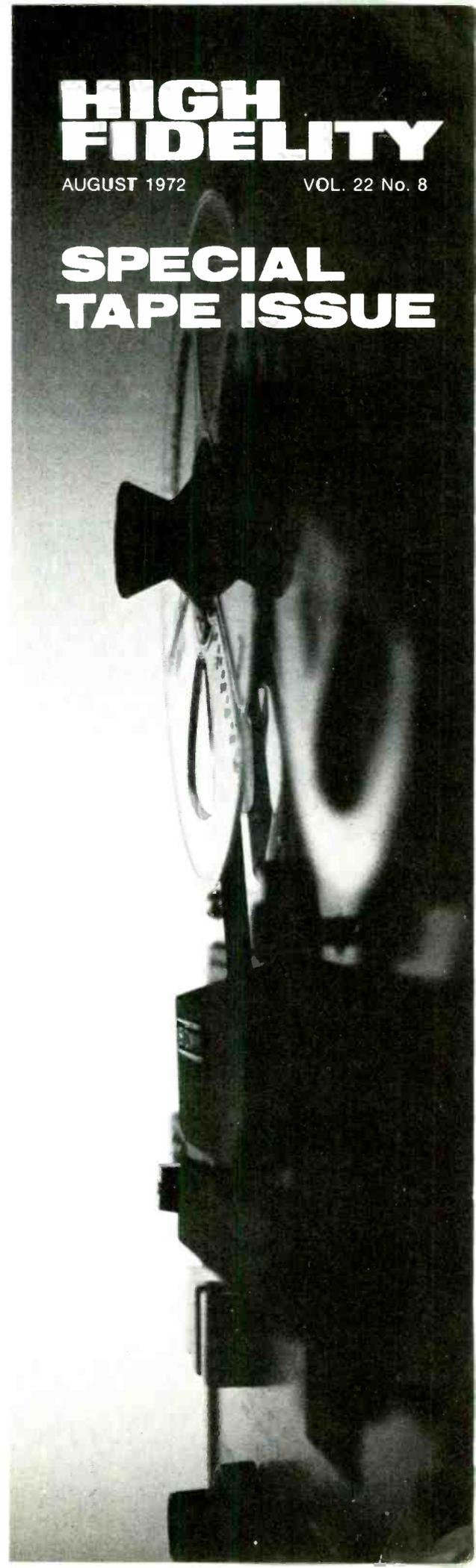
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Current and back copies of High Fidelity and High Fidelity/Musical America are available on microfilm form University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.



# We Took the Cows Out and the Barn Collapsed

On Saturday, April 8, 1972, at approximately 11:30 in the morning, our eighty-year-old barn passed away. Now, that may not mean much to you, but to a staff composed largely of New York City expatriates working in a renovated farmhouse in western Massachusetts it meant a great deal. Veteran readers of *HIGH FIDELITY* may recall various paeans to the barn in early issues, written as only citified editors could. True, in recent years the barn had served only to store old files and magazines, but we once did use it teleologically. When we bought our present Publishing House from Pete Adams twenty years ago, we acquired with it not only the barn and a still-standing chicken coop, but cows (three) and chickens. At first we let them stay. But then, with tragic shortsightedness due no doubt in part to our urban ignorance, we evicted them on the dubious grounds that since we could find no gainful publishing employment for the animals, we would no longer provide them with room and board.

And that, according to an old farm hand hereabouts, was the beginning of the end of the barn. Apparently the heat of the cows—and of their (non-dairy) produce—had kept the structure's walls warm and moist. Once the cows were removed, the walls began to dry out and, eventually, to buckle. In the end, five thin trees were all that seemed to be supporting the protruding right side of the Old Gal, and so last March, for safety's sake, we were forced to plan her euthanasia. The accompanying photos tell the rest of the story.



However, in the sense that nothing ever really dies, the barn too will carry on, for he that carteth away also createth. Eighteen-foot beams are almost impossible to come by these days, and we gave the remains to a builder in exchange for his tearing down the shell.

So our barn shall endure, as we must too, and specifically with next month's "ANNUAL RECORDINGS ISSUE." Included will be a **PREVIEW OF THE FORTHCOMING SEASON'S RECORDINGS**, as well as a triptych of features on **HOW TO CARE FOR YOUR RECORDS**. **AMERICA'S CHANGING TASTES IN POPULAR MUSIC** will review the implications of the thirty-year changeover from "Your Hit Parade" to *Billboard's* "Hot 100." And for those of you interested in continuing your audio education, we will teach you **HOW TO UNDERSTAND OUR POWER AMP CHARTS AND GRAPHS**.

*Leonard Marcus*

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**New York:** 165 W. 46th St., New York, N.Y. 10036. Telephone: 212-757-2800. Seymour Resnick, Eastern Adv. Mgr.

**New England:** The Publishing House, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230. Telephone: 413-528-1300. Russell Gilchrist.

**Chicago:** Billboard Publications, Inc., 150 North Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill. 60606. Telephone: 312-236-9818. Leonard Levine.

**Los Angeles:** Billboard Publications, Inc., 9000 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90069. Telephone: 213-273-7040. Andrew Spanberger.

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Irving Kolodin SATURDAY REVIEW.  
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## Forgotten Singers

J. E. Bonk's letter [May 1972] seconding Peter G. Davis' request for more recordings of the great soprano Astrid Varnay really hits home.

Without a doubt, Varnay is the most unjustly neglected female singer of modern times—strange and shameful when one considers her definitive Elektra (which she was still singing better than anyone else as late as 1967) and Kundry, to say nothing of the other roles in her repertory that demanded to be immortalized on disc.

To be sure, bad luck has dogged Varnay throughout her career—from her spectacular Met debut as a twenty-three-year-old Sieglinde in 1941 (the day before the bombing of Pearl Harbor) to the present. One might on the surface consider her career part of another "Too Much, Too Soon" syndrome, but such was not quite the case. During her formative years at the Met she was used far too frequently as a replacement artist, but her fine technique held up in all cases, while her ever-deepening artistry was an increasing delight to all those who chose to use scores as a reference to performance.

Indeed, her performances of every role she sang at the Met (including her Santuzza and Amelia in *Boccanegra*) were models of musical accuracy, dramatic comprehension, and communication equaled only by Maria Callas in our time. Perhaps Callas was right in turning down her first Met contract in 1945—she too might have become another singer taken for granted. Like Callas, Astrid Varnay is one of that select group of singers, whose every performance teaches one something and they should be heard.

William Zakariasen  
San Francisco, Calif.

I found the article "Vocal Gems From Singers the Met Overlooked" by Dale Harris quite interesting [May 1972]. My collection is heavily vocal—I began collecting in the late Twenties when it was believed that records were dead—and I have spent many hours looking through stacks of 78s in second-hand furniture stores, Goodwill and Salvation Army stores, finding many wonderful recordings in the process.

Opinions about singers of the past will always differ I suppose. Mr. Harris raved about the merits of Berta Kiurina while I have always found her dull and uninteresting; he cares not at all for Felicie Hüni-Mihacsek, an artist I greatly admire. The first record I found by Hüni-Mihacsek was a gold label Brunswick of "Per pietà, ben idol mio" from *Così fan tutte*, the most beautifully sung rendition of this difficult aria in my collection, matched only by the great version by Eleanor Steber. While this aria is not included on the Club 99 LP, I find most of the items on this record superbly performed.

G. Ward Evans  
Akron, Ohio



Varnay—forgotten?

Dale Harris' review of London's "Arias from Forgotten Operas" [June 1972], brought me a real thrill in the discovery that someone has finally resurrected "Ah, se tu dormi" from Vaccai's *Giulietta e Romeo*. I learned this aria, a favorite of Malibran's, many years ago after finding it in an old volume entitled *Opera Airs for Contralto*. I wrote to a number of celebrated singers suggesting that they include it in recital programs but never got a response. In fact, I have never heard anyone sing it, although it is a lovely number and as Mr. Harris says "lies beautifully in the voice." I look forward to obtaining the record, though Mr. Harris' reservations about the singer make me wish that it had been recorded by Grace Bumbry or Marilyn Horne or Christa Ludwig.

A. R. Blacksmith  
San Diego, Calif.

## Frightened Soprano

Although I agree for the most part with Dale Harris' review of the new Maria Callas recital [May 1972], there are some rather obvious inconsistencies that I feel he should explain to his readers. Mr. Harris explains that in 1960 (the date for the *Pirata* sessions), Callas "was still able to summon up sufficient resources to give expression to her dramatic vision." However, a few lines previous to this remark, he states that the remakes of *Norma* and *Lucia* were "unjustifiable vocal risks." How can this be true since both of the remakes were recorded before the *Pirata* sessions?

Also, I don't seem to understand how he knows that Callas was so "frightened" when she stepped before the microphones to record the arias from *Ballo* and *Aida*. Of course, the interpretations sound frightened: Both Amelia and Aida are very frightened ladies! How does he divorce the way Callas is interpreting her roles from the way she is feeling personally at the time? I myself have been a fan of this lady for quite a few years; I too have felt that she had a great deal to offer with an uneven vocal instrument. Mr. Harris obviously feels the same way, but I do think he has some explaining to do.

J. Edward Kauffman  
Philadelphia, Pa.

Mr. Harris replies: Mr. Kauffman misreads my words. Callas, I said, sounds hobbled, even



Callas—frightened?

frightened. I have no inside knowledge about Callas' personal feelings, only the evidence of my ears. In my opinion the fear ascribed by Mr. Kauffman to the characters of Amelia and Aida is not at all what Callas projects; what she projects is fear at having to cope with their music. As for the remakes of Lucia and Norma, these remain for me unjustifiable vocal risks—that is sadly inferior, at times inadequate, remakes of long, difficult roles which she had already recorded with great artistic success in her vocal prime. Her 1964 *Carmen* is even further below the standards she had set for herself in the middle '50s.

## Four-Channel Plot

I read T. E. Wall's letter in your April 1972 issue. He is partly correct in his remarks about four-channel reproduction as being a scheme to make money for both the record and audio industry. However, he has overlooked the success of color TV and two-channel stereo. These improvements made money and kept the American consumer happy; doubtlessly quadraphonics will do the same. It is a never-ending cycle of human development. My advice to Mr. Wall is "if you can't beat them, join them."

In reference to Mr. Molina's letter about your tasteless cover on the November 1971 issue, I should like to tell him where he may find a worse one. He need only walk to the nearest magazine stand to the pornography section.

Robin Hollar  
Hickory, N. C.

## Space-Age Caruso

In the past few years, the sound of historic recordings has been enhanced by using filters, tape splicing, etc. However, acoustic recording techniques introduced painful distortion in transducing sound onto groove, distortion which can't be filtered out.

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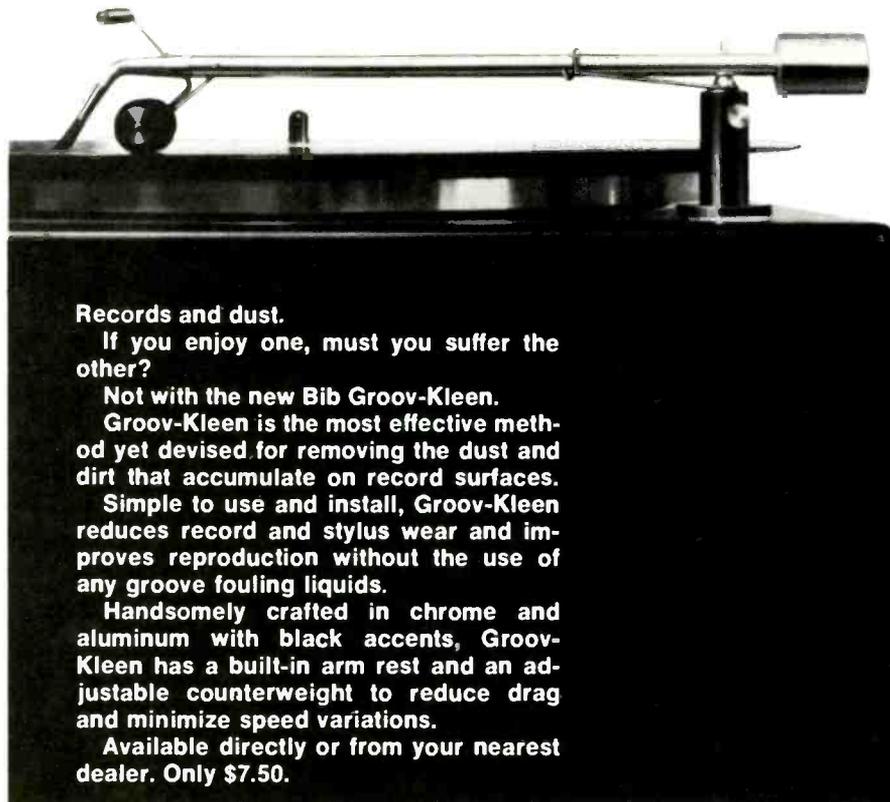
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audio signals could be "digitalized," read into the computer, noise stripped off, and distortions corrected.

Perhaps the idea of hearing Artur Nikisch and Caruso recordings in modern sound is not too farfetched. I wonder if you or your readers have heard of any work along these lines.

*Lawrence Huffman*  
Philadelphia, Pa.

### Voice from Above

In R. D. Darrell's review of the Bernstein *Mass* ["The Tape Deck," May 1972], he says that Bernstein himself speaks the final words at its conclusion: "The Mass is ended: go in peace." Paul Hume makes the same observation in an article in the *Washington Post* on the recording sessions for *Mass*. I'm quite familiar with Leonard Bernstein's voice and there is no doubt in my mind that those last seven words are spoken, on my copy of *Mass* at least, by the baritone, Alan Titus, not Bernstein. I bought the album in New York very soon after it was released last year. Did Columbia make a change in later pressings, substituting Bernstein's voice for Titus'?

*Stephen Sarper*  
Greenwich, Conn.

*No, Alan Titus voices the final benediction on all pressings of the Bernstein Mass. Bernstein's voice was used at the live performances last September in Washington, which most likely accounts for the confusion.*

### Poetic Justice

I do not purchase HIGH FIDELITY to read nursery rhymes. Harris Goldsmith's "poem" criticizing the Stokowski-led Tchaikovsky Fourth [May 1972] is surely the absolute nadir for your excellent publication in the decade I have followed it. Mr. Goldsmith has condescended to the reader to the point where I must assume that he is not illiterate but antilliterate.

*Arthur S. Krupicz*  
Erie, Pa.

It's high time Harris Goldsmith, reviewer, Assume an approach that is newer.

No new disc stands the test:

"Toscanini's is best!"

His readers will shortly be fewer.

*Donald A. Garafalo*  
Baltimore, Md.

**High Fidelity**, August 1972, Vol. 22, No. 8. Published monthly by Billboard Publications, Inc., publisher of Stereo, Stereo International, Modern Photography, American Artist, Billboard, Vend, Amusement Business, Merchandising Week, Music Labo, Photo Weekly, Gift & Tableware Reporter, Record & Tape Retailer, Record Mirror, Discografia Internazionale, World Radio TV Handbook.

**High Fidelity/Musical America**. Edition published monthly. Member Audit Bureau of Circulations.

**Editorial correspondence** should be addressed to The Editor, High Fidelity, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230. Editorial contributions will be welcomed. Payment for articles accepted will be arranged prior to publication. Unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by return postage.

**Subscriptions** should be addressed to High Fidelity, 2160 Patterson St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45214. Subscription rates: High Fidelity/Musical America: In the U.S.A. and its Possessions, 1 year \$14; elsewhere, 1 year \$15. National and other editions published monthly: In the U.S.A. and its Possessions, 1 year \$7.95. Subscription rates for all other countries available on request.

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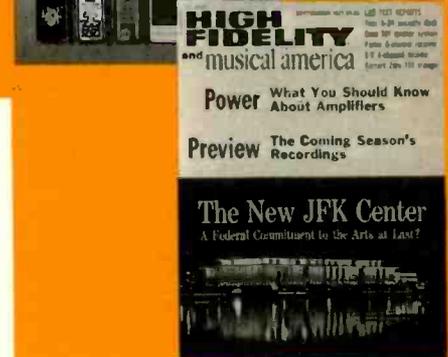


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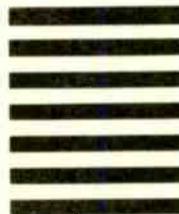
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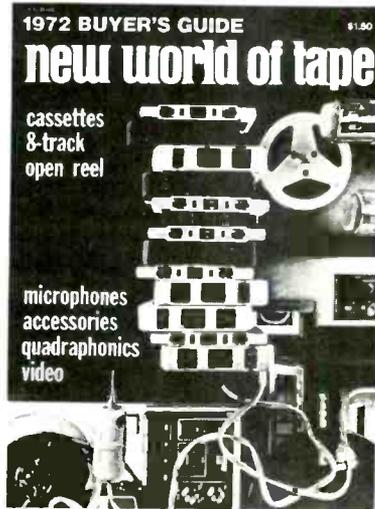
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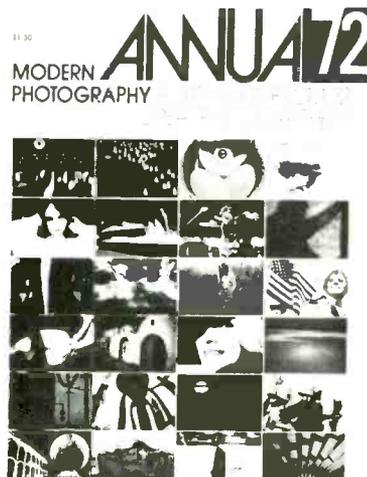
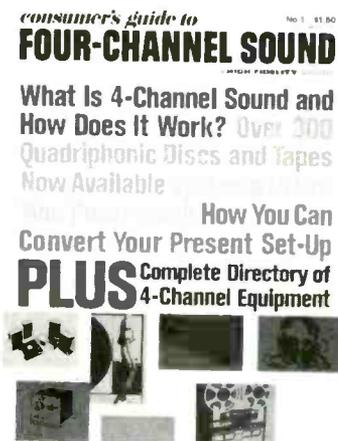
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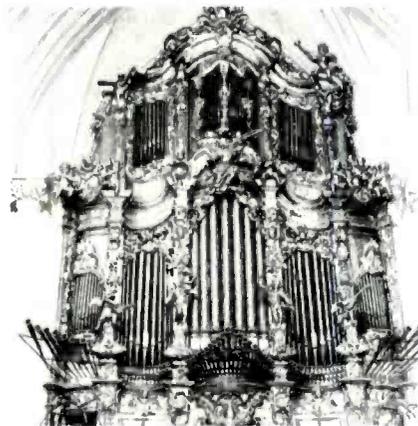
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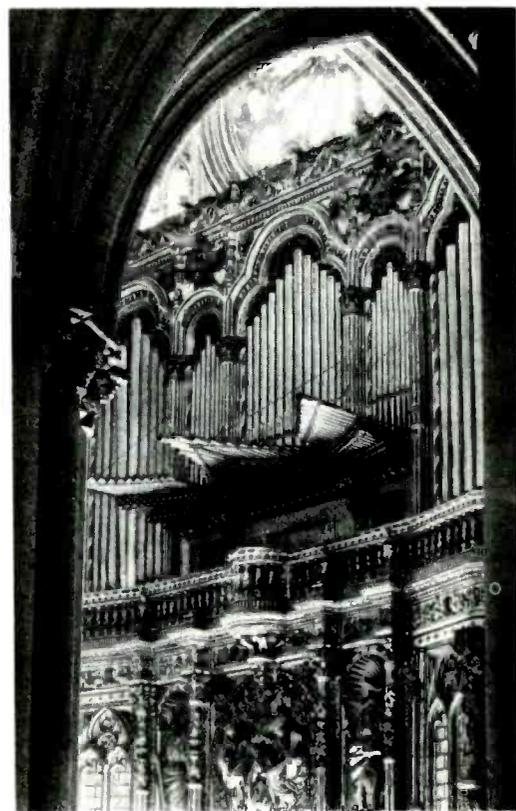
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CIRCLE 38 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

speaking of  
records



The Baroque (top) and Emperor  
Organs in the Toledo Cathedral are fine  
examples of Spanish instruments with  
their fanlike Trompetas Reales.



An Organ Tour

with E. Power Biggs

**HIGH FIDELITY:** We see, Mr. Biggs, that  
one of Columbia's new releases is a  
sampling of your performances on  
twenty-four organs in Europe. That's a  
lot of organs. How long have you been  
exploring, and how do you find these in-  
struments?

**E. POWER BIGGS:** Most of the historic  
organs are pretty well known to organ-  
ists, at least in books. Concert trips that I  
made in the early 1950s, all the way from  
Iceland to Spain, led naturally to the  
idea of recording. Of course a recording  
is vastly more complicated than a concert.  
After advance correspondence, I  
have to make a preliminary visit to de-  
cide what repertoire best suits the instru-  
ment. Then if all goes well, a later trip is  
planned with the recording director, the  
engineers, and the pile of recording  
equipment. Sometimes it can take as  
many as three visits to begin a record.

**H.F.:** How do you determine repertoire?

**E.P.B.:** My "concept," if you want to use  
a big word, is to play the music of the  
composers of different countries on the  
organs they wrote for. Because the in-  
strument and the composer are very  
much one thing. Or, that is, the compos-  
er's style grew out of the instrument—af-  
ter all, the instrument was there before  
*he* was. Musicians are continually ar-

guing, you know, about tempos and such  
things. How fast did Bach play such and  
such a work? What did he do with such  
and such an ornament? How did he  
handle organ registration, the choice of  
stops? What did he do about cadenzas?  
And of course nobody knows now, not  
really. But when you play an instrument  
that Bach played, you are in contact with  
him, you are hearing the sounds that he  
heard, or very close. And this of course  
applies to composers like Buxtehude,  
Handel, and Mozart.

**H.F.:** What makes a good "Bach" organ?

**E.P.B.:** It has to be articulate, incisive,  
and clear in its total ensemble. It has to  
have the sort of sound "that you can see  
the music through." That necessitates  
the type of pipe-voicing and a sensitive  
playing action—direct mechanical con-  
nection between finger and pipe valve—  
of the organs of Bach's day.

**H.F.:** How did the invitation to go into  
East Germany reach you?

**E.P.B.:** The recording company there,  
through Columbia records, asked me to  
come to both Leipzig and Freiberg in  
Saxony. They were very generous, they  
gave us a week in each place to record.  
We had all-night recording sessions. In  
Leipzig they had two policemen outside

# If you're going to steal an idea, steal from the best.



"When the Citation components were in their final design phases we had the rare opportunity to see some of the first engineering prototypes and we have never quite gotten over the dedication and enthusiasm exhibited by the highly qualified engineering team that 'gave birth' to those winners.

Small wonder, then, that we were elated to find that the Model 930 receiver is the brain-child of that very team. It abounds in Citation features, many of which one would have thought impossible to incorporate in a receiver at this attractive price. Of course, the Citation 12 boasts more power (60 watt rms per channel), but then again the [Citation 11 preamplifier and the Citation 12 power amplifier] combination retails for a cool \$600.00 or so, as opposed to just under \$400.00 for this receiver. The rest of the circuit refinements are there, though, including the twin power supplies (not negative and positive voltages supplied by one power transformer, but actually two complete power supplies including two separate power transformers), super-wide frequency response and power bandwidth, fantastic square wave response and rise time, and conservative and meaningful power ratings that can serve as a model to the rest of the industry. All this plus a superior tuner section make the 930 a receiver that even the died-in-the-wool 'separatists' should take a good look at."

*Audio Magazine, June, 1972*

FOR THE COMPLETE REVIEW OF THE 930 AND FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE HARMAN/KARDON LINE,  
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You may have puzzled about the rare availability of Crown tape recorders on the used market. Perhaps you even have a friend who refuses to part with his aging Crown at any price. Well, the typical Crown owner is not only a careful shopper, he knows when something is too valuable to lose. After all, why should he trade when his 4-year old Crown still turns out crisp, perfect recordings with greater fidelity than most brand new hi-fi tape decks?

One reason for this is that the Crown line is a professional line of tape recorders and players - that is, designed for audio pros who make their living by recording. Crown does not bow to the popular philosophy of "planned obsolescence", where the manufacturer automatically outdates last year's line by bringing out all new models each year. Indeed, since Crown first introduced modular solid state recording in 1963 (four years before any other manufacturer), the basic design has not been significantly altered - so advanced was its concept. State-of-the-art currency is maintained by incorporating new features into current models, only when they mean an advantage in either performance or price.

But even these are not the reasons a Crown owner would give for treasuring a venerable old model. He would say it's the sound - that matchless recording and playback fidelity that has become synonymous with the Crown name. For example, the SX724 4-track stereo deck at 7½ips delivers a frequency response of +2dB 30-25,000 Hz, with hum and noise at -60dB, and maximum wow and flutter of 0.09%. (When comparing specifications, keep in mind that, unlike most hi-fi manufacturers, Crown guarantees its specs for minimum long-term performance; actual operation is often even better.)

If you would like your tape deck to record as good years from now, as when new, we suggest that you visit your local Crown dealer soon. (Just don't expect to find a used Crown - at any price.)

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CIRCLE 16 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

the church all night long, stopping all traffic, all pedestrians, all noise. It was very moving. You have no idea. It's a sort of mecca, you know, for an organist. There's a little plaque on the wall and all it says is, "Here Johann Sebastian Bach lived and worked." That's all. St. Thomas was a simple parish church and still is. That was Bach, you see.

**H.F.:** Do organs have what might be described as national characteristics?

**E.P.B.:** Indeed they do, strong ones. Spanish organs, for instance, usually have no pedals; they *do* have wonderful trumpet pipes—Trompetas Reales or Royal Trumpets—that spread out horizontally in a fan shape. And as I've said, music and instruments are one thing—one grew out of the other. In the case of the Spanish composers, they were either very pious, very ecclesiastical, in the manner of Cabezón—very wonderful, with severe counterpoint, like Palestrina with a Spanish character. Or else they were just flamboyant and gay, like Antonio Soler. Either very pious, right on their knees, or having a hell of a good time. In some places—in Portugal, for instance—a church may have six organs. In Toledo, which I think is my favorite Spanish cathedral, they have three huge organs, two of them on either side of the choir, with trumpet pipes fanning out in both directions; and a third on the side, the Emperor's Organ, only played on state occasions. You couldn't find a greater contrast between this sort of thing and the simple parish church of St. Thomas.

**H.F.:** What about English organs?

**E.P.B.:** English organs tend to have a mellow sound, a fullness, a spaciousness. And that's what you need for Handel. England once had a number of wonderful organs and along came Cromwell and smashed them. (People say it wasn't Cromwell, but *somebody* did them in.) In any case, for the continuous in "The Magnificent Mr. Handel" [Columbia 30058 and 31206] I used an organ actually built to Handel's specifications. His librettist for *Messiah*, Charles Jennens, was a wealthy man who fancied himself a poet; he and Handel knew each other for years, though they were always falling out. Jennens wanted to build an organ for his music room and asked Handel for his advice on specifications for the pipes. Handel's reply is still in existence and the organ was built just as he recommended. Later, it was moved from Jennens' music room to the parish church of the Earl of Aylesford's estate in Paekington—a lovely place, the church is out in the fields, with no traffic noise, no one around. This is where we made the record. The only trouble was that one

day during the recording session the Earl was taking friends pheasant shooting, and every now and then we'd get a "bang" on the tape when somebody fired a shot. We had to do quite a few re-takes.

**H.F.:** Getting back to the Continent, what about instruments there?

**E.P.B.:** Well, Holland has some wonderful organs. Being a poor country in the 1800s they were careful to preserve their old ones, and of course now they're very proud of them. There is a superb organ in Haarlem which Mozart played on when he was twelve—you can still see in the registry the notes about the day he came, and how he amazed everyone. Naturally, I used this organ for a recording of Mozart's organ music—"Mozart at Haarlem." Then, French organs—they are quite distinct. They tend to have a reedy sound, good for Couperin.

**H.F.:** Have you exhausted the organ possibilities in Europe yet?

**E.P.B.:** Heavens no. There are hundreds of good organs still not recorded, many of them in small obscure places that the world has passed by. After all, if you've got an organ in Hamburg, it gets bombed out every thirty years. Now, there's an organ in Dresden, just being restored, that I'd like to play sometime.

**H.F.:** Other than pheasant shooting, are there any special recording problems in the churches you've been to?

**E.P.B.:** In the beginning it was difficult to deal with acoustical problems, but now microphones are so much improved, so highly developed and sensitive, that their capabilities seem almost unlimited. One of the main problems, though, is how to get the microphones up. The organ pipes are always so high, and the thing to do is to get the mikes even higher. Sometimes the engineers have spent a whole day suspending mikes from the roof. There was one company, not Columbia, who tried balloons. They put the microphone in a balloon and the chap walked about with the balloon on the end of a string. I think it worked—experimentally, that is. He found more or less the best positions. But then he couldn't hold the mike really steady and mikes are pretty expensive items to have just floating around in the air!

**H.F.:** Tell us about the quadrasonic record you've just made at St. George's Church here in New York ["Antiphonal Music for Organ, Brass, and Percussion." Columbia 31193].

**E.P.B.:** St. George's is a wonderful place. Wonderful acoustics. We've got a really

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CIRCLE 18 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

bang-up record. We chose pieces that were well suited to four-channel sound, and I spent a couple of weeks experimenting with registration. The church has four divisions of organ pipes in the front and one in the rear gallery, and we recorded on two-inch tape with sixteen microphones.

**H.F.:** How do you feel about quadraphonic sound as compared to stereo?

**E.P.B.:** Well, mono gave you the sound from one opening, through a telescope, so to speak. Stereo spread that sound in front of you. What quad does, in the case of St. George's, is to give you the length of the church behind you. It puts the whole box of the church over you. This recording can be played in stereo of course, and then the organ in the rear gallery simply appears in the middle of the front.

The music on the record—works by Gigout, Dupré, Widor, Strauss—is all played absolutely *au naturel*. It is strictly musical, no tricks. They weren't necessary. We rescored in certain cases. The Strauss, called *Processional Entry for Festival Occasions*, was originally scored for twenty-four wind instruments. Then Max Reger added the organ part, and we rescored for the possibilities of St. George's. But it remains essentially as Strauss wrote it, plus Reger. It's a wonderful piece, and the conductor, Maurice Peress, has a simply magnificent conception of it—a very Wagnerian conception. Terrific sonority.

**H.F.:** What is your reaction to Bach recitals given with lights and in all sorts of modern guises—with the Moog, and so forth?

**E.P.B.:** Well, Bach "assembled" on the Moog is vastly ingenious and entertaining. As for electronic imitation "organs"—I don't play them because for me their sounds fall too short of the music. Real music demands the real instrument, and that implies not only an organ of pipes but an organ built on historical lines, a match for the wonderful organ repertoire.

Albert Schweitzer was one of the first to point out that authentic instruments are best for Bach. He made the heretical statement that the old organs were best for old music. Recordings too have made this point and organ building today is directed toward creating a true, historically correct sound. We are coming back to the true identity of the organ and very largely establishing it through the documentation of recordings.

[For a feature review of Mr. Biggs's latest recordings, see page 60.]

CIRCLE 34 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →

# You don't get into the Smithsonian Institution on hearsay.

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

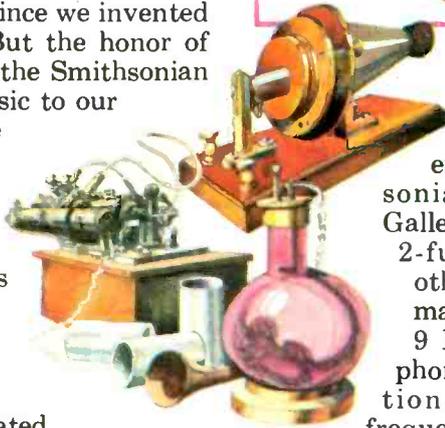
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Take your favorite tape or record to your Hi-Fi Dealer and hear what a difference the Sound of Koss can make. You'll hear everything you've heard before, only better. Crystal clear highs. Rich, deep bass. And

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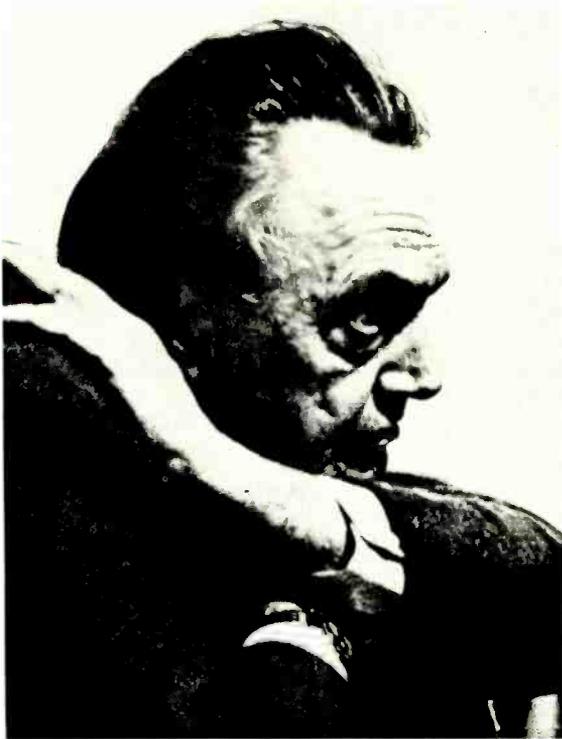
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## the lees side

### A Milestone for Alec Wilder

HAD IT NOT BEEN for Frank Sinatra, I'd never have heard of Alec Wilder. Few others would have either.

In 1945 Sinatra conducted an album of instrumental music by Wilder. An odd amalgam of classical and jazz-inflected music, the album, on 12-inch, 78-rpm discs, sold more copies on Sinatra's name than Wilder's.

As a teenage Sinatra fan, I was attracted by the sheer novelty of Sinatra conducting. (Wilder says he did indeed conduct, and the music has never received a better reading.) But then I fell in love with Wilder's subtle and infectious music for and of itself.

Wilder, I learned in later years, wrote the choral arrangements with which Sinatra recorded during the record ban of the 1940s. He also wrote the music for such superb songs as *While We're Young* and *I'll Be Around*, and highly literate man that he is, occasionally turned his hand to lyrics as well.

I was awed when I met Wilder during the early 1960s. He was a legend. By now I was familiar with his octets as well as his songs. He had gone on, writing his lovely, eccentric music for symphony orchestras, chamber groups, and indeed whatever instrumental combinations caught his fancy. His music was unclassifiable. What *kind* of composer do you call Alec Wilder? Popular? Classical? Jazz? To refuse to be classified can, in America—unlike other countries—lead to professional suicide. And so the record industry had gone on ignoring this extraordinarily interesting and original composer while proclaiming any number of guitar-toting clodpolls as

poets, artists, and geniuses. The neglect of Alec Wilder is one of the major disgraces of a record industry which has already amassed an onerous list.

One of Alec Wilder's greatest achievements, happily, is not being ignored. It is a book, published recently by Oxford University Press, titled *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators, 1900-1950*. I have never seen such a book. It is not a collection of anecdotes about how Rodgers met Hart at Columbia University, how Gershwin would linger outside Jerome Kern's house hoping to hear the master play, and that sort of thing. It is an analysis of major American composers and their "popular" music by a peer. The book needed to be written, and fortunately when at last it was, the work was not done by some pedant, or worse still some overzealous fan, but by the erudite, brilliant, and unpretentious Mr. Wilder. Alec Wilder has one of the coolest and elegant intellects I have ever encountered, and it is in evidence all through his book.

Wilder's friend Willis Conover says in a quote on the dust jacket that this is "the only book about music I've ever stayed up all night to finish." I tried that, but gave up. The musical examples and harmonic analyses are so fascinating that I plan to spend about six months studying the book, as I would a college course. Indeed, the book should be used as a text in music schools, and no doubt it will be.

Wilder laments in his introduction that he could not quote more musical examples. Publishers of songs were tacky about permissions, and "one publisher," he says, "absolutely refused me permis-

sion to quote from songs to which he owns the copyrights until he could review what I had said about the songs. I found the implicit censorship appalling."

Herein lies the reason American popular music, from its golden age (which is what Wilder deals with; he thinks it went all to hell in the 1960s, and so do I), is not given proper scholarly recognition. It is extremely difficult to get permission to use quotes in order to analyze the music properly. Thus the literary as well as musical achievement of pop music has gone largely unsung. There is no such principle as *les droits de l'auteur* in American copyright law.

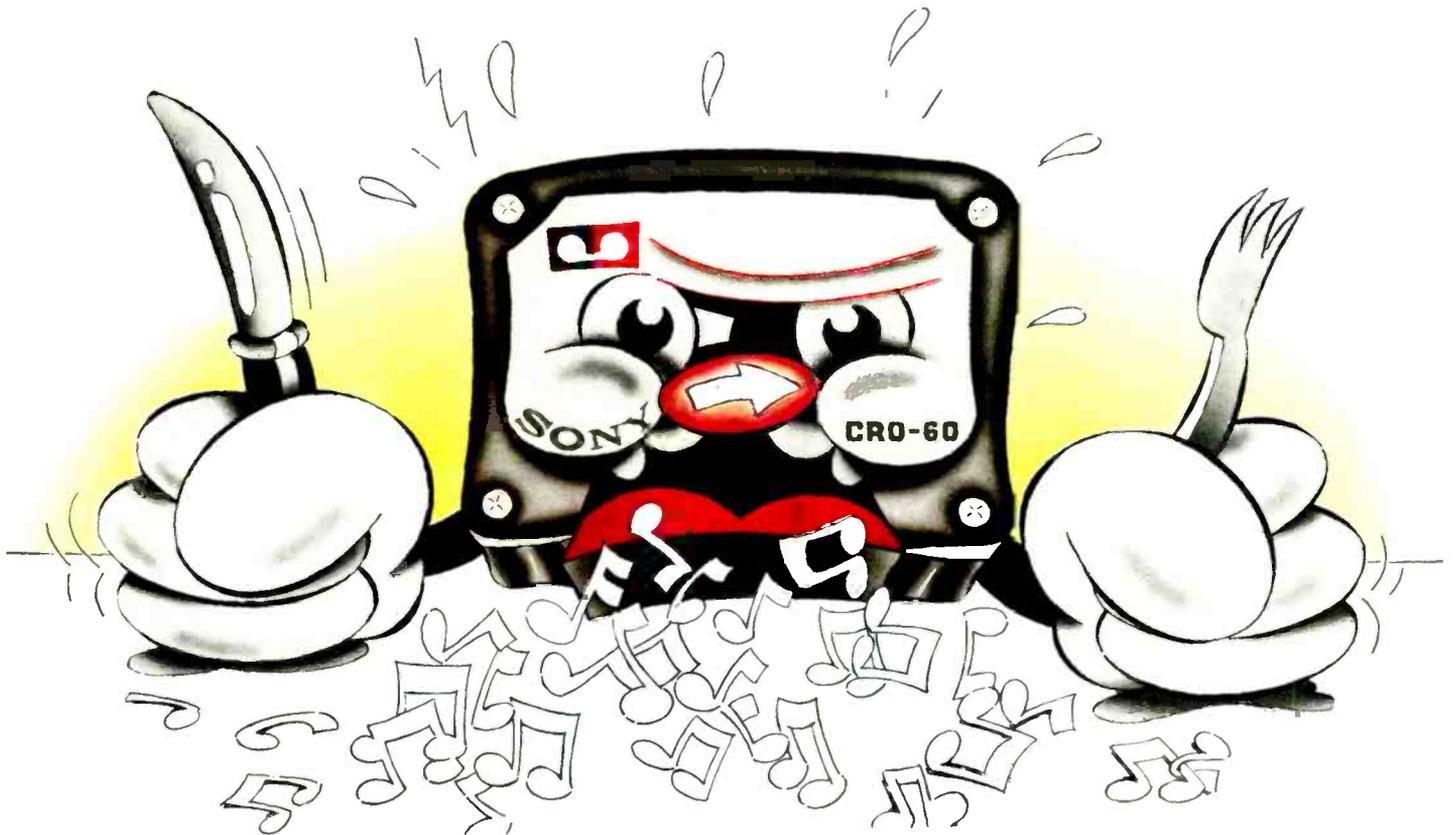
Wilder is an authentic eccentric, by which I mean somebody who doesn't affect it or work at it, but just is. He's one of those people who always looks tweedy, even in worsted fabrics. Erect of posture, about six feet two, topped by a sweep of straight gray hair, and strikingly handsome, he's one of those people who, if you saw him enter a restaurant, would make you think, "Who is that?" I imagine that women have been powerfully drawn to him over the years, and certainly he has superb taste in ladies. Yet he's never married. "I don't *trust* them," he said to me once, but then laughed. It's all a sham. Alec likes to play the curmudgeon, the misanthrope. He's just not very good at it. He loves women, and little children, and nature, and things like that. Corny, y'know?

He has no home. He maintains a mailing address at the storied Algonquin Hotel in New York, and sometimes he's actually there. Sometimes he's at the Sheraton in Rochester, his home town. (Any symphony people who want to perform some of his shamefully overlooked music can write him at either place.) But half the time, nobody knows where he is. He calls me about every six weeks from somewhere-out-there, being the greatest telephone addict south of Glenn Gould. Usually it's to tell me, "There's a new book you simply *muuuuust* read!" There are two men whose recommendations in books I accept without question. Alec Wilder is one of them.

Now I hope you will accept a recommendation from me. Read Alec's book. The price is \$15, but it's worth every cent of it. It is a milestone work of scholarship, a massively important book—the most important book, in my opinion, ever written about American popular music.

It has one shortcoming. While it gives every important composer in the field—at last—his just evaluation, it says not one word about the music of Alec Wilder. How ironic that Alec should be overlooked even in his own book.

# Sony's new chromium dioxide cassette tape is hungrier for high frequencies.



Sony chromium dioxide CRO-60 tape will record up to 50% more volume before you encounter distortion on playback. CRO-60 is hungrier than other tapes for high frequencies.

This means more recorded sound than standard cassette tapes before distortion sets in.

## What you hear.

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

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

## A Sony tape for every purpose.

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

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

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

## How's your appetite?

Now if your appetite has been whetted and you're hungry for more information or a demonstration of CRO-60 or any other Sony tapes, get on down to your nearest Sony/Superscope dealer (he's listed in the yellow pages) and get an earful.



**SONY** **SUPERSCOPE**

You never heard it so good.®

CIRCLE 58 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## too hot to handle

**What cassette decks, if any, do you think are as good as open-reel decks in the \$200-to-\$400 price range? Do you advise buying a cassette unit with built-in Dolby circuitry or an outboard unit?—Gordon Schunick, Randallstown, Md.**

Among the Dolby cassette units on which we've made tapes that sound as good to us as Dolbyized open-reel copies of the same originals are the Advent 201, the Wollensak 4760, and the Teac 350. Of course you can't buy an open-reel deck with built-in Dolby circuitry for under \$400, so to that extent the cassette decks produce better (that is, quieter) sound than the open-reel decks you're asking about. You could buy an outboard Dolby unit and use it interchangeably with a non-Dolby cassette deck and an open-reel deck. If you don't want that kind of flexibility the Dolby cassette decks generally are preferable to the outboard option in terms of both price and simplicity. But keep in mind that to duplicate our success with the cassette you sometimes must take an extra measure of care during recording to keep levels neither too high nor too low.

**Is the Crown IC-150/D-150 combination superior to the H-K Citation 11/12 combination in terms of performance alone?—John Yau, Urbana, Ill.**

Yes. At almost every point in lab testing the Crown International pair outscored the Harman-Kardon pair by a measurable margin. Measurements of distortion and S/N ratios in the Crown preamp and amplifier were spectacular, though we're sure that many listeners would find it impossible to hear a significant difference in A/B comparisons against their Harman-Kardon counterparts.

**Among the stereo tape decks I've been considering for my system, the Concord Mk. III and Ampex AX-50 seem to be available at much bigger discounts than the others. Why is this? Could it be that both are dogs that the manufacturers want to unload?—Carl Ellendorf, Long Branch, N.J.**

The Concord Mk. III is being discontinued, as are all the open-reel recorders of that group. Our latest word from Concord was that no final decision had been made about the introduction of a model to replace it, but when a particular unit is no longer being advertised by the manufacturer the demand for it drops quickly and dealers are anxious to move it off their shelves. Similar reasoning applies to the Ampex, since the company has formally gone out of the consumer recorder business. It will make some of the AX-series equipment available in its

educational products line, however. Neither model can be called a dog. The Concord (HF test reports, July 1970) proved to be an interesting, though not really distinguished unit. The AX-300 (HF test reports, March 1972), the only one of that series we tested, proved to be the most exciting consumer recorder ever offered by Ampex. The AX-50, with far fewer features, should still have been a worthy competitor in its class, and we regret its passing.

**I have been considering buying a Perpetuum-Ebner PE-2040 turntable, but I've been told that repair service on the units is slow in this country. Now that PE is making turntables for Fisher (the comparable model seems to be the Fisher 502) would it be possible for me to get the 2040 serviced at a Fisher repair shop?—Doug Brown, Deerfield, Mass.**

Possibly. But distribution of PE turntables in this country recently was taken over by a new company (Impro Industries of Mt. Vernon, N.Y.), which tells us that they're planning to make a fresh attack on the problems of distribution and servicing for the line. Key people in the company have experience with United Audio (importers of Dual), so they know whereof they speak.

**It recently came to my attention that Sony buys some cassette mechanisms from Akai. Concord and Panasonic units are almost carbon copies. Allied receivers are made by Pioneer. And so on. How about it?—David A. Anderson, St. Paul, Minn.**

Your principle is correct, if not necessarily your specific information. And you could continue into other fields: Polaroid and Kodak, Ford and GM, Johnson and Goldwater. But Sony in Japan has financial ties with Aiwa (not Akai), and we suspect it's Aiwa cassette mechanisms you're thinking of. As for Allied and Concord, both are among the many American importers that have with some regularity had their products built to order in Japanese factories. Often they can save money by picking up features and styling from those products already on the assembly lines in the suppliers' factories, while combining elements in a way that—the importer believes—will best suit the needs and tastes of his American customers.

**I've subscribed to HIGH FIDELITY for a long time but I've never seen an article on speaker construction. Surely more sound can be purchased for the money if one is capable of a little carpentry. Is it or is it not a fact that, say, \$200 invested in quality parts for two home-built speaker systems should produce a less compromised**

**sound than a pair of store-bought speakers for the same price?—Thomas Bimbel, Sanborn, Minn.**

It ain't necessarily so. If you had the option of either building or buying the identical system, the home-built version would cost less. But plans and raw parts are available for mighty few of the more successful speaker systems on the market, so that approach is academic. And since enclosure and drivers must be properly matched if the sound is not to be compromised, ad lib substitutions won't do. So when you set out to build a speaker system you have three basic options: work from published plans (available in book form or through some manufacturers of raw drivers), which generally represent the tried-and-true formulas rather than the present state of the art; attempt a cut-and-try copy of an existing system that you admire; or build a system devised by a magazine writer who, though he may be a clever fellow, doesn't have the technical resources of a manufacturer and therefore has far less opportunity to perfect his designs. Remember too that if the fellow who wrote the article had come up with a really good design it would make more sense for him to take it to a manufacturer, rather than a publisher.

**I've been using a Craig 3124 stereo-8 cartridge deck in my car with a Dynaquad four-channel hookup feeding into four good speakers. The effect is fabulous, but I'm thinking of adding Dolby to it. The Advocate 101 uses a 12-volt DC power supply, so I think I can adapt it to work from the car battery. What do you think of this idea?—James R. Lawrence, Watertown, Conn.**

The usual argument against noise reduction in automotive equipment is that the ambient noise levels in a moving vehicle already are high enough to mask tape hiss. So what is one to do while parking? Assuming that the power supply conversion of the 101 can be made successfully, we see only one objection to your proposed answer: Since no Dolby recorded cartridges are available commercially you either will have to record your own through a Dolby unit or you will have to buy a cassette deck for the car.

**I've heard that chromium-dioxide tapes may be abrasive and can damage the heads of the tape recorder, and I've also heard that the best-known brands (BASF and Advocate) have had mechanical problems with their cassettes. Can you recommend a reliable brand of chromium-dioxide cassettes?—A. Boyem, Niagara Falls, N.Y.**

Yes, BASF and Advocate, for starters. Both have been producing chromium-dioxide cassettes for some time, and we have been using the current designs without problem. We've used other brands (Maxell, Memorex, Norelco, Sony, and TDK are among the more recent entrants) without complaint, though we have less experience with them. What claims to be informed engineering opinion is still all over the lot on the subject of head wear due to chromium dioxide, however. The magnetic particles are harder than those in ferric-oxide tapes, and most studies seem to indicate that head wear will be somewhat higher no matter which chromium-dioxide brand you choose.

# After the monthly breakthroughs and revolutions in speaker design, how come the Rectilinear III still sounds better?

Figure it out for yourself.

More than five years ago, without much fanfare, we came out with a very carefully engineered but basically quite straightforward floor-standing speaker system. It consisted of six cone speakers and a crossover network in a tuned enclosure; its dimensions were 35" by 18" by 12" deep; its oiled walnut cabinet was handsome but quite simple.

That was the original **Rectilinear III**, which we are still selling, to this day, for \$279.

Within a year, virtually every hi-fi editor and equipment re-

viewer went on record to the effect that the **Rectilinear III** was unsurpassed by any other speaker system, regardless of type, size or price. (Reprints still available.)

Then came about forty-seven different breakthroughs and revolutions in the course of the years, while we kept the **Rectilinear III** unchanged. We thought it sounded a lot more natural than the breakthrough stuff, but of course we were prejudiced.

Finally, last year, we started to make a **lowboy** version of the **Rectilinear III**. It was purely a cosmetic change, since the two versions are electrically and acoustically identical. But the

new **lowboy** is wider, lower and more sumptuous, with a very impressive fretwork grille. It measures 28" by 22" by 12¼" deep (same internal volume) and is priced \$20 higher at \$299.

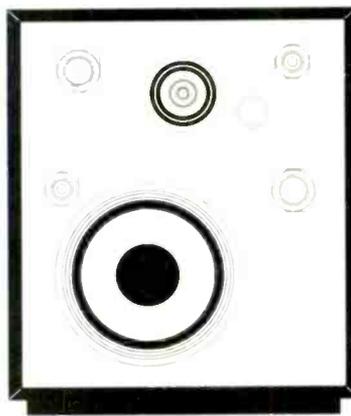
The new version gave *Stereo Review* the opportunity to test the **Rectilinear III** again after a lapse of almost five years. And, lo and behold, the test report said that "the system did an essentially perfect job of duplicating our 'live music' and that both the original and the **lowboy** version "are among the best-sounding and most 'natural' speakers we have heard." (Reprints on request.)

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

What was the real breakthrough and who made it?

For more information, including detailed literature see your audio dealer or write to Rectilinear Research Corp., 107 Bruckner Blvd., Bronx, N. Y. 10454.

## Rectilinear III



CIRCLE 46 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## Report from the Four-Channel Front: SQ vs. Quadradisc

The latest news of the Quadraphonic War indicates that both sides are trying to find allies. Men and matériel have both come into the fray, lining up with one or the other (or both) of the Big Two, RCA and Columbia. These traditional antagonists have gone to war ever since the memorable Cylinder vs. Disc conflict at the turn of the century, which resulted in the now-famous Negotiated Truce of 1902, when what is now the RCA Record Division was known as Victor. Although there were serious skirmishes during the interim, the next major conflict did not arise until the post-World War II Armageddon, now referred to as the Battle of the Speeds. At the time, RCA sent its 7-inch 45 rpm disc into battle with Columbia's 12-inch 33-rpm disc.

Today, of course, the weaponry consists of RCA's "discrete" Quadradisc and Columbia's "matrixed" SQ disc, terms which themselves seem ready to enter the combat. The first reports from Quadradisc headquarters appeared in last month's issue as reviews of RCA's first four-channel disc releases. As of this writing, some hardware and recording companies have seemingly committed themselves to a particular side, although a

significant number of Third World companies are aiding both powers. Here is the announced lineup of licensees as it stands at press time:

**SQ**  
Aiwa  
Columbia/Masterwork/Epic  
Connaught Equipment  
EMI/Capitol/Angel  
Emerson Radio  
Instruteck  
Lafayette Radio  
Major Electronics  
Metrotec  
Morse Electro Products  
Pacific Electronics  
Pilot Radio  
Radio Shack  
Realtone  
Sherwood  
Sony Corp.  
Soundesign  
Superscope/Marantz/Standard Radio  
Tele-Tone  
Vanguard Records

**Quadradisc**  
Hitachi  
JVC/Japan Victor  
Japan Polydor  
Matsushita/Panasonic  
Nippon Columbia/Dennon  
Onkyo  
RCA  
Sharp  
Toshiba

**Both**  
Harman-Kardon  
Pioneer  
Sanyo  
Trio/Kenwood

Although the picture changes from moment to moment and a third power, Sansui, seems to be waiting on the sidelines ready to pick up the pieces with its own matrix system, it appears from our vantage point that the main fighting still lies ahead.

**video  
topics**

## Magnavox Adds New Twist to TV

If you're fed up with television reruns—or first runs for that matter—and are wondering what to do with your expensive TV set, Magnavox thinks it has the answer: Odyssey. It's an electronic game-simulation center that allows you to play a dozen different games (seven more are available as options) on your TV screen. The system can be used with any set having at least an 18-inch screen. The Odyssey game kit includes Mylar transparency overlays (a separate one for each game) that fit over the TV screen, a master control unit, two player control units, twelve game cards, and an antenna-connection adapter for the TV set.

When you're ready to play you tune your set to Channels 3 or 4 and switch the adapter to the game position. The game shown in the photo is table tennis. The players are the larger squares on either side of the vertical bar, representing the net; the square near the net is the ball. As the ball moves across the screen (controlled by the master unit) each player moves his square to block it (using controls on his own unit). If he does so, it bounces back toward his opponent; if not, the ball goes out of bounds off the screen. The players can even apply English to their shots by proper use of the controls.

Gamesmen who find that both Channels 3 and 4 carry local broadcasts may suffer some interference in using

Odyssey, which can only be picked up on these two channels. Though the antenna/game switch is intended to block incoming TV signals when Odyssey is in use, internal wiring in the TV set still can pick up airborne transmissions from strong stations. The Magnavox engineering department suggests that any such interference can be minimized by tuning to the channel with the weaker of the two broadcast signals.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



# The end of the fidelity gap between cassette and open reel.

Our RS-275US brings the low-noise, wide-response performance of open reel to a cassette deck. Frequency response: 20-15 000 Hz. Signal-to-noise ratio: better than 45 dB. Those are numbers you've probably never seen before in cassette.

The biggest reason for our lower noise and wider response is also the smallest. Patented a Hot Pressed Ferrite head with one of the world's narrowest, most precise gaps. You get a 25% broader frequency response with ten times the life of conventional heads.

A separate fast-forward and rewind motor means we don't

have to spin wheels with our drive motor. The motor that drives the tape drives it directly. No belts to give you the slip. No gears to start fluttering and wowing. The speed is constant. So is the lack of noise. Our patented drive motor is DC and brushless. No AC hum. No brushes to spark up static.

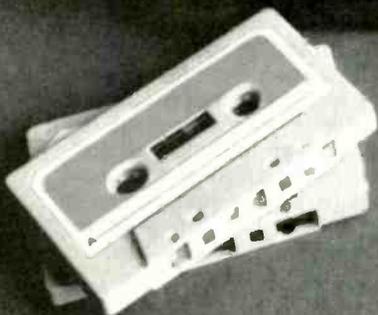
We're quiet in other ways, too. There's a special noise suppression circuit with its own switch. And a tape equalization switch for the newest low-noise super tapes.

Nobody else has all these low-noise, wide-response features in one great cassette deck

And that's just for starters.

You'll find solenoid push-button operation for electrical, not mechanical switching. A "memory rewind" button that pre-sets the tape to stop right where you want it to. Two big VU meters. Separate output volume level controls before the signal goes into your amplifier. Optional remote control. And a walnut base as part of the deal.

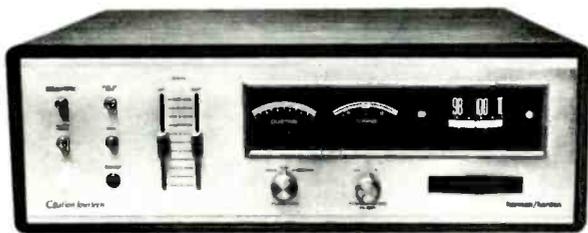
When you're ready to get serious about a stereo cassette deck, see your franchised Panasonic Hi-Fi dealer for the RS-275US. The one that gives you reel sound.



**Panasonic**  
Just slightly ahead of our time.

200 Park Ave., N. Y. 10017. For your nearest franchised Panasonic Hi-Fi dealer, call 800 631-971. In N. J., 800 962-2803. We say for the call.

# equipment in the news



## Two new Citations—both tuners

Harman-Kardon has added two tuners—one with and one without Dolby noise-reduction circuitry—to its Citation line. The multiplex circuit of each uses a phase locked-loop configuration for maximum stereo separation and minimum distortion in tuning. Also included in both are a quieting meter designed to aid in tuning for optimum signal-to-noise ratio instead of signal strength. A 400-Hz oscillator is built into both units as an aid in Dolby alignment. The Citation Fourteen (shown here), which includes the Dolby circuitry, retails at \$525; its non-Dolby mate, the Citation Fifteen, is priced at \$395.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## The nuclear age in record care

The use of atomic energy to clean records may sound like a classic case of overkill, but the Staticmaster Record Brush is described by Nuclear Products Co. as doing just that. The Staticmaster is described as containing a sealed polonium element that emits a shower of alpha particles to neutralize the static charge on the record surface, while the soft hairbrush itself removes the static-free dust. The Staticmaster, with a polonium cartridge guaranteed for one year, costs \$12.95; replacement cartridges are available at \$7.95.

CIRCLE 157 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## Teac extends Dolby line

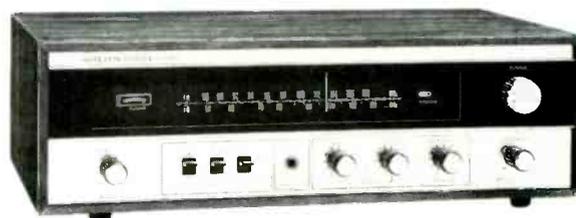
A new model, the AN-60, has joined the Teac Corp. of America line of Dolby noise-reduction units. The new unit can be used with stereo open-reel or cassette tape decks. Dolby-level calibration tapes are supplied in both open-reel and cassette form. At \$89.50, the AN-60 is unusually inexpensive for a separate Dolby unit.

CIRCLE 156 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

## Sherwood offers budget receiver

Priced at \$159.95, the S-7050 stereo FM/AM receiver from Sherwood Electronic Laboratories is designed for budget component systems. The S-7050 is rated for 36 watts total output (IHF), and 3.5-microvolt FM sensitivity. It has provision for two stereo pairs of speakers, tape recording and playback, aux input for eight-track or cassette playback units, and headphones. A walnut-grained wood case is included in the price.

CIRCLE 155 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



## Sony totable cassette recorder/radio

The Sony CF-350 AC/DC Cassette-Corder AM/FM radio combination from Superscope, Inc. offers a variety of entertainment possibilities in a completely portable format. It has a built-in condenser microphone and can record programs from its own radio. Features include a record-level/battery-strength indicator, automatic shutoff, FM AFC with defeat switch, Sonymatic automatic level control, auxiliary inputs, earphone, and built-in ferrite bar AM antenna. Designed to operate on AC, or car battery through an optional cigarette-lighter adapter, the CF-350 costs \$139.95 complete with accessories.

CIRCLE 158 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# Our new PL-12AC stereo turntable. Incomparable at \$99.95

Quality and versatility have their price. Now they cost less. For only \$99.95, including walnut base and dust cover, you can own the new Pioneer PL-12AC 2-speed stereo turntable.

At this low price no other turntable includes all these quality features: 4-pole belt-driven, hysteresis synchronous motor...

meticulously balanced tone arm... feather light tracking force... oiled damper cueing... 2" dynamically balanced die-cast platter... anti-skating control... ringed dust cover... walnut base... simplified operation... 33 1/3-45 rpm

speeds, and much more. See your franchised Pioneer dealer for an exciting demonstration. U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 178 Commerce Rd., Garfield, New Jersey 07072.

**PIONEER**  
when you want something better



# Our very remarkable crowd pleaser.

## The ADC 303AX.

Without a doubt, the most popular speaker we've ever made.

Time and again, enthusiastic owners have written to tell us how very pleased they were with the 303AX. Fantastic... outstanding... beautiful... and remarkable were among the more common-place accolades we received.

As for the experts, they expressed their pleasure in more measured phrases such as: superb transient response, excellent high frequency dispersion, exceptionally smooth frequency response and unusually free of coloration.

Obviously, a speaker like the ADC 303AX doesn't just happen.

It is the result of continually designing and re-designing. Measuring and re-measuring. Improving and then improving on the improvements. All with only one goal in mind...

To create a speaker system that produces a completely convincing illusion of reality.

And we believe that the key to this most desirable illusion is a speaker that has no characteristic sound of its own.

We've even coined an expression to describe this unique quality... we call it, "high transparency".

It's what makes listening to music with the ADC 303AX like listening back through the speaker to a live performance.

And it is this very same quality that has made our very remarkable crowd pleaser the choice of leading audio testing organizations.

Finally, a pleasing word about price. Thanks to steadily increasing demand and improved manufacturing techniques, we've been able to reduce the already low price of the very remarkable ADC 303AX to an irresistible \$90\*.

That could make it the most crowd pleasing buy in high fidelity today.

\*Other ADC high transparency speaker systems available from \$45 to \$450.



**Audio Dynamics Corporation**

Pickett District Road, New Milford, Connecticut 06776



## Unusual Features Abound in the BIC/Lux Receiver

**The Equipment:** BIC/Lux 71/3R, a stereo FM/AM receiver. Dimensions: 19 by 7 by 12½ inches. Price: \$550. Manufacturer: Lux Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: British Industries Co., Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

**Comment:** This is the first product we've examined in detail from among the premium units manufactured by Lux and now available here through the distributor to whom we owe American availability of several British (hence the company name) product lines—notably those of Garrard and Wharfedale. BIC is said to have played a significant role in tailoring present Garrard products to the needs of the American market, and apparently the company plans to continue this activist approach with the Lux models that it imports; initial samples of the 71/3R were withdrawn so that certain changes could be made at BIC's request, and the unit we tested represents the revised version.

To the left of the dial panel are four selector buttons: AM, FM, phono 1, phono 2. The series is continued on the panel below with aux 1 and aux 2. At the left end of the dial is the signal-strength meter; at the right end are the tuning knob and the controls for FM pretuning. When AM is selected only the AM tuning scale (white) and the signal-strength meter light up. For FM, the pretuning panel and the FM scale light up (in green), as well as the meter. When any station (pretuned or manual, FM or AM) is properly tuned, the word "center" lights up in red immediately below the signal-strength meter. Stereo reception lights a similar "stereo" indicator farther along in the same panel. When phono or aux buttons are pressed the dial goes dark but the appropriate indicator glows red at the bottom of the dial panel. Each preselector includes a small FM tuning dial and a two-element control; its outer ring acts as a tuning knob and its inner button switches in the pretuned station. On the bottom control the inner button selects manual tuning, while the ring can be turned to either "distant" (for full sensitivity) or "local" (allowing only maximum-quality signals to pass).

Below the aux selector buttons are stereo input and output phone jacks for use with an outboard tape recorder, and to their right are the tape-monitor switch and the mono/stereo mode switch. Then come the tone controls. Each consists of a pair of knobs, one selecting "turnover" frequency (three positions plus defeat) and the other is a continuous boost/cut control. The turnover calibration is in terms of the nominal frequencies at which 3 dB of boost or cut is achieved with the continuous control in a maximum position: 150, 300, or 600 Hz in the bass, and 1.5, 3, and 6 kHz in the treble. Next come on/off switches for high filter, low filter, and loudness compensation. At the right end of the panel are the volume control (with separate, friction-clutched sections for each channel so that it doubles as a balance control), on/off switches for main and remote speaker pairs, the main power switch, and a stereo headphone jack (which is live at all times).

The back panel is fairly conventional: screwdriver antenna connections (300-ohm FM lead, 75-ohm FM lead, AM), spring-loaded clips for the leads to two pairs of speakers, phono jacks for the low-level connections (tape out, tape in, phono 1, phono 2, aux 1, aux 2). Note that both phono inputs are intended for magnetic cartridges, but phono 2 is more sensitive and is appropriate for use with cartridges whose output is exceptionally low. (See accompanying data.) Below these jacks is a ground connection, and immediately below the antenna connections are three convenience AC outlets, one of which is switched automatically by the receiver.

Of these features, the tone controls probably contribute most to the luxurious "feel" of the unit. The turnover action is illustrated by the tone-control curves in the accompanying graph. In both bass and treble, the in-between setting of the turnover knobs (for "300 Hz" and "3 kHz" respectively) produces the tone-control action that most closely approaches that to be expected of conventional controls. Raising the bass turnover or lowering the treble turnover produces boost or cut (depending on the position of the tone-control knob itself).

### REPORT POLICY

Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Laboratories, Stamford, Connecticut, a division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., one of the nation's leading research organizations. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Manufacturers are not permitted to read reports in advance of publication and no report, or portion thereof, may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific samples tested; neither HIGH FIDELITY nor CBS Laboratories assumes responsibility for product performance or quality.

over a broad frequency range; lowering the bass turnover or raising that for the treble control produces action more like conventional filters, since it is largely restricted to the extreme frequencies. Treble and bass filters can of course be used in addition to these unusually flexible tone controls to further increase the range of options. If we have any criticism of the system, in fact, it is that the treble filter built into the 71/3R behaves almost identically to the maximum treble-cut setting for the 3-kHz turnover position—a redundancy in our view. The flexibility of the controls might have been still further improved by a steeper slope (that is, a sharper cut-off) in the filter circuit.

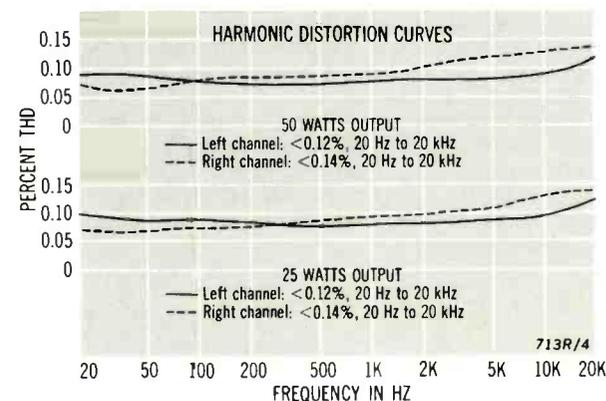
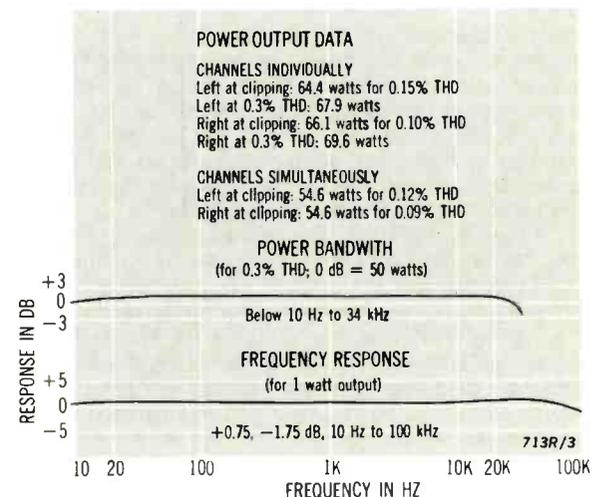
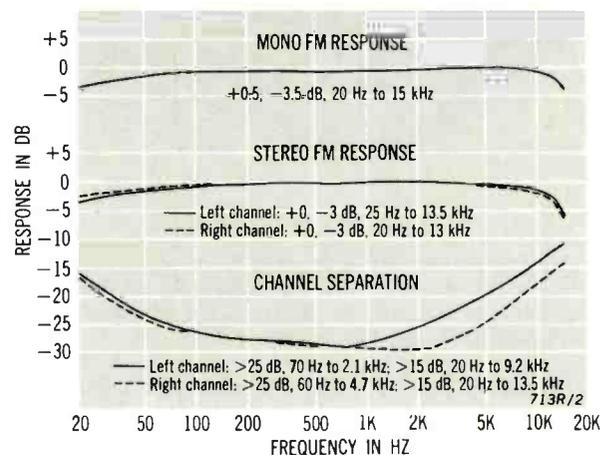
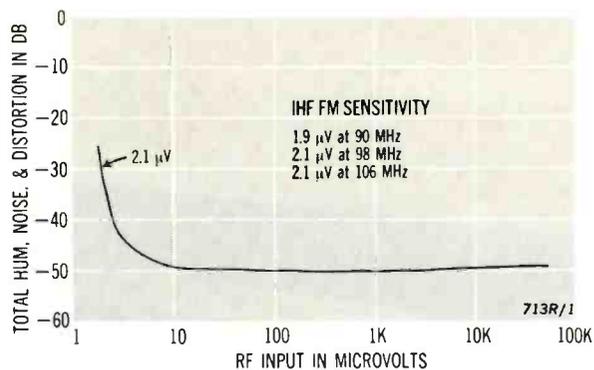
One common use of such a high filter barely applies to the 71/3R however: for noisy FM programs. This is because the built-in muting circuit of the receiver cannot be defeated and hence the unit will reproduce only those broadcasts that deliver signals strong enough to override the muting, which triggers somewhere between 1.5 and 2.0 microvolts. BIC itself avoids the word "muting" in this context because its circuit is more sophisticated than most and is designed, the company says, to be sensitive to distortion and tuning as well as to signal strength. Users with efficient antennas or in high signal-strength areas will notice little immediate difference, since the circuit's triggering point is at signal strengths normally associated with the threshold of barely adequate listening conditions; those who have developed a tolerance for noisy FM reception either because they live in fringe areas or because they like to "DX" (chase down elusive distant stations with their FM or AM gear) may be disappointed in that the 71/3R will not permit them the "luxury" of substandard reception. The muting circuit behaves similarly in AM reception.

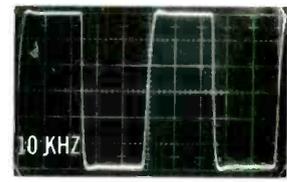
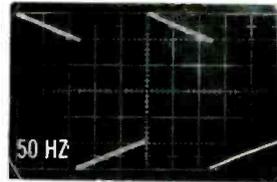
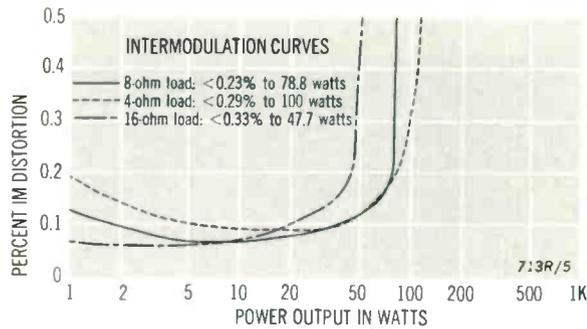
Above muting threshold values the tuner section's FM quieting curve descends steeply to 46.5 dB (maximum quieting for many inexpensive units) at only 4 microvolts. From there the descent is more gradual, reaching 49 dB or better from 7.5 microvolts on out to the limit of testing—an excellent mark. In other respects, the lab data on the FM section also are excellent, though without a defeat in the muting circuit CBS Labs was unable to test the unit for alternate-channel selectivity. In the Additional Data table, note that stereo figures for THD in FM reception are unusually close to those for mono reception, and even *better* than those for mono in several instances. Listening tests confirm these findings; the sound is clear and noise-free—on a par with that from first-rate separate FM tuners we have tested.

The amplifier section also came through the CBS Lab tests with excellent results. All distortion measurements—for both THD and IM—from the 1-watt output level to rated power (50 watts per channel) were below 0.15% except when measured into 16-ohm loads, where IM distortion reached that level just shy of 40 watts. (Amplifiers normally deliver less power—often considerably less—at 16 ohms than at 8 ohms, but few speakers today carry the higher impedance rating.) Even in measuring very low power levels (500 milliwatts) the THD measurements were below 0.75%, the rise in spurious output being due to noise factors rather than true harmonic distortion.

In sum, BIC and Lux have given us a unit that is powerful and luxurious—both in sound and in operation. Silky might be the word.

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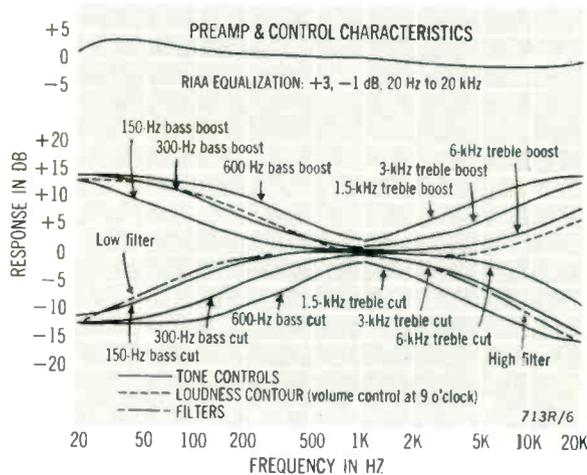




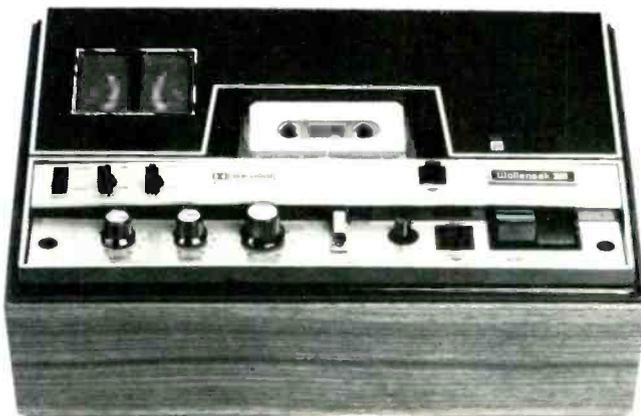
Square-wave response

**BIC/Lux 71/3R Receiver Additional Data**

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	1.5 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	(see text)		
S/N ratio	65 dB		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.30%	0.28%	0.33%
1 kHz	0.24%	0.24%	0.22%
10 kHz	0.80%	0.69%	0.72%
19-kHz pilot	better than		-57 dB
38-kHz subcarrier			-56 dB
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	53		
Input characteristics (for 50 watts output)			
	Sensitivity	S/N ratio	
phono 1	11.5 mV	61 dB	
phono 2	2.1 mV	62 dB	
aux 1	95 mV	75 dB	
aux 2	95 mV	74.5 dB	
tape monitor	92 mV	75.5 dB	



## Wollensak's Dolby Cassette Deck



**The Equipment:** Wollensak Model 4760, a stereo cassette deck with built-in Dolby circuitry in wood case. Dimensions: 13¼ by 9¼ by 4½ inches. Price: \$299.95 including dust cover. Manufacturer: Mincom Div., 3M Company, 3M Center, St. Paul, Minn. 55101.

**Comment:** The 4760 is Wollensak's entry in the high-quality Dolby sweepstakes, and as such it merits serious regard as an instrument on which top-quality tape recordings can be made. The solidly built unit is larger than most cassette decks and has rather unusual controls. Instead of the familiar "piano keys," Wollensak supplies an array of buttons, levers, and knobs that aid operation both by their differentiated shapes and by their ingenious interlocking design.

At the far left of the top plate is a dual VU meter (two pointers and scales, arranged head to head for easy simultaneous monitoring of both channels). To the right of the cassette well is the main on/off switch, which automatically releases the pause and the play control when it is turned off. Near it is the eject button. At the far left of the same panel are a mono/stereo input switch, a Dolby on/off switch, and a tape switch. In early samples this switch was labeled "high" and "std," suggesting its use for high-performance or "standard" ferric-oxide tapes. 3M has changed the marking to make plain that the high position is for chromium dioxide, while the standard position is for ferric oxide—specifically 3M's premium High Energy, with which the unit was tested in

the lab. The CrO<sub>2</sub> position, like that on some other decks, is designed to alter playback equalization as well as recording characteristics. Other controls on the top plate—all ranged across the front of the deck—are left and right input level controls, master recording gain control, fast-wind lever, recording interlock button, a latching pause control, and the main play and stop buttons.

In a well at the left side of the wooden case are the output level control, phone-jack pairs for input and output line connections, an 18-volt DC output to power Wollensak accessory mike preamps (there are no mike inputs as such on the 4760), and a button to trigger the test tone used in calibrating recording levels to Dolby standards. The 18-volt output is covered by a plastic cap when not in use. The actual recording calibration controls—like the playback calibration controls—are screwdriver adjustments accessible through holes at the bottom of the case. The playback adjustments are intended only for use in servicing the unit; the recording calibration controls (of which there are four: two channels for each of the two positions on the regular/CrO<sub>2</sub> switch) need be touched only if you switch tapes, and then only if the new tape produces a different output level for a given recording input level.

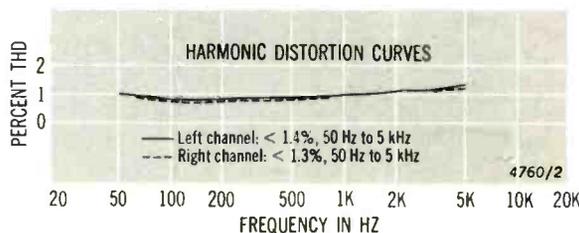
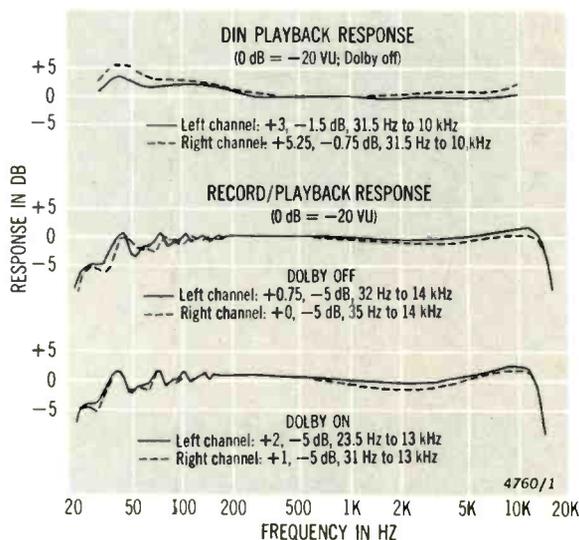
It should be noted that Scotch High Energy is but one tape in the premium ferric oxide group; others can be used on the 4760 with similar results. Lower-priced formulations, which are intended for use with lower bias, can be used too but at a noticeable expense in high-frequency response. This same approach is taken by competing manufacturers, who set the ferric-oxide position of their bias switches for one or another of the premium formulations so that the best possible results can be obtained whether chromium dioxide or ferric oxide is being used. If bias for ferric-oxide tapes were optimized for the so-called standard formulations, all high-quality recordings would have to be made with chromium dioxide.

A comparison of lab data shows that the Wollensak is in the same performance class as other top Dolby cassette recorders, and our use tests certainly confirm this conclusion. With the Dolby circuit on, and watching our signal levels on the unit's meters, we were able to make high-quality cassette recordings that must be judged the equal of those made on a good open-reel deck. They can stand direct A/B comparison with the original source whether FM, discs, or other tapes.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

### TEST REPORT REPRINTS

In response to numerous requests, most of our previously published test reports are now available in reprint form. An index to reports published during any one year appears in that year's December issue. Copies of these indexes are also available. To order, please write, asking for the report on a specific product (or products), or specific index (or indexes), and enclose 25 cents per report or index to cover handling and mailing. Address your request to High Fidelity Magazine, Test Report Reprints, Great Barrington, Massachusetts 01230. Please be sure to include your name, return address, and zip code.



### Wollensak 4760 Cassette Deck Additional Data

Speed accuracy	105 VAC: 0.60% fast
	120 VAC: 0.10% fast
	127 VAC: 0.11% fast
Wow and flutter (unweighted)	playback: 0.11%
	record/playback: 0.13%
Rewind time, C-60 cassette	42 sec.
Fast forward time, same cassette	44 sec.
S/N ratio (ref. 0 VU)	playback L ch: 54.5 dB R ch: 54.0 dB
	record/playback L ch: 52.0 dB R ch: 52.0 dB
Erasure (400 Hz at normal level)	50 dB
Crosstalk (at 400 Hz)	record left, playback right 46 dB
	record right, playback left 46 dB
Sensitivity (for 0-VU recording level)	line input L ch: 37 mV R ch: 37 mV
	Meter action (ref. DIN 0 VU) L ch: + 2.5 dB R ch: + 2.5 dB
	Dolby ref. level L ch: exact R ch: + 0.5 dB
IM distortion (record/play, -10 VU)	L ch: exact R ch: + 0.5 dB
	Maximum output (preamp or line, 0-VU) L ch: 0.66 V R ch: 0.66 V

## Dual's Mighty Middle Model

**The Equipment:** Dual Model 1218, a three-speed automatic record changer (usable also as a semiautomatic or manual turntable assembly). Dimensions: 13 by 11 inches (main chassis; requires 2¾ inches clearance below and approximately 5 inches clearance above chassis); wood base, 15¾ by 13¾ by 3½ inches. Price: \$155 including manual spindle, 45 adapter, and strobe disc; WB-12 base, \$10.95; DC-4 dust cover, \$12.95; DCB-5 base with dust cover, \$39.95. Manufacturer: Dual of West Germany; U.S. distributor: United Audio Products, Inc., 120 S. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553.

**Comment:** The 1218 is priced about midway between the premium Model 1219 (HF test report, Jan. 1970), and the "budget" Model 1215 (Jan. 1972), and it shares the features of both, although its performance puts it closer to the 1219.

The main chassis is the same size as that in the 1215 and the main operating controls grouped along the front are identical in all but some styling details. The arm and its controls, however, are basically those of the 1219. The only major difference is in the vertical-angle adjustment system. For playing records automatically, the 1219 raises the entire arm assembly to the median height of the record stack. The 1218 leaves the arm in the manual position, but adjusts the angle of the cartridge mount. One item is unique in the 1218: The platter itself, at 4 pounds, 5 ounces, is heavier than that of the 1215 and is more stylish in appearance.

Beginning at the front left, the controls include the vernier speed adjustment (whose range CBS Labs checked out as +4, -3% at 33 or 45 rpm, ±2% at 78), the three-position speed selector, the start/stop lever, and the three-position (7-, 10-, and 12-inch) record-size selector. To the right of the arm rest is the cueing lever. At the arm mount is the twin-gauge (one for spherical styli, one for ellipticals) antiskating control which, according to CBS lab measurements, applied antiskating forces that measured very close to theoretically exact values. At the arm pivot is an accurate stylus-force gauge, which showed no measurable departure from the indicated values to beyond 4 grams, and was only 0.1 gram high when set to 5 grams. A small knob in the cartridge housing selects either the M (manual) or S (stack) vertical-angle alignments. In the S position the lab found it produced a shift of some 2 degrees in the cartridge mount, aligning the cartridge for optimum position in playing the fourth record in a stack. The 1218 is designed to hold up to six records. Near the arm rest is a small hole in the chassis through which the arm set-down-position screw may be reached for adjustment; near the antiskating dial is a cueing-height adjustment screw; on the back of the arm pivot assembly is a small setscrew to adjust the height of the arm during the changing cycle. In our sample all of these adjustments were found to have been accurately preset on arrival.

Setup is relatively simple. The most complex part is the installation of the cartridge on the mounting platform that holds it in place within the shell. Once the correct screws and spacers have been selected (Dual supplies quite a variety) the cartridge is aligned for height and overhang position by using a plastic gauge (also supplied) and the screws tightened. Then the platform is locked into the shell; the finger-hold on the shell



doubles as a latch to hold the platform in place. The counterweight slips into place at the back of the arm and is held there by a setscrew near the arm pivot. Turning the counterweight sets it for precise balance; then tracking force and antiskating are simply dialed on the respective gauges and you're ready to go.

The automatic-change spindle is similar to that on other Duals: It supports the stack while gently lowering the bottom record by what Dual calls "elevator action." With the manual spindle (or the large-hole adapter for 45s) in place, the automatic controls still work. Pressing the start lever moves the arm over the record and play begins automatically. It also ends automatically—with the arm returning to its rest—in any mode of play. When the arm is picked up and moved toward the record for manual cueing the motor starts automatically. The cueing lever may be used to lower the arm or to interrupt play and resume later at the same point. The cueing system is damped in ascent as well as descent, preventing the arm from bouncing at the top of the up stroke unless the lever is handled with extreme roughness. As a result, the system's ability to return to the same groove is excellent in normal handling.

The 1218's excellence comes through in many more important ways, however. In testing speed accuracy, with the vernier set for exact performance at 33 rpm with line current at 120 volts, no error could be measured at any voltage for either 33 or 78 rpm. At 45 rpm, with all three test voltages (105, 120, and 127 volts), the speed was absolutely consistent at 0.1% fast—a negligible error (and one that can be corrected by a slight touchup on the vernier of course). Rumble, measured by the CBS-ARLL standard, is 58 dB—an excellent figure one would expect of a premium-model turntable. Average flutter was measured at 0.05% unweighted, 0.07% with the new ANSI weighting—also excellent. Arm friction in both lateral and vertical planes proved to be immeasurably low, while the stylus force necessary for changer tripping was a mere 0.1 gram.

The tone arm weights are decoupled from the main body of the arm by a compliant rubber member; this feature, combined with the double bearings of the gimbal arm pivot, made the lab's measurement of arm resonance more complex than usual, but it also apparently helps reduce resonant effects. Suffice it to say that after measuring the arm (with a Shure V-15 Type II cartridge) in four different planes (vertically, laterally, and perpendicularly to each groove wall) the most extreme peak the lab could find was a 9-dB rise at 6 Hz in the lateral plane.

Whether used as a changer or as a manual the 1218 behaved flawlessly for us. Considering this performance plus the superior measurements made in the lab, there seems no doubt that the Dual 1218 will attract many buyers. Though it costs \$30 less, the 1218 proves to be in the same league as the 1219.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

by Robert Long

# Open Reel Is Still Special

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE a dyed-in-the-wool open-reel fan to appreciate that, as a recording medium, it will do things no other format can. I'm not knocking cassettes (of which I consume a good many these days) or even eight-track cartridges. Both are high fidelity today, and both are convenient ways of playing music in the home—though the less said about the practical problems of recording onto cartridges the better. But open reel is still the Rolls-Royce of recording as far as I'm concerned because it will take so many special applications in its stride.

We got some inkling of how many special functions are demanded of open reel when we ran our tape-composition contest in 1969. The response was fantastic—not only because of the number of readers who submitted entries, but because of the complexity and ingenuity of the techniques many entrants applied. Well, we're not all tape composers—or perhaps constructionists might be a better word, since many of the “pieces” were, like a ten-year-old's tree house, constructed of (sonic) jetsam rather than composed in the classical sense—but the basic techniques of tape composition are the same as those for many other special purposes.

One anecdote may illustrate how important those purposes are to today's open-reel users. During a visit to a major manufacturer of consumer and professional tape products about the time that the contest entries were beginning to roll in, I was shown a design for a deck that would make possible not only quadraphonic recording and playback (then a brand-new concept as far as consumer products were concerned) but synchronous multitrack over-dubbing as well. The product manager explained that rock groups in particular seemed to want a recorder that, within the confines of regular quarter-track, quarter-inch tape, would come as close as possible to the professional multitrack equipment that they saw in the recording studios and used to create the multilayered effects that were (and are) so much a part of rock. A high-quality deck that would also be appropriate for home quadraphonics, he reasoned, might be sufficiently attractive to a wide enough spectrum of potential

users to make its way in the marketplace, despite a necessarily high price—perhaps around \$1,000. What did I think?

The answer had to be sheer speculation, of course. It was well known that electronic equipment—even extremely expensive instrument amplifiers and speakers and similar public-address gear—was selling at a tremendous rate. A sure-fire conversation maker in the industry was: Where are these kids getting all the money? The concept of the product was exciting: aside from its multitrack capability the design included a version of the closed-loop drive system, which until that time had been reserved for mastering and instrumentation equipment. But how many units could be sold? I don't remember what my guess was, and I have no idea whether it influenced the product manager's thinking. Whatever the reason, the recorder never appeared on the market.

Decks of similar description have appeared more recently however. In talking to Sony/Superscope about one of them, the over-\$1,500 TC-854-4S, I was informed that the company now sells more units in a month than it had originally expected to sell per year when the model was introduced. That's pretty impressive, and it seems to confirm that there are plenty of potential buyers whose interest in tape recording goes far beyond anything today's cassette models can provide.

## A Den of Uniquity

Before discussing the factors that make open-reel recording unique, let me take up one way in which it is not: over-all sound quality. Until recently no other home recording medium could match open reel. Recent improvements, particularly in cassettes (see our multifaceted exploration of the subject in the March 1972 issue), have made it possible to capture virtually identical sound on the best of the “convenience” tapes. That isn't to say that you will always *get* identical sound; results depend to some extent on the nature of the program material

and on careful choice of levels. Open-reel recording still has more headroom (that is, it will cope with overload problems with more ease) and a flatter frequency response into the extreme frequencies (where little useful program information exists in any event). So any discussion of the sonic limitations of one format versus another is bound to raise a number of fairly moot points today, and to drag on almost endlessly if the proponents of competing systems wax energetic in their argument. Suffice it to say that open-reel recorders have lost their unique sonic position, if not their exclusive claim to sonic excellence.

For truly unique features we must look elsewhere—at the head configuration, for one thing. The cassette and cartridge fields are only just beginning a somewhat tentative exploration of the advantages to be gained from separate playback and recording head gaps: separate heads have been all but mandatory on the better open-reel recorders since the beginning. They make it possible to tailor head gaps to a single use, rather than compromise between the narrow gap that is optimum for high-frequency playback response and the somewhat wider gap that is desirable to prevent saturation in the record head. (Special head designs—crossfield heads and the recent “focused-gap” heads—seek to optimize performance in a way that will bypass or solve some of the technical problems involved.) But the big advantages of a separate playback head lie in the special functions that they make possible.

“Monitoring” is basic to these functions, and in fact the separate playback head often is called a monitor head for this reason. It allows you to listen to the playback from the tape even while it is being recorded. An experienced recordist, who knows just how deceptive meter readings can be on certain types of program material, will double-check his levels by listening via the monitor head. Some sounds can pin his meters before audible distortion will result, so signal levels (and therefore the signal-to-noise ratio) can be increased by turning up the recording level; other sounds (bells, for example) contain extreme transients that are too brief for the meter to register, and will produce severe distortion if recorded at too high a level.

Of course the limiting regularly employed by broadcasters, and even by commercial record manufacturers, will clip off the extreme peaks, so care in setting levels is of most importance in making live recordings. But the monitor head also opens up other vistas to the armchair recordist—features like sound-on-sound recordings and, more particularly, tape echo. Both rely on signals fed back from a playback head while the recording is in process. Though I can't pretend to think much of the—to me—ersatz sound of tape echo, sound-on-sound is a feature with which you can have a great deal of fun.

Manufacturers are somewhat inconsistent in their use of this term or its sidekick: sound-with-

sound. Sound-on-sound (also sometimes called multiplay, particularly by Europeans) is a process by which a previously recorded sound is picked up from the tape via the playback head, mixed with a new source signal, and the mixture recorded onto the second track of the stereo pair. On a stereo recorder this end product, therefore, is a mixed mono track. In sound-with-sound recording, on the other hand, you simply listen to the first recording while you're making the second on the other track of the stereo pair. To hear the combined result, you play back both simultaneously in stereo. If the recorder has a combined record/play head rather than separate heads the synchronization will be perfect: with separate heads it won't, though some manufacturers seem to consider the time lag insignificant and list their monitor-head decks for the sound-with-sound feature.

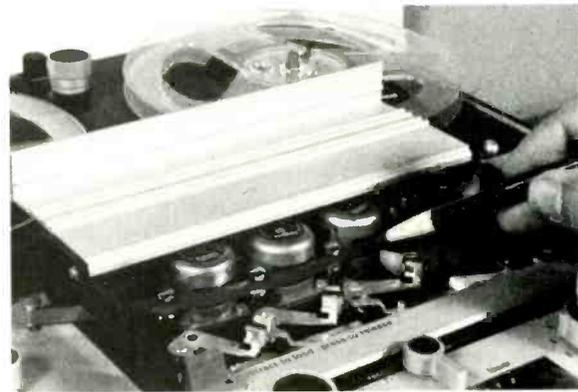
### **Making Like a Pro**

The *ne plus ultra* of this kind of recording is of course the recorder capable of multitrack overdubbing—the sort I referred to earlier. Its special features (aside from its quadrasonic capability) are embodied in switching that can convert the recording head to use as a playback head and will make the conversion in each of the four channels independently of the other three. The conversion itself makes both sound-on-sound and sound-with-sound operation possible with perfect synchronism, and with stereo (or better) results in either case; the four-track heads extend these abilities to an almost endless series of options whose end product may be anything from Les-Paul-and-Mary-Ford mono to discrete quadrasonics.

If you haven't had a chance to play with one of these luxurious units you may be hard put to visualize just what's involved, so let's try on an imaginary situation for size. We want to record a jazzed-up version of a Bach three-part invention, which consists basically of three interwoven melodic lines. We begin with the bass line, using piano, Fender bass, and drums—laying in the foundation, so to speak. Let's record them in stereo (drums on the right, bass on the left, piano in the middle) and arbitrarily place them on Tracks 1 and 2. Now let's assign the middle line of the music to a voice (maybe the pianist's) and the top line to the bass man, now playing acoustic guitar. We can set it up so that the voice is on the middle right, the guitar on the middle left—again recording in stereo. But since we're going to need extra tracks to add a background chorus as the last step, we mix this second recording in with the first.

To do this, we set Tracks 1 and 2 for playback, give the vocalist and the guitarist stereo headphones, and let them sing and play along with the previous recording. The playback from Tracks 1

Physical tape editing—a process well-nigh impossible in other tape formats—is a specialty of the semipro open-reel decks. Tape is carefully cued to edit point and the position of playback head gap marked on tape backing (two photographs on this page). Diagonal cut is made just ahead of marked edit point. (A cut straight across the tape tends to produce a noisy splice.) Tape ends are carefully aligned in splicer and splicing tape applied to the juncture (lower left and upper right photos, next page). Narrow splicing tape is used here; precut splicing patches may be used similarly. Wide splicing tape must be trimmed once firm connection is made. Finished splice should exhibit perfect meeting of tape ends, and splicing tape should not hang over edges of recording tape. If it does it can stick to adjacent tape layers in the reel and will foul the deck's heads with adhesive.



and 2 is mixed with the new signals (mixing left with left and right with right of course) and the mixtures recorded on Tracks 3 and 4. The original recordings on Tracks 1 and 2 can now be erased and reused. But where do we get our "chorus" from with only three musicians? By recording them twice, on the two free tracks.

To keep the chorus perfectly synchronized with the previous recording, Tracks 3 and 4 must be monitored (again via headphones) but from the *recording* head instead of the playback head this time, so that the head gaps for the monitored signal are directly in line with those making the new recording. This mode of operation usually is called Sel-Sync—Ampex's trade name for the process, though each manufacturer has his own term. Teac calls it Simul-sync; Sony/Superscope uses the term Syncro Trak. First we have our three voices sing (or croon or hum or whatever) onto Track 1. Then we rewind and repeat the process on Track 2. The second recording won't be identical to the first, so the effect will be that of a six-man chorus.

There will be fluffs and false starts and other imperfections as we go along of course. But if we repeat each step in this operation until we get it right, the end product should be what we want. At no point do we destroy a previous "layer" in the recording unless it's safely stored on another track in final form, so we lose nothing but time in making retakes.

In playback we can assign any track to any speaker in a quadraphonic system. The logical arrangement might be Tracks 1 and 2 (the chorus) in the back speakers, Tracks 3 and 4 (the stereo recording of all but the chorus) in the front speakers. We can also make a stereo mixdown, which ideally would require a mixer but could be fudged by combining signals through Y connectors.

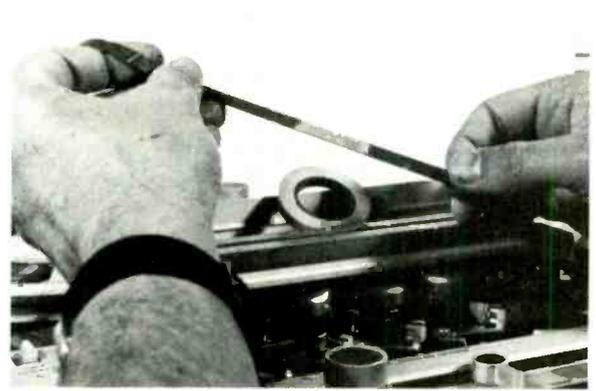
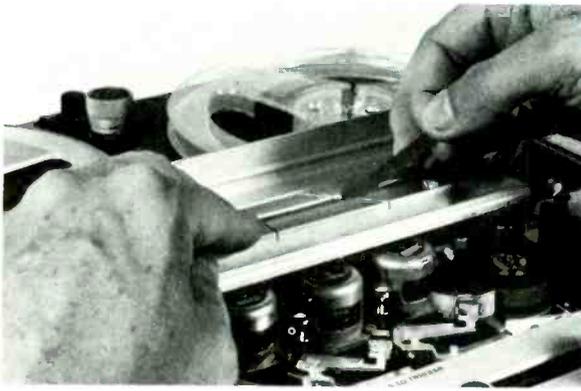
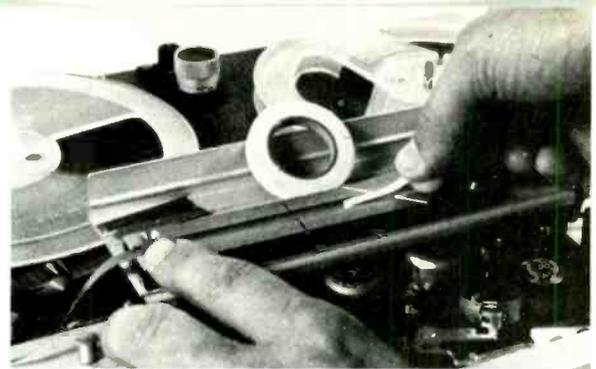
Complicated? With a little imagination you can think up ways of using the equipment that are even more complicated. That's part of the excitement of this sort of recording.

### And Don't Forget Editing

A representative of one major open-reel manufacturer has told me that market studies indicate his customers aren't interested in physically editing their tapes. I don't doubt his information, but I regret it. Tape editing can accomplish purposes that are otherwise impossible, and it can be a great deal of fun once you get the hang of it. In the days when tape recording at home was relatively new (to us) I used to con a forbearing friend into recording two or three anecdotes. Cross-editing of the stories usually could be counted on to provide some hilarious results—at least from our point of view. I remember one time. . . well, that's not for print.

If you do plan to edit tapes, you should choose your recorder carefully. You will need a model that permits the tape to be stopped without cutting off the sound from the playback head either electrically or by forcing the tape away from the head with tape lifters. This is because the key operation in a successful edit is the marking of the edit point, "rocking" the tape back and forth past the playback head until a precise syllable or transient is located. The sounds that issue from your loudspeakers during this cueing operation can be ungodly; if you have neighbors with tender sensibilities, I'd suggest the use of earphones.

For some types of editing, a really good pause control is sufficient, however. I've restored 78-rpm albums to near-seamless continuity that way, for example, and the technique can be applied equally



well to LPs. The ability to cue the tape also is a big advantage in this type of editing, though you can get by with the pause control. If you are using a model with separate playback and recording heads, you will need to back up the tape until the cue point is opposite the recording—instead of the playback—head. (At high transport speeds this may not be necessary in many cases because the time lag between heads is short; I copy most 78s at  $3\frac{3}{4}$  ips.)

The next step is to establish the cue for releasing the pause control at the beginning of the next record side. The surface noise in almost any disc contains irregularities that will help. Let's say there are two sharp ticks, then a revolution and a half of quiet before the music begins. Listen for the ticks, count one revolution, and release the pause. A really first-rate pause control will have the machine up to speed by the time the music comes in, but this technique does take a little practice.

Except for the desirable audible cueing feature, the technique can be applied equally well in cassette equipment, of course. But if you're copying longer works—operas in particular—cassettes give you far less leeway in positioning the recording on the tape. Wagner lovers will appreciate this point in particular, since the longest available cassette-side timing is 60 minutes and many an act in Wagner's operas runs longer. Open-reel tapes offer just about any imaginable timing option.

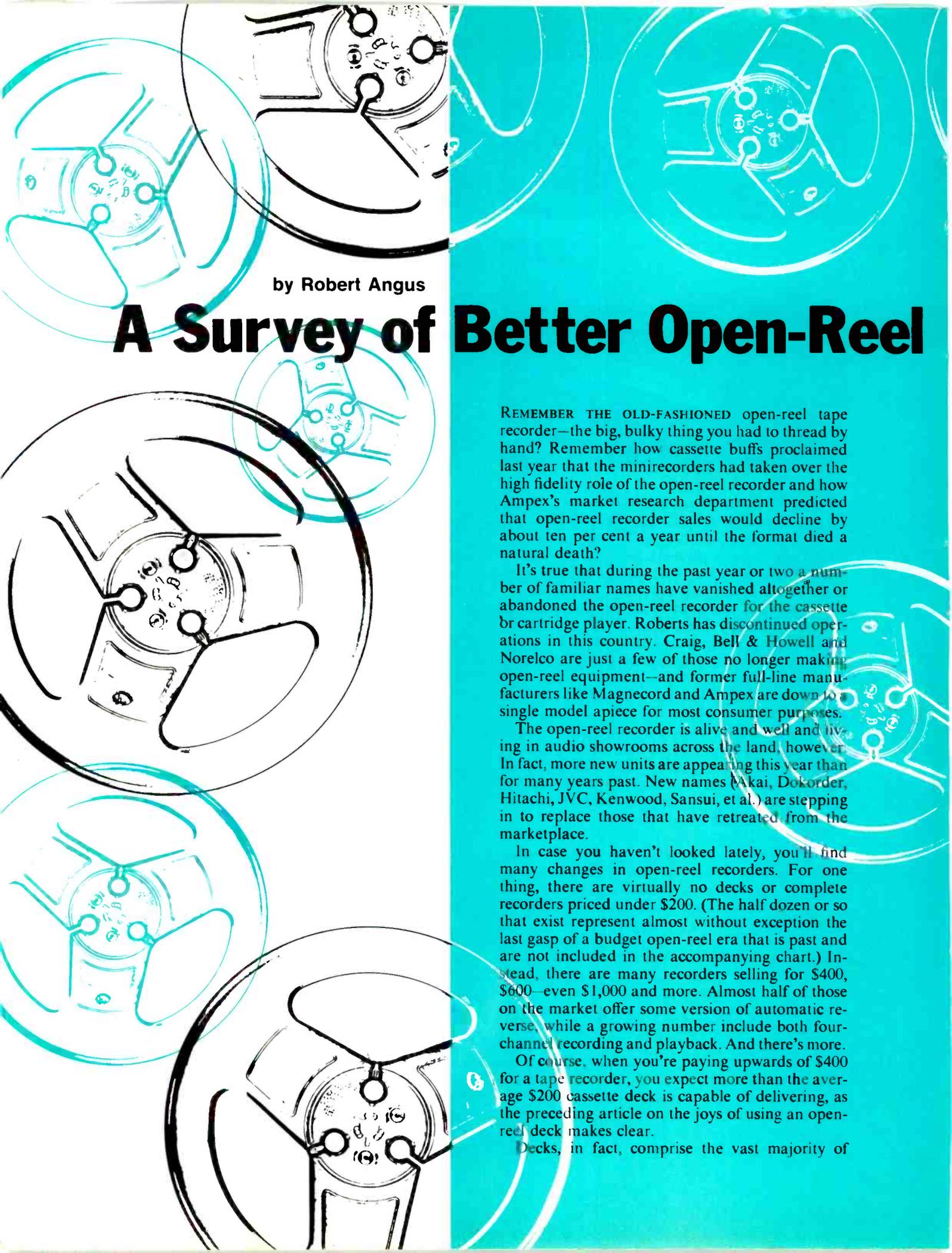
The Wagnerite probably won't want to extend continuous running time by way of automatic reverse because there always is some hiatus (however slight) in the music while the transport switches directions. But for some types of music it's an attractive feature, and one that's generally more attractive in open reel than in cassettes. I say this because the few reversing cassette mechanisms I've seen so far will reverse automatically only at the end of the

cassette; most bidirectional open-reel units—whatever their triggering system for the direction change—can be made to reverse at any point in the tape you choose. You don't have to wait for the tape to run out (or press a button) before picking up the music where you left off at the end of Side 1.

### The Urge Behind It All

I could go on: what Dolby can do for open reel; the fun (and practical advantages for the serious musician) to be derived from a variable speed control; the superiority of big, well-marked VU meters; the silky feel of solenoid controls and the special applications (including remote control and automatic, timer-triggered off-the-air recording when you're not home) they make possible; the flexibility and ease of operation that come with a full range of separate input and output level (and mixing) controls, and so on. But lurking in the background of all these considerations is one that, I suspect, makes the whole somewhat greater than the sum of its parts for many users.

I'm talking about the heft and the glamour that the open-reel equipment has by contrast to the convenience formats. For some users it might be called conspicuous consumption; for others it's a question of playing at being a studio engineer; for still others the appeal lies in a great piece of hardware, admired for its own sake. But shallow though these reasons sound (and from the standpoint of someone devoted to cassette recording they're no reasons at all), they are the stuff that real enjoyment is made of. And dreams. Even if you covet a \$3,000 studio job a \$300 open-reel deck can be an open invitation to adventure. That's what makes it really special. ●



by Robert Angus

# A Survey of Better Open-Reel

REMEMBER THE OLD-FASHIONED open-reel tape recorder—the big, bulky thing you had to thread by hand? Remember how cassette buffs proclaimed last year that the minirecorders had taken over the high fidelity role of the open-reel recorder and how Ampex's market research department predicted that open-reel recorder sales would decline by about ten per cent a year until the format died a natural death?

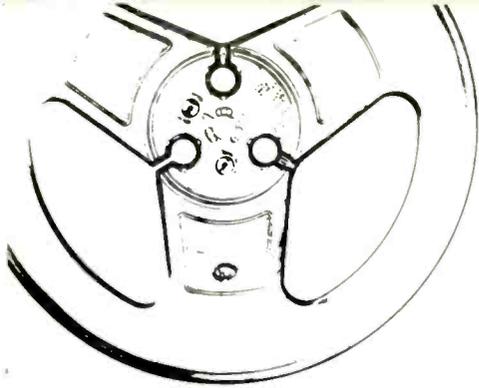
It's true that during the past year or two a number of familiar names have vanished altogether or abandoned the open-reel recorder for the cassette or cartridge player. Roberts has discontinued operations in this country. Craig, Bell & Howell and Norelco are just a few of those no longer making open-reel equipment—and former full-line manufacturers like Magnecord and Ampex are down to a single model apiece for most consumer purposes.

The open-reel recorder is alive and well and living in audio showrooms across the land, however. In fact, more new units are appearing this year than for many years past. New names (Akai, Dokorder, Hitachi, JVC, Kenwood, Sansui, et al.) are stepping in to replace those that have retreated from the marketplace.

In case you haven't looked lately, you'll find many changes in open-reel recorders. For one thing, there are virtually no decks or complete recorders priced under \$200. (The half dozen or so that exist represent almost without exception the last gasp of a budget open-reel era that is past and are not included in the accompanying chart.) Instead, there are many recorders selling for \$400, \$600—even \$1,000 and more. Almost half of those on the market offer some version of automatic reverse, while a growing number include both four-channel recording and playback. And there's more.

Of course, when you're paying upwards of \$400 for a tape recorder, you expect more than the average \$200 cassette deck is capable of delivering, as the preceding article on the joys of using an open-reel deck makes clear.

Decks, in fact, comprise the vast majority of



# Tape Recorders

open-reel offerings. Of some eighty-seven models listed here only about ten per cent include amplifiers and loudspeakers. In addition another fifteen per cent of the models are available either as decks or as complete recorders. When you consider that only two years ago it was possible to buy a quarter-track stereo recorder with monitor amplifiers (albeit very small ones) and detachable speakers (hardly of high fidelity quality) for \$179.95, you can see just how the times are changing.

The deck is popular because it can be installed as part of a component system that may also contain a cassette deck. The portable open-reel recorder has given way to the more compact, more convenient, lighter cassette models. Besides, when used with a good microphone most of the better cassette portables can match or beat the fidelity of the portable open-reel models of years gone by—at least in terms of recording.

Improving both the fidelity and the durability of the new equipment are such developments as hot-pressed ferrite and glass recording and playback heads. These heads are much harder than the older laminated types, which means both that they last longer and that they can be produced to much more critical tolerances. An extremely narrow gap in the record head means a higher fidelity, brighter-sounding recording. It's now possible to manufacture a head with a gap width of only one micron for example. Originally developed for video recorders, these heads now are being used on some of the better open-reel recorders and cassette decks.

The open-reel customer has cassette technology to thank for the growing number of open-reel decks with bias-adjustment switches to permit him to alternate between standard iron-oxide tapes and low-noise, high-density formulations—or between either of these and chromium-dioxide tape. While tape manufacturers never could agree on an exact bias current that would optimize performance with their (or anybody else's) tape, bias requirements generally fell into the same ball park. The introduction by 3M of Scotch 201 tape, and later TDK's SD

and Du Pont's Crolyn, changed all that. Today a recordist who likes to experiment with a variety of tapes finds himself making frequent bias adjustments; for him there are special aids to bias adjustment built into decks by such manufacturers as Ferrograph, Kenwood, and TapeSonic.

A glance at our chart will show an impressive number of decks incorporating automatic reverse, ranging in price from about \$250 to \$2,000. Before you buy, however, it pays to read the fine print to see just what reverses automatically. In some less-expensive models, for example, the recorder will continue playing after reversing itself; but if it's in the record mode, it switches into play for the return trip. In the case of quadraphonic models, automatic reverse usually applies only to two-channel playback or record. (After all, since all four-channel tracks are recorded in the same direction, there's no need to hear them backwards.)

Speaking of quadraphonics, remarkably few four-channel open-reel models have been introduced. Of the twenty now on the market, about half are at least a year old. There are, in fact, almost as many combination recorders (open reel in combination with eight track, cassette, or both on a single chassis) as there are new quadraphonic open-reel models. Why? "Because the repertoire of four-channel prerecorded tapes has not developed nearly as fast as we hoped it would," says Arne Berg of Teac, one of the first to introduce a quadraphonic deck. Berg points out that unless you have access to a live musical ensemble, you're not likely to get much use from the recording capability on a quadraphonic deck, either. There have been some experimental FM broadcasts of discrete-quadraphonic programs, but the necessary receiving equipment is not generally available and the experimenting stations are few and far between. Berg acknowledged that a number of FM stations around the country are transmitting matrixed quadraphonics (Sansui QS, Electro-Voice Stereo-4, or CBS SQ), "but it's possible to record these on your two-channel recorder, then decode the two-channel tape when you play it. There's no point in recording a matrixed signal on four-channel equipment." Milt Phillipson of Akai agrees. But both executives are quick to point to the superior sound of open-reel quadraphonics with respect to the current rivals. "The hiss of an open-reel tape is a fraction of that from even the best cartridge playback deck," Phillipson says, and both note the obvious advantages in channel separation of discrete tape over matrixed records.

Nonetheless, Akai offers a combination open-reel/cartridge unit that permits the user to record or play back four channels from either source, or to record from one onto the other. It's just one of a number of combination units offered by Akai and Concord in a field Phillipson expects to grow rap-

# Open-Reel Recorders

Manufacturer	Model	Mono, stereo, quadr.	No. of tracks	No. of speeds	Top speed (ips)	Max. reel size (inches)	No. of heads	Monitor head	
Akai	M-11D	S	4	2	7½	7	3		
	X-165D	S	4	3	7½/15	7	3		
	GX-220D	S	4	3	7½	7	3	•	
	GX-280D	S	4	2	7½	7	3	•	
	280D-SS	Q	4	2	7½	7	4	•	
	GX-365D	S	4	4	15	7	3	•	
	GX-370D	S	4	4	15	7	3	•	
	GX-400D	S/M	4/2/1	4	15	10½	4	•	
	GX-700D	S	4	3	7½/15	7	3	•	
	1721W	S	4	3	7½	7	2		
	1730D-SS	Q	4	2	7½	7	3		
	1800D-SS	Q	4	2	7½	7	3		
	X-1800SD	S	4	2	7½	7	3		
	X-1810D	S	4	2	7½	7	3		
	GX-1900	S	4	2	7½	7	2		
	X-2000SD	S	4	3	7½	7	3		
	U-4000DS	S	4	3	7½	7	3	•	
	4400D	Q	4	3	7½	7	3	•	
	Ampex	AX-300	S	4	3	7½	7	6	•
	Astrocom	407A	S	4	2	7½	7	4	•
711		Q	4	2	15	10½	4		
Crown International	CX-700 Series	S/M/Q	2/4	3	7½	10½	3	•	
	SX-700 Series	S/M	2/4	2	7½/15	10½	3	•	
	CX-800 Series	S/Q	2/4	3	15	10½	3	•	
Dokorder			Several new models expected; details N/A.						
Ferrograph (Elpa)	Series 7	S/M	4/2	3	7½	8¼	3	•	
Hitachi	TRQ-770D	S	4	3	7½	7	3		
JVC	1224	S	4	3	7½	7	3		
	1400	Q	4	2	7½	7	3	•	
Kenwood	KW-4077	S	4	3	7½	7	3		
	KW-5066	S	4	3	7½	7	4	•	
	KW-8077	S	4	2	7½	7	6	•	
Magnavox			Several new models expected; details N/A.						
Nagra	IV Series	S/M	1/2	3	15	7	3/4	•	
Otari	MX-7000 Series	S/Q	2/4	3	15	10½	3	•	
Panasonic	RS-1030US	S	2/4	2	15	10½	4	•	
	RS-714US	S	4	2	7½	7	3	•	
	RS-715US	S	4	2	7½	7	4	•	
	RS-740US	Q	4	2	7½	7	3	•	
	RS-736US	S	4	3	15	7	3	•	
Pioneer	T-6100	S	4	2	7½	7	3		
	T-6600	S	4	2	7½	7	4		
	QT-6600	Q	4	2	7½	7	5		
	T-8800	S	4	2	7½	7	4	•	

S/S - Overdub features (see text)  
 SW - Switch  
 R/C - Remote control unit

W/Ch - Watts per channel  
 ALC - Automatic level control  
 N/A - Not available at press time

Pb - Playback  
 Auto - Automatic  
 Rec - Recording

# Over \$200

Auto reverse		Pause	No. of motors	Remarks	Approx. price (\$)
play	record				
•		•	1		340
		•	1	Crossfield head	240
•		•	3	Auto shutoff; S/S; bias sw; also with amp, spkrs	400
•		•	3	Auto shutoff; S/S; bias sw; optional R/C	500
•		•	3	Auto shutoff; S/S; bias sw	N/A
•		•	3	ALC; bias sw; auto shutoff; optional R/C; also with amp, spkrs	560
•	•	•	3	ALC; bias sw; auto shutoff	N/A
•	•	•	3	Replaceable heads (quarter-track or half-track); electric speed sw	800
•	•	•	3		700
		•	1	Includes 8-w/ch amp, spkrs; tape sw; S/S	290
		•	1	Avail with 10-w/ch amp, spkrs (1730-SS, \$380)	350
		•	1	Comb open-reel/cartridge	550
		•	1	Comb open-reel/cartridge; crossfield head	430
•		•	1	Comb open-reel/cartridge; crossfield head; electric speed sw	460
		•	1	Comb open-reel/cassette; crossfield head; electric speed sw; amp, spkrs	490
		•	1	Comb open-reel/cartridge; crossfield head	600
		•	1	S/S; mixing	230
		•	1	Includes amp, spkrs; can be rack mounted	250
•	•		3	Solenoid operation; bias adjust; variable noise filt; opt R/C; logic	600
•			3	Solenoid controls; logic	460
•			3	Solenoid controls; logic	2,000
			3	Numerous options; also available as players	995-2,300
			3	Numerous options	995-1,895
			3	Numerous options	1,170-2,880
					400-900
		•	3	Optional amp, spkrs; optional Dolby; bias adjust	650-850
•	•	•	1	ALC; S/S	260
•	•	•	1	Includes 4½-w/ch amp, speakers; S/S	400
		•	1	Bias adjust	400
•		•	1	Auto shutoff; remote pause control	300
		•	1	Bias adjust; high-speed erase; S/S; echo; noise filter	260
•	•		3	Optional R/C; mixing; bias adjust; S/S; echo	560
			1	Bat. powered; ALC; mixing; 5-in. max. reel with cover closed; many options	1,430-1,855
			3	Echo; built-in oscillators; S/S	1,980
		•	3	Mixing; bias sw; auto shutoff; optional R/C; quadr pb only	850
			3	Auto shutoff; solenoid operation; optional R/C; S/S	500
•			3	Bias sw; S/S	550
		•	1	Bias sw; mixing; S/S	450
		•	1	Bias sw; mixing; S/S; noise reduction; echo; auto stop	330
•		•	1	Auto shutoff	250
•	•	•	1	Auto shutoff	300
•	•	•	1	Auto reverse in stereo and mono only	600
•	•	•	2	Bias sw; S/S; auto shutoff; echo; mixing	550

Logic - Automatic prevention of improper operation sequencing  
 Comb - Combination unit (data refer only to open-reel section)

# Open-Reel Recorders Over \$200 *Continued*

Manufacturer	Model	Mono, stereo, quadr.	No. of tracks	No. of speeds	Top speed (ips)	Max. reel size (inches)	No. of heads	Monitor head
Revox	A-77	S/Q	4/2	2	7½/15	10½	3	•
Sansui	SD-7000	S	4	2	7½	7	4	•
Sony/Superscope	252	S	4	2	7½	7	2	
	277-4	Q	4	3	7½	7	2	
	353	S	4	3	7½	7	3	•
	366	S/Q	4	3/2	7½	7	3	•
	440	S	4	3	7½	7	3	•
	580	S	4	3	7½	7	3	•
	630	S	4	3	7½	7	3	•
	640	S	4	2	7½	7	3	•
	650	S	4/2	2	7½	7	3	•
	770-4	S	4/2	2	7½	7	4	•
	850	S/Q	4/2	3	15	10½	4	•
Additional models scheduled for August release; details N/A.								
Stellavox (Gotham Audio)	Sp-7	M/S	1/2	4	30	5	4	•
Tandberg	Model 11	M	2/1	3	7½	7	3	•
	3000X Series	S	4/2	3	7½	7	4	•
	4000X Series	S	4/2	3	7½	7	4	•
	6000X Series	S	4/2	3	7½	7	4	•
	9000X Series	S	4/2	3	7½	7	4	•
Tape Sonic (Premier)	70A-TRSQ	S	4/2	3	15	10½	3	•
Teac	TCA-40 Series	Q	4	2	7½	7	4	•
	1200U	S	4	2	7½	7	3	•
	1230	S	4	2	7½	7	3	•
	1250	S	4	2	7½	7	3	•
	2340	Q/S	4	2	7½	7	3	•
	3300 Series	S/Q	4/2	2	7½/15	10½	3	•
	4010GSL	S/M	4	2	7½	7	4	•
	4070	S	4	2	7½	7	4	•
	6010SL	S	4/2	2	7½	10½	4	•
	7010SL	S	4	2	7½	10½	4	•
	7030SL	S/M	2	2	15	10½	4	•
Telex	Magnecord 2001	S	4	2	7½	7	3	•
	Viking 2+2	Q	4	3	7½	7	1	
	Viking 433W	S	4	3	7½	7	3	•
Uher (Martel)	263	S	4/2	3	7½	7	2	
	4400	S	4/2	4	7½	5	2	
	10,000	S	4/2	4	7½	7	4	•
Webcor	5100DR	S	4	3	7½	7	4	
Wollensak (3M)	6154	Q	4	3	7½	7	2	•
	6250	S	4	3	7½	7	2	•
	6350	S	4	3	7½	7	2	•
	6364	Q	4	3	7½	7	2	•

S/S - Overdub features (see text)  
 SW - Switch  
 R/C - Remote control unit

W/Ch - Watts per channel  
 ALC - Automatic level control  
 N/A - Not available at press time

Pb - Playback  
 Auto - Automatic  
 Rec - Recording

Auto reverse		Pause	No. of motors	Remarks	Approx. price (\$)
play	record				
		•	3	Solenoid operation; many options including Dolby, variable speed	570-780
•		•	3	Auto repeat; optional R/C; solenoid operation; mixing	680
		•	1	Includes 6-w/ch amp, speakers; auto shutoff; S/S; avail as deck	220
		•	1	Tape sw	300
		•	1	Tape sw; auto shutoff; avail as deck or system; optional S/S	220-350
		•	1	Noise reduction; auto shutoff; tape sw	240-500
•	•	•	1	S/S; auto shutoff; mixing; echo; tape sw	450
•		•	3	Mixing; auto shutoff; tape sw	500
		•	1	Includes 20-w/ch amp, speakers; echo; S/S	420
		•	3	Solenoid operation; mixing; echo; S/S; tape sw	350
			3	Optional R/C; tape sw; echo; S/S; quadr model (654-4) avail	450-475
			3	Pb speed control; rechargeable DC power supply	750-995
			3	Logic; opt R/C; mixing; S/S; echo; search; tape sw; opt speed cont (in 854-4S)	795-1,695
			1	Many options & features including 10½-in reel, AC/DC operation	1,725
		•	1	Mixing; cueing; incl monitor amp, spkr; 5-in max reel with cover closed	450
		•	1	Crossfield head; auto shutoff; echo; S/S; cueing	330-350
		•	1	Crossfield head; includes amp, speakers; cueing; S/S; echo	460-480
		•	1	Crossfield head; mixing; cueing; ALC; S/S; echo	500-530
		•	3	Crossfield head; S/S; echo; cueing; mixing; logic	600
			3	Solenoid operation; auto shutoff; mixing; S/S	675
•			3	Available with several electronics and head options	695-730
			3	Auto shutoff; optional R/C; mixing	330
		•	3	Bias sw; auto shutoff; mixing	400
•		•	3	Bias sw; auto shutoff; mixing	500
		•	3	Bias sw; mixing; S/S	760
		•	3	Bias sw; auto shutoff; S/S	550-850
•		•	3	Auto shutoff; bias sw; level sw; optional R/C; optional timer adapter	600
•	•	•	3	Auto shutoff; optional R/C; mixing; bias sw	700
•			3	Solenoid operation; several options including R/C; bias sw	800-900
•			3	Auto shutoff; bias sw; optional R/C	1,000
			3	Includes quarter-track pb head	950
			1	Equalization sw; mixing	800
		•	3	Auto shutoff; no electronics; playback only	250
		•	3	Mixing; echo; S/S; auto shutoff; also avail without wood base as 433	400
		•	1	Includes 6-w/ch amp, speakers; mixing; ALC; S/S	315
		•	1	Includes nicad battery, other accessories; also mono (Model 4000)	525
		•	1	Slide sync; mixing; incl amp, spkrs; S/S; echo; avail as deck (9000)	560
•	•	•	1	Auto shutoff; S/S; ALC; also avail with amp, spkrs (Model 5000R, \$340)	220
			2	Mixing; S/S; echo	320
			2	Includes amp, speakers; mixing; S/S; echo	350
			2	Includes amp, speakers; S/S; echo; mixing	380
			2	S/S; echo; mixing; records stereo only	400

Logic - Automatic prevention of improper operation sequencing  
Comb - Combination unit (data refer only to open-reel section)

idly. "A few years ago you could talk about the open-reel user, the cartridge owner, and the cassette hobbyist as three different individuals," Philipson says. "Now we find that most people own more than one or, if they own only one type of tape equipment, are planning to add another soon." The philosophy of the combination unit is that it puts everything in a single, compact package. It also makes possible the integration of electronic and even mechanical elements of two or more systems.

A growing number of recorders are solenoid operated. We've indicated some of them in the chart—but you may discover others when you go shopping. Solenoid-operated units require only a gentle tap to begin movement; you don't have to press a stiff piano key or turn a knob. And being totally electrical they're readily adaptable to remote-control operation—a convenience you can't get in cassette or cartridge decks yet. Besides, most solenoid-operated units automatically stop the motors and disengage the drive system when the tape breaks or runs out, preventing flattened idlers and untimely wear on drive parts.

While most home recordists are content with a 7-inch reel capacity on their open-reel decks (which permits up to ninety minutes of recording in one direction at 7½ ips with triple-play tape), a growing number are expressing interest in machines that can handle 8¼-inch or 10½-inch reels. The larger reel means more uninterrupted recording or playback time—a virtual necessity if the recorder of your choice offers the 15-ips speed. A 10½-inch reel recorded at 15 ips, for example, equals the playing time of a 7-inch reel of the same tape type recorded at 7½ ips.

There are four premium-priced recorders—the Stellavox, the Uher 4400, and (with their covers closed) the Nagra and Tandberg 11—that offer only a 5-inch reel capacity. These are special-purpose recorders designed primarily for professional or semi-professional recording. The Stellavox has a top speed of 30 ips. To increase playing time, the unit can be fitted with a 10½-inch reel adapter.

In some of the better recorders, a switch lets you A/B the signal going into the recorder with that actually recorded on the tape. While some inexpensive machines do include "monitor" outputs, these may be nothing more than a feed-through of the input signal. The real test is whether the recorder has a separate playback head, positioned where it can pick up the newly recorded signal. If you're still in doubt, ask the dealer for a demonstration before buying. The monitor playback should be a fraction of a second behind the source signal when you switch rapidly from one to the other; if you notice no time lag in the music, you're merely listening to the source signal.

In addition to the monitor head, there are several other specialized heads available on the super-

decks. Uher, for example, offers a slide-sync (Diapilot) head on its Model 10,000 recorder. It and one or two other manufacturers offer interchangeable heads, to convert from quarter-track to half-track or full-track operation. Other manufacturers who offer a choice of tape formats do so by installing two separate heads side by side—one for half-track record or playback, the other for quarter-track. These considerations, plus those involved in automatic-reversing and quadraphonic decks, make nonsense of the traditional phrase, "a three-head unit," as the diagrams in the preceding article make plain. The table of available models lists the number of heads in each unit but also details the functions they perform.

Every quadraphonic recorder I've seen can be used for stereo as well, and almost every unit capable of stereo recording can be switched to record mono on one track only. Keep this in mind in looking over the Q/S/M designations in the table. A unit specified as Q can be used for stereo; one marked Q/S is available in two versions, quadraphonic (which presumably can be used for stereo and mono as well), and stereo (which is incapable of quadraphonic operation).

These and other options will influence the price of the model you buy of course. The prices shown are based primarily on the model versions that we expect will most interest our readers. In the case of home equipment, therefore, the table shows a distinct bias in favor of quarter-track stereo equipment with a top speed of 7½ ips and a maximum reel size of 7 inches—the *de facto* "standard" at present.

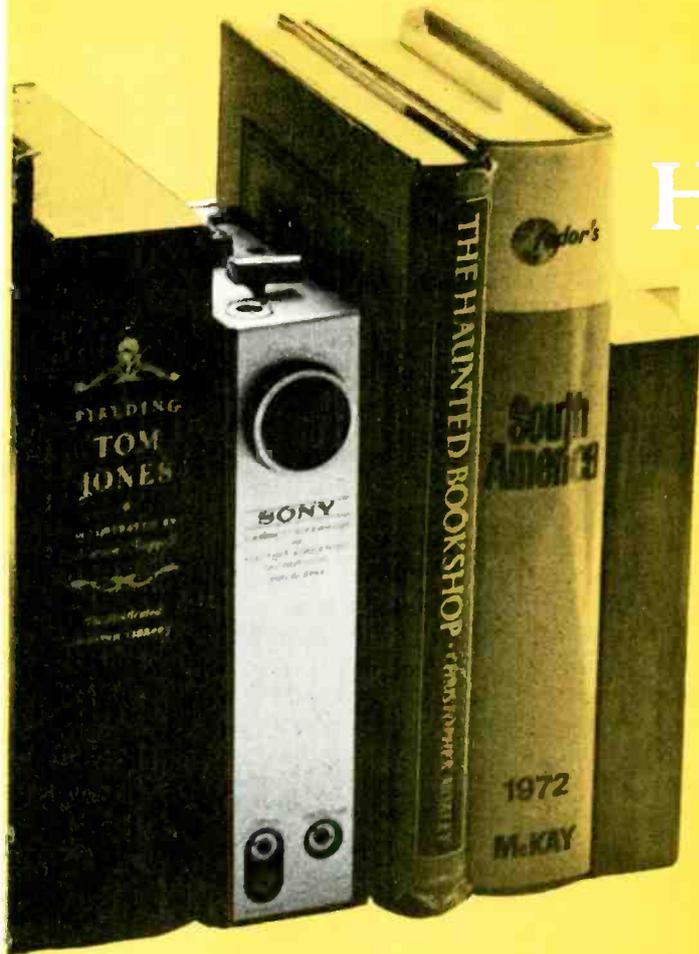
There are a number of functions that will allow you to build up successive "layers" of sound in making a finished recording: sound-on-sound, sound-with-sound, and synchronous overdubbing. Each requires a different head configuration and electronic interconnection scheme, but the table uses the single symbol S/S to indicate them all. Actually, the terminology and the operation of these features differ a good deal from manufacturer to manufacturer. If your recording bent lies in this area, it will pay you to study the appropriate section of the instruction manual for any unit you're considering buying.

Other abbreviations are explained at the end of the chart. But there can be no symbol for one factor that will influence your enjoyment of any recorder you choose: its "feel." In order to find a unit that really suits your style as a recordist—in terms of both feel and the specifics of operating behavior—there is no adequate substitute for a "test drive." And once you begin looking at the models in local shops, you're sure to find features that, for want of space, couldn't be detailed here. An open-reel tape recorder may cost much less than a car, but it deserves to be bought with as much care. ●

by Herbert Keppler

# How to Create an Oral History of Your Family

The portable cassette recorder is an ideal sonic version of the Instamatic.



ALMOST FROM the very beginning, manufacturers of home recording equipment—first disc, then wire, and now tape—have suggested the cloying joys of memorializing such events as a child's first words, a birthday party, a sing-along at home. They were and remain sounds that only a mother-in-law or tone-deaf friend could endure; but most long-term tape recorder owners, overcome by the first flush of enthusiasm with their equipment, have collected such Americana in little cardboard boxes of one size or another, now mouldering in some far-off storage corner. But let sleeping dogs lie.

There is, however, a very vital area where the modern home tape recorder, particularly the cassette variety, serves a most worthwhile purpose: as an oral history notebook—a sound camera if you will. Because of the small size of the average portable cassette recorder it is an ideal tool for listening in on your own personal world and putting into the permanent record those words and sounds of the present, soon to be past, that you will want to listen to again and again—sounds that will become treasures to pass down to future generations, like fine wines.

Home recording used to be quite an event. It literally stopped all life dead. You lugged in the

recorder, crawled under the table or sideboard looking for an AC outlet, misthreaded the takeup reel a few times, got the mike too close to the built-in speaker (creating some ear-splitting whines), set the volume level wrong, and by the time you were ready for whatever you were going to record, it was sick to death of you and sounded it.

With the old systems of recording voice and sounds at home, you had a posed picture. The sounds were made for the benefit of the recorder; they were stiff and self-conscious. Today the cassette recorder can operate with the unobtrusiveness and automation of a modern 35-mm camera. It can record a slice of life with amazing fidelity. I now keep my cassette unit loaded and ready to go at thirty seconds' notice just as I keep my camera. If it's a visual event, the camera gets used; if it's more audible than visible, the cassette recorder gets the nod. Sometimes both are used together so that nothing is missed.

## Picking Your Subject

A for instance? My son is taking cello lessons. It was practice day for him—along with three other bud-

ding cellists. Those serious eleven- and twelve-year-old faces and gleaming instruments made ideal camera studies. Then there were the pieces being played—first badly, then better—with comments from the teacher, responses of the students, amusing quips and hints and complaints. Could I do two things at once? Yes, with a little help from my friends. I started the cassette recorder, placed it in the hands of a friend who had never worked a recorder before, threw on the automatic volume control switch, pointed the mike for him, and tended to the pictures myself. The combination of photos and tape is all I could want.

Let's look at a few other good uses. At the risk of being unseasonal, I get a catch in my throat (even in midsummer) when I play the cassette I made four years ago of my wife reading " 'Twas the Night Before Christmas" to my two children. They interrupted, asked questions about Donner and Blitzen and Santa's red nose, without even knowing they were being recorded. I simply put the cassette recorder on the dresser behind a few knickknacks and let it run.

My friend Luigi Costantini makes wine (legally) in his basement for home use as his father did and his father's father did before him way back into some time when Romulus and Remus made wine in *their* basement. How does he do it? He explained as we sampled, adding a brief history of the Costantini family. He was telling *me*, but my cassette recorder was listening too. A dupe tape will be a precious document for his son and daughter. And if they make lousy wine it will be because they didn't listen to the old man on cassette.

During a vacation in Tobago, our native friends talked of the magnificent Caribbean life as we sat under the stars. The lilt of their melodious West Indian accents was accompanied by a glorious chorus of thousands of tiny frogs. We didn't miss a decibel of it, thanks to the cassette recorder. I carried it so often that no one was aware when I had it running and when I didn't.

When a friend is giving a lecture—or attending one I can't get to—I load my cassette recorder with a 120-minute tape, set all the controls, and give instructions on how to set it in motion. Then later I can listen to the whole lecture at my convenience.

Maybe you wouldn't normally be interested in a two-hour production of *Alice in Wonderland* given by children, but if your daughter is playing a major role it's bound to alter your feelings. From the fifteenth row, off center, I recorded the whole performance and got better and clearer sound than I actually heard.

I am currently hounding my mother-in-law. Why? Because my wife's family history is totally unrecorded. Nobody knows who is related to whom or how, or when or where anyone was born. In any family there is vital history that has eluded written records and can never be recaptured once those

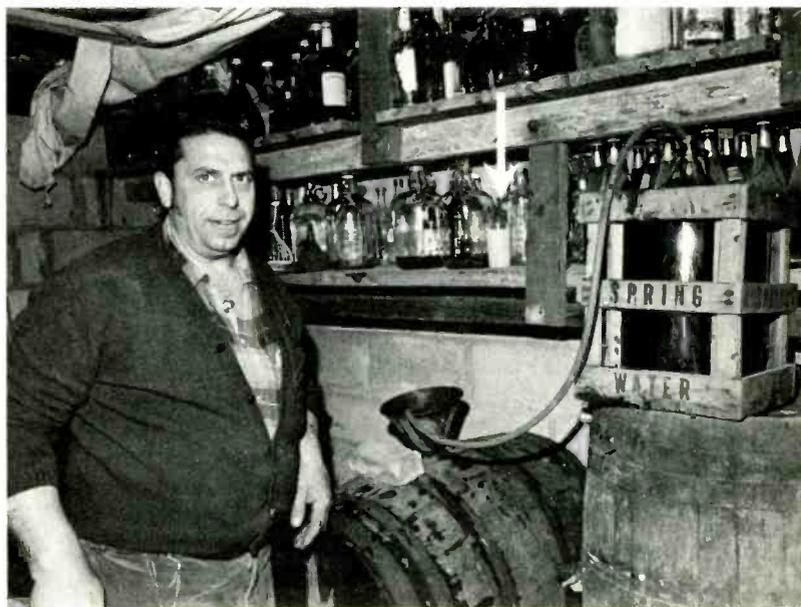
who know the story are no longer with us. My mother-in-law is terrified of microphones, but what she doesn't see won't hurt her and the next time she visits I plan to bring up the subject of family history. What better remembrance than the actual sound of a voice?

### Picking Your Recorder

Let's take a closer look at the recorders most appropriate for taping oral history. I would pass over the nonportable stereo decks and complete home units. They are just too darn clumsy and conspicuous, and who needs his mother-in-law in stereo? Mono does very nicely for most purposes.

There are times when stereo might come in handy, I admit. I've heard tapes made in relatively crowded rooms where stereo is needed to keep the voices distinct. If three or more people speak at once, the results can be unintelligible in mono even though you might be able to pick out every word in stereo. Stereo could have been nice, too, for my daughter's *Alice in Wonderland*. But I would have needed bulkier equipment (generally speaking) and a center seat. If you do decide to go for stereo, I'd recommend the double-element stereo microphones, rather than the usual pair of individual mikes, which are much more bother. In fact you'll find that stereo complicates the process all down the line, and I for one would just as soon do without it.

The many portable monophonic tape recorders powered by D or C cells with AC adapters are just about ideal in size and versatility. The units with piano key operation are more convenient than the



Lurking among the bottles, a cassette recorder takes down Luigi Costantini's wine-making secrets with minimum fuss.

ones with lever controls, but the latter usually are more compact and therefore easier to hide. Examine the microphone supplied. There should be an on/off switch at the microphone itself. Why? Because pushing the piano key and recorder button or throwing the lever every time you want to start or stop recording is a noisy and obvious distraction that can ruin the naturalness of your recording efforts. What you must do is set your machine for the recording mode and then stop and start tape motion from the mike control. These small mike levers are noiseless and no one really knows when you are running the unit and when you are not. You can therefore avoid a lot of useless gab and tune in only when something of interest turns up.

Warning! When using the stop/start mike control, the tape doesn't start up instantaneously; it may take as much as a few seconds to get up to speed. Try to anticipate audio action as you would have to anticipate visual rhythms if you wanted to get a photo at action peak with a camera. Practice may not make perfect—but it helps, it helps. You can buy battery-powered recorders that have (or can be equipped with) an automatic sound-triggered on/off device. Such a feature eliminates the long pauses that always occur in normal conversation, but they're guaranteed to miss at least a syllable or two when someone breaks the silence.

Some mikes have a split remote control. The mike itself is composed of two parts: one the mike proper; the other the on/off switch. These mikes come apart so that you can place the mike near the subject while keeping the control in your hand. This is certainly a great convenience.

I admit preference for the relatively new supercompact cassette recorders with built-in mikes. Typically, their microphones are visible only as a small, circular, perforated opening at one edge. Most people I record simply cannot believe it really is a mike; and even after they know it, the absence of that immemorial separate cylindrical object makes it easier to get natural-sounding voices, making candid and articulate statements. The built-in mikes have fidelity approaching that of separate mikes. I've even used them for recording piano with surprisingly good results. They're usually unidirectional, which means that almost no sound from the machine itself (or from the user holding it) is transmitted to the tape. I point it as I would a camera and it seems to take in about the same area as a moderately wide-angle lens would.

One of the greatest aids for recording oral history is also one of the greatest deterrents to recording music—the automatic volume control. In the bad old days, the problem of first setting the recording level properly and then maintaining it as the subjects moved, or raised and lowered their voices was formidable. Certainly the recorder's owner, watching his tiny VU meter and twirling the volume con-

trols up and down while cursing quietly (so it wouldn't record), didn't help the atmosphere of his recording sessions. Listening to some of my old cassette recordings made under such circumstances is rather painful. Voices rise in volume, blur, recede. Even a recording made in fairly small confines takes on the audible aspects of a recording in a tavern.

You don't have to put up with all of that if you have a cassette recorder with AVC—automatic volume control. You just switch on, and the recorder does a remarkable job of ironing out high and low volume levels.

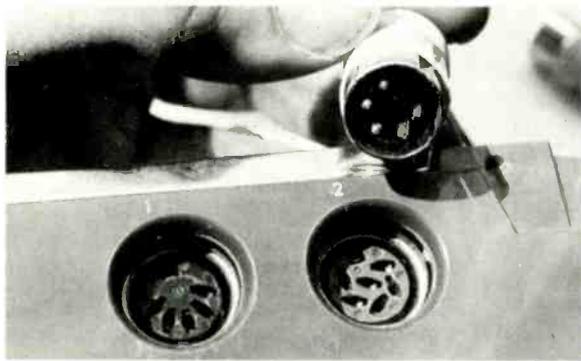
Now this is dandy for voice—something like a camera with automatic exposure control—but there are pitfalls. First, if you intend to use the cassette unit for recording music, AVC won't do at all. It nicely irons out pianissimos and fortissimos into one gooey mass of sound. Second, if you intend to make dub tapes for your friends, you can't use an AVC-only cassette recorder for recording the copies. The cassette recorder into which the sound is being fed must have a standard volume control, although AVC makes no difference in the machine used to play the original. Third, a poorly designed AVC can introduce audible distortion.

The ideal answer, of course, is a tape recorder that has AVC and AVC defeat, complete with a meter to monitor volume manually. Most of the new standard-sized monophonic portables do have such switches; the tiny compact cassette recorders intended primarily for dictation often have AVC only. If you plan to make your own copies you'd better have available a second machine without AVC—but we'll get into dubbing in a moment.

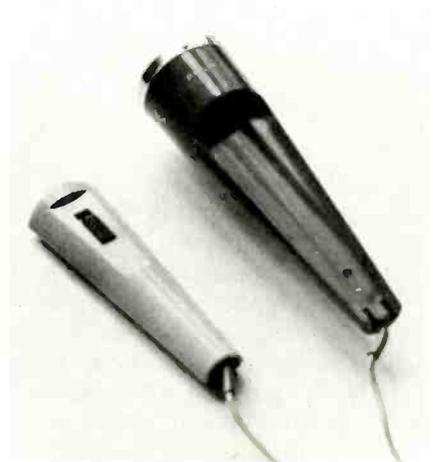
### Picking—and Using—Your Tape

I have tried all sorts of cassette tape and have finally decided that cheapies are dangerous. (That shouldn't be news to anyone familiar with tape recording.) Aside from the blanket caution, there are some specifics you should be aware of.

If you have a cassette recorder with an audible warning feature when the tape is running out during recording, make sure that you buy tape with the proper foil strip to activate this device. I find it a most useful feature. With open-reel recorders, a quick glance at what the reels are doing tells you just how near the end of the tape you are. With a cassette recorder, it's very hard to check the tape if your tape recorder doesn't have a digital counter; you must peer into that little plastic window. I can't count the times I have assumed I was recording only to find to my horror that the tape had run out minutes before. A watch is of no avail if you are stopping and starting the tape constantly. The audible end signal is a great help. The digital counter



Chances are you'll want to edit or make a copy of your oral history. To do this you'll need two cassette recorders connected by a patch cord (as shown below) running from "line out" of the first recorder to "aux in" of the second. The kind of cord you'll need depends on whether your recorders have multiple-pin (as above left) or single-pin connections. The easiest microphones to use in oral history projects are the split microphones (below left) that allow you to position the mike while retaining the on/off switch in your hand.



is even better—if you remember to set it, which I often don't. Naturally the really compact cassette recorders can't have digital counters, darn it.

How long a tape should you use? I'm a conservative guy. I like to stick to the C-60s: 30 minutes per cassette side. While I have used C-120 cassettes successfully, my friends seem to have all sorts of fascinating problems with them and wind up with cassette tape pouring all over the place. In my experience, the monophonic battery cassette recorders can handle good-quality 120-minute tapes if you stop and start the tape carefully; but you must watch your technique if you put this thin tape on a tape deck with a more powerful drive system. Any slack, a quick start-up, and—snap! Treat long-play

cassette tape with respect—and when you get a chance copy it onto C-60s or C-90s for insurance.

I would like to say a brief word about editing and splicing cassette tape. I'm a fairly handy fellow. So naturally when one of my C-120s parted for the first time I felt I could make the repair myself. I decided to take the cassette apart to get at the two tape ends. If you have never done this, believe me it is an experience. Do it on an old cassette just to see what is involved. It isn't complex, but it requires patience, digital dexterity, and sheer determination. And this is only a simple preliminary to actually splicing the tiny stuff. I hauled out my trusty Gibson Girl standard tape splicer. It wouldn't do. You will need a special narrower splicer made just

for cassette tape. But even then doing the job is akin to writing the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin. I eventually sent the broken tape out to a pro recording studio (naturally the broken tape was a precious one). They did a very good job, losing remarkably little sound at the break, but it was very expensive. It doesn't pay to break tape at all.

How do you edit sound on a cassette if splicing is such a problem? By copying from one tape to another, as I'll explain in a moment. Actually, splicing isn't the answer anyhow, unless you use only one edge of the tape and don't ever turn it over to record the other side. If you do use both sides, splicing is out because you can't cut into one side without chopping something out of the other.

Why do you need editing? Because in recording oral history events or even musical concerts, there are inevitable boring moments, coughs, unpregnant pauses, or audience rustles and tune-ups between pieces. Some of this sort of thing gives life to the recording: much of it is just disturbing. Often you may have a little snippet of sound on one tape, some other snippets of sound on another, and wish to get them all into one cassette. One of my prize edits involved an address given by a witty speaker to a club. I missed his opening salutation and remarks. Three days later I cornered him with my tape recorder. He repeated what I missed the first time. I edited the two parts together, and today no one except the speaker knows that I wasn't on my technical toes at the first session. It's all very simple.

If you look at the input and output receptacles of most cassette recorders you will see markings like "aux in," "mic," "earphone," and "line out." These are the keys to both editing and duplicating tape. Most Japanese-made tape recorders use cables with miniature or subminiature phone connectors. Some recorders come with patch cords that have appropriate plugs at both ends, but be not upset if you have no patch cord. They are purchasable at most hi-fi or radio stores. Other cassette recorders have standard phono jacks. Most European-made cassette recorders have German DIN-standard multiple-pin connectors, which may carry both input and output signals through a single jack. If you can't figure out what kind of patch cords or adapters you'll need, take your recorder into a store that sells such accessories, explain just which unit will be the player and which will be the recorder, and let the dealer outfit your system. But try it before you leave the store.

Your precious tape that you are to edit or duplicate is now in one cassette recorder, and the tape onto which you wish to transfer the sound is in the other. Connect the patch cord from the "monitor" or "line out" receptacle of the player unit to the "aux in" or "line in" (sometimes, particularly in European equipment, marked "radio") receptacle of the recording unit. Now before doing any real editing or dubbing, experiment a bit with the two

recorders. You've got to get your input and output volume levels correct.

Again, make sure that the machine doing the recording is not on AVC or you're doomed to failure. Start with the output from the player fairly low, and govern your levels with the recording control of the second unit. The tiny recording meters of the average portable cassette recorders are far from exact scientific instruments, but with a bit of experimenting, you will soon find the right volume setting and meter needle positioning for average tape duplicating or editing. Actually, you will get the best results if one or (preferably) both of the units are home decks rather than portables. And a pause control—a relatively rare feature in small portables—is an invaluable asset in the recording unit.

Once you have the mechanics down pat, making a duplicate tape or editing a tape is duck soup—well almost.

If you must splice sounds together always copy them onto a new tape first. It's dangerous to try to add sound to a precious original—one wrong move and you've done irremediable harm. I always break out the tiny tabs at the back of the cassette as soon as I have recorded something I don't want to lose. I'd rather waste the rest of the tape than record over the material by mistake. Breaking the tabs makes recording impossible: the cassette can only be played (unless you deliberately cover the tab hole again with tape or some other substance).

When adding bits and pieces of sound together consecutively on a second tape, you will need practice to discover just how far you must back up the tape to prevent dead spots between sounds. Since you aren't endangering your original sounds the worst you can do is foul up a break and have to do it over. This is where a pause control pays off: a good one will stop and start on a dime, so to speak.

In copying cassettes you'll soon find that what runs 30, 45, or 60 minutes per side on one machine is not 30, 45, or 60 minutes per side on another. Transport speeds vary slightly from machine to machine—not enough, perhaps, to change the pitch even to a discerning ear, but enough to change total running time by many seconds. So you may have to do some juggling to fit your copies onto the same tape length you used for the original. Naturally you'll avoid problems of this sort if you copy *from* the faster of your machines and *onto* the slower one. Another warning. Brand A may indeed put some more tape into a cassette than Brand B. And guess who puts the least tape into a cassette? Of course—the bargain brand.

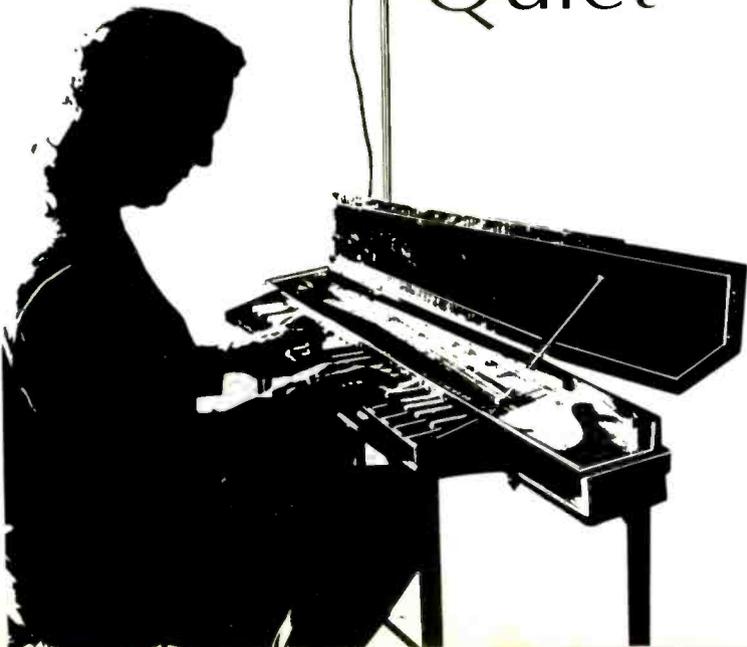
If you feel that I'm leaving you now hopelessly entangled in various patch cords, be of good cheer. Once recorded, oral history (with some music thrown in) will never die, and eventually you will get it all together on cassettes the way you want it. And once you've done it, you'll find it very worthwhile. ●

by Denis Vaughan

To record the almost inaudible  
clavichord requires special techniques.

It helps if you have a country  
bathroom available.

# Taping the Sounds of Quiet



WHEN I SET OUT to make a recording of some of my favorite pieces for the clavichord, I had no idea of the trouble I would run into. The clavichord is a comparatively seldom played keyboard instrument, with little hammers that strike either a single or double string for each note. For twenty years I've been lucky enough to own a single-string instrument from England's greatest maker, Thomas Goff. Its sound is so delicate that the slightest excess pressure on the key can put it out of tune, and the touch is absolutely direct. As you press down the key, the hammer both hits and raises the string, and the more you press the more you increase the tension of the string, sharpening the note as you go.

To have some idea of what the touch is like, try stretching an elastic band with one hand and then pushing it down with a finger of the other hand. If your fingering is sensitive enough you can make it vibrate up and down very slightly, thus producing a tremolo (called in German, *Bebung*) which is different from the vibrato of the violin or the guitar, owing to the fact that it comes from a change in the tension and not in the length of the string.

But the clavichord's most striking qualities are its beauty of tone and its quietness. It is almost inaudible against normal conversation, and to be listened to properly requires total concentration from player and listener alike. Its tremendous range of dynamics is enough to make the VU meter of a tape recorder look as though it has gone mad. But this range is between a forte equal, say, to a note plucked quietly on the guitar and an infinite pianissimo. In fact I find that I can play so quietly that I can't hear the notes myself—but the microphone picks them up. Of course at that level it is quite impossible to see any movement of the fingers, and technique is more a matter of thought than muscular control.

Faced with this very particular range of dynamic level, the first essential for recording is absolute silence. So tiny are the signals the microphones pick up from a clavichord that they must be preamplified by some 110 dB before they will meet the tape recorder's requirements; and at that degree of amplification one suddenly becomes aware just how noisy the usually ignored background sounds of a studio can be. When I first entertained the idea of recording in the RCA Italiana studios I had a good listen around in the empty studios, only to find that down at *that* level of quietness all manner of sounds were audible that would normally never give trouble—distant rock beats, hum from lighting, rumble from air-conditioning.

Even though I was using equipment whose inherent noise levels were extremely low, I was anx-

*Denis Vaughan studied with Thomas Beecham. As a conductor he has recorded the complete symphonies of Schubert. His recording of clavichord pieces described in this article is scheduled to be released by RCA by the end of the year.*

ious to keep the sound of the clavichord as far above the noise as possible by putting the instrument in a chamber that would reinforce its tone even before the sound reached the microphones—in other words simulating a bathroom acoustic. In such a live space, however, the acoustics augment any hums that may be around. I found this out to my chagrin as soon as we tried to record in my home near Piazza del Popolo in Rome.

Anyone familiar with Rome knows that things tend to quiet down a little—even in the summer—by about 2 a.m. So with the indefatigable help of RCA engineer Gaetano Vituzzi, I set out on a series of nocturnal sessions, guaranteed to redden the clearest of eyes. After we had set up the clavichord in an inner corridor which revealed, in initial tests, no trace of background noises, the first thing was to set the quality. This took three nights of running back and forth—between the instrument and the speakers—through five rooms. Clarity and presence were easy to obtain, but once they were there, the golden sweetness of the clavichord was replaced by a more metallic and tiring sound, which was twice as aggressive as anything I was playing.

This delicate balance between the lively presence from direct microphoning and the airy, wafting tone of the more distant pickup can mean life or death in the success of a recording, but never have I known it to take so long to set as it did with the clavichord. Setting the mikes farther away brought in all manner of extraneous noises, mainly from the room, where my slightest movements were picked up to such an extent that striking the key for a forte note, for instance, sounded as if a timpani were playing along with me: adding too sharp a bass-cut to the amplifiers robbed the tone of quality.

In the end we found that the ideal position for the microphone was just beside the player's ears, where half the sound came directly from the strings, the other half reflected from the wood of the clavichord's lid and the walls behind. This position also helped to keep out the percussive sounds of the fingers on the keyboard. But with this setup the player is put in a highly embarrassing position. With a Neumann U87 microphone four inches from your nose, and with that much amplification, the slightest sniff, hiss, or whistle from normal breathing can sound as loud as the Queen Mary's siren and a gulp like somebody wading through a swamp. Yet if you try to put shields on the microphones or change their position, the sound becomes constricted.

When you turn your musical life upside down four nights in succession, concentrating on serious music is no laughing matter, particularly with an instrument that requires you to be "in the mood." When we finally got down to the business of recording, all kinds of unexpected noises got onto the tapes. Ambulances passed at 3:15 a.m. Motorcycles started zooming at 3:30 a.m. Birds started tweeting

at 3:35 a.m. A jet plane or two passed just after 4:00 a.m. Neighbors' bedroom conversations, usually inaudible to the naked ear, could be heard clearly, while the flushing of distant cisterns and washbasins made it impossible to concentrate. The clavichord unfortunately is not one of those obliging instruments that will give its best performance on the first take. The final blow came on the third night of music-making since my neighbors, despite their fervent promises, had failed to turn off their humming air-conditioners when they left for the weekend. Poor Anna Magdalena and Johann Sebastian Bach. They must have longed for the hours when all their children were safely asleep and they could venture into this fairytale world of sound in peace and quiet.

Given this unfair competition, we decided to suspend operations until a suitable spot could be found outside the city. The ideal location turned out to be Scandriglia, a small Umbrian hill town where everything is made on the spot, be it olive oil, flour, cheese or wine; the main road is miles away; the air is cooler; and by all reliable accounts most of the inhabitants turn in early.

The villa we rented was blessed with a small, completely tiled bathroom. The would-be studio was no larger than a cupboard, and the clavichord had to be carried in edgewise. The only external sounds we had to cope with were the cheeping of crickets, the whirring of cicadas, and the faint distant roar of motorcycles. Piling up mattresses outside the bathroom doors kept most of this mild bedlam away from the microphones, but then we were faced with a *new* set of difficulties. The lack of air made me perspire profusely; then the squeak from my sweaty fingertips twisting on the keys became quite audible. Dusting talcum powder on the keys before each take cured the squeaking.

The heat created yet another problem. The brass strings of the single-string clavichord are so fine that hot weather greatly affects the tuning. We are all used to seeing a harp player bobbing backwards and forwards touching up the tuning of his strings, which change tension each time he moves a pedal. Well these thin brass strings of the clavichord change tension even more widely, particularly if the player is applying an agitated vibrato, each pulsation of which is tugging the string on its anchor pin enough to jog it out of position.

With the best-known excerpts from the Anna Magdalena Notebook, where the bulk of the pieces are definitely in one key. I found it easy to tune in that key; but when I began to play some of the J. S. Bach preludes the tuning became critical. The A minor Prelude, Book II, of the forty-eight preludes and fugues is the very devil to tune, as it is almost totally chromatic and explores every note in every key, and here the title *Well-Tempered Clavichord* is synonymous with "Bad-tempered clavichord player"!



Denis Vaughan and his unobtrusive clavichord—how do you tape an instrument that can't even outchirp a bird?

Of the three dimensions in the world of sound which the clavichord explores in new ways—namely timbre, dynamic range between pianissimo and silence, and refinements of pitch—the keen record listener will probably be most fascinated by the last one. *Grove's Dictionary* states it simply: "There are many who would consider the clavichord of all instruments the most beautiful." Beyond the particular sweetness and richness in the upper harmonics of its tone, the clavichord can put its infinite variability of pitch to more emotional use than any other stringed instrument. The violin (in contrast to the fixed pitch of a piano note) has the capacity to sharpen a note so that not only is it perfectly in tune (where all pianos are only approximately in tune), but a player can also intensify a leading tone by sharpening it, forcing it more dramatically to resolve onto the note above it.

The clavichord can obtain this flexibility of pitch with all the notes of a chord played simultaneously. Up to eight or ten notes can be sharpened and flattened so that you deliberately increase the dissonance of a discord, thus doubling the sense of relief when it resolves onto its following concord. When properly performed, this technique helps to grip the attention of the listener and makes of many pieces a dramatic sequence of events, of growing tension and then release, whereas normal tuning would have made it sound like a rather bland exercise in harmony. In fact the clavichord makes the greatest emotional demands on the player of any single instrument I know, and I can well understand why Carl Philip Emanuel Bach (two of whose pieces I have included in this first disc) is reputed to have sweated more profusely in playing the tiny instrument than other larger ones.

Although this is not the first clavichord recording that has been made, it is the first to attempt to put some of the most popular repertoire into the right perspective. Anna Magdalena's Notebook was not written entirely by her great husband, but does contain the handwriting of several members of her family. Some of the most popular pieces, currently circulating as "Piano pieces by Bach," are not by Johann Sebastian at all, and were in fact written for the clavichord (or at least played on it) by various composers of Bach's time. Only very occasionally did Anna notate her husband's pieces in her notebook and often they were merely arrangements.

As for Bach's forty-eight preludes and fugues, there is no strict rule as to which instrument they should be played on, but the bulk of the preludes are most suitable for the clavichord, particularly those that have long singing melodies, or violent contrasts between large chords and single voices. Only the constantly moving sixteenth-note preludes are more adaptable to the less sensitive harpsichord.

But when the recording is released, purchasers will have to consider how to play it in the most advantageous way. All that amplification was used only to eliminate technical background noise, *not* to make the instrument sound louder. As I said previously, the clavichord is incredibly quiet, but one of the key points of its emotional power is that it demands total concentration. I have had guests who laughed outright upon hearing the clavichord and then after a quarter of an hour listened in rapt silence, bewitched by its magic spell.

We have all become so used to amplification and magnification that we think nothing of the grotesqueness of a pair of lips smiling six yards wide on a screen, or of the comic aspect of love's sweet nothings being whispered at deafening volume. We have also had ten years of rock played at high decibel levels. This gross insensibility to scale is not only slowly degrading us, but we have now become almost embarrassed by really quiet sounds.

To show the right level for the clavichord I tried putting announcements on the tape, but the words shot so quickly into distortion and broke the musical feeling so violently that I abandoned them in favor of trusting to the good taste of listeners to turn off all noises in and around their listening rooms and to set their volume controls so low that they cannot hear the instrument if they speak in a medium soft voice.

Once you have acquired a taste for the clavichord, you will find that it can be a real antidote to the indiscriminate aggression of the sounds and noises we hear in our daily lives, and listening to it can be a refreshing experience for our battered souls. The clavichord also allows Bach and his family to speak to us in their true voices, as this is the sound for which their best music was written. ●

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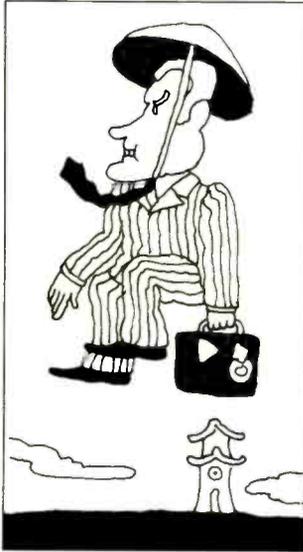
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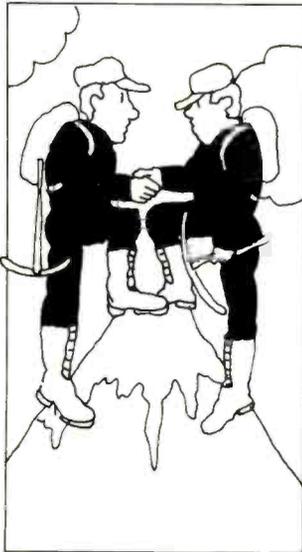
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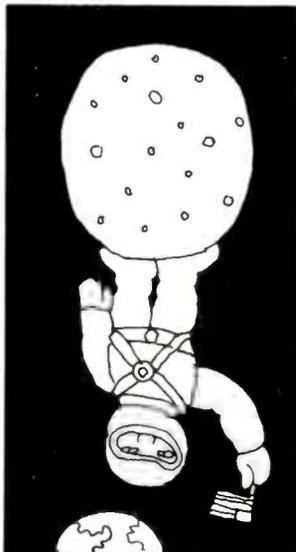
1. Nixon goes to China.



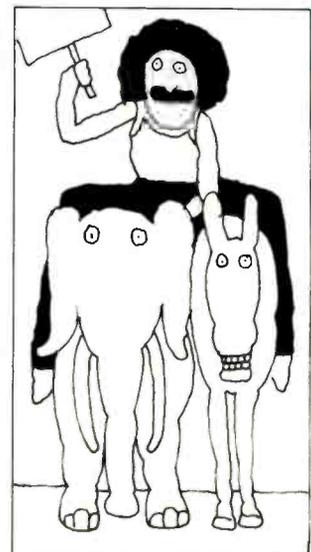
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## Rudolf Bing's Metropolitan Farewell Gala on DGG

by Dale Harris

There is a singular appropriateness to the form taken by the Bing Farewell Gala. A Grand Vocal Concert may seem an odd way of celebrating twenty-two years of stage presentations, especially on the part of a general manager who assumed his duties with the avowed intention of presenting opera as musical drama, yet the fact is that the Bing years were increasingly devoted to the cult of stardom. From the mounting of the mediocre *Adriana Lecouvreur* at the insistence of Tebaldi to the casting of Corelli in the stylistically unsuitable title role of *Werther*, the emphasis fell more and more on vocal glamor.

So it did at the Farewell. Nothing but subservience to the concept of stardom can explain the programming, since the evening consisted of mere bits and pieces of music, a disconcerting jumble of mostly arias and duets, many not even from works performed at the Met during Bing's regime, like *Die Tote Stadt*, *I Lombardi*, *Le Cid*, *Cenerentola*, and the unlikely, though charming, Oscar Straus operetta *Les Trois Valses*. Bing's high regard for stars can surely be the only reason for allowing Birgit Nilsson to end the program with the final scene of *Salome*. If opera is anything more than an excuse for vocal prowess the choice of so dramatically grisly a selection was at best incongruous for a festive occasion.

There is also a certain unfitness about bringing these proceedings to an end with a single artist rather than with the whole company. Some huge musical ensemble (the *Aida* Act II finale, for example) would at least have left an impression of artistic fellowship, the sort of collaborative effort on which a great opera house inevitably depends. Instead, the curtain came down on a solitary superstar. The ascendancy of star values was only underlined by the unmusical abruptness with which the *Salome* excerpt was terminated once Nilsson had finished her last note. The composer, in other words, was of less consequence than his middlemen.

But Nilsson, as this recorded souvenir demonstrates, is a vocal prodigy. Not all of Bing's stars were, alas. During Bing's time it wasn't always easy to see much awareness at the Met of the difference between glamor and talent. An interesting feature of the gala was the sheer amount of mediocrity on display, and the fact that mediocrity and talent appeared to be interchangeable. Certainly the management by its programming and the audience by its applause seemed to accord them equal status. Sir Rudolf had long staked commercial and artistic success on vocal stars. Toward the end, the former kind of success began to disappear, while the latter—as the standard of performance at the gala revealed—was always dubious. It seems fair to say that for a long time now stardom at the Met has depended as much on promotion as on talent.

But doubts on the score of artistic merit should not be allowed to obscure the enterprise of Deutsche Grammophon in recording the evening and in making these highlights (designated as Volume 1 on the jacket) available so swiftly. This, moreover, is DGG's first local venture in both recording and manufacture and bodes well for such future plans as Gentile's opening *Carmen* with Horne and McCracken under Bernstein. In some instances

## The Cult of Stardom



One of the stars of the Bing years who did not appear at his final farewell was the camel featured in Barber's *Anthony and Cleopatra* when the new Met opened in 1966.

DGG's engineers improve on nature. Nilsson's Amazonian and largely successful attempt to make herself heard over the megalomaniacal orchestral barrage unleashed by Karl Böhm has been turned into something more listenable and no less exciting. Moreover, Nilsson in the living room, at whatever hour you find her appropriate, is more enjoyable than Nilsson at 1:15 a.m. after an already long evening of insistent vocalism. She is undoubtedly the highlight of this disc.

The rest is less satisfactory. The music of *Trovatore* is really too cruelly testing for Martina Arroyo. Arroyo gets around all the notes, including the cabaletta where she manages trills of a sort, but her vocal emission isn't smooth enough, her scale not equalized enough, her tone not beautiful enough, for Verdian cantilena. In any case, most of this *scena* lies too low for her. The Caballé/Domingo duet is a foretaste of next season's casting and shows these favorites in their current form. Caballé is comfortable now only at low dynamic levels and is otherwise rather blowsy in tone. Domingo, with a voice noticeably darker than a year ago, is taxed by sustained

# Extraordinary Romantic

by Gregor Benko

Did Liszt play his operatic transcriptions like Jorge Bolet?

loud passages. Both artists have to work hard to survive the rigors of the climax. Why Leontyne Price elected to sing "Dove sono" is hard to guess. This is not the sort of music she has an affinity for, nor is the Countess a role she has ever performed. The upper half of Price's voice sounds beautiful, but she never quite relaxes enough to allow the music to flow with appropriate inevitability.

Richard Tucker and Robert Merrill, both survivors from the Johnson era, still have a lot of vocal stamina to call on. It is probably too late to inform Tucker, now nearing sixty, that Verdi already put the emotion into the music and that all the tenor has to do is sing. In any case, Tucker's tearfulness is an annoying distortion of the composer's intentions.

No wonder Verdi was wary of tenors, for he is ill-served too by Franco Corelli. Corelli does try hard. He begins by paying respectful attention to the music. He achieves an impressive *morendo* on "immenso" just before the entrance of Desdemona. But soon after, a sense of self-importance takes over, and from that point on poor Verdi doesn't stand a chance. Corelli's singing seems dictated principally by vanity. He pulls against the conductor like a willful child defying parental guidance. He swallows what he considers unimportant notes and syllables. Above all, he hangs on and on to the final note as if it were a piece of forbidden candy, and while his fans explode with rapture the ravishing orchestral conclusion to the love duet can be heard expiring quietly in the background. Though Zylis-Gara doesn't have all the vocal purity for Desdemona's music she does some lovely things (like the beautifully poised soft G on "Amen risponda") and unlike her partner she is always musical.

But worst of all is the special party piece, "Chacun à Bing's goût." It is hardly Resnik's fault that John Gutman's rewriting of *Fledermaus* is so witless, self-congratulatory, and demeaning, but in fact Resnik does sound as if she is at the end of her vocal tether. Indeed, the break in registers is so disconcerting that the effect is perilously close to female impersonation. This number, with its dubious taste (the references to Bing's quarrels with Callas, Merrill, and MacNeil, for example) and its rehashing of thrice-familiar stories (like the three Tristans in one performance), is not something I imagine many listeners will want to play very often, particularly straight after Mozart. But it is a fair souvenir of what the Met has sunk to in the recent past (I am thinking of productions like *Périchole*, *Gypsy Baron*, *Martha*, and *Barbiere*), and as such it has its place in operatic history. But, then, the whole fascinating disc with its air of excitement, its audience enthusiasm—even its shadowy, obtrusive prompter—will provide the future with a good idea of our operatic standards in the early 1970s. That the evidence may be unflattering to us is, however, a reasonable expectation.

**"HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE METROPOLITAN OPERA GALA HONORING SIR RUDOLF BING."** Various soloists; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Richard Bonyngue, James Levine, Karl Böhm, Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, and Kurt Adler, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2530 260, \$6.98.

**VERDI:** *Il Trovatore*: Tacea la notte placida (Martina Arroyo, soprano); *La Forza del destino*: Invano, Alvaro (Richard Tucker, tenor; Robert Merrill, baritone); *Otello*: Già nella notte densa (Teresa Zylis-Gara, soprano; Franco Corelli, tenor). **PUCCINI:** *Manon Lescaut*: Tu, tu, amore? Tu? (Montserrat Caballe, soprano; Plácido Domingo, tenor). **STRAUSS, R.:** *Salome*: Final Scene (Birgit Nilsson, soprano). **MOZART:** *Le Nozze di Figaro*: Dove sono (Leontyne Price, soprano). **STRAUSS, J.:** *Die Fledermaus*: Chacun a Bing's goût (Regina Resnik, mezzo).

Jorge Bolet's new recording of Liszt's transcriptions—ranging from the familiar Chopin songs to the rarely heard *Lucia* paraphrase—is astonishing. In his grasp of the musical idiom and style, as well as his prodigious technique, Bolet demonstrates staggering virtuosity, and the result can only be judged as one of the most important, beautiful, and enjoyable piano records of the entire LP era.

Franz Liszt was probably history's supreme piano transcriber. His transcriptions take advantage of every resource and "trick" the piano offers—endless opportunity for cantilena, three- and four-hand effects, "orchestral" display, and much more. Of course the musical quality of these virtuoso vehicles varies greatly. Liszt's earliest works in the genre—those dating from the 1830s like the *Lucia*—are among his weakest, with their superfluous ornamental flourishes and often ridiculous new material. Later efforts such as the *Rigoletto* paraphrase (1859) more successfully present in solo piano terms the original composer's voice-and-orchestra conception, although they still somehow seem stepchildren in comparison. But Liszt's late transcriptions are works of art in their own right. In his translation of Schumann's *Frühlingsnacht*, Liszt has succeeded in subduing his own personality and has remained completely true to Schumann's musical intent. Nothing of the original song has been lost—and nothing has been added. No greater homage could be paid by one composer to another, for Liszt's work is as lovely in its own fashion and as much of a masterpiece as the original song.

Just how should Liszt's transcriptions be performed? We know a great deal about the proper performance practices in baroque music, but very little about the correct interpretation of Romantic music—a strange situation, for there is a mass of historical evidence to help unravel this knotty musical problem. A number of these transcriptions were recorded by pianists whose backgrounds and training stemmed from an authoritative tradition; many books, articles, and other printed material exist that describe in detail the various aspects of Romantic performance style. This sort of piano playing has often been loosely described as "Golden Age," and it is certain that in many respects it embodies the keyboard approach of Chopin, Liszt, and Schumann themselves. It is also the way Jorge Bolet plays these works.

In Bolet's performances the piano is king, performances conceived and executed in terms of what the piano and no other instrument can do. Above all, Bolet cultivates beauty of sound—tone and sonority—as much as lucid architecture. What a tone he has! Deep, rich, and golden at all volume levels, it carries and penetrates without ever being harsh; and once launched, each note takes on a life of its own, seeming to exist without relation to the machinery that created it. Then Bolet has power—real power and not just loudness. In this his only

*Gregor Benko is vice president of the International Piano Library.*

# Pianism—The Full-Blooded Music of Liszt and Weber



Jorge Bolet—one of the greatest piano techniques.



Weber—an original genius.

rival today is Horowitz. Also like Horowitz, no matter how “big” Bolet’s playing gets, one always has the feeling he could give even more and that he still has untapped reserves. Bolet truly *sings* these songs and arias through his fingers, and he is able to delineate a melody line as few pianists since Josef Hofmann. Even in the multivoiced sextet and quartet transcriptions, Bolet is capable of perfectly re-creating “operatic” performances.

To accomplish this, Bolet necessarily possesses one of the greatest piano techniques I have ever encountered, on or off records. Listen to the way he plays the repeated octave passages (measures 79/86) in the *Rigoletto* paraphrase, with a decrescendo in each of the very rapidly played groups—incredible! His rubato is *real* rubato (which does not mean wayward rhythm), and for each quaver that he takes away another is added. This kind of rhythmic freedom is almost classical in its purity, based on the structure of the composition and a logical sequence of phrases that unfold naturally. His pedaling is carefully co-ordinated with his phrasing to create a maximum of “sound” at all times, even in the quietest passages—and, needless to say, without blemishes or indistinctness of any kind in the most rapid passages. The ideal of the Romantic pianist was to use the pedal in order to create wide variations of tone and sonority. Bolet obviously listens very carefully as he performs. He seeks out and highlights inner voices that most Romantic composers wrote into their compositions.

All these details are important, for there is little doubt that this was the style in which these compositions—including the entire *œuvres* of Chopin, Liszt, and Schumann—were conceived and played by their creators. Hopefully RCA will record many great masterpieces of the Romantic repertoire with Bolet, for we have so few recordings of them performed in such an authentic style. There are only a handful of pianists besides Bolet before the public today who give us what the Romantic composers wanted us to hear—and enjoy.

**LISZT:** “Franz Liszt’s Greatest Hits of the 1850s.” Jorge Bolet, piano. RCA Red Seal LSC 3259. \$5.98

Réminiscences de Lucia di Lammermoor (Donizetti). Die Forelle (Schubert). Ständchen (Schubert). Rigoletto, Paraphrase de concert (Verdi). Spinning Chorus from “The Flying Dutchman” (Wagner). Meine Freuden (Chopin). Widmung (Schumann). Frühlingnacht (Schumann).

by Paul Henry Lang  
Vox’s complete documentation  
of Weber’s piano works

This extraordinary set honors a great and largely unknown composer, as it does Vox: such intelligence and largesse (six discs!) on the part of record manufacturers is rare these days. To say that Weber is largely unknown is not rhetoric: of the composer of operas, Masses, symphonies, concertos, chamber music, songs, choruses, piano music, and a large volume of valuable musical criticism, only *Freischütz*, a couple of overtures, the F minor *Konzerstück*, and *Invitation to the Dance* are generally familiar. But then Weber was a somewhat enigmatic composer. He has been described as a satellite of Beethoven and Schubert, or as a forerunner of Wagner, no doubt because he does not fit into any category, least of all into the then dominant “Viennese” school. The answer is very simple: He was an entirely original genius.

Both as a man and as a musician Weber is the antithesis of his great contemporary and fellow pathbreaker for Romanticism, Schubert. Weber came from a large, many-branched family of rather dubious reputation (poor Mozart had his troubles with the Webers, whose daughter he married, not quite voluntarily). Many of the clan were talented; most of them, notably Carl Maria’s father, were also first-class charlatans. An example of the elder Weber’s flair for advancement is his invention of the letters of nobility, and the German respect for titles has kept them Von Weber to this day, though the “Baron” is no longer used. Well, it does not really matter; Carl Maria certainly earned a musical baronetcy. He suffered a great deal from his father’s unsavory operations, but he was one of the few honorable Webers, even though his memoirs are not reliable. (Nor is the biography written by his son, Max Maria; a modern biography is very much needed.)

Weber’s talents, unlike Schubert’s, were many-sided. At nineteen he was an experienced conductor and theater manager; his performances were exemplary and the repertory astonishingly varied. He was also a top-notch piano virtuoso who could hold his own against anyone

then active: and he was a most competent and cultivated music critic, far more strictly professional than either Schumann or Berlioz. The contrast between Schubert and Weber is no less marked in their music. Weber's imagination was first of all theatrical, and his greatest works are in this field. Significantly, his best instrumental compositions are those where a distinctly dramatic-coloristic quality is present. Schubert's profound lyricism does show up in Weber's opera arias and in some of the slow movements of the concertos and sonatas, but in the instrumental works it is as a rule replaced by brilliance. He was far more the full-blooded romantic than Schubert, obsessed all his life by a curious combination of the veneration for the romanticism of the "German forest" and nostalgia for medieval chivalry, sorcery, and the world of the fairy tale. Now how does all this dovetail with the fairly large body of piano music recorded here?

We must reiterate that Weber was a virtuoso pianist in love with his instrument and with its special possibilities. At first he strikes one as a musician from the Hummel-Field-Dusseck group of pianist-composers; the early pieces display a salonlike social elegance but also a remarkable sense for good pianistic writing. Take, for instance, the early four-hand pieces: they are crystalline, no part is ever covered yet there is plenty of rapid, criss-crossing movement. Gradually, Weber's passion for color and dramatic effect asserts itself and we see that this kind of pianism is not Hummel's either; it simply bypasses the era and points directly to Chopin and Liszt. His rhythm is basically an elemental pulsation, always well articulated, but it can be quite capricious without denying this basic quality. In this connection note the "minuets": practically all of them, even in the earliest sets of pieces, are real scherzos, often bold and sweeping. The melismatic melodic flow can be perfunctory, but even then it is usually pleasant. In many instances, however, it is full of invention, astonishingly Chopinesque in its unbroken continuity. Formal problems Weber usually solves in an uncomplicated romantic way, *ex eventu*, as the situation permits it, but he can compose sonata structures with elaborate thematic development, if in the "loose" sonata manner of Schubert. The thread may be broken here and there, but the music has a marvelous unity of effect. At times, as in the E minor sonata, he leads us almost into the Wagnerian world. Though the writing is invariably highly idiomatic for the keyboard, one often "hears" the horns, the timpani, the clarinet, and so forth: Liszt orchestrated the *Polacca brillante*. There is a great deal of variety in this music for both pianists and listeners, who will discover an unworked lode of excellent musical entertainment.

The two pianists in this recording (Rosario Marciano assists in the four-hand pieces) are very good. Hans Kann, the principal performer, exhibits the typical Viennese style: elegant, low-key playing that is always clear, if perhaps with a bit of hand lotion to make things smooth. He has taste and musicality, obviously loves what he is doing, and his fingers are nimble. So Vox's big venture is a real accomplishment. It is hoped that with the rising appreciation of the music of the earlier nineteenth century, heretofore rated quite low, this bold venture will prove to be a success all around. A compliment is due to Leonard Seeber for his excellent notes.

**B** **WEBER:** The Complete Piano Music. Hans Kann, piano (with Rosario Marciano in the four-hand works). Vox SVBX 5450/51, \$9.98 each (two three-disc albums).

by Clifford F. Gilmore

## An Organ Festival with E. Power Biggs

Baroque discoveries,  
a quadraphonic spectacular,  
a Handel potpourri,  
and a European tour

COLUMBIA CELEBRATED "E. Power Biggs Month" recently with an impressive and varied batch of recordings. And, I am pleased to report, each in its own way is quite well done and a welcome addition to the distinguished organist's large discography. But let's go through the new releases one by one.

The most important in a repertorial sense is the disc of six concertos after Italian masters by Johann Gottfried Walther, played on the Gottfried Silbermann organ in Freiberg (East Germany). Walther and Bach were colleagues and close friends during the years they lived in Weimar, and both (like many German composers at the time) had become quite intrigued with the many Italian concertos by Vivaldi and his contemporaries that were then in fashion. Perhaps as a kind of exercise in assimilating the essentials of this new style, both Bach and Walther, at about the same time, made keyboard transcriptions of many Italian string concertos. Bach's transcriptions for the organ and for the harpsichord are pretty well known, but Walther's turn up only very rarely on recital programs. To praise the music is, of course, to praise the Italian composer of the original, since neither Bach nor Walther drastically altered the original composition in making the transcription—Walther even less than Bach. And several of the concertos on this disc are quite lively and entertaining little pieces. Walther's concertos here are based on originals by Vivaldi, Torelli, Albinoni, Taglietti, and Gentili. It's a special pleasure to have these works recorded by an organist like Biggs who makes them sound so sparkling and vivacious.

Even more important than the new repertoire perhaps is the instrument itself—the first available domestic recording of Gottfried Silbermann's first major organ and the one that has been the least altered over the years. For organ buffs this is already a famous instrument, since virtually every treatise on historic European organs discusses it; and now we can hear precisely the kind of organ Bach himself favored. Bach and Gottfried Silbermann also were friends and the composer played con-





certs on several of Silbermann's instruments; he had high praise for the builder's work (though they were constantly at loggerheads over the matter of mean-tone tuning versus equal temperament). In marked contrast to the crisp, stark, and gutsy sound of North German builders—particularly Schnitger—Silbermann leaned more to the rounder, mellower, more colorful sounds associated with French instruments of the period. Cornets and solo reed stops are more common in this style. The instrument in the cathedral of Freiberg is a hefty three-manual organ of about forty-five stops. Biggs plays it fluently and the recording is remarkably rich and clean and realistic.

Of all the records in this release, the one most likely to make the *Billboard* charts, however, is the "Music for Organ, Brass and Percussion," and it well deserves the popularity it undoubtedly will attain. The original conception for the disc seems to have been to produce a four-channel sonic spectacular. Undoubtedly Biggs, conductor Maurice Peress, and arranger Arthur Harris sat down to choose music that could be appropriately arranged, adapted, and rescored to produce the desired effect. It's not the sort of procedure that often pleases musicians, but thanks to the skills and integrity of this team (producer John McClure must also share the honors), the result is not unmusical and it is thrillingly effective, even in my normal stereo copy—the four-channel disc, unfortunately, was not ready by press time. The seven-minute Strauss *Processional Entry* alone would be worth the price of the disc: written originally for twenty-four wind instruments. Max Reger later added an organ part, and the lush, romantic sonorities are truly splendid. There is no need to discuss the other pieces except to say that in these magnificent, mostly antiphonal arrangements they are as good as, and in several cases better than, their original versions.

The installation of the Möller organ in St. George's Church, New York, is peculiar in that its several divisions are splayed rather willy-nilly all around the building. When heard live the effect is disturbing and unsatis-

factory, but for the purposes of this strictly antiphonally conceived recording that weakness is turned to very good advantage. The good-sized brass and percussion ensemble is awesomely brilliant and sonorous and never less than virtuosic. All in all, this is a superbly entertaining and stunningly produced recording—I've already nearly worn out the Strauss.

"The Magnificent Mr. Handel. Vol. 2" follows closely in the footsteps of its predecessor in offering a wide selection of seventeen instrumental overtures, interludes, marches, and a couple of choruses (sans voices) from Handel's operas and oratorios, some well known in their entirety, others still pretty obscure. It should be pointed out that in spite of Biggs's prominent billing on the cover, this is strictly orchestral music: an organ continuo is of course required, but it is scarcely ever heard. I'm not sure how many of the Royal Philharmonic players journeyed to the Great Packington Church where this recording was made, but it is certainly a larger group than Handel himself was likely to muster up. Groves leads a tight ship, however, and the orchestra plays with style and gentle enthusiasm throughout. Furthermore, the spacious and airy recording contributes nicely to this very agreeable collection.

Last is an intelligently assembled two-disc organ tour of "24 historic organs in eight countries covering seven centuries of music by 24 composers." All of the material here has been previously released, including selections from all five of the "Historic Organs of..." series, which now includes Spain, Italy, Switzerland, France, and England. There are several excerpts from Biggs's earlier, indispensable, two-record tour of all twelve of the surviving Schnitger organs in Holland and Germany titled "The Golden Age of the Organ" (M2S 697—a set every organ enthusiast should own in its entirety). Also included is one of the three Haydn organ concertos (from MS 6682); the Mozart Fantasy, K. 608 (from MS 6856), played on the magnificent Müller organ of St. Bavo in Haarlem; one of the seventeen "Festival" sonatas (MS 6857); and a selection from "The Magnificent Mr. Handel, Vol. 1." This is, of course, a "cream of the crop" collection and performances and recordings are never less than good, almost always distinguished. I can highly recommend it as a general introduction and survey of the European organ from 1390 to the mid-eighteenth century.

**WALTHER:** Six Concertos for Organ, after Italian Masters. E. Power Biggs, organ (Gottfried Silbermann organ in the Cathedral of Freiberg). Columbia M 31205, \$5.98.

**E. POWER BIGGS:** "Music for Organ, Brass and Percussion." E. Power Biggs, organ (St. George's Church, New York); the Columbia Brass and Percussion Ensemble, Maurice Peress, cond. Columbia M 31193, \$5.98. Tape: ● MA 31193, \$6.98; ●● MT 31193, \$6.98.

**GIGOUT:** Grand Chorus in Dialogue. **DUPRÉ:** Heroic Poem. **CAMPRA:** Rigaudon. **WIDOR:** Lord, Save Thy People. **STRAUSS, R.:** Processional Entry. **PURCELL:** Antiphonal Voluntary. **KARG-ELERT:** Praise the Lord with Drums and Cymbals; Triumphal March. **CLARKE:** Trumpet Voluntary.

**HANDEL:** "The Magnificent Mr. Handel, Vol. 2." Fanfares, marches, overtures, and other incidental music from the operas, oratorios, and instrumental pieces. E. Power Biggs, organ (Great Packington Church, Warwickshire, England); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Groves, cond. Columbia M 31206, \$5.98. Tape: ● MA 31206, \$6.98; ●● MT 31206, \$6.98.

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# classical

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**ALKAN:** 12 Etudes dans les tons mineurs, Op. 39: Nos. 8, 9, and 10 (Concerto for Solo Piano). John Ogdon, piano. RCA Red Seal LSC 3192. \$5.98

Alkan's Op. 39 is a hefty mouthful that has managed to down, among other things, a four-movement "piano" symphony, a three-movement solo piano concerto, and a theme with twenty-five variations, each of which supposedly depicts one of the animals from Aesop's fables. I might add that pianists tackling the music will find it a sizably challenging meal as well!

We have had several editions of the symphony, two of the Aesop's fables, and one of the first two etudes in the set. Now we are given the first recording of the concerto. Alkan really knew how to make a pianist sweat. In characteristic form, he makes his "soloist" double for the conductor and sub for a one-hundred-piece symphony orchestra as well. This weirdo composer—half eccentric and half genius—had a superb knowledge of the difference between orchestral and pianistic writing (a distinction that many greater composers, Schubert for example, were quite innocent of). There is never any doubt in this "concerto" as to which are the tutti and which the solos. The "orchestral" portions are strong, blocked out, a mite square-boned (although teeming with inner lines and other jaw-breaking complexities); but when the soloist enters, the scoring turns to flowing arabesques very much in the Chopin manner. Eventually the work enters a surrealistic dream world and the usual clear-cut contrasts almost disappear. One thinks particularly of the "cadenza" near the end of the twenty-seven-minute-long first movement. The difficulties there are of fiendish proportions with the most fearsome-sounding repeated note passage I have ever heard. Just listening to it is enough to give any

even semiknowledgeable person goose bumps. On the whole, the concerto is less structurally well knit than the symphony. The initial material, it seems to me, is slightly naive and commonplace, and Alkan sometimes outstays his welcome. There are, of course, splendid and memorable details, but the entity is too uneven to stand a chance of making it into the standard repertory.

John Ogdon's performance is pretty fantastic. He copes brilliantly with the technical hurdles, and projects a sturdy, clear-cut, powerful reading. Perhaps a Richter or an Arrau could lavish a bit more color and finesse on the writing, and a Horowitz could bring still more voltage and high-strung flair. Still, it is doubtful that one of those supervirtuosos will take on such an offbeat assignment, and thus it is fair to assume that Ogdon has not merely said the only word on the subject of Alkan's concerto, but the last one also. Fine sound, with more ring than on several other Ogdon discs for RCA. H.G.

**BACH:** Concertos for Violin: No. 1, in A minor, S. 1041; No. 2, in E, S. 1042; Brandenburg Concerto No. 3, in G, S. 1048. Pinchas Zukerman, violin; English Chamber Orchestra, Pinchas Zukerman, cond. Columbia M 31072, \$5.98. Tape: ● MA 31072, \$6.98; ●● MT 31072, \$6.98.

Selected comparison:  
 Concentus Musicus Tele. 9508

Pinchas Zukerman is a remarkably talented young man, as any random sampling of his recent recordings will clearly demonstrate, and the critics have been lavish in their praise of his Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn, Wieniawski, Vieuxtemps, and other concerto performances. However, a baroque specialist he is not—and why should he be when he is having such success with repertory in which he is obviously more comfortable?

As we would expect, there is very fine fiddle playing to be heard on this record: A sure technique, good intonation, sensitivity, and intelligence are apparent in each work. The English Chamber Orchestra too can be counted upon to deliver ensemble playing of a very high order. What is missing is any hint of awareness on the part of conductor Zukerman or violinist Zukerman that the fashions in baroque music performance have changed radically since the days when his teachers were students. The lexicon of rhetorical/expressive devices which he uses so effectively in romantic literature is simply out of place here.

Zukerman, a product of New York's Juilliard School, does superbly well what his conservatory training has taught him to do. But music written before Mozart or after Bartók (in other words, music other than the "standard concert repertory") is pretty thoroughly ignored in most conservatories today, and has become "specialists'" territory. Thus, Zukerman's approach to Bach is pretty far away from the currently accepted specialist's view and is much more akin to the attitudes of performers three times his age.

The only alternate recording I would recommend is the Concentus Musicus readings

of these two violin concertos plus the D minor double violin concerto on a superb Telefunken disc. C.F.G.

**BACH:** Orgelbüchlein. S. 599/644; Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns wend', S. 709; Herzlich tut mich verlangen, S. 727. Helmut Walcha, organ (Andreas Silbermann organ in the Church of Saint-Pierre-le-Jeune, Strasbourg). Archive 2708 023, \$13.96 (two discs).

Selected comparisons:  
 Alain MHS 668/70  
 Rilling None. 73015

Toward the end of his stay in Weimar (1708-1717), Bach began to compile a large-scale work that would provide chorale preludes for all the major events of the Lutheran liturgical year. He began by entering the titles of 161 hymns at the top of each page of a blank manuscript book arranged in the order of their use during the course of the year from Advent to Pentecost. Only forty-six chorale preludes actually got composed for the set, however, when Bach left Weimar for the court at Cöthen, where such a collection of organ chorales would have been of little practical value to him.

Bach taught his pupils, when playing chorales, "not to play the songs merely offhand but according to the affect of the words." In this collection we have forty-six finely etched, perfectly proportioned, precisely clear examples of just what he meant. The chorale preludes are quite short, usually just the same number of measures as the chorale itself, which is most frequently found in the upper voice. This melody is accompanied in most cases by freely invented motivic fragments, introduced in the first measure and repeated throughout the work, which illustrate the central idea of the text of the hymn. *Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt*, for instance, represents the fall of man through Adam by means of the descending diminished sevenths in the bass. In three of the Christmas chorales Bach uses the traditional device of ascending and descending scale figures to depict the motion of angels between heaven and earth.

I could go on and on describing the wonders of these forty-six miniature gems, but of course they must be heard—or better still, played—to be fully savored. Walcha's intentions with these chorale preludes, as indeed with all of Bach's works, is to give us the notes exactly as they appear in the Bach Gesellschaft, nothing more and nothing less, with appropriate registrations and tempos. If you're familiar with his

## Explanation of symbols

### Classical:

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**R** Reissue

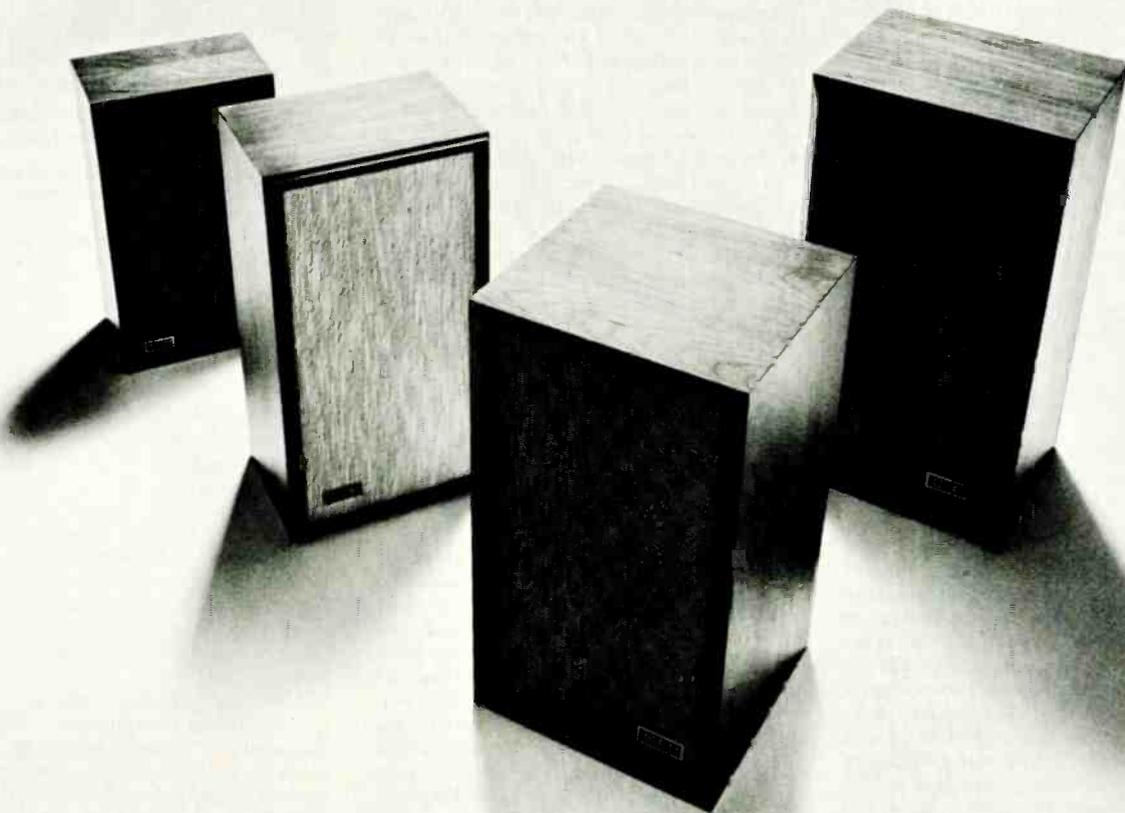
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style, there will not be a single surprise in store for you here. In the larger preludes and fugues and free compositions I feel this approach yields pretty bland (i.e., dull) results: here, however, we don't want much more than the aural "photograph," so to speak, of the score. That rhythmic *rigor mortis* which is so stifling in the larger works is much less objectionable in these miniature proportions.

The organ used here is the so-called Silbermann organ in Strasburg which Walcha also used for his newest recordings included in the recent eight-record box of all Bach's nonchorale-based works. I use the qualification "so-called" because Silbermann's original installation in 1780 consisted of one manual and pedal with sixteen stops; the instrument now comprises forty-one stops on three manuals and pedal. It has been "modernized," enlarged, and moved so many times that it can't possibly resemble what Silbermann originally intended. To my mind it is not a very successful instrument, with too many fat and fuzzy sounds that fail to knit into one ensemble.

You might wish to try Marie-Claire Alain's three-record version from the Musical Heritage Society; she plays a beautiful Marcussen Organ in Denmark, and furthermore includes a straight, four-part harmonization of each chorale along with each chorale prelude. Helmut Rilling goes a step further by having one or two verses of each chorale sung by a choir before and/or after each chorale prelude, though I'm even less fond of his playing and the anonymous organ used in that four-record Nonesuch box is not particularly distinguished.

C.F.G.

**BARTÓK:** Quintet for Piano and Strings. Csilla Szabó, piano; Tátrai String Quartet. Hungaroton LPX 11518, \$5.98.

This disc brings another Bartók curiosity from Hungaroton's ongoing issue of the composer's complete works. Bartók wrote his quintet in the summer of 1904 when he was twenty-three years old, and it was the last of his early works to appear without an opus number. Although remarkably mature for the work of so young a composer, the quintet nevertheless seems overly drawn out and somewhat predictable in its late romanticisms. Although probably of interest primarily to Bartók students, this piece unquestionably occupies an important position in the Hungarian composer's early development: It was his first major composition in the chamber music genre, an area for which he would have had few, if any, native Hungarian precedents. This undoubtedly explains why the influence of Liszt seems so much less marked than in *Kossuth*, the symphonic poem that immediately preceded the quintet; instead, Brahms and the German tradition come to mind here, thus suggesting for the first time a side of Bartók's personality that was to become increasingly apparent in such later chamber masterpieces as the string quartets. The performance by Csilla Szabó and the Tátrai Quartet is both accurate and sympathetic to the spirit of the music, and the liner notes, as usual in this series, are excellent.

R.P.M.

**BEETHOVEN:** Sonatas for Piano: No. 28, in A, Op. 101; No. 31, in A flat, Op. 110. Rudolf Serkin, piano. Columbia M 31239, \$5.98.

The seal of a master looms large here—in fact, it rests rather heavily on these performances. There is a great deal to admire in Serkin's interpretations: personal vision, magnificent attention to linear detail, resplendent pianistic polish (note the uniformity of those trills in the fugal development of Op. 101's finale or the impressive evenness of the treacherous double fourths which come a bit later in the same work). There is also evidence here of Serkin's ever developing bent toward introspection, his growing concern with tonal color.

For all that, this record gave me mixed feelings. There is a certain lethargy and metrical rigidity that I find hard to equate with my own inner metronome and feelings about these transcendental sonatas. The ground plan is obviously a monumental one, but I find disquieting evidence here that Serkin is beginning to align himself with the school of interpreters who feel that to savor their greatness fully, masterpieces (especially German masterpieces) must be made to sound as static as the Parthenon. Serkin will, like that edifice, survive my carping, but for whatever it is worth I submit the reminder that, *contra* local belief, *der Meister* Beethoven is an international rather than a German musical figure.

The sound per se is very fine, especially that of Op. 101 which has a solidity and roundness not always associated with Serkin even in the concert hall. Columbia's processing, though, is baleful—Op. 110 in particular is beset with pops, ticks, clicks, and sputters that compete (often successfully) with the music at hand.

H.G.

**BEETHOVEN:** Trios for Strings: in E flat, Op. 3; in D, Op. 9, No. 2. Grumiaux Trio. Philips 6500 168, \$5.98.

*Selected comparison:*  
Italian String Trio

DGG 2720014

In my survey of Beethoven's chamber music [HIGH FIDELITY, May 1970], I bewailed the fact that the Grumiaux Trio was represented by an incomplete edition of the Beethoven string trios, although the records available (Op. 8 and Op. 9, Nos. 1 and 3) featured one "of the most important violinists of the century" in music ideally suited to his talents. Our patience is at last rewarded. Here are the two missing trios: Grumiaux and colleagues now give us a complete edition on three discs with the Op. 25 serenade for flute and strings as a very nice bonus. The rival edition I had previously recommended, that of the Italian String Trio, offers only five works instead of six, although musically it is an excellent set and continues to hold my high regard.

But no one is likely to find these Grumiaux performances disappointing. The group plays together so well that it is a pleasure simply to hear such ensemble unity and all the felicitous little exchanges it makes possible. The Trio is notable for its tone, which is very warm and refined and on the whole more pleasing than that of the Italians—although the latter group is somewhat more brilliant.

Writing of the Op. 9, No. 1, I observed that the recording "has all of the clarity and presence one might wish" and that the group "excels in lyric warmth" and in "sustained animation and verve gets to the heart of Beethoven's writing." That can all be applied equally well to the new record at hand—a most welcome addition to the current listings.

R.C.M.



Luciano Berio conducts his *Laborintus II* for RCA—a work of genuine fascination.

**BERIO:** *Laborintus II*. Christiane Legrand and Janette Baucumont, sopranos; Claudine Meunier, contralto; Eduardo Sanguinetti, speaker; Ensemble Musique Vivante, Luciano Berio, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3267, \$5.98.

The technique of sequence has dominated Berio's music almost from the beginning: the add-on, the accretion, the geological stratification, the onion-skin layering. Recently, this technique of composing by foliation (it is a way of thinking as well as a technique) produced a series of works that began with *Sequenza VI* for viola, evolved into *Chemins II* for viola and chamber ensemble and further crystallized into *Chemins III* for viola and large orchestra. And one hears reports of a still further use of the same material, for orchestra alone. This could represent either the ultimate in economy or the beginnings of creative exhaustion.

*Laborintus II* represents an earlier sequence, having been derived from the poem *Laborintus* by Eduardo Sanguinetti. The Italian poet, acting as joining agent between the two works, speaks his own lines on this recording, as well as bits of Dante (*La Vita Nuova*, *Il Convivio*, and *Divina Commedia*), Pound, Eliot, and the Bible. In live performances, the voice part has been taken by a soprano (Cathy Berberian), and the substitution of Sanguinetti's elegantly lisped, rather dolorous tones puts a darker cast on the whole matter.

Berio invariably chooses poets of the highest intellectual appeal and then proceeds to treat their words as linguistic counters, as chunks and strands of sound to be used in all combinations alongside, on top of, beneath, and surrounding instrumental events. The result in *Laborintus II* (as in *Circles*, *Passaggio*, *Omaggio a Joyce*, and the like) is a remarkable fusion of simple lyrical sounds and difficult poetic ideas, a heightening of the poetry even while obscuring its words. *Laborintus II* is a little over half an hour long, laid out in five main sections. It employs seventeen instruments, three women's voices (a trio of Swingle Singers in this instance), and the speaker. Fin-

continued on page 68

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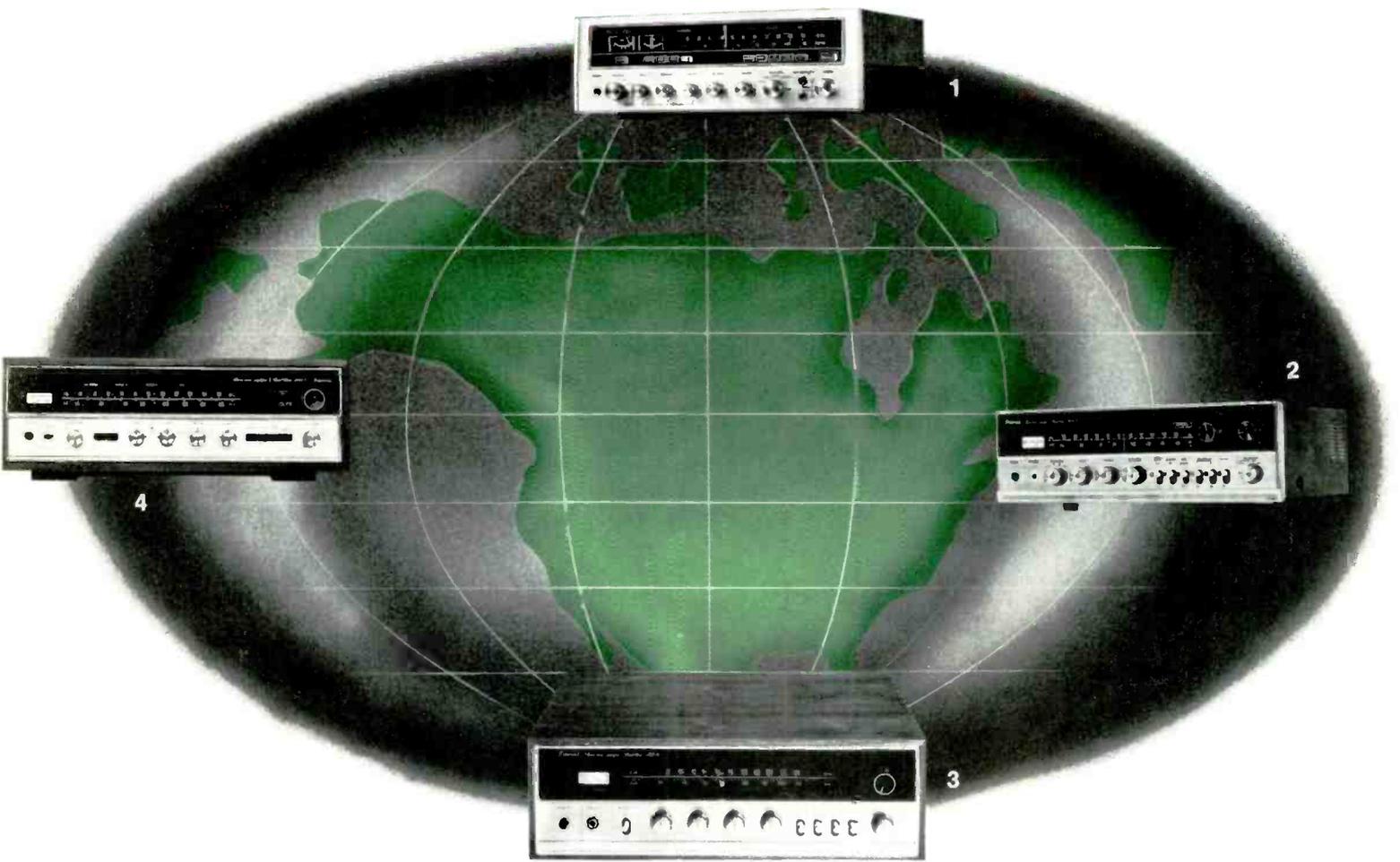
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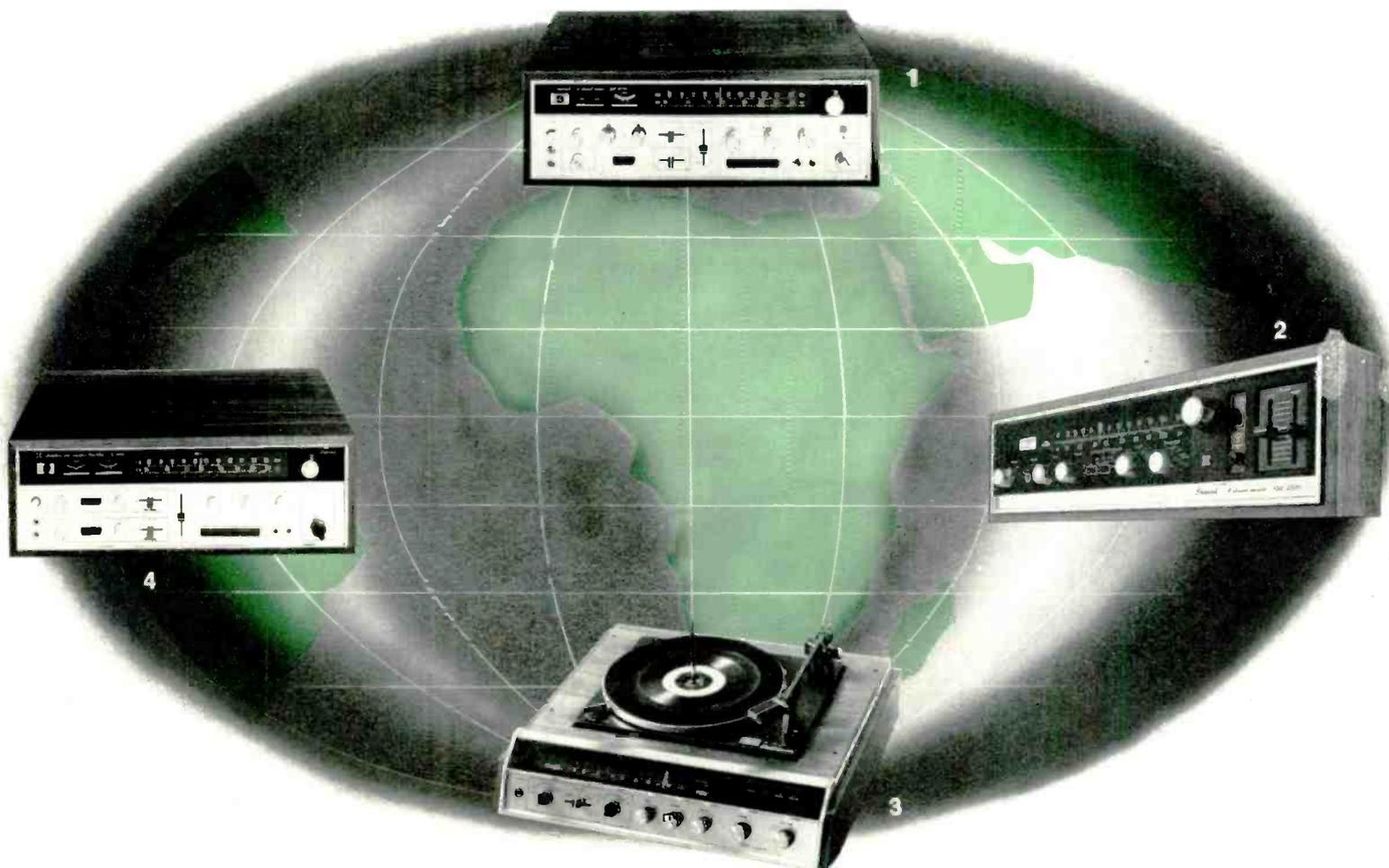
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continued from page 64.

ished in 1963, the work stands between Berio's *Epifanie* and *Sinfonia* and parallels those larger scale pieces in nearly every way. At first hearing, *Laborintus II* seems perilously near to plain hodgepodge, a haphazard collage. The composer uses words and phrases as abstract material, instrumentally, testing them against other vocal, instrumental, and tape sounds for their evocative power over an encyclopedic range of possibilities. But there is more here than the play of sounds across the ear; the words themselves are meant to enter and jostle the brain, even when dimly heard or partly lost.

Thus, in the opening section, against a backdrop of laughter, sustained howling, conversation, whines, cries, and Swinging song, the poet declaims about Dante's youth. The second section, full of exciting flurries, is ultimately frustrating because Sanguinetti's English is so heavily accented that it sounds disconcertingly like his Italian, and very little sense can be made of it. (As in the past with multilingual Berio works, RCA gives no texts, and little helpful detail of any sort about the music itself.) A pseudo-jazz interlude follows—to Berio, the *Inferno* is a rather cool, boppish place—and a tape-cum-instrumental episode subsides into wind-and-waves sibilance in a whispered finale of enervated gentleness. The words at the fade-out are Dante's reflections on music, a point that Berio may or may not mean us to take as his comment on the state of the art.

As may be deduced from the foregoing, *Laborintus II* is a complex work of genuine fascination, though rather diffuse in effect when heard on this disc. Berio, however, intended this score to be presented theatrically, and much of its power would necessarily be lost in any recording. D.J.H.

**BORODIN:** Symphony No. 1, in E flat. **RACHMANINOFF:** The Rock (Symphonic Fantasy), Op. 7. Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. Melodiya / Angel SR 40182, \$5.98.

*Selected comparison (Rachmaninoff):* Previn RCA 2990

At long last, the first stereo recording of Borodin's First (1862-66) gives today's listeners a chance to decide for themselves between the two contradictory historical verdicts on this work: the ecstatic one of its first European audiences, which established Borodin's international fame; the disdainful one of the whole non-Russian musical world in more recent years. Personally, I find both judgments unreasonably extreme. Borodin's own later works, to say nothing of those by Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, et al., far better introduce the (then) new world of exotically colorful Russian music. But on the other hand, and despite its rambling nature and relative lack of the distinctively profiled melodic and rhythmic materials of Borodin's masterpieces, this music does have many, if milder, charms—perhaps more than that if we ever could have a performance by Stokowski.

Unfortunately, Rozhdestvensky is no Stokowski. His reading is enthusiastic but rough and lacking in dramatic conviction. And the tonal qualities here are lacking in opulence, when not frankly coarse—a fault for which the engineer may be more responsible than the or-

#### A Clarification

In my review of RCA's first Quadradiscs last month I wrote that *all* RCA disc releases will be Quadradiscs from now on. This was not exact. I meant to say that all new discs are being recorded for and will be released as Quadradiscs. Material already recorded may be released in stereo (or if a historic re-release, in mono), depending on individual decisions by the company.

LEONARD MARCUS

chestra. Certainly the rather hollow recording doesn't seem to be of very recent vintage.

The shorter Fantasy which fills out Side 2 has been recorded by a different producer/engineer and its markedly superior sonic vividness sounds much more up to date, enough so to give it a slight technical superiority over the 1968 Previn version. The latter's London Symphony performance of this early but quintessentially Rachmaninoff tone poem is smoother and defter than that by the Moscow Symphony, but Rozhdestvensky's greater relish and passion make the work far more dramatically gripping than in Previn's suaver, less forceful reading. R.D.D.

**CARLOS:** Sonic Seasonings. Electronic sound. Columbia KG 3124, \$6.98 (two discs).

Walter Carlos, who is credited in the jacket notes for "Switched-on Bach" and the score to *A Clockwork Orange* (although a cat named Beethoven had *something* to do with that one), here makes a partly successful contribution to a great tradition. The depiction of the seasons in music, poetry, and painting goes very far back in Western culture. Carlos offers a record side for each season, employing instrumental, vocal, and electronic sounds, and the sounds of nature, all stuck together in a series of musical collages. Among other things there are bird

songs and brook-rippings for spring; the buzzing of insects for summer; slow, brown sounds from the brass for autumn; icy dissonances and the wind machine for winter, and rain, rain, rain, rain all the time, starting at least as early as Lincoln's Birthday and not letting up until well after Thanksgiving. Carlos must think we all live in the country, since such characteristic urban sounds of the seasons as those of air conditioners, automobile crashes, and bridge-toll takers saying "Thank you" are not to be found in his work.

These four pieces are not merely assemblages of sound effects: they are not integrated, self-sufficient compositions either. They fall somewhere in between. We are informed by the jacket that they are really intended as background music: but background to what? A.F.

#### CAVALLI: La Calisto.

La Natura Marjorie Biggar (s)  
L'Eternità Enid Hartle (ms)  
Il Destino Teresa Cahill (s)  
Giove Ugo Trama (bs)  
Mercurio Peter Gottlieb (t)  
Calisto Ileana Cotrubas (s)  
Edimione James Bowman (ct)  
Diana Janet Baker (ms)  
Linfea Hugues Cuenod (t)  
Satirino Janet Hughes (ms)  
Pane Federico Davia (b)  
Silvano Owen Brannigan (bs)  
Giunone Teresa Kubiak (s)  
Echo Isla Brodie (s)  
Glyndebourne Festival Chorus; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Raymond Leppard, cond. Argo ZNF 11/2, \$11.96 (two discs).

*La Calisto* is the second of Francesco Cavalli's mid-seventeenth-century operas to be elegantly revived for us by Raymond Leppard. The first, of course, was *L'Ormindo* which had its twentieth-century debut at Glyndebourne in 1967 and since has provided a frothy and painless glimpse of early opera to audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. In many ways the Venetian operas of Cavalli's time were the musical comedies of their era. Aimed to please a well-to-do but varied audience, they featured plots of considerable



Recording *La Calisto*—Hugues Cuenod and Janet Baker discuss a change of sex.

complexity often based on sexual double entendres and assorted disguises designed to appeal to the carnival-loving Venetians.

Calisto is a lovely nymph who, like her mythological sisters Leda, Euterpe, and Semele, has attracted the attentions of the indefatigable Jove. As in most of his amorous adventures, the god is obliged to adopt some disguise to further his cause and since the nymph is a devotee of the cult of Diana, he chooses to take on the appearance of the chaste goddess herself. In this role he has made considerable progress with the naive nymph until the ever-jealous Juno sets out in pursuit of her rival. In the end Calisto is miraculously transformed into a little bear and transported into the heavens to shine forever as Ursa Minor. As a subplot the real Diana betrays her professed chastity by falling in love with a beautiful shepherd, Endymion, and is alternately encouraged and mocked by a group of satyrs and woodland spirits. A few companions for the leading characters and a prologue of allegorical ladies complete the cast. The intertwining plots provide some amusing situations and lots of opportunities for pretty songs, if nothing of monumental dramatic significance.

Actually it is very hard to judge the finer points of dramatic consistency as Cavalli may have conceived them, just as it is impossible to give a valid historical critique of the music, so untrustworthy is Leppard's arrangement of the original materials. Still there is the argument that seventeenth-century opera producers were themselves willing to cut, alter, and rearrange music and plot in the interest of pleasing their audiences. And *La Calisto* is perhaps more a charming bauble than a musicodramatic masterpiece, so Leppard may be justified in presenting its delights in such beguiling if tinsel-wrapped wrappings. For those who want more information about the original form of the opera (there is absolutely none provided with the record), I would refer them to recent articles in *Music and Musicians* (July 1970) and *Musical Times* (May 1970). For others, I say relax and enjoy.

Cavalli would have been a popular composer of any era because he had a gift for writing hummable tunes. One can easily imagine the elegant audience riding home through the canals or strolling through the *calles* of Venice with strains of *La Calisto* in their ears and on their lips. Calisto's lovely opening aria "Pianta ambrose," a lament bemoaning the drought-stricken forest with obvious reference to her own similarly deprived state, is a fine example of Cavalli's memorable melodic writing as is Endymion's attractive apostrophe to the moon, "Lucidissima face," which opens the second act. Jove and Diana are more aggressive suitors and their music with its flashes of virtuosic brilliance and emotionally charged arioso reveals their kinship to Juno and the declamatory goddesses of the prologue. Satirino, a minor character, is blessed with several splendid moments, a catchy arietta "Ninfa bella" and an exquisite aria describing his/her talents and origins in terms far removed from the tasteful grace of the music. The ensembles and chorus numbers are delicious if unfortunately historically suspect.

The transformation, or more correctly, disguise of Jove into Diana is accomplished musically by setting Jove as a bass and the false Diana as a mezzo. I have no doubt that the role was originally sung by a bass with a good falsetto, this being a large part of the fun. In

the Argo performance, Ugo Trama's voice is a bit coarse for Cavalli's elegance, and I must admit that on first hearing I assumed he had been chosen for the truly extraordinary falsetto which gave the false Diana such penetratingly accurate yet curiously sexless notes. It was only after running across an old notice of the Glyndebourne production that I realized it was not Trama but Janet Baker who assumes two parts, that of the false as well as the real Diana. This particular transformation, which makes no sense in terms of the plot, is not mentioned anywhere on the recording or in the notes unless one can deduce it from the fact that Miss Baker's picture is bigger than anyone else's.

The stylish, sensitive, and totally feminine portrayal of the nymph Calisto by soprano Heana Cotrubas is outstanding. Historians tell us much of Calisto's music has been omitted from this version, but there is still plenty to reveal what a splendid musical singer she is. James Bowman sounds a bit hoarse at first, but his fine countertenor makes a graceful Endymion. Janet Hughes deserves special mention for her witty Satirino: she has a lovely voice and I found myself looking forward to her episodes. Hughes Cuenod is amusing in one of those old nurse parts he seems to have a corner on, and on the more serious side Teresa Kubiak is a stentorian Juno. The smaller parts are uniformly well sung. The sound is all very radiant and lush. I have said very little about the Melachrino strings because I assume listeners familiar with Leppard's arrangements will know all about that by now. The engineers have squeezed a lot of music onto four sides and the over-all technical quality is very high.

S.T.S.

**CHAVEZ:** Sonata for Piano, No. 6—See Ginastera: Sonata for Piano.

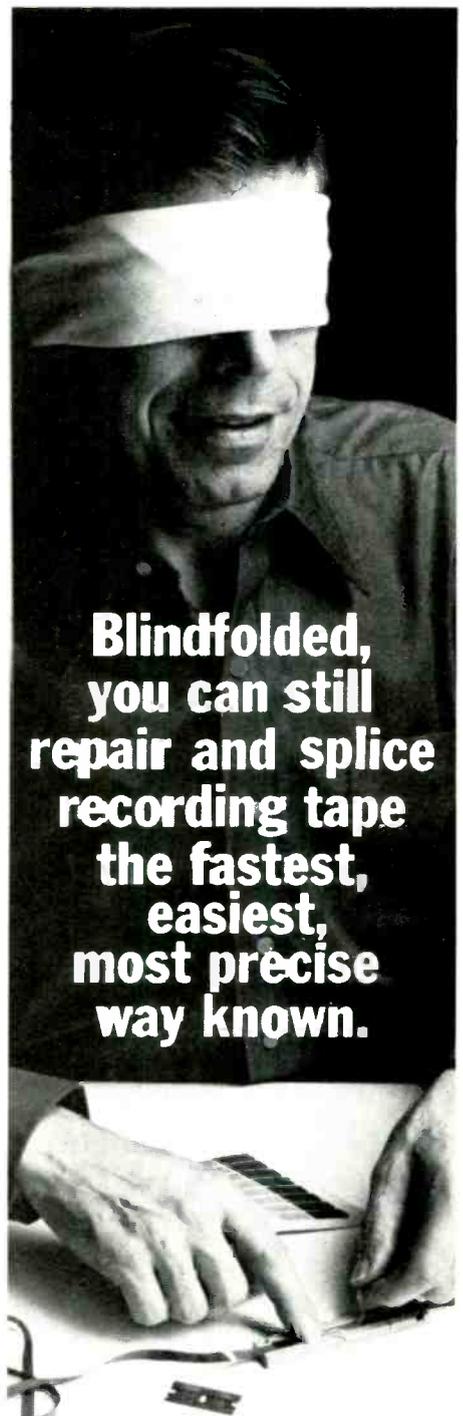
**DEBUSSY:** Nocturnes: Nuages; Fêtes—See Stravinsky: Le Baiser de la fée: Divertimento.

**DVOŘÁK:** Czech Suite, Op. 39—See Vorišek: Sinfonia in D.

**DVOŘÁK:** Symphonic Variations, Op. 78; The Golden Spinning Wheel, Op. 109. London Symphony Orchestra, Istvan Kertesz, cond. London CS 6721, \$5.98.

*Selected comparisons (Symphonic Variations):*  
Sargent Ser. 6003  
Davis Phi. 839706

Dvořák, whose *Symphonic Variations* are undoubtedly influenced by Brahms's great examples in this form (the Handel, Paganini, and Haydn variations), has based the work on a relatively simple and apparently undistinguished folk melody. At first he varies the theme essentially in its entirety, sticking to his opening key; but later he breaks the melody up into brief components for a set of fantasy-like variations in a variety of keys that usually preserve something of the over-all structure of the original theme. There are in all twenty-seven, usually brief, variations, and the work closes with a loosely structured fugue. Throughout, Dvořák employs the mastery of orchestration that he was later to display in his last



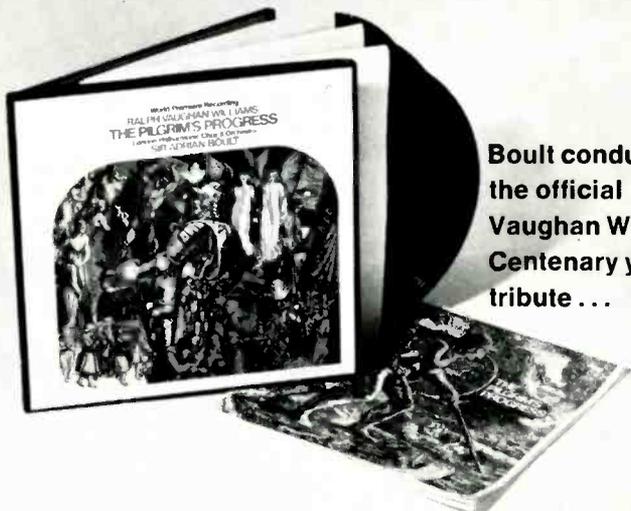
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*The Golden Spinning Wheel* is a late work, one of five symphonic poems composed after his last symphony and his return from America. That visit seems to have intensified Dvořák's already deep commitment to his native Bohemia, and these late tone poems may reflect the influence of Smetana. In style, illustrative content, and generally looser organization, *The Golden Spinning Wheel* provides a sharp contrast with the earlier Variations, though both bear the stamp of Dvořák's individuality.

At the moment, this is the only recording available of *The Golden Spinning Wheel*, though there are excellent versions of the *Symphonic Variations* by Colin Davis (coupled with the *Serenade for Strings, Op. 22*) and by Sir Malcolm Sargent (in his set of Smetana's *My Fatherland*). Sargent's recording is older, less sharply pointed rhythmically and in tone color than either of the two more recent records. Davis, also with the superb LSO, produces a somewhat less flexible performance, rhythmically and melodically, than Kertesz, who has already established himself as one of the best conductors of Dvořák's orchestral music.

P.H.

**FRANCK:** Symphony in D minor. **RAVEL:** Fanfare from "L'Eventail de Jeanne." Hilversum Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski, cond. London Phase 4 SPC 21060 \$5.98.

**B** **FRANCK:** Symphony in D minor. Orchestre National de la R.T.F., Jean Martinon, cond. Musical Heritage Society MHS 1099, \$2.98 (Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Stokowski first recorded the Franck Symphony with his Philadelphians in 1927 (RCA Victor Orthophonic album M 22) and their second 1935 version (RCA Victor M 300) undoubtedly influenced an entire generation to think of the work as a sentimental, quasi-religious, ultra-sensuous effort. With the appearance of the first Monteux and Beecham editions in 1941, Stokowski's exaggerated views quickly fell into disrepute. Today's discophile has all sorts of Franck Symphony interpretations to choose from and a new one from Stokowski can therefore be warmly welcomed as wholesome fun. Unlike the ridiculous and pathetically inept Tchaikovsky Fourth which I recently dismissed, the new Phase 4 Franck is an authentic Stokowski reading.

It is, in many ways, rather similar to the 1935 Philadelphia account. The Hilversum Radio Philharmonic is an expert ensemble, not the equal of the vintage Philadelphia to be sure, but generally adroit, sonorous sounding, and remarkably attentive to their guest conductor's fancy pitching. Considering the idiosyncracies of tempo and accent, the special demands for portamento and palsied "espressivo." I am astonished that these players could adapt so quickly and so well. Stokowski, strangely, begins the opening Lento rather briskly, with an almost impressionistic line and flowing, caressing warmth. There are, to be sure, swells and silent-movie melodramatic devices from the outset, but things

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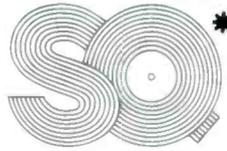
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get really wild only with the appearance of the syncopated second theme (subjected to cat-and-mouse *ritardandos* and *accelerandos* which take the breath away). The slow movement, as before, is really slow (no *Allegretto*, this!) and milked for all it is worth.

The finale is treated to a diverse variety of tempos and scansiones which, to put it mildly, do not help the cumulative aspects of the writing.

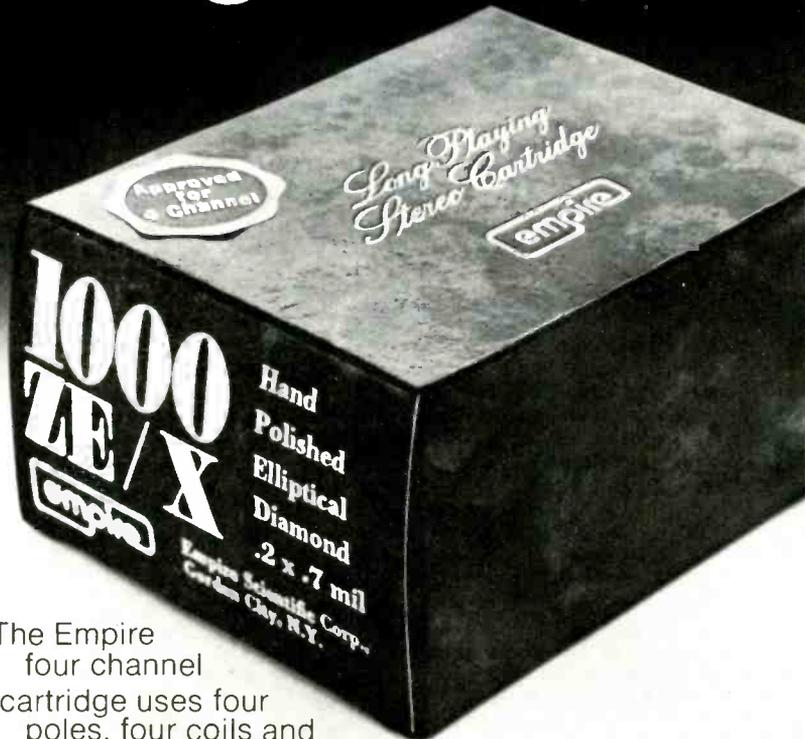
For all that, I feel rather warmly toward this record. I may be gulled by sentimentality (I grew up with M 300), but if you can accept this disc as a party record rather than a legitimate statement of Franck's intentions, I think you will find it surprisingly sensible and musical. The little Fanfare was Ravel's contribution to a children's ballet. It is tastefully written and,

aside from a frizzy trumpet tone or two, pellucid in execution here. The Phase 4 sound is rich, forward in placement, and surprisingly conservative vis-à-vis instrumental spotlighting. Definition is clean but there is little that could be called gimmickry. On the whole it is pleasant to find that the old magician has not lost his touch.

The Musical Heritage liner contains a statement that is worth quoting: "Jean Martinon, who has studied this Symphony very thoroughly under Franck's disciple Vincent D'Indy, stresses the necessity of a more concentrated and less episodic conception, the current performance being in contradiction, according to him, with Franck's real wishes." Martinon fully lives up to his stated beliefs. He delivers a superbly sinewy, protean account of

the thrice-played score. While avoiding the bathos of the standard (and Stokowski's superstandard) interpretation, he also manages to steer comfortably clear of the perfunctory matter-of-factness that marred, say, the Paray interpretation. Martinon obtains tighter, more judiciously responsive playing from the French National R.T.F. Orchestra than Beecham did on his still available Seraphim edition, and his cultivated treatment of detail confirms my belief that Martinon is one of our most sadly underrated podium masters. In sum, I would put this reasonably priced, very capably reproduced reading alongside the warm, passionate, middle-of-the-road Monteux/Chicago as the best currently available. It is idiomatic and musical. H.G.

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**GINASTERA:** Sonata for Piano; Twelve American Preludes. **CHAVEZ:** Sonata for Piano, No. 6. Adrian Ruiz, piano. Genesis GS 1008, \$5.98.

Selected comparisons (Ginastera):

Guralnick  
Somer

Mace 9085  
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Ginastera's impressive piano sonata is one of those big, full-bodied finger-breakers which, like so many recent piano works, owes a great debt to Prokofiev and, to a lesser extent, Bartók. But it is also marked by many originalities, particularly in its obsessive rhythmic language and distinctly colored harmonic style, which go several steps beyond Prokofiev and Bartók. Even more welcome on this disc, however, are the twelve *American* Preludes, which I believe receive their premiere recording here. Ginastera's piano style proves to be most effective in the fire-and-brimstone, toccatalike passages such as in the first and fourth movements of the sonata or in the dazzling Prelude No. 6 (*Homenaje a Roberto Garcia Morillo*). His quieter moments—the sonata's third movement, or in several of the preludes—often seem lacking in substance and conviction, and they occasionally border on the puerile (unlike similar sections in his orchestral works, which often have a haunting impressionistic quality to them).

Adrian Ruiz offers splendid, extremely spirited, virtuoso performances of both the sonata and the preludes, which have been very nicely engineered here as well. His only true competition comes from the Guralnick rendition of the sonata on Mace (the Somer version seems particularly weak in comparison): whether you purchase this recording or the Guralnick depends pretty much on whether you want the Ginastera *American* Preludes or Guralnick playing the Barber sonata (which has very strong rivals in Horowitz and Cliburn).

What, you may ask, about the Chavez sonata? Carlos Chavez's recent Piano Sonata No. 6 is probably the silliest piece of music I have ever heard from a contemporary composer. Unlike a work such as Prokofiev's *Classical* Symphony, which is totally identifiable with its composer, the Chavez sonata is written in an insipidly Haydnesque idiom that simply has no contact with this century—or even with the last! In spite of the alleged formal originalities pretentiously outlined in the jacket notes, I would defy even the most dyed-in-the-wool Chavez scholar to identify, without previous knowledge, his hero through this sonata. Such senile resurrectionism is best left to the likes of Rosemary Brown, who

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would at least seem to have a more valid claim than Chavez on the spirits of dead composers.

R.S.B.

**R** **HANDEL:** *Semele*. Brenda Griffith and Jennifer Vyvyan, sopranos; Anna Poliak and Helen Watts, altos; John Whitworth, countertenor; William Herbert and Robert Ellis, tenors; George Prangnell and George James, basses; St. Anthony Singers; New Symphony Orchestra of London; Thurston Dart, harpsichord; Anthony Lewis, cond. Oiseau-Lyre OLS 111/3, \$17.94 (rechanneled stereo, three discs; from Oiseau-Lyre 50098/100, 1956).

Way back in 1956 when this recording first ap-

peared, Oiseau-Lyre did a pathbreaking job; Handel's dramatic works were almost totally unknown in this country, and this glowing apotheosis of the joys and pangs of love came as a revelation to most of us. The stereophonically refurbished old mono remains a distinguished achievement, for Anthony Lewis largely overcomes the old "oratorio manner," the pseudo-churchly style, and lets the protagonists live. The singing is excellent, much of it superlative; the continuo by the late Thurston Dart exemplary; and the general direction commendable. The sound is remarkably good even considering today's standards, only in some of the choral numbers does it recede a bit, and in the final choruses there is a strong pre-echo.

But such an important and unfamiliar work deserves, indeed requires, notes: Oiseau-Lyre

merely gives us the libretto. *Semele* is listed among the oratorios; but in reality it is a full-fledged English music drama, one of the glories of the operatic literature. Handel could not fool his audience, though; they expected trumpeting hallelujahs and British heroes in biblical disguise—*Semele* was a total failure. Nor was its fate much better in posterity. The Victorians were horrified that the beatified composer of *Messiah* had set to music an "adulterous" love affair, creating a marvelously uninhibited and seductive woman. They toned down the more ardent portions of Congreve's text, made cuts by the fistful, and then under the editorship of that gray pedant, Ebenezer Prout, published a wretched "concert edition." This Novello score was then the only one known to performers—if *Semele* was performed at all. Oiseau-Lyre presents the integral work, and if you don't have it by all means acquire the re-release.

I recommend that you lift the tone arm after the chorus commenting on the outcome of the drama. Contemporary mores demanded a happy ending and Handel obliged with a thinly disguised hallelujah chorus complete with trumpets. It is incongruous and destroys the magnificently dramatic and moving final scene. P.H.L.

**B** **HAYDN:** *Symphonies, Volume 4*. Philharmonia Hungarica, Antal Dorati, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15182/5, \$11.92 (four discs).

No. 73, in D (*La Chasse*); No. 74, in E flat; No. 75, in D; No. 75, in E flat; No. 77, in B flat; No. 78, in C minor; No. 79, in F; No. 80, in D minor; No. 81, in G.

**HAYDN:** *Symphonies: No. 26, in D minor (Lamentations); No. 77, in B flat; No. 34, in D minor*. English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard, cond. Philips 6500 084, \$5.98.

With the arrival of Volume 4 of his complete Haydn edition, Dorati is at the threshold of the six "Paris" symphonies. Leppard, on the other hand, continues to offer selected works from the early and middle years of Haydn's symphonic writing. This is the third such collection of his to appear in recent months.

The Dorati sets require the purchase of a group of symphonies (nine in this case), which may be more than you want. On the other hand they carry a reduced price and clearly offer the most music for your money. I think they also offer the most stylistically accurate performances. In this particular case, both conductors give us their views of No. 77, and I prefer Dorati's orchestral sound to that of the English ensemble and Dorati's crisp, clean accents and cool, singing phrases to Leppard's more emotional performance.

Taken by itself the Leppard sounds quite pleasant indeed, but if you start listening with a really critical ear the strings are playing with too much vibrato, everything is softened and rounded off at the edge, and expression is laid on too thick. (This is even more pronounced in the two earlier symphonies, which appear to be distinctly romanticized.) It just isn't right for early classical music where this type of sentiment is alien to the style. Some may, indeed, find the warmer quality of the English orchestra more to their liking, in which case, let your taste be your guide. But Dorati is my man for No. 77, and since it is the greatest work in either collection, that rather decides things.

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The final works in this set bring Haydn to the first years of his supreme achievement. It is absurd that the Symphony No. 82 is widely played and that No. 81 is relatively unfamiliar. One of the functions of editions such as this is to set things right, and Dorati does it splendidly. R.C.M.

**LISZT:** "Franz Liszt's Greatest Hits of the 1850s." Jorge Bolet, piano. For a feature review of this recording, see page 58.

**MAYER:** Two Pastels; Andante for Strings—See Skrowaczewski: Concerto for English Horn and Orchestra.

**MOZART:** Quintets for Strings: in B flat, K. 174; in C minor, K. 388/406; in C, K. 515; in G minor, K. 516; in D, K. 593; in E flat, K. 614. Tátrai Quartet; Anna Mauthner, viola. Qualiton LPX 11438/40. \$17.94 (three discs).

Mozart turned to the composition of string quintets late in his creative life. Besides the early K. 174, which is more like a divertimento, and a transcription of the K. 388 C minor wind serenade, he wrote four such quintets. But why quintets instead of quartets, of which he wrote many fine ones? Though string quintets were composed in the eighteenth century—the amiable Boccherini turned them out by the dozen—they were not a major representative form like the quartet, and even after Mozart few were written. Yet for Mozart the string quintet became the ultimate expression in the field of chamber music. In fact, the quintet (the clarinet quintet also belongs here) was no longer merely a form of instrumental music like the rest of Mozart's wondrous chamber music: it became a personal, highly subjective experience and expression like the mature piano concertos. Various explanations have been advanced for this change from quartet to quintet composition, but the underlying reason must have been that tremendous presence that had to be faced and against which Brahms still struggled: Haydn. In the quartet Mozart had to contend with a tradition, in the quintet he could follow his own way; it is remarkable how much more subjective are the works in the latter form.

The string quintet is not a quartet with an extra viola (or cello) tacked on: it is a different species of chamber music with its own tone, texture, and materials. In Mozart's quintets the relationship between exposition and development is changed, the former usurping more and more the function of the latter and thereby altering the balance between suspense and release: the tension is more equally distributed. Besides the greater individualization of ideas, there is a different concept of sonority in the quintets: the construction is more complex; the slow movements, even some of the minuets, show a predilection for the dynamic flow that is basic in the sonata-allegro movements. Of the four late quintets the first two form a pair. The C major may well be the largest chamber music work composed in the eighteenth century, and its proportions are matched by the variety and quality of its ideas. Interestingly, and quite against the tradition, in both of these works the minuet (more nearly a scherzo) is the second movement. The G minor, equally monumental and rich, is nevertheless altogether different, for it is a great outpouring of the soul's despair. The remaining two works, less introspective, show a most admirable combination of elaborate counterpoint with simple thematic substance, yet this polyphony is nowhere abstruse and "learned": the music flows lightly without the slightest inhibition. The E flat quintet was Mozart's last chamber music composition.

The Tátrai Quartet is made up of first-class instrumentalists who are well-disciplined ensemble artists. Vilmos Tátrai, the first violin, carries the main burden and he negotiates the difficult passages with ease; but his tone can get a bit thin and cold in the higher regions. While he does not indulge in sliding like a Mischa or a Toscha, there is at times a soupçon of it, which in this style is not regarded with favor. These quintets are particularly rich in melodic ornamentation and trills, and occasionally Tátrai deals with them a little perfunctorily. The other players are steady and on the whole the ensemble is excellent. While these flaws are not too serious, the performances do not attain the ultimate in interpretative finesse. The Tátrais do well with the last two quintets because they have the technique needed for their spirited movements, but in the first pair many questions remain unanswered and the breadth of the "new" genre and its sonorities are not fully exploited. In the G minor the great inner tension is only indicated, and the drastic change in intensity between the final allegro and the supercharged preceding movements is not sufficiently contrasted. The playing is good, but what is missing is the unequivocal location of the strategic points.

The C minor quintet loses from transcription. It is not nearly so colorful and powerful as the original wind octet; on the other hand, the version for five strings (Mozart changed next to nothing in the composition itself) exemplifies the new five-part texture. The early quintet and the C minor are well performed, the latter with real bite that would have been welcome in the first pair of the late works.

And finally a complaint. While in the somewhat shorter quintets the Tátrai Quartet follows classical protocol to the letter, in the C major and G minor the repeats are not taken. More than that, they do not repeat the second half of the minuet—and that is really not

cricket. Apparently, different though the political ideology of present-day Hungary may be from ours, when it comes to cramming an entire work on one side of a disc, their methods are startlingly similar to those practiced by our ruthless capitalists. P.H.L.

**B NIELSEN:** Piano Music. Arne Skjold Rasmussen, piano. Vox SVBX 5449, \$9.95 (three discs).

Suite, Op. 45; Five Pieces, Op. 3; Humoresque-Bagatelles, Op. 11; Symphonic Suite, Op. 11; Festpræludium; Chaconne, Op. 32; Theme and Variations, Op. 40; Three Pieces, Op. 59; Piano Music for Young and Old; Little Five Note Pieces In All Keys, Op. 53

The current man of the hour is Messiaen insofar as offbeat piano music is concerned (the Ives vogue which preceded seems to have peaked). Who will be the next hero? Your guess is as good as mine, but both Nielsen and Janáček have had their banners taken up recently and both, it seems to me, are thoroughly deserving candidates.

The present extensive Nielsen collection has been available for some time but only now has been sent for review, and just as RCA's pioneering disc with John Ogdon's performances of Opp. 8, 32, 45, and 59 is marked for deletion, Ogdon's versions were fine ones and some might prefer his slightly more understated, objectively balanced account of the splendid Op. 32 Chaconne. I also felt that Ogdon ended the early Op. 8 Suite a bit more piquantly and humorously than Rasmussen. On the other hand, Vox's collection gets a rounder, more colorful kind of reproduction and Rasmussen is a magnificently assured Nielsenite. His robust, forthright, at times downright impassioned playing bespeaks not only a first-class pianistic command (which, goodness knows, is demanded by some of Nielsen's thick chords and rhythmically involved passage work), but a blood affinity and love for the material as well.

Nielsen's stylistic development is a subtle one: As he grew older, his music became more rarefied, slightly more at arms' length so to speak. The earlier essays are a bit thickly romantic in texture (like late Brahms and early Reger), but even there one discovers a great deal of willingness to pursue a highly individualistic bent. And for all the occasional har-



Nielsen—the composer at the keyboard: a sunny, life-asserting personality.

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monic strife, the composer's wide-open, sunny, life-asserting traits always emerge intact. In sum, this is an inexpensive set which ought to be in every serious collection of piano music. H.G.

**PAGANINI:** Twenty-four Caprices, Op. 1. Itzhak Perlman, violin. Angel S 36860, \$5.98.

**PAGANINI:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in D, Op. 6. **SARASATE:** Carmen Fantasy, Op. 25. Itzhak Perlman, violin; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Lawrence Foster, cond. Angel S. 36836, \$5.98. Tape: ● 8XS 36836, \$7.98; ● 4XS 36836, \$7.98.

*Selected comparison (caprices):*  
Zukofsky

Van. 10093/4

The prize winners have been proving their mettle. Itzhak Perlman, the Leventritt winner of 1964 is obviously—like his Leventritt successors Pinchas Zukerman and Kyung Wha Chung—here to stay. The fact has been clear long before now, but because these two recordings mark Perlman's Angel debut, a few words of benediction seem in order. He is a brilliant violinist of a very modern cast: technically superb, musically intelligent, and highly efficient. He knows when to give all, when to show restraint, when to melt a little. Yet he does not come across as a calculating type, as this description might imply. He simply knows what he is about, and he can achieve what he aims for with a conviction that carries right to the back row at Carnegie

Hall or through the living room speakers, as the case may be.

Perlman's Paganini caprices might serve as a standard house reference on the work: They are articulate, nicely paced, firmly conceived, well executed—with the occasional exception of flat intonation, which I'm sorry even to mention because the technical difficulties make a sour note or two so understandable. There are no startling insights here, but these are caprices you will be glad to have around day in and day out—in contrast, let me say, to the very original set by Paul Zukofsky, which is rather like an alligator in the bathtub: You might want to look in on it now and then, but to some the view may be repellent.

And now for a bit of sad nostalgia. Perlman dedicates this disc to his friend, the late Michael Rabin, and states that Rabin's influence was a source of inspiration in preparing the caprices. And alas, I think Rabin outclasses Perlman in many instances. His consecutive octaves are a shade cleaner (Nos. 3 and 7), his phrasing is sometimes more shapely (the Presto of No. 3), his tender moments more genuinely warm (the opening of No. 20), his style more elegant (No. 5). In short, the Rabin set, long deleted, remains, I think, the finest version that I know. But the Rabin is not to be had, and if I were buying the caprices today I would buy the Perlman.

The entire set is squeezed onto a single disc without any noticeable loss of sound quality. But the studies are grouped in fours, with bands only between these sections, and if you are groping for a particular caprice you have your work cut out for you. I dislike the arrangement very much, though with thirty-seven minutes of music to a side the necessity for it is obvious.

No backward glances are necessary when it comes to the Paganini/Sarasate recording. Perlman's beautiful tone, which ranges from pure silver up top to a wonderful robust lushness on the low strings, has full play in both works. The soul-shattering variety of tricky bowings demanded in the Paganini are handled with the utmost aplomb, and the impassioned melody line in the second movement gets its full share of warmth. The Sarasate *Carmen Fantasy* is one of the all-time great entertainment pieces in the repertoire—besides adapting quite beautifully to the violin—and Perlman embraces it with both subtlety and brio, and with great rhythmic flexibility. Each work benefits immensely from the contribution of Foster and the Royal Philharmonic, who provide jubilant and very knowing accompaniment. S.F.

**PERSICHETTI:** Symphony No. 9, Op. 113 (*Janiculum*)—See Schuman: Symphony No. 9 (*Le Fosse Ardeatine*).

**RACHMANINOFF:** The Rock (Symphonic Fantasy), Op. 7—See Borodin: Symphony No. 1, in E flat.

**RAVEL:** Fanfare from "L'Eventail de Jeanne"—See Franck: Symphony in D minor (Stokowski version).

**RAVEL:** Rapsodie espagnole—See Stravinsky: Le Baiser de la fée: Divertimento.

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**ROSSINI: Stabat Mater.** Pilar Lorengar, soprano; Yvonne Minton, mezzo; Luciano Pavarotti, tenor; Hans Sotin, bass; Chorus and Orchestra of the London Symphony Orchestra, Istvan Kertesz, cond. London OS 26250, \$5.98.

*Selected comparison:*  
Schippers

Col. 6742

Istvan Kertesz conducts Rossini's *Stabat Mater* as if he feels it needs to be defended against the charge of meretriciousness. Unlike Heinrich Heine, who in the year of the work's first performance vindicated it on the very grounds of the full-blooded spirituality for which it had been censured in some quarters, Kertesz seems to be ashamed of its emotional demonstrativeness. In his hands the music sounds timid and remote. He has diminished its vigor and attenuated the joyous swagger of its religious certainty.

The kind of sensibility that derives from the German cultural tradition has tended to find nineteenth-century Italian music unsympathetic, especially devotional music. The direct engagement with human feelings which the *Stabat Mater* expresses (as does the Verdi Requiem) must inevitably appear sacrilegious to those who automatically identify counterpoint with piety and sensuousness with insincerity. Yet it was this piece that Rossini cited as evidence of his religious faith just before receiving the last rites. Moreover, selections from it were sung at his funeral service. For anyone who, like Rossini, feels that worship does not preclude delight, Kertesz's strait-laced view of this score will prove chilling. Failing to understand the composer's rapturous treatment of distress, Kertesz has removed the music's verve and seriously limited its emotional scope. Rhythms are four-square, figurations get smoothed over, the orchestral sound is without requisite attack. The results suggest Northern reticence more than Southern openheartedness. But in the end the most dispiriting feature of Kertesz's reading is its dynamic blandness, his refusal to allow the music a proper kind of assertiveness. As a result there is an air of reverential gentility about this performance that inhibits sympathy. Kertesz has avoided emotionalism only to fall prey to sanctimoniousness.

The recording is of a piece with Kertesz's musical views, since it is restricted both in volume and in range. All the voices have been miniaturized, their individual qualities leveled out. The Pavarotti one hears on this disc bears only slight relationship to the singer one hears in the opera house. The lyric amplitude of his tone has been reduced and therefore falsified. Hans Sotin's beautiful *sotto voce* singing in the adagio sections of "*Eia mater*" is insufficiently distinguished from his forte singing, so that the scope of his voice too is quite misrepresented. This attempt to scale down the voices and to minimize their idiosyncrasies does not ensure the smooth blend in concerted passages that was obviously intended. The two women in particular seem mismatched when singing together, especially in thirds.

Even though it's hard to gain a true idea of the voices here, Pavarotti seems to be singing well, if not with all the suavity his remarkable gifts imply. By present-day standards his "*Cujus animam*" is very fine, yet the phrasing is sometimes tentative and the sustained high D flat lacks ease. Pilar Lorengar sounds her usual resplendent self at the top of the staff. Otherwise, her vibrato weakens the musical

line, and in the "*Inflamatus*" makes the trills hard to distinguish from the surrounding music. Yvonne Minton sings with taste, but with too much discretion. As in the case of Lorengar her vibrato is excessive to my ears. Hans Sotin, though like Pavarotti hampered by conductor and recording, has a splendid voice, the tone being rich, warm, and solid. Moreover, he phrases well, if without much expressivity. He does not try to sing the trills in "*Pro peccatis*," however, and since such ornaments are an intrinsic part of Rossini's music the effect is graceless. Nevertheless, Sotin's is an important and beautiful voice and he provides the major pleasure of a disappointing performance. The London Symphony plays very well and the chorus, within the artistic limitations of this venture, sings beautifully. By comparison with Columbia's *Stabat Mater*, London's is a model of suavity. Schippers' lively conducting has much to recommend it, but his vocal quartet is impossibly clumsy and amateurish. Kertesz has attained a level of technical distinction unglimped by Schippers—at the cost, however, of musical truth. D.S.H.

**RUBINSTEIN:** Symphony No. 2, in C, Op. 42. *Ocean*. Westphalian Symphony Orchestra, Richard Kapp, cond. Candide CE 31057, \$3.98.

This is an ocean symphony by a composer whose deep water experience was limited (at the time of composition) to the Baltic Sea. It is, in short, evocative rather than pictorial. Rubinstein was a fabulous virtuoso pianist educated in Berlin and Vienna. In the eyes of the Russian nationalists, he was an outsider, German-trained and therefore suspect (Tchaikovsky suffered some of the same fate). But for a time, in the final quarter of the nineteenth century, Rubinstein the composer was one of the most conspicuous representatives of Russian music to the world at large. The present symphony was heard in both New York and Boston in 1873, the composer con-



Anton Rubinstein—the rising tide of romanticism washes ashore the *Ocean* Symphony.

ducting, and may be regarded as a repertory piece of brief life. The Chicago Symphony played the *Ocean* Symphony in its first season, 1891–92, and had offered nine works of Rubinstein to its subscribers before it played a note of Mussorgsky.

Anyone who has done any amount of reading in the history of American symphonic performance has run across the *Ocean* Symphony. It is good to have it on records and learn firsthand what it sounds like. One can distinguish between three versions of the score: the original in four movements, the first revision with six movements, and the final revision with seven movements. The recording at hand does not correspond exactly to any of these. It is in five movements. The original slow movement is omitted and the seventh movement, the "storm scene" is not heard. I am not going to quibble. This is probably all the *Ocean* Symphony that anybody but a dedicated Romantic revival enthusiast is ever likely to want.

The music fairly calls for the Philadelphia Orchestra and "the Ormandy Sound," things which the Westphalian Symphony and conductor Kapp (he is an American, born in Chicago) cannot supply. This is a good European provincial ensemble, reasonably well led, but recorded in a way that turns caution to sonic mediocrity.

Most listeners of today would probably take this music for minor Tchaikovsky, sort of a watered-down *Manfred* Symphony. The themes have a Tchaikovskian flavor, although the actual line of influence may have been the other way round, and the German training shows in the craftsmanship with which the music is put together. One can perfectly well see why the work enjoyed some success, but one can also see why it gave way to stronger and more imaginative scores. R.C.M.

**SARASATE:** Carmen Fantasy, Op. 25—See Paganini: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in D, Op. 6.

**SCHUMAN:** Symphony No. 9 (*Le Fosse Ardeatine*); **PERSICETTI:** Symphony No. 9, Op. 113 (*Janiculum*). Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. RCA Red Seal, LSC 3212, \$5.98.

Anyone whose only musical impressions of Rome are limited to the bubble and sparkle of the famous Respighi pieces is due for a jolting return to reality upon listening to these two recent American symphonies, both of which were inspired by different parts of the "eternal city." William Schuman's Ninth Symphony reflects the grim mood instilled in the composer upon visiting the Ardeatine Caves, where the Nazis performed a reprisal massacre on over 300 Italian citizens in 1944. Austere from start to finish, the symphony offers a typically Schumanesque blend of forlorn, rather harsh melodies with long passages in which melody disappears and is replaced by successions of skittering instrumental and rhythmic configurations. So extended are some of these, in fact, that one has the impression that Schuman conceived of the work as a ballet; for in spite of the haunting, occasionally Brittenesque moods Schuman creates, one feels, in parts of this symphony, the lack of a vital link that would give more coherence to the over-all work.

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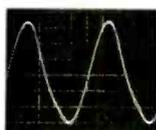
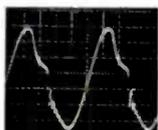
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The same holds true—even more so, in fact—for Persichetti's *Janiculum*, written at the Villa Aurelia situated on the top of that high Roman hill named for the two-faced god, Janus. While more fluid and sonorous than the Schuman Ninth, the Persichetti work seems to offer even less justification for its successive events, and everything thus operates on a more superficial level—in spite of Persichetti's philosophical pretensions, which are made to sound rather silly in the liner notes.

Both symphonies are splendidly recorded (the reverberation level and the mixing were done with a perfect sense of balance), and Eugene Ormandy and his forces turn in meaty, spirited performances, although the string playing is not always what it should be. I might add that I have yet to put my hands on one of

RCA's "Dynamlex" records that does not have a huge warp in it, and the present disc is no exception. At best, this sort of thing causes extra surface noise. One can also note a nasty electronic buzz toward the end of the Schuman. At any rate, both scores offered here manifest no small amount of skilled writing, particularly in their strong rhythmic language and their brilliant yet totally different approaches to instrumentation. Both also offer a moody, unstereotyped view of Rome that is well translated at moments in the music. But neither impresses me as a totally effective whole: there is just too much going on that one feels does not need to happen. R.S.B.

**B** SCHUMANN: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 54; Car-

naval, Op. 9 (orch. Glazunov and others); Dinu Lipatti, piano (in the concerto); Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15176, \$2.98 (electronic stereo).

*Selected comparison (concerto):*  
Lipatti, Karajan Odys. 32 16 0141

Dinu Lipatti's studio recordings of the Schumann and Grieg concertos are still available back to back on Columbia's budget Odyssey label. If you still don't have that classic, you should remedy the situation posthaste. The present Ansermet-led performance is the first issue of a live concert in Victoria Hall, Geneva on February 22, 1950. It's a bit broader and more lovingly expansive than the Karajan-directed edition, but its ruminative qualities are always held in firm reserve. If the pianist's widow is to be believed, Lipatti was in shocking physical condition and hadn't been able to practice the piano in weeks. You'd never guess it from the impeccably clean, unforced pianism which is virtually as polished as on the Odyssey disc. There is, as a matter of fact, a tiny memory flub in the C major section of the first movement. It's a minuscule imperfection which can happen to anyone and I would not for a moment wish to imply that Lipatti is in anything other than superlative form. Ansermet gives sympathetic assistance. The late Swiss maestro was a fine Schumann interpreter and an old hand at this concerto (incidentally, he also had recorded it once before—with Fanny Davies, one of Clara Schumann's last surviving pupils). He is less driving than Karajan, and perhaps that factor is what makes the live performance so different from the studio one. I wouldn't want to be without either.

Mme. Lipatti's contention that the concert "was recorded on tape by radio Sottens" notwithstanding, the performance at hand is clearly derived from 78-rpm acetates. London's stereo reprocessing is of the sort that puts all the highs in one channel and the lows in the other. Fortunately, a flick of the switch easily restores a solid, slightly tubby mono sound in which the close-up piano dominates the slightly woolly orchestra. Sonically, the disc is about on a par with the Columbia, which is to say, perfectly serviceable.

One might have wished for a better coupling. A superlative Bach D minor Concerto with Lipatti and Van Beinum exists and might have been used. There are, reputedly, Lipatti performances of Bartók's Third and Chopin's F minor. Perhaps even that legendary BBC broadcast of the *Waldstein* somehow managed to escape destruction. All of which makes London's choice even more deplorable. The bowdlerization of *Carnaval* "by Glazunov and others" is a gaudy monstrosity and despite Ansermet's excellent presentation and fine sound, I doubt that I shall be hearing it again. Barring the availability of the aforementioned Lipatti material, Ansermet's fine old mono recording of the Schumann *Spring* Symphony would have easily fit onto one side and would have been a far better discmate for the concerto.

These quibbles aside, Lipatti admirers (which must be just about everyone who loves fine piano playing) are indebted to London for expanding the pianist's lamentably small legacy. H.G.



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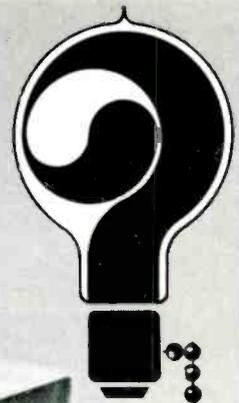
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**SHOSTAKOVICH:** Sonata for Violin and Piano, Op. 134; Quartet for Strings, No. 13, Op. 138. David Oistrakh, violin; Sviatoslav Richter, piano (in the sonata); Beethoven Quartet (in the quartet). Melodiya/Angel SR 40189, \$5.98.

Shostakovich's violin sonata must stand, in my opinion, not only as one of the finest works in the Russian composer's extensive *oeuvre* but as a milestone of twentieth-century chamber music. Like the two works surrounding it—the Twelfth Quartet, Op. 133 (which Melodiya/Angel has inexplicably not yet released in this country) and particularly that grim masterpiece, the Fourteenth Symphony—Shostakovich's violin sonata seems to have grown out of the composer's increasingly poor state of health and his brushes with death. Yet that feeling is in no sense mere gratuitous morbidity: it is simply Shostakovich's customary ability to adapt his musical language to the particular nature of his subjective visions. The opening theme in the piano, for instance, while not exactly a tone row, is built around all twelve notes of the chromatic scale (the Twelfth Quartet goes even farther in this direction); it's as if Shostakovich finally felt emotionally and aesthetically (rather than intellectually) justified at this point in his life to move closer to the atonality he has often flirted with in his melodic lines. And the entire work creates a remarkable dependence-independence relationship between the violin and the piano, resulting in a constant tension particularly within the rhythmic and melodic elements of the music. One might also single out the weird *Nachmusik* passages appearing first in the opening movement and then cyclically returning to close the last.

The Oistrakh/Richter interpretation on this disc comes from a live (and, I had thought, mono-only) recording of the sonata's first public performance, and it is a hair-raiser on every account. How trivial a few noises from the audience and a few technical imperfections in the playing seem when compared to the total vitality of the collaboration: The soloists take chances here one feels they simply would not risk in a studio performance. The result, to give but two examples, is an incredible momentum in the brilliant scherzo (second) movement and a stunningly climactic rendering of the two cadenzas that peak the last movement. The recorded sound is both bright and full-bodied.

It will be interesting to hear the eight a cappella ballades of Shostakovich's cycle *Devotion* (Op. 136) and the composer's music for Kozintsev's film version of *King Lear* (Op. 137), the two works separating the Fourteenth Symphony from the Thirteenth Quartet; for the latter work seems to be yet another variation on death that has, fortunately, belied the premonition that I (and several other people) had that Shostakovich's Fourteenth Symphony was to be his last work. The Thirteenth Quartet is, in fact, one of the strangest, most other-worldly pieces Shostakovich has ever written. From the desolate viola solo that closes the work to the morbid, expressionistic atmosphere of the middle section with its jazzlike rhythms, almost everything in this quartet strikes one as gloomy, distorted, almost neurotic. Yet like the violin sonata, the Thirteenth Quartet is an exceedingly well-wrought work, reminding one of Bartók in its cyclical, archlike form. One finds, perhaps, a

few too many references to Shostakovich's past quartets, solutions that do not quite seem to fit this new quartet at times. But the composer maintains a constantly profound level of communication and expressivity, and his intentions are carried out with extraordinary skill (special mention should be made of violist Vadim Borisovsky, to whom the work is dedicated) and conviction by the Beethoven Quartet, whose beautifully balanced efforts have been particularly well re-created by the stereo effect here. **R.S.B.**

**SKROWACZEWSKI:** Concerto for English Horn and Orchestra. **MAYER:** Two Pastels; Andante for Strings. Thomas Stacy, English horn; Minnesota Orchestra, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, cond. Desto DC 7126, \$5.98.

This is the Record of the Month so far as this reviewer's assignment is concerned, and one of the very great records of the year, thanks entirely to Skrowaczewski and Stacy. The concerto for English horn seems to be the first composition by the distinguished conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra to reach American discs, and it is a masterpiece.

It seems to have been inspired by the extraordinary playing of Stacy, the English horn player of the Minnesota Orchestra. He is none of your "Oh-lay-ee-oh-lay-ee-oo" *cornu inglexists*: he has a tremendous tone and he doesn't hesitate to use it; furthermore he knows how to get the instrument to produce double notes, which sound sort of squawky but interesting, and some unprecedented harmonics as well. In order to dramatize the English horn as much as possible, Skrowaczewski uses no other reeds in the orchestra, but he loves the big ensemble and what he does with brass and percussion against strings and English horn must be heard to be believed. This is really a concerto for orchestra with special emphasis on the English horn and one of the few works of that kind that can stand up alongside the famous *Concerto for Orchestra* by Béla Bartók, which it does not resemble in the least.

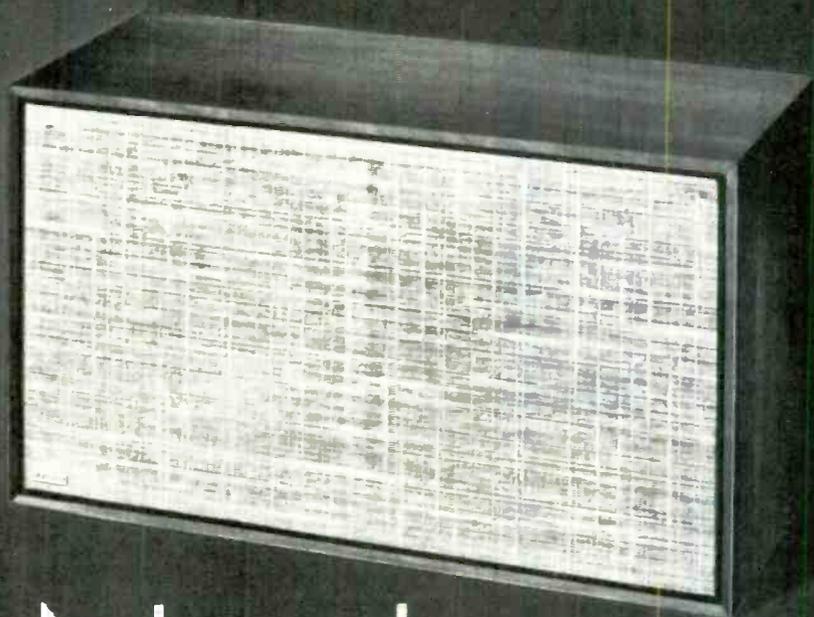
The pieces by William Mayer are pleasant and effective, especially the Andante for Strings. **A.F.**

**STRAVINSKY:** *Petrushka* (1911 version). Paul Jacobs, piano; New York Philharmonic, Pierre Boulez, cond. Columbia M 31076, \$5.98.

**B** **STRAVINSKY:** *Pulcinella Suite*; Symphony in Three Movements. Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond. Seraphim S 60188, \$2.98 (from Angel S 36248, 1965).

**R** **STRAVINSKY:** *Oedipus Rex*.  
Narrator John Westbrook  
Jocasta Shirley Verrett (ms)  
Oedipus George Shirley (t)  
Creon Donald Gramm (bs)  
Messenger John Reardon (b)  
Shepherd Loren Driscoll (l)  
Tiresias Chester Watson (bs)  
Chorus and Orchestra of the Opera Society of Washington, Igor Stravinsky, cond. Columbia M 31129, \$5.98 (from Columbia MS 6472, 1964).

**H** **STRAVINSKY:** *Le Baiser de la fée*; *Divertimento*. **DEBUSSY:** *Nocturnes*:



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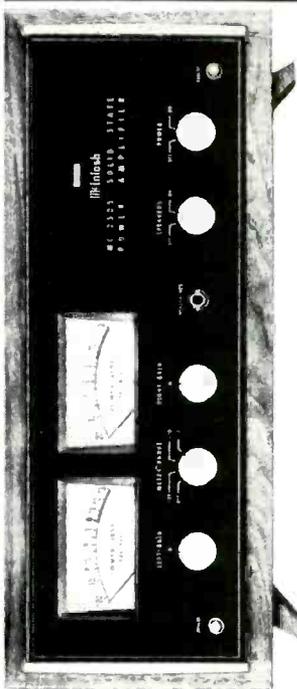
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Nuages; Fêtes. **RAVEL:** Rapsodie Espagnole. RAI Orchestra (in the Ravel); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra (in the others), Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Bruno Walter Society BWS 708 (available to members of the Society, 74 School Street, Waltham, Mass.).

For all the authority that Stravinsky's own recordings possess, and will retain, there is every reason to welcome alternative approaches. Although the results may not always constitute unqualified successes, they are usually instructive—and by no means in consistently negative ways. This quartet of discs gives us more variety of Stravinsky performances than we have had of late.

The 1911, or deluxe, version of *Petrushka* has in recent years been less favored by conductors than the more economical 1947 scoring, and so Boulez' crystalline performance, with the New York orchestra at something near top form, is most welcome. The brilliance and clarity of the playing—very much a result of the conductor's careful attention to matters of intonation and ensemble—make translucent more portions of the work than any other recording I know: one might point especially to the complex passage leading up to the magician's entrance in the first scene, or the various "big accordion" textures in the fourth, as exemplary. Nor is there any loss of rhythmic intensity in the achievement of such sonic grace, for it throws Stravinsky's textural disjunctions into the greatest possible relief, while Boulez maintains an iron grip on the metrical relocations and dislocations.

The only serious competition, as far as the 1911 version is concerned, was Monteux's Boston disc (RCA LM 2376), rather brashly recorded and occasionally less steady of tempo: since Monteux conducted the first performance of *Petrushka* in 1911, his conducting retains historical interest (as does the composer's own driving statement of the revision), but the Boulez is now top choice. (Incidentally, Paul Jacobs has now become—I believe—the only pianist to have taken part in recordings of both *Petrushkas*; he could not be bettered in either.)

Klemperer's approach to *Pulcinella* and the *Symphony in Three Movements* is equally straightforward in the obvious ways, and well played by the Philharmonia. Although the tempos are slower at times than the composer's (in his later recordings, at any rate), they are generally within the range of the metronome markings and not in themselves problematic. What is problematic, to my ear, is the lack of point and lift in the accenting and articulation (feminine endings have a way of effacing themselves out of existence)—and this is where the Stravinsky recordings are still supreme, despite their untidy moments.

*Oedipus* is, of course, one of the most significant Stravinsky scores, and the unavailability of a composer-conducted version has been a striking lacuna in the catalogues, happily remedied by this reissue—a good job, if not quite the equal of the mono version made in Cologne in 1952. Less happy is the curtailment of the composer's program note, and the text of Act II has been garbled in the course of resetting the libretto leaflet. The remastered sound is still not ideally defined, and there is some blasting on high brass notes—but there is also Shirley Verrett's sumptuous Jocasta, excellent work from the other soloists, and the

very specific character that Stravinsky gives to every note.

Finally, under the auspices of the Bruno Walter Society (see *HIGH FIDELITY*, June 1972), an organization evidently—and laudably—catholic in its enthusiasms, we have a unique example of Wilhelm Furtwängler's way with Stravinsky (from 1951–53 broadcasts). Alas, the sound of the source material is far from ideal, with some patches of unsteadiness and a marked hiss, nor was the Berlin Philharmonic's playing on this occasion anywhere near impeccable. But there is uncommon care with phrasing, in ways that bring out important motivic connections of a sort that Stravinsky himself tended to take for granted. At the same time, the matter of rhythm is not slighted, and the tempos are well chosen save for a certain tendency to rush in the material based on Tchaikovsky's *Humoresque*. I particularly admire the flute solo in the Variation of the last movement, and there are similar felicities that will outweigh the numerous bumbles, at least for the dedicated Stravinskyite.

Furtwängler performing the French Impressionists is another unusual cup of tea. This side of the disc is better recorded, and both orchestras play with considerable accuracy, if also with just enough schmaltz (not only string portamento, but also a stylistically unwonted forcefulness of stress accent) to give a somewhat stodgy result, especially in the Ravel, about which the conductor seems not to have any strong convictions. The two *Nocturnes*, however, are very consistent readings, with quite specific attention to melodic shape: one feels quite certain that Furtwängler found in these pieces a substance that interested him, although it emerges in a form that slights other, equally important aspects of Debussy's conception. D.H.

**R SWEELINCK:** Variations, Toccatas, and Fantasias for Organ and Harpsichord. Gustav Leonhardt, organ (St. Laurenskerk in Alkmaar) and harpsichord. Cambridge CR 3508, \$5.98.

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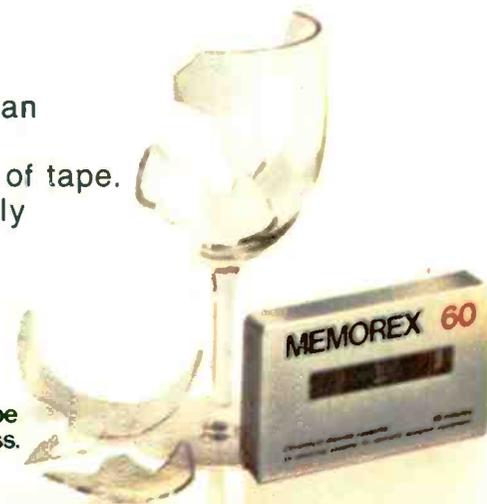
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ligent harpsichordists. Furthermore, he has contributed extensively to the new edition of Sweelinck's complete keyboard music, published by Alsbach, so he certainly knows the territory well. He does sound somewhat more comfortable on the harpsichord side of the disc than the organ side: He plays the harpsichord with a smile, while there seems to be a hint of a knitted brow when he's on the organ bench. However, the differences are only slight and noticeable only in direct comparison. The performances on both sides are really remarkably moving and communicative: Leonhardt's exquisitely conceived phrasing and subtle rubato bring each piece alive with real flair and style.

This record was first released by Cambridge in 1963, then inexplicably deleted from the catalogue in 1969. Despite its age, the sonic quality is excellent—many modern recordings don't sound as good—and surfaces are first rate. We're indeed fortunate to have it available again.

C.F.G.

**TIPPETT:** Little Music for String Orchestra; Concerto for Double String Orchestra; Fantasia Concertante on a Theme of Corelli. Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. Argo ZRG 680, \$5.98.

Michael Tippett has become increasingly well known in this country during the past few years, and this disc makes a significant contribution to his works currently available on record here. These three works for string orchestra cover the years between the late '30s and early '50s (1939, 1946, and 1953 respectively) and they help considerably to focus our picture of the first large phase of Tippett's career. Although these pieces fail to make a sufficiently strong impression to suggest a composer of the very first rank, they nevertheless reveal Tippett to be an enormously gifted musician working with a sure hand in a highly eclectic compositional style. The general orientation of all three works is conservative and neoclassical, but Tippett's approach to traditional procedures seems much less forced and mannered than that of many followers of the school. Indeed, this is music of a remarkably sunny disposition (one of its several English characteristics), and although I find that they suffer from a certain lack of tension, it is difficult not to be won over by their sheer exuberance.

The performances by Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Orchestra match the quality of the music, both in ease of execution and in their evocation of effusive good spirits, making this record a particularly pleasant introduction to Tippett's music. Anthony Payne's notes and the recorded sound are also excellent.

R.P.M.

**VIVALDI:** Concertos for Various Instruments and Orchestra. Kammerorchester Paul Kuentz, Paul Kuentz, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2530 211, \$6.98.

Concertos: for Two Violins, Lute, and Continuo, in D; for Viola d'amore, Lute, and Strings, in D minor; for Mandolin, Strings, and Organ, in G; for Two Flutes, Two Bassoons, Two Trumpets, Two Mandolins, Two Theorbos, Cello, and Strings, in C.

An attractive Vivaldi concert, both in choice of works and in the quality of performances, which are robust, well paced, and rhythmically

alive. The potential danger in any work involving mandolins is of course, that a single note on the mandolin has no sustaining power whatever (far less than lute or guitar), and it takes some sleight of hand to avoid an overdose of plink, plink, plink. Modern repertory allows the mandolinist to use an almost continual tremolo, but the Vivaldian must employ embellishments to get the most he can out of any given pitch, especially at slow tempos. The embellishments in the Largo of the Mandolin Concerto in C are fairly elaborate and accomplish their purpose: this movement alone makes an interesting lesson in eighteenth-century performance practices.

The jolliest of the works here is the last concerto in the above listing, involving all those pairs of instruments that march by in turn as if they were on their way into some musical Noah's Ark. (There is some substitute instrumentation in this performance, guitars replacing theorbos, etc., but the effect seems undiminished.) Another plus for the disc is that the viola d'amore comes across well, with its slightly plaintive, mysterious voice intact. S.F.

**VOŘIŠEK:** Sinfonia in D. **DVOŘÁK:** Czech Suite, Op. 39. English Chamber Orchestra, Charles Mackerras cond. Philips 6500 203, \$5.98.

The Voříšek Sinfonia will undoubtedly lend itself to musical one-upmanship parlor games in which the host defies his unsuspecting guests to identify this music—post-Haydn certainly, but not much later; a contemporary of Beethoven or possibly an extremely talented young composer under Beethoven's spell, nationality uncertain, but certainly in the international style of early eighteenth-century Vienna.

Jan Vaclav Voříšek (or Johann Hugo Wozischeck as he was known in Vienna) was a native of Bohemia who spent the major portion of his brief life as a musician and civil servant in Vienna between 1813 and 1825. He had studied with Tomášek in Prague and with Hummel in Vienna. A friend and fervent admirer of Beethoven, he composed piano music that is said to have influenced Schubert; like John Field's nocturnes, his impromptus foreshadowed the more intensely Romantic music of Chopin.

This Sinfonia in D shows that Voříšek had learned from Haydn and Mozart how to develop a highly proficient and sometimes quite original style; but its time scale and expressive impulse seldom go beyond the range of Beethoven's earliest compositions. The second movement begins with an impressive premonition of dark tragedy, but fails to sustain or develop the implications. Nowhere, not even in the Scherzo where folk materials might have been most appropriate, is there any hint of the composer's Slavic origins. The Bohemians of this era were still musically a part of the Austrian empire. With the imaginative and forceful reading here by the English Chamber Orchestra under Mackerras, this symphony offers considerable interest and provides a great deal of fun, if not substantial profundity.

I also cannot imagine a more ingratiating performance of Dvořák's *Czech Suite*. Here the conductor does not attempt to inflate the music beyond its slight and graceful nature—Dvořák used his native Czech materials more

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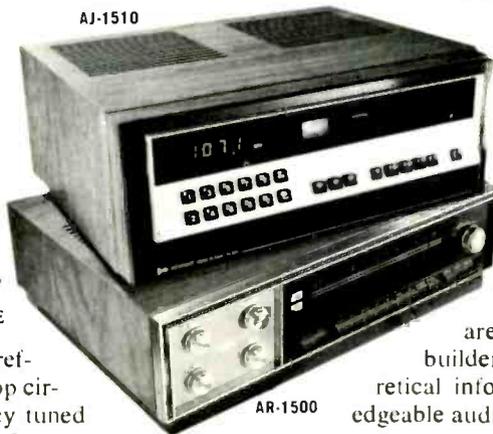
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forcefully in other works, notably the *Slavonic Dances*, than he does here. Stylistically, of course, this suite is a world apart from the Vofšek symphony of but a generation earlier; it is filled with the kind of authentic folk materials—rhythms, melodies, and colors—that Vofšek must have known in his youth but completely ignored in his music.

This is an exceptionally attractive coupling performed with a sympathetic understanding of the distinctive styles. Some may find the bass excessive, but a treble adjustment readily corrects the perspective. P.H.

**WAGNER:** Songs and Arias. Birgit Nilsson, soprano; London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. Philips 6500 294, \$5.98.

Wesendonk Lieder. Der fliegende Holländer: Senta's Ballad. Rienzi: Gerechter Gott. Die Feen: Weh mir, so nah' die fürchterliche Stunde.



## Master Menuhin, Prodigy

by Shirley Fleming

WE ARE SUPPOSED to shudder at the lot of the prodigy—pushed out of the nest by gleeful parents (so tradition goes) into the hectic, exhausting, and eventually destructive world of commercial music-making. Behold, then, the statement (part of it) by Menuhin on this album jacket: "In listening to these recordings [I remember] the child grappling with the intransigent violin and finding an enormous sense of fulfillment and self-expression, of a totality of purpose, challenge, and ideal. . . ." Not every prodigy is a Menuhin, of course, but it is interesting to meditate on the fact that in some cases the fledgling not only flies high at the start but maintains his altitude and looks back on the whole affair with warmth and a sense of gratitude. This is not to say that Menuhin has not had his violinistic problems. The periods of unreliable intonation, the tone difficulties, the sometimes tortured overinvolvement in interpretation are no secret. But they probably do not stem from prodigyism.

Menuhin, New York-born and San Francisco-raised, made his debut at seven playing the Lalo *Symphonie espagnole* with the San Francisco Orchestra. But the real career began at eleven, with debuts in Berlin, New York, Paris, and London. The recordings on this disc pick up at age sixteen with the 1931 Paganini *CampANELLA* and reach to age twenty-two, the year of the Wieniawski *Légende* recorded with the Orchestre des Concerts Colonne under the direction of Georges Enesco (the only orchestral performance in the collection). The performances are simply astonishing—evidence of a voracious, devouring talent that takes each of these display

Improbable as it may seem, Birgit Nilsson and Colin Davis have come up with a Wagner recital that duplicates only a single selection from the soprano's previous discography (Senta's Ballad, which was on her very first American recording, Angel 35540, now deleted).

The biggest novelty, of course, is the aria from *Die Feen*, a fantasy opera that Wagner composed to his own libretto in his twenty-first year, under the spell of Weber and Marschner. The aria of Ada, a fairy in love with a mortal (cf. *Die Frau ohne Schatten!*), is a big, rambling piece, demanding a technique similar to that appropriate for Rezia's "Ozean" in *Oberon*, and if Miss Nilsson lacks the necessary flexibility, she offers nonetheless considerable thrust and musicianship. Here and there, as elsewhere in this program, notes are not perfectly tuned, especially when the

full voice is required to move rapidly, but her soft singing is still impressively controlled. (Further excerpts from *Die Feen*, recorded at a "junior festival" in Bayreuth in 1967, can be heard on German Colosseum STM 4002, available at some import dealers—somewhat ragged, but nonetheless informative.)

Adriano's aria from *Rienzi* is not so uncommon, but it is good to have this strongly sung version, complete and in the original key (most mezzos take it down, and it is often drastically cut, especially in such classic 78 versions as that by Schumann-Heink). The distance Wagner traveled in the decade after *Die Feen* is further attested by the *Holländer* piece, with the relative proportions of emulation and originality now completely reversed. Miss Nilsson was a better voice for Senta fifteen years ago, for the heavier sound of today makes for a less consistent legato, less precise intonation.

For once, a liner note is straightforward about the orchestrations of the Wesendonk songs: they are not Wagner's but Felix Mottl's, although the *Träume* scoring follows in most details the version Wagner made (of that song only) for solo violin and chamber orchestra; although these songs are often cited as progenitors of the orchestral song cycles of Mahler, they are in fact neither orchestral nor cyclical. I much prefer the originals, for the rhythmic definition of the piano parts is beclouded in the orchestral versions. However, it is easy to see why Birgit Nilsson—unlike, say, Tiana Lemnitz, who made on 78s the classic version of these songs—might prefer the larger dynamic framework provided by the greater sonority, and she achieves some notable singing here, especially in *Im Treibhaus*, where the line of the phrases is superbly sustained, thanks to the conductor's subtle accenting.

Even in the unfamiliar pieces, the London Symphony plays well, and Davis keeps things moving through the numerous stops and starts of the early arias with real skill. Add to this a good recording job, and texts and translations. This is a record that, either because of the repertory or the singer, will probably find its way into most Wagnerian collections. D.H.

**WEBER:** The Complete Piano Music. Hans Kann, piano (with Rosario Marcliano in the four-hand works). For a feature review of this recording, see page 59.

**ZELENKA:** Lamentationes Jeremiae Prophetarum. Nedda Casei, alto; Theo Altmeyer, tenor; Karel Berman, bass; Ars Rediviva Orchestra, Milan Munclinger, cond. Supraphon 1 12 0883, \$6.98.

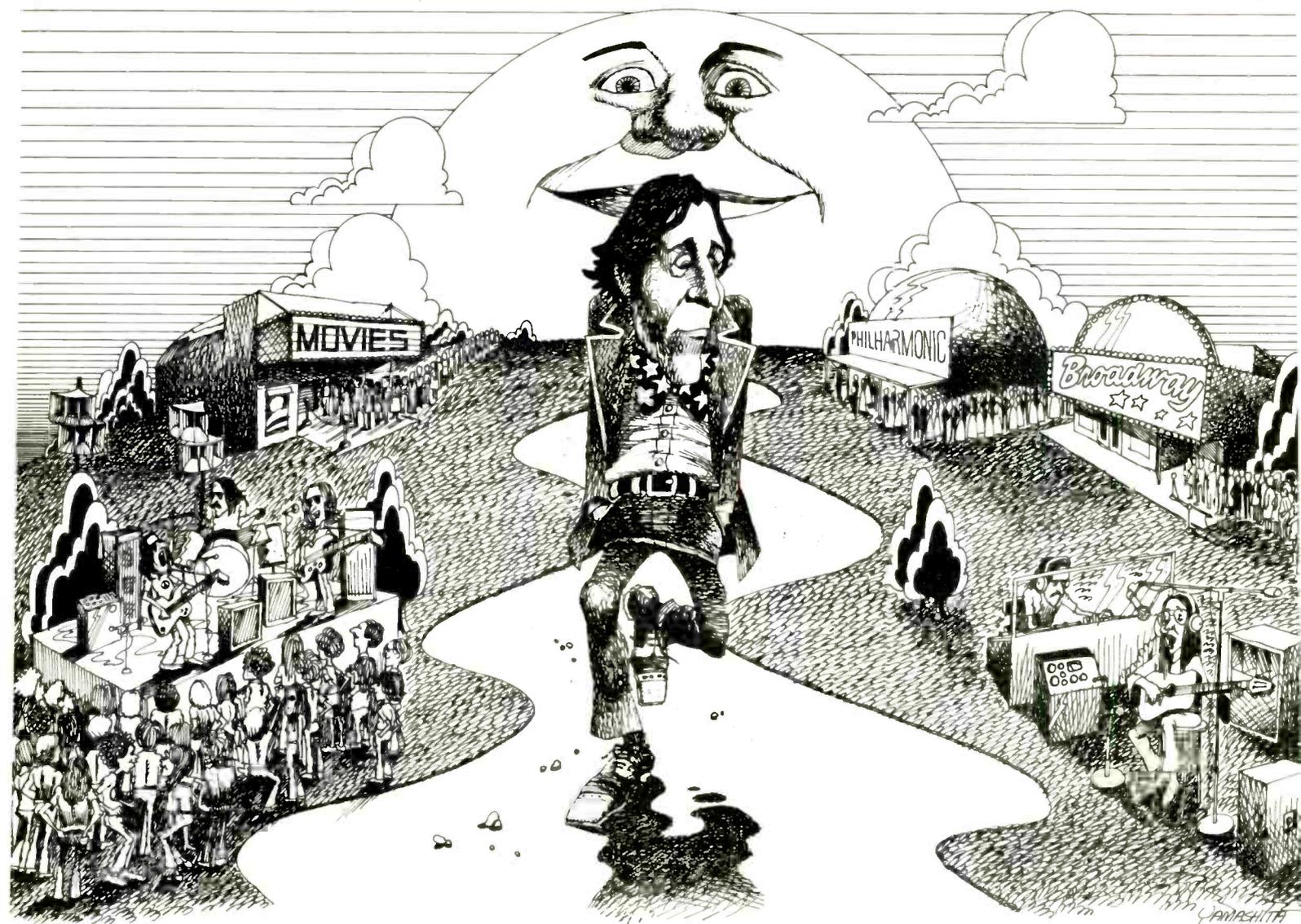
One of the more remarkable discoveries of my week has been this sampling of the vocal music of Jan Dismas Zelenka, a Czech double-bass player who became court composer at Dresden, and whose life span (1679–1745) coincides more or less with that of Bach. Zelenka, *Grove's* informs us, wrote no fewer than twenty-one Masses and 108 psalms, cantatas, and motets, among much else, and to judge from this recording he had a notable gift for expressive vocal writing and interesting orchestral polyphony. These four solo cantatas, in Latin (texts provided), are from a set of six written for the three Easter holy days (two cantatas for each day). The Lamentations of Jeremiah on which they are based fall into a

pieces by the throat and fashions it with so much immediacy that it seems newborn on the spot. The tone is refined and incisive, the intonation razor-edged, the bow control almost beyond belief (note the flying staccato in the Bazzini *La Ronde*—an example of particularly exuberant virtuosity—and the *détaché* in the Paganini *Perpetuum mobile*, where the notes travel almost faster than the ear can follow). Not all the pieces are fireworks. The quieter ones are equally impressive, and the simplicity of feeling in the Schumann-Kreisler Romance bespeaks the deep musicality and seriousness that is so much a part of Menuhin.

The recorded sound ("enhanced for stereo") is perfectly acceptable; there is some surface scratch but the Menuhin tone burns through it like fire through gauze. Original HMV numbers are given on the album, along with the names of the accompanying pianists—among whom the most familiar name is that of Arthur Balsam. This is a record that no admirer of Menuhin or of the art of fiddle playing will want to miss.

**YEHUDI MENUHIN:** "The Legendary Early Recordings." Yehudi Menuhin, violin; various accompanists. Orion ORS 7271, \$5.98 (electronic stereo, recorded in 1931–38).

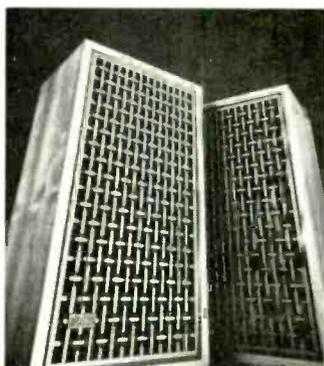
**PAGANINI:** La Campanella; Perpetuum mobile. **GRANADOS-KREISLER:** Spanish Dance No. 5. **BAZZINI:** La Ronde des lutins. **BRAHMS-JOACHIM:** Hungarian Dance No. 1. **WIENIAWSKI:** Légende, Op. 17. **RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF-HARTMANN:** Flight of the Bumblebee. **SCHUMANN-KREISLER:** Romance in A. **DE FALLA:** Danse espagnole.



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three-against-one scheme: Nos. I, II, and IV express mourning over the lost Jerusalem, a spirit summed up in a line from No. I—"The Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions." No. V—in some ways the most vital of the four—sings the praises of the Lord and voices hope for salvation: "The Lord is good unto them that wait for him." The special flavor of each text is conveyed in the music, and though the author of the album notes finds some pictorial descriptiveness in the orchestral writing, à la Bach, it seems to me that his examples are farfetched.

What is not farfetched are the marvelously fluid, pertinently inflected vocal lines, with their frequent coloratura flights; the sometimes quite abrupt shifts of tonality; the affecting interplay of major and minor; the startlingly juxtaposed meters. There are no set da capo arias as in Bach's cantatas, but in their place a kind of continual heightened recitative growing into bona fide melody. The orchestra takes over in interludes of highly developed polyphony, and frequently flows directly back into an accompaniment role without a break. And upon occasion the singer becomes simply one voice in a four- or five-part fugue. In one striking passage in No. V the tenor pursues a pair of cellos in extended imitation, after which the cellos take up a canon on their own. It is all skillful, inventive, and very much alive.

The three soloists are quite satisfactory, with the tenor (No. V) topping the list—he has one of those flexible, pure, but healthy voices perfect for this kind of music. The important

orchestral contribution is brisk, well disciplined, and to the point. A fine disc. S.F.

## recitals and miscellany

**E. POWER BIGGS:** Organ Recitals, featuring music by Walther, Gigout, Dupré, Campra, Widor, R. Strauss, Purcell, Karg-Elert, Clarke, Handel, et al. For a feature review of these recordings, see page 60.

### "HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE METROPOLITAN OPERA GALA HONORING SIR RUDOLF BING."

Martina Arroyo, Montserrat Caballé, Plácido Domingo, Birgit Nilsson, Leontyne Price, Regina Resnik, Richard Tucker, Robert Merrill, Teresa Zylis-Gara, and Franco Corelli; Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Richard Bonyngue, James Levine, Karl Böhm, Francesco Molinari-Pradelli, and Kurt Adler, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 57.

**LEONTYNE PRICE:** "Five Great Operatic Scenes." Leontyne Price, soprano; London Symphony Orchestra, Fausto Cleva, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3218, \$5.98.

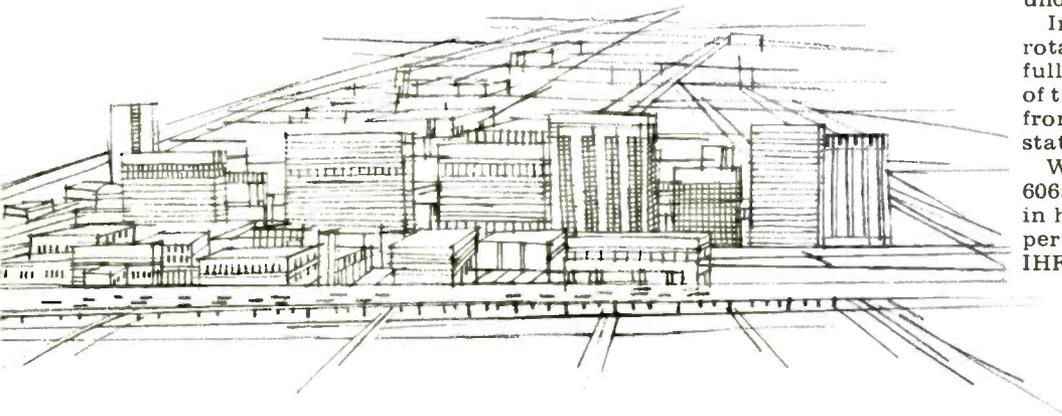
**VERDI:** La Traviata: E strano . . . Ah! fors' è lui . . . Sempre libera (with Ryland Davies, tenor); Don Carlo: Tu che le vanità. **TCHAIKOVSKY:** Eugene Onegin: Tatiana's Letter Scene. **STRAUSS:** Ariadne auf Naxos: Es gibt ein Reich. **BEETHOVEN:** Fidelio: Abscheulicher! wo eilst du hin?

Miss Price is in very good voice for this program, from the bottom A flat of the *Ariadne* scene right up to Violetta's high Cs, although a few of the top notes are not as uniformly placed and colored as the rest of the voice. Very much in evidence, too, is her accustomed musicality, founded on careful attention to rhythmic and dynamic niceties. My own preference is for a more pointed, focused sound (we'll come to an exemplar of that in a minute), but there is no gainsaying the plush of this tone, the security with which it is deployed.

Verdi comes off best here, certainly in part because the late Fausto Cleva was much happier in this repertory than in the German and Russian selections. "Tu che le vanità" has a fine sweep, and the *Traviata* scene is noteworthy not only for the presence of a capable tenor and the inclusion of "A me, fanciulla" (the rarely heard second stanza of "Ah! fors' è lui"), but also for a well-measured and steady tempo.

But even here—and more markedly in the three other pieces—one misses the sense of a dramatic experience. A lack of bite and clarity in the diction contributes; the word-tone equation is distinctly out of balance, in favor of sonic rather than verbal values. Perhaps also relevant is the fact that none of these scenes except the Tchaikovsky is in the singer's usual stage repertory—and even that exception she has sung in English, rather than the somewhat vague Russian employed here (cf. Slobodskaya or Vishnevskaya).

# A TALE OF THREE CITIES



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

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

In Washington, D.C., using a Yagi with rotator, 45 stations were received with full quieting. In Los Angeles, where some of the 73 stations are more than 100 miles from the test site, the 6065 logged 44 stations.

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The lack of urgency in the *Onegin* scene is even more marked by comparison with the classic, if wrong-linguaged (German), account by Ljuba Welitsch, recently reissued on Odeon/Dacapo (C 047-01 267, also including an imposing, previously unissued *Salome* finale from a 1944 broadcast), where the more pointed, intense tone in itself contributes to the effect, along with vastly more specific convictions about the necessary contrasts of tension and release. The *Ariadne* monologue is undermined from the start by the failure to clearly define the important motive in the lower strings, and later on the tension is allowed to slacken after each vocal climax; not all the handsome expansion of tone can pull this together convincingly.

In sum, then, a recital that commends itself more for tonal splendor than true operatic projection. The sound is typically Dynagroove, with a muffled orchestra, but kind to the voice. Texts and translations are provided.

D.H.

**JOHN WILLIAMS AND JULIAN BREAM:** "John and Julian." John Williams and Julian Bream, guitars. RCA Red Seal LSC 3257, \$5.98. Tape: ● R8S 1230, \$6.95; ●● RK 1230, \$6.95.

**LAWES:** Suite for Two Guitars. **CARULLI:** Duo in G, Op. 34. **SOR:** L'Encouragement, Op. 34. **ALBÉNIZ:** Córdoba (Nocturne). **GRANADOS:** Goyescas: Intermezzo. **FALLA:** La Vida Breve: Spanish Dance No. 1. **RAVEL:** Pavane pour une Infante defunte.

This recital is just as good as you would expect it to be in view of the artists involved. The principal achievement—particularly difficult to manage where collaboration is involved—is the dazzling sparkle of spontaneity that lights up the quick movements: The Rondo finale of the Carulli Duo simply takes flight; Falla's Spanish Dance zips into high voltage without ever getting out of control; Sor's theme-and-variations movement abounds in zest. Even the slower music catches fire: The Albéniz Nocturne is one of the most swinging night pieces you are likely to hear.

In one instance two different musical attitudes emerge: In the Carulli slow movement the left-channel player (Williams?) snaps out a phrase with more incisiveness than the right-channel player, who repeats it with a greater sense of relaxation. But pay no heed. This is a duo to remember. S.F.

**NICANOR ZABALETA:** Spanish Music Recital. Nicanor Zabaleta, harp. Deutsche Grammophon 2530 230, \$6.98.

**ALBÉNIZ:** Granada (Serenata); Zaragoza (Capricho); Mallorca (Barcarola); Asturias (Leyenda); Tango Español. **FALLA:** Serenata Andaluza. **TURINA:** Tocata y fuga, Op. 50. **GUERRA:** Apunte Betica. **GRANADOS:** Danza española No. 5 (Andaluza). **HALFFTER:** Sonatina. **CHAVARRI:** El viejo Castillo moro.

There are all too few recordings lately by the Spaniard who surely is the supreme harp virtuoso of our era—which is fortunate for reviewers who find it increasingly difficult to say

anything new in praise of (much less discover any flaw in) Zabaleta's artistry. The present release, however, does give me a chance to carp—if only about the choice of an all (or nearly all) transcription program. The mostly fairly short selections here were originally written for piano, with the possible exception of the Scarlattian *Sonatina* drawn from Halffter's ballet *Danza de la Pastora* and the rhapsodic *Apunte Betica* by Gerardo Gombau Guerra, whom I can't find in any handy reference book. (He's undoubtedly identified in DGG's usually informative notes; my advance review copy of the disc arrived jacketless.)

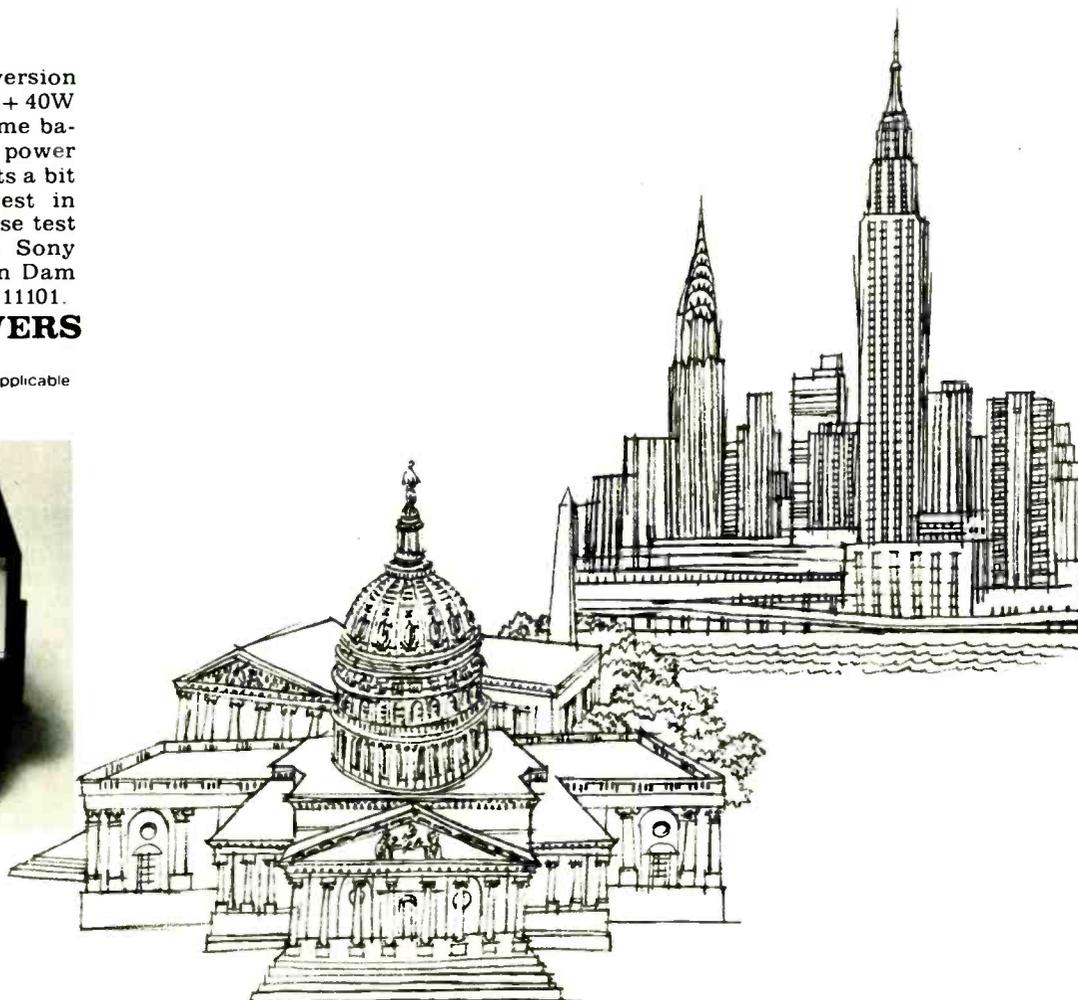
But I certainly can't carp with any real conviction, since Zabaleta plays all these pieces with more subtle tonal coloring and rhythmic grace than most pianists ever can! And except for the Granados favorite and four of the five Albéniz pieces, most of this music is likely to be unfamiliar to all but Iberian specialists. There is especially seductive "Spanish" charm in Albéniz's Tango (not the famous one in D) and the tone picture of an *Old Moorish Castle* by Eduardo López Chavarri (1875-1970!). The largest, most demanding work, however, is the now-bold/now-atmospheric Toccata and busy (if scarcely academic) Fugue from Turina's *Cielo pianístico No. 1*. And as in all earlier DGG/Zabaleta discs, the recorded sonics are a sheer delight to one's aural sensibilities; but for that the harpist himself surely deserves practically all the credit—how could any audio engineer go wrong with him? R.D.D.

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## in brief

**CAMBINI:** *Trois Quintetti Concertante for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, and Bassoon: No. 1, in B flat; No. 2, in D minor; No. 3, in F.* Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet. Ravenna 701, \$6.95 (University of Washington Press, Seattle, Wash. 98105).

Cambini (1746–1825) was born in Livorno and spent much of his life in Paris. The album notes speak of the “recent revival of interest in his wind quintets.” I hadn’t been aware that there was one, but maybe the author of the notes, who is the flutist of the Soni Ventorum, has hopes of planting the idea. To give Cambini his due, he wrote with skill and never was cloddish. One of the five instruments is always singing, running, skipping, noodling, or teedle-dumming. It is perfectly respectable *style galant*, exploits the instrumental possibilities sagely, and is all utterly forgettable. The pieces are perhaps important as examples of some of the earliest writings for wind quintet. The Soni Ventorum, in residence at the University of Washington, plays with deft phrasing, apt tempos, and good balance. S.F.

**HAYDN:** *Symphonies: No. 44, in E minor (“Trauer”); No. 49, in F minor (“La Passione”).* Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlo Zecchi cond. Supraphon 1 10 0963, \$6.98.

Had this record appeared ten years ago it would have been more highly regarded than is likely today. It belongs to the plain and literal school of Haydn performance in which one follows the printed score and adds nothing. But Haydn’s contemporary friends are likely to know by now that in works of this period additions must be made to reproduce the performance tradition Haydn knew. Throughout this music the absence of a continuo is now clearly felt, especially when one has easily at hand the superlative keyboard playing that adds so much to the Dorati edition. In their conservative fashion Zecchi’s performances are reasonably sympathetic and well paced. The recorded sound is average. R.C.M.

**RIEGGER:** *Dichotomy.* **RAYKI:** *Elegiac Variations.* Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester, cond. Louisville LS 715, \$5.95.

Riegger’s *Dichotomy*, composed in 1932, is one of his strongest orchestral works. It is also one of his earliest atonal pieces, and the stimulus to his imagination in exploring the atonal universe results in a work of immense integrity, seriousness, and grandeur. *Dichotomy* is very much of its era in the stripped, economical orchestration, very powerful rhythmic structure, and the intensities of its harmonic color, but it has weathered the years like a mountain peak: The musical profile is stronger today than it ever was. Unfortunately Mester has seen fit to couple it with an ordinary piece of movie music by one Györgi Rayki. A.F.

**RIETI:** *Capers.* **HOIBY:** *After Eden.* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Jorge Mester, cond. (in the Rieti); London Symphony Orchestra, Lawrence Foster, cond. (in the Hoiby). Desto DC 6434, \$5.98.

Vittorio Rieti’s *Capers* is the perfect light ballet score: tuneful, pointed, and sparkling in the best Rossini tradition. Lee Hoiby’s *After Eden* is a dramatic ballet score of the kind that is more effective in the theater than in the cold blood of the turntable. Foster gives it a better performance than it deserves. A.F.

**STRAUSS, Johann II:** “The Blue Danube Waltz Program.” *An der schönen, blauen Donau, Op. 314; Wiener Blut, Op. 354; Kaiser-Walzer, Op. 437; Frühlingsstimmen, Op. 410; Morgenblätter, Op. 279; G’schichten aus dem Wiener Wald, Op. 325.* Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3250, \$5.98. Tape: ●● RK 1229, \$6.98; ●● R8S 1229, \$6.98.

A new symbol, a half-R, is needed to denote the hybrid character of a program that combines three new recordings (Opp. 314, 354, and 410) with three 1968–69 recordings drawn from the “Crown Jewels” collection reviewed here in June 1970. The sonic characteristics achieved by a different producer/engineer team aren’t at all contradictory, but they are noticeably richer and warmer, and so effectively remedy the only previous (very minor) technical weakness. Interpretatively, there is less difference: Ormandy maintains the marked advances over his earlier, more sentimentalized and heavy-handed Straussian approach. And even if he hasn’t yet reached the ideal of Viennese casual grace and insouciant lilt, the present disc and tape editions well warrant the best-seller status they are sure to win. R.D.D.

**VAUGHAN WILLIAMS:** *Symphony No. 5; The Wasps: Overture.* London Symphony Orchestra, André Previn, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3244, \$5.98.

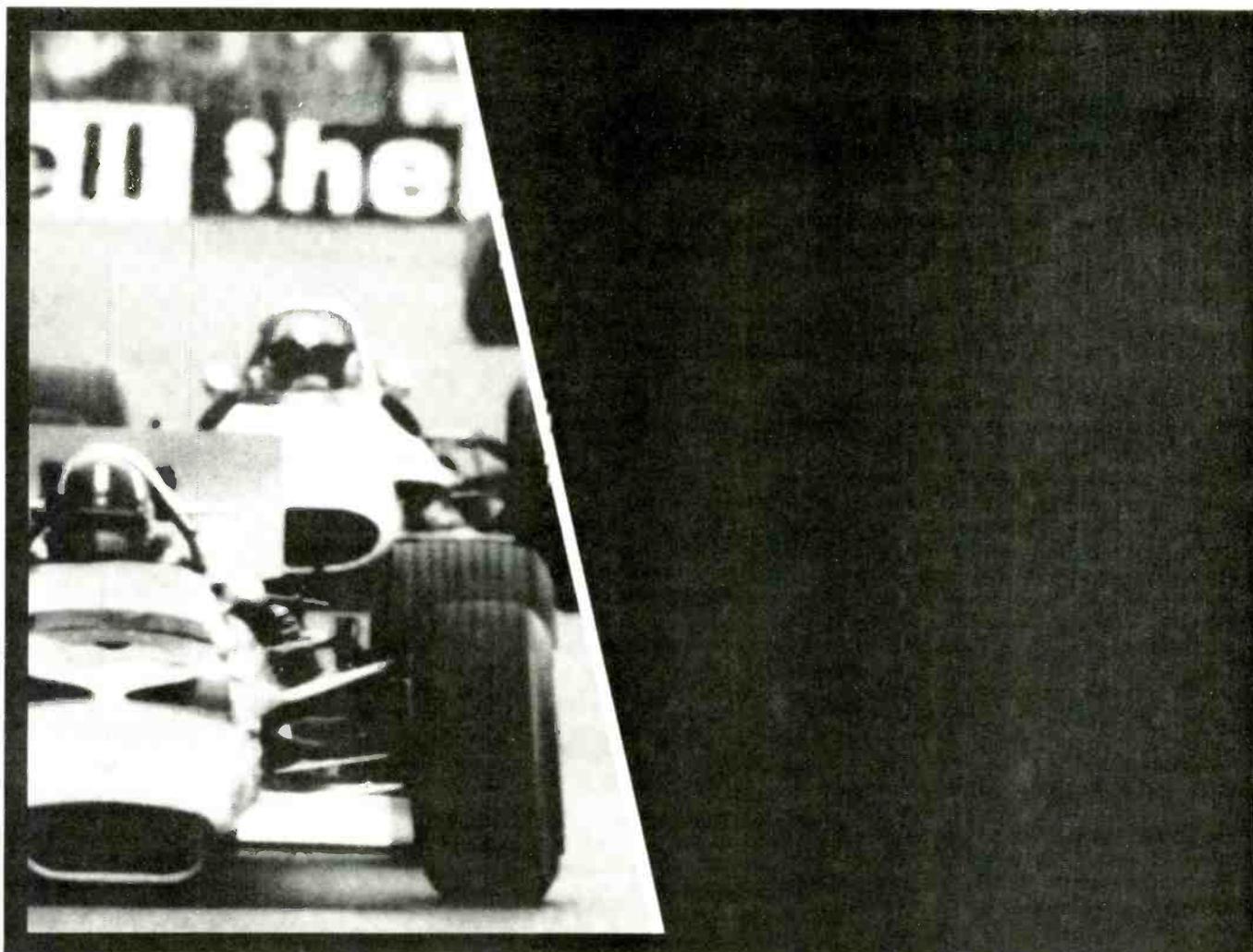
The short, light, comic, folksy-tuneful overture to *The Wasps* is superb here, and this is the only recording of it now available outside of a two-record set containing all the music Vaughan Williams wrote for the play by Aristophanes (Angel 3739, with the First Symphony). The Fifth Symphony competes with recorded versions by Barbirolli and Boult and suffers by comparison. This is, to be sure, an essentially lyrical work and Previn’s soft-style approach is far from unsympathetic to it; even so, the performance lacks the sense of climax, the distinction of episodes, and when needed, the bit that Boult brings to it. A.F.

**WAGNER:** “Great Moments.” *Rienzi: Overture; Lohengrin: Preludes to Acts I and II; Die Walküre: Wotan’s Abschied; Feuerzauber.* David Ward, bass; New Philharmonia Orchestra, George Hurst, cond. London Phase 4 SPC 21064, \$5.98.

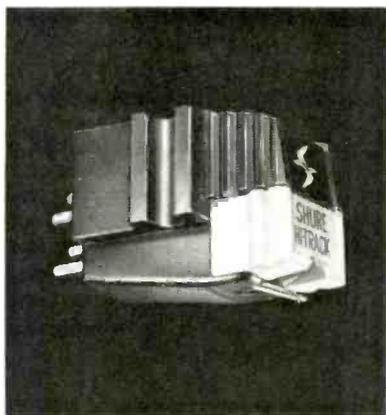
This Phase 4 Wagnerian salad is fatally handicapped in several respects: The earnest but routine readings lack dramatic grip; there is far too noisy a background to the quiet opening and close of the Act I *Lohengrin* Prelude; in Wotan’s Farewell the robust soloist is far too close and prominent, as well as afflicted by excessive vibrato; even the recorded sonics are considerably less than spell-binding, especially in unpleasantly coarse brass and percussion fortissimos. Scots-born Hurst (who has appeared in this country as both conductor and teacher) is unfortunate in what seems to be his first American recorded representation, but his standing in British musical circles suggests that he deserves another chance. R.D.D.

**THOMAS STEVENS:** “The Contemporary Trumpet.” **KRAFT:** *Encounters III.* **CAMPO:** *Times.* **HENDERSON:** *Variation Movements.* **HAMILTON:** *Five Scenes.* Thomas Stevens, trumpet; Ralph Grierson, piano (in the Hamilton); Mitchell Peters, percussion (in the Kraft). Avant AV 1003, \$4.98.

The talented associate principal trumpet of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Thomas Stevens, makes his solo record debut the hard way, exclusively in works composed within the last few years and in more or less avant-garde idioms. The two that impress me most are the always interesting William Kraft’s ingenious “battle-scenes” between trumpet and percussion, and Robert Henderson’s virtuoso Variation Movements for unaccompanied trumpet in C. This last work also displays both Stevens’ tonal brilliance and Lester Rensen’s auditorium-authentic records at their dramatically gripping best. But neither soloist nor engineer can give any marked distinction to Frank Campo’s amusing but very lightweight evocations of “Good Times—Hard Times—and Time to Go” for unaccompanied trumpet in B flat, or to British-born Iain Hamilton’s dodecaphonic “Wild—Nocturnal—Declamato—Nocturnal—Brilliant” bits-and-pieces. Quadraphonophiles will be interested to learn (from the liner notes) that the present stereo edition of this program has been edited down from four-channel masters and that a four-channel tape edition (format, order number, and price unstated) is available under the Advent label. R.D.D.



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**JOHN MAYALL: Jazz Blues Fusion.** John Mayall, vocals, harmonica, and keyboards; Larry Taylor, bass; Freddy Robinson, guitar; Ron Selico, drums; Clifford Solomon, saxophone; Blue Mitchell, trumpet. *Country Road; Mess Around; Good Times Boogie; Change Your Ways; Dry Throat; Exercise in C Major; Got To Be This Way.* Polydor PD 5027, \$5.98. Tape: ● 8F 5027, \$6.98; ●● CF 5027, \$6.98.

This disc was recorded in concert in Boston and New York, and is easily Mayall's best recording in years. As the title says, it starts out with blues and slips into a melodic jazz. There's a driving, exciting feeling accentuated by the prevalent shuffle beat. Freddy Robinson's guitar is outstanding, at once tasteful and exciting. After an initial round of popularity around 1967 and 1968, Mayall slipped due largely to a number of lackluster albums. This could well restore him to the position he deserves.

M.J.



John Mayall—driving, exciting feeling.



**Carroll O'Connor: Remembering You.** Carroll O'Connor, vocals and narrations; Roger Kellaway, arr. *Can't We Talk It Over; Sweet and Lovely; So Rare;* nine more. A&M 4340, \$5.98.

If a single word can sum up the essence of this project, the word is charm. In his warm liner notes, Carroll O'Connor says, "Now the professional singer can never equal the closet singer's craving to sing."

How could Mr. O'Connor have known that crab-headed Archie Bunker would ultimately give him the opportunity to act out his singing fantasies by making this album? (While we're at it, how has Mr. O'Connor managed to keep his immense personal charm out of Archie? Or is that the real reason we have taken the Bunkers into our hearts?) At any rate, one feels certain that Archie Bunker would like this album. On the other hand, so do I.

The formula for successful albums, artistically and/or commercially, is a blend of two forces: strength of artist and strength of album concept. Mr. O'Connor has both going his way. The subject matter is the mood and music of the 1930s. Brief narrations of the period are interspersed between its finest songs. By keeping the vocals down to one chorus each, Mr. O'Connor finds time for twelve songs, plus history.

Yeah, but how is his singing? Charming, I tell you. Mr. O'Connor chose all the songs, his favorites no doubt, and he didn't fool around. Never mind that they were hard to sing. Have you tried to hum the intervals of *Last Night When We Were Young* or *About a Quarter to Nine*? Mr. O'Connor does an able job technically, and when he doesn't you don't care. That is not condescension. Songs are always more important than notes, and Carroll O'Connor owns these songs.

To top it off, Mr. O'Connor wrote lyrics to his own "Thirties song," *Remembering You*, and it turns out to be a highlight of the album. Its melody sounds familiar enough, for it is the closing theme for "All in the Family," and we hear it each week over the end titles of the show played by its composer, Roger Kellaway. Usually it is interrupted by network commercial announcements. First things first.

About Roger Kellaway, Mr. O'Connor says he "discovered in Roger a mutual fondness for the songs of the Thirties." For Kellaway, fondness was not nostalgia. He was barely born at the time. But he developed into an extraordinary pianist and later an important composer/arranger. Roger has always grown in several musical directions at once. In his early twenties he recorded a classic album of stride piano, simultaneously studying contemporary classical music and working as a studio pianist in New York, not to mention work in jazz clubs. That was the Sixties.

In the album, Roger plays behind narrations as well as songs. He adds Matty Matlock on clarinet, Joe Pass on guitar, Ed Lustgarten on cello, and John Guerin and Chuck Domannico on drums and bass. The arrangements are simple and natural. The album was produced by Kellaway and Steve Goldman, a man with a particular talent for making people feel good as they work. It shows.

In all, this disc is a moment of peace and graciousness, high ground in a flood. I recommend it.

M.A.

**JANIS JOPLIN: Joplin In Concert.** Janis Joplin, vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Down on Me; Bye Bye Baby; All Is Loneliness; Piece of My Heart; Road Block; Flower in the Sun; Summertime; Ego Rock; Half Moon; Kosmic Blues; Move Over; Try (Just a Little Bit Harder); Get It While You Can; Ball and Chain.* Columbia C2X 31160, \$11.96 (two discs).

"Janis sang in the eye of the hurricane," CBS Records President Clive Davis writes in the liner notes. Well, I suppose. This LP, a collection of her concert recordings both with Big Brother and the Holding Co. and Full Tilt Boogie, is ragged, however much it earned its rags in combat. It's a two-LP set, half devoted to each of her backup bands, recorded in 1968, her last year with Big Brother, and in 1970, her last year. The most interesting track is *Ego Rock*, a slow blues recorded in 1970 when she sat in with Big Brother and sang a duet with their replacement vocalist, Nick Gravenites.

Over-all, the set contains a representative sample of her better songs, and enough between-song banter (including her famous out-looking-for-action monologue) to give anyone who never saw her perform a sense of what went on. There's nothing that seems slick here, not everybody is miked properly all the time, but this just adds to the sense of raw power that was Janis' most wonderful quality. M.J.

**HARRY CHAPIN: Heads and Tales.** Harry Chapin, vocals and guitar; Tim Scott, cello; Ron Palmer, guitar and harmony vocals; John Wallace, bass and high harmony vocals. *Greyhound; Any Old Kind of Day; Empty;* six more. Elektra 75023, \$4.98. Tape: ● ET 85023, \$6.98; ●● TC 75023, \$6.98.

We are in an age of transience, constant motion, turnover, and "disposable" artistry, wherein a talent can flash through and then weaken within months or less. All this is painfully clear in the record industry where a single song can be written and recorded in a day, marketed in a week, and capture the public moments later, only to be cast aside like an empty milk container. The point of records is not talent per se but in the constant turnover of talent. The public must have a certain number of Elton Johns per year. The stronger survive.

Right now we have Harry Chapin. Critics are raving. He just sold out Los Angeles' Troubadour, along with co-artist Carly Simon. Chapin is overexposed daily on radio with a well-made hit song called *Taxi* (included in the album). It is played on easy listening as well as rock stations. Chapin is having his year. One wonders about next year.

Chapin has the rough-edged, energetic, yet simple voice quality that communicates most easily with the public at present. He sounds as if he spent a few years on the folk-club circuit, or what's left of it. His guitar playing is regulation folk/pop, pleasant but not adventurous. His melody writing is about the same.

Where Chapin shines is in his lyric writing. The stories are uncomplicated, often sad, telling of loneliness (*Everybody's Lonely*) and missed ladies (*Sometime, Somewhere Wife*). In nearly every song one or two lines pop out at you, so direct are their insights.

No doubt of it: Chapin's writing is strong

when it's strong. And yet—the problem is difficult to pin down. Is it simple inconsistency, that quality that allows a song to alternately exalt and disappoint? *Greyhound* begins interestingly, but then builds to a kind of panic as its tempo races insensitively and Chapin loses his vocal presence by overdoing all. Suddenly he is unconvincing and one thinks of the Kingston Trio and Tom Dooley. Does Chapin have an inner enemy, a streak of showoff?

At any rate, let's hope that Harry Chapin survives such a sudden assault of success and gets his chance to build and grow. M.A.



**DAVID PEEL AND THE LOWER EAST**

**SIDE: The Pope Smokes Dope.** David Peel, lead vocals; Chris Osborne, Eddie Mottau, Eddie Ryan, and Lower East Side Friends, vocal and rhythm accompaniment. *I'm a Runaway*; *Everybody's Smoking Marijuana*; *F Is Not a Dirty Word*; nine more. Apple SW 3391, \$5.98.

David Peel is a New York character who lives on the lower east side of Manhattan and spends a great deal of time hanging out in local parks with a band of cronies singing songs about the joys of marijuana. Peel is also a member of the Rock Liberation Front, a free-form organization that is concerned with promoting rock-and-roll as an authentic cultural force.

John and Yoko Lennon allowed Peel and his friends to go into the studio in order to put their sentiments on wax for the sake of posterity. The result is a disc that might offend some, bore others with its infantility, and probably delight many more. I think it's a good, funny album. Peel's grating, urban voice has always amused me and his good-natured irreverence appeals to my own sense of anarchy. In *The Hippies from New York City*, he responds to Merle Haggard's ode to good country living by writing, "We hate to go to work, we live on welfare/We have our love, and always have a ball/We hate your barnyard dances and your moonshine/We'd like to see you up against the wall." Peel also paints a picture of an obscene, VD-infected Old MacDonald's Farm; he pays tribute to John and Yoko for their contributions to New York City life; he chronicles the achievements of Bob Dylan; he lambastes the Vietnam War and the Chicago Seven trial, and in the title song he describes a stoned Vatican. Life would be very dull without characters like David Peel. H.E.

**CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL:** Mardi Gras. John Fogerty, guitar and vocals; Doug Clifford, bass and vocals; Stu Cook, drums and vocals. *Lookin' for a Reason*; *Someday Never Comes*; *What Are You Gonna Do*; *Hello Mary Lou*; six more. Fantasy 9404, \$4.98.

In their first LP since the group lost guitarist Tom Fogerty, CCR seeks to compensate for the loss—and perhaps avoid future losses—by spreading the responsibility around instead of having all come out like the John Fogerty Experience, as in the past.

But democracy or no, Fogerty does seem the ranking talent in the band, and on this LP

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the songs sung by him are the best. Few of those championed by Cook and Clifford are better than all right. *Door to Door*, a familiar hard rocker sung by Cook, is quite good, as is Clifford's *What Are You Gonna Do*. But they are eclipsed by Fogerty's *Sweet Hitch-Hiker* and *Someday Never Comes*. *Hello Mary Lou* seems to be phoenixing lately, as a version of it was just released by the New Riders of the Purple Sage as well. In his Fogerty manages to duplicate faithfully the Ricky Nelson original, if that can be considered a plus. In all, it's a decent album but not one of the band's important ones. M.J.



### ROBERTA FLACK & DONNY HATHAWAY.

Roberta Flack, vocals and keyboard accompaniment; Donny Hathaway, vocals and keyboard accompaniment; strings, horns, woodwinds, and rhythm accompaniment. *I (Who Have Nothing)*; *You've Got a Friend*; *Baby I Love You*; seven more. Atlantic SD 7216, \$5.98.

This album is sheer perfection. It has been carefully conceived, tastefully arranged, and expertly produced by Joel Dorn and Arif Mardin. Miss Flack and Mr. Hathaway are both extraordinary musicians, eloquent exponents of soul music. Subtlety, sophistication, and simplicity are the hallmarks of their musical expression. Pairing them together was a brilliant idea and the results justify the inspiration.

They reinterpret rock standards like Carole King's *You've Got a Friend* and Barry Mann's *You've Got That Loving Feeling* and suddenly these songs are transformed into insinuating ballads filled with icy passion. Miss Flack's multileveled composition about personal devotion and a sense of pride, *Be Real Black for Me*, is another haunting contribution. The stars work over a traditional spiritual, *Come Ye Disconsolate*, and capture a real feeling of religious devotion that makes the number a truly moving experience.

The LP concludes with an instrumental written by Miss Flack entitled *Mood*, with Miss Flack on piano and Mr. Hathaway on electric piano. The result: seven minutes of truly beautiful music. The mood of this disc leaves one with a sense of satisfaction. H.E.

**YVONNE ELLIMAN.** Yvonne Elliman, vocals. David Spinozza and Andrew Lloyd Webber, arr. *Sugar Babe*; *Speak Your Mind*; *Can't Find My Way Home*; eight more. Decca 75341, \$4.98.

**JENNIFER.** Jennifer, vocals. Unidentified arranger and players. *P.F. Sloan*; *All My Love's Laughter*; *These Days*; seven more. Reprise S 2065, \$4.98. Tape: ● M82065, \$6.95. ●● M52065, \$6.95.

These albums are combined in a double review, first because both young ladies have interesting talents and second because both of them made their original impact on the public through their excellent performances in two contemporary musicals. Jennifer came first, in an early version of *Hair*. Yvonne Elliman emerged more recently through her performance in *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Miss Elliman, a beautiful young Hawaiian girl, was discovered in London and chosen to



Roberta Flack—teaming with Hathaway.

play Mary Magdalene in *Jesus Christ Superstar*. The highlight of her performance occurred in the brilliant, intensely emotional song, *I Don't Know How to Love Him*, in which we view Mary Magdalene as an earthy, man-wise and bewildered woman touched for the first time not just by love but by spirituality in love. It is an extremely human song of despair and elation, love and fear, exquisitely written. Miss Elliman's performance was heartbreaking. The song is included in the set, which was produced by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber, who wrote *Superstar*. Miss Elliman's rough sweetness pervades the album. Yet the disc lacks concept and therefore leaves a weak impression for all Miss Elliman's strength. Better luck next time out.

Jennifer (Warren) has a softness and humor about her that makes you want to know her. She has accessibility. Her voice is strong and interesting, her presence authoritative, and her choice of material tasteful and personal. Jennifer has been on the brink of making a hit record for some time but has not yet crossed the line. One wonders why, other than the fact that the majority of hits are made by men. There are twenty James Taylors for every one Carole King. But Jennifer Warren is worth waiting for. In the meantime, you can buy this album and be the only one in your crowd who's really discovered Jennifer. M.A.



**DAN HICKS AND HIS HOT LICKS:** Striking It Rich! John L. Gorton, lead guitar; Sid Page, violin and mandolin; Maryann Price, vocals and rhythm instruments; Dan Hicks, vocals and rhythm guitar; Jaime Leopold, string bass and skippy Sanchez; Naomi Ruth Eisenberg, vocals, second fiddle, and rhythm instruments. *You Got to Believe*; *Walkin' One and Only*; *O'Reilly At the Bar*; eleven more. Blue Thumb BTS 336, \$5.98.

The Dan Hicks sound is almost as indescribable as it is pleasurable. C & w, jazz, ragtime, blues, Thirties jump, and a healthy dose of Lambert, Hendricks & Ross somehow blend together to create an irresistible result. Hicks's music is filled with a true sense of the past, but this is no nostalgia act. The nostalgia phenomenon is an attempt to take the most mindless characteristics of past eras and exaggerate them in order to create a giant pacifier. Hicks's music serves as both a reminder of the past

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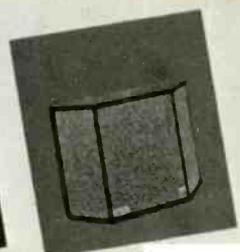
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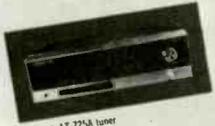
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and an attempt to create something truly timeless.

On this disc two tunes, *I Scare Myself* and *Woe the Luck*, are especially rewarding. Here, the musical and vocal lines soar in and out of each other so effortlessly and with so much dazzle that the end result is positively awe-some. Hicks has always had the ability to utilize female backup voices with uncanny skill. This time around, he outdoes himself. Sid Page's violin is breathtakingly featured on the entire album and his soaring solo on *Flight of the Fly* is one of the most haunting musical performances in quite some time.

I've only seen Hicks once—as a guest on a TV talk show. I found his act much too precious and coy. People who think they are funny rarely are. I crossed this act off my list even though I've always admired their records. This LP, however, makes me reconsider. I am now quite eager to see Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks in person. I hope they are as good as "Striking It Rich!" H.E.

\* **STEPHEN STILLS:** Manassas. Stephen Stills, vocals and guitar; Chris Hillman, vocals and guitar; Dallas Taylor, drums; Paul Harris, keyboards; Fuzzy Samuels, bass; Al Perkins, guitar and steel guitar; Joe Lala, congas, timbales, and vocals; instrumental accompaniment. *Song of Love; Rock & Roll Crazy's; Cuban Bluegrass; Right Now, The Treasure; (Take One); Blues Man;* sixteen more. (Take One) SD 2-903, \$11.96 (two discs).

This two-LP set ranks as the most impressive recording released by any of the various Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young partners before or after their breakup. It is a heavy dose of folk rock, in the manner of Buffalo Springfield, which spawned CSN&Y in the first place. Much of it is hard rock, the best being the final side, a scorcher! The flow slows on Side 2, a country & western display, but picks up quickly. The final track, *Blues Man*, is an acoustic blues tribute to Jimi Hendrix. Alan Wilson, and Duane Allman.

The instrumental in *The Treasure* may signal the return of the trend toward long songs, a phenomenon that developed in the late Sixties but which has been missing of late. M.J.

\* **JOHN KAY:** Forgotten Songs and Un-sung Heroes. John Kay, vocals and guitar; Kent Henry, guitars; Hugh O'Sullivan, organ; George Biondo, bass; Pentti (Whitey) Glan, drums. *Many a Mile; Walk Beside Me; You Win Again; Bold Marauder; Two of a Kind; Walkin' Blues; I'm Movin' On.* Dunhill DSX 50120, \$4.98. Tape: • M85120, \$6.98; •• M55120, \$6.98.

John Kay, an alumnus of the startling Step-penwolf, appears in his solo debut album as an artist of amazing depth and perception. I was prepared to write off all the advance notices that I'd heard about him as so much press-agentry. But on hearing this album, I'm impressed.

His choice of material is really eclectic: *Many a Mile* by Patrick Sky, an American Indian singer/songwriter; *You Win Again*, an old Hank Williams tune; *Bold Marauder* by

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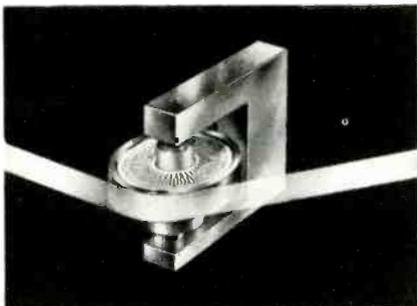
Thingvellir, where Iceland's parliament was founded in the year 930 A.D.

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the late Richard Farina: *Walkin' Blues* by the legendary Texas blues man, Robert W. Johnson; Hank Snow's *I'm Movin' On*; plus four songs of his own, a couple of which are excellent.

If all the fumbling, bumbling, stumbling efforts of the numberless, nameless, fameless struggling rock groups produces a John Kay one time in a thousand, it's worth it. J.G.

## jazz

**DAVE JASEN:** Fingerbustin' Ragtime. Dave Jasen, piano. *Charleston Rag; Maple Leaf Rag; London Rag*; thirteen more. Blue Goose 3001, \$4.98 (54 King St., New York, N.Y. 10014).

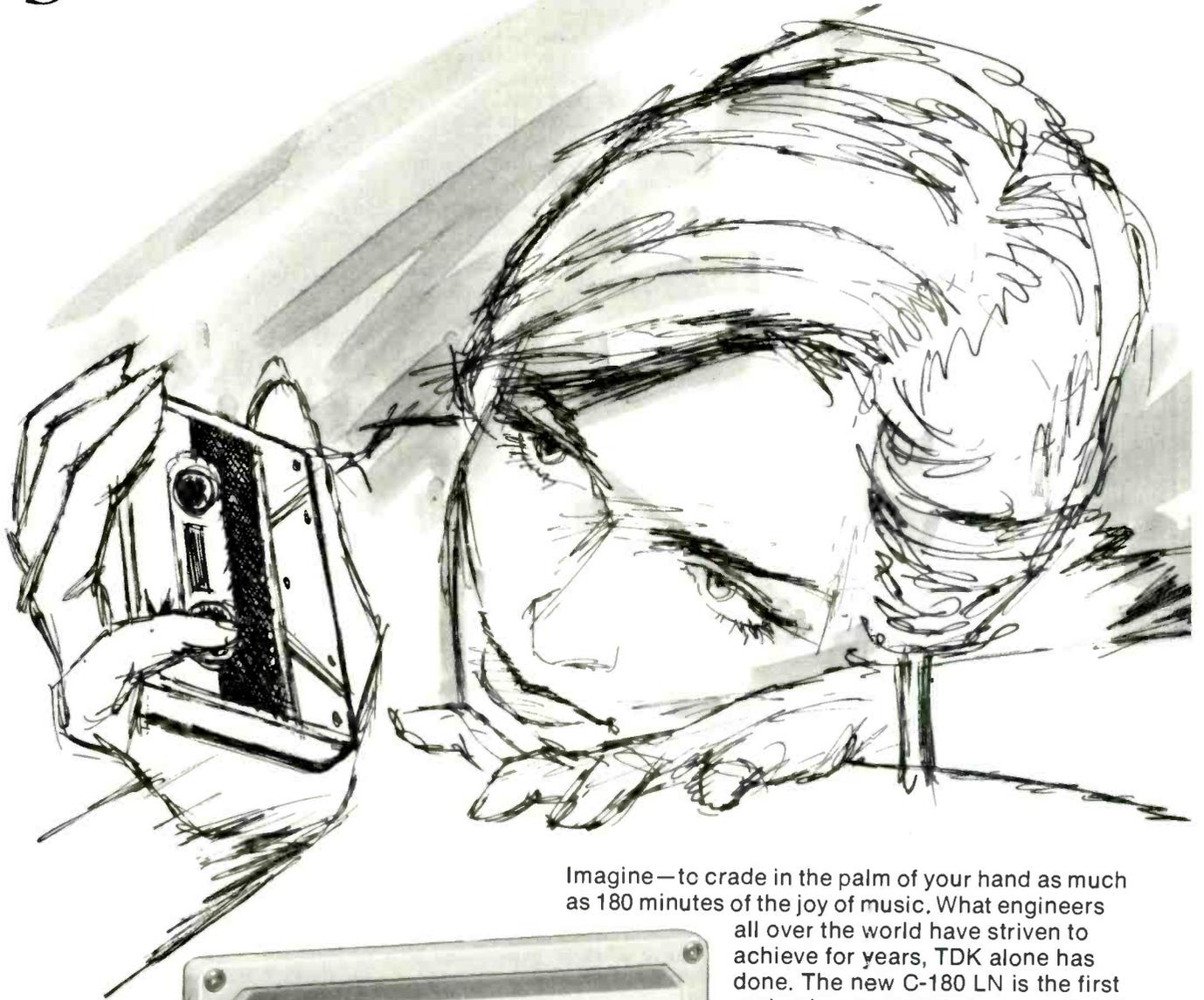
This is a most unusual ragtime record for a number of reasons. Where else, for example, would you find one entire side of the ragtime compositions of David Jasen? Nowhere. But don't dismiss this side lightly, because Jasen is both knowledgeable and imaginative. His fascinated interest in piano rags is applied to a group of original compositions that occasionally reflect the original rag men but which have a validity of their own. *Festival—a Ragtime Cakewalk* could be taken for definitive Scott Joplin. *Dave's Rag* carries echoes of Jelly Roll Morton. His buoyant *Raymond's Rag* is a distillation of the whole era. And *That American Ragtime Dance* is even livelier than the period could possibly have been. Beyond the compositions themselves, the vitality of his piano performances gives these tunes added credibility.

So much for Jasen the composer. Now turn the record over and we find some of the classic rag composers: Joplin, Eubie Blake, and—yes—ZeZ Confrey, whose *Kitten on the Keys* as well as Herbert Ingraham's *Poison Ivy Rag* are quite justifiably included as novelty descendants of the ragtime era. One of the major pleasures of Jasen as a composer and performer is that he is not hung up on the standard formalities of what is and is not acceptable ragtime. He himself is so far off the beaten track as to be a long-gone enthusiast of Joe "Fingers" Carr (Lou Busch). Simply admitting to such an idol would be enough to disqualify one from most respectable ragtime circles. But Jasen is brash and unflappable and these qualities are reflected in his playing—which is all to the good because it helps to make his performances alive and vital and immediate. J.S.W.

**EARL HINES:** Plays Duke Ellington. Earl Hines, piano. *Sophisticated Lady; Warm Valley; Come Sunday*; six more. MJR 8114, \$5.50. (Master Jazz Recordings, Box 579, Lenox Hill Station, New York, N.Y. 10021).

As the mills of the gods grind on—slowly and eventually exceedingly small—Earl Hines and Duke Ellington have emerged as two of the longest-lived major jazz figures of the highly provocative Twenties, both of them band leaders and pianists. Ellington the most creative of band leaders, Hines the most creative of pianists. Beyond this, they were both composers, but even though Hines has *Rosetta* and *Monday Date* to his credit he cannot compete

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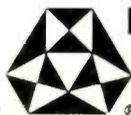
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with the compositional output of Ellington. And here on this disc these two brilliant minds come together—Hines the brilliant pianist and Ellington the brilliant composer. It becomes an interesting battle of wills. Can Hines the improviser outdo Ellington the creator?

The answer in this collection is, in general, no. Ellington's tunes, it turns out, do not lend themselves to Hines's more exalted flights. These melodies have such shape and form and such determined body that Hines finds himself, most of the time, locked into situations that, despite their own merits, do not provide the kind of display cases in which he might normally choose to show his wares.

When Ellington moves into the basic jazz idiom, the blues, Hines finds himself on the kind of familiar ground where he can strut his stuff to the full. This happens most noticeably on the free and easy *C Jam Blues* (a piece that is an invitation to extempore) and, in a different way, on *Mood Indigo* which, Ellington scholars will recall, was originally called *Dreamy Blues*—and Hines's dream is full of Tatumesque runs.

In a confrontation such as this the listener cannot lose. Whatever is not superb Hines is superb Ellington. Who could ask for anything more? J.S.W.

**LUIS GASCA.** Luis Gasca, trumpet and flugelhorn; Joe Henderson, tenor saxophone; Carlos Santana and Neal Schon, guitars; George Cables, Greg Rolie, and Mark Levine, pianos; Richard Kermode, organ; Stanley Clark, bass; Lenny White and Mike Shrieve, drums; Victor Pantoja and Mike Carabello, congas; Carmelo Garcia and Coke Escovedo, timbales; Rico Reyes and Snooky Flowers, percussion. *Street Dudes; La Raza; Spanish Gypsy; Little Mama.* Blue Thumb 37, \$5.98.

The mingling of jazz and Latin elements has been going on at least since Jelly Roll Morton began expounding the merits of "the Spanish tinge" (translation: tango rhythm) in the Twenties. It has progressed through the Machito-Stan Kenton give-and-take in the Forties. Dizzy Gillespie's involvement with the Spanish element at the end of the Forties (with the help of Chano Pozo), and emerged again at the beginning of the Seventies in the rock-influenced jazz of Santana.

Luis Gasca, with the help of Joe Henderson (the saxophonist now with Blood, Sweat & Tears), has switched that most recent emphasis by putting jazz in the forefront backed with Latin rhythm and an occasional suggestion of

rock. This is primarily a jazz record—strong, vibrant, full of bristling solos by Gasca and Henderson and a pulsating beat from the rest of the band; one or another of the four pianists involved also provide the highlights that lift the performances from the routine of a regular Latin band. This may not be the way to combine Latin rhythms and jazz but it is one way and, as played by Gasca, Henderson, and company, stretches over a wide range of appeal. J.S.W.

**CLARENCE WILLIAMS ORCHESTRA:** 1927-1928. Ed Allen and King Oliver, cornets; Charlie Irvie or Ed Cuffe, trombone; Coleman Hawkins, Buster Bailey, Alberto Socarras, and Arville Harris or Ben Waters, reeds; Clarence Williams, piano; Leroy Harris, banjo; Cyrus St. Clair, tuba. *Long, Deep and Wide; Beau Koo Jack; Squeeze Me*, thirteen more. Biograph 12038, \$5.98.

Clarence Williams' versatility may have deprived him of the prominent place in the history of jazz he might otherwise have had. Williams was a songwriter (*Royal Garden Blues; Baby, Won't You Please Come Home; Sugar Blues; West End Blues; Squeeze Me; I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None of My Jelly Roll*), music publisher, a&r man (although the term did not exist in his day), pianist, and band leader. His recording units in the Twenties included Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Coleman Hawkins, and King Oliver. Some of his groups were essentially washboard bands. But the most distinguishing element of Clarence Williams' recording bands was his use of the deep, rich tuba bass line played by Cyrus St. Clair.

This collection of Clarence Williams recordings of 1927 and 1928 are focused on the presence of King Oliver. But Cyrus St. Clair is also present and although these are not, for the most part, arrangements that show off St. Clair's use of the tuba to its fullest advantage, he can be heard huffing and puffing vigorously all through the set. Coleman Hawkins erupts from time to time and the plaintive cornet of King Oliver makes itself felt through most of the recordings. The real quality of this collection rests in twelve selections (out of sixteen) made for QRS in 1928 with King Oliver on cornet, Cyrus St. Clair puffing out a strong foundation on tuba, Ben Waters, Arville Harris, and Buster Bailey playing clarinet trios in the Fletcher Henderson Manner, and Ed Cuffe adding the gruff tones of his trombone. J.S.W.

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The author, a young Greek American, who has worked closely with Theodorakis since the composer's release by the Greek government in 1970, takes a broad sociocultural approach to his subject. A book of interest to anyone concerned with the impact of political and social problems on the contemporary artist, an issue not limited to Greece. **No. 283 . . . \$8.95**

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## theater and film

**THE GODFATHER.** Original Soundtrack, composed by Nino Rota and conducted by Carlo Savina. *Connie's Wedding* composed by Carlo Savina. Paramount PAS 1003, \$4.98.

No, I have not seen *The Godfather*, but I have heard the theme from the film, which is receiving a great deal of airplay. Judging from that version, I was prepared to loathe the score. It is corny, tritely "Italian," and every inch as insipid as Francis Lai's theme for *Love Story*: not to mention *Plaza Suite* and *Ryan's Daughter* (Lai keeps ruining good films for me).

I was deceived about Nino Rota's score for *The Godfather*. While the radio version is awful, the soundtrack album is rich with the fragrance of a strong film. The music is involving, beginning with a hauntingly recorded cornet solo, an echo down a lonely hall, followed by a mournful cello solo. Poignancy is set at once. To be sure, the flavor is Italian, but not tritely so. I cannot say the *Godfather Theme* is my favorite song, even well scored as it is in the album. But I can say that it is natural and even moving in the context of the project—which is what good film scoring is all about.

The same goes for Al Martino's vocal, *I Have But One Heart*, sung both in English and Italian and performed, I believe, during the wedding sequence. Again, it is not my kind of listening, but one senses its perfect entry in the film.

The album is bound to do well and deserves to. It runs high in emotion and pacing, and is thoughtfully produced by veteran soundtrack producer Tom Mack.

As for the radio theme of *The Godfather*, sold as a single record, it is an injustice to the score and to the film itself, leveling all aspects of the project down to what various administrators consider to be the lowest common denominator of American taste. It was an unnecessary, no-class decision. M.A.

## in brief

**DON IMUS:** 1200 Hamburgers to Go/Imus in the Morning. RCA LSP 4699, \$5.98.

Imus is a New York DJ who has been getting quite a bit of attention because of the satirical sketches and outrageous opinions he has brought to early morning radio. The sketches may be satirical; the opinions may be outrageous; but none of it is very funny. This LP of his radio tapes just goes to prove that I'd much rather wake up with Bob and Ray. H.E.

**THE FLYING BURRITO BROS.:** Last of the Red Hot Burritos. A&M SP 4343, \$5.98.

The last Burrito Bros. LP, this disc was recorded live in concert and stands as the final installment in their usual country rock. The group performs well, but in such a restricted genre that one need really be a fanatic to want more than one of their discs. M.J.

**GORDON WALLER:** ... And Gordon. ABC

ABCX 749, \$5.98. Tape: ● M8749, \$6.98; ●● M5749, \$6.98

Gordon Waller is the Gordon of Peter and Gordon, that mellow-voiced British duo who were part of the first English musical invasion that started with the Beatles. On his own, Gordon performs a well-intentioned collection of ballads. It's hard to believe that he had his first hit in 1964. H.E.

**JACK JONES:** Bread Winners. RCA LSP 4692, \$5.98.

This album comes up with a perfect marriage: Jack Jones and the hit songs of the group Bread, all written by David Gates. Songs include *Make It With You*, *It Don't Matter to Me*, *Baby I'm-a Want You*, all sounding as lovely from Jones as they did in Gates's original versions. This Jack Jones's best in a long time. Strong concept, warmly convincing performances. M.A.

**LIZA MINNELLI:** Live at the Olympia in Paris. A&M 4345, \$5.98.

Listen, there's no denying it. Miss Minnelli has become one of the most electric performers of any time. It shows in this album. M.A.

**GUNS AND BUTTER.** Cotillion SD 9901, \$5.98.

The Guns and Butter sound is interesting as well as melodious. It is agreeable jazz-tinged rock in which violin, viola, flute, and saxophone predominate. H.E.

**JOHN BALDRY:** Everything Stops for Tea. Warner Bros. BS 2614, \$5.98.

A follow-up to Baldry's notable 1971 release, "It Ain't Easy." Produced by Rod Stewart and Elton John like the last, it's a worthy display of Baldry's warm blues voice, but not the best he can do. M.J.

**HISTORY OF ERIC CLAPTON.** Atlantic SD 2-803, \$11.96 (two discs).

Jean-Charles Costa's detailed liner notes on this two-record set are certainly deserving of a Grammy Award nomination. They sympathetically trace Eric Clapton's career from his Yardbird days through his association with Cream, Blind Faith, Bonnie and Delaney, and Derek and the Dominos, and they refuse to indulge in any of the "hype" that surrounds the lives of rock giants. The recordings, which feature tracks representative of the many different stages in the career of rock's most beloved lead guitarist, are superb. H.E.

**DENNIS LAMBERT:** Bags and Things. Dunhill 50119, \$4.98. Tape: ● M85119, \$6.98; ●● M55119, \$6.98.

Dennis Lambert has one of the most appealing voices I've heard lately in pop music, both strong and warm. Happily, Lambert has a song that is on its way to being a hit, an interesting thing called *Ashes to Ashes* (co-written by himself and Brian Potter), about the irrevocable changes we all experience these days. "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, It's the way the west was won. Amos 'N' Andy and nickel candy have fallen to the gun." Excellent album, engrossing talent. M.A.

**THE FABULOUS RHINESTONES.** Just Sunshine JSS 1, \$4.98.

This new band contains former members of the Electric Flag and the Illinois Speed Press. Fans of those hard-driving groups will like this hard-driving group. H.E.

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## the tape deck

BY R.D. DARRELL

**Old Comrades and Personal Susceptibilities.** Some old musical friends turned up a while back, bringing with them (as old friends often do) some awkward problems. At first I was tempted to avoid writing about them at all, since I would have to acknowledge the obvious weaknesses that might make them *non grata* in many listeners' homes. But finally I decided to risk it in the hope that there may be others who will share at least some of my personal relish in welcoming back old comrades—perhaps as much for their flaws as in spite of them.

Objectively, there's much to complain about Bernard Herrmann's "Impressionists" program with the London Philharmonic (London/Ampex 8-track cartridge M 95062 and cassette M 94062, \$6.95 each; 7½-ips reel L 75062, \$7.95). The title is inaccurate except for Debussy's *Clair de lune* and *Plus que lente*; the performances are mostly too soulfully expressive and lacking in infectious zest; and the Phase 4 recording is too sumptuously opulent for its materials. Yet altogether apart from giving us the first recording in some forty years of the amusing Ravel-Branca *Five O'Clock* fox trot, plus new versions of the too-seldom-heard Honegger *Pastorale d'été* and haunting Fauré *Pavane*, these pieces (and the Satie-Debussy *Gymnopédies*) hold a special nostalgic appeal for those passionate record collectors of the Great Depression era who survive today—among them a then apprentice composer/conductor and journeyman reviewer/discographer. For us, rehearsing these onetime "discovery" favorites is a wryly poignant experience.

Later, in the Forties and Fifties, a wider circle of discophiles got to know and love one of the finest horn players of all time, the tragically short-lived Dennis Brain who played everything superbly but above all excelled in the four Mozart horn concertos. His incomparable versions of 1954 were of course monophonic and the set's recording age shows up unmistakably where Von Karajan's rather routine orchestral accompaniments are concerned. But while "electronic reprocessing" (actually achieving minimal stereoism) wasn't enough to keep later disc and reel editions in print, the set now has been resuscitated in 8-track cartridge and cassette tapings (Angel 8XS 35092 and 4XS 35092, \$6.98 each) and proves—despite all subsidiary weaknesses—to have lost none of Brain's (and Mozart's) unique tonal magic, vitality, and humor.

**Late Weber; Pre-Ring Wagner.** A converse problem, also stemming from a reviewer's personal experience and susceptibilities, is how to give due justice to works of high merit and still admit that one's heart isn't really in it—that respect doesn't necessarily include love. The first stereo (and tape) *Oberon* well may be considered an outstanding triumph by many listeners, and even I have only relatively minor complaints about the Kubelik performance starring Birgit Nilsson and Plácido Domingo; and I have nothing but the liveliest praise for the sweet yet vivid recording (DGG/Ampex R 7035, two 7½-ips reels, \$21.95; notes-and-texts booklet included). Yet apart from a few sheerly magnificent musical moments, the over-all lack of dramatic grip, the long stretches of tedium (including those of unmercifully extended German dialogue) stretch one's powers of patience to the limit. Purist opponent of excerpted performances though I normally am, *Oberon* is one work where I'm forced to admit that the parts are greater (or at least easier to take) than the whole.

The more familiar *Lohengrin* is another work that is now-spellbinding, now-boring for many listeners who are not wholehearted devotees of German musical romanticism. I must admit, however, that its latest taping (now the only available one) holds my attention better than most versions, even those boasting soloists vocally superior to the present James King (*Lohengrin*) and Gwyneth Jones (*Ortrud*), if not necessarily to Gundula Janowitz (*Elsa*). Kubelik's beautifully proportioned reading, the first-rate Bavarian Radio Chorus and Orchestra performances, and above all the expansively warm yet lucid recording (here favoring chorus and orchestra vis-à-vis soloists, where the reverse was true of *Oberon*) enable one to appreciate perhaps better than ever before Wagner's fabulously matured powers of sonority (DGG/Ampex U 3005, three 7½-ips reels, \$36.95; notes-and-texts booklet included).

### Solti's Chicagoans at Krannert Center.

What a relief to turn at last to a release that can be commended without either subjective or objective qualifications. The latest symphony in Solti's Mahler series, the Seventh (*Song of the Night*), is one of his very best (London/Ampex K 80249, 7½-ips double-play reel; also K 10249 double-play cassette; \$11.95 each). Not all Mahlerian aficionados, especially Bernstein's fans, will agree with every detail of the Solti reading, but I doubt that anyone can question the clear-cut supremacy of the Chicagoans' executant virtuosity. And I am particularly impressed by the solidity and strength, as well as the lucidity, of the

recording itself—Solti's first, but surely not the last, to be made in the Great Hall of the Krannert Center of the University of Illinois. That the ambience is an improvement over London's earlier Chicago Symphony recordings is undeniable, but whether for this or other reasons the engineering characteristics also differ considerably. The sonic qualities somewhat resemble those of American Decca's Cincinatti series: seemingly dark, even bottom-heavy in the first moments of audition, but before long revealing no lack of genuine brilliance (at least from a midhall vantage point) as well as exceptionally satisfactory overall sonority and impact. This would be a decisive first choice even if the 1966 Bernstein/Columbia taping were still in print along with the less competitive Abravanel/Vanguard reel also of 1966.

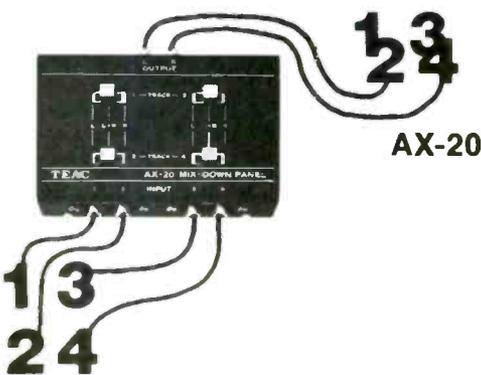
**Recorded Pianism Par Excellence.** The Horowitz legend gains a new chapter with the release of an all-Chopin program that combines a leftover from an April 1966 Carnegie Hall concert with a batch of studio recordings made five years later (Columbia MR 30643, 7½-ips reel, \$7.98; also MT 30643 Dolbyized cassette and MA 30643 8-track cartridge, \$6.98 each). The tautly assured live performance is of the Op. 61 *Polonaise-Fantaisie*; the studio ones feature the seldom-heard, lightweight, but engagingly bravura Introduction and Rondo, Op. 16, along with four more familiar pieces—all played with almost unbelievably dexterous articulation and point. Both types of recordings are first rate, with a naturally somewhat warmer acoustical ambience in the "live" session. And the Dolbyized cassette edition matches the reel in every respect, including surface quietness, while excelling it in freedom from some slight opening pre-echo.

Then the Cliburn legend receives another boost, the best since its sensational beginning, in a less spectacular but richly satisfying Brahms recital (RCA Red Seal RK 1215 cassette and R8S 1215 8-track cartridge, \$6.95 each). The pianist seems more emotionally involved here than in most of his recent releases, yet his executant—and dramatic—grip has tightened rather than loosened in the two Op. 79 Rhapsodies; Op. 118, No. 3 Ballade; Op. 116, No. 3 Capriccio; Op. 39, No. 15 Waltz in A flat; and six intermezzos from Opp. 116, 117, 118, and 119. The recorded piano tonal qualities are just about the most opulent ever captured on discs or tapes and while some smooth surface noise is evident in the quietest passages, the cassette processing is quite admirable by non-Dolby standards. And here the tape editor with whom I have jostled in the past demonstrates how skillful he *can* be!

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