

IN **Back**
beat

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HIGH FIDELITY

APRIL 1977 \$1.00

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Turntables Tone Arms Cartridges



How to Judge
Record-Playing
Equipment

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41332



The high price.

For under \$200*, you can
now own the direct-drive PL-510.



*For informational purposes only. The actual resale prices will be set by the individual Pioneer dealer at his option.

The best way to judge the new Pioneer PL-510 turntable is to pretend it costs about \$100 more. Then see for yourself if it's worth that kind of money.

First, note the precision-machined look and feel of the PL-510.

The massive, die-cast, aluminum-alloy platter gives an immediate impression of quality. The strobe marks on the rim tell you that you don't have to worry about perfect accuracy of speed. The tone arm is made like a scientific instrument and seems to have practically no mass when you lift it off the arm rest. The controls are a sensuous delight to touch and are functionally grouped for one-handed operation.

But the most expensive feature of the PL-510 is hidden under the platter. Direct drive. With a brushless DC servo-controlled motor. The same as in the costliest turntables.

That's why the rumble level is down to -60 dB by the JIS standard. (This is considerably more stringent than the more commonly used DIN "B" standard, which would yield an even more impressive figure.) And that's why the wow and flutter remain below 0.03%. You can't get performance like that with idler

drive or even belt drive. The PL-510 is truly the inaudible component a turntable should be.

Vibrations due to external causes, such as heavy footsteps, are completely damped out by the PL-510's double-floating suspension. The base floats on rubber insulators inside the four feet. And the

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The PL-117D for under \$175.* The PL-115D for under \$125.* And the amazing PL-112D for under \$100.*

None of these has a rumble level above -50 dB (JIS). None of them has more wow and flutter than 0.07%.

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Turntable:

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- $\pm 2\%$ fine adjustment of speeds
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- One-handed operation of controls

Tone arm:

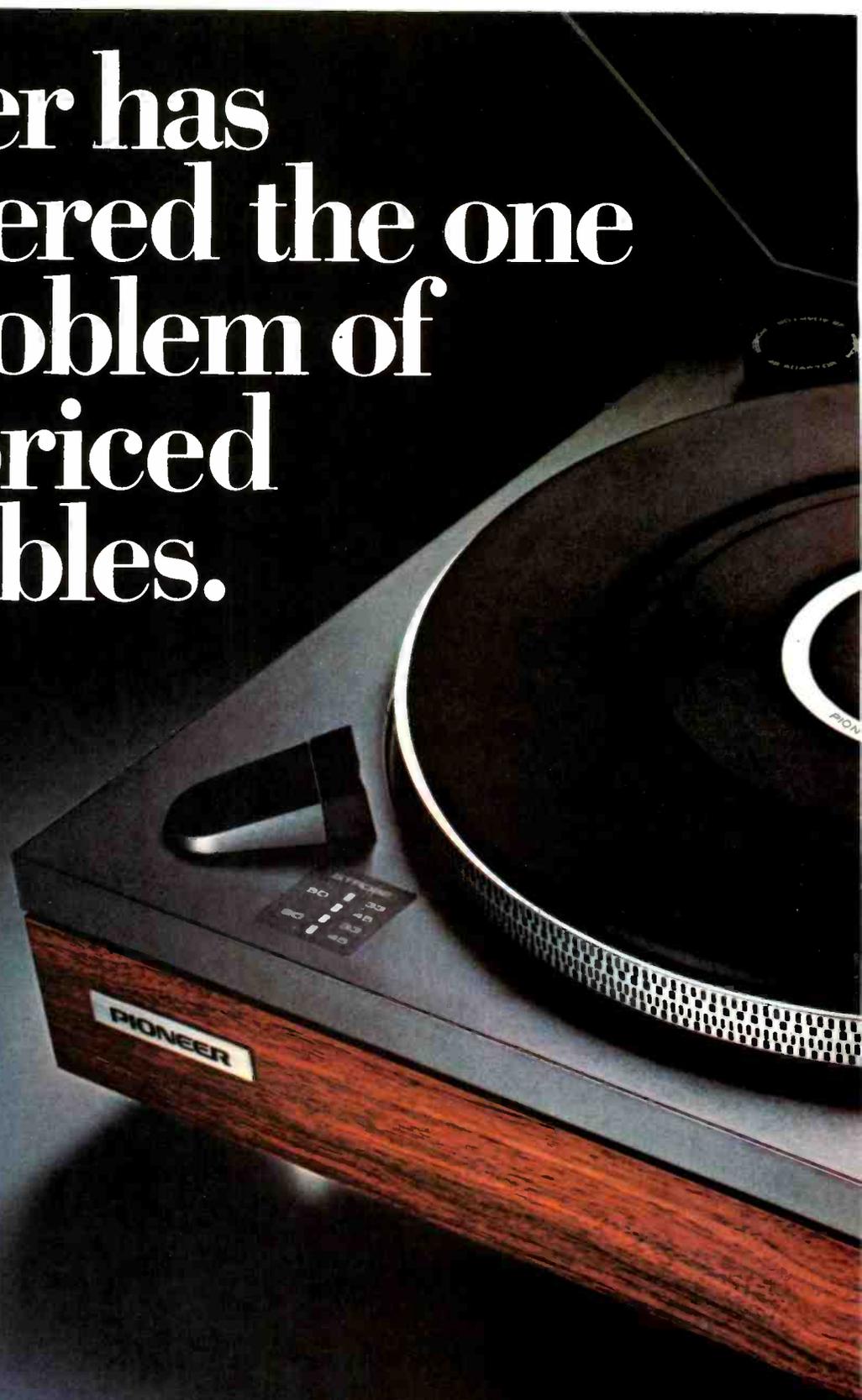
- Lightweight S-shaped tubular design
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- Lateral balancer
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CIRCLE 39 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

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conquered the one
big problem of
high-priced
turntables.





PIONEER ELECTRONIC CORP.

DIRECT DRIVE STEERING SYSTEM

AMPLIFIER

SPEED

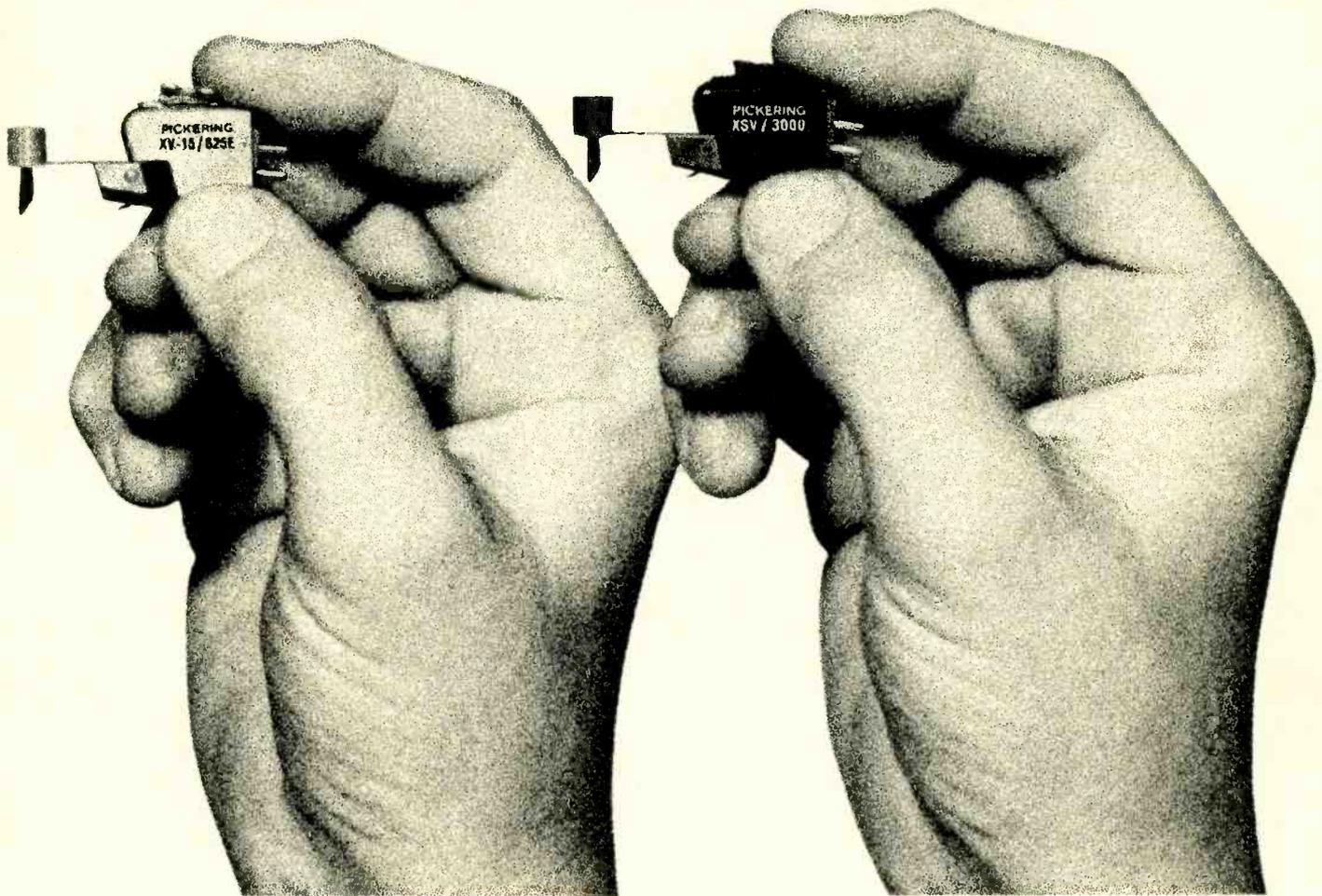
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OFF

DOWN

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PL-510

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Match one to your equipment

"The right Pickering Cartridge for your equipment is the best Cartridge money can buy."

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If you have a fine manual turntable, the XSV/3000 is a perfect choice.

If you have a high quality automatic turntable, then installing an XV-15/625E in its tone arm is a perfect choice.

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Read the whole evaluation report. Send for your free copy of the **Stereo** "Lab Test" reprint; write to Pickering & Co., Inc., 101 Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, N.Y. 11803. Department HF

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HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

CIRCLE 38 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

HIGH FIDELITY

APRIL 1977 VOLUME 27, NUMBER 4

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

- 14 The U.N. Day Concerts *John Culshaw*
18 Music U.S.A.: Words into Music *Gene Lees*
69 The Acoustic Era *Painted by Jim Jonson*
75 Rosa Ponselle Reminisces *James A. Drake*
80 Boulez' IRCAM *Roy McMullen*
86 Behind the Scenes
89 Sass and Price: Soprano Superstars *Dale Harris*
90 Heroic Strauss from 1928 *R. D. Darrell*
123 Judy Collins in Transition *Susan Elliott*

EQUIPMENT AND INSTRUMENTS

- 4 MCA vs. Sony *Leonard Marcus*
22 Too Hot to Handle
28 News and Views
28 Equipment in the News
40 Pathfinder: Walter Stanton *Norman Eisenberg*
45 Equipment Reports
Pioneer Spec-2 power amplifier
Empire 698 turntable
Hitachi SR-903 receiver
Aiwa AD-1250 cassette deck
Crosswinds outboard subsonic filter
Audio-Technica AT-605 Audio Insulators
60 Judging Record-Playing Equipment *Edward J. Foster*

- 64 Buyer's Guide to Record-Playing Equipment
127 Tom Oberheim *Don Heckman*
132 A&M Records *Todd Everett*
135 Instruments and Accessories

REVIEWS

- 89 Essays
Sass/Price recitals Mengelberg's *Ein Heldenleben*
92 Classical Records
Marriner's *Messiah* Davis' Dvořák
93 Critics' Choice
119 Theater and Film
To Kill a Mockingbird *Pink Panther*
121 The Tape Deck *R. D. Darrell*
136 Backbeat Records
Lionel Hampton Janis Ian Leon Redbone
150 Folios
Alice Cooper The Allman Brothers Carly Simon

ET CETERA

- 6 Letters
59 HiFi-Croctic *William Petersen*
106 Advertising Index
107 Reader-Service Cards

BACKBEAT begins on page 123



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MCA vs. Sony

I don't usually get involved in intercorporate struggles, but the outcome of a lawsuit in process may have such radical consequences in regard to the right to home entertainment that I think every one of our readers should be aware of the issues. MCA, partner of Philips in a well-publicized video disc system (I wrote about it extensively myself in our December 1973 issue), is suing Sony to prevent the latter from manufacturing and marketing its Betamax video tape system.

While I have no solid evidence from which to infer that any part of the impetus for the lawsuit is MCA/Philips' inability to get its product onto the market, whereas Sony's is already there, I cannot dismiss my suspicion that the video disc company merely wants to thwart the video tape company's capture of a potentially enormous home entertainment market. For all the advantages the MCA/Philips system has over the Sony—not the least of which is the lower cost of both its hardware and its software—the Betamax can claim at least one: It can record. You can watch one television show while taping another for later viewing; you can set a timer to record a show while you are out.

You can, but whether you may is an open question. MCA (and its partner in the suit, Walt Disney Productions) has claimed copyright infringement; the entertainment conglomerate counts among its properties the movies of its subsidiary Universal City Studios. In its symbiotic partnership with Philips, MCA supplies the program material while Philips makes the players. (As we reported last November, Sony has now teamed up with Paramount.) Movie companies, of course, have a stake in discouraging you from taping their films from *The Late Show* for your personal library. What would happen to the annual broadcast of *The Wizard of Oz* if enough people made their own copies? What would be the future of those intermittent re-releases of *Gone with the Wind* if enough viewers had taped its recent telecast? If Betamax proliferate, would MCA have to turn a deaf ear and reject any multimillion-dollar offers the networks make to televise its *Jaws*? Clearly, the traditional distribution patterns for making films available to the public would have to be rethought.

It is, to be sure, generally illegal to make an unauthorized copy of somebody else's copyrighted material. (The 1972 Sound Recording Act specifically exempts the home audio tapist who records anything for his own use. Thus, strangely, you can tape the soundtrack of a TV program—but don't get caught recording what's on the screen.) Since MCA cannot hope to sue every homebody with a video recorder, company executives have decided to attack the subversive technology.

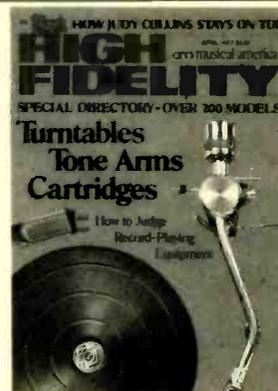
There is a basic difference between the recording of visual material and the recording of sound. If you have a few dollars, you can walk into a neighborhood store and buy the music from *Godspell*; you cannot do the same for the movie. With the one, you buy the product; with the other, you (or the network) buy a single showing. These are the conditions the economics of the two industries have dictated.

But now a new industry is developing, an industry whose economics are conflicting with those of a long-established one. And in the process the older industry, rather than planning for changes in its distribution patterns to meet the development of technology, is trying to limit our ability to do what we want within the confines of our homes. When it does appear, an MCA disc should be cheaper than even the blank tape necessary to record the same length of program material via Betamax, if you plan to keep the program rather than re-use the tape.

Which only goes to reinforce my suspicion that the entertainment giant, not yet able to market its own wares, is trying to quash the competition, and the public interest be damned.

If MCA wins the suit, watch out, Xerox!

Leonard Marcus



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Roy Lindstrom

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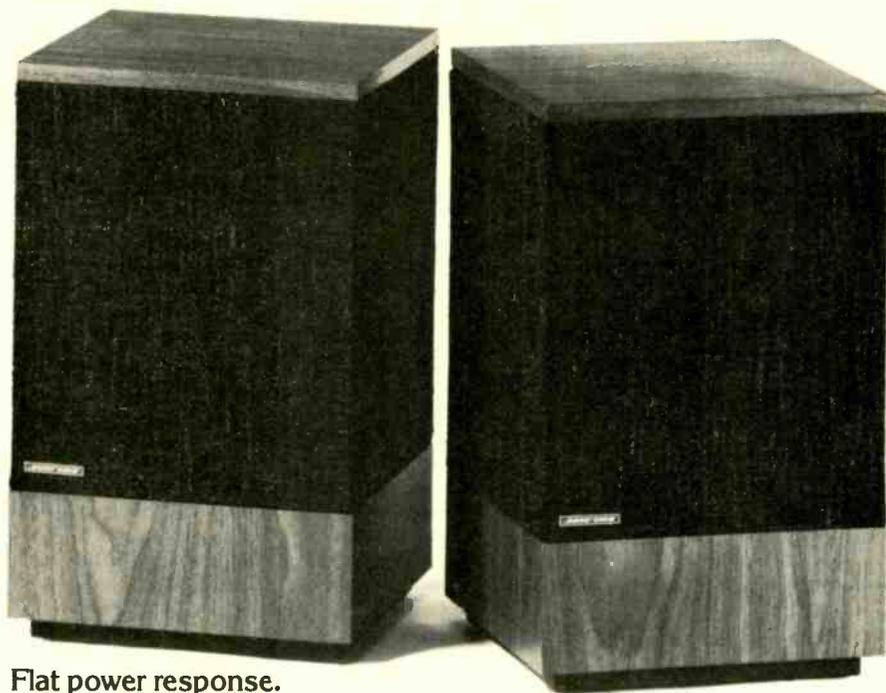
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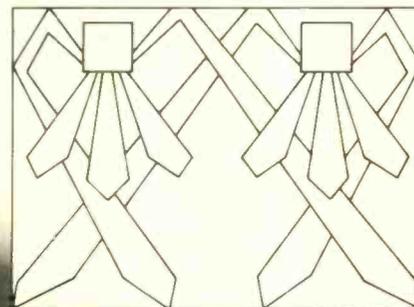
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Along with May's flowers our next issue will bring you **An Early Look at Next Season's New Equipment** as gleaned by our audio editors during the Winter 1977 Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago. For those who love the great outdoors but don't want to leave music behind, we offer Stephen Traiman's survey of **Portable Components for Camping**. Arthur Jacobs' revealing account of **The Real Sir Arthur Sullivan**, based on his unpublished diaries, shows that, among other things, the motto of this upright Victorian gentleman's amorous life was decidedly not "Well, hardly ever." And we'll have the first of two parts of Richard Dyer's comprehensive **Gilbert and Sullivan Discography**. Plus equipment test reports, Gene Lees, John Culshaw, BACKBEAT, our regular classical-release coverage, and more.

SOLUTION TO HIFI-CROSTIC NO. 22

HENRI TEMIANKA: *Facing the Music*

Recipe for a chamber symphony: Take thirty-five musicians, add board members to taste, mix not too vigorously. Keep at even temperature and drop in one medium-sized manager. Keep well supplied with lettuce. Baste frequently until done.

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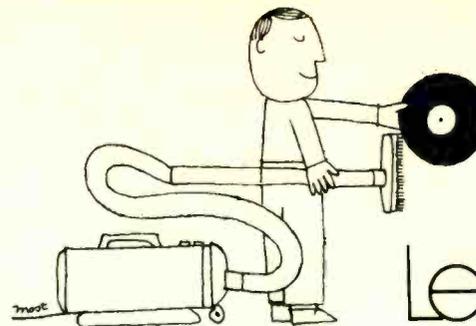
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Letters

Record Quality: Another Slant

In response to John M. Dobson ["Letters," January], I am compelled to put in a word on behalf of Deutsche Grammophon. Living in nearby Lexington, Kentucky, Mr. Dobson probably receives records from the same distributor as I do in Cincinnati, and I must say my most recent DG purchases have been worthy of the company's fine reputation. In the last month I bought Karajan's Bruckner Eighth Symphony and Jochum's *Die Meistersinger*, and the pressings were uniformly marvelous. This is not to suggest that Mr. Dobson is incorrect, but merely to suggest that perhaps DG has restored quality to its product.

It occurred to me that depreciation in recording quality in general has gone on far longer than a year. I'm referring not to pressings, but to musical sound. After having purchased London's new Solti *Die Meistersinger* as well as DG's version, I pulled out my Friedrich Schorr excerpts album on Seraphim to hear this music truly sung and was thunderstruck to find the sound on this antediluvian marvel superior in essential ways to both contemporary products. The *Wahnmonolog* in Schorr's recording is beautifully balanced, the voice incredibly true, and the orchestra—if not so resonant and refulgent as in the stereo records—is certainly more revealing of detail. Instruments and voices have a reality of timbre lost on today's products. It is the difference between a faithful but faded photograph and a brilliant but distorted cartoon.

It is with reluctance that I observe (and must accept) that as far as records are concerned, advancement has been strictly to the rear.

Alan Klein
Cincinnati, Ohio

Paradox

There is before me a copy of the recording of Pierre Boulez conducting the Beethoven Symphony No. 5, which features in the interpretation of the third movement a repeat of the opening scherzo and trio. The notes on the back cover explain by quoting Mr. Boulez as stating, "I have a pupil who has . . . proved conclusively to me that it was just carelessness on Beethoven's part that the repeat marks got left out. I think the balance of the work is improved too, in practice."

These same notes begin by declaring that "Boulez has been called 'a marvelous bundle of paradoxes.'" The paradox here consists in the fact that Boulez tries to "improve" the balance of the work by inserting

a repeat in the third movement that Beethoven, through carelessness or otherwise, supposedly neglected to specify, and then neglects to observe a repeat in the last movement that Beethoven was careful to specify, thereby destroying the very balance he claims to be trying to improve.

Samuel Schulze
Pickering, Ont.

Isle of the Dead

With regard to Abram Chipman's review [January], it is interesting to note the extent to which Rachmaninoff was "inspired" by Böcklin's *The Isle of the Dead* in composing his great symphonic poem. In fact he never saw the oil painting until after he had finished the score. He had seen only a small black-and-white sketch made afterward and did not like the big oil. "If I had seen the original first, I might not have composed my *Isle of the Dead*. I like the picture best in black and white," he remarked.

Also, in Rachmaninoff's account of the composing of this work, given to a Dutch journalist, there is no mention of Böcklin's picture at all: "And they come: all voices at once. Not a bit here, a bit there. All. The whole grows. So *Toteninsel*. It was all done in April and May. When it came, how it began—how can I say? It came up within me, was entertained, written down."

Noel Farrand
Cañon, N.M.

Judy Holliday

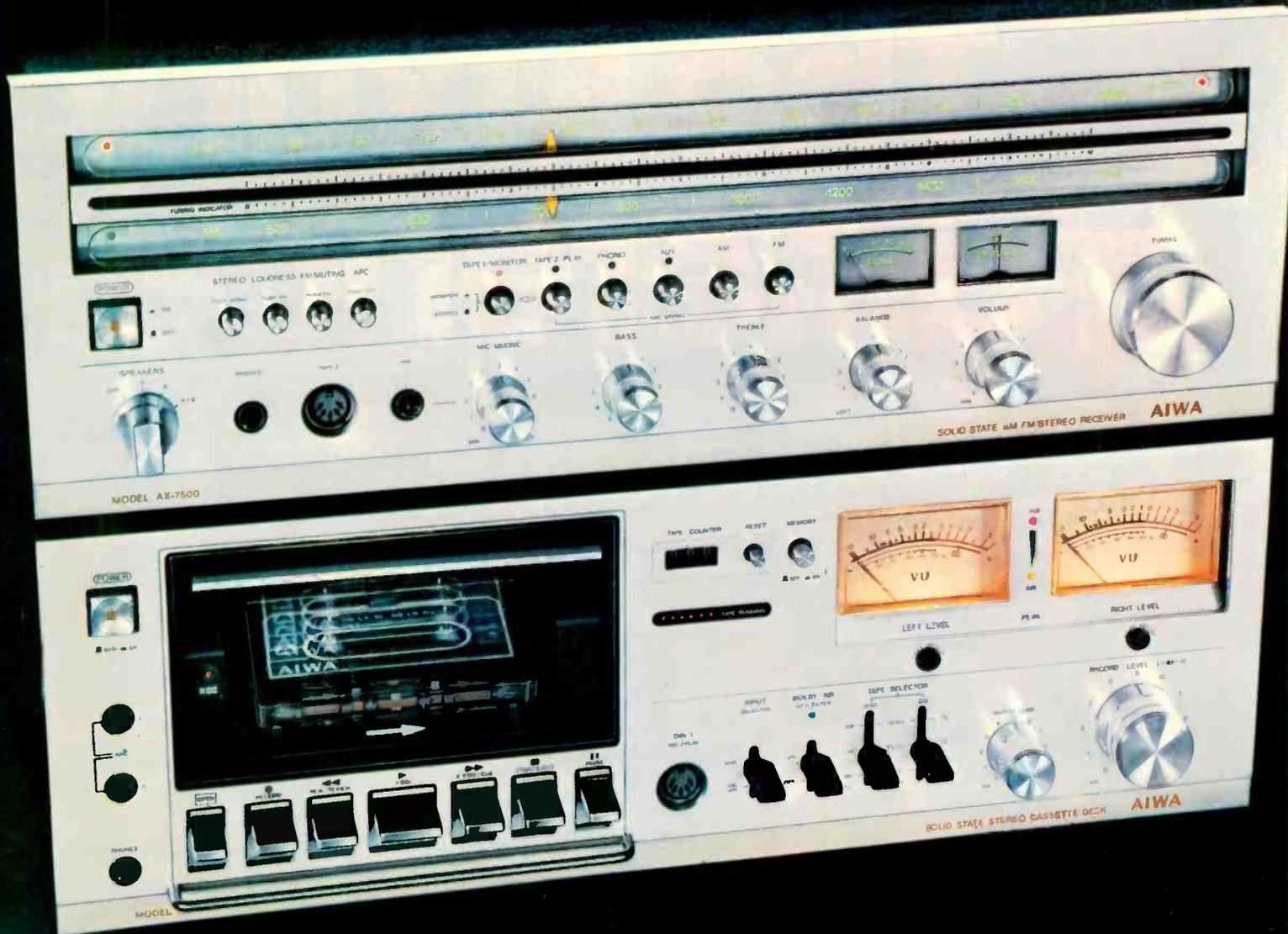
Gene Lees's exquisite article about Judy Holliday [January] was much appreciated. He expressed, much better than I could ever have, the sense of loss experienced by all of us who miss her.

Richard Smith
Philadelphia, Pa.

Computerized Caruso

James Drake's article [October] and David Hamilton's review [November] concerning computerized Caruso were quite informative. In fact, I placed them inside the jacket of the recording along with the accompanying booklet.

My first impression on hearing the disc was that the sense of strain often noted in Caruso records—and in Madame Favaria-Artsay's book—was gone. Besides, the almost living presence of the voice sounded like some of the best Edisons of the period, which caught some great voices quite well. In fact, Caruso sounds like a human being rather than a "singing god."



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From the beginning it was a love match, each bringing out the best in the other. The AIWA AD-6500 cassette deck and the powerful AIWA AX-7500 receiver.

The AD-6500 cassette deck with its exclusive automatic front loading has been the belle of the ball since coming out. The separate transport system automatically loads the cassette into place. Added to this exclusive feature are those famous AIWA specs that impress even the most discriminating audiophile. The built-in Dolby* N. R. allows the S/N ratio of 62dB (Fe-Cr tape); the wow and flutter is kept to 0.07% (WRMS); the frequency response from 30 to 17,000Hz; the 2 step peak level indicator (+3dB, +7dB); the quick

cue and review; the Ferrite guard head and the 3 step bias and equalizer tape selector insures that the AD-6500 will always be out front.

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Luis Alvarado
Rio Piedras, P.R.

Sound Debate

I was chagrined to see ["Letters," November] that someone as eminent as John Culshaw would repeat a misapprehension that had, I thought, been buried some time during the New Deal. I refer to his astounding statement that "the words 'natural,' 'realistic,' and 'faithful' are meaningless" to high fidelity reproduction. Or should I just call it sound?

It does not take a golden ear to hear what a limiter, or equalization, or multiple mi-

crophone techniques can do to a recording. If Mr. Culshaw's ears are in such a sorry state that he can't hear the poor stereo image and flatness of a multi-miked recording, perhaps he should refer to the *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society*, where more than one study has indicated that recordings made with various two-microphone techniques are almost universally preferred in every respect to those made with multiple pickups.

As to Mr. Culshaw's belief in the ascendancy of the artist during the mix, I have often heard singers overwhelming symphony orchestras, or woodwinds slowly climbing in level, and must sorrowfully conclude that Mr. Culshaw's statement is patent nonsense. These things don't occur at the concerts I attend.

Please, Mr. Culshaw, and all you other engineers—listen to what a pair of cardioids and a two-track can do, and then be glad that expensive consoles can be retired to pop. We will all benefit.

Joshua Hill
New York, N.Y.

Blitzstein Recording

It seems that it took quite a while for Columbia to get its recording of Blitzstein's *The Airborne Symphony* [January] off the ground. Although reviewer Irving Lowens refers to it as "newly recorded," I have before me a copy of the Metropolitan Opera Guild's *Opera News*, dated January 21, 1967, in which it is stated: "Andrea Velis has recorded Marc Blitzstein's symphony *The Airborne* with the N.Y. Philharmonic under the direction of Leonard Bernstein for Columbia, a result of the success of their performance of the work last October."

Wilfred J. Healey
Los Angeles, Calif.

Though the music portion of the album was indeed recorded in 1967, Orson Welles's narration was just recently recorded and the complete album released. It seems that it took nine years to find a time in Mr. Welles's busy schedule when he could do the narration:

Iris

Why don't your reviewers start urging a recording of Pietro Mascagni's *Iris*? The music has to be heard to be believed—gusty, vividly colored and exciting, with magnificent choruses and thoroughly effective arias. Admittedly, the plot's a little static, but this wouldn't matter on records and the music would amply compensate for it.

As the lead, let's have Magda Olivero, who has sung the role in Italy. If she isn't available, Josella Ligi would do it with precisely the *verismo* qualities needed. Considering how rapaciously hungry both the public and the recording companies are for exciting rediscoveries, a well-presented version of *Iris* couldn't help but sell like the proverbial hotcakes.

Jordan G. Lee
San Francisco, Calif.

Early Music Quartet

In her November review, Susan T. Sommer states that she is a fan of Thomas Binkley's Early Music Quartet. If so, she should have checked her record collection before writing the review of the EMQ's latest release, which was not "assembled in house from bits and pieces of old European releases." Rather, the material under discussion was taken completely from two single discs that have been available in the U.S. for at least five years. The recordings were originally issued by Telefunken as SAWT 9432-B and SAWT 9466-B, and are currently in the domestic catalogs as 6.41053 and 6.41068, respectively.

Robert W. Schirmer
Stow, Ohio

Ms. Sommer replies: Available or not (and these particular discs have not come to my

Both of these are made in Elkhart, Indiana



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The ideal dome material for a high frequency driver must respond instantly to changes in amplitude and frequency of the input signal. So the ideal dome material must be virtually weightless as well as extremely rigid.

Beryllium is the lightest and most rigid metal known. Its density is less than two-thirds that of commonly used aluminum, and its rigidity is a most four times as great — thus preventing dome deformation and consequent distortion. What's more, beryllium's sound propagation velocity is twice that of aluminum.

The beryllium dome found on the NS-500's high frequency driver is the world's lightest — about half the weight of one petal of a small sweetheart rose. Which is one of the reasons for this speaker's exceptional sensitivity and response. And for its sensuous sound.

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To be able to offer the sophistication of beryllium at a more affordable price, without sacrificing quality of performance, Yamaha designed the NS-500 as a two-way bass reflex system.

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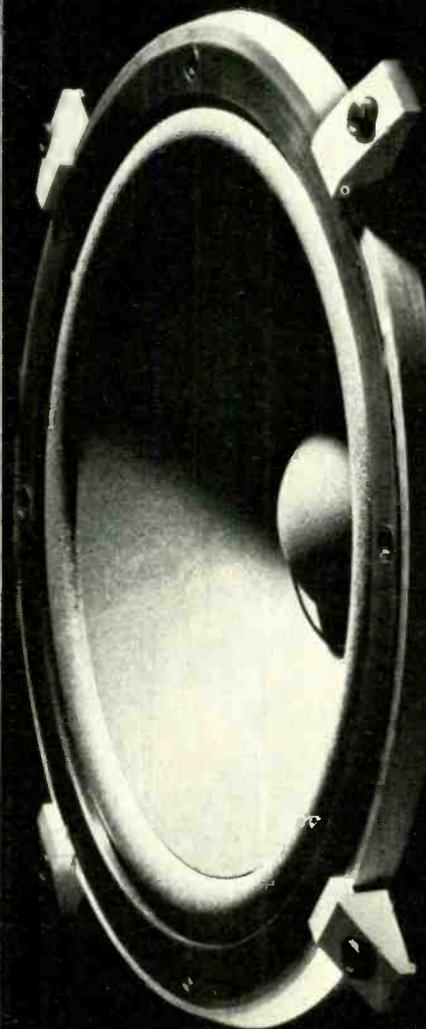
But to fully appreciate the beauty of the NS-500, you really should visit your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer.

And if you're not familiar with the name of your local Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer, drop us a line. In turn, we'll also send you a free preprint of the Audio Engineering Society paper on Yamaha beryllium technology mentioned above.



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CIRCLE 29 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

attention), the point that Telefunken's latest collection is a hodgepodge still holds. Binkley himself has complained that companies release selections without acknowledging it and that the final arrangement is not necessarily the program envisioned by the original artists.

More on Dohnányi

Bravo to Alex Hassan for his appeal for more Dohnányi recordings ["Letters," December]. With the advent of Vox Boxes and the marathon race to get so many composers' complete oeuvre on disc, Dohnányi has been overlooked in preference to some composers of lesser stature.

For some months I have been aware of the approaching Dohnányi centennial and, like Mr. Hassan, was appalled that there was only one recording of his works listed in this year's forecast. I immediately wrote Columbia and asked if it might not include in its many Odyssey reissues one disc of the several historical performances in its vaults. I doubt that my single letter is enough to persuade Columbia, but more letters from interested readers might do the trick.

George J. Mintz
Gainesville, Ga.

... and Havergal Brian

H. Jack Adams is doing Havergal Brian a disservice by recommending the Gothic Symphony on Aries ["Letters," December]. This is a pirate issue of Sir Adrian Boult's 1969 performance; the recording sounds as if it were made on a \$19.95 cassette recorder in the top balcony of the Albert Hall. Some of the sense of the music comes through, but not very much; the huge orchestra and chorus in the Te Deum finale are lost in the mush.

There are three recommendable English releases: amateur but surprisingly good performances of the excellent Tenth Symphony and less interesting Twenty-first (Unicorn RHS 313); of the short Twenty-second, an early Psalm setting, and the late English Suite, No. 5 (CBS Classics 61612); and, best yet, superb readings of the Sixth (*Sinfonia Tragica*) and Sixteenth Symphonies, two of Brian's finest works, on Lyrita SRCS 67, by the London Philharmonic under Myer Fredman. I hope that MHS will release the Lyrita; it is the best introduction available to Brian's exasperating but powerful symphonies.

Michael Steinberg
Ontario, Canada

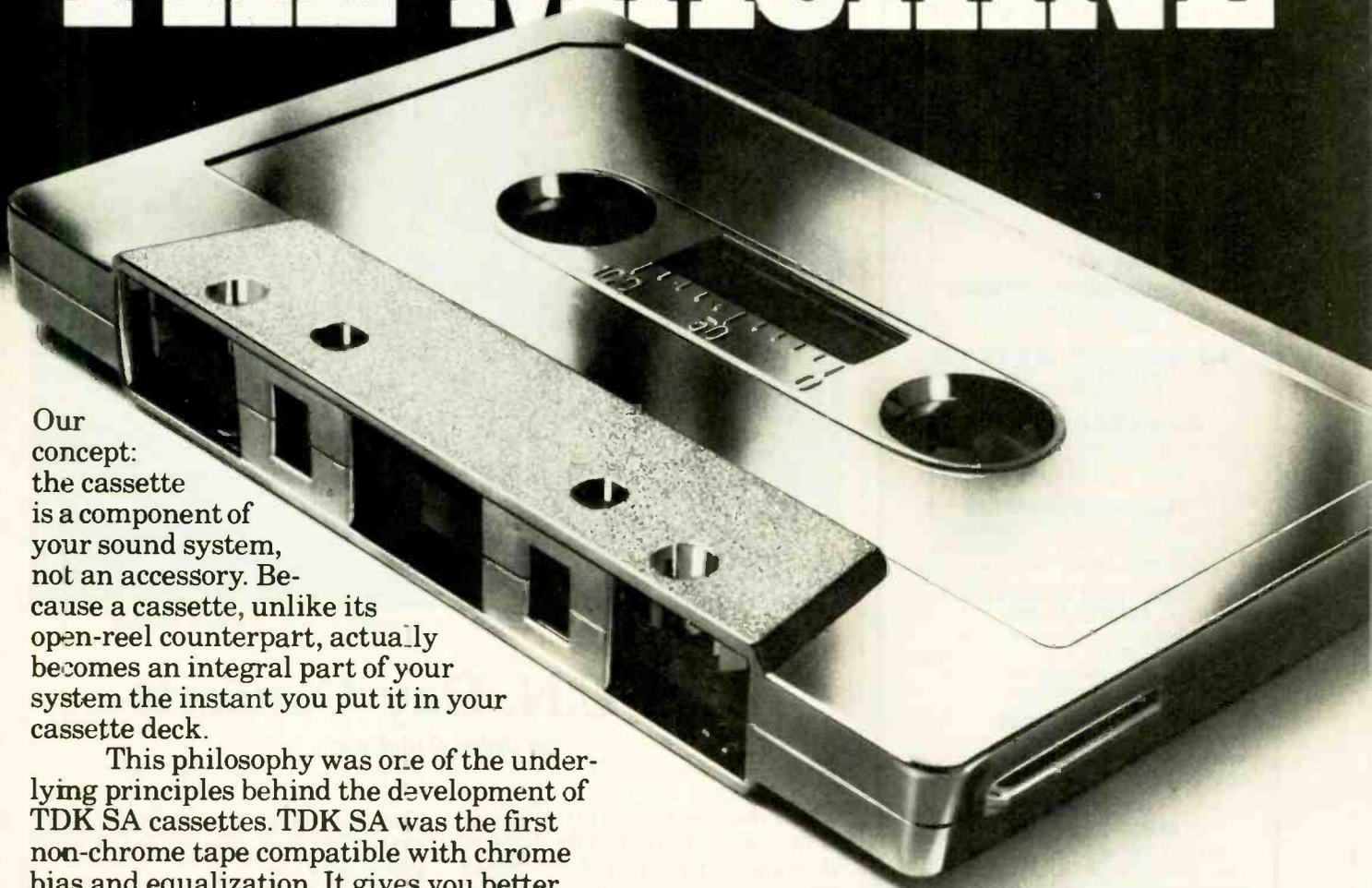
Benson's engineer

Somewhere between the typewriter and the printed page, both the name and the special significance of engineer Al Schmitt were omitted from my story about George Benson (BACKBEAT, February). I'd like to make amends by quoting producer Tommy Li-Puma on Schmitt's role in the creation of Benson's enormously successful albums for Warner Bros.: "Without Al, it just would never have happened."

Don Heckman
Encino, Calif.

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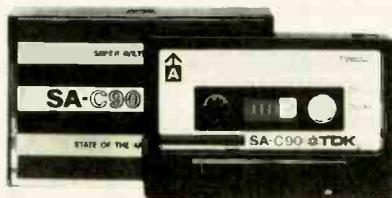
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The National Philharmonic under Antal Dorati at the 1976 U.N. Concert.

The U.N. Day Concerts

by John Culshaw

NEW YORK—For the past three years, on October 24, I have had the honor of directing the televising of the United Nations Day concert. It is an exhilarating and exceedingly frightening experience, never to be contemplated by those who are frail of heart or weak of knee. For one thing, it is live, which means that any mistake you make will be displayed to the world; and it is "live-deferred," which is a way of getting rid of the awkward thirty-minute intermission.

The 1976 concert began precisely at 3:00 on that Sunday afternoon, but transmission did not begin until 3:30, a process that involves the hitching up and respooling of several video machines. The effect in real time is uncanny, because at 3:32 there I was directing the cameras for Marian Anderson in Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* while on the transmission monitor Antal Dorati was just starting Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*, which had taken place exactly thirty-one minutes earlier. The result of this deliberate time lag is that by the time you reach the second half of the concert—in this case, Lazar Berman playing the Tchaikovsky B flat minor Concerto—you have caught up with the

clock and have become genuinely, irrevocably live. It can all be very confusing.

There are other confusions, too, at least for someone who works for the U.N. only once a year, and the first is finding your way about the building. The trouble is that it is not one building, as it appears on a postcard, but hundreds if not thousands of buildings, all connected by elevators and escalators designed to take you where you do not want to go. You have also to learn never to take as much as a step without carrying your pass because, although it is easy to go from a restricted to an unrestricted area, it is almost impossible to get back again without that vital piece of paper.

In 1974, when the concert was given by the New Japan Philharmonic with Seiji Ozawa, the second half of the program nearly went on the air without a director because I had unwittingly gone to a restroom in an unrestricted area during intermission and had left my pass in the control room. The guards correctly and politely stopped me. Their apprehensions about a jacketless Englishman trying to gain entry were doubtless doubled when I explained that within

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We'll be pleased to forward data on the entire Ortofon line. We suggest that you write to us directly. Ortofon, Dept. B, 122 Dupont Street, Plainview, New York 11803.

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The lower mass tone arm, electronic cueing, quieting circuitry and automatic arm lift are all very new.

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The new 698 arm moves effortlessly on 32 jeweled, sapphire bearings. Vertical and horizontal bearing friction is a mere 0.001 gram, 4 times less than it would be on conventional steel bearings. It is impervious to drag. Only the calibrated anti-skating and tracking force you select control its movement.

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A self-cooling, hysteresis synchronous motor drives the platter with

enough torque to reach full speed in one third of a revolution. It contributes to the almost immeasurable 0.04% average wow and flutter value in our specifications. More important, it's built to last.

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Stylus force is dialed using a see-through calibrated clock mainspring more accurate than any commercially available stylus pressure gauge.

A new silicon photocell sensor has been added to automatically lift the arm at the end of a record.

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four minutes I was going to "shoot" Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, whose speech was about to begin. But instead of locking me up or putting me on another escalator to nowhere, they kindly guided me back to the control room and stayed to listen to the speech.

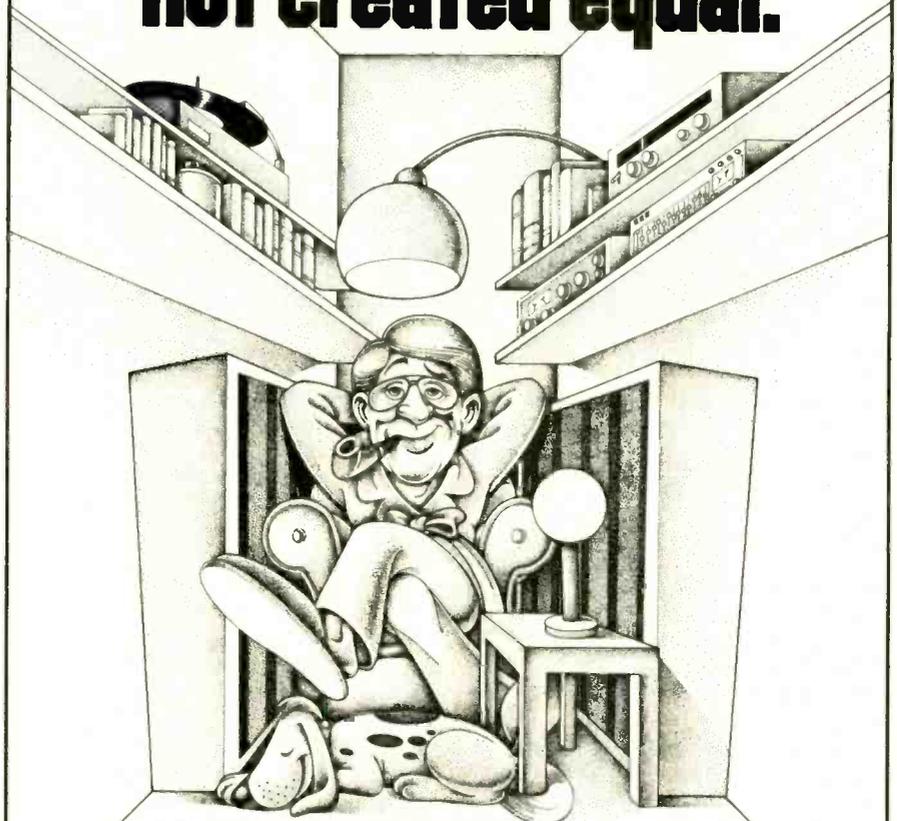
Such problems are minor indeed compared with the situation that arose while we were preparing for the 1975 concert to be performed by the Vienna Symphony under Carlo Maria Giulini. The main work was a new cantata by Gottfried von Einem called *An die Nachgeborenen (To Posterity)*, and it involved Julia Hamari, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and the Temple University Choirs. A journalist noticed that in the last movement of the cantata—a setting of Psalm 121—Einem had omitted a line that reads: "Behold, He that keepeth watch over Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." Now I don't know about those who keep watch over Israel, but from that moment onward there was not much slumber or sleep for any of us.

It is not hard to imagine the various sensitivities aroused by the omission, and Einem did not help matters by claiming, during an interview with *The New York Times*, that he had worked from an ancient, authenticated text that excluded the line. This brought down upon his head a veritable deluge of theological denials, at which point he refused to give any more interviews.

By that time various factions for various reasons were threatening to boycott the concert. Giulini tried without success to persuade Einem to set the line. Then someone suggested a fermata during which Fischer-Dieskau might speak the line—a seemingly ingenious solution until it was pointed out that it would provide an even greater emphasis than the omission. In the event it was left out, and I don't think anybody missed it; but I'm told that in the DG recording made shortly afterward in Vienna, which I have not heard, it has mysteriously appeared. Perhaps Einem wrote music for it in during the long flight home.

There were no such incidents in 1976, but I have just been told in confidence what may await me in 1977. It's very exciting, and I wish I could disclose it, but I can't. Yet, being a journalist rather than a diplomat, I can't resist revealing one closely kept international secret: The bartender in the U.N. Delegates Lounge makes the best Bloody Mary in the world. ●

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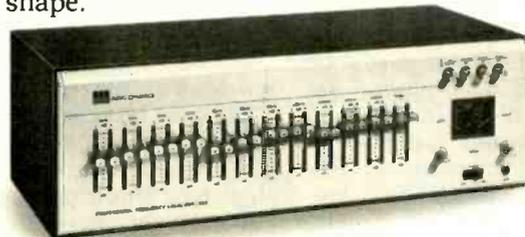
Because unless you happen to have an acoustically perfect listening room, your system and space probably don't match. Hard walls, soft carpets, glass tables, even the size of a room can change sounds.

So ADC developed the new ADC 500 Sound Shaper Frequency Equalizer.

By adjusting the twelve frequency levels you can actually shape your sound to fit the shape of the room, and compensate for spaces and textures that interfere with sound. You can even tinker with the sound just for the fun of it: bring up a singer, lose a violin, actually re-mix your recording.

The new ADC 500 Sound Shaper can get your system into great shape.

ADC



The Sound Shaper

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THE LANGUAGE of a people, and sometimes even differing dialects, act as a powerful force in shaping a nation's music, even its instrumental music. The German language is full of regular stresses and emphases; so is much of German music. Mexican Spanish has the pattering sound of triplets about it; so does a good deal of Mexico's music. Consider how the rhythmic feeling of "The Mexican Hat Dance" accords with the way Mexicans speak Spanish.

The influence of language on music was brought home to me in the 1960s when I began translating the Brazilian Portuguese lyrics of Antonio Carlos Jobim. I found that English lyrics would fit comfortably into the music of a ballad (the *samba canção*, to use the Brazilian term) because there is a stressed-unstressed structure in Brazilian speech—which is quite different, by the way, in rhythm and even tonal character from that of Portugal. At more rapid tempos, English usually becomes awkward in conjunction with Brazilian melodies. Take Sergio Mendes' recording of "Chauve Chuva": The English line "constant is the rain" comes clumsily from the mouth, tripping over the rhythm of the music. "The Girl from Ipanema" utterly lost her swing in Norman Gimbel's English translation, partly because the three-syllable phrase "tall and tan" was forced onto a melodic phrase that originally had five syllables. The more idiomatically Brazilian a song is in speech character—and therefore in musical character—the more difficult it is to fit English lyrics to it.

In 1963, I began a working collaboration and friendship with the French songwriter, singer, and film actor Charles Aznavour. Helping him prepare for his first Broadway appear-

3. Words into Music

by Gene Lees

ance, I translated about a dozen of his songs. Some of them were easy to render into English, like "J'aime Paris au mois de Mai." Its structure is rather like that of an American song, with a markedly stressed but uneven rhythmic character to the words. In English the title became "Paris Is at Her Best in May" (partly to poke fun at one of the loveliest of American songs, "April in Paris," since anyone who has lived there knows that April in Paris is usually soggy and dismal). The English title contains the same number of syllables as the French; but more importantly, the weak and strong syllables conform to those of the original line.

Others of Aznavour's songs were difficult, however, particularly "Que c'est triste Venise"—which became "Venice Blue." I was always unhappy with my English lyric for the song. Last year when Aznavour said he intended to re-record it, I totally re-wrote it as "How Sad Venice Can Be." The new lyric is a considerable improvement, but I still am not content.

The problem is not a matter of meaning; true translation is ultimately impossible, and all that one can do is to understand the emotional components of a song and then reconstruct them with the images, symbols, and rhymes of the adopted language. Many of his songs were written in alexandrines, the meter of classical French poetry and the verse dramas of

Racine and Corneille. An alexandrine is a line of iambic hexameter—six iambs, each containing a weak beat followed by a strong one. Thus each line contains twelve syllables.

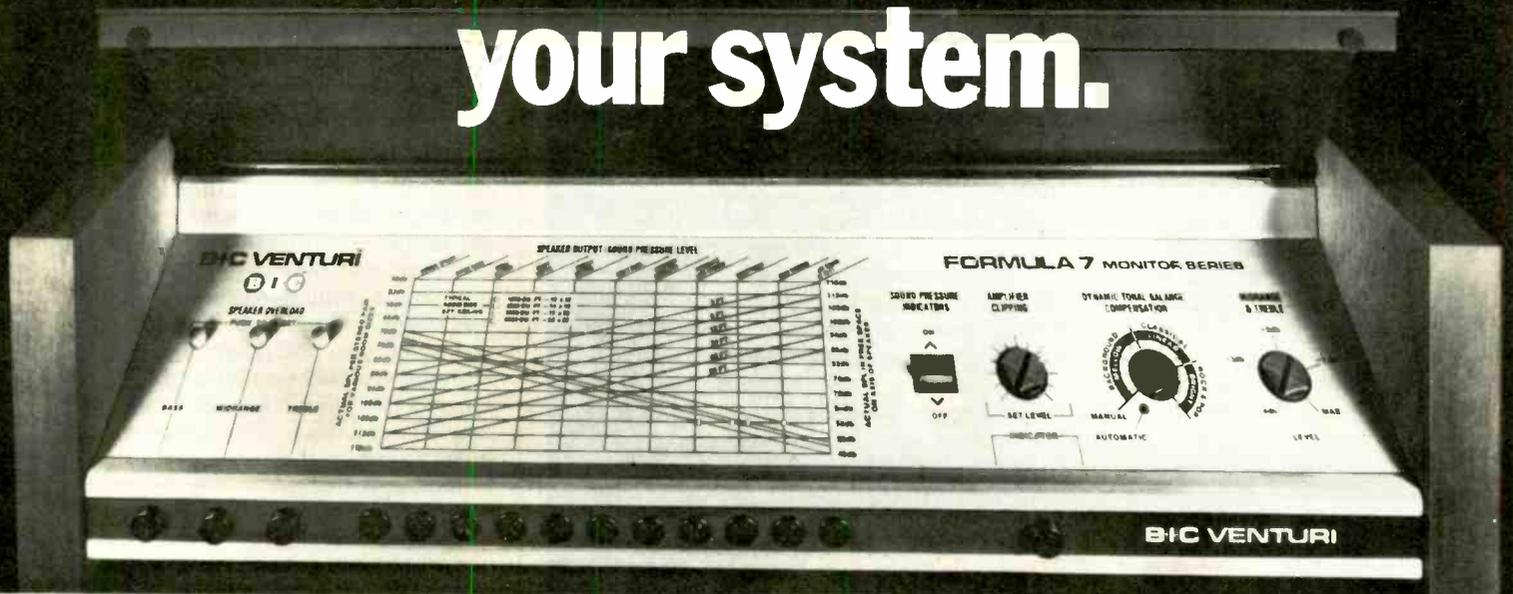
The music of "Que c'est triste Venise" conforms to that structure of iambic hexameter, so the English lyric must be in alexandrines as well. The first two lines of the more recent translated version read: "How sad Venice can be when you return alone/ and find a memory in ev'ry paving stone."

One sees that these lines seem very long and "wordy" in English, a language in which iambic pentameter has usually been considered the longest practicable graceful line. It is the rhythm of Shakespeare and, incidentally, of American blues.

Repeated experiments by poets, including Pope and Dryden, have established that alexandrines are awkward in English. They work quite felicitously in Latin languages, however, and especially in French. One reason for this is that French utilizes certain devices of articulation that make it possible to speak smoothly at higher speeds than are natural to English. For example, the French leave terminal letters such as *s*, *t*, and *d* silent when the following word begins with a consonant. But when the following word begins with a vowel, the terminal consonant is sounded, in the device called "liaison." This prevents the collision of consonants—the bane of an English or American lyricist's professional life.

In the song "All the Way," Sammy Cahn wrote the clumsy phrase "tallest tree," which presents a singer with the unhappy alternative of singing "talles' tree" or "tallest (short and artificial pause) tree." (Frank Sinatra, whose sensitivity to problems of articulation

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*Suggested manufacturer's retail price.

CIRCLE 8 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

is one of the keys to his genius as a singer, chose the latter of the two evils.)

French is a comparatively unstressed language, the syllables emerging (when well spoken) in a smooth, even flow. It has a balanced and somewhat detached quality that is oddly parallel to the educated Frenchman's Cartesian way of thinking. Whether the structure of a given language underlies the way its people think or whether, conversely, in the course of a country's evolution, the way its people think determines the nature and form of its language, I do not know. No doubt a reciprocal process occurs. I am convinced that the language, and the songs growing out of it, that a composer hears as a child will deeply influence the way he later writes instrumental music. Of course, although a child hears far more popular and folk than classical music, he may later submit to strong foreign influences, as in the cases of Berlioz, Franck, and Delius.

Debussy's opposition to German influences in French music may have had more to do with an aesthetic ultimately shaped by the character of his language than even he knew. (We do know how strong the effect of a few French poets, including Mallarmé, was in his thinking.) Whatever the forces working throughout his lifetime to form his personality, his music is remarkably similar to the French language in its evenness, balance, and subtlety. Bartók's music, to cite an opposite extreme, favors a disjointed rhythm in which a stressed short note often precedes an unstressed long one, a characteristic of the Hungarian language, consequently of its folksongs, and eventually of Bartók's (not to mention Kodály's) style.

Perhaps the failure of this country's "melting pot" goal of integration of many peoples stems from the mistaken assumption that there are no inherent differences between the thought processes of various ethnic groups. The achievement of that national goal is more likely to grow out of learning to value what is different in the cultural experience of others than in denying the existence of these differences. We have made small steps in this direction when a white audience appreciates John Coltrane or Benny Carter and a young black drummer is lovingly immersed in the music of Debussy or Ravel.

If even classical music, deliberate and planned in conception and execution, lends insight into a nation, popular music offers a much more immediate access to this understanding. I will begin to examine this point in the next issue.

CIRCLE 32 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →

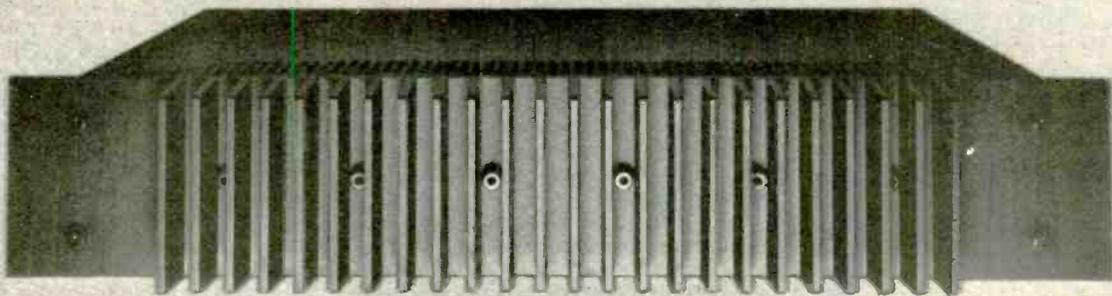
A New Dimension



Two new electronic products from Nakamichi may be just what you've been waiting for. The 410 Preamplifier and 420 Power Amplifier are incredibly compact, beautifully styled and decidedly affordable. Measuring less than 9" x 16" and barely 3/4" thick, both are timeless design expressions... pure Nakamichi in quality and performance.



The 410 approaches the theoretical limits of error-free amplification. A superb phono section, inherited from Nakamichi's amazing 610 Control Preamplifier, utilizes unique circuitry to minimize noise and distortion while maximizing dynamic range. Three phono input sensitivities accommodate a wide variety of cartridges. There is even a switchable active subsonic filter that keeps rumble and tonearm resonances from degrading sound quality. Additional features include fully defeatable tone control circuits, variable contour compensation, high-output headphone jack, and a 2 dB-stepped precision volume attenuator.



The 420 Power Amplifier is a heat, efficient unit for perfectionists with moderate power requirements. The unique output circuitry originally developed for the Nakamichi 620 virtually eliminates crossover and switching distortions without high idling current. The resulting low operating temperatures ensure long-term reliability. And, like the 620, the 420 employs a super-efficient toroidal power transformer, low negative feedback and foolproof protection circuitry—all of which add up to exemplary performance specifications and an effortless sound quality that belies its conservative power rating.

Let the 410 and 420 add new dimensions to your listening pleasure. See and hear them at a Nakamichi dealer soon. Your ears will thank you. For further information, write Nakamichi Research (U.S.A.), Inc., 220 Westbury Avenue, Carle Place, New York 11514.

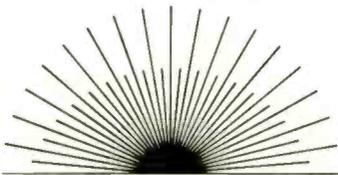


from **Nakamichi**

410 Preamplifier: Phono S/N (IHF-A): Better than 80 dB ref. 1 mV
RIAA Deviation: Within 0.3 dB
Subsonic Filter: -45 dB @ 10 Hz
Distortion: Less than 0.003%
Frequency Response: 20-50,000 Hz \pm 0, -1.5dB

420 Power Amplifier: Power Output: 50 watts per channel min. rms @ 8 ohms, 5-20,000 Hz, with less than 0.02% THD
S/N Ratio (IHF-A): Better than 110 dB @ rated output
THD @ 1 kHz: Less than 0.0008% at any power level below clipping
Frequency Response: 5-50,000 Hz \pm 0, -1dB

RTR unveils aesthetic sound



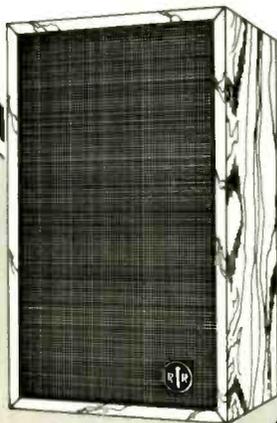
with the EXP bookshelf system

In a typical listening environment, the bookshelf speaker is a perfect design entity. It fits logically, aesthetically within a room. If only the sonic coloration could be eliminated, it would be an ideal loudspeaker.

Now RTR unveils audiophile bookshelf speakers for those who take their music seriously.

The EXP series delivers pure musical reproduction. Free of coloration, full of transparency, they reflect the most critical RTR standards. Wide-band tweeter exhibits the best transient performance from 1,000 to 15,000 Hz of any dynamic tweeter. Woofers deliver hair-line delineation coupled with natural boom-free bass.

All in a bookshelf package and price. Hear a pair of EXP's at your franchised RTR dealer.



For dealer list and specifications, write
RTR, Dept. HF, 8116 Deering Ave.,
Canoga Park, CA 91304.

CIRCLE 41 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Too Hot to Handle

I am looking for a stereo system for use at first in the U.S. and later on overseas, where the AC frequency is different. What is involved in using a stereo system with both 50 and 60 Hz? Are there any components on the market suitable for both? If not, is the conversion of turntable and receiver to a new frequency a difficult procedure?

Also, I like to listen to classical music at medium to low levels and wonder whether the loudness compensation networks built into some of the BIC speakers are more effective than the standard controls provided in receivers.—P. R. Belden, Westmont, Ill.

For electronics there is usually little difference between a 50- and 60-Hz AC supply except that the power transformer may run a little hotter at the lower frequency. The situation should be similar for direct-drive turntables and DC-drive tape decks, since these do not use the power-line frequency as a speed reference and many turntables come with strobe markings for both frequencies. Units using synchronous or induction motors normally require that pulleys or gears be substituted when the power-line frequency is changed. Voltage is another matter, however. Unless the equipment you buy has provision for alternate connection of the power transformer, you could be in trouble. The best thing to do is tell your dealer of the problem when shopping.

Since proper loudness compensation depends on sound pressure levels and not electrical power levels, the efficiency of the speaker is a crucial consideration. Since BIC knows the efficiency of its speaker and can design accordingly, its compensation network should have the inside track—unless the level at which your amplifier's loudness control takes effect is adjustable. (Sherwood and Yamaha appear to be the only companies still offering this option.) Then it's a standoff.

When I attempt to make a cassette tape recording on my Sony TC-152SD of an FM broadcast from my McIntosh MAC-1900 receiver, there is an instant hiss in the loudspeakers, even when the recorder is set to record but is still being held in the pause stage. The hiss is also audible in playback. This happens only in stereo. The hiss is not apparent in mono or when I'm recording discs. Neither Sony nor audio technicians have been able to locate the source of the trouble. Do you have any suggestions?—C. Stanley Mahan, Vista, Calif.

Sorry, our crystal ball is out of order. Presum-

ably those you have consulted have ruled out the obvious explanations: the inherently higher hiss levels of stereo (as opposed to mono) FM reception at moderate signal strengths, or intermodulation between the stereo subcarrier (38 kHz) or pilot (19 kHz) with the TC-152's bias-oscillator frequency.

Your reports have frequently noted the danger of using two pairs of 4-ohm speakers at the same time. My amplifier (Pioneer SA-9900) instructions say this too.

I have two AR-3 4-ohm speakers. If I get two speakers that are rated at 8 ohms, will it be safe to use the four at the same time? I figure that, if I used the speaker pairs in different rooms and did not have all four on at once, it would be safe. But there is always the chance that someone would, by mistake, switch on all four. If that happens, is the damage instant and terrible?—T. M. Williams, Gettysburg, S.D.

Most amplifiers are safe with loads down to 4 ohms or slightly below and can therefore handle two pairs of 8-ohm speakers or one of 4-ohm speakers without trouble. Connecting an 8- and a 4-ohm speaker in parallel, as you suggest, brings the total load to 2.7 ohms; this is a definite no-no with most amps. The usual response of an amplifier to an excessive current demand (the result of too low a load impedance) is to activate its protection circuits and shut down, but if these circuits do not act quickly enough, damage to the amplifier may ensue. It seems to us that the best solution would be speaker switching via an external (double-pole, double-throw) switch that prevents driving both pairs at once.

My present setup consists of a Pioneer SX-838 receiver, a BIC 960 turntable with a Shure M-95ED cartridge, a Teac 2300 tape deck, a Teac outboard Dolby unit, a Soundcraftsmen equalizer, a Pioneer RG-1 Dynamic Range Enhancer, and a pair of Utah floor-standing speakers. I am considering the addition of an Audio Pulse Model One time-delay device. How many add-on units can I use without increasing the distortion level of my system or reducing the sound quality?—Rudolph Johnson, Kendall Park, N.J.

You should see some of our systems! There is no reason why you cannot continue to be an insatiable gadget freak and still have clean sound; if you buy good quality gadgets and use them intelligently, your sound should continually improve. It's true that noise and distortion are cumulative for all units in the

You only hear what's on top of the platter. Not what's beneath it.



You can always distinguish the excellence of a turntable by its capability to rotate a platter precisely, at a given speed, without adding rumble, wow and flutter to the performance.

Because JVC's new JL-F45 turntable platter is directly driven by a specially designed DC servo motor, any rumble-producing effect is virtually nonexistent. The result is outstanding measurements that defy audibility. Rumble is better than 70dB (DIN B) and wow and flutter is less than 0.03% (WRMS). Even some of the most expensive turntables don't measure up to the excellence of these specifications.

In addition to the precision of direct-drive, the JL-F45 offers dual options for operation. Manual. And completely automatic. Auto Lead in. Auto Return. Auto Stop. You can even repeat play a record automatically up to six times — or infinitely.

The JL-F45's exclusively designed Tracing-Hold tonearm assures the highest degree of groove tracking with unusually low tracking error.

This is absolutely essential for today's ultra low tracking cartridges, including CD-4. The new unipoint gimbal suspension system reduces unwanted friction and overcomes unexpected jolts to the arm.

Every feature you're likely to want in a quality turntable contributes to this 2-speed unit's high level of performance. 2-way viscous-damped cueing. A 12-inch aluminum die cast platter with illuminated strobe. Anti-skating control. Direct-reading tracking force dial. And lots more.

While the JL-F45 is JVC's top of the line at \$250,* there are two other more modestly priced models. The fully automatic belt-driven JL-F35 at \$160.* And the semi-automatic JL-A15 at \$130.*

Whichever you choose, you can be sure you're getting the most turntable precision, reliability and value JVC has ever offered.

JVC America, Inc., 58-75 Queens Midtown Expressway, Maspeth, N.Y. 11378 (212) 476-8300. Canada: JVC Electronics of Canada, Ltd., Scarborough, Ont. Outside N.Y. call toll-free 800-221-7502 for nearest dealer.

*Approximate retail value, including base and dust cover.

JVC



If your cartridge is more than three years old, don't replace your stylus!

Don't get us wrong. There is nothing worse than playing your records with a worn stylus. And no better way to restore your old vinyl to its original glory than a new diamond.

But frankly, there have been significant strides made recently in the phono cartridge field. And the new cartridges of today stand head and shoulders above even the finest of a few short years ago.

Here's the choice: Get fresh—but outdated—performance with a replacement stylus to enjoy all the benefits of modern cartridge research and development for just a few dollars more. You'll find that you can update your system for far less than you might imagine. It's probably the most dramatic single improvement you can make.

For instance, Audio-Technica offers Universal™ cartridges equipped with a genuine Shizata stylus and our uniquely effective Dual Magnet™ system beginning at just \$75.00 list. Or you can replace your present cartridge with a fresh new Audio-Technica cartridge with highly-polished elliptical tip for as little as \$45.00 list.



AT11E
\$45.00

AT12Sa
\$75.00

AT13Ee
\$65.00

AT-5Sa
\$135.00

Are these new models worth the difference? Absolutely. You'll be amazed at what you hear from today's generation of phono cartridges. Improved frequency response. Lower distortion. Better separation. Less record wear. Truly better sound.

A new Audio-Technica cartridge.
Your best value in hi-fi.

 **audio-technica**
® INNOVATION □ PRECISION □ INTEGRITY

AUDIO-TECHNICA U.S., INC., Dept. 47H, 33 Shiloh Avenue, Fairlawn, Ohio 44131

signal chain, though both generally are very low in the kind of outboard equipment you specify. And when most units of this type are switched out of the chain, they offer only passive connections (in theory totally distortion-free, though they may allow entry of minute quantities of noise) by which the signals are passed on to the other components. So, if all the add-ons are correctly adjusted for level, noise and distortion should not be a problem.

Why can't records be cut with the cutting stylus oriented just the way the playback stylus in a pivoted arm would be, thus eliminating the necessity for complicated tangent-tracking tone arms for undistorted playback?—Carton Chen, Toledo, Ohio.

Pivoted cutting arms have been used in expensive home equipment, but the radial-tracking disc lathe offers vastly greater control over disc quality. In theory it would be possible to drive a cutting system in such a way as to "predistort" the groove to compensate for the tracing error to be expected with a typical pivoted playback arm, but the cost of the special technology presumably would seem entirely unjustifiable to the record companies that would have to pay for it. The distortion that such a system could correct is minute in comparison with that inherent in the disc-playing systems used by the vast majority of the record-buying public. And even if manufacturers were to be convinced that lateral tracking angle error is worth compensating for, tangent tracking still would be needed for comparable playback with the millions of discs already in existence. Let's pressure them into solving the record-war problem before attacking this one.

I recently purchased a Discwasher Zerostat and have found that it is tremendous for removing static from my records. A friend of mine also has one, and he uses it for discharging other objects such as socks that cling together. I was wondering just how safe this is. The instructions state that the Zerostat should be used only on inanimate objects but give no other information about safety. Also, I have heard that using it near tapes will cause partial erasure. Is there any truth to this?—Thomas R. Jackson, Norman, Okla.

The last time we checked, our socks were inanimate, so we'd expect your friend to have escaped unscathed. The "driving force" in the Zerostat is the tiny arc in which a static charge, built up by operating the trigger, is released. It works rather like shuffling your feet across the carpet on a dry day and then touching a metal doorknob—though this can build up much higher static charges than the Zerostat can, according to the manufacturer. The cautionary note was inserted into the instructions lest, with the "gun" in extreme proximity to the eye, the arc might somehow misdirect itself and cause damage—however minor—to the eye. Tests with a magnetometer held six inches from the Zerostat have proved negative; you might be able to achieve partial erasure by wrapping the tape around the device and firing it repeatedly, but we don't see why you would want to.

Some \$5 blank cassettes have the nerve to tinker with Beethoven. We think it's outrageous.

Beethoven, even when he was deaf, knew exactly how a piccolo sounded in relation to the rest of the orchestra. Some cassette manufacturers would just as soon forget. Their cassettes give the piccolo and other high frequency sounds a distorted prominence. They appear to do this deliberately, regarding absolutely natural sound as raw material to be improved upon.

At BASF, we think this is an abomination. We're purists; we stake everything on total accuracy of sound reproduction. You will never encounter artificially enhanced high frequencies in our cassettes. We believe that if you care enough to buy an expensive audio system, the last thing you need is a cassette that imposes its own dubious tastes upon your sensitive ears.

Faithful reproduction entails more than miracle ingredients and fanciful initials on a cassette label. At BASF, we begin with the best quality ferric oxide. We mill it by a patented process to

achieve maximum packing density and uniformity of coating. We use an exclusive chemically cross-linked polymer binding which will never deteriorate and cause head-related frictional noise or wow and flutter.

We use a unique multi-stage polishing process, and our slitting technique results in an edge that's clean even when viewed under a microscope. Even our cassette case is different, incorporating our patented Special Mechanism, designed to assure smooth tape feed for years of dependable performance.

Is completely natural sound worth that kind of effort? To people who know the difference, it is.

At BASF, we're purists. We've been obsessed with total accuracy since we invented magnetic tape back in 1932. There are no shortcuts to perfection. But you knew that when you planned your own audio system. We'll give you no reason to compromise when you buy our cassettes.



 **BASF The Purist**

Our Promise: the purest, most accurate sound that tape can reproduce.

After people learn what we've done, no one will heckle our speakers.

We're as close to the impossible as possible.

Our new speakers color sound.

Anybody's speakers do.

Should someone tell you otherwise, they speak with forked frequency response.

We at Sony approached the development of our new speaker line with this grim reality in mind.

Thus our goal was to create speakers with a minimum of coloration. With a frequency response flat and wide. With low distortion. And with repeatability. Which is critical. Which means that each speaker we turn out will sound like the one before and the one after.

Searching and researching.

Our basic dilemma was that speaker specs don't specify much.

You can build two speakers with identical specs, and find they'll sound non-identical.

That's because your sophisticated ear can pick up differences our clumsy measurements can't.

Some examples:

You can hear how pure water is. The purity of the water in which the pulp for the speaker cone is pressed will influence the sound. (Spring water is the best.)

But water purity would hardly change the frequency response—or any other measureable characteristic.

Nor would the dye used to color the cone—or the glue used in gluing the cabinet.

But you'd hear the dye and the glue.

And there are dozens and dozens of elements that interact this way.

So our job was mammoth. To correlate these factors in order to reach the goal we outlined earlier. Changing one

changes the other and almost changed our minds about going into the speaker business.

But we stuck it out. And found the answer to the juggling of these variables thanks to a major technological innovation.

Trial and error.

That's why we labored for three years to bring you our speakers. While other manufacturers rushed frantically to market with theirs.

We keep the whole world in our hands.

Once we understood how to control the sound of our speakers, we realized we had to control what went into our speakers.

So we did the only logical thing.

We built a plant.

And pursuing that logic, we built it at a place called Kofu. Which is at the base of Mt. Fuji. Where we can get all the spring water we want.

This factory does nothing but produce—under outrageously close control—the components for our speakers.

Whatever we do buy, we specify so carefully that our vendors have nightmares about us. (It's unfortunate that we can't make *everything* ourselves, but only God can make a tree, and only wood can make a fine cabinet.)

Few companies make this effort.

So it's safe to say that when it comes to exercising this kind of control, our speakers are a voice in the dark.

Don't judge a bookshelf speaker by its cover.

As you can see, there's a lot that goes into producing a speaker that's not easily seen. (One beautiful exception—the handsome finish on our cabinets.)

That includes the carbon fiber that we mix into the speaker cone paper.

Carbon fiber is light and strong. (Why they don't use it in girdles we'll never know)

Light, so our speaker is more efficient. Meaning you need less power to operate it. Meaning you are closer to the ideal of converting electrical energy to mechanical energy without a loss of power.

Light, so our speaker cone reacts quickly to stops and starts in the signal. The result: improved transient response.

Strong, to prevent the cone from bending out of shape in the high frequency range.

Moreover, carbon fiber doesn't resonate much. It has what's called a low Q, and it took someone with a high IQ to realize it would absorb the unwanted vibration rather than transmit it down the cone.

We also cut down on unwanted vibration (as opposed to the wanted vibration, which is music), by using a cast aluminum basket rather than a stamped, shoddy cheap metal one.

We could go on, but at this point the best thing would be for you to move on to your nearest Sony dealer. And listen.

Because the results of our three years of labor will be clear after three minutes of listening.

At which point, far from heckling our speakers, you'll be tempted to give them a standing ovation.

SONY®

© 1977 Sony Corp. of America. Sony, 9 W. 57 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10019
SONY is a trademark of Sony Corp.

Suggested retail prices: SSU-3000, \$300 each; SSU-4000, \$400 each.

CIRCLE 47 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



**The SSU-3000 and SSU-1000.
Great speakers like these deserve an audience.**

RCA Cassettes Go Dolby

RCA Records has announced that all cassettes it has released since January have been encoded for the Dolby-B noise-reduction system. RCA had been a notable holdout in this respect, to the disgruntlement of tapeophiles seeking quality sound on cassettes. Welcome aboard!

Audio-Technica Awards to Prod Record Industry

Hoping to encourage improvement in the current standards for disc production, engineering, and manufacture, Audio-Technica U.S. has instituted the Audio Excellence Record Awards, which are meant to recognize accomplishments in the technical areas. According to Jon R. Kelly, vice president and general manager of the company, "Phono cartridges are better than they were five years ago; so are electronics, and so are loudspeakers. All now offer greater performance per dollar than ever. The main area of standstill is records: Most have not improved at all, and some are worse. Without records of superior quality, why should someone buy state-of-the-art equipment?"

Selections for the award are made by a broad group including music critics, audio editors, radio programmers, recording engineers, and retailers. Records distributed by Audio-Technica are not eligible.

Super SQ from Deltek

In our travels through the Winter Consumer Electronics Show we encountered a new SQ decoder, designed by quadriphonic pioneer Peter Scheiber and manufactured by Deltek, Inc., of Bloomington, Indiana. The Deltek Model One operates on the "parametric" principles that CBS has

used in past prototype models and incorporates techniques whereby unwanted crosstalk between channels is canceled out. In addition to the obvious function of decoding SQ discs, the unit is capable of synthesizing quadriphonic sound from nonencoded stereo discs. This is done either by extracting ambience and routing it to the back channels or by "bending" the normal stereo "line" between the left and right channels into a 270-degree "horseshoe" that surrounds the listener on three sides.

When we heard the Deltek demonstrated, its performance was most impressive. For the first time in our experience the wind instruments in the Boulez "surround" performance of Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* (Columbia M 32132) actually stayed put while playing. We suspect that its price (\$2,150) will limit its appeal, but the decoder audibly demonstrates that matrixed quad need give up virtually nothing to discrete quad—even to four-channel tapes. And if the technology's there, can the price be far behind?

Some Audio Reading

- A career in audio? The Audio Engineering Society has published "A Guide to Careers in Audio Engineering," which describes various occupations for audio professionals and offers advice about how to become one. For a copy send \$1.00 to the Audio Engineering Society, 60 E. 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

- Available from JVC is a new sixteen-page booklet, "Join the Four-Channel Family," which explains quadriphonic sound, its achievement, and its enjoyment—with the emphasis on CD-4. The booklet describes various cartridges, styli, and electronics for four-channel applications. Of particular interest, in our opinion, is the section on loudspeaker arrangements. For a copy write to Gene Yamamoto, JVC Cutting Center, 58-75 Queens Midtown Expwy., Maspeth, N.Y. 11378, or see your JVC dealer.

Equipment in the News

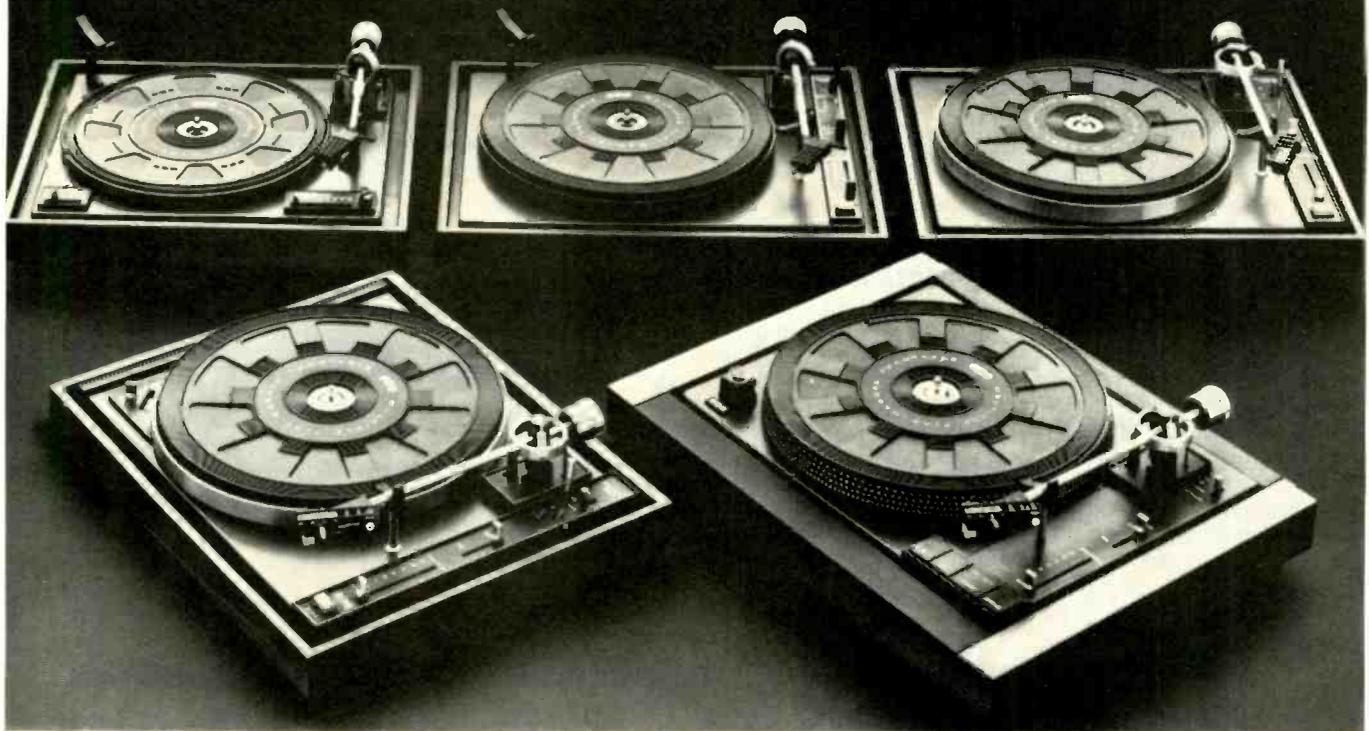


Koss launches Auditor Series

The ESP-10 headset is one of the first models in Koss Corporation's Auditor Series of stereo products. Designed for a wide and psycho-acoustically correct frequency response, the headphones plug into the E-10 electrostatic energizer unit, which accommodates two sets of phones and has semi-peak-reading level meters for each channel. Koss says the E-10 can be run on as little as 25 watts (14 dBW). The circuitry includes a device that automatically shuts off the unit if audio input levels become excessive. The ESP-10 has a headband of soft vinyl and Koss Pneumalite ear cushions. The cost is \$300.

CIRCLE 136 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

**Anyone who tells you
that a single play
turntable is better
than one of these has
never checked out
one of these.**



These are the five belt-drive turntables from B-I-C (pronounced "bee eye cee"). All feature low speed 300 rpm motor, program system, and superior tone arm that give them the high performance of comparable manual turntables plus multiple-play capability. For details pick up our "5 Turntables" folder at high-fidelity dealers or write to British Industries Co., Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

5 Turntables B-I-C™

Model 920 about \$79—940 about \$109—960 about \$159—980 about \$199—1000 about \$279. © 1976 British Industries Co. A Division of Avnet Inc.

CIRCLE 6 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Thorens Isotracks have plug-in tone arm

Featured in the Thorens Isotrack line of turntables is a sectional tone arm that joins near the pivot rather than at the headshell, reducing effective mass to improve tracking with high-compliance cartridges, particularly with warped discs. The top Isotrack model is the TD-126C, which is belt-driven and has a 16-pole synchronous motor. It offers three speeds, an illuminated strobe, and a fine speed adjustment of $\pm 5\%$. A floating chassis supports the turntable platter and tone arm. Also included are antiskating, illuminated pushbuttons for speed selection, cueing, and an electronic lift/shutoff system. The price of the TD-126C is \$625.

CIRCLE 137 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Parametric equalizers from SAE

The Model 2800 parametric equalizer from SAE offers control over center frequency and bandwidth, as well as an equalization range rated at ± 16 dB, in each of four bands: low (10 to 320 Hz), low-mid (40 Hz to 1.2 kHz), mid-high (240 Hz to 7.6 kHz), and high (1.2 to 15 kHz). (Model 1800 has only the low-mid and high bands.) Bandwidth within each is said to be continuously variable over a range of from 0.3 to about 3.6 octaves. The narrowest bandwidth settings are intended to compensate for room resonances; broader settings permit alteration of program balances. Line attenuation controls allow adjustment of stereo balance, and dual LED peak indicators warn of overload. Distortion—both THD and IM—is specified as less than 0.02%, with signal-to-noise ratio greater than 100 dB. The Model 2800 costs \$550; the 1800 retails for \$300.

CIRCLE 138 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Pioneer tuner represents new generation

The Model TX-9500II tuner is one of a series of Pioneer products that boast better specs at lower prices than their predecessors. This model incorporates a switch that allows a choice of narrow or wide IF bandwidth. Adjacent-station interference can be avoided with a narrow setting; the wide setting is used, where possible, for lower distortion. Another switch presets levels for recording off the air. An integrated-circuit multiplex section that phase-cancels the FM pilot obviates the conventional low-pass filter. Favorite stations can be tuned quickly with the aid of sliding memory markers. The price of the TX-9500II is \$400.

CIRCLE 139 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Technics markets stroboscopic open-reel deck

The Model RS-1500US from Technics by Panasonic offers user-adjustable pitch controls with a $\pm 6\%$ range and a built-in strobe. The direct-drive transport of this open-reel deck features an isolated loop that starts and finishes on the same capstan. Differential pinch-roller pressures provide the tape tension for good head contact. The RS-1500US has a quarter-track playback head plus half-track erase, record, and playback heads. Separate three-way recording bias and equalization adjustments are provided, as well as a separate amplifier for mike mixing. Playback and recording levels are indicated by the switchable-range VU (average-reading) meters. Speeds are 15, $7\frac{1}{2}$, and $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips; maximum reel size is $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The price of the RS-1500US is \$1,500.

CIRCLE 140 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



The Sherwood Model HP 2000: It adds a new high to performance.

If power and versatility are the essential elements of high performance, the HP 2000 is unquestionably the high performance amplifier you've been waiting for.

This new top-of-the-line Sherwood amplifier puts you in full command of your sound system.

Consider the credentials:

Power: 120 watts per channel (minimum RMS at 8 ohms from 20-20,000 Hz) with no more than 0.08% Total Harmonic Distortion.

This rating is ensured by massive 16,000 μ f filter capacitors, backed by a zener regulated dual secondary power supply. The full complementary direct-coupled OCL output circuitry employs output transistors with the largest S.C.A. [safe operating area] of any current device currently available. Dual power meters (which feature selectable sensitivity: normal, or

-10dB) and LED power limiting indicators precisely monitor power output at all times. And rear-panel switching permits the independent operation of the pre-amp and power amplifier sections.

Precision: The film resistor step Loudness [Volume] control features 22 accurately calibrated positions [both channels matched within 0.5dB in all steps]. Eleven position Variable Loudness Contour, Bass, Treble and Midrange controls have 11 detented positions each. Resetting to your exact acoustic preferences is never a matter of guesswork.

Master Tone Defeat, High and Low filters, and -20dB Audio Muting are controlled by convenient front panel switches.

Operational Flexibility: The HP 2000 can accommodate two turntables [Phono inputs are selected with IC analog

switching, and feature a front panel level control]; two tape decks [tape-to-tape duplication is accomplished with the Tape-1 Tape-2 Monitor circuits]; and a pair of professional caliber microphones [mixing level determined by a separate front panel control]. Additional source capabilities include a Tuner; two Auxiliary components; and a 4-Channel Adaptor (which also serves as a third Tape Monitor if needed).

All Sources and Functions are activated by front panel push switches. ["On" position is indicated by color change.]

The highest quality componentry. The HP 2000 has been meticulously engineered for durability, consistent performance standards, and ease of servicing—the mark of Sherwood design for over 20 years. All componentry

has been selected to meet or exceed posted specifications. The P.C. boards and inter-board ribbon cable connectors plug into a "mother-board," for reliable operation.

The HP 2000 is the first in a new, highly sophisticated line of tuners and amplifiers from Sherwood Electronics.

Other units in this new High Performance Series will be available soon.

See the HP 2000 soon. And treat yourself to performance that's as high as your expectations have always been.



SHERWOOD
Everything you hear is true.

Sherwood Electronics
Laboratories, Inc.
4300 N. California Ave.
Chicago, IL 60618



Engineered and manufactured in the USA

New electret microphone from Electro-Voice

The Electro-Voice Model 1776 cardioid electret condenser microphone is powered by a 4.5-volt battery, internally mounted in a compartment at the back of the mike housing. The 1776, with a 150-ohm balanced output, integral blast filter, and a rugged die-cast zinc case, is said to be suitable for professional applications. The specification sheet points out that low-frequency response is boosted at working distances of less than 24 inches with maximum bass response attained when the mike is within $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch of the sound source. This characteristic may be used to give a voice a more robust character or to control bass response by varying the mike-to-source distance. Model 1776 sells for \$99.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Elac's first belt-driven turntable

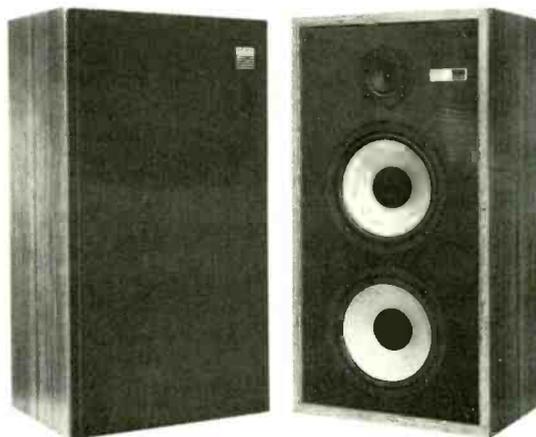
Elac, whose turntables formerly were marketed here by Benjamin under the Miracord name, now offers its first belt-driven turntable, the Elac PC-830, through Adcom of New York. The PC-830 has an asynchronous motor and can be operated in either single or multiplay modes. The idler wheel provided for startup drive disengages as soon as the stylus touches the record, and the belt-drive system takes over. Additional features are an illuminated strobe and a low-mass tone arm with cue control and antiskating adjustment. The PC-830 comes with automatic and manual spindles, base, and dust cover and costs \$190.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

A bookshelf Sony speaker

The SSU-1250, recently added to Sony's speaker line, is a two-way bookshelf model. It uses a 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch tweeter and 8-inch woofer plus an 8-inch passive bass radiator, which is said to give more efficient bass response with less distortion. Smooth response and well-defined transients are attributed in part to the use of Carbacon graphite fibers in the cones. Minimum recommended amplifier power is 10 watts (10 dBW) and maximum is 60 watts (18 dBW). The SSU-1250, which can be placed either vertically or horizontally, costs \$100.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Super Stack package from Spectro Acoustics

Spectro Acoustics is marketing Super Stack, a package consisting of its Model 217R preamp, Model 210R graphic equalizer, and Model 202C power amplifier in a rack-mount cabinet. The preamp has inputs for two phono pickups, tuner, aux, and two tape decks. Its frequency response is rated at 10 Hz to 100 kHz, $\pm \frac{1}{4}$ dB, with less than 0.05% total harmonic distortion. Model 210R offers ten octave bands of equalization per channel with ± 15 dB of boost or cut in each. Dynamic range is said to be better than 100 dB at full output. Model 202C, a Class AB amplifier with modular construction, has a rated frequency response of 20 Hz to 20 kHz into 8 ohms with no more than 0.25 THD. Super Stack costs \$1,100.

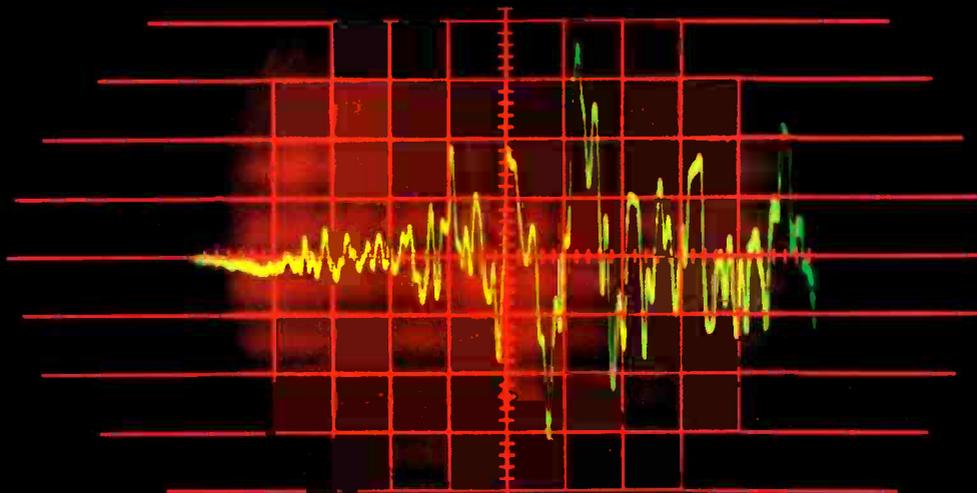
CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



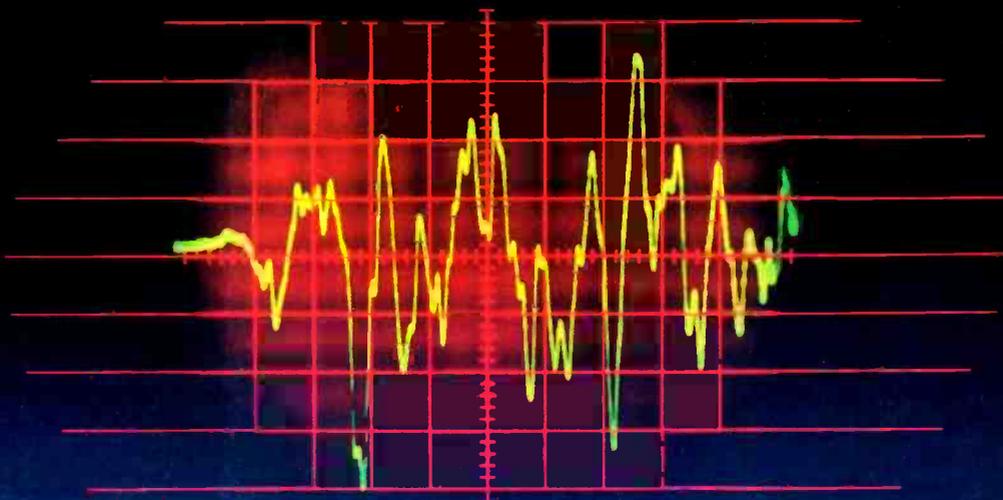
**A new concept
in speaker comparison.
Instead of
speaker vs speaker...**



Live versus...



Piano Waveform.



Bass Drum Waveform.

If you were satisfied with conventional speaker sound, Technics would have made a conventional speaker. Then you could have compared our speaker to their speaker.

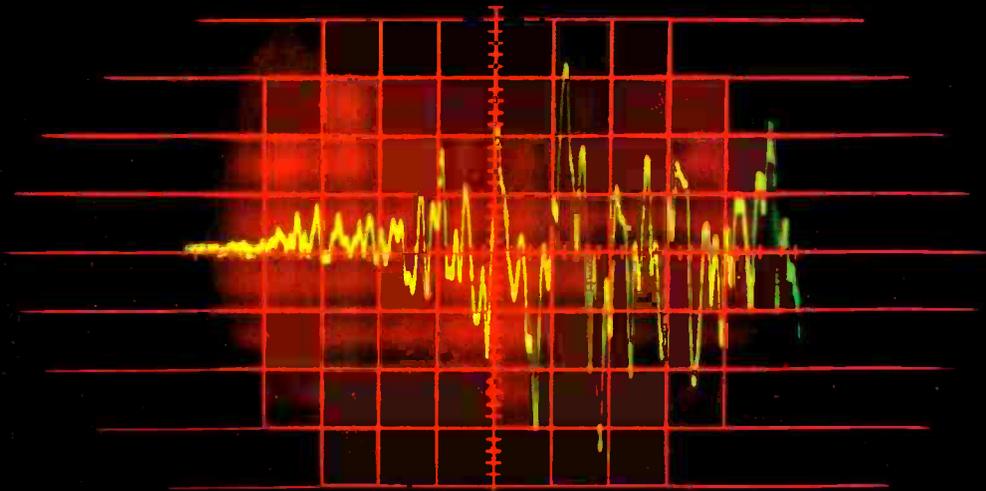
Instead, we developed Technics Linear Phase Speaker Systems and compared them to music. Live music. Look at the waveforms. On the left are oscilloscope readings (the fingerprints) of representative musical instruments. On the right, these instruments as reproduced by Technics Linear Phase SB-7000A. Waveform fidelity that could only be achieved by a drastic departure from conventional speaker design.

How did we do it?

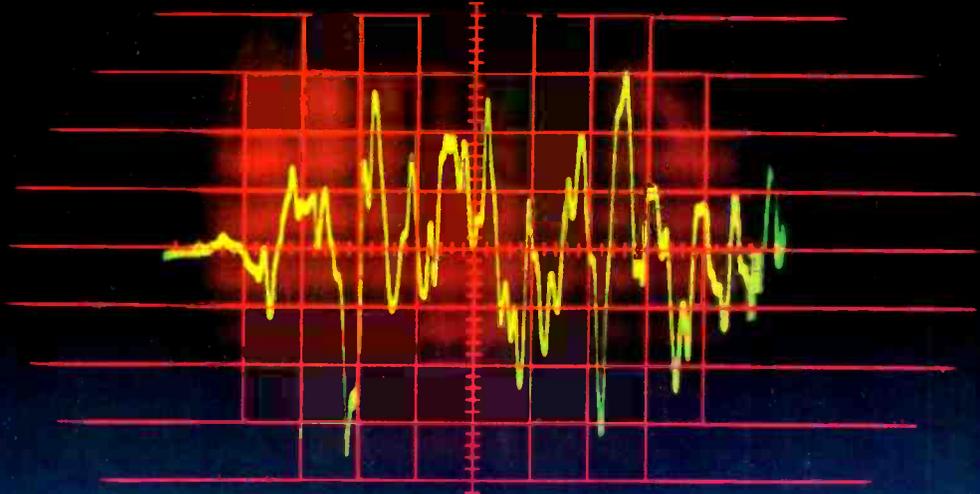
Our engineers realized there were three conditions to be satisfied. First, the crossover network should be designed to provide an overall linear phase characteristic for the whole speaker system, while simultaneously compensating for the different acoustic pressures of the individual drivers. Second, each driver unit must be precisely located in the optimum acoustic position. Third, the driver units must be designed and manufactured with flat amplitude and a wide frequency response.

By using our unique new phase-controlled crossover network, which incorporates 6 dB and 18 dB/octave cut-off slopes

Technics Linear Phase



Piano Waveform reproduced by SB-7000A.



Bass Drum Waveform reproduced by SB-7000A.

and special phase-correcting circuits for each driver, Technics engineers have been able to achieve an overall phase response, linear between 0° and $\pm 45^\circ$ between 100 Hz and 15 kHz. An incredible figure in a multi-range speaker system! The special phase-correcting circuits have also eliminated "audible dip" at crossover frequencies. These circuits assure excellent directional localization of the original sound source within the acoustic field.

To align the acoustic centers of the speaker units in precisely the same vertical plane, Technics engineers had to develop a new time-delay system using BBD (Bucket Brigade Device). After alignment, each unit

was fine-tuned to assure precise linearity. Additionally, each unit was positioned vertically for the best horizontal dispersion and then spaced as closely as possible for the best vertical dispersion of all sound frequencies.

Each of the wide frequency response/low distortion driver units was designed and manufactured by Technics after exhaustive amplitude and phase studies in anechoic chambers. It is this ability to both design and manufacture that has helped us become the world's largest speaker company. Supplying many of Europe's and America's finest speaker system designers with high-quality speaker units.

The result: Waveform Fidelity

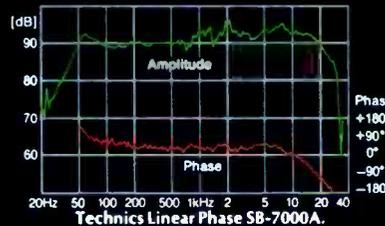
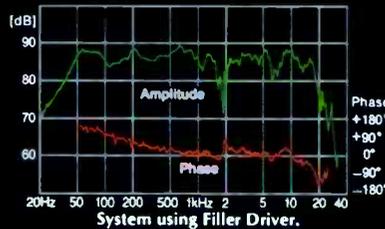
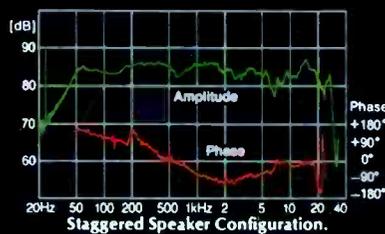
The diagrams show the phase and amplitude characteristics of Technics Linear Phase and three other leading speaker systems.

The other speaker systems, including those promoted with "phase linearity," show severe phase shifts at different frequencies.* But, as you can see, Technics Linear Phase Speaker Systems show an unprecedented flat and linear phase response. This results in more precise positioning of instruments in the stereo sound field.

What does all this mean to you?

Waveform fidelity you can hear... and see. For the first time in audio history there is a speaker system with not only wide frequency response, but complete linearity: Flat amplitude/frequency response and linear phase/frequency response.

Technics SB-7000A, SB-6000A and SB-5000A. The world's most linear phase speaker systems. No more wandering stereo imagery, no more bass loss at high



volumes; just music, pure and simple, as it was originally played. Live.

And if specifications are music to your ears. Listen to these:

SB-7000A: 3-way speaker system with 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ " woofer, 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " mid-range and 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " dome tweeter. Output level (1M) of 90.5 dB/watt.

SB-6000A: 2-way speaker system with 12" woofer and 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ " dome tweeter. Output level (1M) of 91.0 dB/watt.

SB-5000A: 2-way speaker system with 10" woofer and 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ " tweeter. Output level (1M) of 92.0 dB/watt.

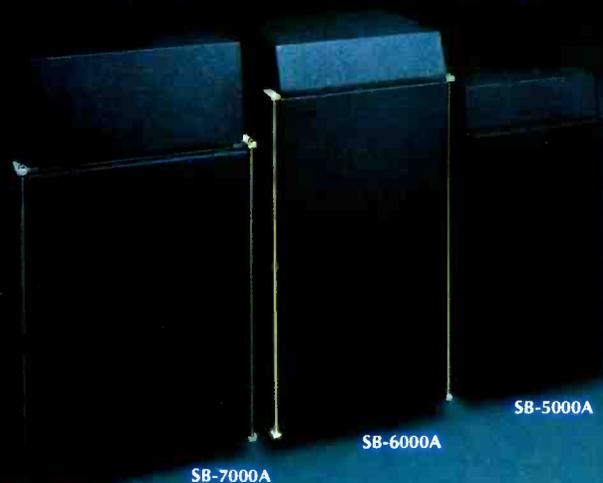
The SB-7000A cone-type units are made from a new triple layer TC/aramid fiber. This combines lightness with high Young's modulus (strength) for smooth piston motion and low distortion.

The high-efficiency dome-type tweeters in the SB-7000A

and SB-6000A use a diaphragm of heat molded expanded polyurethane on a silk cloth base.

Sounds great, doesn't it. But there's really only one way to be truly convinced. Listen to Technics Linear Phase Speaker Systems. Now available for demonstration at selected audio dealers for very selective ears.

*Test data and methodology available upon written request. Write Mr. James Parks, Technics Dept., One Panasonic Way, Secaucus, New Jersey 07094.



Technics by Panasonic

Otari's Son of MX-5050

Otari's Mark II open-reel tape deck, the latest generation of its MX-5050, comes in a half-track two-channel version using ¼-inch tape and a four-channel ½-inch version. Mounting versatility is provided by separate transport and electronics. The DC servo drive includes a ± 7% pitch adjustment at 15 and 7½ ips. Frequency response (at 15 ips) is rated as 35 Hz to 25 kHz, ± 3 dB. The two-channel version has an extra quarter-track playback head and a splicing block on the head cover. Low-impedance microphone transformers, balanced-line input and output transformers, remote control, and floor console are available. The basic two-channel model of the Mark II costs \$2,195; the four-channel version is \$3,195.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Lightweight headphones from Superex

The TRL-77 is an open-design stereo headset in which Superex has combined its wide-range Mylar diaphragm and Translinear principle to give a specified frequency response of 25 Hz to 20 kHz with 5 dB of boost at about 60 Hz. Total distortion at 100 dB SPL is rated at 0.65%, sensitivity at 5 milliwatts. The lightweight headphones—11.5 ounces without the cable—have a stainless steel headband and replaceable foam cushions. The 7-foot cord has strain reliefs at all critical points. The TRL-77 sells for \$30.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Test cassettes from TDK

TDK's AC series of prerecorded test tapes are designed to help the serious recordist verify the performance specifications of his cassette recorder. There are tapes to test level calibration at 333 Hz and 1 kHz (AC-311, 312), Dolby level (AC-313), azimuth alignment at 6.3 and 8 kHz (AC-321, 322), frequency-response at eleven, three, or four frequencies (AC-331, 332, 333), wow and flutter (AC-341), and crosstalk measurements (AC-351). Prices for the test tapes range from \$10 to \$35.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Speaker volume control from Amtech

American Technological Products, Inc., is introducing its loudspeaker attenuator, a bridged-T network device used to control the power to a speaker. The attenuator can be used for remote-speaker control or to equalize loudness of speakers with different efficiencies in the same room. According to the manufacturer, an important application is in headphone listening, allowing the amplifier to be driven at its optimum for distortion and dynamic range while listening levels are adjusted at the Amtech. Output is calibrated in 3-dB steps. The attenuator, available either as a 100-watt (20-dBW) mono unit or a 50-watt (17-dBW) stereo unit, is housed in a black anodized case with walnut trim. The single-channel type sells for \$54.95, the two-channel for \$69.95.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Onkyo — A step ahead

State-of-the-Art is for everyone else. Onkyo design and construction is for tomorrow. Today.

We don't just claim innovation, quality and value. We prove it when independent test laboratories publish their unbiased reports in your favorite audio magazines.

Of our TX-4500, one test report said, "...one of the finest receivers available today at any price."

Of our TX-2500, another said, "...sounds a good deal better than the data suggest—and better than one has a right to expect at \$300."

If the data don't suggest the total quality, it may be we're too cautious in our claims. But, we have other equipment too new to have been reported on as yet. All are built to the same exacting standards, featuring exclusive Onkyo advances. We'll try to be a bit less modest as we tell about:

Quartz-Locked Tuning—This is the tuning system of which the most famous testing lab said, "...a new system that completely eliminates tuning errors in FM reception." This is done by using a quartz crystal oscillator which takes advantage of the unique capability of precisely ground quartz to maintain a fixed frequency.

The Quartz-Locked circuitry compares the tuner's IF frequency with the frequency generated in the Quartz-Locked oscillator, continually compensating for frequency differences that would cause distortion or poor reception, and additionally compensating the FM tuning meter at the same time.

Servo-Locked Tuning—An economy version of the Quartz-Locked system with similar characteristics in a different configuration. While essentially an automatic frequency control circuit, Servo-Lock is more sophisticated in design and performance and in actual lab tests has held stations for at least 24 hours without perceptible drift.

Quartz-Locked AM/FM Stereo Receiver

TX-8500—Power output 110 watts per channel, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, both channels driven from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.1% Total Harmonic Distortion.

Direct coupled differential pure complementary main amplifier with ultra wide frequency response, 2 Hz to 60 kHz \pm 1 dB at main amp. Total Harmonic Distortion less than 0.1% at rated output; 0.08% at 1 watt output. Rated FM sensitivity 1.7 μ V (mono), 4 μ V (stereo). 50 dB quieting sensitivity 3 μ V (mono), 35 μ V (stereo). Image rejection ratio 83 dB; alternate channel selectivity 70 dB; IF rejection ratio 100 dB. S/N ratio 70 dB (mono), 65 dB (stereo).

TX-4500—Power output 55 watts per channel, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, both channels driven from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.1% Total Harmonic Distortion.

Direct coupled differential complementary main amplifier with ultra wide frequency response, 2 Hz to 80 kHz \pm 1 dB at main amp. Rated FM sensitivity 1.8 μ V (stereo). Image rejection and alternate channel selectivity 70 dB. IM distortion 0.3% at rated power; 0.1% at 1 watt output.

Servo-Locked AM/FM Stereo Receivers

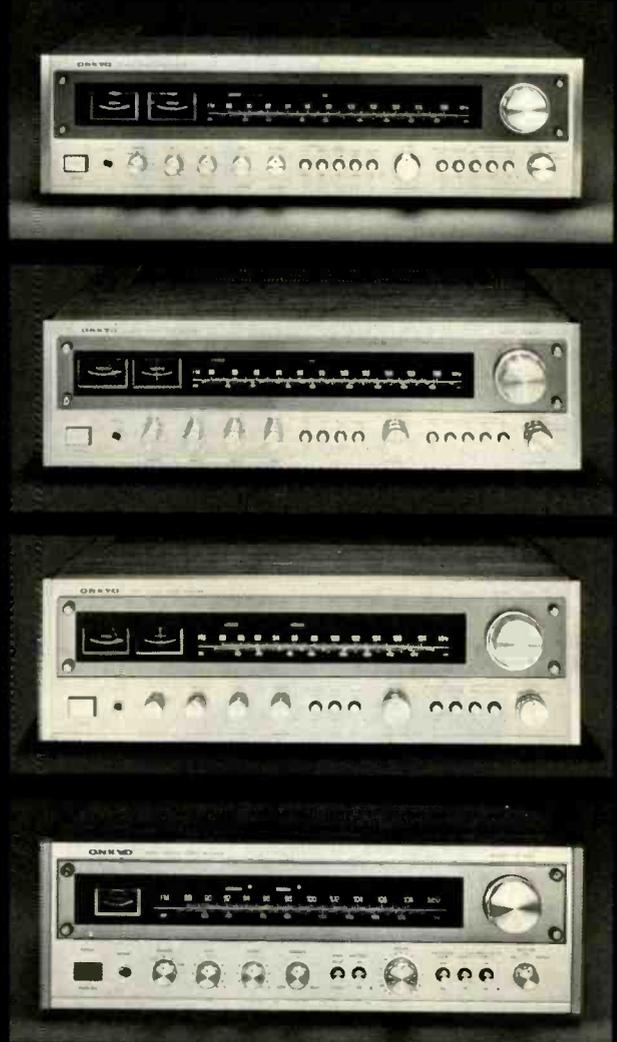
TX-2500—Power output 27 watts per channel, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, both channels driven from 40 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.5% Total Harmonic Distortion.

Direct coupled differential main amplifier with frequency response of 2 Hz to 60 kHz \pm 1 dB. Total Harmonic Distortion no more than 0.5% at rated output; 0.2% at 1 watt output. IM distortion 0.5% at rated power; 0.3% at 1 watt output. Usable sensitivity in FM, 2 μ V (mono), 5 μ V (stereo). Image rejection 45 dB; alternate channel attenuation 60 dB; S/N 65 dB (mono), 60 dB (stereo). IF rejection 80 dB.

TX-1500—Power output 15 watts per channel, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, both channels driven from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.5% Total Harmonic Distortion.

Direct coupled differential amplifier with overall frequency response 20 Hz to 20 kHz \pm 1 dB. Total Harmonic Distortion no more than 0.5% at rated power; no more than 0.3% at 1 watt output. Usable FM sensitivity 2.3 μ V (mono), 5 μ V (stereo). 50 dB quieting sensitivity 4.5 μ V (mono), 50 μ V (stereo). S/N ratio 65 dB (mono), 60 dB (stereo). IF rejection 80 dB. Alternate channel attenuation 60 dB.

All of Onkyo's receivers feature multiple speaker outputs as well as multiple tape inputs and outputs including tape to tape dubbing. All are built to specification which often exceed their price ranges with special features, including Phase Locked Loop Multiplex.



of State-of-the-Art.

Quartz-Locked AM/FM Stereo Tuner

For those who are satisfied with their present amplifier but want the distinct benefits of Quartz-Locked tuning, Onkyo offers the T-9, the only component tuner in the world that has Quartz-Lock.

In addition to the precision tuning capabilities of the T-9, it features a dual gate MOSFET/4 gang-variable capacitor front end with usable sensitivity 1.7 μ V, 50 dB quieting sensitivity of 3 μ V, 83 dB Image rejection and 73 dB S/N in stereo.

The T-9 uses Phase Locked Loop Multiplex for low distortion, high separation stereo reception. At 1 kHz, stereo separation is 40 dB; at 100-10,000 Hz separation is 35 dB.

Assuring continuous, drift-free tuning, the FM oscillator circuitry is hermetically sealed to prevent environmental influence on the components.

Other specifications include an IF rejection ratio of 100 dB and AM suppression ratio of 50 dB. In addition to Quartz-Locked tuning and exceptional performance characteristics, the Onkyo T-9 provides a special feature for tape recording directly from the tuner.

Known as the Tape Recording Level Check Switch, activation injects a 440 Hz tone to set recording level through the tape deck. Modulation of the incoming FM signal is reduced to 50%, preventing overloading and distortion. Onkyo's T-9 provides some of the cleanest tape recording possible.



Solid State Integrated Amplifiers

Having the only Quartz-Locked Tuner in captivity, Onkyo felt the need to provide amplifiers capable of delivering the same quality. There are, at present, two amplifiers in this series...A-5 and A-7. Both have been designed for their power handling quality, featuring reserve power for optimum sound reproduction with absolutely minimum distortion.

Because of this basic, very low distortion design, these amplifiers require exceptionally muscular and stable power supplies with more power than needed for normal operation, and a lot available when needed for peak demands. These needs are met through massive transformers and oversized electrolytic capacitors. Thus, an extremely stable power supply is assured for hours of continuous operation. Further, specially selected power transistors are mounted in oversized heat sinks and the entire unit is enclosed in a more than ample cabinet which allows for the flow of cooling air.

A final Onkyo touch for clear, clean highs and deep-down lows is design approach and construction that approaches the theoretical zero point in equivalent series resistance (ESR). Through circuitry which uses copper plates instead of wires for the bus feeder ground system, and unusually heavy gauge wiring to the power transformer, the overall frequency response is greatly enhanced. Because of these and other considerations the following ratings are established conservatively:

A-5—Power output of 45 watts per channel, minimum RMS into 8 ohms, both channels driven, from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.1% Total Harmonic Distortion.

Onkyo avoids the primary distortion found in solid state amplifiers with Class A, push-pull driver stage differential direct-coupled, pure complementary circuitry. The A-5 delivers exceptional frequency response of 2 Hz to 70 kHz \pm 1 dB, with system square wave response showing less than 5% tilt at 50 Hz. S/N ratio is extraordinary at 110 dB (IHF A Network).

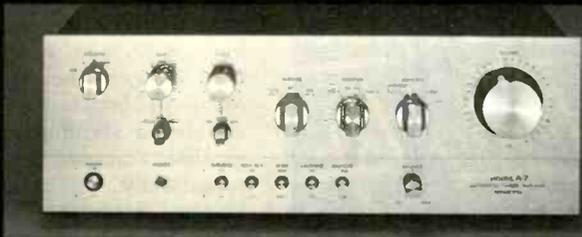
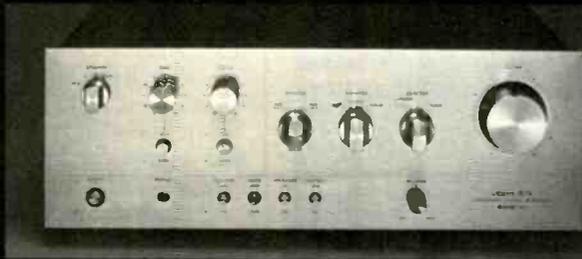
Features include two Phono inputs and two tape monitors and dubbing, as well as tone controls and defeat, muting and a subsonic filter plus transient killer circuitry.

A-7—Power output 65 watts per channel, minimum RMS at 8 ohms, both channels driven, from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, with no more than 0.1% Total Harmonic Distortion.

Onkyo's A-7 integrated amplifier also uses a Class A driver stage differential direct-coupled pure complementary circuitry. The A-7 frequency response is 2 Hz to 80 kHz \pm 1 dB with square wave response showing less than 5% tilt at 50 Hz. At no point does the A-7 exceed 0.1% Total Harmonic Distortion at rated power, and at 1 watt output, Total Harmonic Distortion is as low as 0.08%.

In the amplifier section the phono equalizers are based on Class A, differential push-pull circuitry with exceptionally low noise characteristics, e.g., the A-7 shows an impressive S/N ratio of 110 dB.

A number of special features are included, such as a subsonic filter and a high frequency filter as well as transient killer circuitry. Stepped tone controls are provided with two turnover frequency switches and tone control defeat. Phono overload is exceptional at 230 mV RMS at 1 kHz, 0.1% Total Harmonic Distortion, and the RAA Curve Deviation of \pm 2 dB, 30 Hz to 15 kHz produces superb reproduction of your records.



What does it all mean?

You've read a lot of our claims—understated though they may be—and some of the claims made for us. But the best test is still your own ears. And the only way to use them is at your local Onkyo dealer. If you want more information, including reprints of independent test reports...or the name of your nearest Onkyo dealer, drop us a line. After all, a thirteen cents stamp is a lot better than guesswork.

Artistry in Sound **ONKYO**

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Canada: Sole Distributor, Tri-Tel Associates Ltd., Willowdale, Ontario M2H 2E3

THE COST/PERFORMANCE EQUATION: HOW MUCH TAPE RECORDER IS ENOUGH?

Essentially, a tape recorder is a machine you can use to capture your talent and faithfully reproduce it. Practically, the more you make demands on a tape recorder, the more demands it can make on you.

Put another way, a tape recorder can be your wings or an anchor. It can work for you or it can work against you.

At \$1,299.95 the investment you make in the Dokorder 1140 gets you a partner instead of a handicap. Compare what it does to what it costs and you won't find a better tape recorder anywhere.

The 1140 lets you concentrate on your music as art. Much of the concern you have about your music as signal is handled for you automatically.

The 1140 has logic circuitry that takes care of getting you in and out of Sync and in and out of Source automatically. It makes knowing where you are in multi-track recording a whole lot easier.

The 1140 also has an automatic cue-up function, called Program Memory. Once it's set up, the Pro-

gram Memory automatically brings you back to the beginning of material and either stops or plays it again, depending on what you tell it.

The transport controls on the 1140 are digital logic-operated so you can go from one mode to another directly except in Record and there is a motion sensing system which lets you go into play from fast forward or rewind when the reels stop.

Bias controls are up-front on the transport and there is a built-in pink noise generator which supplies a test signal to each channel. This unusual device makes biasing simple but extremely accurate.

There is a lot more hardware to the 1140: peak level indicators, discrete playback and record amplifiers, 62-Volt record drive circuit, wide band sync response, etc.

All to make it easier to put music on tape.

DOKORDER 1140

5430 Rosecrans Avenue Lawndale, CA 90260



CIRCLE 14 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

What you don't know
about effective tip mass
won't hurt you,
just your records.



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what you don't know
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Bang & Olufsen

Bang & Olufsen of America, Inc., Dept. 11G
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CIRCLE 5 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

netic pickup for stereo, beating Fairchild and General Electric to the market, though Pickering concedes that the German-made Elac pickup preceded them all. Pickering's lightweight stereo model, utilizing the V-Guard principle, first appeared in 1960 and over the next decade was refined and updated. In 1973 Pickering introduced the first magnetic pickup designed and manufactured in the U.S. for CD-4 discs.

When, by the mid-1960s, Pickering had become totally identified with consumer equipment, it was decided to form a sister company to supply the professional market. Indeed, Stanton Magnetics' first customers were broadcast and recording studios and the growing number of disco establishments. But the Pickering story repeated itself: Consumers wanted in, and it wasn't long before Stanton Magnetics also found itself manufacturing for that market and distributing to regular high fidelity dealers. Among the consumer products offered were the Stanton Gyroise turntable and the Unipoise tone arm; the turntable line now includes four versions of one basic model. The line between Pickering and Stanton has become fuzzy—especially to an outsider—but, as an insider puts it, Pickering products are “application-engineered for a wide variety of turntables” and Stanton products are still “primarily aimed at the professional user.” Today, at sixty-two, Walter Stanton heads both companies.

Long deeply involved with industry affairs, Stanton holds definite views on the subject of equipment standards, views that seem to have become the prevailing philosophy behind the efforts of the Institute of High Fidelity (of which he was president from 1963 to 1966) in this delicate area. A standard, according to Stanton, should not “legislate” (FTC style) performance criteria: minimum acceptable power, maximum acceptable distortion, and so on. Rather, a standard should define methods of measurement and perhaps a few basic concepts (such as the watt) by which a product is evaluated. Performance capabilities must remain a matter of choice by the individual manufacturer lest the spirit of innovation and improvement be lost in a “me too” acceptance of minimal performance levels—as has often happened under Germany's DIN standards. (Only products meeting those standards may be advertised as “high fidelity” in Germany.) As for the IHF itself, Stanton sees its role changing from that of an agency for promoting the concept of high fidelity sound to that of a trade organization representing the industry in dealing with its problems.

FREE McIntosh CATALOG
and FM DIRECTORY

Get all the newest and latest information on the new McIntosh Solid State equipment in the McIntosh catalog. In addition you will receive an FM station directory that covers all of North America.



MX 113

FM/FM STEREO - AM TUNER AND PREAMPLIFIER

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If you are in a hurry for your catalog please send the coupon to McIntosh.
For non rush service send the *Reader Service Card* to the magazine.

CIRCLE 21 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Remember the plug-in-shell?

Thorens Isotrack Series Turntables proudly introduce the Plug-In Arm.

Thorens introduces an exciting new tonearm design to complement its highly sophisticated, new manual turntable series. Thorens has eliminated the headshell and its collar connection by incorporating the headshell and tonearm rod in a straight tubular design only 7.5 grams in effective tonearm mass. This reduction in mass (up to 50% that of other tonearms) reduces the inertial forces that affect stylus pressure. Tracking is improved, distortion lowered and stylus and record life are extended. Thorens Isotrack tonearm assures optimum performance with the newest, light weight, high-compliance pick-up cartridges.

The accent is on quality

—The high-speed stability and silent opera-

tion of the belt-driven 16-pole synchronous motor is a tribute to Thorens traditionally advanced engineering. The natural elasticity of the belt filters motor vibrations from reaching the platter, and therefore, the pick-up stylus. In more than twenty years of continuous development, and the manufacture of nearly one-million Thorens turntables, Thorens has brought its belt-drive design to a level of technical perfection not approached by *any other drive system known today.*

Thorens Isotrack turntables featuring the "mini-mass" tonearm—now at your Authorized Thorens Dealer, or for further details write:

THORENS

ISOTRACK™

ELPA MARKETING
INDUSTRIES, INC.

East: Thorens Bldg.,
New Hyde Park, N.Y. 11040
West: 7301 East Evans Road,
Scottsdale, Ariz. 85260



Pictured Above: Top Right—TD-126C • Lower Right—TD-145C
Lower Left—TD-166C • Top Left—TD-160C

Empire's Blueprint for Better Listening...

No matter what system you own, a new Empire phono cartridge is certain to improve its performance.

The advantages of Empire are threefold.

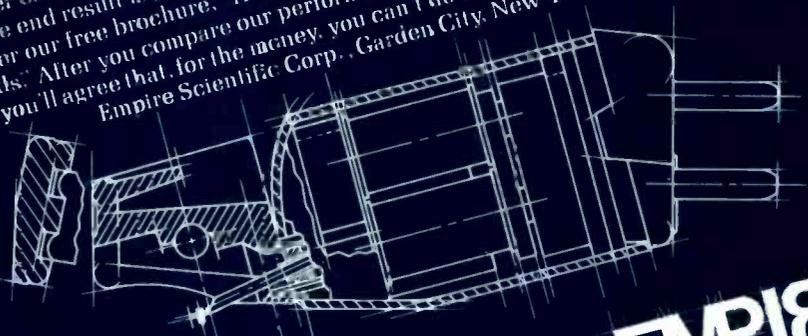
One, your records will last longer. Unlike other magnetic cartridges, Empire's moving iron design allows our diamond stylus to float free of its magnets and coils. This imposes much less weight on the record surface and insures longer record life.

Two, you get better separation. The small, hollow iron armature we use allows for a tighter fit in its positioning among the poles. So, even the most minute movement is accurately reproduced.

Three, Empire uses 4 poles, 4 coils, and 3 magnets (more than any other cartridge) for better balance and hum rejection.

The end result is great listening. Audition one for yourself or write for our free brochure, "How To Get The Most Out Of Your Records." After you compare our performance specifications we think you'll agree that, for the money, you can't do better than Empire.

Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, New York 11530

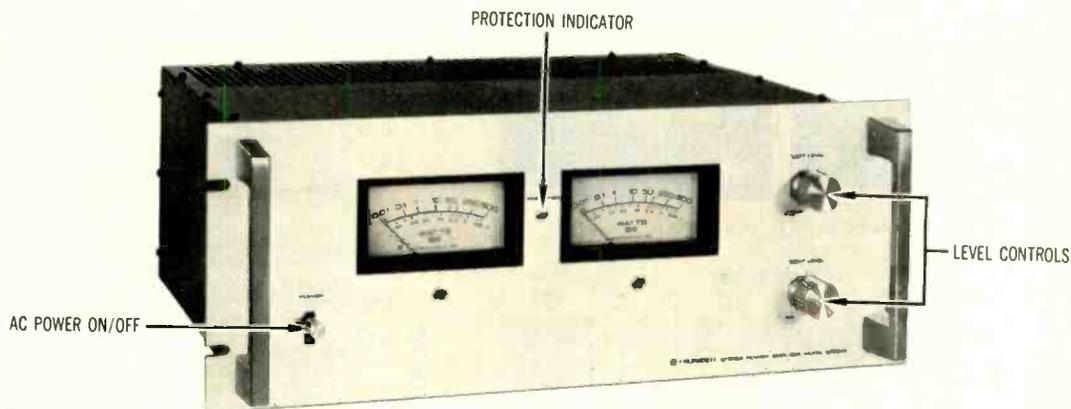


EMPIRE
Already your system sounds better.

MODEL	4000 D/III	4000 D/II	4000 D/I	2000Z	2000 E/III	2000 E/II	2000 E/I	2000 E	2000
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	10Hz-50KHz ± 3 db	15Hz-50KHz ± 3 db	15Hz-45KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 1 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 2 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 2 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db
TRACKING FORCE RANGE	¾-1¼ gm	¾-1½ gm	1-1¾ gm	¾-1¼ gm	¾-1½ gm	¾-1½ gm	1-2 gm	1¼-2½ gm	1½-3 gm
SEPARATION: 15Hz to 1KHz 1KHz to 20KHz 20KHz to 50KHz 20 Hz to 500Hz 500Hz to 15KHz 15KHz to 20KHz	28 db 23 db 15 db	26 db 21 db 15 db	24 db 20 db 15 db	20 db 30 db 25 db	20 db 28 db 20 db	20 db 25 db 8 db	18 db 23 db 15 db	18 db 23 db 15 db	16 db 21 db 13 db
M. DISTORTION @ 3.54 cm/sec	2% 2KHz-20KHz	2% 2KHz-20KHz	2% 2KHz-20KHz	.08% 2KHz-20KHz	.1% 2KHz-20KHz	.15% 2KHz-20KHz	2% 2KHz-20KHz	2% 2KHz-20KHz	2% 2KHz-20KHz
STYLUS	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 mil bi-radial	2 x .7 mil elliptical	.3 x .7 mil elliptical	.7 mil radius spherical			
EFFECTIVE TIP MASS	4 milligram	4 milligram	4 milligram	2 milligram	6 milligram	6 milligram	6 milligram	9 milligram	1 milligram
COMPLIANCE	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	20x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	18x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	17x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	16x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	14x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne
TRACKING ABILITY	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¼ gm	30 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm	38 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ .9 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¼ gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¾ gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 2 gm
CHANNEL BALANCE	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within ¾ db @ 1KHz	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1¼ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz
INPUT LOAD	100K ohms/ channel	100K ohms/ channel	100K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel	47K ohms/ channel
TOTAL CAPACITANCE	under 100 pf/channel	under 100 pf/channel	under 100 pf/channel	300 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel
OUTPUT @ 3.54 cm/sec	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	4.5 mv/channel	4.5 mv/channel	7 mv/channel	7 mv/channel	7 mv/channel

Preparation supervised by
Robert Long and Harold A. Rodgers
Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted)
supplied by CBS Technology Center

New A CONSUMER'S GUIDE Equipment Reports



Specs Plus in Pioneer Spec-2

The Equipment: Pioneer Spec-2, a basic power amplifier with peak-reading output meters, in metal case. Dimensions: 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ by 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches (front panel), 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep. Price: \$900. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Pioneer Electronics Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 75 Oxford Dr., Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

Comment: There is something about testing a superamp that leaves us slightly frustrated, as though the amp were laughing up its sleeve at us. Consider the Pioneer Spec-2. CBS labs puts it through very thorough testing, and the amp just breezes along doing what it is supposed to do, often with a good deal to spare. Then we connect it to some loudspeakers, feed a music signal to it, and listen at a level that would drive most people from the room. Nothing untoward happens. Next we connect a second pair of speakers in parallel, bringing the total load to 4 ohms (and sometimes less)—and neglecting, we might add, to reset the back-panel switch that lowers the supply voltage to ensure safe operation with such a load—and feed a signal in again. Still no misbehavior. The front panel meters show that we are approaching half power on peaks, and this monster (which has no fan) doesn't even get warm.

Outflanked on the high-power front, we make a tactical retreat to the opposite end of the power spectrum and play music (with loudness compensation) at levels at which the peaks are all less than 0 dBW (1 watt). The amp remains as clean as a whistle. And when the volume is turned down completely, not a trace of noise is audible until we bring an ear to within an inch or so of the tweeter.

The lab data are in accordance with the excellent performance in the listening test. Worst-case total harmonic

distortion at the rated 24-dBW (250-watt) per channel output is 0.087% at 20 kHz. IM distortion at full power is less than 0.051%. Both forms of distortion decrease as output diminishes toward 23 dBW (200 watts), remaining at a plateau down to levels well below 0 dBW. That CBS's measurement of the damping factor does not precisely confirm Pioneer's specification is probably attributable to the rigor of CBS's testing method and is of no practical importance in performance. More to the point, Pioneer's modest design value suggests that the amp is clean in open-loop operation and that negative feedback has been used simply to make a good thing better. We would not expect the Spec-2 to have transient distortion problems and in fact heard nothing we can attribute to this phenomenon.

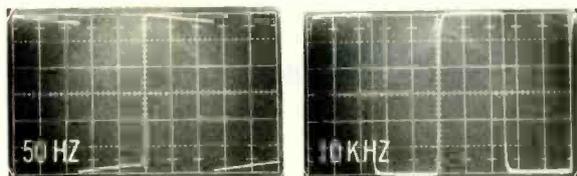
Signal-to-noise ratio, at 108 $\frac{1}{2}$ dB (equivalent to a noise level of -84 $\frac{1}{2}$ dBW) is excellent. In practice, since the gain of the amp (1.6 volts in for full output) is so high, its level controls can be cut back and the noise lowered further still. Frequency response can be drawn with a ruler through the audible region and is down only $\frac{3}{4}$ dB at 10 Hz and 100 kHz. Robust in its construction and appearance as well as in performance, the Spec-2 can be rack-mounted at the user's option. Unlike some rack-mount amps, it has regu-

REPORT POLICY Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Technology Center, 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 Technology Center assumes responsibility for product performance or quality.

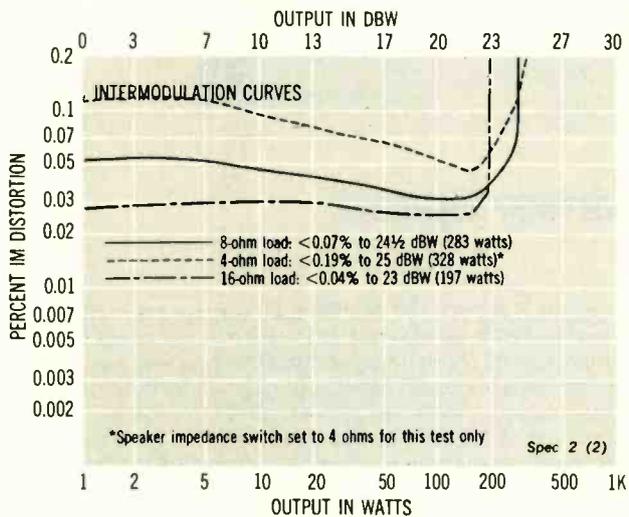
lar pin-jack inputs; the speaker terminals are hefty three-way (for bared wires, large spade lugs, or banana plugs) binding posts.

Quite a mystique has grown up around superamps, and some people claim to be able to hear substantial differences in sound from one model to another. We do not doubt that differences exist, but in our experience they are extremely subtle and show up only in rigorous A/B testing. This alone (ignoring listening tastes and applications) would militate against our trying to pick a "best" super-amp. What we can say, however, is that the sound of the Spec-2 is right there with the best of the contenders we have heard. It will not surprise us if you conclude that it is the best.

CIRCLE 131 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

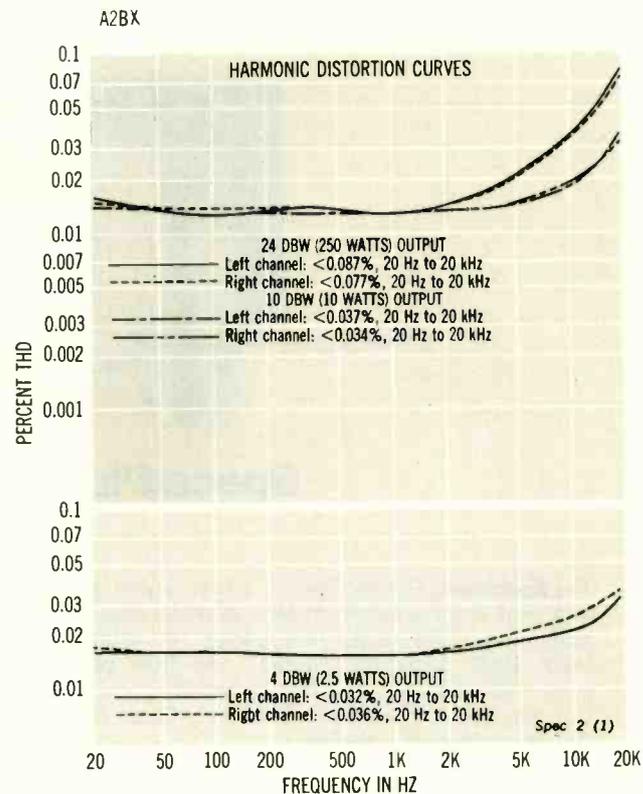


Square-wave response



Pioneer Spec-2 Amplifier Additional Data

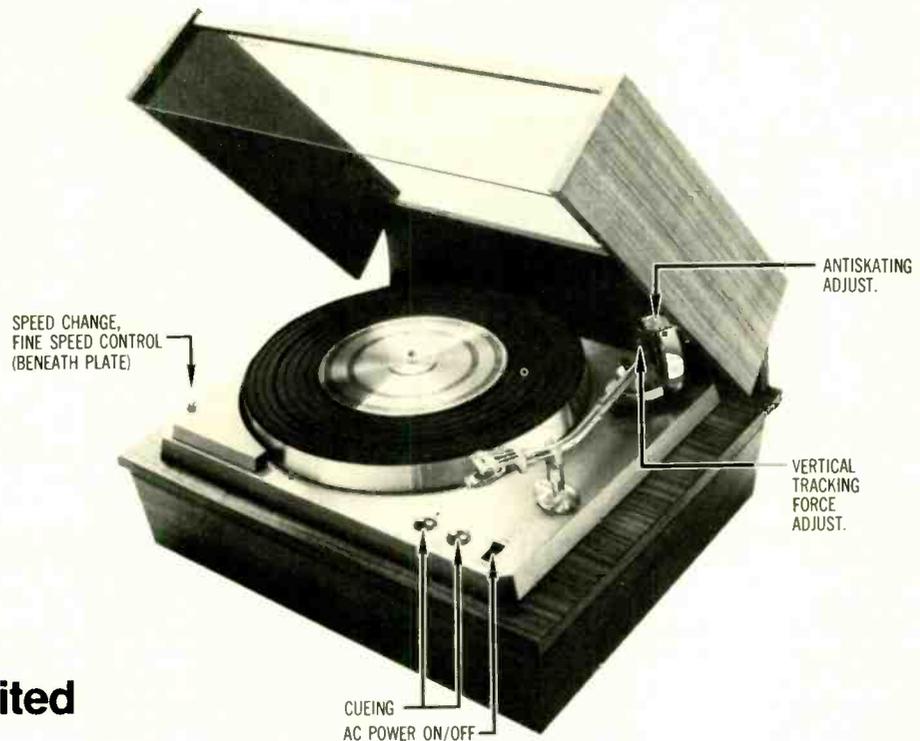
Power output at clipping (channels driven simultaneously)			
L ch	24½ dBW (280 watts) for 0.21% THD		
R ch	24½ dBW (280 watts) for 0.18% THD		
Frequency response ±0 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz			
	+0, -¾ dB, 10 Hz to 100 kHz		
Input characteristics (for rated output at full gain)			
Sensitivity	Noise	S/N ratio	
1.6 V	-84½ dBW	108½ dB	
Damping factor at 1 kHz	46		



About the dBW . . .

We express output power and noise in terms of dBW—meaning power in dB with a reference (0 dBW) of 1 watt. We repeat herewith the conversion table so that you can use the advantages of dBW in comparing current products with those we have reported on in the past. You can, of course, use the figures in watts that accompany the new dBW figures for these comparisons, but then you lose the ability to compare noise levels for outputs other than rated power and the ability to figure easily the levels to which specific amplifiers will drive specific speakers—as explained in the June 1976 issue. If you do not have that issue and would like a reprint of the full exposition, send 25¢ (U.S.) to: dBW, c/o High Fidelity Magazine, The Publishing House, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230.

WATTS	dBW	WATTS	dBW	WATTS	dBW
1.00	0	10.0	10	100	20
1.25	1	12.5	11	125	21
1.6	2	16	12	160	22
2.0	3	20	13	200	23
2.5	4	25	14	250	24
3.2	5	32	15	320	25
4.0	6	40	16	400	26
5.0	7	50	17	500	27
6.3	8	63	18	630	28
8.0	9	80	19	800	29



Empire 698: A Classic Revisited

The Equipment: Empire 698, a manual single-play turntable, with base and dust cover. Dimensions: 17½ by 15 inches (top); 8½ inches high, 22¼ inches clearance required with cover fully open. Price: \$400. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Empire Scientific Corp., 1055 Stewart Ave., Garden City, N.Y. 11530.

Comment: The Empire 698 manual turntable candidly displays its filial relation to the earlier 598, retaining essentially the same cosmetics and drive system. The principal difference between the two models is that the 698 includes a newly designed, lightweight tone arm equipped with electronic cueing and a photocell-controlled automatic lift at the end of a record. The arm also has such niceties as a headshell designed for minimum mass, antiskating bias that varies (as, ideally, it should) as the arm moves across the disc, and a decoupled counterweight that minimizes resonant effects and improves tracking of warped records.

Empire's belt-drive system, which was signally ahead of its time when introduced in the 598, performs very well by today's standards too. CBS Technology Center measured peak flutter (ANSI/IEEE weighting) at 0.08% maximum and 0.04% average, figures that fall in the good-to-excellent range. Rumble, which measures -61 dB with ARLL weighting, is likewise very good. (Empire, using ARLL weighting but a less stringent measurement technique, specifies -68 dB—a figure the lab was able to duplicate substantially when it copied the manufacturer's technique.) Speed (33 or 45 rpm) remains exact at all test power-line voltages.

The retention of the familiar Empire drive scheme implies some restrictions in convenience. Fine speed control is quite limited in range (significantly less than a semitone at either speed) and is accomplished by means of a vernier screw that changes the axis of the motor and drive pulley. To switch the speed it is necessary to remove a metal cover (which also conceals the fine speed adjustment) and guide the belt by hand from one drive-pulley step to the other,

taking care to have the belt move into proper alignment around the platter and not pop back to the wrong part of the pulley. This system is easier to use than to describe and does have the virtue of simplicity, but it may seem, to some users, somewhat incongruous with electronic arm cueing.

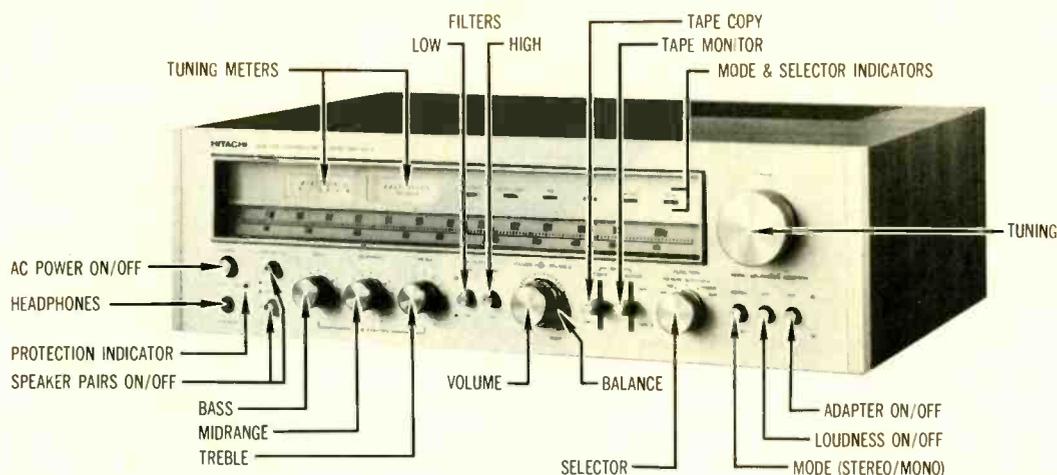
Taking resonant frequency as a general measure of tone-arm mass, we find the Empire's entirely competitive with other late-model arms. With the extremely compliant Shure V-15 Type III pickup it resonates at 7.5 Hz but shows very good damping in holding the rise to just 2 dB. Pivot friction in the arm mount is negligible for both vertical and horizontal movement, and there is no perceptible side drift in cueing. The cueing lifter does not support the arm once it is well clear of the platter, so you must be careful to lift and not push the arm when returning it to its rest.

Vertical tracking force is applied by means of a spring (calibrated in half-gram increments) so that the accuracy of this force is not dependent on having the turntable perfectly level. In the range from 1 to 4 grams the measured tracking force is 0.2 gram lighter than indicated at all settings. Antiskating bias, on the other hand, is exactly as set (again in half-grams of VTF) throughout the range; a table is provided in the instruction sheet to show how the bias should be adjusted for various stylus shapes.

In its construction the Empire is robust, not to say massive. The dust cover is of the friction-hinged rather than liftoff variety, but its mass is sufficient and the suspension of the working parts compliant enough that we would expect no problem with acoustic feedback—and, in fact, found none. Setting up the unit is not the simplest of tasks, but the instructions make it comparatively easy.

In auditioning the 698, we found its sonic performance just fine. Tracking is good, even on warped records, and there is no trace of audible misbehavior. We would conclude that Empire has done a clever job of refining an existing "classic" design.

CIRCLE 132 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Hitachi's Unique (Series E) Receiver

The Equipment: Hitachi SR-903, a stereo FM/AM receiver in wood-veneer case. Dimensions: 19¼ by 5½ inches (front panel), 15¾ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$500. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Hitachi, Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Hitachi Sales Corp. of America, 401 West Artesia Blvd., Compton, Calif. 90220.

Comment: The first clue that there is something unusual about the Hitachi SR-903 receiver comes when you pick it

up. Can this, one wonders, be an 18¾-dBW (or 75-watt) receiver? Well, it is; and the reason it weighs so little is that it contains a novel output circuit (called Class G by Hitachi, though the components incorporating it are called Series E) that is a good deal more efficient than a standard Class B stage and thus requires less heat sinking. In addition, the new circuit has an unusually large amount of short-term headroom: It can produce a little more than 3 dB above rated power—that is, twice its continuous wattage rating—on transient peaks without clipping, rivaling in this

Class G Amplification: What Is It?

To understand the operation of a Class G amplifier, it is advantageous to compare it with the two "standard" circuit configurations for audio amplifiers: Class A and Class B (described in detail in "How to Translate Amplifier Jargon," HF, March 1975). Class A output devices conduct current at all times. This means that the stage dissipates power continuously; moreover, the highest dissipation is under no-signal conditions. Consequently, while a Class A amp is capable of very linear (distortion-free) performance it is inherently inefficient, particularly when it idles for a large part of the time. This is not a drawback for low-level amplification stages, where output power is low in any case. But in a power amp's output stage it makes severe demands on the power supply and in particular on the heat sinking.

In a Class B stage both output devices of the push-pull pair are cut off when there is no signal, and no power at all is dissipated. When signal is applied, one output device of the pair handles the positive swings of the waveform, the other the negative swings. In practice, since solid-state devices are markedly non-linear at very low current levels, a small current flows at times of zero signal (technically, a Class AB configuration) to prevent crossover distortion. The efficiency of a Class B stage approaches 67%, but only

when it operates near full output. (The maximum efficiency of a Class A stage is 50% under the same conditions.)

In a Class G stage, there are four output devices: two to handle the positive swings, two for the negative swings. The circuit is arranged so that one pair of devices is fed from a low-voltage power supply and the second pair from a higher voltage. When a positive signal is applied, the low-voltage transistor on that side begins to conduct while the high-voltage transistor remains cut off. When the input voltage exceeds the supply to the low-voltage device, it cuts off and the high-voltage section takes over, remaining on until the voltage falls into the range of the low-voltage section once again. The action is exactly symmetrical in the negative portion of the waveform.

In effect, the low-voltage pair acts as a Class B stage, but since it is designed for relatively low power, its efficiency is of small concern. Moreover, in practice it is driven fairly close to its limits most of the time and is thus near its maximum efficiency. The high-voltage pair is also essentially of Class B, but since it acts only to "rescue" the low-voltage stage from clipping, it never works at low levels. In this way it is spared operation in the inefficient part of its range. The key to the optimization of a Class G stage is the choice of the ratio between the two supply voltages.

case the performance of many a superamp.

Data from CBS labs verify that the SR-903 meets its full-power distortion specs with a little to spare. Both total harmonic and intermodulation distortion fall to a roughly constant value near half power, remaining there to levels below 0 dBW, after which there is only an inconsequential rise. Testing with tone bursts (as an approximation of musical peaks) confirms that the headroom claimed does exist. The largest deviation from flat frequency response (20 Hz to 20 kHz) is just 3/4 dB, and that is at an extreme of the band. Signal-to-noise ratios are very good through all inputs, and that of the phono stage is equivalent to 76 1/2 dB when referenced to the conventional 10-millivolt input.

In our listening test we operated the Hitachi with two pairs of 8-ohm loudspeakers connected to its spring-loaded terminals and were surprised at how cool the back panel (which acts as heat sink for the output transistors) remained. It is possible with this nominal 4-ohm load to make the protection circuitry intervene, but that requires turning the volume to levels that are uncomfortably loud, in our listening room at least. The protection system, incidentally, acts cleanly and decisively, keeping the amplifier section off long enough to allow due contemplation of the misdeed that caused the shutdown.

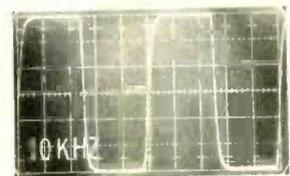
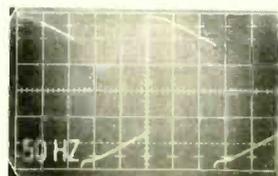
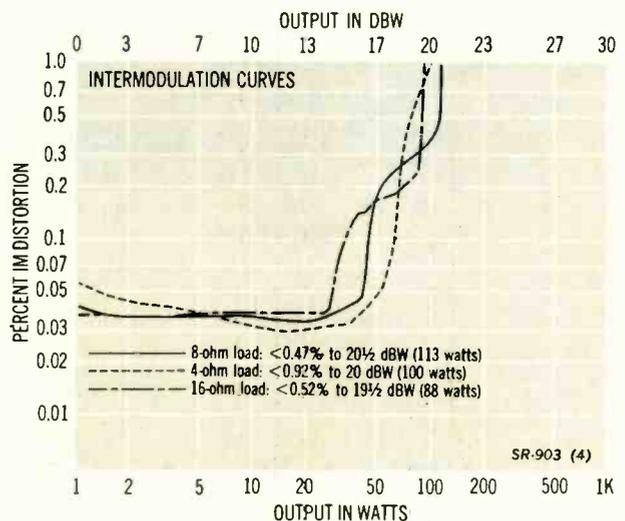
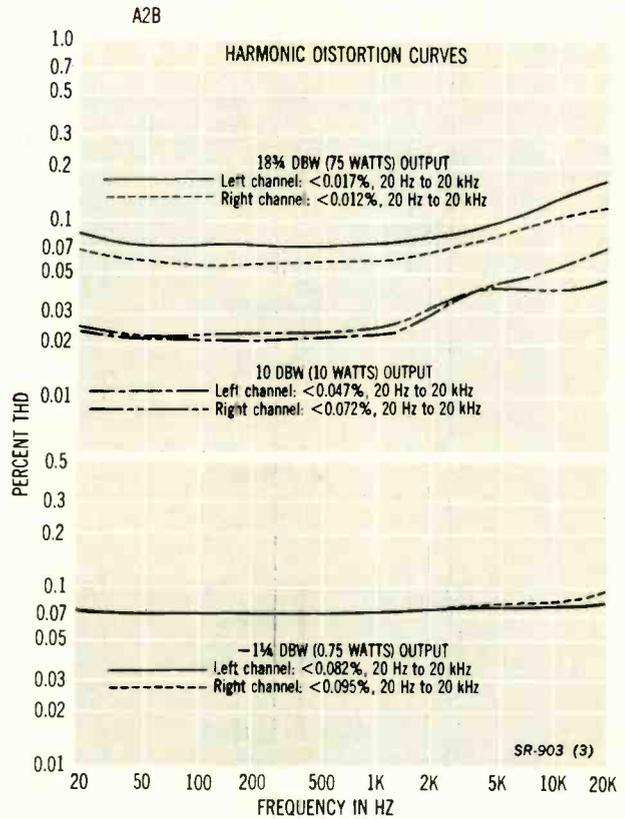
The FM section contributes solidly to over-all performance as well. Stereo reception is automatically suppressed until the available signal-to-noise ratio exceeds 38 dB, and 50 dB of quieting is achieved with an RF input just below 38 dBf, which is a healthy par for the course. The ultimate stereo S/N ratio is reached at 65 dBf and is, at 66 1/2 dB, substantially in agreement with the manufacturer's spec. Capture ratio, frequency response, and stereo separation are very good, and distortion is properly minimal under all test conditions. The alternate-channel selectivity graph in Hitachi's spec sheet agrees reasonably well with the 60 dB measured by CBS, representing good selectivity—though not as good as is suggested by the 80 dB that Hitachi (using a different measuring level) specifies for the SR-903.

One nice feature is the Autolock tuning system. Automatic control is disabled when you touch the tuning knob and select a station; when you let go, the system locks to the center of the channel once again. The Autolock can be switched out via a control that disables muting (which is nonadjustable and very effective) as well. The tuning dial is highly legible and offers more than adequate resolution.

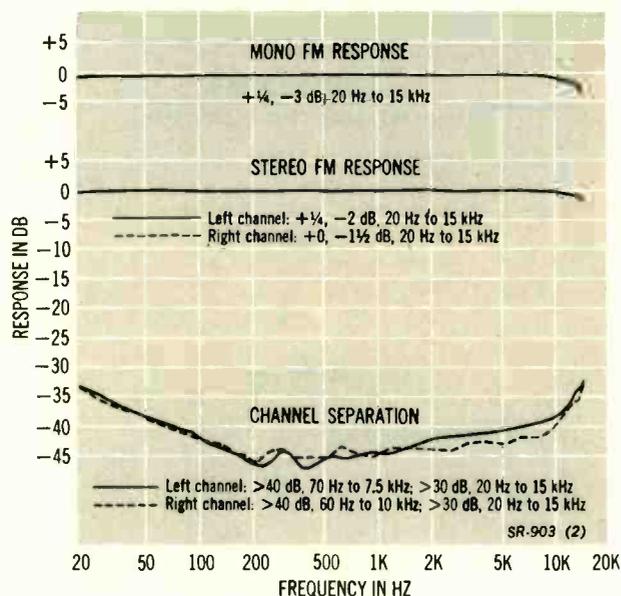
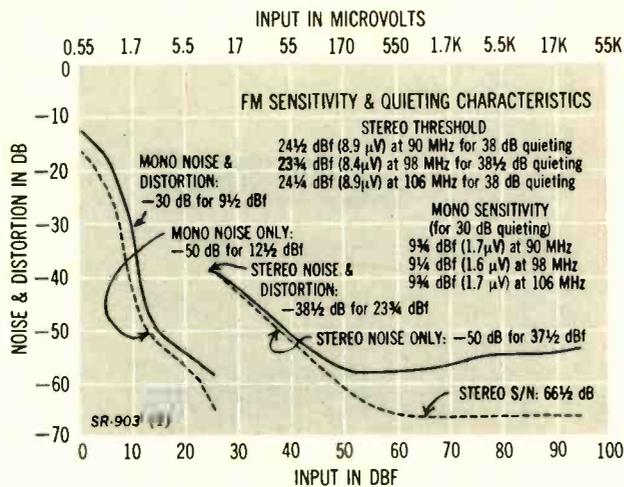
A midrange tone control, which is not a common feature in this class of receiver, is included. Although its scale is identical to those of the bass and treble controls—which offer, respectively, ± 15 and ± 10 dB of boost and cut—its range is limited (perhaps wisely) to ± 6 dB.

Provisions are made for two tape recorders. You can dub from one to the other while you listen to a different program source. The ADAPTER connections can be used for a third deck (you can dub to this deck, but not while listening to another source) or for signal-processing equipment—an equalizer, a Dolby adapter (for FM), etc. The high and low filters have break points of 4.5 kHz and 120 Hz, respectively, and their gentle slopes (nominally 6 dB per octave) prevent them from being more than moderately effective. The phono stage has adequate gain and overload and, like the high-level stages, a very good S/N ratio. Its sound seems accurate, and it interfaces well with pickups, even ones that we would consider "difficult."

Clearly, the principal strong point of the Hitachi is its amplifier section. Performance far exceeds what can be rightfully expected of a conventional 75-watt amp. The generous headroom contributes to a sense of ease, clarity, and crispness. The standard set by the amplifier outpaces



Square-wave response



Hitachi SR-903 Receiver Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	1 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	60 dB		
S/N ratio (mono, for 65 dBf)	73 dB		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.065%	0.11%	0.13%
1 kHz	0.11%	0.11%	0.12%
10 kHz	0.20%	0.54%	0.52%
IM distortion	0.15%		
19-kHz pilot	-66 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-68 dB		
Frequency response			
mono	+ 1/4, -2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
L ch	+ 1/4, -2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
R ch	+ 0, -1 1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
Amplifier Section			
Power output at clipping (channels driven simultaneously)			
L ch	20 dBW (98 watts) for 0.18% THD		
R ch	20 dBW (100 watts) for 0.17% THD		
RIAA equalization	+ 0, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz		
Input characteristics (for rated output at full gain)			
	Sensitivity	Noise	S/N ratio
phono	1.9 mV	-43 1/4 dBW	62 dB
aux	148 mV	-63 3/4 dBW	82 1/2 dB
tape 1, 2	149 mV	-63 3/4 dBW	82 1/2 dB
adapter	149 mV	-63 3/4 dBW	82 1/2 dB
Phono overload (clipping point)	95 mV at 1 kHz		
Damping factor at 1 kHz	44		

the other sections to a degree, but they are in fact much better than adequate. The 903 may not be the ultimate choice for someone whose primary music source is FM. But if discs are your bag and you like concert hall levels, this receiver will really show you something.

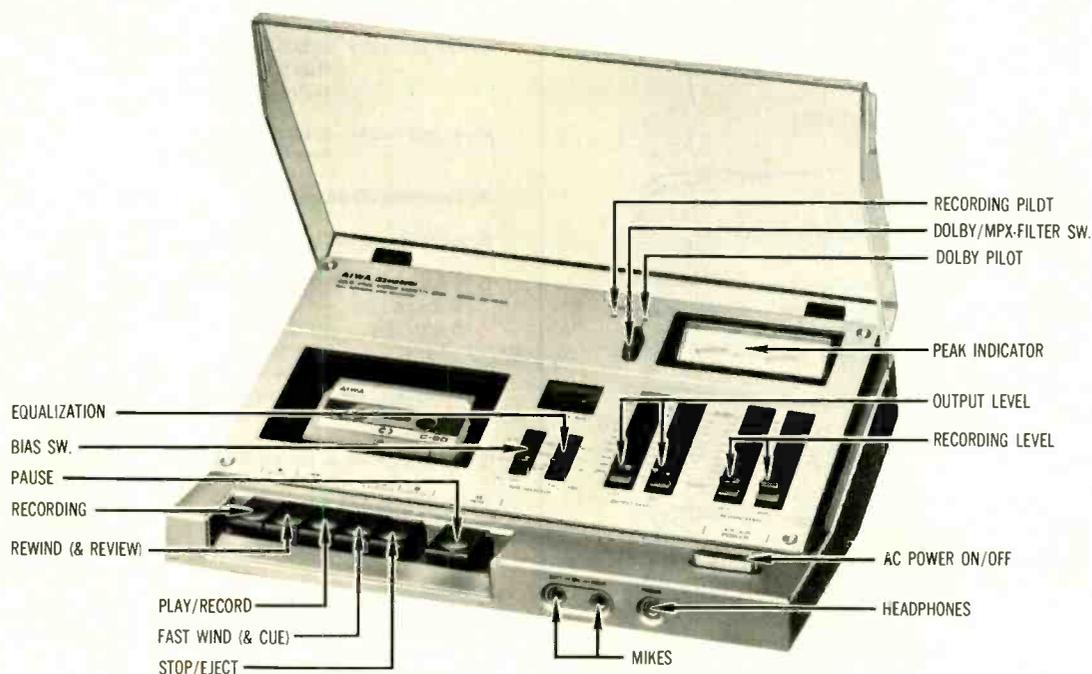
CIRCLE 133 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

A Fascinating Budget Cassette Deck from Aiwa

The Equipment: Aiwa Model AD-1250, a stereo cassette deck in metal and plastic case with removable dust cover. Dimensions: 15 1/4 by 11 inches (top); 5 3/8 inches high with cover closed, 12 3/4 inches clearance needed with cover fully open. Price: \$230. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Aiwa Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Meriton Electronics, Inc., 35 Oxford Dr., Moo-nachie, N.J. 07074.

Comment: A little over a decade ago, when the cassette

was no more than a promising newcomer, some of us discovered that a company called Aiwa was building some attractive equipment at astonishingly low prices. Then the brand disappeared from the U.S. market—because, it would seem, of some inept handling on the part of its American importers. When Meriton announced that it would take over U.S. distribution, therefore, we were eager to try an Aiwa deck. Well, folks, the cassette format has changed a lot in the intervening years, but Aiwa's admirable attitude apparently has not.



There are other under-\$300 Dolby decks on the cassette market, but few of those in the current crop that we have looked at before were very encouraging. Sometimes they failed to meet what we would consider minimum high fidelity standards, and sometimes their features or mechanical design simply cut too many corners. Whether the Aiwa cuts corners is a moot point; its "omissions" strike us as cannily chosen to keep costs down and, therefore, as virtues rather than as sins.

Take the input section, for example. There are mike inputs (1/4-inch phone jacks at the front edge of the deck) and line inputs (pin-jacks, underneath at the back—where there also are pin-jack inputs and a DIN input/output socket), but only one left/right pair of recording-level sliders. Therefore, no mixing. Similarly, the FM-pilot filter is built into the Dolby switch: no noise suppression without the response cut at the extreme high end. But instead of niceties like full-band Dolby or mixing inputs or, perhaps, Dolby-FM decoding, you get a DC-servo-drive motor that is virtually unaffected by line voltage and a cue/review feature (actuated by pressing either of the fast-wind levers with the deck in PLAY) that gives you some output from the tape at high speeds so you can find your place. And still at less than \$250. If those are tradeoffs, we're all for them.

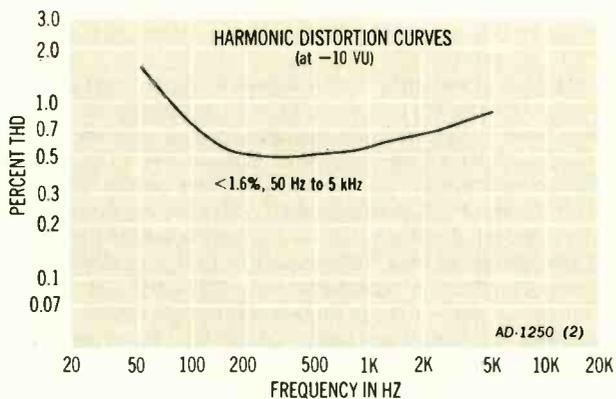
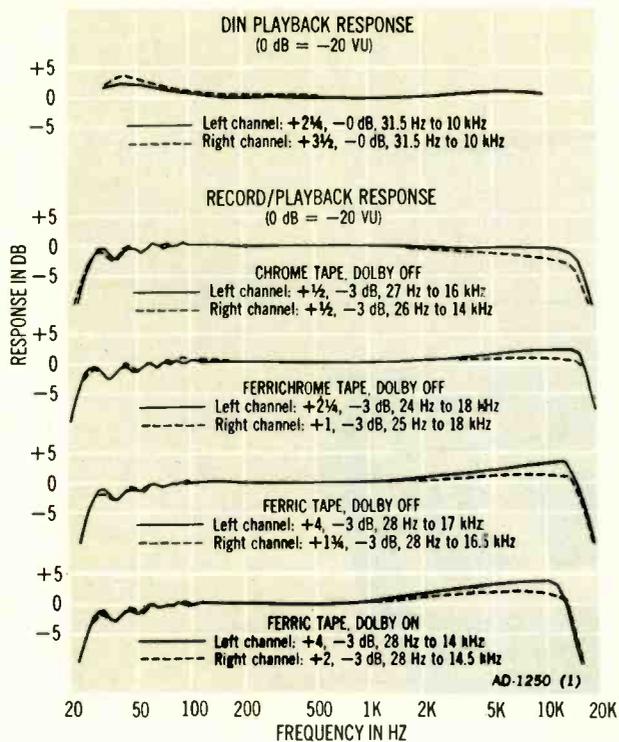
Not that performance is consistently spot-on when compared with, say, a \$400 deck. In many respects it is excellent but, in that company, the response curves look a little less flat than we would consider par (though they are not really substandard); the action of the averaging meters, which seems at once sluggish and underdamped, is saved only by the peak indicator; the crosstalk is a little high, though better than you're likely to have in most program material. And the owner's manual is almost a travesty. Not only do we defy novices to interpret correctly some of the opaque English, but the tape table is misleading because it is based on brands available in Japan, rather than those

familiar to U.S. recordists. (Manuals can affect performance.)

This is a great pity. Otherwise the tape-matching scheme is among the best we've seen in any cassette deck at any price. It has separate switches for bias and equalization, each with three positions: CRO., FPCR, and LH. These three positions are further identified on the faceplate in terms of actual equalization (70 microseconds for the first two eq. positions, 120 microseconds for the third) and percentage of bias with respect to that for LH (low-noise, high-output ferric tapes): 150, 110, and 100, respectively. At last—a really rational approach! CBS's lab tests were run with Sony tapes: UHF ferric, Duad ferrichrome, and chromium dioxide.

That assumed "100%" bias point wants some discussion. Since Aiwa designates it for LH tape, we would tend to assume that it is a little on the high side for the bottom formulations in quality tape lines. Since the CBS lab data show flutter response in the right channel than the left for ferric and ferrichrome tapes, we used that channel to run some quick tests with a variety of tapes to see which matched which bias points best. "Hotter" ferric tapes like Maxell UDXL-1 seemed a hair overbiased at the 110 setting, a hair underbiased at 100; Ampex 20/20+, which prefers a lower bias, seemed an excellent match to the 100% setting; Fuji FL, as an example of a moderate-priced formulation, still did well at the 100% setting, though evidence of overbiasing was starting to show. So these differences, while they will be of interest only to the really fussy recordist (perhaps one too fussy to consider an under-\$300 deck), indicate that the 100% bias position is best suited to ferric tapes in the medium-high price bracket and that no option is given for getting the best from the cheapies. Perhaps that is as it should be.

The angling of the front panel makes the deck a joy to work with. There are two dust covers: The large, hinged



Aiwa AD-1250 Additional Data

Speed accuracy	0.33% fast at 105 VAC	
	0.26% fast at 120 VAC	
	0.20% fast at 127 VAC	
Wow and flutter	playback: 0.04%	
	record/play: 0.07%	
Rewind time (C-60 cassette)		77 sec.
Fast-forward time (same cassette)		77 sec.
S/N ratio (re 0 VU, Dolby off; CBS weighted)		
playback	L ch: 57 1/2 dB	R ch: 57 1/2 dB
record/play	L ch: 55 1/2 dB	R ch: 55 1/2 dB
S/N ratio (re 0 VU, Dolby off, unweighted)		
playback	L ch: 56 dB	R ch: 55 1/2 dB
record/play	L ch: 54 dB	R ch: 53 1/2 dB
Erasure (333 Hz at normal level)		70 dB
Crosstalk (at 333 Hz)		
record left, play right		31 dB
record right, play left		32 1/2 dB
Sensitivity (re DIN 0 VU)		
line input	L ch: 100 mV	R ch: 105 mV
mike input	L ch: 0.6 mV	R ch: 0.7 mV
Meter action (re DIN 0 VU)		
	L ch: 4 dB high	R ch: 4 1/2 dB high
IM distortion (record/play, -10 VU)		
	L ch: 4.0%	L ch: 4.0%
Maximum output (re DIN 0 VU)		
	L ch: 1.30 V	R ch: 1.35 V

cover that protects the entire working surface can be slipped off and laid aside if you choose; in addition, there is a sliding, smoked plastic cover over the cassette well that automatically pops out of the way when you press EJECT. Like the deck as a whole, this feature is well thought-out: efficient, attractive, practical. The AD-1250 really is an excellent value.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Crosswinds' Rumble Filter

The Equipment: Crosswinds Sound Systems stereo high-pass filter, an outboard subsonic filter in metal case. Dimensions: 9 1/2 by 2 1/2 inches (front panel), 5 inches deep plus clearance for connections. Price: \$100. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Crosswinds Sound Systems, 5307 Harvest Lane, Austin, Tex. 78745.

Comment: Warped records, recorded rumble, and turntable rumble are perennial problems that plague the home

music listener and, equally undesirably, subject his equipment to unnecessary stress. Subsonic noise wastes amplifier power and uses that power to drive woofer cones through long excursions at frequencies at which they are poorly loaded and thus easily overdriven and damaged. And because of the low-frequency boost inherent in the RIAA playback curve, phono feedback at these frequencies can be particularly pesky. The solution to this problem is, of course, a rumble filter, an amenity that is not always incorporated in receivers and preamps. But even in components that do have such filters, often the slope and break

point) make the device much less than ideally effective.

The Crosswinds high-pass filter is a simple "black box" with a power cord and one pair each of input and output terminals. The box isn't really black, but since the final cosmetics had not been chosen when we tested it, we are not sure what it will look like. Practically, we would not expect the appearance to be critical, as the device is easily concealed and need not be touched once installed. It is meant to be connected in a tape-monitor or adapter loop or between a preamp and power amp. In the latter position, it cannot be switched out.

The circuit (which we *did* test in its final form) is an active filter whose response is -3 dB at 30 Hz with a rolloff of 18 dB per octave below that. We find the break point and slope very effective in suppressing rumble with virtually no effect on program material. But if you want a different break point, Crosswinds will make it up for you at extra cost. According to the manufacturer's claim, total harmonic distortion is less than 0.08%. While we did not verify

this with test equipment, we can find no logical or audible reason for skepticism concerning it—nor concerning IM distortion, which is not specified. Hum and noise are rated at better than 65 dB below 1 volt. Capable of supplying 8 volts across a 10,000-ohm load, the filter will drive just about any power amp we know of.

So far as we can tell, this is a unique product, at least in the consumer audio marketplace. And, record warps being as common as they are, it fills a genuine need. Crosswinds has been using the circuit for some time in commercial installations and says it is satisfied with the track record. To our ears, the filter does its job well and does not degrade the signal audibly. If you have a preamp or receiver that you love dearly—except for its rumble filter (or the lack of one)—this could be just the thing to give it a new lease on life. The unit is currently available by mail only (Texas residents are advised to include 5% sales tax) although Crosswinds is looking for dealers.

CIRCLE 134 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Audio-Technica Acoustic Insulators



The Equipment: Audio-Technica AT-605 Audio Insulators, a system for attenuating vibrations at audible and sub-audible frequencies in turntable assemblies. Dimensions: 1½ inches height clearance required for isolated component. Price: \$25. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Audio-Technica, Japan; U.S. distributor: Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., 33 Shiawassee Ave., Fairlawn, Ohio 44313.

Comment: Few things are as annoying as a tone arm that skips a groove at the slightest provocation, forcing even the cat to tiptoe across the room. Or a music system that is given to moaning whenever the volume is turned past the whisper level. These forms of undesirable behavior, vibration sensitivity and acoustic feedback, are what the AT-605 is designed to combat.

The system consists of four damped feet that are meant to be placed under a turntable in such a way that its own feet, which are not doing the job, remain free of contact with the supporting surface. The AT-605 feet are adjustable in height, and a spirit level is included to aid in setting the turntable level. The effectiveness of the insulator set depends in part on the turntable with which it is used. That is, it may not improve the isolation of the most sophisticated turntables on the market, but it does seem likely to help a great many whose feet are just adequate.

We tested the system by setting a turntable (with a bet-

ter-than-average suspension) next to a loudspeaker that had been placed woofer-down on a table. The speaker was driven with a sweep tone essentially from 0 to 100 Hz, and the signal from the turntable pickup (which was placed on a record) measured with and without the AT-605. The actual data depend, of course, more on the other equipment than on the Audio Insulators, but the difference between the two curves is impressive. One peak slightly below 20 Hz was attenuated by nearly 6 dB, and another near 60 Hz by about 3 dB. Further, the system gave 1 dB or so of extra attenuation at all frequencies above about 5 Hz, the lowest frequency at which we could get useful data with this setup. We also noticed, but did not measure, decreased susceptibility to shocks. The device is not a panacea, but can help materially where a problem exists.

There is no reason why the Audio Insulators should be used only on turntables. If acoustic feedback is the difficulty, the speakers can be isolated as well, which should suppress structure-borne vibration by about another 3 dB. Or, if your tape deck's drive feeds rumble to the turntable, either or both could be isolated from the supporting surface. According to the manufacturer, each of the feet can support up to 9 pounds—or a maximum of 36 pounds for a set—and still retain its damping characteristics. One other nice thing about the AT-605 is that it will not detract from the appearance of your sound system.

CIRCLE 135 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

THE GAP BETWEEN OTHER TAPES HAS

INTRODUCING UD-XL I AND UD-XL II.

Maxell tapes have always been considered by many people to be the highest quality tapes in the world.

But instead of sitting back and resting on our laurels, we've spent the last few years looking for ways to move even further ahead.

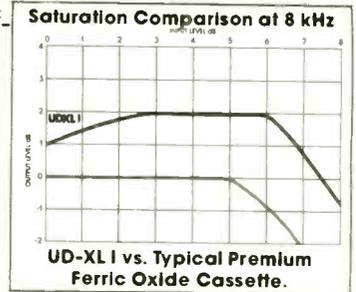
The results of our efforts are Maxell UD-XL I and UD-XL II. Two tapes which are not only better than anything we've ever made, they're better than anything anyone's ever made.

To begin with, UD-XL I is an improved version of our own UD-XL.

More specifically, it's a ferric oxide tape designed for use with the tape selector switch in the normal position (120 microsecond equalization and standard bias).

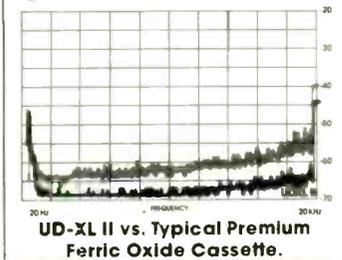
Its performance characteristics include the lowest harmonic distortion level of any premium cassette on the market today.

An extremely flat frequency



MAXELL AND ALL JUST WIDENED.

Signal-to-Noise Ratio Comparison



response from the lowest to the highest frequencies.

And an exceptionally high resistance to saturation even

at the highest recording levels.

UD-XL II, on the other hand, is a ferric oxide tape specially formulated for use with the tape selector switch in the chrome position (70 microsecond equalization and high-level bias). It offers the low noise advantage of "chrome"

without the disadvantages. Its performance characteristics include extremely low modulation noise and a 5 dB signal-to-noise ratio improvement over ordinary premium tapes.

If you'd like to know more about UD-XL I and UD-XL II, stop into your local dealer and ask some questions. Not just about our tapes, but about our competitors' as well.

We think you'll soon discover something that we've always known.

The best just keeps getting better.

MAXELL. THE TAPE THAT'S TOO GOOD FOR MOST EQUIPMENT.

Maxell Corporation of America, 130 West Commercial Ave., Moonachie, N.J. 07074.

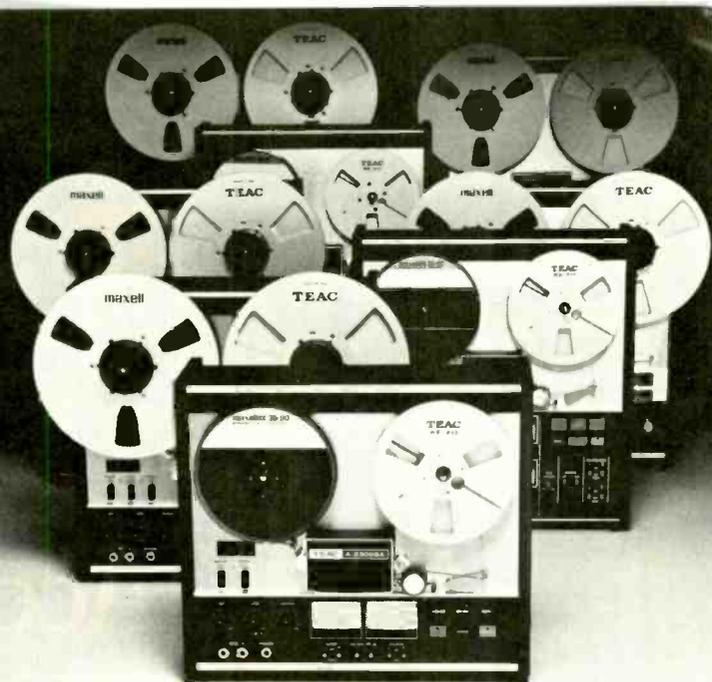
CIRCLE 22 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





“If I just wanted to listen to music, I’d go to a concert.”

“I want to lead the band. I want to build my own albums.”



TEAC®

Nineteen tape systems—six cassette and thirteen open reel—from \$200 to \$1450.*

“I want to get my hands on the music.”

You're talking TEAC open reel. From the time you decide to edit, resequence and build your own albums until you finish your home studio, you're talking TEAC open reel.

Why TEAC?

Better specs. Not more bells and whistles and gingerbread. Performance you can hear. Specs we can prove:

We can print a signal at plus six and still meet spec. (A cheapy will lose definition and distort.)

We hold and define a piano and violin with a sustained Middle C. (On Brand X, Y and Z, the tone will wander away.)

When the tape transport moves or shifts or reverses, TEAC has a nice, clean, solid “thunk” that tells you the tape transport is there to stay. (Some TEAC look-alikes give off a hollow, plastic complaint when they're asked to do anything.)

And we'll perform to specs a year or two from now.

Not just pull tape. Perform to specs.

Do you know who buys one out of every three new TEAC systems? People who own old TEAC systems. We've been making tape systems for twenty five years, and we really know how.

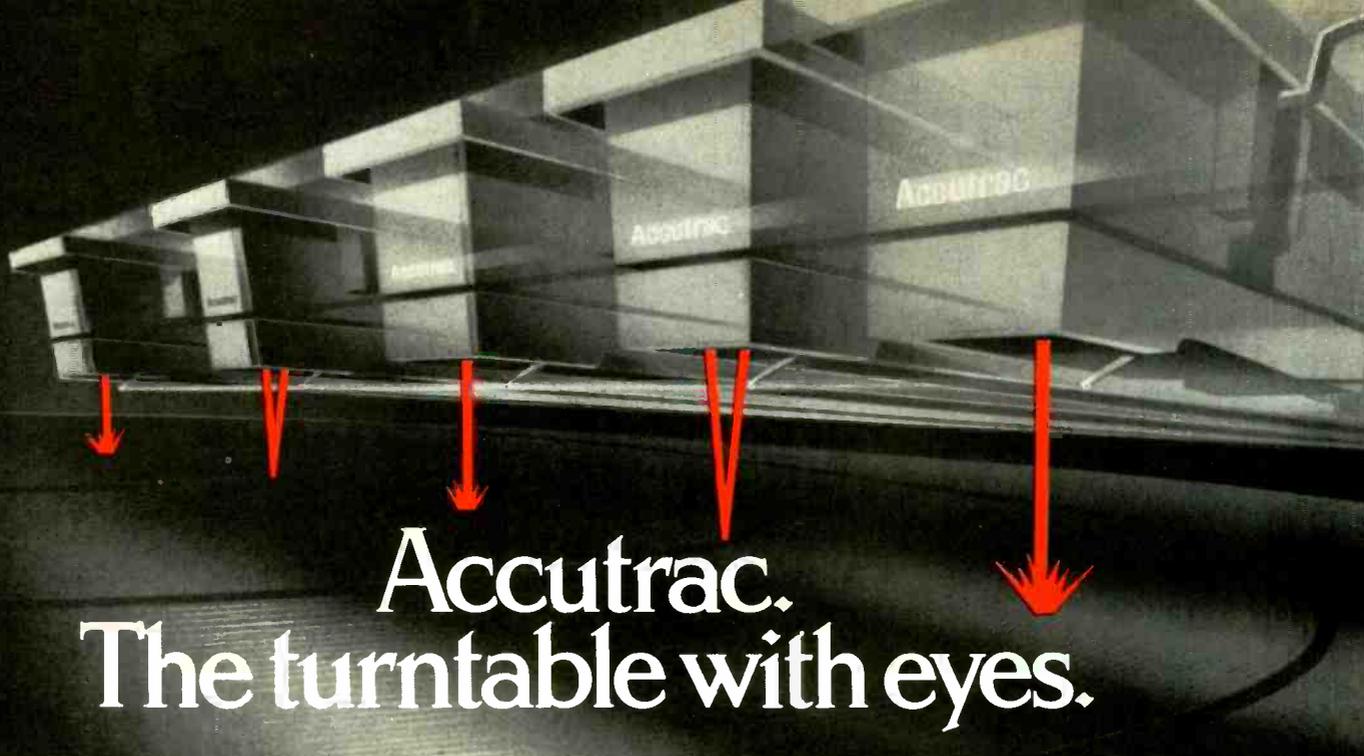
It's just a matter of time. The more you know about tape, the more you'll know about TEAC.

The Extra Mile.

Buy any TEAC open reel recorder between now and June 1, 1977, and you'll be able to get 30% off on twelve 7" reels of Maxell U.D. 35-90 tape or twelve 10" reels of Maxell U.D. 35-180 tape. The way we figure it, you get at least five miles of tape for the price of four. Any way you figure it, it's a nice way to start a tape library.



*Actual resale prices are determined individually and at the sole discretion of authorized TEAC dealers.



Accutrac. The turntable with eyes.



Introducing Accutrac.

The only turntable in the world that lets you tell an LP which selections you want to hear, the order you want to hear them in, even how many times you want to hear each one.

Sounds like something out of the 21st century, doesn't it? Well, as a result of Accutrac's electro-optics, computer programming and direct drive capabilities, you can have it today.

Just imagine you want to hear cuts 5, 3 and 7 in that order. Maybe you even want to hear cut 3 twice, because it's an old favorite. Simply press buttons 5, 3, 3 again, then 7. Accutrac's unique infra-red beam, located in the tonearm head, scans the record surface. Over the recorded portion the beam scatters but over the smooth surface between selections the infra-red light is reflected back to the tonearm, directing it to follow your instructions.



What's more, it can do this by cordless remote control, even from across the room.

The arm your fingers never have to touch.

Since Accutrac's tonearm is electronically directed to the record, you never risk dropping the tonearm accidentally and scratching a record, or damaging a stylus.

And, since it cues electronically, too, you can interrupt your listening and then pick it up again in the same groove, within a fraction of a revolution. Even the best damped cue lever can't provide such accuracy. Or safety.

What you hear is as incredible as what you see.

Because the Accutrac servo-motor which drives the tonearm is decoupled the instant the stylus goes into play, both horizontal and vertical friction are virtually eliminated. That means you get the most accurate tracking possible and the most faithful reproduction.

You also get wow and flutter at a completely inaudible 0.03% WRMS. Rumble at -70 dB (DIN B). A tracking force of a mere 3/4 gram. And tonearm resonance at the ideal 8-10 Hz.

The Accutrac 4000 system. When you see and hear what it can do, you'll never be satisfied owning anything else.

**Its father was a turntable.
Its mother was a computer.**

The Accutrac™ 4000



M	1	X	2	Y	3	O	4	Q	5	G	6	K	7	N	8	B	9	F	10	X	11		Q	12	O	13	N	14	D	15					
M	16	R	17			B	18	O	19	L	20	P	21	N	22			W	23	N	24			L	25	K	26	O	27	A	28				
N	29	C	30			O	31	L	32	J	33	M	34			D	35	N	36	R	37	I	38	O	39	G	40			P	41				
Q	42	N	43	M	44			Q	45	W	46	O	47			X	48	Y	49	A	50	N	51	L	52			G	53	Q	54				
		A	55	O	56	N	57			K	58	H	59	C	60	M	61	E	62			Y	63	N	64			O	65	L	66				
P	67			O	68	S	69	D	70	V	71	X	72			F	73	R	74	O	75			B	76	N	77	I	78						
H	79	O	80	M	81	A	82	B	83	U	84	J	85			M	86	S	87	N	88	V	89	G	90	N	91	F	92	Q	93				
O	94			O	95	W	96	U	97	N	98					C	99	Q	100			M	101	N	102	A	103	J	104			N	105		
O	106	U	107	D	108			Q	109	G	110	R	111	O	112			V	113	M	114	N	115			S	116	L	117	I	118				
T	119	Y	120			O	121	C	122	N	123					J	124	B	125	O	126	Q	127	K	128	N	129	A	130			G	131		
D	132	F	133	Q	134	H	135	B	136	R	137	U	138	M	139	O	140	N	141			X	142	Y	143	P	144			B	145				
O	146	A	147	H	148			N	149	L	150					K	151	Q	152	O	153			W	154	V	155	S	156	X	157	F	158		
B	159	N	160			L	161	I	162						A	163	N	164	Q	165	F	166	O	167	M	168	Y	169			T	170	D	171	
W	172			N	173	G	174	C	175	O	176	M	177			U	178	X	179	B	180			O	181	K	182	A	183	W	184				
B	185	N	186	L	187	F	188	E	189						H	190			M	191	X	192	O	193	W	194	G	195			Y	196	Q	197	
		X	198	W	199	Y	200	C	201	A	202	N	203						N	204	W	205	U	206	E	207	L	208	V	209	X	210			
M	211	N	212																																

DIRECTIONS

To solve these puzzles—and they aren't as tough as they first seem—supply as many of the Output words as you can in the numbered dashes following the Input. Unless otherwise specified in the Input, the Output consists of one English word. "Comp." means compound, or hyphenated word.

Transfer each letter to the square in the diagram that bears the corresponding number. After only a few correct guesses you should begin to see words and phrases emerging in the diagram, which when filled in will contain a quotation related to music, recordings, or audio.

The words in the quotation are separated by darkened squares and do not necessarily end at the end of a row.

Try to guess at these words and transfer each newly decoded letter back to its appropriate dash in the Output. This will supply you with further clues.

A final clue: The source of the quotation—the author and his work—will be spelled out by the first letters in the Output, reading down.

The answer to HiFi-Croctic No. 23 will appear in next month's issue of *High Fidelity*.

INPUT

- A. Musical tempo
- B. Choral work on the Easter theme by Gounod
- C. Pen name of William Sydney Porter (2 wds.)
- D. Controlling it is a problem for singers
- E. Symbol of Easter
- F. Islamic counterpart of Lent
- G. Hovhanness' Op. 100, Part 3, an Easter cantata
- H. Brazilian soprano
- I. ___ Speaks, American composer (1874-1948): "On the Road to Mandalay"
- J. Siestas
- K. Composer of *Resurrection* Symphony
- L. Of papal pronouncements, intended for all Catholics (3 Lat. wds.)
- M. Domestic chore traditional during Holy Week (2 wds.)
- N. Bach's Cantata 160, for Easter Day (6 Ger. wds.)

OUTPUT

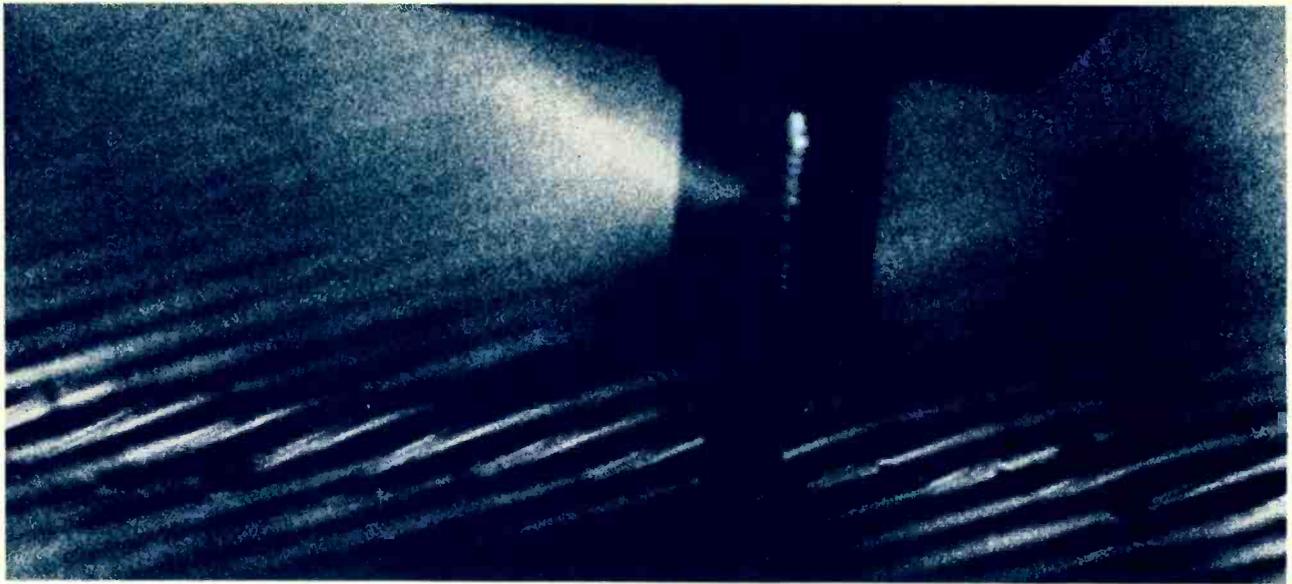
- 183 202 147 103 82 163 28 130
- 55 50
- 136 125 180 83 18 159 76 185
- 145 9
- 175 122 201 99 60 30
- 15 35 132 70 108 171
- 62 207 189
- 133 10 92 158 166 73 188
- 6 195 53 131 90 40 174 110
- 79 190 148 59 135
- 118 38 78 162
- 33 104 124 85
- 182 26 151 58 128 7
- 32 52 117 208 150 20 66 25
- 161 187
- 86 1 114 211 81 61 191 44
- 177 16 168 101 139 34
- 8 129 77 105 36 91 203 160
- 102 14 204 173 88 123 51
- 186 98 22 43 57 141 24
- 115 64 29 164 149 212

INPUT

- O. Easter hymn by Charles Wesley (6 wds.)
- P. Composer of *Fisherman Called Peter*, recorded on Serenus
- Q. In High Church parlance, common designation of Easter Day (3 wds.)
- R. Intended
- S. Tenor role in Rossini's *Siege of Corinth*
- T. ___ re, mi (orig. version)
- U. In Hindu myth, king of Ceylon suspended in limbo for 10,000 years
- V. English author of hymns (1818-66): *Carols for Eastertide*
- W. Female lead in two Gluck operas
- X. Ornament consisting of one or more short notes attached to preceding main note (Ger.)
- Y. Place of Jesus' crucifixion

OUTPUT

- 140 95 27 181 94 65 13 106
- 4 39 193 176 153 80 68
- 126 167 31 47 146 121 56
- 75 19 112
- 67 41 21 144
- 134 93 165 5 45 100 197 127
- 42 152 12 109 54
- 137 111 37 74 17
- 87 69 116 156
- 119 170
- 84 138 97 178 206 107
- 209 155 113 71 89
- 194 154 46 205 184 172 199 23
- 96
- 179 2 142 157 11 48 192 72
- 198 210
- 200 63 3 169 196 120 49 143



How to Judge Record-Playing Equipment

A guide for prospective buyers based on our test reports

by Edward J. Foster

TEST REPORTS IN HIGH FIDELITY are intended to give a basic idea of the characteristics and peculiarities of a product. They are based upon both laboratory measurements—technical data that are considered to reflect a product's strong and weak points—and listening tests. The correlation between the data and actual performance is not always direct; therefore the audio editors must interpret the figures. But to get the most out of a report the reader should understand why the various measurements are made and something of their relative importance.

Details of the test procedures need not concern us here, though in some tests they may differ markedly from the procedures used by at least some manufacturers in determining product specifications. We'll take up the more significant divergencies as we go. The point to keep in mind is that, while HF takes pains to be consistent in its approach to competing models both on the test bench and in practical use, other sources of information about components may well represent different viewpoints or different measurement techniques—even where a measurement standard exists in the interest of uniformity of data.

Edward J. Foster runs his own audio-testing and technical service, Diversified Science Laboratories, and is a frequent contributor to these pages on audio-related subjects.

Turntables and Tone Arms

Record-playing equipment usually consists of the turntable/arm combination and the pickup or phono cartridge. Generally HF reviews each separately, but sometimes a record player comes with its own cartridge, in which case the reviews are combined. A few turntables are marketed without arms—and, naturally enough, arms without turntables.

The lab tests on the turntable and arm are of two types: those that indicate the "convenience" features and, more important, in our view, those that measure basic performance. Since the primary purpose of the turntable is to rotate the record at a constant speed and introduce no noises of its own, HF considers the flutter and rumble measurements paramount. Flutter (or wow and flutter) is a measure of the short-term speed stability of the turntable. If the drive system were perfect, the turntable would spin at its nominal speed (say 33 rpm) without variation. But imperfect bearings and jerky delivery of power by the motor ("cogging," as it is called) create minor wavers in speed from instant to instant. The change in speed, divided by the average speed and expressed as a percentage, represents flutter.

The currently accepted standard (the so-called

IEEE/ANSI standard) specifies a weighted peak measurement. Weighting is used because listeners are most annoyed by speed variations that occur at a rate of about 4 Hz; thus variations that occur at this rate count more heavily in the measurement than those occurring at less irritating rates. Flutter, by its very nature, is not constant. For this reason HF generally reports two figures: an "average" value (an interpretation of what the flutter meter reads) and a "maximum" (the highest level reached on the meter). The latter corresponds to the above standard.

What flutter "sounds" like depends upon the rate at which it occurs. Slow speed variations—individual "wobbles" lasting from one-sixth of a second to two seconds and therefore said to have a frequency of from 0.5 to 6 Hz—cause instability in the pitch of reproduced tones, a sort of "wowing" sound. (These slow variations used to be measured separately as "wow.") They are most annoying on sustained tones, such as those produced by piano or woodwinds. Faster speed variations ("flutter" in its more limited sense) from 6 to 200 Hz cause a roughening of the sound rather than pitch variations. Equipment of high quality will generally have average peak weighted flutter figures of $\pm 0.1\%$ or less.

Rumble, sometimes called the turntable's signal-to-noise ratio (or simply S/N), is the measure of the noise introduced into the music by vibrations in the drive system. The phono cartridge responds to the wiggles of the record groove, but it also is sensitive to vertical and lateral vibrations induced into the turntable platter by the motor or drive train. Since these vibrations are generally very low in pitch, they produce a rumbling sound. Again, weighting is used to make the measurement reflect the amount of annoyance caused by the rumble. HF employs the ARLL (audible rumble loudness level) weighting, which is in widespread use in this country, although the DIN B and DIN A (German), the JIS (Japanese), and the NAB (an older American standard) standards frequently are used elsewhere. (There are no direct conversion factors relating these systems.) The ARLL curve counts rumble most heavily at 500 Hz. Rumble low enough to produce an ARLL measurement of -60 dB or better (e.g., -61 dB, etc.) is a prerequisite of high performance.

Lateral and vertical friction in the arm pivot is an important consideration. Excessive friction (more than, say, one-tenth of the tracking force needed for the cartridge used) will necessitate raised tracking forces, which can result in excessive record wear. Fortunately, in equipment reviewed today in HF, bearing friction usually is so low as to almost vanish.

The frequency of tone-arm resonance is an important parameter in that it relates to the playing

of warped records. At the resonant frequency, the sensitivity of the system—both in terms of the output voltage from the cartridge and of susceptibility to mistracking—increases. The tone-arm resonance actually involves the total effective mass of the tone arm and cartridge and the cartridge's stylus compliance. But in measuring a turntable/arm combination, HF must use some cartridge, and measurements are therefore valid only for that cartridge (or for others with the same mass and compliance). For convenience, HF has standardized with the Shure V-15 Type III for testing all high-quality arms—unless, of course, the turntable system comes with its own cartridge, in which case HF measures the combination and the results are then valid for the system.

The ideal range for arm resonance is 10 to 15 kHz. This is sufficiently below the music band so that the increased output from the cartridge at resonance will have a negligible effect on the tonal balance, and sufficiently above the frequency band at which record warps are most prevalent and severe (about 1 to 6 Hz) to minimize the chances of mistracking on a warped disc. The less boost at resonance (reported as a rise of so many dB) the better, but since the tolerable boost depends in a fairly complex way on the resonant frequency, the reviewer normally assesses the importance of this data.

It may seem odd that HF rates absolute speed accuracy as less important than, say, tone-arm resonance. Speed accuracy is important, because it affects the over-all pitch of the music, but very few listeners can tell the precise pitch of what they hear without a reference for comparison. An entire piece could be as much as a quarter-tone sharp or flat without bothering most people. The exceptions are people with perfect pitch or those who wish to play the piano along with the record. Absolute speed accuracy within, say, 0.5% (one-twelfth of a semitone in pitch) is sufficient for any musical need.

Variation in speed with changes in line voltage can cause perceptible shifts in musical pitch, as when the switching of an air conditioner causes a short-term low-voltage condition. HF measures the speed at line voltages of 105, 120, and 127 volts and reports the discrepancy, if any. In practice "120-volt" AC lines may fall anywhere within this range and tend to vary; typical home power lines average 110 to 115 volts.

Many modern high-quality turntables include a speed control. In such cases, HF reports the range of the control. A variation of 6% (say, $\pm 3\%$) is equivalent to a semitone and should be more than adequate.

Most pivoted tone arms now include an anti-skating control that compensates for the tendency of a conventional pivoted arm to move toward the

center of the rotating record. Without antiskating "bias" compensation, the stylus force on the two groove walls is unbalanced by the skating force, producing a tendency toward mistracking of the outer (right-channel) wall. (Straight-line-tracking arms do not develop this unbalanced force.) Since the skating force develops from friction between the stylus tip and record groove, the amount of compensation required depends on the stylus shape. Frequently, several scales are included on the antiskating control to indicate the proper setting for various styli. HF checks to see that the antiskating forces are reasonably close to the empirically "correct" values. We also verify that the minimum tracking force required to activate the arm-cycling mechanism on automatic and semi-automatic turntables is well below the smallest value that would ever be used.

Some matters on which we report are of varying significance to different users. A cueing control that skips ahead or back by more than one or two grooves when you use it as a temporary "pause" can be very annoying—if you use it that way. Similarly, a slow cueing cycle in an automatic (more than 12 seconds or so) can be galling to some users, unimportant to others. And while accuracy of the stylus-force setting is worth measuring, we wouldn't turn down a player because the gauge was a bit off or because calibrations are no finer than quarters of a gram. For a few dollars you can buy a gauge and set the vertical tracking force as accurately as you want.

Pickup Cartridges

When it comes to pickups, frequency response and channel separation are cardinal factors. Frequency response that is flat from 20 Hz to 20 kHz is necessary for the cartridge to reproduce the entire audible spectrum without coloration. This ideal is seldom realized. Typical anomalies are a trough between 5 and 10 kHz, followed by a peak between 10 and 20 kHz. The peak (which occurs at a higher frequency in CD-4 pickups) is caused by a resonance between the stylus tip and the groove and can vary according to the record used. A response curve that is flat within ± 2 dB from 30 Hz to 15 kHz is typical of cartridges with very good performance. Responses are plotted for both channels. They should be identical for best performance, but a match within 1 dB is considered very good.

The channel separation curves are plotted on the same graph with the frequency response curves. Again, the separation is plotted for both channels. The degree of separation (in dB) can be read directly from the scale on the left; typically, it will be best in the midrange and at its minimum at the resonant frequency. You will never see a "flat" separation curve—desirable as that might be—nor

are the curves likely to be identical for the two channels. Generally, a separation of 20 dB from about 100 Hz to 15 kHz in the worse of the two channels would be considered adequate; other things being equal, the greater the separation and the greater the frequency band across which it extends, the better.

When testing CD-4 cartridges, HF extends its upper limit of response and separation measurements from 20 to 50 kHz and plots the results on a separate graph. The response is not usually as smooth, nor the separation as great, in this region. Fortunately, depending on the design of the particular CD-4 demodulator, anomalies in this, the CD-4 carrier region, are relatively tolerable. Smoother response and wide separation are still the ideals, however.

Coequal with frequency response and separation is the "maximum tracking level" test. For this test, the tracking force is adjusted to the center of the manufacturer's recommended range, and measurements are made to determine the highest recording levels that can be traced without significant distortion of the signal. Different signals are used to check the tracking performance at different points in the band: sine waves for the lower frequencies and a one-octave noise signal for the top band. The measurements are carried out to a level of +12 dB above the RIAA 0 VU at 300 Hz, to +18 dB at 1 kHz, and to -5 dB in the 10- to 20-kHz band. These levels correspond to the highest levels normally encountered on modern discs. Preferably the cartridge should track the highest level on each test (indicated by $> +12$ dB, $> +18$ dB, and > -5 dB, respectively, in the data). A cartridge that can come within 3 dB of these levels is still acceptable. HF also measures the minimum force required to track a series of certain low-frequency glide tones. This force is usually less than that recommended by the manufacturer and can be taken as an indication of the precision with which the recommended value need be maintained.

Second-harmonic distortion (at various frequencies from 1 to 10 kHz) and intermodulation distortion (400 Hz and 4 kHz) are measured. Distortion, of course, is a very important criterion, for it is related to the "cleanness" or clarity of the reproduced signal. The correlation, unfortunately, is not direct, so the significance of particular distortion measurements is assessed by the reviewer after auditioning the cartridge.

The importance of the low-frequency resonance point of the cartridge/arm system was mentioned when we discussed the turntable/arm tests. HF is faced with the same problem here—having to mount the cartridge in a *particular* arm. We've standardized with the SME 3009 arm, but the performance in another arm is likely to be different.

Keeping in mind that increasing either stylus compliance or effective arm mass (which, of

Ten Aids in Choosing Record-Playing Equipment

Selected Guideposts to the Highest Quality

Turntable and Arm

1. Average peak weighted flutter of no more than $\pm 0.1\%$.
2. Rumble low enough to produce an ARLL-weighted measurement of -60 dB or lower.
3. No variation in speed when line voltage changes.
4. A cueing control that sets arm back down within a groove or two of where you lifted it.
5. In an automatic turntable or changer, a cueing cycle or change cycle not so slow as to bother you.
6. Arm resonance to cause a boost of no more

than 1-2 dB in the 5- to 10-Hz range, and 3-4 dB in the 10- to 15-Hz range.

Cartridge

7. A response curve flat ± 2 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz and with the channels matching within 1 dB.
8. Separation of channels no less than 20 dB between 100 and 15,000 Hz.
9. Trackability of $+12$ dB (above RIAA 0 VU) at 300 Hz, $+18$ dB at 1,000 Hz, and -5 dB through the 10,000- to 20,000-Hz band, all within a 3-dB tolerance.
10. Second-harmonic and intermodulation distortion as low as possible.

course, includes the weight of the pickup cartridge itself) will lower resonant frequency, while decreasing either will raise it, and that the optimum resonance-frequency range is about 10 to 15 Hz, you can draw some conclusions from our reports. The Shure V-15 Type III, with which we test tone arms, happens to produce a 6.5-Hz resonance in the SME arm, with which we test pickups. (Resonance is, of course, higher in the most recent SME, which Shure says the Type III was designed to complement.) This means that pickups for which we show a higher resonance frequency in the SME arm will also deliver a higher resonance than the Shure in other arms; those that measure lower in the SME will be lower in other arms too. This information can help you avoid poor pickup/arm matches.

Let's say, for example, that you're considering a pickup that we report produces a 10-Hz resonance in the SME arm and want to use it in an arm that checks out at 8 Hz with the Shure. Since this pickup produces a somewhat higher resonance than the Shure, it should be just about in the "ideal" range with this arm.

The output voltage measurement, given in millivolts per centimeter per second (of groove velocity) at 1 kHz, indicates the compatibility of the cartridge with your preamp. Rarely do problems arise in this area, and when they do they are normally discussed in the report. This figure gives a clue to channel balance: HF would look for a match within 1 dB (10%) between the two sensitivity measurements.

The 1-kHz square-wave photo provides some indication of the degree of damping of the stylus as-

sembly. Ideal reproduction of the square wave would imply a flat top, a vertical rise and fall, and no overshoot, although this is only approached in practice. Some would claim that good performance is indicated by a rapid rise and fall time, no more than a 30% overshoot, and less than two cycles of ringing, though by that standard some very good-sounding cartridges do not reproduce square waves well.

The ideal vertical tracking angle for a cartridge is the same angle as that at which the record was cut. When the two match, distortion is minimized. Over the years, record companies have adopted a number of different "standards." The current RIAA recommendation calls for a 15-degree angle. In practice, any tracking angle between 10 and 20 degrees is acceptable.

Every stylus is examined microscopically to determine its geometry, size, orientation, and polish. HF reports these results as a general indication of the quality of the stylus.

The amount of lab data measured for an HF review is quite exhaustive, and rarely does any one device turn up spectacular figures in all of the tests. Moreover, the data represent necessary rather than sufficient conditions for good performance on the part of the product. To put it another way, while a product can flunk by coming up with a very bad number in any one of the tests, passing all of the lab tests we know of will not guarantee that it sounds good when used to reproduce music. And for HF, that is what matters most—making music. So in the final analysis the lab data collectively represent a guide: useful, to be sure, but only a guide. The final judge is the ear. 

Directory of Turntables,

THIS BUYER'S GUIDE is unusual in several respects. First, we have omitted all numerical data constituting manufacturers' claims about product performance—rumble, flutter, frequency response, channel separation, and the like. The variety of measurement techniques and weighting systems used makes the comparability of such specs suspect at best. But we have noted under "comments" when any product was given an HF test report, since our data are comparable.

Second, since space requirements make it im-

practical for us to include all record-playing equipment, we have narrowed the range on the basis of price and availability. Turntables whose nominal retail price is below \$99.50 and phono cartridges below \$49.50 are not listed. Prices shown are based on suggested retail values, rounded to the nearest \$5.00 point.

The turntable section is divided into manual turntables, automatic single-play turntables, and changers. A listing in the "automatic" section implies at least that the tone arm of the unit in ques-

MANUAL SINGLE-PLAY TURNTABLES

Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Motor type/ Drive system	Tone arm	Built-in strobe	Speed adjust	Speeds	Cartridge	Dust cover	Cueing	Comments	Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Motor type/ Drive system	Tone arm	Antistatic
Acoustic Research	AR-XB	\$145	Permanent magnet synchronous/belt	*			2		*	*	Available as AR-XB91 with Shure M-91ED cartridge for \$200		ST-7	430	DC/belt	*	
Audio Retroflex (Fidelitone)	LT-76	275	Synchronous/belt	*	*		2		*	*		Hitachi	PS/38	200	DC servo/direct	*	*
Connoisseur (Hercic)	BD-2	130	Synchronous/belt	*	*		2		*	*		JVC	PS/48	240	DC servo/direct	*	*
	BD-2A	145	Synchronous/belt	*	*		2		*	*	Automatic liftoff		QL-8	800	DC servo/ direct	*	*
Dual (United Audio)	CS-704	310	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	10%	2	*	*	HF test report, 3/77; automatic shutoff		QL-10	1,200	DC servo/ direct	*	*
	502	160	8-pole synchronous/belt	*	*		6%	2	*	*	Automatic shutoff		JL-A15	130	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*
	510	200	8-pole synchronous/ belt	*			6%	2	*	*	Automatic shutoff	Kenwood	KD-500	200	DC servo/direct	*	*
Empire	698	400	Hysteresis synchronous/belt	*	*	*	± 3%	2	*	*	Automatic liftoff		KD-550	250	DC servo/direct	*	*
Fisher	MT-6130	200	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 2.5%	2	*	*	Automatic shutoff		KD-2055	140	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	
	MT-6010	120	AC synchronous/ belt	*	*			2	*	*	Automatic shutoff	Lafayette	T-2000	130	Synchronous/belt	*	*
Fons	CQ-30		DC servo/belt			*	*	3	*	*	HF test report, 12/75; continuously variable, 20-100 rpm; available with optional SME-3009 tone arm, with detachable head \$350; w/o detachable head \$340		T-4000	180	DC servo/belt	*	*
	Mk. II	250									Continuously variable, 10-99 rpm; preset, 33		T-6000	230	AC servo/ direct	*	*
Gale	GT-2101	1,985	DC servo/direct					1	*	*	Continuously variable, 10-99 rpm; preset, 33	Lenco (Uher)	L-75/S	165	AC/idler	*	*
Garrard (Plessey)	DD-75	230	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 3%	2	*	*	Automatic shutoff		L-80	140	Synchronous/belt	*	*
Harman-Kardon	ST-6	325	Synchronous/belt	*			± 5.5%	2	*	*	Tangent-tracking arm		L-82	160	Synchronous/belt	*	*
													L-84	195	Synchronous/belt	*	*
													L-90	300	Synchronous/belt	*	*
												Linn-Sondek (Audiophile Systems)	LP-12	400	Synchronous/belt		

Tone Arms, and Cartridges

tion starts from rest, positions itself over the lead-in groove, descends and plays the disc, lifts off, and returns to rest without human intervention. Less automated models are listed as "manual," with notes of any salient automatic features in the "comments" column. All models that sequence two or more discs are listed under "changers." Turntable speeds are listed as: 1 for 33 rpm, 2 for 33 rpm and 45 rpm, 3 for 33, 45, and 78 rpm.

Stylus shapes of phono cartridges are cataloged as spherical, elliptical, or special. The last category

includes all the configurations designed originally for CD-4 (Shibata, Pramanik, parabolic, hyperbolic, etc.) and spinoffs of them designed for two-channel material. It should be noted that a number of cartridges that have stylus shape and bandwidth suitable for use in CD-4 reproduction are sold primarily as two-channel devices and that the success of any of these pickups in reproducing CD-4 material will depend in part on the demodulator. The distinction between the two applications is not, therefore, a hard line.

Built-in strobe	Speed adjust	Speeds	Cartridge Base	Dust cover	Carriage	Comments	Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Motor type / Drive system	Tone arm	Built-in strobe	Speed adjust	Speeds	Cartridge Base	Dust cover	Carriage	Comments	
*	± 5.5%	2	*	*		Tangent-tracking arm	Luxman (Lux Audio)	PD-121	495	DC servo/direct		*	± 4%	2	*	*		Supplied with SME and uncut bayonet arm mounts; precut mounts available for other arms	
*	3%	2	*	*															
*	2.5%	2	*	*															
*	± 6% (re 440)	2	*	*	*	Quartz-locked; quick stop (less than 1 second)	Marantz	6100	130	Synchronous/belt	*	*		2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff	
*	± 6% (re 440)	2	*	*	*	Quartz-locked; 4-digit LED pitch indicator; quick stop (less than 1 second)		6300	270	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 3%	2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff; also, without arm, as Model 6320
		2			*	Automatic shutoff	J. A. Michell (Dick Wagner)	Prisma	700	DC servo/belt	*	*	*	± 10%	2	*	*	*	Contains integral disc-cleaning arm; price without arm, \$600
*	± 8%	2	*			Resin concrete base (reduces external vibration and acoustic feedback); without tone arm		Reference Hydraulic	550	Hysteresis synchronous/belt	*	*	*	± 2%	2	*	*	*	Contains integral disc-cleaning arm and stylus brush; price without arm, \$450
*	± 8%	2	*			Identical to KD-500 but with tone arm	Micro Seiki (Teac)	MB-10	100	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*		2	*	*	*		
		2	*			Resin concrete base; automatic shutoff		MB-15	150	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*		2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff	
*	± 1.3%	2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff		DD-20	200	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 6%	2	*	*	*	
*	± 2.5%	2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff		DD-30	300	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 6%	2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
*	± 4%	2	*	*	*			DD-40	400	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 6%	2	*	*	*	MA-505 arm allows VTF adjustment during play; provision for outboard mounting of second arm
*		2	*	*	*	Continuously variable, 30-50 rpm													HF test report, 3/77; up to 3 arms can be mounted on adapter brackets
		2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff		DDX-1000	600	DC servo/direct		*		± 6%	2	*	*	*	
*	+7% -3%	2	*	*	*	Viscous-damped spring suspension; automatic shutoff	Midra	T-3112	130	4-pole synchronous/belt	*				2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
		1	*	*				T-3115	200	4-pole synchronous/direct	*	*	*	± 5%	2	*	*		

Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Motor type/ Drive system	Tone arm	Anti-skating	Built-in strobe	Speed adjust.	Speeds	Cartridge	Dust cover	Cueing	Comments
Netronics	350D (Kit)	90	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 3%	2	*	*	*	Available with Shure SME tone arm (\$149), Grace 707 (\$129), or Audio-Technica 1005 (\$95); optional dust cover, \$12
	350F (Kit)	120	DC digital servo-loop/direct	*	*	*	± 5%	3	*	*	*	
Optonica (Sharp)	RP-3636	300	AC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 4%	2	*	*	*	Granite base Automatic shutoff
	RP-1414	140	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	
Philips	GA-212	170	DC servo/belt	*	*	*	± 3%	2	*	*	*	HF test report, 5/73; automatic shutoff Automatic shutoff
	GA-427	100	Synchronous/belt	*	*	*	± 3%	2	*	*	*	
Pioneer (U.S. Pioneer)	PL-112D	100	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	
	PL-115D	125	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
	PL-510A	200	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 2%	2	*	*	*	
Realistic (Radio Shack)	Lab 100	100	Synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	
	Lab 300	160	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
	RP-1100Q	130	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
Rotel	RP-2500	180	DC servo/belt	*	*	*	± 5%	2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff Spirit level, adjustable legs
	RP-3000	220	AC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 5%	2	*	*	*	
	SR-222	115	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	
Sansui	SR-929	430	DC/direct	*	*	*	± 3.5%	2	*	*	*	
	SR-525	200	DC/direct	*	*	*	± 3.5%	2	*	*	*	
	FR-1080	125	4-pole, 16-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	Automatic arm return
	PS-16	130	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
Sony	PS-76	220	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	3%	2	*	*	*	
	PS-1100	140	AC induction/idler	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
Stanton Magnetics	PS-1700	140	Synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
	PS-3300	200	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 4%	2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
	PS-3750	230	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 4%	2	*	*	*	
	PS-4750	300	DC servo/direct	*	*	*	± 4%	2	*	*	*	
	PS-8750	900	AC torque servo/direct	*	*	*	± 4%	2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
	8004-II	200	24-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	HF test report, 11/76; magnetic platter suspension; comes with 681EEE cartridge
Technics (Panasonic)	8004-IIB	175	24-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	Same as 8004-II, but comes with 600EE cartridge
	8004-IIA	180	24-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	Same, but comes with 680EE cartridge
	8004-IV	225	24-pole synchronous/belt	*	*	*		2	*	*	*	Same, but comes with 780/4DQ cartridge
	SL-20	100	DC servo/belt	*	*	*	6%	2	*	*	*	Model SL-20A (\$129.95) includes Audio-Technica AT-12E cartridge

Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Motor type/ Drive system	Tone arm	Anti-skating
Thorens (Elpa Marketing)	SL-23	140	DC servo/belt	*	*
	SL-1100A	370	DC servo/direct	*	*
	SL-110A	300	DC servo/direct	*	*
	SL-120	230	DC servo/direct	*	*
	SL-1200	280	DC servo/direct	*	*
	SL-1400	250	DC servo/direct	*	*
	SL-1500	200	DC servo/direct	*	*
Yamaha	SP-10 Mk. II	700	DC servo/direct	*	*
	YP-450	160	4-pole synchronous/belt	*	*
Yamaha	YP-701	220	Synchronous/belt	*	*
	YP-800	500	DC servo/direct	*	*
	YP-801	550	DC servo/direct	*	*
	TD-126C Isotrack	625	16-pole synchronous/belt	*	*
Yamaha	TD-145C Isotrack	325	16-pole synchronous/belt	*	*
	TD-160C Isotrack	275	16-pole synchronous/belt	*	*
	TD-166C Isotrack	215	16-pole synchronous/belt	*	*

AUTOMATIC SINGLE-PLAY

Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Motor type/ Drive system	Anti-skating
ADC (BSR)	Accutrac 4000	\$500	DC/direct	*
B&O	1900	325	Nonsynchronous/belt	*
	4002	740	DC tach-control/belt	*
Dual (United Audio)	CS-721	400	DC/direct	*
Fisher	MT-6120	150	synchronous/belt	*
Garrard (Plessey)	125SB	110	Synchro-lab/belt	*
Hitachi	PS/10	130	16-pole synchronous/belt	*
	PS/58	300	DC servo/direct	*
	PS/15	170	16-pole synchronous/belt	*
Kenwood	KD-3055	180	4-pole synchronous/belt	*
Marantz	6200	200	AC servo/belt	*
Mitsubishi (Melco)	DP-EC1	590	DC servo/direct	*

Built-in strobe	Speed adjust.	Speeds	Cartridge Base	Dust cover	Cueing	Comments
*	6%	2	*	*	*	Model SL-23A (\$169.95) includes A-12E cartridge; automatic shutoff
*	10%	2	*	*	*	Removable arm mount
*	10%	2	*	*	*	
*	10%	2	*	*	*	Arm mounts, one precut for SME
*	10%	2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff HF test report, 3/76
*	10%	2	*	*	*	
*	10%	2	*	*	*	Fast start, stop; requires external arm mount
*		3				Automatic shutoff
*	±5%	3	*	*	*	HF test report, 1/76; automatic shutoff
	±2%	2	*	*	*	
	±2%	2	*	*	*	
	±2%	2	*	*	*	
		2	*	*	*	Automatic shutoff
*	±3%	2	*	*	*	Same as YP-800, black styling
*	±3%	2	*	*	*	

TURNTABLES

Built-in strobe	Speed adjust.	Speeds	Cartridge Base	Dust cover	Cueing	Comments
*	5%	2	*	*	*	Programmable sequencing of cuts; remote control; comes with LMAI cartridge
	±3%	2	*	*	*	HF test report, 1/75; tangent-tracking arm; automatic disc diameter sensing and speed selection
	±3%	2	*	*	*	
*	±10%	2	*	*	*	Tone-arm height adjustment
		2	*	*	*	HF test report, 4/76
		2	*	*	*	
		2	*	*	*	Two motors
	2.5%	2	*	*	*	
		2	*	*	*	Separate arm motor; resin concrete base
*	±3%	2	*	*	*	Automatic disc diameter sensing and speed selection
*	±3%	2	*	*	*	

Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Motor type/ Drive system	Built-in strobe Antiskating	Speed adjust.	Speeds	Cartridge Base	Dust cover	Cueing	Comments
Pioneer (U.S. Pioneer)	PL-117D	175	4-pole synchronous/belt	*		2	*	*	*	
	PL-530	250	DC servo/direct	*	*	±2%	2	*	*	Separate tone arm motor
	PL-570	400	Servo/direct	*	*	±6%	2	*	*	
Sansui	FR-3080	200	4-pole, 16-pole synchronous/belt	*		2	*	*	*	16-pole synchronous motor for auto functions
	FR-5080S	260	DC/direct	*	*	±3.5%	2	*	*	
Scott	PS-36	170	16-pole synchronous/belt	*		2	*	*	*	
Sony	PS-2700	165	Synchronous/belt	*		2	*	*	*	
	PS-4300	270	DC servo/direct	*	*	±4%	2	*	*	
Technics (Panasonic)	SL-1300	300	DC servo/direct	*	*	10%	2	*	*	

CHANGERS

Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Motor type/ Drive system	Max. discs	Built-in strobe Antiskating	Speed adjust.	Speeds	Cartridge Base	Dust cover	Cueing	Comments
BIC	940	\$110	24-pole synchronous/belt	6	*		2	*	*	*	
	960	160	24-pole synchronous/belt	6	*		2	*	*	*	Same as 940 plus removable headshell and record support
	980	200	24-pole synchronous/belt	6	*	*	±3%	2	*	*	HF test report, 10/75
	1000	280	24-pole synchronous/belt	6	*	*	±3%	2	*	*	Same as 980 plus optional remote; 2-motor drive system; antiskate mat
BSR	100 BAX	110	Synchronous/belt	5	*		2	*	*	*	Includes ADC K6E cartridge
	200 BAX	140	Synchronous/belt	6	*		2	*	*	*	Includes ADC VLM Mk. II cartridge
	2630W	100	Synchronous/idler	6	*		6%	2	*	*	Includes ADC K6E cartridge
Dual (United Audio)	1249	280	Synchronous/belt	6	*	*	6%	2	*	*	HF test report, 2/76
	1228	200	Synchronous/idler	6	*	*	6%	2	*	*	
Garrard (Plessey)	GT-55	250	DC servo/belt	6	*	*	±3%	2	*	*	HF test report, 2/77; articulated arm
	775M	120	Synchro-lab/idler	6	*		3	*	*	*	Includes Shure M-93E cartridge
	990B	170	Synchro-lab/belt	6	*		±3%	2	*	*	HF test report, 11/76
Elac (Adcom)	PC-830	190	Asynchronous/belt	8	*	*	±3%	2	*	*	Separate motor for tone arm; automatic disc diameter sensing and speed selection
JVC	JL-F35	160	4-pole synchronous/belt	*			2	*	*	*	Optional dust cover, \$13
	JL-F45	250	12-pole DC servo/direct	*			2	*	*	*	
	Philips	GA-406	160	DC servo/belt	5	*		±3%	2	*	*
Realistic (Radio Shack)	Miracord 42	150	Synchronous/belt	6	*		2	*	*	*	
	Miracord 46	200	Synchronous/belt	6	*		3	*	*	*	
Technics (Panasonic)	SL-1350	350	DC servo/direct	6	*	*	10%	2	*	*	

CARTRIDGES

Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Stylus	Comments	Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Stylus	Comments
ADC	QLM 36 Mk. II	\$55	Elliptical		Grado	F-1+	75	Special	Super flux-bridger
	VLM Mk. II	75	Elliptical			F-2+	60	Elliptical	Super flux-bridger
	XLM Mk. II	100	Elliptical	HF test report, 10/75		F-3E+	50	Elliptical	Super-flux bridger
	Super XLM Mk. II	145	Special	HF test report, 10/75		G-1+	150	Special	Super-flux bridger
AKG (Philips)	P6E	50	Elliptical		Joseph Grado Signature Products	Signature Model I	275	Special	Super-flux bridger
	P7E	70	Elliptical			Micro-Acoustics	282-e	90	Elliptical
	P8E	100	Elliptical		20002-e	120	Elliptical	Direct-coupled electret	
	P8ES	135	Elliptical		QDC-1-e	95	Elliptical	Direct-coupled electret	
Audio-Technica	AT-12E	55	Elliptical		Ortofon	M-15E Super	80	Elliptical	HF test report, 4/73; variable magnetic shunt
	AT-12XE	65	Elliptical			MC-20	120	Special	Moving-coil, requires transformer or pre-preamp
	AT-12Sa	75	Special	Tapered cantilever	SL-20E	100	Elliptical	Moving-coil, requires transformer or pre-preamp	
	AT-13Ea	65	Elliptical	Tapered cantilever	SL-20Q	150	Special	Moving-coil, requires transformer or pre-preamp	
	AT-14Sa	85	Special	Tapered cantilever	VMS-20E	60	Elliptical	HF test report, 9/75; variable magnetic shunt	
	AT-15XE	100	Elliptical	Tapered cantilever	Pickering	XV-15/400E	55	Elliptical	
	AT-15Sa	125	Special	HF test report, 12/74; tapered cantilever		XV-15/625E	60	Elliptical	
AT-20SLa	175	Special	Tapered cantilever	XV-15/750E		65	Elliptical		
B&O	MMC-3000	50	Spherical		XV-15/1200E	80	Elliptical		
	MMC-4000	75	Elliptical		UV-15/2000Q	70	Special		
	MMC-5000	100	Special		XSV-3000	100	Special	HF test report, 2/77	
	MMC-6000	125	Special	HF test report, 12/74	XUV-4500Q	140	Special	HF test report, 12/75	
Decca (Rocelco)	London Mk. VI Gold	150	Elliptical		Satin (Osawa)	117G	155	Elliptical	Moving-coil, high-output; user-replaceable stylus
	London Mk. VI Plum	130	Spherical			18E	195	Elliptical	Moving-coil, high-output; user-replaceable stylus
Dynavector (Audioanalyst)	20A	150	Special	High-output moving coil		18X	240	Special	Moving-coil, high-output; user-replaceable stylus
	20B	190	Special	Same as 20A with beryllium cantilever		18BX	325	Special	Beryllium cantilever, moving-coil, high-output; user-replaceable stylus
Empire	2000E/II	55	Elliptical		Shure	M-24H	75	Special	HF test report, 11/76
	2000E/III	70	Elliptical			M-91ED	60	Elliptical	HF test report, 10/72
	2000Z	100	Elliptical	HF test report, 12/76		M-95ED	65	Elliptical	HF test report, 1/76
	4000D/I	85	Special			V-15 Type III	85	Elliptical	HF test report, 7/73
	4000D/II	125	Special		Sonus (Sonic Research)	Blue Label	125	Special	HF test report, 9/76
	4000D/III	150	Special	HF test report, 12/74		Red Label	104	Elliptical	
Goldring (Hervic)	G-820E	55	Elliptical		Green Label	90	Spherical		
	G-800SE	58	Elliptical		Silver Label E	60	Elliptical		
	G-820SE	70	Elliptical		Silver Label P	70	Special		
	G-900SE	120	Elliptical		Supex (Sumiko)	SD/900E	150	Elliptical	Moving-coil, transformer or pre-preamp recommended
F9/L	120		"Luminal trace" stylus construction	Technics (Panasonic)		EPC-450	65	Special	Semiconductor strain-gauge type, needs DC power supply; CD-4
Grace (Sumiko)	SD-901/E Super	155	Elliptical		High-output moving coil (no transformer or pre-preamp required)	C-II			

TONE ARMS

Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Anti-skating	Cueing	Comments	Brand (Distributor)	Model	Price	Anti-skating	Cueing	Comments
Audio-Technica	AT-1005	\$ 80	*	*		Keith Monks Audiophile Systems)	M-98A Mk. III	150	*	*	Mercury contacts in signal lines at pivot
	AT-1009	160	*	*			Ortofon	AS-212 Mk. II	120	*	*
Decca (Rocelco)	New International	140	*	*	Uses viscous-damped unipivot; optional remote cueing device, \$39.95	SAEC (Aural Technology)		WE-308NEW	200	*	*
Dynavector (Audioanalyst)	DV-505	500	*	*		SME (Shure)	3009 Series II	160	*	*	
Goldring (Hervic)	SAU-2	50	*	*		Stax (American Audioport)	UA-7M	185	*	*	
Grace (Sumiko)	G-704	225	*	*							
	G-707	130	*	*							
J. A. Michell (Dick Wagner)	Fluid Arm	120	*	*	Unipivot						
Micro (Teac)	MA-505	150	*	*							

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100 Years of Recording

A series of four original acrylic paintings by Jim Jonson

Inspired by the centennial of the phonograph and planned and commissioned by HIGH FIDELITY's editors, the series depicts the development of recording through its leading figures in music and the recording business, its dominant means of sound reproduction, and its principal innovations in audio technology. The first of the four, "The Cylinder Era," appeared in February; the remaining two will be published later this year.

Jim Jonson, a Connecticut resident, has produced paintings for *Saturday Evening Post*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Fortune*, *Reader's Digest*, *Boys' Life*, and other journals and has fulfilled commissions for corporations ranging from Capitol Records to American Airlines and the Ford Motor Company. His work has been exhibited in the Denver Art Museum, Art Museum of Sport, and the Los Angeles County Art Museum, among others, and his one-man shows have been seen in many major galleries. A portfolio of Mr. Jonson's drawings and paintings was recently published by Prentice-Hall.

The Discwasher Group is proud to present the second of this distinguished artist's portrayals of "100 Years of Recordings."

Part II: The Acoustic Era

100 Years of Recording

The Acoustic Era March 18, 1902, is a seminal date for the disc phonograph — or gramophone as Emile Berliner called it and as it still is called in most of the world. On that day the up-and-coming tenor Enrico Caruso, who with the gramophone dominates Jim Jonson's painting of the era (roughly the first quarter of this century), made his first recordings in Milan. A year later he was a major international opera star; a decade later virtually every major musical star had made discs and the cylinder record was in rapid decline. Caruso, costumed here as Meyerbeer's Vasco da Gama, was to record exclusively for Victor Red Seal (its "Nipper" logo appears behind him) from 1903 to his death in 1921.

While the acoustic recording technique favored the human voice — and Caruso in a sense "made" the phonograph because of his exceptionally phonogenic voice — not all the Red Seal stars were singers. Ignace Jan Paderewski (continuing clockwise from Caruso's hat) was overshadowed in sheer technique by a number of other recording pianists, but his reputation as Polish patriot, statesman, and man of letters made him, perhaps, the most famous. Similarly, Fritz Kreisler overshadows other violinists partly because of his long career and his many popular compositions — some of which created something of a scandal when it was learned that they were not by the "old masters" in whose style Kreisler had written them.

Conductor Landon Ronald, later knighted for his services to music, was an important early acquisition of the Gramophone Company, primarily because his wide acquaintance in musical circles was critical in persuading many stars to record. The orchestra, however, posed severe problems to the recording horn, which responded adequately only to nearby sounds. The stringed instruments in particular could not be picked up realistically in large groups. Some companies substituted brasses; others adopted the Stroh violin, whose small, solid sounding board replaced the body of the instrument while metal horns focused and directed the sound.

Beside the Stroh violin is a particularly elegant variant of the Queen Anne Victrola, which — with

its totally enclosed reproducing horn — made the phonograph unequivocally at home in the best-appointed parlors. The Queen Anne models and the Red Seal discs together led in establishing the social acceptability of recorded music.

While most of the prestige-label artists were European, a few were native products. Among the most eminent was alto Louise Homer (bottom right, as Amneris). In popular music, however, indigenous artists like Ted Lewis (in top hat) were the rule and imported entertainers like Sir Harry Lauder (in kilt) the exception. A few, like John McCormack (next to Lauder), cut across all national and musical boundaries.

McCormack — young, unknown, and poor in 1904 — was delighted to step before the recording horn. Established artists often were not. The "legendary" soprano Adelina Patti (continuing to the left of McCormack), already in her sixties and retired, was persuaded to entertain the equipment and its operators in her Welsh castle in 1905. Lilli Lehmann was almost as old (she had sung in the first Bayreuth season in 1876) and as legendary, and even more versatile; her Odeon discs of the period range from the bel canto to the heroic.

Until adequate symphonic recordings could be managed, the brass band offered the most stirring sounds to be had on Berliner's discs, as it had on Edison's cylinders. But though John Philip Sousa's band recorded extensively for both, he openly attacked both (see HF, November 1973) as spoilers of musical amateurism and appreciation; the juxtaposition of Sousa's face with Berliner's gramophone may be taken equally as confrontation and partnership.

The small full-length figure (he was, in fact, tiny) is Fred Gaisberg, who pioneered as producer, recordist, and a&r man. He first recorded Caruso, Patti, Chaliapin, and many others. Looming beside him are the faces of Emile Berliner himself and Eldridge Johnson, originally Berliner's supplier (from the Camden, N.J., plant in the background) of spring-wind motors but ultimately the man who developed the Victor empire from Berliner's gramophone.

But, as Johnson understood, it was the stars — particularly the opera stars — who made the Victrola the Kodak of American phonography. Soprano Geraldine Farrar (shown at upper left) was the first American operatic superstar; in the Twenties her fans were known as Gerryflappers. Tenor Fernando de Lucia (some of whose European recordings were pressed here by Victor) not only was famous as a bel canto singer, but was director of the Phonotype Company, for whom he recorded both *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* and *Rigoletto* complete. Feodor Chaliapin (shown as Don Basilio in *Barbiere*) was probably the most celebrated bass of the era.

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The diva, now eighty, talks about her career and her recordings.

Rosa Ponselle Reminisces

by James A. Drake



Beilmann Archive

Above: Rosa Ponselle expires in Enrico Caruso's arms as Léon Rothier pleads for divine mercy, in the final scene from a Met production of Verdi's *Forza del destino* early in the diva's career. Left: Ponselle at home in her villa outside Baltimore.

FORTY YEARS after Rosa Ponselle last appeared on-stage, the legend of her career—beginning with her emergence from the vaudeville circuit onto the stage of the Metropolitan Opera in November 1918—remains firmly ingrained in the minds of most opera enthusiasts. On a recent visit to her villa outside Baltimore, I invited the great diva, now eighty years of age, to sort out the “facts” of her legendary career.

“It’s true that I started out as a silent-movie pianist, but like everything else in my career I didn’t seek it out myself. My sister Carmela, who had all the drive and ambition I lacked, took me to the manager of the Bristol movie house in Meriden [Connecticut] because she was convinced that I was old enough to start earning my keep. Before long the manager of the rival theater in town made me a better offer, and I took it. This same fellow had a second movie house near Wallingford, not far from Meriden, and he paid me extra to play there on weekends. From there I got a very good position as a soloist in a fashionable New Haven restaurant, and so that part is also true.

“As for my vaudeville career, that too was some-

thing that I merely happened to fall into. By 1915 my sister was a huge success in vaudeville, and at the time ‘sister acts’ were being booked by all the big managers. Gene Hughes, Carmela’s manager at the time, asked her out of curiosity whether she knew of someone who could sing and who would be willing to pose as her sister. She told him that she had a real-life sister who could sing well, and so he told her to bring me to New York for an audition.

“The audition itself took place in Carmela’s apartment, and I was my own accompanist. Before Hughes heard me sing he took one look at my waistline, which was far too big in those days, and then gestured to Carmela that I was too plump for the stage. Then he heard me, and all he said was, ‘I don’t give a good damn how fat she is, when can she open with you?’

“We made our vaudeville debut in the Bronx, and made our way to Brighton Beach and finally to the Riverside Theater; eventually, we played the Palace, which was the high point of any vaudeville career in those days. In terms of my getting to the Metropolitan, though, it was the Riverside Theater that proved important, because it was there that Romano Romani, who later became my coach,

James A. Drake is working on a biography of Rosa Ponselle.

heard Carmela and me and was very impressed with both of us.

"It was really Romani, rather than Caruso, who discovered us; Caruso entered the picture after Romani and our manager, William Thorner, had arranged for an initial audition before the Met's general manager, Giulio Gatti-Casazza. I first met Caruso during that audition. He had come to hear these singing sisters that Romani and Thorner had been filling his ears about. When he entered the room where the audition was held, he walked diagonally across the room and spoke to me as if I were one of his own. We took to each other from the moment we met, and as he was kidding me I could see him sizing me up, thinking to himself, 'Now here's a brash, outspoken little urchin whom I might want to sing with, if she's as good as she's cracked up to be.' I could just sense that this was what was going through his mind.

"After he heard me he told me confidently that I had everything I needed in the throat and in the heart, and that what remained was for me to get what I needed musically in my head. Then he told me flatly, 'You'll sing with me.' That next fall I made my debut opposite him in *Forza del destino*, and it seemed just that—the force of destiny.

"As for my debut, it is true that I had never sung on an operatic stage before I was engaged by the Metropolitan. But I want to point out that I was already a vaudeville headliner by the time I auditioned for the Met, and so I was accustomed to singing to very large audiences. Then too, as is sometimes forgotten, Carmela's and my act was an operatic act. We sang arias from *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, from such light classics as Victor Herbert's *Mademoiselle Modiste*—for our finale we even sang a duet version of the Prison Scene from *Faust*. You must remember that vaudeville and grand opera were no strangers to each other then. A great many established singers made vaudeville appearances in those days. I heard Alessandro Bonci during a vaudeville run he did.

"Still, even though I was used to singing fairly demanding music as a vaudevillian, I wasn't totally ready for the pressures of the Met. I knew very little about opera performing—I had only been in the opera house twice, once to see Caruso and Farrar in *Madama Butterfly* and then to see Caruso sing opposite Claudia Muzio in *The Love of Three Kings*.

"Even though it makes for a good story, I suppose, I didn't faint at any rehearsals. The truth is that I was extremely confident, right through the general rehearsal on the Wednesday of the week I made my debut. In fact, everyone at the Met, including Mr. Gatti, was impressed by how well I was handling the pressures they knew I was facing."

Ponselle later found out that Gatti had carried on a continuous argument with Caruso over the wisdom of letting her debut in a new production

without trying her elsewhere. "If she succeeds," Gatti confessed to Caruso, "American singers will have the doors opened to them. If she fails, I will be on the first boat back to Italy and New York will never see my face again." And she did succeed, though not without scars. Between the general rehearsal and the day of her debut, the Italian tenor Giulio Crimi made his Met debut and received negative reviews from the New York critics.

"Unfortunately for me, my secretary happened to give me copies of the papers, and when I read what the critics did to an already well-established singer, I panicked. I was in such bad shape by the time I got to the opera house that I couldn't even manage my own makeup—I'd been given all kinds of sedatives and hardly knew where I was.

"To make matters worse, Thorner insisted that I vocalize in my dressing room just to make sure the voice was all right. That's when I really panicked—my voice sounded horrid, and I was sure I'd lost it. Later on I realized that I'd been vocalizing in a room that had massive drapes, heavy carpeting, and every other kind of sound-absorbing thing you could imagine.

"In any case, I managed to live through the first act in spite of myself, and then, wonder of wonders, I realized that I'd made it through the second act. From then on I was fairly stable, even though the soprano role in *Forza* lies very high. By the last act I was totally calm, but afterward I spent several days in the hospital recuperating from the emotional drainage I experienced."

Though she lived through her debut, it colored every other opening night in her career. "I was always nervous, no matter how many times I sang a role and how thoroughly I knew it. I took some comfort in knowing that Caruso, even though he was world famous, became nervous before every performance. Although I hardly knew him as a person, I could empathize with his nervousness."

"Hardly knew him as a person"? What about all the legends in the Caruso biographies? "That story about my being admitted to his hotel suite when he was thought to be dying is totally untrue. For some reason, and I can't explain why, the story first appeared in Dorothy Caruso's biography of her husband. She flattered me by giving me such an important place among Caruso's close friends.

"In fact, the only time I can ever remember talking with him in any personal way was during a train trip to Atlanta in the spring of 1919. Perhaps out of nervousness, he would sometimes walk through the cars' hallways on the train, and one time he saw that my door was open and asked if I minded if he came in. We must have passed an hour or so talking about whatever came to our minds, and in the course of it he told me about the many disappointments he had had in his life. Beyond that one conversation, I never spoke with him in any personal kind of way, nor did I ever get to know him well."



Ponselle provided accompaniment for an impromptu concert by a recent guest in her home, the Italian tenor Luciano Pavarotti. The photo on the piano is of Mamie Eisenhower.

But what of Caruso the professional colleague? And of the other legendary singers of her day? "Among tenors, there are two classes. In the first, there is but one: Caruso. He had the most beautiful, the most awesome tenor voice in my recollection.

"All the tenors who succeeded him are in the second category, and I wouldn't presume to try to rank them. Giovanni Martinelli, with whom I sang most, inherited most of Caruso's dramatic repertoire, and, though he was a great actor in his own right, his singing was always a well-studied effect, whereas Caruso's was totally natural. Beniamino Gigli's voice was as beautiful as any I've heard, and, while he was not in Caruso's league as an actor, there were certain roles in which he was almost peerless. Giacomo Lauri-Volpi, with whom I also sang frequently, had a fine voice and was a good actor, although most of his fame stemmed from his high notes; one didn't always remember the middle and bottom parts of his voice."

The mention of Lauri-Volpi, who sang Pollione to her *Norma* when the Met revived the opera for her in 1927, reminded Ponselle of one of her deepest fears. "People often ask me why I sang so little in Italy and instead concentrated most of my performing in this country. The answer is simple: I was terrified of Italy.

"All through my early career I'd keep hearing stories about the kind of treatment a singer might get from an Italian audience, especially in Florence. I finally consented to sing *La Vestale* there in a moment of weakness, and all the way over I cursed myself for ever agreeing to it."

Those worries proved needless: The audience demanded, and got, an encore of the second-act prayer. And her fear of Italian audiences diminished, until she saw the Florentines vent their wrath on Lauri-Volpi in *I Puritani*, when he cracked the high D in "A te, o cara." "Not in my wildest dreams would I have imagined that an au-

dience could tear a singer apart like that." (Lauri-Volpi displayed his own brand of vitriol after the performance, smashing props, furniture, and anything else he found backstage.)

Ponselle is gratified by her recognition among the operatic greats but speaks warmly of many other sopranos she has heard. "I saw Emmy Destinn's *Aida*, and I can tell you that she was one of the greatest sopranos I ever heard. The same holds for Rosa Raisa, whom I saw in *The Jewels of the Madonna* and in *Norma*. Her *Norma*, while different from my own, was uniquely her own role, and every performance she gave was almost breathtaking.

"So, while it's fashionable to make comparative lists of the so-called 'greats,' I'm not convinced that it's a very productive thing to do. It's far better to focus upon what makes each of us unique. Outstanding voices, plus an incredible ability in pianissimo singing, made Elisabeth Rethberg and Zinka Milanov unique. Montserrat Caballé and Leontyne Price have unique voices that would stand out in any age—and the same with Joan Sutherland, whose repertoire is genuinely impressive. Maria Callas, whom I consider a great artist, had a dramatic uniqueness and was always a definitive actress in the many roles she undertook.

"The same with other vocal ranges, too. In my day there were singers whose interpretations of certain roles put them in a class by themselves—Antonio Scotti's *Scarpia*, Giuseppe de Luca's *Rigoletto*, Titta Ruffo's *Don Carlo* in *Ernani*, or Ezio Pinza's *Don Giovanni*, for instance. Just as they were definitive singers, so today we have brilliant vocalists like Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, Sherrill Milnes, and James Morris, all of whom breathe life into the roles they sing." Morris, incidentally, is among the more recent of Met singers who got his professional start under Ponselle at the Baltimore Civic Opera Company, her longtime pet project.

In nineteen Met seasons, Ponselle sang a strikingly varied repertoire: *Aida*, the *Trovatore* and *Forza Leonoras*, *Violetta*, *Elvira* (*Ernani*), *Luisa Miller*, *Norma*, *Giulia* (*La Vestale*), *Maddalena*, *Gioconda*, *Donna Anna*, *Santuzza*, *Carmen*, *Selika* (*L'Africaine*), *Rachel* (*La Juive*), *Rezia* (*Oberon*). Was there a favorite?

"It's like asking a mother which child is her favorite. Each role, like each child, is different and has its own set of characteristics. I will say that some roles that were rather easy for other sopranos were more difficult for me. The reverse was true too. *Carmen* and *Santuzza* were problematic for some singers, but both roles lay perfectly for my voice and I loved singing them. Still other roles will be difficult, no matter who you are or what era you happen to be singing in. *Giulia* and, of course, *Norma* make incredible vocal and dramatic demands."

One question about Ponselle's Met career remains open: her abrupt retirement in 1937. Even today, she will only say, "People who know me will tell you that I am a victim of the emotions, and when I left it was for emotional rather than vocal reasons."

There are no apparent regrets, and indeed her few professional regrets center around her commercial recordings. "I should have been born a generation later," she says wistfully. "I was born too early for the long-playing record."

Whatever their technical limitations, her records are in a class of their own. Yet, curiously, in an era dominated by the famous Victor Red Seal disc, she recorded first for Columbia. "I signed a Columbia contract in 1918. Thorner, my manager, argued that I would be better off there, since the competition would be far less than at Victor.

"During my brief stay at Columbia, I recorded several duets, most of them with Carmela, although I did make operatic recordings with the baritone Riccardo Stracciari and with Charles Hackett, the American tenor. Then, too, I recorded several arias, including 'Pace, pace, mio Dio' from *Forza*, 'Voi lo sapete' from *Cavalleria rusticana*, and 'Casta diva' from *Norma*."

When Columbia commemorated her seventy-fifth birthday in 1972 with an all-Verdi LP (Odyssey Y 31150), Ponselle carefully endorsed the effort by saying on the opening band of the record that her Columbia discs, good as they may have been in their day, were not reliable indicators of her artistry. She gracefully took the blame for the obviously inadequate original pressings, claiming that her artistry was simply not "mature" enough when she had made them. The blame was wrongly placed, and she knew it.

"I suppose I should have said that the mechanical recorders used in those days simply failed to capture the full timbre of my voice. Fortunately, microphones soon replaced the old recording megaphones then in use, and far more of the voice could be recorded fully. But even then we had to worry about the clock—that was one ever-present part of every studio I recorded in, and you were told repeatedly that everything had to be sung within a four-minute period. That meant compressing everything, usually by changing tempos to make the song or aria fit the length of the 78-rpm record."

Even so, her post-1925 recordings for Victor were aesthetically among the best the company ever issued. On her 1928 "Ernani, involami" (on Victrola VIC 1507), for example, she demonstrated the effortless trill that invariably brought audiences to their feet in the Verdi opera. "The record was successful because I loved the aria and I was able to carry my feelings about it into the recording studio. In the opera house I would take that trill on F and I'd prolong it, to the point that

the conductor would actually put down his baton until he heard me begin the upbeat."

Both in the opera house and in the recording studio, Ponselle chose her own tempos wherever possible, and no conductor objected. Tullio Serafin pronounced her one of the greatest musicians he had ever encountered; Toscanini several times described her musicianship to the late Bruno Zinato as being "per Dio," a gift of God.

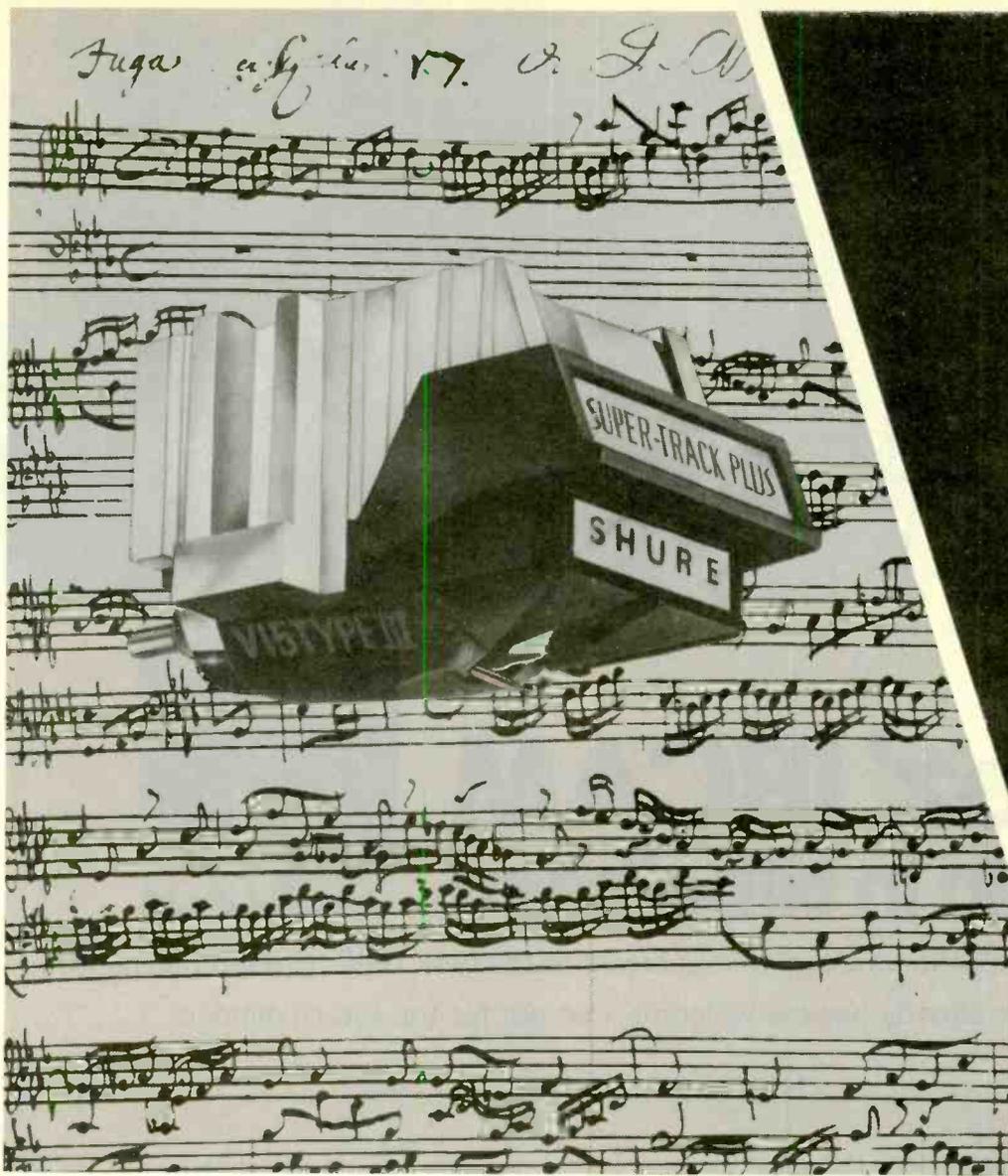
Unfortunately she never sang with Toscanini. "Each season he would send Zinato or another emissary to approach me about singing under him, and I'd admit that I was too terrified to work under him. He knew how uneasy I was, and, while he paid me compliments that I wouldn't trade for anything, he never pressed me by asking me directly."

Between 1926 and 1930 Ponselle graced Victor with her most famous ensemble recordings, beginning with a full *Aida* Tomb Scene with Martinelli (also on VIC 1507), a marvelous "La Vergine degli angeli" from *Forza* with Pinza, and "Mira, o Norma" (again, on VIC 1507) with Marion Telva. "The Tomb Scene records with Martinelli were probably our most famous discs, though neither of us was totally satisfied with them. We first recorded together in *Aida* in the winter of 1924, and on that occasion we did the Tomb Scene and parts of the Nile Scene. They were recorded by the old acoustical process, and we wouldn't approve them for public release. Two years later Victor brought us together again to record an electrical version of the Tomb Scene, and, though it was an improvement over the earlier one, we still didn't particularly like it.

"Finally, Victor set up a conference call so that Martinelli and I might reconsider. My main concern was that our voices didn't sound balanced enough, and Martinelli agreed. During the phone conversation, Giovanni said to me, 'Look, Rosa, it's great singing, and the musical public will accept the balance problem.' Needless to say, he was right."

And what of her other Victor issues? "I like the 'Pace, pace' and 'Ernani, involami,' as well as the two discs I recorded from *La Vestale* in 1926. I'm not at all happy with the 'Casta diva,' since I could sing only the first verse, which kept me from showing the dramatic contrast in the second verse. Nor am I happy with the 'Vergine degli angeli' with Pinza, because an engineer boosted the volume of my voice, making it a more forte performance than I would ever have given in an opera house.

"But I do like the 'Mira, o Norma.' Telva and I spent a whole summer at Lake Placid before we did *Norma* on-stage, and we worked out a way of squeezing each other's hand to make sure that our voices were always synchronized, measure after measure. Happily, all that was captured in the recording we made of it." ●



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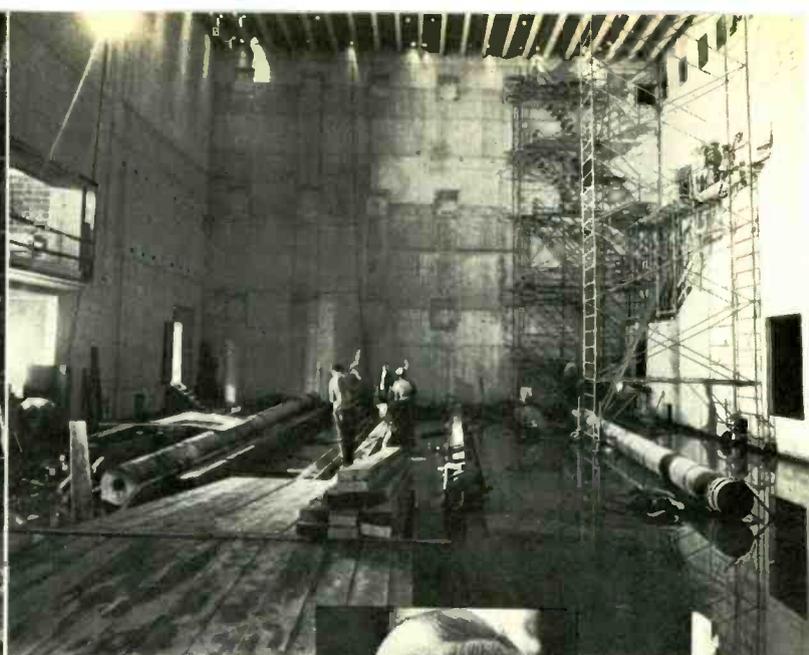
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IRCAM under construction above and below ground



Patrick Croix

Boulez' IRCAM Amnesia in Nibelheim

Though unfinished, the underground quarters of the new musical-scientific institute in Paris already has the welcome mat out for the future-minded.

by Roy McMullen

IF YOU'RE BORED by antimodern Calamity Janes, weary of modish jeremiads against science and technology, and in general fed up with pessimism, you should visit Paris this summer. Specifically, you should head for the Right Bank and Pierre Boulez' new Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique—IRCAM in the lingua franca of initials. Here you will find a most stimulating symbol of faith in our cultural future.

You will also find evidence that Boulez has ended his Thirty Years' War with the French musical Establishment. He is obviously determined to develop IRCAM into one of the principal achievements of his career. When his contract with the New York Philharmonic runs out with the current season, he will be free of major conducting engagements except for the one with Bayreuth and will be a Paris resident. In fact, although he intends to keep his house in Baden-Baden, he has already taken an apartment on the thirtieth floor of one of the controversial skyscrapers near the Eiffel Tower, and he has begun to refer to himself,

rather emphatically, as an inhabitant of the Fifteenth Arrondissement.

Naturally, IRCAM has its detractors. Since it is attempting an alliance of art with science and technology, it has been criticized as a musical revival of the Bauhaus. Since it will be installed (by June, if the present building tempo is maintained) in a labyrinth below street level, it has provoked derisive allusions to Nibelheim, to Orpheus in Hades, and to an underground ivory tower. More seriously, it has been called a misuse of public money by an elitist minority. Boulez, however, is accepting all the disapproval with the serenity of a man who has at last obtained the tool he has always wanted, and who knows exactly what he is going to do with it.

"The creator," he explains, "working with just his intuition, is powerless to provide a complete translation of musical invention. He must collaborate with the scientific research worker in order to envisage the distant future, to imagine less personal, broader solutions. As for the scientist, we are of course not asking him to compose, but to conceive with precision what the composer, or instrumentalist, expects of him, to understand the

Roy McMullen, an American resident in Paris for years, is the author of Mona Lisa: The Picture and the Myth.

direction contemporary music has taken, and to orient his imagination along these lines. In this way we hope to forge a kind of common language that scarcely exists at present, while training a staff that will be basically oriented towards musical creation."

Extending, ramifying, and marvelously complicating the interdisciplinary aspects is the fact that IRCAM is one of the four components of the huge Centre National d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou, which was inaugurated in January. (It is usually referred to as the Centre Beaubourg, because of the name of the square on which it stands.) The other parts of the Beaubourg complex are a public library, the National Museum of Modern Art, and a center for industrial design, architecture, town planning, and visual communications.

While waiting for the completion of its underground quarters, the institute is open for business in an old building next door. Here the computers are already humming and the major departments organized and functioning. Boulez, as director, keeps an eye of everything. But he is being helped by a remarkable international staff, which will have fifty-four permanent members when the budget limit is reached, of composers, performers, researchers, technicians, and far-out thinkers. Although many of these people have other commitments to fulfill, from now on they will all be spending a lot of their time in Paris.

The Instruments and Voice Department is headed by Vinko Globokar, whose frequently facile clowning with his trombone has perhaps obscured his merits as an amusing, knowing composer, a fantast capable of drawing on nearly anything from the folk music of his native Yugoslavia to some of John Cage's drolleries. The mission of the department is to discover, invent, and disseminate innovations in traditional Western instrumental and vocal techniques; study Asian and other non-Western techniques without condescension and without "colonizing" them; develop new instruments or devices that radically transform old instruments; and investigate the psychology, the physiology, and the role of the performing musician in contemporary society. Globokar hopes to encourage an outburst of "physical and psychic energy" and, finally, a sort of sonic humanism. He believes that conventional musical sounds have become "grayer and grayer" and therefore "no longer capable of communicating a message."

The Electroacoustic Department is being run by Luciano Berio, who is thus updating an early phase of his career, when he was a founder, with Bruno Maderna, of the Studio di Fonologia Musicale in Milan. He is charged "with studying the means of processing electronic sound production in real time and introducing digital techniques for

generating and processing signals (particularly intermodulation and voltage control techniques)." That may not suggest much in the way of orphic pleasure. But Berio has promised, in less bristling language, that his department "will be as flexible and as open as possible in order that each composer or research worker can invent, create his ideal studio." And he adds that IRCAM, although interested in analysis, is not "a hospital for sick music."

A French information expert and composer, Jean-Claude Risset, is in charge of the Computer Department. His assignment is to do research on sound and the synthesis of sonic material with computers; study the man-machine relationship in the field of music; improve methods for computerized composition; and probe the many psychoacoustic phenomena that affect our enjoyment of music. His equipment also takes care of IRCAM's general need for scientific calculations, data processing, circuit simulations, trial runs, and automatic controls.

The American composer Gerald Bennett, formerly director of the conservatory of Basel, heads what is called the Diagonal Department. This, as its odd label implies, slants across the organization chart, coordinates the various branches of research, and instigates the transplanting of techniques from one department to another. In short, it needles Globokar, Berio, and Risset into remaining aware of each other. It also does some investigating on its own, notably into the links between music theory and other areas of inquiry.

Two years from now, when the IRCAM research has borne usable results, the Pedagogic Department will start to function. It will study ways to train people for a new music and will provide advanced students with the technical facilities they need for becoming familiar with new instrumental techniques and new methods of composition. Boulez hopes that what emerges will have a beneficial effect outside the avant-garde and will eventually help to make all sorts of music—ancient and modern, Western and non-Western—more accessible. The head of the department will be the French composer/conductor Michel Decoust, who has a brilliant record as the innovating director of a conservatory at Pantin, on the outskirts of Paris.

IRCAM staff members know perfectly well, partly because of unfriendly reminders, that what they are attempting is by no means an earthshaking novelty. After all, people have been inventing electromechanical and electronic musical instruments since the beginning of the twentieth century. Synthesizers will soon be almost as common as pianos. Popular musicians who may never have heard of sine and sawtooth waves are turning out, with the help of record-company engineers, some fascinating new sounds. Similar operations have long been under way in the well-equipped music



IRCAM's cast: at left, Max Mathews, Jean-Claude Risset, Gerald Bennett, and Boulez; below, top to bottom, Luciano Berio, Vinko Globokar, and Michel Decoust

departments of American universities, in the studios supported by European radio networks, in the research divisions of computer manufacturers, in the laboratories of individual scientists, and so on.

Moreover, in this context Paris was not exactly a backwater when Boulez decided to come home. Here, in 1948, Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry dreamed up the whole concept of tape music. Schaeffer's Groupe de Recherches Musicales is still active, financed by Radio France and under the direction of the imaginative François Bayle. Pierre Barbaud has been quietly working at computerized composition for some twenty years. So, of course, has Iannis Xenakis, who since the early 1960s has been doing a good deal of fundamental musical research with a team of mathematicians and scientists.

In view of all this, isn't IRCAM largely redundant? Isn't it, like the rest of the Centre Beaubourg in many minds, too big and too concentrated? Perhaps a manifestation of what has been called, by conservative French critics, *l'impérialisme boulezien*? Wouldn't the French government have been wiser, and at any rate fairer, if it had distributed its largesse?

Boulez has answered such questions over the past year in Paris press conferences and interviews. Other research centers, he argues, are in general too small and too dependent; they are cells grafted onto large organisms with different priorities. For example, the electronic studios attached to radio networks are subject, so far as diffusion is concerned, to program policies that mostly ignore electronic music; and the studios in American universities are subject to the curricular imperatives of standard music departments. Also, he says, these smaller centers tend to isolate disciplines, to be staffed either by musicians or by scientists and technicians. IRCAM, by contrast, is large enough and independent enough to have its own priorities



Photos IRCAM

and to assemble musicians, scientists, and technicians under one roof.

Boulez drily denies that he has Napoleonic ambitions. IRCAM, he points out, is getting only 10% of the Centre Beaubourg's budget this year, and there is no plot to annex or destroy other French musical-research efforts. He insists, however, on the need to keep his institute reasonably big. "Sprinkling government subsidies," he says, "is a technique loved by politicians, for it supposedly keeps everyone happy. But it produces very small results. I'm persuaded that one must concentrate the means available."

He insists, too, on the international character of IRCAM. Risset has been able to get his computers going in a useful, musical way largely because of programming material from Stanford University, sent over without payment. Other generous help has come from Michigan State and Columbia. Nicholas Snowman, cofounder of the London Sinfonietta, has been working with Boulez on concert programs and on the knotty general problem of coordinating the manifold activities of IRCAM. Particularly valuable on-the-spot assistance in scientific and technological matters has arrived from Max Mathews, research director in acoustics and psychology at Bell Telephone Laboratories, and from acoustics expert Manfred Schroeder, director of the Physikalisches Institut of Göttingen and also a Bell Labs man.

More and more foreign musicians and scientists will undoubtedly discover the peculiar, exhilarative charm of IRCAM. Boulez is planning a system of short-term contracts for research that should attract thesis writers and professors on sabbatical leave.

Another major attraction is bound to be the building itself. Designed by the Italian Renzo Piano and the Englishman Richard Rogers, who were the architects for the Centre Beaubourg as a whole, it will be the fanciest, but most functional, structure of its kind. In fact, it is already close enough to existing to permit the present tense. It occupies an area below a piazza between the main Beaubourg building and the Gothic church of Saint-Merri. Its flat dimensions are about those of a football field, and its deepest point is more than fifty feet. The whole structure floats in thick insulating materials that augment the sonic isolation provided by being underground. There are studios, laboratories, offices, and study rooms. A glassed-over zone is supposed to prevent claustrophobia.

The most interesting part is an auditorium called the Espace de Projection that has room for about four hundred people. This, in Boulez' words, is a "unique tool, spectacular in every sense of the term." It's a combination of concert hall, experimental theater, recording studio, and scientific laboratory, as flexible as an accordion

and as gadgety as the Concorde. The ceiling goes up and down in three separate sections, metal room dividers roll and unroll, and nearly two hundred pivoting, prismatic elements reflect or absorb sounds as desired. These devices are controlled by an electronic console that eventually will be coupled to a computer, so that the resulting spatial and acoustical configurations can be programmed. Mobile ladders and bridges for performers, batteries of colored lights, and a wide variety of speakers, tape machines, and whatnots add to the protean potential.

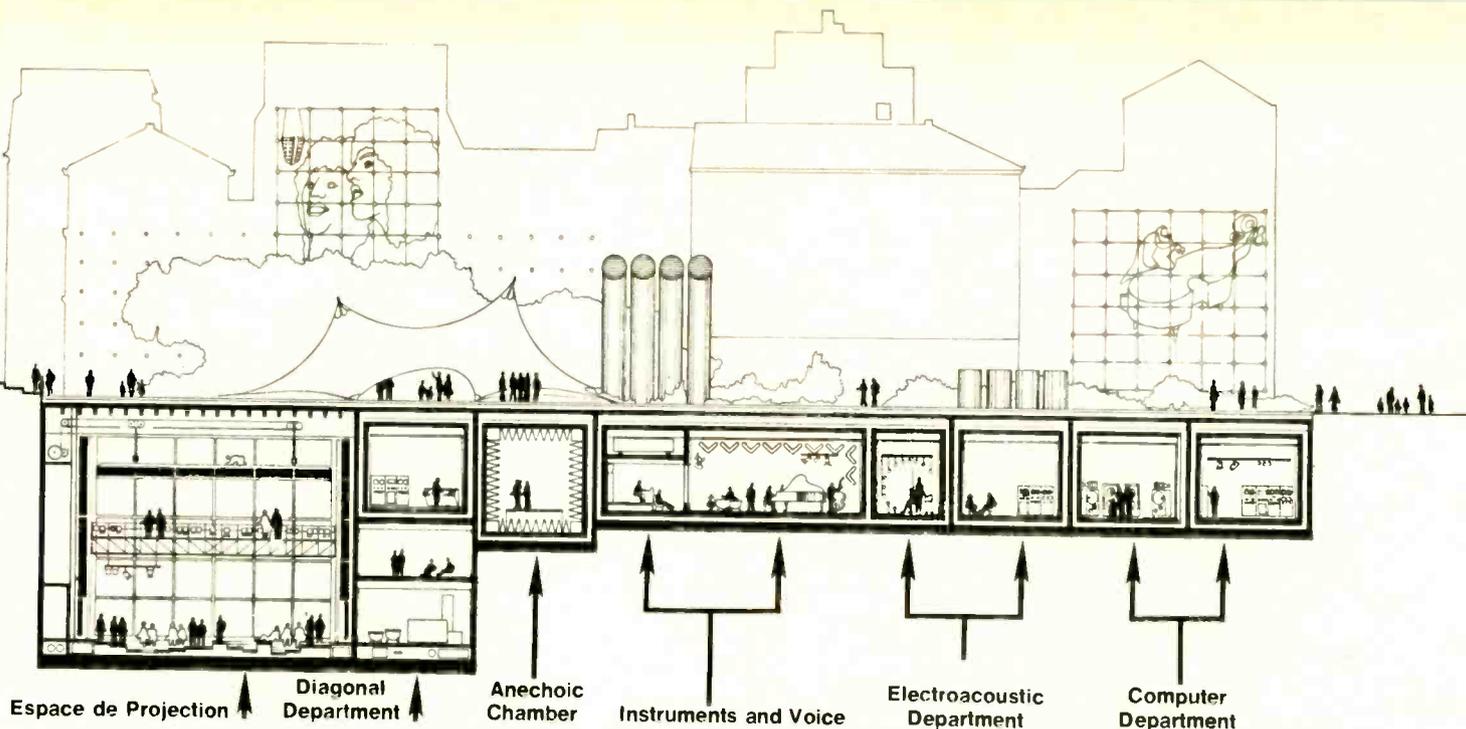
The activities of IRCAM will not be limited, however, to what goes on in its headquarters. A mobile unit, carrying experimental equipment, will have the mission of spreading the good avant-garde word, and new music, in the French provinces and soon in other European countries. Its work will be supplemented by a documentation service that will send out specialized publications, tapes, and audio-visual material to anyone who is interested. (Everything will not be free. For details write to IRCAM, Documentation Service, 31 Rue Saint-Merri, F-75004 Paris. Some good papers should emerge from an IRCAM-sponsored symposium on musical psychoacoustics scheduled for July 11-13.)

The institute is also functioning, in a surprisingly ambitious way, as an impresario of modern music. With the opening of the Centre Beaubourg in January, it launched a gigantic year-long festival, *Passage of the Twentieth Century*. In a preface to the program, Boulez explains the purpose of the festival:

Before devoting itself completely and exclusively to research, IRCAM wants to focus, in public, on what exists as an immediate or distant reality and also on what ought to exist in the perspective of the future. . . . Let us together consider the passage of this century, with the certitudes it has abundantly produced, and the uncertainties it has also produced in profusion. . . . What we have as our constant aim is the transition from works that have become models to experiments that are courageous and adventurous.

To be performed throughout the year are works of ninety-one composers, ranging in time from Debussy, Mahler, and Schoenberg to the present, and in style from impressionism and expressionism to computerism. Some of the evenings are "ateliers" in which a composer rehearses and explains one of his compositions.

The concerts are being given in a half-dozen Paris halls by fifty-six soloists, eight French orchestras or chamber groups, and eleven foreign formations. Among the soloists are Cathy Berberian, Yvonne Minton, Aurèle Nicolet, Heinz Holliger, Daniel Barenboim, Maurizio Pollini, Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman, and Mstislav Rostropovich. The foreign ensembles include the



A cutaway view of IRCAM. Note the hoists for the Espace de Projection ceiling, adjustable in three independent sections. The Instruments and Voice rooms include recording studios, depicted here during a session. Above the recording console area are vent pipes. The artist has included ideas for decorating the barren walls that will enclose the IRCAM plaza.

BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Alban Berg Quartet of Vienna, the Composers Quartet of New York, and the Schola Cantorum of Stuttgart.

Of particular interest are the concerts presented by the Ensemble InterContemporain, the new twenty-nine-man orchestra created by the French ministry of culture for the performance of contemporary music. Although Michael Tabachnik is its regular conductor, Boulez is its director. And although it has no official role in IRCAM, Boulez clearly regards it as another essential tool for his Parisian operations.

A striking aspect of these operations is their consistency with what was going on in Paris about twenty years ago, when the animator of IRCAM was heroically animating his first organization for new music, the *Domaine Musical*. Except for size, the IRCAM festival is a replica of the series of concerts presented by the *Domaine*, which also mixed contemporary experiments with twentieth-century works regarded as "models," as points of historical reference. The Ensemble InterContemporain resembles the old ensemble and has the same aim of helping young composers to be heard.

Plainly, Boulez has come home to pick up, with more massive means, where he left off. At fifty-two he is a bit mellower, and much more polite, than he used to be; he is no longer what Jean-Louis Barraud once (affectionately) called him: "a cat with all its claws out." Even so, he has not lost his old convictions. One could have expected a weakening of modernist combativeness in a middle-aged man who had spent years as a highly successful conductor of mostly traditional music in London, New York, and Bayreuth. But nothing of the sort has happened.

On the contrary, the combativeness has become stronger, in the sense of taking in more territory. The Boulez of the old days in Paris was noticeably unenthusiastic about electronic music and about attempts by composers to make use of modern science and technology. In the perspective offered by IRCAM, he was in many ways a conservative musician. Why is he so markedly less conservative now? So interested in what he might have dismissed as naïve gadgetism and scientism when he was running the *Domaine Musical*?

A simple explanation is that the gadgets have been improved to the point of providing a previously unsuspected opportunity for a musical imagination. Another explanation is that Boulez has evolved in a predictable way. He was educated, it should be remembered, partly as a mathematician and an engineer. He has always been an uncompromisingly intellectual musician, a believer in structure and precision. And while an analogy between serialism and computerized composition will not hold much water, one can see how a sensibility that was once fiercely responsive to Schoenberg's method could finally become interested in electronic equipment.

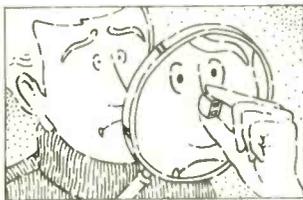
And there is a deeper consideration. Boulez has long been preoccupied by the problem of historicism in modern music. Six years ago, in a strangely passionate article on the subject for the French magazine *Musique en Jeu*, he announced his intention to "praise amnesia." He grants, of course, that composers cannot really forget the past of European music and traditional instruments. But he obviously feels that they can benefit from trying to do so. They can take a fresh, scientific—hence ahistorical—look at the fundamentals of their art. They can do what IRCAM is doing. ●

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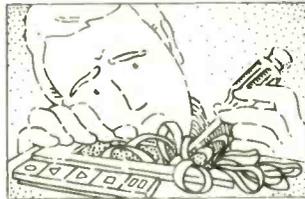
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Levine in Philadelphia. When James Levine taped the Mahler Fifth Symphony (the fourth installment in his Mahler cycle) and the Schumann Second for RCA in January, he became only the fourth conductor other than music director Eugene Ormandy to record with the Philadelphia Orchestra since the war. (A smattering of recordings were made by Leopold Stokowski in 1960, Charles Munch in 1963, and William Smith in 1968.) The sessions were held in Philadelphia's Scottish Rite Cathedral.

Previn in Pittsburgh and Chicago. André Previn took up his new post as music director of the Pittsburgh Symphony in style: In addition to beginning the taping of eight television concerts for PBS, in January the orchestra made its first recordings in eight years, for EMI. Two records will result—the Goldmark violin concerto and Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* with Itzhak Perlman, and the Sibelius Second Symphony. (Perlman's regular producer, Suvi Raj Grubb, supervised the sessions, the orchestra's first in its current home, Heinz Hall.) After Pittsburgh, Previn guest-conducted in Chicago, where he also recorded the Shostakovich Fourth and Fifth Symphonies with his regular producer, Christopher Bishop.

By a rather neat turnabout, Previn's earlier Shostakovich Fifth, for RCA in 1965, was his first recording with the London Symphony (of which he would become principal conductor within three years) and helped launch his spectacular British career. Despite an abortive attempt to force him out in 1975, Previn's ties to the LSO remain firm, and recent recordings include Mendelssohn's complete (really complete, that is) *Midsummer Night's Dream* incidental music.

Davis in Boston and Amsterdam. Colin Davis has been pursuing symphony cycles in two of his current favorite recording locales: With the Boston Symphony, he has added the Sibelius Third and Fourth Symphonies (and *The Swan of Tuonela*) to the previously recorded First, Fifth, and Seventh; with Amsterdam's Concertgebouw Orchestra, he has recorded the Dvořák Seventh and Eighth Symphonies.

Maazel (and Columbia) in Cleveland. ... As previously reported, Lorin Maazel, no longer under exclusive contract to Decca/London, looms large in CBS's plans, but until recently he had been unable to use his own orchestra, which remained contractually tied to Decca/London. In January, however, Columbia took

Behind The Scenes

advantage of that contract's expiration (while a new one was being negotiated) to record Maazel and the Cleveland in Berlioz' *Symphonie fantastique* and Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*.

... and on direct-cut discs. After the Columbia sessions, Maazel and the Cleveland Orchestra proceeded to a more unusual project: a direct-cut disc recording of orchestral chestnuts—Berlioz' *Corsaire* overture and "Rakóczy March," the "Farandole" from Bizet's *L'Arlesienne*, the final dance from Falla's *Three-Cornered Hat*, and the Polonaise from Tchaikovsky's *Yevgeny Onegin*—produced by Robert Woods of Cleveland's Advent Recording Corporation (not to be confused with the audio manufacturer).

The resulting LP, to be distributed by Discwasher, Inc., will be manufactured in a new American pressing plant that, according to Woods, "will use special equipment, production techniques, and quality-control procedures which have heretofore been utilized only by the best European manufacturers." Glen Glancy of Phonopress, Inc., of Burbank, California, will supervise disc mastering and ultimate manufacture. Advent's discs will sell for \$15 each on a new label, Telarc (from the Latin *tel* and the company acronym).

Elsewhere on the direct-disc front, Crystal Clear Records (225 Kearney St., San Francisco, Calif. 94108), which released "Direct Disco" last year, has announced two new discs (issued at 45 rpm): "San Francisco Ltd.," a pop collection with lead vocals by Terry Garthwaite; and a part-jazz, part-classical program by guitarist Laurindo Almeida.

Porgy and Bess in New York. RCA has recorded the production of Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* that moved last year from the Houston Grand Opera to Broadway. (And for once, the opera-vs.-musical question moved from mere aesthetics into economics: after much persuasion, the unions involved decided that *Porgy* is an opera after all—the recording cost at Broadway-musical rates would have been prohibitive.) The title roles are taken by Donnie Ray Albert and Clamma Dale,

with Andrew Smith as Crown, Larry Marshall as Sportin' Life, Wilma Shakesnider as Serena, Carol Bryce as Maria, and Betty Lane as Clara. The conductor is John DeMain.

Berman in London. Lazar Berman has made two new records for CBS in London. With Claudio Abbado and the London Symphony he taped the Rachmaninoff Third Piano Concerto (produced by Steven Epstein, from New York), while three overlapping sessions produced an encore-type recital of works by Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Khachaturian, Liszt, and others.

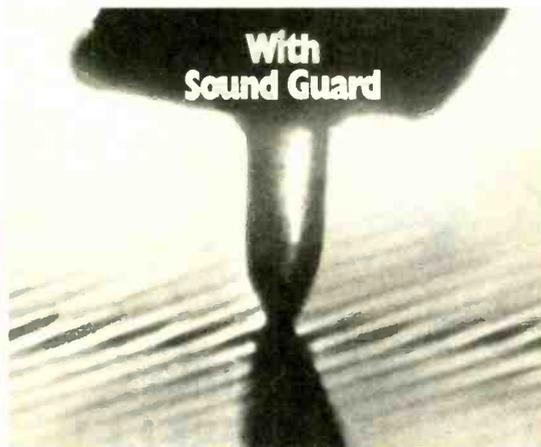
Vanguard's veterans. Vanguard has pressed two distinguished musical senior citizens into the studios for major recording projects. Pianist Mieczyslaw Horowitz, now in his eighties, has recorded Book I of Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, while violinist Alexander Schneider is participating in a promised chamber music series begun with the Brahms Third Piano Quartet, also featuring pianist Stephanie Brown, violist Walter Trampler, and cellist Leslie Parnas.

For P.D.Q. Bach fans, Prof. Peter Schickele and his cohorts have yet another record in the works—made with an invited audience shortly after the professor's annual New York Christmas extravaganza.

King's Bach. Philip Ledger has made his first large-scale recording as choir-master of Cambridge's all-male King's College Choir, conducting the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields in Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* for EMI. Under Ledger's predecessor, David Willcocks, chorus and orchestra had recorded Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *Creation*, neither released domestically. Unlike *Creation*, done in English translation, the *Christmas Oratorio* is in German, and unlike *Messiah*, whose soprano solos were sung by the choral trebles in unison, the new recording uses female soloists. The solo quartet comprises Elly Ameling (her third *Christmas Oratorio*), Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (his second), Janet Baker, and Robert Tear.

Bernstein postscript. Further to last month's report on Leonard Bernstein's new free-lance activities: Two ambitious Deutsche Grammophon projects are scheduled to begin this fall. Spanning twenty-one discs will be a Beethoven series, mostly with the Vienna Philharmonic. With the Israel Philharmonic, Bernstein will record eight discs' worth of his own works.

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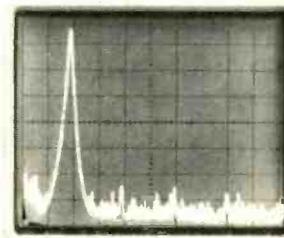
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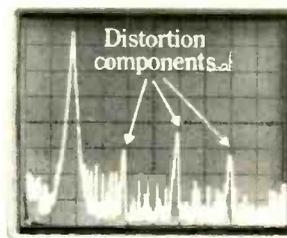
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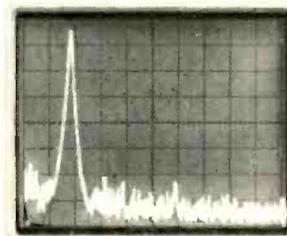
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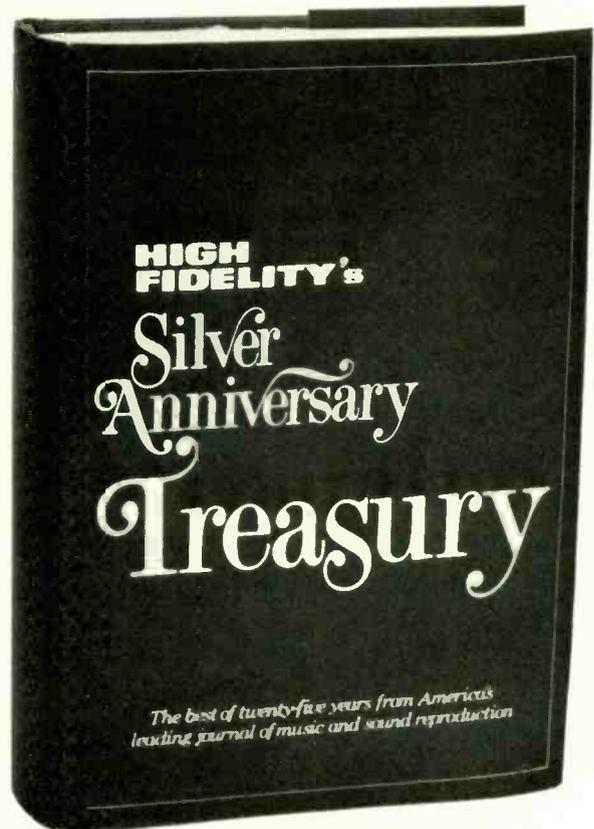
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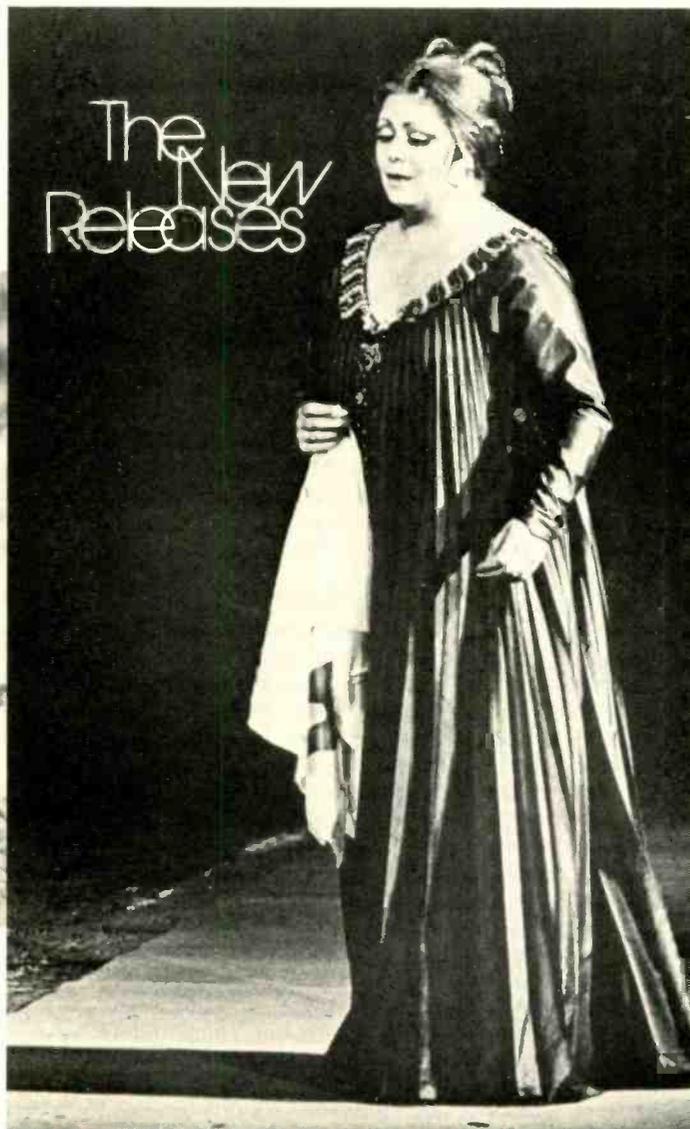
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*Mozart recitals by Silvia Sass
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of our fastest-rising sopranos.*

by Dale Harris

A GREAT DEAL of Mozart's vocal music, especially that designed to display the skills of specific artists, presents real problems for contemporary singers. Nearly everything in the pair of recently released Mozart recitals by Silvia Sass (Hungaroton) and Margaret Price (RCA Gold Seal) calls for a combination of line, weight, and agility—not to mention style—that is only rarely encountered these days.

The number of times one has heard a Donna Anna who could sing with genuine facility the concluding florid measures of "Non mi dir" is small indeed. A technically proficient *Idomeneo Elettra* is even rarer. And if in the last generation there have been several Constances who could negotiate the technical difficulties of "Martern aller Arten," the reason is that, as with the Queen of the Night, the role is almost invariably entrusted to a piping soprano *leggiero* rather than to a singer with the amplitude of tone implied by the music and the dramatic situation.

Price and Sass, however, are exceptional in that

both have sizable voices—the former is a Desdemona, the latter a Tosca—and yet can handle with ease all the *fioriture* demanded of them by this music. Price simply sails through the allegretto section of “Non mi dir” and dispatches Constanze’s aria without turning a hair, while Sass makes Elettra’s bravura vengeance aria seem like child’s play. (Each of them, incidentally, can lay claim to that increasingly rare accomplishment, a recognizable trill.) No wonder that they are among the most highly touted young singers of today.

Nevertheless, I fear that my admiration for them as artists falls somewhat short of my appreciation of their nimbleness. In the case of Price there are insurmountable barriers to my enjoyment of her skills, chief among them being the whiteness and hootiness of her tone. However, in light of her worldwide renown I realize that mine is a personal reaction, and for those who do not find such straight, fluty tone objectionably unsensuous this recital may, of course, prove rewarding.

Even so, the breathiness of Price’s vocal production (listen, for example, to the sound of air escaping as she attacks the top A on “Pein” in the *Entführung* aria) might be adjudged a drawback by others besides myself. The same could be said for her frequent recourse—discreet but damagingly evident—to the intrusive aspirate as a means of getting from note to note in slow music. Another problem is the blandness of her interpretations, though I would say this is the concomitant of her vocal method, which, admitting of little coloristic variety, has the consequence of making the Countess, Susanna, and Cherubino (or, if you like, Donnas Anna and Elvira) all sound much the same.

Whatever the reason, Price’s lack of vocal personality becomes all the more evident as soon as one turns to the Sass recital, where one immediately hears a more distinctive and interesting voice, though I would not call it a particularly attractive one. Sass, however, will be twenty-six this year and is therefore about a decade younger than Price. Thus she is in the early stages of what could be a highly successful career and is still, I suppose, capable of developing.

Her gifts right now are considerable. She has a good stage presence, great physical attractiveness,

and a voice not merely engaging and flexible, but also powerful. I have no idea when this Mozart recital was recorded. (How I wish record manufacturers would offer such information!) But the voice is very much fresher and more malleable than the one I heard—with, I must confess, a certain amount of misgiving—last summer at Aix-en-Provence in *Traviata*. Here Sass sounds fluent and poised. Apart from the noteworthiness of her agility, she is also impressive when it comes to legato singing, an especially fine example of which may be heard in “Ch’io mi scordi di te” at the words “*mancando va*,” where she binds all the notes of a long descending phrase into a seamless whole.

None of the latter skill was evident at the live performance I attended, and even in the present recital there are obtrusive weaknesses in Sass’s technique that give one pause. Above all, her tone is excessively covered and she shows, possibly as a result of this, a disturbing lack of ease in the top register. (Like Price, she is weak at the lower end of the staff.) Despite her youth she already seems to have difficulty in producing high tones unless these are either very loud or very soft. Her soft high notes, moreover, are not really securely supported and lack color. Whether this is eradicable (or even whether Sass is aware of the problem) I don’t know, but I find it disconcerting to think of so young and technically vulnerable a voice embarking on roles like Tosca (her Met debut) with Norma and Elisabeth de Valois to come next season (at Covent Garden and Hamburg, respectively).

In both recitals the often elaborate accompaniments are well played. Hungaroton offers texts, though only in Italian, and helpful notes. RCA Gold Seal offers no texts and deplorably thin notes.

MOZART: Operatic and Concert Arias. Silvia Sass, soprano; Hungarian State Opera Orchestra, Ervin Lukács, cond. [János Mátyás, prod.] HUNGAROTON SLPX 11812, \$6.98.

Idomeneo: D’Oreste, d’Ajace. Concert Arias: Ah, lo previdi, K. 272; Ch’io mi scordi di te, K. 505 (with András Schiff, piano); Bella mia fiamma, K. 528.

B **MOZART:** Operatic Arias. Margaret Price, soprano; English Chamber Orchestra, James Lockhart, cond. RCA GOLD SEAL AGL 1-1532, \$4.98.

Il Rè pastore. L’amerò sarò costante. Idomeneo: Idol mio. Die Entführung aus dem Serail: Martern aller Arten. Le Nozze di Figaro: Voi che sapete; E Susanna non vien. . . Dove sono; Giunse allin il momento. . . Deh vieni, non tardar. Don Giovanni: In quali eccessi. . . Mi tradi; Non mi dir. La Clemenza di Tito: Parto, parto.

Heroic Voices from Pioneer Days

Willem Mengelberg’s incomparable 1928 recording of Strauss’s Ein Heldenleben is vividly restored (or improved?) on Victrola.

by R. D. Darrell

ONE OF THE transcendental musical experiences of my youth was hearing Mengelberg lead the New York Philharmonic in Richard Strauss’s *Ein Heldenleben*, a score dedicated by the composer to “Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam.” And it was only a few years

later that I had the opportunity of reviewing the Mengelberg/Philharmonic recording in its original Victor 78-rpm edition.

That review—in the March 1929 *Phonograph Monthly Review*—was so enthusiastic, and the imprint of Mengelberg’s eloquence so deeply embedded



Willem Mengelberg
and Richard Strauss in
the late Forties

Philips

in my mind, that I'm undoubtedly still biased in evaluating the new RCA Victrola reissue. The reading entralls me all over again with a dramatic conviction and continuity unmatched for me by any later recording, even in such deservedly admired versions as those by Krauss (1952 mono, just reissued in London's Treasury series as R 23209), Reiner (1954), and Beecham and Ormandy (both 1961). And I must doubt that any of the accounts I haven't yet heard—by Haitink (1971), Kempe (1974, as yet available only abroad), Karajan (1975, the first in quadriphony), and Solti (just announced)—are likely to change my mind, at least as far as interpretations are concerned.

Yet the real point is not Mengelberg's reading as such, but how well his original recording has been transferred to LP—a question clouded and complicated by annotator Irving Kolodin's jacket-note statement that, through "new methods of computerized recovery of . . . latent values, [the] veritable sound of the Philharmonic-Symphony has been recreated as it did not exist in this recording's first issue: Victor album M 44." Does this mean that the digital processing system invented by Thomas G. Stockham Jr.—which I had assumed was devised primarily, if not exclusively, for acoustical rather than electrical recordings—has been used as it was in the recent reissues of Caruso and Gershwin acoustical recordings?

Regrettably, I have never heard the 1957 Camden LP reissue, but I have been provided with an even better means of comparison: the recent British RCA reissue, SMA 2001 (which bears a 1972 publication date, although it was not actually released until the fall of 1975). Insofar as my impressions of original sound are dependable—and I rely more on my printed words than on aural memory—the British edition strikes me as a shade truer to the original qualities, especially in string-tone warmth and overall dynamic range, both of which were considered exceptional by 1929 standards and remain impressive even today. However, despite my purist skepticism about computerized re-creations of anything

not in the original recording, the American reissue does indeed suggest at least some closer approximation to what Mengelberg's *Heldenleben* must have sounded like in the December 1928 Carnegie Hall recording sessions.

Relative to the British LP, there is slightly but definitely more brazen bite and impact to the fortissimos, a slightly wider dynamic range, more weight to the very low frequencies, and occasionally some increase in resonance. Perhaps such qualitative differences may seem unnaturally spectacular to some listeners. But I can't honestly say that I can muster any serious objection to their enhancements of the dramatic force of both the music and the Mengelberg performance.

Whether you accept the Victrola reissue on its own merits (or for its budget price) or search out the British version, you'll be mightily impressed by the minimization of the original noise elements (now evident mainly behind the unaccompanied solo violin passages), the authentic Carnegie Hall acoustical ambience, the lucidity of score details (surprising only to youngsters unfamiliar with the technological achievements of 1928 engineers at their best), and—beyond the incomparable Mengelbergian magic itself—the caliber of the orchestra in its first year as the combined Philharmonic-Symphony.

You may not be surprised by the earlier excellence of such familiar first-chair men as timpanist Saul Goodman (in his rookie year), trumpeter Harry Glantz, clarinetist Simeon Bellison, and bassoonist Benjamin Kohon. But who remembers the legendary concertmaster Scipione Guidi and hornist Bruno Jaenicke? There were giants—players, conductors, engineers—in those days! If this reissued *Heldenleben* can't convince today's young listeners of that, nothing can.

B **STRAUSS, R.:** *Ein Heldenleben*, Op. 40. Scipione Guidi, violin; New York Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra, Willem Mengelberg, cond. RCA VICTROLA AVM 1-2019, \$3.98 (mono) [from VICTOR 78s, recorded December 11-13, 1928].

Classical

reviewed by ROYAL S. BROWN

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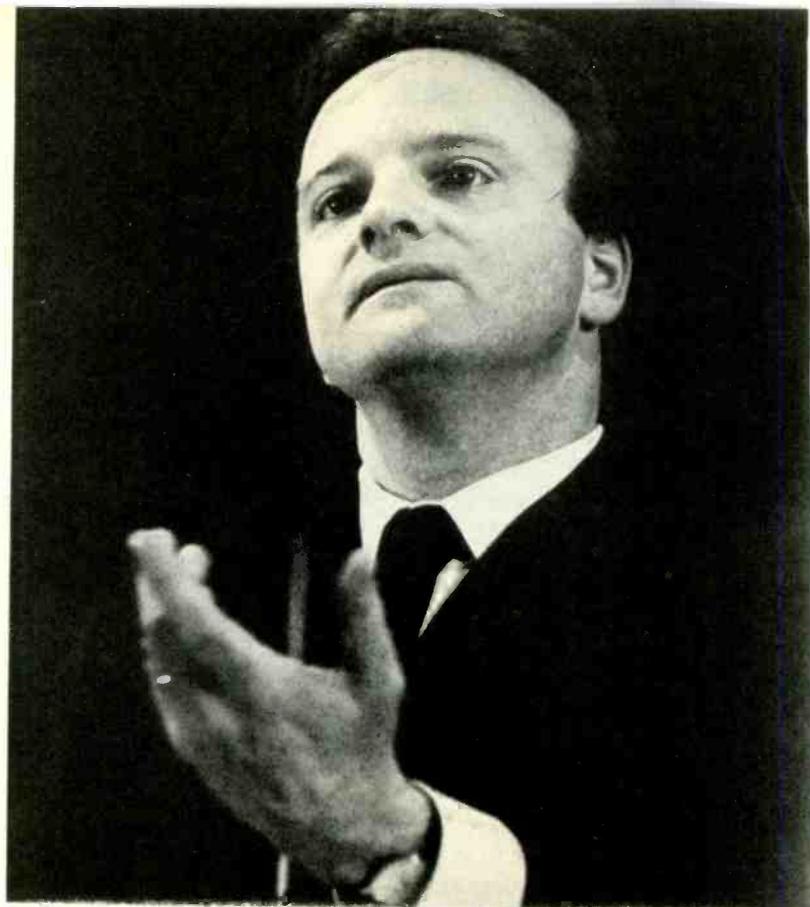
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Karl Richter—sometimes lively, sometimes leaden Bach

BACH, C.P.E.: Trio Sonatas: in B minor, W. 143; in C, W. 147; in B flat, W. 161. Eugenia Zukerman, flute; Pinchas Zukerman, violin; Samuel Sanders, harpsichord; Timothy Eddy, cello. [Thomas Frost, prod.] COLUMBIA M 34216, \$6.98.

In his emulation of Menuhin's breadth of musical interests, Pinchas Zukerman is exceptional among today's young superstar fiddlers both for his repertorial catholicity and for his readiness to shift roles from violinist to violist, from soloist to conductor, from virtuoso soloist to chamber ensemble. No doubt his relish for shared concertizing and recording has been strengthened by the ability of his flutist wife to join him—as she already has in three earlier Columbia releases. Eugenia Zukerman is versatile too, doubling as jacket annotator for many of her husband's or their joint programs. Indeed she does so again for the present batch of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's trio sonatas, none of which is otherwise listed in Schwann, although W. 143 and 147 can be had on Supraphon 1 11 0640 (with two more trio sonatas, W. 145 and 148), W. 161 on MHS 971.

Since the two early works, W. 143 and 147, are merely pleasant, superficial examples of routine rococo music-making in which the flute and violin parts dominate, the relative reticence of the continuo players is not unjustified. But they are only slightly more outspoken in the W. 161 of 1751, which approaches more closely the nature of the classical-era trio. And in all three works the ensemble is further unbalanced both by the violinist's excessively polite deference to the flutist and by the lack of meld between his elegantly finespun string tone and her cooler, less polished wind tonal qualities. In the bright and

clean, if lightweight, recording of these generally spirited performances, an occasional overintense high-register flute note stands out jarringly.

R.D.D.

BACH: Cantatas. Edith Mathis, soprano¹; Anna Reynolds, mezzo²; Peter Schreier, tenor³; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone⁴; Theo Adam, bass-baritone⁵; Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra, Karl Richter, cond. [Gerd Plebsch, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 313, 312, and 306, \$7.98 each.

2533 313: No. 23, *Du wahrer Gott und Davids Sohn*^{1,2,3}; No. 87, *Bisher habt ihr nichts gebeten in meinem Namen*^{2,3,4}

2533 312: No. 92, *Ich hab' in Gottes Herz und Sinn*^{1,2,3}; No. 126, *Erhalt' uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*^{2,3,4}

2533 306: No. 34, *O ewiges Feuer*^{2,3,4}; No. 58, *Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt*^{1,2}; No. 175, *Er ruft seinen Schafen mit Namen*^{2,3,4}

The recording of the first two discs listed above was begun in May 1973 and completed in June and October 1973 and January and February 1974 sessions. The third disc was begun in February 1974 and completed in January 1975; its contents have already appeared in Vol. 2 of Archiv's Bach

jumbo packs (2722 019, not yet released in this country; it collects nineteen cantatas on eleven discs, plus a bonus record of Kirkpatrick playing harpsichord works). The recording dates, punctiliously noted in usual Archiv style, make it clear that the cantatas were not done as integral performances but were built up number by number in a manner presumably determined by the artists' availability in Munich. The unevenness of the result, however, cannot be ascribed to this, since the best of the three records (2533 312) and the dullest of them (2533 313) date from the same period. The reason must be Karl Richter's oft-noted unpredictability as a Bach interpreter. Sometimes he is lively and imaginative; sometimes he plods along like the most leaden of Kapellmeisters.

Nos. 92 and 126 are a stunning pair of cantatas and they are performed in exciting fashion. No. 92, *Ich hab' in Gottes Herz und Sinn*, contains a storm at sea—a chorale breaking off after each phrase into accompanied recitative—which Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau sings in arresting, even hair-raising fashion. The storm continues in the subsequent tenor aria ("See, see, how every thing is torn off, breaks, falls"), which is done with a fine energy by Peter Schreier. The next bass aria tells of the "raging of the boisterous winds," in the kind of blustering musical imagery that Fischer-Dieskau always seems to relish—though I'm not sure how much I enjoy his bouncing along the coloratura lines. Calm returns in another chorale cum recitative and the soprano sings of St. Shepherd to the pastoral piping of an oboe d'amore. No. 92 is an extended cantata, spreading to the second side. Although the orchestra is only two oboes d'amore and strings, it spans a big range of mood and color.

Explanation of symbols

Classical:

-  Budget
-  Historical
-  Reissue

Recorded tape:

-  Open Reel
-  8-Track Cartridge
-  Cassette

No. 126. *Erhalt' uns, Herr, bei deinem Wort*, is short but grand. "Luther on the warpath again" is Alec Robertson's phrase for it; a trumpet joins a pair of oboes. But the most lively aria, the bass's "*Stürze zu Boden*," has continuo only. The singer leaps or runs between the E below the bass staff and the E above it; Theo Adam sings it all in fine style and with fine voice. Richter adds a bassoon to the continuo bass line, which goes tumbling down into the abyss and then swiftly clambers up again, step by step, until the bass's fierce defiance seems to send it plummeting once more. There is also a very taxing tenor aria containing bar after bar of rapid, elaborately spun coloratura, alternating roulades and repeated notes. Richter takes it at a spanking pace, and Schreier brings it off by the skin of his teeth.

The three works on 2533 306 are Whitsun cantatas. No. 34, *O ewiges Feuer*, is a rewrite of a wedding cantata (No. 34a), an attractive piece with a particularly attractive alto aria, warmly and smoothly sung by Anna Reynolds. No. 68, *Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt*, contains the celebrated and oft-recorded "My heart ever faithful." To discover it in its original setting is a joy: There is a lively cello obbligato, and at the end, when the voice has done, violin and oboe break in to make a trio-sonata coda. Edith Mathis is not quite ideal, for her voice seems to have darkened; she does not efface memories of Isobel Baillie. But to hear the original accompaniment (Miss Baillie had full orchestra; Margherita Perras had organ; I forget what Schumann-Heink had) is a delight. In No. 175, *Er rufet seinen Schafen*, the pastoral imagery of the text is reflected by three recorders, here not always precisely in tune. There is a very florid bass aria, which Fischer-Dieskau sings in his bouncing-along-the-notes manner.

Nos. 23 and 87 are the disappointments. *Du wahrer Gott* is a magnificent work that Bach composed, it seems, to demonstrate resourcefulness and mastery, when applying for the Leipzig job. But Richter trudges through it; his textures are thick and heavy. And so they are in *Bisher habt ihr nichts gebeten*, where his slow tempo makes the alto aria seem interminable, and the lilting 12/8 of the tenor aria (in a major key, after three arias in the minor) has no spring.

In Nos. 23 and 34, comparisons arise with the Telefunken *Das alte Werk* versions, sung by boys and men and played on instruments that Bach would have recognized. Richter's performances represent something between the old Bach style of Mengelberg and Albert Coates and the "authentic" Bach style of Harnoncourt and Leonhardt. And while they are closer to the latter—orchestra and chorus are slimmed; the inflections are not nineteenth-century Romantic; the players have made moves in a baroque direction—they still must seem like a step backward to anyone familiar with the Telefunken series. That series has some way to go before it reaches Nos. 92 and 126; and therefore anyone impatient to possess those cantatas can safely be recommended to Richter's vivid performances.

The album essays by Reinhard Gerlach are interesting; three short studies, complementary but not overlapping, of the cantata as a literary form, in relation to Bach's han-

dling of it. Especially interesting are a few detailed notes on the changes, in the cause of directness, that the composer introduced into the texts by Mariane von Ziegler, the poetess of Nos. 68, 87, and 175. A.P.

BERLIOZ: Requiem, Op. 5. Stuart Burrows, tenor; Choeurs de Radio France. Orchestre National de France, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Leonard Bernstein, cond. [John McClure, prod.] COLUMBIA M2 34202, \$13.98 (two SQ-encoded discs, automatic sequence). Tape: ●● MT 34202, \$15.98.

BERLIOZ: Requiem, Op. 5. Robert Tear, tenor; City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Louis Frémaux, cond. [David Mottley, prod.] ANGEL SB 3814, \$13.98 (two SQ-encoded discs, automatic sequence).

Comparison:
Davis/London Sym. Phil. 6700 019

The Berlioz Requiem is among the classic challenges for the recording engineers—so much so that the musical challenge it presents may easily be relegated to second place. In the long run, though, it's the performance that counts. I can still listen with pleasure and excitement to the wartime French recording conducted by Jean Fournet, for example, since it strongly conveys

the thrust of the work, if hardly all of its breadth and depth. Of course the Requiem is, among other things, about sounds in space, about the contrast between immense sounds and small ones—but unless these sounds are shaped with purpose and intensity the most splendid reproduction will deliver to us only a hollow shell.

Another important postulate: For all that its instrumental extravagance—the brass bands and kettledrums, the trombone-and-flute chords—has garnered most of the headlines over the years, the Requiem is a choral work. The tenor soloist appears only briefly, in a single movement; no matter how good, he can hardly carry the work or at least make it tolerable (as, for example, superior soloists in the Verdi Requiem can to a significant degree counterbalance inadequate choral work). And even when the orchestra is crucially involved, as in the main section of the "*Lacrymosa*," the primary line is conveyed, undoubled by instruments, in the chorus; weakness here can vitiate the entire effect.

That is what happens, I am afraid, in the Frémaux performance, so that this rather central tableau in Berlioz' epic polyptych fails. Elsewhere, the citizens of Birmingham don't do badly. Their sound is, in fact, more homogeneous than that of Bernstein's stronger-voiced Parisians, and somewhat more smoothly registered (although this ad-

Critics' Choice

The best classical records reviewed in recent months

- BACH:** Flute Works. Robison, Cooper. VANGUARD VSD 71215/6 (2), March.
BACH: Italian Concerto; French Overture. Kipnis. ANGEL S 36096, Jan.
BARTÓK: Bluebeard's Castle. Troyanos, Nimgern, Boulez. COLUMBIA M 34217, Feb.
BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6. Ferencsik. HUNGAROTON SLPX 11790, March.
CHERUBINI: String Quartets. Melos Qt. ARCHIV 2710 018 (3), Jan.
GOTTSCHALK: Piano Works. List, Lewis, Werner. VANGUARD VSD 71218, March.
HANDEL: Organ Concertos. Rogg. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CSQ2 2115, 2116 (4), Jan.
HAYDN: Symphonies Nos. 99, 100. Bernstein. COLUMBIA M 34126, Feb.
LISZT: Concerto No. 1 et al. Gutiérrez, Previn. ANGEL S 37177. Kiss, Ferencsik. HUNGAROTON SLPX 11792. Berman, Giuliani. DG 2530 770, Feb.
MAHLER: Symphony No. 3. Horne, Levine. RCA RED SEAL ARL 2-1757 (2), March.
MESSIAEN: Quatuor pour la fin du temps. Tashi. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1567, Jan.
MEYERBEER: Le Prophète. Scotto, Horne, McCracken, Lewis. COLUMBIA M4 34340 (4), March.
MOZART: The Impresario. Cotrubas, Welting, Davis. PHILIPS 9500 011, Feb.
NIELSEN: Orchestral Works. Blomstedt. SERAPHIM SIC 6097, 6098 (6), Feb.
ROSSINI: Elisabetta. Caballé, Carreras, Masini. PHILIPS 6703 067 (3), Feb.
SCHUMANN, SCRIBIN: Sonatas. Horowitz. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1766, Jan.
SHOSTAKOVICH: Quartets Nos. 8, 15. Fitzwilliam Qt. OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 11. Cello Concerto No. 2. Rostropovich, Ozawa. DG 2530 653, Feb.
TCHAIKOVSKY: The Nutcracker. Dorati. PHILIPS 6747 257 (2), Jan. Swan Lake. Previn. ANGEL SCLX 3834 (3), March.
TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 5. Karajan. DG 2530 699, Jan.
WAGNER: Die Meistersinger. Fischer-Dieskau, Ligendza, Domingo, Jochum. DG 2713 011 (5). Bailey, Bode, Kollo, Solti. LONDON OSA 1512 (5), Feb.
WALDEUFEL: Orchestral Works. Boskovsky. ANGEL S 37208, Feb.
LEON BATES: American Piano Works. ORION ORS 76237, March.
JOSÉ CARRERAS: Operatic Recital. PHILIPS 9500 203, March.
DAVID MUNROW: Art of Courtly Love. SERAPHIM SIC 6092 (3). Instruments of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. ANGEL SBZ 3810 (2), Feb.
CLAUDIA MUZIO: Edison Diamond Discs, Vol. 2. ODYSSEY Y 33793, March.
FREDERICA VON STADE: French Opera Arias. COLUMBIA M 34206, Feb.

vantage is rather offset by disc distortion in the loudest passages). The crunch comes when these new recordings are confronted with the work of the London Symphony Chorus in Colin Davis' Philips recording, which is clearly the result of much more detailed rehearsing and shaping. The individual lines are more finely distinguished, the phrases in each line curve up and down with more sense of destination and climax.

None of these performances is entirely free of ensemble inexactitude—keeping together the cellos, contrabasses, low winds, and choral basses is a frequent problem, probably compounded by their geographical dispersion in the recording halls—but the music that comes off the Philips recording is by far the most vividly imagined and executed; only there, for example, do the counterpointing rhythms of the "Lacrymosa" speak out with full authority. Only there does the Dies Irae emerge as a complex series of phrases, not just a long sawage of a melody.

Not that the two new recordings are really very much alike. As intimated, Bernstein has the stronger forces to work with, and he rouses them to considerable excitement in the big moments. Elsewhere, there are some relatively inert passages: the emergence of a pulse under the first choral entry ("Requiem aeternam") is obscure, and the movement never really gets under way. Complementarily, Frémaux is rather good here, with a nice swing that often serves him in good stead. Bernstein has his demonstrative moments, too—big distentions of tempo at the climaxes in the Offertorium, for example, that far exceed (and precede) Berlioz' indications of "un poco ritenuto": as much expansion as the composer wanted is already composed into the piece here, with the thinning-out of rhythmic density.

The Bernstein performance was recorded in the chapel of Les Invalides in Paris, the site of the work's first performance (Scherchen's Vega/Westminster recording of two decades ago, now on Turnabout THS 65017/8, was also recorded there—rather dimly and distantly). Angel doesn't report the locale of its recording, but the space is evidently of comparable dimensions if somewhat less overbearing resonance. In Les Invalides, at one point in the "Rex tremendae" the echoes of "Confutatis maledictis" pretty well submerge the chorus' suddenly soft "Jesu," and when all six choral parts get going in the "Querens me" a certain congestion results. Angel's sound has less immediate impact, while the Philips engineers (working in London's Westminster Cathedral) managed the happiest compromise of all: keeping the initial sound forward and clear, the resonance sufficiently distant that it doesn't obscure what's going on (check out the string figurations in the Offertorium, for example).

As for that tenor soloist: The first time around the Sanctus, Stuart Burrows walks off with most of the honors, using sweet head tones to pretty ravishing effect, but on the repetition he seems strained and has to lunge for one B flat. Angel's Robert Tear is throughout too loud and in serious technical difficulties (a point to the EMI engineers here, for the bass-drum strokes are more "felt" than heard—much the best realiza-



Arthur Grumiaux
Distinguished Brahms performances

tion of the effect Berlioz wants). On Davis' recording, Ronald Dowd is certainly too loud, but his tone is consistently firm and the lines are very cleanly shaped.

All three of these recordings give us the shorter version of the "Querens me," as published in the orchestral score—something that the editor of Columbia's liner notes evidently does not know, for the excised words ("culpa rubet vultus meus") are printed in the text on the liner. But then Columbia's annotator seems to be unaware of the repeat of the "Hosanna," let alone the fact that the entire final movement is recapitulatory. At that, his work is preferable to the gossipy history and patronizing musical observations that Angel offers. Here again, Philips gains the palm, with a literate and knowledgeable essay by David Cairns.

D.H.

Technical and quad note: Columbia informs us that the Bernstein recording is to be replaced by a remastered, two-channel-only version, which will be indicated by a "2" series stamper number. As no date is given for its appearance, this review is based on the version that has been in circulation for several months.

If your cartridge can track the loudest passages of the recording (and some top-of-the-line models can't), it has unusually good dynamic range. It could, in fact, be recommended as a very rigorous cartridge test.

Both recordings of the Berlioz Requiem offer full and well-balanced quadraphonic sound, with most of the performing forces at the front and large amounts of hall ambience (particularly the Columbia recording) at the sides and rear. When the "Tuba Mirum" comes along with all the fancy stuff, both discs are reasonably equal to the task. The edge on positional accuracy is with the Angel, which not only pinpoints the auxiliary brass choirs well, but also seems to preserve more of the details of the music. The Columbia trades away some of the finer points in favor of a powerful, sweeping opulent sound that fairly overwhelms the listener at times.

It would be hard to say whether it is the intrinsic qualities of the music that make it

Philips

so, or whether it is a matter of recording technique, but these discs represent a severe test for a matrix decoder. One full-logic unit that we tried produced anomalies such as a thunderous roll of the timpani (in the "Tuba Mirum" on Columbia) that parted like the Red Sea to allow free passage of the choral basses. A replay using a less ambitious but more accurate decoder gave a more credible sonic image. H.A.R.

BRAHMS: Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, in B minor, Op. 115. Richard Stoltzman, clarinet; Cleveland Quartet. [Jay David Saks, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1993, \$7.98. Tape: ●● ARK 1-1993, \$7.95; ●● ARS 1-1993, \$7.95.

Richard Stoltzman is a clarinetist with real personality, a limpid sound, and a memorably wide dynamic range. But in the first movement of the Brahms clarinet quintet both he and the Cleveland Quartet members tend toward a self-indulgence at odds with the music. Thus the already too dreamy tempo (hardly an allegro) is perversely slackened at bar 51 for the sake of a largely irrelevant, kittenish clarinet portamento. And while the recording balance admirably makes the clarinet a team member rather than a soloist, Brahms's crucial part writing is compromised by the players' failure to form a genuine ensemble. As a result, the movement's stark energy and rhythmic urgency are sapped.

The remaining movements, however, are quite wonderful. In the Adagio the gently autumnal treatment pays dividends, and the last two movements are given with more verve and altogether crisper incisiveness. I felt a bit uncomfortable with the cellist's mannered rubato in the final variation; such harmonic pointing can be achieved through phrasing and dynamic subtlety rather than conspicuous distortion of the basic rhythmic ostinato.

Whatever my reservations, this is a serious, if controversial, presentation of one of Brahms's most sublime works. By comparison, I now find the admirably robust and straightforward Eitlinger/Tel Aviv version (Oiseau-Lyre SOL 146, September 1973) somewhat extroverted and lacking in nuance.

H.G.

BRAHMS: Sonatas for Violin and Piano: No. 1, in G, Op. 78*; No. 2, in A, Op. 100*; No. 3, in D minor, Op. 108*. Trio for Violin, Horn, and Piano, in E flat, Op. 40.* Arthur Grumiaux, violin; Francis Orval, horn (in Op. 40); György Sebok, piano. PHILIPS 9500 161* and 9500 108*, \$7.98 each.

Comparisons—sonatas:

Szeryng, Rubinstein
Zukerman, Barenboim

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in DG 2709 058

These are distinguished performances, gorgeously reproduced, but they may not be to all tastes. The emphasis is on refinement and delicacy. Grumiaux at his best is a remarkable instrumentalist, a violinist with impeccable intonation, perfect bow control, and aristocratic musical impulses. Thus from the very beginning of the G major Sonata his firmly centered, luscious tone and superior sense of flowing line

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create a lofty mood, fully seconded by György Sebok's knowing, sensitive chamber-style playing.

That is the merit—and, to some extent, the limitation—of these interpretations. The more passionate, solistic elements of the stormy D minor Sonata, for example, are played down and consequently less dramatic than in the Szeryng/Rubinstein and Zukerman/Barenboim performances. While the G major and, to an even greater degree, A major Sonatas are admirably served by the Grumiaux/Sebok approach, the D minor Sonata and the horn trio, for all their interpretive elegance and distinction, strike me as slightly lacking in drama and brio. Francis Orval, a horn player previously unknown to me, contributes a liquid

legato and chaste phrasing, with just a trace of saxophonelike vibrato. The balance in the trio, incidentally, is exemplary. All three instrumentalists are in just ratio without any loss of impact or inner-voice clarity.

The more I hear the Zukerman/Barenboim DG set, the more I like it (the violin sonatas, at least; the coupled viola sonatas are a different story). The touch of gypsy vibrato in Zukerman's tone raises the music's emotional temperature, and Barenboim is more willing than Sebok to assert himself solistically. As a result, Zukerman and Barenboim tend to complement Grumiaux and Sebok, succeeding best in the D minor Sonata. Neither Sebok nor Barenboim, however, can challenge the keyboard work

of Rubinstein, who manages to create remarkably sophisticated ensemble effects without in any way lessening his normal individualistic ardor. Since Szeryng can rival Grumiaux for every-note-in-place aristocratic musicianship and seems, on this occasion, to have been sparked by Rubinstein's greatness, the RCA performances hold a slight edge over the Philips and DG. Add to these the excellent individual accounts of these pieces by Oistrakh, Szigeti, Milanova, and others, and you realize that few works have been as lucky on disc. H.G.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 2, in D, Op. 73. Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein, cond. UNICORN UNS 236, \$6.98 [recorded in concert, March 16, 1972] (distributed by HNH Distributors, Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

This performance, from an actual studio concert, does not represent Horenstein at his best. In the first place, instrumental balances are faulty: Inner voices (especially second violins and violas) are exceedingly reticent compared with upper and lower lines. Then, either the engineers have compressed the dynamic range or really good soft playing is absent. Phrasing tends to break down into bar-by-bar fragments, most notably in the slow movement, where the problem is compounded by the very broad tempo (which itself runs down toward the end). Orchestral discipline is not up to what I would expect from either Horenstein or the Danish Radio Symphony; note the ragged brass chording at bar 348 of the first movement and the late woodwind attack at bar 62 of the Adagio.

The approach itself is a weighty one. From the first movement (with repeat) on, all goes rather deliberately, yet without the sweeping ardor and lushness of sound that I find most suitable for a "big" Second. It's an approach with a respectable following—including Szell and Haitink, to judge from their recordings—but among current SCHWANN listings I'll stick with Boult (Angel S 37032), Monteux (Stereo Treasury STS 15192), Steinberg (Westminster Gold WGS 8153), and Karajan (DG 138 925). A.C.

B BRAHMS: Symphony No. 4, in E minor, Op. 98. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. [Charles Gerhardt, prod.] RCA GOLD SEAL AGL 1-1961, \$4.98.

This performance, previously available only in the Reader's Digest recordings series, is typical of Reiner in many ways, including the immaculate polish. Indeed, the Chicago Symphony in his Brahms Third, recently reissued in the Gold Seal series as AGL 1-1280, has nothing on the Royal Philharmonic in unflustered accuracy and gleaming brightness of sonority.

Phrases are always turned with dapper understatement, and there is a certain impersonality. This Brahms Fourth doesn't fit any of the neat pigeonholes: luxuriantly Romantic, firmly Teutonic, rigorously incisive. Reiner often had the knack of making fast tempos seem leisurely and slow ones taut, or at least light; sometimes one isn't

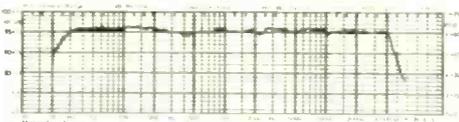


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even sure which sleight of hand is being performed. I think the finale is one of the steadier ones around, and the scherzo has plenty of martial energy.

I'll go out on one limb: You can't get a better Brahms Fourth at the price. A.C.

B **BRITTEN:** A Charm of Lullabies, Op. 41; Folksong Arrangements. Bernadette Greevy, mezzo-soprano; Paul Hamburger, piano. LONDON STEREO TREASURY STS 15166, \$3.98.

Folksong Arrangements: O can ye sew cushions?; There's none to soothe; O waly, waly; The Ash Grove; Sally Gardens; The trees they grow so high; Come you not from Newcastle?; Sweet Polly Oliver; Bonny Earl o' Moray; Oliver Cromwell.

A *Charm of Lullabies* was composed in 1947 to five texts by various poets. The moods and characters of the lullabies are as contrasted as one could imagine; Britten's settings fit the words succinctly; and the piano is a creative partner. But for me the ultimate art-song portrayal of childhood's wide-eyed wonderment remains Musorgsky's *Nursery cycle*—Britten always strikes me as the cleverly stylized producer of chic repertoire, even when he is trying to speak directly to the heart.

The accompaniments to the ten Britten-arranged English folksongs heard here provide ample opportunities for flights of the composer's fancy. "The Ash Grove," for example, features evocative use of polytonality.

Bernadette Greevy gives performances of Peter Peersian vividness, and the 1970 recording (not previously issued here) is discreet—though my copy had somewhat noisy surfaces. Full texts are provided. A.C.

B **BUXTEHUDE:** Cantatas: Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme; Jesu, meine Freude; Herzlich lieb hab ich Dich, o Herr. Herrad Wehrung and Gundula Bernát-Klein, sopranos; Frauke Haasemann, mezzo; Friedreich Melzer, countertenor; Johannes Hoefflin, tenor; Wilhelm Pommerien, bass; Westphalian Choral Ensemble, Southwest German Chamber Orchestra, Wilhelm Ehmann, cond. NONESUCH H 71332, \$3.96.

The works on this disc are called "cantatas," a designation as vague as "concerto"—the two being interchangeable when applied to this genre in the seventeenth century. (Bach still called most of his cantatas concertos.) We might say that the entire century was under the auspices of the concerto principle, whether the music was instrumental or vocal. The aim was to loosen the uniform texture of a composition by creating contrasts: chorus vs. chorus, chorus vs. solo, solo vs. instruments, and so forth.

The cantatas recorded here are "spiritual concertos"; they are not church music like most of Bach's cantatas but early examples of public concert music of an elevated sort. Such cantatas were performed in Lubeck cathedral at "evening musicals" (*Abendmusiken*) for the enjoyment and edification of the well-to-do business patrons of the Hanseatic city. They are fine works, rich in ideas, colors, and moods.

The performances, while decent enough, bring out these qualities only in spots. Con-

ductor Wilhelm Ehmann doctored the first cantata, *Wachet auf*, a bit, adding trumpets and a trombone. While this is not a musical crime, as Buxtehude was no stranger to large ensembles and such additions were often made in his time, these works are predominantly lyrical and intimate and do not need reinforcement. Moreover, faulty microphone placing makes the brass too prominent. Much of the playing is too uniform, even plodding. The singers, except for the sturdy bass Wilhelm Pommerien, are timid, and the prevailing color is somewhat gray. Sopranos Herrad Wehrung and Gundula Bernát-Klein do well in the quiet strophes, and countertenor Friedreich Melzer is not at all bad, but the Italianate roudades are not taken with

enough freedom by the German singers, and Ehmann's rhythm is soft and lacking in variety. The chorus is good, if a little distant; the organ continuo is good. P.H.L.

CHOPIN: Polonaises. Maurizio Pollini, piano. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 659, \$7.98. Tape: ♪ 3300 659, \$7.98.

Polonaises: No. 1, in C sharp minor, Op. 26, No. 1; No. 2, in E flat minor, Op. 26, No. 2; No. 3, in A, Op. 40, No. 1; No. 4, in C minor, Op. 40, No. 2; No. 5, in F sharp minor, Op. 44; No. 6, in A flat, Op. 53; No. 7, in A flat, Op. 61 (*Polonaise-Fantaisie*).

The piano sound on this otherwise splendid disc is a trifle bleak and clangorous—a result, one suspects, of both engineering and

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playing. (Pollini's pianism, for all its coloristic sensitivity, veers more toward the linear than toward the massive or ripely sensual.) But the ear is quickly reconciled, and only in the *Polonaise-Fantaisie* was my enjoyment diminished by the actual tone quality. Pollini's account has purity of feeling, a distinguished sense for rubato effects, and a welcome structural grasp, yet I found it too inhibited emotionally, lacking in color and magical atmosphere.

In a more overtly linear piece like the C sharp minor *Polonaise*, however, Pollini's rare sensibility is just what is needed. His rhythm is full of both snap and lilting, subtly nuanced flexibility. In the companion E flat minor *Polonaise*, he avoids thick textures and gives the music brooding

poignance: I have heard more explosive readings but few that rival this one for eloquence and detail. The popular A major is taut, symmetrical, and rather Mozartean in feeling. (Mozart was, after all, a spiritual forebear of Chopin, even if one is surprised to be reminded of it in this particular piece!) Pollini's exquisite voicing again pays dividends in the opening section of the C minor, which can so easily sound square and podgy (compare Frankl and Ohlsson). The new account of the big F sharp minor is surprisingly similar to the one the eighteen-year-old Pollini made directly after winning first prize in the 1960 Warsaw Chopin competition, a tribute to his early maturity. There has been a heightening of perception, most conspicuously in the complex central

section. I have heard only Horowitz (and *not* on record) give an unarguably greater account.

The biggest surprise is Pollini's Op. 53, which recalls Arthur Rubinstein's proprietary way with the score: Their performances have the same sense of expansion and rhetorical inflection. Perhaps this will put to rest once and for all the notion that Pollini is a dry, metronomic literalist. H.G.

COUPERIN: *Concerts royaux* (4); *Nouveaux concerts* (10). Heinz Holliger, oboe; Aurèle Nicolet, flute; Thomas Brandis, violin; Josef Ulsamer and Laurentius Strehl, viole da gamba; Manfred Sax, bassoon; Christiane Jaccottet, harpsichord. [Andreas Holschneider and Gerd Ploebesch, prod.] ARCHIV 2712 003, \$31.92 (four discs, manual sequence).

For sheer elegance the music on this handsomely produced set would be hard to beat. Couperin may plumb greater depths of rhetorical pathos in the *Leçons de ténèbres* and reveal a still more individual vein of fantasy in his later harpsichord pieces, but these instrumental consorts (for that, not concertos, is the correct English translation here) show him as the supreme master of the social music of his time and place. A highly civilized time and place, it goes without saying: Versailles and Paris in the decade between 1714 and 1724.

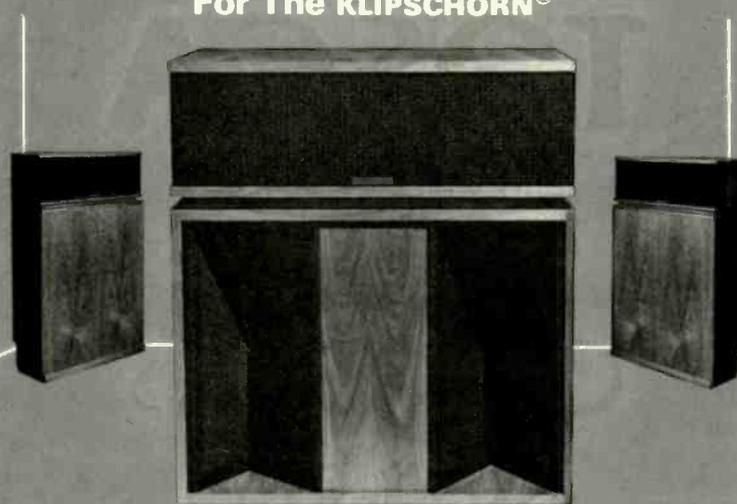
The four *Concerts royaux*, the composer tells us, were originally written for the aged Louis XIV's Sunday chamber concerts at Versailles in 1714 and 1715, the last years of his life, though Couperin did not publish them until 1722, as an appendix to his third book of harpsichord pieces. The remaining ten consorts, more diverse in style and character, came out two years later and reflect a wider spectrum of taste. Among them we find not only the more or less standard sequence of idealized dance movements, but also a full-scale suite, "*Dans le goût théâtral*," consisting of airs each with its own clearly marked choreographic character, and another, called *Rittrato dell'amore*, in which the individual titles ("*Le Je-ne-sçay-quoy*," "*La Noble fierté*") evoke the whimsical world of the harpsichord suites.

The Italian name for this consort reminds us, incidentally, that the whole set of ten bears the subtitle *Les Goûts-réunis*, referring to the supposed union in these pieces of the current French and Italian styles of instrumental music. Couperin was too complete a professional not to have achieved what he set out consciously to do, but for us it is certainly the French style that predominates, with its finely chiseled but always lyrical melodies and its subtle refinements of harmony and rhythm. And these are the qualities that this group of players (who are augmented in the "theatrical" consort by an additional flute, oboe, and violin) seems consistently to relish. Following Couperin's own hint, when he tells us in his preface to the *Concerts royaux* that they were originally played by a violinist, two oboist/bassoonists, and a viol player, with Couperin himself at the harpsichord, the present recording shares the music sensibly between these instruments, throwing in a flute for good and entirely ap-

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appropriate measure.

Purists may be offended that Heinz Holliger and Aurèle Nicolet are not (at least so far as I can tell) playing on eighteenth-century instruments. No doubt this is the reason why Archiv has forsaken its usual practice of including full details of the instruments in the accompanying notes, even though we are told precisely when and where the recording was made. But although my sympathies are usually with the purists (who wants to be an impurist, after all?), I have to admit that the refinement of Holliger's and Nicolet's playing soon converted me. Not quite at once in Holliger's case: his line is so tautly drawn, his ornaments so replete with nervous tension, that at first I was tempted to dismiss his playing as anachronistic. But the tension is controlled with such exquisite taste that one finishes by being seduced. Thomas Brandis' violin, which certainly sounds like an authentic eighteenth-century instrument, is no less eloquent in its silvery way, and the bass viols of Josef Ulsamer and Laurentius Strehl gambol and descant in the most urbane manner in the two consorts for "instrumens à l'unisson" that they share.

The recorded sound is beautifully balanced, and the pressings beyond reproach. One tiny cavil, though, on behalf of disc jockeys and catalogers: Why adopt separate numerations for the two sets of consorts on the record labels, and a continuous one in the album notes, so that the same work appears variously as No. 10 and No. 14?

J.N.

B **CRUMB:** Makrokosmos II. Robert Miller, piano. [Thomas Frost, prod.] ODYSSEY Y 34135, \$3.98.

This is the second of three works entitled Makrokosmos written between 1972 and 1974. (The first and third have already been recorded by Nonesuch, on H 71293, June 1974, and H 71311, October 1975, respectively.) Like Vol. 1, Vol. 2 is scored for solo piano, amplified by means of a conventional microphone, and consists of twelve pieces divided into three groups of four each, with each piece bearing a descriptive title as well as the name of one of the twelve signs of the Zodiac. (Vol. 3, *Music for a Summer Evening*, scored for two amplified pianos and two percussionists, has a different formal layout.)

This score contains many of the features that have come to be identified with Crumb's style: The piano sound is altered through the use of such external props as paper, glass tumblers, and a wire brush; strings are played pizzicato; harmonics are employed; the pianist sings, chants, and whistles as well as plays his instrument. Yet for all these sonic innovations, the piano writing is closely bound to the nineteenth-century virtuoso tradition: the kinds of figurations and textures used, even such special effects as the sudden opposition of registral extremes, have their close parallels in Schumann and Liszt. The spell of such later composers as Debussy and Bartók can also frequently be detected, not least of all in the title and formal organization of the piece. These associations are no doubt intended by the composer, and they

provide the work with a "historical resonance" that supplies an interesting accompaniment to those acoustical resonances Crumb uses to such telling effect: sounds that gradually die out while being sustained by pedal, etc.

Despite its division into twelve sections, *Makrokosmos II* creates a distinctly unified impression. As pianist Robert Miller remarks in his excellent liner notes, there is a sort of intensification to the eighth piece and then a gradual relaxation thereafter until the composition reaches its peaceful close. Yet each piece also projects a distinct character of its own: and each evokes clearly the associations suggested by its title, whether through literal sound imitation, as in No. 9 ("The Cosmic Wind"), or

through a more general evocation of its character, as with the ominous minor chords in No. 8 ("A Prophecy of Nostradamus").

The performance by Miller is very fine, though his whistling is somewhat shaky in No. 10 ("Voices from 'Corona Borealis'")—a real tour de force for the whistler, who must not only play as he whistles, but also, in one section, apply "Monteverdi trills" (produced by "a rapid series of staccato ejections of breath"). The recorded sound is excellent; and in addition to Miller's helpful notes, the names of the movements are listed as well as the composer's suggested markings for the character of the individual pieces (e.g., "Exuberantly, with primitive energy" for No. 1).

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DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 7, in D minor, Op. 70. Concertgebouw Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 9500 132, \$7.98. Tape: ●● 7300 535, \$7.95.

Comparisons:

Szell/Cleveland Orch.
Rowicki/London Sym.
Kubelik/Berlin Phil.
Monteux/London Sym.
Neumann/Czech Phil.

in Col. D3S 814
Phi. 6500 287
DG 2530 127
St. Tr. STS 15157
Van. SU 7

The most somber, and perhaps greatest, of Dvořák's symphonies has always fared well on disc (to the admirable recordings listed above I could add half a dozen or more not currently available domestically), and this newest version, the beginning of a Davis/Concertgebouw Dvořák cycle, continues the tradition.

Davis' interpretation generally belongs to the laud school exemplified by Szell and Rowicki. Tempos throughout, while never rushed, veer toward militancy, with great heed paid to rhythmic energy and regularity of phrasing. In the third movement, Davis clarifies the subordinate theme more explicitly than anyone I have heard, and in the finale's second theme he will have none of the rhapsodic heaving and hauling often encountered (which admittedly can be done to good advantage, as Kubelik shows in his Berlin recording).

Yet unlike Szell—and, to a lesser degree, Rowicki—Davis manages to secure this knife-edged precision and refinement of tone and balance without sacrificing the heft of Dvořák's scoring, thanks no doubt to the superbly vigorous, dark-toned playing of the Concertgebouw. Similarly, he captures something of Monteux's robust energy without the momentary ensemble lapses and textural crudities. Some may still prefer the more lyrical approach of Neumann or the more rhapsodic one of Kubelik/Berlin, but I am tempted to award Davis and the Concertgebouw pride of place. Philips' moderately distant, yet exquisitely defined recording captures the bite and dynamic range to perfection.

H.G.

ELGAR: Enigma Variations—See Schoenberg: Variations for Orchestra.

B FOSTER: Songs, Vol. 2. Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano; Leslie Guinn, baritone; Camerata Chorus of Washington; Gilbert Kalish, piano and melodeon; Douglas Koeppel, flute and piccolo; Howard Bass, guitar; James Weaver, piano. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] NONESUCH H 71333, \$3.96.

The Voice of Bygone Days; Better Times Are Coming; Linger in Blissful Repose; There Are Plenty of Fish in the Sea; My Old Kentucky Home; Soiree Polka; Larry's Good Bye; Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming; We Are Coming, Father Abraham, 300,000 More; Come with Thy Sweet Voice Again; Katy Bell; Hard Times, Come Again No More; Village Bells Polka; The Hour for Thee and Me; Summer Longings.

When Jan DeGaetani and Leslie Guinn brought out their first volume of songs by Stephen Foster (Nonesuch H 71268), I was absolutely ecstatic about their work. This was the way Foster should be sung; the record was living proof that he was a really great composer. All you had to do was to sing what he had written, and the man's genius shone through.

The sequel is a profound disappointment, for the producers have gone fancy:

The fifteen Foster selections are arranged in no less than thirteen different ways. We have the singers not only with piano accompaniment, but with melodeon, with guitar, with flute, with piccolo, with chorus, and with every permutation and combination thereof. Only three songs are sung by DeGaetani straight (that is, with simple piano accompaniment); Guinn sings only one. It may be quite true that way back then a Foster song would be accompanied by a guitar or melodeon if a piano wasn't available, and if a flutist happened to be visiting he might have thrown in his two cents. But to find this kind of *olla podrida* all at the same time would have been a virtual impossibility.

Furthermore, I must say that Guinn shows a decided tendency to veer away from the printed notes—in "My Old Kentucky Home," for instance, he varies both rhythm and melody. And by and large, the materials in Vol. 2 are not nearly so well chosen as those in Vol. 1 (which, however, only scratched the surface). Nevertheless, DeGaetani can do no wrong, and the best things about the disc are the songs she sings so sympathetically and simply.

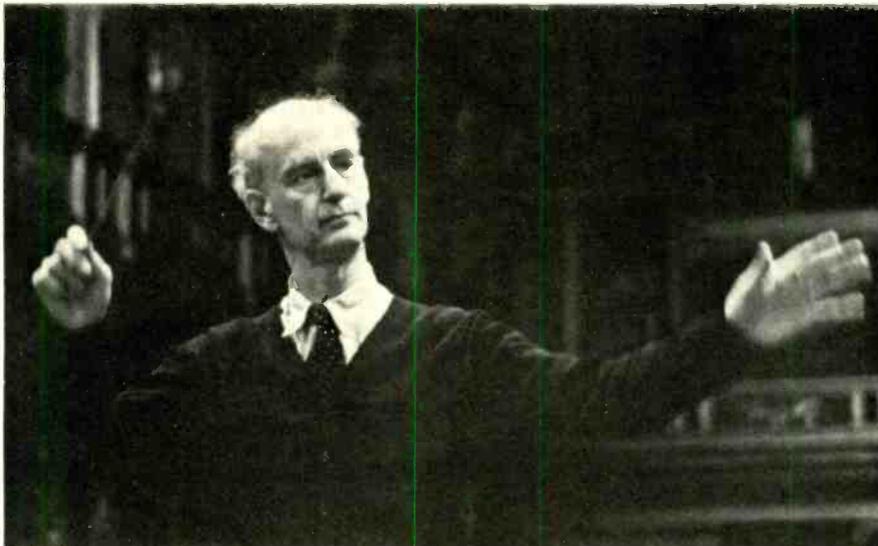
I was also disappointed in the work of the Camerata Chorus of Washington, which is featured in "Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming." In his choral writing, Foster arranges his voices STAB, and the main melody is invariably given to the tenor. This is particularly noticeable in this song, where the lower voices flow on serenely while the soprano unexpectedly enters with a sort of simple descant. For some reason, the Camerata's sopranos invariably manage to sound screechy when they should sound velvety.

Full texts of the songs as sung are provided, but not all the verses in the originals are sung. The instruments, mostly from the collections of the Smithsonian Institution, are contemporaneous with Foster and are fully described. The note by Jon Newsom of the Library of Congress strikes me as more literary than informative. One further small point: There does not seem to be any way to discover whether the piano accompaniments are being played by Gilbert Kalish or James Weaver. Or doesn't it matter? I.L.

B FRANÇAIX: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra; Suite for Violin and Orchestra; Rhapsody for Viola and Small Orchestra. Claude Paillard-Françaix, piano; Susanne Lautenbacher, violin; Ulrich Koch, viola; Luxemburg Radio Orchestra, Jean Françaix, cond. TURNABOUT TV-S 34552, \$3.98.

B FRANÇAIX: Divertimento for Flute and Chamber Orchestra*; Suite for Solo Flute, Quintet for Winds*. Ransom; Wilson, flute; Orpheus Chamber Ensemble*; Musical Heritage Wind Quintet*. MUSICAL HERITAGE MHS 3236, \$3.50 (Musical Heritage Society, Musical Heritage Building, Oakhurst, N.J. 07755).

Unlike Poulenc, whom he superficially resembles here and there, Françaix does not usually use contrasting material to provide relief from his sometimes jaunty, sometimes warmly flowing, but always suave musical ideas, which instead often



Wilhelm Furtwängler—conducting and composing with variable results

are repeated to the point of puerility. His music may be "completely, unabashedly, and irrevocably French," as Ransom Wilson points out in his liner notes for the Musical Heritage disc: but it is so only in accordance with a cliché, belied by countless Gallic endeavors, that would have all French artists concerned primarily with stylistic hedonism.

The concertante idiom is the one in which Françaix is perhaps the most successful, for the tensions created between soloist and orchestra help compensate for the sameness that tends to water down his style. In the four concertante works on these two recordings—the piano concerto (1936), the suite for violin and orchestra (1934), the rhapsody for viola and small orchestra (1946), and the divertimento for flute and orchestra (arranged in 1974 from an earlier flute/piano piece)—the composer uses the almost constantly moving solo parts as a latticework around which myriad melodic and instrumental patterns weave their attractive ways. None of it is very "deep," even in the sense that Satie and Poulenc are deep. And those enamored of concertante pyrotechnics won't find much to gasp at here, although the reworked flute part in the divertimento has more virtuoso *éclat* than the solo writing in the other three works. But if Françaix relentlessly concentrates on flat surfaces, in these pieces he has at least made the surfaces extremely attractive through some judicious tautening.

I must say, too, that the short solo-flute suite (1962) manages to sustain the listener's attention and that the 1948 wind quintet, which has a particularly appealing theme-and-variations third movement, deserves its popularity. I found the performance of the quintet somewhat blunted, especially in the way the mosaicly composed instrumental lines lack definition. Ransom Wilson, on the other hand, is obviously an extremely accomplished and versatile flutist, with a sharp attack and an ability to radically change the character of his playing to suit an individual passage or movement. Note, for instance, his almost muted performance of the slurred, chromatic perpetual mobile of the divertimento's third movement.

The Musical Heritage disc also benefits from extremely good sound reproduction. Turnabout's sound and performances are unexceptional but good enough not to be bothersome.

R.S.B.

B **FRANCK:** Symphony in D minor.*
WAGNER: Siegfried Idyll.* Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler* and Hans Knappertsbusch*, cond LONDON TREASURY R 23207, \$3.98 (mono) [from LONDON LL 967, 1954; *from LL 1250, 1955]

FRANCK: Symphony in D minor; Rédemption (symphonic piece). Orchestre de Paris, Daniel Barenboim, cond. [Gunther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 707, \$7.98. Tape: ●● 3300 707, \$7.98.

FRANCK: Le Chasseur maudit; Nocturne*; Psyché (orchestral version). Christa Ludwig, mezzo-soprano*; Orchestre de Paris, Daniel Barenboim, cond. [Gunther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 771, \$7.98.

Rehearing Furtwängler's bizarre interpretation of the Franck D minor Symphony, one wonders whether he knew what "lento" (or "allegro non troppo," or "a tempo") means. Admittedly, some of his tempos taken separately might—with some stretch of the imagination—be justifiable; put them together, however, and you have trouble.

In the first movement, which poses real problems of transition and structural unity even in the best circumstances, Furtwängler inverts and virtually destroys the normal dichotomy between the Lento and Allegro non troppo sections. In his overly brisk Lentos, all the spiritualism and mystery simply vanish (and that, after all, is what the piece is about). The tempo barely changes for Allegro non troppo and, in fact, gives the illusion of getting slower. Then, at the grandiose recapitulation, there is a lurch at the return of the alleged Lento. Only at the very end, when Franck augments the note values, is there anything approaching what the tempo ought to have been from the start.

There are more problems: the disregard for both a tempo markings, the uncalled-for ritenuto along with the molto diminuendo at bar 226, the swollen portentousness of the string figurations at bars 191-95, the generally unidiomatic, monochromatic Vienna woodwind playing throughout the symphony. (In the second movement, the all-important English horn sounds particularly threadbare and starved.) The second movement is not so much eccentric in tempo as stodgy and overemphatic, but the finale returns us to the aimless meandering of the first movement.

The sound, however, is highly acceptable; this is one of the last and, from a purely technical standpoint, best of Furtwängler's Vienna recordings.

Since Daniel Barenboim is an ardent admirer of Furtwängler, one is not surprised to discover in his first movement the same fast Lento and slow Allegro, the same fondness for overripe expressive lingering. The second movement goes more crisply, and the Orchestre de Paris, while less decisive than the Vienna Philharmonic, has more of the requisite opulence. Ironically, Barenboim projects Furtwängler's tempo aberrations less decisively and authoritatively, and the resulting performance sounds more mystical, less hard to like.

The shorter Franck pieces are acceptably played, and Barenboim is not insensitive to the music's beauty. My own feeling is that this literature is best served by underplaying its prominent rhetorical and mystical qualities. Toscanini's "Psyché et Eros" is a case in point: Heard alongside that plastic, yet more firmly delineated account, Barenboim's, well played as it is, sounds turgid and overripe. But make no mistake, he is improving as a conductor.

Knappertsbusch's *Siegfried Idyll* is a curious filler for the Franck symphony, and it happens that Furtwängler himself recorded the piece with the Vienna Philharmonic for EMI (available in Seraphim IB 6024). Knappertsbusch's genial, mellow approach works passably here, but one looks in vain for the tensile shaping of phrase and line practiced in divergent ways by Furtwängler, Toscanini, Kubelik, Walter, and Cantelli. The sound holds up well; the strings sound even rounder and warmer than in the Furtwängler Franck.

H.G.

FURTWÄNGLER: Symphony No. 2, in E minor. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. [Fred Hamel, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 086, \$15.96 (two discs, mono, manual sequence) [from LPM 18114/5, recorded December 1951].

Wilhelm Furtwängler's activity as a composer was divided into two periods. As a boy, his extraordinary musical gifts were early manifest, and he pursued composition equally with performance: works in various media, climaxing in a *Te Deum* that was first performed in Essen in 1911. But the demands of his conducting career—first the need to learn a broad repertory, which his early, humanistically oriented education had ignored, and then the growing demand for his services—severely circumscribed the time available for composition. Ironically, it was the advent of the Nazis

that changed this: after the 1934 showdown with Goebbels over Hindemith, when he resigned all his positions, and during similar periods of enforced inactivity later on, Furtwängler again found time to compose: two violin sonatas, a "Symphonic Concerto" for piano and orchestra, and three symphonies (the final movement of the third not completely revised when he died in 1954).

The Second Symphony was written during the last years of the Second World War, and completed in Clarens, Switzerland, on October 18, 1945. But you would hardly guess this from the music, which shows little trace of any developments since, roughly, the turn of the century. Furtwängler evidently resumed composition where

he had left off decades earlier. Not that he was unaware of what had passed in between: He had conducted at least three Mahler symphonies in the pre-Nazi years, and many works of Schoenberg, Bartók, Hindemith, Stravinsky, Honegger, and Prokofiev as well, and he believed that the music of his contemporaries deserved active support. But his heart was in tonal music, in the great German tradition that he considered inextricably dependent on the tonal system. (Schoenberg, an equally fervent musical nationalist, sought to make his peace with that tradition by demonstrating that all his innovations were firmly rooted therein.)

To understand this, we should note that the Germanic *fin-de-siècle* cultural milieu

about which we know the most—Vienna—was hardly typical; its ferment of ideas and personalities played no role in Furtwängler's youth. In Munich and Berlin, his upbringing faced southward, to Greece (his father and his tutor, Ludwig Curtius, were both noted classical archaeologists) and Italy (his fiancée, Bertel Hildebrand, was the daughter of a famous architect who kept a house in Florence). In these formative years he was exposed to all the arts in their classic manifestations: a world in which Aeschylus, Michelangelo, Goethe, and Beethoven held equal places—and Mahler, Freud, and Klimt none at all. That aspect of nineteenth-century German culture which yearned after the Mediterranean is one of its most appealing, and it was Furtwängler's spiritual home during what seems to have been an idyllic youth—so it is not surprising that his musical sympathies remained rooted there.

The language of the Second Symphony is, then, conservative: a big, brooding four-movement symphony in classical forms, with clear-cut themes, developments, and returns. Its aspirations are high—in those days, you didn't write a piece lasting an hour and twenty minutes unless you planned to say something pretty weighty. But the lengths are not covered in the leisurely, long-phrased strides of Bruckner—this is more nervously active music (though a certain obsessive quality in the duple-metered scherzo does recall Bruckner), and very tightly reasoned thematically. Often, in fact, one feels that the lengths are not so much covered as filled out, that the relatively neutral expressive character of the themes doesn't bear the weight they are called upon to support by the massive structure. And the prevailingly gray character of the orchestral writing (perhaps accentuated by a rather dim recording job, especially in the first two movements) doesn't make for greater variety.

I've known this recording for about fifteen years, and come to respect much of the symphony for its professional skill. Despite all my admiration for Furtwängler as a musician, however, I cannot find it a successful piece, least of all in the final pages—victory grasped from despair—where the scoring turns conventionally grandiose. This may not be the final word, however: though the symphony was recorded in 1951 and published in 1952, a 1954 letter to a conductor planning a performance refers to a "second conclusion."

This recording was made several years after the 1948 premiere, and the Berlin Philharmonic had not played the work in the meantime, which may account for some patches of uncertain execution. In another letter to that same conductor, Furtwängler said that the recording of the symphony was "certainly in many ways authoritative, but partly a series of tempos later became faster." Tapes of later performances are in existence that might confirm this (and also clarify the matter of the "second conclusion")—but the discs are, in any case, a fervent enough brief for the work.

Deutsche Grammophon's double-fold sleeve includes a slightly abridged translation of the analysis by Peter Wackernagel that appeared on the original issue, plus a brief biographical sketch by Karla Höcker

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and a photo of the composer/conductor, occupying some 240 square inches of space that might more usefully have been devoted to thematic citations, more historical detail, or to a translation of Furtwängler's own "Prefatory Note to the Premiere of the Second Symphony." D.H.

HANDEL: *Messiah* (ed. Hogwood). Elly Ameling, soprano; Anna Reynolds, mezzo; Philip Langridge, tenor; Gwynne Howell, bass; Nicholas Kraemer, harpsichord; Christopher Hogwood, organ; Academy and Chorus of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. [Chris Hazell, prod.] ARGO D18D 3, \$23.94 (three discs, manual sequence). Tape: ●● K18K 32, \$23.95.

Comparison:
Davis/London Sym.

Phi. SC71AX 300

From 1742 until a few days before Handel's death in 1759, there were fifty-six performances of *Messiah*, each determined to a considerable extent by the circumstances: portions of the score were omitted, new numbers added, others transposed to accommodate new singers, and so forth. As Christopher Hogwood, the editor of the version recorded here, says, Handel left "not one *Messiah*, but many."

Actually, the situation is not so bad. Judicious selections from among the different versions of *Messiah* have been made within the last decade or so by Alfred Mann, Watkins Shaw, and John Tobin (the latter's score published in 1965 in the Halle critical edition of Handel's works now in progress). Hogwood disapproves of these "standard performing editions," substituting the first London version, which survives only in a late-eighteenth-century copy. This is a legitimate decision, and we are grateful to this devoted scholar for letting us hear Handel's first thoughts, with several numbers that deviate from what we are used to.

But it is difficult to accept Hogwood's claim that the London version, which is not always unequivocally clear and portions of which had to be reconstructed, is better than Shaw's or Tobin's—in the absence of a definitive version, selections must be made in any event. And surely some of the additions and changes that Handel made are worth considering, as the product of second thoughts or the availability of better singers. (The "official" Tobin score prints the important variants in an appendix, the same procedure followed by Arthur Mendel in his invaluable edition of Bach's *St. John Passion*, which similarly survives in four versions.)

Neville Marriner's performance is admirable in many respects. I have never heard a better-trained, more accomplished and accurate boys' choir, the orchestra is first-class, the general performing discipline is exemplary, and the sound is good. Yet there are some disappointing contradictions.

On the one hand, Marriner, an excellent and cultivated conductor, follows the modern enlightened way of dealing with baroque music: The tempos are bracing (even, in many instances, too fast); the proportion of the performing forces is correct and well balanced, avoiding the pyramids of sound favored by the old-line choral societies; the dynamics are tasteful; most numbers are



DG/Jacoby

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau
A new look at Ives

sharp and clean, if often too fast and pointed. Colin Davis, in his remarkable recording, also displayed ample virtuosity but hit just the right degree of brilliance to bring out the incomparable charm of these pieces.

The contradictory quality comes in the self-conscious sentimentality of the solo numbers. Elly Ameling and Anna Reynolds, both very good singers, fairly tremble with emotion; some of the recitatives are really unctuous. Also, "I know that my Redeemer liveth" should not be performed, as it is here, like a French minuet, which is just as sentimental, if in a different sense, as when it is soulfully dragged. Ameling still delivers some fine singing, with her ringing high tones, and Reynolds too can sing well when she is not inhibited—interpreting "He was despised" she seems to emulate Handel's friend, the tragedienne Susanna Cibber, who reportedly had "a mere thread of a voice." Tenor Philip Langridge is also a little awestruck but holds his own, though his is not a bel canto voice; bass Gwynne Howell is good. Both men struggle a little with the coloratura.

Finally, a word about an important aspect of the performance: the overdone embellishment, which I take to be the editor's work. In the baroque era the performer was king, but some composers, like Lully and Handel, did not permit undue liberties, and we know that in many instances the doodads were excessive. Common as well as musical sense demands that with changed circumstances and sensibilities we should hold such embellishments to a tasteful minimum. In this recording, "I know that my Redeemer liveth" is covered with the musical equivalent of costume jewelry. (I am aware of the existence of such a sequin-studded version, contemporaneous with Handel but anonymous, but who would want to break up such a glorious melody with meaningless curlicues?)

The so-called fermata cadenzas at the end of pieces or sections are, as usual, inept sallies into the musical void. Pier Francesco Tosi's famous *Observations on the Florid Song* (1742) should have been taken to heart. "Some," he warns, "after a tender and passionate Air make a lively merry ca-

dence; and after a brisk Air, end with one that is doleful." Exactly this is being done these days, in the name of historical accuracy! Double-dotted, another fetishism, is also a bit exaggerated by Marriner, especially at the opening of the overture. Surprisingly in such a scholarly venture, the continuo is nearly inaudible, leaving the arias accompanied by violins and bass, which depend on replenishment by the harpsichord, bereft of harmonic support.

Still, Marriner's recording is worth considering as a supplement to Davis', both for the textual variants and for the many exquisitely performed numbers it contains.

P.H.L.

IVES: *Songs*. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Michael Ponti, piano. [Cord Garben, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 696, \$7.98.

At the River; *Elégie*; Ann Street; A Christmas Carol; From "The Swimmers"; West London; A Farewell to Land; Abide with Me; Where the Eagle; Disclosure; The White Gulls; The Children's Hour; Two Little Flowers; Autumn; Tom Sails Away; Ich grolle nicht; Feldeinsamkeit; Weil auf mir; In Flanders Fields.

Since my October 1974 Ives discography, in which I noted that the songs represented a still largely untapped source of some of the composer's finest and most accessible music, we have had Jan DeGaetani's wonderful Nonesuch disc (H 71325, August 1976) and now this collection by Fischer-Dieskau. Although I cannot say that his achievement matches DeGaetani's, this is certainly a fascinating and valuable contribution to the Ives shelf. Simply to have someone of his musical background and experience deal with this literature is an exciting and intriguing prospect.

From Ives's roughly 150 songs, Fischer-Dieskau chooses a varied group of nineteen that covers the entire thirty-five years of the composer's productivity. Included are five songs not previously available on record ("Elégie," "Abide with Me," "Where the Eagle," "Disclosure," and "Weil auf mir"); and although some of the better-known songs do appear—such as "At the River" and "Ann Street"—emphasis is wisely placed upon those that are less frequently performed.

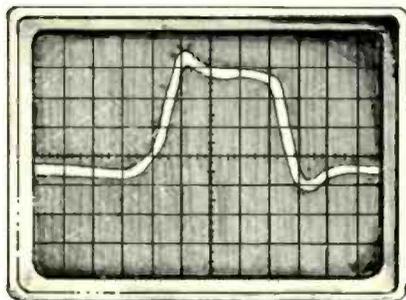
In the performances, Fischer-Dieskau never simply takes the obvious course but shapes the pieces in unusual and unexpected ways. Indeed, my chief complaint with this disc is that the works seem over-interpreted: Fischer-Dieskau is so intent upon constantly "doing" something with his voice—articulating every possible nuance and inflection—that the music tends to get buried beneath the performance. One of the most impressive aspects of DeGaetani's disc is the way she meets the music on its own terms, neither condescending to it nor trying to make of it something that it isn't. Particularly irritating is Fischer-Dieskau's habit of scooping into (or out of) notes, presumably to lend them more expressive warmth; this rarely works with Ives.

Yet there is much that is excellent about this disc. I particularly like the performances of four early settings of texts taken from European art songs (three in German, one in French), and the reading of "West London" is as beautiful as any I have heard.

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One problem in approaching this disc may simply be that we are accustomed to hearing lves done in a certain way, by home-grown voices. Fischer-Dieskau does not fall into the trap of trying to sound like a different kind of singer from the one he is, and I suspect that I will come to like these readings better as I become more accustomed to them.

All lves lovers should welcome the appearance of this collection, offering as it does a real alternative to what is otherwise available. And while texts are provided, Fischer-Dieskau's English is consistently intelligible (though his determination to sound "American" frequently gives his voice an unpleasantly nasal timbre). Michael Ponti's sensitive accompaniments are a real plus. R.P.M.

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Valentina Kayevchenko (s)
Albina Chilikova (s)
Nina Isakova (ms)
Anatol Mishchenko (l)
Nikolai Gutorovich (l)
Yevgeny Maximenko (b)
Leonid Boldin (bs-b)
Gyorgy Dudarev (bs)

Chorus and Orchestra of the Stanislavsky/Nemirovich-Danchenko Musical Theater, Georgi Zhemchuzhin, cond. [Yuri Kokzhayan and Nikolai Danilin, prod.] COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M3 33588, \$20.98 (three discs, automatic sequence).

This opera, Kabalevsky's first, was initially performed in 1938 in the composer's native city, Leningrad. Though its overture and an orchestral suite drawn from the opera gained a certain currency, the piece itself did not hold the stage. Kabalevsky pattered over it for thirty years, finally producing a revised version in 1968 (hence the dual opus listing). This second version has evidently achieved some success in the Soviet Union, and is the work recorded here by forces of the Moscow company that is descended from Stanislavsky's Opera Studio, and that has also been responsible for recordings of Prokofiev's *The Duenna* and Shostakovich's *Katerina Ismailova*.

Colas Breugnon is drawn from a tale by Romain Rolland, set in the Burgundian town of Clamecy during the 1500s. The hero, Colas, is a sculptor and carver of evidently irrepressible spirits. As represented in the opera, he is one of those invented legends intended to embody the presumed free and noble attributes of a particular region, as well as those of the socially useful artist. In his character there are undertones of Daudet's *Tartarin of Tarascon* or the stage-romanticized Villon. He flouts the social order and defies the aristocracy, asserting the artist's right to expression in a society that assigns him servant status. Kabalevsky was attracted by Colas' stance as "artist of the people"—and in best Russian tradition, this means nifty satirist of the privileged classes. Colas endures humiliations, a bad marriage, plague, loss of family, and finally destruction of his entire life's work, but ends with optimistic sayings about life and a final act of bravado—the unveiling of an equestrian statue of the villainous duke, portraying him seated backward on an ass. Beneath all this

runs the theme of Colas' lifelong love for Selina, who like Colas makes the wrong marital choice when young and headstrong.

The dramatic problems of the work arise in part from the difficulty of finding actions and situations suitable for showing us just why we should be captivated by Colas (villagers exclaiming "Oh, that Colas!" are not enough) or interested in his situation with Selina (they both seem merely pigheaded), and partly from a conflict in lyric stage method: The material indicates epic treatment, but Kabalevsky's compositional approach leans toward rather protracted development of choruses, monologues, and other conventional forms, carried along by expository dialogue. Neither problem is really resolved, but there is enough in the music to create at least some interest, and it is only fair to hedge judgments a bit—a recording is no way to get to know a piece like this, and it is conceivable that the Moscow company, whose members really know how to act, makes the work entertaining and absorbing in the theater. A truly charismatic performer in the title role would do a great deal for the work.

I enjoyed the opera more as it went along, and more at second hearing than at first. Kabalevsky's harmonic language will be familiar to anyone who has heard the conservative side of Prokofiev, and so will the sonorities, heavy on xylophone, snare drum, and muted trumpet. The first half is incessantly chattery, and though the overture and Colas' patter song are sprightly enough and there is a pleasant song for Selina, none of these numbers do anything unpredictable, and a great deal of the connecting material is dressing for characters and stage gestures that are decidedly *vieux jeu*—to work, it would have to be inspired, not merely competent.

The writing becomes more personal and lyrically inventive in the "serious" scenes that surround the onset of the plague and the death of Colas' wife. The hero is given two monologues of some intensity, there are striking descriptive moments in the orchestral writing, and Jacqueline's death is touchingly set. The scene of a meeting between Colas and Selina, forty years after their youthful attraction, has some suggestive delicacy. To my ear, it is in the intimate, even sentimental side of the story that Kabalevsky does his more comfortable work; much of the "brashness" sounds like nicely crafted put-on, and the satirical commentary has little of the pungency that marks similar operatic passages in Rimsky, Prokofiev, or Shostakovich. Still, there is enough here to make me curious about a carefully cast, brilliantly directed and acted stage production, whenever that may come to light.

The performance has a great deal of vivacity—Georgi Zhemchuzhin is a real theater conductor, and the company's orchestra (supplemented, I suspect, for recording purposes) plays with considerable address, if not the utmost refinement. The men of the cast are more listenable than the women. Leonid Boldin, an up-through-the-ranks veteran of the company, has a firm lyric bass with a trace of quick oscillation in sustained writing. He sounds quite lovely in several of the *cantante* passages and (like so many Slavic basses) shows off an adept *mezza voce*. Much of his writing is of a par-

lando nature, and here he tends to sound like any above-average Russian character bass. I respected and enjoyed his work, but he did not quite persuade me that Colas is the magnetic, charming rascal he is supposed to be, which is only to say that he does not transcend the writing.

Anatol Mishchevsky used to sing romantic tenor leads with the ensemble (and, for all I know, does yet). He still has plenty of voice, though to judge by present evidence it is beginning to sound dry and constricted around the break and to lose some of its malleability. In what amounts to an extended character part, he gets off some ringing top notes and throws himself into the caricature with a will. Gyorgy Dudarev is a solid basso for the quasi-buffo part of the Cué. Yevgeny Maximenko a guttural-sounding baritone for the important but musically thankless role of a toady for the duke who is Colas' sexual rival.

Nina Isakova, the Selina, is an experienced mezzo whose voice now inclines to some harshness and heaviness. She sings reliably, but at least in purely aural terms does not convey the allure intended in the music. Valentina Kayevchenko, as the wife, does a committed piece of vocal acting, but her lyric soprano has taken on a case of the Slavic shrills. To compare the singing of these two women with their earlier work in the *Duenna* recording is to have specified the sort of stiffness and wiriness that seems to invade the vocalism of almost all Russian female singers as they move out of their youthful primes.

The sound is decent enough, though the soloists are at points rather aggressively with us, and the empty-room acoustic is in evidence. The booklet includes libretto with a careful, annotated transliteration by Dr. Albert Todd and some informative background notes by Boris Schwarz. C.L.O.

KODÁLY: Háry János; Suite. PROKOFIEV: Lt. Kije; Suite, Op. 60. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. [Jay David Saks, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-1325, \$7.98.

KODÁLY: Háry János; Suite. PROKOFIEV: Lt. Kije; Suite, Op. 60. Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. [Raymond Few, prod.] LONDON PHASE-4 SPC 21146, \$6.98. Tape: ●● SPC5 21146, \$7.95.

Comparison—same coupling:
Szeil/Cleveland

Col. MS 7408

Neither of these conductors succeeds in projecting the quite individual satiric wit of these scores. Ormandy, who introduced the *Háry János* Suite to records more than four decades ago with the Minneapolis Symphony, has not here captured the music's sardonic bite and wild fantasy, and the lushness of the Philadelphia Orchestra, at least as recorded by RCA, doesn't suit either piece. Both works, though brilliantly scored, need more dry-point etching to match their humor. Dorati comes closer to meeting their textural requirements, but he too lacks the necessary wit to carry them off successfully. Moreover, the intensely detailed Phase-4 recording does not flatter the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic. Dorati's performance of the Kodály with the Philharmonia Hungarica in their set of that composer's orchestral works (London, CSA 2313) was in every respect better.

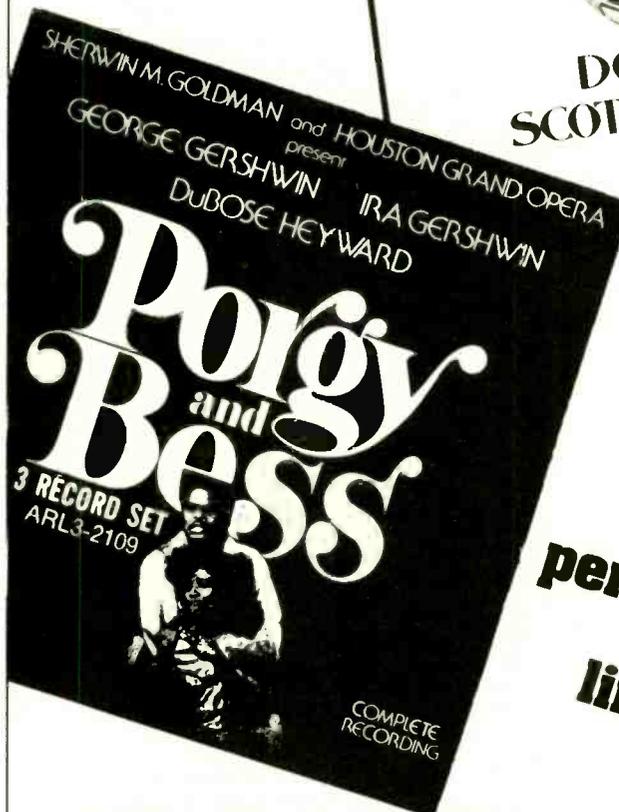
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ADVERTISING INDEX

Key No.	Page No.
1	Acoustic 3A International.....96
2	ADC Professional Products Group A division of BSR (USA) Ltd.....17
58	ADC Professional Products Group A division of BSR (USA) Ltd.....58
	ADS—Analog & Digital Systems.....112
3	AIWA.....7
	Akai America Ltd.....137
	AKG.....119
4	Angel Records.....100
	Audio Technica U.S.A. Inc.....24
5	Bang & Olufsen of America.....42
	BASF.....25
	Bose Corp.....5
6	British Industries Co.....29
7	British Industries Co.....19
8	BSR (USA) Ltd.....20
9	Carston Studios.....120
	Classified Ads.....152-154
	Component Discounters.....144
11	Crown International.....10
12	Discount Music Club.....14
	Discwasher, Inc.....69, 73, 74
	Dixie Hi-Fi.....145
14	Dokorder.....41
17	Dual.....147
15	Electro Voice, Inc.....139
16	Elpa Marketing Industries.....43
10	Empire Scientific Corp.....16
13	Empire Scientific Corp.....44
18	Frazier, Inc.....40
57	Garrard.....155
	High Fidelity's Test Reports.....122
19	Icelandic Airlines.....120
20	Illinois Audio.....145
28	JVC America, Inc.....23
30	Kenwood.....Cover IV
23	Kirsch Co.....116
24	Klipsch & Assoc.....98
25	Koss Corp.....141
26	London Records.....109
	Marantz Co., Inc.....156, Cover III
22	Maxell Corp. of America.....54, 55
27	Maxell Corp. of America.....85
21	McIntosh Laboratory.....42
29	Miida Electronics.....12
31	Musical Heritage Society.....95
	Music Listener's Book Service.....110
	Music Listener's Record Service.....117
32	Nakamichi (Research USA) Inc.....21
55	National Record Plan.....99
33	Olympus Corp. of America.....114
34	Onkyo.....38, 39
35	Ortofon.....15
36	Phase Linear Corp.....113
37	Philips Records.....97
38	Pickering & Co. Inc.....2
39	Pioneer High Fidelity.....Cover II, 1
	Radio Shack.....149
40	RCA Records.....105
41	RTR Industries.....22
42	SAE, Inc.....131
43	Sansui Electronics Corp.....8, 9
	Schwann Artist Issue.....102
44	Sherwood Electronic Laboratories.....31
45	Shure Brothers, Inc.....79
46	Sonic Energy Systems.....104
47	Sony Corp. of America.....26, 27
	Sound Guard.....87
48	Sound Reproduction Inc.....144
49	Stereo Corp. of America.....144
50	Superex Electronics.....117
	Superscope, Inc.....150, 151
51	TDK Electronics.....13
	Teac Corp.....56, 57
52	Technics by Panasonic.....33-26
56	Technics by Panasonic.....142
16	Thorens.....43
17	United Audio Products, Inc.....147
7	Venturi.....19
53	Vor Industries.....118
	Wyeth Press.....88
54	Yamaha.....11

Among the many recorded performances of these scores, I still return to Szell's coupling: The lean sound of the virtuoso Cleveland Orchestra and Szell's rather strained sense of fun seem infinitely more idiomatic in both pieces. For the record, both Ormandy and Dorati use a cimbalom in *Háry János* and opt for the instrumental version of the Romance in *Lt. Kije*. P.H.

LALO: Symphony in G minor; Rapsodie norvégienne; Le Roi d'Ys: Overture. Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra, Antonio de Almeida, cond. PHILIPS 6500 927, \$7.98.

Edouard Lalo's Symphony in G minor (1885-86), like many such minor Romantic pieces, starts out with the suggestion of a rather heroic theme, does very little with it, moves on to other themes (some quite attractive) that likewise have little place to go, and ties its loose ends together with fairly empty dramatic flourishes. Much of the symphony sounds to me like excellent accompaniment to vocal lines that were never devised, or perhaps a curtain-raiser for a curtain that never rises. Attractive as much of the music is, it leaves me with an empty feeling.

Much more effective, despite the blatant Wagnerisms that pervade Lalo's work, are the overture to the opera *Le Roi d'Ys* (here, at least, one knows the curtain will go up) and the Presto from the two-movement *Rapsodie norvégienne*, the composer's orchestral arrangement of his violin-and-orchestra *Fantaisie norvégienne*. The cute folksiness of the *Rapsodie*'s opening movement, however, does little for me.

In some of the big tutti passages, the Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra sounds quite impressive, and it is helped by Philips' big, present sonics. In more subdued passages, though, weaknesses appear, particularly a thin-toned, often flat oboe. Antonio de Almeida is good enough with the flashier material, but I do not find much cohesiveness in his approach to the symphony. R.S.B.

MASSENET: Le Cid: Ballet Music. Lamento d'Ariane. **MEYERBEER-LAMBERT:** Les Patineurs. National Philharmonic Orchestra, Richard Bonyngé, cond. [Michael Woolcock, prod.] LONDON CS 7032, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS5 7032, \$7.95.

Richard Bonyngé's coupling of *Les Patineurs* and the ballet music from *Le Cid* competes with Jean Martinon's equally proficient version of the same music with the Israel Philharmonic (London Stereo Treasury STS 15051). What gives Bonyngé a distinct advantage, however, is the six-minute excerpt from Massenet's late and neglected opera *Ariane*, one of the many accounts of Ariadne on the island of Naxos with which the history of opera is studded.

The actual nature of the excerpt is unclear. From the note by dance historian Ivor Guest, you are led to expect the ballet music, whereas the title, "*Lamento d'Ariane*," refers to an orchestral peroration from the third act. Some of that music is, indeed, heard here, though at least half is taken from other places in the score. Confusing though all this is, Bonyngé's arrangement enables us to hear some characteristically

elegant and sensuous Massenet for the first time on records.

Good sound and pressing. D.S.H.

MENDELSSOHN: Symphony No. 4, in A, Op. 90 (*Italian*). A Midsummer Night's Dream: Overture; Scherzo; Nocturne; Wedding March. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 9500 068, \$7.98. Tape: ●● 7300 480, \$7.95.

A disappointing record after the successful Davis/BSO Sibelius Fifth and Seventh Symphonies (Philips 6500 959, December 1975). Whether from the actual playing or from the engineering, the sound is frequently opaque and brash. Timpani are too prominent when they should blend into the ensemble, and the basses are murky when clear definition is needed thematically, especially in the *Italian* Symphony. Nor are Mendelssohn's dynamics correctly projected.

Certainly such sound is completely at odds with the magic and fantasy of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* music, and the lack of nuance also detracts from the *Italian* Symphony, a work that Davis' renowned affinity for Berlioz should have made especially congenial to him. I am surprised that Davis approved the release of these performances. P.H.

MEYERBEER-LAMBERT: Les Patineurs—See Massenet: Le Cid: Ballet Music.

MOZART: Operatic and Concert Arias. For an essay review, see page 89.

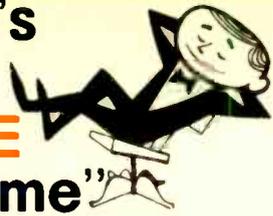
MOZART: Sonatas for Piano: in A, K. 331; in B flat, K. 333. Adagio in B minor, K. 540. Alfred Brendel, piano. PHILIPS 9500 025, \$7.98. Tape: ●● 7300 474, \$7.95.

The performance of K. 331 is elegant, sensitive, and impressive. Brendel paces the opening variations well and throws in some modest but meaningful embroidery. The minuet is stately but never, as is sometimes the case, stolid. In the celebrated Rondo alla turca, the nimble fingerwork is a treat to hear, and the delicately handled "Turkish" passages scintillate. The B minor Adagio, if less gloom-laden than it sometimes is, loses little poignancy in this coolly chaste, classical treatment. Formal elements are respected, and the effect is more Mozartean than Beethovenian.

In K. 333, Brendel's mincing and rigid staccato rears its head. His insistence on hitting every downbeat squarely precludes the communication of meaningful line and structure: his handling of the wonderful second-movement development section lacks mystery or poetry (he further distorts the binary structure by repeating only the first half), and there is absolutely no savoring of the opera buffa qualities and harmonic teasing in the rondo's "C" section. What finally puts me off is Brendel's maddening reliance on pedal for legato; the resulting sound is, consequently, both picky and unclear.

Philips' processing is, as usual, splendid. H.G.

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16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105
106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135
136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75
76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100	101	102	103	104	105
106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120
121	122	123	124	125	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135
136	137	138	139	140	141	142	143	144	145	146	147	148	149	150
151	152	153	154	155	156	157	158	159	160	161	162	163	164	165

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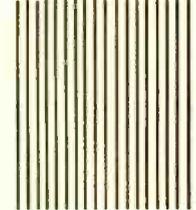
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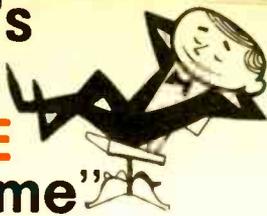
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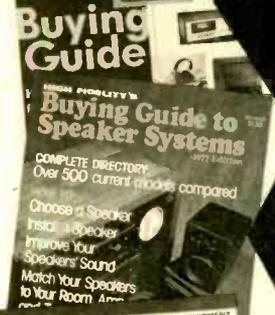
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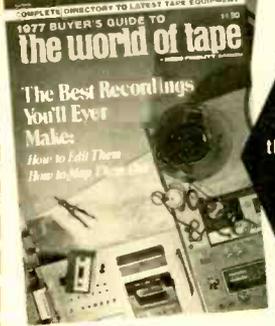
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B **MUSSORGSKY:** Pictures at an Exhibition (orch. Ravel); A Night on Bare Mountain (ed. Rimsky-Korsakov). St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin, cond. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] TURNABOUT QTV-S 34633, \$3.98 (QS-encoded disc).

Both Slatkin and the fast-maturing St. Louis Symphony do remarkably well with these Mussorgsky showpieces, even though they inevitably fall short of matching the best earlier versions. Like other young conductors in such demanding scores, Slatkin has to be so intent on maintaining taut control that he isn't yet able to inject much distinctive individuality.

There is no real challenge here to the fierce drama of the Toscanini and a few other accounts of Mussorgsky-Ravel (or to the more pictorial lyricism of Ansermet in the same score), but with the invaluable aid of luminous engineering, Slatkin makes the Midwest orchestra sound mightily impressive in both stereo-only and even bigger auditorium-authentic quadraphony. The four-channel technology is of the ambience-only type, however, and hence not quite as thrilling as the more enveloping "surround sound" of the Mackerras/Vanguard Pictures, especially in the latter's fully discrete Q-reel edition. R.D.D.

ORFF: Carmina Burana. Norma Burrowes, soprano; Louis Devos, tenor; John Shirley-Quirk, bass-baritone; Southend Boys' Choir, Brighton Festival Chorus, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. [Raymond Few and Tim McDonald, prod.] LONDON PHASE-4 SPC 21153, \$6.98. Tape: ●● SPC5 21153, \$7.95.

Given the mushrooming vogue of this Orff showpiece, the only surprise is that there hasn't been a *Carmina Burana* long before this from London. As might also be expected, especially since this is a Phase-4 release, the audio engineering is outstanding for its strength, solidity, and dramatic impact. Technologically, this version ranks among the very best. And it is, moreover, distinctively different from any of the others in its choice of vocal/instrumental balancing, with the voices somewhat more prominent—which may or may not be an advantage.

Unfortunately, however, the producers must have been so preoccupied with engineering considerations that they neglected to choose performers who know and relish the music. Dorati, with his long ballet experience, should have been a good choice to conduct, but he gives the impression of dutifully reading an unfamiliar score, never conveying any real sense of personal involvement. All three soloists are at best routine, at worst indulgently mannered, while the often somewhat coarse-toned chorus is neither first-class to begin with nor adequately rehearsed so as to seem so in this particular work. And when *Carmina Burana* is given no better than a barely adequate performance, the best recording in the world can't save it.

So it's the discographic status quo ante: The 1970 Ozawa/RCA version (LSC 3161) remains grandly unique; the 1975 Thomas/Columbia account (M/MQ 33172) remains

the most provocatively exciting for its spectacular quadraphony, the recent Kegel/Philips version (9500 040, December 1970) is my all-round preference for its felicitous combination of authority, musicality, dramatic point, and relish. R.D.D.

B **PAGINI:** Caprices (24), Op. 1. Michael Habin, violin [Richard Jones, prod.] SERAPHIM SIB 6096, \$7.96 (two discs, automatic sequence) [from CAPITOL SPBR 8477, 1959].

Comparison: Perلمان

Ang. S 36860

I hope that no one lives with a soul so dead as not to vibrate in every bone at a really

spectacular performance of the Paganini Caprices. For my money there are few tonics quite so bracing, and over the years those impossible feats among the thirty-second-note chromatic octaves, the left-hand pizzicatos, the over-the-string four-octave leaps, the flying spiccatos, and all the rest have remained one of the great roller-coaster rides of all time. And over the years, too, one man's recording of the Caprices has remained at the top of the heap. Michael Rabin first recorded eleven of them for Columbia at the age of fourteen, the year he made his Carnegie Hall debut, his complete set, here reissued by Seraphim, was released in 1959. In the early 1960s, he was afflicted with health problems, and he died tragically in 1972.

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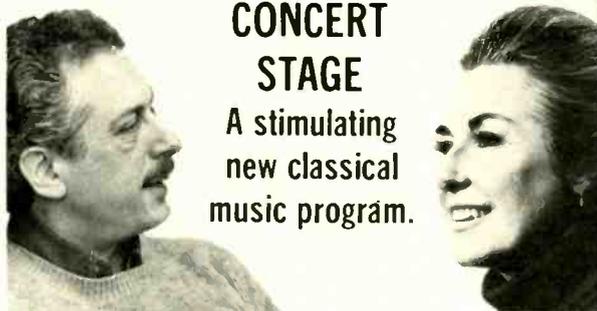
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It is wonderful to have his *Caprices* back, and they are still at the top of the heap. In 1972, in reviewing Itzhak Perlman's version (which Perlman dedicated to Rabin's memory), I found Rabin in many instances a shade more elegant, more secure in intonation, more yielding in Paganini's sweet sentimental moments. Going over the two versions again, I feel the same way, though Perlman's set is so good that I am slightly embarrassed to place it second to anybody's. (Paul Zukofsky, of course, is also a fabulous technician, but his Vanguard version is highly idiosyncratic—so peculiar, in fact, as to put it almost out of the running.)

At any rate, Rabin is full of presence and tensile energy. He is positively princely in his sense of rhythmic resilience (the bounce of those punctuating eighth notes as they offset the cascade of thirty-second-note runs in No. 17!) and surprisingly sensuous in Paganini's slower, more beguiling moments, like the *dolce* opening of No. 20 or the luscious, sentimental chromatic thirds of No. 13. It is, in fact, this sensuousness that distinguishes Rabin from Perlman; the latter is inclined to be a little more restrained, a little more on top of the strings, a little cooler. A case in point is the fanfare figure of No. 14, which Rabin digs into to the point of grittiness; Perlman employs a lighter touch and keeps his distance a bit. He is, on the whole, a shade paler. (So is Angel's sound, which does not have the presence, oddly enough, of Seraphim's re-run.)

So Rabin is back. And you won't really know what the Paganini *Caprices* hold until you hear him. S.F.



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POULENC: Gloria*; Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*. Norma Burrowes, soprano*; Cristina Ortiz, piano*; City of Birmingham Chorus* and Symphony Orchestra, Louis Frémaux, cond. [David Mottley* and John Willan*, prod.] ANGEL S 37246, \$6.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Poulenc's piano concerto, composed in 1949, opens with one of those melodies so immediately striking that heads automatically turn when it is played. After a solid C sharp minor figure, a momentary shift to D major sets the theme in a slightly off-center perspective that is ingeniously maintained throughout; those mild distortions of perspectives give Poulenc's work much of its charm. By the time the last movement is reached, he begins to play with the perspective even more, dashing from melodic snippet to melodic snippet while picking up along the way a bit of "Old Folks at Home," Gershwin's *American in Paris*, and perhaps even a smidgen from the finale of Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto.

Louis Frémaux's attempt to turn the concerto into something bigger than it strikes me as unreasonable. I am not asking for a fluffy, across-the-surface rendition, but neither should Poulenc's simplicity be turned into Rachmaninoff-ish lushness, which is pretty much what happens. Cristina Ortiz performs the almost self-effacing piano part with beautiful flow and tone, but she has not been able to entirely avoid getting caught up in the excessive orchestral swell. There are things to be heard on this well-recorded release that are obscured in the Tac-



Alix B. Williamson

Kyung-Wha Chung
A breathtaking violinist

chino/Prêtre performance (Angel S 36426), but the latter is quite a bit more idiomatic.

Poulenc's 1959 Gloria may prove one of the last great musical works based on Catholic liturgy. Opening with a fanfare based on a much earlier (1928) *Hymne* for piano (itself probably inspired by the "Hymn" opening Stravinsky's 1925 serenade for piano), the Gloria is a perfect example of the almost sensual richness Poulenc brought to his liturgical music. Whether in the bantering jocularly of the "Laudamus Te," which struck certain religious spirits as inappropriate at the time of the work's premiere, or the rather Prokofiev-ish, impassioned plea of the "Agnus Dei," he subtly manipulates mood with both an extraordinary series of melodies and a warm harmonic and orchestral coloration perfectly suited to the spirit of the texts.

Frémaux's Gloria, while more idiomatic than his piano concerto, is still drier and less exuberant than Prêtre's (Angel S 35953). And although I like the churchlike ambience of the choral passages, the recorded sound here lacks depth and brightness, and the sensitive, effortless singing of soprano Norma Burrowes has been all but buried. R.S.B.

PROKOFIEV: Lt. Kije: Suite—See Kodály; Háry János: Suite.

SAINT-SAËNS: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 3, in B minor, Op. 61. **VIEXTEMPS:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 5, in A minor, Op. 37. Kyung-Wha Chung, violin; London Symphony Orchestra, Lawrence Foster, cond. [Michael Woodcock, prod.] LONDON CS 6992, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS5 6992, \$7.95.

Comparison—Saint-Saëns:
Milstein, Fistoulari/Philharmonia Ang. S 36005
Comparison—Viextemps:
Zukerman, Mackerras/London Sym. Col. MS 7422

Kyung-Wha Chung entertains stiff competition in both these works—Milstein in the Saint-Saëns, Zukerman in the Viextemps—and does so without turning a hair,

as one would expect. She is truly a breathtaking violinist, whose intensity in virtuosic passages might lead you to anticipate a hard or roughshod handling of more lyric moments. What an unfailing pleasure it is, therefore, to find her muscular and biting drive give way to the utmost tenderness when the *espressivo* measures come into view. Each of these concertos was calculated by its creator to make the most of just such juxtapositions, and Chung knows how to handle them to the hilt.

In the Saint-Saëns she makes more of the drama than Milstein—for drama is one of her strong suits. The opening of the finale, for instance, is attacked with a string-snapping viciousness, whereas Milstein, for all his sense of thrust, is lighter and more lyrical. But Saint-Saëns's figuration here can hold up under Chung's incisiveness very well, and her perception of style never fails her. She warms up the finale in particular with plenty of portamento but never too much. There is only one aspect of her playing that I find bothersome: a tendency to land just under the pitch on climactic notes before slipping up with split-second precision to the true plateau of tone. She does this often enough to suggest that it is a mannerism rather than a technical flaw, and the habit does not crop up in the Viextemps at all. But the point is a small one. Put this alongside Milstein's as one of the finest performances of the work on discs.

The Viextemps is a less substantial piece, but as a vehicle it is astutely designed to encompass sweet-toned rhapsodizing, a lovely lyricism, and spurts of derring-do. Chung manages a little more snap than even Zukerman, and throughout she displays the fine, free phrasing and capacity for tonal color that are characteristic of her. Zukerman is not overshadowed, by any means—these Leventritt winners (they shared that prize in 1967) are a fair match for each other. But Chung's performance is enormously attractive.

She gets strong support from Lawrence Foster and the London Symphony, who see eye to eye with her on the inherent drama in each work. A special salute to the oboist, who performs his concertante role in the Saint-Saëns middle movement with a soloist's verve. S.F.

B SAINT-SAËNS: Requiem, Op. 54. Danielle Galland, soprano; Jeannine Collard, mezzo; Francis Bardot, tenor; Jacques Villisech, bass; "Contrepont" Choral Ensemble, Orchestre Lyrique de l'ORTF, Jean-Gabriel Gaussens, cond. [Jacques Boisgallais, prod.] RCA GOLD SEAL AGL 1-1968, \$4.98.

Saint-Saëns's Requiem was written, in a very short time in 1877, as a response to an inheritance that enabled him to give up his post as organist of the Church of the Madeleine. Although the Requiem is characteristic of its composer, it differs radically from its celebrated nineteenth-century cousins by Berlioz and Verdi.

It is a low-keyed, reflective work, attuned to church rather than concert hall, with the music remaining subservient to the text. Its best qualities lie in this straightforwardness and in Saint-Saëns's craftsmanship. In this respect, the Requiem recalls eight-

eenth-century works in tone and feeling; its aura of quiet repose and its shunning of melodramatics are found again in the Fauré Requiem.

This is not to say that the Saint-Saëns Requiem is archaic. The musical materials are thoroughly those of the composer: There is always present a Romantic plushness, and behind every sighing chromatic there is a solacing cadence. Other "Requiem fingerprints" in the work are a variant, in the opening, of the arpeggio figurations of the "Amen" from the Berlioz work and a quotation of the thrice-familiar Dies Irae plainchant. Saint-Saëns, however, does not highlight this moment: He uses it as a countertheme, almost in the background, and as part of the musical texture. The soloists are considered part of the choir, emerging and receding into the choral mass rather than standing out from it.

The performance is consistent with the work, nowhere outstanding but quite acceptable. The sound (it was recorded in the ORTF studio) has a closed-in opaqueness that obscures a lot of musical detail and causes the organ to blur even more than usual. P.J.S.

B SCHOENBERG: Serenade, Op. 24. Kenneth Bell, bass; Light Fantastic Players, Daniel Shulman, cond. [Marc J. Aurbort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] NONESUCH H 71331, \$3.96.

Atherton/London Sinfonietta Br. Decca SXLK 6660/4
Craft/Columbia Chamber Ens. Col. M2S 762

Light, even playful, as Schoenberg's Serenade is, it is still composed with a density that challenges both performers and recording engineers. Nonesuch, like Decca/London in its boxed set of Schoenberg's music for chamber ensemble, has opted for a fairly reverberant acoustic, as if we were listening to the performance from the back of an empty hall. (The London recording was in fact made in a church.) Many people will find this more attractive than the clinical clarity of Robert Craft's version in Vol. 6 of his Columbia Schoenberg series, not to mention the dry mono sound of the Mitropoulos recording made in 1949 for Schoenberg's seventy-fifth birthday celebrations (unlisted in SCHWANN at present but too much of a classic to be allowed to disappear for good).

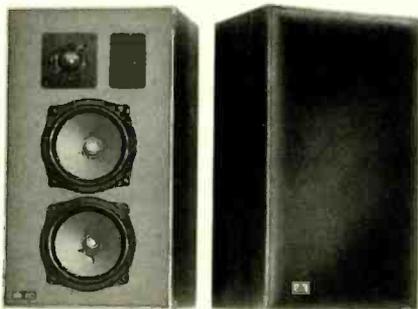
To my ears, though, this music demands all the clarity it can get. There is so much going on, the chord structures are so complex, the instrumentation is so kaleidoscopic in its shifts of pitch and timbre, that the average listener can do with all the help the engineers can give him. That is particularly the case, of course, with conductors like Craft and David Atherton, who do their best to take the music up to Schoenberg's invariably fast tempos. Daniel Shulman, though by no means sentimentalizing the score, is prepared to allow his players rather more leeway, occasionally to the point of losing the music's forward impetus, I feel. This is very much a matter of subjective impressions, of course, but it seems to me that the serenity of the penultimate "Song Without Words" is undercut by too many suggestions of the same mood earlier in the work.

On the other hand, these fairly easygoing

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tempos do allow the Light Fantastic Players to phrase with point and character, and they take the chance eagerly. Only the cellist seems to me not to emerge quite as distinctly as he should, and this is more a result of slightly backward placing than of any lack of intensity in his playing. The young bass Kenneth Bell makes an honorable Nonesuch debut in the central George/Petrarch sonnet. I wish I could say more, and it is not Bell's fault that I can't: This movement has always struck me as a let-down in the middle of an otherwise witty and tender work, the hideously ungrateful leaps in the vocal line justified mainly by the need to conceal the banality of a constantly repeating series. If this is heresy, so be it—but I observe that Robert Erich Wolf, in his admirably cant-free notes, remarks that Schoenberg's setting of the text “is still decidedly Expressionistic, charged musically with more emotional tension than its rather formal sentiments warrant,” which may be a politer way of saying the same thing.

Apart from this one of its seven movements, the Serenade is a richly rewarding work, and one whose very complexities make it desirable to own more than one recording. For acoustic reasons I am not sure that Nonesuch's would be my first recommendation, but it could admirably complement any of the others I have mentioned. And a score enhances one's pleasure enormously; isn't it about time that the publisher, Hansen, put out a less illegible edition of the miniature? J.N.

SCHOENBERG: Variations for Orchestra, Op. 31. **ELGAR:** Enigma Variations, Op. 36. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. [Ray Minshull, prod.] LONDON CS 6984, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 6984, \$7.95.

SCHOENBERG: Chamber Symphonies, No. 1 (orchestral version), Op. 9b; No. 2, Op. 38. Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra, Elisha Inbal, cond. PHILIPS 6500 923, \$7.98.

The fate on records of Schoenberg's Orchestral Variations—the first twelve-tone work for orchestra—has not been very happy. After two undernourished Craft versions, a dimly recorded but capable Rosbaud performance (on Wergo, now difficult to come by), Mehta's rough-and-ready job, and Karajan's super-smooth, devitalized reading, we have at last, from Chicago, an execution that comes close to meeting the score's terrific demands of ensemble and balance, recorded with equivalent precision and clarity.

Solti's orchestra need yield nothing in expertise to Karajan's, and these players really dig into their lines and phrases in a way that the Berlin men were not asked to do. The impetus here is very much more involving, drawing the ear from one line to the next, one variation to the next, and through the long and episodic finale to the marvelously voiced last chord. Schoenberg's contrapuntal fertility is given its full value, and only in the irregular phrases of the fifth variation did I occasionally feel some lack of conviction about where things were leading. A fabulous achievement.

Elgar's *Enigma* is executed with comparable finesse, although Solti's tendency

to linger over certain phrases and inner lines strikes me as mannered by comparison with more direct performances such as Toscanini's classic reading. Also a disadvantage, if your interest is primarily in *Enigma*, will be the fact that it is spread over one-and-a-third sides (the break coming just before the finale)—doubtless in the interests of sonic splendor but rather destructive of continuity. (The liner notes incorporate a serious error: In his first four paragraphs, the annotator regales us with facts, anecdotes, and quotations about the completion of *Enigma*—but every single thing he says actually applies to the completion of *The Dream of Gerontius*!)

Another significant contribution to the Schoenberg discography comes from Philips: the first recording of Op. 9b, the composer's 1935 orchestral version of the 1905 Chamber Symphony. This orchestration, which actually modifies the distribution of material among the instruments, superseded an earlier (and never-recorded) version that essentially only enlarged the instrumental forces of the fifteen-man original. It makes for improved balance and clarity among the prolific contrapuntal lines, and naturally delivers greater impact at the climaxes. I've always preferred it to the original, and feel confirmed in that preference by the recording. For all its epoch-making structural and harmonic originality, the First Chamber Symphony is at heart—in its gestures and temperaments—essentially a “big romantic” piece, and the big sound of the full orchestra matches matter with manner more successfully.

Inbal's performance, though not played at quite the Chicago level of virtuosity, is nevertheless quite fine, with lots of energy and sensitivity. He does equally well by the Second Chamber Symphony, a lighter and perhaps lesser work, begun shortly after the First but not completed until after the reorchestration of the earlier work. Philips has done a good job on the sound, so that makes two essential records for Schoenbergsians.

D.H.

SCHUMANN: Piano Works, Vol. 3. Peter Frankl, piano. Vox SVBX 5470, \$10.98 (three discs).

Papillons, Op. 2; Paganini Etudes, Op. 3; Fantasiestück, Op. 12, No. 9; Kreisleriana, Op. 16; Humoreske, Op. 20; Nachtstücke (4), Op. 23; Pieces (4), Op. 32; Fugues (4), Op. 72; Bunte Blätter, Op. 99; Album for the Young (9 additional pieces).

Vol. 3 of Frankl's Schumann series can be recommended both for the unusual music and for the performances. As in the earlier installments (SVBX 5468, December 1974, and SVBX 5469, November 1975), the Hungarian-born, British-resident pianist plays with a modern artist's exactitude of detail and note values but is fully sensitive to line, inner voices, and gracious expression. All that is really lacking in these brightly pliant, patricianly phrased, smooth-textured interpretations is that touch of fire, textural diversity, and asymmetry—in short, temperament—that separates the highly intelligent artist from the born recreator. This interpretive homogeneity is more evident when all the playing is heard in concentration—a state of affairs common for reviewers with a deadline but, fortunately, not for most listeners. The additional items from the *Album for the Young*

are a particular delight, as are the spiritedly handled short pieces in the loosely assembled *Bunte Blätter*.

Vox furnishes agreeable sound, and, except for a few noisy sides, the processing is acceptable. H.G.

SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 5, in D minor, Op. 47. Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Paavo Berglund, cond. [David Mottley, prod.] ANGEL S 37279, \$6.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Comparisons:
Bernstein/N.Y. Phil. Col. MS 6115
Previn/London Sym. RCA LSC 2866
M. Shostakovich/U.S.S.R. Sym. Mel./Ang. SR 40163

Angel has regrettably muffled and dulled the clean, bright, well-defined sound of the British issue of this recording (SLS 5044, coupled with Berglund's Shostakovich Tenth, also scheduled for domestic release). Heard on its own, the Angel version sounds decent enough, but the difference is substantial enough to make it worth any interested listener's while to search out the British edition.

Berglund's interpretation stands with those of Bernstein, Previn, and Maxim Shostakovich as the best available. Yet his approach differs from the others' in important ways. The music flows more smoothly, along much more expansive lines. Berglund avoids both Bernstein's frenetic jaggedness and Maxim Shostakovich's dramatic contrasts. Previn does maintain a more even keel, but his is a more extroverted reading. Berglund often reaches an almost meditative quiescence that puts the carefully prepared peaks into particularly strong relief. The finale, of course, is another story, but even here Berglund's middle-of-the-road, one-principal-climax point of view makes his perhaps the most palatable rendition on disc. Throughout the symphony, he succeeds in using slowing tempos and understating his points while maintaining the music's dramatic vitality. The results are most effective. R.S.B.

STRAUSS, R.: Ein Heldenleben. For an essay review, see page 90.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 6, in B minor, Op. 74 (*Pathétique*). London Symphony Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein, cond. VANGUARD CARDINAL VCS 10114, \$3.98.

This is a disappointing record. For some reason, Horenstein, who could be quite flexible and expressive in late Romantic music, here chose to play this eloquent work with excessive precision. Every *i* is dotted, every *t* crossed, all at the expense of a freely expressive reading of the score. Even the sonority of the orchestra is tapered down to a leanness more appropriate to Prokofiev or Stravinsky.

The sparse sound, I should add, does not seem to me entirely attributable to the record's age (it was first issued nearly a decade ago in England). P.H.

TIPPETT: Quartets for Strings, Nos. 1-3. Lindsay Quartet. [Peter Wadland and Ray-

mond Ware, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 10, \$7.98.

British composers seem to turn to the string quartet less often than do Americans. Britten wrote two string quartets in the early Forties, and only last year a third. Michael Tippett's three quartets are early works; since *A Midsummer Marriage*, which occupied him from 1947 to 1952, he has written more operas, concertos, symphonies, piano and vocal music, but no more quartets. The First Quartet dates from 1934-35, the Second from 1941-42, and the Third from 1944-45. (The First was revised in 1943; the first two movements were discarded and a new opening movement was composed to take their place.)

Tippett was drawn to the medium early,

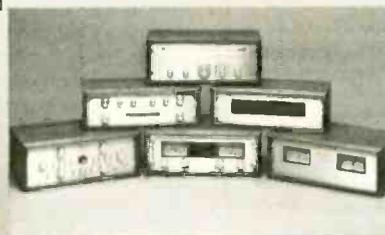
in his Royal College days, when the Busch and the Léner Quartets played regular cycles; and he has said that he also got to know the Léner's Columbia recordings of Beethoven so well that he was in danger of building the turnovers of those 78-rpm sides into his idea of the music. It is tempting to trace Busch influence in the rhythmic vigor of Tippett's fast movements and Léner influence in the poetic refinement of his lyrical melodies—with Beethoven behind both. Another strand in Tippett's musical makeup is the Tudor polyphony of madrigal and of viol fantasies. In the first movement of Quartet No. 2, the bar lines are there only for notational convenience: each instrument may be singing its own melody with its own rhythmic patterns, propelled by differing accents.

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One talks of influences—and Beethoven has remained a constant influence on Tippett, most patently on the piano concerto, the Third Symphony, and the Third Piano Sonata—but Tippett's style is all his own, hard to describe and very easy to recognize. Anyone who has heard *A Midsummer Marriage* knows it. One element is an exuberant, joyful, dancing quality of rhythm, achieved sometimes by cross-accents within a regular meter (as in the finale of No. 2), sometimes by an impetuous flow of lively movement that defies regular barring (as in the finale of No. 1 and the scherzo of No. 2, where the time signatures on the page keep changing while the ear is carried forward without restraint). Another element is the resolution, often unexpected, of tonally independent lines into concord, with an effect sometimes poignant, sometimes wonderfully consoling.

Tippett seems to be incapable of writing a dull or routine line. If anything, there can be at times too much musical energy. (Someone once remarked that his Third Quartet must contain more notes than all Shostakovich's quartets together.) This can lead to a contrapuntal busy-ness that has prompted comparisons with middle Hindemith at his most remorselessly active. It makes Tippett hard to play: Like Berlioz, he used to be accused of lacking instrumental dexterity—until performances such as those Colin Davis has put on record made everything clear. The Third Quartet has had some currency in Britain, but I own that my admiration for it remained qualified until the Lindsay Quartet, on the recording under review—well, one cannot exactly say made *light* of its difficulties, for it is not a light piece, but at any rate showed the necessity for the writing's being as energetically florid as it is.

This young quartet (formed at the Royal Academy in 1967, quartet-in-residence at the Universities of Keele and then Sheffield) has forged the kind of special relationship with Tippett that the young Fitzwilliam Quartet (formed in Cambridge in 1969, quartet-in-residence at the Universities of York and then Warwick) had with Shostakovich. Its players possess the buoyancy, the energy, and the passion that Tippett's music needs. Let me pinch two sentences from a colleague that characterize its merit: "The Lindsay Quartet is remarkable not only for the strength and panache of all its members, but for the collective concentration with which it pursues its sharply defined musical purposes. There is a strong sense that each player is given his head, and yet that all the heads seem to think the music the same way."

The tone is keen, without coarseness. Lerner sweetness is missing; there is no sense of polish for polish's sake. The Lindsay's Beethoven is regularly praised: its Haydn and Mozart are praised only with reservations. The recording is beautifully clear and immediate, producing a strong sense that the players are in the room with one, not heard from a seat in a concert hall. One of the players—I think it is the leader—can be heard snatching his breaths rather noisily; it adds to the reality of the recording but can hardly be counted a virtue.

It was about ten years since I had last heard any of the Tippett quartets. Listening

again to all three, I hear again and again the kind of musical thinking that was to produce *A Midsummer Marriage*. Tippett writes music that owes nothing to fashion and owes much—which is frankly avowed—to Tallis, Beethoven, and Schubert. (The composer thinks that his experience of the Bartók quartets also played a part in the making of his Third, and perhaps it did, in manners of writing for the strings.) There are later and greater works by him that should be the first acquisitions for the record collector eager to know his music. But since the string quartet is so direct and so personal a medium, the Tippett enthusiast should not be without this disc. Nor, for that matter, should anyone capable of being exhilarated and inspired by an encounter with one of the rare visionary minds of our age. As Wilfrid Mellers once remarked of these quartets, "Although he does not achieve late Beethoven's vision of paradise, he writes Beethoven's kind of music." A.P.

VIEUXTEMPS: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 5—See Saint-Saëns: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 3.

WAGNER: Siegfried Idyll—See Franck: Symphony in D minor.

Recitals and Miscellany

PHILIP JONES BRASS ENSEMBLE. [Michael Bremner, prod.] ARGO ZRG 813, \$6.98.

ADDISON: Divertimento, Op. 9. **BENNETT:** Commedia IV. **DODGSON:** Sonata. **GARDNER:** Theme and Variations, Op. 7.

This superlative British ensemble, which I praised so immoderately in 1971 (the Argo ZRG 655 "Just Brass" program), is back with another outstanding batch of contemporary quartets and quintets. Again both the playing and the recording are incomparably fine—and this time there is special interest in the fact that all four selections have been specifically composed for Jones (who plays first trumpet) and his colleagues. If none of the composers is as yet exactly a household name (in this country), Richard Rodney Bennett (b. 1936) and Stephen Dodgson (b. 1924) are already known and respected here, while the other two should be if only on the basis of the skillfully turned, often piquantly amusing Divertimento and Variations by John Addison (b. 1920) and John Gardner (b. 1917), respectively. These two works are for brass quartet (two trumpets, horn, and trombone). The larger-scaled, more serious Bennett and Dodgson works add a tuba to the foursome, yet in these instances I can't, of course, complain about that sonic behemoth's being anachronistic, as it is so jarring in baroque-era brass music. As a



Beitmann Archive

The original Hutchinson Family Singers in concert

Manchester (N.H.) circa 1850: You Are There

by Irving Lowens

Vox has put together an extraordinarily entertaining and informative album that attempts to present an accurate picture of what music was like between roughly 1850 and 1865 in one particular small urban center in New England, the town of Manchester, New Hampshire, population in 1850 approximately 13,500 but growing.

During that period in our development, there were three primary sources of musical performance: the brass band, the social orchestra, and singing groups with theatrical, political, or religious overtones. Each of these groups produced music almost totally lacking in self-consciousness—what they played and sang was not intended to be profound or “artistic,” but rather to entertain and instruct the average citizen, unsophisticated in the ways of high art but quite capable of enjoying a good tune, technical virtuosity, and sentimental or didactic texts.

The album, appropriately named “Homespun America,” draws on the musical repertory of three ensembles known to have been active in Manchester in the middle of the nineteenth century: the Manchester Cornet Band, the Manchester Quadrille Orchestra, and the Hutchinson Family Singers. The instrumentalists are all members of the Eastman Wind Ensemble and the Eastman Philharmonia under the direction of Donald Hunsberger; the singers (called the New Hutchinson Family Singers here) are all members of the Eastman Chorale with Robert DeCormier conducting.

Most of Manchester’s population earned its livelihood in the knitting mills in the vicinity and in the Baldwin Locomotive Works, but this did not stand in the way of the town’s strong interest in music. Fortunately, an extensive collection of orchestral music, vocal works, keyboard music, and the Cornet Band’s part books is preserved as the Walter P. Dignam Collection in the

Manchester Historical Association, and this (plus a manuscript score collection in the New York Public Library inscribed by Hosea Ripley of Bethel, Maine, and J. W. Perkins of the 17th New Hampshire Band dated December 7, 1762) was the primary source of the selections and the instrumentation utilized in the recordings of the Manchester Cornet Band repertory.

The Quadrille Orchestra relied upon such publications as *The American Collection of Instrumental Music* (Boston, 1856) compiled by John W. Moore of Bellows Falls, Vermont, and programs of balls and dances printed in the local newspapers or in broadsides for its repertory. As for the Hutchinsons, they frequently traveled the few miles south from their home in Concord, New Hampshire, to Manchester to sing hymns, anthems, and glees from the best collections of the time, such as *The Kingsley Social Choir* and *The American Lyre*, and to propagandize for abolition (in which they were strong believers), temperance, and other worthwhile causes.

The specific pieces included in “Homespun America,” chosen for the instrumentals by Rayburn Wright and for the voices by Hunsberger, are a constant source of delight and, in the case of the Cornet Band, of excitement and discovery as well. What astonished and pleased me most of all, I think, was the fresh brilliance of the Cornet Band’s instrumentation, and the manner in which its repertory fitted that sound so well. One might not expect anything much from pieces with such titles as *Eaton’s Grand March*, *Quickstep Blues*, or *Congo’s Quickstep*, but listening to them as performed here quickens the pulse and sets the toes to tapping. But for sheer excitement, I would recommend that you listen to *Hope Told a Flattering Tale*, an *air varié* that runs on for almost ten minutes, as played with astounding virtuosity by solo E flat

cornetist Allen Vizzuti. It’s a *real* barn-burner.

In comparison, the Quadrille Orchestra repertory is downright genteel. Such pieces as the *Felina Redowa de Salon*, *The Peri Waltzes*, and the *Hand Organ Polka* (all taken from G.W.E. Friederich’s 1856 collection, *The Orchestra Journal*) vividly recreate the swirling hoopskirts and the dashing cutaways of the time. But the standard pair of fiddles, cello, clarinet, flute, cornet, and harp or piano that made up the standard midcentury social orchestra were no match for the blazing brasses when it came to making the heart beat faster. Also, it should be remembered that Manchester’s concert life differed in summer and winter. The hot days of summer brought the outdoor programs and the frequent band concerts; the cold days of winter brought the indoor programs and the no less infrequent balls and dances calling for softer-voiced instruments.

The Hutchinson Family repertory is the only one of the three that sounds really dated. It is impossible not to smile (and, at times, laugh out loud) at the sung texts, which apparently moved our forefathers. Occasionally, it did come forth with a stirring ditty such as “The Old Granite State” (which came pretty close to serving as its theme song), but who could keep a straight face listening to “King Alcohol,” “Calomel” (a spoof of the medical practice of the day sung to the tune of “Old 100th”), or that masterpiece of unabashed sentimentality, “The Vulture of the Alps,” which caused so much eye-dabbing with lace handkerchiefs?

In a two-record album entitled “Our Musical Past” (OMP 101/2, October 1976), the Library of Congress attempted a very similar re-creation of the American brass-band tradition of approximately the same period. But the recording utterly failed to generate the sense of liveliness and whoop-de-doo that is so characteristic of “Homespun America,” which is superior in every respect, even that of scholarship. It is true that Hunsberger attempts to jam an enormous amount of information into his program booklet, and not all of it is organized with the clarity that one might like, but he does supply the interested listener with a great deal of food for thought.

“Homespun America,” a research and performance project of the National Center for the Symphonic Wind Ensemble at the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester, is a credit to all concerned. It is a genuine contribution to our much too scant knowledge of musical life in nineteenth-century America.

B HOMESPUN AMERICA. Eastman Chorale, Robert DeCormier, cond.; Eastman Wind Ensemble, Eastman Philharmonia, Donald Hunsberger, cond. Vox SVBX 5309, \$10.98 (three discs).

Marches, Waltzes, Polkas, and Serenades of the Manchester Cornet Band; Music for the Social Orchestra of the Manchester Quadrille Orchestra; Songs of 19th-Century Patriotism, Temperance, and Abolition and Popular, Sentimental Tunes of the Hutchinson Family Singers.

matter of fact, John Fletcher plays it so well that the tuba parts in both works must rank among their most distinctive features.

Incidentally, avant-garde fans and other tender-eared listeners need have no fears: This all is unmistakably, sometimes notably, original music, but its sounds as well as its melodic and rhythmic materials make immediately intelligible sense. R.D.D.

YOLANDA MARCOULESCOU: French Songs. Yolanda Marcoulescou, soprano; Katja Phillabaum, piano. [Jon Stoll and Gideon Cornfield, prod.] ORION ORS 76240, \$6.98.

HONEGGER: Quatre poèmes. **SATIE:** La Statue de bronze; Daphnéo; Le Chapelier; Tendrement; La Diva de l'Empire; Je te veux. **SCHMITT:** Trois chants, Op. 98; Quatre poèmes de Ronsard, Op. 100.

Yolanda Marcoulescou's first American-made disc (Orion ORS 75184, October 1975) introduced those of us unfamiliar with her earlier Czech and Romanian recordings to an artist of rare quality: a sensitive, distinctive interpreter of the *chanson* and one, moreover, interested in such neglected but fascinating composers of them as Roussel and Enesco. That is a record that no one responsive to superb vocal musicianship should be without. The same is true of Mme. Marcoulescou's latest recital, which is equally interesting in repertoire and even more distinguished as a performance.

In purely vocal terms, it's true that the soprano sounds somewhat less fresh than on her previous disc: One is aware here of a certain diminution of resonance in her low

notes and less freedom at the top of her range. The result of this, however, is not so much to weaken her effectiveness as to increase it. As if responding to a challenge, she makes the very most of her resources, communicating moods and meanings with greater vividness than ever and bringing into play an increased range of tonal colors, subtle rhythmic emphases and penetrating verbal nuances.

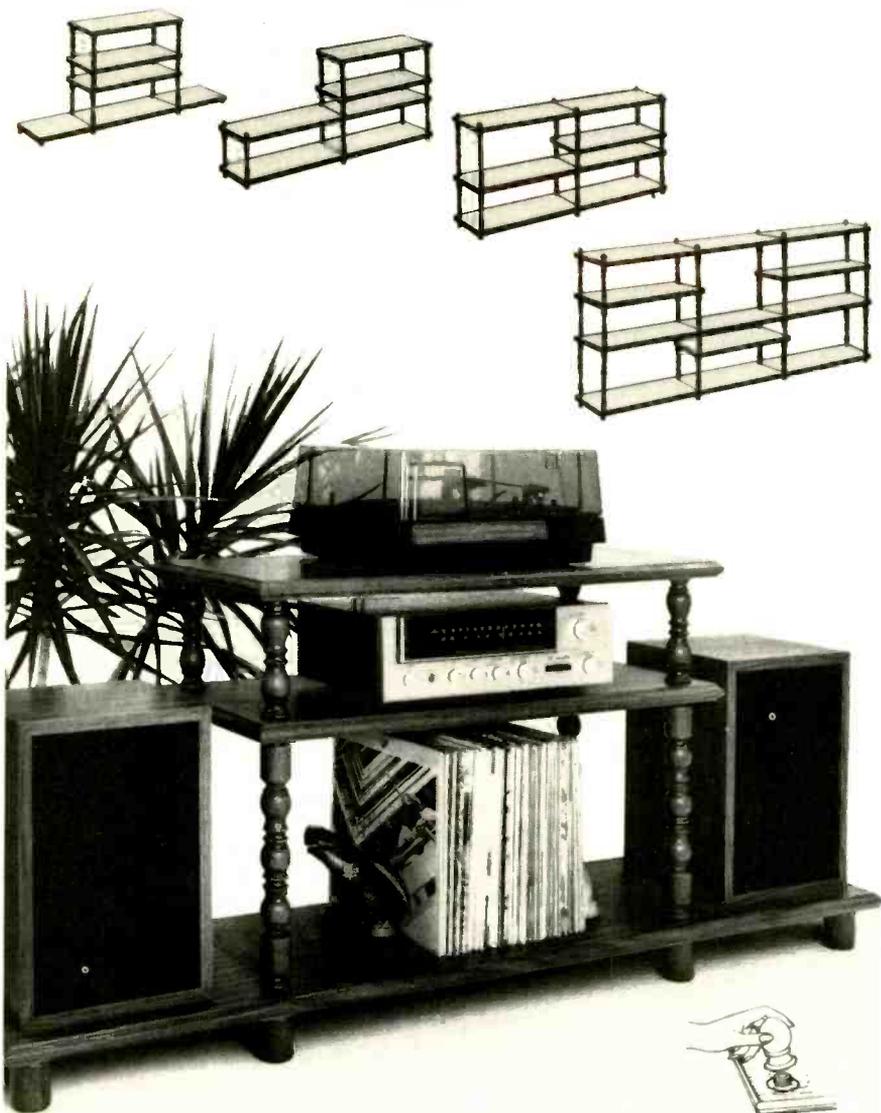
And all, let it be said, without ever stepping beyond the bounds of the musical concept, whose integrity she always maintains—unlike some famous singers with reputations for intelligence and insight who are so intent on "interpreting" the song that they almost neglect to sing it. There is an awareness throughout of the need to maintain a singing line, and as a result we get some exquisite examples of legato—for example, in the first of the Honegger songs on the words "les coupes d'orgueil des glaieuls" ("the proud goblets of the gladioli").

Even so, the ultimate distinction of this record is the breadth of Marcoulescou's interpretive range, which reaches from the melancholy gravity of "La Citerne des mille colonnes" and the mordant irony of "La Tortue et le lièvre" (the second and third of Schmitt's *Trois chants*) to the provocative *fausse naïveté* of Satie's "Daphnéo." The words of the latter are, as the jacket folder informs us by "M. God"—in actuality, Mimi Godebski, the young girl for whom, with her brother Jean, Ravel wrote his *Ma Mère l'oye*.

Neither the latter information nor anything about the music and the circumstances of its creation is to be found on the jacket. It would, I think, be useful to have some musical guidance, especially about the Schmitt and Honegger songs, to learn, for example, that the first three Satie pieces comprise his *Trois Mélodies* of 1916 and that the last three are in effect pop songs, written around 1900 for café-concerts and, in the case of "Lo Diva de l'Empire," a revue (called *Devidons la Bobine*).

But other than this, and the fact that my pressing was somewhat noisy, there can be nothing but praise for this enterprise. Orion has supplied full texts and accurate translations. The performances are superb—not only Marcoulescou's, but also, as before, pianist Katja Phillabaum's. The songs are often revelatory. I cannot think of a more satisfying and illuminating vocal recital in the past year. D.S.H.

B The Nothing Record. [prod.] MURRAY HILL 896311, \$2.98.



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B **BIDÚ SAYÃO:** French Arias and Songs. Bidú Sayão, soprano; Milne Charnley, piano*; Columbia Concert Orchestra, Paul Breisach, cond.*; University of Pennsylvania Women's Chorus, Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond.*. [William Seward, reissue prod.] ODYSSEY Y 33130, \$3.98 (mono) [recorded 1938-50].

ANON.: C'est mon ami (arr. Crist. 6/20/47). * **AUBER:** Manon Lescaut. L'éclat de rire (12/29/38). * **CAMPRÀ:** Les Fêtes vanitaines. Chanson du papillon (arr. Weckerlin. 12/29/38). * **CHOPIN:** Melancholy, Op. 74, No. 12 (arr. Marx, in French. 12/29/38). * **DEBUSSY:** L'Enfant prodigue. Air de Lia (5/12/50). * La Demoiselle élue. Je voudrais qu'il fût déjà près de moi (3/14/47). * Proses lyriques. No. 3, De fleurs (6/20/47). * **DUPARC:** Chanson triste (5/12/50). * **HANN:** Si mes vers avaient des ailes (5/12/50). * **KOECHLIN:** Si tu le veux (6/20/47). * **MORET:** Le Nélumbo (6/20/47). * **RAVEL:** L'Enfant et les sortilèges. Toi, le coeur de la rose (6/23/47, not previously issued). *

This record is both attractive and instructive. Because its contents are miscellaneous in character—they range from opera and oratorio to art song and drawing-room kitsch—it supplements very usefully our knowledge of Sayão, who apart from the *Bachianas brasileiras* No. 5 (on Odyssey 32 16 0377) is otherwise in evidence on current reissues only as an operatic performer.

What is so interesting about Sayão is the consistency of approach she maintained in all the music she sang. By consistency I refer not to sameness, for there is much variety in her exquisite art, but to unity of style. In assignments as diverse as Manon, Mimi, Susanna, Zerlina, and Violetta and, as we can see from this new recital, in her performances of songs, she is essentially and consistently a miniaturist. Whatever the music, she relies on refinements of emphasis for her effects, which are out of all proportion to the subtlety of their means. She neither forces nor coarsens. She has complete confidence in the distinctiveness of her vocal personality. She does not so much reach out toward her audience as draw it irresistibly into her orbit. She commands our attention by the very quietness of her assurance. It comes as no surprise to learn that, like Elisabeth Schumann, she could without any seeming effort reach to the farthest corners of the most enormous auditorium simply through the perfect poise and clarity of her vocal projection.

Actually, a certain amount of artificial homogeneity is imposed upon this recital by the fact that there are orchestral accompaniments for all the material on Side 1 and piano accompaniments for all the material on Side 2, though on the former there are songs by Hahn and Duparc and on the latter arias by Campra, Auber, and Ravel.

Luckily, Sayão's performances are mostly good enough to overcome these drawbacks. The legato with which she sings the last lines of the Hahn song ("Si mes vers avaient des ailes, / Comme l'amour!") and the first lines of the Duparc ("Dans ton coeur dart un clair de lune, / Un doux clair de lune d'été") helps to drown out the inappropriate backgrounds. The sense of character in the Auber aria ("L'éclat de rire" from *Manon Lescaut*), the playfulness, the assurance of her *fioritura*, are enough to keep one happy. The Ravel, though ("Toi, le coeur de la rose" from *L'Enfant et les sortilèges*, here issued for the first time), is a different matter, and here one misses the orchestra. Apart from some

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uncharacteristic aspirates in the anonymous "C'est mon ami" and Chopin's "Tristesse," the singing is very fine. The beautiful rise to high B flat toward the end of Moret's "Le Nélumbo" is memorable.

Texts and translations (only one verse of the Auber is included, though Sayão actually sings two). Good, clean dubbings.

D.S.H.

SENTIMENTAL SONGS OF THE MID-19TH CENTURY. American Music Consort. [Jon Monday, Charel Morris, and Douglas Decker, prod.] TAKOMA A 1048, \$6.98 (Takoma Records, Box 5369, Santa Monica, Calif. 90405).

FOSTER: Beautiful Dreamer; Oh! Lemuell; Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground; My Old Kentucky Home; Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair; Old Dog Tray. **ROOT:** The Vacant

Chair; The Battle Cry of Freedom. **WORK:** Come Home, Father; Kingdom Coming!; The First Love Dream; Grandfather's Clock; Crossing the Grand Sierras; The Silver Horn; Marching Through Georgia.

The American Music Consort is the West Coast-based repertory ensemble of the Yankee Doodle Society, a nonprofit organization of artists and scholars interested in exploring American history through mass communications, and this recording is the first in a series of American Archive Recordings undertaken by the Society and Takoma Records, Inc. Other projected albums include music of early Negro minstrels, "The Southern Harmony," early American patriotic music, spirituals of the Fisk Jubilee Singers, songs of the ragtime era, and nineteenth-century virtuoso in-

strumental music.

The songs in this album are performed from original editions of the sheet music for voices and accompaniment, which was usually either piano or guitar, but the Consort does not stick to the letter of the original. Ornamentation, improvisation, and adaptation to other instruments are used, the apologia being, according to music director Joseph Byrd, that this practice is "stylistically consistent with contemporary music practice, in which the song was subject to interpretation by any voices and instruments available. Such instrumentation might be restrained or lavish."

The Consort consists of sixteen musicians—a vocal quartet, brass quartet, string trio, flutes, fretted instruments, harp, piano/harmonium, director/narrator, and stage director. The music is presented, Byrd states, "with historical authenticity (including costumes and instruments) and includes a narration which re-creates vividly the social setting of earlier American culture. Humor, melodrama, heart-piercing lyricism, and flamboyant virtuosity were important components of the music, and are equally important in its reconstruction."

Fortunately, the disc spares us the narration, and even giving the Consort the benefit of the doubt, I was somewhat startled to hear the sound of the mandolin, French horn, trumpet and low brass accompanying these simple (and not infrequently artful) songs. If you agree with Byrd's premise as to the use of any instruments that happen to be lying around, this is a perfectly acceptable disc. But if you don't, these sentimental songs will sound pretty strange to your ears.

I.L.

BARRY TUCKWELL AND VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY: Works for Horn and Piano. Barry Tuckwell, horn; Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano. [James Mallinson, prod.] LONDON CS 6938, \$6.98.

BEETHOVEN: Sonata in F, Op. 17. **DANZI:** Sonata in E flat, Op. 28. **SAINT-SAËNS:** Romance, Op. 67. **SCHUMANN:** Adagio and Allegro, Op. 70.

Several years ago Itzhak Perlman, Barry Tuckwell, and Vladimir Ashkenazy recorded a superlative performance of the Brahms horn trio. Now, with violinist and pianist working their way through the Beethoven violin sonatas, it is only just that the other member of this illustrious threesome have his say.

If the horn's repertory cannot rival the violin's in size or quality, Tuckwell and Ashkenazy deserve our gratitude for garnishing the expected Beethoven and Schumann works with the lesser-known but by no means trivial Danzi and Saint-Saëns compositions. All four works are superbly performed. The Beethoven sonata is attractively audacious. Neither player tries to invest this early work with Germanic profundity, preferring instead to etch the music's formal lines with grace, decorum, and—when appropriate—a touch of stinging vehemence. In its way, the rounder, more mellow quality of the old Dennis Brain/Denis Matthews version (Seraphim 60040) was equally, but certainly not more, convincing.

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anything even more receptive to Tuckwell's biting edge, and Ashkenazy's propulsive, stinging articulation in the *Allegro* supports him to the hilt. The Danzi sonata is a much more complex work than one might expect from the much-maligned composer of woodwind trivia. It is thematically equal to the Beethoven sonata, and its harmonic turns are many and surprising. The languorous Saint-Saëns *Romance* comes off beautifully too, with Tuckwell warming his sound considerably and modifying his tonal bite.

Reverberantly bright, but commendably distinct, reproduction. H.G.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN PERCUSSION* AND TUBA* ENSEMBLES. Charles Owen* and Uri Mayer*, cond. GOLDEN CREST CRSQ 4145, \$6.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

The magnificent concert and marching bands of the University of Michigan must be indebted for some of their best players to the music department's professors of percussion and tuba, Charles Owen and Abe Torchinsky, both onetime Philadelphia Orchestra members. This release documents the work of these specialized teachers with skilled student performances of what are more academic than avant-garde contemporary compositions: by Anthony Iannaccone and William Presser for tuba quartet and Arthur Gottschalk for ten tubas; by Miloslav Kabeláč, Robert Myers, Frank Benciscutto, and William Kraft for variously constituted percussion ensembles.

The appeal may be too restricted for most general listeners, yet even they may relish the jolly swing of Presser's *Serenade* finale and the jauntily imaginative rhythmic animation of Benciscutto's prizewinning *Rondeau*. Certainly odd-sounds-fanciers will find considerable fascination in Gottschalk's *Substructures* for two tenor and eight bass tubas and in William Kraft's always-authoritative manipulations of some forty percussion instruments in his well-named *Momentum*.

Throughout, but particularly in the percussion-works side, the recording is extremely robust and crisply brilliant in stereo only, more dramatically expansive in unexaggerated quadriphony, and in both modes marred only by considerable breathing and other extraneous background noises. R.D.D.

Theater and Film

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD. Original film score by Elmer Bernstein. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Elmer Bernstein, cond. and prod. FILM MUSIC COLLECTION Album 7, \$8.00 plus 60¢ handling to members only (annual membership \$10; Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection, Box 261, Calabasas, Calif. 91302).

Of the many atrocities committed at Acad-

emy Award time, few have been more flagrant than the 1963 award of the best-original-score Oscar to the turgid pseudo-Arabianisms of Maurice Jarre's *Lawrence of Arabia* rather than to Elmer Bernstein's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, one of the treasures of film music. Although Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson set the precedent in a way, Bernstein with this score became the Hollywood composer to establish a recognizably American idiom in movie music. He could not have chosen a better vehicle than Robert Mulligan's 1962 film based on the Harper Lee novel, a tender, nostalgic, yet subtly tragic view of the U.S. that cannot fail to find sympathetic vibration within those who were brought up outside the cities in pre-1960s America.

Bernstein's score evokes, on its own, all the principal feelings created by the film and the story, first and foremost the bitter-sweet longing aroused by the remembrance of childhood innocence and the first awakenings from it. The composer accomplishes this on an immediate level by the simple, aching ingenuousness of the chamberlike scoring, in which solo piano, harp, flute, accordion, and celesta weave in and out like different strands of the same memory. Even when larger ensembles are playing, the score has a very unsymphonic quality that perfectly suits the picture. And as Christopher Palmer (who helped reconstruct the score) puts it in the liner notes, the opening theme is "one of the quietest ever heard on an American soundtrack." Furthermore, by using simple, rocking ostinatos and by creating mild harmonic clashes here and there between theme and accompaniment, Bernstein maintains a hypnotically out-of-time perspective that rather uncannily fuses the adult and the childlike into a single, deeply moving autumn-waltz.

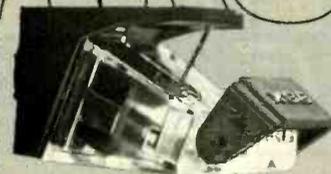
For me, this new recording of *To Kill a Mockingbird* was essential. The long-discontinued Ava release of the original music track, although better than nothing, was badly recorded to the point of frustration. The new version benefits from warm, bright sound, and it includes several cuts not heard on the original disc. It also features a penetrating, sensitive performance from the Royal Philharmonic (this is the first time an orchestra has been identified in the Film Music Collection series), with Bernstein giving beautiful shape to his own music, from the most hushed reminiscences to the Americana syncopations and the nervous, disjointed drama as the music-story reaches its climax.

If the general production quality of this disc carries over to the series' next release, Rozsa's classic *Thief of Baghdad*, then Bernstein's outfit will certainly have realized its potential. R.S.B.

THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN. Original film soundtrack recording. Composed and conducted by Henry Mancini; Tom Jones, vocal. [Joe Reisman, prod.] UNITED ARTISTS LA 694G, \$6.98.

Even the most commercial films these days have picked up the new-wavy device of cinematic in-jokes. Instead of heavy-handedly satirizing the James Bond flicks, for instance, this new Inspector Clouseau caper,

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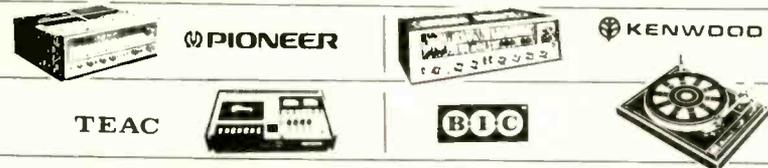
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by far the best after *Shot in the Dark*, incorporates subtle visual allusions to thriller movies, allusions that are all the more funny because they don't hit you over the head. Not surprisingly, this aesthetic incest carries over somewhat into the music, with Mancini punctuating his famous "Pink Panther" theme with snippets of "Batman," "Singin' in the Rain," and other goodies to accompany the animated cartoon used in the title sequence. (*Jaws* also pops up in the end-title music, not recorded here.)

All this is good fun, but it is not, fortunately, the album's only delight. For once again, Mancini has come up with an absolutely charming tune: a Slavic-flavored mime dance, called "The Inspector Clouseau Theme," that is one of the most understatedly appropriate pieces I have heard on a soundtrack in years. There is also the usual complement of music-to-creep-through-corridors-by, nicely colored by Mancini's characteristic battery of various-sized flutes.

The only things I could do without are the Tom Jones vocal (lightened by a "vocal cameo by Jacques Clouseau") and the awful solo "Until You Love Me" by femme impersonator "Ainsly Jarvis," who sounds like Darlene Edwards mimicking a musical sav. The satire is kinkily devastating in the film, but it has little meaning isolated on disc. R.S.B.

THE RETURN OF A MAN CALLED HORSE. Original film soundtrack recording. Composed and conducted by Laurence Rosenthal. UNITED ARTISTS LA 692G, \$6.98.

When film sequels are made, whatever devices that existed in the original often are abandoned in favor of tried-and-true Hollywood devices producers are sure will attract an even bigger public. *A Man Called Horse*, for instance, had a score (once recorded on Columbia OS 3530) by Leonard Rosenman, one of film music's most sadly neglected talents, who used almost exclusively native American Indian musical materials and instruments. *The Return of a Man Called Horse* returns to a fairly standard symphonism by Laurence Rosenthal, perhaps best known for his music for *Becket*.

But while Rosenthal's title theme is a rather predictable, sweet-strings affair, a good deal of the rest stands up quite well. One reason is that the fairly long musical sequences behave, on this well-recorded disc, very much like movements in a symphonic suite with strongly effective dramatic variety, ranging from the multi-layered, fast-paced violence of "The Massacre" to the dirgelike, Honeggeresque gloom of "The Yellow Hands in Despair." (Copland and Grofé also come to mind in places.) Rosenthal provides an interesting musical commentary on the events in "Morgan Haunted by His Memories" through collage-style juxtaposition, over his own orchestral drones, of various snatches of music representing both the Indians and the hero's native England. In addition, the listener hears some electronic sounds in the "Sun Vow" sequence.

Authentic it isn't, but good enough in its own right. R.S.B.

Nonpareil nonagenarian. Restless on his innumerable laurels, Leopold Stokowski incredibly has been more productive than ever in the last few years. Indeed, he is so active, so musically versatile, and so commercially impartial that he enables cassette collectors to celebrate his ninety-fifth birthday, April 18, 1977, by playing his recordings of no fewer than eleven works (four of them for his first time, I believe) in five releases representing four labels and five different audio engineers.

Advent's latest list of deluxe, Dolby-B, chromium-dioxide musicassettes features the respective National Philharmonic and Royal Philharmonic programs of his Rachmaninoff Third Symphony (with a Vocalise transcription in Desmar E 1046, \$7.95) and his Dvořák Op. 22 String Serenade (with Vaughan Williams' Tallis Fantasia and Purcell's "Dido's Lament" in Desmar E 1047, \$7.95). For Philips, he leads the London Symphony in Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings and *Francesca da Rimini* (7300 364, Dolby, \$7.95). For London Phase-4 it's the Czech Philharmonic in Elgar's *Enigma Variations* (filled out with the Op. 20 Serenade and Op. 58 Elegy, conducted by Ainslee Cox, in SPC5 21136, Dolby, \$7.95). And for RCA Red Seal, Stokowski, with the London Symphony, resumes his lifelong devotion to Wagner with a *Götterdämmerung* concert triptych: Siegfried's Rhine Journey and Funeral Music and Brünnhilde's Immolation (ARK/ARS 1-1317, cassette/cartridge, \$7.98 each).

All these are quintessential Stokowski interpretations: idiosyncratic, romantic, sometimes unexpectedly restrained, always electrically provocative. With one exception they are magnificently recorded, yet with the distinctively individual sonic differences of the various producer/engineer teams. Even the exception, Bob Auger's Rachmaninoff recording, is as fascinating as the singularly ambivalent music itself: more remote, with less strong contrasts between the lushly songful and the fiercely dramatic than the Ormandy/Columbia version; less auditorium-authentic, yet illuminatingly lucid in what seems like a sonic synthesis of multiple channels.

But if no qualifications are needed for Stokowski aficionados, more objective listeners may need reminding that most of these are not necessarily the top-ranked versions of each work. For those, I'd cite Marriner's Dvořák, Tchaikovsky, and Vaughan Williams music for strings, and Haitink's Elgar variations and Tchaikovsky Fran-

by R. D. Darrell

The Tape Deck

cesca. Yet Stokowski's Elgar warrants special consideration for its uniquely glowing enchantments. And for the Ring excerpts, all qualifications and demurrers can be forgotten: Stokowski himself has never played them better nor achieved more gloriously authentic sonics.

On and off the beaten paths. Among the many other current musicassettes (all in Dolby B except for RCA's), one can stick in a thumb and pull out a plum almost at random. My single sampling of various labels turns up the following diversified prizes:

ANGEL: Hard on the heels of last month's London reissue of the first stereo *Aida* comes the most recent—and vividly "live"—version starring Caballé (4X3S 3815, three XDR cassettes, \$23.98; libretto on request). Conductor Muti's reading may not be the subtlest or most tautly dramatic, but the individual roles are exceptionally well sung and few opera-house choruses and orchestras sound as fine as the chorus of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and the New Philharmonia Orchestra do here.

ARGO: Also exceptionally animated and vivid are Marriner's 1971 Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields fresh approaches to those usually stiffly ceremonial monuments of the high baroque: Bach's four orchestral suites (KRZC 687/8, \$7.95 each). This is "Bach Without Wig" in truth, yet more authentically idiomatic, as well as far more piquant, than many more pretentiously purist performances.

DESMAR/ADVENT: Valenti's ten Soler harpsichord sonatas (E 1050, \$7.95) are welcome both as the first taped Soler recital and for the chance they give me to dig up the musical identifications missing here as well as from last year's disc production. Side-selections A-1, A-3, and A-5 are respectively Nos. 88, 84, and 90 in the Rubio collected works edition; B-1, B-2, B-3, and B-5 are Rubio Nos. 24, 45, 86, and 89; and A-2, A-4, and B-4 are from Joaquin Nin's editions of *Old Spanish Sonatas*, Vol. II, No. 3, 11/2, and 1/11. As in his pioneering Allegro and Westminster mono disc Soler programs, Valenti is almost unremittingly heavy-handed, but if he does scant justice to Soler's lyricism, in the bravura toccatalike works the power potentials of his big Challis instrument

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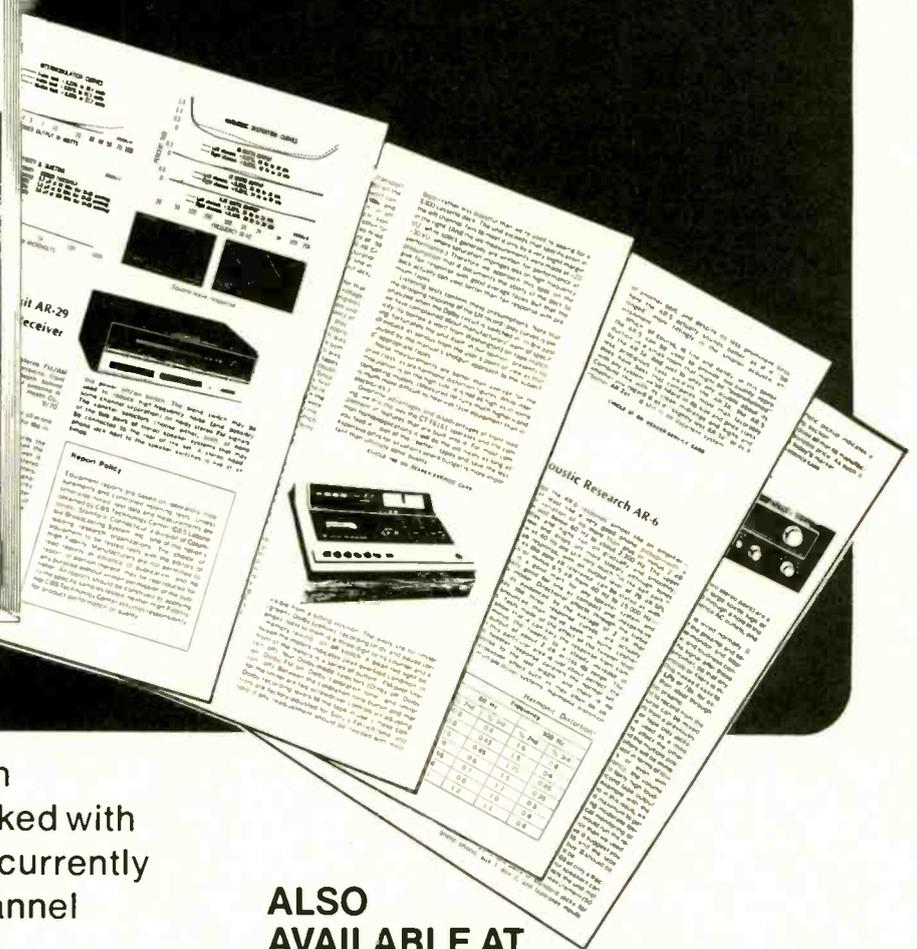
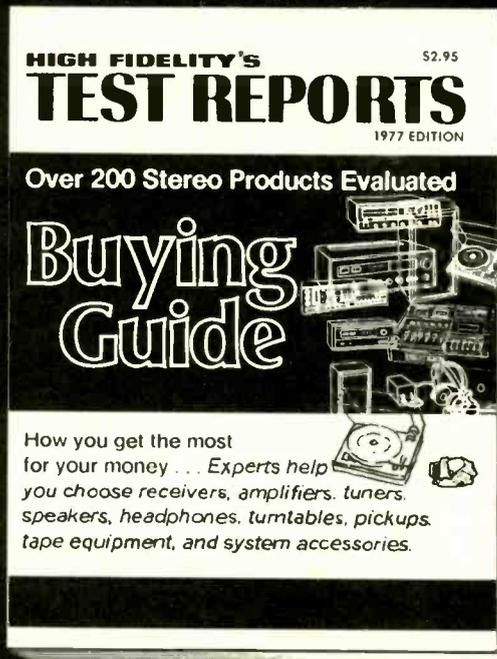
DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON: Pollini's Chopin preludes (3300 550, \$7.98) are pellucid pianism *in excelsis*. Well-nigh flawless technically, Pollini seems temperamentally best suited to the more sprightly and bravura pieces; the gentler, more lyrical ones are too coolly restrained in feeling.

FINNADAR: The classical music subsidiary of Atlantic Records presents the brilliant young French-trained Turkish pianist Idil Biret in an ingeniously imaginative Ravel and Stravinsky program (CS 9013F, \$7.97). Each master's most demanding piano works—*Gaspard de la nuit* and the *Petrushka* "Three Scenes"—are contrasted with his earliest or simplest ones: Ravel's rarely heard *Sérénade grotesque*, Stravinsky's *Valse pour les enfants* and *Cinq doigts* miniatures. The bigger showpieces have been done in higher-voltage versions by others, but Miss Biret plays them and is recorded with exceptionally searching lucidity, further italicized by somewhat dry acoustical ambiences. And the smaller pieces are both disarmingly charming in themselves and—as tape firsts—essential to every Ravel and Stravinsky library.

PHILIPS: An unknown Mozart opera? Not exactly, but few Mozarteans are familiar with the fragmentary opera buffa *Lo Sposo deluso*, K. 430, which I find more interesting than Paul Henry Lang did in his February disc review. Here is the chance to hear what has been preserved of the work—an amusingly martial overture, swaggering quartet, two arias (completed and orchestrated by Erik Smith), and decidedly buffo trio—by soloists and London Symphony players under Colin Davis (7300 472, \$7.95). It's coupled with the more familiar *Schauspieldirektor*, K. 486—livelier if less well sung than the Böhm/DG version—but that's sheer lagniappe to the Mozartean must acquisition.

RCA RED SEAL: The "Vladimir Horowitz Concerts 1975-76" program (ARK/ARS 1-1766, \$7.95 each) presents the super-virtuoso not only at a new height of his Himalayan technical powers, but radiating more warmth than ever before. As best I can tell, both Schumann's ambitious if only intermittently inspired F minor Sonata (*Concerto Without Orchestra*) and Scriabin's now mystically melting, now passionately proclamatory Fifth Sonata are tape firsts. But that primacy is the least of their appeal as incomparably grand piano playing and recording. ●

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Back Beat

Judy Collins & the Art of Transition

by Susan Elliott

No question about it. Judy Collins has staying power. Sixteen consecutive years of recording and fifteen albums to show for it (six of which have gone gold) make her a true rarity in this business. Those who are lucky find the crest of the wave and ride it for a while. But the general buoyancy limit (at least before the skin starts to wrinkle) is at most three to four years. After that it's time to gracefully ride the wave to shore and bask in the sun, leaving big brother to release a few token remembrances from what's left in the can—perhaps even with thoughts of an eventual comeback cash-in.

Judy's never made a comeback, simply because she never went away. Her initial stardom came as the folk queen of the Sixties. But her continued successes well into this decade are true indicators of her ability and efforts to explore, ingest, and put forth with confidence, thereby keeping her close to the forefront of this country's changing musical tastes. "I'm obsessive about work—that's part of it. But there's a more essential reason. I was raised to consider the long-term goals of a situation. I'm not averse to success, nobody should be. But I don't see it as the only source of nourishment. I see much more invested in the long run in just the process of work and growth . . . and I do have a sense of where I'm going."

Behind what appears to be a down-to-earth understanding of herself and her own goals lies a rich background in music and show business. Her father was a musician and songwriter with his own daily radio show in Denver. "He was the housewife's standby—'10:15, Chuck Collins calling'—and he played the piano and sang all the old standards."

Judy began her own piano studies at age seven with Antonia Brico, and for ten years was "a very serious student" occasionally even performing with conductor Brico's Businessmen's Orchestra of Denver.



Richard Aaron

She took three lessons a week, practiced morning and night, and "never had a social life." The switch to folk was not an easy one, especially considering her deep respect and admiration for her teacher. "I felt very guilty. It wasn't that folk music pulled me away from the piano—I was fed up with practicing and all the Sturm und Drang, the tears . . . the things that every serious student goes through with a serious teacher if there's any real commitment at all." That there was. "At the moment that I quit, I had just finished memorizing the Rachmaninoff Second Piano Concerto and I was ready to begin the years of polishing that would eventually prepare me for my next performance with the orchestra."

But even that prospect was not satisfying enough—she needed something more. "I have a love

" 'I'm not averse to success . . .
but I don't see it as the only
source of nourishment.' "

of literature and of music, and singing combines those two things. I wanted to find some kind of music which would be an outlet for drama and storytelling, and it wasn't opera. I needed something which gave me more of a scope to explore through words, and that was folk music."

Judy had always been interested in folk, "but I didn't know what it was, other than just popular song." When in high school, she heard *The Gypsy Rover* on the radio. "My friends and I kept listening to get the words. We made a skit out of it . . . choreographed the story, and performed it all over the place." A man who called himself Lingo the Drifter seems to have been the one who finally hooked her on the medium. He was a singer/raconteur who had come to Denver from the East bringing with him the songs of Pete Seeger, Woody Guthrie, and the Weavers. He had his own radio show, and Judy eventually became part of his entourage of friends, listeners, and singers. "We would get together and sing, drink beer, and carry on to all hours of the night."

Her first "professional" engagement came about at age sixteen—the result of having won a Kiwanis Club singing contest. The lucky winner was given \$500 and the opportunity to perform in Atlantic City, New Jersey. "I played in the convention center where the Miss America contest was held. It was an enormous, concrete vatican filled with people with their Kiwanis hats on, eating popcorn and junk food from the boardwalk." Shortly after, she got her first regular singing job for \$300 a week at Michael's Pub in Boulder, a college hangout. At this time she was singing downhome American folk (*If You've Never Made Love to the Landlady's Daughter Then You Cannot Have Another Piece of Pie* and *Ten Thousand Goddamned Cattle*) in her as yet untrained voice and accompanying herself on guitar. "The audiences were very devoted and reverent—the folk music boom had just begun."



After Michael's came the Gilded Garter in Central City—a tourist joint—and in 1960, on the basis of a tape she had made of *The Great Silkie of Shule Skerry*, a job at the Gate of Horn in Chicago. Surprisingly, she had no aspirations for stardom ("I didn't see myself as Judy Garland, or even Tim Holt")—only for her family's survival. "I was launched by the necessity to support my husband. That's really the reason I went out and got the job at Michael's Pub. We had a baby and it was a very cold winter, and Peter said, 'Why don't you go get a job?' In a way, I owe that initial kick to him."

By 1960–61, Judy was truly doing the folk circuit—which included New York's Greenwich Village—but was apparently oblivious to her successes. "I was so naive, so out of it. I was like five years old. I kind of floated through all that time working in clubs in Chicago and New York, and still nothing ever got to me. I was not paranoid. I thought everything was wonderful—I was just gaga. I can't get over it. The protective nature of innocence is incredible."

Jac Holzman, president of Elektra Records at the time, had heard her the first summer she played at the

Gate of Horn. The following year he offered her a recording contract. But Judy was still gaga. "He said, 'Judy, I think you're ready to record.' And I said, 'Oh no, *anything* but that!'" But he was insistent, and from his insistence came her first album, "Maid of Constant Sorrow," recorded at Fine Recording in Manhattan's old Great Northern Hotel. Judy is quite definitely a soprano, but if you listen to those first albums, you'll notice a very direct, earthy-sounding alto. "In those days I was a very untrained singer, and I was literally using about the lower third of my voice all the time because I didn't know that there was anything up there." Fortunately for recording history, she eventually studied voice and "found" the other two thirds.

The folk material on her first two LPs was primarily public-domain traditional, but the next three included the songs of Tom Paxton, Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie, Richard Fariña, Gordon Lightfoot, and Phil Ochs. By the mid-Sixties, *Time* magazine had dubbed her "a major contender for the female folk crown." But Judy was moving on. "My producer [Mark Abramson] and I decided that we'd like to do Brecht, and more theatrical kinds of things."

And so in 1966 she released "In My Life," thereby introducing Leonard Cohen's songs to recording (*Suzanne*, *Dress Rehearsal Rag*), as well as exposing the work of Jacques Brel and Randy Newman for the first time on a major U.S. label. The new genre of material necessitated a more sophisticated musical setting, and this was ably provided by Joshua Rifkin's orchestrations. At that time Rifkin was still associated with Nonesuch, Elektra's classical label.

With the production/engineering/arranging team of Holzman, Abramson, and Rifkin, the LPs that followed continued to treat folk and pop material with art-song taste and sophistication: four of the six albums from this period went gold. "Wild Flowers" represented Joni Mitchell's debut as a writer ("I just fell in love with her music," says Judy) with *Both Sides Now* and *Michael from Mountains*, and introduced Collins herself as a songwriter. (She continued to contribute one or two of her own songs to the recordings from this period.)

In 1973 came "True Stories and Other Dreams"

"I was launched by the necessity to support my husband."

with five of her own compositions. I asked her if she was heading in the singer/songwriter direction. On the contrary—just another exploration. Her primary concern seems to be the maintenance of a well-rounded standard of repertoire and performance, both live and on record. And after she had finished writing the five songs (it took eight months) on "True Stories" she found herself "absolutely itching to get back on stage. I really need that direct contact with an audience—it's tremendously satisfying to me.

"I have a career on many different levels... it would be very limiting for me to do all my own mate-

rial. I think a lot of singers who have to write their own are constantly faced with a tremendous and difficult obstacle to overcome. There are a few people who have come through in that way over the years, but it's very hard."

She doesn't like to talk about her writing much—she feels it's bad luck. "I know how I write—slowly and painfully, and if possible without interruptions. It takes tremendous concentration for me, but I know that if I stick with it, it happens—knock wood."

After "True Stories" came a two-year break from recording, during which she produced and co-directed



Photos by Tony Galluzzo

the documentary about her teacher, *Antonia: A Portrait of the Woman*. The film was released in 1974 and won the Independent Film Critics Award as well as an Academy Award nomination. It was also at about this time that she left Harold Leventhal to become her own manager (Leventhal still produces her New York concerts). "In 1972 I had decided that I wanted to try working a different way—have my own business and see how that went." It apparently went well, for by now Ms. Collins has a reputation in the industry for being a professional on all levels. "I don't want to have somebody take my life and run it . . . appear when and where they say I should. I have a need to guide my own life . . . with professional help. People tend to categorize themselves as either artists or business people. My own feeling is that there's always a lot of overlap, and if you're responsible, then you can take care of your own business."

Having launched her own business and completed *Antonia*, she again turned her attention to musical exploration. "I was very disturbed about what direction to go in. I spent six months tearing around the world, meeting different producers and engineers." The result of the restless search was her current production/engineering team of Arif Mardin and Phil Ramone. She had worked with Phil before in New York, and knew his work through her good friend Paul Simon. "I'd fallen into the pattern of going to California to record or going to England. I suddenly woke up to the fact that I'm a New Yorker, and I wanted to be at home to record. Arif and Phil were the perfect combination."

The new triumvirate's initial release, "Judith" (1975), was the artist's first recording without either Jac Holzman or Mark Abramson (David Geffen replaced Holzman as president in the Elektra/Asylum merger). The difference in sound and approach is astounding. Lavish production and rich orchestrations couch a totally mixed bag of material that stretches from Collins to Mick Jagger to Stephen Sondheim. The latter was responsible for one of Judy's few hit singles, *Send In the Clowns* from *A Little Night Music*. "In choosing that Sondheim song there was a major step. I was saying through that album, there are many different kinds of music that I want to do, and here's one of them. It's a matter of having realized that a good song is a good song, no matter where it comes from. I look in every nook and cranny for material—I'm open to any avenues."

The unusual nature of her repertoire was and still is a risky proposition within today's what-bag-is-it-in record industry. She claims, however, that she receives as much support from Geffen as she had from Holzman. "He's the one [Geffen] who encouraged me to do what I do and not be thrown by the big changes that the business was taking." And the risk proved worth it—"Judith" became her sixth gold album.

On her next and most recent recording, "Bread and Roses," she continued to explore new avenues of expression through different writers. As always, her own contribution—*Out of Control*—stands out as one of the better cuts. But the light, pure voice sounds

strained and uncomfortable in the upper limits of the more commercial songs. She seems forced to travel on her own characteristically ethereal plane while an overly texturized backup busies itself around her. The inclusion of this kind of material is no doubt part of her conscientious contemporizing, but Elton John and Andrew Gold (who composes and arranges a substantial amount of Linda Ronstadt's material) do not write Collins songs. One can only surmise that this was a passing tactical error, for the other, more dramatic cuts (notably Ellington's *I Didn't Know About You*) come across with characteristic sincerity and depth.

I asked her how she felt about today's popular music. "I don't like it much. It doesn't grab me a lot. People who have come through for me in the past as artists I find very disappointing now—with a few exceptions. The record industry is becoming such a big business that perhaps quality is sacrificed. We don't have the same kind of stimulation that we had in the Sixties with the Beatles and with Dylan."

Where does a Judy Collins fit into today's scene? "I see myself as a performer, a very visible person in entertainment—in television and concert work and recording—in developing myself as an artist. And you know, that's a lifetime goal. That's not how one fits into a scheme of what's fashionable at the moment."

Whether or not it's "fashionable" (and that depends on your pocketbook and your cultural preferences), plans are in the works for the inevitable Vegas appearance. "Basically, I think I'd like to do a show. I'm moving in that direction—my concerts are more theatrical, with elements of lighting and design—toward getting away from that impersonal, hard-rock, electronic look that a singer's stage very often has in contemporary music. Reaching people of all kinds is part of the challenge and I'd like to make it a totally satisfying experience, visually and musically."

In addition to Vegas, she mentioned the possibility of doing a show on Broadway. In either case, she seems quite adamant about it being a performance-hall vs. supper-club situation. "I don't really feel that I will ever be capable of working while people eat." (This could be a reaction to an incident in Odessa, Russia, where she had various kinds of "produce" thrown at her. Apparently the audience was expecting rock & roll, not Judy Collins.)

Immediate plans include another recording, television, and "lots of writing." The new album will include some of her own songs and possibly another cut from *A Little Night Music*. She hopes to do some acting, but has no plans to revive her career as a film producer. "That was a unique and once-upon-a-time situation. I don't think I *could* do that again."

But that's just the point. Why should she? Unlike many contemporary pop artists, following past success formulas for shoo-in results has never been—and one hopes never will be—a Collins characteristic. Rather, she seeks her reward in the means, not in the ends they might bring about. The successful evolution from classical to folk to cabaret/pop serves as proof of her own need to change, explore, and develop. And that, after all, is what artistic longevity should be about. ●

Tom Oberheim's Magical Music Machines

by Don Heckman

A funny thing has happened in the last decade or so: Music synthesizers have come of age. It really wasn't all that long ago—seven or eight years, perhaps—that Bob Moog was running a cottage industry in Trumansburg, New York, and Donald Buchla was custom-making synthesizer equipment for composers like Morton Subotnick. True, Walter Carlos' now-classic breakthrough recording, "Switched-On Bach" was beginning to reach a mass audience, but hardly anyone really believed that a *performable* electronic music synthesizer was anything more than a pleasant, science-fiction sort of dream.

There wasn't, after all, much precedent. In the early Sixties, the only way for most composers to work electronically was with either home-made Rube Goldberg assemblages (a couple of Eico oscillators and a rewired tape deck served me admirably at the time) or—for the lucky and mathematically oriented—one of the rare monsters like the vacuum-tube synthesizer put together by RCA for the Columbia-Princeton electronic music department.

So, in the Sixties when Moog told me that the proliferation of performance synthesizers was not only possible but inevitable, I snickered a bit, nodded my head, and asked him to show me a few more tricky ways to patch the Moog together. But as anyone who's been to a rock concert in the last six or seven years can testify, Moog sure knew what he was talking about. Performance synthesizers have eased into our consciousness as smoothly as a Dino Ferrari into the high-speed lane of a California freeway.

In fact the last few years have seen enough synthesizers, semi-synthesizers, and quasi-synthesizers—from monster corporations like Yamaha and from small companies in the wilds of New England—to startle even Moog (who by now has become part of a rather large conglomerate himself).

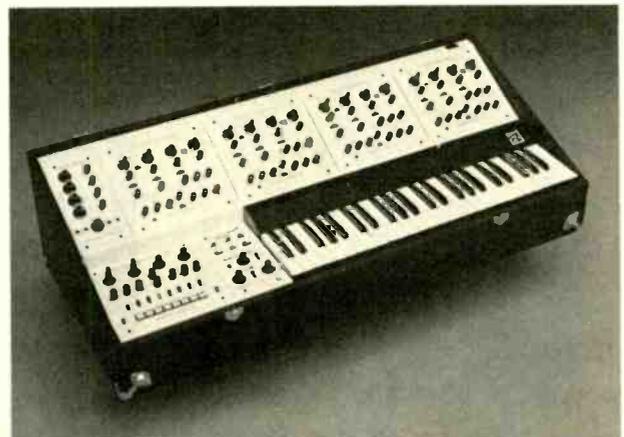
Curiously, it happened almost in a frontier fashion. There aren't too many areas of endeavor left in which the good old virtues of perseverance, self-reliance, and imagination can be translated into real

commercial results. The manufacture of sound components for the home started out that way (and a few hardy souls persist as independents) but what began as specialized equipment and devices for hobbyist aficionados and sound freaks soon evolved into sophisticated mass-produced units for a huge consumer market.

Electronic musical instruments—including everything from sound modifiers for woodwinds to full-blown, multi-keyboard synthesizers—do continue,

“Performance synthesizers
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however, to pour out of small, independent operations. Their development involves a quixotic mixture of the most sophisticated electronic know-how, jerry-



Four-voiced polyphonic synthesizer with programmer

built production lines, and primitive sales techniques. It's wild, wonderful, and, for the people involved, a lot of fun. They're making money, they're doing what they want to do, and they feel that their work places them at the cutting edge of the creative community.

Tom Oberheim is a prime example. He's a tall, graying, fortyish man who could easily be mistaken for, say, the defensive line coach of the Los Angeles Rams rather than what he is—the founding father, designer, engineer, and chief proselytizer for the company that bears his name. Virtually unknown outside

“I set up a little business,
got a few investors,
and went into ring modulators.”

the specialized world of music electronics until a year ago, Oberheim's development of modularized four-, six-, and eight-voiced synthesizers with built-in computerized programming potential has thrust him and his equipment into the thick of the competition.

He operates from a small, well-coordinated building in Santa Monica. Although his business has grown substantially in the past few years, his “shop” is still small enough for him to personally test each synthesizer; the shipping clerks and the women who wire the units reach the boss by simply walking into his office.

Oberheim is modest about his entry into the field: “Boy, when I started, I just didn't know anything. When Moog was making his impact in the late Sixties I knew essentially nothing about synthesizers.”

A self-trained engineer, Oberheim had been scrambling around in musical electronics ever since the early Fifties, when he was nineteen years old. He picked up a physics degree from UCLA, went most of the way toward a degree in vocal music, and spent a

lot of time in the Sixties singing avant-garde music with the Gregg Smith Singers and the Roger Wagner Chorale.

“I started doing a little electronic work for a couple of friends of mine who used to work in a group called the United States of America. Dorothy Moscowitz, the singer, was trying to get the group back together again, and they needed amps, so I built some for them. Then one day Dorothy said, ‘Why don't you build us a ring modulator?’ ”

Oberheim smiled at the recollection: “Do you believe that I had no idea what a ring modulator was? I went up to the UCLA engineering library and found a few textbooks that said, ‘A ring modulator is this . . .’ but I couldn't, for the life of me, figure out how you could use it for electronic music. Finally I dug up an article from an old issue of *Electronics* magazine—I think it was actually from 1960. A guy named Harald Bode—he's worked with Moog on and off through the years—described several modules, including a ring modulator and other stuff that you plugged together with patch cords. [Basically, what a ring modulator does is enable you to produce a simultaneous cluster of random tones from a single tone.]

“So I built one, and this friend hooked it up to a piano and made some weird sounds with it; he thought it was terrific. Around the same time, I was building amplifiers and other little things for Don Ellis, the jazz musician, and he decided he wanted a ring modulator, too. Well, the word got around fast. In 1969, Leonard Rosenman, a film composer, heard about it and decided to use one in the score of *Beneath the Planet of the Apes*. He called me and I traipsed over to 20th Century-Fox for the recording. The funny thing was that some of the guys in that big orchestra listened to what was happening and said, ‘Hey, I want a ring modulator, too.’ So because of all these little unrelated incidents, I decided that maybe there was a market for these units. I set up a little business, got a



“The Music Modulator”:
Oberheim's first creation

few investors, and went into ring modulators.”

My first awareness of Oberheim came at about the same time, when a friend loaned me one of his meticulously handcrafted early ring modulators. Oberheim's was a remarkable unit, emblazoned with his own logo—a bright and jaunty example of the R. Crumb-inspired graphics of the period. I used it in a somewhat unorthodox hookup with a soprano saxophone, but it functioned superbly and the audiences I played for reacted as though I had revived the ancient sirens of Odysseus.

Oberheim was surprised to hear I'd used one. “I don't know how you got hold of it. There sure weren't that many around then. We didn't hit the ‘big time’—ho, ho,—until around 1970, when I put a free ad in a little throwaway newspaper. A guy from Norlin Music called and said they wanted to market my ring modulator in their Maestro line.”

Even so, Oberheim was still operating what was essentially a backyard industry: “I was still working full time as a computer engineer.” Once again, contact with musicians stimulated a further development in his thinking.

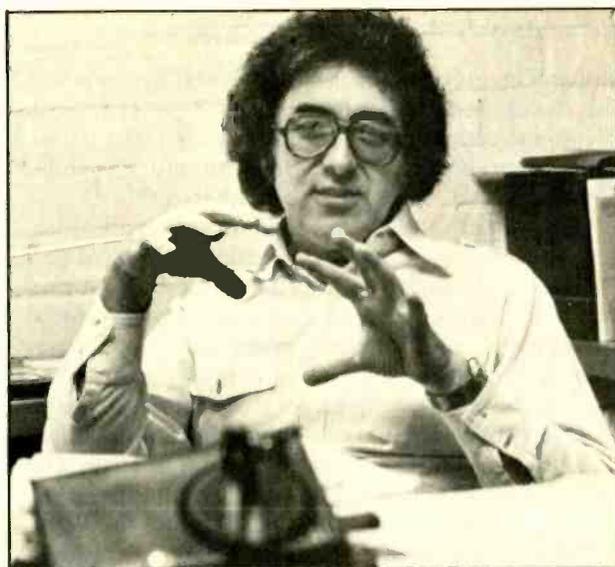
“I was doing home recording for some rock musicians around that time.” One was Wendy Waldman, the others were Andrew Gold and Kenny Edwards.

“I want to stay small enough so that we're never blinded by what looks good in ad copy. In the end it's how it sounds that matters.”

They had a band called Brendel that didn't get anywhere but they were all super musicians. Working with them turned me on to a lot of rock, and one of the big rock fads of the time was putting guitars through Leslie speakers. Well, I liked that sound, and since I was always keeping an ear open for another possible product for my company, I decided I'd see what I could do with it.

“I worked for a month trying to figure out what a Leslie really did; it's so complicated that I never did really figure it out. So before I even made an *attempt* at duplicating the Leslie sound I just sort of gave up and said, ‘What's the next best sound that I'd like to make?’ And the answer was phasing. But I was back at go again; I didn't know much about that process either. I looked around and finally found a classic textbook phase shifter circuit, added some circuitry to allow for variation, and put one together. Well, lo and behold, it didn't sound like phasing—or flanging, in the studio sense—but it *did* sound a lot like a Leslie, which was what I had wanted to do in the first place. You just never know, do you?”

Oberheim fixed up the unit (“a nice box with controls and stuff can do wonders”) and took it to Norlin. They were reluctant to distribute it; in 1970 the sound of Hendrix was in the air (fuzz tone, distortion, feedback, etc.) so they didn't think there'd be much commercial interest in something as relatively conserva-



The boss in his executive suite

tive-sounding as a phase shifter.

But Oberheim persisted, and Norlin had the first commercially viable phase shifter as a result. “It really made us a company,” he said. “The business that started in my second bedroom was grossing a million dollars a year: zap—just like that!”

But he knew that he needed another product. One-crop economies have had a lousy reputation ever since the South lost the Civil War; every time Oberheim went to the bank he was told to diversify or expect the worst. “I knew I could make a living no matter what happened, but I wanted to get into synthesizers. I wanted to make something that could use my knowledge of digital computers and, I guess, most important, I wanted something that I could sell on my own, without a middle man.”

In fairly short order, Oberheim and his engineer put together two new products. The first was a digital sequencer—a device that stores and replays a sequence of sounds in various forms, transpositions, inversions, and rhythms. They followed up with an instrument that directly complemented the sequencer: They called it an Expander Module.

The Module was actually a reduced-to-the-bare-bones synthesizer. Its original job was to provide a sound source for sequencers. (Until recently, all synthesizers were monophonic, which meant that they could not provide a sound source for both keyboard and sequencer operation at the same time.) It had all the capabilities of, say, a Minimoog or an Arp Odyssey, but Oberheim saw it in the beginning “as an add-on unit that would let a player run a sequencer and play his keyboard at the same time.”

About two years ago, at the height of the recession, Norlin suddenly canceled nearly \$100,000 worth of orders for ring modulators and phase shifters. Even a *very* viable cottage industry would find it hard to survive that kind of setback, and Oberheim still had pretty much a “one-crop” operation.

“I looked around,” he said, “and asked myself ‘what do I do now?’ I had become friends with a little

company up in Santa Clara called E-MU Systems that had developed a digital keyboard system with polyphonic capabilities. The combination was an absolute natural: their keyboard with my Expander Modules. Wow! A polyphonic synthesizer!"

He was absolutely right; it was a terrific idea. From the very beginning the essential rap against performance synthesizers had been their inability to produce more than one sound at a time. A multi-voiced instrument is, by definition, enormously more versatile and correspondingly more complex to use and program; but it also comes a great deal closer to fulfilling the creative potential of synthesizing instruments.

Of course Oberheim wasn't the only person who realized the value of a multi-voiced synthesizer. The idea was in the wind and (like calculus and the Western hemisphere) was arrived at by different people using different means. Moog came out with the Poly-moog, Arp with the Omni. There no doubt will be others. "There are going to be a lot of things on the market calling themselves polyphonic synthesizers," said Oberheim, "and there will be some controversy brewing over which does or doesn't deserve the name."

The question of name is important, because there is very little agreement about what a music synthesizer really is. Many of the instruments on the market that are called synthesizers are actually organs. The confusion is understandable: Synthesizers and organs both use oscillators; they both have ways of altering timbre with filters; they both have circuits that introduce varying degrees of attack and decay.

It's not exactly surprising, then, that any number of companies start with an organ, add a filter that can be swept to produce the characteristic synthesizer "weeeeeooowww" sound, add a couple of other gimmicky controls, and call their units synthesizers.

The point, I suppose, is that one person's music is another person's noise. Definitions, in this case at least, depend upon what you're looking for. The most useful description seems to take two connecting considerations into account. First, the more parameters that the user can control, the closer he is to a true synthesizer; the more parameters that are set or predetermined by the manufacturer, the closer one is to some sort of hybrid. The second consideration, in rudimentary terms, is that the various sound parameters the user should control in a true synthesizer—envelope, pitch, attack, decay, timbre, etc.—are most effectively achieved through the use of some common, readily available physical entity. Voltage is the physical entity that is the easiest to mechanize in terms of controlling circuitry.

The Moog and Buchla synthesizers were the first to use a set amount of voltage throughout the circuitry to control those elements, and the best and most useful synthesizers of the past decade have all, in one form or another, applied the same principle.

"We feel we're closest to a true synthesizer, primarily because so many of our parameters are voltage-controlled," said Oberheim. "Our unit has a com-

pletely logical sequence of controlled connections: Voltage-controlled oscillators drive voltage-controlled filters that drive a voltage-controlled amplifier. You've got control over all those parameters.

"I personally find certain musical values in a voltage-controlled synthesizer—in the classic Moog system of VCOs, VCFs, VCAs, envelope generators, etc. That's the best we've got and that's what we—at this company—are going to stick with."

Oberheim's polyphonic units have the additional versatility provided by the Expander Modules. When four or six of them are assembled, then panned across a stereo spectrum, the sound can justifiably be described, in Oberheim's word, as "luscious." And the modular makeup of the equipment allows the user to start with a small unit and build from there. (Herbie Hancock started with Oberheim's four-voiced synthesizer—serial No. 3, expanded to an eight-voiced and then added a programmer; other musicians have done the same.)

But Oberheim's *pièce de résistance* is another modular element—one that traces back to Oberheim's interest in computer technology. He calls it, logically enough, his "programmer." "It allows you," he explained, "to make the settings in the twelve most critical synthesizer parameters; when you have those set for a sound you like, you press a button and it's stored in the digital memory. You can store a different patch on all the modules or you can store the same patch, and you can do that sixteen different times. So when a guy goes on a gig, he can have his own personal approximation of a string sound on one, his brass sound on another—whatever. And it's not like a preset patch that's been dreamed up by an engineer at the factory; the sound is the musician's sound, and it can vary infinitely.

"This capacity for producing what each performer wants the instrument to sound like, rather than the sound that we build into it, is what I think really makes our instrument unique."

With his new polyphonic instruments, Oberheim seems to have taken the music synthesizer—*his* synthesizer, at least—full circle, back to the time when Moog and Buchla were making units to fulfill the direct needs and requests of musicians.

"I don't want my company to be real big," he told me. "Our competition puts a lot of energy into the kind of corporate organization that simply doesn't exist here. Most important to me is having the time to talk to musicians when they come in, and I want to be able to continue to listen to music—all the time. I know a lot about rock, a lot about jazz, I have an ear, I'm a musician, and I listen—I hope—intelligently.

"Our directions are motivated by what we feel musicians need or by what musicians *tell* me they need. I want to stay small enough so that we're never blinded by what looks good in ad copy. In the end it's how it sounds that matters." He paused for a moment and flicked a control on his newest synthesizer. "We are making musical instruments, you know." ●

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CIRCLE 42 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

The Independent That Could: A&M Records

by Todd Everett

There is a strong case to be made that the most interesting record companies are the smaller, independent ones. While sometimes characterized by shoestring budgets and shotgun distribution, it's the independents—with no parent company pressure—who have traditionally supplied most of the imagination and set many of the trends in the music business. Rock & roll, disco, reggae, and to some degree mass appeal black music all owe their initial exposure to independent labels. Almost invariably, they've been founded by the need to make music available through means other than existing distribution channels. Witness the proliferation, even in these relatively sophisticated days, of small companies dealing in contemporary classical, avant-garde and traditional jazz, blues, folk, spoken-word, and both legitimate and bootleg reissues of vintage material from all categories.

With the absorption in recent years of Decca by MCA, Mercury by Phonogram, and Elektra and Atlantic by Warner Communications, only a few major independent labels exist—A&M, Motown, and Casablanca among them. A&M has the largest number of charted albums (forty-six in 1976, according to *Billboard*), but despite its size (something like three hundred employees) and financial solidity it remains the classic independent.

The company was founded in 1962 by its current owners, Herb Alpert and Jerry Moss. Both were young; both were determined "record men." Alpert was a record producer (notably, Jan & Dean's early successes), songwriter (several of Sam Cooke's, including *All of My Life* and *Wonderful World*), singer (remember *Tell It to the Bees* by Dore Alpert? Don't worry, neither does anybody else!), and actor. Moss was a promotion man, whose first job—at a salary of

Todd Everett is a free-lance writer who is less interested in the stars than he is in the process that makes them.

\$75 a week—was to get the Crests' *16 Candles* played in Philadelphia.

Alpert, who also played trumpet, had recorded an instrumental of a song called *Twinkle Star*, written by a friend. He had added corrida crowd noises and then dubbed it *The Lonely Bull*. Rather than try to sell or lease the master to another label, he and Moss decided to launch their own, operating from Alpert's low-rent Hollywood garage.

The Lonely Bull, performed by the Tijuana Brass, eventually sold 700,000 copies—most of them during the several-month period that A&M continued to crowd Alpert's car out into the driveway. But not much time passed before the company moved to a real office on the Sunset Strip (in the years since, that office has been considered good luck by the superstitious in the industry—Uni, 20th Century, and Casablanca are now headquartered in the same building). In 1966, A&M settled permanently in the Charlie Chaplin film studio lot, which is today a historic monument preserved in much of its original condition. The label uses the huge sound stage for rehearsals and occasional showcase performances.

Typical of the independents, A&M's artist roster reflected the personal tastes of its owners—smooth, adult-oriented pop, occasionally with a slight jazz, rhythm & blues, or Mexican tinge. Aside from Alpert's Tijuana Brass, the label's successful early acts included the Baja Marimba Band (like the Brass's, their music was Latin-flavored pop-instrumental with more than a hint of humor in the arrangements and presentation), the Sandpipers (a Lettermen-styled vocal trio whose first hit was *Guantanamera*, in Spanish), Sergio Mendes and Brasil '66, wispy-voiced Claudine Longet, and the quietly folk-rocking We Five (*You Were on My Mind*).

Some attempts were made at entering other



The start of it all—Alpert's Tijuana Brass (1966)

areas. Captain Beethart's first single was on A&M and became a hit in Los Angeles, Waylon Jennings was signed to the label in the mid-Sixties, and Leon Russell released a couple of energetic songs including an uptempo *Misty* that predated Ray Stevens' version by a good nine years. But generally, A&M was one of the country's major suppliers of tasteful middle-of-the-road music.

Today the roster is large—about fifty-five acts currently signed—but still a clear indicator of Alpert and Moss's personal tastes. The music of Karen and Richard Carpenter, the Captain and Tennille, Lani Hall, Chuck Mangione, and Gino Vannelli is a Seventies extension of what was happening on the label ten years ago. Most of the rock artists, signed in a blitz that started shortly after the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival, are of the clean-living, not-too-heavy type like the Ozark Mountain Daredevils and Peter Frampton. Heavy metal acts (Nazareth and Budgie being two examples) remain the exception.

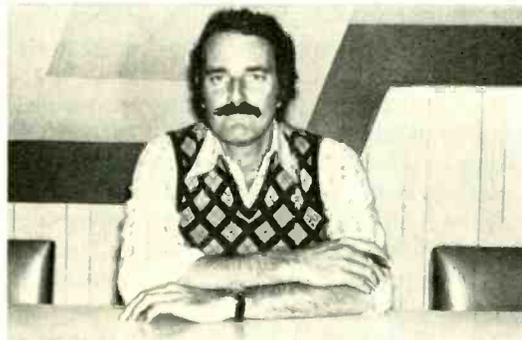
The most recent cultural inroads have been in the area of r&b, starting with the signing of veteran composer/arranger/producer Quincy Jones and keyboard player/singer Billy Preston several years ago, and continuing up through the recent success of the Brothers Johnson and LTD.

Though record sales are substantial enough to be competitive in the CBS/Warner league ("Frampton Comes Alive!" has sold in excess of six million units alone) A&M continues to operate as an independent. Alpert's duties are largely musical, as a producer and recording artist, and Moss handles the executive/administrative end of things. Both are still in their early forties; neither has the slightest desire to sell out to a larger corporation (though there were rumors not so many years ago that the company—then in a lean period—was on the auction block). "There are only two

reasons to sell," Moss explains. "To get a lot of cash so that you can tick off the days till your retirement, or you sell a part of the company for cash in order to expand rapidly. I'm only forty-one, and I've been with A&M for fourteen years. There's nothing that I would rather be doing than what I'm doing now—it's not a job, it's my life."

In addition to the money generated by such huge-selling acts as the Captain and Tennille, the Carpenters, Frampton, Jones, Preston, and Cat Stevens, A&M counts on other sources of revenue. For one, the recording studios are in constant use by outside artists. Also, it distributes one outside label, Ode, which is owned by Alpert's long-time friend and former co-writer and co-producer, Lou Adler. Artists include Carole King (though she recently signed with Capitol, she owes Ode one more album), comedy duo Cheech and Chong, and several other, less familiar, acts. (Rumor has it as we go to press that Ode is up for sale.) A&M's music publishing wing, Irving/Almo, is notably strong. Aside from handling the administrative work for many of the label's acts, they own (for instance) all of Brian Wilson's early copyrights; they've also recently established their own print division, publishing and distributing sheet music and folios.

At various stages in the company's development, there have been tactical errors—largely the result of wanting to expand too rapidly into areas that the staff wasn't prepared to handle. Moss still grimaces at the mention of A&M's short-lived 1968 venture into motion picture production; within a year's time the movie branch was announced (with three initial projects planned) and dissolved. Sometime later, the label



Owners/founders Moss & Alpert: personal pride and attention to detail

co-financed the film of the Joe Cocker/Leon Russell tour with a band called Mad Dogs and Englishmen. In a few years, all rights to that picture revert to the label, but one can assume—since no other ventures along these lines are planned—that this too was an error in judgment.

A&M also recently pared its artist roster by some fifteen acts to make it easier to handle. And various artist and/or production deals have proven less fruitful than expected. One with producer Phil Spector in 1969 resulted in a couple of moderately successful singles (by the Checkmates and Ronettes) but nothing more. One with George Harrison in 1975 resulted in albums by Ravi Shankar and bands like Attitudes, Splinter, Jiva, and Stairsteps, but nothing by Harrison himself. This all climaxed in a huge lawsuit that was settled out of court last year in A&M's favor. An attempt to initiate a jazz series, Horizon (loosely patterned after ABC's Impulse and Arista's Freedom lines), isn't showing the kind of profit anticipated. The artists, production, and presentation are topnotch, but the A&M sales and promotion forces are apparently unable to push Jim Hall, Ira Sullivan, Paul Desmond, and Charlie Haden—though those same forces are doing well enough with Chuck Mangione and Gato Barbieri's albums on the parent label. Nevertheless, says Moss, "In retrospect, any mistakes have been minor. We're still here, and I don't owe anyone any money."

Whether or not they owe anybody anything, A&M must operate with less capital than a label funded by a huge international corporation. So it saves where it can. Rather than invest in huge branch warehouses and sales staffs, the company remains as it started, with an independent distribution system—distributors in every marketing region but two handle A&M together with several other lines. Rather than set up international offices, A&M licenses recordings to established local labels, except in Great Britain and Canada, where its wholly owned affiliates operate on a semi-autonomous basis, able to sign their own acts as well as distribute A&M's U.S. roster. Manufacturing in the U.S. is handled by Columbia Records, saving A&M the cost of pressing, packaging, warehousing, and shipping facilities.

(The exceptions to A&M's independent distribution system are in Atlanta, where they share ownership of Together Distributors with Motown, and in the Northeast, which is served by an A&M office in Boston. Both resulted from an urge to experiment and from what Moss felt to be inadequate performance by their previous distributors in those markets. There are no plans to expand in this area.)

When A&M does expand its roster, it does so slowly—again with an eye to sensible financing. Although the early acts included the Canadian Sweethearts and Waylon Jennings and later country-rockers like Steve Young, Dillard and Clark, and the Flying Burrito Bros., the label never really felt at ease with country music and eventually ceased its attempts in that area. Though now a strong force in the r&b market, initial inroads were made by acts like Billy Pres-

ton, who crossed over into it from the Top 40. A&M has never had a separate r&b-oriented staff, as most labels do; it releases no classical product, and no hard-core jazz appeared until the Horizon operation was founded last year.

Unlike the larger companies, this one can't use money as a weapon in artist recruitment. Artists-and-repertoire head Kip Cohen, a three-year veteran of Columbia before joining A&M, puts it this way: "We can't compete with bigger companies on that level, and we don't even try. Labels like Columbia and Warner Bros. can lure an act with a promise of a huge cash advance and larger royalties. What we tell an act that we can deliver is an individual treatment, and a highly specialized one. We're experienced in image-making and growth-building. Furthermore, we can deal with acts on a musical basis. Herb's a producer, Jerry's a promotion man, and most of our executives are record people and not attorneys or accountants. Columbia's moving their West Coast offices to Century City [an office building complex well outside of Hollywood]. That's because they want to be closer to the lawyers who work there. When I have lunch with somebody, it's with an artist or a producer. That's the difference between us and a Columbia."

Cohen adds that the label seldom signs established artists—"... not only because of the money they might demand, but because there's no sport"—and when they do, it's likely to be one who hasn't reached full career potential (a nice record-biz way of saying an artist has been around a while without going anywhere). Recent acquisitions in that area include Joan Baez, Chuck Mangione, Nils Lofgren, and Richie Havens. And when A&M does get into the big-money sweepstakes, they don't often win: After releasing a number of Baez's albums, each selling considerably better than its predecessor, they were outbid by Columbia's new Portrait label at contract-renewal time.

In the foreseeable future, A&M's plans are to remain pretty much the same record company that it is today, with reinforcement of the relatively weak areas, such as jazz. Moss is most interested in preserving a high-quality image. A&M was the first large label to supervise the manufacture and distribution of prerecorded tapes, largely in order to upgrade quality control (most labels that didn't manufacture their own tape would lease cartridge, cassette, and open-reel rights to a tape company like Ampex or GRT). Now Moss is looking at pressings. "Playback equipment has been getting more and more sophisticated, and we aren't making the same kind of advances in the physical quality of records. Columbia presses ours; their quality control is higher than the industry standard, and we have our own people to double-check. But still, shoddy pressings get released. It's our goal to come out with the best record in the country, even if that means that we'll end up pressing them ourselves." It is this kind of personal pride and attention to detail that has characterized A&M throughout its history and has, no doubt, contributed in no small amount to its ultimate—and independent—success. ●

Input Output

Instruments and Accessories

Polytone Mini-Brute II. In the years that I've been in the recording business, I suppose I've seen most types of instrument amplifiers—from the homemade jobs with their dazzling speaker arrays, to the gigantic Marshalls, Peaveys, Sunns, Acoustics, Gibsons, and so many models in the Fender line that I've lost track. While recording these amplifiers is usually not a problem, there are always a few that need endless attention as they hum, buzz, and hiss their way onto my avoid-this-one-the-next-time list.

Then there's the "bigger the better" syndrome. When a rock group books studio time, the members invariably drag in their own monster stage-type amps, much to the delight of the local chiropractor and to the grief of roadies, girlfriends, and the resident recording engineer. So when Polytone announced its 18-pound Mini-Brute II, rated at 60 watts (17¼ dBW) continuous, you'd better believe I was eager to try it. The amp has two standard ¼-inch phone-jack inputs, both of which will accept an instrument or microphone output signal. Front panel controls include a three-position BRIGHT/DARK switch, separate bass and treble tone controls, a reverbation potentiometer, and dual concentric volume controls for preamp and power amp gain. The dual volume controls allow you to increase the output level of the preamp while maintaining a constant power amp output level. Simply stated, this means you can create a



Polytone Mini-Brute II

distortion effect (if you like that sort of thing) without an external distortion device—an impressive feature for so small a package.

The Mini-Brute II has an auxiliary preamp output and accessory speaker jacks; the power amps' frequency response is said to be from 20 Hz to 50 kHz, and the preamp's flat response from 60 Hz to 35 kHz. Despite the seemingly modest power rating, the amp is capable of high output levels and produces sound of surprisingly high quality. Clearly, this is no toy amp, and the clarity and impact of the sound—even at high levels—is excellent.

We used a Mini-Brute I (no reverb or preamp controls) on a recent recording session with Jay Leonhart playing a Fender Precision bass. The instrument's output was fed directly to one console input while a microphone placed near the Mini-Brute's speaker was fed to another. With the amp's tone controls in the flat position, neither Jay nor the producer could tell which was which. Of course one of the purposes of an amplifier is to color the sound of the instrument played through it, and that can be done on the Mini-Brute by using the tone controls. But there are remarkably few amps that can boast this kind of transparency. As with a subsequent test of the Mini-Brute II, there was no hum, no buzz, and no hiss—in short, an engineer's dream.

Well fine, you may say, but I'm not an engineer—I play clubs, concerts, bars, or in my home, and I don't really care how it records. Fair enough, but it can be just as useful in live situations. It's small, it eliminates the need for two amplifiers in a two-input situation (say guitar and voice), and with the tone controls and built-in reverb you can achieve the same two-input mix that you would with a small mixer.

A clean-sounding, powerful amplifier that records beautifully, is usable with a wide range of instruments from bass to voice, and weighs only 18 pounds deserves your attention—unless you're a chiropractor. The Mini-Brute II retails for \$325; the Mini-Brute I which does not include preamp control or reverb, costs \$275.

CIRCLE 122 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Switchcraft Guitar Plugs. Here are three new brass-construction guitar plugs for

you do-it-your-selves. Model C-420P2 is equipped with internal threads for strain relief, and the black plastic casing will accept cables up to 5/16 inch in diameter. Model 440P2 has no internal threads



Switchcraft Guitar Plugs

in the handle and will accept cable up to 9/32 inch. Model 470P2 is a variation of the 440P2 but is sturdier in that it has a shielded metal handle with knurling for more secure grip and protection against damage. This model will accept cables up to 9/32 inch in diameter. Prices are, respectively, \$4.75, \$4.35, and \$5.45.

CIRCLE 124 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Ibanez Flying Pan. This is a stereo panning device with a built-in phase shifter. Designed for use with two power amp/speaker systems, it could create some new possibilities for the stage performer. Panning (the movement of sound between two amps or speakers) is similar to turning the balance control on your stereo set. You can place the signal extreme left, extreme right, or anywhere in



Ibanez Flying Pan

between. The PAN SPEED control sweeps the audio signal back and forth between the speakers at a rate that is said to be variable from a slow sweep to a rapid tremolo. Phasing may be added to either or both of the speaker outputs, and FEED-BACK DEPTH regulates the depth of the effect.

Among numerous possibilities, the Flying Pan might be used to simulate the rotating-speaker (Leslie) sound, by a careful balancing of the phasing and sweep rates. Retail price for the unit is \$139.50.

CIRCLE 123 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

FRED MILLER

Records

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STEPHEN HOLDEN
JIM MELANSON
JOHN STORM ROBERTS
SAM SUTHERLAND
JOHN S. WILSON

Lionel Hampton Is All Over the Place

Lionel Hampton: The Complete Lionel Hampton, 1937-1941. Frank Driggs, producer. *RCA Bluebird AXM6 5536*, \$23.98 (six discs).

“Complete” means everything recorded by Lionel Hampton’s small groups for RCA Victor from February 1937 to April 1941. This is far and away the best period in Hampton’s

recording career for thorough documentation. His was one of four classic small groups of the Twenties and Thirties (the others included Louis Armstrong’s Hot Five and Jelly Roll Morton’s Red Hot Peppers in the ‘20s and Teddy Wilson’s all-star groups, originally with Billie Holiday as vocalist, in the ‘30s). Both Wilson and Hampton drew from the major big bands of the day for their record-

ing personnel: Ellington, Goodman, Calloway, Hines—whoever happened to be in New York at the time. But while Columbia gave Wilson a relentless diet of current and usually forgettable pop tunes (most of which his sidemen and Billie Holiday managed to salvage), Hampton’s opportunities were not so limited. He recorded a large number of unadulterated, riff-based jazz originals as well as good jazz and pop standards.

In this impressive six-disc set—ninety-one tunes with five additional alternate takes—there are wild zig-zags of style and cohesiveness because the players changed from session to session. The first, played by Goodman sidemen, is rather stiff and tentative, but the second, dominated by Ellingtonians on the loose, is brilliantly brash and joyous. Although Hampton could use excellent jazz grist such as Ellington’s *Ring dem Bells* (with a hair-raising Cootie Williams trumpet entrance) and Morton’s *Shoe Shiner’s Drag*, he also got an occasional dog such as *Stand By! For Further Announcements (and More Good News)*. Most of the great jazz instrumentalists of the ‘30s (with the exception of Basie’s sidemen) are heard all through the series in loose, free-wheeling circumstances and some who were not widely known—Dizzy Gillespie, Nat King Cole—get an early chance to shine. Hampton is all over the place, playing vibes or one-finger piano, drumming, singing. Yet it is usually the sidemen who make or break each piece. Toward the end even they can’t rescue the dull material that Hampton was drifting into or the bland vocals by several dismal singers of his choice.

J.S.W.

Ashford & Simpson: So So Satisfied.

Nickolas Ashford & Valerie Simpson, producers. *Warner Bros. BS 2992*, \$6.98. *Tape: ●● M5 2992, ● M8 2992*, \$7.97.

This first-rate producer/songwriter/performer team that emerged out of Motown in the late ‘60s try on their fourth Warner release to reconcile sophisticated soul with the more streamlined sound of ‘70s disco. The most ambitious attempt is *Tried, Tested and Found True*, a straightforward, melodic dance tune with homogenized vocals and a propulsive beat. But the cut lacks the aural spaciousness of contemporary disco. Its elaborate arrangement and solid rhythm tracks qualify it as superior soul, but the vocals are not close enough to chant and the beat not throbbing enough to make it as hard-core disco.

The hallmarks of Ashford & Simpson’s style remain unchanged. They excel at writing and arranging chromatic vocal tradeoffs that take their time building to a big payoff. But on their recent albums the dramatic scope of the lyrics has



Hampton in the late Fifties



Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson

narrowed and the melodies, though well-crafted, are not nearly so bold. Perhaps one reason is that Nick Ashford's gospel singing lacks the stamina and power of his wife's. And though he has an appealing soulful style, in performance their gospel is sensibly tempered with a supper-club intimacy that underplays the discrepancy. The moody title cut is the finest example of what they do best: Graced with a sophisticated orchestral arrangement, *So So Satisfied* is an erotic call-and-response ballad which carries '60s soul to a lavish climax as welcome as it is unusual in the harder-edged, discofied late '70s. S.H.

Average White Band: Person To Person. Arif Mardin, producer. *Atlantic SD 2-1002, \$9.98 (two discs). Tape: ●● CS 2-1002, ●● TP 2-1002, \$10.97.*

Each new album since their first collaboration with producer Arif Mardin has reinforced this predominantly Scottish sextet's sense of r&b classicism. For that career-making album, titled after the group and boosted to eventual platinum status by its impact on pop, rock, and r&b audiences alike, has served as a stylistic primer, rather than a starting point for continual development.

That's not necessarily a weakness, as the best moments on this live, two-disc package attest. AWB's forte is fluid rhythm playing, with vocals and instrumental solos inherently restricted by the intricate, syncopated clockwork of the basic rhythm and horn arrangements. In that respect, the band is simply following a time-honored r&b tradition created by the Flames, Booker T. & The MG's, and the Bar-Kays—three seminal instrumental units that excelled in making infectious dance music. Like those predecessors, AWB continues to bring heartening drive and precision to their work, and the new set's live environment only verifies that energy.

Yet there are problems here, despite the familiar repertoire of past singles and album tracks. The band's most glaring blind spot is their emphasis on their own material, which too often degenerates into interminable riffing that might be mesmeric in concert but proves simply tiring here. Had the band never covered more melodic, driving material like the Isleys' *Work to Do* and the Leon Ware/Pam Sawyer *If I Ever Lose This Heaven* (the latter included here), the lack of melodic color and structural focus wouldn't be so apparent.

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Thus, their first concert package proves appealing primarily for confirmed fans, rather than interested but unacquainted newcomers. An eighteen-minute version of the band's first hit, *Pick Up the Pieces*, certainly affirms each member's strength as a soloist, but there is little in the way of discovery that justifies its length. Similarly, the fourteen-minute *TLC* gradually rambles toward a formal song structure only to again subdivide into featured riffs.

Capping the problem is a lengthy reworking of *I Heard It Through the Grapevine*, which elaborates Marvin Gaye's recorded arrangement without approaching its taut, tough power. Sixteen bars of vamping where four are needed may be advisable for disco play, but this is also a classic song, a fact that is obscured by all this exposition.

Mardin's production and Lew Hahn's engineering are superb, presenting each instrument and voice with clarity and definition (especially drums and cymbals) without sacrificing the crowd noises and hall ambience that give the record its live atmosphere. That, along with some undeniably strong showings on the group's more economical turns (*Cut the Cake*, which doesn't attempt to enlarge on its original length and arrangement and thus emerges superior to its studio incarnation, and *School Boy Crush*), make the album worthwhile for fans and incessant dancers, but a probable risk for the merely curious. s.s.

George Benson: In Flight. Tommy Li-Puma, producer. Warner Bros. BSK 2983, \$7.98. Tape: ●● M5 2983, ● M8 2983, \$7.98.

I've always found George Benson a rather cold though skilled player, but that's only part of the reason I was unmoved by this second bid for the pop/jazz (or is it jazz/pop?) flipover that he achieved with "Breezin'." Benson sings adequately and plays pleasant guitar, but the results are very uneven. His vocal on *Nature Boy* does well by that unforgettable piece of silliness (though no version has ever been as apt as Spike Jones's). *Gonna Love You More* is a dim song appropriately sung, but the singularly beautiful ballad *Everything Must Change*, while not matching Randy Crawford's state-of-the-art rendering, does come across fairly well.

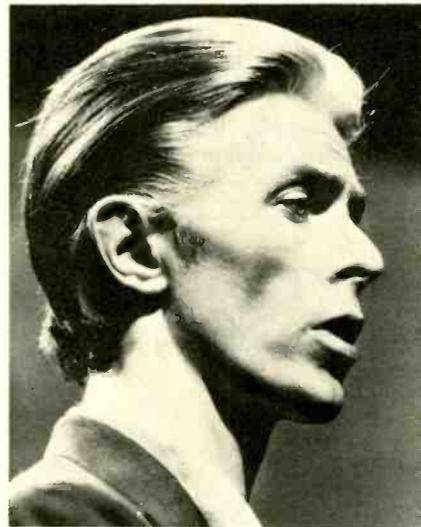
The instrumentals are similarly variable. *The Wind and I* swings a good deal more than most of the funk jazz around, thanks as much to keyboardist Ronnie Foster as Benson himself. War's *The World Is a Ghetto* is marred by producer Li-Puma's use of strings as a (saccharine) "sweetener"—awful throughout—and dreary disco/funk oompa-chuck a-

chicka-chicka-chuck drumming. Donny Hathaway's subtle *Valdez in the Country* cooks mightily from the start, despite drooling violins.

In all, "In Flight" is an agreeable enough album that will probably sell, and despite a certain lack of conviction and a rather aimless wandering between modes, it far outstrips most current funk rock. But musically it is no match for two other recent Benson releases: CTI's recording of him and Foster in concert with Hubert Laws, "George Benson in Concert—Carnegie Hall" (CTI 6072 S1), and Polydor's reissue (which contains one previously unreleased cut) of a bunch of 1968 sessions under the title "Blue Benson" (Polydor PD-1 6084).

J.S.R.

David Bowie: Low. David Bowie & Tony Visconti, producers. RCA CPL 1-2030, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CPK 1-2030, ● CPS 1-2030, \$7.98.



David Bowie—more than meets the ear

Rock music's most eclectic and often most grandiose avant-gardist has finally made an album that makes no compromises toward commercial accessibility. "Low" takes its direction from the soundtrack of Bowie's film, *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (the cover art reproduces the ad for the film), and offers "space music" as chilling as it is evocative. The music is of roughly two types. Side 1 comprises seven short pieces (songs is hardly the right word) of abrasively textured guitar and synthesizer-based rock. Here some of the most stock hooks in the rock repertory act as mechanized instrumental fragments with Bowie's superimposed vocals amounting to little more than the repetition of Dadaist phrases. Though the effect is distancing, it's not totally alienating. For despite robot-like rhythms, there is an undeniable energy, and a

frame of reference can be gained with repeated listenings.

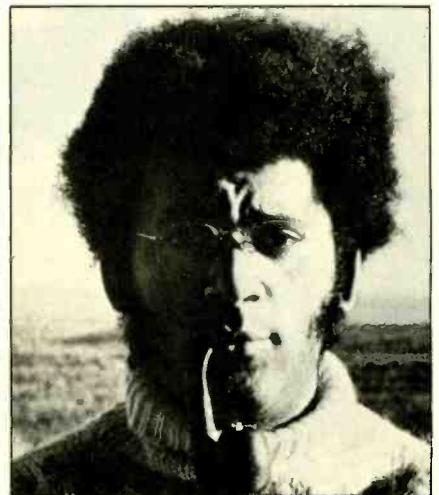
The LP's major aesthetic problem is stylistic inconsistency. Not content to develop a single musical idea per album, Bowie explores a different, chillier avant-gardism on Side 2. The pieces are longer, sparer, cooler, and lack rhythm tracks. *Warszawa*, a collaboration with the brilliant English synthesist Brian Eno, is the most portentous piece, *Weeping Wall*, in which Bowie overdubs all the instruments bringing vibraphone and xylophone to the foreground, is the most subtly captivating and tantalizingly reminiscent of some of the sounds created by avant-garde composer Steve Reich. There is probably much more to this music than meets the ear, and it can at least claim a certain charm in its low-keyed, arctic impressionism. s.H.

Anthony Braxton: Duets 1976. Steve Backer, executive producer. Arista A1 4101, \$6.98. Tape: ● 8301 4101, \$7.98.

Braxton's music is more striking for the sense of *déjà vu* it creates than for its implicit interest. The musical problems that concern him are problems that were thoroughly and exhaustively explored a decade ago.

Working with pianist Muhal Richard Abrams, Braxton uses virtually the entire gamut of single-reed instruments (alto sax, soprano sax, contrabass sax, clarinet, E-flat clarinet, and contrabass clarinet) to labor through six mostly improvised pieces. *Miss Ann*, Eric Dolphy's brightly humorous line, and Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* receive the most ingratiating performances, simply because they provide ample bases from which to improvise.

The remaining four pieces (three devised by Braxton, one duo improvisation) employ the now-familiar avant-garde techniques of pointillism, inter-



Anthony Braxton—maybe next time

vallic leaps, substitution of a sound-and-silence flow for a jazz pulse, and spontaneous back-and-forth "sound effect" episodes. None of this is wrong, or even uninteresting, but much of it was done to much greater effect years ago by performers and composers like Bill Dixon, Ken McIntyre, Cecil Taylor, Don Ellis, Paul Bley, Jimmy Giuffre, George Russell, and John Benson Brooks, to name only a few.

The real question, then, is to what extent Braxton can push out beyond the confines of the artistic cul-de-sac he has created for himself. If this outing is any indication, not very much. And that's regrettable, because he's a superb technician and—potentially—one of the finest contemporary jazz improvisers. Perhaps next time. . . . D.H.

Kim Carnes: Sailin'. Jerry Wexler & Barry Beckett, producers. *A&M SP 4606*, \$6.98. *Tape: CS 4606*, \$7.98. *8T 4606*, \$7.98.

Singer-writer Kim Carnes is the slickest new exponent of an enduring pop subgenre: white soap opera schlock with a strong flavor of Southern country soul. Like Dusty Springfield and Jackie DeShannon, Carnes plays the sexy, slightly

faded belle who has lived long enough to see her dreams of a Cinderella ending tarnish but not so long as to have forgotten the fantasy completely. Although she has a lovely voice, she does not project the real masochistic desperation of Springfield or the tough/tender resilience of DeShannon. Rather, she is a superb technician who turns the subgenre into a pleasant Hollywood pastiche.

Jerry Wexler, who coproduced Springfield and DeShannon's finest albums, takes exactly the same approach with Carnes on her second LP, accentuating and stretching her emotive range in distinct, carefully preconceived sound settings. Thus the melodiousness of the ballad *Sailin'*, co-written with husband Dave Ellingson, is enhanced by striking passages of a cappella part singing. *Let Your Love Come Easy* skillfully plays her voice against a stunning pop/jazz flute solo by Chris Coldesser. But it is with the daydream ballads that the album hits its peaks. The richly orchestrated *He'll Come Home* makes delicious country/soul schmaltz out of a woman's suffering nobility. And the Carnes-Ellingson American Song Festival winner, *Love Comes from the Most Unexpected Places*, is as fine a traditional pop expression of

wish-fulfillment as has come along in many years. S.H.

Fleetwood Mac: Rumours. Fleetwood Mac, Richard Dashut, & Ken Caillat, producers. *Warner Bros. BSK 3010*, \$7.98. *Tape: M5 3010*, \$7.98. *M8 3010*, \$7.98.

This second LP from Fleetwood Mac as we know it today (Mick Fleetwood, drums; John McVie, bass; Christine McVie, keyboards/vocals; Stevie Nicks, vocals; and Lindsey Buckingham, guitar/vocals) has been a long time in coming, but proves well worth the wait. Few bands have survived the changes this one has since its formation in 1967 (see *BACKBEAT*, February). Fewer still have produced the quality of sound that's found here at any time during their career. It's that kind of disc—a perfect follow up to "Fleetwood Mac," released in 1975 and still on the charts after eighty-plus weeks.

The material on "Rumours" is generally in the popsy, high-flying rock vein. Among the exceptions are *Songbird*, a lilting melody both penned and sung by Christine McVie; Stevie Nicks's *Dreams*, featuring strong acoustic-guitar picking

Continued on page 144

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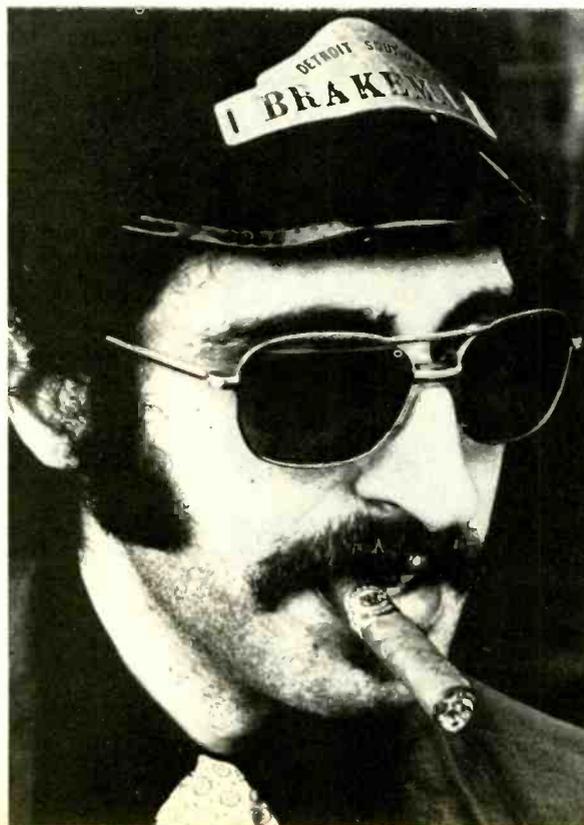
Who Is Leon Redbone & Why Is He Singing All Those Oddball Songs?

Any way you look at it, Leon Redbone's ascendance is slightly anomalous. How do you account for a man who sings old ballads, blues, jazz, and novelty tunes in a voice somewhere between Mississippi John Hurt and a '20s lounge crooner, yet still manages to sell records in the '70s? When was the last time you thought you'd want to hear a new version of *Shine On Harvest Moon* complete with background whistling?

Hiding behind shades, pith helmet, muttonchop sideburns, facial hair, stogie, and riverboat gambler's tie, Redbone comes across as a retrogressive Frank Zappa. Warner Bros. attempts to compound this affected air of mystery by referring to Redbone in his bio as "the reclusive Pied Piper of Esoterica" who has an aversion to revealing his age or origins ("Mr. Redbone ... finds the in-

terrogations to be irrelevant in the extreme"), adding that upon completion of "Double Time," his second album, he was "off in truth studying the pyramids. But one suspects his whole family to be a little off."

Stranger gambits have been used to sell "difficult" music, but the irony is that Redbone may not need the gimmicks. What his record company will allow us is that he was first spotted playing Toronto clubs in 1970, that he went on to become a hit of the Mariposa Folk Festival in '71 and secure laudations from the likes of Bob Dylan, Ramblin' Jack Elliott, and Maria Muldaur, and finally that his 1975 debut album ("On the Track") sold modestly until an appearance on *Saturday Night Live* turned him into a national cult figure and moved 200,000 units.



Not surprisingly, the coyness and secrecy surrounding all this has turned some people off. What *can* be questioned are not his basic intentions, but the nuances of his method and the contrivance of his image. While he is obviously working the nostalgia market, he just as clearly loves and has an archivist/historian's comprehensive understanding of his material. His act is not so much the camp schtick it might at first appear as another manifestation of that peculiar '60s cranny wherein certain members of the grass-smoking youth culture came to decide that there was nothing so hip as the (particularly black) pop arcana of the '20s and '30s. (After all, the early jazz musicians and their fellow travelers were the original American pothead "underground.") Redbone also derives from the sort of longhair record collectors who assume outlandish monikers like "Dr. Demento," probably in order to dissociate their far-out personae forever from the popular image of the neurotic, musty collector.

Obviously, there are hazards to this approach. Nostalgia tends to soften the raw edges of the past, and it's not surprising that Redbone generally downplays the pervasive wildness of early blues and jazz for a more (marijuana-sympathetic?) Stephen Fosterish, sometimes almost drowsy style. No hambone stomps here, folks, just deadpan Leon a-sittin' an' a-pickin' in the shade of that old sycamore.

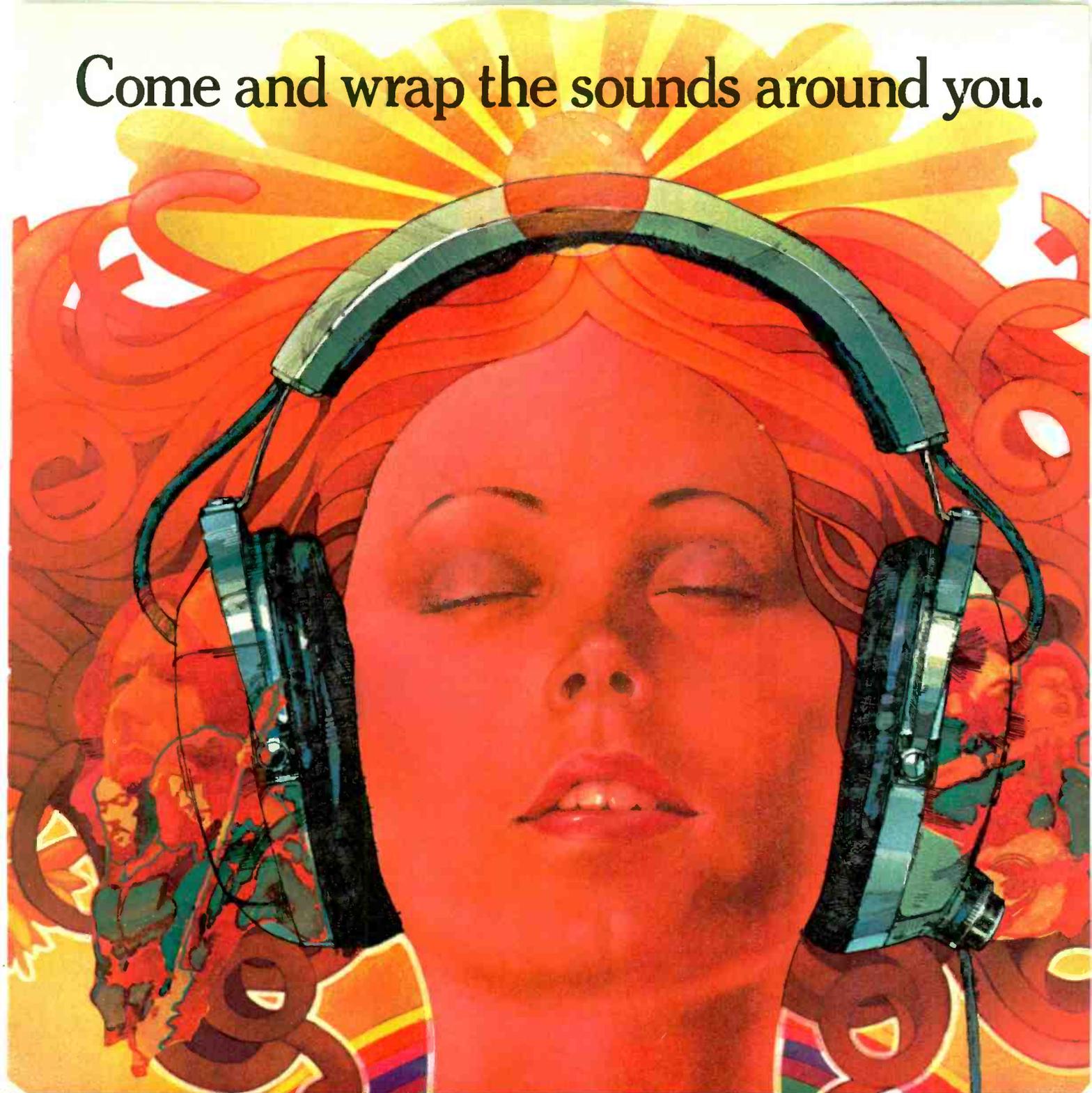
A comparative listening to Redbone's version of *Crazy Blues* with the original by Mamie Smith and Her Jazz Hounds is instructive. Where Redbone's version is typically subdued, "subtle" in its growly vocal insinuations, and politely understated with economical horn charts, the Smith cut (available on "Jazz Odyssey, Vol. 3—The Sound of Harlem," Columbia C3L 33) is roiling, crashing, and wide open. Smith bawls out the lyrics in lascivious jubilation, the horns slopping around her like a mass of drunken lubricious tongues. What had been a Rabelaisian roar, a party record of its day in both the modern senses, here serves as a pleasant vehicle to showcase Redbone's basso vocal expertise and parakeet whistling. And is it Redbone's liberalism that prompts him to change Smith's "I'm gonna do like a Chinaman, smoke myself some hop" to "I'm gonna do like a madman, get myself some hops"? Such revisionism, however well intentioned, inevitably undercuts the vitality of folklore.

But such cavils are ultimately minor. "Double Time" transcends both its idio-

Continued on page 154

Leon Redbone: Double Time. Joel Dorn, producer. Warner Bros. BS 2971, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M5 2971, ● M8 2971, \$7.97.

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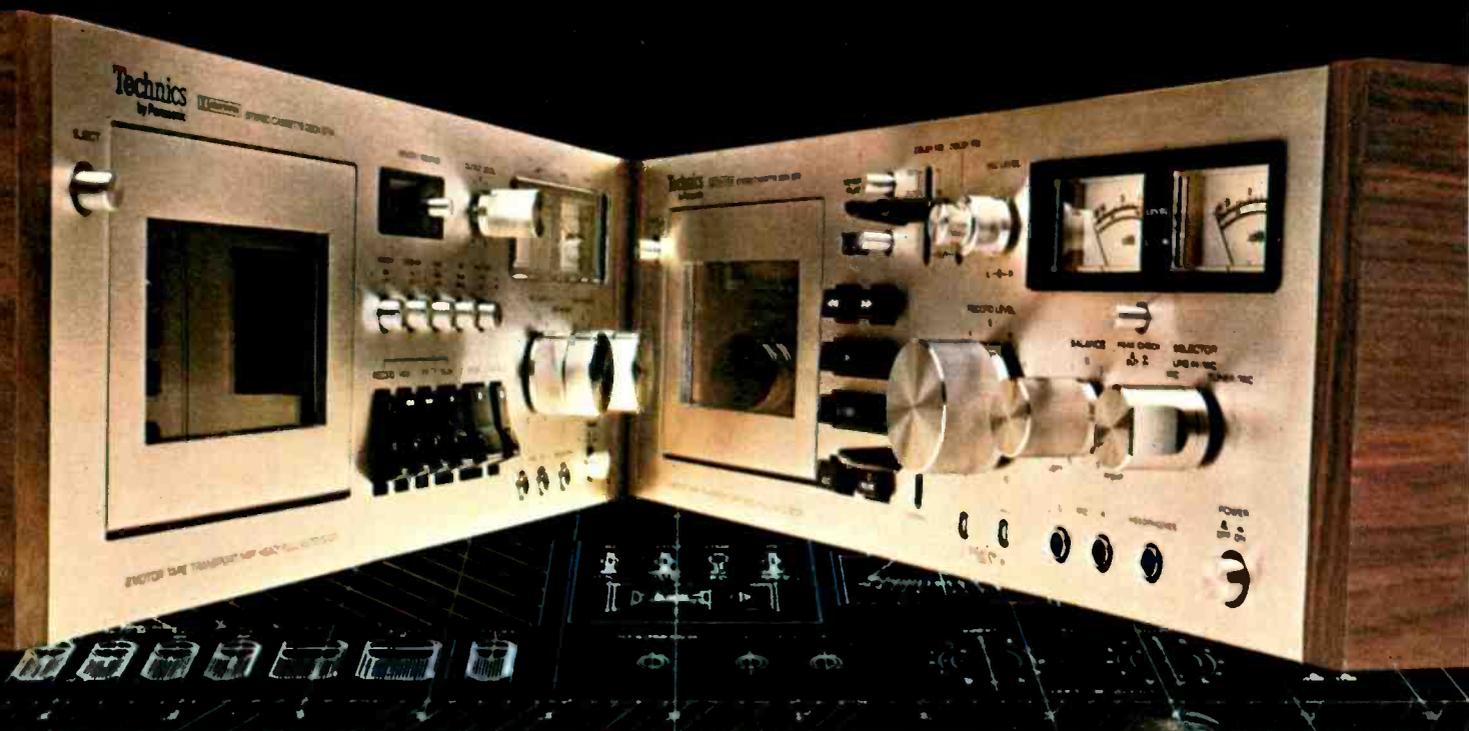
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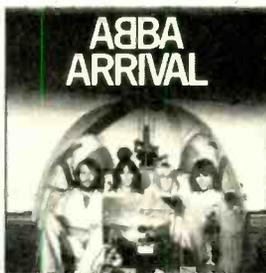
by Panasonic



Pop/Rock

BY KEN EMERSON

ABBA: Arrival. Benny Andersson & Bjorn Ulvaeus, producers. *Atlantic SD 18207, \$6.98. Tape: ●● CS 18207, ● TP 18207, \$7.97.*



ABBA's Scandinavian pop has lost none of its sweet sweep but has gone a little soft on this album, which finds guitars playing second fiddle to keyboards. Still, the combination of crafty '60s choruses and girl-group harmonies with consummate '70s production is so catchy it deserves a Golden Glove. Prigs will object to the meaningless lyrics, yet triviality has always been one of pop music's chief delights. What was so great about *Tutti Frutti*?

Bread: Lost Without Your Love. David Gates, producer. *Elektra 7E 1094, \$6.98. Tape: ●● TC5 1094, ● ET8 1094, \$7.97.*

Bread's reunion seems a second marriage of convenience: None of its members enjoyed much success as a solo artist. This album may fare no better, for lead singer David Gates's limpid sentimentality has turned limp and the playing is perfunctory. *Change of Heart* is pleasant pop, and *Belonging* reprises *The Diary*, but nothing here equals the eloquent pathos of Bread's original hits.

Isis: Breaking Through. Len Barry, producer. *United Artists UA LA 706G, \$6.98. Tape: ●● UA-CA 706H, ● UA-EA 706H, \$7.98.*

Can a man dismiss an all-woman band? When it's as bland as Isis, I think he can. If it doesn't excite, good women's music should at least unsettle the opposite sex. But the playing here, though always professional, is never inspired, and the arrangements are tepid at best. After four years, Isis still lacks a musical (as opposed to ideological) purpose—and a rhythm section.



Jefferson Airplane: Flight Log. Various producers. *Grunt CYL 2-1255, \$10.98 (two discs). Tape: ●● CYK 2-1255, ● CYS 2-1255, \$11.95.*

It's easy to quarrel with the selections (only one track from "Baxter's," its most adventurous album?), but this ecumenical, double-album retrospective of a decade's work by the Airplane/Starship and its multirarious spinoffs still fascinates. What's especially interesting—and disturbing—is that much of the music doesn't live up to one's memories of it. The outstanding musician is bassist Jack Casady, who manages to be lumber and lumbering at the same time.

Queen: A Day at the Races. Queen & Ray Baker, producers. *Elektra 6E 1091, \$7.98. Tape: ●● TC5 1091, ● ET8 1091, \$8.97.*

On Queen's fifth album, guitarist Lee May's heavy-metal crunch and lead singer Freddie Mercury's heavy-breathing camp are often at cross-purposes. The helium harmonies are exquisitely engineered but mesh awkwardly with the Led Zeppelin riffs. Nothing on this slick but schizoid album approaches the temerity of last year's *Bohemian Rhapsody*, and one searches in vain for a glimmer of genuine feeling amid the glittering contrivance.

James Talley: Blackjack Choir. James Talley, producer. *Capitol ST 11605, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 4XT 11605, ● 8XT 11605, \$7.98.*



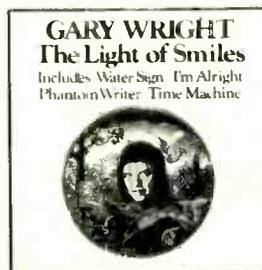
As if in anticipation of his Inaugural appearance, Rosalynn Carter's favorite singer spruced up and fleshed out his act for this album. The conventional arrangements on some of these tracks detract from Talley's homespun originality, but the songs with simpler settings are elegiac syntheses of blues, country, and folk music, and vivid evocations of a South that isn't New.

Dave Van Ronk: Sunday Street. Dave Van Ronk, producer. *Philo 1036, \$6.00.*

Dave Van Ronk has never prevailed, but he's certainly endured. To show he has kept the folk-blues faith, he even includes a song he performed and recorded at the Newport Folk Festival in 1963. This set of blues, rags, and hollers accompanied by acoustic guitar lacks the intensity of his best '60s albums, but Van Ronk's growl hasn't lost its grit—or its poignance.

Muddy Waters: Hard Again. Johnny Winter, producer. *Blue Sky PZ 34449, \$6.98. Tape: ● PEA 34449, \$7.98.*

His new label seems to have given Muddy Waters a new lease on life. Like the album title says, these blues are as hard as they come. Waters plays little guitar (those chores are left to producer Johnny Winter and Bob Margolin), but he punches out the vocals with the virility of a man half his age. James Coitton's hackneyed harp is featured throughout, but the real star, apart from Waters, is Willie "Big Eyes" Smith and his tough, fundamental drumming.

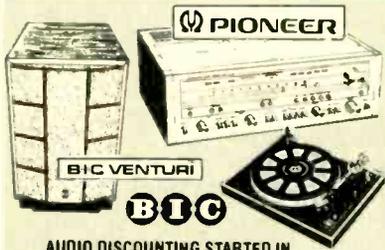


Gary Wright: The Light of Smiles. Gary Wright, producer. *Warner Bros. BS 2951, \$6.98. Tape: ●● M5 2951, ● M8 2951, \$7.98.*

Gary Wright has long deserved the attention he received last year, but this album's rudimentary melodies and rhythms are too flimsy to support its elaborate superstructures of multiple keyboards. These are castles built on sand, and Wright's brawny voice, with its paradoxically husky yet wispy falsetto, cries out for meatier lyric fare than hippy-dippy metaphysics.

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Continued from page 139
on Buckingham's part; and *Gold Dust Woman*, softly sassed through by Nicks on lead vocal. On the uptempo side, the standout cut is *Don't Stop*, a get-it-on number showcasing the group's ability to sparkle as individual players while maintaining a hard-to-match tightness. Other songs, such as *The Chain*, *Never Going Back Again*, *Second Hand News*, and *You Make Loving Fun* add up to an effort free of any throw-away album filler.

While it's still early to tell, I think it's a safe bet that "Rumours" will end up as one of the year's top ten releases. And although it is one of the first albums to carry the \$1 price increase, I highly recommend making an exception before contemplating a boycott. J.M.



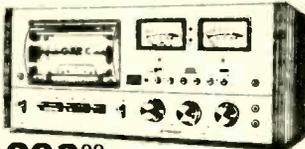
Janis Ian—teenage rejection

Janis Ian: *Miracle Row*. Janis Ian & Ron Frangipane, producers. *Columbia PC 34440*, \$6.98. *Tape: PCT 34440*, PCA 34440, \$7.98.

This is a disappointing production and contains no songs of the *At Seventeen/Watercolors* caliber found on Ian's best-selling "Between the Lines" album. The Frangipane co-production lacks the distinctiveness of Ian's earlier work with Brooks Arthur. Her voice sounds less intimate than before, and the moody string and horn arrangements that embellished much of the best material on her earlier LPs have been replaced by less sophisticated keyboard work, electric guitar fills, and part singing between Ian and Claire Bay.

Even more crucial to the failure of "Miracle Row" is its dearth of strong material. Many of the new songs are inferior recyclings of old ideas. *Party Lights*, *Let Me Be Lonely*, *Slow Dance Romance*. *Will You Dance?* and *I'll Cry Tonight* in one way or another all touch on a theme that Ian has treated more directly in the past: the plight of the grownup wallflower who can't get over the traumas of teenage rejection, even as she recognizes the hypocrisy and shallowness of the rituals that caused that

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Moving?

trauma. Only in the ambitious diptych *Miracle Row/Maria*, a detailed psychological portrait of the relationship between two women, does Ian extend herself beyond the short-form still-life songs that seem increasingly like carbon copies of a single humorless and self-pitying idea. S.H.

Kenton '76. Robert Curnow, producer. *Creative World ST 1076, \$6.50.*

Stan Kenton: Journey to Capricorn. Stan Kenton, executive producer. *Creative World ST 1077, \$6.50.*

Stan Kenton—Live in Europe. Ray Few, producer. *Decca/London SP 44276, \$6.98. Tape: ●● SP5 44276, ● SP8 44276, \$7.95.*

These three albums are testimony to Kenton's unflagging musical integrity. At sixty-five, he is the Billy Graham of jazz, proselytizing from his chartered bus at one-night stands beneath the floodlights. On "Kenton '76," he turns Sondheim's *Send in the Clowns* into an evocative musical statement about the values of our society and *My Funny Valentine* into a pseudo-symphonic tone poem. "Journey to Capricorn" includes Hank Levy's *Time for a Change*, *Decoupage*, and *Journey to Capricorn*. Here the band skids along in velvet virtuosity punctuated by yelps of passion from Tim Hagan's trumpet and Terry Lane's saxophone. In *Pegasus*, Levy combines 6/8 and 3/4 time signatures to lift the Kenton sound to its ultimate potential. Only in Bill Holman's *Tiburón* ("Kenton '76") and Alan Yankee's arrangement of Chick Corea's *Celebration Suite* ("Journey") does the orchestra sound disoriented and uncertain of its territory.

The best of the albums is "Stan Kenton—Live in Europe," recorded at an Amsterdam concert in the fall of 1976. The band sounds relaxed and free, its swirl of tonal colors adding new dimensions to such standards as *I'm Glad There Is You* and *My Old Flame*. Dick Shearer's solo on *Love for Sale* clearly establishes him as one of the best jazz trombonists in captivity. The band leans heavily on Maurice Ravel for the *Bolero*-like extravaganza, *Fire and Ice*, but quickly redeems itself with *Tattooed Lady*, an Alan Yankee original that documents tonal progressions lacking in much of rock. A magnificent version of Billy Strayhorn's haunting *Lush Life* completes the set.

This is vintage Kenton. But unlike his early, pretentious efforts, these recordings reflect the joy of a man who has not only survived, but grown. Stan Kenton at his best is now playing music as purely pleasurable as any. PETER C. NEWMAN

Former jazz drummer Peter C. Newman is the editor in chief of the *Canadian publication*, Maclean's.



Delbert McClinton—'git it'

Delbert McClinton: Love Rustler. Chip Young, producer. *ABC AB 991, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 7991, ● 8991, \$7.98.*

Delbert McClinton is the avatar of Southern rock. He put the bullets in Johnny Ace's gun, he beat Buster Brown in a Fort Worth Battle of the Harps. He's got one bag for his whisky, one bag for his wine, and he ain't got nothing but time, sweet time. Watch him now.

This is McClinton's third album with ABC, and there is no reason to believe it will be any more appreciated than the previous two. But God, it's great: an awesome mix of r&b and redneck flames. The title cut is so strong, so dark, so hot that it could get Delbert clipped for statutory rape in Iowa. *Hold on to Your Hiney*, sort of a disco cut for folks who still block their Chevys, sounds like the closest Delbert's come to a Top Forty hit. *Some People* is a half-surlly, half-sorry ballad that proves again that McClinton can out write the entire population of Mills Valley with one hand roped behind his back. (Go and hear his "Victim of Life's Circumstances," the best-written album I've heard.)

There are three great resurrections here: *I'm in the Jailhouse Now*, Jimmie Rodgers' immortal hymn to reprehensible conduct; *Turn on Your Love Light*, which may emerge as the party cut of the year; and *Ain't No Cane on the Brazos*, a classic piece of Texas dirt that'll make you close your eyes and shiver. In the good words of Gene Vincent, git it. S.F.

The Mighty Clouds of Joy: Truth Is the Power. Frank E. Wiles, producer. *ABC AB 986, \$6.98. Tape: ●● 7986, ● 8986, \$7.98.*

Each of the Mighty Clouds of Joy's three pop albums has surrounded a couple of excellent tracks with a range of more or less bland material, saved only by the group's strength and professionalism.

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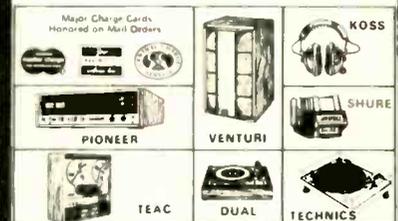
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The Mighty Clouds of Joy: gospel, soul, and solar plexus funk

On "Truth Is the Power," the first and last cuts are the standouts. *There's Love in the World* is a joyous gospel/soul number with rollicking church piano and sharp church harmonies. Even better is the last, *Like a Child*, which marries incandescent preaching vocals with contemporary solar plexus-funk accompaniment, electronics and all.

During a decade in which they were nicknamed "The Untouchables"—the leading black quartet in the gospel field—the Clouds brought this kind of shout-for-joy singing to a fine pitch, and they have been able to bring it over in their cross into pop. But the rest of the album is a battle between their ability to put soul into everything (and the resultant sameness that tends to haunt all their work) and an array of contemporary producers' clichés like the wide horizon TV-commercial French horn themes that intrude on three of the cuts. The production-by-numbers approach is at its worst on *God Is Not Dead*, which combines pompous drums, Grand Canyon horns, birdies going twitter, plastro-funk drumming, disco-drag string riffs, and gospel-hackneyed music and lyrics.

The Mighty Clouds of Joy's church-bred intensity carries all before it—but it shouldn't need to. At their best they are phenomenal, but they deserve a producer who can draw that best out of them. Then we shall know whether they are capable of outstanding albums, or are essentially makers of brilliant singles.

J.S.R.

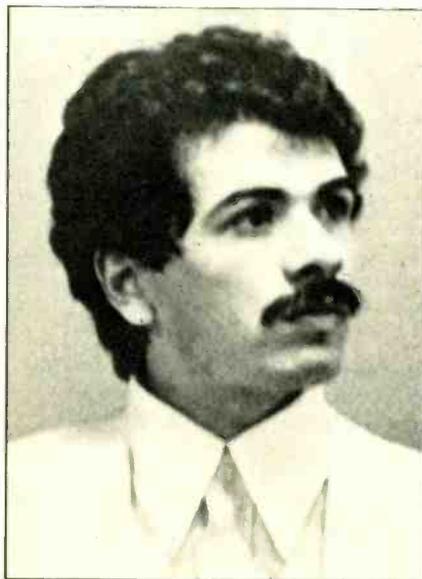
Santana: Festival. David Rubinson & Friends, producers. Columbia PC 34423, \$6.98. Tape: ●● PCT 34423, ● PCA 34423, \$7.98.

"Festival" continues several themes of Santana's last album, "Amigos," with a piece for acoustic guitar, a richly melodic ballad, and above all a return to his early r&b and salsa sources. But there's also something new here: a major, mainstream Brazilian infusion. The opener, *Carnaval*, is based on Rio carnival music, all percussion and uptempo minor singing. The acoustic guitar that was so enchantingly blended with Cuban music in last-time-around's *Gitano* gets a some-

what less successful workout in *Verão Vermelho* (Red Summer). One of this album's best tracks, *Maria Caracóles*, blends a New York salsa *mozambique* rhythm with strong Brazilian inflections in both melody and rhythm.

Like "Amigos," "Festival" has a remarkably wide focus. *Revelations* opens with an extremely beautiful, very French 3/4 ballad treatment, then picks up in both tempo and urgency as Santana's guitar creates swirling counterrhythms above the percussion. *Jugando* is full of Latin rock's special tension between acid guitar and salsa drumming; the guitar work on *Reach Up* reflects rock's roots in the '50s Chicago blues masters; and *Try a Little Harder* is infectious lilting r&b party-party music. Not that all is positive: Santana's tradition of blah lead vocals is carried on by Leon Patillo.

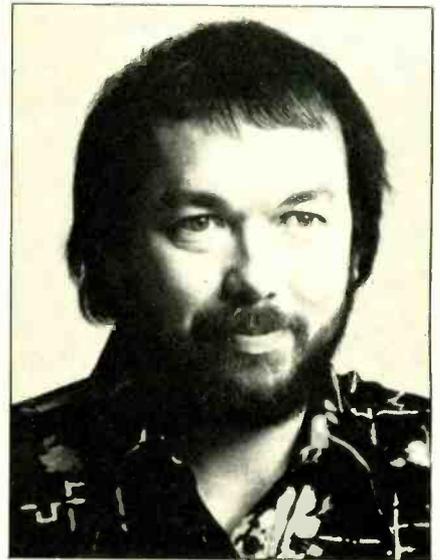
Santana is obviously settled in his return to broad-appeal music, but he has switched personnel quite thoroughly since the last album. Most important are the absence of the previous rhythm section's anchor, conga-player Armando Peraza, and the return of "Chepito" Areas' tense and flashy timbales playing. Only keyboardist Tom Coster remains to offset Santana's acid calm with his flur-



Carlos Santana

ried pop-tinged runs. Aside from him and alumnus Pablo Tellez (who also played with the group Malo at one time) on bass, percussion, and one lead vocal (*Maria Caracóles*), all other musicians are new to the band. This creates some important changes in texture, especially in the percussion, but continues to reinforce the fact that Santana's musical conception is very much his own.

J.S.R.



Billy Swan: grits and magic

Billy Swan: Four. Billy Swan, producer. Columbia PC 34473, \$6.98. Tape: ●● PCT 34473, ● PCA 34473, \$7.98.

Billy Swan is a rockabilly holy man, a jukebox prophet. What's at the heart of his music is what's missing in most: fire and heat. When Swan wants to make music, he makes music. It may be a love song so weird that you hesitate to listen to it in the dark; it may be a flurry of rhythm and words so plain and so perfect that it must be a hit (in my mind, Swan's 1974 *I Can Help* was the most natural, wildfiery hit since the Stones' *Satisfaction*, ten years before it); or it may be *Ubangi Stomp*, a shard from the rock & roll hideum that no other man would dare commit to record. There are no plastic flowers in Swan's sunny brain-garden.

"Four" is as fine as the three albums that came before it. *Swept Away*, written by Swan and Dennis Linde, is wet and young and loud; a great oceanic *ah*. Dedicated to Billy's wife Marlu, *California Song* is a dream-like, glimmery hymn of meshing wills. *Last Call* is nasty and funny and mean and vulnerable and right. *Oliver Swan* is the tale of a Missouri drunk (and here we must pause to recall that Billy is from Missouri) sucked into space by a ravenous crew of sauceroid girl-things. And so on: grits and magic, love letters in the sand, and blue-shift universes. Saddle up and scream. This is Swan country.

N.T.

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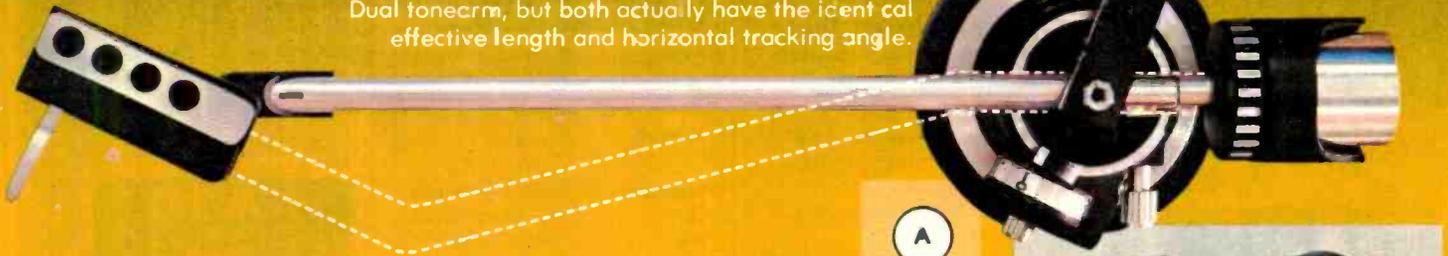
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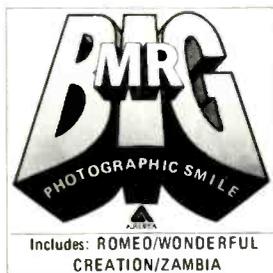
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New Acts

BY JIM MELANSON

Mr. Big: Photographic Smile. Val Garay & John Punter, producers. *Arista AL 4083*, \$6.98. *Tape: ●● 5301 4083, ●● 8301 4083*, \$7.98.

This five-man British rock group should do for the FM radio-oriented what the label's Bay City Rollers did for the AM teeny-bopper set. Musical fare is well structured and varied, ranging from a Caribbean-flavored title cut to the multi-layered rocker *Wonderful Creation*. Influences from other U.K. rock groups—the Who among them—surface throughout, but not to the point where Big's identity suffers. Expect to hear a lot about this band in the future, especially leader Dicken.



Cado Belle. Keith Olsen, producer. *Anchor AN 2015*, \$6.98. *Tape: ●● 7-2015, ●● 8-2015*, \$7.98.

Lead singer Maggie Kelly holds the spotlight throughout most of this Scottish group's debut. The overseas press has likened her to Linda Lewis and Minnie Riperton, but the view here is that her voice, though pleasant enough, doesn't pack the punch or range for comparison. Enjoyable listening throughout, but not really a must.



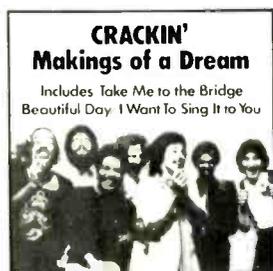
Deardorff and Joseph. Louie Shelton & Jim Seals, producers. *Arista AL 4092*, \$6.98. *Tape: ●● 5301 4092, ●● 8301 4092*, \$7.98.

A Seals & Crofts sound-alike that seems a cinch to take best-cloned-record-of-the-year honors. For those into the sound, the arrangements, production quality, and vocal harmonies are generally good.

But material tends to be candy-coated on the lyric side, and solo tries are not up to the standards of their mentors.

Crackin': Makings of a Dream. Russ Titelman, producer. *Warner Bros. BS 2989*, \$6.98. *Tape: ●● M5 2989, ●● M8 2989*, \$7.97.

This tight and well-defined seven-piece group from San Francisco is as capable of funk as it is rock. Problem is, though, that they're as derivative as they come: a little bit of Stevie Wonder, a touch of Santana, a smack of Sly Stone, and so on. The right material could



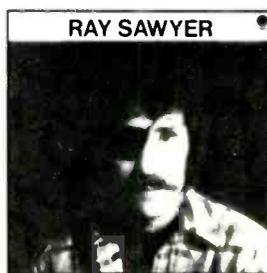
break them out the next time around. Let's hope. The talent is definitely there.

Joe Ely. Chip Young, producer. *MCA 2242*, \$6.98. *Tape: ●● MCAC 2242, ●● MCAT 2242*, \$7.98.

Ely's singing seems to have all the earmarks for a strong country music following, but it's going to take some polishing. He goes the outlaw route as successfully as he follows in the footsteps of a Marty Robbins. But the edges are a bit too rough, including material and backup band.

Kalyan. Tony Silvester, producer. *MCA 2245*, \$6.98. *Tape: ●● MCAC 2245, ●● MCAT 2245*, \$7.98.

Salsa recently had its shot at the big time; now comes soca—defined as "soul calypso." As played by this fourteen-piece band from Trinidad, soca shows promise, especially when its calypso percussive elements are out front. Unfortunately, slick American r&b and disco arrangements clutter this first LP and undermine the music's natural vitality. This band can boogie, but next time let it be native style.



Ray Sawyer. Ron Hafkine, producer. *Capitol ST 11591*, \$6.98. *Tape: ●● 4XT 11591, ●● 8XT 11591*, \$7.98.

Ray Sawyer, eye-patched member of Dr. Hook, makes his first solo recording here, country style. The results are disappointing. Singing predominantly love ballads, Sawyer comes across as a willowy reflection of the Dr. Hook performer who's at his best with meatier material. Both country-music fans and Hook followers should find this a turmoil.

Seawind. Harvey Mason, producer. *CTI 5002*, \$6.98. *Tape: ●● CTC 5002, ●● CT8 5002*, \$7.98.

A potpourri of jazz, rock, and r&b sounds, all cleanly played, mark this Hawaiian mainland group's debut. Production is excellent, as are the arrangements. No new ground is broken, but the old ruts are skillfully avoided. Support on Pauline Wilson's just-average vocals would be a welcome improvement on the next go round.



Split Enz: Mental Notes. Phil Manzanera, producer. *Chrysalis CHR 1131*, \$6.98. *Tape: ●● CCH 1131, ●● 8CH 1131*, \$7.98.

Sounding as zany as they look (jester-like suits and pointed hairdos), this seven-piece New Zealand band is a welcome musical goose. It'll probably take more than one listen, but the extra spin will be worth it. Their basic sound is camp rock, with lots of instrumental breaks spiced with horns and mandolins. Cuts like *Late Last Night* and *Lovely Dovey* should put Split Enz in the spotlight.

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Folios

Music in Print



Alice Cooper Goes to Hell. Warner Bros. Publications, 11 songs, \$5.95.

Ordinarily the random sequence of songs in a folio does not bother me, as long as each piece of music is acceptable on its own terms and playable.

In this case, however, the recording has a concept, as specified in a cleverly written foreword on the album sleeve (but omitted, unaccountably, from the folio). This is a bizarre bedtime story, and each of the eleven numbers is an episode in Alice's adventures in Underland, beginning with his "punishment for criminal acts and violence on stage," and ending with his release from the nightmare, a presumably chastened ghoul. The missing explanation and haphazard placement of the songs are a gaffe of major proportion on the part of the Warner Bros. folio production team; it simply defeats the purpose of the al-

bum. One hopes that crazy Alice will forgive them.

The Allman Brothers Band: Wipe the Windows, Check the Oil, Dollar Gas. Warner Bros. Publications, 10 songs, \$5.95.

This folio corresponds to a double-sided album by the now-defunct blues/rock Allmans. True, we've heard the songs before, on "Win, Lose, or Draw" and "Brothers and Sisters," but never with such intensity. These are live, on-location recordings. Do you purchase the matching folio, which promises that you, the home or pro musician, can re-create those fantastic instrumental bends, slides, and dips on your own axe?

Regretfully, no. For in this case, what you hear is not what you get. Vital improvisatory performances are represented in print by the original transcrip-

tions of the previously recorded material, with no allowances for maturity, rethinking, or musical growth. Listen to "Wipe the Windows," check it out. Nothing matches: not the structure, not the riffs, the guitar choruses, or the vocals. Only the titles are the same. The old, outdated material is simply dressed up with a shiny new Art Deco cover by Jim Evans and six pages of on-the-spot, relaxed photos of the band. And I'm cynical enough to believe it will work for Warner Bros.; the folio will sell as successfully as the LP. But it will do so only as an expensive souvenir book and not as an accurate musical representation of the album.

England Dan and John Ford Coley: Nights Are Forever. Warner Bros. Publications, 11 songs, \$5.95.

England Dan and John Ford Coley are

SONY TC-186 SD



SONY TC-209 SD

SONY TC-204 SD



MOR ninstreis in the Seals/Crofts and Loggins/Messina tradition. Piano-vocal transcriptions of their hit single, *I'd Really Love to See You Tonight* and the ten other songs on "Nights Are Forever" are tidily packaged in a folio that is highly pleasing in its functionality, exactness, and, above all, content. The finely crafted material deals with love in its many phases; it is universally appealing and should find special favor among cabaret singers in search of fresh audience-winning songs.

Fifty Golden Giants. Warner Bros. Publications. 50 songs. \$5.95.

This folio is an update on some of the mellower rock trends of the mid-Seventies. Thirty-six of these fifty songs were published in 1971 or later, and included are such welcome newcomers as Elton John's *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road*, Eric Carmen's *All By Myself*, the 1976 Grammy-winning *Love Will Keep Us Together*, and Barry Manilow's *Tryin' to Get the Feeling Again*.

But, like a guilt-producing mother, Warner Bros. will not allow us to forget our obligation to the past. We are subjected to the likes of the Association's

Never My Love (1967), the Beatles' *Michelle* and *Yesterday* (1965), and, incredibly, that tenacious bag of bones, *Blowin' in the Wind* (1962). One tires of repurchasing these threadbare standards in order to gain access to the newer Warner copyrights, but the general excellence of the folio cannot be denied. It's a good value.

Van McCoy: The Hustle and Other Great Disco Songs. Warner Bros. Publications. 22 songs. \$5.95.

Are you ready for a Van McCoy retrospective? The Hustle King is represented here by twenty-two of his current compositions, most of which demand an exceptionally high degree of concentration from the home musician if the steady interplay of rhythms is to be maintained.

Considering that the piano is, at best, an inadequate medium for capturing the vibrancy of this dance form, the transcriptions are very good indeed; but still, it is only reasonable to assume that "with-it" hustle freaks would rather practice at their neighborhood disco than at the keyboard, so the rationale for this folio is beyond my comprehension. Hustle sing-along, anyone?

Carly Simon: Another Passenger. Warner Bros. Publications. 12 songs. \$5.95.

For students of total confusion, this folio represents a breakthrough. I am well aware that de-caiorizing Ms. Simon's richly overproduced album was no easy task, but there is no necessity for so many eye-ear conflicts, unless the editor had a nervous breakdown mid-pencil.

From the first smoked-salmon-pink page to the last, we are bombarded with inconsistencies: missing D.S. signs in one song (*Fairweather Father*); cue-size rhythmic notation on some, but not all, measures of alternate verses (*Cow Town, In Times When My Head*); an important repeat omitted from the chorus of *Be With Me*; melodic and/or chordal errors in hook sequences (*Riverboat Gambler, He Likes to Roll*). Is it possible that the folio was not designed to coordinate with the recording? If so, the keys should have been transposed across the board for singability. In any case, the lady is an artist and a money-maker (not always synonymous), and her printed material deserves the best possible editing. That's the way I've always heard it should be, Carly.

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Continued from page 140

syncretism and its restraint to be as full of musical intelligence and quiet beauty as "On the Track." The approach is basically the same: producer Joel Dorn supplementing Redbone's vocals, guitar, and "throat trombone" (you figure it out) with a group of seasoned jazz musicians (Milt Hinton, Jo Jones, Vic Dickenson, and several others from innumerable big-band sessions past) playing beautifully spare arrangements by Al Cohn. Other tracks are augmented by strings, or banjoists Eric Weissberg and Don McLean, or ragtime piano expert Bob Greene, while Redbone's selection of tunes is as alternately impeccable and eccentric as last time, ranging from *My Melancholy Baby* to pieces by Jelly Roll Morton and "Singing Breakman" Jimmie Rodgers.

In general, I find that I prefer Redbone's reworkings of traditional blues, white or black, to the odder choices and novelty numbers. Morton's *Winin' Boy Blues* and the two Rodgers songs feature restrained yet intensely mournful vocals. And Redbone's poignant yodel in *Mississippi River Blues* reveals clearly the roots that the Hank Williams of *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry* had in Rodgers,

with Yusuf Lateef's simple three- and four-note soprano sax figures completing the historic linkage. *Mr. Jelly Roll Baker* and Blind Blake's *Diddy Wa Diddy*, meanwhile, comprise the original phatic blues joke, with Redbone scatting salaciously all the way.

Nobody's Sweetheart is weakened by its camp proclivities—"Painted lips and painted eyes/Wearing a bird of paradise"—but mostly redeemed by Joe Wilder's fine muted trumpet solo. And it's songs like *Melancholy Baby* that almost make you wonder if Redbone might be competing with Bryan Ferry in the effort to revive corrobali ballads with a vibrating baritone. "Come, sweetheart, mine/ Don't sit and pine," etc. Add a nonsynced string arrangement reminiscent of the layered effects used by avant-garde experimental composers like Gavin Bryers, and you have a truly peculiar piece of music.

Sheik of Araby, on the other hand, poses as being even more bizarre and is actually more relatable. Redbone's delivery is almost all scat, and with his growls, groans, slobberings, gurgles, burbles, snaris of laughter, and assorted eructatory noises he brings to mind the cartoon vocal flights of old comedy jazz

and pre-rock do-wop records, the whimsical avant-rock of Captain Beeheart, and Top 40 novelties like Ray Stevens' *Ahab the Arab* and *Gitarzan*. In *Shine On Harvest Moon*, however, Redbone's delivery threatens to become what it parodies—if you took out his vocal and whistling altogether, the remaining banjo and background chorus could just as easily be that of a Ray Conniff or Lawrence Welk.

But perhaps there is an open space, a sort of no-man's-land where "authentic" traditional American music and what is more or less kitsch can meet on equal terms. People tend to forget that Hank Williams loved the syrupy renditions of his songs by his Muzaky inferiors, or that Louis Armstrong was recording white pop songs long before *Hello Dolly*. I'm not saying that Leon Redbone will ever be as big as Williams or Armstrong, but he understands the delicate balance in which schmaltz and art can coexist in popular music. That balance may seem anomalous—like a combination of Jelly Roll Morton and *Saturday Night Live*—but it is a benign anomaly. For no other artist working today better exemplifies the supremely contradictory vitality of American music. **LESTER BANGS**

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Direct drive turntables can be manual or automatic. The difference has a direct bearing on record safety. With a manual turntable, you risk scarring your records or damaging your stylus, particularly when lifting the arm off the record. That's because the human hand can't *always* be steady and accurate. The risk is minimized with a system that lifts the arm precisely, automatically.

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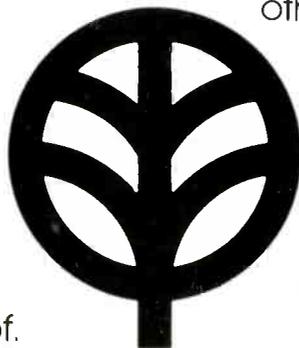
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