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IN BACKBEAT: The Big 6 that Control Rock & Roll

HIGH FIDELITY

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Speaker Issue

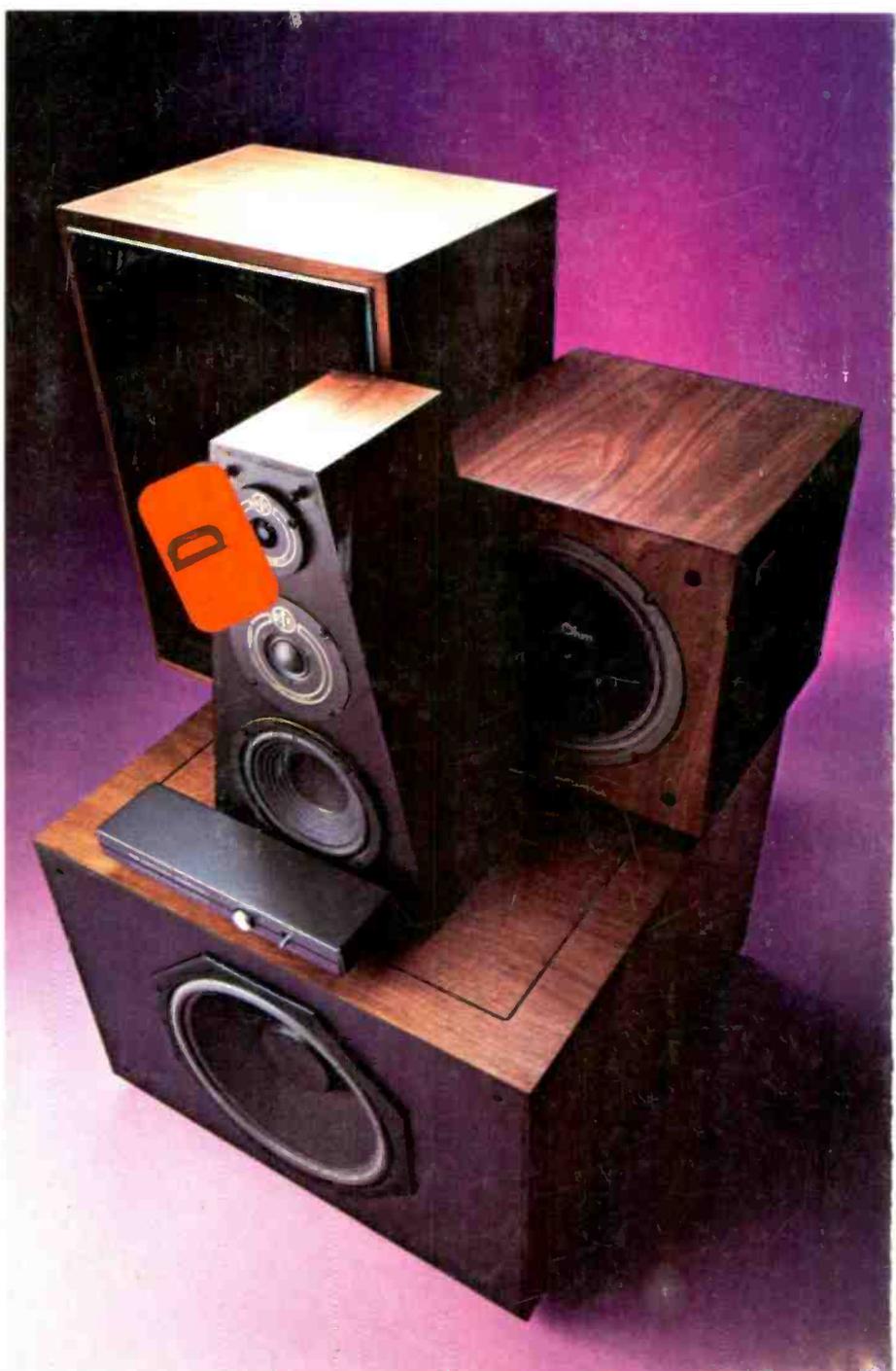
How to Judge Your Speaker Performance:

Eight Revealing Records to Use

New! Super-Bass Subwoofers—

Why's & Hows

O ing Them
 J ing tests of
 D assic subwoofer
 R fer/satellite system
 A, ronic subwoofer
 O ct subwoofer
 B vidovich:
 N viet Superstar





AM Y-1080

PL-610

X-980

RT-701

SX-680

SX-1080

STEREO RECEIVER
BLUETOOTH PLUS

STEREO
BLACK

STEREO AMPLIFIER

STEREO RECEIVER

30

PL-540

X-9500

STEREO RECEIVER

SA-6800

540

TX-2500

STEREO RECEIVER

PL-6

518

540

CT-F500

STEREO RECEIVER

PL-6

PL-5

SX-680

CT-F500

STEREO RECEIVER

STEREO RECEIVER

PL-6

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SX-980
STEREO RECEIVER
PIONEER ELECTRONIC CORP.

AT-701
PIONEER

SX-680
PIONEER

PL-540
PIONEER

TX-8500
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STEREO RECEIVER
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SA-9800
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A great high fidelity system is very easy on the ears, but not always very easy on the budget.

But now, for this month only, you can buy Pioneer high fidelity components for savings unlikely to be repeated.

For the first time in history you can take advantage of the great Pioneer Month Sale.

Pioneer has reduced many prices to our dealers for this sale to make it possible for them to pass these savings on to you.

Every receiver has been specially priced. Including the industry's best selling SX-780, which critics say, "has a level of performance that's hard to distinguish from that of much more expensive receivers."

Every quartz turntable. Including Pioneer's high-end PL-630.

Even our PL-518, already considered by many to be the best engineered direct drive turntable for the money, has been specially priced.

The great Pioneer Month Sale also covers tape decks. Including the hottest selling deck of the year, the CTF-900, featuring Fluroscan metering. Our latest series of amps and tuners. Speakers. Headphones. Even add-ons. Like our TV tuner that brings big screen sound to the little screen.

Most people think they have to wait till January to afford the component they wanted to give in December. But not anymore.

So if the component you set your heart on costs an arm and a leg, come to your local Pioneer dealer during Pioneer Month Sale. You'll find the item that was once out of reach is now within your grasp.

Pioneer Month Sale is only at your participating Pioneer dealer. Look for the Pioneer Month Sale wall poster or banner in your dealer's window. It will direct you to Pioneer Month Sale, that's really the sale of the year.

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We bring it back alive.

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ANNOUNCES
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HI-FI.**

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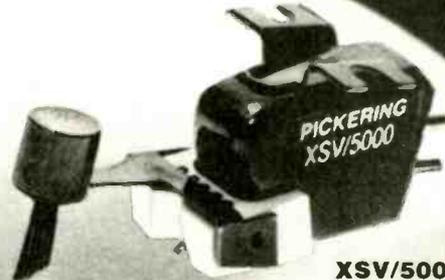
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XSV/3000



XSV/4000



XSV/5000



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Circle 46 on Page 105

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4 x 10 3-way
Power Handling
25 watts

Audiotex auto speakers with Liqui-Glide™ for Sound-Good-Longer Sound

Audiotex auto speakers will turn you on the first time you hear them. They'll still be turning you on months later, because they'll still be delivering rich, powerful, undistorted sound.

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But Liqui-Glide also reduces distortion and aging, which means you may very well get more miles out of Audiotex speakers than you do out of your car.



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Power Handling
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Memoirs: [The] Life of Hector
Berlioz

My compositions, conceived in accordance with common notions of proportion, demand extreme precision together with irresistible zest, a controlled impetuosity. It is painful for me to hear my compositions conducted by others than myself.

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HIGH FIDELITY and **HIGH FIDELITY/MUSICAL AMERICA** are published monthly by ABC Leisure Magazines, Inc., a subsidiary of American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. Warren B. Syer, President; Herbert Keppler, Senior Vice President, Photographic Publishing Division; Leonard Levine, Vice President, Advertising; Warren Tuohy, Vice President, Finance; David Lee, Circulation Director; Cathleen Alois, Personnel Director. Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature. Current and back copies of High Fidelity and High Fidelity/Musical America are available on microfilm from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. Microfiche copies of these magazines (1973 forward) are available through Bell & Howell Micro Photo Division, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, O. 44691.

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

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At last, a furniture maker who makes real stereo furniture—a whole catalog of it. Verticals, side-by-sides, etageres, rack-mounts, towers, and more. Like these glass-door units in pecan, walnut or rosewood-tone finishes. Go house hunting for your stereo now. Write me, Mike Sheperis, for our FREE catalog. Gusdorf's the one who's put electronics furniture on the map.

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If you don't clean and preserve your records with Sound Guard, you're only scratching the surface.

Have you ever considered what it would cost to replace your record collection at today's prices? With that kind of investment at stake, it's no wonder that many music lovers have become more aware of record care. Regular cleaning of your records is important and necessary, but cleaning alone won't prevent them from wearing out. To protect your investment you need more than cleaning. You need both Sound Guard Cleaner and Sound Guard Preservative.

Sound Guard Record Preservative is a revolutionary dry lubricant which virtually eliminates record wear without affecting the fidelity of the record. And when you drag the hardest

substance found in nature—diamond—through the soft, intricate vinyl canyons of a phonograph record at phenomenal rates of acceleration, it doesn't matter how light you're tracking. Something's got to give, and that's the vinyl. But with a Sound Guard-treated record, even after 100 plays, there is no audible degradation of performance.*

Before and after you preserve your records, be sure to use our superior cleaner to remove the dust and oily films that can further mar

performance. (The cleaner will not remove the preservative's protective coating.)

Sound Guard offers the only complete program of record preservation and maintenance. It requires a little more time and effort than just cleaning. But how much did you say it would cost you to replace your record collection?

Sound Guard. Everything else is a lot of noise.



Sound Guard™

Sound Guard preservative—Sound Guard™ cleaner. Sound Guard™ Total Record Care System. Sound Guard is Ball Corporation's registered trademark. Copyright © Ball Corporation, 1979, Muncie, IN 47302.



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Who's Davidovich?

This issue's story on Bella Davidovich is the second about a "new" Soviet pianist in four years, and there is a connection between them: The subject of the first in fact initiated the article on the second. In January 1976 we ran an interview from Moscow with the then unknown Lazar Berman just prior to his first American tour. I had commissioned the piece after hearing a tape of a Berman performance played for me by impresario Jacques Leiser. During the next couple of years I met Berman a few times and about a year ago, over a post-concert supper, he exclaimed to me in a fit of modesty: "Why is everybody always writing about me? Why don't you write about Bella Davidovich? She's more interesting than me—phenomenal. But nobody writes about her."

"Who's Bella Davidovich?" I asked.

"She's our greatest woman pianist. She's superb!"

As seems to be expected of Soviet musicians these days, Bella Davidovich soon left Russia. (Those of you holding our *MUSICAL AMERICA* edition can read of a couple of recent Soviet defectors, including conductor Kiril Kondrashin. An amusing footnote to all this: Pianist Sviatoslav Richter was touring Europe when the latest round of emigrations and defections from his country took place. According to an unconfirmed report, upon hearing about it Richter commented, "If this keeps up, pretty soon I won't have anybody left to make music with.") Not too surprisingly, Davidovich's manager turned out to be Leiser, again armed with tapes. The result of Berman's instigation and Leiser's tapes is this month's article.

Schwann's Thirtieth

Five years ago this month we ran an article celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Schwann Record & Tape Guide*. That means, of course, that this month the publication has passed another milestone. For thirty years, what everybody still seems to call "the *Schwann Catalog*" (it hasn't been that since January 1971) has served as the record buyer's invaluable source of information.

Our use of caps and small caps instead of italics in printing its name should let you know, if you didn't already, that since that celebratory article, *Schwann* has become what is known in the trade as our "sister publication." (Whoever determined the gender of magazines wasn't thinking too clearly. Magazines are often specific people, and I find it hard to think of Bill Schwann as my "sister." We did, however, recently acquire *McCall's Needlework and Crafts* and its associated publications. Now *those* I can think of as "sister publications.") *High Fidelity* and *Schwann* have many interlocking staff members, so in congratulating *Schwann*, we are in effect congratulating ourselves. So be it.

While I'm on the subject, when the 1976 *Schwann Artist Issue* was published, I lauded it but lamented that it had been six years between editions. As you are no doubt aware, the latest *Artist Issue* came out earlier this year, just as fascinating as its predecessors and with the publishing interval cut in half. I hope you already have yours (see page 147 if you don't), because I don't know how many will be left by the time you read this. I have two, anticipating theft when the issue becomes rare over the next couple of years.

Leonard Marcus

Circle 66 on Page 105 ▶

Technics

Nobody's perfect. But Technics quartz-locked, direct-drive Q-Series: the Q-2 semi-automatic and Q-3 fully automatic come incredibly close.

So close that many discos and FM stations choose Technics quartz-locked, direct-drive turntables over any other. It's no wonder, with speed accuracy of 0.002%, wow and flutter of only 0.025% WRMS and rumble of -78dB (DIN B). They're impressive specs.

What's just as impressive is Technics soft-touch in-line controls conveniently mounted on the front panel. You can operate every electronic function without ever lifting the dust cover.

Or Technics statically balanced S-shaped tonearm. With only 7 mg friction on both the vertical and horizontal planes, it's more than sensitive, it's sensational. Even the computer-designed headshell contacts are gold-plated for maximum conductivity.

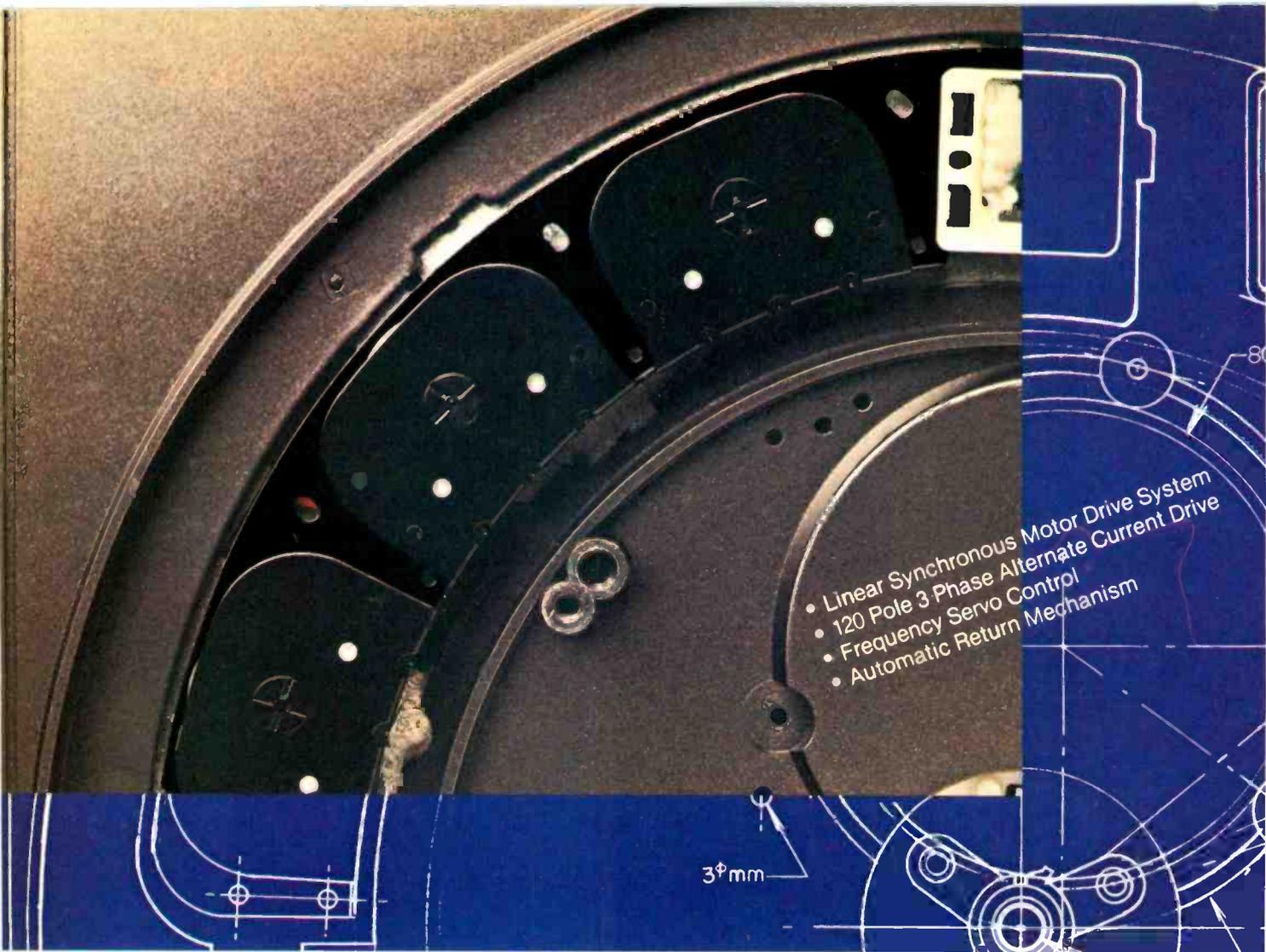
To help protect against acoustic feedback, Technics Q-Series turntables are all mounted in a precision aluminum diecast base with a unique non-resonant compound, TNRC. It's so effective it resists feedback at the highest music levels.

By this time you might think you have to be rich to afford Technics Q-Series. You don't. Both models are surprisingly reasonable.

Technics Q-Series. We can't say they're perfect. You will.

We can't say the speed accuracy of our new quartz-locked turntables is 100%. Just 99.998%.





- Linear Synchronous Motor Drive System
- 120 Pole 3 Phase Alternate Current Drive
- Frequency Servo Control
- Automatic Return Mechanism

3 ϕ mm

THE LINEAR DRIVE QUARTZ LOCK MT6335 IS THE KIND OF TURNTABLE YOU'D EXPECT FROM THE NEW FISHER.

Fisher's technological leadership in high fidelity was never more elegantly stated than in the new MT6335 Linear Drive quartz lock turntable. Just as direct drive surpassed belt-driven turntables in terms of performance and reliability, so has Linear Drive from the new Fisher brought turntable performance into a new state-of-the-art.

SIMPLER IS BETTER. Nothing could be simpler or quieter than Linear Drive. The only moving part is the platter itself. There are no complicated motors or rotating electronic components—just a totally silent, dependable drive system with virtually nothing to go wrong, even after thousands of playings. (The MT6335 comes with an unheard-of five-year warranty.) Proof of the incredible stability and performance is seen in the specs: 0.035% wow and flutter. Rumble is an inaudible - 70 dB (DIN B).

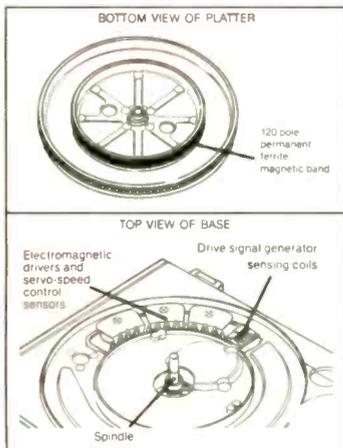
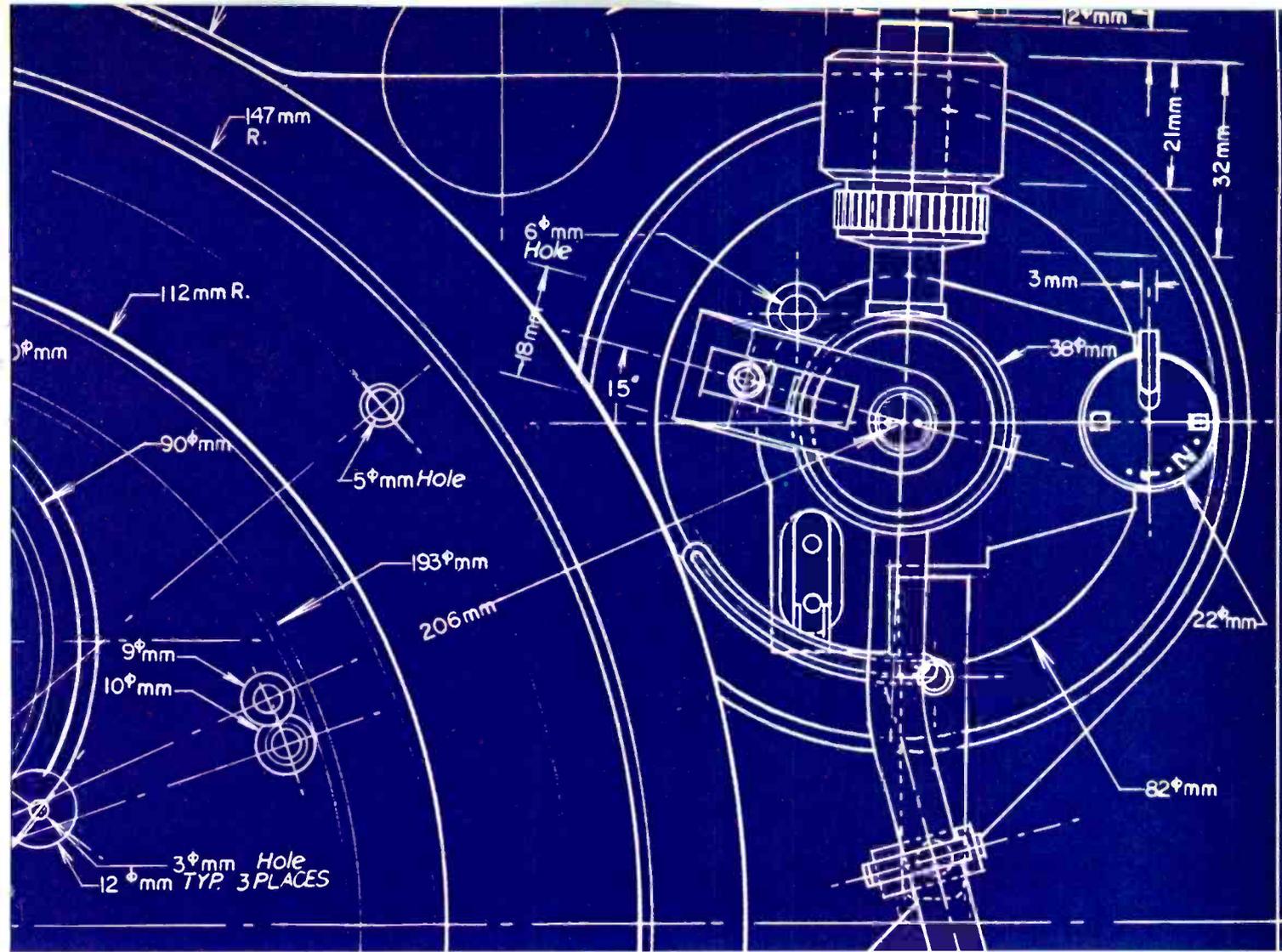
QUARTZ LOCK ACCURACY. Total speed accuracy is assured by

the most effective method in use today—a quartz lock phase locked loop servo circuit. Platter speed is continuously monitored and compared to a quartz reference signal for instantaneous speed correction. Deviation from 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ or 45 rpm is virtually zero.

STROBE & SPEED CONTROL.

Other features combine to make the MT6335 a top-performing, easy-to-operate high fidelity turntable. There's a strobe light and fine speed control to alter record pitch and confirm speed accuracy, viscous damped cueing, automatic tonearm return and shut-off—and all controls are front-panel mounted where you can operate them with the dustcover closed. A carefully crafted, fully counterbalanced S-shaped tonearm accommodates most any cartridge and built into the handsome base is a stylus overhang gauge.

LINEAR DRIVE—THE HEART OF THE MT6335 TURNTABLE. The



platter on the MT6335 is the only moving part of the turntable drive system. Encircling the platter is a 120-pole magnetic strip. Three drive coils beneath the platter act upon this magnetic strip to propel the platter. Magnetic pulses from the coils "overlap" one another to pro-

vide constant, smooth platter rotation. Conventional 12 or 16 pole direct drive systems can't compare to the MT6335 in terms of low wow and flutter, and freedom from "cogging." The utter simplicity of Fisher Linear Drive means years of trouble-free performance.

IT'S WHAT YOU'D EXPECT FROM THE NEW FISHER. We invented high fidelity over 40 years ago. We've never stopped moving forward. The MT6335 is a good example of that technological leadership. Part of the new Fisher. Where the only thing about us that's old is our tradition for quality and craftsmanship. See the MT6335 at your Fisher dealer. All these features and an under \$250 price.

New guide for buying high fidelity equipment. Send \$2.00 with name and address for Fisher Handbook to: Fisher Corporation, Department H, 21314 Lassen Street, Chatsworth, California 91311.

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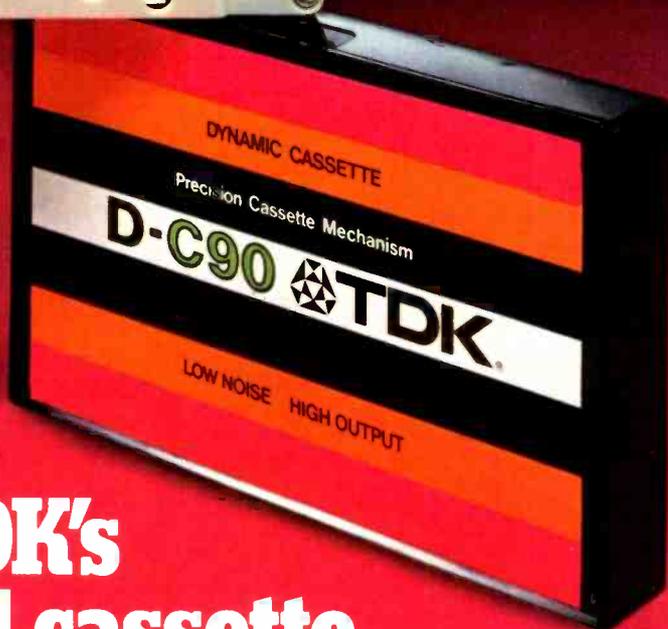


SPECIFICATIONS:

Motor	120 Pole Linear Drive Quartz	Tracking Force Range	0.6—3.5 grams
Drive System	Phase Locked Loop	Maximum Tracking Error	± 1.5%
Wow and Flutter (WRMS)	Direct	Anti Skate Control	
Rumble (DIN 45539B)	0.035%	Calibrated Adjustable	
Speed Variation	—70 dB	Cueing	Viscous Damped
Speed Control Range	± 6% (Quartz Lock On)	Weight	18 lbs.
	± 6% (Quartz Lock Off)	Dimensions	17½" x 14½" x 6"
		(WxDxH)	

the  **FISHER**
The first name in high fidelity®

The Overachiever



TDK's standard cassette sets a standard some premium cassettes reach for.

TDK's D cassette has improved constantly since its introduction in 1974. In fact, it improved to such an extent two years ago, that it surpassed and replaced the world's first high fidelity cassette, TDK SD.

Recently, TDK D improved again. Now it features a Hi-Grained Ferric Oxide particle developed by TDK's engineers, who have also incorporated many of the features of TDK's super precision mechanism.

High frequency sensitivity has been improved by 2.5-4.0dB (from 10 kHz-16 kHz), yielding recordings with a wider dynamic range than some premiums. And maximum output level (MOL) has been increased by a substantial 3.0dB (at 10kHz), to give you more recording headroom with less chance of distortion. Your music will sound great in any mid-priced home deck, car deck or portable.

Best of all, improved D continues in the TDK tradition of

quality, with a precision mechanism that will provide years of ear-pleasing performance.

TDK engineers are never satisfied with success. So keep expecting improvements from TDK. After all, a lot of premium cassettes need a standard to measure up to. TDK Electronics Corp., Garden City, N.Y. 11530

 **TDK**
The machine for your machine

HIGH FIDELITY NEWS

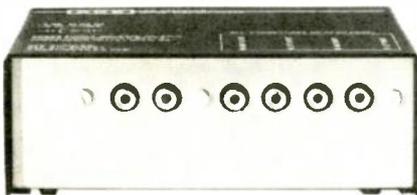
New equipment, trends, and ideas for the home listener, recordist and musician.



AGI preamp quick on the draw

A phono preamplifier designed for fast response has been introduced by Audio General. Claimed slew rate of the 511A is 370 volts per microsecond, with a 0.01-microsecond rise time. A line amplifier is coupled with the phono section; according to AGI, 600-ohm loads may be driven without distortion. Price of the 511A, which also features a computer-compensated volume control, is \$465.

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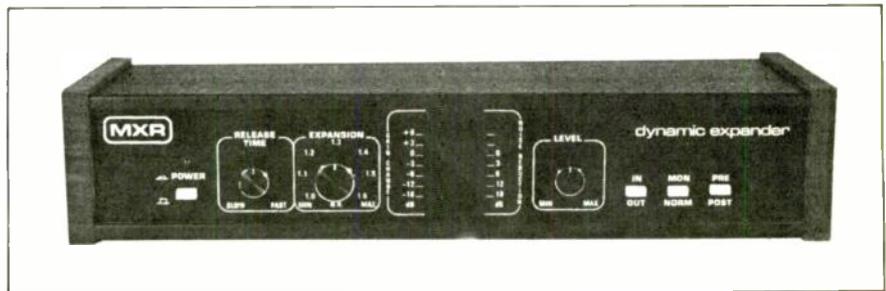


Ace produces electronic crossover

Ace Audio's Model 6000 electronic crossover has its own power supply and offers a choice of fifteen standard crossover frequencies from 200 Hz to 10 kHz via plug-in modules with slopes of 12 dB per octave. Distortion is rated at 0.02%, noise at -90 dB. In kit form, the 6000 costs \$92.25; wired, the price is \$117.50. Custom frequency modules are available for \$37.50, and any additional standard plug-in frequency module costs \$27.50.

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◀ **Circle 64 on Page 105**



Variable expansion from MXR

MXR's newest signal processor is the Dynamic Expander, providing up to 8 dB of upward expansion and 21 dB of downward expansion. A front-panel control allows variable release (approximately 50 to 500 milliseconds), and an LED display indicates the effect of the signal. Other controls include bypass switching and tapping facilities. The Dynamic Expander costs \$300; optional rack-mount ears are available.

Circle 138 on Page 105

(more)



Stop Listening To Paper.

And start listening to music as you've never heard it before.

Completely free of the spurious vibrations caused by conventional paper cone speakers.

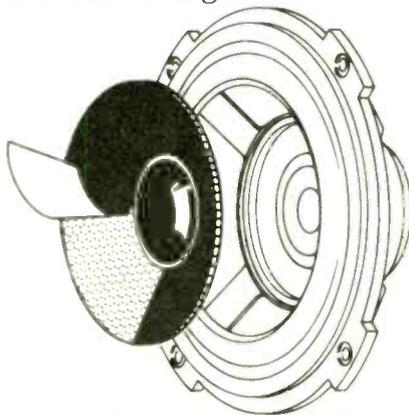
Mitsubishi has eliminated those vibrations by eliminating the paper.

Instead, we build our woofer cones with an aluminum honeycomb core in a sandwich of glass fiber.

Unlike paper cones, the honeycomb structure is rigid enough to maintain its shape, yet light enough to be

exceptionally responsive.

So it can put out sound without adding to it.



And since the glass fiber is non-porous, it gives our air suspension speakers a perfect seal, and a lower resonance frequency for better bass response.

We've also added a flux normalizing ring that reduces distortion by 20dB. And automatic overload protection.

The end result is a speaker capable of a level of performance literally unheard of until now.

If our honeycomb speakers sound too good to be true, test listen to them and judge for yourself.

It's what you won't hear that will impress you.

 **MITSUBISHI**
AUDIO SYSTEMS

Mitsubishi's Honeycomb Speakers. MS-10 10" 2-Way Bookshelf. MS-20 12" 2-Way Bookshelf. MS-30 12" 3-Way Bookshelf. For more information write Melco Sales, Inc., Dept. 45 3030 East Victoria Street, Compton, California 90221.

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Superex enters equalizer market

Superex' first equalizer is the GEM-1, a five-band (per channel) graphic design. A feature of the GEM-1 is its programmable EQ system, in which specific settings are contoured on cards that, when moved up the faceplate, automatically slide the controls into position. The tape-deck switching permits EQ in the recording circuit, EQ in playback, or straight tape monitor. The GEM-1 costs \$89.95.

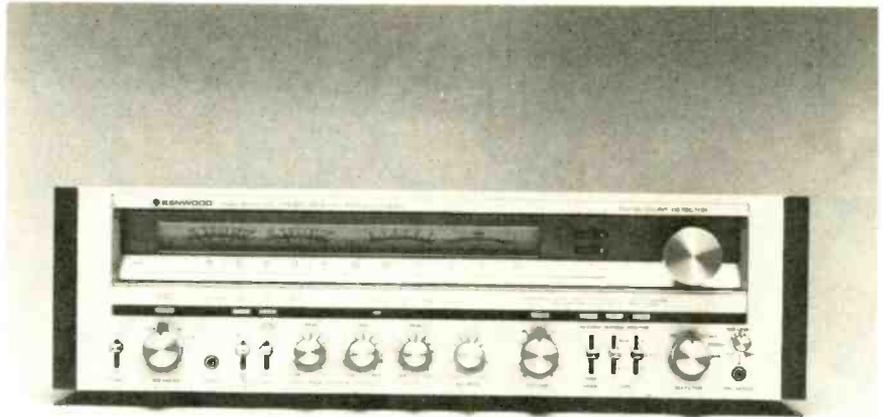
Circle 141 on Page 105



Deluxe flanger from Ibanez

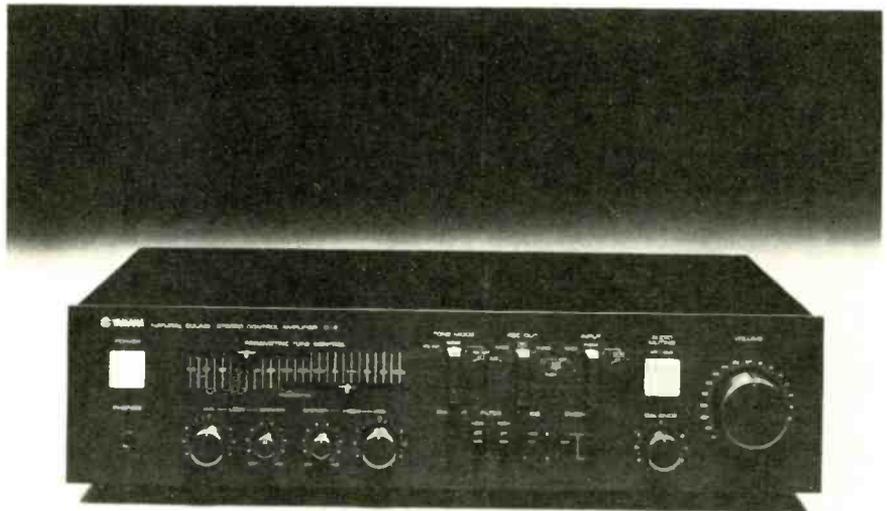
The FL-305's analog decay circuitry achieves delay times between 0.8 and 16 milliseconds that, combined with the original signal, create true flanging effects. A WIDTH pot controls the frequency bandwidth to be flanged, DELAY LEVEL controls the blend of the flanging with the original signal, and REGEN feeds the flanged signal back to the input for a deeper effect. The FL-305 runs on two 9-volt cells, and a footswitch on the front panel engages or bypasses the flanger. Ibanez rates noise at -80 dBm and frequency response from 20 Hz to 20 kHz. Price of the FL-305 is \$225.

Circle 142 on Page 105



Kenwood introduces the speedy receiver

Adopting circuitry formerly found only in Kenwood's high-end separates, the KR-8050 features a high-speed DC amplifier section and a pulse-count detector in the FM tuner. Power in the normal operation mode is rated at 120 watts (20% dBW) into 4 or 8 ohms, 20 Hz to 20 kHz, with no more than 0.02% THD; a power boost switch raises the capability to 150 watts (2 1/4 dBW) into 8 ohms without exceeding the distortion spec. The tuner circuitry is credited with exceptionally low distortion and garnered a Grand Prix at a recent Japan Audio Fair.



A different twist in preamps

A servo control circuit in Yamaha's C-6 preamplifier is said to make possible the incorporation of a parametric tone control that allows user selection of center frequency, frequency bandwidth, and sound level. The bandwidth controls are continuously variable from narrow to wide; the level control has a ± 12 -dB range. The seventeen selectable center frequencies range from 31.5 to 640 Hz in the low band, and 640 Hz to 12.5 kHz in the high band. The C-6, which also contains a moving-coil head amp, costs \$450.

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(more)

PRICES IF SOLD SEPARATELY . . .

#1021 AM/FM Stereo Receiver	\$257.26
#1022 Tape Player/Recorder	168.84
#1023 Speakers (Pair)	149.77
#1024 Turntable	78.00
#1025 Stand	64.97

PRICE IF PURCHASED SEPARATELY	\$718.84
OUR ADVERTISED PRICE	\$488.84

\$488.84

CREDIT AVAILABLE ON MAJOR PURCHASES

Put the system together at K mart and save \$230.

K mart put some spectacular savings together on this Silver Marshall stereo component system. Now through October 27, you can save \$230 off the "purchased separately" price.

The system features: **Receiver:** an AM/FM stereo receiver with lighted dial scale, flywheel tuning knob, speaker selector switch and headphone jack. **Eight-Track and Cassette Player/Recorder:** featuring record level controls, headphone and microphone jacks,

tape counter and deluxe features such as channel L.E.D.'s and auto stop. **Turntable:** deluxe automatic, full-size BSR turntable with magnetic cartridge and cueing control lever. **Speakers:** four-way deluxe passive radiator-type matched acoustic suspension speakers in 23-inch walnut grain cabinets. **Vertical Component Stand:** houses turntable, player/recorder and receiver, with storage area for records, on easy-roll casters. The system is sale-priced at over 1,450 K mart stores across the U.S.A.



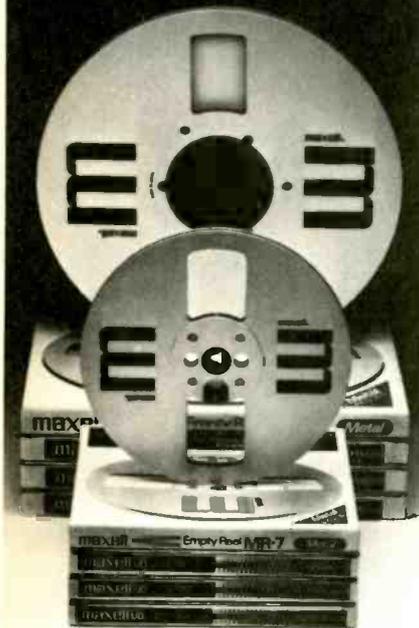
The Saving Place

HOW TO GET THIS MAXELL TAKE-UP REEL FREE.

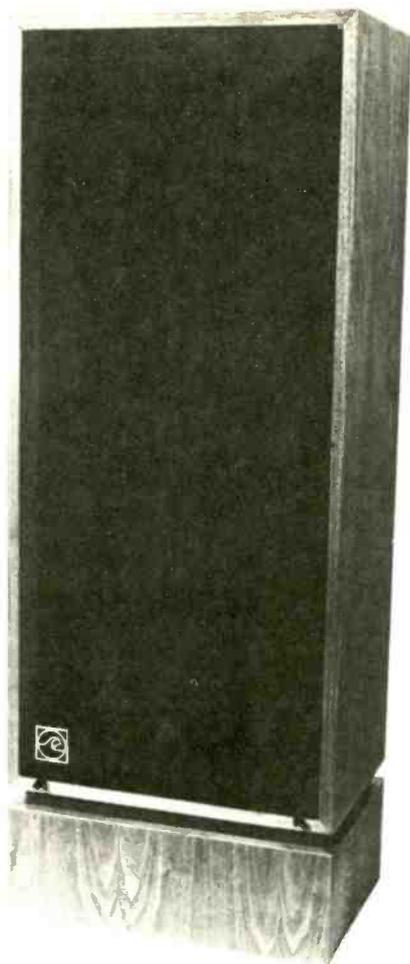
Now, for a limited time, when you buy three 7- or 10-inch, 1.0 mil, Maxell Ultra-Dynamic Open-Reel Tapes, aside from getting the best recording tape anywhere, you'll get a precision metal Maxell take-up reel at the best price anywhere.

Absolutely free. Offer good at participating dealers while supplies last.

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



Circle 34 on Page 105



A new star on the speaker horizon

The Nova RF-5R speaker from Manhattan Pacific uses a ribbon tweeter that handles the frequency range from 6 to more than 40 kHz. The other drivers in the vertical-array design are a 1 3/4-inch dome midrange and 12-inch woofer. Continuously variable controls are provided for the midrange and high frequencies. Sensitivity is rated at greater than 90 dB SPL at 1 meter for a 0-dBW input. A time-phase compensated filter network is employed in the RF-5R, which costs \$489. The speaker is also available with a 1-inch dome tweeter (as Model RF-5) for \$439.

Circle 145 on Page 105

Esoteric develops stylus-cleaning system

Esoteric Audio, a division of Brahma Research, has introduced Stylus Formula, a cleaning system designed to rid styli of vinyl debris and polymers. SF6, which contains no alcohol, comes with an extension spray tube to prevent shaky hands from damaging stylus assemblies. No pad or brush is needed, and a cap catches excess fluid. You can get six ounces of Stylus Formula for \$6.00.

Circle 143 on Page 105

For Quadriphiles

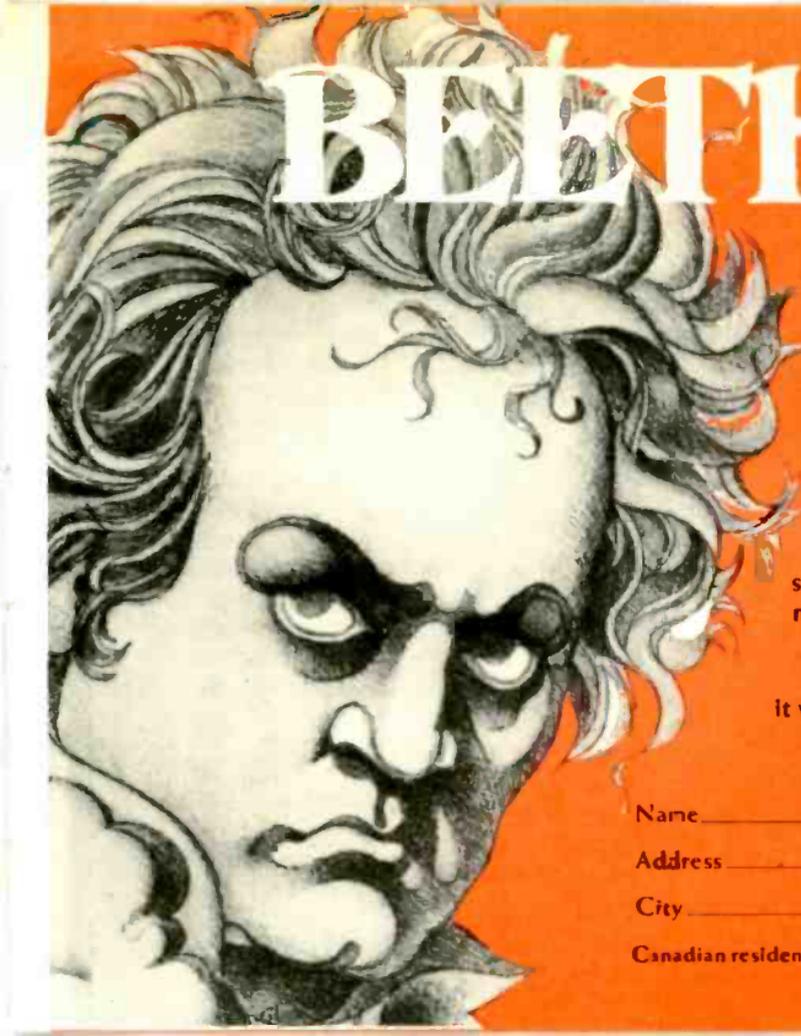
A gentleman by the name of Larry Clifton has undertaken no less a task than a complete compilation of all quadriphonic recordings ever offered. His company, Quad, Inc. (P.O. Box 19, Capron, Va. 23829), publishes a catalog, a quarterly, and a monthly newsletter. We've seen the catalog and are impressed with the obvious care exercised in its preparation. There are notes about announced (possibly not yet released) recordings, issue and withdrawal dates, and so on, that will fascinate collectors sharing Clifton's interest in quadriphonics. Perhaps when the bible of the quadriphonic era (which, we hope, has a future) comes to be written, these works will constitute the Pentateuch; in the meantime, they are full of interesting Numbers.

Lauderdale products preserve records

Two items from Lauderdale Electronic Labs join the legion of record-care products on the market. Its RC-32 Record Cleaner and De-Ionizer combines antistatic properties with a grime-removing solution. The company's RP-32 Record Preservative adds a 1-micrometer layer of dry lubricant to discs to slow down vinyl wear. Both products come in 32-ounce containers with "squirt-gun" applicator caps, at prices of \$7.60 for RC-32 and \$16 for RP-32.

Circle 146 on Page 105

(more)



BEETHOVEN!

TIME-LIFE RECORDS

Time & Life Building, Chicago, IL 60611

YES, I would like to examine the first album in the BEETHOVEN BICENTENNIAL COLLECTION. Please send it to me for a free 10-day audition and enter my subscription. If I decide to keep the first album, I will pay \$19.95 (\$24.95 in Canada) plus shipping and handling. I then will receive future albums in the Collection, shipped one at a time, approximately every two months. Each album is \$19.95 (\$24.95 in Canada) and comes on the same 10-day free-audition basis. There is no minimum number of albums that I must buy and I may cancel my subscription at any time simply by notifying you.

If I do not choose to keep the first album, I will return it within 10 days, my subscription for future albums will be canceled and I will be under no further obligation.

High Fidelity

RBBPR9

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Address _____ Apt _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____
(or Province) (or Postal Code)

Canadian residents: Please mail this form in an envelope.



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NECESSARY
IF MAILED
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UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY CARD

FIRST CLASS

PERMIT NO 22

CHICAGO, IL

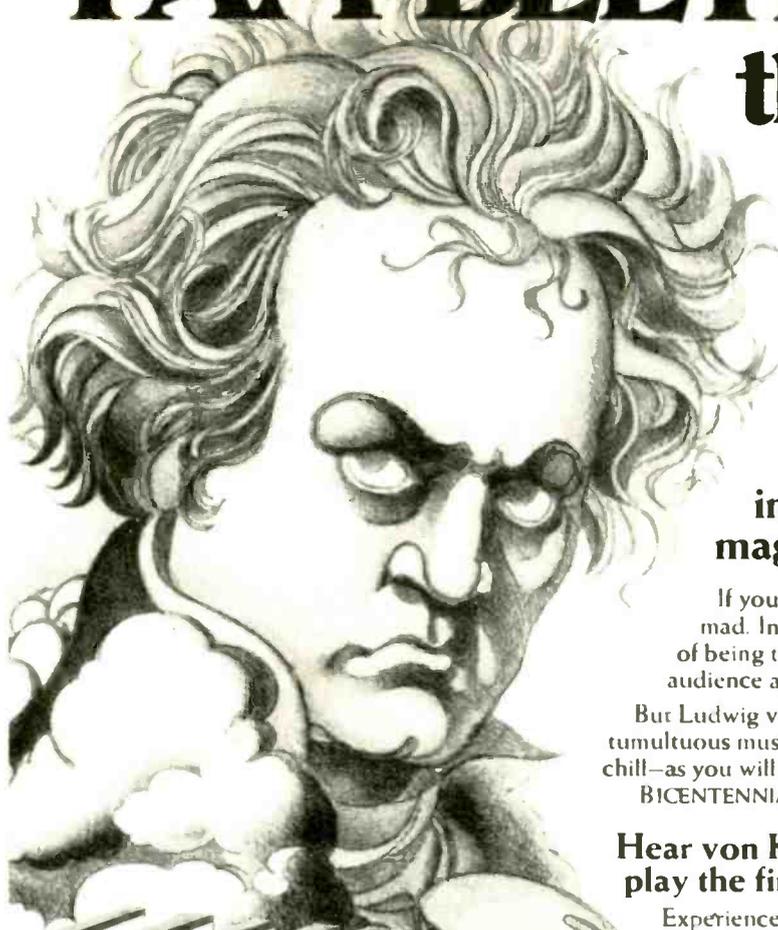


Time & Life Building
Chicago, IL 60611



"I AM BEETHOVEN!"

the madman roared.



Could this wild-eyed figure be the world's greatest musical genius?

Hear the answer in the inspired "madness" of the most magnificent music ever composed.

If you saw this grotesque figure, you'd have thought he was mad. In truth, he was struggling with the desperation and fury of being too deaf to hear the orchestra play his music or the audience applaud it.

But Ludwig van Beethoven broke through the awful silence with tumultuous music that makes the listener's soul expand and the skin chill—as you will discover in the first album of the BEETHOVEN BICENTENNIAL COLLECTION from TIME-LIFE RECORDS.

Hear von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic play the first six symphonies—free for 10 days.

Experience for yourself the surging force of composer Ludwig van Beethoven combined with the methodical force of conductor Herbert von Karajan in what has to be one of the most electrifying musical "collaborations" ever.

In five 12-inch LP stereo disks, recorded by the famous Deutsche Grammophon, you will hear the stirring Leonore Overture No. 3, as well as six complete symphonies, among them:

SYMPHONY NO. 3 ("Eroica") Described by one critic as "the greatest single step by an individual composer in the history of music."

SYMPHONY NO. 5 From brooding drum taps and weeping violins to a jubilant electrifying conclusion.

SYMPHONY NO. 6 ("Pastoral") A trip to the country—complete with nightingale (flute), cuckoo (clarinet) and quail (oboe).

No risk or obligation

If you are delighted with Volume I, you may keep it for only \$19.95 plus shipping and handling. You will then enjoy free auditions of additional volumes in the Collection...symphonies, Nos. 7-9 (von Karajan)...the celebrated piano sonatas...and so much more. Otherwise just return it within 10 days and your subscription will be canceled. Mail the attached card today. Or write: TIME-LIFE RECORDS, Time & Life Building, Chicago, IL 60611.



The Ultimate Beethoven Collection:

All 9 Symphonies. 7 Overtures.
8 Concertos. 23 String Quartets.
50 Violin, Piano and Cello Sonatas.
52 Lieder. And much, much more.
Performed by today's foremost virtuosos. Menuhin, Nilsson, Kempff, Fischer-Dieskau, Fournier, The Amadeus Quartet, Richter

**TIME
LIFE
RECORDS**

BEETHOVEN BICENTENNIAL COLLECTION

The Watts Parastat



In 15 seconds your records are clean, dry and ready to play.

With some systems you pour liquid on your records (and rub it into the grooves), while with others you brush the dirt around (and rub it into the grooves). The Watts Parastat is neither of these.

By placing a plush velvet pad on either side of a soft nylon brush and adding a drop or two of Parastatik® fluid, a

remarkably efficient system is created.

The brush bristles lift the rubbish to the surface. The pads collect and remove it. And the Parastatik® fluid supplies just the right degree of humidity to relax dust collecting static without leaving any kind of film or deposit behind.

No other system does so much for

your records in so little time.

So when you want the best, ask for the original. The Parastat, by Cecil Watts.

Watts products are distributed exclusively in the U.S. by: Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, NY 11530.

EMPIRE EMPIRE

Cecil E. Watts Ltd



Two-way headset from Sonic International

Sonic International's Pro-90 headphone uses individual woofers and tweeters in each ear cup, making it a two-way system with crossover at 3.5 kHz. Rated frequency response is 20 Hz to 22

kHz; 1-kHz sensitivity is said to be 105 dB SPL from 1 milliwatt; recommended drive impedance range is 4-32 ohms. The Pro-90 weighs 9.7 ounces, has a 10-inch straight cord, comes with padded leather ear cushions, and costs \$65.95.

Circle 153 on Page 105

McIntosh goes into energy saving

Frank McIntosh, founder of McIntosh Laboratories (the Big Mac of high fidelity, so to speak), now is head of a group called Energy Trust, based in Arizona. It is working on a joint energy project involving the TAF valve for gasoline engines, developed by Sumari Engineering, Inc. The valve, whose worldwide manufacturing and distribution rights have been purchased by Energy Trust, is said to increase gasoline mileage by an average of more than 20% (and up to 60% in some cases), improve performance, and eliminate hydrocarbon emis-

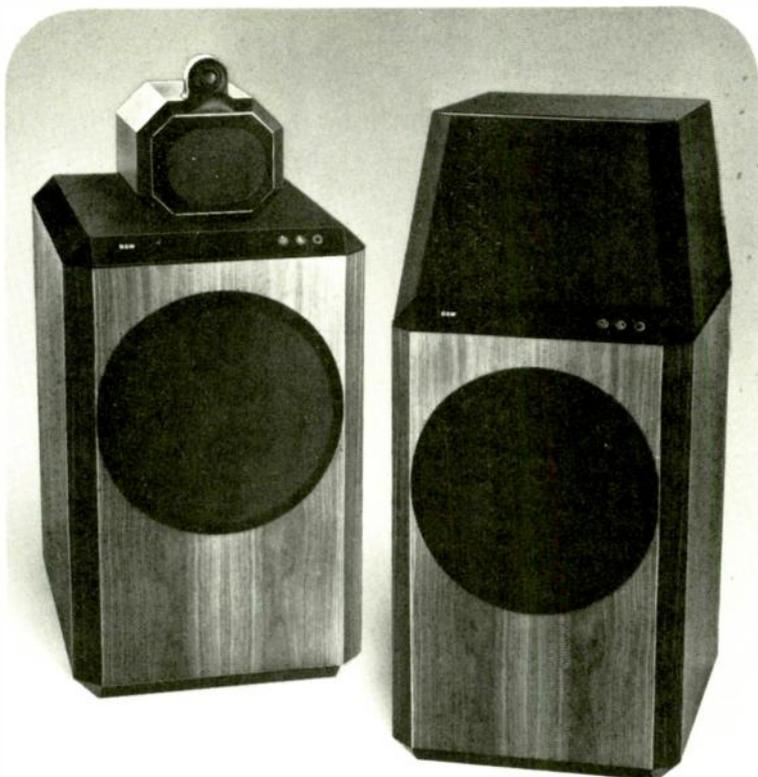
sions in standard, carbureted internal-combustion engines.

Superscope's super Pianocorder 'rolls'

Superscope has issued a catalog of "piano rolls" for its Pianocorder system, and it's an astonishing list. Equipped with the Superscope device and tapes from the catalog, your own piano can be played by the likes of Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Paderewski, Loesser, Grainger, Hofmann, Dohnányi, Gieseking, Busoni, and Rubinstein. The pianists and repertoire seem endless as we thumb through the forty-six pages of listings. While we are (naturally) most impressed with the classics, there is plenty of popular music, too—tinkly favorites from waltzes to ragtime to Cole Porter and performances by such jazz greats as Earl Hines, James P. Johnson, Eubie Blake, and Jelly Roll Morton.

(more)

INTRODUCING THE B&W 801. THE END OF THE BEGINNING.



Speaker design, as any engineer will tell you, traditionally involves compromises and trade-offs. Visions of perfection sacrificed to practical considerations.

But does it have to be this way? B&W doesn't think so and they've designed the loudspeaker to prove it, the B&W 801.

No more compromises.

With the 801, B&W engineers have broken with conventional design practices, not to mention conventional technology, to create a loudspeaker that surpasses, in every audible respect, the finest currently available.

The outstanding performance of the B&W 801 is directly traceable to a massive investment in research and development. From the computer models employed in its design to the laser interferometry used to measure

the behavior of its individual components, this landmark in loudspeaker technology represents an uncompromising commitment to excellence.

Critically matched drive units using new materials and fabrication techniques are employed throughout. A computer optimized, 4th-order crossover network maintains uniform sound pressure/frequency response and correct phase characteristics. In addition, a unique electronic overload protection device continually senses the voltage applied to each driver and if safe values are exceeded, cuts off the signal. A convenient reset button restores operation.

The striking two-part enclosure has been precisely matched to the individual drive units with a staggered, in-line driver configuration insuring wide horizontal dispersion and the time arrival correction needed to yield a coherent wavefront. Finally, the enclosure has been contoured to minimize secondary diffraction effects.

For the discerning few.

To be sure, the 801 isn't for everyone. Both price and limited production effectively preclude widespread use. However, if you are unwilling to settle for anything less than a supremely accurate loudspeaker fully capable of recreating every nuance of the original performance, the B&W 801 is for you.

A visit to your B&W audio specialist will prove conclusively that the B&W 801 represents a quantum leap in loudspeaker technology—a singular end to the beginning.

For additional information write: Anglo American Audio Co., Inc., P.O. Box 653, Buffalo, N.Y. 14240. In Canada: Remcron Electronics Ltd.

B&W Loudspeakers. The next step up.



Mellow

**That's the Jensen Car Stereo Coax II.
That's the thrill of being there.**

Mellow is the word. And the new Jensen Coax II 2-way speakers bring it all out.

These two new coaxials bring a special richness to music, starting with their extended-range woofers and low mass, low distortion tweeters.

The 6" x 9" Jensen Coax II features a new high power 20 oz. barium ferrite woofer magnet. A high temperature voice coil. And a 2.3 oz. tweeter magnet for improved transient response.

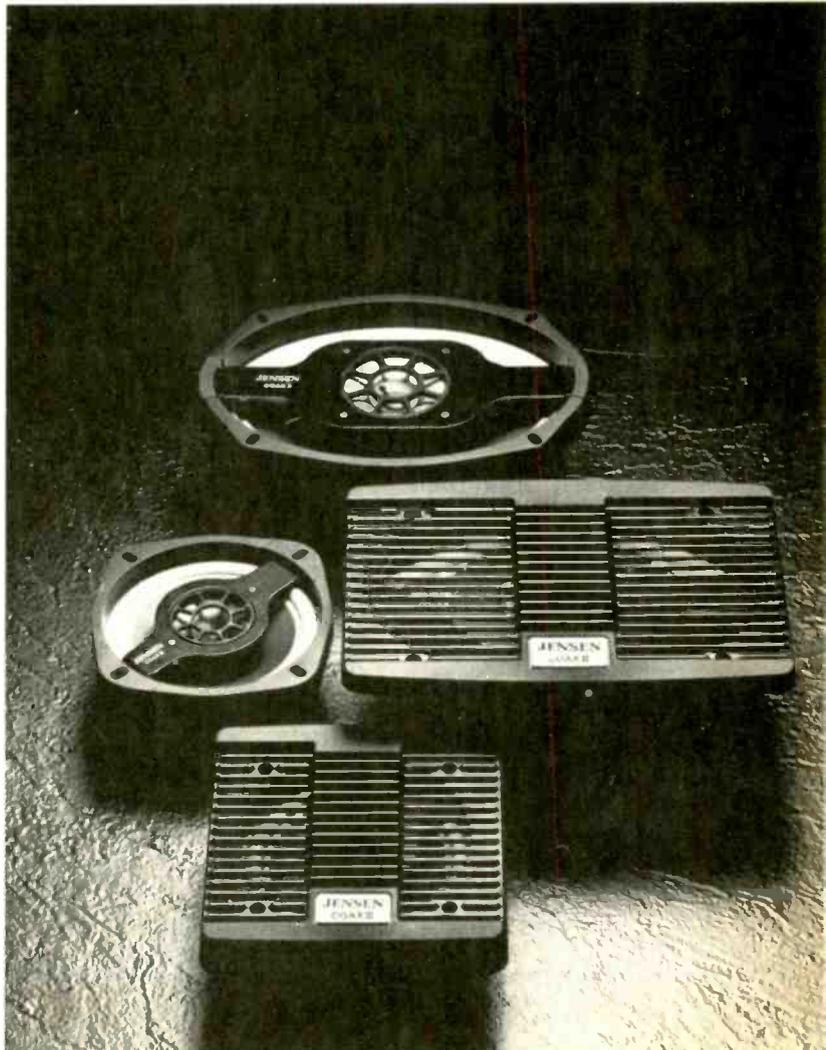
The 5¼" Coax II is shallower than ever for more installation applications. Not to mention a new 16 oz. barium ferrite magnet that will out-perform most 20 oz. magnets.

The smooth, wide response of these Jensen Coax II's incorporates the bass, midrange, and high tones that are a world of difference from what you're used to hearing.

Which all boils down to one thing. Balance. Clear, clean, mellow balance. It means better than ever sound reproduction.

So why settle for anything less... when you can experience the thrill of being there. With Jensen Coax II's.

JENSEN
The thrill of being there.



Fender's 12-channel mixer

Fender continues to expand its line of mixing consoles with the new M-12 portable, designed for sound reinforcement as well as recording. The M-12's twelve input modules each have high- and low-impedance inputs, four output

masters, an array of effects-patching jacks on the back panel, a five-band equalizer, and SEND pots for three monitor channels and one cue channel. Two submaster modules are provided for grouping multiple inputs from drums or keyboards, and each master has its own built-in fast-attack/slow-decay limiter with threshold control and indicator LED. The M-12, which weighs 65 pounds and measures 31 by 27 by 7 inches, costs \$3,100.

Circle 152 on Page 105

Ohm's Law 9:

It is possible to make a loudspeaker that gets loud and still sounds good.

Ohm introduces another new loudspeaker that defies the traditional laws of loudspeaker design. The new Ohm I.

Used to be, if you liked listening to music as loud as life in your home, you had a tough choice to make. You could buy high efficiency "monster" loudspeakers, and put up with the boom and shriek. Or, if you wanted something smoother, you could buy low efficiency systems. But then you'd need an amplifier big enough to power Toledo. Until now.

Introducing the new Ohm I. It can



achieve concert hall levels in your home, effortlessly. With no sacrifice in bandwidth, linearity, or imaging ability. It gets amazingly loud with as little as 10 watts input. But it will handle 1000.

It's the world's first *good and loud* loudspeaker. And it's already earning rave reviews. *Hifi Stereo Buyer's Guide* (8/79) says that the Ohm I "...is one of the finest speakers we've ever heard. There is nothing it couldn't do, and do it superbly... It will bring you the best from any program material... This is

clearly a speaker with a future - for the future".



We make loudspeakers correctly
241 Taaffe Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205

Circle 42 on Page 105



Real-time monitors from Polk

Polk Audio's Real-Time Array monitor loudspeaker, the RTA-12, was intended to combine the qualities of studio speakers with state-of-the-art technology. The system employs an acoustic crossover between the molded-foam subwoofer and the two midrange drivers as well as a computer-designed electrical network between the midrange and the dome tweeter. Rated frequency response is 27 Hz to 20.5 kHz, ± 2 dB; recommended power is 10 to 500 watts (10 to 27 dBW). The RTA-12 costs \$350.

Circle 139 on Page 105

Feedback phase shifter

The Phase Tone PT-909 has all the features of the traditional foot-pedal phase shifter but contains some extras. A feedback pot routes the output of the phaser circuit to the input for a deeper phase sound. The PT-909 also includes a low-frequency oscillator for modulating the input signal and creating more dramatic effects, and a heavy-duty foot-switch can bypass the effects. Connections are standard phone jacks; controls include FEEDBACK, SPEED, and WIDTH. Cost of the PT-909 is \$99.

Circle 154 on Page 105

(more)

Most direct drive turntables are a Cog'n' Pull Story.

There's a common problem shared by most direct drive motors: cogging. They cog because the spaces or "slots" between the magnetic poles of the motor exert a different force than the poles themselves. So you get cog and pull, cog and pull. Uneven rotation. Rumble.

Two new turntables from Garrard. And no cogging!

Garrard's two new direct drive, single play turntables — the DD131 and DD132 — are free of cogging. But more. Garrard engineering has designed and incorporated the ingenious Fail-Safe Drive System that assures the user a powerful thrust and absolutely steady rotational speed.

Three key elements.

One. The motor is the heart of any direct drive turntable. The new DC Servo-controlled motor, developed and built by Garrard, is brushless, coreless and slotless. It ends cogging by exerting a constant magnetic force during the entire 360° rotation of the platter!

Two. State-of-the-art speed monitoring. A Time-Integral-Velocity monitoring system instantly detects the slightest variation that could affect speed.

Three. "Hall effect" circuitry gives final assurance of precise speed by making instant correction of any rotational irregularity.

There it is. Garrard's Fail-Safe Drive System with a cogless motor, constant monitoring and instant correction.

And still more.

The Fail-Safe Drive System by itself makes for a great turntable. But, in addition, both models boast the same ultra-light, 12-gram tonearm (including magnesium headshell!). Moreover, the drive system and tonearm are integrated with the silent, smooth and dependable Delglide® system (You've seen the rave reviews.) and both turntables come with the now-famous Garrard three-year warranty. Differences? The DD131 is semi-automatic, the DD132 fully automatic.

A great value.

Finally. There's the good news that provides as much reason to buy one of these turntables as their quality and features. The price under \$200!

Write to us. We'll forward complete information about both of these handsome models. And we promise. No cog and pull stories.



Garrard
More than ever.

Circle 20 on Page 105

HOW THE MODEL 100 BRINGS A WHOLE NEW FEELING TO YOUR MUSIC

In recent months, we've received rave comments from all kinds of music lovers about our new Model 100 Subharmonic Synthesizer. "I can't believe what sounds I've been missing;" "It adds fullness to the bass that you normally only hear and feel in a live concert;" "It adds presence and impact to disco music although I use it most of the time with classical records;" "I have a whole new record collection now;" and so on.

But besides these great comments, most new Model 100 owners also wanted to know just how it improves the low-frequency performance of their music systems. So, we're happy to oblige.

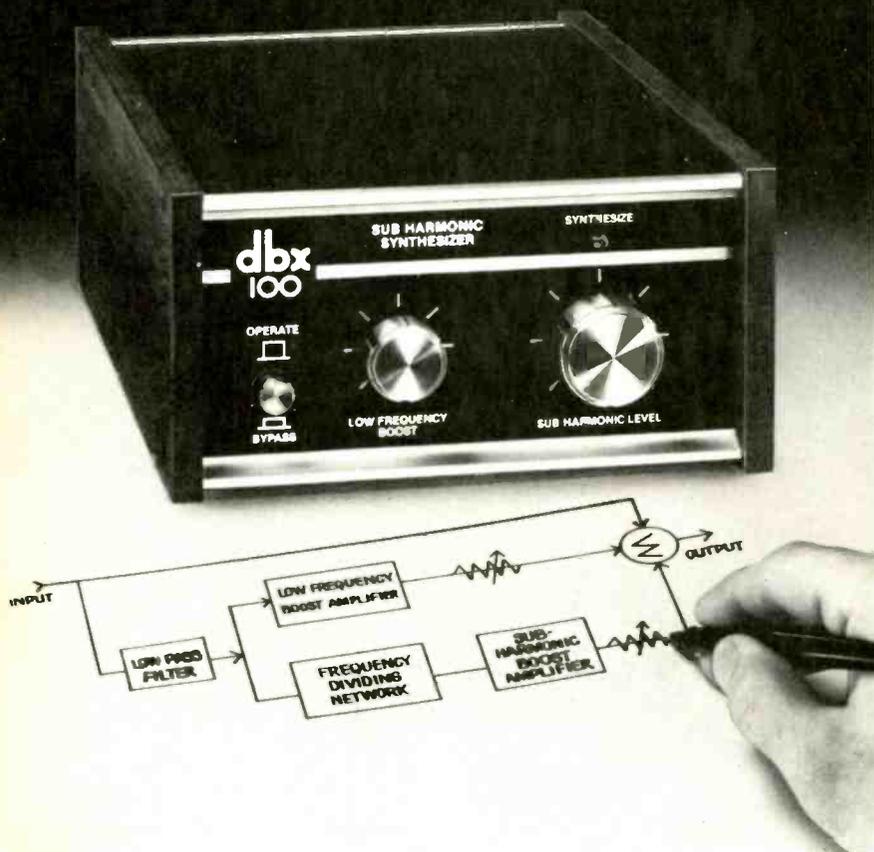
As the block diagram below shows, the music signal from your preamplifier (usually taken from the tape monitor output jacks) is fed directly into the Model 100. Its circuits send the full frequency range of this signal straight through. Simultaneously, the Model 100 selects the lowest notes in the signal (between 50 and 100 Hz), creates a companion signal an octave lower, and mixes it back with the original musical signal. A front panel control allows you to vary the level of the added subharmonic signal, and there's a special output for use with subwoofer systems too.

What happens is that you literally achieve a sense of "being there" —with more excitement from your music than ever before—no matter whether you're listening to disco, rock, or classical music.

Now that you know how the Model 100 works, we suggest that you experience the full impact of this unique electronic component at your dbx dealer. The dbx Model 100: just one of our keys to unlocking your ears.

dbx, Incorporated, 71 Chapel St., Newton, MA 02195, (617) 964-3210.

dbx
UNLOCK
YOUR EARS



Circle 74 on Page 105

Road-safety system from Blaupunkt

Already in use on German Autobahns, a broadcast-based highway-safety/traffic-control system developed by Blaupunkt may someday find its way onto American highways. The system operates this way: In each section of Germany one FM station carries a sideband signal that is always on, albeit without a program. At any time, the FM broadcaster can air a warning of accidents or poor road conditions, or suggest alternate routes to avoid a bottleneck. When the sideband signal starts to carry program information, a specially designed tuner switches automatically from regular reception. The signal can even turn on a tuner that's off, override a cassette, and turn up the volume so that you can't miss the warning. Blaupunkt is the major supplier of tuners and receivers so equipped. On certain models of its Berlin receiver, the warnings are visual as well as aural—a gooseneck display lights up to show accident, fog, road blockage, or other road problems.

Blaupunkt's engineers hasten to admit that road and broadcast conditions in the U.S. are markedly different from those in Germany. For one thing, thousands of miles of interstates are outside the range of any FM station, while a handful of transmitters are adequate to blanket all of Germany. In American urban areas, as many as forty FM stations can compete for listeners, complicating the problem of automatic retuning. In Germany, a tuner needs to cope with fewer than half a dozen signals at a time; only one government-operated station in each area carries the coded signal. But Blaupunkt contends that the system is exportable and suggests that the next move is up to U.S. government officials. **HF**

THE BETTER YOUR HIGH FIDELITY SYSTEM, THE NOISIER IT WILL SOUND.



It's a strange, but true fact—the better your hi fi equipment, the more hiss, hum and rumble you will hear. Just as a quality high fidelity system provides richer music through its wide frequency response and greater dynamic range, it also has a better ability to reproduce irritating flaws contained in the source material. You can make a major improvement in your system by eliminating much of the hiss, hum and rumble that's inherent in the source material itself.

Many noise reduction systems have some success, but only one can silently remove 10dB of the hiss, hum and rumble that is contained in unencoded records, tapes and FM. That one system is the Phase 1000 Series Two.

As you reproduce recorded music, the 1000 Series Two analyzes the millions of incoming waveforms to find signals similar to a sine wave—a highly "correlated" waveform with periodic repetition. Like a guitar note. Or a piano note. Or a vocal note.

The 1000 Series Two electronically analyzes the signal to find fundamental musical tones, and their harmonics. Where these are missing, there is no music. The 1000 can then safely assume there is noise.



THE PHASE 1000 SERIES TWO

If the 1000 Series Two identifies a fundamental waveform, it instantly orders one of its silent bandpass gates to open. If no music is present, the gates remain shut. The 1000 removes a full 10dB of hiss, hum and rumble—without affecting music!

The 1000 Series Two overcomes another flaw—dynamic compression. Live music has great dynamic range, with as much as 100dB between the loudest and the quietest passages. But tape recorders have limited range, so studio engineers compress the dynamic range to less than 50dB. FM broadcasters compress the signal even more, in order to facilitate transmission. The 1000 is the only Noise Reduction System that can correct this compression on unencoded material. It expands dynamic range by a full 7.5dB, for a more open, lively sound.

The Phase 1000 Series Two may very well improve your sound more than any

other single component you could add, regardless of the quality or price of your hi fi system. The 1000 is an improved version of the Phase Linear Autocorrelator, now with second generation, low noise, high slew rate integrated circuitry for quiet, distortion-free performance. It's easy to utilize with any stereo receiver, integrated amp or preamp/amp, and is a valuable addition to Dolby* and dbx systems. (These systems are very effective in preventing noise from being added in the re-recording stage, but don't reduce noise in the original recording.) When you play conventional records through the 1000, you cut tape hiss. (Expensive direct-to-disc records are cut directly onto a master, primarily to avoid the taping stage with its inherent hiss.)

Ask your Phase dealer to play any record, tape or tuner through the 1000 Series Two. Then listen to the music. Not the noise.

Phase Linear[®]
THE POWERFUL DIFFERENCE

TOO HOT TO HANDLE

Q. In April, a reader asked whether it would cause any undesirable effects to attach a phono cartridge to a headshell with silicone rubber cement. It seems to me that, because of the compliance of the silicone, he is creating a resonating circuit in series with the stylus-arm circuit, although at a higher frequency, in the audible range.—Gary Groves [no address given]

A. While it is true that any compliance/mass system creates a resonance, there should be negligible compliance in a secure mounting achieved as described in the earlier item. But if the cement is excessively thick or the bearing surfaces of the cartridge and/or shell too restricted (making the mounting insecure), undesirable resonance could occur.

Q. I understand the functions of equalizers, dynamic range expanders, time-delay systems, and noise-reduction units, but I am unsure as to which would produce the most noticeable sound improvement in my basic system. Given my interest in rock music, derived equally from records and non-Dolby FM, and my equipment (Pioneer SX-1010 receiver, Accutrac 4000 turntable, and two B.E.S. d-50 speakers), which add-on signal processor would be the most worthwhile first choice?—Gerard E. Michel, Vandalia, Ohio.

A. It would be as difficult to match you up with the right equipment as it would be to match you with a mate. But since you've told us a bit about yourself (and the selection being less crucial to your happiness than a human add-on), we'll attempt the role of marriage broker.

Considering your first love in music—rock—we suggest an equalizer as a first choice. Our decision is based on a process of elimination. Since rock music is so highly compressed, noise seldom is a problem. So, we'll put the noise-reduction system fourth on the list. A range expander might be nice to expand some of the compressed rock to more realistic levels—but then, it wouldn't be the rock we all know and love. Put that in third place. That gets us down to the equalizer and the time-delay system. Knotty problem. We've had a lot of fun adding pseudo-concert-hall ambience to classical record-

ings with a time delay. We've also gotten some interesting hype effects with rock. But rock is hype enough as it is. Put the time delay in second place, and go for the equalizer. It's the tonal balance of rock that strikes us as needing the most homework, and we've yet to hear a speaker that couldn't stand a little equalization.

Q. My cassette deck, a Teac 450, is hardly new, but I'm very fond of it and get excellent recordings from it. Yet when friends whose equipment is at least as good send me tapes they've made, the results can sound awful on the 450. The problem seems to be Dolby tracking since the levels come out very low on the Teac (though one channel generally is worse than the other), and the sound is muffled. Why should this be?—C. G. Lehrer, Springfield, Mass.

A. There may be differences in head-height adjustment (its relationship to the tape's width), possibly compounded by other factors. Assuming that your Teac has been checked out by a competent repairman, he could touch up bias, recording level, metering, and so on, but head adjustment is trickier. Azimuth alignment tapes (used to adjust the head gap's perpendicularity to the recorded track), even from reputable suppliers, may not agree, and severe azimuth differences can contribute to muffled sound. Head height is even more of a problem, since all of the standard quality test-tape brands are recorded across the full width of the tape and allow no clue to misadjustment. If the 450 isn't "reading" along the paths that the recording head laid down, the overall output drops, affecting Dolby tracking. If one playback-head element is picking up some of the other channel's track, its output will drop less. Unfortunately, there's little a home user can do to ameliorate the effect.

Q. While playing LPs I am frequently bothered by distortion that becomes most noticeable on the innermost grooves. It seems to occur most often on recent pop/rock issues, usually during loud vocal/choral passages. It becomes especially noticeable when the signal is routed through a Sansui QSD-1 synthesizer, which seems to reproduce it as the major signal in the back channels. The turntable, a Sony PS-1800, has been checked by

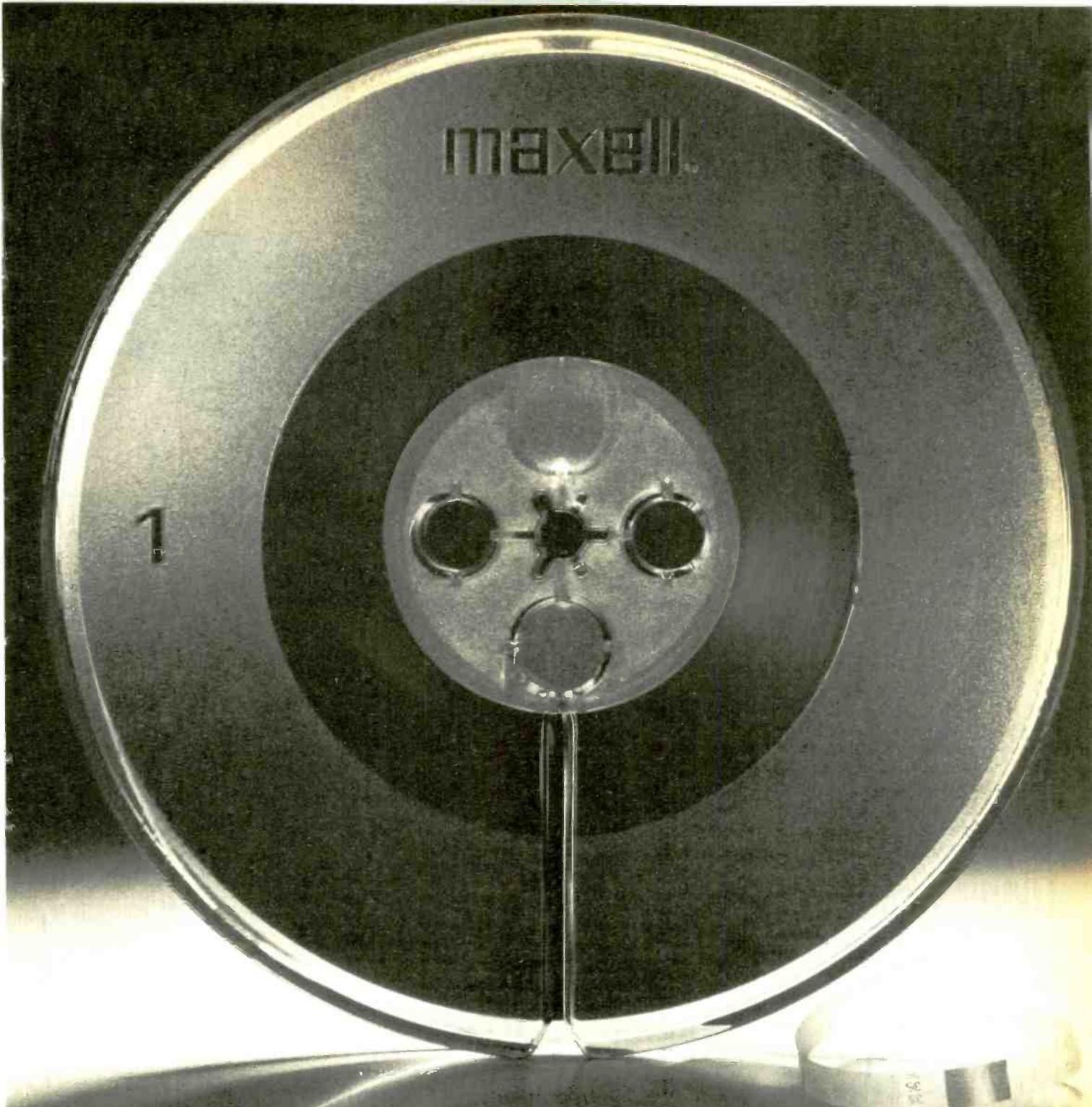
two clinics with both Shure V-15 Type III and ADC Super XLM Mk. II cartridges. Am I experiencing tracking or tracing problems? How can I tell if the distortion is inherent in the recording? What playback equipment (such as a straight-line-tracking arm or a Shibata stylus) would noticeably reduce this distortion?—Gary Handova, Silverado, Calif.

A. Distortion is greatest on the inner grooves of a record, where the linear groove velocity is least. And high-level, high-frequency signals are most prone to this type of tracing distortion. Assuming that your turntable is functioning properly and that the cartridge is mounted with the correct overhang, you've pretty much done all you can do. A Shibata or other multiradial stylus generally will be able to trace these short wavelengths more readily than an elliptical because of its smaller scanning radius, but there are some records that just can't be played successfully.

Q. My '77½ Porsche 924 has a dealer-installed Blaupunkt AM/FM/cassette deck with a three-speaker arrangement that appears to be wired with the front and left-back speakers reproducing the left channel and the right-back speaker handling the right channel. The sound just doesn't compare with that of a conventional two- or four-speaker arrangement. What are the advantages or disadvantages of my hookup, and what would you suggest for upgrading? I would prefer to interfere as little as possible with the factory installation.—John D. Frye, Baltimore, Md.

A. Since most cars carry no passengers much of the time, the stereo balance should, if anything, be shaded to favor the driver; in your arrangement, it appears, only a passenger can expect reasonable balance. The easiest fix probably would be to move the leads for the center speaker from the left-channel amplifier terminals to the right-channel connections. Of course, if the Blaupunkt has a mono output, the obvious choice would be to drive the center speaker from it.

We regret that, due to the volume of reader mail we get, we cannot give individual answers to all questions.



maxell.

Our 7" reel is designed to gather tape. Not dust.

Something as insignificant as a speck of dust can mess up a perfectly good recording.

So at Maxell, we've developed an ingenious device that keeps dust

from collecting on our tape. Our take-up reel.

Instead of gaping holes that let dust in, our specially molded polystyrene design actually forces dust out.

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Lights, Camera, Action . . .

That's Hollywood. Major publishing and entertainment companies know a good (i.e., profitable) thing when they see it, and several giants have entered, or will soon enter, the prerecorded video market. Time-Life has created a distribution scheme called Time-Life Video Club. Operating much like the monthly book and record clubs, it offers subscribers a monthly bulletin listing feature films, made-for-TV movies, sports, comedy, drama, self-improvement, and children's shows on half-inch video cassettes. The American Broadcasting Company has formed the ABC Video Enterprises division and is studying the possibility of marketing cassettes and discs with programs drawn from its considerable library, as well as material produced especially for the new format. Allied Artists announced that it will be duplicating fourteen of its original Sherlock Holmes films for home distribution through its Allied Artists Video Corporation. Columbia Pictures is making a commotion with its announcement of "great star-studded Columbia classics" soon to be available on video cassette. Two other Hollywood studios, Twentieth Century-Fox and Paramount Pictures, are also gearing up to provide tapes of selected features from their huge film libraries.

For \$1.00, Blackhawk (P.O. Box 3990, 1235 W. Fifth St., Davenport, Iowa, 52808) will send you its catalog of more than 100 films and special features. Listed under headings according to the era in which they were produced, Blackhawk's offerings range from contemporary films ("Papillon," "The French Connection") to silent classics. Prices for Beta and VHS formats are the same, and some films can be obtained on U-Matic at an additional charge.

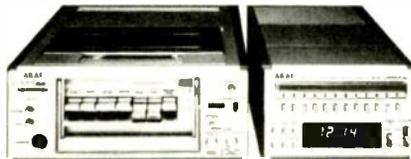
If you're looking for a Baedeker of program material for your video deck, you may want to acquire the "Source Index" published by Video Programs/Index (923 Sixth St., SW, Washington, D.C. 20024). It shows a host of duplicators and distributors, indicating the tape formats in which they work, the types of programming available from them, and the conditions (sale, rental, trade-in, broadcast, home-only, etc.) under which the tapes are obtainable.

Among the individual companies from which we've received material, Reel Images, Inc. (Dept. R.P. 47, 456 Monroe

Turnpike, Monroe, Conn. 06468) has a tantalizing \$1.00 video cassette catalog. It lists more than 200 items ranging from "The Birth of a Nation" to "The Red Balloon," from Betty Boop to "Son of Blob." All are available on VHS and Beta II (the current, slower speed); some can also be had—usually at somewhat higher prices—in Beta I (high speed) and U-Matic.

TCA Industries, Inc. (10 Penn Valley Dr., Yardley, Pa. 19067) also has a flyer listing some 200 titles that cut a wide swath. Prices run a little higher for VHS than for Beta. The company has begun issuing music programs (particularly rock), with a sizable list of releases scheduled this year.

On the rental front, VidAmerica (235 E. 55th St., New York, N.Y. 10022) emphasizes the current feature movies (it has an exclusive 3½-year agreement to distribute twenty United Artists pictures) in its varied list. At present it is offering special enrollment incentives to new purchasers of Sony Betamax decks. Fotomat, meanwhile, has had such success with its programs to sell blank cassettes and to transfer slides and home movies to tape that it has entered the rental business in conjunction with Paramount, which says it sees low-cost rentals as a way of heading off tape piracy of its pictures. The non-exclusive agreement gives Fotomat free access to the Paramount library rental outlets.



Akai Activideo recorder and programmable tuner/timer

On the road. Akai has joined the portable VCR market with its Activideo VCR system. The \$1,125 VHS recorder weighs in at a scant 15 pounds with battery, which allows 60 minutes of camera recording. A control on the deck selects the speed, from still-frame operation to four times normal playback speed. A companion 3¼-pound color camera and a programmable tuner/timer round out the Activideo system.

Say "cheese." Consumer involvement with VCRs is a limited affair if use is



Sharp XC-35U color camera

relegated to taping programs off the air. Color sound cameras that interface with both portable and home VCRs are being touted by several companies as offering more flexibility than Super-8 film cameras. Quasar has broadened its line with three models, ranging in price from \$660 to \$960. The lightest (4½ pounds) of Panasonic's three new portable color cameras, the PK-400, features a single ⅜-inch vidicon tube and ten-pin connector that allows direct connection to most portable VCRs. Sharp's XC-35U camera has a 6:1 power zoom lens and electronic range finder/monitor.

Word from Japan has it that prices for portable color cameras may drop substantially in the not-too-distant future if charge-coupled chip technology wins acceptance from the manufacturers. Nippon Electric, for one, uses a single charge-coupled chip (as opposed to the three that Sony has used) in a color video prototype half the size and weight of conventional cameras. Its price is expected to be about \$400 in Japan, when (and if) it comes to market.

On the beach. Though small-screen portable color receivers usually rate a yawn in the news department, Panasonic's CT-1010 with 4½-inch screen is newsworthy on several counts. It employs just one electron gun instead of the three found on conventional color sets, resulting in a 40% reduction in power consumption, a far less bulky appearance, and a net weight of just under 10 pounds. In addition, the new design replaces the conventional shadow mask with phosphor-activated servo loop to control the color synchronization of the single electron beam. **HF**



An acknowledged world leader in loudspeaker design and engineering, KEF has developed a monitor-standard speaker system that is both small—only ¼-cubic foot in size—and truly “high” fidelity. While these objectives are not new, the Reference Series Model 101 speaker system represents the first time that both are available in one product.

The Model 101 is, therefore, ideal for use in locations where an accurate small speaker is required in keeping with the rest of a high quality audio system.

System Design

Despite all the ingenious ideas that have been proposed by various speaker manufacturers over the years, the three basic parameters of Enclosure Volume, Bass Response and Efficiency are still related by unchanged physical laws. What is different is the thorough manner in which KEF engineers have, with the use of advanced technology, optimized the relationships between these parameters.

Starting with the premise that prospective Model 101 users will have substantial amplification available, KEF engineers achieved a response from this small enclosure of 90Hz–30kHz \pm 2dB (–10dB at 47Hz).

KEF's leadership in computer-aided digital analysis techniques enabled them to optimize the design of the drivers, crossover network and enclosure to achieve a Target Acoustic Response without repetitious trial and error experimentation. Much of this technology, which did not previously exist, has been applied to the design and production of a small high fidelity speaker system for the first time in the Model 101.

Once the desired prototype was completed, KEF applied the same unique computer-aided techniques developed for the production of the critically acclaimed Model 105, so that the sound quality originally achieved in the laboratory prototype will be available to every user.

In addition, the high standards of the computer-aided production and assembly procedures enable precision-matched pairs of stereo loudspeakers to now be offered. For example: every Model 101 driver is tested and matched to tolerances of better than 0.5dB, and crossover networks to tolerances of 0.1dB; each pair of drive units is matched not only to each other, but to the other components in the system as well.

Loudspeaker Protection

The major problem with small, relatively less efficient loudspeakers is thermal overloading of the voice coils. KEF engineers have developed a unique self-powered electronic overload protection circuit, S-STOP (Steady State and Transient Overload Protector).

Musical peaks are generally of short duration, so tweeters can handle far in excess of their normal program rating. A similar situation exists with low frequencies and their effect on the bass unit. Consequently any form of fuse protection can reasonably limit the instantaneous peak handling ability of the system, yet fail to protect the system against a very high average power level. KEF's solution is to incorporate a protection circuit which takes into account the instantaneous power applied to each drive unit and also computes the length of time the signal is applied. The law under which it operates resembles very closely the temperature rise within the voice coil. A potentially damaging signal is immediately attenuated by about 30dB, and the full signal is automatically reconnected when it is safe to do so.

As a result, the Model 101, although only ¼-cubic foot in size, is fully protected against fault conditions when used with amplifiers of up to 100 watts per channel.

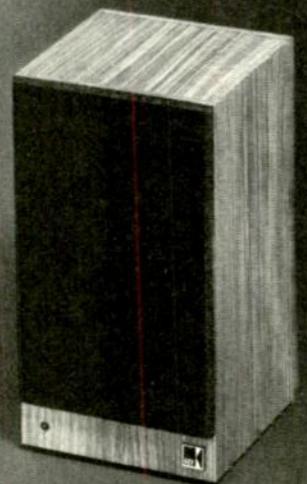
The Model 101 is obviously not your average “miniature” speaker system where the quality of sound or power handling capacity is compromised by the small size of the enclosure. Nor is it inexpensive. If you require a speaker system that

is both small and truly high fidelity, visit your authorized KEF dealer for a thorough demonstration. For his name, write: KEF Electronics, Ltd., c/o Intratec, P.O. Box 17414, Dulles International Airport, Washington, DC 20041.



KEF Reference Series Model 101:

Accurate, Small, Protected.



The Middle-Aged Ear

Do the aural limitations of the high fidelity establishment compromise half the world's audio?

by Robert Long



There is a nice comfortable feeling in being assured that a piece of stereo gear will do only good things "from 20 Hz to 20 kHz." That, we all know, constitutes the total audible range; whatever happens at other frequencies is therefore inaudible and unimportant. Of course there are effects—like signal intermodulation with ultrasonics or infrasonic preamp overload—that degrade the audible signal due to something that's happening outside the band; but it's still only the audio-band by-products that we need be concerned with, either in listening or in testing.

Some recent investigation has suggested that—at the high end, at least—this range gives us more than we really need. Specifically, European "tonmeisters," the professionally trained sound specialists who run major Continental recording sessions, have been studying digital recording systems. Some had assumed that any system with a cutoff lower than 20 kHz would compromise sound quality. But in listening tests it frequently turned out that no difference could be perceived between a 20-kHz low-pass filter and one at 15 kHz; sometimes, indeed, the more restricted range was judged sonically superior.

Such findings can be viewed with pleasure by proponents of digital recording, the sampling frequency for which must be at least twice that of the highest tone it samples if the former is not to interfere with the latter. A top recorded frequency of 20 kHz thus requires a sampling rate of at least 40 kHz, while the sampling rate can be as low as 30 kHz (at considerable saving in tape and digital circuitry) if nothing above 15 kHz need be preserved in the audio. The tonmeisters, it seems, had feared that audio might need even more headroom—say, to 30 kHz, requiring a sampling rate of at least 60 kHz—if ultimate fidelity is to be maintained.

The fear is not unreasonable. There is plenty of other evidence that human hearing can, in fact, extend well beyond that magic 20 kHz. It has been known for a long time that the effective high-frequency cutoff for any given listener tends to creep downward with age and that the cutoff for the average man is lower than that for the average woman of the same age. Many now ensconced in the 20-to-20k audio industry (including me) have their own tales of "astonishing" youthful abilities—now vanished—to hear "ultrasonic" noises of which their elders were oblivious. One recent series of experiments suggests that most women can hear 30 kHz (or possibly higher) at age thirty and that most teenagers of both sexes can perceive frequencies above 30 kHz.

The audio establishment, however, is almost exclusively male and predominantly middle-aged. (I blink as I write, aware that, like it or not, I'm a middle-aged male member of the audio establishment.) "Good" hearing in a person of this description is generally accounted to go a little past 15 kHz and therefore to exceed averages for that gender and age group by a fairly small margin. How many tonmeisters, I wonder, can hear sounds close to 20 kHz? And should their judgment—or mine, or that of my colleagues on other consumer audio magazines—be allowed to circumscribe the sounds available to listeners who can hear 25 or 30 kHz? Is the audio establishment an oligarchy whose standards are imposed on the multitude without appeal and without redress?

Consider the demographics. In round numbers, there are a little more than 200 million people in this country. Of the males, the number who are twenty years old or less is something a bit shy of 40 million; some 60 million females are thirty or less. That's a total of 100 million Americans—roughly half the population—that might reasonably be expected to enjoy significantly more extended high-frequency hearing than middle-aged males.

For some months now, I've been seeking out expert opinion on this matter. Some of those to whom I talked (again, middle-aged males) flatly refuse to believe that hearing extends significantly beyond 20 kHz. One (elderly male) audiometrist considers all hearing above 7 kHz as non-information-bearing and therefore academic. An equipment manufacturer dismissed the subject with the comment, "You mean kids; they're not my market." But those who do take my questions seriously seem to have an answer. One European engineer put it this way: "You're talking about the perception of individual tones. Yes, the ability to hear beyond 20 kHz is quite common, especially in teenagers and young adults. But when those tones are combined with lower ones in proportions that approach the balance of normal program material, the upper tones are masked and can no longer be perceived. A good deal of work has been done in Europe to investigate this area, and it demonstrates that nothing is to be gained by extending response beyond 20 kHz." I hope he's right. **HF**

can you be bribed?

You get \$35.21 in bribes when you try 10 DAK ML90 high energy cassettes risk free for only \$2.19 each. Your bribe is bigger than your purchase!

Hats off to Maxell. Their UDXL cassette established a new standard of sound quality for all cassettes.

The new DAK ML90 starts another new technology. A technology of protection from Hi frequency loss and of extreme reliability.

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YOUR TIME IS PRECIOUS

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

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

When we first started, 12 years ago, DAK's cassettes failed, just like many others. So we installed over \$20,000 worth of high speed duplication equipment at our factory and set out to design the perfect cassette.

MOLYSULFIDE

Failure after failure. For six years we substituted, remade, tested and retested until we positively linked the major cause of cassette failure to the slip sheets, or liners in the cassette. Evidently, 3M and TDK were hot on our heels, because they have now also come out with new liners.

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

Molysulfide reduces friction several times better than graphite and allows the tape to move more freely within the cassette. The molysulfide is tougher and makes the liner much more resistant to wear.

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

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

MAXELL IS BETTER

Yes, honestly, if you own a \$1000 cassette deck like a Nakamichi, the fre-

quency responses of Maxell UDXL or TDK SA are superior to DAK and you just might be able to hear the difference.

DAK ML has a frequency response that is flat from 40cps to 14,500 \pm 3db. Virtually all cassette recorders priced under \$600 are flat \pm 3db from 40cps to about 12,000cps, so we have over 2000cps to spare, and you'll probably never notice the difference.

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

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

YOU WIN

You are paying less for the 10, 90 minute cassettes than you would pay for the comparable bribes we are offering if you went to a Radio Shack store.



Yours Free

CHECK THE VALUE OF THE DAK BRIBES AT RADIO SHACK

The next time your batteries are dead in a calculator, radio, flashlight or battery operated recorder, you'll be glad you have this versatile battery eliminator AC adaptor.

You'll save lots of money on batteries because now you can plug in, instead of using up expensive batteries. 4 voltages: 3, 4.5, 6 and 9 volts plus 4 plugs to fit virtually anything battery powered. Radio Shack sells a similar 4 voltage adaptor for \$9.95.

Think of it, 10 of the most commonly used six foot hook up cords with RCA plugs at each end. You can connect friends recorders, extra tuners, or virtually any stereo equipment. You'll certainly appreciate these cords in the years to come. Radio Shack sells their

FREE CATALOGUE "HOW TO RECORD" BOOKLET



10 free 6 ft. RCA to RCA hook up cords



DAK Industries
Inco-patented

bias, eq normal

HIGH ENERGY ML 90

six foot cords for \$1.89 each.

You need clean tape heads to make good recordings. The easiest way to clean your heads is with DAK's 12 oz. deluxe spray head cleaner, complete with handy snorkel tube. Radio Shack doesn't sell a single large 12 oz. can, but 12 oz. from them costs \$6.36.

The comparable Radio Shack prices are not list prices, but the actual prices you would pay at a store when this ad was written.



Yours Free

WE WIN TOO

Customers like you are very valuable in the form of future business. We anticipate receiving over 6000 orders and 4500 repeat customers from this advertisement to add to our list of over 57,000 "actives." We are betting you will buy our cassettes again, and we are putting our money where our mouth is!

TRY DAK ML90 FREE

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

To order your 10 DAK ML90 minute high energy cassettes and receive your \$35.21 bribe with your credit card, simply call toll free 800, 423-2636, (in Calif. call 213-984-1559) or send your check for \$21.90 plus \$3 for postage and handling for each group of 10 cassettes and bribes to DAK. (Calif. residents add 6% sales tax).

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

Why not order an extra group of 10 DAK ML90 cassettes for yourself or a friend? We will add one free ML90 cassette to each additional 10 you buy and of course you get all 3 bribes with each group of 10 tapes.

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NEW EQUIPMENT REPORTS

Preparation supervised by Robert Long, Peter Dobbin, and Edward J. Foster. Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted) supplied by CBS Technology Center or Diversified Science Laboratories.

About the CBS subwoofer tests. . . .

When you examine the data on the subwoofer systems tested for this issue, you'll find some changes from our usual speaker reporting practices, occasioned by the nature of subwoofers themselves. Most obvious is omission of anechoic-response curves. Since the CBS chamber is rated only down to about 60 Hz (it will produce useful, though less reliably quantifiable, information for lower frequencies) and the most important response range in a subwoofer lies below that, we saw little purpose in publishing the curves. Similarly, we have modified the normal 300-Hz reference frequency and the noise band (250 Hz to 6 kHz) with which the lab tests for sensitivity since they are inadequate for speakers that are designed to respond only below 250 Hz.

A Classic Subwoofer

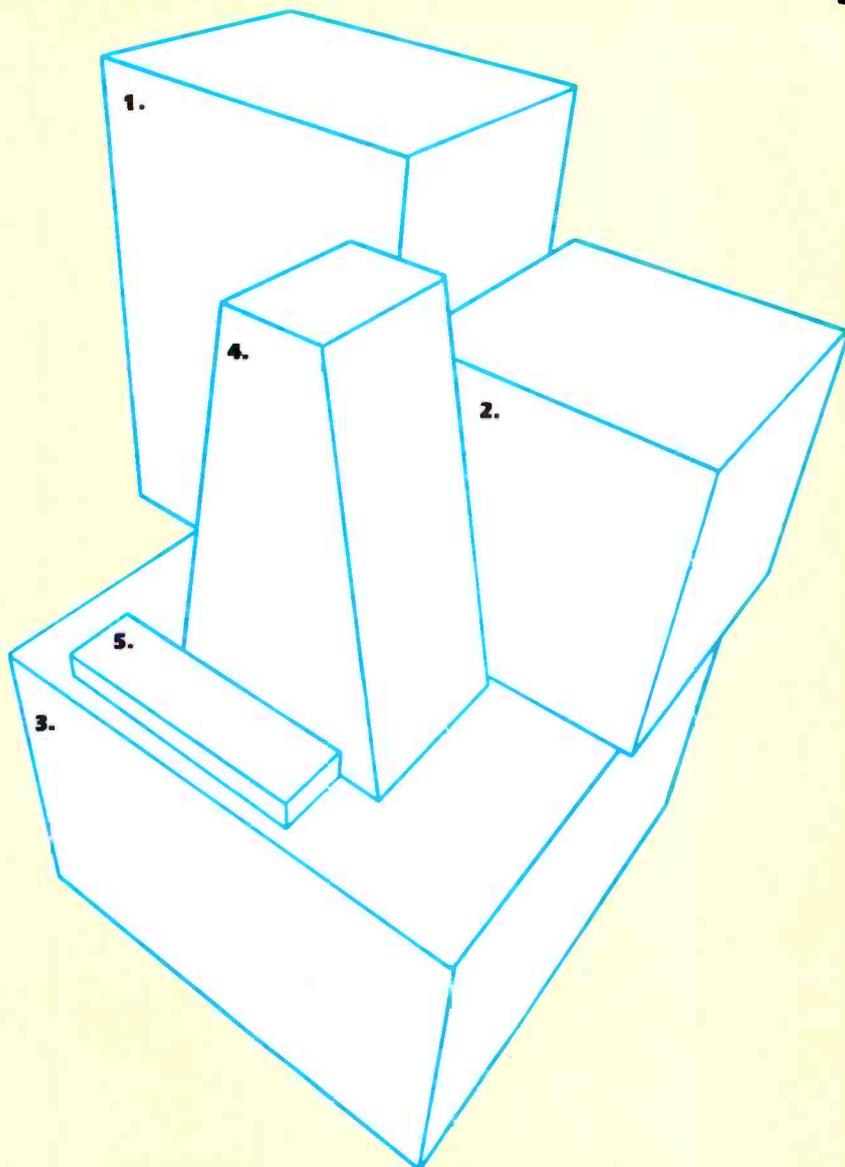
Dahlquist DQ-1W subwoofer

AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL OUTPUT (40 to 400 Hz)
85 dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
100 dB SPL for 7 dBW (5 watts) input

PULSED OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
118½ dB SPL for 25½ dBW (365 watts) peak

"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE 6.9 ohms



On this month's cover: 1. Dahlquist DQ-1W subwoofer; 2. Ohm Acoustics Model N subwoofer; 3. RTR Industries PS/1 Pyramid full-range loudspeaker with 4. DAC/1 Rhombus subwoofer; 5. Allison Acoustics Electronic Subwoofer.

Dahlquist DQ-1W subwoofer system in wood veneer cabinet. Dimensions: 18½ by 26 inches (front), 14½ inches deep. Price: \$275; optional DQ-LP1 electronic crossover, \$300. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor on DQ-1W; "limited," three years parts and labor on DQ-LP1. Manufacturer: Dahlquist, Inc., 601 Old Willlets Path, Hauppauge, N.Y. 11787.

Among the various types of low-bass extenders available, Dahlquist's DQ-1W may well be termed a "classic" subwoofer: It is designed specifically to supplement the very low frequency output (well below 100 Hz) of full-range loudspeakers. Its large, bulky, boxy shape will never tempt anyone to deem it inconspicuous, nor can we conceive of it ever being pressed into service as a piece of furniture.

An acoustic-suspension design, the 1W incorporates a single 13-inch driver. No internal crossover is provided, and Dahlquist recommends biamping with an outboard electronic crossover and separate (mono) power amp for optimum performance. In our listening tests we used Dahlquist's DQ-LP1 continuously variable low-pass filter and a power amp capable of operating in the 1W's recommended unclipped power range of 50–200 watts. Connection to the amplifier is via two screw terminals, and a single replaceable fuse protects the driver's voice coil from sustained high-level signals.

Continued on Page 40

THE DIGITAL READOUTS ON THE NEW SANSUI RECEIVERS ARE NOT WHAT COUNT.





G-4700



G-5700



G-6700

QUARTZ-LOCKED TUNING DOES.

life like, crisp and clean.

ELECTRONIC LED POWER METERS

The all-new peak power level LED display gives you an instantaneous reading of the power output of each channel, so you can continuously monitor the power you're sending to your speakers. This electronic indicator responds much faster and more accurately than any conventional needle-type meter.

ALL THE EXTRAS, TOO

The new Sansui receivers are high technology through and through. So we've designed them with special protection devices to prevent any mishap. Protective circuits save the output transistors from excessive current and keep too much direct current from your speakers.

And we haven't forgotten about the con-

trols and features that make it possible for you to fine-tune the music. Like the bass and treble controls, which operate with an absolute minimum of distortion. And tone defeat switch plus audio muting on our top three models. The volume controls with 41 click-stops, and ultra-smooth tuning knobs, are large and centrally placed for ease of operation. Taping, too, is simple, with versatile and complete facilities.

Everyone is proud of a great-sounding, high performance receiver. But you should be proud of its looks as well. With Sansui, you will be.

Ask your authorized Sansui dealer to show you one of our Double-Digital receivers. Ask him to turn it on. You'll see that your music never had it so good. And you never heard it better. That's something you can count on.

G-7700

- 120 watts per channel, min. RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000Hz with no more than 0.025% Total Harmonic Distortion.
- Power Amplifier Frequency Response: DC to 200,000Hz +0, -3dB
- FM Sensitivity: 9.8dBf (1.7uV IHF T-100)
- FM Signal-to-Noise Ratio: 76dB
- FM Spurious Response Ratio: 90dB

G-6700

- 90 watts per channel with no more than 0.025% THD under the same conditions.
- Power Amplifier Frequency Response: DC to 200,000Hz +0, -3dB
- FM Sensitivity: 10.8dBf (1.9uV IHF T-100)
- FM Signal-to-Noise Ratio: 75dB
- FM Spurious Response Ratio: 70dB

G-5700

- 75 watts per channel with no more than 0.03% THD under the same conditions.
- Power Amplifier Frequency Response: DC to 200,000Hz +0, -3dB
- FM Sensitivity: 10.8dBf (1.9uV IHF T-100)
- FM Signal-to-Noise Ratio: 75dB
- FM Spurious Response Ratio: 70dB

G-4700

- 50 watts per channel with no more than 0.05% THD under the same conditions.
- FM Sensitivity: 10.8dBf (1.9uV IHF T-100)
- FM Signal-to-Noise Ratio: 75dB
- FM Spurious Response Ratio: 70dB

SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

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Circle 49 on Page 105

Sansui



OUR PATENTED DIGITALLY QU

DIGITAL READOUTS

While digital readouts may improve the looks of a receiver and make it easier to use, only digital circuitry can improve the receiver's performance. That's why all the new Sansui Double-Digital receivers use our patented Digitally Quartz-Locked Tuning System, too.

DIGITALLY QUARTZ-LOCKED TUNING

To meet its rated distortion specifications, a receiver's tuner section must be perfectly center-tuned. The slightest mistuning causes distortion of the final signal to increase rapidly. And even if a tuner is accurately tuned initially, it may drift away from the desired frequency within a short time.

Sansui's Digitally Quartz-Locked Tuning System automatically provides optimum tuning that not only remains perfect while you listen, but stays on the same center frequency even if the receiver is turned off and back on again later.

Conventional quartz-controlled tuners use an analog phase reference circuit that may lose accuracy as a result of harmonic interference. Sansui's patented digital tuning system

actually counts the vibrations of a quartz-crystal time-base and compares it to the tuned-in frequency for instant corrections.

When you listen to any of the new Sansui Double-Digital receivers, you'll immediately hear the difference that perfect tuning makes.

You'll also see the difference in the specs. The tuning sections are extremely sensitive, with unusually high signal-to-noise and spurious response ratios.

PURE POWER DC AMPLIFICATION

A great receiver needs more than a superb tuner section. The amplifier must be first rate, too. That's why Sansui uses our own unique Pure Power DC amplification system in all of our Double-Digital receivers.

While some other receivers have low Total Harmonic Distortion (THD), a Sansui DC receiver can achieve lowest Transient Intermodulation Distortion (TIM) simultaneously. That's because our high slew rate, fast rise time DC circuits provide sufficient drive current to respond instantaneously to even the most fleeting musical transients. The music reproduction is remarkably



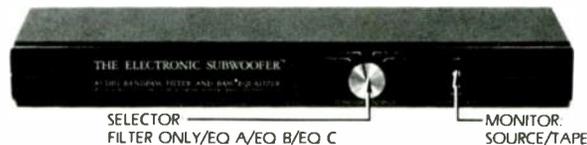


Since this model responds to far above the true subwoofer range—reasonably flat output continues up to 2 kHz—CBS Technology Center could apply some of its regular test methods (devised with woofers in mind) that are inappropriate to subwoofers of more restricted response. The output test, for example, was conducted at 300 Hz, where 100 dB was reached before distortion exceeded test limits. Since the subwoofer's efficiency is fairly high, it needed only 7 dBW (5 watts) of input power to reach this point, yet pulses to beyond 25 dBW were taken in stride. The impedance is well controlled—varying only between 1.6 ohms (at resonance) and 6.9 ohms (at the CBS rating point) within the range below 1 kHz—and thus presents a “comfortable” load to the amplifier.

Unlike some other subwoofers whose room placement does not have a serious effect on low-frequency output, the 1W's low Q and near-critical damping demand placement at the junction of two large surfaces or in a corner for proper low-frequency reinforcement. The DQ-LP1 crossover, however, includes a variable equalizer intended to provide up to 5 dB of boost in the region around 20 Hz to raise the subwoofer's output should corner space be unavailable. Distortion figures for the 1W are very low; both second and third harmonics stay well below 1% at the 0 dBW level throughout its range.

Our response to the 1W in actual listening tests is enthusiastic. Though Dahlquist notes that “ideal” performance will be realized only by using a stereo pair of subwoofers, we chose to go the common-channel route with just one. Carefully putting the 1W in a corner (in the plane of the stereo speakers) and experimenting with the level and frequency controls on the crossover, we soon brought the total system into good balance, so that it articulately reproduced tones that had hitherto remained veiled. The bowing of the bass fiddle, the smack of the kettledrum, and the deep resonance of a pipe organ emerged with wonderful clarity and definition, and with no appreciable boom. The subwoofer should never have to do much above 60 Hz or so, assuming good design in the speakers it supplements. Yet it represents an investment in worthwhile realism that—even allowing for the cost of a crossover and extra amplifier—can deliver solid dividends with wide-range program sources.

Circle 136 on Page 105



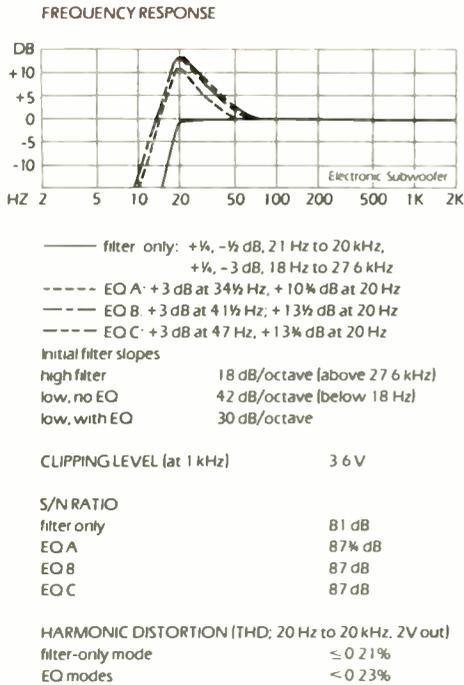
“Big” Bass from A Little Box

Allison Electronic Subwoofer in metal case. Dimensions: 14½ by 2 inches (front panel), 4 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$290. Warranty: “full,” five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Allison Acoustics, Inc., 7 Tech Circle, Natick, Mass. 01760.

Allison Acoustics' Electronic Subwoofer is unique in the field of low-frequency extenders: a subwoofer without a mechanical driver. It is, in fact, an electronic equalizer specifically designed to extend the very low frequency output of acoustic-suspension loudspeakers. Since low-frequency rolloff below woofer resonance is intrinsic and predictable in such designs, the Electronic Subwoofer can compensate for it electrically, “bending” the bottom end of the response curve to match the rest of the audio spectrum. Thus it is both more precise and narrower of application than the general-purpose bass equalizers that have preceded it. The Allison can be patched into a stereo system between the preamp and power amp, in an external-processor loop or in a tape-monitor loop. (For the latter hookup, its tape-recorder connections and switching replace those pre-empted on the preamp.) The unit draws only 2 watts, so it may be left on continuously, or it may be powered via a switched outlet; no power switch is built in.

Two of the three bass-equalization settings relate most directly to Allison loudspeakers: Position A is calculated for Models One and Three, Position B for Models Two and Four. Inasmuch as these speakers are of the classic closed-box (acoustic-suspension) type, the Electronic Subwoofer should benefit similar systems: Position A for those with resonance frequencies between 40 and 47 Hz, and B, between 48 and 56 Hz. (Position C is for those with a resonance around 60 Hz.) Obviously, precise equalization won't be achieved unless the speaker's “Q” (see the article by Victor Campos in

Allison Electronic Subwoofer



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, a division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., and Diversified Science Laboratories. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Samples normally are supplied on loan from the manufacturer. 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; HIGH FIDELITY, CBS Technology Center, and Diversified Science Laboratories assume no responsibility for product performance or quality.

Satellites and Subwoofers in Matched Pairs

this issue), as well as its resonance frequency, matches one of the EO curves. Since Q values in a fairly narrow range, from 0.7 to slightly over 1, are typical of quality acoustic-suspension systems, use of the Subwoofer is by no means limited to the Allison. But it will not correctly equalize vented designs (whether with ports, ducts, passive radiators, or transmission lines) because the curves do not match their more rapid rolloff characteristics.

In addition to its main task of bass compensation, the Allison serves as a sharp-cutoff audio-bandpass filter. In this mode—which can be chosen without boost but cannot be defeated—infrasonic and ultrasonic energy are sharply reduced, while audible signals are passed essentially flat. The initial slope of the infrasonic filter is a fantastic 42 dB per octave; according to Allison, the slope eventually regresses to 36 dB per octave, but in DSL's bench test this didn't show up until the infrasonics were thoroughly suppressed—by well over 30 dB, in any selector position, by the time the phono warp region is reached. Ultrasonics are also filtered (presumably to avoid inducing dynamic intermodulation in the power amp) by the same rate—18 dB per octave—in all settings of the selector.

Unloaded, the Subwoofer demonstrates neither gain nor loss. With a "standard" (but demanding) 10,000-ohm load, the insertion loss is less than ½ dB. Output capability at clipping (3.6 volts) is certainly adequate for hookup between a preamp and power amp and is unlikely to cause a problem even when the unit is connected before the volume control (as in a tape-monitor loop). Signal-to-noise ratio also is excellent. Measuring THD presents a methodological problem because of the low-frequency boost. IHF standards for preamps suggest a ½-volt input and a gain of 12 dB, for a 2-volt output. Since the Allison has unity gain in the midband, a 2-volt drive would have been necessary there to achieve the reference output, but then the bass-equalization boost would have driven the circuitry into clipping in the boost range. So we decided to follow the intent rather than the letter of the IHF standard by measuring THD at a constant 2-volt output level and adjusting the input as required to achieve that condition. Thus measured, the distortion maxima shown in the data are approached only at the higher frequencies: THD is under 0.1% to beyond 6 kHz and consists predominantly of the nonintrusive second harmonic, with the third harmonic discernible only above 2 kHz.

In actual listening tests, we used the Electronic Subwoofer with both the Allison One and the Four, connecting it into the stereo system via an external-processor loop so that we could switch it quickly in and out for comparison. At first we heard no difference. This is not surprising, since precious few records have anything on them below 45 Hz, and that's the only region in which the Subwoofer "does" anything. On direct-cut and digitally mastered recordings (as well as on some standard discs), however, its benefits really begin to show. Double basses have more solid underpinnings, and the fundamentals of the lower register of the piano are more realistic. The bass drum recorded on the Holst band suites (Telarc 5038) is more solid—has more "feel"—when equalization is used, and the sonority of the tuba is enhanced. So is that of the larger pipes on "The Great Organ" (Telarc 5036). The Allison Four benefited more from the Subwoofer than the larger Model One did, although some care must be exercised to avoid overstressing the smaller system.

In a nutshell, the Subwoofer can make a good loudspeaker system even better; the better the system to start with, the better it becomes after equalization—assuming, of course, that its bass-resonance behavior is appropriate to the EO involved. The reverse side of the coin is that the better the system is, the rarer will be the discs that demonstrate the improvement. Nor can you expect the Allison to make a monitor out of a mini; unless the speaker has quality to start with—in particular, an ability to handle 10 to 14 dB of added signal at 20 Hz without distress—the Electronic Subwoofer is, frankly, a waste of money. But, in conjunction with a capable speaker, we find that its benefits grow on you. The longer we use it, the less willing we are to forgo it.

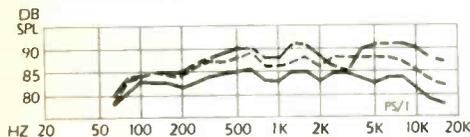
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RTR Model PS/1 Pyramid "full-range satellite" loudspeaker system plus Model DAC/1 Rhombus floor-standing subwoofer, both in walnut-veneer enclosures. PS/1 dimensions: 12¼ (max.) by 22 inches (front), 8 inches deep. DAC/1 dimensions: 29¼ by 28 inches (top), 21¼ inches high. Price: PS/1, \$325; optional stands for PS/1, \$29.95 per pair; DAC/1, \$575. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: RTR Industries, Inc., 8116 Deering Ave., Canoga Park, Ca. 91304.



RTR PS/1 Pyramid satellite

ANECHOIC RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS (0 dBW input)



boundary-dependent region
 — average omnidirectional response
 - - - average front hemispheric response
 - · - on-axis response

AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL OUTPUT
 [250 Hz to 6 kHz]
 84 dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
 108 dB SPL for 20 dBW (100 watts) input

PULSED OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)
 121 dB SPL for 33 dBW (1945 watts) peak

"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE 4.4 ohms

APPROX. TWEETER CONTROL RANGE (re "flat")
 -10 dB max. above 12 kHz.
 -3 dB max., 6 to 12 kHz.
 -1 dB max. 4 to 6 kHz

RTR DAC/1 Rhombus subwoofer

"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE 3.7 ohms

When we decided to place special emphasis on subwoofers for this issue, we looked for one system in which subwoofers and satellites, though sold separately, had been engineered for each other, to be used on a mix-or-match basis. There are several candidates, but none is more impressive in terms of total system flexibility—or of sheer size—than the RTR combination reviewed here. The Pyramid satellites are three-way full-range systems in that they will deliver reasonable bass all by themselves, but they include a defeatable high-pass crossover filter at 120 Hz for use when the range below is to be handled by a subwoofer. The matching Rhombus subwoofer, which RTR recommends be used in pairs (one per channel), includes a complementary low-pass crossover filter (also defeatable), a downward-firing 12-inch driver, and a pair of 15-inch mass-loaded passive radiators behind the grilles on opposite sides of the massive "coffee table" enclosure.

The first question raised by the design, therefore, is whether you will have enough room for it—even if you ignore RTR's advice and use a single subwoofer. In the larger-than-average room in which our listening was conducted, we felt distinctly cramped. Better planning to allow for the system doubtless would have helped, though the sizes and shapes still would have been at odds with the room's traditional decor. Big, open, modern spaces should accommodate the ensemble much more comfortably.

The second question involves system configuration. Assuming that you will be using both the satellites and the subwoofers, you can biamp them either via an electronic crossover (with the built-in filters defeated) or with their own passive crossover. Or you can parallel the two units in each channel (with filters on) from a single stereo amp. Or you can choose biamping with a stereo amp driving the satellites and a mono amp driving a single subwoofer (with either an electronic crossover or the built-in filters). You can buy the Pyramids first and use them as full-range systems until the bank account has recharged, and then buy either the Rhombuses or another subwoofer; a different subwoofer may match the Pyramids' 120-Hz filter, or they may be better matched via an electronic crossover. If you already have small speakers in want of downward response extension, one or two Rhombuses (with or without electronic crossover) may be the answer. Obviously we could not try all of these permutations; while we investigated some, the major thrust of the testing (both at the lab and in listening) was on biamping a pair of Pyramids plus a pair of Rhombuses, using the built-in filters, and on the potential of the individual units.

Let's begin (as piecemeal buyers will) with the satellites. With their tweeter controls at the full-open ("flat") setting, they sound the way you might expect from the omnidirectional anechoic response curve: flat within a very few dB over most of the range—say, 100 Hz to 10 kHz—with just a hint of roughness in the lower treble (actually the province of the midrange driver and the upper end of the woofer, around the 1.5-kHz crossover between them). Reducing the tweeter controls produces a more "old-fashioned" high-end rolloff without going to extremes, even with the control all the way down. The sound seems clean, if somewhat etched—due, perhaps, to the fact that at listening levels the "nastier" third harmonic predominates over the second (which is generally below 1/2%), as measured in the CBS distortion tests. Even the third harmonic is well controlled, however; it is below 1% at almost all points across the frequency range and increases only negligibly in the high-power test, where the second harmonic rises to about 2% throughout the midrange and at around 3–5 kHz in the treble. The 3-kHz pulse, as photographed on an oscilloscope, shows slightly more overhang and reflections than average. Depending on the program material, the bass is quite respectable, though it begins rolling off before about 80 Hz and should not be expected to deliver full deep-bass underpinnings in big-orchestra or organ music.

The Rhombus appears to deliver astonishingly flat response in this range in the CBS chamber, and it readily lets you know whether your recordings contain cleanly captured low fundamentals. (As with other subwoofers, it seems to do little with much program material simply because it is given little to do.) Actually, it is rated to 16 Hz, with a sharp cutoff below. The CBS chamber (which, of course, is not rated for quantitative analysis to anything like this extreme) shows response as holding up well to at least 25 Hz and confirms the steep cutoff to prevent reproduction of warp information. Second harmonic distortion is fairly well controlled—at both power levels in the CBS tests—around the crossover range (say, 60 to 150 Hz), though it does reach the neighborhood of 5% both above and below this. But the third harmonic content generally stays below 1% and is surprisingly low in the ultrabass, particularly in the 0-dBW (normal listening level) test.

The Rhombus does not confine its activity to its chosen range, with the

New Measurement Standards: In making comparisons between current reports and those published in the past, readers are cautioned to pay particular attention to the reference levels and similar test criteria cited. S/N ratios for electronics, in particular, are measured very differently now that we have adopted salient features of the new IHF amplifier-measurement standard. While we believe that the new technique (which also implies a saner approach to loading of all inputs and outputs) will result in measurements that more perfectly reflect audible, in-use effects, they cannot be compared directly to the numbers resulting from the former, more conventional lab measurements.

built-in filter off, the greatest output is at around 400 Hz. The filter's gentle slope (6 dB per octave, according to RTR; the figure is difficult to assess from the measurements) shaves something between 6 and 9 dB off this peak and provides a good match to the Pyramids used with their filter. With other satellites, it might be necessary to go for an electronic crossover with sharper slopes to get a good match with the Rhombus.

RTR gives a 6-ohm impedance rating for both units. At the high end, the Rhombus appears to deliver a purely resistive load of about 5 ohms, but both it and the Pyramid drop to below 4 ohms at some frequencies. Since the Rhombus impedance curve is extremely flat and the Pyramid's bass-resonance impedance peak falls (at 70 Hz) well below the filter bandpass, a value of 4 ohms for the entire system might be more representative.

The sound of the ensemble, set up as RTR recommends, is truly impressive. If you're paying this kind of money, we would advise that you spring for the extra cost of biamping as well and consider using an electronic crossover. (This last refinement will, in our opinion, net only subtle improvement over the built-in filters.) The Pyramids, taken alone, are not likely to impress buyers willing to spend more than \$300 apiece; many other speakers in this price range will do a better job without the subwoofers—though, of course, they may not integrate nearly as well with the Rhombuses, if that is the ultimate objective. The Rhombus itself—whether used singly or in pairs, and whether or not it is mated to the Pyramids—is a superb subwoofer in its deep response, reasonably high efficiency (for easy matching to non-RTR satellites), and sharp infrasonic cutoff. It's bulky, and it's not cheap, but who ever said a good subwoofer had to be otherwise?

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A Subwoofer for Minis



Ohm N subwoofer system

AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL OUTPUT
(32 to 140 Hz)

76 dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 85 Hz)

91 dB SPL for 10 dBW (10 watts) input

"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE

3.5 ohms

Ohm Model N subwoofer system in walnut-veneer cabinet. Dimensions: 16½ by 18 inches (front), 16 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$320 (optional Model M satellite speakers, \$145). Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Ohm Acoustics Corp., 241 Taaffee Place, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205.

The Ohm N subwoofer represents one aspect of the burgeoning field of low-bass extenders: subwoofers designed to operate in concert with limited-range minispeaker satellites. Although Ohm offers a complete system (the N plus two Model M satellites), the subwoofer is sold separately to enhance any brand of minispeaker.

Due to the omnidirectional dispersion of low frequencies, placement is not critical, and for those who see the mini/subwoofer combination as a way to avoid losing too much floor space to large speakers, the low-standing, cube-shaped N will fit inconspicuously just about anywhere.

The N's driver complement consists of two 8-inch woofers, mounted front and back and acoustically coupled to two 12-inch passive radiators. Ohm claims that response reaches down to 32 Hz. Though maximum output in the CBS anechoic chamber occurs at about 70 Hz, rolloff below this point is not particularly steep—even without the reinforcement provided by normal floor placement. A built-in passive crossover network cuts in at 140 Hz, and Ohm states that very little will be gained by opting for an outboard electronic crossover. Two pairs of spring-loaded clips connect the N to an amplifier's output, and two more link the output to the satellites. A single three-position satellite-output attenuator is the only control on the N.

Ohm recommends a minimum of 10 and maximum of 100 watts (10 to 20 dBW) to power a complete subwoofer/satellite system. The output data show that the N reaches 91 dB of output for only 10 dB of input (at which point, in the 85-Hz test, buzzing begins). In actual use, of course, the crossover network would shunt most of the musical energy (that above 140 Hz) to the satellite speakers, so the recommendation seems reasonable and the N's output an adequate match for most minis. Efficiency, too, seems reasonable for this purpose. And since impedance is low (between 3.5 and 8 ohms throughout the subwoofer's working frequency range), the N makes the most of the amp's power capabilities.

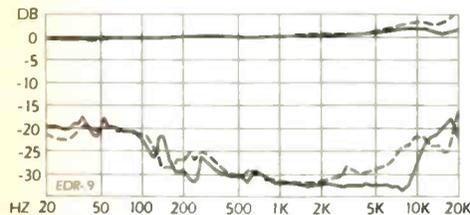
Trying to judge the subjective difference a subwoofer makes to a good pair of full-range loudspeakers is difficult. The plain truth is that there is not enough low bass on most records to provide a comparison. With typical minis (we used Ohm's own satellites), however, the improvement in bass reproduction can be startling. The N supplies a clean, well-defined bottom end with no apparent boom. At the 0-dBW level, second harmonic distortion is very low—generally below ½% from 35 Hz up—and the third harmonic averages about 1%. At the 95-dB output level, third harmonic content increases less than the second does; both average about 2% in the working range.

New Top Empire Pickup



Empire EDR-9 phono pickup

FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION
(test records: STR-100 to 40 Hz; STR-170 above)



Frequency response

— L ch: +2 1/4, -1/2 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
- - - R ch: +5, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

Channel separation

≥ 27 1/2 dB, 340 Hz to 6.4 kHz
≥ 17 1/2 dB, 54 Hz to 19 kHz

SENSITIVITY (at 1 kHz)

0.86 mV/cm/sec

CHANNEL BALANCE (at 1 kHz)

± 1/4 dB

VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE

29°

LOW-FREQUENCY RESONANCE (In SME 3009 arm)

vertical 8.4 Hz; 7 1/2-dB rise
lateral 7.6 Hz; 6-dB rise

MAXIMUM TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1.0 gram)

at 300 Hz +18 dB
at 1 kHz +12 dB

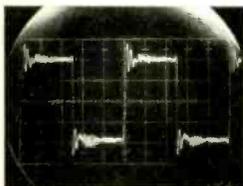
WEIGHT (used, as recommended by manufacturer,
without stylus guard)

4.33 grams

TIP DIMENSIONS

tip radii 5.21 by 10.42 micrometers
scanning radii 8.33 & 7.92 micrometers

SQUARE WAVE RESPONSE



Using records suitable for testing the deep-bass mettle of the N, we found it capable of solid, sonorous reproduction of frequencies approaching 45 Hz—beyond the range of most minis, certainly, but not necessarily a big improvement with most full-range, floor-standing loudspeakers. If you have minis, be warned: The Ohm N can be addictive. The more your main speakers can profit from the added underpinning, the faster they will seem inadequate without it, however satisfactory they were before. Perhaps the subwoofer should be available by prescription only.

Circle 134 on Page 105

Empire EDR-9 fixed-coil phono cartridge with L.A.C. (Large Area Contact) diamond stylus. Price: \$200. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Empire Scientific Corp., 1055 Stewart Ave., Garden City, N.Y. 11530.

Considering the vagaries of taste and hearing, compounded by the difficulties a cartridge presents in objective lab tests, it is to Empire's credit that its new top-of-the-line pickup emerged impressive on all counts. A fixed-coil design, the EDR-9 is the most costly cartridge ever produced by Empire and incorporates some new design principles.

Many of today's fixed-coil cartridges control high-frequency mechanical resonance by relying on the capacitance of the phono preamp to create what might be thought of as an electrical antiresonance and thus work best only within a circumscribed range of loading conditions. Empire's approach is to insert a miniature iron bar within the hollow cantilever tube. The bar moves only in a specific range of frequencies and acts as an inertial damper, filtering out high-frequency peaks. Since this arrangement does not depend on preamp capacitance, the company claims that the EDR-9 can operate into a wide range of loads without audible ill effects. Data from CBS Technology Center, using the STR-170 and loading the pickup with 100 picofarads (a common value of turntable-lead capacitance), show some peaking around 10 kHz. In listening tests, however, we noticed a pronounced smoothing of the sometimes sibilant character of other top-quality pickups. And overall frequency response of the pickup is extremely flat.

Another departure in this cartridge is the configuration of its stylus tip, which resembles the Shibata: Its contact area is spread up and down the groove walls, with a much smaller dimension front to back. CBS's inspection indicates fair polish and good alignment of the nude-mounted diamond tip. The vertical tracking angle was measured by CBS's new method, of course, and therefore should not be compared with the lower but less accurate figures published prior to last June.

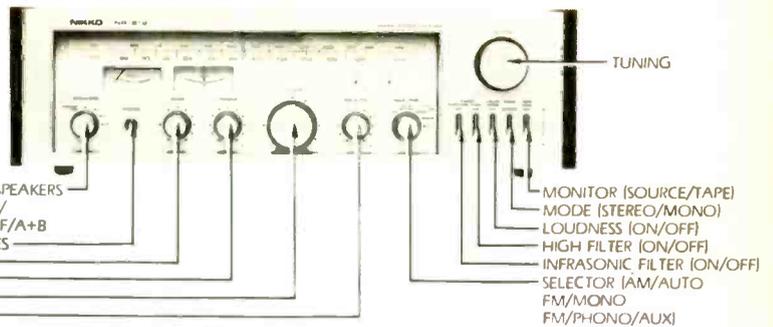
According to CBS, the EDR-9 negotiated the sweep-tone torture test with a minuscule vertical tracking force of 0.55 gram. Using a 1-gram VTF (the mean of Empire's recommended tracking force range), the cartridge maintains good separation and response that cannot be called "peaky," despite the rising high end of the test results and though the ringing visible in the square-wave photo does not appear to be far beyond 20 kHz. Low-frequency resonance falls a hair below the 10-Hz ideal, suggesting that a tonearm somewhat less massive than our standard SME would be a good choice.

In comparison to other cartridges, it took some getting used to in our listening tests, since its distinction lies in not being distinctive. A/B comparisons between it and another fine pickup, for example, show the Empire markedly less disposed to dramatize sibilants and other high-frequency effects. Instrumental timbres come across in all their details, without any artificial emphasis. Voices appear open and full, with just enough presence; bass notes are solid and well defined.

We were even impressed with the packaging: A vinyl lens case snaps open to reveal the cartridge, a screwdriver, mounting hardware, stylus brush, and cleaning liquid. More important, of course, the EDR-9 reproduces music with accuracy and nuance, making it a strong contender for those choosing a high-quality, high-priced phono cartridge.

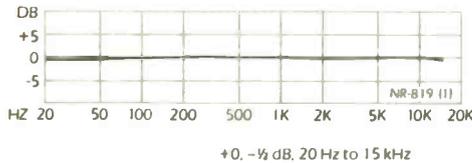
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The Sensible Audiophile's Receiver

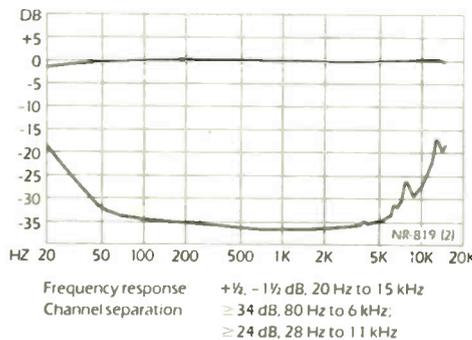


Nikko NR-819 tuner section

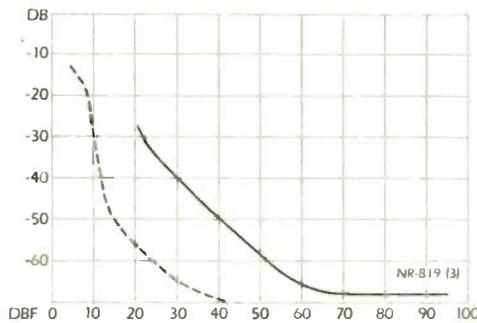
MONO FM FREQUENCY RESPONSE



STEREO FM RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION



FM SENSITIVITY & QUIETING



—	stereo noise (quieting)	
- - -	mono noise (quieting)	
Stereo sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)		
	40½ dBf at 98 MHz, with 0.87% THD+N	
	[39¼ dBf at 90 MHz; 44¼ dBf at 106 MHz]	
Mono sensitivity (for 50-dB noise suppression)		
	15 dBf at 98 MHz	
Muting threshold	25 dBf	
Stereo threshold	25 dBf	
Stereo S/N ratio (65 dBf)	67½ dB	
Mono S/N ratio (at 65 dBf)	71¼ dB	
CAPTURE RATIO	1½ dB	
ALTERNATE-CHANNEL SELECTIVITY	46½ dB	
HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD+N)		
	stereo	mono
at 100 Hz	0.42%	0.26%
at 1 kHz	0.35%	0.20%
at 6 kHz	0.28%	0.27%
STEREO PILOT INTERMODULATION	0.053%	

Nikko NR-819 stereo FM/AM receiver in metal case with wood end panels. Dimensions: 19½ by 6 3/16 inches (front panel), 11½ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlets: 1 switched (100 watts max.), 1 unswitched (200 watts max.). Price: \$369.95. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor; repair-estimate service on nonwarranty repairs. Manufacturer: Nikko Electric, Japan; U.S. distributor: Nikko Electric Corp. of America, 16270 Raymer St., Van Nuys, Ca. 91406.

The American audiophile thinks of Nikko as a high fidelity manufacturer with a reputation for lots of features at a modest price. That reputation has been somewhat obscured in the last few years by Nikko's forays into high-performance separates, but the NR-819 receiver returns to tradition with 45 watts (16½ dBW) per channel and T-Locked tuning.

The last is yet another name for the modern version of automatic frequency control: The receiver senses the frequency of the station it is receiving and aligns itself for (presumably) best reception. As exemplified in this model, the system works well; distortion—the best indicator of proper tuning—is low in both the stereo and mono modes. This is fortunate, since the T-Lock cannot be defeated on the NR-819. As soon as your hand moves away from the tuning knob, T-Lock takes control.

Midband quieting sensitivity is good and proves even better at the low end of the dial; at the upper end, however, sensitivity drops off noticeably both on the DSL bench and in the listening room. The very respectable ultimate (65-dBf) signal-to-noise ratios differ by only 3 dB between the two modes. Calibration of the tuning dial is sufficiently accurate (closer than 0.1 MHz) to allow you to identify the station you're hearing, not all that common an attribute in moderate-priced receivers. Adjacent-channel selectivity is good (5½ dB, measured for stations 200 kHz apart), but the more common alternate-channel measurement (for stations 400 kHz apart) does not compare as favorably with other tuners. In our fairly crowded listening area, however, we find few signs of alternate-channel interference. Capture ratio is about average. At an input of 45 dBf—the standard test level—AM suppression is excellent, but DSL noted that the suppression was less (by 10 or 11 dB) at 35 and 65 dBf. Though the stereo subcarrier is well suppressed, a relatively substantial amount of 19-kHz pilot appears in the output; use of a multiplex filter when taping off the Nikko's FM section would be a hedge against Dolby mistracking. Frequency response is almost as flat in stereo as in mono, channel separation is entirely adequate.

The muting and stereo thresholds are identical, and each exhibits a healthy amount of "hysteresis"—the difference in signal level between the point at which the receiver unmutes (or switches to stereo) and the point at which it mutes (or reverts to mono). The NR-819 does not come out of mute until input reaches 29½ dBf—and mono S/N ratio is better than 64 dB. Once active, however, it stays with the station down to 20½ dBf (for a S/N of about 56 dB). Thus the receiver is unusually free of sonic "flicker" in the presence of a fading signal, including multipath caused by passing airplanes. We consider this an excellent idea; in the listening room, we never experienced instability on fading stations. (In the data, we report the muting and stereo thresholds as the average of the "on" and "off" levels.)

The Nikko NR-819 easily meets its power rating, and the dynamic headroom of 1½ dB suggests a music capability of about 62 watts per channel. As usual, extra power is available with 4-ohm loads. The generally negligible harmonic distortion consists predominantly of the "soft" second-order type with traces of fourth near the band edges. At rated output, the measurements generally fall below an insignificant 0.02%; at 0 dBW (1 watt), they inch past 0.05% only at 20 kHz and remain near 0.01% throughout most of the frequency range. With the tone controls set at their center

IM DISTORTION (mono)	0.16%
AM SUPPRESSION	64½ dB
PILOT (19 kHz) SUPPRESSION	51 dB
SUBCARRIER (38 kHz) SUPPRESSION	74 dB

Nikko NR-819 amplifier section

RATED POWER	16½ dBW (45 watts)/ch.	
OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)		
8-ohm load	17½ dBW (56 watts)/ch.	
4-ohm load	18½ dBW (75 watts)/ch.	
16-ohm load	15½ dBW (35 watts)/ch.	
DYNAMIC HEADROOM	1½ dB	
HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)		
at 16½ dBW (45 watts)	≤ 0.04%	
at 0 dBW (1 watt)	< 0.06%	
FREQUENCY RESPONSE (at 0 dBW)		
	± ½ dB, 17 Hz to 15.8 kHz;	
	+½, -1 dB, 9 Hz to 27 kHz;	
	+½, -3 dB, 4 Hz to 56 kHz	
RIAA EQUALIZATION	+½, -1½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz	
INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW; A-weighting)		
	sensitivity	S/N ratio
phono	0.35 mV	77½ dB
aux	22 mV	79 dB
PHONO OVERLOAD (1-kHz clipping)	165 mV	
PHONO IMPEDANCE	50k ohms; 150 pF	
DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz)	32	
HIGH FILTER	-3 dB at 11 kHz; 6 dB/octave	
INFRASONIC FILTER	-3 dB at 23 Hz; 6 dB/octave	

detents, response droops a bit at both ends of the audio band, but the important frequencies are within a ½-dB tolerance. The fixed-turnover controls themselves shelve at ± 10 dB, with relatively modest boost or cut at the first two positions on either side of center, for somewhat finer resolution than is typical. The LOUDNESS boosts both bass and treble with a 13-dB low-frequency shelf and continually rising highs to about +9 dB at 20 kHz. Beyond the one o'clock position of the volume control—which has forty-one detents—"flat" response is restored.

Phono equalization—which is measured through, and therefore reflects the response of, the amplifier section—is down 1½ dB at 20 Hz. By the time the 5-Hz warp region is reached, the phono preamp offers a 9½-dB rejection. This can be improved further with the infrasonic filter. The high-cut filter affords the same (6 dB per octave) gentle slope and an 11-kHz cutoff frequency, making its effect on both signal and noise minor. The phono preamp combines low residual noise with more than adequate headroom and provides a good load for a fixed-coil cartridge. Tape-output levels are appropriate from all sources, and isolation resistors reduce the probability that a deck may introduce distortion into the main signal path. The tape-output impedance is reasonably low when dubbing from a disc but considerably higher from the tuner, which still should present no problem provided that the interconnecting cables to the recorder are no more than 10 feet long.

All in all, Nikko has balanced performance, features, and price quite nicely in the NR-819. Provision for only one tape deck is quite common in this price range; those with a penchant for dubbing or multiple tape formats can add an outboard deck-switching box at moderate cost. We're impressed that Nikko has forsworn glitter for its own sake and has put the design costs where they belong—into performance and sensible features. Specifically, though there are no output-power meters or flashing LED displays, there are conventional signal-strength and tuning meters and an accurate, useful tuning lock. While we would prefer better low-signal sensitivity from the signal-strength meter (it requires about 30 dBf of antenna input for a visible deflection), it is nonetheless more useful than most of the five-LED indicators now in vogue. The FM mute and stereo threshold are especially stable, and sensitivity is adequate for most areas over most of the band. The reception is notably clean and quiet and quite free of interference. The phono preamp elicits excellent response from the cartridge we used, with a bright, almost bell-like clarity, and is as quiet as one could ask. The Nikko NR-819 is a receiver for sensible audiophiles.

Circle 133 on Page 105

Manufacturers' Comment

We invite rebuttal from those who produce the equipment we review. The comments printed here are culled from those responses.

Euro 7 loudspeaker, July

1979. Your review's comments seem to agree with the design objectives we set for the Euro project. The Euro 7s we submitted for testing were from our preproduction run, and later units have a slightly modified crossover and midrange driver design that removes the dip at about 1,300 Hz indicated on your on-axis curve. We now have stands available for the Euro 5 and 7, which we feel provide floor placement with optimal performance; these VSS-2s, retailing for \$38 per pair, are vertically adjustable.

Chris Hartnack, Product Manager
Visonik of America, Inc.

HF replies: We try to test only production samples and were assured that our Euro 7s came from production stock. The sort of change Mr. Hartnack describes could alter not only frequency response, but distortion figures (for better or worse) and overall tonal balance as well, invalidating the comments in our review.

JBL L-110 loudspeaker, July

1979. The system was designed to be maximally flat looking into a "half space" environment. As a result, we recommend floor placement, slightly out from the walls—or, conversely, slightly off the floor if placed against the wall. These mounting conditions will optimize the low-frequency response in the "boundary-dependent region," as your review's graph calls it.

John Eargle
James B. Lansing Sound, Inc.

Speakerlab Model 30, July

1979. Most speakers are designed for flat on-axis response, which leads to rolloff in the high end of the total-energy (average

omnidirectional) response due to declining dispersion with rising frequency. The S-30s, on the other hand, are designed for flat frequency response at 15 degrees off axis in a typical listening-room (not anechoic) environment. In addition, we have taken great care to make the far-off-axis response as nearly uniform as possible. As your "average" curve shows, this gives approximately uniform omnidirectional response.

The extended high end on the S-30s very quickly demonstrates differences in program material, listening environment, and associated equipment to critical listeners. The switches are provided to allow for these differences. In most situations, the center or lower switch positions [not the "flat" upper settings used in much of HF's listening—Ed.] will be most appropriate. We use the top positions only with the finest driving equipment, in listening rooms arranged for balanced sound reproduction, and with master tapes and the best recordings.

Pat Snyder
Speakerlab

The tonearm that isn't.



The traditional tone arm has been replaced. By Linatrack. A revolutionary tracking system developed by Revox.

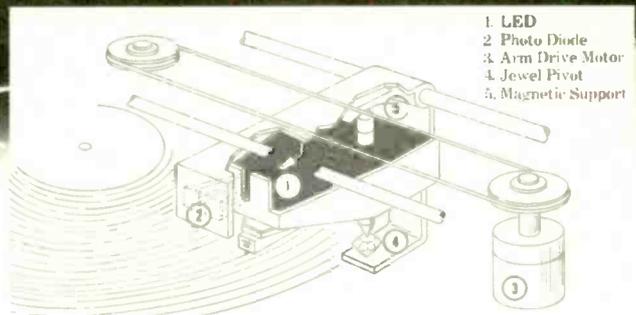
This sophisticated and highly refined electronic servo-system ensures that your records are played just the way they were cut, with perfect tangential tracking.

We've eliminated the causes of distortion inherent in conventional tone arm design. There's no need for an anti-skating device because there is no skating force. Our unique LED/photo diode array monitors the stylus angle and makes instant corrections to keep the tip absolutely perpendicular:

Pivot friction has also been dramatically reduced by our unique single-point jewelled pivot/magnetic support and suspension system.

With Linatrack, tracking error is reduced to a phenomenal 0.5° or less, virtually eliminating distortion and protecting your records from excessive wear:

The high torque direct drive motor of the Revox B790 uses Hall-Effect magnetic sensors tied to a quartz crys-



tal to constantly read and instantly correct rotational speed. This eliminates the moment-to-moment deviations found on even the most expensive conventional direct drive motors. You can verify speed accuracy with the fast responding LED digital readouts. The readouts also provide an accurate log of manual speed adjustments.

Even with its advanced features, the Revox B790 is a pleasure to operate with safe and convenient automation. It works with virtually every cartridge and is ruggedly built to stand up to years of daily operation.

For more good reasons to play your records without a tone arm, experience the B790 at your Revox dealer today.

REVOX

Studer Revox America, Inc., 1819 Broadway, Nashville, TN 37203 615 329-9576 / In Canada: Studer Revox Canada, Ltd.

HIFI-CROSTIC No. 47

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 Output, reading down.

The answer to HiFi-Crostic No. 47 will appear in next month's issue of HIGH FIDELITY.

M1	U2	C3	T4	N5		J6	K7	L8	E9	S10	U11	D12	B13		T14
P15	U16	Q17		W18	K19		N20	L21	H22	V23	J24	M25	A26		L27
	T28	K29	F30	B31	J32	U33	E34	I35	L36	V37		W38	G39	S40	P41
T42	Q43	L44	K45		M46	C47	U48	W49	B50		R51	I52		D53	L54
J55		F56	M57	W58	E59	U60		L61	T62	A63	G64	S65		K66	W67
Q68	N69	J70	B71		P72	E73	L74	D75		I76	T77	U78		A79	J80
B81	N82	R83		L84	H85		J86	W87	U88		Q89	M90	K91	C92	
P93	L94	V95		U96	T97	E98	D99	H100		J101	M102		L103	B104	W105
K106		T107	S108	Q109	P110		D111	H112		B113	L114	V115	P116	E117	U118
	M119	C120	Q121	J122	N123	T124		O125	F126	K127	U128	W129	T130		L131
K132	S133		U134		P135	E136	R137		T138	W139	L140		K141	O142	B143
J144		L145	V146	S147	Q148	T149		N150	C151		G152	E153	O154	U155	B156
K157	M158	T159	I160		W161	J162	M163		N164	T165	L166	S167	U168		G169
U170	T171	H172	S173		K174	A175		F176	U177		D178	P179	T180		D181
O182	N183	B184	J185		C186	B187	S188	L189	T190	U191	O192	F193		W194	K195
R196		O197	D198	E199	P200	L201		K202	V203	T204		J205	S206	E207	U208
A209	B210	K211	L212	M213	Q214			B215	V216	T217	P218	F219	J220	U221	N222
E223	V224	S225	P226	U227											

INPUT

- A. A kind of dew
- B. Instrumental piece to be played in church (2 wds.)
- C. With Word N., 48 piano pieces by Mendelssohn (Ger.)
- D. With Word V., Wolf-Ferrari opera (2 lt. wds.)
- E. Latin-American bandleader: "The Rumba Is My Life" (full name)
- F. After "The," Menotti opera
- G. Facilitate
- H. _____ Lamare, jazz guitarist/singer
- I. Skillful
- J. Tchaikovsky overture (2 wds.)
- K. Blues guitarist/singer, with about 200 recordings (full professional name)
- L. Weinberger folk opera (3 wds.)
- M. Budget record label (3 wds.)
- N. See Word C. (2 Ger. wds.)
- O. With it (colloq.)
- P. English composer (b. 1935): "Scenes and Arias" on Argo (full name)
- Q. German composer (1891-1947): "Der Natur"
- R. "_____ and Psyche," opera by Rozycki
- S. Jazz saxophonist/composer; has many old records on Capitol (first and last names)
- T. Falla ballet (wd., comp., wd.)
- U. German composer (1854-1921); pop singer
- V. See Word D.
- W. Round dance similar to a slow polka

OUTPUT

79	175	63	26	209											
184	113	104	215	50	143	187	31	81	71	13	210	156			
120	47	151	92	3	186										
12	181	111	99	53	178	75	198								
153	136	73	59	207	34	117	199	98	223	9					
176	126	193	219	30	56										
152	39	169	64												
100	22	172	112	85											
160	35	52	76												
205	24	220	162	86	122	32	185	101	70	144	80	6	55		
127	141	45	211	174	91	7	132	195	29	202	106	157	19	66	
36	8	54	145	189	44	201	27	140	94	21	84	131	166	61	212 103 74 114
46	90	213	163	1	57	119	158	102	25						
164	150	5	183	20	82	123	222	69							
125	192	154													
116	226	41	179	72	200	218	93	110	15	135					
148	182	142	89	43	214	197	17	121	109	68					
196	83	51	137												
40	108	10	188	167	173	133	225	206	147	65					
124	42	180	107	77	165	97	149	14	171	217	138	159	190	4	130 28 62 204
118	168	48	177	155	96	88	208	170	221	2	16	128	78	11	33 134 227 60 191
23	203	37	216	95	224	146	115								
58	38	87	139	161	67	18	194	105	49	129					

Solution to last month's HiFi-Crostic appears on page 4.

Perfection for the Professional

Drawing upon their unequalled 30 year leadership in magnetic recording technology, Tandberg's TD 20A open reel tape recorder extends their traditionally superior level of performance to even further limits—to even beyond the present capabilities of today's magnetic recording tape! This is due to Tandberg's exclusive ACTILINEAR Recording System, which not only provides up to 20 dB headroom margin over existing tape, but is specifically designed to be used with the new high coercivity tapes that will appear in the market in the near future—including the soon-to-be-available metal particle tapes. No other quality open reel tape recorder can make this obsolescent-proof claim today.

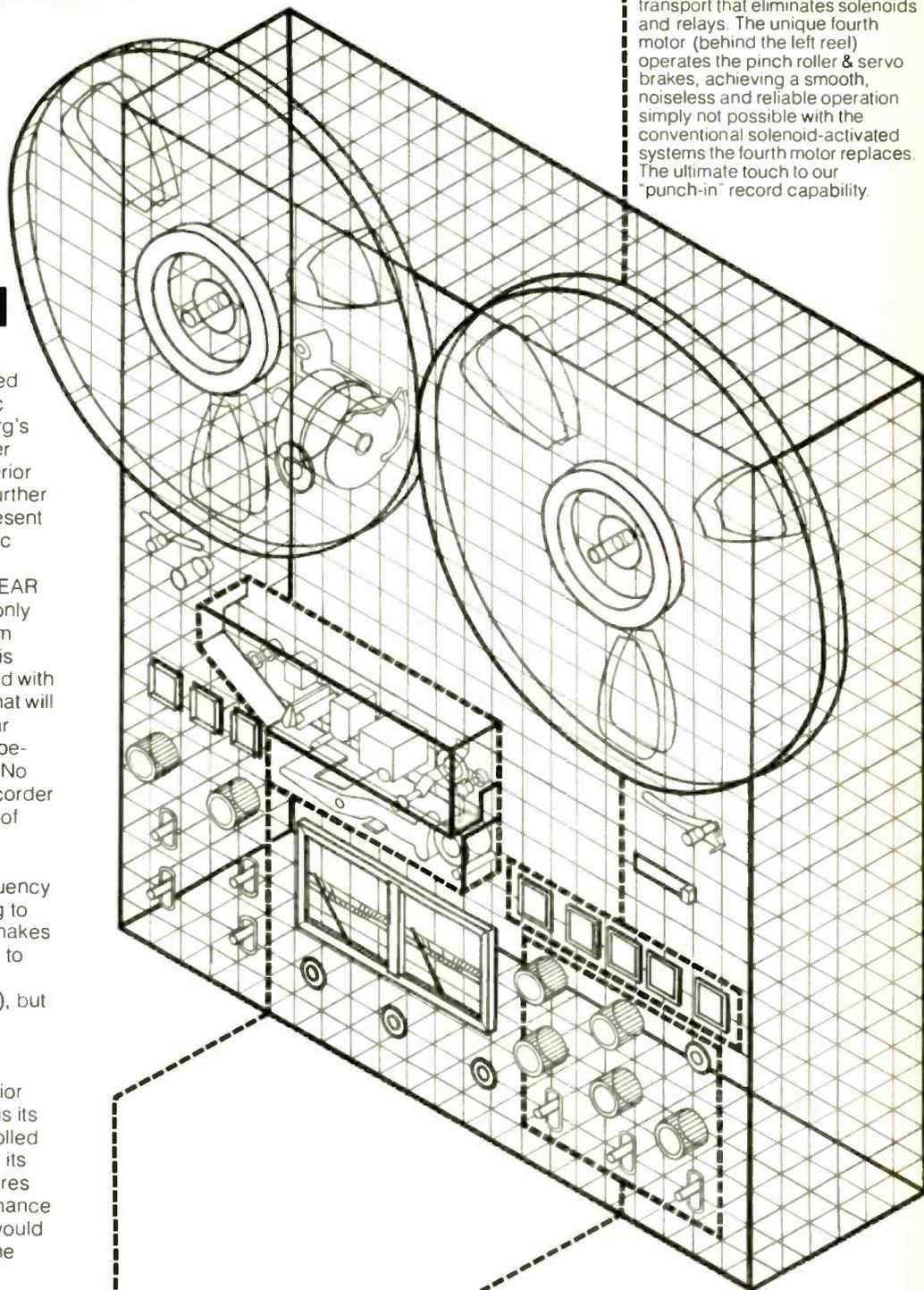
The ACTILINEAR Recording System's extremely linear frequency response ("ruler flat" according to some test reviewers) not only makes the TD 20A essentially immune to slew-rate limiting and transient intermodulation distortion (TIM), but also means better transient response and lower distortion overall.

Adding to the TD 20A's superior level of quality & performance is its unique PROM computer-controlled four-motor transport, as well as its many standard operating features that permit a degree of performance and control flexibility that you would expect only from Tandberg—the world leader in tape recorders.

Visit your authorized Tandberg dealer for a demonstration of the TD 20A. Check our *guaranteed minimum specifications* and rate them against any other manufacturer. Combined with the unsurpassed ease of operation & control, the TD 20A is probably more tape deck than you actually need. Isn't it the way things should be?

For your nearest dealer write:
Tandberg of America, Inc.
Labriola Court
Armonk, N.Y. 10504

TANDBERG 



Tandberg's exclusive PROM computer-controlled four-motor transport that eliminates solenoids and relays. The unique fourth motor (behind the left reel) operates the pinch roller & servo brakes, achieving a smooth, noiseless and reliable operation simply not possible with the conventional solenoid-activated systems the fourth motor replaces. The ultimate touch to our "punch-in" record capability.

Tandberg's unique ACTILINEAR Recording System, offering up to 20 dB headroom margin over existing tape. And easily adjustable for use with the new high coercivity tapes to come, so your TD 20A is obsolescent-proof!

Still more features: Four line input mixer + Master gain control with pre-set, Self adjusting input amplifier, Front-panel bias adjustment, Mic sensitivity switch, Channel Sync & Sound-on-Sound, "Free" mode & Edit/Cue facilities, Infrared-controlled motion sensing device, Professional scrape-flutter filter, Separate power supplies for operational functions & audio functions, and Peak-reading equalized meters that have been graphically redesigned for easier reading.

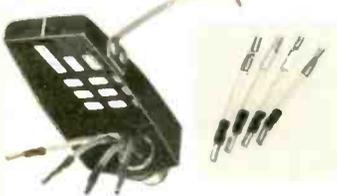


Optional PCM infrared wireless remote control for an ease of operation that doesn't tie you down to the length of a cable. Plus automatic start & stop via a timer switch (optional).

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

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

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



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



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

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



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



audio-technica

INNOVATION □ PRECISION □ INTEGRITY
AUDIO-TECHNICA U.S., INC.
Dept. 109-H, 33 Shiloh Avenue
Fairlawn, Ohio 44313
In Canada: Superior Electronics, Inc.

Circle 5 on Page 105



HF's New Format

There is no question in my mind but that your new format is beautiful indeed. The print is easier to read; the additional space between the lines makes it look better. The pictures, illustrations, and overall look of the magazine are extremely attractive.

But it appears that you have decided on a radical change in emphasis. It appears that the popular will dominate the serious, and this is, I believe, an error. I hope that you have not decided to end your interest in the serious music lover and trust that you will achieve a proper balance.

Alan D. Aberback, President
Western Canadian Opera Society
Vancouver, B.C.

The hedonism of the culture of rock and disco, recently dubbed the "me" culture, has swept America. In the record business, one major producer and importer after another has placed more emphasis on rock and disco LPs and tapes at the expense of classical music products. So it is no surprise that HF has moved where the money is, although it is a sad day for subscribers who counted on a different emphasis.

Frederick S. Lightfoot
Greenport, N.Y.

After the July issue, few readers seriously interested in music will continue to subscribe. Many of us spend a lot of money on records and equipment, but clearly that market no longer matters to you. BACKBEAT is now up front. The old HF has died. The worst has happened.

Ronald Sillman
Birmingham, Mich.

The most valuable part of HF, its high-quality reviews of serious music, has been shoved to the back and printed in small type. It is unfortunate that you have decided to abandon your fine traditions, but at least I need no longer worry about supporting your efforts.

John Pfordresher
Falls Church, Va.

In spite of your rapturous self-congratulations, I remain unmoved. What I see is not better, only slightly different. You have made the classic mistake of confusing change with progress. Furthermore, in the minor reshuffling of your format, you have

Coming in November

Ambience Synthesis:
A Symposium
*Six experts debate a
little-understood
audio phenomenon*

Video Recording—
State of the Art
*Tape's competing formats, the
promise of discs, the impact on
audio—a comprehensive wrapup*

Video Software:
Caveat Emptor
How to avoid the ripoffs

A Tribute to Walter Legge
*John Culshaw on the career of an
illustrious fellow producer*

In Backbeat:
Pop's Talent Headhunters
*Sam Sutherland penetrates the
mystique of the u&r man*

actually denigrated the quality of your magazine.

Richard Kent
Suffern, N.Y.

Why do you pretend to be merely making a few graphic improvements when you are actually changing the whole thrust of the magazine? Why do you lack the courage to tell the readers that your pursuit of profits obliges you to favor the pop and rock audiences over the classical audience?

Terrence W. Faulkner
Rochester, N.Y.

Now that the classical music section

**Super-Dome™
high
performance
tweeter
to match
a high
performance
speaker
system.**

Massive 1.6-lb. magnetic structure provides quick response to short-duration signals and contributes to high efficiency, 2 to 4 times that of conventional dome radiators.

Lightweight aluminum voice coil on large 1½" high-temperature polyimide form dissipates high input power.

High-density Acoustifoam™ lens for the wide dispersion associated with smaller, low-output dome radiators.

Foam damper smoothes response in the upper octave.

Two layers of phenolic-impregnated linen, bonded together with wave patterns intersecting at 45°, produce a dome of high stiffness, dimensional stability, and strength.

Ferro fluid held magnetically in the voice-coil gap damps coil motion for smooth response in the lower octaves.

The Super-Dome™ tweeter in the new generation of Interface speakers represents an extraordinary development in speaker design. Electro-Voice engineers have developed the first high-performance tweeter capable of matching the high efficiency and extended bass response found in our optimally vented, computer designed Interface:A. Super-Dome has the sonic excellence normally associated with a dome tweeter and the efficiency heretofore found only in cone tweeters — two to four times that found in a standard dome. Plus, its voice coil will withstand a full 25 watts power input long term. That's *five times* the power handling capacity of other standard dome or cone tweeters.

While the angle of dispersion narrows at high frequencies with conventional tweeters, the high-density Acoustifoam™ lens in Super-Dome helps keep dispersion constant in the upper octaves. Acoustically transparent at lower tweeter frequencies, the lens becomes opaque at higher frequencies, reducing the effective diameter of the radiating surface, thus increasing the angle of dispersion.

The result is the wide, uniform high-frequency dispersion necessary for precise localization of sound, both lateral and front-to-back.

Super-Dome is found in six of seven speakers in the new third-generation Interface line. No matter which model you decide to buy, you are assured of outstanding performance and model-to-model sonic integrity. Our goal remains the same as it was in 1973 when we introduced the first Interface speaker — to offer you a speaker that sounds like music.

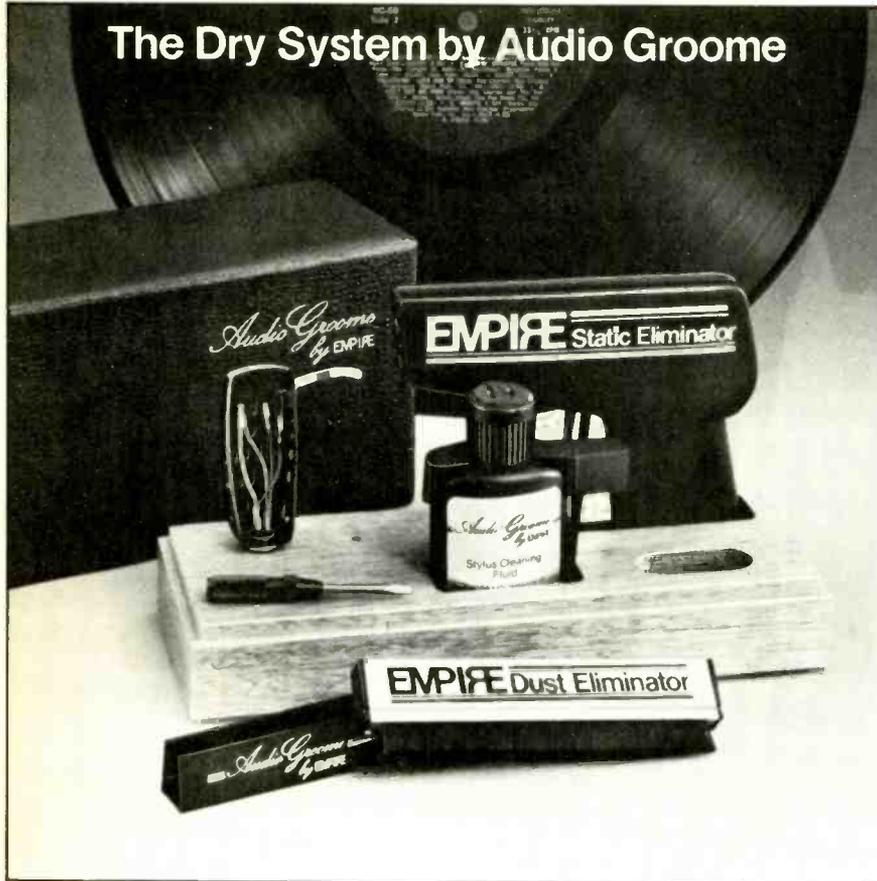


Interface:A Series III

EV **Electro-Voice®**
a gulton company
600 Cecil Street, Buchanan, Michigan 49107

Interface®

The Dry System by Audio Groome



For complete information on Audio Groome accessories write to:
Empire Scientific Corp., Dept. AG, Garden City, NY 11530.

EMPIRE EMPIRE

Audio Groome by EMPIRE

HIGH FIDELITY

Record care that leaves behind clean sound, not chemicals.

Housed in a solid mahogany base with removable leatherette cover, the Dry System is a combination of Audio Groome products designed to prolong the life of your record collection. The position of each item within the package has been carefully considered so that when placed next to your turntable, the most frequently used are the most accessible.

1. Empire Static Eliminator: Millions of positive and negative ions are released to effectively neutralize the entire surface of the record. It stops dust before it starts.
2. Empire Dust Eliminator: Microbristles reach deep down into record grooves to lift dirt out with thousands of electrically conductive carbon fibres which neutralize the static charges that attract dust.
3. Empire Stylus Cleaning Kit: Built-up dirt on the stylus can disfigure the record grooves and ruin the stylus. Our special formula fluid and brush keeps your stylus free of dirt, helping to prolong record life.
4. Empire Universal Headshell: Many of today's audiophiles use more than one phono cartridge. This additional lightweight aluminum shell allows switching cartridges without constant remounting.
5. Empire Audiophile Screwdriver: The perfect tool for minor adjustments.

has been moved to the back of the book, why not call it BACKBURNER?

Phil Shapiro
Los Angeles, Calif.

Sorry to take issue with your paean of self-praise about your new graphic format, but to me what you have come up with is visual disco, and it gives me a headache.

John Temple
Scituate, Mass.

... Drab, confusing, and hard on the eyes.

Lawrence B. Porter
Nashville, Tenn.

Being in a related business (principal of a design firm in New York), I am pleased to see your publication take an interest in its visual appearance. Sarina Bromberg should be proud of a job well done.

Herbert M. Meyers
New Rochelle, N.Y.

The graphics have a cold, impersonal look to them. Comparing your old

format to the new one is like comparing Mozart to Stravinsky (on an off day). The great areas of white space and the new type seem to me like trying to follow an ant in a blizzard.

Allan Fetherolf
Springfield, Ohio

I think you have just taken a giant step backwards! The one positive item is that the increased spacing of the print in the classical reviews makes reading easier.

David Adler
Clark, N.J.

My reactions are favorable—the layout is more attractive and readable than before. The editorial content seems more extensive and even better written than in past issues.

Thomas J. Hughel
Royal Oak, Mich.

To these eyes, at least, this new creation has been designed to be looked at but not read. The dividing line between advertisements and editorial matter is now so

hopelessly muddled that the poor reader has no idea what's being sold and what's not. And to add insult to injury for veteran readers like me, the important sections of the magazine have been consigned to the editorial boondocks.

Michael H. Gray, Music Librarian
Voice of America
Washington, D.C.

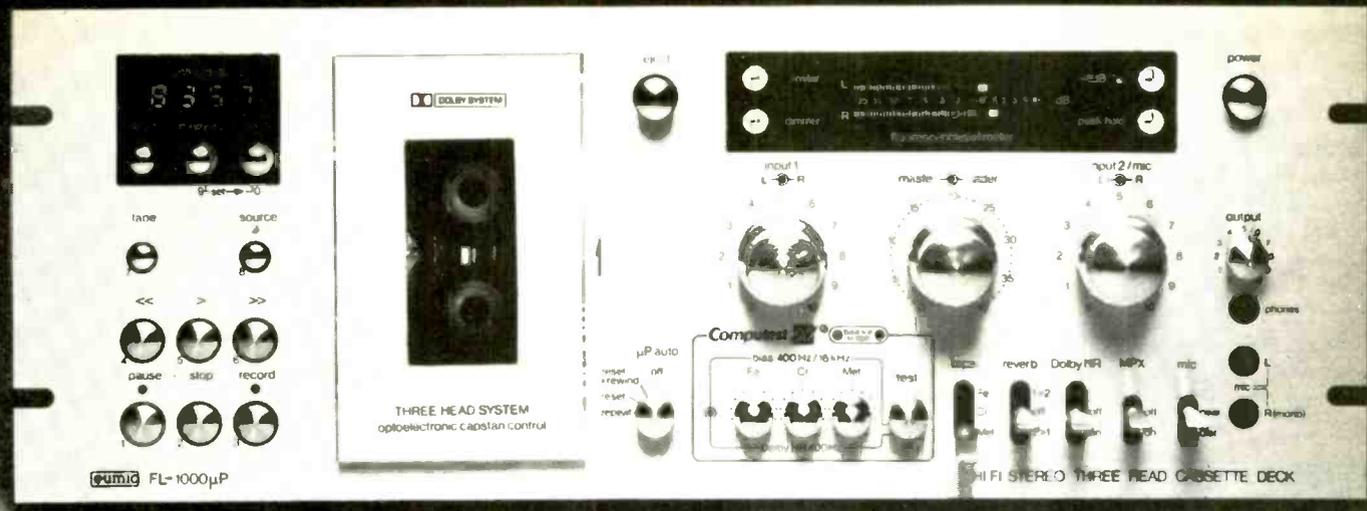
I haven't even finished reading your July issue, and I already love it! I did read the two new columns and the editorial and enjoyed all three, especially Stephen Holden's "Pop-Pourri"—I'm a longtime subscriber to *Rolling Stone*.

Lee Smith
Albuquerque, N.M.

You are to be congratulated for your fine effort to bring a new face to your magazine. The refreshing style makes it an even greater pleasure to receive HF every month. May your efforts be matched by your growth as a result of the new style.

Edward T. Dwyer
Manahawkin, N.J.

Continued on page 54



Calling the FL-1000 a cassette deck is like calling a Ferrari transportation.

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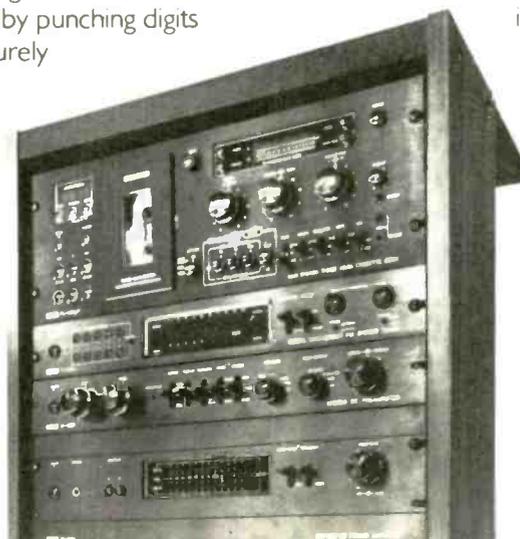
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If you want to understand and appreciate a fine car, a test drive is best. It's much the same with the FL-1000; so visit your Eumig dealer to audition the FL-1000 and the companion tuner, preamp and power amp. To set the right mood, make the trip in a Ferrari.



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Circle 16 on Page 105

The editorial director comments: Those who wrote in response to my invitation in the July issue, whether to cheer or deplore our new format, had many things on their minds. But, as the selection here suggests, two chief themes emerge from the welter of varied reactions.

The first is the assumption that HIGH FIDELITY is jettisoning classical music at the behest of the hip and buck-proud purveyors of pop. The springboard to this conclusion was principally BACKBEAT's unaccus-

tomed position forward of the feature articles and classical review section. Some readers even counted pages devoted to pop and to classical music (as if music could be divided into warring factions). None of them, as far as we can tell, came up with an accurate tally. If they had, it might have allayed some suspicions: In the July issue, more than 27 pages were devoted to classical music as against a total of 22 for all of BACKBEAT, music and audio. That balance may be taken as symbolic.

As for BACKBEAT's position in July, readers will already have noticed that in subsequent issues it is again to be found where its appellation implies it should be—whence it shall emerge, if at all, only when the editors deem that its contents merit a disturbance of the magazine's natural order.

The second theme is the graphic change itself—praise or censure for the new, nostalgia or absence of regret for the old. Many of the "cons" seemed inspired by the malaise that inevitably accompanies change; many others contributed significantly to our own evaluation of our undertaking and our subsequent—and continuing—refinement of it. Some readers complained about type size, in particular that used in the feature and classical review sections, "The Tape Deck," and "Letters." (For those interested in such things, 8-point is the size both of the face previously used in these sections and of the one adopted in July, but the latter's "x-size character"—the index of a face's basic body size—is slightly smaller.) With this issue we are enlarging the size in these sections so that it is exactly equivalent to the former face.

On behalf of all of the staff, thanks to everyone who wrote, both pro and con—and please let us hear from you again in the months ahead. Your response demonstrates to us that HIGH FIDELITY's readers, however dissimilar in convictions, interests, and tastes, are vitally concerned about the magazine.

Cavpag Madman: Panned . . .

I used to look forward to Conrad L. Osborne's reviews, but with his "Diary of a Cavpag Madman" [June] your magazine has hit an all-time low. The cutesy-poo tone is nauseating, and some of the remarks about various performers go beyond legitimate criticism to out-and-out abuse. The article isn't even well written—and I never expected to have to say *that* about a C.L.O. piece! There are valid insights, but I wonder how many readers are going to wade through all that verbal mud to get to them. Please let this surreal experiment be the last of its kind.

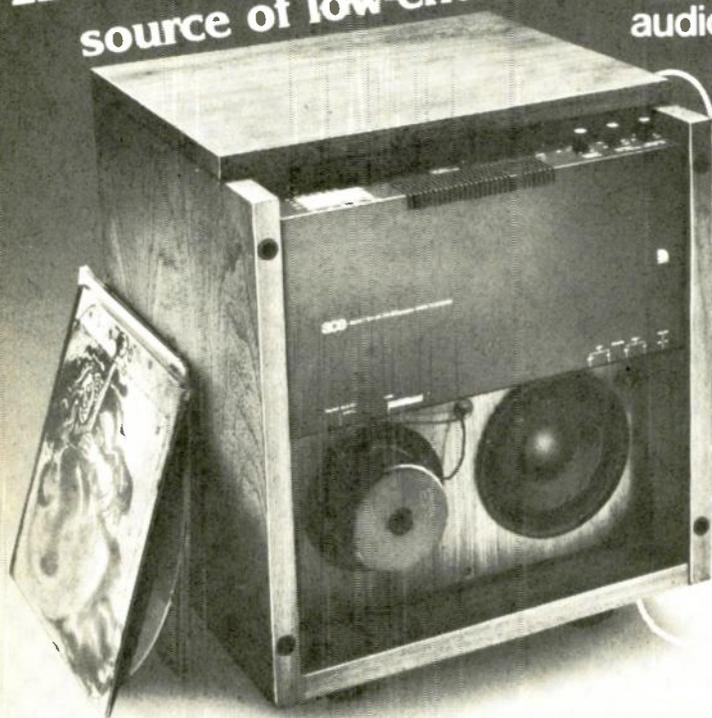
Brad Deamer
Buffalo, N.Y.

As a writer of reviews, I can well understand Conrad L. Osborne's urge to go bananas every so often when faced with writing a review about a recording he is supposed to like by a supposedly likable tenor, when he doesn't like it or him at all. But I cannot understand your decision to publish such a piece. Mr. Osborne should

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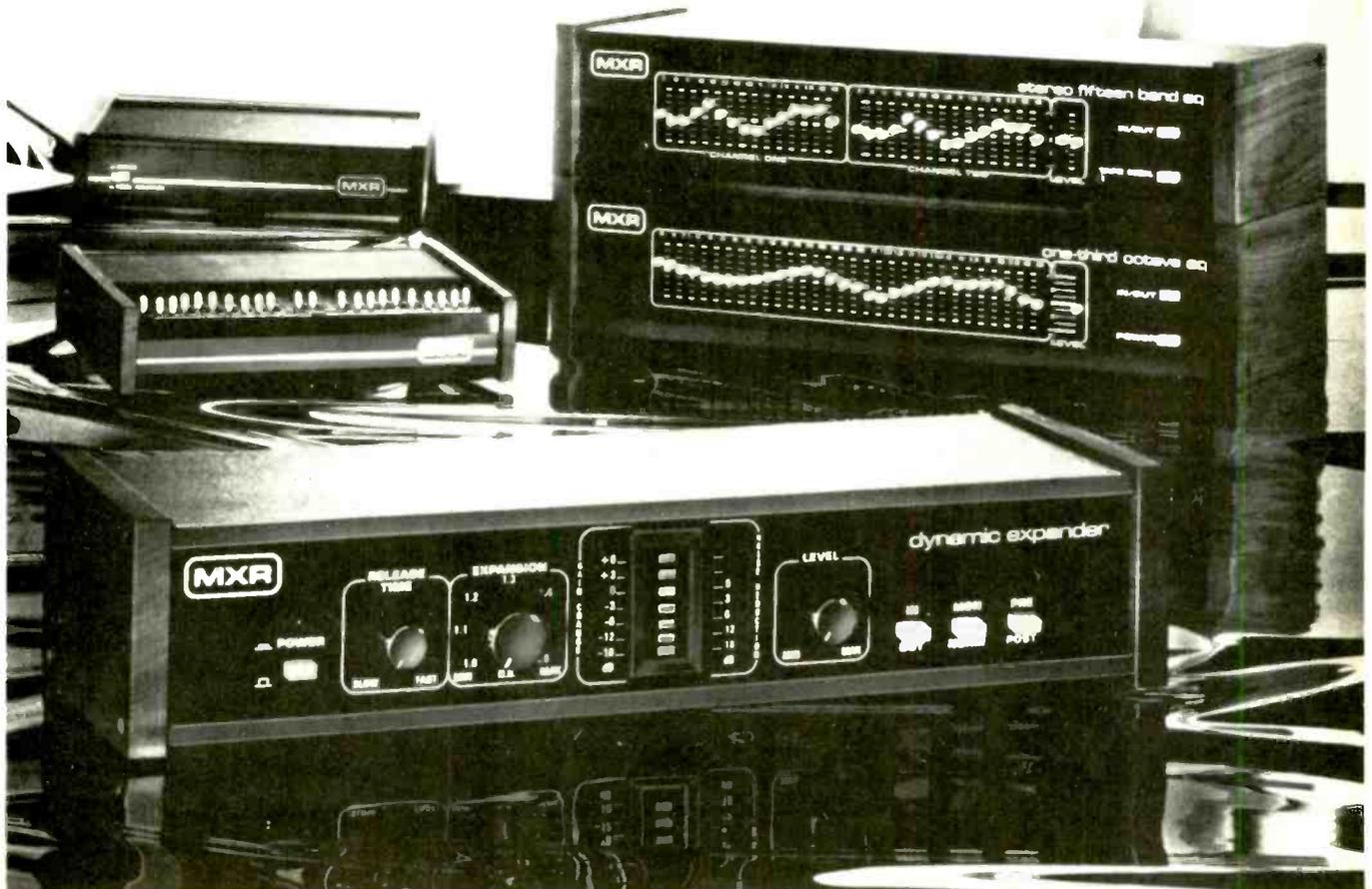
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Circle 27 on Page 105

56

have written his "diary," circulated it among a few close friends, gotten stoned, awakened the next day, and written a normal, succinct review. I hope he feels better.

Art Jones
Virginian Pilot & Ledger-Star
Norfolk, Va.

... and Praised
"Diary of a Cavpag Madman" is the wittiest, best-written, and most sharply perceptive article to grace the pages of HIGH FIDELITY in many moons. Mr. Osborne demonstrates what unfortunately eludes all too many of his brothers-in-trade: that the sheer ability to write well is at least as important as any other ingredient in the making of a top-notch critic.

Mark E. Landon
Newark, Calif.

What a pity it is that space and funds do not permit (nor reader taste require) every music reviewer to provide, at regular intervals, an apologia such as that by Conrad L. Osborne. It is important, for posterity's sake, that someone say in print that today's hybrid, magic-of-the-studio performances do not preserve the experience of live opera in the latter half of the twentieth century. We (general and reviewing audiences alike) have taken the bait and acquired a rarefied taste that permits us to be content with good recordings rather than great music.

John A. Bridges
Nashville, Tenn.

Glazunov and Smetana
I was captivated by R. D. Darrell's review of recordings of Smetana's *Má Vlast* [July]. I too prefer idiomatic performances of the entire cycle of tone poems and agree that the Czechs seem to do it best. However, I am mystified that he failed to mention the stereo recording of the cycle by Karel Ančerl and the Czech Philharmonic available on Supraphon 50521/2.

Ančerl draws from the orchestra the verve, spirit, and sense of national pride that make *Má Vlast* live and breathe. The recording itself boasts quiet surfaces, beautiful packaging, and clean sound. However, the sound is dated, and, frustratingly, there are no liner notes.

Larry Garrison
Pine Bluff, Ark.

I object to R. D. Darrell's idiotic review of the new Angel recording of Glazunov's *Seasons* [July]. There are as many "sophisticated youngsters" as there are "nostalgic oldsters" who enjoy this and other works of the eminent Russian composer. Why did Darrell have to arrive "willy-nilly" at the conclusion that Glazu-

HIGH FIDELITY

nov was a fine orchestrator? This is a fact that has always been acknowledged. His music, furthermore, is not as old-fashioned as a daguerreotype. Gad, I thought we were past such backbiting.

Edward Westermann
Lincoln, Ill.

Mr. Darrell replies: The best reply I can make to Mr. Westermann is to quote Ralph Waldo Emerson: "The only sin which we never forgive in each other is difference of opinion." I cannot argue with Mr. Garrison's evaluation of the Ančerl recording of *Má Vlast*. Regrettably, I did not have it available at the time I was writing the review.

Performance Practice

I was suspicious that some sort of plot was afoot when I read Paul Henry Lang's remarks on countertenors in April, followed in July by his assault on all the early-music people in "Rigor Antiquarii: The Great 'Performance-Practice' Muddle." My suspicions were confirmed when, also in the July issue, I came upon Harris Goldsmith's hearty affirmation of Bach on the piano, changed harmonies and all. (But what a purist Mr. Goldsmith becomes when reviewing Beethoven, complaining about Busoni's "tasteless" cadenzas [in the Fourth Concerto] and a "corrupt text," with its "wrong bass note" [for the *Lebewohl* Sonata].)

Not that I object to these opinions being expressed, nor do I even necessarily disagree with them. But in fairness to the opposition, I suggest that HIGH FIDELITY make amends. First, commission Gustav Leonhardt to arrange all the Beethoven piano sonatas for the harpsichord and record them. Second, lock Mr. Goldsmith up with his piano and a tape recorder while he records the twenty-seven *Ordres* of François Couperin from a corrupt text with no table of ornaments. Finally, send all the tapes to Paul Henry Lang for review.

Richard Crandall
San Francisco, Calif.

HIGH FIDELITY welcomes correspondence from its readers that falls within the scope of our coverage—music, recordings, audio componentry, and aspects of the general cultural milieu that relate to these. Letters may be edited in order to sharpen their sense and style and to pare their length, and we suggest therefore that correspondents confine themselves to 400 words. Please keep 'em comin' to the Editor, High Fidelity Magazine, The Publishing House, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230.

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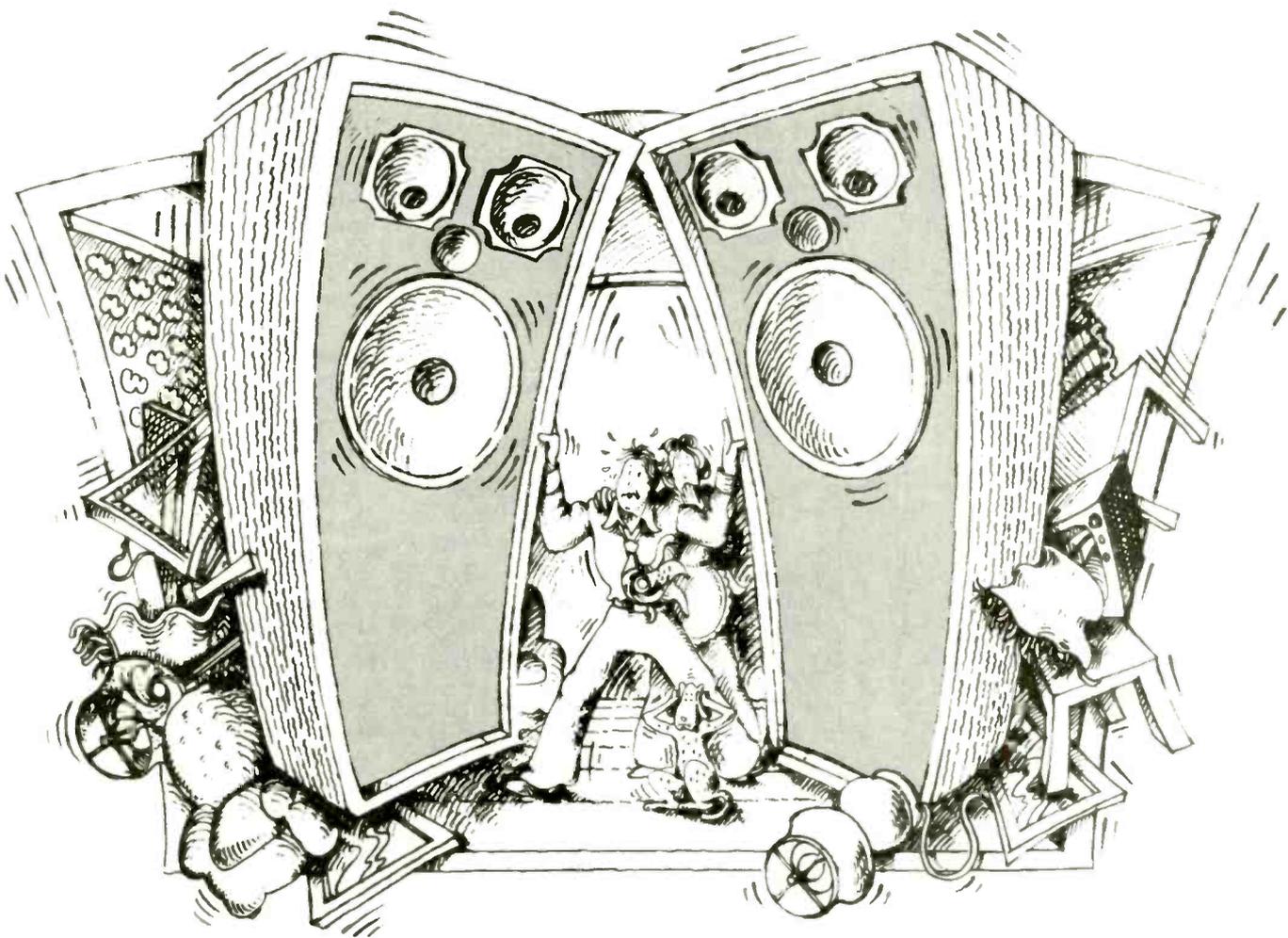
Recent Record Releases

The following listings are excerpts from the "New Listings" sections of the August Schwann Record and Tape Guide. Some listings contain a cross-reference (*) to other works on the recording. Letters in brackets refer to language used in vocal music (G, German; E, English, etc.). Cassette editions are indicated by the symbol Δ . Quadriphonic discs are indicated by a Q following the record number.

- ALBENIZ, ISAAC**
Iberia (complete)
 De Larrocha 2-Turn. 34750/51
- BACH, JOHANN SEBASTIAN**
Aria variata alla maniera italiana, S.989
 Tureck (hpsi) † Goldberg 2-Col. M2-35900
Goldberg Variations for Harpsichord, S.988
 Tureck † Aria 2-Col. M2-35900
- BALAKIREV, MILY**
Symphony No. 2 in d (1907-8)
 Rozhdestvensky, Moscow Radio Sym. †
 Glazunov: Cortège Col./Mel. M-35155
- BEETHOVEN, LUDWIG VAN**
Ah, perfido!, Op. 65
 Nilsson, Downes, Royal Op. Orch. [I] †
 Sym. 4 Lon. STS-15394
Symphonies (9)
 No. 4 in Bb, Op. 60
 Monteux, London Sym. † Ah, Perfido!
 Lon. STS-15394
- BISCARDI, CHESTER (1948-)**
Tenzone, for 2 Flutes & Piano
 Dick, Underwood, Weirich † R. Dick; E.
 Lee; Luening CRI S-400
- BITSCH, MARCEL**
Concertino for Bassoon & Piano (1948)
 Polisi, Schmidt † Matthews; Noon; Villa-
 Lobos: Ciranda Crys. S-341
- BRAHMS, JOHANNES**
Choral Works
 Corboz, Gulbenkian Foundation Cho. [G]:
 Rosmarin, Op. 62/1; Waldesnacht, Op.
 62/3; Dein Herzlein mild, Op. 62/4;
 Vergangen ist mir Glück und Heil, Op.
 62/7; Der bucklichte Fiedler, Op. 93a/1;
 O süßer Mai, Op. 93a/3; beherzigung,
 Op. 93a/6; In stiller Nacht; Abschieds-
 lied; Im herbst, Op. 104/5 † Marienlied-
 er; Motets RCA ARL1-3350
Marienlieder, for Chorus a cappella, Op. 22
 Corboz, Gulbenkian Foundation Cho. [G]
 † Choral; Motets RCA ARL1-3350
Motets, for Chorus a cappella, Op. 29, 74,
 110
 Corboz, Gulbenkian Foundation Cho.
 (Op. 74, No. 1) [G] † Choral; Marien-
 lieder RCA ARL1-3350
- COPLAND, AARON**
Symphony No. 3
 Copland, Phil. Orch. Col. M-35113
- DEBUSSY, CLAUDE**
**Danses sacrée et profane, for Harp & Or-
 chestra**
 Johnson & Kozikova (2 harpe) † Ravel:
 Intro.; Roussel: Impromptu; Saint-Saëns:
 Morceau, Op. 154 Desmar 1018G
- DONIZETTI, GAETANO**
Lucrezia Borgia
 Sutherland, Horne, Aragall, Wixell, Bo-
 nyng, Nat'l Phil. [I]
 Lon. 13129; /5-13129
- ELGAR, EDWARD**
Sonata for Violin & Piano, Op. 82
 S. & J. Weiss † Walton: Vn Son. Uni. 72027
- GABRIELI, ANDREA**
Sacred Works
 Rose, Magdalen Coll. Cho. [L]: Sancta et
 immaculata; Laudate Dominum; Heu
 mihi; Ave Regina (& Ricercar ariosi II,
 IV; Bassano: Ave Regina) † G. Gabrieli
 Argo ZRG-857
- GABRIELI, GIOVANNI**
Motets
 Rose, Magdalen Coll. Cho. [L]: Hodie
 Christus; Plaudite; Ego sum; Virtute
 magnam; Diligam te; Jubilemus † A.
 Gabrieli Argo ZRG-857
- GLAZUNOV, ALEXANDER**
Cortège solennel, Op. 91
 Rozhdestvensky, Moscow Radio Sym. †
 Balakirev Col./Mel. M-35155
- HAYDN,, (FRANZ) JOSEPH**
Concerto in Eb for Trumpet & Orchestra
 Longinotti, Ansermet, Suisse Romande †
 Mozart: Fl Con. 2; Schumann: Adagio
 Lon. STS-15373
- Flute-Clock Music**
 Guest, St. Martin's Acad. † Masses 5, 6
 Argo ZRG-867; /867
- Mass No. 5 in Bb, "Little Organ"**
 Smith, Watts, Tear, Luxon, Guest, St.
 Martin's Acad., St. John's Coll. Cho. [L]
 † Flute-Clock; Mass 6
 Argo ZRG-867; /867
- Mass No. 6 in C, "Missa Cellensis"**
 Smith, Watts, Tear, Luxon, Guest, St.
 Martin's Acad., St. John's Coll. Cho. [L]
 † Flute-Clock; Mass 5
 Argo ZRG-867; /867
- Quartets (Divertimenti) for Flute & Strings,**
 Op. 5
 Rampal, Trio a Cordes Français
 Sera. S-60327
- Quartets (6), Op. 20**
 Juilliard Qr 3-Col. M3-34593
- Symphony No. 73 in D, "Hunt"**
 Dorati, Hungarica Phil. † Sym. 74
 Lon. STS-15445
- Symphony No. 74 in Eb**
 Dorati, Hungarica Phil. † Sym. 73
 Lon. STS-15445
- Trios (125) for Baryton, Viola & Cello**
 Esterhazy Baryton Trio (Nos. 37, 48, 70,
 71, 85, 96, 97, 109, 113, 117, 121)
 2-Sera. S-6116(Q)
- HRABOVSKY, LEONID (1935-)**
Trio for Violin, Contrabass & Piano (1964;
 rev. 1975)
 Gratovich, Turetzky, Baley; Kosenko;
 Lyatoshinsky; Stankovych Orion 79331
- KOSENKO, VICTOR (1895-1938)**
Two Pieces for Violin & Piano, Op. 4
 (1919)
 Gratovich, Baley † Hrabovsky; Lyatoshin-
 sky; Stankovych Orion 79331
- LALO, ÉDOUARD**
Trio (piano) No. 1 in c, Op. 7
 Caecilian Trio † Saint-Saëns: Trio 1
 Turn. 37002
- LEE, EUGENE (1942-)**
Composition for Flute Solo (1973-4)
 Spencer † Biscardi; Dick; Luening
 CRI S-400
- LUENING, OTTO**
Suites 3, 4, & 5 for Solo Flute
 Sollberger † Biscardi; R. Dick; E. Lee
 CRI S-400
- LYATOSHINSKY, BORIS (1895-1968)**
Sonata for Violin & Piano, Op. 19 (1926)
 Gratovich, Baley † Hrabovsky; Kosenko;
 Stankovych Orion 79331
- MATTHEWS, WILLIAM**
Sumer is Icumen in - Lhude Sing, for
Bassoon & Tape
 Polisi † Bitsch; Noon; Villa-Lobos: Ciran-
 da Crys. S-341
- MOZART, WOLFGANG AMADEUS**
Andante in C for Flute & Orchestra, K.315
 Siebert, Faerber, Württemberg Ch. Orch.
 † Fl Con.; Fl Qrs; Fl Son.; Rondo
 K.Anh.184 3-Vox SVBX-5153
Concerti (2) for Flute, K.313, 314
 Siebert, Faerber, Württemberg Ch. Orch.
 † Andante, K.315; Fl Qrs; Fl Son.; Ron-
 do K.Anh.184 3-Vox SVBX-5153
Concerto No. 2 in D for Flute, K.314
 Pepin, Ansermet, Suisse Romande †
 Haydn: Tr Con.; Schumann: Adagio
 Lon. STS-15373
- Duos (2) for Violin & Viola, K.423/4**
 D. & I Oistrakh (K.423) † Sinf. Con.
 K.364 Lon. STS-15482
- Marches & Dances**
 Leinsdorf, London Sym.: 3 Marches,
 K.408; 6 German Dances, K.509; 6 Min-
 uets, K.599; Minuet, K.409; March of
 the Priests, from Magic Flute, K.620
 Col. M-35154
- Quartets, Flute & Strings, K.285, 285a,**
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 K.Anh.184 3-Vox XVBX-5153
Rondo in D for Flute & Orchestra,
 K.Anh.184
 Siebert, Faerber, Württemberg Ch. Orch.
 † Andante, K.315; Fl Con.; Fl Qrs; Fl
 Son. 3-Vox SVBX-5153
Sinfonia Concertante in Eb for Violin &

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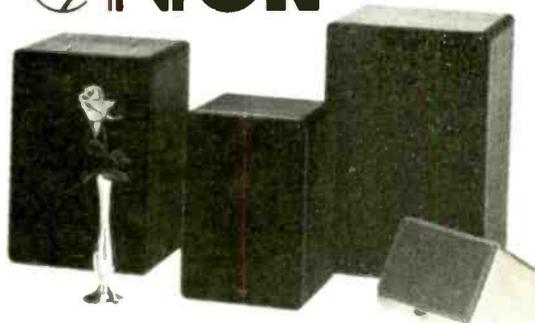
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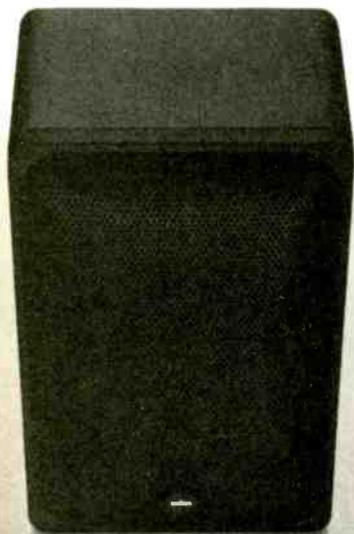
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BRAUN

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Sonatas for Flute & Harpsichord (complete)
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Motets & Monodies, for Oboe, English Horn & Bassoon
Roseman, Snow, Polisi † Bitsch; Matthews; Villa-Lobos: Ciranda Crys. S-341

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Parable for Solo Oboe (1971)
Christ † Schmidt; Still; Thomson
Crys. S-321

PROKOFIEV, SERGEI
Cinderella, Op. 87 (ballet Excerpts)
Ansermet, Suisse Romande
Lon. STS-15481

Romeo and Juliet (excerpts)
Skrowaczewski, Minnesota Orch. (Suite 2)
† Stravinsky: Sacre Can. 31108(Q)

RAVEL, MAURICE
Introduction & Allegro for Harp, Flute, Clarinet & String Quartet
Johnson & Kozikova (2 harps) † Debussy: Danses; Roussel: Impromptu; Saint-Saëns: Morceau, Op. 154 Desmar 1018G

RESPIGHI, OTTORINO
Boutique fantasque (ballet, after Rossini)
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Ang. SZ-37570

ROUSSEL, ALBERT
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Concerto No. 4 in c for Piano & Orch., Op. 44
Entremont, Plasson, Capitole de Toulouse Orch. † Con. 4
Col. M-35136; /MT-35136

Morceau de concert for Harp & Orchestra, Op. 154
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Kipnis (12): in G, K.146; in f, K.204a; in f, K.204b; in F, K.205; in C, K.513; in b, K.87; in A, K.322; in A, K.323; in G, K.337; in G, K.338; in D, K.443; in d, D, K.444 (K.87, 322, 323 played on clavichord)
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SCHMIDT, WILLIAM
The Sparrow & The Amazing Mr. Avaunt, for Narrator & Oboe (Poems by William Pillin)

Vlazinskaya, Christ † Persichetti: Oboe Parable; Still; Thomson Crys. S-321

SCHUBERT, FRANZ
Rosamunde: Incidental Music, Op. 26, D.797
Mehta, Israel Phil. (excerpts) † Sym. 6
Lon. 7115

Symphony No. 6 in C, "Little", D.589
Mehta, Israel Phil. † Rosamunde Lon. 7115

SCHUMANN, ROBERT
Adagio & Allegro for Horn, Op. 70
Leloir, Ansermet, Suisse Romande; Haydn: Tr Con.; Mozart: Fl Con. 2
Lon. STS-15373

STILL, WILLIAM GRANT
Miniatures for Flute, Oboe & Piano
Shanley, Christ, Davis † Persichetti: Oboe Parable; Schmidt; Thomson
Crys. S-321

STANKOVYCH, YEVHEN (1942-
Triptych for Violin & Piano, "In the Highlands" (1972)
Gratovich, Baley † Hrabovsky; Kosenko; Lyatoshinsky Orion 79331

STRAVINSKY, IGOR
Le Sacre du printemps
Skrowaczewski, Minnesota Orch. † Prokofiev: Romeo Can. 31108(Q)

THOMPSON, RANDALL
Suite for Oboe, Clarinet & Viola
Christ, Atkins, Veritch † Persichetti: Oboe Parable; Schmidt; Still Crys. S-321

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, RALPH
The House of Life; Songs of Travel (song cycles) (1904)
Rolf Johnson [E] Chal. 77017

Hugh the Drover (1924)
Armstrong, Watts, Tear, Lloyd, Rippon, Groves, Royal Phil., Ambrosian Op. Cho. [E] 2-Ang. SZX-3879

VILLA-LOBOS, HEITOR
Ciranda das sete notas, for Bassoon & Piano (1933)
Polisi, Schmidt † Bitsch; Matthews; Noon
Crys. S-341

WAGNER, RICHARD
Tannhäuser (selections)
Caballé, Lombard, Strasbourg Phil. [G]: Overture; Dich, teure Halle; Elisabeth's Prayer † Tristan, Prel.
RCA ARL1-3351; /ARK1-3351

Tristan: Prelude & Liebestod
Caballé, Lombard, Strasbourg Phil. [G] † Tannhäuser (sel.)
RCA ARL1-3351; /ARK1-3351

WALTON, WILLIAM
Sonata for Violin & Piano
S. & J. Weiss † Elgar: Vn Son. Uni. 72027

WEBER, CARL MARIA VON
Concerto No. 1 in C for Piano, Op. 11
Keller, Köhler, Berlin Sym. † Con. 2; Konzertstück Turn. 34746(Q)

Concerto No. 2 in E♭ for Piano, Op. 32
Keller, Köhler, Berlin Sym. † Con. 1; Konzertstück Turn. 34746(Q)

Konzertstück in f, Op. 49
Keller, Köhler, Berlin Sym. † Con. 1, 2
Turn. 34746(Q)

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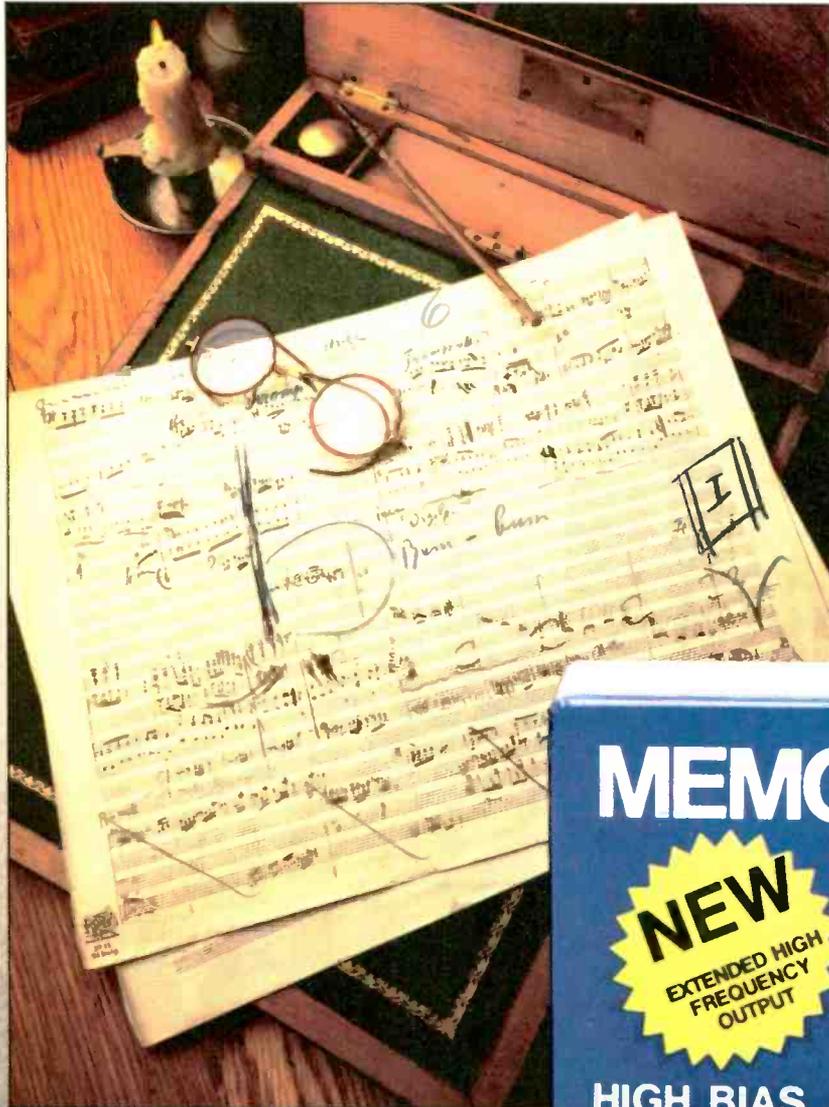
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Eight (or So) Records to Judge Speakers By

by Norman Eisenberg

From the standpoint of such accepted criteria of speaker performance as frequency response, power-handling ability, dynamic range, clarity, smoothness, definition, transparency, absence of spurious tonal coloration, transient attack, and any others you care to add, the best test equipment remains your own hearing, and the best test material remains musical recordings. This is not to deny the usefulness of such specialized signals as warble tones, pink noise, and the like; nor does it deny the aid provided by such devices as the sound-pressure-level meter or real-time analyzer. But while these techniques can provide clues as to how a speaker *might* sound, ultimately the only way to judge how it actually *does* sound is to listen.

Of course, some compositions are better than others for this purpose. The best choice is material that is fairly complex in harmonic structure and richly scored. Music that is relatively thin in texture—solo guitar, for instance—may sound good on any passable speaker. Beyond the music itself, of course, is the recording, and as it happens, classical performances are generally less gimmicked than pop recordings. Often, in the latter, you can't be sure whether the distortion you hear should be attributed to the playback system or was deliberately created for effect in the studio.

Some of my current favorites are among those that I have found especially good for judging speaker performance. I have tried to select them carefully so that, in addition to their technical uses, a good measure of musical merit also may be enjoyed by the serious stereo listener.

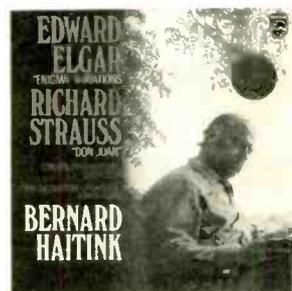
The Copland recording was made using the 3M digital audio mastering system and in "real time"—which is to say that the entire piece was played through and taped once, with no retakes, no splices, no mixdowns. The tape then was used to cut the master disc. Doubtless the care lavished on the cutting and subsequent disc processing is as responsible as anything else for the ultraclean sound and its unique impact. A kind of artistic/technical synergism seems at work: The lean orchestration (the original scoring for thirteen musicians) and the clean sonics make for an exceptionally sharp aural focus that not only is very revealing of instrumental timbres, but—especially in some of the more forceful passages toward the end—adds to the illusion that the entire ensemble is right in your room. Basically, this production is a fine proving piece for midrange response; if your speakers have it, there should be a startling sense of presence. A closely related quality is the speakers' ability to distinguish between instruments with roughly the same tonal range but different overtone structures. The work as a whole should create a tight, bright acoustic feeling with well-etched transients.

Whatever else they are—musically, personally, or philosophically—the *Enigma* Variations are a rich storehouse of tonal color, challenging dynamics, and very wide spans of frequency. And the work demands "wide stage" stereo treatment, so that the miking captures all the inner detail while preserving the sense of ensemble. On a good playback system, these desiderata will be joyfully apparent. On anything less, many sections may sound

Some current favorites—all with musical merit—that will stretch your system's acoustic sinews



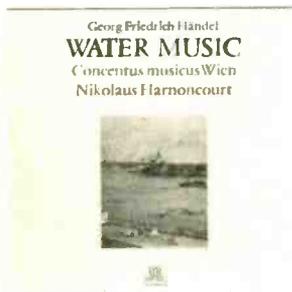
COPLAND: *Appalachian Spring*. St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Dennis Russell Davies. SOUND 80 DLR 101A.



ELGAR: *Enigma Variations*.* STRAUSS: *Don Juan*.† London Philharmonic Orchestra*, Concertgebouw Orchestra†, Bernard Haitink. PHILIPS 6500 481.

HANDEL: Water Music.

Concentus Musicus, Nikolaus Harnoncourt. TELEFUNKEN 6.42497.



muddled. There also are several climaxes that stretch your woofers' suspension, and others that will demand nothing but the smoothest response from your tweeters. One especially tricky passage in the finale tests a speaker's ability to handle sub-basement lows with plenty of power. It is perhaps revealing, with all the fuss over today's "superdiscs," that this one was made in 1975 and was neither direct-cut nor processed from a digital master.

With all due respect to previous "Suites from the *Water Music*," hearing this full version is a revelation. The recording preserves an airy feeling that—together with an ultraclean disc surface—affords amazing clarity of instruments. This effect is the more interesting because the performance uses original instruments that—historical authenticity aside—evoke a remarkable acoustic quality, one that is bright but never brash. At least that's how it should sound through speakers with really smooth response and good transient behavior. Especially good for this evaluation are Band 3 of Side 1 (the Allegro), and the Minuet toward the end of Side 2, where a deep, well-paced rhythm abruptly intrudes upon a passage for strings and thoroughbass and in turn is followed by the sudden piping of high-pitched piccolos. This record should sound different from performances with modern instruments; if it doesn't, start shopping for new speakers.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 5.

Philadelphia Orchestra, James Levine. RCA ARL 2-2905.



Mahler's Fifth Symphony abounds in sonic grandeur. It spans the full reaches of dynamic range and frequency response and presents a dazzling assortment of instrumental timbres and groupings. The first movement's opening brass and later massed strings will test the mettle of your speakers' midrange and highs. So will the stormy second movement. In the Adagietto, listen for strength but no brashness in the strings. Incidentally, the sustained-note passages here are good for checking wow and flutter of your turntable. In the finale, there's another brass choir to challenge your system's high-end response. The later interplay between strings and winds will demolish a system that lacks ample dynamic range and sufficient power capability to span that range. The final bars of the full orchestral climax should come through with a definite sense of the drums and brass choirs holding firmly under it all.

RAVEL: Bolero; La Valse; Rapsodie espagnole. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 475.



La Valse's big timpani burst and the galloping passages after it were used as a keynote theme for an early Vox album called "This Is High Fidelity," produced more than twenty years ago and, sadly, out of print now. I have long searched for a stereo version of the work that sounded as good, and this DG recording is it. There is something about much of Ravel's orchestrations that suggests a rapid-fire succession of taut transients, deep but well-defined bass passages, limitless tonal coloration for the midfrequencies, and piercing highs that make you wonder why you ever needed an oscillator to test tweeters. These effects abound in *La Valse* and in the *Rapsodie*.

Bolero, of course, is a tour de force of subtle changes in orchestral color, and you should be able to detect the sonic differences between each statement of the theme and the next. It also is an excellent test of stereo imaging in terms of both left-to-right breadth and front-to-rear depth. Correct stereo imaging involves correct phase relationships, good treble dispersion, linear power response, and other speaker design parameters, as well as effective placement in your room. With these pointers in mind, you may find

yourself listening to that old *Bolero* with some fresh insight. By the way, this one was taped in 1974 and transferred to disc by the conventional method—but with care.

The Telarc disc was cut from a master tape made by the Soundstream digital recording system, obviously saving as many decibels as could be cut into the groove. From the very first notes of the Stravinsky, with their subterranean lows, you know that something special—sonically anyway—is going on. Look out for that lightning-bolt chord that starts (and reappears throughout) Kashchei's dance; it could, at high volume, tax your speakers' suspension. It also could drive your amplifier (or receiver) into clipping. It actually tripped the overload protection circuit in one receiver I tried it on, shutting the set down momentarily as if someone had pulled the plug. The same thing happened again at the end of the piece.

Some listeners—audio types, at that—have complained that, for all the dynamics and muscular tonality on this disc, it lacks a certain warmth and richness and takes on an antiseptic quality. Be that as it may, on capable speakers the overall sound is so clean you may find you are comfortably playing your system louder than usual. In my own listening room, I clocked sound pressure levels—at a distance of about ten feet from my speakers—of 95 to 100 dB, which sounded (subjectively) fairly appropriate to this recording. The same levels could bother me with many other recordings. So, in a real sense, the record is a test of the many distortions that add up to what is known as "listener fatigue," and as playback equipment goes these days, that problem is most likely to result from less-than-great speakers. Some of the passages also will tax a phono pickup's tracking ability. Watch out for stylus jumps during the massed crescendos.

Just past the Kashchei chord, your speakers should make a splendid recovery and quickly settle down to project the soft, rhythmic passage of bassoons and low horns over strings. Listen here for any signs of tonal dropout. You should not have to turn up the volume to hear all the inner orchestral detail clearly. Listen carefully in the Finale as the music builds to the climax with sudden outbursts of brilliant brass and of heavy percussion with the triangle bravely tinkling away on top of it all. The final bass drum should set up a brief vibration that seems to hover in the air about the speakers.

The opening bars of the *Polovetsian Dances* are a good test of tweeter response: Can you distinguish among the various woodwinds? At the end of the first chorus, listen to the roll of timpani and bass drum, which should make you feel as if a thunderstorm has erupted in your room. At fairly loud playback levels, the bass will come up from the floorboards; you may actually feel it in your legs.

The Rite of Spring is still the best all-purpose single opus for showing off or showing up a high fidelity system. It has everything an audio-minded fanatic could wish to test the capabilities of his playback equipment. Did Stravinsky, sixty-six years ago, have some kind of audio prescience? Certainly, the score lends itself most obligingly to the art and artifice of modern recording and playback techniques. So much is going on here, it is impossible to list every possible example of sonic wonderment that is useful for testing. One of my longtime favorites comes soon after the opening: The strings, repeating a chord in sharp, asymmetrical rhythms, evoke eruptions from the brasses and woodwinds and lead to a thunderous descending climax in the

STRAVINSKY: The Firebird Suite (1919 version). BORODIN: Prince Igor: Overture; Polovetsian Dances.* Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus*, Robert Shaw. TELARC DG 10039.



STRAVINSKY: Le Sacre du printemps. New York Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta. COLUMBIA M 34557.



WAGNER: Die Walküre: Ride of the Valkyries. Siegfried: Forest Murmurs. Götterdämmerung: Siegfried's Funeral Music. Tristan und Isolde: Act I Prelude. Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf. SHEFFIELD LAB 7.



deep bass tones of percussion and brass. On a top playback system, the visceral effect becomes overwhelming.

And, near the middle of Side 2, there's a section with heavy drum work along with high woodwinds and brass. Each instrumental group should be clearly audible; if the high-pitched tones waver, it's a sign of intermodulation distortion—in the pickup, amplifier, or speakers. Toward the end of the piece is a passage where the cymbals should sound as if they are tearing the music apart—just make sure they don't tear your speakers apart. Another tricky section has the deep drums interwoven with softer string sounds; again, the one should not intermodulate the other. The final outburst should linger an instant "in the air." If your speakers are overdamped (for instance, installed in less than an optimum enclosure), you will not hear this effect. If they are underdamped (for any of a number of possible reasons), the sound may linger too long.

Sheffield's direct-to-disc recording of Wagner opera excerpts is as much a tribute to the stamina and concentration of the Los Angeles players and Leinsdorf as it is an example of brilliantly clean sound emerging from a super-clean background. In the "Ride of the Valkyries," try to hear both the contrasts and the blending of the big brass choirs and massed strings; this is a good test of phase linearity. The tutti climaxes near the end can overload a system that has insufficient power reserves and dynamic range; this also will test your pickup's tracking ability. In the *Tristan* prelude, note the subtleties and nuances created by the strings; you need very smooth treble response to perceive these effects fully. The slight *r-r-r-r* of the trombones in the opening of "Siegfried's Funeral Music" is not distortion, although inferior reproduction can make it seem so. To resolve any doubt, compare this sound with the low brass section that follows—it should sound smooth, but with a slight "edge" to the top. Parts of this music can hit sound pressure levels above 95 dB and may, in some installations, set up feedback through the floor to the phono pickup.

For good measure, I will briefly mention a few more releases whose generally superior sonics can be challenging to your speaker system:

Thelma Houston's "I've Got the Music in Me" (Sheffield Lab 2) was one of the first of the direct-to-disc albums. It still is among the best, musically as well as acoustically.

Leopold Stokowski's recording of Shostakovich's Symphony No. 6 and *Age of Gold Suite* (RCA LSC 3133) dates from 1970 but is one of the best he ever made.

In listening to E. Power Biggs's "Historic Organs of Italy" (Columbia MS 7379), try to differentiate among the various instruments.

Made in 1972, "What the World Needs Now" (Polydor PD 5019), Bacharach songs performed by Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops, sets a standard for meticulous recording of ingenious arrangements that are both exhilarating to hear and strenuous exercises for the acoustic sinews of your stereo system. **HF**

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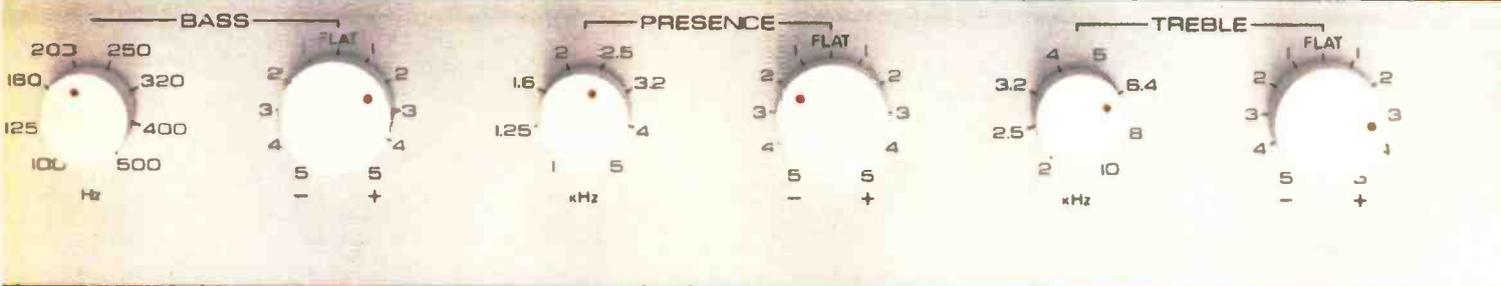
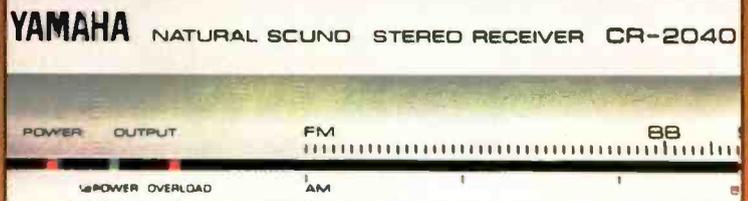
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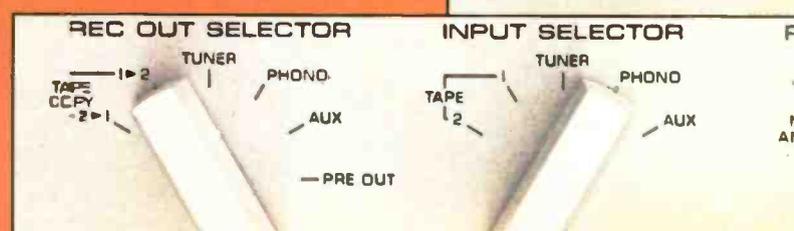
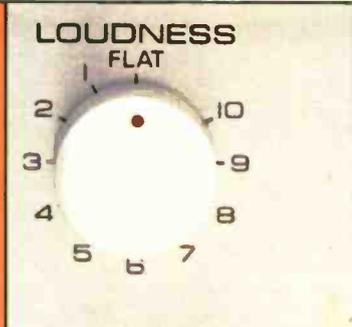
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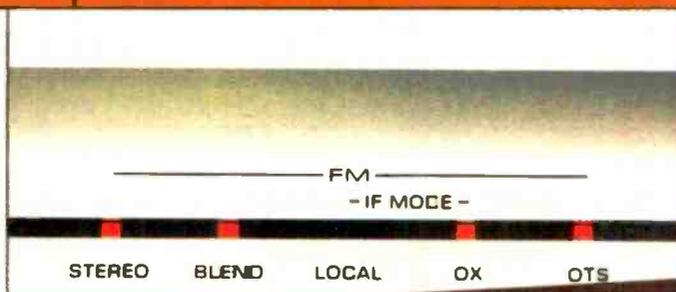
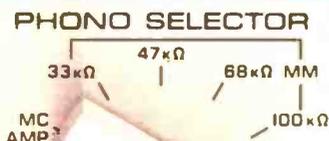
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zu 2

ff

zu 2

p

This system contains the first six staves of music. The top two staves are treble clef, and the bottom two are bass clef. The middle two staves are also treble clef. The music is in 4/4 time. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The third staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The fourth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of two flats. The fifth staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The sixth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of two flats. The music is marked with *ff* (fortissimo) and *p* (piano). There are two instances of the marking 'zu 2' above the notes. The staves are decorated with colorful horizontal bands and small circular icons.

ff

ff

ff

ff

ff

p

p

p

p

ff

This system contains the next six staves of music. The top two staves are treble clef, and the bottom two are bass clef. The middle two staves are also treble clef. The music is in 4/4 time. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The third staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The fourth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of two flats. The fifth staff has a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. The sixth staff has a bass clef and a key signature of two flats. The music is marked with *ff* (fortissimo) and *p* (piano). The staves are decorated with colorful horizontal bands and small circular icons.

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Subwoofers

New designs are springing up like mushrooms; a former loudspeaker designer gives you his thoughts on the whys and hows of choosing and using them.

by C. Victor Campos

Few developments in recent high fidelity history have been as visible—even as touted—as the equivocally named subwoofer. In the strict sense, a subwoofer is a low-frequency driver system designed to extend the range of an already-adequate speaker into that bottom audible octave where costs are high (because the long wavelengths imply oversized reproducers) and benefits low (because so little program material includes reproducible information in the bottom octave). The term has, however, come to mean any low-frequency-only reproducer, even if its primary objective is to reproduce what would normally be the woofer range of the speaker systems it supplements.

In particular, the subwoofer/"satellite" combinations—often using minispeakers of the type that have proliferated in high fidelity and auto sound as the main speaker pair—are enjoying considerable vogue. Some combinations are designed as integral ensembles, some as mix-and-match separates. But even without the inherent limitations on deep bass posed by the minispeaker format, there is rationale for add-on subwoofers. They permit the speaker buyer to make his own decision about the octave between, say, 25 and 50 Hz, whose inclusion can easily double the price of a typical quality loudspeaker. Thus the current rash of subwoofer designs brings a new degree of flexibility to the tailoring of individual stereo systems.

The word "new," however, deserves some qualification: The first noticeable demand for subwoofers was in response to early so-called full-range

C. Victor Campos, probably best known to our readers for his long association with KLH and AR (and, to Boston readers, for his pioneering audio show on station WGBH-FM), has transferred his activities to Washington, D.C., and the Electronic Industries Association.

electrostatics, notably the Quad and the KLH Nine. Although they reproduced the whole audible range, their power-handling capability was very limited when they were called upon to reproduce frequencies below 120 Hz or so. And their intrinsically low efficiency demanded substantial power for reasonable volume levels, particularly in large rooms. This combination of factors required extraordinary measures: supplemental low-bass drivers. The first speakers to be pressed into this service were the AR-1W and the KLH One, Two, and Three—all of which were woofers only and the first of the acoustic-suspension designs on the market. (I purposely ignore earlier common-bass woofers, crossed over at relatively high frequencies to tiny stereo "satellites" whose bandwidth did not encompass the bass to begin with.) These, along with electronic crossovers of that era (Marantz and Heathkit) and biamplication, made the electrostatic/subwoofer combination feasible.

The results were almost miraculous: The bass suddenly became robust, and the overall power-handling capability of the electrostatics appeared to increase phenomenally. In fact, only minor problems presented themselves, primarily that of achieving satisfactory blend between the subwoofers and the "dipoles" (which electrostatics generally are) due to the physical separation of the driver elements in the crossover region, and the difficulty of matching the acoustic levels and the acoustic slopes of the two sources in the crossover region. Over the years, improvements in woofer manufacture and materials extended bass response sufficiently to make the use of subwoofers for other than electrostatic systems a curiosity. Since the vast majority of available source material rarely has much energy below 50 Hz, attempts to reproduce the bottom octave of the audio spectrum proved an almost worthless task.

The recording, cutting, and pressing technologies also improved, however, putting extended low-frequency information onto more and more records. Then the brilliant and punchy "direct cut" records began to exceed the low-frequency reproducing capabilities of most loudspeakers, almost requiring the extension of this capability. In addition, the many owners of minispeakers with excellent response down to 100–150 Hz welcomed the flexibility of a subwoofer that could extend response into the nether regions without pre-empting floor space at the focus of the listening room.

The only function of a true subwoofer is to supplement a standard system at the lowest frequencies—below about 100 Hz, though some make their contribution primarily below 75 Hz. In this range, sound sources cannot be localized and subwoofer placement is not critical, permitting use of a common unit for both channels in stereo systems. Above 100 Hz, however, use of separate subwoofers, placed reasonably close to the speakers they supplement, becomes increasingly important for good stereo localization and image stability. Whatever their effective frequency range, subwoofers are available in many formats and designs, ranging from classic acoustic-suspension formulas to complicated computer-aided vented designs to purely electronic ones that, in effect, boost amplifier power below the woofers' resonance frequency to compensate for their inherent rolloff.

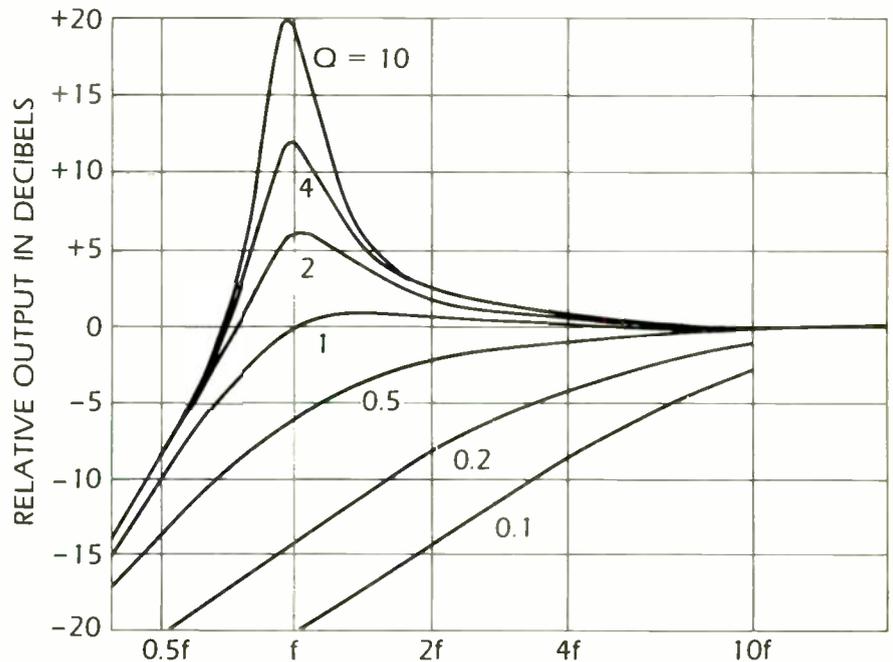
If you are contemplating the purchase of a subwoofer, your big question should be: "How do I know that a subwoofer will, in fact, extend my low-frequency response?" Fortunately, the behavior of loudspeakers at low frequencies can be defined quite adequately by the "Q" of the system and by its point of resonance. Q may be considered a numerical statement of the behavior and output of a speaker at and near its resonance frequency, as shown in the accompanying curves. The higher the Q, the higher the speaker's output will be at resonance, and the less controlled its behavior when compared to the response just above resonance. Generally speaking, loudspeakers with a Q higher than 1 will tend to be boomy and exhibit "hangover": blurred, indistinct attack on transients. The ideal Q lies between 0.75 and 1, where bass response is flat at resonance, with no evidence of hangover. As

the Q begins to fall below 0.75, the output at resonance and above actually decreases—and to quite a significant extent. At a Q of 0.5, known as “critical damping,” the bass is down 6 dB at resonance, and although it might then be defined as “very tight,” the rolloff with such overdamping doesn’t really result in cleaner bass.

The second parameter of importance, resonance frequency, defines the point at which (assuming a Q of about 1) the loudspeaker reaches its maximum excursion and its lowest frequency of unattenuated output. All speakers, regardless of design, roll off at a predictable rate below the lowest resonance point. Closed-box systems, such as acoustic-suspension designs, attenuate input at a rate of 12 dB per octave below resonance; vented speakers roll off at 18 dB per octave.

Knowing these two parameters, anyone can accurately predict the performance of any woofer or subwoofer at very low frequencies—and how much improvement the subwoofer will provide to the low end of a given system. In speakers incorporating 10- or 12-inch woofers, it is not uncommon to find resonances between 40 and 45 Hz, with a Q of about 1. If you want to improve such a system, the subwoofer must have a resonance at 25 to 30 Hz with a Q of 1, or the enhancement of low frequencies may be more imaginary than real. For such a resonance (with constant acoustic output above it), however, the excursion of the subwoofer cone must increase substantially: It must quadruple its excursion for each added octave of bass response. To keep distortion low, the length of the voice coil must increase so that the same amount of coil will always be in the gap, even during maximum cone excursions. Under such circumstances, and assuming good power-handling capability, there is enough voice coil out of the magnetic gap (enough “overhang”) to lower the efficiency of the system in comparison to one of similar size and cone area but with a higher resonance.

Addressing themselves to the complicated interrelation of distortion, efficiency, and bandwidth, subwoofer designers have opted for multiple drivers, large-area cone drivers, and even built-in amplifiers, which help to ensure both that the driver will receive adequate power and that its output can easily be matched to that of the system it supple-



Response curves for differing values of Q show that at a Q of 0.75 to 1 a speaker's output at resonance frequency (f) is flat in relation to output above.

ments. There are, of course, advantages and disadvantages to all of the approaches; only the user can make the correct choice for his particular needs.

A few complete loudspeaker systems on the market can be said to have integral subwoofers since their low-frequency response cannot readily be enhanced by an additional device. The Infinity 4.5 and the AR-9, for examples, employ techniques that extend their woofer response down to 30 Hz and below in enclosures that are not especially large when compared to most large speakers of more limited low-frequency response. In these systems, the designers have already determined for you the correct balance throughout the spectrum, including the very low frequencies; although adjustments may be possible (or provided), your starting point has already been very well defined.

Knowledge of your starting point is important in adding any subwoofer since the balance and blend between it and the rest of the system are critical to good results. They are, at best, tricky to achieve without the aid of instruments; the ear can be fooled easily, particularly during the excitement that such an addition can generate. Many subwoofer owners have mistaken an elevated low-frequency response for extended bass when, in fact, the subwoofer may have added only 5 Hz or less to the response of the system. If response irregularities

due to reflections from room surfaces fail at slightly different frequencies due to differences in room placement, the bass of the subwoofer may sound different from that of the main speaker without extending it; if the subwoofer simply delivers 3 to 5 dB more output than the rest of the system, it will sound “bassier” but can hardly be said to serve the cause of fidelity. So, careful initial level adjustment and correct placement of the subwoofer to minimize peaks and dips in its response are at least as vital to maximum performance as careful product selection. And the guidelines available from manufacturers for best use of their subwoofers should be taken to heart.

Finally, pay close attention to the blend between the subwoofer and the woofer—and, particularly, to the juxtaposition of the subwoofer and the speaker system. Phasing anomalies in the crossover region are especially problematical with dipole radiators, such as electrostatics. Careful positioning of all the elements and selection of gentle crossover slopes (if you have a choice, as you do with some electronic crossovers used for bi-amplification) usually are helpful. Remember, too, that the lower the crossover frequency, the less noticeable phase effects will be because of the longer wavelengths involved.

But whatever specific objectives you want to achieve, watch your Q s and resonances. **HF**

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* \pm 3dB @ -20VU

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Bella Davidovich Prepares to Conquer America

That new Queens resident just happens to be the Soviet Union's most prominent woman pianist.

by Joseph Horowitz

In the years after the Russian Revolution, Heifetz, Horowitz, Koussevitzky, Milstein, Piatigorsky, and Rachmaninoff, among other eminent musicians, were driven west by politics and civil war—a celebrated exodus that changed the face of music in Europe and America. Half a century later, following decades of Stalinism and Cold War, another Russian exodus is underway. The most visible evidence is a handful of famous performers—Vladimir Ashkenazy, Kiril Kondrashin, Mstislav Rostropovich, Galina Vishnevskaya—who have resettled abroad without permission from home. The vast majority of the expatriates, however, are beneficiaries of a liberalized emigration policy for Jews that began around 1970, and they are coming out legally and in droves.

However crippling this migration may be for the Soviet Union, the Russians will not again take the West by storm. The American arena Heifetz and Horowitz conquered is more crowded and sophisticated than before; by the

Joseph Horowitz, a noted writer on musical subjects, has investigated the Russian emigré musical community for three years.

same token, too many of the immigrants seem raised in a time warp. But by any normal standard, the current influx, if not another artistic transfusion, is at least a tonic for tired blood.

One tantalizing thing about the Russians is their obscurity—even some of the most prominent in their homeland are virtually unknown here. In New York, where they regularly turn up in recital, more than a few try to compensate with exaggerated claims of past success. At least two newcomers have been presented as "Russia's leading woman violinist." Another was named "Russia's most-acclaimed woman pianist" in a wire-service story distributed nationally this year.

As it happens, neither of the violinists really lives up to such extravagant billing. The pianist, however, is the genuine article. Her name is Bella Davidovich (pronounced Da-vee-DOH-vitch), and her credentials include a first prize in the 1949 International Chopin Competition, a full professorship at the Moscow Conservatory, seventeen recordings for Melodiya, and twenty-eight consecutive annual appearances with the Lenin-grad Philharmonic. Probably the most practical evidence in her favor is a recital she played at the Milan Conservatory on May 26, 1977. In the audience was Jacques Leiser, the New York-based artists' manager who masterminded Lazar Berman's blitz of Europe and America. When, having secured permission as a Jew, Davidovich left Russia in October 1978, Leiser promptly signed her up. Working from a private tape he had obtained, he mailed cassettes of the Milan recital to conductors, impresarios, critics, and writers in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe. Shortly afterward, Philips agreed to tape her. The result was three recordings made in March in Switzerland: the twenty-four Chopin preludes; a Schumann disc containing *Carnaval* and *Humoreske*; and one of Beethoven music, the *Moonlight* and Op. 31, No. 3 Sonatas plus *Für Elise*. All three are scheduled to be released in time for her Carnegie Hall debut this October 12, one of fourteen 1979-80 recitals Leiser managed to book on short notice, along with thirty-one orchestral dates.

Since last January, Davidovich has lived in a one-bedroom apartment in Kew Gardens, Queens, twelve miles east of Manhattan. To a visitor, three months ago, the apartment seemed more a way station than a new home. There was a piano, rented from Steinway, but Davidovich could not practice at full volume because the neighbors complained. The music rack held a miniature orchestral score of a Beethoven concerto. (Her full-size piano score remained in Russia.) The living room floor was bare, and so were the walls, aside from two small photographs—one of Jakov Fliere, the famous pedagogue who was her teacher at the Moscow Conservatory, the other of Yulian Sitkovetsky, her husband, a leading Soviet violinist who died of cancer in 1958 at the age of thirty-two before his fame could reach the West. Under a curtainless window were two large suitcases belonging to her twenty-five-year-old son, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, also a violinist, who was out of town for the summer. Her mother and younger sister, both of whom left Russia with her, shared an apartment two floors above.

At fifty-one, Davidovich is a small woman with reddish-brown hair and lively, experienced eyes, who looks startlingly like Chopin from the side because of her aquiline nose. Speaking through an interpreter, she apologized for the appearance of things: "The feeling here is very unusual, very uncertain. It is like living in a suitcase."

Many of the immigrants are eager talkers, buzzing with tales of philistinism, subterfuge, and anti-Semitism. For example, Rostislav Dubinsky, formerly first violinist of the Borodin Quartet in the U.S.S.R. (now a member of the three-year-old Borodin Piano Trio), speaks of tapped telephones, undercover policemen, and cultural hatchetmen who routinely veto performances of Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern. Violinist Boris Belkin describes bribes for good behavior and crude reprisals for recalcitrance; at one point, he says, he wound up seeking refuge in a Moscow psychiatric hospital. Davidovich, by comparison, was gracious but laconic. She volunteered little about her past, though she answered questions simply and easily and

Tapped telephones, undercover policemen, and cultural hatchetmen routinely veto performances of Schoenberg, Berg, Webern.

registered tired amusement whenever the subject of the Soviet bureaucracy came up.

She left Russia, she said, mainly to reunite her family: "The first reason was my son. To have only one son, to lose my husband so long ago—it was natural. I had to move sooner or later to be with him." Dmitry (she calls him Dima, a familiar form of the name) had abandoned the Moscow Conservatory in favor of study with Ivan Galamian at Juilliard and had tried to persuade her to emigrate when he did in May 1977. But her sister was ill at the time and unable to travel. And Davidovich herself was reluctant at first.

"My tours to the West gave me hope of visiting Dima from time to time," she said. "The thing is, through the end of 1977 all the tours were permitted to continue, even though Dima had left. So I had hoped for the best. But then all my 1978 tours were canceled. No explanations were given, and there was no need to ask. It was obvious Dima was the reason and that my career in Russia could only diminish. So it was clear that, unless I left, I would never see him again."

"If you told Gossconcert, 'I would like to play in the West,' they would think you were crazy."

Davidovich dislikes generalizing about her playing style. Her repertoire, she pointed out, stretches from Scarlatti and Bach to such contemporary Russians as Rodion Shchedrin and Kara Karaiev and takes in all the prominent eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germans and Austrians, as well as Debussy and Ravel. At the same time, she acknowledged that her orientation might be broadly called Romantic and that there exists "a kind of popular opinion" that she specializes in Chopin. She plays nearly all of his music.

The Milan tape that Leiser converted into bookings and publicity contains the Mozart Sonata, K. 331, Mendelssohn's *Variations sérieuses*, Schumann's *Carnaval* and *Abegg Variations*, and six Chopin etudes: Op. 10, Nos. 3-5 and Op. 25, Nos. 1-3. All the playing is very impressive—ardent, refined, fleet-fingered, exquisitely proportioned—but the Chopin set seems especially revealing. Davidovich's performances not only are ravishing pianistically, but convey a depth of identification that is very poignant. If one etude stands out, it is the thrice-familiar Op. 10, No. 3, in E major, a reading that aches with sadness.

Performing abroad had not merely been a way to visit her son. Davidovich previously had appeared frequently in Holland, occasionally in Italy, and briefly in England and France. Of playing in Amsterdam, where she had regularly appeared at the Concertgebouw, she said, "The orchestra, the managements, the audiences—everyone was supportive and enthusiastic. I played there for eleven consecutive seasons. It became a sort of celebration. The critics wrote that no other pianist from the Soviet Union had received such a welcome."

To become known elsewhere in the West, she confided, had been "the dream of my life." But Gossconcert, the Soviet bureau in charge of foreign engagements, "is a very complicated system, and I never tried to understand how it works. Anyway, it is useless—it is silly. If you told them, 'I would like to play in the West,' they would think you were crazy. Everybody wants to play in the West." She shrugged her shoulders and smiled with her eyes.

The melancholic side of her Chopin, Davidovich commented, is perhaps more pronounced than it once was: "Of course, performances change a great deal over the years as a person changes and grows. At the beginning, my playing was probably more joyful, more optimistic, with brighter colors. Then something vanishes—the fearlessness of the very young—and is replaced by something else. The F minor Ballade that I played in the 1949 Warsaw competition differs greatly from what I recorded in 1970. I wouldn't say that in 1949 it was a 'happy' performance, yet it was quite different. Not as broad, not as deep."

Prokofiev is another composer toward whom she feels an especially strong affinity: "To my mind, he is the greatest Russian composer of his time, and I feel very close to his world. He is a wonderfully lyrical composer. Many people don't see that. Some people try to show him as being very severe or sarcastic. But he has such depth, beyond this, and such warmth."

Her repertoire includes less Prokofiev than one might expect, however. Of the ten sonatas, Davidovich plays only Nos. 2-4; of the five concertos, only No. 1. The reason is one not every pianist cares to consider: She feels she must respect her "physical abilities." Her hands are too small for some of Prokofiev, she said. And, aside from the First, in which the orchestra can be subdued, the heavily scored concertos call for soloists with more carrying power than she feels she can muster.

All told, Davidovich performs twenty-seven works with orchestra, ranging from concertos by Bach, Haydn, and Mozart to Shostakovich's Second. The list includes many of the nineteenth-century staples, plus a few relative surprises—Mendelssohn's G minor Concerto and Concerto for Two Pianos, Saint-Saëns's Second Concerto, and the Strauss *Burleske*.

She also plays one American concerto, and in some ways it is the most intriguing of the lot: Gershwin's Concerto in F. According to Davidovich, in Russia the work is a favorite and Gershwin is by far the best-loved American composer. She closed her eyes when she recalled her initial encounter with his music: "Before 1956 we heard non-Russian performers only on records. . . . Menuhin came in 1945, but I was not in Moscow at the time. Then, in 1956, a visiting American company gave the first performance in Russia of *Porgy and Bess*, and I went with my husband. It was out of this world—the music, the sets, the costumes. People went absolutely wild. This was the beginning of the cultural exchange. Later Isaac Stern came, and Munch and the Boston Symphony. These concerts were just overwhelming."

Davidovich heard the Concerto in F for the first time in 1959 in Leningrad, where it was played by Ludmilla Sosena, a Soviet pianist. Through a friend, she duplicated Sosena's score and decided to learn it. When she first performed the work in 1960, that was still the only version she had heard; no recordings were available. It was not until John Browning and the Cleveland Orchestra visited Moscow in 1965 that she encountered an American interpretation. By that time, the concerto had become a regular part

of her repertoire: "I played the Gershwin many times, and in many places—more frequently than any other Russian pianist. Before I left the Soviet Union, Kondrashin suggested we could play it together, but it never happened. Last February we met in Holland, following his departure from Russia, and we spoke of it again. Perhaps it will be possible now."

Judging from Davidovich's remarks, the Gershwin concerto may be at least as popular in Russia as in the United States—a provocative point not so much for suggesting the range of Soviet tastes as, paradoxically, the effects of Soviet insularity. The music itself, written at the height of the '20s, is sanguine and sassy. In this country it turns up at pops concerts as a period piece and, for all its brashness, has acquired a degree of nostalgic charm. In Russia, where composers are still admonished to produce popular, affirmative art, it may well be closer to the symphonic mainstream. Kondrashin, in fact, has re-recorded it—a confident, flat-footed performance with the pianist Piotr Pechersky, available on Westminster Gold WG 8355.

To some of the immigrants, the commercial trappings and jet-age diversity of Western concert life seem bewildering, even threatening; they remember the security and traditionalism of the Soviet system and worry that their careers will be mislaid or their artistic bearings jostled. For others, with more sour memories of Russia, adjusting to new musical possibilities is not a worrisome by-product of the move, but a top priority. Davidovich's son belongs to the second group. Looking back, Sitkovetsky sees Soviet musicians as glorified civil servants, badgered by the state and increasingly cut off from their prerevolutionary roots.

"Generally, in Russia," he says, "professional standards have been high because of the many excellent teachers. But this is changing, and the reason is simple. When the revolution came and the regime changed, studying possibilities at first improved for Jews and other minorities, and not all the best musicians left. The pianists who stayed in-

cluded Igumnov, who taught Fliere, and Neigaus, who taught Richter and Gilels. The violinists who stayed included Poliakin, who was the major pupil of Auer; Stoliavsky, who was David Oistakh's teacher; and Yampolsky, who taught Leonid Kogan and my father. But most of them died after World War II, and the next generation was already a pure Soviet generation, in which many musicians sought success rather than knowledge. Today there are still individual, outstanding performers. But there is no longer a 'Russian school.'"

After two years in New York, a busy period during which he graduated from Juilliard and made his Carnegie Hall debut, Sitkovetsky feels he is riding his playing of outworn romanticisms that he absorbed in Russia. "It's funny," he says, "but the Russians, despite the theory of communism, are more individualistic performers than those in the West. They cannot play chamber music, for example. They're more egocentric, more outgoing, more dramatic.

"My own playing has changed quite a bit. I played the Prokofiev First Violin Concerto at Juilliard after two months in the United States. Then I played it again about a year later, and the interpretation was totally different. The first time, it was typically Russian playing—lots of emotion, and sometimes too much, so that it was a little exaggerated. Now I'm looking for a different kind of intensity, a more inner intensity. I'm quite sure my mother, too, will in some ways be influenced and change. It happens to all the Russians here. Even Rostropovich plays quite differently than he used to."

Davidovich responds to such opinions with smiles and affectionate motherly shrugs. She does not agree that Russia's nourishing musical traditions have lapsed and believes that increased access to recordings and radio broadcasts has helped open up the Moscow Conservatory. As for changes in Dmitry's style, she has noticed a difference but questions its source.

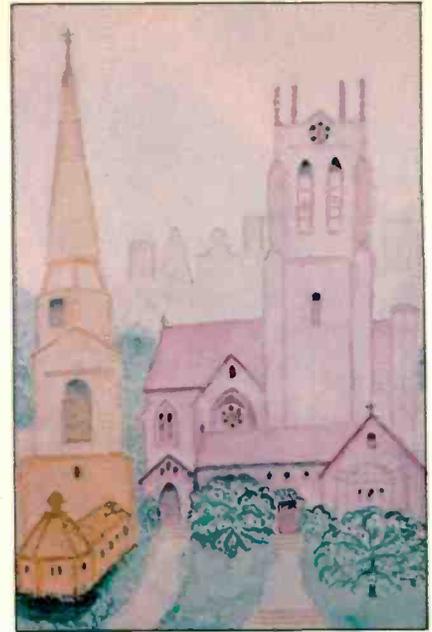
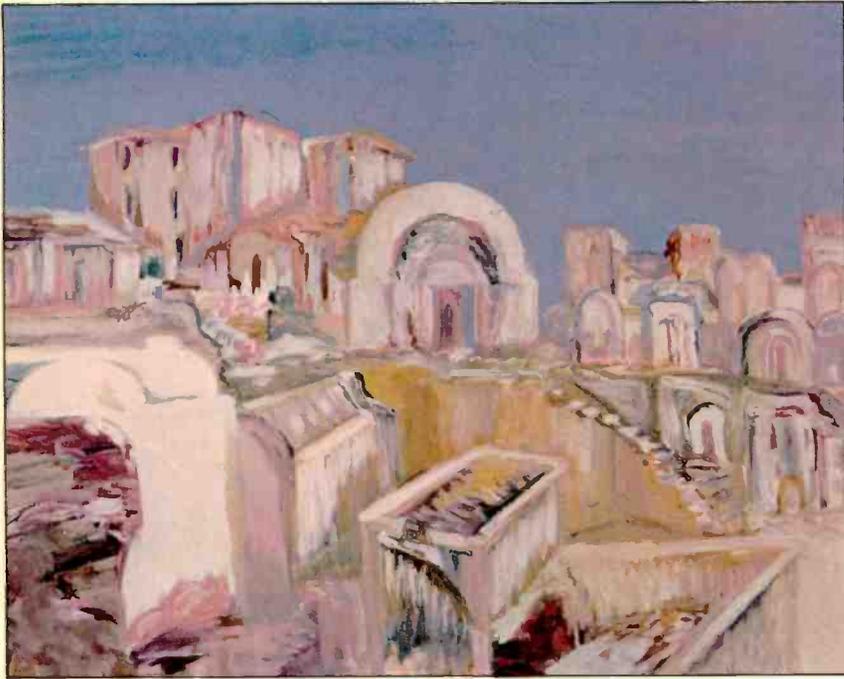
"Unfortunately, I didn't get to hear Dima when he played in New York because I was in Amsterdam at the time," she said. "But I heard him play a

The Gershwin concerto may be at least as popular in Russia as in the United States.

little Prokofiev in rehearsal, and to my mind he has started to play much more warmly. Whether it's his age or the experience of being alone in a new country, I don't know. The individual personality, the artistic soul of a person, always undergoes certain transformations over the years, regardless of whether he lives in the Soviet Union or the United States. Even back home, we were influenced by visiting artists. The arrival of Glenn Gould in Moscow, for instance, caused a revolution in the interpretation of Bach. All the students took their feet off the pedals and played staccato. It became impossible to teach Bach."

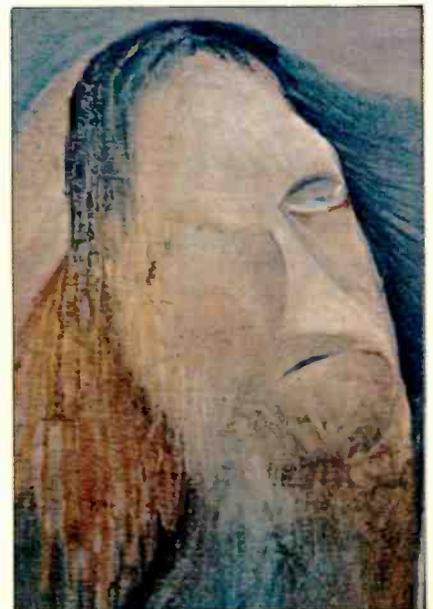
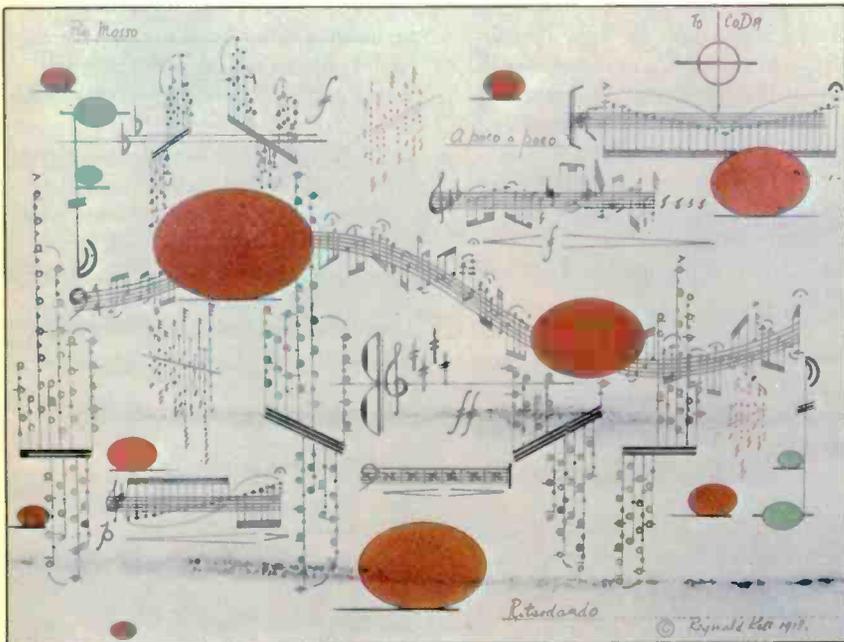
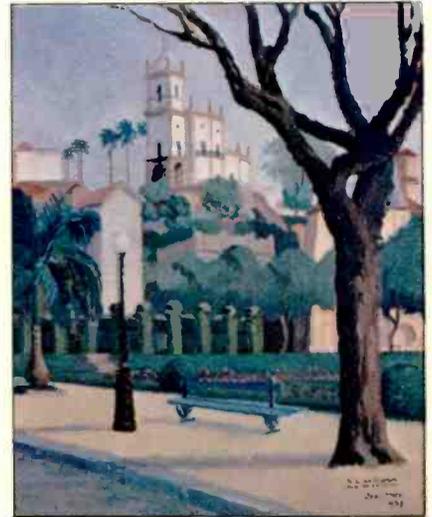
And what of Dmitry's prediction that her own style of playing will change? Davidovich laughed and flung her arms into the air: "When you have a son of twenty-five, it is hard to say anything. The musical life in the West is very lively, and I am eager to see and hear as much as possible. It's very hard to foresee what will happen. At present, I'm just the same person as before."

HF



Clockwise from directly above: Helen Gahagan Douglas' *Imaginary Morocco*; Leopold Stokowski's pastel view of the Columbia University campus from his studio window; Jean Morel's *N.S. da Gloria, a Church in Rio de Janeiro, 1939*; Arnold Schoenberg's 1924 portrait of his wife as she lay dy-

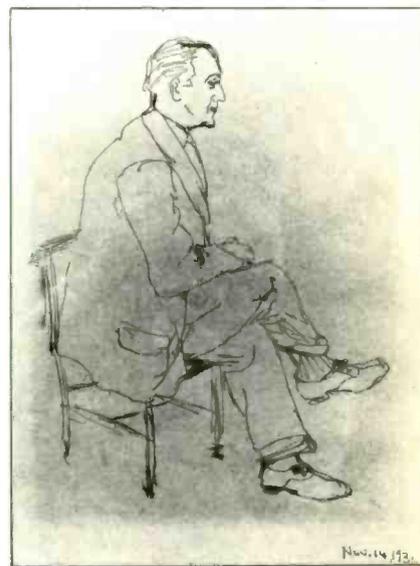
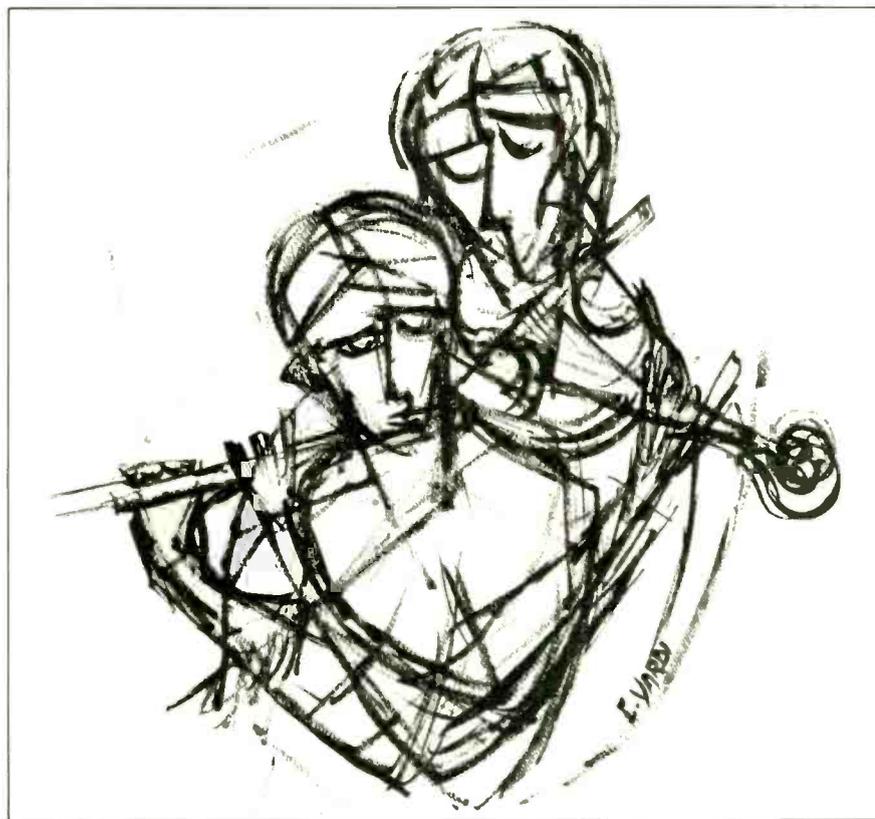
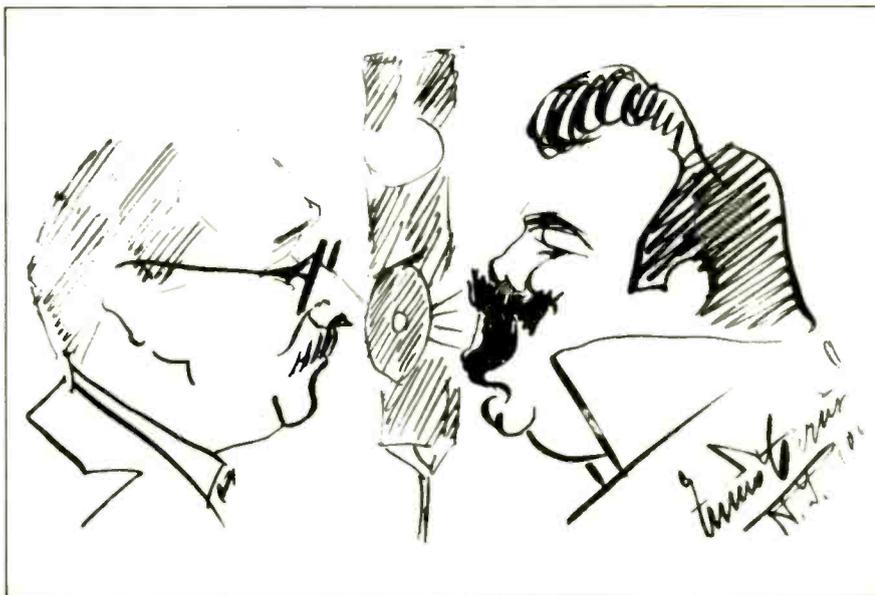
ing; and clarinetist Reginald Kell's Klee-like *Piu mosso, 1978*. What, you may ask, is Mrs. Douglas doing in the exhibit? The liberal former congresswoman, defeated for the Senate in 1950 by one Richard M. Nixon, preceded her political career with one as an actress and singer, both popular and operatic.



Musicians as Artists

On these pages is a sampling from a most unusual art exhibit that will open in New York this month: All the artists are best known as musicians. Among them are composers Arnold Schoenberg, George Gershwin, John Cage, Carl Ruggles, David Diamond, and Harold Rome; conductors Leonard Bernstein, Leopold Stokowski, Vladimir Golschmann, and Jean Morel; singers Lotte Lehmann, Luciano Pavarotti, Feodor Chaliapin, Enrico Caruso, and Tito Gobbi; and instrumentalists of all persuasions.

The exhibit, held for the benefit of the Koussevitzky International Record Awards (of which HIGH FIDELITY is co-sponsor), will be open to the public from October 11 to 20 at the Harkness Foundation Gallery, 7 East 75th Street. Admission is what you wish to donate. (The winner of this year's award will, as usual, be announced in our December issue.)



At top is an extraordinary self-caricature of Enrico Caruso, drawn in 1906 in New Jersey (probably Camden), the site of the Victor recording studios. What makes it so extraordinary is not only the other caricatured gentleman, the record industry's early, legendary a&r man, Fred Gaisberg, but what seems like a microphone into which Caruso is singing, twenty years before the

development of electrical recording. Above is violist/conductor Emanuel Vardi's *Flutist and Violinist*. At its right a 1931 sketch by George Gershwin of an unidentified man. Even the sketch's owner, Gershwin's sister Frances, doesn't know who it is, so if you can identify him—or can tell us what Caruso was doing in front of a microphone in 1906—please let us know.

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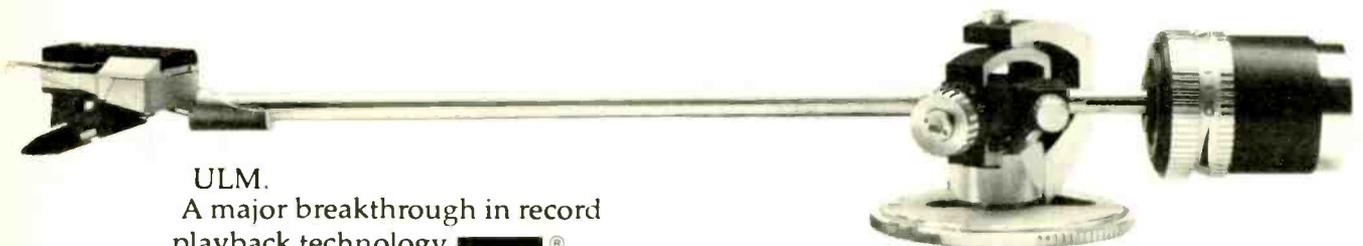
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Preview of the Forthcoming Year's Recordings: Part II

Here is the completion of our preview, begun in the September issue, of recordings planned for release in 1980. Reissues are indicated with a ■; quad releases with a □.

AURORA (U.K.)

(distributed by Qualiton Records)

BRAHMS: *Piano Concerto No. 2*. Ousset; Leipzig Gewandhaus O, Masur.

DANYEL: *Songs for Lute, Violin, and Voice* (1606). London Music Players, Cole.

BIS (Sweden)

(distributed by Qualiton Records)

BERG: *Seven Early Songs*. SEGERSTAM: *Six Songs of Experience*. Valjakka; Austrian RSO, Fischer and Segerstam.

BRAHMS: *Piano Trios* (3). Trio Pro Arte, Denmark (2).

DOPPLER: *Works for Two Flutes and Piano, Vol. 1*. Aitken, Øien, Braaten.

GRIEG: *Piano Works, Vols. 10, 11, 14*. Knardahl (with Royal PO, Ingebretsen).

NIELSEN: *Organ Works*. Westenholtz.

NIELSEN: *Piano Works*. Westenholtz (2).

OLSSON: *Organ Works*. Fagius.

PETERSON: *Choral Works*. Malmö CCh, et al.

SAEVERUD: *Orchestral Works*. Various performers.

Gunilla von Bahr and Diego Blanco: *Flute-Guitar Recital*.

Christmas Music for Choir. Soloists; Tapiola

NOTE ON ABBREVIATIONS

Performing groups are indicated with appropriate combinations of P (Philharmonic), R (Radio), S (Symphony), C (Chamber), O (Orchestra), and Ch (Chorus).

Where the number of discs is not obvious from the listing, this information (where known) is included in parentheses at the end.

Children's Choir, Pohjola.
Christmas Music for Organ. Fagius.
English Renaissance Organ Music. Fagius.
Rolf Leanderson (b): *Baroque Songs and Cantatas*.
With G. von Bahr, Fagius.
Old Swedish Organs, Vol. 3. Engstö.
Renaissance Music at the Compenius Organ, Denmark. L. Jacobson.
Knut Sønstevald: *Bassoon Recital*. Knardahl.
Christer Torgé and Hans Fagius: *Trombone-Organ Recital*.
Wind Quintets. Frösunda Quintet.

CHALFONT

(produced by Varèse Sarabande)

GILLIS: *Tulsa*. A. REED: *Russian Christmas Music*. H. O. REED: *La Fiesta mexicana*.
Symphonic Band Ensemble, Kendeigh, Revilli, and Griffith.

HADI SHARIF (Libya): *Sounds of the Desert* (symphonic suite on Arabian folk dances). London Symphonic Concert O, Dunn.

SOUNDSTREAM DIGITAL RECORDINGS:

BACH, FRANCK: *Organ Works*. Rawsthorne, Liverpool Cathedral organ.

KORNGOLD: *Kings Row* (film score). National PO, Gerhardt. (George Korngold, prod.)

Digital recordings distributed by Discwasher, list price \$15.

CITADEL

(produced by Varèse Sarabande)

BAXTER: *Black Sunday* (suite based on the film score); *Edgar Allan Poe Suite*. Symphonic Ensemble, London, Baxter.

■ GOLDSMITH: *The Blue Max* (film soundtrack). Graunke SO, Goldsmith.

■ GOLDSMITH: *Freud* (film soundtrack). Italian Cinema O, Goldsmith.

Film Music for Piano (piano and duo-piano selections by Rózsa, Steiner, Korngold). Dominguez.

FINLANDIA (Finland)

(formerly Finnlevy; distributed by German News)

BRAHMS: *Handel Variations; Paganini Variations*. De Groot.

ENGLUND: *Symphony No. 1*. Turku PO, Pekkanen.

ENGLUND: *Symphony No. 2; Epinikia*. Helsinki PO, Berglund and Pekkanen.

KLAMI: *Kalevala Suite; Cheremissian Fantasy*. Helsinki PO, Panula.

KOKKONEN: *Cello Concerto*. HAYDN: *Concerto in C*. Noras; Helsinki PO, Freeman and Kamu.

MADETOJA: *Symphony No. 2; Comedy Overture*. Helsinki PO, Panula.

MERILAINEN: *Symphony No. 3; Piano Concerto No. 2*. Gillespie; Helsinki PO.

PROKOFIEV, RACHMANINOFF: *Cello Sonatas*. Noras, Heinonen.

PROKOFIEV: *Piano Sonata No. 8; Romeo and Juliet Suite*. De Groot.

SALLINEN: *The Horseman* (complete opera). Savonlinna Festival production.

SARMANTO: *New Hope Jazz Mass*. Heikki Sarmanto Ensemble, Gregg Smith Vocal Ensemble, Long Island Symphonic Choral Association, Smith.

SCHUMANN, KILPINEN: *Songs*. Talvela.
SHOSTAKOVICH: *Cello Sonata*. SCHUBERT: *Arpeggione Sonata*. Noras, Valsta.

SIBELIUS: *Lemminkäinen and the Maidens; Finlandia*. BERGMAN: *Aubade*. Helsinki PO, Panula.

SIBELIUS, BRAHMS: *Songs*. Talvela.

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 4*. SALLINEN: *Mauermusik*. Finnish RSO, Berglund.

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 5*. RAUTAVAARA: *Requiem in Our Time*. Helsinki PO, Panula.

SIBELIUS: *Tapiola*. KOKKONEN: *Symphony No. 3*. Finnish RSO, Berglund.

SIBELIUS: *Violin-Piano Works*. Yaron, Stipelman.

Finnish Organ Music. Aikaa.

FREDONIA

LA MONTAINE: *Solo Flute Sonata; Conversations for Flute and Piano*. Dwyer.

SIFLER: *Recitative, Passacaglia, and Fugue*. Sifler, organ.

Fredonia Discs, 3947 Fredonia Dr., Hollywood, Calif. 90068.

GERMAN NEWS COMPANY

See Finlandia, Harmonia Mundi, Preiser, Vista, Wergo. German News Co., 218 E. 86th St., New York, N.Y. 10028.

GOLDEN AGE

ALTOUNIAN, K. AND T.: *Vocal Works*. Jamgochian Chorale, CO, Jamgochian.

BRAHMS: *Waltzes*. SCHUMANN: *Fantasies-tücke, Op. 12*. Cook.

GREENWOOD: *Chamber Works*. Young, Price, Elmquist, Fay, Greenwood.

KHATCHATOURIAN, K., AND WAINBURG: *Cello Sonatas*. Yampolsky.

McFREDERICK: *Various Works*.

Armenian Folklore (12 popular folksongs). Avedian, Badalian, Hovhannessian, Matevossian, Mekertchian, Tarpinian; folk and jazz orchestras (tape only).

■ *Armenian Popular Songs*. Jamgochian; Armenia's Folk Instrumental Ensemble, Anasian.

Jean Carrington Cook: *Piano Recital*. Works by Debussy, Rachmaninoff, Scriabin, Dohnányi.

Fugenia Evans: *Piano Recital*. Little-known sonatas.



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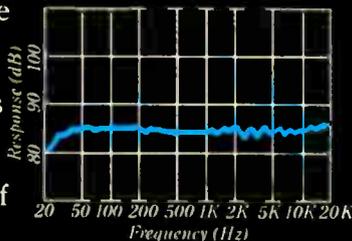
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HARMONIA MUNDI (Germany)
(distributed by German News Co.)

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Trio, Op. 70, No. 1; Gassenhauer Trio*. Deinzer, Maier, Demus.

BERG: *Violin Concerto*. Hoelscher; Wakasugi.

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 8*. Cologne RSO, Wand.

CEREROLS: *Missa pro defunctis*. Escolania Montserrat.

FRESCOBALDI: *Capriccios*. Leonhardt (2).

HANDEL: *Partenope*. Soloists; La Petite Bande (3).

MENDELSSOHN: *String Symphonies Nos. 6, 7, 10*. Ensemble 13.

MOZART: *Entführung*. *Nozze di Figaro* wind arr. Collegium Aureum.

MOZART: *Songs*. Auger, Werba.

MOZART: *Symphonies Nos. 23, 24, 29*. Ensemble 13.

RAMEAU: *Hippolyte et Aricie*. La Petite Bande (1).

WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll*. LISZT: *Malédiction*. Ensemble 13.

WEBERN: *Orchestral Works*. Wakasugi, cond. *Pro Cantione Antiqua: Music at the Tudor Courts*.

REISSUES (including some titles formerly available domestically on BASF):

BACH, C.P.E.: *Concertos*. Collegium Aureum.

BACH, J.C.: *Sinfonias*. Collegium Aureum.

BACH: *Harpichord Partitas (6)*. Leonhardt (3).

BACH: *Violin-Harpichord Sonatas (6)*. Kuijken, Leonhardt.

BOULEZ: *Le Marteau sans maître*.

BRAHMS: *Choral Works*. Kantorei Barmen.

BYRD: *Masses; Motets*. Deller Consort.

FROBERGER: *Harpichord Works*. Leonhardt.

HAYDN, MOZART: *Salve Regina*. Tölz Boys' Choir, Collegium Aureum.

HAYDN: *Symphonies Nos. 82, 83*. Collegium Aureum.

MOZART: *Clarinet Concerto*. Collegium Aureum.

PERGOLESI: *La Serva padrona*. Bonifaccio, Nimsger, Collegium Aureum.

SCHUMANN: *Album für die Jugend*. Demus (2).

TELEMANN: *Flute Suites*. Collegium Aureum.

VECCHI: *L'Amfiparnaso*. Deller Consort, Collegium Aureum (2).

VIVALDI: *Concertos*. Collegium Aureum.

VIVALDI: *Concertos; Sonatas*. Collegium Aureum.

Claviorganum. Musik in der Salzburger Residenz.

Collegium Aureum: Old German Christmas.

Wilhelm Krumbach, organ: *Vom Himmel Hoch*.

Pro Cantione Antiqua: A Christmas Sequence.

Sonatas from the High Baroque.

Tölz Boys' Choir: *Lieder Europas*.

HUNGAROTON (Hungary)
(distributed by Qualiton Records)

BEETHOVEN: *Cello Sonatas and Variations*. Pérényi, Ránki (3).

DEBUSSY, DUKAS, FALLA, RESPIGHI: *Orchestral Works*. Budapest PO, J. Sándor.

DURKÓ: *Moses (opera excerpts)*. Sass; Budapest Opera, Kórody.

FARKAS: *String Quartet; Correspondances; Fruit Basket*. Various performers.

HAYDN: *Seven Last Words*. Tátrai Qt.

JENEY: *Impho 102/6; Garden Of Orpheus; 100 Year Average*. Kocsis, et al.

KÓSA: *Cantata; Chinese Songs; De Profundis*. Various performers.

LÁNG: *Violin Concerto; Wind Quintet; Two Suites*. Pauk, Lehel, et al.

LISZT: *Faust Symphony; Two Episodes from Lenau's Faust*. Korondy; Hungarian Army Ch, State O, Ferencsik.

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos. 2, 3, 4, 6*. Szeged SO, Pál.

MOZART, L.: *Toy Symphony; Musical Sleigh Ride*. MOZART: *German Dances*. Liszt CO.

MOZART: *Requiem*. Kalmár, Takács, Korondy, Gregor; Hungarian Radio Ch, State O, Ferencsik.

SÁRY: *Various Works*. Various performers.

SCHOENBERG: *Book of the Hunging Gardens; Songs (8), Op. 6*. Sziklay, Jandó.

SCHOENBERG, STRAVINSKY: *Piano Concertos*. Fellegi; Hungarian RSO, Fischer.

SCHUMANN: *Piano Sonata, Op. 11; Abegg Variations; Arabeske*. Rados.

SIBELIUS: *Finlandia; Karelia Suite; Swan of Tuonela*. GRIEG: *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1*. Debrecen PO, Szabó.

STRAVINSKY: *L'Histoire du soldat; Renard; Japanese Songs*. Soloists; Budapest Ch Ensemble, Mihály.

VERDI: *Choruses*. Hungarian Radio, Breitner.

VIVALDI: *Guitar Concertos*. Szendrei-Karper; Hungarian ChO.

Bolshoi Theater Violin O. Works by Handel, Bach-Gounod, Saint-Saëns, et al.

■ Ernst von Dohnányi: *Piano Recital*. Works by Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Brahms, Dohnányi (2).

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■ Alexander Sved: *Operatic Recital*.

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■ Richard Tauber: *Operatic Recital* (2).

PREISER (Austria)

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PFITZNER: *Songs*. Holl.

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Inge Borkh Sings Her Memoires.

Christel Goltz: *Operatic Recital*.

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Organ Improvisations. Frieberger.

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Reissues devoted to Giannina Arangi-Lombardi, Maria Farneti, John Gläser, Giacomo Lauri-Volpi II, Hipolito Lazaro, Jose Mardones, Giovanni Martinelli II, Maartje Offers, Tancredi Passero II, Gianna Pederzini, Carlo Tagliabue.

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SUPRAPHON (Czechoslovakia)

(distributed by Qualiton Records)

BACH: *Cantatas Nos. 204, 209*. Jonášová; Ars Rediviva, Munclinger.

BACH: *Gamba Sonatas (3)*. Starker, cello; Růžičková.

BACH: *Works arr. for guitar*. Zelenka.

CEREMUGA, KRČEK: *Symphonies*. Czech PO, Bělohávek; Pízeň RSO, Klemens.

ČTVRTEK: *Vom Rahtolzer Räuber Rumzaís und seinem Sohne Zipfelchen; Taub*. Film SO, Koniček.

DVOŘÁK: *The Jacobin*. Machotková, Zitek, Průša, Tuček, Berman, Příbyl, Blachut, Sounová, Mixová; Brno State PO, Pínkas.

■ DVOŘÁK: *Piano Trios*. Suk Trio (3).

■ DVOŘÁK: *Symphonic Poems*. Czech PO, Neumann (2).

■ DVOŘÁK: *Violin Concerto; Romance*. Suk; Czech PO, Neumann.

FALIK, TISHCHENKO, SLONIMSKY, USPENSKY: *Orchestral Works*. Prague SO, Vronský.

FIALA, STAMITZ, VAŇHAL, VRANICKÝ: *Quartets*. Musica da Camera.

HANDEL: *Harpichord Works*. Růžičková (2).

HINDEMITH: *Piano Works*. Petermandl.

JANÁČEK: *Choral Works*. Czech PCh, Veselka.

JANÁČEK: *Diary of One Who Vanished*. Příbyl, Márová, Páleníček; Women's Ch,

Kühn.

JANÁČEK: *Fate*. Přibyl, Hájossová, Palivcová, Krejčík, Novák, Caban; Brno State Opera, Jilek.

● KROMMER-KRAMÁR: *Clarinet, Oboe Concertos*. Mihule, Zahradník; Prague CO, Vajnar.

KUBIK, RYBÁŘ, RIEDLBAUCH, KURZ, SLAVICKÝ: *Chamber Works*. Various.

LASSO: *Penitential Psalms*. Czech PCh, Veselka (2).

LECLAIR: *Chamber Works*. Ars Rediviva.

● MAHLER: *Symphony No. 5; Songs*. Berman; Czech PO, Neumann.

● MAHLER: *Symphony No. 7*. Czech PO, Neumann.

MARTINŮ: *Fantasia concertante; Two-Piano Concerto*. Various.

● MARTINŮ: *Symphonies Nos. 2, 6*. Czech PO, Neumann.

MENDELSSOHN: *Symphonies Nos. 4, 5*. Czech PO, Delogu.

MUSSORGSKY, RIMSKY-KORSAKOV, BORODIN: *Orchestral Works*. Brno State PO, Bělohávek.

● PALESTRINA: *Song of Songs*. Czech PCh, Veselka (2).

PROKOFIEV, HINDEMITH, POULENC: *Flute Sonatas*. Válek, Hála.

PROKOFIEV: *Symphony No. 7*. Czech PO, Košler.

RUBINSTEIN: *Viola Sonata*. JOACHIM: *Hebrew Melodies*. Mály, Křepelová.

SCHUBERT: *String Quartet No. 14; Quartett-satz*. Prague Qt.

SCHUMANN: *Violin Concerto*. SCHUBERT: *Konzertstück in D*. Snítíl; Prague SO, Hlaváček.

SHOSTAKOVICH, KHACHATURIAN: *Cello Concertos*. Sádlo; Prague SO, Smetáček.

SIBELIUS: *Violin Concerto*. BRUCH: *Concerto No. 1*. Ishikawa; Brno State PO, Bělohávek.

STRAVINSKY: *Piano Concerto; Sonata; Serenade*. Kožina (with Dvořák CO, Válek).

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Violin Concerto; Sérénade mélancolique*. Ishikawa; Czech PO, Košler.

VERDI: *Pezzi sacri (4)*. Czech PCh&O, Delogu. *Music at the Court of Charles IV*. Prague Madrigal Singers, Symposium Musicum (2). *Prague Strings, Hrábek (2)*.

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Varèse Sarabande is releasing mono and stereo reissues and first releases in the classical and film-soundtrack fields. A new series of stereo recordings is being released in conjunction with the Roy Harris Archive. New soundtracks (most of which are not listed below) by Delerue, Rózsa, Donaggio, and Morricone will appear before Christmas. Additionally, a series of new Soundstream digital recordings has been launched, with initial releases featuring Morton Gould conducting the London Symphony.

Varèse Sarabande now produces the Chalfont and Citadel labels (see separate listings) in conjunction with their founders, Thomas A. Britton and Tony Thomas. Citadel will continue to specialize in film music; Chalfont's emphasis will be on digital classical recordings.

Varèse Sarabande and Chalfont digital recordings are distributed by Discwasher (1407 N. Providence Rd., Columbia, Mo. 65201), list price \$15.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphonies (9)*. Leipzig Gewandhaus O, Masur.

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 0*. Osaka PO, Asahina.

■ *Gershwin Rarities*. Songs from films and Broadway featuring Kaye Ballard and Nancy Walker (mono reissue from Walden).

HINDEMITH: *Concertos: for Harp, Woodwinds, and Orchestra; for Trumpet, Bassoon, and Orchestra*. San Francisco Little SO, Millar.

MOROSS: *Concerto for Flute with String Quartet; Sonata for Piano Duet and String Quartet*.

RÓZSA: *Fedora (film score)*. Graunke SO, Rózsa.

SKALKOTTAS: *Greek Dances (12)*. San Francisco Little SO, Millar.

SOUNDSTREAM DIGITAL RECORDINGS:

Gould Conducts Gould. London SO.

GRAINGER: *Works for Symphonic Band*. U.C.L.A. Wind Ensemble, Westbrook.

HOLDRIDGE: *Violin Concerto; Film-Score Suites*. Dicterow; London SO, Holdridge.

TANNER AND SIU: *Boy with Goldfish* (cantata for large orchestra, with added percussion, chorus, organ, and soloists, based on Hawaiian legends as interpreted by the paintings of John Thomas). Siu, Elliott; London SO, Holdridge.

Digital Film Festival (works by Rózsa, Bliss, Copland, Walton, Williams, Moross, Vaughan Williams, Gould). London SO, Gould.

REMINGTON SERIES (all mono reissues):

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 3*. Vienna Tonkünstler O, Busch.

BRAHMS: *Violin Concerto*. Spalding; Vienna Tonkünstler O, Busch.

OFFENBACH-ROSENTHAL: *Offenbachiana*. Berlin RSO, Rosenthal.

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 5*. Berlin RSO, J alas. TCHAIKOVSKY: *The Tempest*. Vienna Tonkünstler O, Fekete.

VILLA-LOBOS: *Chorus No. 6; Bachianas brasileiras No. 7*. Berlin RSO, Villa-Lobos.

URANIA SERIES (partial listing; mono reissues except as noted):

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Sonata No. 29* (arr. Weingartner). Bavarian SO, Graunke.

DOHNÁNYI: *Symphonic Minutes, Op. 36*. Bavarian SO, Graunke. DVORÁK: *The Jacobin: Suite*. Berlin RSO, Kretschmar.

SMETANA: *Wedding Scenes*. Leipzig RO, Pfluger.

GLAZUNOV: *Symphony No. 4*. Kansas City PO, Schwieger (stereo). MIASKOVSKY: *Lyric Concertino*. Berlin RSO, Guhl.

MEHUL: *Symphony No. 1*. Berlin RSO, Kleinert. WITT: *Jena Symphony*. Brussels RO, Schwieger (stereo, previously unreleased).

PFTZNER: *Symphony in C sharp minor*. German Opera House O, Schmidt-Isserstedt. *Käthchen von Heilbronn: Overture*. Vienna PO, Pftzner.

PROKOFIEV: *Semyon Kotko: Suite*. Berlin RSO, Kleinert (includes one previously unreleased movement).

STRAUSS, J.: *Ritter Pázmán: Ballet*. Berlin RSO, Guhl. *Marches, Waltzes, Polkas*. Vienna Philharmonica O, Hagen (stereo).

WEBER: *Abu Hassan*. Schwarzkopf, Witte; Berlin RSO, Ludwig.

French Suite (works by Egk, Roussel, Debussy, Massenet). Egk, Celibadache, and Sebastian, cond.

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Varèse Sarabande Records, 6404 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1127, Los Angeles, Calif. 90048.

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Bach Family: *Music of*.

HOWELLS: *Organ Works, Vol. 3: John Ireland and His Contemporaries*.

PARRY: *Organ Works*. Massey.

RHEINBERGER: *Piano Trios, Vol. 1*. New England Trio.

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Organ in St. Dominic's Priory. T. Murray.

Organ Music from Four London Churches.

Organ Music from Leeds. Lindley.

Organ Music from St. Edmundsbury Cathedral. Oxley.

Organ Music of Pupils of Dukas, Vol. 2.

Organ of Beverley Minster. Spedding.

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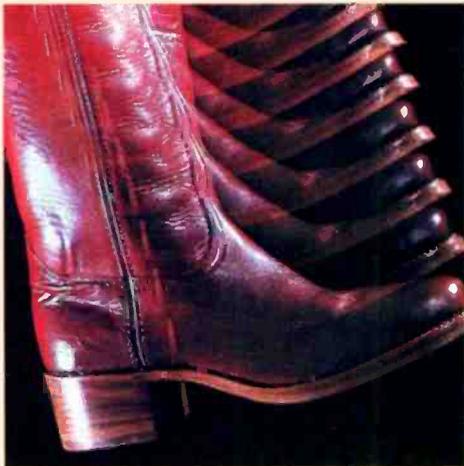
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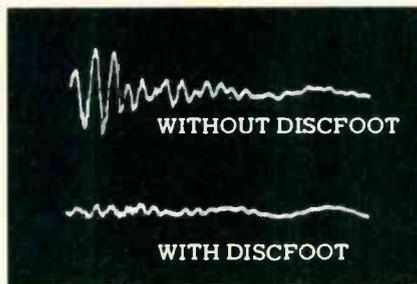
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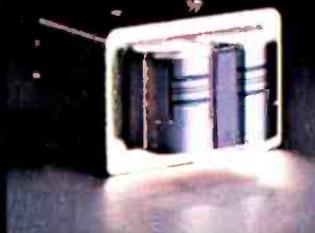
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Donizetti's Version of a Middle-Verdi Melodrama

by Patrick J. Smith

London's *Lucrezia Borgia* is distinguished by Richard Bonynges crisp yet flexible conducting and Joan Sutherland's magisterial, vocally robust heroine.

Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833) is not one of his best scores, but it is a good deal better than his average ones. This is so less because of the music Donizetti provided than because of the grisly, super-melodramatic plot Felice Romani fashioned from the Victor Hugo play. Emotion is at center stage, and—given the necessity for plenty of vocal opportunities—the story moves with concision and rapidity, ending with the villain Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara, left alive, in the company of his wife and her (not his) son, both dead on-stage, and five more people poisoned off-stage. The plot has as much coherence as most suspense movies and a trifle less believability, but Romani knew enough to give his heroine the chance to show a variety of emotions: mother love, family pride, fury, hatred, fear, triumph, and, finally, grief. He is aided by the ambiguity of the story, for son Gennaro is unaware of the identity of his mother and adores her in the oedipal sense until she enlightens him in the final duet, when he is dying.

Donizetti pours forth a steady

DONIZETTI: *Lucrezia Borgia*.

CAST:

Lucrezia	Joan Sutherland (s)
Maffio Orsini	Marilyn Horne (ms)
Gennaro	Giacomo Aragall (t)
Rustighello	Graeme Ewer (t)
Liverotto	Graham Clark (t)
Vitellozzo	Piero de Palma (t)
Don Alfonso	Ingvar Wixell (b)
A Servant	David Wilson-Johnson (b)
Gazella	Lieuwe Visser (bs)
Petrucci	John Bröcheler (bs)
Astolfo	Nicola Zaccaria (bs)
Gubetta	Richard Van Allan (bs)

National Philharmonic Orchestra, London Opera Chorus (director: Terry Edwards), Richard Bonynges, cond. [James Mallinson, prod.] LONDON OSA 13129, \$26.94 (three discs, automatic sequence). Tape: OSA5 13129, \$26.94 (three cassettes).

Joan Sutherland, Richard Bonynges, and Marilyn Horne on a London street



stream of melody of a positive and optimistic sort—as was his habit—and the very dynamic, upbeat quality of the music serves to heighten tension when combined with the largely unrelieved bleakness of the plot. The music thus achieves a dramatic function that I feel eludes it in Donizetti's straightforward dramas (e.g., *Roberto Devereux*), in which its very life-enhancing qualities work against the more elevated drama of the story. In much the same way, the frenetic partying of Orsini and his friends, in their inane superficiality, is deliberately set against the backdrop of the deadly Borgias and culminates in the last scene, in which the roisterers joyously and unknowingly quaff their poisoned cups of wine. (The dramatic irony of the scene was reused, in altered form, by Scribe and Meyerbeer in the last scene of *Le Prophète*.)

Lucrezia Borgia has never been particularly successful, even among Donizetti's operas, I think because it is the Donizetti opera that most clearly points the way to the middle-Verdi melodramas, and these effectively eclipsed it. Verdi's handling of a swiftly moving and more tightly constructed story of heightened emotion, in *Macbeth* and more centrally in *Rigoletto* and *Un Ballo in maschera*, is everywhere more persuasive. Yet the seeds for those works and others are contained here. Indeed, the handling of the Borgia henchmen throughout *Lucrezia* is directly analogous to *Rigoletto*, and the setting of Act I, Scene 3 (Act II, Scene 3 in the London recording, which numbers the prologue as Act I), with its repeated musical figure underlying the conversation of Rustighello and Astolfo, could be the model for the great Sparafucile/*Rigoletto* scene in its evocation of insinuated menace.

London's new recording of *Lucrezia*, while not ideal, does bring out strongly the febrile vitality that infuses the work. Its only rival is the RCA recording with Montserrat Caballé, reviewed here by Conrad L. Osborne in 1967. In at least one respect, the RCA recording is clearly superior: the Gennaro of Alfredo Kraus. Although Kraus does not possess a luscious voice, his sense of phrase and style is so apt and beautiful that it is a constant pleasure to hear—particularly today, when such values, among leading tenors, are in very short supply. But Gennaro is, as a character, a near nullity, and Donizetti has not given him a role commensurate with his mother's.

The question of editions is a factor. Donizetti, in keeping with nineteenth-century performance practice, altered the score for specific performances. At her insistence, he provided the first *Lucrezia*, Henriette Méric-Lalande, a final coloratura death aria, which he later excised. Both recorded sopranos side with Méric-Lalande rather than Donizetti and include it. In 1840, he added a cabaletta to *Lucrezia's* aria in the prologue; Caballé sings it, but Joan Sutherland, oddly, does not. Richard Bonyngé inserts a tenor aria in Act II, written for Nicolai Ivanoff, that the conductor found in the Morgan Library in New York (keeping in, too, the Gennaro/Orsini duet dropped when the aria was sung), and also includes the brief tenor arioso from Donizetti's refashioning of the last scene; neither of these tenor additions is in the RCA. Bonyngé, however, makes several small cuts in the chorus parts, uncut in the RCA. His performance also features occasional differences in note values, as well as cymbal crashes in the orchestrations at various spots not found in the RCA. As usual with him, second verses of arias are embellished.

The strengths of the London recording lie in the aforementioned energy—in Bonyngé's conducting and in Sutherland's vocalism. Bonyngé plays for drive but, at the same time, demonstrates the flexibility of tempo and plasticity of phrase that enliven his best ballet recordings. His attention to clean staccato orchestral passages give many sections a buoyancy and crispness that propels the music onward, and in this he is aided by the lithe, spirited, and youthful-sounding London Opera Chorus. RCA's Jonel Perlea is no match—though consistently forceful, he has none of the nuance Bonyngé brings to the opera.

Sutherland is Sutherland, which means that most of *Lucrezia's* emotional variety goes unrealized, except for some swooning phrasing meant to suggest feminine fragility. She cannot, for instance, really convey outrage at the beginning of her central scene with her husband, and though her enunciation is, for her, quite good, she rarely sings anything under mezzo-forte. Her voice, nevertheless, sounds in surprisingly good shape (the recording was made in August 1977), with a firmness of tone and an ongoing thrust reminiscent of her best vocal days, and her coloratura and trill remain solid. She brings an appropriate magisterial, almost glacial,

stature to her outburst at her husband in their scene, as well as in the final scene, tempering it there to an affecting farewell to her son. The noble imperturbability of the character is well set forward. Those who admire Caballé will perhaps prefer her vocalism, which is more varied, but I generally agree with Osborne's strictures as to her technique, and she was in subpar vocal estate at the time of the recording.

The subtleties Bonyngé brings to the orchestral playing are not reflected in the solo work. Vocally, the opera is played for maximum gut wallop. Giacomo Aragall simply cannot sing at any other level but forte (his isolated attempts at soft singing are embarrassing). Moreover, his major faults—an in-built sob and the frequent inability to strike the center of the pitch—while less evident than in some of his live performances, are for me a major distraction and annoyance, although others may be less bothered. It is ironic that he, and not Kraus, was given the opportunity to sing the extra tenor music. Ingvar Wixell's baritone does not have the range or flexibility of his RCA counterpart, Ezio Flagello, but he does bring to Alfonso a dark and consistently focused intensity that is exactly right for that unregenerate black hat. His rendition of the rousing cabaletta to his Act I aria is electrifying and is splendidly partnered by Bonyngé's rhythmically vital (and prominent) accompaniment.

Marilyn Horne's singing of the trouser role of Maffio Orsini is another in the long list of performance enigmas by this gifted artist. It is quite well sung, even if the celebrated last act ballata needs more quickness and élan, and it lies well for her voice, but she does not give me any picture of a young and insouciant rakehell. The volume and weight of the voice are wrong, and what results is singing for singing's sake rather than any portrayal of character. RCA's Shirley Verrett, despite her curious Italian pronunciation, is much more in the trouser-role tradition and sings equally well.

The supporting cast (numerous, but minor in contribution) is adequate overall. The recording is close-miked as to the principals (Horne's breathiness is very evident) and lacks a sense of aural depth, but the orchestra can be more clearly heard than on RCA. Exemplary notes—which should set a standard for the industry—by Jeremy Commons.



Richard Strauss in the mid-Thirties

Eleventh among Richard Strauss's fifteen operas, *Die schweigsame Frau* (*The Silent Woman*) was the first after the death of Hugo von Hoffmansthal and—Strauss hoped—the first of many in a new collaboration with the Austrian novelist, playwright, and biographer Stefan Zweig. The libretto was completed on January 17, 1933; two weeks later, Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany. Zweig was Jewish, and by the time the new opera was finally performed in Dresden on June 24, 1935, Strauss had learned just how limited was his clout—and even his privacy—as Germany's greatest living composer. He did manage to have Zweig's name printed on the program, but, to his intense humiliation, an irate and compromising letter he had sent to Zweig was intercepted and sent to Hitler. Direct collaboration was no longer possible, and Zweig declined to work under a pseudonym; instead, he passed his ideas on to the servile and uninspired theatrical historian, Josef Gregor, who made the libretto for *Friedenstag* with Zweig's direct assistance. (*Capriccio*, too, was a Zweig idea, which Strauss eventually took away from Gregor, turning it over to Clemens Krauss.) The whole sad story can be read in the Strauss-Zweig correspondence, recently published in English by the University of California Press under the title *A Confidential Matter*.

Zweig had earlier won great success with his adaptation of Ben Jonson's *Volpone* (made without direct reference to the original, on the basis of a detailed synopsis in a French history of English literature!), and to Strauss he proposed another Jonson subject. *Epicoene* or *the Silent Woman* (1609) is a comedy dealing with a society in which both the distinctions of gender and the proper uses of language have become blurred and distorted. Its action combines two plots of considerable antiquity: the one about the foolish old man whose intention to wed is foiled when a young man is sub-

The Silent Lass with a Strenuous Air

by David Hamilton

Though the performance lacks color and polish, Angel gives us the Strauss-Zweig *Die schweigsame Frau* complete in its first recording, and for all the work's dramatic and musical flaws it is welcome.

stituted for the supposed spouse (at least as old as Plautus' *Casina*), and the one about the foolish old man who, seeking peace and quiet, marries a timid young girl and discovers her to be a shrew in mouse's clothing (a version of this by the fourth-century Greek satirist Libanius had been translated into Latin and published just a few years before Jonson's play).

As far as retaining the social overtones and the verbal imagery of Jonson's comedy is concerned, Zweig might as well have worked from a synopsis, as he did with *Volpone* (in fact, he worked from two German translations by Tieck)—but this was doubtless good sense, for the dual sea-change of translation and musical setting would pretty well have smothered them anyway. Also jettisoned was the central feature of the Plautus plot, the transvestite spouse; the libretto's bogus wedding is to a real woman—in other words, pretty much the plot of *Don Pasquale* (which of course stems from the same antique ancestors).

What remains from Jonson otherwise are a couple of characters. The play's rich uncle, Morose, is a ludicrous creature who can bear no noise except the sound of his own voice. Zweig "humanizes" him into the retired sea captain Sir Morosus, whose distaste for noise stems from eardrums damaged by a gunpowder explosion—but paradoxically this rationalization of his complaint, and the gradual revelation that he has a sympathetic side, make the plot to deceive him rather less palatable. While Jonson's conspirators use noise to unmask a grotesque faker, Zweig's use it to torture a man with a genuine physical affliction; the fact that Aminta (the Norina figure) feels sorry for him as she makes him miserable does not make the goings-on more palatable.

From Jonson, Zweig also takes the figure of the barber who organizes the plot (Doctor Malatesta, as it were), but the rest of the characters are his own invention. The

nephew whose inheritance is at stake, Henry, has disgraced himself by leaving the university and joining an Italian opera troupe that is about to open a season at London's Haymarket Theatre, and by marrying one of the singers, Aminta. The rest of the troupe fills in the necessary roles in the mummery marriage and divorce proceedings (it's not at all clear how a bunch of down-at-the-heels Italian singers have become so fluent in English—and in dialects, yet—that they can carry off this elaborate set of impersonations, but one of the advantages of writing this opera in German is that you don't have to face that question squarely). Zweig never got quite clear on the chronology; having introduced the opera company, he had to abandon the original 1609 period. An initial date of 1760 was changed in later copies of the score to 1780, but in the last act Aminta and Henry sing excerpts from seventeenth-century operas (actually Straussian pastiches), while Strauss elsewhere inserts quotations ranging from the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book* to *Die Frau ohne Schatten*, which makes anachronism into an article of faith. In a letter to the

STRAUSS, R.: *Die schweigsame Frau*, Op. 80.

CAST:

Aminta	Jeanette Scovotti (s)
Isotta	Carola Nossek (s)
Housekeeper	Annelies Burmeister (ms)
Carlotta	Trudeliene Schmidt (ms)
Henry Morosus	Eberhard Büchner (t)
The Barber	Wolfgang Schöne (b)
Morbio	Klaus Hirte (b)
Sir Morosus	Theo Adam (bs-b)
Vanuzzi	Werner Haseleu (bs)
Farfallo	Helmut Berger-Tuna (bs)
Parrot	Johannes Kemter (spkr)

Dresden State Opera Chorus, Dresden State Orchestra, Marek Janowski, cond. [Helmut Storzjohann and Heinz Wegner, prod.] ANGEL SZCX 3867, \$24.98 (three SQ-encoded discs, automatic sequence).

original costume designer, Zweig wrote that he had envisaged the England of Handel and George III, referring to Rowlandson's drawing of Vauxhall Gardens.

That doesn't matter very much in practice, though it is symptomatic of some sloppy thinking. And Strauss, perhaps in an excess of joy at having discovered a distinguished new collaborator, wasn't nearly as critical of Zweig's work as he used to be when sizing up the theatrical and musical potential of Hofmannsthal's. (Neither Strauss nor Zweig ever mentions *Don Pasquale* in the correspondence; it's hard to believe that neither of them knew Donizetti's work—after all, it was performed in Salzburg, where Zweig lived and Strauss often visited to hear his own works, in the summers of 1930 and 1931!)

The "blend of noble lyric poetry and farce" which to Strauss constituted "an entirely new genre of opera buffa" is in fact not very well constructed. The lyricism keeps getting in the way of the farce, even toward the end of the otherwise tightly made first act, and rather seriously so in Act II, when the mock wedding is much delayed by a duet between Morosus and the disguised Aminta. Clumsy, too, is the undercutting of what should be the climax of this act, the moment when "Timida" (Aminta in disguise) suddenly becomes a noisy termagant; a previous elaborate intrusion of supposed sailors from Morosus' old ship (actually the Italians in disguise), followed by the entire neighborhood, has already worn out our ears as well as the poor old man's.

To these problems must be added the weight of Strauss's music. Not that he doesn't try to keep it light. He uses a deal of spoken material, sometimes unaccompanied, sometimes over a light musical background. He makes closed forms that, especially in the first act, move matters along expeditiously and maintain good pacing. He exploits that chamber-orchestra style of marzipan rococo devised for the *Bürger als Edelmann-Ariadne* pastiche, and also what remains in his *Till Eulenspiegel* vein.

Alas, the cumulative weight of all the notes—the insistently strenuous vocal writing, the complex ensembles, the ceaseless virtuoso elaboration of the motives—saturated orchestral textures—simply overwhelms the already tenuous (i.e., somewhat Teutonic) lightheartedness of the drama and the often only workmanlike quality of the musical ideas. Especially by the third act, Strauss's never strong artistic discipline has collapsed, and he abandons any consistency of style, grasping at straws for inspiration. The final peaceful monologue for Morosus, rather than transfiguring his musical material, merely repeats it—the curtain

scene is a deadly anticlimax.

And yet there is—as always with Strauss—much characteristic and inventive writing. The Overture (written after the opera was finished) is a jolly and ingenious confection from the opera's leading motives. In Act I, Morosus' complaints about noise in general and bells in particular are set to novel and apt music (though the quodlibet of operatic quotations that accompanies the first of these fails to sound clearly in the recording). The barber's music is lively, and his development of the conspiracy at the end of Act I builds very well, though it never quite recovers its momentum after being briefly sidetracked by an unnecessary slower section. Even the ill-placed duet for Morosus and Aminta in Act II is musically sound, if rather obviously indebted to the Sachs/Eva scenes in *Meistersinger*. There's much felicity of detail to offset the limited satisfaction that the totality yields.

What is certain, *Die schweigsame Frau* turned out to be anything but the light comic opera its authors intended, just as *Die ägyptische Helena* ended up far from the *belle Hélène* manner that Strauss had hoped for. Miraculously, Strauss was finally, in *Capriccio*, to recover his touch, to bring matter and manner back into proportion. But not in this work.

Angel's recording brings to nine the number of Strauss operas that have been recorded commercially (*Helena*, recorded last spring in Detroit, will raise the total to ten). So far, the later operas have been introduced to records in performances of considerable distinction: Walter Legge's Angel productions of *Ariadne* (conducted by Karajan) and *Capriccio* (conducted by Sawallisch) are models of style and virtuosity; *Die Frau ohne Schattien* (London) and *Daphne* (DG) were conducted by Karl Böhm at the height of his powers; the Solti *Arabella* (London) is also an impressive piece of work. These recordings made the best possible cases for the operas.

The Dresden *Schweigsame Frau* is less convincing, if only because no individual performance strikes us—as did Schwarzkopf's *Ariadne* and Countess, Seefried's *Composer*, Rysanek's *Empress* and Schoeffler's *Barak*, Gueden's *Daphne* and Zdenka, Wunderlich's *Leukippos*, Della Casa's *Arabella*—as a masterful realization of the character in question. There is competence and earnestness here, but not avid re-creation.

Most debilitating are the limitations of Theo Adam's Morosus. The part is extravagantly written (by the same composer who now and then wrote low F sharps for the violins even though he knew they couldn't be played on any violin in captivity), from top F down to D flat below the

bass staff. The extremes aside, it demands much firm legato tone in the center of that range, and this Adam cannot provide. He's played the part on-stage a good deal, and makes appropriate gestures; not enough of them are projected with convincing security.

Aminta the silent woman is required to be silent all the way up to top E—a Zerbinetta who can ride over heavier ensembles and thicker scoring; the twenty-five-year-old Maria Cebotari created the part, to Strauss's great satisfaction (though her contemporary recordings leave one wondering about that upper range). For Jeanette Scovotti, the range is accessible, and she has few serious difficulties with intonation, so it seems churlish to wish for more variety of color, more fullness of tone for the melodies in the middle range—but these would help.

Wolfgang Schöne is a lively Barber, Eberhard Büchner a dry and wooden Henry (the original singer of this part was Martin Kremer, a Dresden *Spieltenor*; in 1959 at Salzburg, Fritz Wunderlich made his first international impact as Henry, and such a voice and style surely did enhance what is in fact some of Strauss's pleasanter writing for tenor). The ensembles are more vigorous than polished, suffering—as does much of the performance—from a strenuous air that is less the result of excess vigor than of insufficient attention to dynamic shading. Nor does the loss of detail in the rather resonant acoustic enhance our perception of Strauss's subtleties.

This recording gives us the complete score, for which I am grateful. Doubtless, cuts are desirable in performance; Böhm, who conducted the uncut Dresden premiere, took out nearly a third of the piece for the 1959 Salzburg performances. But it seems desirable that we should have at least one complete recording of such a work, so that listeners can make up their own minds about the work's difficulties without possibilities having been foreclosed by someone else's decisions. (It may be, of course, that cutting isn't the answer, or that the best cuts from the point of view of pacing also remove necessary plot material. Sometimes flawed works cannot be repaired.)

The booklet includes, usefully, pictures of the original Dresden designs, and essays by Ernst Krause, a Strauss biographer who should not have committed such errors as these: a reference to Zweig's "translation" of *Volpone*; a statement that in 1933 Zweig "first went to Austria" (but he had always lived there!); and a story about Strauss visiting Hitler personally that, although reported in Zweig's memoirs, seems to be a misunderstanding on his part, supported by no firsthand evidence. **HF**

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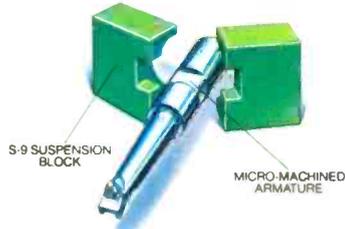
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Gennady Rozhdestvensky
Getting the most from Balakirev

BALAKIREV: Symphony No. 2, in D minor. GLAZUNOV: Cortège solennel, Op. 91.

Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. [Severin Pazukhin and Alexander Grossman, prod.] COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M 35155, \$7.98.

Mily Balakirev (1837–1910) probably was the most influential of all the forces that shaped Russian musical nationalism, in particular the early creative careers of Borodin, Mussorgsky, and Rimsky-Korsakov. This great original was what the British would call a “rum cove”—in later life, at least, a neurasthenic religious fanatic, a misogynist, indeed a misanthrope. In short, a “most disagreeable man” who was his own worst enemy as an artist. When he wasn’t lethargically inactive for long periods, he was so busy telling his disciples how and what to compose that he ne-

glected his own work, eventually finding it difficult, if not impossible, to finish what he had promisingly started. Nevertheless, he was an inventive genius, and as discographic growth widens our knowledge of his work, we keep hoping to find something hitherto unknown that we can rank with such long-accepted masterpieces as the kaleidoscopic tone poem *Tamara* and the nearly superhuman virtuoso showpiece *Islamey*.

Unfortunately, we haven’t found it in the Second Symphony, which will be new to most American listeners. The only previous recording I know of, Alexei Kovaliev’s mono LP of the early Fifties, apparently was released only in Russia and France. Labored over from 1900 to 1908, this score is less successful overall than the First Symphony. The arrestingly virile and quintessentially Russian themes of both the first movement and the *Tempo di polacca* finale are ineffectually developed, and the pallidly lyrical Romanza meanders interminably. Only the high-voltage *Alla cosacca* scherzo is an incomparably motoric masterpiece, characteristic of Balakirev—and it was written years before, originally intended for the First Symphony.

What a pity that Balakirev was not the sort of man who could learn—say, from Taneyev, who was twenty years younger but far more disciplined—as well as teach! But of course even a Balakirev well short of his best is still more stimulating than composers working at full stretch of more limited potentials. And it doesn’t matter much that the present robustly recorded 1973 performance is coarse, even harsh, sonically. Rozhdestvensky has no doubt at all of the music’s worth, and his enthusiasm is hard to resist.

The conductor even brings some conviction to the far more conventional filler, the second of Glazunov’s *Cortèges solennels* (1907), which is more accurately described by the literal English translation of its original Russian title, *Festive Processional*. It’s a rousing symphonic march based on the famous Russian folksong, “*Slava*,” that would make a welcome, fresh addition to any summer pops program. R.D.D.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55 (Eroica).

Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond. [Günther

B Budget
H Historical
R Reissues
A Audiophile
(digital, direct-to-disc, etc.)

Critics' Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BACH, J.C.: Sinfonias (6). Marriner. PHILIPS 9502 001, Sept.
 BACH: Toccatas, Vol. 1. Gould. COLUMBIA M 35144. Keyboard Works. Kempff. DG 2530 723. Well-Tempered Clavier. Loesser. TELARC 5029-5 (5), July.
 BEETHOVEN: Fidelio. Flagstad, Walter (1941). METROPOLITAN OPERA MET 6 (3), July.
 BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 4. Rosen, Morris. PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 110, Aug.
 BEETHOVEN: String Quintets, Opp. 4, 104. Suk Qt, Spelina. SUPRAPHON 1 11 2128, July.
 BERG: Lulu. Silja, Berry, Hopferwieser, Dohnányi. LONDON OSA 13120 (3), Aug.
 BOCCHERINI: Symphonies (6). Leppard. PHILIPS 6703 034 (3), Sept.
 BRITTEN: Peter Grimes. Vickers, Harper, C. Davis. PHILIPS 6769 014 (3), July.
 BUSONI: Piano Sonatinas (6). Jacobs. NONESUCH H 71359, July.
 MASSENET: Cendrillon. Von Stade, Gedda, Welting, Rudel. COLUMBIA M3 35194 (3), Aug.
 MARTINŮ: Symphony No. 1; Variations for Piano and Orchestra. Lechner, Neumann. SUPRAPHON 4 10 2166, Sept.
 MONTEVERDI: Madrigals, Book VII. Soloists, Leppard. PHILIPS 6747 416 (3), July.
 MUSSORGSKY: Pictures. SHOSTAKOVICH: Preludes. Berman. DG 2531 096, July.
 MUSSORGSKY: Songs. Nesterenko. COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M 35141, July.
 RAVEL: Vocal and Instrumental Works. DeGaetani, Kalish, et al. NONESUCH H 71355, July.
 SHOSTAKOVICH: Lady Macbeth of the Mzensk District. Vishnevskaya, Rostropovich. ANGEL SCLX 3866 (3), Sept.
 SIBELIUS: Four Legends. Ormandy. ANGEL S 37537, July.
 SMETANA: Má Vlast. Talich (1956-57). REDIFFUSION HCN 8001/2 (2). Neumann. SUPRAPHON 4 10 2021/2 (2), July.
 VIVALDI: L'Olimpiade. Zempléni, et al., Szekeres. HUNGAROTON SLPX 11901/3 (3), July.
 ELLY AMELING: Souvenirs. COLUMBIA M 35119, Aug.
 TERESA BERGANZA: Zarzuela Recital. ZAMBRA ZL 505, July.
 EDWARD TARR AND GEORGE KENT: Baroque Masterpieces for Trumpet and Organ, Vol 3. NONESUCH H 71356, July.
 BUCK ROGERS. Original film soundtrack recording. MCA 3097, Aug.
 SWEENEY TODD: Original Broadway cast recording. RCA RED SEAL CBL 2-3379 (2), Aug.

Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 123, \$8.98. Tape: 3301 123, \$8.98 (cassette).

Giulini and his new orchestra gave a soporific account of the *Eroica* in Carnegie Hall last May, an utterly wrongheaded, low-tension account. All the strife was smoothed away, and such crucial elements as the jabbing trumpet dissonances and the numerous sforzando accents (not to mention the sense of the first-movement marking, *Allegro con brio*) were underplayed. This recording, made several months earlier, is much tougher in accentuation, more precisely executed, and, everything considered, a much more viable interpretation of Beethoven.

I still question the wisdom of that first-movement repeat, especially when the tempo is as slow as, if not slower than, Klemperer's, and I am convinced that Beethoven was after a combative, stinging momentum rather than stolid monumentality. For all that, there is an overall design and architecture to the interpretation that eluded me in the live performance. Particularly memorable is the *Marcia funèbre*, gravely paced (in that movement, appropriately so) and eloquently sung with a long tensile line. The scherzo, too, is impressive—a slow basic tempo that is nonetheless rhythmically well sprung and admits a steady transition into the trio, which the horns play more accurately and audaciously here than at the concert.

The recorded sound, rather closely miked, brings out some attractive woodwind detail, but, whether from the sonic compression—the first side runs to nearly thirty-eight minutes—or from the intrinsic scrawniness of the orchestra itself, there is a lack of impact that seems at variance with so weighty a conception. Not an all-purpose *Eroica*, then, but one that can give musical pleasure in its way. H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano, in B flat, Op. 97 (*Archduke*).

Suk Trio. [Milan Slavický, prod.] SUPRAPHON 4 11 2137, \$8.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

COMPARISON:
 Quin. PMC 7082 Suk Trio

This remake of the *Archduke* by that fine ensemble of violinist Josef Suk, cellist Josef Chuchro, and pianist Jan Panenka appears reissue of its outstanding mid-Sixties recording, previously available domestically on Crossroads and Vanguard/Supraphon. And the new version too comes in multiple formats: It was recorded (in 1975)

simultaneously by Supraphon, in conventional analog form, and by Nippon Columbia, in PCM digital form. The latter is available—at premium price, of course—as Denon OX 7035, which I have not heard.

From my experience of some other digital recordings, including the Suk remake of the Tchaikovsky trio, I am willing to entertain the possibility that I might be more swayed by the Denon edition, but for now I have a distinct preference for the immediacy and impact of the older performance over the brighter highs and larger-hall ambience of the remake. Nobody hearing the new recording is going to fault it seriously, and it does reflect a decade's technological progress, especially in terms of reduced tape hiss. For all that, the more intimate balances of the older version seem to me more apt for chamber music, particularly in the case of the piano, whose symphonic aspects were more discreetly contained; in the new recording, the wider dynamic range and the more distant miking sometimes allow the keyboard to swamp the strings.

At the time of its release, I called the Crossroads recording "the *Archduke* we have been waiting for." I can repeat that claim here, with the qualifications that the newer account is fractionally broader and slightly fussier in its shaping and pointing. In both performances, the first-movement repeat is made, but not the one in the scherzo.

My preference for the older recording is heightened by the somewhat crackly surfaces and low-level mastering of the new Supraphon disc. H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Works for Cello and Piano.

Janos Starker, cello; Rudolf Buchbinder, piano. TELEFUNKEN 36.35450, \$26.94 (three discs manual sequence). Tape: 34.35450, \$26.94 (three cassettes).

Sonatas: No. 1, in F, Op. 5, No. 1; No. 2, in G minor, Op. 5, No. 2; No. 3, in A, Op. 69; No. 4, in C, Op. 102, No. 1; No. 5, in D, Op. 102, No. 2. Variations: on Handel's "See, the conquering hero comes," WoO. 45; on Mozart's "Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen," Op. 66; on Mozart's "Bei Männern," WoO. 46.

COMPARISON—sonatas:
 Mus. Her. MHS 596/7 Starker, Sebok

Although Starker has recorded the Beethoven sonatas twice before, this is the first time he has included the three sets of variations—works of slighter stature, but nonetheless rewarding as examples of how one master dealt with the materials from two other masters.

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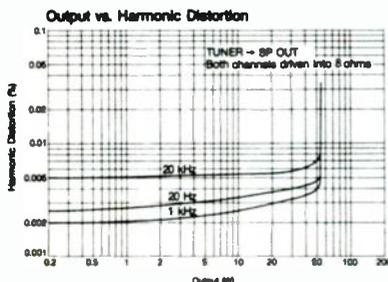
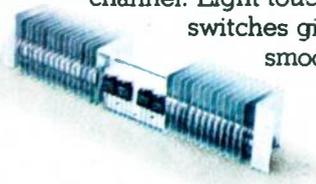
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Starker's current approach to the sonatas in general proceeds from the breadth and deliberation of his second cycle, with György Sebok (an Erato recording issued here by Musical Heritage Society), which was itself a radical departure from the headlong facility of the earlier Period recording with Abba Bogin. The differences between the Erato and Telefunken sets are due chiefly to Rudolf Buchbinder's more volatile, lyrical pianism—some may even find it overnuanced, especially in the first movement of Op. 69—and to the superiority of Telefunken's sound. Both instruments are robust and prominent, and they are in exemplary balance—note the striding octaves behind the cello in the *Allegro vivace* of Op. 102, No. 1, and the way accompanimental figures always emerge clearly yet supportively. Furthermore, the impactive clarity is heard in the context of an ideal resonance. Starker's bowing and tone production are silken smooth, yet less aloof, more songfully relaxed, more mellow, than sometimes in the past. The variations are particularly communicative.

Everything considered, there are persuasive grounds for regarding this beautiful set as the preferred edition. A whole new literature has grown around this music since I reviewed the Fournier/Schnabel sonatas (Seraphim IB 6075) in March 1973, including some entries that are impressive in whole or part. The Harrell/Levine sonatas set (RCA ARL 2-2241), for example, direct to the point of brusqueness, is dominated by the pianist, which makes some sense when you consider that the composer wrote at least the early works for his own virtuoso abilities. I find the Op. 5 sonatas especially attractive, and the slightly businesslike Op. 69 is a refreshing departure from the customary languor.

The Olefsky/Hautzig Monitor edition of the sonatas (MCS 2137/8) is attractively broad and characterful, a shade roughhewn and unpolished, perhaps, but reproduced with telling immediacy. Of special interest is Op. 69, played from an autograph that has many variants from the standard text: cello lines filled out with embellishment, ties not treated as such, some purposeful harmonic amplification. The Monitor recordings make a plausible low-priced alternative to the uneven but incomparably patrician Fournier/Schnabel set. Chuchro and Panenka (Supraphon 1 11 1091/3, with the variations) produce a balanced team effort; again, I especially like Op. 5. The Du Pré/Barenboim set (Angel SC 3823, with the variations) is also uneven, ranging from a vital, enthusiastic Op. 5, No. 1, and a strong Op. 102, No. 2, to a lethargic, smeary Op. 5, No. 2, and tentative



Janos Starker
Beethoven cello works smoothly done

work elsewhere. Perhaps because of the on-location recording, the cello tone is uncentered and the piano tone lacking in nuance. The vulgar, vibrato-laden cello playing of Shafran (Odyssey/Melodiya Y2 34645, just the sonatas) annihilates Ginzburg's strong pianism.

Among the older sets, the strongest competitor, were it available (and it is undoubtedly out of the domestic catalog only temporarily), would be the whimsical, exalted Fournier/Kempff DG set (with the variations). Richter and Rostropovich (Philips 835 182/3, sonatas only) offer magnificent playing that somehow seems (to me, at least) more theatrical and superficial in the years pass. At the opposite extreme are the Casals/Serkin recordings (Odyssey 32 36 0016, rechanneled, with the variations)—soberly paced, granitic in interpretation, carefully posed for posterity, more to be admired as statues than enjoyed as flesh-and-blood music-making. The prewar Casals versions with Horszowski and Schulhof (available as a German import), while more problematic in terms of balance, ensemble, and reproduced tone, are much more communicative. H.G.

BOULEZ: Sonata for Piano, No. 2.
WEBERN: Variations for Piano, Op. 27.

Maurizio Pollini, piano. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 803, \$8.98.

COMPARISON:
Fin. 9004 Biret

In an article written in 1948, shortly before the completion of his Second Piano

Sonata, Boulez remarked: "I believe that music should be collective hysteria and spells, violently of the present time—following the lead of Antonin Artaud and not in the direction of simple ethnographic reconstruction in the likeness of civilizations more or less remote from ours." Boulez was twenty-one at the time, an angry young man bent on the destruction of an outmoded aesthetic and determined to produce a new kind of musical structure, one "violently of the present time." He had only recently published his notorious polemic, "Schoenberg is Dead," in which he accused the Viennese master of compromising his revolutionary approach to pitch organization (i.e., the twelve-tone system) by clinging to traditional rhythmic and formal principles. Webern, not Schoenberg, would show the way.

Yet this new disc, which brings us both Boulez' Second Sonata and Webern's Variations, reveals that these two composers were in fact worlds apart. Indeed, the sonata seems much closer to Schoenberg with its violent contrasts and intensity of expression. True, it recalls Webern in its tendency to dissolve thematic content, but the texture is consistently dense and cluttered. Boulez' piece is clearly a provocation: Notes fly about in a rage. It would be difficult to imagine a work more distantly removed from the extraordinary composure and restraint of Webern's lyrical utterances.

Moreover, it still bears traces of traditional sonata organization. It is divided into four movements, the second and third of which are a slow movement and a scherzo, respectively, while the first and last are generally fast and dramatic in character. The oppositions, however, are no longer those of key and theme, but of more general "gestural types" defined by differences in texture, tempo, and pacing. The outer movements, for example, can be heard in terms of an alternation and juxtaposition of two such types, with a sort of limited and tenuous resolution—or at least mediation—at the end.

The scherzo is the simplest of the movements. In a clear three-part A-B-A form, it is lighter and more transparent than the others and has a consistent, well-defined character that produces an almost narrative effect. The second movement is the most complex and resistant of the four. It is a sort of variation form, in which units of musical material are commented upon, after their original appearance, by troped elaborations, a way of composing that was to become especially prominent in the later Boulez.

Continued on Page 99

Ahh. Decisions, decisions.

Metal, three heads, microcomputer.

Auto reverse, detachable remote, logic.

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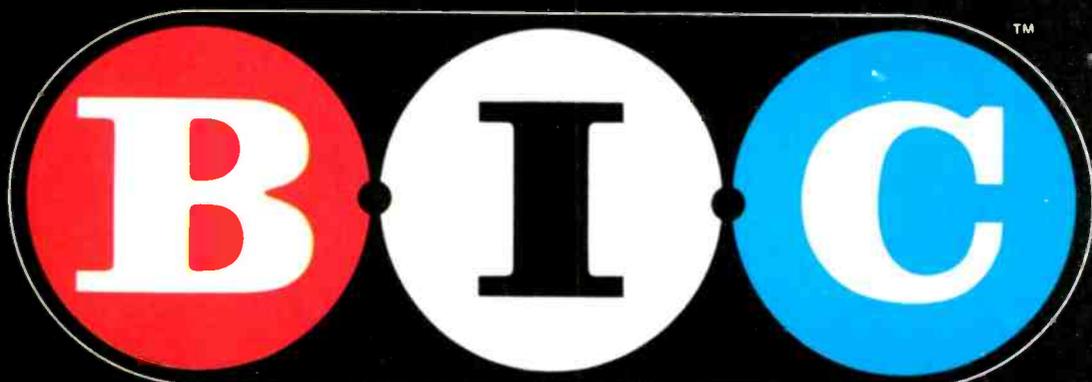


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Maurizio Pollini
Impassioned approach to Boulez' sonata

The sonata lasts some thirty minutes, and it is remarkable how it manages to sustain such intensity over that considerable length. Only the two-minute scherzo provides any real relaxation. Boulez has recently remarked that this was the last work in which he still consciously reacted to the framework supplied by traditional Western formal structures: "Probably influenced by the whole Viennese school which wished to recoup the old forms, I tried the experiment of completely destroying them." In fact one does feel that the piece was written almost in opposition to traditional patterns, as if the composer were trying to discover the degree to which he could counter them. Yet, just by virtue of this opposition, the old frameworks are still in some sense operative, and the resulting tension lends the sonata its unusual character.

Curiously, the only other available recorded version of either of these pieces also couples them. When Idil Biret's Finndar recording appeared some years ago, I found it generally excellent, and I maintain this opinion. But I would give Pollini the edge, mainly due to his more impassioned approach to the Boulez. Both sound and liner notes, incidentally, are first-rate. R.P.M.

BRAHMS: Ballades (4), Op. 10; Variations on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24.

Claudio Arrau, piano. PHILIPS 9500 446, \$8.98. Tape: 7300 652, \$8.98 (cassette).

If there is a more resplendently re-

produced performance of the *Handel Variations*, I have not heard it. Arrau's piano is imposing in mass, full of delicacy, and rounded at all dynamic levels. Clarity is exemplary: Contrapuntal strands emerge with the diversity of orchestral instruments, as much the product of the artist's penetrating ear and probing musicianship as of careful microphone placement and a magnificent concert grand.

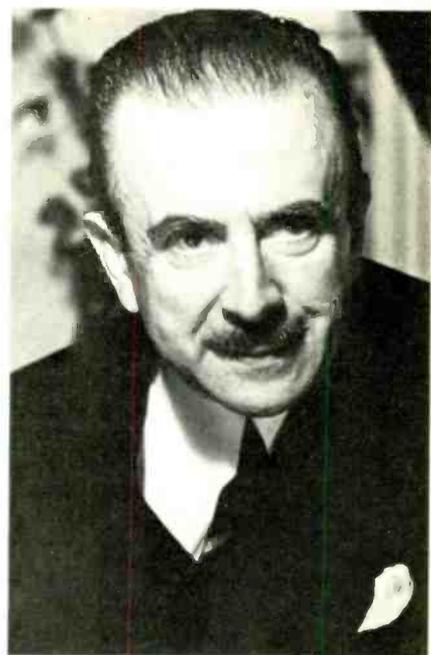
One must marvel at the technical finish of the playing, too; at seventy-six, Arrau's grasp of the notes is complete, and if some of the bold exuberance of Fleisher's deleted Epic account (far less attractively recorded) is missing, that is undoubtedly more a matter of choice and temperamental affinity than anything else. This is unquestionably one of the most imposing recordings of the work ever made, and my only serious reservation is that Arrau chooses to make rhetorical adjustments (the emphases in the surging Variation No. 4, for example) that sometimes dispel the sense of buildup between variations. In that respect, Fleisher's interpretation had greater urgency and continuity. On the other hand, Arrau's vision produces many instances of grand clarification, as in the music-box-like No. 22 or the swirling scale passages of No. 24. The culminating fugue is splendidly transparent but verges on heaviness.

His treatment of the Op. 10 Ballades shows that he *can* be impetuous. His penchant for tempo fluctuation produces many vehement outbursts—as in the *maggiore* central section of the D minor—which makes for an interesting comparison with Kempff's more severe classical outline (DG 2530 312). In general, Arrau's readings are grander, more rugged and emotional. Kempff's cooler, more aristocratic, and perhaps more mindful of the architecture of each piece. Both readings are quite wonderful, and in the two we have both elements of the Brahmsian dichotomy. As in the *Handel Variations*, the sound of Arrau's piano is something out of the ordinary. H.G.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 3, in F, Op. 90.

Philharmonia Orchestra, Guido Cantelli, cond. SERAPHIM S60325, \$3.98.

There seems to be a revival of interest in Cantelli's tragically curtailed career, on both sides of the Atlantic. This first stereo release of his 1955 recording of the Brahms Third Symphony—never before issued domestically in *any* form—follows hard on the heels of RCA's triumphant restoration of the Franck D minor Symphony, also in stereo (ARL 1-3005, March). In England, EMI's World Records label has just



Claudio Arrau
A quite wonderful Brahms recording

reissued the long unavailable performances of Tchaikovsky's Fifth and Sixth Symphonies and *Romeo and Juliet* and Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll* (all with the Philharmonia Orchestra except the Tchaikovsky Fifth, taped in London when Cantelli visited with the Scala orchestra). World Records has also issued the coupling of Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony and Schubert's *Unfinished* familiar to American collectors from Angel and Seraphim (currently 60002) editions, but this is also of interest, since the Schubert is in stereo for the first time. Finally, in the fall Tantivy Press will publish a biography by Laurence Lewis, who has furnished some interesting comments with the British records, which are distributed here by Peters International.

The Brahms Third gets an urgent, fine-grained reading much in the tradition of Toscanini's concert-hall performances. (Toscanini's 1952 RCA recording is uncharacteristically lacking in flow. His 1952 performance with the Philharmonia—issued along with the whole Philharmonia Brahms cycle in quite decent sound by Cetra as LO 511/4, also imported by Peters International—is far more representative.) Cantelli's first movement may be a shade overdeliberate (more so, certainly, than his live performances with the NBC Symphony, the Boston Symphony, and the New York Philharmonic), and the recording differs from those concert performances in its omission of the first-movement repeat (without the conductor's consent, it is rumored). Cantelli follows Toscanini's latter-day habit of reinforcing the double basses



Guido Cantelli—Following the Toscanini tradition in Brahms

with timpani at bars 174–76 in the finale; the resonant recorded sound makes it difficult to ascertain whether the second violins are being helped with cellos at bars 161–62 in the first movement, another very sensible Toscanini practice. Detail is somewhat underplayed in Cantelli's agreeably, though somewhat murkily, reproduced reading. The left-right division of violins is an advantage of the stereo format, which otherwise differs only slightly from the mono version. Indeed, the last British issue of this performance, on one side of a deleted HMV Concert Classics disc, had marginally cleaner highs and more bite in the brass. At its modest price, this is a thoroughly worthy Brahms Third, regardless of its memorial value.

The World Records issues of the two Tchaikovsky symphonies (SHB 52, two discs) and the *Romeo/Siegfried Idyll* pairing (SH 287) are dramatically improved over the original American editions. The *Romeo*, in fact, is so much fuller and clearer (with only the underrecorded timpani remaining to remind one of the older pressing) that one is forced to re-evaluate the performance, which lacks the overpowering drama of Toscanini's and Markevitch's but more than compensates with ravishing instrumental color and superlative woodwind blend. The stereo remastering of the Schubert *Unfinished* (SH 290) seems a bit fuller than the Seraphim mono, but my copy has noisy surfaces.

Some prime Cantelli material still awaits reissue—in particular the 1953

Brahms First and Schumann Fourth, the 1955–56 coupling of Mozart's Symphony No. 29 and *Musical Joke*, the 1951 Musorgsky-Ravel *Pictures*, the 1954 Debussy *Martyre de Saint Sébastien*, the 1955 Ravel *Daphnis et Chloé* Suite No. 2, and the 1950 Hindemith *Mathis der Maler*. H.G.

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 8, in C minor (ed. Nowak).

Dresden State Orchestra, Eugen Jochum, cond. [David Mottley, prod.] ANGEL SB 3893, \$15.98 (two discs, automatic sequence).

COMPARISONS—Nowak ed.:

Priv. 2726 077 Jochum/Berlin Phil.
DG 2709 068 Böhm/Vienna Phil.
Col. M2 30070 Szell/Cleveland O.

The first thing to note about the initial release in Eugen Jochum's new EMI Bruckner cycle is the quality of the orchestral playing and recording. The veteran conductor's earlier DG cycle (returning to print in the midprice Privilege series) was split between the Bavarian Radio Symphony, which just wasn't as good an orchestra as the Dresden State, and the Berlin Philharmonic, whose softer-edged playing was further muted by DG's engineering style of the period. The new recording is a decided improvement sonically. Note, for example, the top-to-bottom audibility of harp runs in the scherzo's trio. In the DG edition, I was bothered by rather simpering vibrato and portamento of the violins; the Dresden players are solid and clean, yet no

less expressive. Trumpets and drums are also more militantly present in the new version—an important consideration in a symphony whose sheer savagery is commonly understated by conductors.

Jochum's two stereo Eighths follow the same basic outline. (I remember only vaguely his—and the symphony's—first recording, with the Hamburg Philharmonic on a mono DG/Decca.) The conductor stresses the dotted rhythm in the low strings' opening phrases, and the first movement's apocalyptic argument unfolds with little further pressure—note the refusal to hurry the horn solo two bars after G. The scherzo is moderately brisk, with a gaiety suitable for Beethoven; the trio is flexible, with several *Luftpausen*. The Adagio is calm and inward, somberly glowing from first to last; after the final climax (three bars before W), Jochum exaggerates the *sehr markig* direction, bearing down very distinctly on each note. His generous observation of gear changes in the finale for me underscore the episodic character of the movement.

Jochum remains firm in his adherence to the Nowak Bruckner editions, which in the case of the Eighth means rejection of Haas's hybrid of Bruckner's original and final score. The Nowak score thus has the virtue of consistency in presenting the composer's wishes at one point in time. Of the rival Nowak-based recordings, Böhm's is more heated in its passion and drive, though the unsubtle dynamics of the recording are a problem. (Böhm's coupled Seventh Symphony, as a matter of fact, is more impressive.) Szell's is coolly meticulous in its craftsmanship, controversial for the deliberation of its scherzo, and splendidly taut and well molded. A.C.

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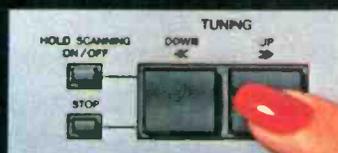
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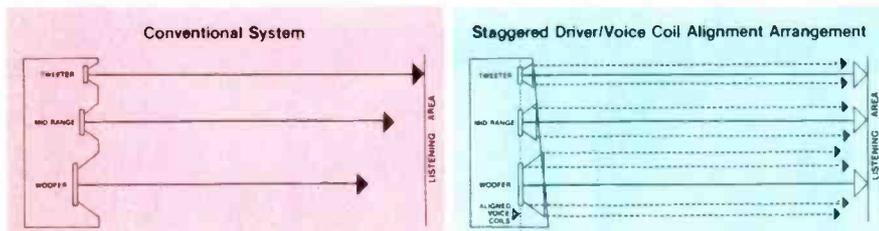
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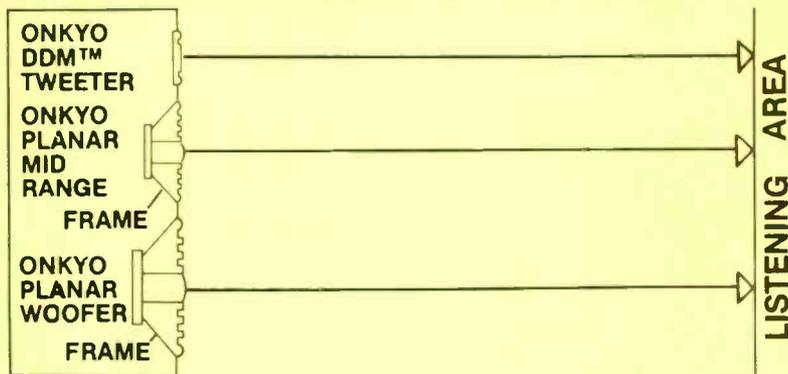


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not in the edition used by the performer). No organ specifications are given here, but information on all four organs used in this survey is included in Vol. 1.

Giving historical authenticity its due, it is unlikely that Chapuis's more vertiginous speeds would have been possible with the typical fingerings and toes-only pedaling of Buxtehude's day, and in any case the brisk tempos sometimes sound inconsistent with the music. The Saraband of the "Auf meinen lieben Gott" partita (BuxWV 179) is decidedly much too fast, and a number of the other chorale settings seem unduly hurried. Worse than this, though, is Chapuis's tendency to rush figurative passagework and anticipate beats, and his unwillingness to yield for beginnings and ends of phrases appears curiously at odds with the often rhapsodic character of the music. Still, the performances are colorful and at least superficially exciting, and, in music that is often smothered with misguided pedantry, that counts for a good deal.

Judging from excerpts I have heard from the complete recordings by Marie-Claire Alain, Walter Kraft, and René Saorgin, the competition is lackluster. Though Chapuis's set is hardly the last word on Buxtehude, it sounds like the best for now. S.C.

CHOPIN: Sonata for Piano, No. 3, in B minor, Op. 58; Scherzo No. 2, in B flat minor, Op. 31.

▲ Edward Auer, piano. [Hiroshi Isaka, prod.] RVC RDCE 7, \$14.95 (direct-to-disc recording; distributed by Audio-Technica).

Direct-to-disc recording of course means that one is going to hear a performer without recourse to fancy tape editing, but in the studio, unlike in the concert hall, the artist does have the option of doing it over. In the case of this recording by the sadly undervalued American pianist Edward Auer (now in his early thirties), the direct-to-disc adventure produced an apparently unwanted by-product: The Japanese edition (RDC 7) contains alternate takes, which the artist has indicated to me he considers inferior to those heard in this "export" version.

Having both editions at my disposal, I found the differences fascinating, with a substantial edge to the export. This is particularly true in the B flat minor Scherzo, where the Japanese version seems comparatively careful and unadventurous—and paradoxically, despite its caution, less cleanly executed. In the B minor Sonata the difference is less marked. I enjoyed the Japanese recording, especially the last three movements (contained on Side 2), but even

there the present version is a bit tighter and more vibrant.

I admire any artist who can play this difficult Chopin sonata so well without resorting to tape splicing. But I wonder if Auer might have done greater service to himself had he recorded digitally. The sound of the Hamburg Steinway is a bit clangorous, and I suspect that judicious editing might have produced a more sustained reading without losing any of the passion and adventurousness. His performance of the scherzo, however, is just about the finest I have ever heard. I am particularly pleased that Auer plays the lyrical theme of the first part directly, without any of the aimless "traditional" sentimentalization, and there is a wonderful sense of direction and motivic clarity to his eloquent rubato. H.G.

DOHNÁNYI: Piano Works.

Howard Shelley, piano. HNH RECORDS 4055, \$7.98.

Passacaglia, Op. 6; Rhapsody in C, Op. 11, No. 3; Variations on a Hungarian Theme, Op. 29; Singular Pieces (3), Op. 44.

PADEREWSKI: Sonata for Piano, in E flat minor, Op. 21; Variations and Fugue, in E flat minor, Op. 23.

Antonin Kubalek, piano. [Tony Thomas, prod.] CITADEL CT 7001, \$7.98.

In contrast to Rachmaninoff, whose reputations as pianist and composer have remained pretty much on equal footing, Paderewski's fame as a crowd-pleasing performer continues to overshadow his creative efforts, while Dohnányi's great pianism and his music have suffered undeserved neglect in the nineteen years since his death.

If any recording is going to revive Paderewski the composer—an unlikely prospect, I suspect—it will be this superlative coupling in Kubalek's scintillating performances. This music will be surprising to those who know only the inevitable Minuet in G and the well-constructed but saccharine A minor Piano Concerto recorded by Jesús María Sanromá, Earl Wild, and Felicja Blumenthal. The harmonic content is considerably more caring, and the piano writing is notably challenging and rewarding. The idiom reminds me of Richard Strauss, Dohnányi, and at times (particularly in the sonata) Ravel. There is a strain of Lisztian bravura, too, and all these ingredients merge to form a thoroughly enjoyable late-Romantic confection.

Czech-born, Toronto-based Antonin Kubalek, whose live Schumann/Brahms recital (Citadel CT 6027, November 1978) impressed me so favorably, confirms that impression here. His playing has passion, concision, electricity, and tonal con-

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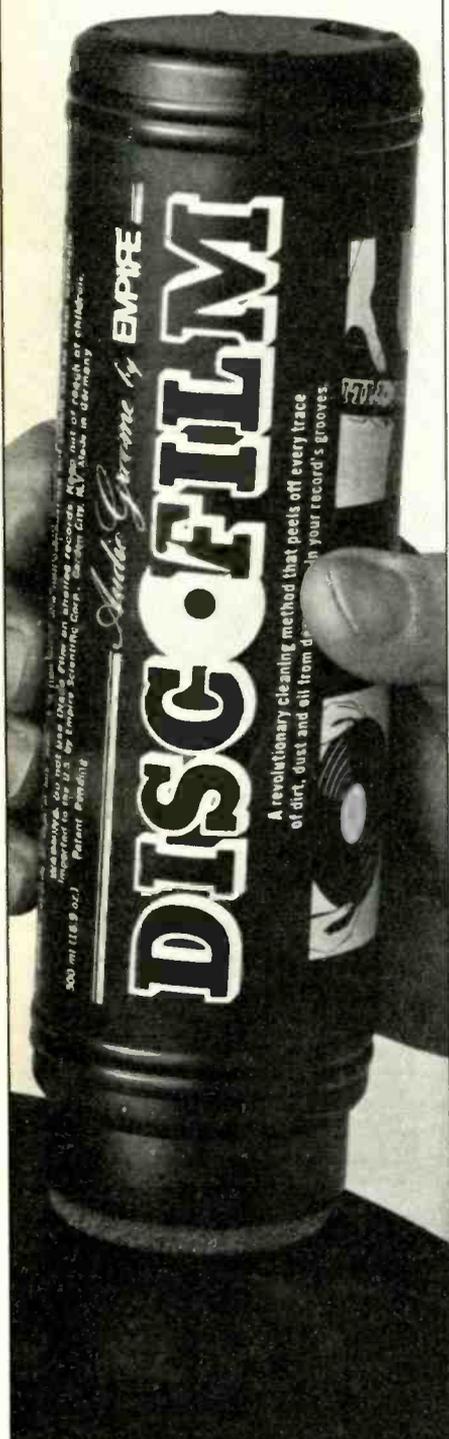
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trast, and Citadel's reproduction catches it with excellent liveness and dynamic range. My copy has crackly surfaces, however.

Switching to HNH's cross-section of Dohnányi's output makes clear what Paderewski's music, finely crafted and substantial though it is, lacks: a real individual profile and, even more important, humor. Even in the earlier works—the mostly Brahms-derived C major Rhapsody (1902-3) and the Passacaglia (1899)—a certain wit and purposefulness unfailingly drives Dohnányi's message onward. The 1916 *Variations on a Hungarian Theme* already show Dohnányi moving in the direction of Kodály (but not Bartók!). The Op. 44 *Singular Pieces*, composed during Dohnányi's final decade, as professor-in-residence at Florida State University, are charmingly advanced; the third piece, "Perpetuum Mobile," reminds me of Josef Suk's Four Pieces for Violin and Piano, Op. 17 (once recorded by Ginette and Jean Neveu and overdue for re-recording). The young English pianist Howard Shelley gives full-bodied, committed readings, and HNH's recording is airy and open. H.G.

DONIZETTI: *Lucrezia Borgia*. For a feature review, see page 89.

DRAESEKE: *Symphony No. 3, in C, Op. 40 (Tragic)*.

Berlin Symphony Orchestra, Hermann Desser, cond. *VARÈSE SARABANDE VC 81092 \$7.98 (mono) [from URANIA UURLP 7162, 1955].*

At the beginning of this century there was an anti-Romantic revulsion, well illustrated by Stravinsky's writings. Though he was not the real author of his books, his ghostwriters correctly conveyed the gist of his thoughts. Of course, many Romantic composers remained great favorites, but not a few young musicians reached for their handkerchiefs when such fine composers as Mendelssohn were mentioned.

This attitude toward a preceding era is not unusual; even Bach was denounced by the rococo as a long-winded bore, yet just as his time came again, so Romantic music is once more coming into its own. We now have the necessary perspective lacking to us half a century ago, and we realize that a large and valuable body of literature has been unreasonably neglected. Whenever such a revival takes place, however, there is at first a tendency toward a lack of critical discrimination. It was so with the baroque revival a few years back—especially in the recording industry—when a multitude of works rightfully consigned

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to oblivion were resurrected, and if we are not judicious in our selections, it will again happen with the profusion of Romantic also-rans.

The symphony by Felix Draeseke (1835-1913) that prompted these thoughts is presented by Varèse Sarabande in a face-lifted release. The operation on the twenty-five-year-old Urania mono was quite successful, but the patient expired. The Third Symphony proves to be a mixture of portentous emptiness and a reckless prodigality with the worn clichés of the time. It also

recalls Burney's remark about another work: "The length of each movement is more inconsiderate than Christian patience can endure."

The reissue also retains—though without face-lifting—the original commentaries by Sigmund Spaeth, the late tune detective who of course discovered similarities in *Tannhäuser*, *The Gondoliers*, the Ninth Symphony, *Rosenkavalier*, and so forth. But good old Sig was a charitable gentleman who believed that Strauss "imitated unconsciously." Well, this sort of

thing is sheer waste, not even useful as a historical documentary. Our manufacturers must be guided by better judgment and higher critical standards; they will be the winners, because there are plenty of good Romantic works waiting to be re-discovered. P.H.L.

FAURÉ: Requiem.* Pavane (choral version).

*Lucia Popp, soprano; *Sigmund Nimsger, baritone; Ambrosian Singers, Philharmonia Orchestra, Andrew Davis, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] COLUMBIA M 35153, \$7.98. Tape: MT 35153, \$7.98 (cassette).

COMPARISONS:

Phi. 6500 968 Fournet/Rotterdam Phil.
Sera. S 60096 Willcocks/New Philharmonia

Infinitely sad and beautiful, Fauré's Requiem has deservedly accumulated a number of excellent recordings. This latest entry may be the best of all. Andrew Davis knows how to give the music breathing space without sentimentality or stasis. His tempos make good sense, and the obvious affection with which he molds transitional phrases underlines the work's taut yet plastic structure. Among the high points in the performance are the deeply serene "amen" from the Offertorium, the boldly affirmative horns in the central climax of the Agnus Dei, and the well-balanced organ and general limpidness of the final "*In Paradisum*." The Ambrosian Singers under John McCarthy are exemplary in polish and warmth, and they project the text feelingly too.

Sigmund Nimsger is a satisfying baritone soloist, avoiding the hooty bluster of Fischer-Dieskau (with both Cluytens and Barenboim on Angel) and the tentativeness of Bernard Kraysen (in Fournet's otherwise admirable recent Philips version). Lucia Popp—though worlds apart from the piercing earnestness of Suzanne Dupont (on the wartime Columbia recording by Bourmauck) or the seraphic innocence of Elly Ameling (with Fournet) and various boy trebles—gives us a mature, cultivated, and flawlessly shaded "*Pie Jesu*," which should stand the test of time. Columbia's engineering is spacious, vibrant, and clearly focused.

The equally haunting *Pavane*, which is becoming the Requiem's standard disc mate, is performed here with the optional choral part (also used by Barenboim, whose Requiem performance I consider out of the running); Fournet and Willcocks (on Seraphim, a good bargain alternative for the Requiem) use orchestra alone. Davis leads

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the *Pavane* as sensitively as he does the Requiem, and for me the choral version's greater variety of sonority gives that format a decided edge. A.C.

GLAZUNOV: *Cortège solennel*, Op. 91—See Balakirev: *Symphony No. 2*.

GRAUN, J.G.: *Concertos for Oboe and Strings*—See Krebs: *Concerto*.

GRIGNY: *Livre d'orgue: Hymns (5)*. Michel Chapuis, organ of the Church of St.-Christophe, Belfort (France). TELEFUNKEN 6.42228, \$8.98.

Nicolas de Grigny's *Livre d'orgue*, comprising the five hymn settings included here and an organ Mass, was the culmination of a whole series of such collections that appeared in France from the middle of the seventeenth century. Other *Livres*—notably those of Clérambault, Du Mage, Gui-

lain, and Marchand—would follow, but not until the best works of Franck more than a century and a half later would French organ music again capture the nobility and spirituality with which Grigny's compositions are so palpably suffused. Manifest in Grigny's bold harmonies and rhythmic subtleties is the apotheosis of the entire French classic "school," an accomplishment all the more remarkable for an obscure provincial organist doomed never to reach his thirty-second birthday.

The effect of this literature is wholly dependent upon the empathy and skill of the interpreter. What is needed above all is a supremely polished technical control, for without it the player cannot execute all those subtleties of rhythm and articulation so essential to the music. Here, for all his extensive experience in the performance of this literature, I find Michel Chapuis wanting. His version of rhythmic flexibility has less to do with rubato and agogic accent than with basic unsteadiness and a tendency to rush when the going gets tough. Everything sounds a bit nervous—a fatal impression—as if utter technical disaster is likely to intervene at any moment. Real disaster never occurs, but the way is strewn with anticipated beats, unsteady figurations, and before-the-beat mordents and trills. Even the instrument used has its drawbacks, for while it makes good use of surviving eighteenth-century pipework, the new mixtures (by Schwenkedel, 1971) are entirely too Germanic for an authentic *plein jeu*.

This record is not without its virtues, but I much prefer André Isoir's inspired readings of the *Hymnes* on the French Caliope label. That they are unavailable here is a sad commentary on the status of organ music in American record catalogs. S.C.

JANÁČEK: *Quartets for Strings: No. 1 (Kreutzer Sonata); No. 2 (Intimate Pages)*. **B** Gabrieli Quartet. [Richard Beswick, prod.] LONDON TREASURY STS 15432, \$4.98.

COMPARISONS:

Supr. SUAST 50556

Janáček Qt.

Supr. 4 11 1995 Smetana Qt.

These extraordinary documents of an old man's desperate, volcanic passion belong in every serious collection; their return to the domestic catalog, and at a bargain price to boot, should get them there more easily. The Gabrieli Quartet brings uninhibited temperament to the music, revving up to the frazzled intensity of such places as the second movement of the *Intimate Pages*. The general approach, though, is more lyrical than that of either the Janáček

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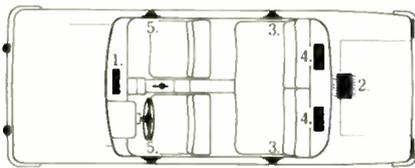
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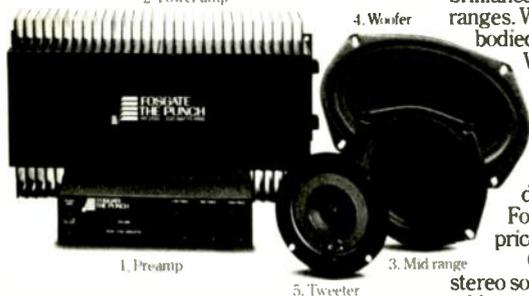
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or Smetana Quartet, whose recordings I compared in March. The Gabrieli's tone is fuller and richer, though the cello sounds a little boomy, and there is at least as much intonational struggle as in the Smetana performances. For overall technical panache and toughness of musical fiber, I still lean to the earlier Janáček Quartet disc.

London does not specify, but, judging from the Gabrieli's tempos, I suspect that the standard texts are played here, rather than the controversial new editions used by the Smetana Quartet. A.C.

KHACHATURIAN: *Gayane* (complete ballet, 1957 version).

Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Jansug Kakhidze, cond. [Severin Pazukhin, prod.] COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M3 35195, \$23.98 (three discs, automatic sequence).

COMPARISON—1942 version (suites):
RCA CRL 2-2263

Tjeknavorian/Royal Phil.

Back in October 1977, when I re-

viewed Loris Tjeknavorian's two-disc RCA set of *Gayane* suites, I thought we had an ideal discographic solution for the ballet score. But no! It seems that Khachaturian created a new problem when, for a 1957 Bolshoi production, he junked the original 1942 plot in favor of an entirely new one to a scenario by Boris Pletayov while retaining the names of the characters. Most of the original music remains, but in a score that now makes extensive use of leitmotifs and about a third of which is new or altered material. In contrast with Tjeknavorian's twenty-four selections running to some 99 minutes on four disc sides, we have here fifty selections running to some 141 minutes on six sides.

If you're one of those for whom Khachaturian's mass-public hit, the "Sabre Dance," is all or more than you want to know of *Gayane*, you can safely ignore this new set entirely—although I hope you won't ignore the RCA, which just may change your mind. The revised score doesn't proffer any significant improvements over the original. Its main attractions (other than to balletomanes) must be to aficionados of the composer and to composition/orchestration students who well may be fascinated by the reworking and augmentation.

Conductor Jansug Kakhidze (a Georgian, born in 1936) was the composer's choice for the present recorded performance, and M. Ignatyeva's liner notes also inform us that Khachaturian personally approved the master tapes. Kakhidze strikes me as often carried along by the orchestra and by his own enthusiasm, rather than being in sure control of either his players or himself. The playing and recording are generally more robust than refined, and they lack both sonic transparency and genuine brilliance. Give me the good old-time *Gayane* and the charismatic Tjeknavorian. R.D.D.

KREBS: *Concerto for Harpsichord, Oboe, Strings, and Continuo, in B minor.*
J. G. GRAUN: *Concertos for Oboe, Strings, and Continuo: in C minor; in G minor.*

Heinz Holliger, oboe; Christiane Jaccottet, harpsichord; Camerata Bern, Alexander van Wijnkoop, cond. [Gerd Ploebusch and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 412, \$8.98. Tape: 3310 412, \$8.98 (cassette).

Bachians will remember that Johann Ludwig Krebs (1713–80) was, like his father and two brothers, a pupil of the Master. Indeed, he was Bach's favorite (at least outside his own sons), and the subject of his punning praise as *der einzige Krebs im Bache*,

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Circle 52 on Page 105

the "only crab in the brook." We've already had a fair recorded sampling of Krebs's keyboard music and, notably, some of his chorale preludes for trumpet and organ. But the present double concerto is at once novel (no concertos are credited to Krebs in *Grove's*) and rewarding.

This concerto is a musical delight, especially in this entrancing performance by Jaccottet, Holliger, and the thirteen-player Bern ensemble, but it is also an illuminating historical exemplar of the melding of baroque and rococo/early-classical styles. The busy yet quirky harpsichord part in the opening *Moderato* suggests that Krebs may have known the Fifth *Brandenburg* Concerto—he certainly did know and was a frequent Collegium Musicum soloist in Bach's Leipzig harpsichord concertos. The fairly fast-flowing *Amabile* second movement, however, is more akin to the music of Bach's sons, while the *Presto* finale is a more cheerful yet bravura display piece than probably would be attributed to any of the Bachs.

Johann Gottlieb Graun (1703–71—not to be confused with his opera-composer brother, Karl Heinrich, 1704–59) studied with Tartini and Pisendel rather than Bach, but he was well enough respected by Bach to be chosen to instruct his eldest son, Wilhelm Friedemann. Later on, Graun (like his brother) was most closely associated with Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and—as concertmaster, later *Kapellmeister*—with Frederick the Great. Derek McCulloch's notes for the present release suggest that Graun's creative gifts may have been adversely influenced by the flute-playing monarch. At any rate, his C minor Concerto is—except for its witty finale—not much more than late-baroque journeyman work, distinctive here mainly for its engaging performance. But his obviously later, less baroque G minor Concerto, which was never published, has considerably more grace and vivacity, qualities that are of course italicized by the soloist.

The cassette edition of this program, conveniently received in time for direct comparison with the disc version, is not quite sonically identical: It is processed, in Dolby of course, at a slightly lower modulation level, which may partially account for its sweeter reproduction of *ff* high-register violin and even oboe passages that are a bit sharp-edged in normal disc playback. And for once, a tape editor dares correct the errors of his disc colleague, who starts off the program with the least arresting music, Graun's C minor Concerto, and breaks after the first movement of the Krebs work. Instead, the cassette begins with the better G minor Concerto and breaks between the C

minor's second and third movements, thus allowing the Krebs masterpiece to be heard without interruption. R.D.D.

LECLAIR: Instrumental Works.

Cologne Musica Antiqua (Reinhard Goebel and Hajo Bäss, violins; Charles Medlam, cello; Henk Bouman, harpsichord). [Gerd Ploebusch and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 414, \$8.98.

Overture for Two Violins and Continuo, Op. 13, No. 2. Sonatas for Two Violins: in G minor, Op. 12, No. 5; in B flat, Op. 12, No. 6. Trio for Two Violins and Continuo in A, Op. 14.

Jaap Schröder's recent disc of three violin concertos with Concerto Amsterdam (Telefunken 6.42180, January) made me a belated but fervent Leclairist, and so I avidly anticipated the present program, also featuring period instruments, of Leclair chamber works previously unknown to me and perhaps to records as well. I haven't been disappointed as far as the music is concerned. I like especially the oddly distinctive, often intricate-textured B flat Duo Sonata and the curious two-movement trio-overture that was published a year after its composer's death in 1764. Indeed, all four works are significant additions to the Leclair discography.

It's sad to have to say, however, that only fanatical fans of Leclair or musicologists are likely to play any of these performances twice. In what is apparently their recording debut, the four young members of Cologne Musica Antiqua seem to have learned only the worst habits of period specialists. Except in the fast passages, their playing is maddingly, gustily surging, constantly and pointlessly swelling and shrinking on single tones or within single phrases. I've never encountered this presumably "expressive" mannerism as frequently and as irksomely elsewhere. In addition, the tonal qualities of the authentic period violins and cello as played here are harshly rough both individually and in ensemble, an aural trial exacerbated by quite close miking and high-level recording. R.D.D.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 6, in A minor.

London Symphony Orchestra, James Levine, cond. [Jay David Saks, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 2-3213, \$15.98 (two discs, automatic sequence). Tape: ARK 2-3213, \$15.98 (two cassettes).

COMPARISONS:

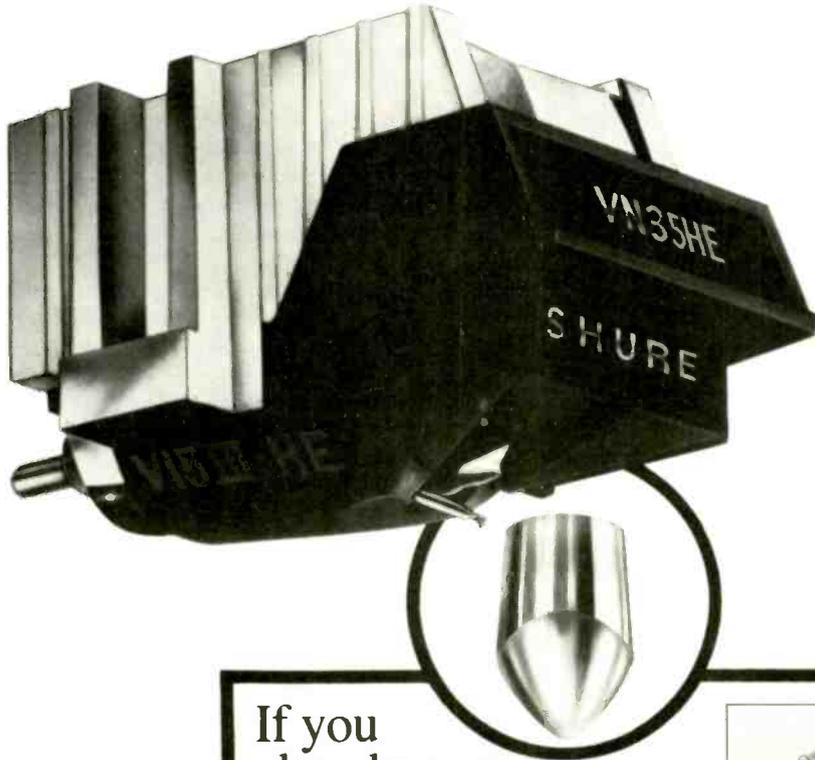
DG 2707 106 Karajan/Berlin Phil.
None. HB 73029 Horenstein/Stockholm Phil.

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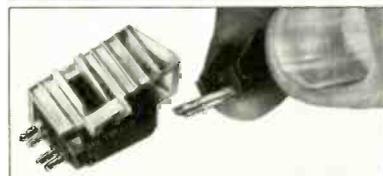
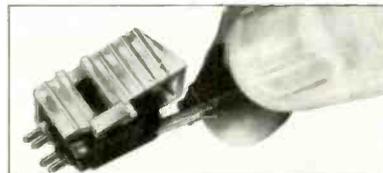
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Col. M2 31313 Szell/Cleveland Orch.

This Mahler Sixth has its own extra hammer blow of tragic fate: engineering that produces a quasi-concerto effect! Horns, double basses, and percussion are in the "solo" grouping, with all others seemingly relegated to backward status as a tutti or perhaps "echo orchestra." Mahler's uncanny scoring, as in the delicately calculated passage of bars 415-417 of the finale, is thus ridiculously misbalanced. Moreover, in this movement my copy has a good deal of surface splutter.

All the more's the shame, because Levine's reading is anything but anticlimactic after the splendid one by Karajan, which I compared to its handful of distinguished predecessors in January. Levine is considered a conductor of the modern or objectivist school for good reason, and his sculpting of the often murky opening pages of the finale is unparalleled in its cogency and inevitability. His typical rhythmic crispness and insistence on taut articulation are amply in evidence too. Yet he displays another, more romantic side—a willingness to go beyond the printed page and mold a line with a thoroughly instinctive rubato that works. Note, for example, the sometimes pressing, sometimes yielding handling of the Andante from bars 70-130.

Levine's major interpretive decisions will shock few. The first-movement repeat, the omitted third hammer blow, and the scherzo-andante sequence of the middle movements are now standard procedure. His tempo for the opening Allegro energico may not be exactly non troppo but parallels Solti and is less extreme than the jittery goose step of Kubelik's account (on DG 2707 037, deleted). In the scherzo, Levine is almost as prone as Solti to exaggerate the rapid tempo shifts Mahler calls for, producing an effect of considerably more inebriation, so to speak, than Karajan, Szell, and especially Horenstein. The finale is neither as volatile as some nor as steadily dignified as others (again, notably Horenstein).

The London Symphony Orchestra theoretically lacks the velvety aplomb of its world-class competitors in this music. Yet the fierceness with which the strings respond to demands for accents and big tone shows its passionate commitment to Mahler. Few other recordings can match the vividness with which the brass section conveys the sheer brutality of the opening movement.

If RCA would remix and remaster this recording in accordance with the points I have cited, this would be a front-runner for a basic or single-version library.

Even in its present state, serious Mahlerians will want it for the special insights Levine has brought to what we already know about the Sixth Symphony. A.C.

NONO: Sofferte onde serene . . . *; A floresta è fovem e cheja de vida*.

*Maurizio Pollini, piano; †Liliana Poli, soprano; various performers, Bruno Canino, cond. [*Rainer Brock and †Luigi Nono, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 004, \$8.98.

Luigi Nono's 1976 ". . . . sofferte onde serene . . ." arose from special circumstances and came from the heart. The fourteen-minute work was designed for the virtuosity and communicative abilities of Maurizio Pollini, who performs it on this recording. It was dedicated to Maurizio and Marilisa Pollini on the occasion of deaths in both their family and the composer's; the tape that runs along with and against the "live" piano seems to represent death in both its inevitability and its quietude, and it gives ". . . . sofferte onde serene . . ." ("sorrowful yet serene waves") a feeling of motion and force. The taped sounds were derived from the piano, including such extramusical noises as those made by depressing the pedals, but they have been altered and played with to the point where they have taken on supernatural qualities. The work has beautiful moments that echo the bells Nono hears from his house in Venice. The composer was fortunate to have his friend Pollini to bring out these important crystal-line passages; listeners are equally lucky that the pianist feels an obligation to the music of his own time.

Unfortunately, thirty-four minutes of the music on this record belong not to the moment, but to the decades past, when political statements made to music seemed timely and perhaps even aesthetically important. It seems so long ago. "A floresta è fovem e cheja de vida," written in 1955-56 and recorded here for the first time, is an accompanied diatribe of Marxist and antiwar (specifically anti-Vietnam) statements and slogans, which no longer seem to be part of our communal concern.

Giovanni Pirelli compiled the multilingual texts and sources, which range from references to an article Herman Kahn wrote for *Fortune* magazine in 1965 to words of an anonymous Detroit factory worker and revolutionary statements by fighters and workers from Cuba, Angola, Venezuela, Vietnam, and Berkeley. Pirelli must be credited because his contributions are ultimately more evident than Nono's; the composer has scored the words for soprano, voices, clarinet, copper plates (in-



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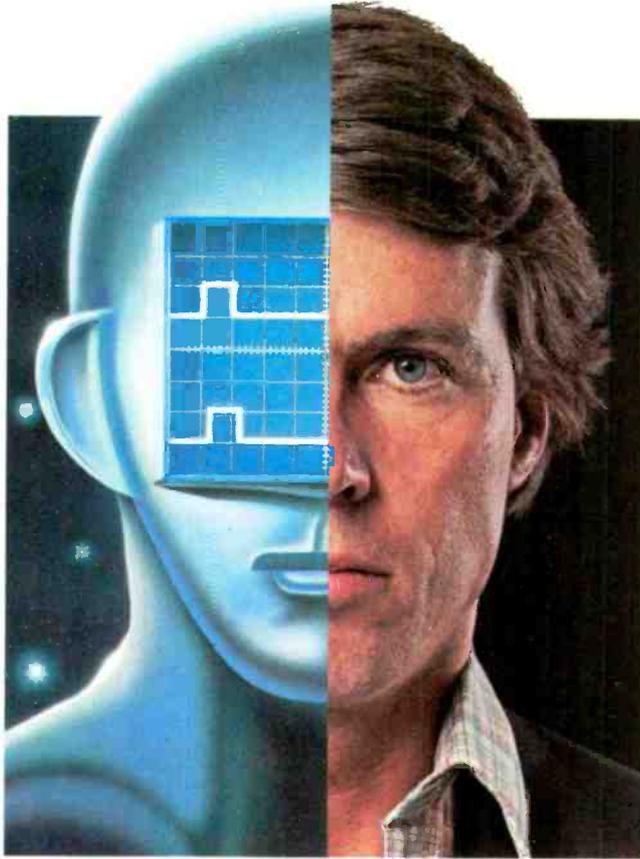
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stead of normal cymbals), and tape, but even the non-musical or extramusical sounds are ultimately secondary to the texts. The work was, according to the liner notes, designed with the cooperation of the performers, which is, I suppose, very democratic—but which is also, in the long run, boring. Nono and Pirelli quote Castro: "We know that this is a struggle between past and future." That it is, but the struggle here is less between past and future than between creativity and politics. K.M.

PADEREWSKI: Piano Works—See Dohnányi: Piano Works.

SCHUBERT: Impromptus, D. 899 and 935.

■ Agustin Anievas, piano. [Suvij Raj Grubb, prod.] SERAPHIM S 60312, \$3.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

Daniel Barenboim, piano. [Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 986, \$8.98. Tape: 3300 986, \$8.98 (cassette).

SCHUBERT: Piano Works.

■ Peter Frankl, piano. [Heinz Jansen and George Kadar, prod.] Vox SVBX 5487, \$11.95 (three discs, manual sequence).

Impromptus, D. 899 and 935; Moments musicaux, D. 780; Wanderer Fantasy, D. 760; Scherzos (2), D. 593; March in E, D. 606; Adagio in E, D. 612; Variation on a Waltz by Diabelli, D. 718; Allegretto in C minor, D. 915; Klavierstücke (3), D. 946.

SCHUBERT: Waltzes for Piano (complete).

■ Paolo Bordoni, piano. SERAPHIM SIC 6112, \$11.94 (three SQ-encoded discs, manual sequence). Tape: 4X3G 6112, \$14.94 (cassettes).

This seems an appropriate place for a reminder that Artur Schnabel's recording of the Schubert impromptu—one of his last, most inclusive, and best-sounding efforts—has been absent from the American catalog since RCA deleted its LVT edition in the mid-Fifties. (Two impromptus, D. 899, Nos. 2 and 4, are available on Seraphim 60115.) Schnabel's way with this music—his inimitable manner of curving a line, grouping phrases, and bringing angularity to the harmonic rhythm—is much imitated. It is, for example, almost perverse to play the trio of D. 899, No. 2, "traditionally," without some of Schnabel's vehement stress. And when Kempff (DG 139 149) and Horowitz (Nos. 2 and 4, on Columbia M 32342) were bold enough to approach these works from a completely different musical lineage, one ended up sounding square-toed, the other contrived and mildly sentimental. It would appear that Schnabel's insights carried so strong an aura of "rightness" that people have ceased to question and merely follow.

Something of Schnabel may be

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found in the divergent readings of Frankl and Barenboim. An example is the way Frankl achieves a flowing—one might almost say casual—line. His pianism here is rounded, easily expansive, and very Central European. The magnificently quirky account of the frolicsome F minor Impromptu, D. 935, No. 4, shows that Frankl is obviously a musician of great culture, and who can deny that Schnabel's own playing had something of this rhythmic cavaliness, this feeling of urbane nonchalance? The difference is that Frankl's playing sometimes grows soft-centered, while Schnabel's never did. A telling comparison may be found in the B flat Impromptu, D. 935, No. 3: Frankl's rubato veers to the oversophisticated, with pulse-dispelling ritards and self-conscious italicizing of phrases; Schnabel shaped the patterns with cogent simplicity and a touch of vehemence. Frankl slights dynamic extremes; in the trio of the sixth *Moment musical*, he smooths away the crucial difference between the forte-crescendo and subito pianissimo at bars 97–98. Such instances, combined with his low-key attitude toward phrasing and rhythm, add to the cumulative impression of pallidness.

For some reason, the Frankl's *Wanderer* Fantasy projects more power, although the final bravura spark (cf. Fleisher and Richter) and the final poetic impulse

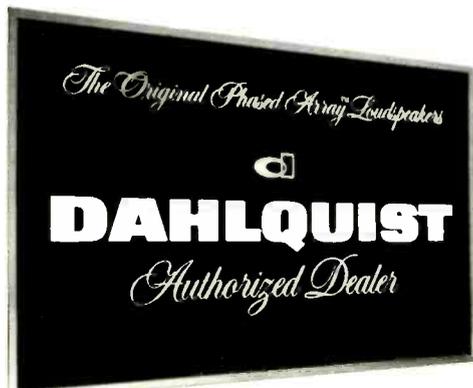
(cf. Curzon) are missing from this earnest, intelligent performance. Best of all are the three *Klavierstücke* (including the longer version of No. 1, with the extra trio that Schubert had second thoughts about) and some of the shorter works, notably the late C minor Allegretto, the D. 593 Scherzos, and the *Diabelli* Variation. I am surprised, however, that a pianist cognizant of the long-perpetrated misprint in the *Wanderer* (Frankl rightly changes the D sharp to D natural in the second movement's last measure) and discerning enough to prefer the F flat to F natural in the trio of the fourth *Moment musical* could be guilty of the tasteless and inauthentic harmony change in the G flat Impromptu—a residual of its long-discredited transposition to G major.

Barenboim's treatment of the epic C minor Impromptu, D. 899, No. 1, is certainly one of the most impressive examples of his playing on records. The brusque, firmly molded phrases compellingly project the drama and harmonic strife, and I am again reminded of Schnabel in the confidence and purposefulness, the lack of sentimentality (although Schnabel's own account had somewhat more lyrical expansiveness and nuance). Unfortunately, Barenboim fails to maintain this level. Already in the E flat Impromptu, D. 899, No. 2, there is a lot of uneven articulation (a far cry from Perahia's pearling execution), and

most of the subsequent pieces are either routinely somnolent (D. 899, No. 3; D. 935, Nos. 2 and 3) or unsmilingly businesslike (D. 899, No. 4). The quirky F minor, though decidedly staid and lacking in Frankl's (and Schnabel's) humor, somehow is salvaged by Barenboim's granitelike imperturbability. The recorded sound is realistic but not very alluring; the wiriness and lack of color are, I suspect, inherent in the playing. DG's pressing is flawless.

In some repertory (e.g., the Chopin etudes on Seraphim S 60081), Agustin Anievas projects a certain muscular sobriety and solid authority, so that one only momentarily misses the sparks of fire and poetry. He sounds far more at sea stylistically in Schubert: His idea of expressivity in the G flat Impromptu apparently comprises setting a slow *Liebstraum*-like tempo (a problem too with Barenboim and, to a lesser extent, with Frankl) and "modifying" it by sudden, ill-gauged incursions of double time in the central interlude, only to fall back into the prevailing lethargy. The fermata just before the reprise of the main theme is all but endless. Most of the other pieces are less fancy, but a basic inelegance and spiritual deadness remain. The piano sonority is thick and opaque; the surfaces of my review copy left much to be desired. In the absence of Schnabel's impromptus, I direct attention to Brendel's earlier (and

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better) recording on Turnabout TV 34481.

Seraphim's processing is much better, though not perfect, in the three-disc set of Schubert waltzes. If one listens in small doses—a luxury denied to reviewers with impending deadlines—one will discover that these miniatures have emotional diversity beyond the repetitiousness inevitable in a succession of pieces in triple meter, mostly in binary form. Genius that he was, Schubert managed many captivating felicities of harmony and color and even—as in the wonderful G major Waltz, D. 980, No. 1—some metrical surprises.

Paolo Bordoni, a Paris-trained Italian pianist previously unfamiliar to me, plays these waltzes with wonderful élan, bracing rhythm, and incisive articulation. His sonority has color and nuance; I find its tendency to silvery brilliance, even hardness, aurally cleansing. There is a danger, of course, of falling into mannerism when faced with the problem of sustaining structures over and over, and at first it seemed that Bordoni's formula consisted of playing first times straight and repeats with heavy rubato. Closer scrutiny revealed many exceptions, and I doubt that there are many pianists who could sustain such freshness and vitality. Bordoni's bouncy approach to the *Diabelli* Variation stresses the waltz elements that justify its appearance in this collection; Frankl's slower, more introspective account probes more deeply into Schubert's magical world. Bordoni's Beethovenian accents and dynamic contrasts in the scherzos make an interesting alternative to Frankl's gentler, more ruminative statements, but why the repeats in the da capo of No. 1? H.G.

STRAUSS, R.: *Die schweigsame Frau*. For a feature review, see page 89.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *The House of Life; Songs of Travel*.

Anthony Rolfe Johnson, tenor; David Willison, piano. [Brian Culverhouse, prod.] *Chalfont* C77 017, \$7.98.

COMPARISON—Songs of Travel:
Argo ZRG 732 Tear, Ledger

This first domestic release of a British Polydor Select disc (2460 236) is notable as the first recording of Vaughan Williams' song cycle *The House of Life*, on poems by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. But don't be misled—the finer of these two sets of songs, both of which date from 1904, is the *Songs of Travel*, one of Vaughan Williams' most important accomplishments.

I find the *Songs of Travel*, to poems by Robert Louis Stevenson, breathtaking in their beauty and tension. Still, that doesn't mean I'm willing to go quite as far as Michael Kennedy did when he called this cycle "a kind of English *Winterreise*." The

two cycles have their journeys in common, and they share a sense of love lost and experience gained, but the British composer's nine songs do not build the emotional impact nearly as strongly as Schubert's do. Rather like the symphonies, they tend to recapitulate without developing, and as a whole they have a feeling of patness and self-satisfaction that can be alienating.

Nevertheless, among the *Songs of Travel* are five superb examples of the British art song, including "The Vagabond" (No. 1), "Let Beauty Awake" (No. 2), and Nos. 7-9, "Whither Must I Wander?," "Bright Is the Ring of Words," and "I Have Trod the Upward and Downward Slope." These may share a feeling of open harmonies and parallel motion, but they still are very sensitive settings of the texts, full of pride and power.

In contrast, *The House of Life* seems self-consciously romantic and restrained, though the third song, "Love's Minstrels," and the fifth and sixth, "Death in Love" and "Love's Last Gift," have their own sweet, introspective characters. "Love's Minstrels" also has a chordal piano setting that emulates the effects of a guitar in a more colorful way than one expects of this composer.

Anthony Rolfe Johnson serves *The House of Life* better than he does the *Songs of Travel*, which received a better performance in its earlier recording by Robert Tear. The producers also seem to have been more intent on giving a reliable realization of the Rossetti cycle, and the engineering there is correspondingly warmer and more immediate. David Willison is Johnson's capable pianist. K.M.

VIVALDI: Motets.

Elly Ameling, soprano; Jeffrey Tate, harpsichord; English Chamber Orchestra, Vittorio Negri, cond. *Philips* 9500 556, \$8.98.

Canta in prato, RV 623; *In furore*, RV 626; *Nulla in mundo pax*, RV 630; *O qui coeli*, RV 631.

These four "motets" may surprise listeners not familiar with southern Italian sacred music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though one late specimen of the genre, Mozart's *Exsultate, jubilate*, is well known. What in the baroque and early classic era was called a motet was a sacred cantata, solo with basso continuo or with orchestra, though in tone and technique it was quite similar to the secular ones. This stylistic resemblance is well demonstrated in Vivaldi's motets. The texts, by an anonymous minor Italian poet, are obviously variants of some nonreligious poetry converted to sacred use in a somewhat shaky Latin. Vivaldi set them to a heady and imaginative mixture of concerto, dramatic recitative, semi-arioso, and melting

Italian aria style, but the virtuoso element predominates and is driven to breathtaking lengths.

Elly Ameling is the ideal interpreter of this kind of music—who says that the breed of prima donnas who can do justice to the demands of ornate baroque singing is extinct? Besides having a beautiful and minutely equalized voice over which she has absolute control, she projects a hundred shades of color, never sings a strained or ambiguous tone, and never takes a breath at the wrong place, no matter how fiercely difficult the coloratura—and difficult they are most of the time. What an artist! At times, as in *Nulla in mundo pax*, Vivaldi starts out in a quiet vein, but we know that he won't allow the singer the ease of such demure music for long. Sure enough, he suddenly launches into a rondolike fast piece that would make a flutist blanch, but Ameling would put the flutist to shame with her agility.

Vittorio Negri and his fine English Chamber Orchestra furnish a well-nigh perfect accompaniment; it is feather-light, yet never in the background. And Negri keeps Jeffrey Tate, an excellent harpsichordist but also a notorious scene-stealer, well within bounds. If you want to hear singing in excelsis, don't miss this disc. P.H.L.

WU/WANG/LIU: Little Sisters of the Grassland*. SOUSA: The Stars and Stripes Forever. LISZT: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in E flat*.

*Liu Dehai (Liu Teh-hai), pipa; *Liu Shikun (Liu Shih-kun), piano; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa, cond. PHILIPS 9500 692, \$8.98.

This release is the discographic equivalent of what the jargon of the day terms a "media event." It commemorates the visit last spring of Ozawa and the Bostonians to the People's Republic of China. Yet, inexplicably, the extensively illustrated double-folder liner notes give no hint that these recordings were made back in Boston, rather than on the trip itself. (Incidentally, the spelling of Chinese names is wrong throughout. In the listing above, the *pinyin*-ized spelling of the performers' names is used, with the pre-1979 spelling in parentheses.)

Two of the three selections can be quickly dismissed: the effectively blustery Sousa march (included, I presume, because the Chinese seem to believe it's an American national anthem) and the uninhibitedly portentous and pretentious performance of Liszt's First Piano Concerto (included, I presume, to demonstrate that the international prizewinning Chinese soloist, Liu Shikun can play every bit as fast and loud as any Occidental virtuoso).

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Wu Tsu-chiang
A Hollywoodian concerto for pipa

There is more pertinence and interest in the concerto for pipa, a fretted, four-string Chinese lute. For while the interminable metallic twangs and tremolos of the instrument itself get mighty tiresome, the work is fascinating as the by-no-means unsuccessful product of a troika—its composition is credited not only to Wu Tsu-chiang, but also to Wang Yen-chiao and the soloist, Liu Dehai. And, fortunately, the music—in conventional enough western, or Hollywoodian, idiom—is not quite as simplistic as one might assume from its party-line subtitles: "Grazing on the grassland," "Furiously struggling in the blizzard," "Pressing forward in the freezing night," "Remembering the parties concerned," and "Myriad red flowers blooming everywhere." If that "program" doesn't deter you, press forward, Comrade, to get your copy of this probably all too ephemeral historical document! R.D.D.

Recitals and Miscellany

FINNISH SONGS, Vols. 1-2.

Taru Valjakka, soprano (Vol. 2); Jorma Hynninen, baritone (Vol. 1); Ralf Gothóni, piano. [Robert von Bahr, prod.] Bis LP 88 and 89, \$8.98 each (distributed by Qualiton Records).

Vol. 1: BERGMAN: See the Dreamer Coming There, Op. 21, No. 1; A Maid's Glimpse, Op. 21, No. 3; Serenade, Op. 35,

No. 1. KILPINEN: Spielmannslieder, Op. 77. MELARTIN: Along Forest Paths I Wander, Op. 4, No. 1; The Grasshopper's Wedding Journey, Op. 15, No. 2. PALMGREN: The Charcoal Burner; In the Rushes; Happy Summer Journey. RAUTAWAARA: Three Sonnets of Shakespeare, Op. 14. SALLINEN: Simpple Simme and Homeless Hamme. SALMENHAARA: Three Japanese Songs.

Vol. 2: KOKKONEN: Evenings. KUUSISTO: Finnish Husbandry. MADETOJA: Since You Left Me, Op. 2, No. 1; Dark Herbs, Op. 9, No. 1; Come with Me, Op. 9, No. 3; Swing, Swing, Op. 60, No. 1; You Thought I Was Watching You, Op. 68, No. 3. PYLKKÄNEN: The Swan of Death, Op. 21. SALLINEN: Four Dream Songs.

Our knowledge of the Scandinavian music scene is appallingly limited, but the rewards are there for anyone who makes the effort to catch up with that swift-running avant-garde or to take a look back and realize that its traditions did not start and end with Sibelius. That said, there's little on these two discs that casts new light on music in Finland. And though the program notes to Vol. 1 begin with a warning not to compare each of these composers to the "maestro" Sibelius, the point remains that few of them have done anything more adventuresome or original than he did and that, when it comes to representing Finland in song, Sibelius did it best.

It's hard not to resort to the clichéd landscape metaphors when discussing this music, since the pervading mood is craggy and gray. Humor and lightness are rare exceptions, and, even when they creep in, they're generally tinged with folk-style modality or with a sense of transience (often expressed in Impressionistic harmonies). These qualities not only recall Sibelius, but also remind one of Rachmaninoff and, now and then, of Bartók. There is a great deal of Eastern European and Slavic influence in much of this music, even when the surface has been glossed by the chromatic harmonies of the late-nineteenth-century French.

Frankly, these songs and cycles are tiresome when taken as a set; there is surprisingly little variation among the composers, even though they write in English and German as well as in their native language. It is possible, however, to filter out from these albums several groups that could probably hold their own on most recital programs. The *Three Japanese Songs* of Erkki Salmenhaara (b. 1941—the youngest of the composers) are attractive and evocative and avoid the predictable. The three songs by Erik Bergman and the three by Se-

lim Palmgren have tension and mystery. Among the songs for soprano in Vol. 2, the five by Leevi Madetoja are gentle and romantic, and the set *Evenings* by Joonas Kokkonen is delightfully pictorial, with a surprise ending. The lesser songs are derivative and/or unimaginative. Worst is Yrjö Kilpinen's *Spielmannslieder* (in German), an attempt to retake *Winterreise*.

The performances are more than competent, though it does seem at times that soprano Taru Valjakka, baritone Jorma Hynninen, and pianist Ralf Gothóni haven't done all they could to underline the songs' variety. K.M.

MICHAEL MURRAY: Organ Recital.

Michael Murray, organ of the Church of St. Ouen, Rouen (France). [Robert Woods, prod.] TELARC 5022, \$7.98.

BRAHMS: Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen, Op. 122, No. 8. **MENDELSSOHN:** Sonata No. 2, Op. 65, No. 2. **PURCELL:** Trumpet Tune. **VIERNE:** Symphony No. 3, Op. 28: Allegro maestoso. **WIDOR:** Symphony No. 6, Op. 42, No. 6: Adagio.

To Charles Marie Widor, who inaugurated the instrument in 1890, the organ of St. Ouen at Rouen was "un orgue à la Michel-ange"—an organ worthy of Michelangelo. Built by Aristide Cavallé-Coll, the great doyen of nineteenth-century French organ-building, the Rouen instrument is today in virtually original condition, providing important insights into the sonorities forming the very basis of the music of Franck, Widor, Vierne, Dupré, and Messiaen.

A Dupré protégé, the young American organist Michael Murray has a special fondness for the modern French "school" of organ music, and among the pieces included in the present anthology the Widor and Vierne movements seem to inspire his finest efforts. He captures all the boldness and drama of the Vierne, and in his sensitive hands the honest sentimentality of the Widor never descends into mawkishness.

Matters fare less well on Side 1: The full-organ romp through the famous Purcell trumpet tune represents the "school of no thought," and Murray's tendency toward a basically metronomic playing style is fatal as much to the limpid grace of the Adagio from Mendelssohn's Second Sonata as to the sensuous chromaticism of the Brahms chorale prelude. Murray's sympathies—and those of the Rouen instrument—being what they are, I would have preferred an entire Widor or Vierne (or even Dupré) symphony to the "bits and

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pieces" assortment offered here.

These reservations aside, Murray's playing is in every way competent, and the recorded sound is quite vivid. There is, however, a curiously grainy quality to the sound, and an odd perspective that suggests the use of too many cardioid microphones too close to the organ. S.C.

ORCHESTRA OF OUR TIME.

Jan DeGaetani* and Johanna Albrecht†, mezzo-sopranos; Orchestra of Our Time, Joel Thome, cond. [Marc Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] CANDIDE CE 31113, \$4.98.

*CRUMB: Night Music I. BOULEZ: Eclat. DLUGOSZEWSKI: Fire Fragile Flight. *WEILL-BERIO: Surabaya-Johnny.

The main attractions of this release come on Side 2, works for chamber orchestra by Pierre Boulez and Lucia Dlugoszewski, both recorded for the first time. Boulez is represented by *Eclat*, which, after fifteen years, might be said to have earned the reputation as his perennial work-in-progress. Dlugoszewski, much less known but of the same generation as Boulez, wrote her *Fire Fragile Flight* (try saying that five times, fast) in the mid-1970s.

The two composers share some opinions and goals: Both choose evocative titles, and both explore contrasting and complementing timbres, often in virtuoso sequences. They part, however, as Boulez goes the route of the intellect in *Eclat*, which is scored for fifteen performers, heavy on the percussion. The most interesting aspect of this nine-minute work (which he expects to lengthen or absorb into another opus) is the smoothness with which the melodies fit together, even when they are fragmented among wildly diversified instruments. There is a linear sweep to this music that is not always a part of Boulez' language and that adds measurably to the work's appeal.

Eclat seems prim, however, next to *Fire Fragile Flight*, which flies by with vibrant energy. Part of the fun lies in figuring out how (and by whom) the weird and wonderful sounds were made; effect plays a role in *FFF*, but there is sense and substance to back it up and no feeling of gimmickery. The liner notes quote the composer as having been inspired by "the delicacy of deciduous trees in early March" at daybreak in the Great Lakes country. Her music has captured the spirit of opening the eyes, stretching out the limbs, and coming alive.

George Crumb writes not for daybreak, but for the darkest hours of the night, he seems to feel, the mood is basically romantic. His *Night Music I*, re-

corded here for the second time (the first is on CRI), almost has to be played when everyone else is asleep; this is music so quiet as to make the listener wonder whether the amplifier and speakers are failing him. The percussion (mostly tuned), celesta, piano, and voice make some lovely sounds, but even the telling fact that the composer decided to write out previously improvisatory passages for this new recording has failed to make the seven "nottornos" hang together. Sections 3 and 5 are settings of Lorca texts; the vocal lines use glissandos and regulated recitation in ways similar to those in Crumb's much-acclaimed *Ancient Voices of Children*. Jan DeGaetani's contributions to this performance make it worthwhile to have re-recorded *Night Music I*, but no amount of brilliant work by the mezzo can give the music a spine.

If you hadn't already been wondering, the inclusion of Luciano Berio's setting of the Brecht-Weill "Surabaya-Johnny" is sure to make anyone question the logic of this release. Yes, this song from *Happy End* celebrated its fiftieth birthday September 2 and it is one of the greatest—if not *the* greatest—of the Brecht-Weill collaborations. Nevertheless, from this performance, it's hard to care that Berio orchestrated it, adding some modern flourishes to the original pit-band accompaniment. Berio's version was made for Cathy Berberian; Johanna Albrecht, who sings it here, might have taken a few more pointers from Lotte Lenya.

The best rationale I can come up with for this disc is that it shows off Joel Thome and his Orchestra of Our Time. The instrumental performances (and DeGaetani's of course) are excellent, and we can hope that Thome's thirty-piece ensemble will continue its mission, perhaps with more sensibly selected repertory for future recordings. K.M.

**Theater
and Film**

ALIEN. Film score by Jerry Goldsmith.

National Philharmonic Orchestra, Lionel Newman, cond. [Jerry Goldsmith, prod.] 20TH CENTURY-Fox T 593, \$7.98.

Although I still consider Jerry Goldsmith the most imaginatively fertile and technically knowledgeable of currently active creators of *déjà entendu* upon encountering yet another assembly-line product of his

seemingly round-the-clock workshop in musical teratology—what used to be known as “monster music.” After the breakthrough accomplishments of *Planet of the Apes*, *The Omen* and *Omen II*, and *Boys from Brazil*, the danger mounts that Goldsmith may become typecast as a slick purveyor of creepy chords and mutant modulations. This impression is partly traceable to the vagaries of soundtrack-releasing patterns: Some of his most provocative departures from the mold, such as *Magic* and *Islands in the Stream*, have not materialized on records.

This is not to say that *Alien* does not measure up to Goldsmith’s standards of craftsmanship. The title theme—which is not heard in its entirety until the film’s denouement—is a hypnotic chromatic-scale figure (with overtones of Scriabin, Holst, and John Williams), establishing the appropriately spaced-out, ominously forlorn, and vulnerable ambience this science-fiction horror story calls for. Whenever this note is struck, the music takes on a full-blown lyricism one does not always expect from Goldsmith.

The bulk of the score, however, is occupied with conjuring the atmosphere of infinite space and terror caused by the characters’ total isolation in being at the mercy of an elusive, intangible, even inconceivable threat. Toward this goal, the composer marshals his tried-and-true strategies: sudden changes in dynamic levels, eerie use of unorthodox registers, electronic distortion of conventional instrumentation, repetition of rhythmic ostinatos, string glissandos—all familiar from *Planet* and *Coma* and *Logan’s Run*, where they sounded considerably fresher than they do here.

For chroniclers of Goldsmith’s un-failing professionalism, there is much to savor here. And it has all been captured in a carefully balanced and spacious if somewhat muted recording, with the National Philharmonic under the capable baton of veteran Lionel Newman. P.A.S.

FARNON: Captain Horatio Hornblower (suite from the film score); *Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra**.

*Raymond Cohen, violin; London Festival Orchestra, Robert Farnon, cond. CITADEL CT 7009, \$7.98.

Robert Farnon’s name may not be familiar to all film-music buffs. Although the Canadian-born composer has scored a number of films in England over the past three decades (primarily light romantic comedies), his work in Hollywood has been confined mainly to the ill-fated *Shalako*,

whose soundtrack was briefly available on Philips in the Sixties. He also has occasionally served as musical director—*Where’s Charley?*, *Gentlemen Marry Brunettes*, *Road to Hong Kong*.

In the pop and jazz fields, Farnon is generally regarded as an arranger without peer (now that Morton Gould and Robert Russell Bennett have turned their attention elsewhere), admired for his telling backgrounds for such artists as Tony Bennett, Sarah Vaughan, Singers Unlimited, and Lena Horne. He has a pronounced affinity for the jazz idiom, and as a straight composer his output of instrumental music (such universally recognized if not immediately identifiable miniatures as *Jumping Bean*, *Journey into Melody*, *Portrait of a Flirt*) assure him a place alongside Eric Coates and Leroy Anderson. But Farnon is a conservatory-trained musician with a proven capacity for thinking in symphonic terms, and this reissue of an obscure English Delysé disc restores to the catalog his most ambitious dramatic film score together with his most successful concert work.

The energetic and vivid suite from *Captain Horatio Hornblower*, a swashbuckling historical adventure film cast in an unabashedly romantic mold, bristles with all the bold strokes and soaring climaxes this dashing nautical subject requires. But its lyrical centerpiece is the impassioned “Lady Barbara” love theme, which Farnon clothes in all the urbane harmonies and resonant textures for which he is justly famous.

His amazing gift of melodic inspiration coupled with an instinctive feel for the appropriate blend of orchestral sonorities is displayed even more breathtakingly in the rhapsody for violin and orchestra. Conceived in a simple A-B-A form, with brief scherzo eruptions, this work is a seamless elaboration of its long-breathed and ecstatic main theme, whose contours are marked by the sudden, heart-stopping leaps and modulatory shifts characteristic of the composer’s style. The combination of Waltonian virility and Ravelian sumptuousness recalls the best elements in European Postimpressionist traditions, as practiced by composers like Eugene Goossens, Cyril Scott, and Malcolm Arnold.

These composer-conducted performances have conviction and authority, and the pressing captures all the stunning presence of the original disc. The benefits deriving from Citadel’s new association with Varèse Sarabande are indicated by the high technical and production standards here. P.A.S.

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Cassette Debuts, More Super-Chromes, Bargain Sets

by R. D. Darrell

With the debuts of the Nonesuch and Monitor labels under their own names, the repertory of bargain-price Dolby musicassettes gains full access to two exceptional catalogs. Each has been represented before, but only sparsely and under other auspices: Nonesuch via Advent, Monitor via the Classical Cassette Company.

The big news is, of course, that Nonesuch's first sixteen releases (at \$4.96 each, the same as the disc price) demonstrate the adventuresome materials and high technical as well as artistic standards the label has consistently maintained under the imaginative direction of Teresa Sterne. Although they reached me only on the (literal) eve of this month's copy-delivery date, I've managed to hear and report on two exemplars.

One is the cassette edition (N5 1356) of Edward Tarr's and George Kent's period-instrument "Baroque Masterpieces for Trumpet and Organ," Vol. 3, which I reviewed so enthusiastically last July in its disc version. On tape it is every bit as fine, sonically identical, with even quieter surfaces. The other is new to me: Vol. 4 of Gilbert Kalish's Haydn piano-sonata series—the Olympian No. 33, bravura No. 38, irresistibly delectable little No. 54, and the wide-ranging E flat Variations, H. XVII:3 (N5 1362). They're all gleamingly played and recorded with a refreshing freedom from idiosyncratic mannerisms. My only—but bitter—complaint is the failure to include notes, particularly since Nonesuch disc notes rank among the best available.

The ten Monitors (\$4.98 each, with at least brief notes) also represent both new and older programs. Of the former, I've heard only the gifted Milanova sisters (violinist Stoika, pianist Dora) in first-rate performances of all three Brahms violin sonatas, plus an only routine account of the horn trio with Vladislav Grigorov (M 55005 and 55006). Even more valuable, especially for devotees of the late Jascha Horenstein's incomparable way with the Mahler symphonies, is the conductor's profoundly moving Fourth (M 55001) with Margaret Price and the London Philharmonic. Among the other Monitors I've been able to listen to so far, I'm delighted to confirm my earlier pleasure in pianist Anton Kuerti's poetic illuminations of three Mendelssohn preludes and fugues plus several show-

pieces, now available by themselves (M 55009) instead of in the double-play CCC 31 coupled with the Chopin Op. 25 Etudes ("Tape Deck," December 1975).

The super-chromes keep coming.

Apparently the response to the first Connoisseur Society/In Sync Laboratory series has been warm enough to ensure regular monthly additions—no fewer than thirteen since my July and August reports on these technological spectaculars (premium-priced at \$10.98 each, with notes available on mail request). Among the piano programs for which Connoisseur Society has long been celebrated, I've relished especially the original piano-four-hands versions of the inexhaustibly invigorating Brahms *Hungarian Dances* (C 4014) and Dvořák *Slavonic Dances* (C 4018), both played to zestful near-perfection by Michel Béroff and Jean-Philippe Collard and appropriately recorded in glittering and not too weighty sonics.

I admired too Ruth Laredo's authoritative Scriabin program (C 4017) of the Op. 42 Etudes and the Fifth, Seventh, and Ninth Sonatas, which seems to be out of print in its disc edition; the 1970 recording still sounds mighty impressive here. But while I'm properly dazzled by György Cziffra's bravura in the Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsodies* (Nos. 1–8 on C 4021, Nos. 9–15 on 4022), his grand-mannered treatments seem excessively flamboyant and the robustly recorded piano qualities too hard-toned. And though fifteen standard rhapsodies are here, the three-disc edition included two of the later ones (Nos. 16 and 19), all four of which are present in Robert Szidon's three-cassette set (DG 3371 018, \$26.94).

Bargain- and budget-priced boxes.

Sine Qua Non Superba offers its first multiple releases in the form of three three-cassette big boxes (RCA style) at \$14.94 each, including brief notes. DG Privilege's cassette boxes, more sensibly sized, begin with six programs, mostly operatic, at \$13.96 (two cassettes) or \$20.94 (three), with trilingual leaflets but, regrettably, no texts.

SQN C 2032/3 stars Jean-Pierre Rampal in a heterogeneous baroque flute concert featuring Decca/London recordings of four fine Leclair sonatas (with Robert Veyron-Lacroix) and C. P. E. Bach's

spirited Concerto in G (with a string orchestra under Louis de Froment). Also included are recordings of unspecified provenance—miscellaneous chamber works (some with second flutist Mario Duschenes) by Albinoni, W. F. Bach, Kuhlau, Pepusch, Quantz, Telemann, and—new to me—one Sebastian Bodinus, who flourished 1720–40.

Of more specialized, but more substantial, interest are two sets of unaccompanied Bach: the six cello suites (C 2026/3) and the six solo violin sonatas and partitas (C 2028/3). The cello suites are most elegantly played by Pierre Fournier, updating his 1962 Archiv recording. The violin works are performed with idiosyncratic but restrained expressiveness by Christian Ferras, although the clean recording has somewhat more background noise and—in my review copy—a first-production erroneous duplication of cassette Sides 1 and 2.

Privilege also has a Bach sonata program: a reissue of the six violin-harpsichord sonatas recorded by David Oistrakh and Hans Pischner (3372 002, double), in which the great Russian fiddler admirably restrains his romanticizing inclinations. Perhaps more widely appealing are two outstanding operatic reissues: Tullio Serafin's memorable 1963 Verdi *Trovatore* (3373 008, triple) and Rafael Kubelik's 1971 Weber *Oberon*, in German (3372 052, double). The former, appearing for the first time on tape, stars Antonietta Stella, Carlo Bergonzi, and Ettore Bastianini, with the La Scala Chorus and Orchestra, in still admirably warm sonics. The more brilliantly recorded *Oberon*, starring Birgit Nilsson and Plácido Domingo, with Bavarian Radio forces, differs from the previous disc and open-reel tape editions in its omission of some twenty-five minutes of dialogue, which—for most American listeners at least—is all to the good.

Three other opera reissues have their individual merits, but they all face formidable competition, even on tape: the 1965 Donizetti *Don Pasquale* with Florence May Festival forces under Ettore Gracis (3372 084, double); the 1962 Verdi *Traviata* starring Renata Scotto, with La Scala forces under Antonino Votto (3372 049, double); and Ferenc Fricsay's 1961 Mozart *Nozze di Figaro* with Renato Capecchi, Irmgard Seefried, Maria Stader, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and Berlin Radio forces (3373 004, triple).

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By Robert Harris, Technical Director

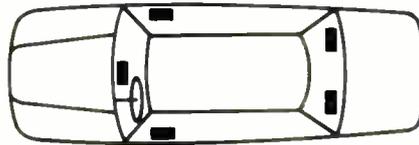
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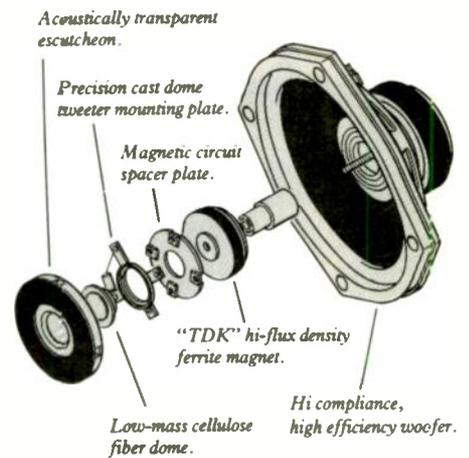
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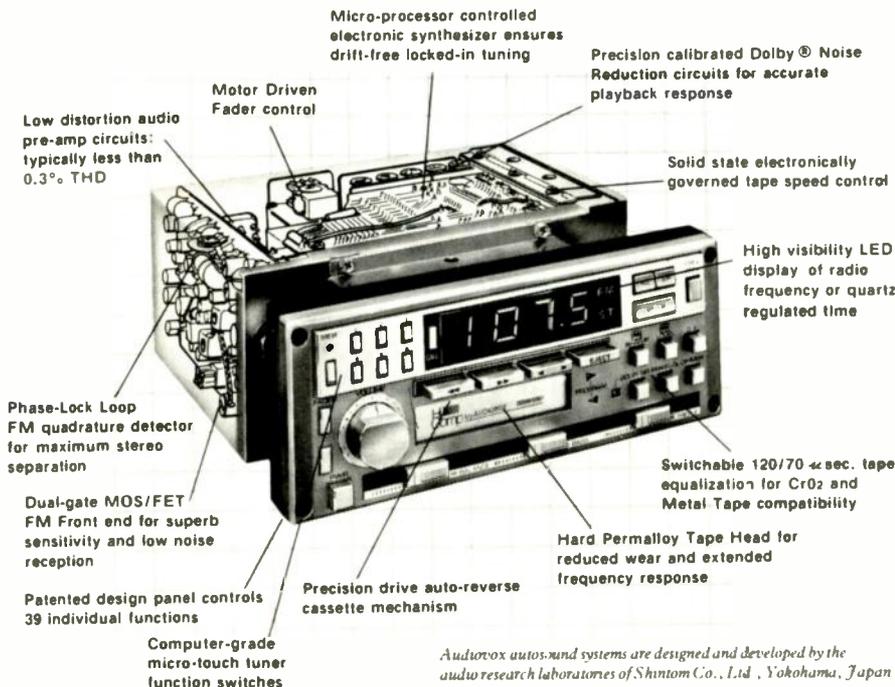
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“I’ve been working on getting my own conception and sound since I was fifteen years old,” says Pat Metheny. “That’s always been the uppermost thing in my mind, because to me jazz means making your own personal statement. It’s a matter of finding your own voice.”

It’s still a little early to tell (he’s now just twenty-four), but on the basis of the evidence accumulated so far, guitarist Metheny has found that voice. After a career that included three albums with Gary Burton and two promising but unfocused solo projects, in the last year he has blossomed into an estimable composer, player, and band-leader. On the strength of two ECM albums, 1978’s “Pat Metheny Group” (his quartet’s debut) and this year’s “New Chautauqua” (a solo work), Metheny has accomplished what others in the amorphous world of “new jazz” have only promised: He has provided a music that firmly and refreshingly defies comparison with anything else.

Yet he is more than an original. He is an original who sells records, many thousands of them, and that has lent him considerable legitimacy in an industry obsessed with “product” and its performance in the marketplace. Tunes like the sweeping, richly textured *San Lorenzo* and the expansive *New Chautauqua* have made their way onto radio playlists where the presence of anything remotely jazzlike usually is considered heretical. Perhaps it’s too much to hope for, but it’s just possible that Metheny’s work may eventually finish what groups like Weather Report have started, by taking a

Pat Metheny Finds His Own Voice

by Sam Graham

The author is an editor of Record World.



He is an original who sells records.



Dan Gottlieb and Lyle Mays

It's possible that Metheny's work may eventually finish what groups like Weather Report have started.

style that is not only new and intelligent, but also listenable to an audience of, say, Supertramp-like proportions.

If that happens, it will hardly be the fulfillment of some lifelong fantasy. Indeed, if there is one thing Metheny shares with the rest of the disparate ECM roster, it's a nearly elitist attitude toward commercial priorities. On the other hand, a recent comment indicates that he might well want to put that massive popularity to use: "I feel quite a responsibility to the other members of my generation to show that it's possible to believe in something and do it right. You can make it work on an artistic level without always taking the easy way to the quickest possible results. I don't get the feeling that there are many people who are working hard to do something the best it can be done. . . . The fact is, there's no shortcut to doing anything right, whether it's building refrigerators or playing music."

Metheny and his bandmates—pianist Lyle Mays, drummer Dan Gottlieb, and bassist Mark Egan—are well suited to the task that he earnestly calls "showing that there are alternatives to playing strictly disco music, or fusion jazz, or bebop, or whatever." All four are in their mid-twenties, and all are mature enough to recognize that they are still musically immature. Moreover, they are in the vanguard of a new generation of musicians who have absorbed a vast range of styles—due in part to the ever-lengthening reach of the media in the last fifteen or twenty years.

"We all listen to virtually the entire spectrum of music," claims Metheny, "from country and western to Stockhausen. None of us has any real prejudices. I mean, we're not crazy about polkas, but I feel we're open to any serious music that people are doing. In this group, you have to be able to play *House of the Rising Sun* or *Gloria* one second and *Giant Steps* the next. We're aware that there is a tradition that we can draw from and expand upon."

For Metheny, exposure to that tradition came early. Music was a fact of his childhood life in little Lee's Summit, Missouri: both his father and older brother were trumpeters (the latter now teaches at Boston's Berklee School). Pat himself might now be a horn player were it not for braces (it's tough to play *Salt Peanuts* with a tin grin) and the Beatles. He switched to guitar and soon was playing Top 40 in various local bands.

It helped that Lee's Summit is near Kansas City, one of the mid-American melting pots for all of the country's indigenous forms—jazz, blues, country, and eventually rock & roll as well. Metheny, having turned to jazz largely because of his brother's influence, began playing in the organ/guitar combos in vogue at the time. "I got those gigs mainly by default," he says, laughing at the image of a skinny, fifteen-year-old white kid with braces gettin' down in some funky K.C. bar.

Later, a short-lived enrollment at the University of Miami indicated that Metheny wasn't much of a student. "I had basically bluffed my way through high school," he says, "and I guess I wasn't into another bluff period." He ended up teaching guitar at the University instead, falling into musical company that included Jaco Pastorius, Narada Michael Walden, the Dixie Dregs, and future partners Egan and Gottlieb. (The association with Jaco has also continued, from Miami gigs backing Lorna Luft through Pat's first album to various live gigs.)

Pat was not yet twenty when he taught at Miami, and later at Berklee as well; but if development of one's own style counts, his students (who included Al Di Meola) were probably well taught. Part of his own growth as a player was conceptual. Given the family atmosphere, it was natural enough that he was inspired by horn players—tale-spinning soloists like Miles Davis and Art Farmer. Among guitarists, he names Wes Montgomery, Jim Hall, and other pure, unhurried melodists as influences.

When it came to the actual chops, Metheny found that his right hand was a good deal weaker than his left, resulting in a softer attack at the picking end and hammerlike approach to fretting. That combination helped define his ringing, fluid tone—what he calls his "midrange, kind of warm sound." He also has exceptional control of the dynamics of his instrument; he alters his volume by touch, with his pick strength or his left hand, but rarely with a volume knob. And while Pat does use various effects, such as digital delay, he is quick to downplay their importance.



His three year stint with Gary Burton (1974–77) afforded Metheny little opportunity to show off his emerging talents. at least at first. On his initial two albums with the veteran vibraphonist's group ("Ring" and "Dreams So Real") he soloed only occasionally, leaving the bulk of the playing to Burton, fellow guitarist Mick Goodrick, and bassists Steve Swallow and Eberhard Weber, and the writing to composers like Carla Bley. When Pat finally showcased with three tunes on 1977's "Passengers," even that was "pretty much of a struggle," he admits.

"I have nothing against Gary at this point," Metheny says when referring to a split that was decidedly less than amicable. "He helped me a lot. But I had such a high regard for his playing, and I realized about halfway through my time with him that it had become just a gig to him. That was a little hard to take."

Attitude is certainly no problem in the current quartet. "I think the way we approach the music is a radical departure from most of the other things that are going on," Metheny contends. "There's no real competition—we're all there for the same reason. The band has an identity, not just the individual players." This, more than any musical element, links his group with the all-for-one spirit of the great rock & roll bands.

He continues, "We have endless discussions about the idea of the group—what sort of tunes I want to do, the sound of the band, the presentation onstage, all of it. The philosophy is in some ways more important than the actual music behind it."

Yes, but what about when the instruments are tuned and plugged in and it's time to work out a piece? Surely they must then deal with specific musical practicalities. "Probably the most important thing is the drums. On virtually every record that comes out nowadays, the drum part may as well be a metronome. The snare is always on two and four. There's always a bass drum hit on one—usually on three, too, and in disco on all four—and the high-hat is usually playing even eighths. It's incredible how drums have gone from the amazing color and sophistication of players like Elvin Jones and Tony Williams to something like a machine. I insist that the drums in my band be based on a certain kind of chaos, not just a pattern. They should provide a constant commentary on everything else."

Also vital is the input of Mays, a brilliant young pianist ("Talk about a mind for logic," says Pat, "this guy is ridiculous") whose cowriting has helped eliminate a lot of the meandering that plagued the tunes on Pat's first two solo albums ("Bright Size Life" and "Watercolors") and is still sometimes apparent on "New Chautauqua." Metheny—who obviously doesn't lack for confidence, but whose sincere, matter-of-fact delivery precludes outright cockiness—believes that "a case could be made that this is the first group where the guitar and piano have played together in a really integrated way. Lyle really understands the way the guitar works, and I have a strong idea of my function as a guitarist when he's soloing.

"A good example is *San Lorenzo*: The traditional thing would have been for me to lay out during his solo, but what I do play becomes *part* of his solo. It's not that blatant—we don't work out fast unison things—but we have ways of complementing each other and getting this sort of shimmering sound. I'll play voicings that have all kinds of fifths, three or four sets of them, which blend real well with the piano."

The follow-up to "Pat Metheny Group" was recorded at the end of June and is due out presently. "It looks like it'll be pretty much rocklike," says Metheny. "By rock, I mean even eighth notes, and more structured pieces. Some of them are pretty long—but definitely not your normal head-solo-head kind of things." He may have a chance to test them out later in the summer when he, Lyle, Jaco, drummer Don Alias, and alto saxist Michael Brecker join Joni Mitchell on her national tour.

For a guy whose musical ideals are the lofty likes of Miles Davis, Josef Zawinul, and Bach, there's a lot yet to be done. "No one should think that all the pieces are in just based on the four records I've made so far," he says. "There are huge elements of my playing that I intentionally haven't put on record. For instance, I'm also interested in just blowing—in *less* structured things. The best thing the Pat Metheny Group can do right now is play this textural music. But that's not to say that I can't do anything else."

In the meantime, ECM has released *New Chautauqua* as a single—the iconoclastic label's first ever—and that's not a bad start. ♣

"I feel a responsibility to show that it's possible to believe in something and do it right."



Mark Egan and Pat

If there's one thing Metheny shares with the ECM roster, it's a nearly elitist attitude toward commercial priorities.

Record Distribution: The Big 6 Take Over

by Ira Mayer

America is losing its independents. In music-business terms, the "indie" is a company that distributes records to retail outlets but is not connected to a major LP manufacturer. By contrast, a branch distributor is linked to one of the six giant entertainment conglomerates—CBS, Warner Communications, Polygram, Capitol/EMI, RCA, and MCA. Since 1978, the indies have been losing a significant amount of business to their branch counterparts, to the point where today the "Big 6" account for about 85% of the U.S. recorded music market.

A&M, for example, which had once experimented with its own branches in the southeast, pulled its \$100-million annual business away from Alpha Distributors in New York, Record Merchandising in Los Angeles, and more than a dozen other indies and gave it to RCA, which had also just acquired the Elton John Rocket label and 20th Century-Fox records for manufacture and distribution. United Artists recently left the indies for Capitol. And indie-distributed ABC was absorbed by MCA. That leaves the independents with Arista, Chrysalis, Fantasy, and Motown—all relatively large labels—along with many smaller ones whose product flow is too slow to sustain a full-time distribution operation. And although those four labels all steadfastly deny contemplating any move from independent distribution, all are

The author is the popular music critic for The New York Post.

known to have recently "talked with the majors." (Arista's recent acquisition by Ariola-Eurodisc will not affect its indie-distributed status.)

A well-oiled branch distribution system is generally believed to have the best potential for getting records into the stores, which—after all the radio airplay, ads, and personal appearances—is where they have to be if sales are to be made. The branch spends its parent company's money to function on its behalf. That means that certain corporate priorities must be met, such as which records are going to be pitched most actively to radio stations (the field promotion staff usually works out of the branches) and which are going to be pushed most heavily into stores. The parent company will also determine what kinds of "special deals" (discounts, long-term credit, free goods, etc.) its branches can offer retailers in exchange for pushing those records. The branches exchange local market information with national headquarters, and together they arrive at effective regional promotional strategies, enabling the parent corporation to force-feed its records into the national marketplace.

The indie, by contrast, spends its own money. It too must meet certain priorities, in this case those set directly by the labels themselves. (Indeed, if it doesn't meet them, his client will simply take his business elsewhere.) Still, the indie has to base its business decisions directly on what has moved best in the

past, or on what new acts appear to have the best potential in its market.

Typically, the bulk of an independent's line includes a couple of the larger independent labels and several dozen smaller jazz, folk, blues, or other specialty lines. At a peak season, say eight weeks before Christmas, fewer than a dozen LPs will come in from any one of its clients, maybe one or two of which will be "superstar" product. During that same season, a CBS will release 200 or more albums from all of the labels it distributes, many by their biggest superstars. In fact, in any given month the number of releases the indie services to stores is a fraction of what one of the Big 6 sends out. Relieved of bulk, the indie can concentrate on the LPs it does have, be they established hit makers or, in some instances, unknown "big pushes" from the larger accounts.

Historically, independent labels and distributors have been specialists of a sort, spearheading musical trends, testing the market for the majors. It makes sense: You go into business because you believe you can offer a product no one else is offering. Early "race records"—black artists performing jazz and rhythm & blues—were on such labels as Okeh, Vocalion, and Brunswick; current disco hits are on such labels as Dash and Juana (both owned and distributed by the Florida-based T.K. Records). And these independent labels have been distributed by indies. Prior to its success with K.C. and the Sunshine Band, in fact, T.K.'s major business was distribution, a fact that contributed greatly to its ability to break records in the southeast region of the country.

The advantage of independent distribution for a label—beyond the per-unit dollars-and-cents issues we will discuss shortly—is "the ability to control your own destiny," as Chrysalis marketing vice president Sal Licata puts it. At a branch operation (and Chrysalis was distributed by WEA before going indie), the many labels that the parent corporation distributes compete with each other for attention; marketing and policy decisions are made through corporate channels, so one label's priorities will inevitably take prece-



dence over another's. In a well-run indie operation, without that higher-up clearing house, each label gets something much closer to customized service.

So why the relatively sudden multilabel defection from independent distribution? And why are so many new labels looking directly to the majors for distribution on every album they sell? The specific numbers change constantly—Motown recently lowered their wholesale prices while WEA and others upped theirs—but for reference purposes, we'll use the following, based on a \$7.98 list price:

	Indie	Branch
Purchase price from manufacturer	\$3.60	\$3.47
Resale price to retailer	4.30	4.08
Distributor profit	.70	.61

The chart suggests the paradox that is at the heart of the indie/branch distinction: From a strictly per-unit dollars-and-cents perspective, it is most advantageous for a label to sell to an independent and for a retail outlet to buy from a branch.

An indie pays more per LP in order to get a label's business. The branch can afford to work at a lower profit margin because distribution is merely one step in the parent company's (presumably profitable) business. The branch's cheaper prices, augmented by those previously mentioned "special deals," encourage the dealer not only to make volume purchases, but to take risks on new acts—both central to any record label's survival.

The indie simply does not have the branch's muscle, and that muscle is more than a matter of attractive wholesale prices. It includes getting good display space in stores, in-store airplay, money for cooperative advertising campaigns, and the leverage to say, "You want 10,000 copies of Superstar X's new LP? You've got it—just take 100 each of ten of our new acts in the same order." The branch, with a multitude of labels and big-name artists, has this leverage at its disposal of ten; the indie, with but a handful of superstars, gets such opportunities far less frequently.

And then there is the matter of volume: With costs at every level of the recording and record-promoting processes escalating, typical rock/pop/soul/disco debut LPs are costing between \$75,000 and \$125,000 even before any serious marketing or advertising campaigns are undertaken. No longer is a record company breaking even (let alone showing a profit) on an LP that sells, say, 50,000 copies. Success today is more in the area of 300,000 discs sold. (The superstars are making even these numbers skyrocket. It is said, for instance, that CBS will have to sell 2 million Wings albums before it breaks even on its investment in Paul McCartney.)

That means that the distributor—branch or indie—is going to have to move a lot of records through its warehouse in order to provide a record company with the volume it needs. The branch, using its parent company's money, is a lot more likely to risk big orders of both established and new artists' records; for the independent, tying up its own cash and space in inventories by newcomers makes no sense. It's the hits that keep the inventory moving and the cash flowing.

Today, the largest independent distributors—such as Pickwick, Handleman, and Lieberman—almost constitute branch systems of their own. Some of the smaller ones have looked at consolidation as a possible route to survival. In California, for example, Record Merchandising, Record Distributors, Inc., and Record Rack Service merged under the first company's name in the interest of creating "the strongest regional distribution in the western United States."

Such consolidation and centralization is, indeed, being encouraged by the likes of Arista and Chrysalis. Arista executive vice president Elliot Goldman explains: "I don't want to make it sound like every single independent distributor out there is either efficient or able to survive a difficult period. But those who've been around a long time have been through this kind of thing before, and they know how to weather it. For some of them that really have a problem, rather than knocking each other's heads apart, they might see some merit in doing some things on a

joint basis."

One major impediment in the relationship between independent distributors and labels has been the fact that their operational agreements traditionally have been oral and short-term. And with all of the shuffling about lately, this has led to fears of desertion on both sides. At this year's convention of the National Association of Record Merchandisers (NARM), Goldman suggested that indie labels and distributors set up formal contracts that would insure allegiances and guarantee services and incentives. Both Arista and Chrysalis are pursuing just such arrangements—albeit with Pickwick, their largest and most branchlike distributor, for starters. Says Chrysalis' Licata, "If we make a contract with one distributor, that would be sufficient because that would show them that we're with them for two or three years, and if we're going to be in business with one, we're going to be in business with all of them."

But Licata is equivocating; he's making his contract with Pickwick and assuring them that he'll be with them for two to three years. That, however, offers no guarantee to anyone else beyond the implicit understanding that Chrysalis will maintain its independently distributed status. And he openly contradicts himself when he points out that the number of distributors he uses "will probably go down" to fewer than the sixteen the company now has. Someone's going to get the ax.

There is also a musical question that looms darkly on the distribution horizon: If power and competition are increasingly being centralized among the six majors, with each looking for the biggest megaplatinum-selling artists, are we not in for a still greater homogenization of American popular music? Yes, but not necessarily because independent labels and distributors are losing power and visibility. At this time, homogeneity is more a result of major label artists attempting either to cross over—from country to pop, pop to soul, soul to rock and disco—or to simply modify their sound to sell more records. There has also been a tendency of late for gold-selling acts to switch labels

Continued on page 136

FOR WEEK ENDING AUG. 18, 1979

Billboard® TOP

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KEY

Following is a list of the Top 104 Pop LPs as ranked in **Billboard's** August 11, 1979 issue. 88 of the albums are distributed by the Big 6, 16 by indies.

- A** = CBS
- B** = Warner Comm.
- C** = Polydor
- D** = RCA
- E** = Capitol/EMI
- F** = MCA
- G** = Arista
- H** = Motown
- I** = Chrysalis
- J** = TK
- K** = Rounder
- L** = Fantasy

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	Weeks on Chart	ARTIST Title Label, Number (Dist. Label)	
★	1	8	THE KNACK Get The Knack Capitol SO 11948	E
	2	15	DONNA SUMMER Bad Girls Casablanca NBLP 2 7150	C
	3	21	SUPERTRAMP Breakfast In America A&M 3708	D
★	4	8	CARS Candy-O Elektra 5B 507	B
	5	9	TEDDY PENDERGRASS Teddy P.I.R. F2 36003 (CBS)	A
★	6	10	EARTH, WIND & FIRE I Am Arc FC 35730 (CBS)	A
★	7	9	ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA Discovery Jet F2 35769 (CBS)	A
★	9	8	THE WHO The Kids Are Alright MCA 2-11005	F
	9	8	CHEAP TRICK Cheap Trick At Budokan Epic FE 35795	A
★	13	15	CHARLIE DANIELS BAND Million Mile Reflections Epic JE 35751	A
★	12	14	JOHN STEWART Bombs Away Dream Babies RSO R51 3051	C
★	21	5	NEIL YOUNG Rust Never Sleeps Reprise HS 2295 (Warner Bros.)	B
	13	10	WINGS Back To The Egg Columbia FC 36057	A
★	18	4	KINKS Low Budget Arista AB 4240	G
	15	11	DIRE STRAITS Communique Warner Bros. HS-3330	B
	16	17	BAD COMPANY Desolation Angels Swan Song SS 8506 (Atlantic)	B
	17	15	RICKIE LEE JONES Rickie Lee Jones Warner Bros. BSK 3296	B
★	20	7	JONI MITCHELL Mingus Asylum 5E 505	B
★	24	5	ROBIN WILLIAMS Reality What A Concept Casablanca NBLP 7162	C
	20	14	KISS Dynasty Casablanca NBLP 7152	C
★	23	10	DIANA ROSS The Boss Motown M7-923	H

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	Weeks on Chart	ARTIST Title Label, Number (Dist. Label)	
	22	36	KENNY ROGERS The Gambler United Artists UALA 934	E
★	25	7	SOUNDTRACK The Main Event Columbia JS 36115	A
★	60	4	VARIOUS ARTISTS Studio 54 Casablanca NBLP 2-7161	C
★	27	7	ABBA Voulez-Vous Atlantic SD 16000	B
	26	26	ATLANTA RHYTHM SECTION Underdog Polydor PD 1 6200	C
★	29	11	CRUSADERS Street Life MCA 3094	F
	28	28	VAN HALEN II Van Halen II Warner Bros. HS 3312	B
	29	30	CHUCK MANGIONE An Evening Of Magic A&M SP 6701	D
★	33	5	LTD Devotion A&M SP 4771	D
	31	16	QUEEN Queen, Live Killer Elektra BB 702	B
★	50	3	LITTLE RIVER BAND First Under The Wire Capitol SOO 11954	E
★	NEW ENTRY		COMMODORES Midnight Magic Motown M 8926	H
★	41	11	DIONNE WARWICK Dionne Arista AB 4230	G
	35	36	THE CARS Elektra 6E 135	B
	36	37	G.O. Disco Night Arista AB 4225	G
★	39	8	BRAM TCHAIKOVSKY Strange Man, Changed Man Polydor/Radar PD1 6211	C
★	42	14	STEPHANIE MILLS What Cha Gonna Do With My Love 20th Century T-583 (RCA)	D
	39	40	SWITCH Switch II Gordy G7 988 (Motown)	H
★	46	20	SPYRO GYRA Morning Dance Infinity INF 9004 (MCA)	F
★	45	5	ROBERT PALMER Secrets Island ILPS 9544 (Warner Bros.)	B
	42	43	BLACKFOOT Strikes Atco SD 38112 (Atlantic)	B

LPS & TAPE

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	Weeks on Chart	ARTIST Title Label, Number (Dist. Label)	
43	44	15	JAMES TAYLOR Flag Columbia FC 36058	A
★	51	14	MINNIE RIPERTON Minnie Capitol SD 11936	E
★	49	19	RAYDIO Rock On Arista AB 4212	G
46	47	48	BLONDIE Parallel Lines Chrysalis CHR 1192	I
47	48	7	BLUE OYSTER CULT Mirrors Columbia JC 36009	A
★	54	10	GERRY RAFFERTY Night Owl United Artists UALA 958	E
49	19	13	ANITA WARD Songs Of Love Juana 20004 (TK)	J
50	31	11	KANSAS Monolith Kirschner FZ 36008 (CBS)	A
51	32	9	PETER DINKlage Where I Should Be A&M 3710	D
52	53	5	BOOTSIE'S RUBBER BAND This Boot Is Made For Funk-N Warner Bros. BSK 3295	B
53	55	5	PAT TRAVERS BAND Go For What You Know Polydor PD1 6202	C
★	59	6	NICK LOWE Labour Of Lust Columbia JC 36087	A
55	56	8	ELTON JOHN The Thom Bell Sessions MCA 13921	F
56	57	35	DOOBIE BROTHERS Minute By Minute Warner Bros. BSK 3193	B
★	65	5	NILS LOFGREN Nils A&M SP 4756	D
★	64	16	TRIUMPH Just A Game RCA AFL1-3224	D
59	61	6	A TASTE OF HONEY Another Taste Capitol SD 11951	E
60	34	10	DAVID BOWIE Lodger RCA AQL1-3254	D
61	35	20	JOE JACKSON Look Sharp A&M SP 4745	D
★	70	10	BILLY THORPE Children Of The Sun Capricorn CPN 0221	C
63	63	12	CON FUNK SHUN Candy Mercury SRM 1-3754	C

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	Weeks on Chart	ARTIST Title Label, Number (Dist. Label)	
★	72	2	REO SPEEDWAGON Nine Lives Epic FE 35988	A
★	71	5	STANLEY CLARKE I Wanna Play For You Nemperor PZ2 35680 (CBS)	A
66	38	27	BEE GEES Spirits Having Flown RSD RS1-3041	C
67	68	39	POCO Legend MCA AA 1099	F
68	69	47	STYX Pieces Of Eight A&M SP 4724	D
69	52	7	K.C. & THE SUNSHINE BAND Do You Wanna' Go Party TK 611	J
70	58	10	ISLEY BROTHERS Winner Takes All T-Neck PZ-2-36077 (CBS)	A
71	67	17	IAN HUNTER You're Never Alone With A Schizophrenic Chrysalis CHR 1214	I
72	73	16	MARSHALL TUCKER BAND Running Like The Wind Warner Bros. BSK 3317	B
73	62	76	VAN HALEN Warner Bros. BSK 3075	B
★	82	3	MICHAEL HENDERSON Do It All Buddah BDS 5719 (Arista)	G
75	78	16	WAYLON JENNINGS Greatest Hits RCA AHL1-3378	D
★	103	5	MASS PRODUCTION In The Purest Form Cotillion SD 5211 (Atlantic)	B
★	88	9	DR. HOOK Pleasure & Pain Capitol SW 11859	E
78	80	19	JOURNEY Evolution Columbia FC 35797	A
79	79	11	THE JONES GIRLS The Jones Girls P.I.R. J2 35757 (CBS)	A
★	90	13	FLASH IN THE PAN Epic JE 36018	A
81	83	14	EARL KLUGH Heartstrings United Artists UALA 942 (Capitol)	E
82	66	8	WILLIE & LEON One For The Road Columbia KC2-36064	A
83	75	26	SISTER SLEDGE We Are Family Cotillion CDT 5209 (Atlantic)	B

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	Weeks on Chart	ARTIST Title Label, Number (Dist. Label)	
84	85	43	BILLY JOEL 52nd Street Columbia FC 35609	A
85	89	5	SUN Destination Sun Capitol SF 11941	E
★	97	4	CAMEO Secret Omen Chocolate City CCLP 2008 (Casablanca)	C
87	77	39	PEACHES & HERB 2-Hot Polydor/MVP PD1-6172	C
88	86	49	DONNA SUMMER Live And More Casablanca NBLP-7119	C
★	100	4	PATRICK HERNANDEZ Born To Be Alive Columbia JC 36100	A
90	92	33	DIRE STRAITS Dire Straits Warner Bros. BSK 3266	B
91	81	14	PATTI SMITH Wave Arista AB 4221	G
★	181	2	PLEASURE Future Now Fantasy F-9578	L
★	142	5	MAXINE NIGHTINGALE Lead Me On Windsong BXL1-3404 (RCA)	D
94	98	4	SOUNDTRACK Manhattan Columbia JS 36020	A
95	95	36	THE JACKSONS Destiny Epic JE 35552	A
★	105	4	SMIFF 'N' THE TEARS Fickle Heart Atlantic SD 19242	B
97	87	12	TED NUGENT State of Shock Epic FE 36000	A
★	109	2	RY COODER Bop Till You Drop Warner Bros. BSK 3358	B
99	101	19	GRAHAM PARKER Squeezing Out Sparks Arista AB 4223	G
★	NEW ENTRY		SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY & ASBURY JUKES The Jukes Mercury SRM 1-3793	C
101	102	37	GEORGE THORGOOD Move It On Over Rounder 3024	K
102	76	8	CARLY SIMON Spy Elektra SE-506	B
★	122	3	DAVE EDMUNDS Repeat When Necessary Swan Song SS-8507 (Atlantic)	B
104	94	17	REX SMITH Sooner Or Later Columbia JC 35813	A

(among the Big 6) in search of platinum sales figures.

Perhaps the indies will eventually save us from this kind of vinyl inflation. We have already seen that they are a source for new trends, be it early race records, rock & roll (Elvis and Jerry Lee Lewis, for instance, started on Sun), or disco—the latest and biggest example. It was the indies who experimented with the use of discos as a promotion vehicle for their records and who paved the way for every major label—two years later—to start up their own disco divisions.

And a look at this year's charts shows that even the majors, especially in a weak selling period, are breaking new artists who are not stereotypical of the pop scene. Wherefore Dire Straits and Rickie Lee Jones? Joe Jackson? The Cars? All critically acclaimed and widely purchased (though not in "Saturday Night Fever" numbers) from Warner Bros., A&M, and Elektra.

America is losing its independents, a trend that will doubtless continue in the coming years. Those that survive will probably do so by consolidating in order to maximize their buying power and create more efficient—and branchlike—operations. Even Clive Davis, Arista founder and president, was cautiously diplomatic when responding to a *New York Times* query about rumors of Arista's change from indie to branch distribution: "We are certainly appraising whether we have the best of all possible worlds. But, up to now, independent distribution has worked extremely well for us."

The trend right now is definitely toward centralization, and although the U.S. Justice Department continually warns the Big 6 that it is investigating possible antitrust violations, it is unlikely that the basic structure of things will change in the near future. But the picture is not all bleak. The indies are a hardened species that has survived death knells in the past. Indeed, a significant part of their attractiveness to labels is their resourcefulness.

What is likely is that as new technologies enter the market—video discs, for example—the record industry will be forced to refocus, redefine, and respecialize. That will require experimentation and risk-taking, and it will be the people "in control of their own destinies," who can do that. And regardless of their numbers, those people will still be known as the independents. ♪

THE BIG 6:

Who Distributes Who

Because distribution agreements change at breakneck speed, and because sometimes no sooner than a label is unveiled does it disintegrate or become dormant, this list is not "definitive." It also does not include the many classical labels that most of these companies distribute.

CBS

Arc
Bang
Blue Sky
Caribou
Columbia
Columbia/Stiff
Epic
Epic/Stiff
Jet
Kirshner
Lorimar
Nemperor
Pavillion
Philadelphia Internat'l.
Portrait
T-Neck
Tabu
Unlimited Gold

POLYGRAM

Capricorn
Casablanca
Charisma
Curton
Delite
DJM
Harem
Magnet
Mercury
Monument
MVP
Panama
Polydor
Radar
Riva
RSO
Spring
Zappa

MCA

Back Beat
Butterfly
Hickory
Infinity
MCA
Montage
Mike Curb Recs.
Source

WARNER COMMUNICATIONS

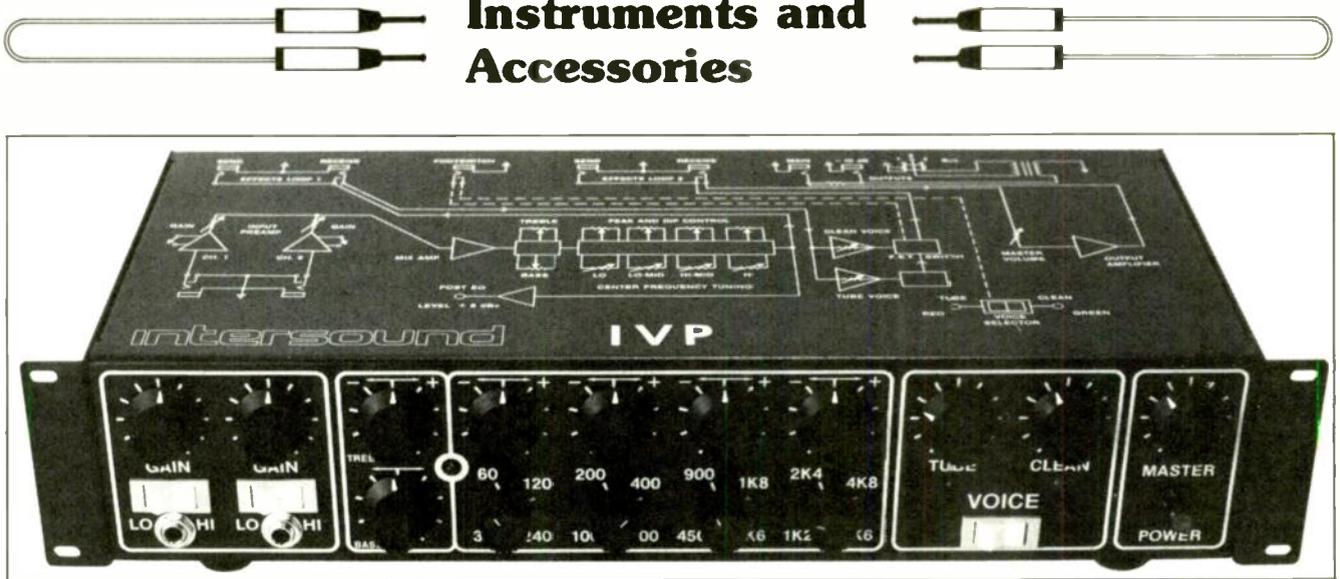
Atco
Atlantic
Bearsville
Big Tree
Cotillion
Dark Horse
ECM
Elan
Elektra/Asylum
Elektra/Curb
Emerald City
Island
Manticore
Number One
Planet
RFC
Rolling Stones
Scotti Bros.
Sire
Swan Song
Virgin
Warner Bros.
Warner/Curb
Westbound
Whitfield

RCA

A&M
Grunt
Hologram
Horizon
Millenium
New York Internat'l.
Pablo
Panorama
RCA
Roadshow/Nature's Music
Rocket
Salsoul
Solar
20th Century
Windsong

CAPITOL/EMI

Ariola America
Capitol
EMI
EMI America
Harvest
United Artists



Intersound's Instrument Voice Preamplifier (IVP). Before the IVP came to my attention, I had never heard of an "instrument voicing" preamplifier. The IVP has what seems to be a parametric equalizer and a section marked VOICE, so I thought maybe it was something to use on a vocal—like one of those vocoders. Never one to judge a component by its cover, I studied the instruction manual, which revealed that the nineteen-inch rack-mountable preamplifier was designed for use with guitars, basses, and keyboards.

The front panel incorporates two input phone jacks (with sensitivities switchable between HI and LO) with volume controls, a tone-control section, a four-band parametric equalizer, a VOICE amplification section where the user may choose between CLEAN (for sound like that of a transistor amp) or TUBE (like that of a "good old-fashioned tube amp"), and an output volume control for feeding a power amp. Several back-panel phone jacks are provided for interconnection to outside units, such as phasers and echoplexes. The interconnection patch points, labeled EFFECTS LOOP 1 and 2, are sensibly located—one before and one after the VOICE control. There also is a remote footswitch jack (for CLEAN/TUBE selection). The inclusion of three output jacks of varying potential—LINE for hookup to power amps, a -10-dB jack for connection to mixing consoles and other lower-output devices, and BALANCED (an XLR jack) for long cable runs and other units requiring balanced inputs—makes interconnection a breeze virtually anywhere.

The input level controls are variable over a wide range and will accept a dynamic mike (our choice), electric piano, or any standard electric instrument. The input signal goes through the IVP's bass and treble controls, where shelving equalizers shape the instrument's sound. Next it passes through the parametric equalizer section, where center frequencies can be selected and ranges around them highlighted or attenuated at will with peak-and-dip equalization. The equalized signal then may be sent to an accessory unit (echoplex, flangers, delay line) and returned to VOICE—either CLEAN or TUBE, which are selectable via the two-position VOICE switch. Each position has its own volume control, and, when they are matched, you can switch back and forth between the two to compare their relative desirability. The output of the voice section is the EFFECTS LOOP 2 patch point; it returns to the MASTER volume control. The gain setup of the IVP permits overloading, so you can achieve, for example, the infamous "tube distortion" effect without ear-splitting volume levels. The package is rounded out by a pair of status LEDs in the voice section and a fused output stage.

We put the IVP through some absurd paces. In addition to standard sound shaping with piano, voice, and synthesizer, we took it to its EQ and volume limits. The bass and treble section is quite sharp and provides a wide range of tone qualities. The parametric equalizer, with its four frequency bands, is very flexible; although the "Q" (breadth of peak/dip at a given frequency) seems rather sharp, perhaps a

live situation would require that lack of subtlety. For recording, I would have preferred a gentler—or a variable—"Q" control. The IVP is quite sturdily built, and all the knobs, switches, and jacks were in excellent health.

Since the voice section is what keeps the IVP from being just another excellent preamp, it needs close examination. In the CLEAN position, the sound is clean. But does TUBE really sound like the old tube units? Can it distort like they did? Well, it certainly sounds different from CLEAN—generally rounder and a shade less "present"—and takes on sort of a pear-shaped characteristic below 1 kHz. My subjective opinion is that, while it may sound like tubes, it isn't quite tubes. Whether because of the knowledge that I was playing through a solid-state preamp or a predisposition to old Fender amps, I didn't get that "old feeling." I would also add, however, that the tube sound is sometimes as elusive as the smell of your Grandma's closet.

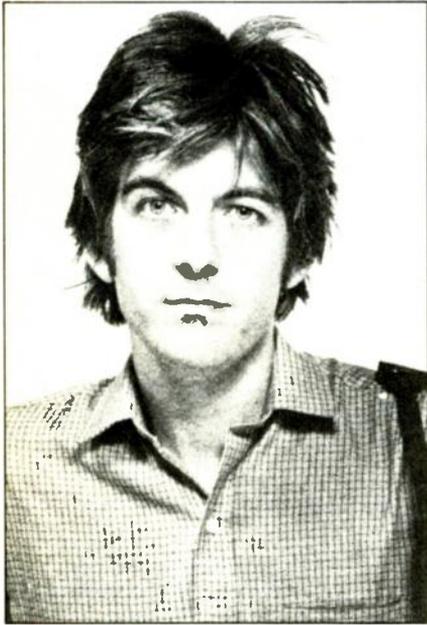
Overall, I must set down my complete admiration of the IVP as being an excellent tool for any serious electronic musician engaged in live performance. It offers maximum versatility and quiet, reliable response. The suggested list price of the IVP is \$359.

Go try it out, and you decide about those tubes. I'm going over to Grandma's to stand in the closet. **FRED MILLER**

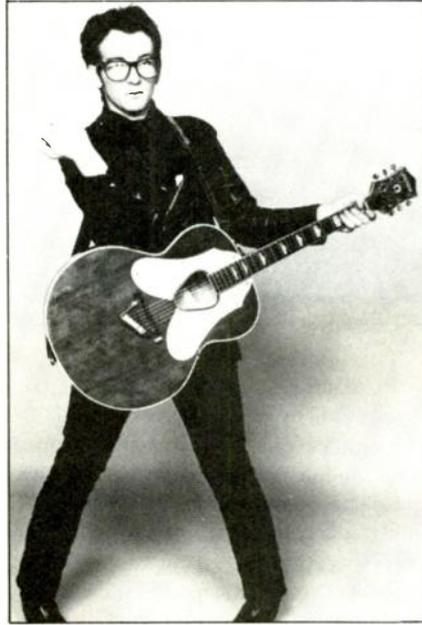
Circle 121 on Page 105

Rock 'n' Recession

by Sam Sutherland



Cost-efficient Nick Lowe and . . .



Elvis Costello

Within the recording industry, the year 1979 is starting to sound like a twist on the classic "good news/bad news" joke. This time the bad news comes first, and in this instance it's preceded by dollar signs and followed by percentages.

Simply put, the first six months of 1979 marked a jolting return to earth after a decade of stratospheric economic growth. The bullish sales boom some executives predicted during the prior year, based largely on the dizzying millions of copies of "Saturday Night Fever" and "Grease" sold during '78, never materialized. What did were unprecedented returns on unsold records and tapes, the demise or absorption of a number of record companies, and an alarming dip in profits industry-wide that has since led to staff cutbacks and slashed budgets.

Though industry sales figures for 1978 showed respectable growth in dollar volume, the number of albums sold was beginning to suggest slower growth for the music audience that had been building in the mid-'70s. When these problems began to show up on label balance sheets in the first quarter of 1979, an air of anxiety

spread beyond corporate suites and into every corner of the trade. Fiscal worries undercut many companies' ability to promote their records and lessened the number of dollars available for signing and producing new artists. Unemployment is thus on the rise for both music business folk and musicians, as labels cut back or close down. And with the majors trying to shore up profits with higher wholesale and list prices, the consumer is literally paying the price for the slump.

Where's the good news? Right now, it exists as only a distant possibility, but one growing more probable in view of how both the business and the music is changing. Looking at the European music industry, and at England in particular, we see a scenario that could—although to a lesser degree—happen here. There, a sharply depressed economy has ended much of the music business champagne-and-limousine largesse, and while that doubtless depresses once-pampered execs, it has also toughened up the music.

Styles influenced by New Wave and punk have sprung as much from an economic process as a social or aesthetic

one. Feisty British labels like Stiff and Radar may have consciously cultivated their cheap-but-cheeky image, but the raw verve of the earliest, mid-'70s records was as much an index to fiscal limits as it was to a sense of rebellion. The return to a singles orientation likewise underscores bottom-line pragmatism: By cutting singles as such and keeping session budgets low, new artists have been able to reach the British public without running the risk of big-budget album projects. That equation also indicates the cramped spending power of that country's music fans.

At the same time, labels taking that cheaper path have awarded artists greater control, simply because the reduced monetary gamble in recording and marketing singles lessens the need to enforce formulae devised to protect investments. At its worst, such *laissez-faire* has yielded unlistenable two-chord yowls, but it has also permitted some of the most potent rock heard in years—witness, for instance, the earliest efforts of Dire Straits or the Clash. And for those artists breaking into broader public acceptance, like Elvis Costello or Nick Lowe, the discipline imposed during early sessions has led to an enviable skill at attaining a more sophisticated production finish while still keeping costs far below those routinely incurred by U.S. rockers.

Less obviously, but perhaps most promising, the gravity of economic and energy problems now facing the U.S. is beginning to chafe on a public that has spent much of this decade detaching itself from global concerns. American pop music in the '70s had retreated to a wishful isolationism shaped by private, not public, issues, and epitomized by the escapism of disco. As historian Christopher Lasch (*The Culture of Narcissism*) has observed, pop/rock culture has provided an archetype for our self-absorbed and materialistic indifference to social problems.

But as the lines lengthen at the gas stations, such retreat is increasingly difficult. And pop music is already reflecting this darker new mood of the '80s: Summer brought a reversal in disco's domination of the airwaves, and tough-minded rock is seeing a resurgence, paced not by platinum dinosaurs but by hungry new rockers fueled emotionally, if not always stylistically, by new rock genres. That's good news. 

Ry Cooder's Digital Rock

by Crispin Cioe



Cooder: a milestone for pop recording

Ry Cooder: *Bop Till You Drop*

Ry Cooder, producer
Warner Bros. BSK 3358

In a modest and friendly little way, this is a landmark album. It's not only the first rock or pop album to use the digital recording process, but the most fully realized, satisfying LP of Ry Cooder's illustrious, yet muted career. Long known as the main man of bottleneck guitar playing, he started performing in Los Angeles at age ten, kept it up through a stint at Reed College, worked in a band with Taj Mahal (the Rising Sons), and by the late '60s was a fixture in the L.A. studio scene. His solo career started in 1970, and right from the outset it was clear that he was much more than a practiced country blues revivalist. His seven albums have raised eclecticism

to dizzying new heights. His dedication to updating musical Americana has produced a stolid cadre of fans who follow his forays from classic, Memphis gospel-based soul (James Carr's *Dark End of the Street*) to classic Leadbelly (*On a Monday*) to the ultimate fusion nonsequitur—the mating of Hawaiian and Tex-Mex music. This last produced "Chicken Skin Music" and a live LP, "Show Time," which had several exquisite moments.

Yet Cooder has never been able to translate these influences into a fluid, syncretic style. As a guitarist, he could unite the styles of Hawaiian steel guitarist Gabby Pahinui and Mexican accordionist Flaco Jimenez, but his albums as a whole continued to be delightful, slightly whacked-out lost weekends. His last effort, "Jazz," was a complete departure, an

exhumation of lost threads on the jazz periphery over the last century.

With "Bop Till You Drop," Cooder has finally taken the giant cohesive step merging his gospel-tinged vocals, Latin American guitar touches, and love of American r&b to form a new whole that's much more than the sum of its parts. The first song is a joyful reworking of my favorite Elvis Presley tune, *Little Sister*, written by Mort Shuman and Doc Pomus. The style here is perfectly recognizable, yet original (which is just how I felt on first hearing Dire Straits). Jim Keltner's drums chug along gracefully, while Cooder and David Lindley, his only rival for guitar melodiousness, weave textures that ring like bells. Cooder's continued study of gospel singing has matured his voice tremendously. When he sings "little sister, don't you do what your big sister done," longtime backup singers Herman Johnson and Bobby King add that flexible, triumphant layer that literally glorifies the human voice in song, creating a masterpiece of concise emotion in a pop arrangement.

Cooder says that he has always favored the "short little r&b song that tells a story: a little humor, a little pathos, a little reality, some nice-sounding instruments." Song after song on "Bop Till You Drop" honestly and unpretentiously updates that tradition. *Down in Hollywood*, which he wrote with Crazy Horse bassist Tim Drummond, is a laidback, funky look at Tinseltown lowlife, with Chaka Khan adding sli-thering backup vocals. *Look at Granny Run Run*, the venerable Jerry Ragavoy number originally recorded by Howard Tate, gets a stately country-blues treatment that pumps new life and meaning into what I had always thought was a novelty tune. *Go Home, Girl*, written by Arthur Alexander and covered in a different form on the very first Rolling Stones album, is done in a splendid Mexican-style guitar setting, with Drummond's bass lines alternating between stop-and-go reggae-ish fillips and full-bodied plucks at the end of each chorus. The overall effect is beautifully atmospheric, as the singer reluctantly tells his best friend's girl, "You'd better go home."

The digital recording process greatly reduces harmonic distortion and noise, but even more dramatically, it reduces the need to equalize the recorded tracks. As Cooder explains it, "For the



America's Bunnell and Beckley: masters of pensive yearning

first time, we are hearing back exactly what we played. Instead of noise, we hear each little sound perfectly. . . . For guitars, the textures come out. You get that real finger-chord skin sound, that brushy feel."

You certainly do, and it's a blessing that the first pop digital recording was that of a small band playing such resonantly beautiful music. Each nuance and shading, every dynamic in Keltner's sensitive touch on the snare drum, all the rich, woody sounds of Drummond's bass—everything emerges effortlessly and truly. Perhaps the ultimate test of digital's efficacy on this album is an instrumental version of *I Think It's Going to Work Out Fine*. Besides the alluring arrangement—the lead trades off between Lindley on Hawaiian lap steel guitar and Cooder's own dramatic bottleneck playing—the sounds of the instruments are so damn fine on this song that I find myself playing it over and over again, week after week.

America: *Silent Letter*

George Martin, producer
Capitol SO 11950
by Crispin Cioe

There is a certain strain of pop music, sometimes dubbed soft rock, whose main emotional thrust is a generalized, pensive yearning with little hope in sight. The style began in the '60s with Simon and Garfunkel, David Gates, and Jimmy Webb's compositions (*Wichita Lineman* is a masterpiece of the genre). It peaked in the mid-'70s, and today its most able practitioners are James Taylor, Melissa Manchester, Gerry Rafferty, and, of course, Dewey Bunnell and Gerry Beckley of

America. (Third member Dan Peek left awhile back to pursue a solo career in religious music.)

The duo has stuck with producer George Martin since 1974, and a couple of cuts on "Silent Letter" achieve the evocative sense of longing he helped them perfect on that year's *Tin Man*. But Martin has also introduced a heavier sound on several tunes here, almost destroying the delicate balance between the believable and the (let's face it) ploddingly stated obvious. Pomposity is not something America songs need, but the first cut, *Only Game in Town*, gets it from a second-rate Steely Dan vocal approximation on the verses and the heavied-up Tower of Power horns on the choruses. Given the lyric's pseudo world-weariness, it's interesting to note that this is the only non-Bunnell-Beckley composition on the album; it's also the first single.

Now don't get me wrong, the tune isn't an utter failure, and for all I know, it may end up a big hit. But I like my wistfulness straight. Luckily, at least half of "Silent Letter" serves it up dolefully. *All Around* has the kind of sweetly unadorned vocal force that Peter and Gordon attempted in the '60s. *Tall Treasures* extends America's much-vaunted concern for ecology and includes a short but stinging Hammond organ solo from Jim Calire, who also turns in outstanding baritone sax work elsewhere. *1960* is purely personal nostalgia sung by Beckley.

Bunnell's reedier, flinty voice has remained unique in pop since it burst on the scene in the group's first hit, *Horse with No Name*. He turns in a characteristically haunting performance on the jazzy

And Forever, yet another fond recollection of the past. *Foolin'* features the patented, Americanized unison vocals, wrapped around a chimelike hook that recalls Dusty Springfield's *Baby It's You*. It's the strongest arrangement on the album.

All My Life is another attempt to get heavy, with Bunnell snarling that "nothing is real when you're lonely." Again, the production, replete with psyched-out guitar solo and deep echo on the vocals, overextends America's credibility. *No Fortune*, on the other hand, mates the horn-band sound with its lyrics admirably, without resorting to sledgehammer tactics: the line, "No fortune pays for wounds like these" rings through with just the right amount of plangency. Reserve is what this band has always been about, and when that quality comes through on "Silent Letter," no matter how it's been updated and repackaged, Beckley and Bunnell are America's premier pop chroniclers of the wistful. And I mean the nation.

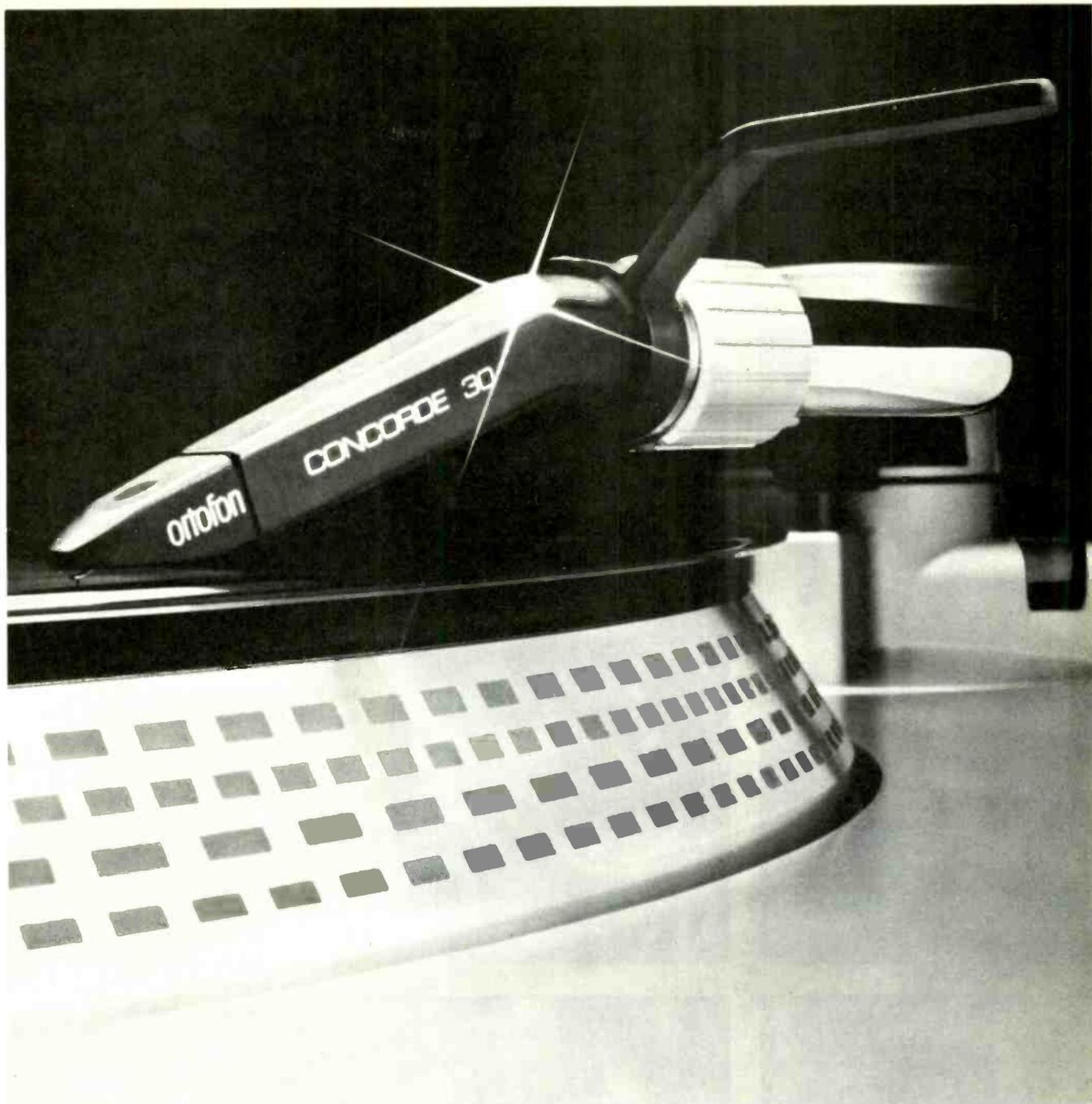
Chic: *Risqué*

Nile Rogers & Bernard Edwards,
producers. Atlantic SD 16003
by Christopher Petkanas

Chic didn't need yet another spanking clean and directional effort to confirm its membership in the disco pantheon, but that's certainly what it has done with "Risqué." Ironically enough, a mere four years ago guitarist Nile Rogers and bassist Bernard Edwards—who write, produce, conduct, and arrange all of the quintet's material—were putting their talents into a punk outfit called the Big Apple Band. Today they have a reserved seat on the charts alongside the likes of Village People and Donna Summer.

Chic sports a durable and optimistic signature sound that, unlike much of what is commonly heard in discos, does not intimidate with electronic calisthenics. The single *Good Times* grips, but does not assault, with crisp, potent hand claps, propelling guitar work, and a string section that neatly slices the song into sections. Singers Alfa Anderson and Luci Martin are treated as musical components; neither emerges as a distinctive personality. After all, the success of the group is founded, in part, on an ensemble identity.

A Warm Summer Night is a mind-
Continued on page 144



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The Commodore Catalog Comes Back to Life

by John S. Wilson



Left to right: Billie Holiday, Mel Powell, Jack Teagarden, Max Kaminsky and Lester Young

Eddie Condon: *Windy City Seven and Jam Sessions at Commodore*
Commodore XFL 14427

Billie Holiday: *Fine and Mellow*
Commodore XFL 14428

Coleman Hawkins
Commodore XFL 14936

Lester Young:
Kansas City Six and Five
Commodore XFL 14937

Ben Webster & Don Byas:
Two Kings of the Tenor Sax
Commodore XFL 14938

Wild Bill Davison:
That's a-Plenty
Commodore XFL 14939

Jack Teagarden & Max Kaminsky:
Big T and Mighty Max
Commodore XFL 14940

Bud Freeman: *Three's No Crowd*
Commodore XFL 14941

Jelly Roll Morton:
New Orleans Memories Plus Two
Commodore XFL 14942

Mel Powell & Joe Bushkin:
The World Is Waiting
Commodore XFL 14943

Milt Gabler, producer

Collecting jazz records in the 1930s was often very much a matter of seeking out hidden treasure, listening through chorus after chorus of routine pop performances to catch a few bars by a studio sideman who was a member of the jazz community. A rabid fan might sit through an entire Paul Whiteman side just to hear one beautifully bell-like note from Bix Beiderbecke. The situation improved in the middle of the decade, when the success of the Billie Holiday-Teddy Wilson series encouraged more all-star, small-combo recordings and Swing began to grow in popularity. But there were only three major record companies—RCA Victor, Columbia/Brunswick, and Decca—and their prime goal was, understandably, commercial survival. That meant areas of specialist interests such as jazz got relatively short shrift. Then, in 1938, Milt Gabler founded the first label that was devoted to jazz.

Gabler's Commodore Music Shop in New York had been a center for jazz collectors throughout the Thirties. In addition to current discs, he stocked bins full of two- and three-year-old records that were already collector's items, reissuing even rarer items on the United Hot Clubs



of America label. But he felt there was still a gap. Lots of excellent jazz musicians, particularly those that Gabler liked, were not being recorded. So, in 1937, he planned a session involving some of them—Bobby Hackett, Bud Freeman, Pee Wee Russell, Jess Stacy, George Wettling, Eddie Condon. But because one or more was always on the road with a big band, six months passed before he was able to get them all together at one time. That happened on January 17, 1938, the day after Benny Goodman's celebrated, precedent-setting Carnegie Hall concert, for which Stacy was in town to back Goodman on piano. (His solo on *Sing, Sing, Sing* was a high point of the evening.)

The session went off so well and the response to the records—for which Gabler created the Commodore label—was so good that another one was held in April. Jack Teagarden was substituted for George Brunis on trombone, but otherwise the group remained the same. With this second go-round, Commodore Records was solidly in business and, over the next decade, continued to build a rich catalog that reached from New Orleans roots up to the fringes of bebop.

When the LP era arrived, the recordings were reissued on ten- and later twelve-inch discs, initially by Commodore and later by Mainstream and Atlantic. But all were sporadic efforts, and eventually the series petered out. Now Gabler has undertaken to put the catalog back in circulation in an orderly fashion by approaching the various artists and sessions chronologically. The series includes previously unissued second takes and some material that presumably was planned for release but never saw the light of day.

The first ten albums suggest the scope of the catalog. The series starts, quite logically, with the two sessions that put Gabler in business, both organized by and attributed to Condon. They display the smoothed-out variation of the wild and wooly '20s Chicago jazz that Condon developed at Nick's in the late '30s and that became known as Nicksieland jazz. The presence of Hackett and Teagarden lend an air of suavity that balances the gut-bucket qualities of Russell and Brunis. By contrast, a more unprocessed Chicago sound leaps out of Davison's "That's a Plenty." Here, his raucous cornet is heard in the company of Russell and Brunis and, on some cuts, with Edmond

Hall's unique blend of New Orleans and Chicago drive.

The Mel Powell and Joe Bushkin groups on "The World Is Waiting" are primarily distinguished by their trombonists—Lou McGarity and Bill Harris, respectively. This disc also features a much imitated clarinet solo on *The World Is Waiting for the Sunrise*, by shoeless John Jackson, a contractual disguise for Benny Goodman. Saxophonists Ben Webster and Don Byas share "Two Kings of the Tenor Sax." Coleman Hawkins' album is as notable for the presence of Art Tatum as a sideman as it is for Hawkins' solos, and there is a rather dry collection of trio performances by Bud Freeman on "Three's a Crowd."

Three of the albums are outright classics and were recognized as such even when they were first issued forty years ago. One is the series of piano solos that Jelly Roll Morton recorded late in 1939 as "New Orleans Memories." It includes three of his finest vocals (*Mamie's Blues*, *Winin' Boy Blues*, and *Buddy Bolden's Blues*), a display of some of the material that he played with other pianists on his travels (*The Crave*, *King Porter Stomp*, and two completely different versions of *The Naked Dance*), and a lively summation of Mortonian devices in a previously unissued *Sporting House Rag*.

"Kansas City Six and Five," which features Lester Young in the unaccustomed role of clarinetist, is a set that Young made with a group of Count Basie men (but without Basie, for contractual reasons). Though the sessions were intended to show off Eddie Durham's pioneering use of the electric guitar, the real points of interest are Young's 'ight but pungent clarinet (touches of Pee Wee Russell) and an incredible feathery ensemble sound. And finally, there is Billie Holiday's "Fine and Mellow," recorded in 1939 and 1944, a period when her emotional projection was opening up (it started with *Strange Fruit*, which is in the set) and she still had all her vocal facility. Her magnificent *Yesterdays* and her first pop hit, *Fine and Mellow*, are also here and she is backed on four cuts by the then-emerging Eddie Heywood Sextet. ♣

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Chic: not bad, for professionals

less ballad that suffers from bland eroticism, while *Forbidden Lover* is driven by bright, snappy vocals and a persistent, prominently defined rhythmic line. Sophisticated funk is paired with an aggressive, hard-hitting handling of lyrics on *Can't Stand to Love Ya*. Anderson's intensely dramatic attitude on *Will You Cry* is inappropriate, but the achingly simple *What About Me* takes on vibrancy and sincerity in the hands of these masterly technicians (including the redoubtable Tony Thompson on drums).

If Rogers and Edwards had turned out nothing else this year but the blockbuster *Sister Sledge* album, "We Are Family," their disco eminence would hardly have slackened. Perhaps one of the reasons they maintain a deliberately low profile is so they can continue to explore interests exclusive of Chic. Besides, musical wealth deserves to be shared.

Cory Daye: *Cory and Me*

Sandy Linzer, producer
New York International/
RCA BX1 1-3408

by John Storm Roberts

"Cory and Me" is the Real Thing in spades: witty and elegant and joyful, with enough power and freshness to knock your socks off. Like Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band, from which she comes, Cory Daye mines deep into 1940s and 1950s pop, with results that are ravishing.

Wiggle and Giggle, which kicks off from the '40s Carmen Miranda pseudo-calypto tradition, is the album's most "retro" track and also one of its best. Its performance isn't camp, because it's so accurate, so original, and so full of real love for its material. And its sudden, seamless segue into *Rhythm Death* finds Daye

soaring like a trapeze artist above a chanted chorus of "Rum and Coca-Cola." Then comes a snatch of steel pan and a moment of seriousness from a bunch of baritones. It's the most breathtaking piece of pop rhythmic interplay I've heard in years.

But "Cory and Me" doesn't stop at the '40s. *Be Bop Betty* starts with a stomping blues/r&b four to the bar and boo-bop-shoo-op backup, moves into an apparently straight-ahead rocker ("I graduated from high school and moved in with a rock & roll star"), then suddenly features Daye roaring through a riff straight out of the Kansas City '30s.

Nor is this any mere nostalgia trip. *Green Light* and *Pow Wow* are the singles, and the disco trappings work as well with *Green Light*'s rhythmic complexity and bop-ballad melody as they do with *Pow Wow*'s extraordinary hook. Daye has a remarkable understanding of the spirit of all these styles, but she also gets some substantial help from her friends: Producer Sandy Linzer wrote most of the songs, and keyboardist Joe Delia did the arranging, providing material and a texture to match the richness of her performance.

Dürocs

Ron Nagle, Scott Mathews & Elliot Mazer, producers
Capitol ST 11981

by Sam Sutherland

This sly but energetic debut album answers at least one vital musical question: What would have happened if Cole Porter had grown up in the '50s—and had lived next door to Brian Wilson?

Lest anyone dismiss that notion as mere whimsy, consider Dürocs' sultry *We*



Cory Daye

Go Good Together, which extols its perfect love by comparing it to such traditional couplings as "Keys and locks / Shoes and socks" or "Ropes and whips / Fish and chips." Or ponder the conflict between romantic ideals and carnal practicality sketched on *I'm Saving It All Up for Larry*, wherein the hopeful seducer leers, "What makes you think he's alone / While you're being faithful at home?"

Dürocs are conceptual artist and songwriter Ron Nagle and his secret weapon Scott Mathews, whose versatility as an engineer and musician can conjure up an in-house studio orchestra. Such mordant twists on romantic clichés as those listed above recur throughout "Dürocs," making it one of the year's wittiest pop confections. Better yet, Nagle and Mathews have matched the satirical acuity of their songs with a lush production style every bit as engaging as their lyrics.

Together with coproducer Elliot Mazer, they have pursued the fun-house possibilities offered by multitrack recording, patching two 24-track recorders together and feverishly filling as many channels as possible to create a widescreen pop/rock style culled from the most Wagnerian elements of the Beach Boys and Phil Spector. Seldom have so few

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achieved so much and still sounded like they were having a ball.

If there's any problem with "Dü-rocs," it's a slight one, and pertinent only to playlist prophets: For reasons known only to its creators, the album eschews the usual strategy of parking potential hits at the beginning by saving its best songs for Side 2. A stunning remake of Gene Pitney's *It Hurts to Be in Love* comes more than respectably close to the original. And in *Seeker (You Be Sucker)*, Mathews and Nagle triumphantly prove there is indeed life after the Haight-Ashbury by skewering the consciousness movement parlayed by so many of their Bay Area neighbors. Anyone wearied by psycho spiritual buzzwords will find themselves shouting along on the choruses by song's end.

Best of all is *I'm Saving It All Up for Larry*, which finds Mathews slipping effortlessly from baritone insinuations on the verses to a soaring falsetto on the impossibly corny title chorus. Here the Dü-rocs exemplify the best pop satire, wringing humor from their topic yet evincing an equally genuine affection for the pop clichés they so playfully, yet accurately, lampoon.

Ian Dury & the Blockheads: Do It Yourself

Chaz Jankel, producer
Stiff/Epic JE 36104
by Ira Mayer

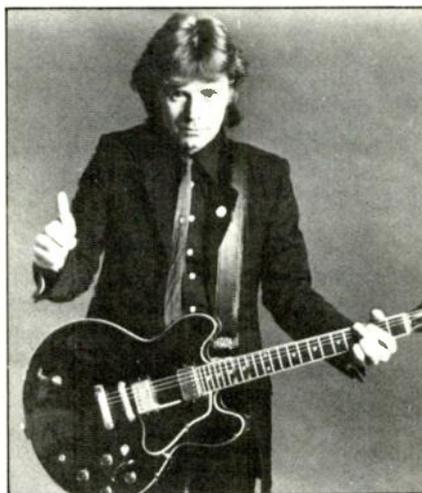
Ian Dury is part Muppet and part Monty Python, but imagine if you will a strictly aural Miss Piggy or Twit of the Year. Sure, you'd get a sense of the absurdist mien of their creators, but you'd be missing something.

It isn't that Dury and the Blockheads are so visual, but rather that you need more information than a record offers to fully appreciate their zaniness. Take a title such as *Inbetweenies* and you already know these guys are a little off-center. Add the Cockney accents that make understanding the lyrics a mite tough for us gringos and the quirky start-and-stop rhythms, and you have an idiosyncratic song outline in need of a visual image to fill it out.

Dury's monotone delivery doesn't help matters, either. His voice modulates and wavers, but you can't actually say he "sings." And for all the New Wave/no



Dury—Twit of the Year



Dave Edmunds

wave/punk bases with which they are associated, the Blockheads toy rather earnestly with jazzy undercurrents.

For all that, I like Ian Dury a lot, and "Do It Yourself"—including its bonus 45 with *Hit Me with Your Rhythm Stick* and *There Ain't Half Been Some Clever Bastards*—does give you a sense of that absurdist mien. It's just that I can't wait for their first video disc.

Dave Edmunds: Repeat When Necessary

Dave Edmunds, producer
Swan Song SS 8507
by Steven X. Rea

Dave Edmunds treads a fine line between rock revivalism and being his own man, and nine times out of ten he pulls it off. The British singer/musician/producer carries a book of rock & roll heroes he could tear pages from: Chuck Berry, the Everly Brothers, Buddy Holly, John Fogerty, the Beach Boys, and both Elvises—Presley for his early rockabilly verve and Costello for his late '70s caustic romanticism. But while it's readily apparent that Edmunds knows his book by rote, "Repeat When Necessary" is the work of an original.

The self-produced album features Edmunds on guitars and piano, joined by Rockpile: comrade-in-arms/bassist Nick Lowe, drummer Terry Williams, and guitarist Billy Bremner. It was recorded concomitantly with Lowe's "Labour of Lust," so it's no surprise that the arrangements share the same live-sounding sparsity and directness, with little overdubbing and a minimum of studio trickery. Edmunds and Rockpile bashed these songs together on the road, and they recorded them as fast and as furiously (but not sloppily, mind you) as possible.

The opener, *Girls Talk*, is a heretofore unheard Elvis Costello composition that ranks right up there with *Alison*, *Watching the Detectives*, and *Accidents Will Happen*. It's one of that writer/performer's best, rife with vivid, close-up images (his penchant for powder room accouterments manifests itself again) and terrific plays on words ("You may not be an old-fashioned girl/But you're gonna get dated"). But where Costello would spit out the lyrics in venomous flurries, Edmunds transforms the song's woman-as-



goddess sentiments into a silken, swift pop serenade.

Graham Parker, another stellar name from the new British Invasion, offers the rollicking, though comparatively (for Parker) lightweight *Crawling from the Wreckage*. Edmunds' own songs (credited to one B. Murray) run the gamut from out-and-out rockers like *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* to the rockabilly boogieing of *Goodbye Mr. Good Guy*. He also pays homage to the seminal Brinsley Schwarz band, covering one of their biggest showstoppers, *Home in My Hand*. Guitarist Albert Lee, of Emmylou Harris' Hot Band, guests on a speedily countrified tune, *Sweet Little Lisa*, delivering runs and fills so dizzily dexterous that the notes appear to jump ahead of themselves.

It's a tossup choosing the single. There's *Girls Talk*, and then there's *Queen of Hearts*, which kicks off Side 2. Propelled by a rhythmic rush of acoustic guitars and drums, Edmunds' vocals resound with Everly Brothers-like lyricism, evincing a range that's only suggested elsewhere. In fact, like the rest of "Repeat When Necessary," he makes what he does on *Queen of Hearts* sound deceptively easy. It's the difference between second-hand rehash and firsthand rock & roll.

Cissy Houston: Warning—Danger

Michael Zager, producer

Columbia JC 36112

Candi Staton: Chance

Candi Staton & Jimmy Simpson,

producers. Warner Bros. BSK 3333

by Christopher Petkanas

Cissy Houston's Columbia debut is no debut at all. The frankly thin four-song package is drawn entirely from her last album, "Think It Over," released on Private Stock in 1978. The title cut, included here, was something of a hit for the gospel-rooted, refreshingly unpretentious singer who sports a hearty three-octave range. Although Houston sings with sailing urgency and natural determination, the song isn't immune from identification as yesterday's disco. Besides, it is difficult to believe that she prefers this idiom to the kind of high-grade material she recorded with the Sweet Inspirations on Atlantic in 1967. It's not that Houston simply goes

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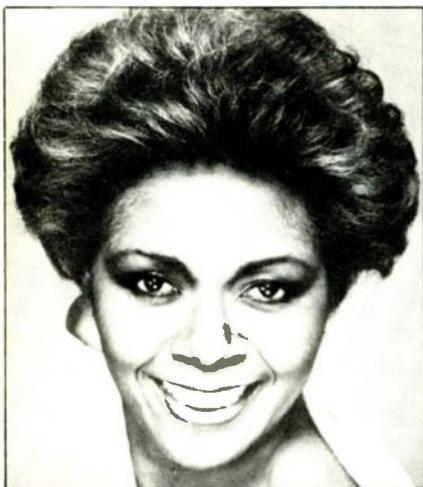
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Cissy—a false start on CBS



Candi—the right material

through the motions here, but she has shown that she is a solid and serious r&b artist, backing Elvis, Aretha, and a diverse roster of other heavyweights.

Of course, the fundamental question is whether or not this quartet of songs couched in serviceable arrangements and ambitious production schemes, is worthy of being reissued. Houston is a mover and shaker who should be able to churn up the disco waters with fiery emotion. Nonetheless, the answer is a resounding no, for the material does not match the inspired, first-rate vocals.

Jimmy Simpson, by comparison, has written some consistently punchy, on-the-nose charts for Candi Staton's "Chance," and we should be grateful for the absence of filler. I've come to heartily welcome each new release from Staton,

as she continues to cut through the mire of gimmicky, of-the-moment disco refuse. She slinks up to the charts without the benefit of many personal appearances or a clearly articulated public image and hands out free instructions in honesty and grit to the self-conscious competition. She collaborated on four of the six songs here, and her *When You Wake Up Tomorrow*, laced with an affecting, stinging synthesizer, is the infectious single this time around.

Staton's relaxed, matter-of-fact approach serves her material judiciously. She understands that disco tumbles down under the pressure of grandstanding and so works from a limited catalog of passions, hinting at a greater range than she employs. The pleading *I Ain't Got No-where to Go* is charged with Cornell Dupree's gutsy guitar and salted with a sparkling horn section that boasts Randy and Michael Brecker. Staton is not beyond sweetness and compassion on the energetic *Chance*, which is underscored with a mildly funky rhythm and buoyant background vocals. Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson's *I Live*, a contemplative song about identity and complete devotion to one lover, finds her deftly handling an extended narrative at ballad tempo.

As coproducer it's obvious that Staton is wise to the material and musical settings that flatter her, and "Chance" is a cogent lesson in how not to over-reach.

David Johansen: In Style

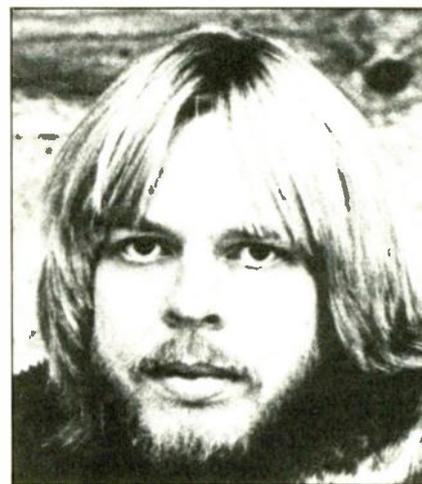
David Johansen, Mick Ronson, producers. *Blue Sky* JZ 36082
by Ira Mayer

Funky but Chic, the leadoff cut on David Johansen's last L.P., was the perfect capsulization of his oeuvre. A charismatic writer, singer, and performer, he has style, wit, and an ingratiating flamboyance. But that flamboyance is more of the Jagger/Springsteen variety than the campy transsexuality of the New York Dolls (who were punky before *that* was chic). Johansen's association with that mid-'70s group has both stigmatized him and hampered the development of his solo career, and on "In Style" he tries valiantly to carve a new niche for himself.

Musically, he leaves himself open to all tastes—from the Byrds-like *Justine* to the Stones-esque *Wreckless Crazy* to the modified reggae and disco inflections of, respectively, *She Knew She Was Falling in*



Maria—still fuzzy



Wakeman—pure self-indulgence

Love and Swaheto Woman. But the album is too formulaic, too contrived, and too desperate in its efforts to be all things to all popsters. Johansen is most at home with rave-up rockers delivered with thrashing Top 40 eagerness, such as *Melody* and *Wreckless Crazy*. Competent as everything here is, "In Style" never picks up the intensity nor projects the personality that shone through on *Funky but Chic*, *Girls*, and *Frenchette* from the earlier disc.

Inconsistency in the way the vocals were recorded and mixed compounds the multiple-personality problem. And unlike "David Johansen" there's little sense of a "band" underlying the tracks, but rather one of individual musicians contributing their parts without much involvement. But mark my words: Johansen is one of the best rock & rollers around. His time will come.

Maria Muldaur: Open Your Eyes
Patrick Henderson & David Nichtern,
 producers. Warner Bros. BSK 3305
 by Crispin Cioe

Like the Norman Seeff photographs that adorn this album, the music here is glamorously, ever so slightly, out of focus. The laidback sexuality Maria projected on *Midnight at the Oasis* was passionate yet intelligent, hip and worldly yet not too far from innocence. The musical and physical profile on "Open Your Eyes" is more unabashedly sensual than that relatively earthy image, and on paper this change looks like it should work.

After a couple of album detours into Swing jazz standards with arrangers like the great Benny Carter, Muldaur is now attempting to fulfill her promise and potential as a leading female pop stylist. The problem is that she continues to sink her teeth into too many different styles without really taking a decent-sized bite from any one. This is a very talented and unique singer, and her eclecticism might work if the material was produced with more conviction and oomph. On the rock/disco tune *Fall in Love Again*, producers Patrick Henderson and David Nichtern have left the bite out of the bottom: Willie Weeks's bass and Rich Shlosser's drums don't really penetrate the mix enough to make the tune a dance-floor contender. Much stronger is *Heart of Fire*, which features a truly blistering sax solo by the inimitable Jr. Walker. The classic Betty Wright number, *Clean Up Woman*, a sizzling early '70s Miami soul smoker, is given a nice vocal reading, but again the instrumental track lacks the original's punch.

On the ballads and slower tunes, however, Muldaur is completely at ease and at one with her arrangements and material. On *Elona*, an eerily beautiful Nichtern composition (he also penned *Midnight at the Oasis*), the singer projects a floating, netherworld eroticism. The album's lone jazz standard, *Lover Man (Oh Where Can You Be)*, is given the full orchestral treatment, with gorgeous, back-to-back solos by guitarist Amos Garrett and alto saxist Marshal Royal. Maria manages to squeeze new meaning out of this chestnut, and avoids copying Billie Holiday's classic reading. Michael McDonald's *Open Your Eyes*, sticks close to its original Doobie Bros. incarnation musically and is

the most "pop"-sounding tune on the album. In fact, I wish all of "Open Your Eyes" had the focus and direction of this song. As it is, there are some lovely moments of solid playing and singing, as well as one truly acerbic and biting tune, the anti-disco (*No More*) *Dancin' in the Street*, by John Hiatt. But I'm afraid it's not the album to put Muldaur up there on top, where she belongs.

Rick Wakeman: Rhapsodies
Tony Visconti, producer
 A&M SP 6501 (two discs)
 by Don Heckman

Perhaps because it was such a surprisingly effective solo concept album. Yes member Rick Wakeman's musical survey of the wives of Henry VIII—released several years ago—may have provided an unreasonably favorable view of the keyboard player's skills. Since then, he has released collections of increasingly turgid music, some with overly pretentious titles, like "The Myths of King Arthur," others with no coherent organization.

"Rhapsodies" does little more than pound another nail in the coffin of Wakeman's disintegrating promise. I suppose we can't blame him for the fact that nobody's synthesizer music has turned out to be what we expected way back in the glory years of the first Moogs and Arps. These days, any kid with an indulgent parent can pick up a unit for a couple of grand and produce more swoops, clangs, sequenced programs, and accidental timbres than all six rooms, twenty tons, and 5,000 vacuum tubes of the original Columbia-Princeton synthesizer, which cost several million.

Wakeman doesn't do much more with these electronic toys than the kid with the indulgent parent. Yet incredibly he, producer Tony Visconti, and some brain at A&M have had the fantasy that someone might want to listen to two discs' worth of this stuff.

Side 1 includes four Wakeman originals, each of which is put to shame by the fifth tune (can you believe it?). *Yes, We Have No Bananas*. All of it would sound just fine at a pre-disco roller rink. Side 2 contains possibly the worst, most insulting interpretations I've ever heard of *Rhapsody in Blue* and *Swan Lake*, here retitled *Swan Lager* (just a little joke for the guys

Continued on page 152

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around the studio, folks). Gershwin and Tchaikovsky survive, as always: I wish I could say the same for Wakeman's and Visconti's integrity. Side 3 is more of the same, except for the final track. *Palais*, a piano solo that revives a smidgen of respect for Wakeman's abilities. On Side 4 he runs through some changing meters on *Stand-By*, and neither he nor his backup players reveal any talent for the style. *Half Holiday* tries to prove that a Dixieland band can be simulated on synthesizer. It can't.

Then, to close, one final shot to the groin with what I suppose Wakeman considers a "rhapsodic" interpretation of *Summertime*. Rhapsodies—played properly—require finger technique, musical sensitivity, and creative passion. Wakeman articulates like a piano student learning to play the Chopin etudes with a metronome. If he ever had any real musical sensitivities they seem to have been burned out by too much exposure to stentorian sound systems and record company sycophants who told him he was a genius. He isn't.

Yachts

Richard Gottehrer, producer
Polydor PD 1-6220
by Sam Sutherland

The recent commercial legitimacy accorded to New Wave-influenced rock has restored a bracing sense of angry passion to the music. Equally vital, and perhaps more enjoyable, has been a restoration of true irreverence; with *Yachts*, a British quartet already successful in their homeland, that quality is a main suit.

On first listen, "*Yachts*" pulses with a riff-laden rock momentum that provides more than ample justification for attention. The greater treat lies in the band's arch vantage point. Dominated by the writing of keyboard player Henry Priestman, the album repeatedly undercuts its no-holds-barred instrumental energy with the alternately jaded and exhausted comments of its protagonists. On *Love You, Love You*, a lover claims with unusual candor, "I wouldn't climb any mountain for you/Ford any stream, that's a daft thing to do/'Cause I'm cynical, cynical, cynical through and through." Elsewhere, Priestman and company complain about the cheesy m.o.r. fare on BBC's "Light" chan-

nel (*Mantovani's Greatest Hits*) and turn in what's surely the first use of "appalled" in a rock love song (*Then and Now*).

Much of the comic effect is generated by that tension between a rock vulgate in the musicianship and a smarty-pants erudition to the lyrics. Thus the loaded titles of their two U.K. singles, *Look Back in Love (Not in Anger)* and *Suffice to Say*, which have been added to the album for its American release. And while much of the verbal humor is likely restricted to Anglophiles, the playing throughout is more than lively enough to snare even literal-minded U.S. fans.

JAZZ

Caldera: Dreamer
Eduardo del Barrio & Jorge Strunz, producers
Capitol ST 11952
by John Storm Roberts

"Dreamer" mixes Santana Latin-rock with the kind of modal jazz that gets its color from the free percussion of Airtio. It's a promising approach: The essence of Santana is the contrast between the percussion's earthy realism and the soaring, spiritual search of its leader's guitar. Add the largely cerebral exhilaration of much modal jazz, and you wind up with a mind-spirit-matter triad that is, theoretically, very complete.

Theoretically. In practice, too much of Caldera's music simply ambles along. Interesting notions come up without resolution and ideas recur half-recognized. In the best track, *Brujerias (Witcheries)*, the result is both intriguing and frustrating. A fairly standard flamenco passage is used as a focus for some quite complex writing, but, aside from some effective bamboo flute and acoustic guitar, it never really takes off. Despite a good deal of imaginative detail, the total effect is the jazz/rock equivalent of the kind of "Impressions of Spain" program music that filled the middlebrow radio concerts of my British youth.

Overall, "Dreamer" attempts even less than this and attains it. With the exception of *Celebration* (which is less joyful than overexcited) its essential mood is summed up by the titles, *To Capture the Moon, Rain Forest, and Dreamchild*. Frankly, dreamy aestheticism is thin artis-

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Circle 44 on Page 105

tic fare. Caldera's musicians have not yet developed the individual voices they need to move beyond high-IQ background music. Steve Tavaglione's soprano saxophone playing simply isn't wide enough in scope to merit the space it is allotted here. Eduardo del Barrio's synthesizer work is competent and amiable but little more. Only guitarist Jorge Strunz leaves much of a memory.

Caldera is said to be a lot more rambunctious in concert than on record. Maybe they should consider putting some of that spirit onto vinyl and forget about Kulture.

The 1944 Esquire Jazz All-Stars Aircheck 27. (By mail from Kinner Enterprises, P.O. Box 724, Redman, Wash. 98052)

by John S. Wilson

The first of Esquire's All-American Jazz Stars really lived up to their title. Louis Armstrong and Roy Eldridge on trumpets. Jack Teagarden on trombone. Coleman Hawkins on tenor saxophone. Barney Bigard on clarinet. Art Tatum on piano. Lionel Hampton and Red Norvo on vibes. Al Casey on guitar. Oscar Pettiford on bass, and Sid Catlett on drums. Side 1 on this disc is a half-hour excerpt from a 1944 concert at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. Side 2 is a broadcast of *The Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street*, on which most of the All-Stars appear briefly. In addition to the regulars, Side 1 includes Teddy Wilson backing Mildred Bailey on *Rockin' Chair*. Billie Holiday singing two blithe choruses of *I'll Get By*, and a cut-in from the West Coast by the Benny Goodman quartet.

The sound of both broadcasts is surprisingly good, and the musicians are all in excellent form, with particularly strong appearances by Tatum, Hawkins, Armstrong, and Teagarden. The last two sing and play *Basin Street Blues* on both sides, sounding slightly better on the second: Teagarden seems more at ease in his singing and Armstrong's vocal is backed by a lovely running flow of support from Tatum.

The only real flaw in the Metropolitan Opera broadcast is a loud and abrasively obstreperous announcer. The *Chamber Music* side, on the other hand, is almost a complete disaster, through no



The All-Stars at the Met: Hawkins on sax, Norvo on vibes, Bailey at the mike

fault of the All-Stars. By 1944, this show had abandoned the mock solemnity and parodied scholarliness that had given it its original distinction. This recording is built around a series of embarrassingly tasteless and simpleminded skits involving poor old Milton J. Cross, a shrill-voiced shrew, and a road version of Jack Benny's Rochester. The inclusion of these, a couple of numbers by a studio band, and one of Dick Todd's reflections of Bing Crosby leaves virtually no time for the All-Stars. Aside from *Basin Street Blues*, they play a blues on their own and, backed by the studio band, *Honeysuckle Rose*. In those cases, they are in complete command, and, briefly, this ghastly half hour comes vividly alive.

Jocque & Le Scott:

The Ornette Coleman Songbook

Tony Taylor & Le Scott, producers
TEA 100. (JCOA, 500 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012)

by Don Heckman

In theory, this was a sensational idea. The tunes of tenor saxist Ornette Coleman—some of the most provocative most creatively informed jazz music of the past two decades—have rarely been examined by anyone other than Coleman himself. His influence upon his contemporaries has been enormous, but it has manifested itself almost exclusively in various imitations of his loose, long-limbed improvisational style.

Le Scott, the organizer of this project, is the founder of the Theater for the Evolving Arts in Washington, D.C., as well as the creator of something called "transcendental tennis." His idea was to provide lyrics for a set of Coleman tunes and

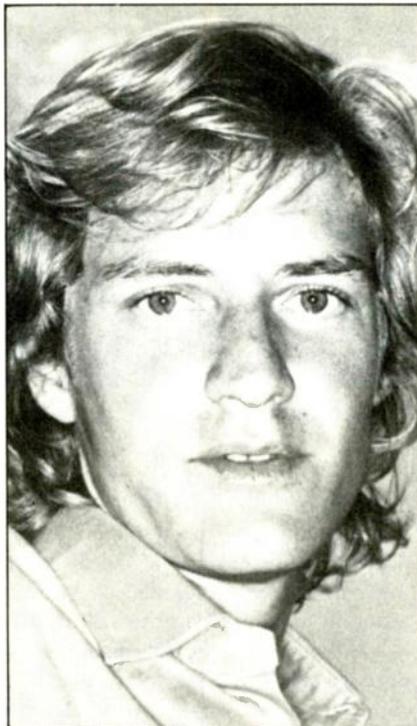
then perform them in appropriately theatrical settings. Obviously, this required a certain sympathy for the music's original intentions, and the inclusion of Coleman's name in the credits—for "artistic guidance"—suggests that he was on the right track. Certainly, in the case of *Humpty-Dumpty*, with its childlike but contemporary retelling of the fairy tale, Scott has found a good slant. *The Empty Fox-Hole*, strident and angry—"My aim in life's/To bring you grief an' strife"—also feels true to the original. I'm less pleased with *Beauty Is a Rare Thing*, *Lonely Woman*, and *Lorraine*. The last two have been set to better lyrics by other writers.

My problem with the "Songbook" centers on the performances by Scott, singer Jocque, and a group of unfamiliar (presumably Washington-based) musicians. Too often, Scott's use of tangential dialogue, shouting parallel phrases, etc., sounds like warmed-over '60s avant-garde stuff. (There are moments when you'll swear you just walked into a Dick Shawn movie.) And the playing, with some exceptions, leaves much to be desired. Jocque has a peculiarly harsh quality in the timbre of her voice, and her pitch placement—especially important in these melodies—is disturbingly casual. Still, she sings beautifully on the one Coleman track that is not cluttered by Scott's theatrical devices, *A Girl Named Rainbow*. Both music and lyrics are written by Coleman, showing a gift for songwriting that deserves further exploration.

Despite the fairly high failure rate on many of the tracks, this is a worthwhile overall effort that deserves hearing. Jocque and Le Scott have tried to interpret Coleman's music, and that in itself is no easy task.

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Larsen—low energy

Neil Larsen: High Gear

Tommy LiPuma, producer

Horizon SP 738

by Ira Mayer

An overuse of fadeouts is symptomatic of the problem with keyboardist Neil Larsen's second solo effort: It has nowhere to go and so wanders somnambulant. Larsen is an excellent jazz-based instrumentalist with a clean, simple style built around the juxtaposition of single-note melody lines and nicely rounded chordal runs. And he has surrounded himself with an A-1 backing quartet in guitarist Buzz Feiten, bassist Abe Laboriel, drummer Steve Gadd, and percussionist Paulinho Da Costa.

Feiten in particular is a musician who has yet to gain due recognition. In a league with Jeff "Skunk" Baxter (studio player and ex-Doobie Brother), he can adapt to any musical environment. But on "High Gear" he is relegated to a mostly rhythmic role. He is best when allowed to wail openly, an opportunity he almost gets on *This Time Tomorrow*, though his relatively laidback solo is so far back in the mix as to be lost.

Larsen never takes flight either, seemingly content to blend in with the general texture of the sound rather than

to ride atop it or cut through it. All of which overemphasizes Michael Brecker's guest sax at the tail ends of *Nile Crescent* and *Rio Este* and throughout *High Gear*. *Nile Crescent* is the most uniquely impressionistic piece on the LP. Its subtle Middle Eastern motif is generated by a coolly underplayed Joe Farrell flute. It's a light, airy track. The rest is too much noodling from musicians who need more of a focus and more substantial material.

Bob Wilber and the Phontastic Swing Band: Swingin' for the King

Anders R. Ohman, producer

Phontastic 7406/7 (two discs).

(Bodeswell Records, 24 Skipper's Drive, Harwich, Mass. 02645)

by John S. Wilson

During his thirty-five-year career, Bob Wilber went through a Sidney Bechet period and, later, a Johnny Hodges period. He learned the Bechet clarinet and soprano saxophone styles at the feet of the master and adapted the Hodges alto sax sound to soprano while copying and arranging Ellington small-group pieces.

But all along he has also been drawing on Benny Goodman, a source for a multitude of young clarinetists in the early '40s. On "Swingin' for the King" he focuses on this influence. The parallel between his and the King's style can be heard particularly well on the selections that include Lars Estrand's Hampton-like vibes. On several cuts, Estrand and a four-piece rhythm section support an ensemble of three or four clarinets (or, occasionally, two clarinets and an alto saxophone). All are arranged by Wilber, with some based on Goodman's big-band orchestrations and some on his solos. These solos are countered by Swedish reedman Arne Domnerus, whose alto saxophone attack reflects Benny Carter.

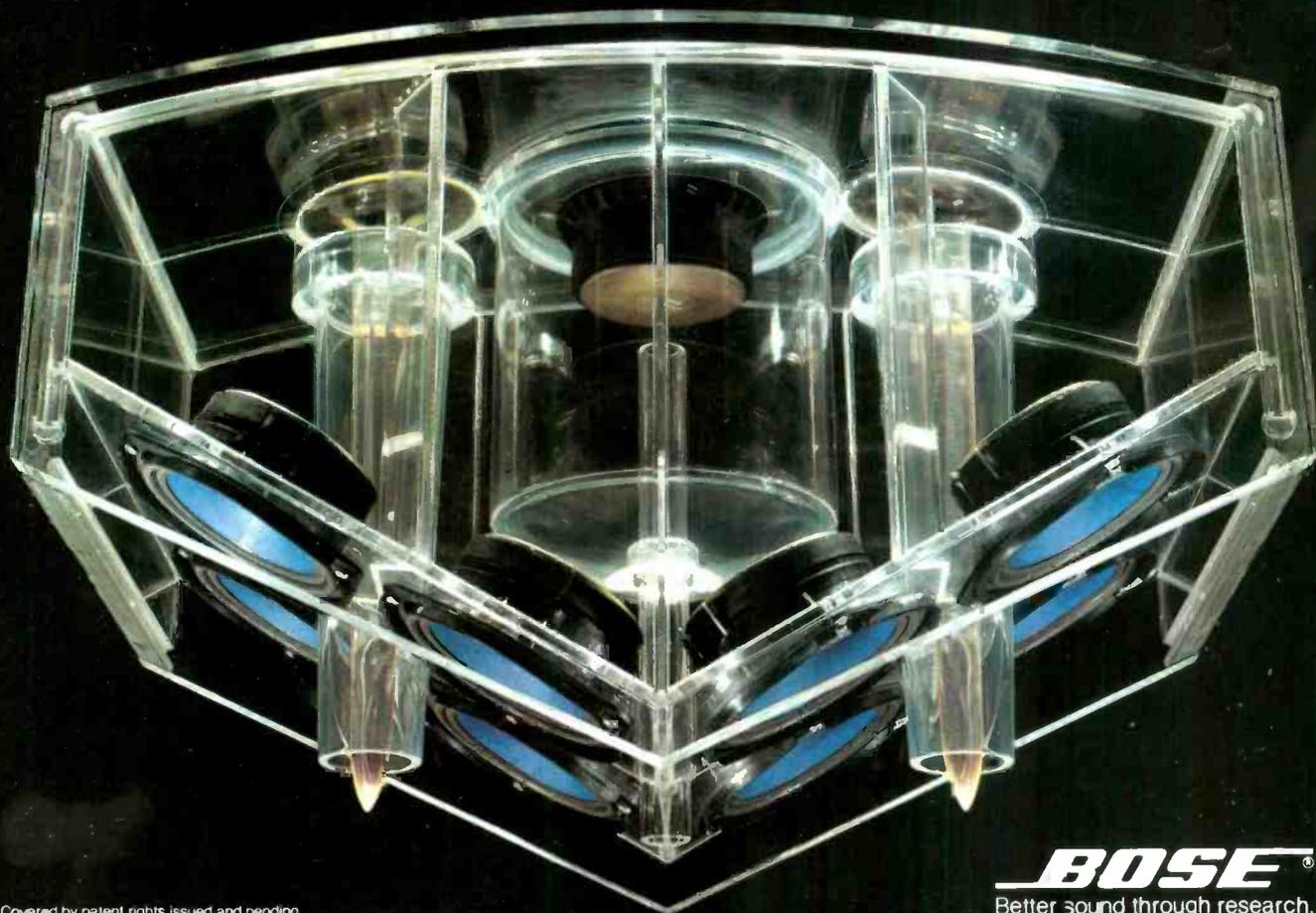
Most of the tunes are taken from the Goodman repertory, with the exception of *Deep Night*, *All the Things You Are*, and one Wilber original. There are several vocals by Pug Horton, whose direct and unpretentious singing style is reminiscent of the band singers of the era. Overall, the set has a strong Goodman aura but with a slight, refreshing difference, thanks to Wilber's arrangements and the personal quality of Domnerus' clarinet and alto.

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