

# HIGH FIDELITY

ICD © 08398

**VIDEO TODAY**  
Video Disc Players Are Superb, but...

**Buying a Tuner  
Do Specs Tell It All?**

**Best Record Bets  
38 Winners for 1980**

**Trade-Up Tactics -How to  
Cash in on Old Equipment**

**Mitsubishi's Unique Upright  
Turntable-First Test Ever!**

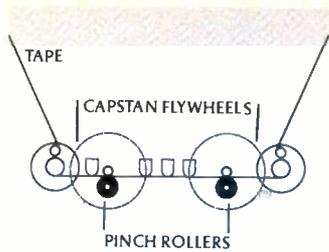


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# WITH ONLY ONE EXCEPTION, THIS IS THE MOST REMARKABLE TAPE DECK IN THE WORLD.





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

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

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

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

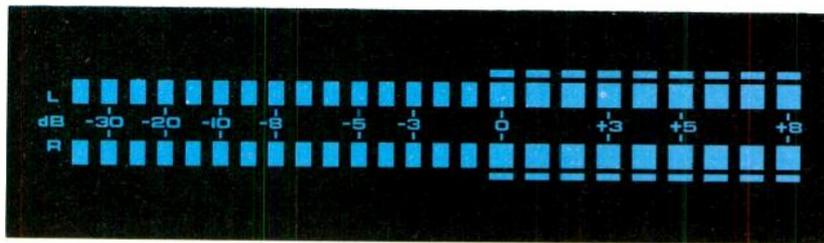
Even if you pay \$1500 or more for a so called "professional" quality tape deck, you'll probably still be getting a conventional single capstan tape transport system that is prone to wow and flutter.

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

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

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

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



*Pioneer's 24 Segment Fluroscan Meter gives you an instantaneous picture of what your ears cannot see.*

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

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

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

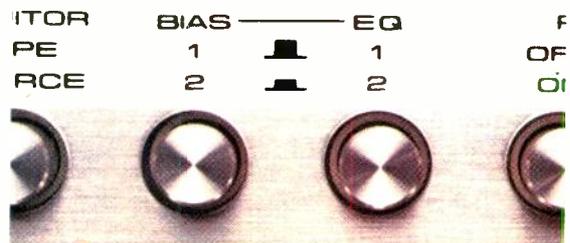
But the RT-909 also has a Fluroscan metering system that gives you an instantaneous picture of what you're listening to. A pitch control that lets you listen to music in perfect pitch even if it was far from perfectly recorded. Four different bias/equalization selections so you can use many tapes and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

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

**PIONEER®**

We bring it back alive.

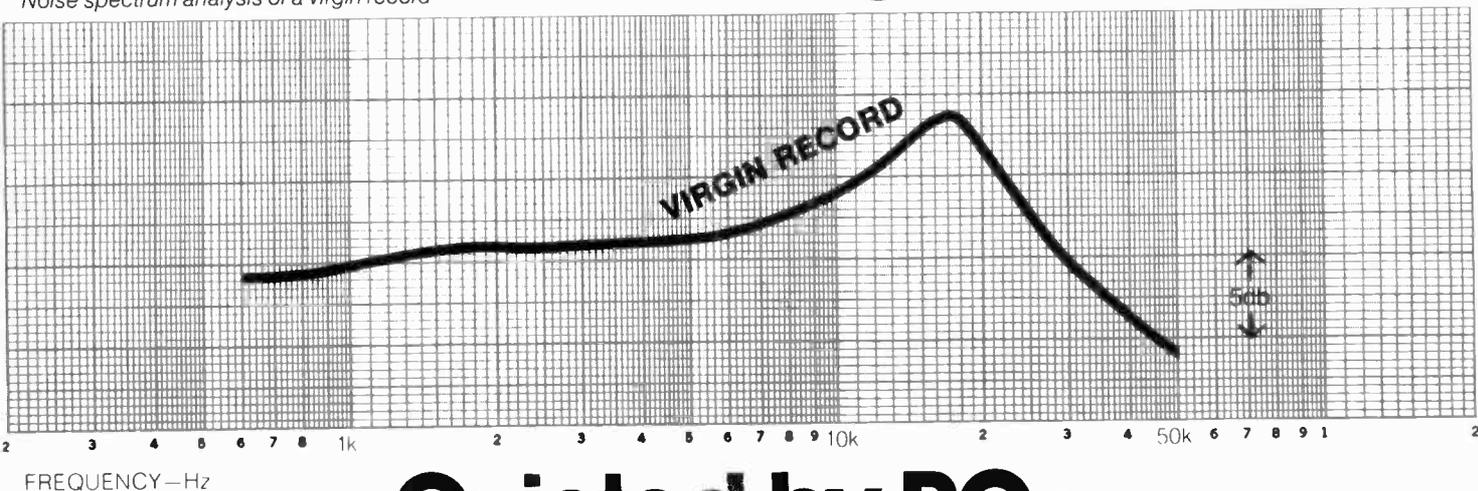
©1980 U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 85 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074



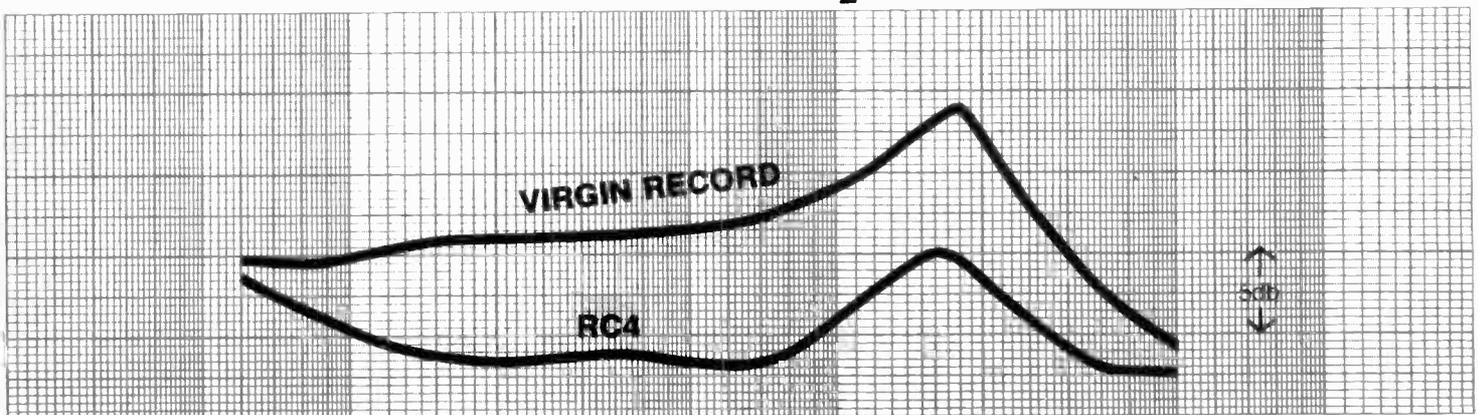
*Independent bias and equalization offer maximum performance from every tape.*

# Noisy virgin

Noise spectrum analysis of a virgin record



# Quieted by RC4™

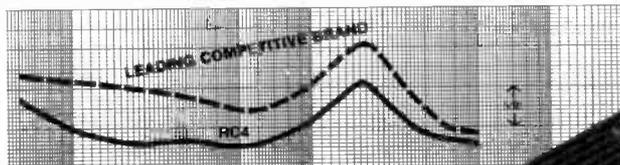


## A quiet revolution in record cleaning

For years record collectors around the world have been searching for the ideal record maintenance program. A method that actually delivers a stated promise of continual protection of the faithful reproduction of the original recorded sound.

Now, supported by the most respected names in the audio field new RC4 and a companion stylus cleaning and inspection kit provide a new and dramatic improvement over every record care program available.

*RC4 is 60% more effective than the leading competitive brand*



made by Record Care, Inc. exclusively for



**STANTON**  
THE CHOICE OF THE PROFESSIONALS™

For example, the ultimate test of a clean record is a quiet record and RC4 quiets even a virgin record right from the sleeve. Result, a purity of sound, an absence of "pops and clicks" that brings new enjoyment to even well used and older records.

A companion stylus cleaning and inspection kit, complete with fluid, brush, magnifying glass and mirror, assures a record maintenance program in keeping with the ever increasing value of every record collector.



Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803

# HIGH FIDELITY

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begins after page 34

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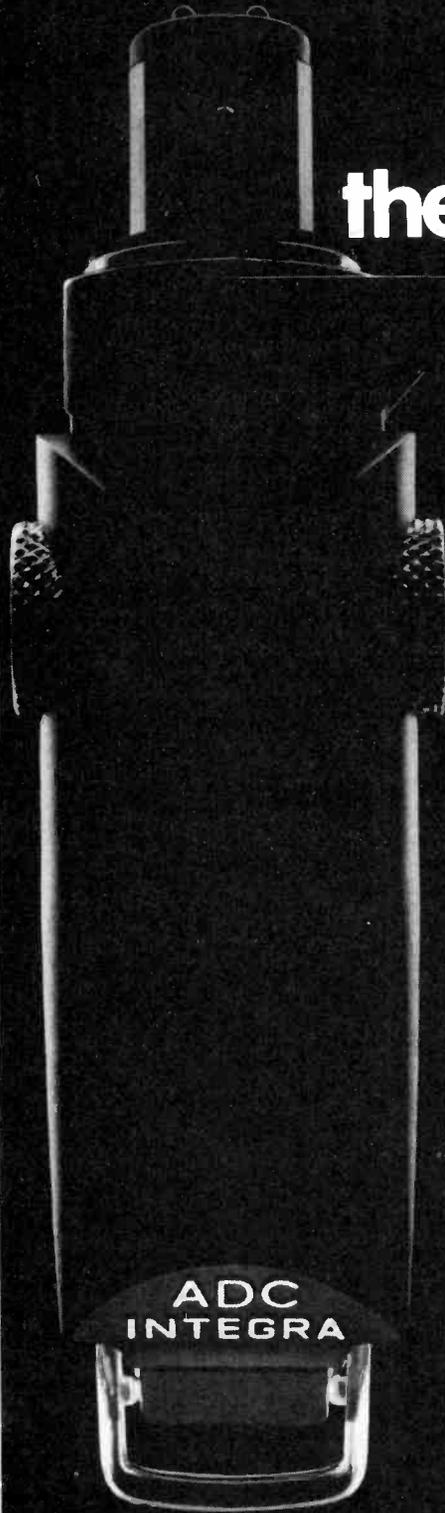
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# Our ADC Integra phono-cartridge's carbon fibre VS their plastic.



Once you compare the ADC Integra cartridge to the competition you soon realize there's really no competition at all. Let's start with the basics. Like the plastic our competitors use. A bit too basic for a design as revolutionary as the ADC Integra. That's why our engineers chose to precision mold the Integra from a special carbon fibre material pioneered for aerospace use. Combined with our unique integrated headshell/cartridge design, it makes the ADC Integra up to 50% lighter than conventional headshell and cartridge combinations. And because the Integra is lighter, it tracks better. And preserves your record collection longer. For most people that would be enough. But not for ADC. Our Integra's carbon fibre material also eliminates any low frequency loss or flexing. But the biggest advantage of a material like carbon fibre is available in three different Integra models. One for every kind of budget. All for one kind of sound... devastating. If you'd like to hear more, call Audio Dynamics Corp., toll-free (800) 243-9544 or your ADC dealer.



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## ART CREDITS

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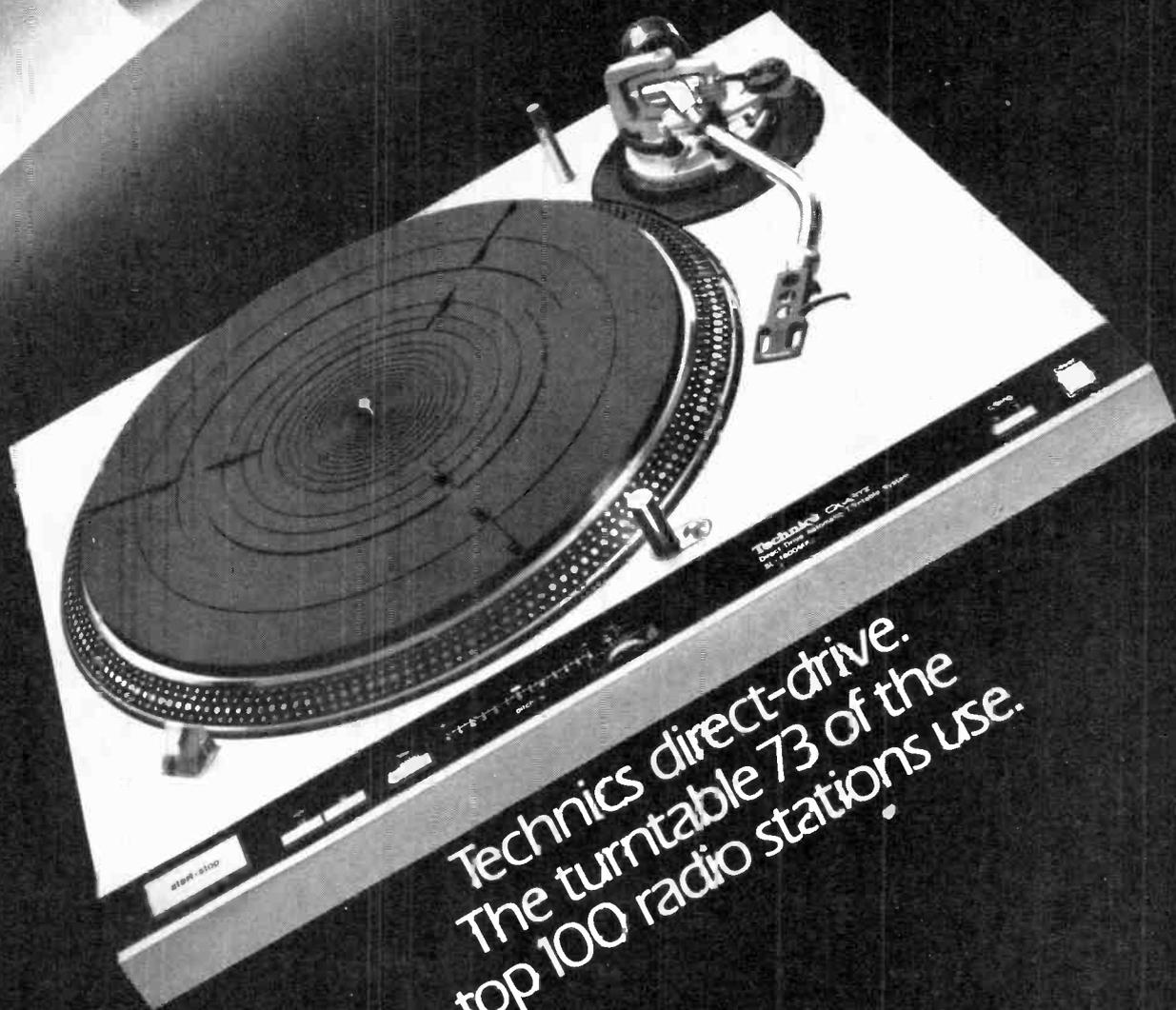
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Technics direct-drive.  
The turntable 73 of the  
top 100 radio stations use.

Performance and reliability. That's why 73 of the top 100 radio stations that use turntables use Technics direct-drive turntables. In fact, of those stations surveyed by Opinion Research Corporation, Technics was chosen 5 to 1 over our nearest competitor.

Why did station engineers choose Technics direct drive: "Low rumble"—as low as -78 dB. "Fast start"—as fast as 0.7 sec. "Wow and flutter"—as low as 0.025%. "Direct drive and constant speed"—as constant as 99.998%. Perhaps one engineer said it best when he described Technics direct drive as the "latest state of the art."

But Technics state of the art goes beyond performance.

Station engineers also depend on Technics direct-drive turntables because of "reliability and past experience" as well as "quality and durability." In fact, the most listened-to classical music station, WQXR in New York, has depended on Technics direct-drive turntables since 1972.

You'll choose Technics direct-drive turntables for the same performance and reliability that's made Technics the turntable top radio stations use. And there are eleven Technics direct-drive turntables from manuals, to semi-automatics, to fully automatics, to changers. Starting at \$125 to \$600 (Technics suggested retail prices). So listen to Technics and hear the Science of Sound.

**Technics**  
The science of sound

# HIGH PERFORMANCE HIGH BIAS.



## AMPEX GM II HIGH BIAS TAPE.

When you're recording music that's rich in high frequencies, you need a high performance tape. Ampex GM II high bias cassettes. They retain and release every note and nuance. Especially those found in highly amplified electronic music.

GM II's high performance begins with the magnetic particle. The ones we use are smaller, permit higher volumetric loading and greater uniformity of dispersion on the tape surface. This produces a more consistent energy, increased output sensitivity, and a substantial reduction in the third harmonic distortion level. Our unique oxide formulation and new processing techniques extend the high end while they lower the noise floor (-62.8dB @ 333Hz). And to make certain that tape-to-

head contact is precise, we use our exclusive Ferrosheen™ calendaring process to give the tape an ultrasmooth, glossy surface.

GM II's True-Track™ cassette mechanism is an audio achievement in and of itself. Every aspect, from the fore and aft guide system to the computer-torqued cassette housing screws, says high performance. Then every Ampex cassette must pass our stringent quality control standards.

GM II high bias, high performance tape. Use it next time you're recording a passage that's rich in high frequencies. You'll hear what a difference it can make when your high bias tape delivers high performance.

For complete information and specifications on all Ampex premium tapes, write us for a copy of our Full Line Brochure.

**AMPEX**  
*The Tape of the Stars*

# Letters

## Curb Record Piracy by Licensing

With reference to "Dick Tracy and the Record Pirates" [September]: As a former musician, I have witnessed retailers throughout the world selling counterfeit reproductions of the gifts of my friends and peers without regard to the authenticity, quality, and legitimacy of the products' origin. No amount of logic could penetrate their greed, and my friends' livelihood mattered not at all to them, compared to the profit being made.

It is time to change tactics. Though the concept of a cartel may be too horrible for politicians to contemplate, we could form an alliance of the MVA, ASCAP, RIAA, and the AFL-CIO to license retailers, who would be required to sign a paper legally binding them to market only the recordings of approved manufacturers. The licensing would not only keep the retailers legitimate, but protect them as well. Those who didn't belong would soon be isolated.

The final solution to the problem of distribution of forgeries would be to force retailers to order directly from record companies by mail, eliminating all middlemen. Again, the dishonest vendor would be isolated. If he received forged products through the mail, he could be prosecuted for mail fraud, and he could not plead ignorance, because the order would have been placed through an unauthorized distributor. Should the records arrive in the blue van, he could be nailed on the spot.

**Howard Reed**  
Houston, Tex.

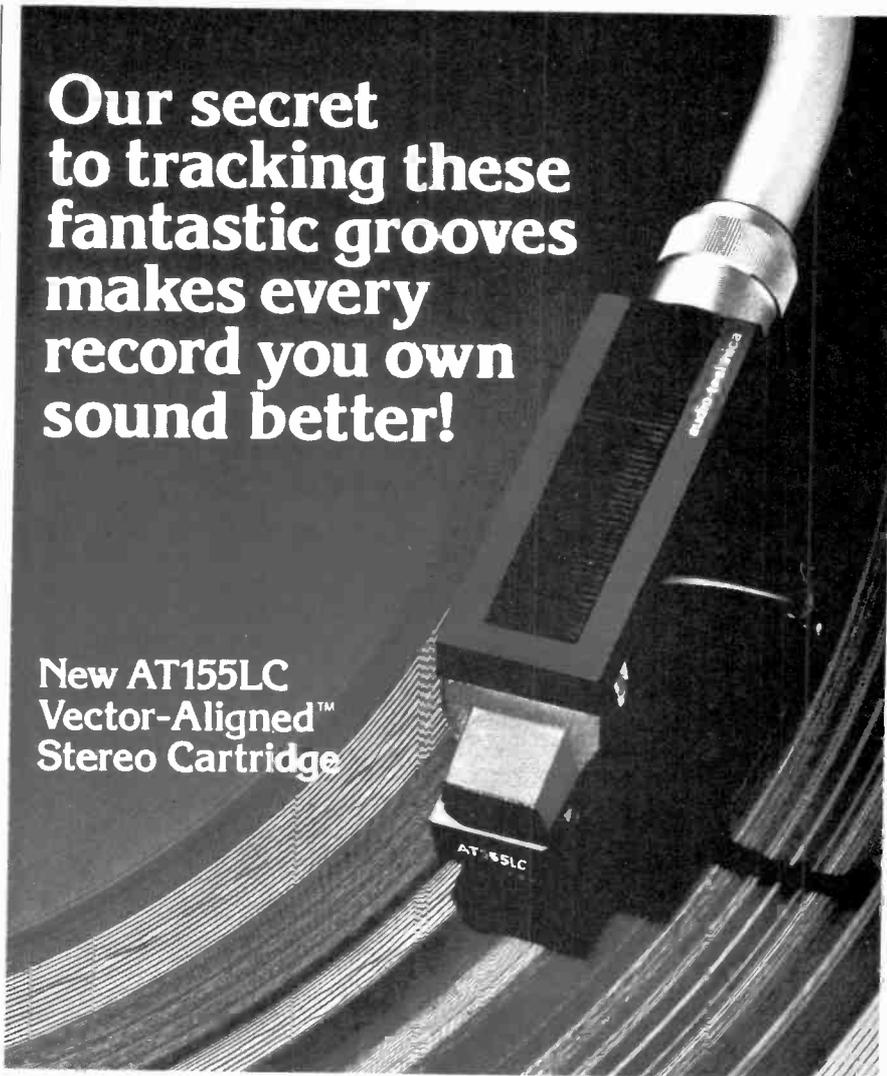
## Praise or Blame

Congratulations for a fine review of the first releases in CBS's Mastersound series [September]. Derrick Henry's writing is informative, clear, and believable. He lists the components in his listening system, providing evidence that he has the resolution to really hear what is (or is not) on a record, and his descriptions of what he hears show that he has the training and sensitivity to give an accurate evaluation of sonic quality. I would not hesitate to purchase any recording Mr. Henry recommends.

Now to less pleasant comments. R. D. Darrell reviewed Zubin Mehta's London recording of the Berlioz "Symphonie fantastique" [August]. In my opinion, London's digital recordings are not only poorer than its own best analogs, but

# Our secret to tracking these fantastic grooves makes every record you own sound better!

## New AT155LC Vector-Aligned™ Stereo Cartridge



There are perhaps a dozen reasons why the new AT155LC does so well tracking even the most explosive new digital records. An advanced new Line Contact stylus, our exclusive Vector-Aligned™ magnetic system, and new high-efficiency coil and core designs to mention just a few.

But it's our *sound*, not the construction that is important. And our capability to track even the tough records which benefits you every time you listen. Because even slight mis-tracking can quickly destroy any record, shortening both disc and stylus life dramatically.

Of course it's easy to claim "good tracking"... everybody says it. *Proving it is something else. Well, we guarantee that every new AT155LC will pass an objective test which easily exceeds the limits of most commercial pressings.* Specifically, at 1.2 grams the AT155LC cleanly tracks the 80-micron band of a standard

DIW 45 549 or AT6607 equivalent test record. And at 1.6 grams it even tracks the severe 90-micron band without visible distortion.

Of course tracking is not the only virtue of the new AT155LC. Response is uniform from 5 to 35,000 Hz, separation is great, and efficiency is uncommonly high\*. All claims we back up with specific tests any lab can duplicate.

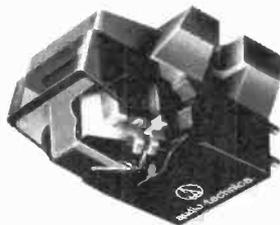
But the most important test is a visit to your Audio-Technica dealer. Ask to hear the new AT155LC with

your favorite records and with the new digital blockbusters. We promise a remarkable sonic experience. And audible proof that the new AT155LC can unlock the full potential of every other hifi component you own.

\*Performance specifications available on request.

## audio-technica.

AUDIO-TECHNICA U.S., INC.,  
1221 Commerce Dr., Stow, OH 44224  
Dept. 120H.



There are 300 voices  
in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.  
This tiny diamond tipped sapphire  
enables you to hear every one.



Shown actual size

It's the diamond stylus/sapphire crystal cantilever of the Bang & Olufsen MMC 20 CL phono cartridge, the cartridge with no audible tip resonance. And no distortion of the music.

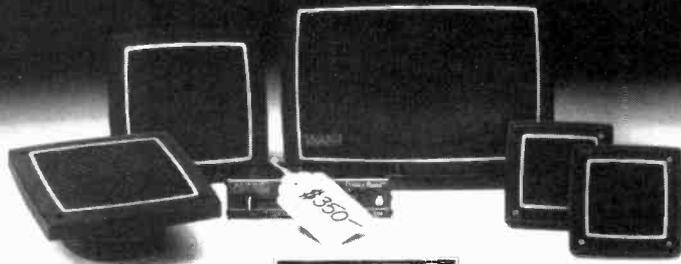
Your cartridge has an overwhelming influence on the reproduction quality you achieve. Which is why we go to great lengths to achieve perfection where it counts in all four of our cartridge models. Hear them for yourself at your local Bang & Olufsen dealer. Or write to us for reprints of what reviewers the world over have been reporting. Which is that Bang & Olufsen stereo phono cartridges are great places for your music to begin.

## Bang & Olufsen

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

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**YOU  
GET WHAT  
YOU  
PAY FOR.**



**ALTEC  
LANSING**

Voice of the Highway™

1515 South Manchester Avenue, Anaheim, California 92803

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much worse than many of those from other labels. The best account of that work—and one of the most natural and electrifying recordings of anything—is André Previn's for EMI. And how can any review of Mussorgsky's "Pictures" be written without a comparison to the spectacular (if a little phony) sound of Telarc's version?

Mr. Darrell's review [August] of the Saint-Saëns "Organ" Symphony led by Eugene Ormandy makes me wonder if he sits in the back of the symphony when he goes to concerts. The orchestral sound is so distant and diffuse that most of the high-frequency detail is lost in the hugely reverberant hall. The microphones seem too far back. And the recording is boring.

In the same issue, Philip Hart also neglects the better recordings (in sound quality) in his review of the Minnesota/Skrowaczewski account of Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet" suite. He does not compare it to the Los Angeles Philharmonic/Leinsdorf version from Sheffield Lab. The omission of such a near-state-of-the-art recording again invalidates any judgment of the current disc's sonic quality.

**Max R. Knittel**  
Bellingham, Wash.

### Walter Producer

In his review of the CBS Master-sound series [September], Derrick Henry gave credit to John McClure for the "wonderful last recordings of Bruno Walter." In fact, I produced these recordings, including Bruckner's Symphony No. 7, Wagner's "Tannhäuser" Overture and Venusberg Music, Mozart's "Magic Flute" Overture and Masonic Funeral Music, Haydn's Symphonies Nos. 88 and 100, Brahms's "Haydn" Variations and "Academic Festival Overture."

**Thomas Frost**  
Thomas Frost Productions  
New York, N.Y.

### Short Shrift for Shostakovich

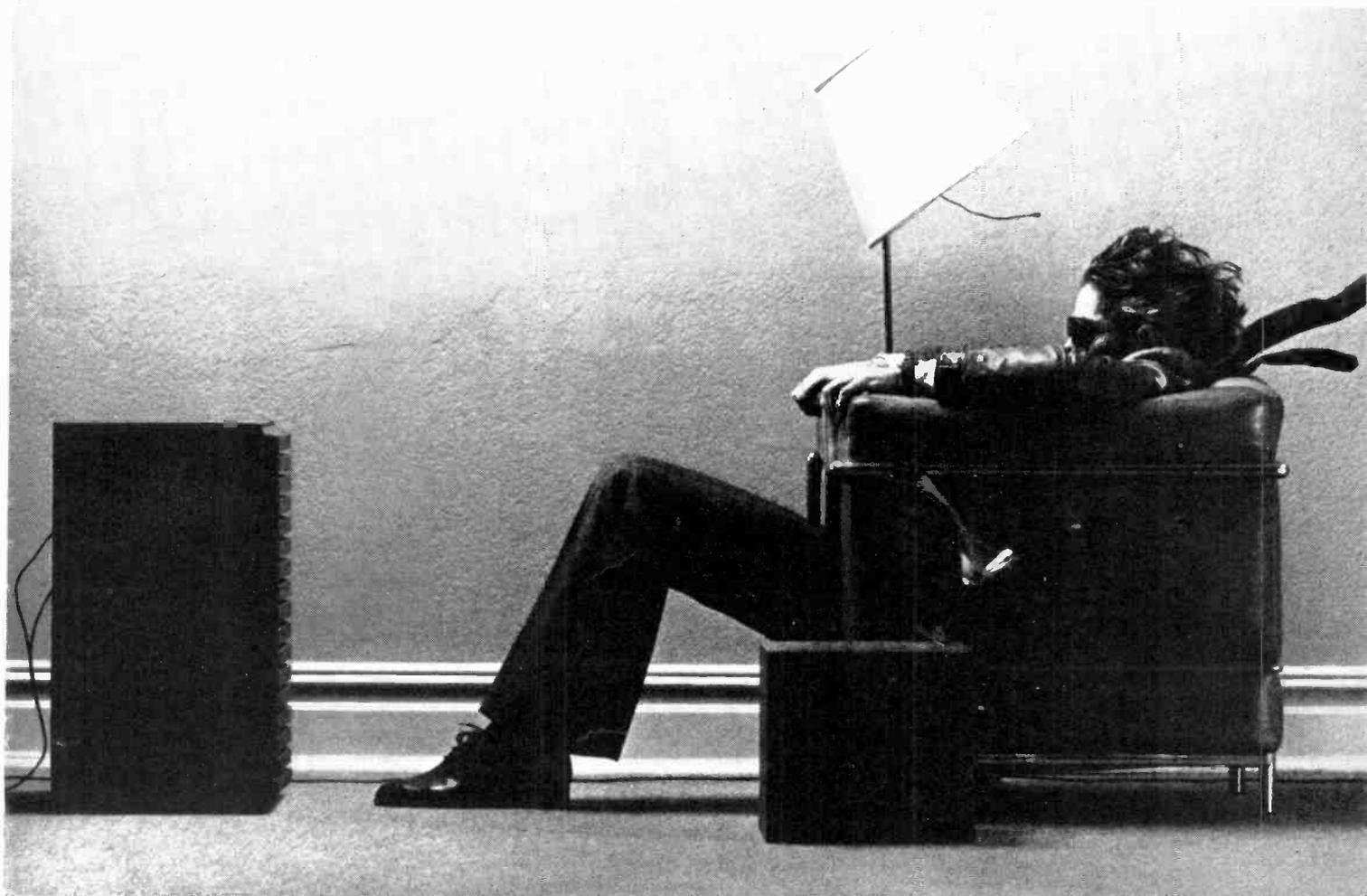
It's a ridiculous instance of thrift to squeeze Shostakovich's Fourth Symphony, which runs more than one hour and has tremendously massive climaxes, onto a single disc. I feel that those who know this wonderful masterpiece would gladly pay for two records, provided that the peaks and tuttis sound with no distortion and don't lack body, and that the individual details aren't swallowed up.

How about rendering the Fourths of Kiril Kondrashin (Melodiya/Angel SR 40177) and Bernard Haitink (London CS 7160) on four sides, 45 rpm?

**Lucio Zelinsquis**  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Circle 25 on Reader-Service Card ▶

# AFTER 500 PLAYS OUR HIGH FIDELITY TAPE STILL DELIVERS HIGH FIDELITY.



If your old favorites don't sound as good as they used to, the problem could be your recording tape.

Some tapes show their age more than others. And when a tape ages prematurely, the music on it does too.

What can happen is, the oxide particles that are bound onto tape loosen and fall off, taking some of your music with them.

At Maxell, we've developed a binding process that helps to prevent this. When oxide particles are bound onto our tape, they stay put. And so does your music.

So even after a Maxell recording is 500 plays old, you'll swear it's not a play over five.



IT'S WORTH IT.

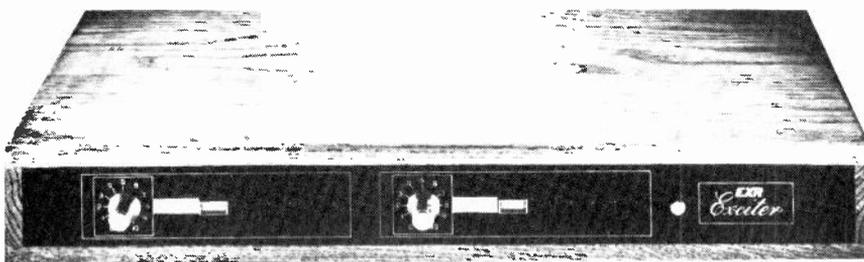
# High Fidelity News



## Select a song with Sansui

Equipped with an on-board minicomputer, the XR-Q11 turntable from Sansui can be programmed to play up to seven selections on a record side in any desired order. Platter speed in this direct-drive model is monitored by a dual-head magnetic sensing system, which activates a quartz-servo speed correction network. The straight low-mass arm is said to be pivoted precisely to minimize spurious vibrations. A high-density synthetic material is used in the base as a barrier against acoustic feedback. Cost of the XR-Q11 is \$650.

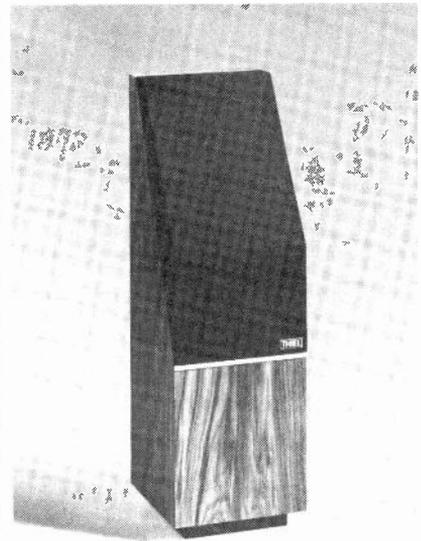
Circle 145 on Reader-Service Card



## Excitement from EXR

The EXR Corporation calls its Model SP-1 Exciter a "psychoacoustic audio processing system" designed to restore the "natural characteristics" of recorded music. The audio signal fed to the device goes through various contortions, including preselective 180-degree phase notching, time manipulation, frequency manipulation, and "psychoacoustic juxtapositioning." Aside from its music-enhancing effects, the Exciter is said to increase voice intelligibility when used in public address systems. Price of the SP-1, which fits a standard 19-inch rack, is \$700.

Circle 146 on Reader-Service Card



## Thiel tackles phase

Accuracy in both amplitude and phase response is claimed by Thiel for its Model 03a loudspeaker. A floor-standing, three-way design, the new unit reproduces bass frequencies with a long-throw woofer and equalizer. Bass response is said to be flat down to 30 Hz. Midrange and treble are handled by vertically aligned drivers mounted on a sloping baffle to minimize time-delay distortion. Price of the Model 03a, including equalizer, is \$975 per pair. Additional information is available directly from Thiel Audio Products Company (4158 Georgetown Rd., Lexington, Ky. 40511).



## Pro EQ from GLI

GLI's latest is a 10-band graphic equalizer, the Model EQ-1500, intended for professional applications. The two-channel device features three sets of selectable inputs, low-noise Bi-Fet circuitry, and a maximum of  $\pm 12$  dB of boost or cut in each band. An automatic muting circuit prevents turnon/turnoff transients from zapping speakers. The EQ-1500, which mounts in a standard 19-inch rack, carries a price tag of \$250.

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(More)

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# TDK Metal. Now you can have ninety minutes in either case.



TDK sets the metal standard for most metal deck manufacturers. With good reasons. Superior high frequency MOL for extended response. Up to 8 dB greater MOL at high frequencies than any high bias tape. High coercivity and remanence for superior sensitivity and additional recording headroom.

This unsurpassed sound comes housed in two different cases. In the case of the MA-R, there is a unique TDK die-cast metal frame. Its unibody construction creates perfect integrity between sides A and B. This insures against signal overlap, channel or sensitivity loss from one side to the other. The Reference Standard Mechanism assures a lifetime\* of superior performance. TDK MA has a computer-molded cassette shell. Like MA-R, it's specially designed for the best interfacing with the 3-head metal deck. And

its Laboratory Standard Mechanism assures years of pure metal sound.

Now in both cases, TDK gives you a choice of 60 or 90-minute lengths. Whichever you choose, you'll hear how TDK makes a perfect case for metal.



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

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**TDK**  
The machine for your machine

CIRCLE 19 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

# If all you want is everything...



## Here it is.

These machines have it all. Every advanced feature you could want. And more.

The luxurious new digital receivers and cassette decks from Vector Research are rugged but beautiful.

Omni-talented but simple.

Advanced but affordable.

Our VRX-9000 receiver has quartz-locked digital-synthesized AM and FM tuning circuitry. Built-in C-MOS micro-computer in charge of preset 12-station memory. Automatic AM and FM

scanning. Optional remote and rack mount. And more.

VCX-600 deck features computerized Programmable Music Search.<sup>™</sup> Sendust heads for metal tape. Two-motor solenoid-activated logic-controlled transport. LED color-bar peak level meters. Optional remote with all function controls. Everything!

Suggested retail price \$750 each.\* Other Vector Research models as low as \$350.

So if your appetite for perfection is huge but your stash of cash is

modest, call us toll-free at 800-854-2003 or, in California, 800-522-1500 ext. 838. We'll tell you the nearest store where Vector Research is now playing.

See them and hear them; feel their feather touch; put them under your control. We promise you a surprising and sensual experience.

\*Optional with dealer

VRX-9000 Digital Receiver has RMS power (both channels driven, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.08% total harmonic distortion) of 80 watts per channel into 8 ohms.

VCX-600 Three-Head Cassette Deck wow and flutter is less than 0.06%. Frequency response ( $\pm 3$  dB): metal tape, 30 to 20,000 Hz, Co or CrO<sub>2</sub> tape, 30 to 18,000 Hz.

# vector research

**A new direction in sound technology.**

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## High Fidelity News

### BSR bows in with speakers



BSR has dubbed its first line of loudspeakers the Powerhandler series. Top-of-the-line Model 883 is a three-way floor-standing tower design with two 8-inch drivers that operate in tandem in the deep bass region; from 800 to 1.2 kHz,

one of the drivers operates singly. The Model 883 sells for \$130.

Circle 138 on Reader-Service Card



### Splice dispenser

For the open-reel recordist who is into cut-and-splice tape editing, there's a "cassette" containing some 500 pre-cut lengths of splicing tape that emerge one at a time from the housing when you pull on the backing tape. We had a chance to try it in advance of its announced distribution here, which seldom happens with products in this column. Using it with an EdiTall block, we found it the most efficient way, hands down, to edit quarter-inch recording tape. Called the PW-384, the pack is made by BASF in Europe and is distributed in this country exclusively by Gotham Audio Corporation (741 Washington St., New York, N.Y. 10014) for \$9.00 apiece.

(More)

Circle 42 on Reader-Service Card

## It whistles while it works

Listen to the Robins WhistleStop electronic head demagnetizer whistle as it eliminates performance-robbing residual magnetic build up from your tape head. Hear the difference in sound quality and reduced distortion. Simply insert like any cassette. Complete with batteries. At your hi-fi dealer.



Circle 48 on Reader-Service Card

## For lovers only

Soft music and soft lighting go together. Preserve the romantic mood. Robins ROBO-LITE snaps on turntable dustcovers and illuminates the record. Lets you place the tonearm in the groove you want without turning on room lights or fumbling in the dark. Turns off automatically when the dustcover is lowered. Ask for a demonstration at your hi-fi dealer.



# RoboLite

ROBINS  
Robins Industries Corp., 75 Austin Blvd., Commack, N.Y. 11725

Circle 30 on Reader-Service Card

# ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.

It all comes together in Status:Pro by Gusdorf. The luxury. The fantastic flexibility. Like the Model 1930 we show you here.

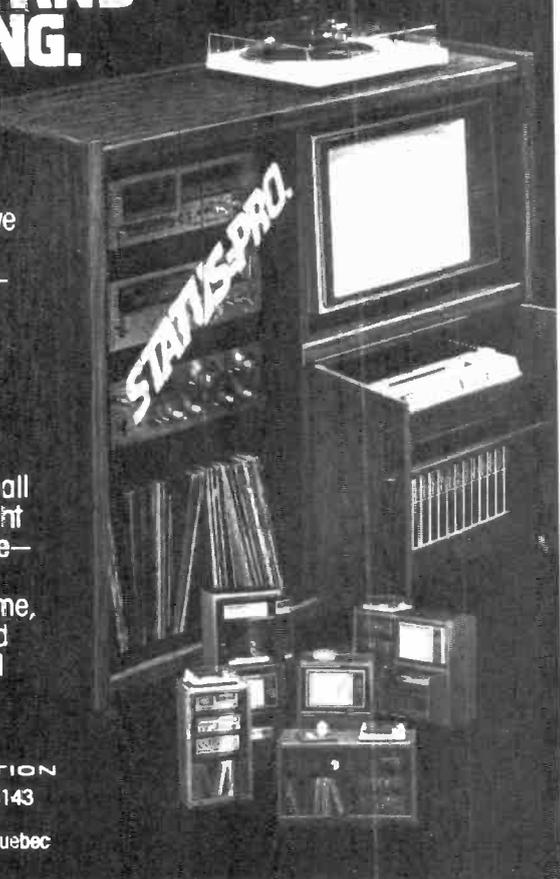
Designed to accommodate and coordinate every kind of component and to achieve every kind of component interface including VCR and video disc.

Status:Pro.

It's the classic case of all the right ideas in all the right places, at just the right time—right now.

Write now yourself, to me, Mike Sneideris, and I'll send you our color brochure and dealer listing for 50¢.

**GUSDORF CORPORATION**  
6900 Manchester, St. Louis, MO 63143  
Gusdorf Canada Ltd.  
4830 Cote Vertu Ville, Ste. Laurent, Quebec



## 14 High Fidelity News



### Shure in a shell

Shure has expanded its line of M-97 Era IV pickups with the M-97HE-AH, integrated in its own headshell. The new model allows for precise stylus overhang adjustment. Like its stand-alone cartridge counterparts in the Era IV series, the integrated version includes a nude-mounted hyperelliptical stylus, a viscous-damped dynamic stabilizer, telescoped stylus shank, and Side Guard stylus protector. The M-97 HE-AH, compatible with standard plug-in-headshell tonearms, costs \$120.

Circle 142 on Reader-Service Card

### Too late for AM stereo?

Amid the hubbub over the presumed imminence of stereo AM broadcasting, a front-page story in a recent issue of the trade paper "Billboard" struck us as something of a bombshell. The article, covering the 1980 Radio Programming Conference of the National Association of Broadcasters, contained the assertion that AM radio will be moving away from music in the Eighties. Talk, it seems, is taking over; FM can have its music—Top Forty, classics, easy listening, or whatever—and welcome to it.

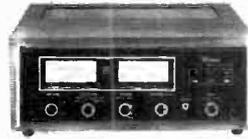
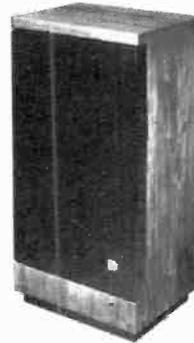
If radio programming editor Doug Hall, who wrote the report, is correct in his reading of broadcaster sentiments, stereo technology may have come too late to AM to do it much good. The underlying assumptions have been that motorists want stereo music in their cars and that FM, which has been supplying that fare in the home, is just too problematic in moving automobiles. Perhaps while nobody was looking, tape filled the need for mobile music, and drivers and homebodies alike began looking to AM only for information and nonmusical entertainment.

One Boston program director summed it up: "Those who failed in mono will fail in stereo but just sound better."

Circle 45 on Reader-Service Card ▶

## FREE McIntosh STEREO CATALOG and FM DIRECTORY

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



**SEND TODAY!**

McIntosh Laboratory, Inc.  
East Side Station P.O. Box 96  
Binghamton, N.Y. 13904

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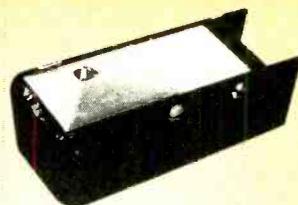
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If you are in a hurry for your catalog please send the coupon to McIntosh. For non rush service send the Reader Service Card to the magazine.

Circle 26 on Reader-Service Card

- 1939...FIRST DIRECT-DRIVE TURNTABLE SYSTEM.
- 1951...FIRST MOVING-COIL CARTRIDGE.
- 1972...FIRST DIGITAL (PCM) RECORDING.



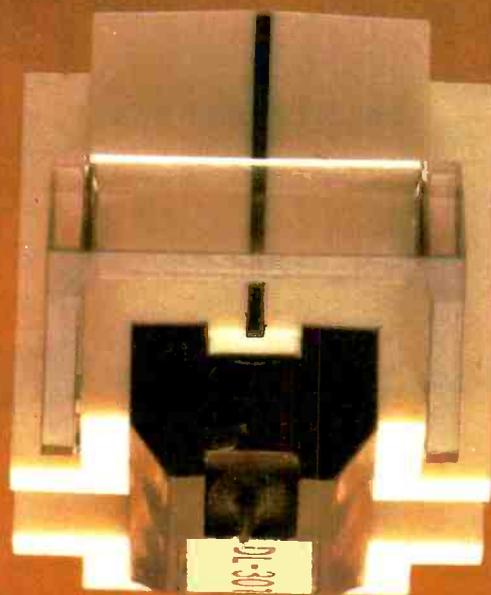
The year is 1951. Harry Truman is President. An amazing new device called television entertains millions. And in Japan the leading manufacturer of professional sound equipment — Denon — develops the first high-performance moving-coil cartridge.

Denon's engineers discover that an extremely lightweight stylus assembly, made without a heavy magnet attached to its stem, gives this new kind of phono cartridge the ability to reproduce music with a subtlety of detail that escapes conventional cartridges.

Denon offers the cartridge first to professional broadcasting organizations, and then later to small numbers of sophisticated home listeners. Among this discerning few, the moving-coil legend is born: there is no finer way to play a record.

In recent years, the moving-coil legend has grown to the point that many manufacturers build their entire product lines around the moving-coil principle. But only one company has had 29 years to refine and improve the moving-coil concept. The same company that developed direct-drive turntables 41 years ago. The same company that invented the world's first commercial digital recorder eight years ago.

Denon.



## 1980...DENON DL-300 SERIES PHONO CARTRIDGES.

The Denon DL-300 Series, the latest in the long line of superior Denon moving-coil designs. With the lowest stylus tip mass of any stereo cartridges in history, achieved through the use of Denon's patented dual-section cantilever and cross-shaped coil, they depict nuance and a sense of depth in music with unsurpassed sonic accuracy. The Denon DL-301 and DL-303 with long-area-contact stylus profiles and dual-section aluminum alloy cantilevers. Or the ultimate in record-playback performance, the Denon DL-305, with an ultra-low-mass Amorphous Boron cantilever.

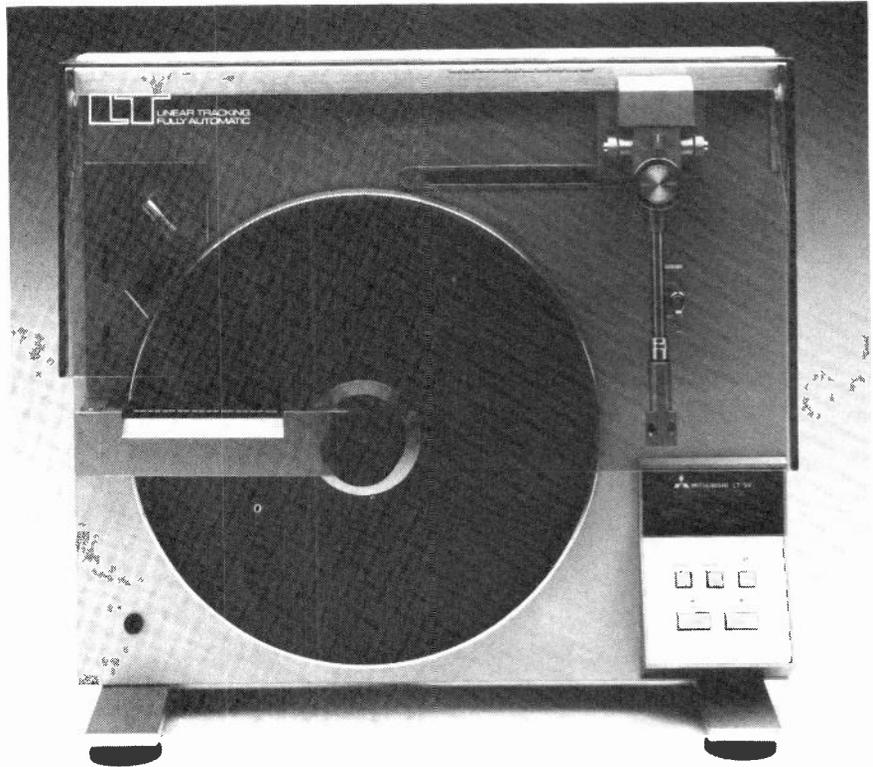
Denon's DL-300 Series cartridges for 1980: three new musical instruments from the company where innovation is a tradition.

**DENON**  
*Imagine  
 what we'll  
 do next.*

Denon America, Inc.  
 27 Law Drive, Fairfield, N.J. 07006

# 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.



## A Standup Performer from Mitsubishi

**Mitsubishi Model LT-5V two-speed (33 and 45 rpm) linear-tracking vertical-format turntable, with hinged dust shield. Dimensions: 18 by 17 inches (front, including legs), 8 inches deep; 2 inches additional vertical clearance required with shield open. Price: \$450. Warranty: "limited," two years parts, one year labor. Manufacturer: Mitsubishi Electric Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Mitsubishi Electric Sales America, Inc., 3010 E. Victoria St., Compton, Calif. 90221.**

The line between gimmickery and practicality in audio design is often quite thin. For instance, a fluorescent display is an attractive alternative to a moving-needle meter, but whether it is more or less useful than the meter depends on the design of both and on the application for which they are intended. And though change itself is commonplace, modifications that really do contribute to the flexibility and performance of audio equipment are rare. So a radical design like the LT-5V might seem gratuitous were performance sacrificed to its vertical format; on the contrary, it is an extraordinary and important departure from traditional turntables, and one whose obvious merits are reinforced by nothing less than superb performance.

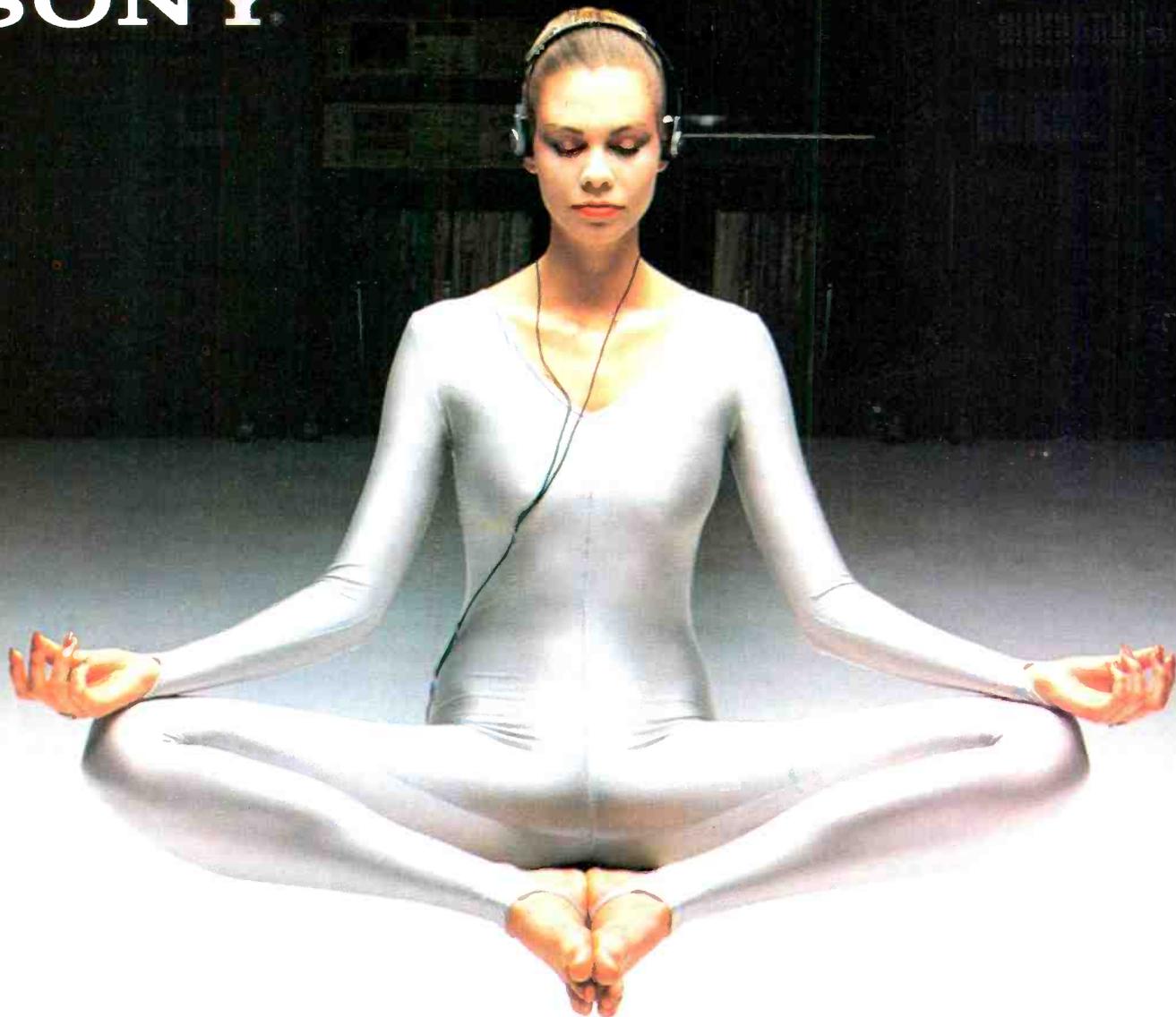
The most obvious merit is the saving of space from standing the turntable on its ear. It fits shelves that cannot accommodate the depth of horizontal models, most of which need at least 6 inches more space. Then there is the tangential-tracking arm, a genus whose theoretical advantages—zero lateral tracking-angle error and skating force—are too well known to warrant exposition here. The arm is kept tangent to the record grooves by an optical servo controlling a worm-gear/pulley arrangement. Not only does the servo keep the pickup on course, but it also acts as a level; it signals any inward or outward gravitational bias on its TRACKING ERROR display, whose central lamp indicates when all's well. In use, we noted that the system is quite tolerant, signaling for help only when the departure from level was fairly gross.

Mitsubishi has cleverly adapted the static balancing principle to this format, in which the arm hangs from—rather than teetering on—its pivot. A fixed

(Continued on page 20)

**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.

# SONY



## Heavy.

Introducing another Sony only. The MDR series open-air headphones. The smallest, lightest stereo headphones available today. Or tomorrow.

With our lightest at 40 grams, you will barely know you're wearing them. Yet the sound is dynamite.

Through a remarkable new audio breakthrough, our engineers have succeeded in reducing big-headphone technology down to the size of your listening channels.

The MDR series headphones' airy spaciousness delivers absolute clarity through an ultra-small driver

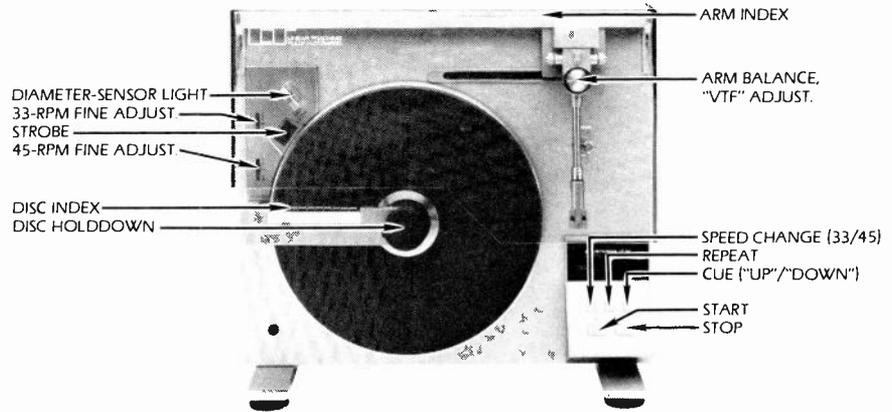
unit that produces more than three times the energy of conventional circuits. And a new high-compliance diaphragm accurately reproduces the 20 to 20,000Hz bandwidth and improves low-range response.

That means you can listen to the heaviest of music for hours. Lightly. And know that you're hearing every nuance of the original recording from deep bass to the highest treble.

Listen to our new MDR series headphones. They're light. And heavy.



STEREO HEADPHONES  
**MDR**



### Mitsubishi LT-5V turntable

**SPEED ACCURACY** (at 33 or 45 rpm)  
no measurable error at 105 or 127 VAC  
when set exact at 120 VAC

**SPEED ADJUSTMENT RANGE**  
at 33 +6.0 to -3.5%  
at 45 +9.2 to -3.1%

**WOW & FLUTTER** (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)  
±0.05% average; +0.10% max. instantaneous

**TOTAL AUDIBLE RUMBLE** (ARLL) -67½ dB

**TO NEARM RESONANCE & DAMPING**  
"vertical" 8.0 Hz; 2-dB rise  
lateral 5.6 Hz; 2½-dB rise

**ARM FRICTION** negligible in either plane

**VTF-GAUGE ACCURACY**  
no measurable error to 1.0 gram;  
gauge reads < 10% high above 1.0 gram

**MIN. STYLUS FORCE FOR AUTO TRIP** 250 mg

**TOTAL LEAD CAPACITANCE** 260 pF

weight is mounted at the top of the arm, and the actual counterweight/VTF adjustment is located further down, immediately below the pivot. Balancing therefore becomes a matter of positioning this fine-tune counterweight so that the arm hangs perfectly straight, like a builder's plumb line. The owner's manual says to adjust for a distance of ¼ inch (3 mm) between the arm pipe and the flange of the armrest post. Then you dial the "vertical" tracking force (which actually is a horizontal vector in this model) at the counterweight, offsetting it toward you and hence developing an appropriate moment of inertia around the arm pivot. Since the center of gravity of a typical pickup is directly below the pivot, its weight will not influence arm balance, so swapping pickups does not necessitate rebalancing. Retrim the tracking-force gauge, if necessary, and you're ready to go—a big plus for multipickup perfectionists.

Turntable speed and arm setdown position are determined by record size as detected by optical sensors beneath the platter mat. With no record on the mat, the arm will not set down at all. A 7-inch disc covers the inner sensors, shifts speed from normal (33) to 45, and moves the setdown point in appropriately. Larger discs that cover the outer sensors leave the speed at 33 and the setdown at the 12-inch point. If you have any 10-inch LPs, they will require manual cueing and setdown at the control panel, which can also be used to encompass such esoterica as 12-inch, 45-rpm superdiscs.

One of the most logical niceties in a unit crammed with well-planned touches is the ganging of the AC power switch with the arm locking flange: When you free the arm, the power comes on. A spring-loaded clamp mounted on a swing-away hinged arm holds records in place. The upper edge of the arm carries a scale that corresponds with one inscribed above the tonearm assembly. Though this arrangement is intended to facilitate accurate cueing, we found the black index mark on the headshell itself simpler to use as long as we had strong light near the turntable and an armchair-height viewpoint. The microprocessor-based transport controls are quite responsive, and it takes only a few minutes to get the feel of the helm.

On the CBS Technology Center test bench, the LT-5V proved its mettle with uniformly high marks. In one important respect—the extraordinary -67½ dB of audible rumble—it has been bettered by only a handful of turntables over the years. Tonearm resonance, measured with our "reference" Shure V-15 Type III pickup, is very well controlled in both planes, and what remains in the warp-sensitive "vertical" plane (actually horizontal here) is near ideal in frequency. The belt drive does not vary in speed with voltage changes and keeps wow and flutter acceptably low.

We found the unpacking and setup somewhat more complex than average. (If you don't follow directions easily, ask your dealer for help.) But once that's accomplished, the rest is pure pleasure. Since surface-borne vibrations tend to act at right angles to the path of the stylus in such a system, there is a dramatic reduction in the turntable's susceptibility to such feedback. The benefits show up in tight, clear bass and a remarkably vivid midrange. With a well-mastered and carefully pressed disc, one auditioner commented that there was a sense of music forming out of a background of total silence. Whether that is attributable to the very low rumble figures, the vertical orientation of the arm, or perhaps the effects of the disc clamp in controlling record resonances is hard to say. Nor can we say unequivocally why our admiration for and enjoyment of this turntable increased daily over the month or so during which we prepared this report.

(Continued on page 23)

Circle 33 on Reader-Service Card ▶

# Sony's inseparable separates.

A stylish new match in a thin new tuner and an integrated amplifier. Tune into style and grace with Sony's new slim separates. Together they give you the compactness of a single receiver, with the higher-fi engineering of individual components.

Sony's sleek ST-J55 tuner and powerful TA-F55 integrated amplifier are a perfect pair. Both with the convenience of feather touch operation. In addition the F55 features an electronic volume switch with a built-in motor to give you smooth and easy stereo command.

## Frequency synthesized tuning.

The tuner's advanced technology is Sony sophisticated. Frequency synthesized tuning with a highly stable quartz-crystal oscillator locks onto the broadcasting signal and makes station selection precise and drift free. Sony sensational is the only description for our tuner's masterful performance.

The ST-J55's feather touch switches are set in a neat clean line for perfect visual operation. And you get impeccable operational ease with Memory Tuning, Auto Tuning and Manual Tuning.

## Non-volatile memory with random memory preset.

The ST-J55's MNOS memory makes total operation incredibly simple. From tuning to randomly presetting a total of 8 of your favorite FM/AM stations.

Pre-set frequencies and reception adjustments like Muting/ Mode Pre-set are all memorized for problem-free tuning each time you turn the tuner on. And Sony's non-volatile memory holds all information up to ten years without power or backup systems.

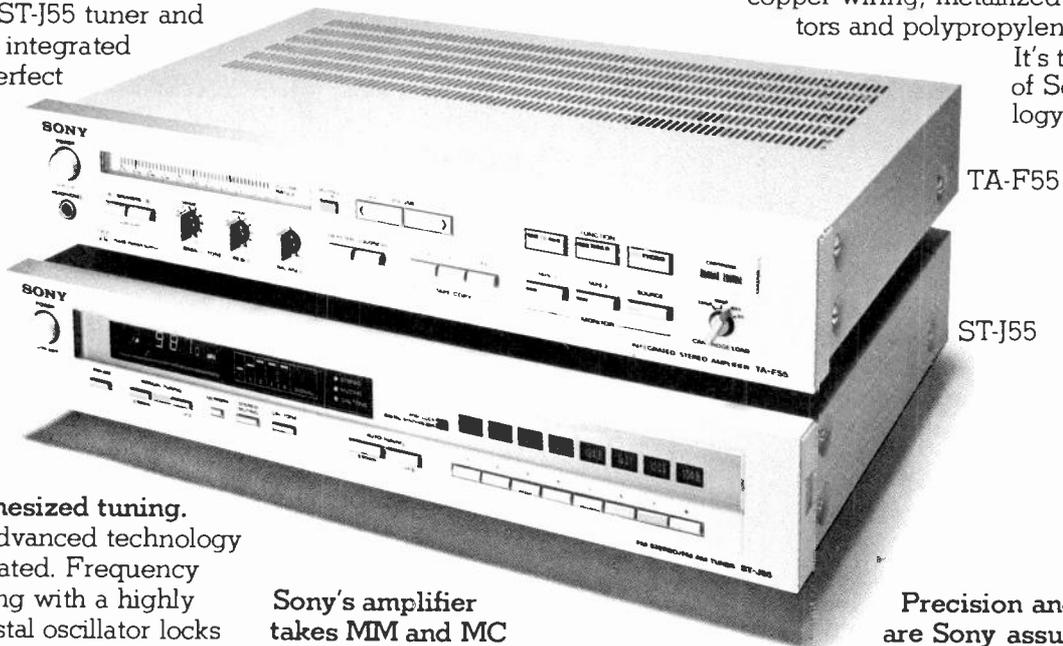
Sony also supplies blank station labels so you can personalize your tuner. You can tag your pre-programmed frequencies or station names in a handy LED backlit slide out holder for at-a-glance identification.

MM and MC cartridge and appreciate the TA-F55's virtuosity.

## The final touches.

Of course, you get all the higher-fi standards in the TA-F55, like Gold Plated Phono Jacks, oxygen free copper wiring, metallized film resistors and polypropylene capacitors.

It's the synthesis of Sony technology and design.

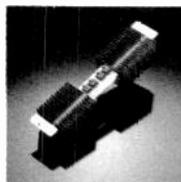


TA-F55

ST-J55

## Sony's amplifier takes MM and MC cartridges for maximum virtuosity.

The ST-J55's matching mate is Sony's TA-F55 integrated amplifier. They're a natural fit at exactly the same slim size. Sony's technology gives you the combination of slim elegance and a powerful delivery. The TA-F55 pumps out 65 watts minimum RMS per channel at 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000Hz with no more than 0.008% total harmonic distortion.



Pulse Power Supply, Sony's revolutionary Heat Pipe, and Sony's innovations in simple and straight signal processing circuitry construction all result in extremely clean and noise free sound quality.

Best of all, now you can choose practically any type of MC and MM cartridge for your choice of the most satisfying musical performance an audiophile can hope for. Just set the two position load selector for each

## Precision and stability are Sony assured.

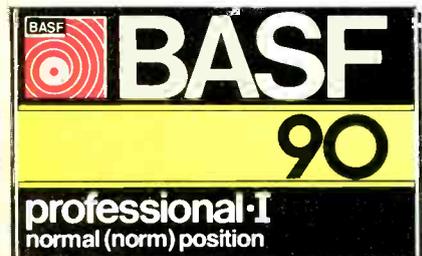
The ST-J55 tuner and TA-F55 integrated amplifier. Two Sony quality engineered components, whose separate stability and precision are unmatched for operational convenience and performance.

Sony's perfect pair. They're inseparable.

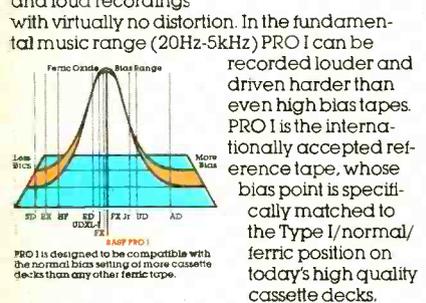
# SONY®

# The Tape Guide

**Professional-I.**  
The one tape that stands up when you crank it up.



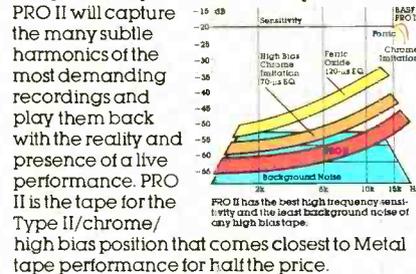
Premium ferric oxide tapes have more headroom which allows higher maximum recording levels (MRL). Among all premium ferric oxides PRO I has the best MRL for loud recordings. Uniform maghemite particles provide increased headroom for very accurate and loud recordings with virtually no distortion. In the fundamental music range (20Hz-5kHz) PRO I can be recorded louder and driven harder than even high bias tapes. PRO I is the internationally accepted reference tape, whose bias point is specifically matched to the Type I/normal/ferric position on today's high quality cassette decks.



**Professional-II.**  
The world's quietest tape puts nothing between you and your music.



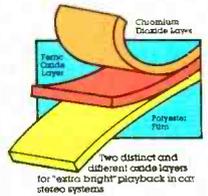
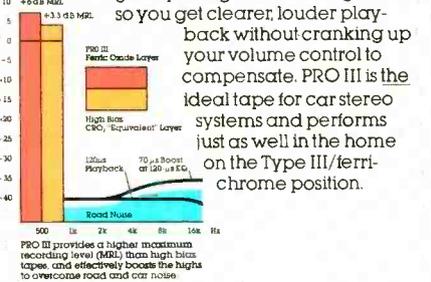
High bias tapes consistently provide wider frequency response and less tape noise (hiss or background noise) than any other tape type. Among premium high bias tapes PRO II is in a class by itself. It is the second generation chromium dioxide tape with superb frequency response and outstanding sensitivity in the critical (10kHz-20kHz) high frequency range. It also has the lowest background noise of any other competitive tape available today. PRO II will capture the many subtle harmonics of the most demanding recordings and play them back with the reality and presence of a live performance. PRO II is the tape for the Type II/chrome/high bias position that comes closest to Metal tape performance for half the price.



**Professional-III.**  
The only car tape that eliminates the car.



Ferrichrome tapes combine the benefits of chromium dioxide and ferric oxide tapes for superior performance in car stereos. The top layer is pure chromium dioxide for unsurpassed highs and low background noise. The bottom layer is ferric oxide for superior lows and great middle frequencies. And it also gives you higher recording levels, so you get clearer, louder playback without cranking up your volume control to compensate. PRO III is the ideal tape for car stereo systems and performs just as well in the home on the Type III/ferrichrome position.



**GUARANTEE OF A LIFETIME**

"The guarantee of a lifetime." All BASF tape cassettes come with a lifetime guarantee that covers everything. Should any BASF cassette ever fail—for any reason—simply return it to BASF for a free replacement.



**Patented "Jam-Proof" Security Mechanism (SM):** All BASF tape cassettes come with our exclusive SM—Security Mechanism. Two precision arms actually "guide" the tape in a smooth, exact and consistent track, so that winding is always even, no matter how often the cassette is played. SM puts an end to tape jamming.



Crosby Drive, Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

There are surely those who will seek out the LT-5V for its novelty or for the placement flexibility it affords. But we can recommend it on the basis of performance alone and believe that its sterling technical virtues will keep the design current long after the novelty has faded.

Circle 132 on Reader-Service Card

## Sony's Featherweight Headset



**Sony's Model MDR-3 dynamic headset, with 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ -foot cord. Price: \$50. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Sony Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Sony Corp. of America, 9 W. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.**

Sony faced a formidable challenge in the design of the MDR-3 headphones. Planned as part of the Walkman portable stereo cassette player system, they had to be light enough to be nonfatiguing to the jogger, efficient enough to play loudly with the milliwatt-range output of the system's cassette player, and capable of enough bass response to satisfy the roller-disco crowd. So successful was the result that a market soon developed for the product as a home audio item. In fact, there is a whole line of headsets in the MDR Series, ranging in price from \$40 to \$80. The top model (MDR-7) is rated down to 16 Hz. The 3's response spec only (!) goes to 20 Hz, and its sensitivity is a tad lower, but it is the lightest of the lot—the "world's lightest," according to Sony.

To be specific, it weighs about 3 ounces including the lightweight cord, which weighs a hair more than the headset alone. The headband is made of a thin strip of flexible plastic, with adjustable spring-metal sliders supporting the ear pieces. The foam ear pads measure 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches in diameter—just wide enough, when correctly seated, to cover the center of the ear. The miniaturized dynamic transducers, the heart of the MDR approach, employ high-flux/low-weight samarium-cobalt magnets and long-excursion diaphragms. After prolonged periods of use, we find the MDR-3 the most comfortable headset we've encountered. While many other "open-air" designs depend on the pressure of the pads against the ear to keep the headset firmly in place, this one is held by the spring-metal bands, which gently distribute the pressure at the sides of the head.

Testing the model with a variety of program material, we were delighted with its response over much of the frequency band. It does not, however, escape the bane of open-air designs: a noticeable rolloff in the bass region. Without a circumaural seal to trap bass information, there seems no remedy short of equalization. A judicious bass boost at our preamp did help, but the ultradeep bass, often handled well by sealed-cup headphones, can't be kept subjectively flat by these little guys. (Note that, though their spec reaches to 20 Hz, it makes no claim about the level at which the ultrabass will be reproduced.) And these headphones accept reasonable bass boosts without buzzing, breakup, or other audible complaint—unlike many headsets and even minispeakers of our acquaintance.

There are other pleasures here: chiefly the lack of coloration and fine feeling of spaciousness the MDR-3s impart to a wide range of musical material. There is a sense of hearing through the headphones and little of the "orchestra inside your head" effect common to sealed-cup designs. Massed strings, woodwinds, and brass could be heard clearly and distinctly, with a good sense of dimensionality for headphones. Sony's avoidance of a resonance-inducing ear cup may well contribute to the clarity and spaciousness of tone.

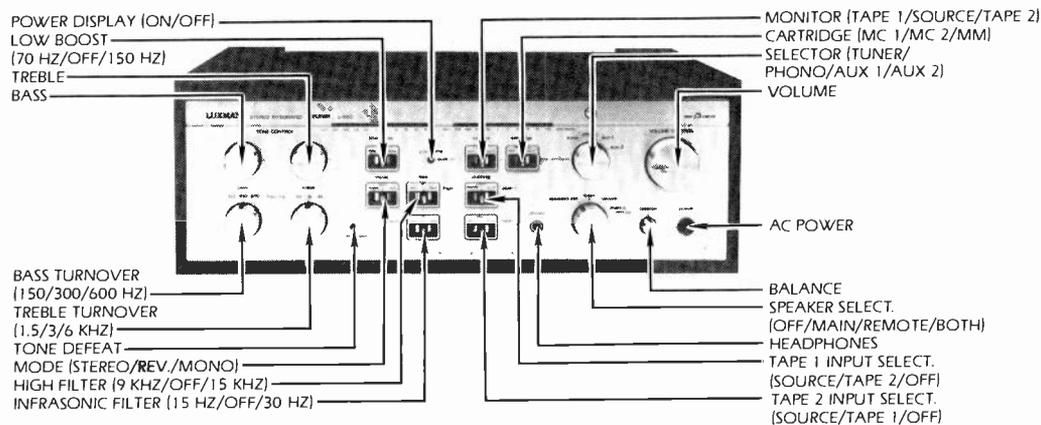
The MDR-3, whose 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ -foot cord contains oxygen-free copper wire for high conductivity, is unusually efficient, even by headphone standards. Sony rates it at 96 dB SPL for a 1-milliwatt input, with a maximum power-handling capacity of 100 milliwatts (1/10 watt or -10 dBW). Though any open-air headphone is of limited use for monitoring a live recording, the MDR-3's high efficiency enables it to play quite loudly with the outputs of tape decks and therefore to mask some ambient sound.

But the essential comparison is not with the high-seal designs, but with other on-the-ear models, which represent a distinctly different sort of listening. The MDR-3 is, again, exceptionally comfortable, and its audio very smooth. If you press its drivers tightly against your ears, you will realize how comfort might have been sacrificed to deep-bass response. (The MDR-7 and MDR-5 both are rated for about 50% more head pressure than the 3 and doubtless derive greater bass perceptibility from the stiffer headband.) If that observation amounts to "you can't have everything," so be it. What you can have with the MDR-3, in addition to great comfort, is good sound at a moderate price. We found it a delight.

Circle 134 on Reader-Service Card

◀ Circle 11 on Reader-Service Card

(More)



## Lux Integrates Its Latest Amp Technology

### Luxman L-580 integrated amplifier

RATED POWER 20 dBW (100 watts)/channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)  
 8-ohm load 21% dBW (150 watts)/channel  
 4-ohm load 23% dBW (210 watts)/channel  
 16-ohm load 19% dBW (94 watts)/channel

DYNAMIC HEADROOM (8 ohms) 2½ dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz)  
 at 20 dBW (100 watts) ≤0.052%  
 at 0 dBW (1 watt) ≤0.027%

FREQUENCY RESPONSE (at 0 dBW)  
 +0, -¼ dB, <10 Hz to 28 kHz;  
 -3 dB at 110 kHz

RIAA EQUALIZATION  
 MM or MC-1 +¼, -½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz;  
 -1¼ dB at 5 Hz  
 MC-2 +¼, -¾ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz;  
 -4¼ dB at 5 Hz

**Luxman L-580 integrated amplifier, in wood case with rosewood finish. Dimensions: 18½ by 6½ inches (front), 13¾ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Accessory AC outlets: three switched (300 watts max. total), one unswitched (200 watts max.). Price: \$800. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Lux Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Lux Audio of America, Ltd., 160 Dupont St., Plainview, N.Y. 11803.**

New power-amplifier technology usually makes its debut in separates, then pauses awhile as though to savor its own importance before rolling up its sleeves to tackle integrated models. Not so Lux's Duo-Beta (or Duo-β) circuit, which uses a twofold negative feedback arrangement to keep feedback quantitatively low over most of the audio range (for minimum potential dynamic intermodulation) and addresses extraneous infrasonics, which normally are not the recipients of such specialized care, via their own feedback loop. Duo-Beta designs first appeared less than two years ago; already we find ourselves documenting an integrated amp that incorporates it.

At a rating of 100 watts per side, there is left behind the theory. And the preamplifier is exceptionally versatile, with three knee frequencies for each of its tone controls, a separate LOW-BOOST control, both high and low filters with two knee frequencies apiece, two aux inputs, and separate, switched back-panel signal-processor connections for devices that (like a speaker equalizer) are to remain in use on more than an intermittent basis. It also has two sets of tape connections, with recording outputs capable of dubbing in either direction or totally removable from the L-580's circuitry (to prevent loading on the source feed and/or interference of source signals with tape playback signals). The phono section offers switching for two moving-coil pickups or for one moving-coil and one fixed-coil model. The output display—a series of LEDs at roughly 4-dB power-level intervals from rated power down to -17 dBW (0.02 watt)—can be switched off, we're happy to report. And all of this is subtly deployed on a front panel that has become a source of minor controversy. Admittedly, it is less elegantly simple than the best remembered of Lux's faceplates. The rather fussy design of the eight three-position switches seems chiefly to blame, yet we do admire the way their staggered positioning differentiates them. Ultimately, the success or failure of the front panel remains a matter of taste.

In the tests at Diversified Science Laboratories, the multiply adjustable tone controls showed themselves to be more than just window dressing. With the turnovers switched toward the frequency extremes, control action continues to grow more pronounced as those extremes are approached, and the band around 1 kHz is left virtually unaltered. Conversely, when the bass is set for its highest (600 Hz) turnover and the treble for its lowest (1.5 kHz), there is considerable overlap in the middle and the curves all shelf toward the frequency extremes. And gentle increments are available because none of the curves is extreme, never significantly exceeding 10 dB of boost or 15 dB of cut. There is one very minor oddity in the tone-control section, however: When it is switched in, a slight bass rolloff (1 dB maximum, at 20 Hz) is introduced. (Since you're using the tone controls anyway, you can easily compensate for it—if you can hear it.) The filter slopes are gentle; the 6-dB figure was presumably chosen, in part, to minimize phase shift through the controls. So, presuming that the Luxman is designed primarily for the reproduction of signals whose audio quality is good at the very least, the knee frequencies strike us as well chosen, though the audible effect is relatively minor.

(More)

# AKAI QUICK-REVERSE. FOR PEOPLE WHO HATE TO INTERRUPT A GREAT PERFORMANCE.



Just pop in the cassette and spend the rest of the night making beautiful music together.

AKAI proudly announces the GX-F60R. Another superb example of quality in reverse.

It begins with the finest record/playback head in the industry. AKAI's glass and crystal ferrite Twin Field Super GX Head. Guaranteed for over 17 years of virtually wear-free performance on any tape formulation — low-noise through metal.

You'll also find a tape transport design that's sheer engineering wizardry.

And a two-motor system to lend even more stability.

All this, combined with specially engineered channeled tape guides, maximize tape-to-head contact in both directions for both record and playback.

Wow and flutter is

reduced to less than 0.04% WRMS. Distortion is less than 0.7% (1000 Hz "0" VU).

Now, add AKAI's second stroke of genius, our Quick-Reversing mechanism. Integrated into one of the two tape guides, is an infrared device that detects the tape leader and triggers the reverse.

The result — virtually no interruption in place of the usual 12 to 14 seconds of silence between sides on conventional decks.

And just in case you thought we neglected the rest of the GX-F60R's features in search of the perfect transport system, read on.

You'll also find full-logic solenoid controls, two-color fluorescent VU/peak bar meters, Dolby\*, timer record/playback and remote control capabilities.

Plus a handsomely designed hydraulically-dampened panel that artfully conceals a full host of controls.

All in all, the finest reversing cassette deck AKAI has ever built.

And guaranteed to leave you with a lot more than time on your hands.

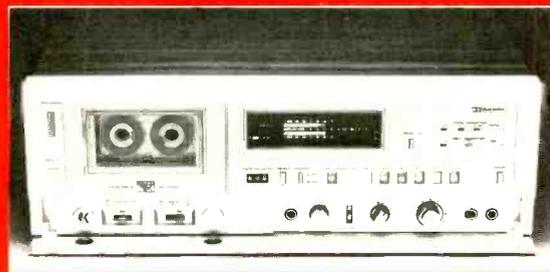
For much more information on the

GX-F60R — or our more economically-minded CS-M40R, also metal-capable with Quick Reverse — write AKAI, P.O. Box 6010, Compton, California 90224.

\*™Dolby Labs, Inc.



Four-position tape selector.



The GX-F60R, our new Auto-Reverse, Quick-Reverse expert.



The magic of quick-reverse.

# AKAI

YOU NEVER HEARD IT SO GOOD

## INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (IHF loading, A-weighting)

	sensitivity	S/N ratio
phono MM	0.18 mV	78 dB
phono MC-1	0.18 mV	≤ 82 dB*
phono MC-2	6.3 μV	81 1/4 dB
aux	24 mV	86 1/2 dB

## PHONO OVERLOAD (clipping at 1 kHz)

MM and MC-1	150 mV
MC-2	5.2 mV

## PHONO IMPEDANCE

MM	45k ohms, 120 pF
MC-1	275 ohms
MC-2	17 ohms

HIGH FILTER -3 dB at 9 or 15 kHz;  
6 dB per octave

INFRASONIC FILTER -3 dB at 20 or 36 Hz;  
6 dB per octave

DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz) 104

\*See text

The LOW BOOST is Lux's unique answer to the loudness-contour question. Again, the action is subtle relative to that of typical home equipment (which we sometimes find capable of rather gaudy sonic effects). Only the deep bass is boosted, consistent with current findings in loudness-perception experiments, and only by a limited amount. (Curiously, Lux claims a maximum of 4 dB, though DSL consistently measured a maximum of 6 1/2 dB; also, the lab found no significant change in the degree of compensation over a range of ± 10 dB in volume-control settings relative to the "standard" setting, based on the IHF measurement specs.) Note that, again, there are choices of knee frequency; which is preferable will depend on both your speakers' deep-bass response and your taste.

There are two phono inputs. One will accommodate moving-coil pickups only and is documented in the MC-2 listings in the data; the other can be switched for either MC-1 or MM (standing for moving-magnet, though we'd prefer to say fixed-coil, allowing for variable-reluctance pickups and such). As you can see, the data for MC-1 and MC-2 are distinctly different. Actually, only MC-2 has a head amp; MC-1 is intended for moving-coil pickups whose sensitivity is in the "MM" range, and the MM/MC switch simply alters the loading accordingly. In showing S/N ratio, we assumed the same 5-millivolt reference level for MC-1 as for a fixed-coil pickup. Actual sensitivities of even the high-output moving-coil models being somewhat lower, a 2-millivolt reference might have been somewhat more realistic; it would result in a S/N figure of 76 1/2 dB, instead of 82 dB with the 5-millivolt preference, but either represents an excellent degree of quiet.

All the noise and distortion data are excellent. Designs with massive negative feedback in the power amplifier regularly achieve lower steady-state distortion figures (often below the 0.01% that we believe to be comfortably under the minimum at which such distortion figures start to have meaning), but on no ground can these figures be faulted. And it probably is significant that the lab had difficulty finding any high-frequency intermodulation distortion at all, though on the basis of our experience with conventional high-feedback designs, we'd expect the percentages to approximate the maximum harmonic-distortion figures. The harmonic figures themselves must be qualified by the fact that they represent almost exclusively the second harmonic, without the odd harmonics (particularly the third) that often appear on the spectrum analyzer and portend more rasp per percentage point.

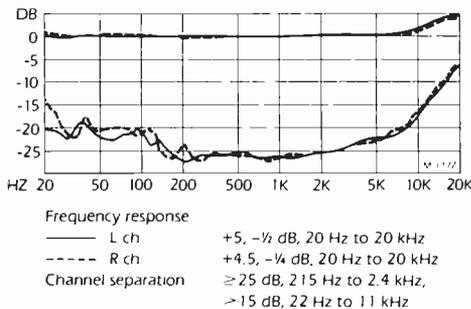
All in all, we consider the sonics exceptionally attractive. As long as the amplifier receives a really fine input signal, the reproduction is clean and clear without being cold or analytical; when some modest alteration at the various controls is in order, those controls are virtually all-encompassing. The L-580's very avoidance of extremes seems a point of breeding, and its breeding does tell. Obviously, we were impressed.

Circle 136 on Reader-Service Card

## A Moving Coil for the Masses

### Satin M-117Z phono pickup

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



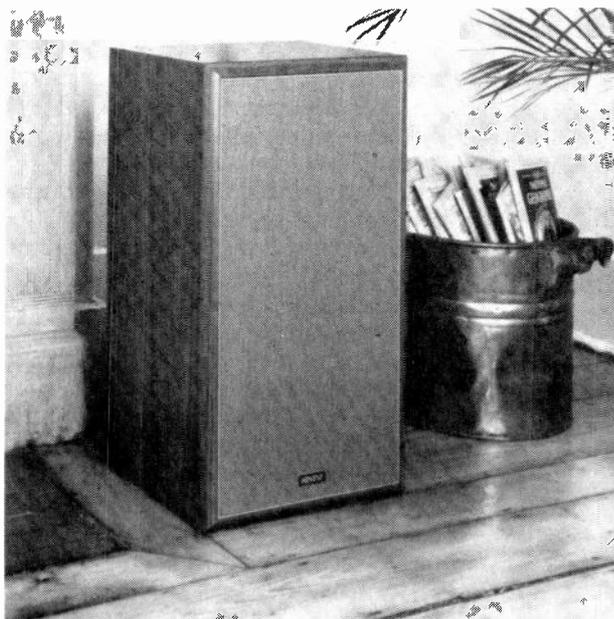
**Satin M-117Z moving-coil phono pickup, with spherical diamond stylus. Price: \$100; replacement stylus, \$80. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor, excluding stylus wear. Manufacturer: Satin Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Osawa & Co. (U.S.A.), Inc., 521 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.**

Lately, a number of moving-coil pickups have succeeded in avoiding the many drawbacks associated with their ilk, and the Satin M-117Z is a prime example. It costs no more than many fixed-coil models and considerably less than some; it requires no head amp or transformer, delivering comfortable levels through conventional phono input stages; and its stylus is user-replaceable. In order to maintain adequate electrical output, Osawa employs a coil made up of many turns of extremely thin aluminum ribbon. The company claims that, since the shape of the resulting coil is flat, the coil/cantilever assembly slides easily into the magnetic gap, permitting user replacement. One traditional drawback still remains, however: At almost 9 grams, the M-117Z is considerably more massive than typical fixed-coil designs, which average about 5 grams.

According to data from CBS Technology Center, the Satin's output is plenty high for use with regular (fixed-coil) phono inputs. In real-world use, however, you'll find yourself cranking the volume control somewhat higher than you would with a typical fixed-coil pickup. In a system with a noisy phono stage or marginal gain, that could be a problem. The recommended tracking force range of 1.0 to 2.2 grams is respectable, if not breathtakingly low. More to the point, the

# The Advent 5002.

If you would like the best in loudspeakers  
but doubt you can afford them,  
please read this ad.



The loudspeaker shown—the new Advent 5002—is intended to be compared in audible performance, including frequency bandwidth, with the most elaborate and expensive speakers available. We realize that this statement may be difficult to accept, but it is true and can be verified by listening.

This new speaker from Advent was developed after many years of experience in designing and manufacturing high-performance speaker systems, including some of the most popular models ever sold in the United States. The new Advent 5002 takes full advantage of new design ideas, new materials, and new manufacturing techniques.

Over-engineering (needlessly elaborate designs in imitation of what has existed so far) is a common problem in audio equipment, and one for which the customer often pays heavily. We believe good design is represented by the simplest and most direct approach that realizes a design objective without compromise.

The new Advent 5002 is a two-way system. A single speaker would be a more “ideal” device, but in actual use requires giving up either the frequency range or bandwidth of a no-compromise loudspeaker. Three-way and four-way systems are frequently unnecessarily expensive and elaborate. They are also often inferior-sounding because of interference effects and the abrupt electrical cut-off of drivers in different operating ranges. The two-way design is simple and effective, and the new Advent 5002 system exploits it more thoroughly than have any previous speakers. No more elaborate design offers wider range or more meaningful performance characteristics.

The new Advent 5002 sounds obviously and dramatically better than other speakers in its price range and than many far more expensive speakers.

We will be happy to send you more detailed information on Advent's new speaker systems and the name of the nearest Advent dealer. Please write us at the address below. Thank you.

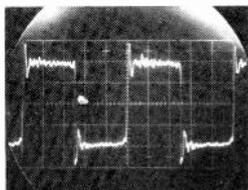
*Advent loudspeakers range in price from \$99.95 to \$209.95 (suggested retail).*

**Advent Corporation**  
195 Albany Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

SENSITIVITY (at 1 kHz)	0.57 mV/cm/sec
CHANNEL BALANCE	± ¼ dB
VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE	25°
LOW-FREQUENCY RESONANCE (in SME 3009)	
vertical	11.5 Hz; 8½ dB rise
lateral	8.0 Hz; 2½ dB rise
MAXIMUM TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1.6 grams)	
at 300 Hz	> +18 dB
at 1 kHz	+6 dB
WEIGHT	8.9 grams

TIP DIMENSIONS	
tip radius	approx. 14 micrometers
scanning radii	12.6 micrometers, both sides

SQUARE-WAVE  
RESPONSE (1 kHz)



cartridge passed the CBS "torture" test at 1.25 grams, and its midrange (300 Hz) tracking ability is excellent, though at 1 kHz it showed the limits imposed by its low-compliance cantilever.

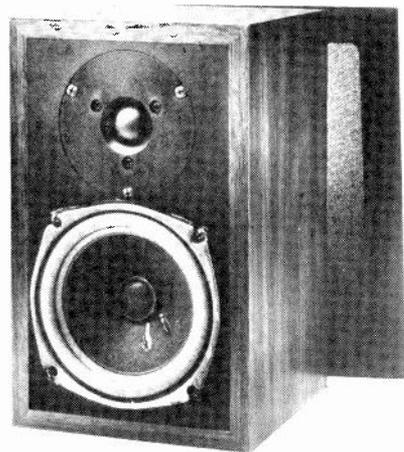
Listening tests called attention to tracking ability in another way. Though the Satin handled bass transients such as the drumbeats in the Holst band suites (Telarc 5038) solidly, the following note often sounded fuzzy unless the vertical tracking force was at least 1½ grams. In the upper portion of the recommended VTF range (where most cartridges perform their best), this problem disappeared. So we would recommend that, if you're one of those audiophiles who still suffer from a prejudice against VTFs in the 2-gram range, you cure yourself before tackling this pickup.

The M-117Z's distortion measures quite low at 1 kHz but rises rather quickly with increasing frequency, and the listening tests confirmed a slight fuzziness on high-frequency material. (The high-frequency harmonic distortion theoretically should be lower in the elliptical-tip Model M-117ZE, \$130.) Low-frequency resonance in CBS's "reference" SME arm proved to be well placed in frequency but not damped. Scope photos show some overshoot on transients, but the high-frequency ringing evident in the square wave is an artifact in the test record introduced by the cutterhead. And finally, microscopic examination of the stylus revealed excellent polish and alignment.

Overall sound balance correlated surprisingly little with the measured frequency response. Where the graph would lead one to expect a fairly neutral cartridge with a distinct high-end emphasis, the actual sound was rather warm, with the bass noticeably emphasized. As a final check, we verified Satin's claim that its stylus is replaceable. Removing and replacing it was not only possible, but easy, though a little extra care was required to make sure the stylus seated firmly. We also noticed that, once removed from the cartridge, the stylus retracts most of the way into its housing, like a turtle drawing into its shell for protection.

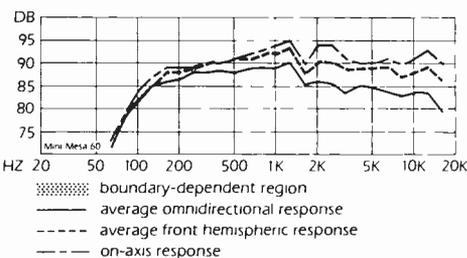
Circle 131 on Reader-Service Card

## Mesa Makes a Mini



Mini-Mesa 60 loudspeaker

ANECHOIC RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS (0 dBW input)



**Mini-Mesa 60 loudspeaker system, in wood cabinet with vinyl finish. Dimensions: 6½ by 10¼ inches, 7 inches deep. Price: \$139. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Mesa Electronics Sales, Ltd., 2940 Malmo Dr., Arlington Heights, Ill. 60005.**

Mesa's latest entry in the popular minispeaker field—the Cinderella of contemporary home audio—is the Model 60. A two-way system consisting of a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter and 5¼-inch woofer/midrange housed in an acoustic suspension enclosure, the Mini-Mesa has much to commend it sonically. Yet, as with other diminutive speakers, the reduction in size involves certain inescapable tradeoffs.

For those who glance first at the lab data, the 60's inability to withstand more than 1 1¼ dBW of continuous power without unacceptable distortion—in this case, buzzing—might seem utterly damning. In fact, this is a remarkably efficient little speaker that simply does not demand large power inputs for loud volume levels. The 101¼-dB sound pressure level produced in the continuous-tone test is probably loud enough to guarantee complaints from neighbors in most apartment dwellings, for which minispeakers, by virtue of their size, seem custom-designed. In pulsed power tests, an additional 9¼ dB of input elicited a proportional increase in output.

The impedance curve drops from 32 ohms at bass resonance (about 125 Hz) to the "nominal" 4.8 ohms at 300 Hz. From there, impedance rises somewhat through the upper midrange and lower treble but stays between 4 and 8 ohms from 2.3 kHz up. Overall, this is fairly typical of the values encountered in today's speakers. With a system as efficient as this, however, you might choose a low-power receiver or amplifier whose output stage may very well balk at the current drain demanded by paralleled pairs. So use single pairs or choose your amp accordingly.

There are no controls on the unit; our listening evaluations were conducted using our preamp's tone controls. In our moderately reflective listening room, we considered its sound smooth and unboxy through the midrange. Higher up, a tendency to a glassy brightness responded well to a bit of cut on the treble control. Not so easy to remedy is the somewhat restricted bass response. We are accustomed to minispeakers that peter out below 100 Hz, but the Model 60 shows some weakness in the midbass as well. Adding a little bass boost helped things considerably, but here one must be wary of overstressing the low-frequency/



## Only Custom-Tailored Sound meets your taping needs.

If tape is the only sound that's right for you, to maximize your taping requirements, an ADC Sound Shaper® Two MK II frequency equalizer is a must.

When they designed the Sound Shaper Two, they had you in mind. Because, aside from being a superb all-around equalizer, it lets you work with tape the way you want. For example, now you have two-way tape-dubbing capability, a feature many receivers don't offer. You can "custom-tailor" a record and then record it the way you would have engineered it. And that includes your golden oldies because, with the Sound Shaper Two, you can virtually eliminate the surface noise which has accumulated

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The entire ADC Sound Shaper line is impressive. The basic Sound Shaper One is a great introduction to frequency equalizers. And the top-of-the-line Sound Shaper Three, the *Paragraphic™* equalizer, combines the ease and control of a graphic equalizer with the precision and versatility of a parametric. And, all Sound Shaper equalizers, except the Sound Shaper One, feature LED-lit slide controls, allowing for visual plotting of the equalization curve.

With the Sound Shaper Two MK II, you can appreciate the difference custom-tailored sound makes — over and over again.

## Custom-Tailored Sound



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A BSR COMPANY

BSR (USA) Ltd., Blauvelt, NY 10913  
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AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL RESPONSE  
(250 Hz to 6 kHz)  
87 dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)  
101¼ dB SPL for 11¼ dBW (13.3 watts) input

PULSED OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)  
110½ dB SPL for 20½ dBW (110 watts) peak

"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE 4.8 ohms

midrange driver. A built-in circuit breaker protects the drivers from potentially damaging signal levels, but audible buzzing occurs well before the protection trips.

At the 0-dBW level, distortion generally is less than ½% in the midrange and treble as measured in the CBS Technology Center anechoic chamber. At the loud (100-dB) testing level, third harmonics are well controlled, averaging out to well below 1% above 200 Hz; second harmonics average about 1% in this range. In all the measurements, distortion rises precipitously at and below bass resonance, of course. Scope photos depicting quasitransient waveform reproduction show excellent handling of 300-Hz pulses and just a slight trace of overshoot at 3 kHz.

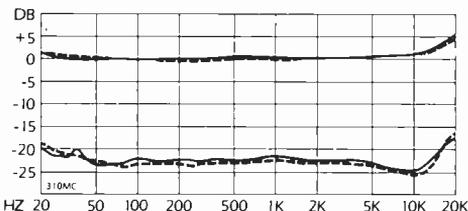
A speaker as small and efficient as the 60 provides certain obvious benefits: As part of a budget system, it can offer high-quality sound over a broad frequency range (although with marked weakness in its lowest register) without requiring amplifier power that would drive the price of the electronics back up. And judging from the success of minis—alone or in conjunction with add-on subwoofers—there are many listeners who find the genus a satisfying solution to the problem of getting good sound in a small space. The Mini-Mesa has the additional virtues of being well constructed, handsomely finished, and economically priced.

Circle 133 on Reader-Service Card

## Sidekick to a Straight-Liner

Technics 310MC cartridge (for SL-10 turntable)

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



Frequency response  
— L ch +6, -0 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz  
- - - R ch +5, -¼ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz  
Channel separation  
≥ 21 dB, 40 Hz to 15 kHz,  
> 16 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

SENSITIVITY (at 1 kHz)  
head amp bypassed, 30-ohm load 0.05 mV/cm/sec  
with SL-10 head amp, 47k-ohm load 1.1 mV/cm/sec

CHANNEL BALANCE (at 1 kHz) ± <¼ dB

VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE 23°

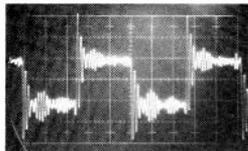
LOW-FREQUENCY RESONANCE (in Technics SL-10)  
vertical 13 Hz; 6½-dB rise  
lateral 11 Hz; 5½-dB rise

MAXIMUM TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1.25 grams)  
at 300 Hz > +18 dB  
at 1 kHz +15 dB

WEIGHT 6.0 grams

TIP DIMENSIONS  
tip radii 5.2 by 13.4 micrometers  
scanning radii 5.2 micrometers

SQUARE-WAVE RESPONSE (1 kHz)  
(see text)



Except as specified, all data measured through the head amp built into the Technics SL-10 turntable.

**Technics 310MC moving-coil cartridge with elliptical diamond stylus, supplied with Technics SL-10 turntable ensemble. Price: Included in SL-10; replacement (EPS-310MC), \$105. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor, excluding stylus. Manufacturer: Matsushita Electric Co., Japan; U.S. distributor: Panasonic Co., Div. of Matsushita Corp. of America, 1 Panasonicon Way, Secaucus, N.J. 07094.**

Last May, when we reported on the SL-10 tangential-tracking turntable, we expected that it would be made available without a premounted pickup. We (and Technics) still expect that to happen, but it hasn't happened yet and evidently won't happen soon. And since the SL-10 comes equipped with the 310MC moving-coil pickup (an alternative Ortofon fixed-coil model is available only as a replacement for the 310), our report was essentially incomplete without data on the pickup too.

The turntable includes a built-in head amp to accommodate this cartridge. The output can be plugged directly into the conventional (fixed-magnet) phono input of your stereo system, or the head amp can be bypassed (via a switch in the turntable) and the cartridge output fed to the head amp in your system, if it has one. (The Ortofon, of course, requires no head amp.) Since Technics here had the opportunity to achieve optimum match between its head amp and the cartridge, we would expect most users to choose the one in the turntable. We generally used it for listening, and CBS Technology Center adopted it (except as noted) as the "normal" bench-test mode. The sensitivity figure demonstrates, however, that output falls near the center of the wide range found among moving-coil models and, therefore, that you should not expect wayward levels if you choose to use your own head amp.

We liked the pickup when we were auditioning the turntable through it, and although it, like many other moving-coil models, displayed a certain hardness that some listeners admire as "extra etching," listening left us unprepared for the lab's square-wave response photos. They appear to contain horrendous ultrasonic ringing. Two mechanisms are at work here: ringing inherent to the Westrex cutterhead with which the square-wave test disc was cut, and a response peak of more than 10 dB near 35 kHz, which grossly exaggerates the ringing already present in the test signal. Music records—even if they're mastered with a similar cutterhead—don't have to cope with square waves, whose harmonic content reaches far beyond the audio band, and therefore won't "dump" significant energy into the range of the pickup's resonance peak. That's why we heard nothing comparably untoward in our listening tests, though the lower "skirt" of the resonance, beginning at about 10 kHz, may contribute to what we have called the cartridge's slightly hard coloration.

Even when this coloration is acknowledged (and, again, it is a property common among moving-coil designs and one that many listeners evidently count a virtue), we find the sound of the 310MC admirably clean and well focused. And this should certainly not deter you from buying the SL-10, unless you demand the specific qualities of a different pickup.

Circle 135 on Reader-Service Card

"...an outstanding product on any absolute scale of measurement without regard to price." -STEREO REVIEW



Read more of what Stereo Review magazine had to say about the Yamaha CR-840 receiver:

"The harmonic distortion of the CR-840 was so low that without the most advanced test instruments it would have been impossible to measure it."

When speaking of the OTS [Optimum Tuning System], an easy-to-use Yamaha feature that automatically locks in the exact center of the tuned channel—for the lowest possible distortion, Stereo Review said, "The muting and OTS systems operated flawlessly."

Among Yamaha's most significant features is the continuously variable loudness control. By using this control, the frequency balance and volume are adjusted simultaneously to compensate for the ear's insensitivity to high and low frequency sound at low volume settings. Thus, you can retain a natural-sounding balance regardless of listening level. As Stereo Review states, "...another uncommon Yamaha feature."

And there's more. Like the REC OUT/INPUT SELECT feature. These separate controls allow you to record from one program source while listening to another program source. All without disturbing the recording process. Stereo Review's comment was, "...the tape-recording functions of the CR-840 are virtually independent of its receiving functions." One could not ask for greater flexibility.

In summing up their reaction to the CR-840, Stereo Review said, "Suffice it to say that they [Yamaha] make it possible for a

moderate-price receiver to provide performance that would have been unimaginable only a short time ago."

And the CR-840 is only one example in Yamaha's fine line of receivers. For instance, High Fidelity magazine's comment about the Yamaha CR-640 receiver: "From what we've seen, the Yamaha CR-640 is unique in its price range."

And Audio magazine has remarks on the Yamaha CR-2040 receiver: "Without a doubt, the Yamaha CR-2040 is the most intelligently engineered receiver that the company has yet produced, and that's no small feat, since Yamaha products have, over the last few years, shown a degree of sophistication, human engineering, and audio engineering expertise which has set them apart from run-of-the-mill receivers."

Now that you've listened to what the three leading audio magazines had to say about Yamaha receivers, why not listen for yourself? Your Yamaha Audio Specialty Dealer is listed in the Yellow Pages.



To obtain the complete test report on each of these receivers, write: Yamaha International Corp., Audio Division, P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, CA 90622.

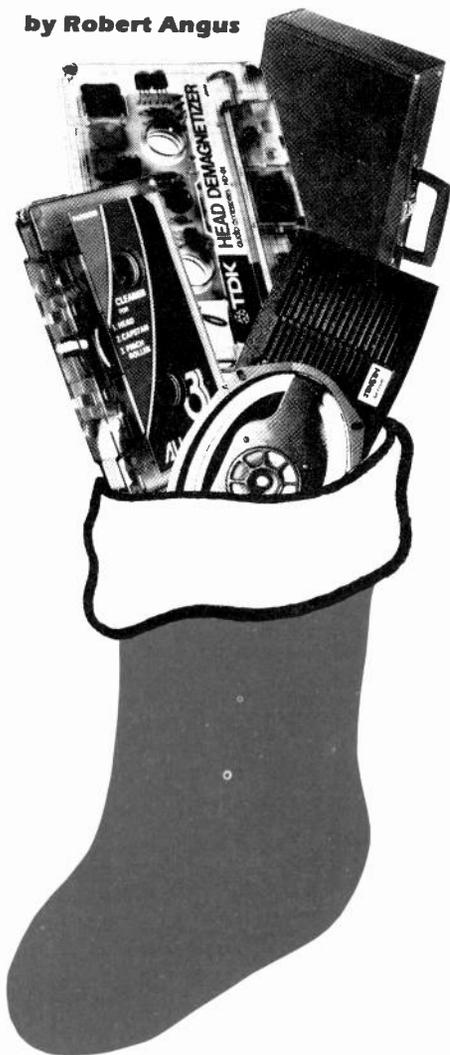
Quotes excerpted from June 1979 issues of Stereo Review, High Fidelity and Audio magazines. All rights reserved.



## AUTOPHILE

# Stocking Stuffers

by Robert Angus



If there's an autophile on your Christmas shopping list (or if you fit that description yourself), you'll be delighted to know that there are a number of goodies available that won't wreck your gift-giving budget. Though we regularly report on some fairly expensive car stereo gear, this month's choices could tempt even old Scrooge into joining the holiday mood.

My friend Joe Dash claims that the best gift, and the cheapest, is a really good recorded cassette. Now it's true that Joe's opinion is not that of a disinterested observer; he's the man in charge of Columbia's Mastersound "Super-fi" disc and cassette project. Nonetheless, he has two winners up his sleeve—the Beethoven "Eroica" with Zubin Mehta conducting the New York

Philharmonic (CBS Mastersound HMT 43409) and Simon & Garfunkel's classic "Bridge over Troubled Waters" (HCT 49914), both recorded on chrome tape from digital or carefully reprocessed masters, and each priced at \$15.

If you've ever tried to clean the heads on your car stereo unit, even with the aid of long-stemmed cotton swabs, you know that the chore can be a real pain—particularly if you manage, as I do, to bump your head on the steering wheel or get a cramp in your back from the contortions it takes to see what you're doing. This Christmas, there's a perfect solution: the Allsop 3 head/capstan/pinch-roller cleaner for \$7.00. It consists of a cassette shell containing a felt pad for cleaning the head and a separate wool pad to clean the capstan and pinch roller, plus an isopropyl alcohol solution. You put a few drops of the liquid on each pad, insert the cassette, and play for 20 to 40 seconds. The beauty of this cleaner is twofold: It's not abrasive, and when you remove the cassette, you can actually see the dirt it has removed.

While car stereo decks don't need demagnetizing as often as they need cleaning, they should get the treatment every six months or so. TDK's demagnetizer-in-a-cassette not only does the job easily and efficiently, but looks like a miniature work of nonobjective art. Its transistors, capacitors, and resistors are clearly visible through the transparent plastic shell. It sells for about \$25.

While the CB ripoff problem has abated in recent years, owners of good car stereo gear still face the possibility that sometime, somewhere, somebody may try to remove their equipment, incidentally doing damage to the car. Radio Shack offers two warning systems, one designed to ward off intruders, the other to enable police to catch them in the act. The former is an electronic whooper with an alarm loud enough to wake the dead. Priced at \$40, it comes with voltage sensor and extra lead for a car stereo system. There's a five-minute automatic shutoff and reset, with lock switches for the trunk and hood. The \$99.50 Mobile Alert is a silent alarm system that transmits a signal to a pocket receiver over a range of up to half a mile. The tiny transmitter mounts under the dash and uses your existing radio antenna. Electronic sensors on the door posts or car frame detect tampering and activate the device.

It's axiomatic that thieves usually won't steal what they can't see. At least that's the theory behind Burbank Enterprises' Audio Safe, a metal box that locks

on over the head unit in your car stereo system and sells for under \$50. Audio Safe comprises two parts: a plate that mounts behind the faceplate of your receiver/cassette unit and a hood that locks over it when you park your car, covering the shafts and faceplate.

It's no fun driving with tapes cluttering the interior of your vehicle. A carrying case not only keeps them stored compactly and neatly, but helps to protect them as well. Cases come in all shapes and sizes and in a wide range of prices. A good choice might be Le-Bo Products' TA-224, a brown heavy-duty vinyl model with twenty-four cassette capacity and priced at \$9.00. Its riveted construction with bound edges means that it'll stand up under heavy road use.

An even niftier idea might be the Eazon tape belt (about \$20) manufactured by HJL Creative Designs of Syosset, New York. Each belt consists of five soft plastic pouches, each capable of holding two cassettes in Norelco boxes. You can glue the pouches almost anywhere in your car or use the Velcro patches supplied by the manufacturer so you can detach and refasten them at your convenience. A good spot is the front seat base, where they're both out of the way and readily accessible.

There's no end to the process of upgrading stereo speakers in the home, and the same holds true for the car. If you know somebody whose system utilizes basic 6½-inch door-mount speakers, you might want to consider a pair of Jensen J-1201 Coax II speakers as replacements. They fit the same cutouts and cost \$100 a pair. Or for somebody who already has a pair of Coax IIs or other full-range speakers but would like a bit more brightness or high-frequency response, how about a pair of Jensen J-1044 tweeter/midrange modules? The price is \$75, and each system contains a midrange reproducer, tweeter, and control unit. The modules can be mounted, as is, almost anywhere in most cars, or the separate elements may be dash-mounted in certain GM and other models.

And finally, for the autophile frustrated because he can't fit his favorite speakers in the cutouts in his car, there's the Hole Solution (under \$20): a ring adapter for mounting heavy-duty car speakers with oversized magnets in locations where they normally won't fit. Designed to accommodate round models, 5¼ to 6½ inches across, an inch away from the mounting surface, it adapts to both three-screw and four-screw speaker mounts. **HF**

# The new FISHER



## The micro processor controlled turntable that automatically selects and plays the tracks you want to hear.

Push the wireless remote control button and select track 1, track 3, track 6 or any other. The micro processor automatically moves the arm to play the selected track. You can repeat the same track, select another or play the entire record over again all by wireless remote control. And there's an LED readout to indicate the track being played.



Since you can select the music you want to record, making tapes from



your record collection becomes easier and more convenient than ever before.

The MT6360 Linear Drive turntable is not only great for really enjoying the music you like, but it's a sophisticated audio component with some extraordinary design features.

**Fisher's exclusive Linear Drive.** With Linear Drive, the only moving part is the platter itself. So, there's virtually nothing to go wrong. And, no inherent turntable noise. (For you audiophiles, wow and flutter is just 0.035% and rumble is a low -70dB).

**There's a lot more.** There's a servo circuit that continuously monitors and locks in record speed.

Plus a strobe light and fine speed control so you can monitor the accuracy of speed and alter pitch.

The MT6360 has a viscous-damped "floating" tonearm with a specially designed integral stereo magnetic cartridge. And there's even a muting circuit to eliminate that annoying "pop" you hear when the tonearm touches down.

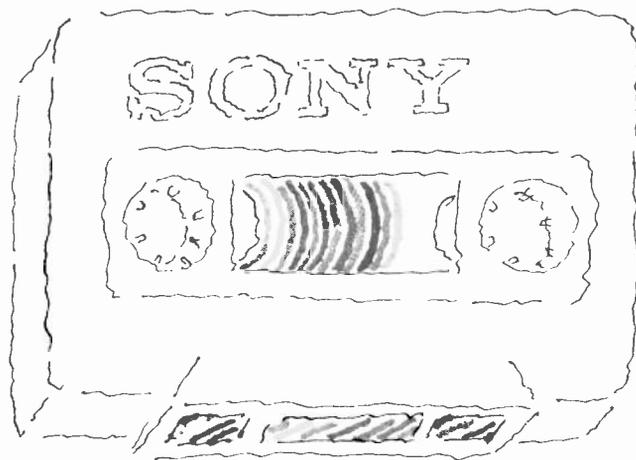
**It's what you'd expect from the new Fisher.** We invented high fidelity over 40 years ago. And never stopped innovating. So check out the new MT6360 at your Fisher dealer. One demonstration of the automatic track selector will change, forever, the way you listen to records.

Fisher Corporation, 21314 Lassen Street, Chatsworth, CA 91311

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# Inside Full Color Sound.



There's more to Full Color Sound than meets the ear.

There is a story of experience and technical achievement that no other tape manufacturer can tell. Fact: Sony produces both high fidelity audio and video tape and the high quality equipment that plays it. In fact, Sony pioneered magnetic tape recording, and has been producing tape and tape equipment for over 30 years.

Because of this vast and unique experience, we believe Sony knows more about producing high quality recording tape than anyone else. Sony know-how goes beyond exclusive magnetic particles and binders, or our exceptionally smooth SP transport system, or superb MOL and frequency response.

What Sony does in its own unique way has to do with *balance*. The fine-tuning of all the elements that go into making a tape, so that each complements the other, and together—in balance—deliver the finest recording that is humanly and technically possible to achieve.

It is this balance that is the secret of Full Color Sound. It isn't really difficult to make one particular element extraordinarily superb. So when some tapes boast about a particular feature,

we are not impressed. And neither should you be.

The true test of a tape is to balance these superb elements, some of which actually work against each other. For example, high sensitivity (so vital for MOL and S/N ratio) can produce print-through. Another example: increasing the volume of magnetic particles on the tape improves sensitivity. However, this would decrease tape durability.

Some of the factors that we consider important to tape performance are: MOL, frequency response, S/N ratio, sensitivity, uniformity of output level, print-through, erasability, and such physical attributes as runability, shedding, head wear, resistance to temperature and humidity.

This is where the genius of Sony comes in. To take all these elements and balance them so they work with, instead of against each other.

*Balance*. It's why Sony audiotapes are so superb. The fact is, the more expensive your audio equipment, the more you'll appreciate Full Color Sound. Listen to Sony SHF (normal bias), EHF (high bias), FeCr or Metallic tape yourself. Listen to the balance. It's the secret of Full Color Sound.

**SONY.**

# VIDEO TODAY

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Will a multi-million-dollar media blitz guarantee success for video disc players? Page A2



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## A Matter of Tempered Excitement

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Your own tearout checklist of ten troubleshooting tips to keep your VCR in working order. Page A13

**W**hat does it take to be a "factor"? To borrow a concept from science, something must exist in a certain quantity or have a certain amount of support before it is recognizable; it must pass a threshold of some type. With candidate John Anderson, the threshold was 15% in the presidential preference polls. Only then did the League of Women Voters judge him a factor of enough significance to include him in the presidential debates. With quadriphonic (four-channel) sound, the threshold may have been lower. We'll never know, because four-channel sound never became a factor in audio, in spite of the massive marketing efforts behind the three basic systems — SQ, QS, and CD-4 — all of which were essentially incompatible with one another.

Maybe there's something to be learned here about video discs. As we've noted before, the three major formats being sold, or scheduled to be sold, in the U.S. are mutually incompatible. A disc purchased for one system can't be played on one of the other two. Yet backers of all three are plunging ahead to establish their system as *the* system. By this time next year, the hot air should be separated from the cold facts.

Within ninety days of the time you read this, RCA has pledged to have the first of its SelectaVision players available at a target price of \$500. The Philips/MCA players (under the Pioneer and Magnavox brands) will be sold in an increasing number of cities. Advent — a well-known name in audio — has announced plans to offer an optical-laser system by March. The Korean-based Gold Star brand, which currently sells black-and-white TVs here, also has plans to market a player of Philips/MCA design during 1981. And JVC's VHD system is slated for introduction before the end of next year. JVC is working on a proposal to join General Electric, Thorn EMI, Ltd., of England, and its Japanese corporate partner Matsushita Electric in promoting the VHD format.

The list of companies promising software for the various systems is extensive and, at this point, is ex-

panding almost daily. Suffice it to say that only the VHD format would seem to be weak in that area now.

**Which brings us** back to square one. What if all the promises come true? Experience shows that the mere existence of the products will not guarantee success. Enter the Joneses Factor.

The Joneses become a factor when that unknown threshold is passed and (certainly you've guessed it by now) the Smiths buy a video disc player because the Joneses have one. There's a lot of guessing and predicting on what the magic figure might be. One number that comes up often is 10% (of the 80 million U.S. households, or 8 million players).

Even the most ambitious marketing plans of the various video disc player manufacturers would suggest

that reaching a 10% penetration point will not occur during the next twelve months. And you might wonder how a manufacturer could sell millions of players when prospective purchasers don't know how many of the three formats will be around next year.

The main thrust is geared to quantity and diversity of programming. Undoubtedly you've read in the popular press many of the almost constant announcements of purchases of major films for one of the disc systems. But as we ask elsewhere in this issue, how many times will you want to watch a particular movie? The special strength of video discs is the capability to store vast amounts of material in a readily accessible format. And it is somehow easier to visualize people reusing 100 times a video disc that contains an entire encyclopedia or 50,000 recipes than it is to imagine them regularly re-viewing a movie. On the other hand, a video disc of *Jaws* could be a top seller, while one of an encyclopedia might sell relatively few copies. So this is the double dilemma that the manufacturers face: How to capitalize on the disc's main advantage over the video tape format, while offering software that can be produced at a profit. That's where you, the Joneses, will be the ultimate factor.

## The Joneses Factor



\* With 80 million U.S. households, this means 8 million players.

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The grand finale of this stunning 90 minute show features the four premiere danseurs together in the 1845 masterpiece, *Pas de Quatre*.

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# How They Work & Differ

**By this time next year these questions should be answered: whether RCA's SelectaVision is seriously challenging the Philips/MCA design for market dominance and whether JVC's system has made it to market. Perhaps some clue will have emerged as to which of the three video disc formats will eventually prevail. One thing we can look at now is the way each system operates. ■ The Philips/MCA laser system is the only one of the three actually being sold. Perhaps the attendant publicity is the reason why many people think all video discs employ a laser in playback. In fact, Philips/MCA's is the only one to do so.**

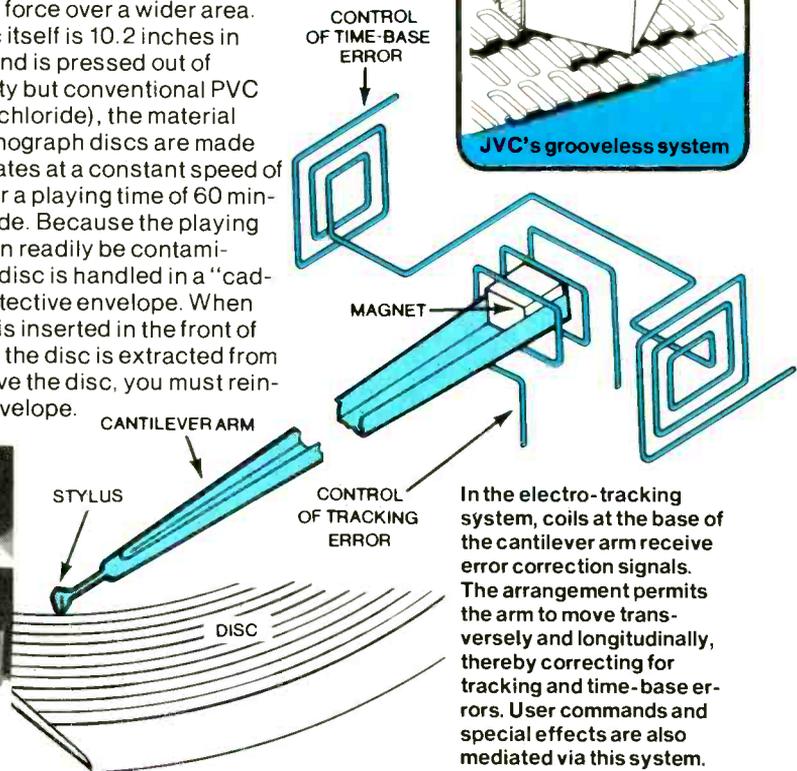
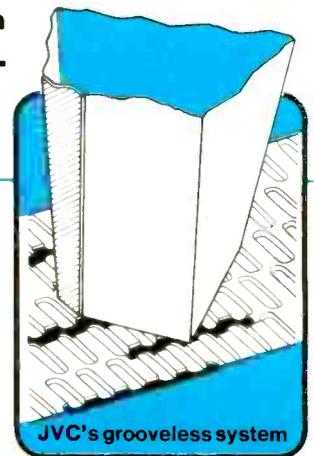
by the Editors

## JVC VHD SYSTEM

JVC's VHD system uses pits recorded by laser. These are played back by a capacitance-sensing stylus that glides over the recorded surface. The stylus is guided not by grooves, but rather by rows of even smaller pits on each side of the program track that carry track-placement signals. In effect, recorded signals tell the stylus-control system where groove walls would be if they existed. The stylus itself is several times wider than the track it's following, but the electrode that senses variations in capacitance forms only a narrow strip on the stylus' trailing edge. This broad surface reduces

record wear by spreading the stylus' downward force over a wider area.

The disc itself is 10.2 inches in diameter and is pressed out of high-quality but conventional PVC (polyvinyl chloride), the material audio phonograph discs are made from. It rotates at a constant speed of 900 rpm for a playing time of 60 minutes per side. Because the playing surface can readily be contaminated, the disc is handled in a "caddy," or protective envelope. When the caddy is inserted in the front of the player, the disc is extracted from it. To remove the disc, you must reinsert the envelope.



In the electro-tracking system, coils at the base of the cantilever arm receive error correction signals. The arrangement permits the arm to move transversely and longitudinally, thereby correcting for tracking and time-base errors. User commands and special effects are also mediated via this system.

## PHILIPS/MCA LASER SYSTEM

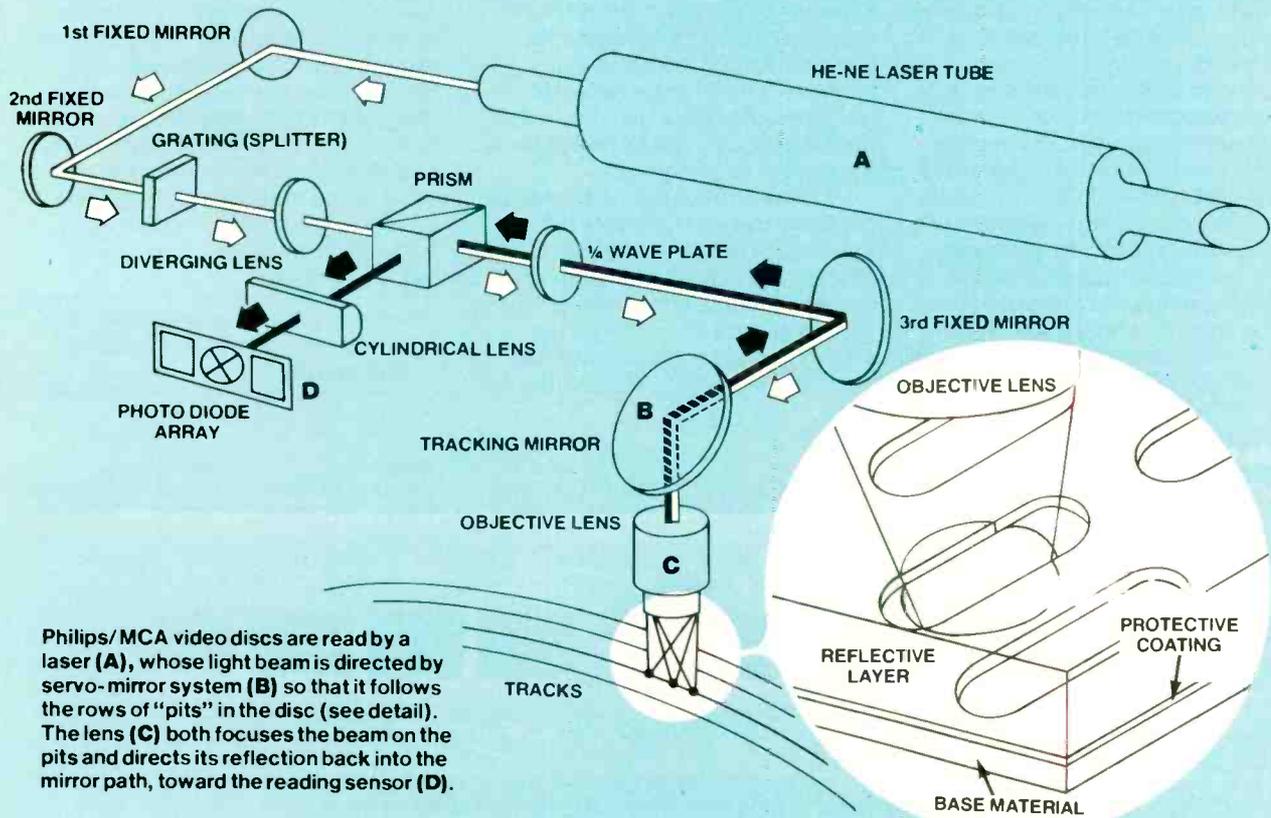
In this system, the recorded information exists in the form of microscopic pits on the surface of a silvered disc. This method of encoding allows up to 54,000 frames (separate pictures) to be stored on one side of the 12-inch disc. The silvered layer is encapsulated in a layer of transparent plastic for protection. As a result, the pits can't be scratched or clogged with dust. And only deep scratches on the clear layer will cause any problems, since the optical system that scans the laser light reflected from the silvered surface is focused on that inner layer; blemishes on the outer layer are sufficiently out of focus to be virtually unseen by the scanning system. The disadvantage of this type of disc encapsulation is that it requires bonding together two three-layer discs to make a single double-sided disc for playback.

While the optical system reads the information on the spiral track, it also reads its own position relative to that track. Feedback servos use this information to guide the laser to follow the track's spiral (either inward or outward, depending on the function you've chosen). Since the scanner

is not guided by physical grooves, there are no grooves to jump; a given track, therefore, can be repeated indefinitely without damaging the disc. On normal-play (30 minutes per side) discs, this permits still-framing, since each revolution of the disc represents one frame.

But a record's circumference is greater at its outer grooves than at its inner ones. A constant speed that's fast enough to spread enough information out along the inner groove for

easy reading will waste space at the outer groove by spreading it much farther than necessary. So Philips/MCA extended-play discs turn more slowly when playing the outer grooves (600 rpm) than when playing the inner ones (1,800 rpm). The discs are played from the inside groove out, gradually decelerating along the way. This method doubles the amount of material that can be recorded on a disc but eliminates the capability for still-framing.



### RCA SELECTAVISION

The RCA system also works by sensing capacitance variations as an electrode passes over microscopic pits in the disc surface. But these pits are in a physically bounded groove, which simplifies player construction but also obviates still-framing. Unlike a record groove, whose twists and turns carry the recorded information, RCA's groove is smooth spiral that merely guides the stylus. SelectaVision employs a 12-inch disc, and like JVC's, it is stored in a protective plastic sleeve when not inside the playback machine. The disc rotates at a constant speed of 450 rpm, making 27,000 revolutions during the one hour (per side) of playing time.

**A plastic envelope protects the SelectaVision disc when it is outside the player. Disc is inserted in the front of the player; the empty envelope is then withdrawn.**



### SPECIAL FEATURES

In terms of special features, the grooveless systems would seem to have an edge. For example, one of the Philips/MCA machines currently available (Pioneer's Laser Disc VP-1000) offers a three-times-normal fast speed, freeze-frame, variable slow motion, and an ability to advance or go backward one frame at a time. A random-access feature can locate any frame within 15 seconds after its number has been punched in on the keyboard. With the 30-minute (standard) discs, the number of each frame can be shown on the screen when desired; with the 60-minute (extended-play) discs, elapsed time can be shown instead. Prototypes of JVC's VHD system indicate that it will have similar features. And, both the

Philips/MCA and the JVC designs have the capability for stereo sound.

JVC's VHD machine differs from Pioneer and Magnavox's players (the two Philips/MCA-design models currently available) in that it will be sold as a basic unit with optional add-ons. As planned now, you will have to purchase a separate random-access device, if you want that feature. JVC has done this to cut the price of its basic model.

Unless there is a dramatic change between now and February (when the initial SelectaVision players are scheduled to be available), this format will offer neither stereo capability nor still-framing. The disc's physically incised grooves could be damaged by the stylus'

looping back to the beginning of the repeated groove. Perhaps aware of this marketing disadvantage, RCA has recently announced that SelectaVision will have forward and reverse visual search plus rapid access to individual time segments (not frames), using a digital time indicator. And it will share with the other designs one advantage that is inherent in the disc format: fast cueing from one end of the recording to the other, since the scanning head (like a tonearm) has only to move a few inches from the outermost to the innermost grooves.

Next month we'll take a closer look at the two main video tape systems — VHS and Beta.

### Video Disc Systems Compared

	Price	Disc & Stylus Wear	Stereo Sound	2-Hour Playback	Freeze Frame	Auto Frame Stop	Multiple Speeds	Random Frame Access	Software Variety
<b>PHILIPS/MCA LASER SYSTEM</b>	-	+	+	+	+1	+1	+	+	+
<b>RCA SELECTAVISION</b>	+	-	3	+	-	-	-	-	+
<b>JVC VHD/AHD</b>	+	-	+	+	+2	+2	+	+2	+

+ = Advantage      1: Currently available only with one-hour discs      3: Promised on later models  
 - = Disadvantage      2: Optional

Laser Disc and Magnavision Video Disc Players:

# A Matter of Tempered Excitement

by Peter Dobbin

When I was a kid, anyone who owned a color television had panache. There was some style and not a little ostentation in spending hundreds of dollars for a TV set capable of doing justice to the handful of weekly broadcasts in "living color." Faces often had a greenish cast, and bright orange sunsets took on a purple glow, but *Bonanza* in color was a special treat, indeed.

Oddly enough, it was color again that was the center of attention when I demonstrated the Magnavox and Pioneer video disc systems for my friends. Not the color on the screen, mind you — good though it was — but the dazzling prismatic effects the room light created as it refracted from the pattern of digital information etched onto the discs' reflective inner surface. That was beside the point, of course.

"This technology may very well revolutionize television in the '80s," I pointed out. "Those discs are read by a laser in the player, which scans some 54,000 frames on one side of a disc, allowing slow motion, reverse, fast scan, and random access to any frame in less than 15 seconds. Imagine the possibilities!"

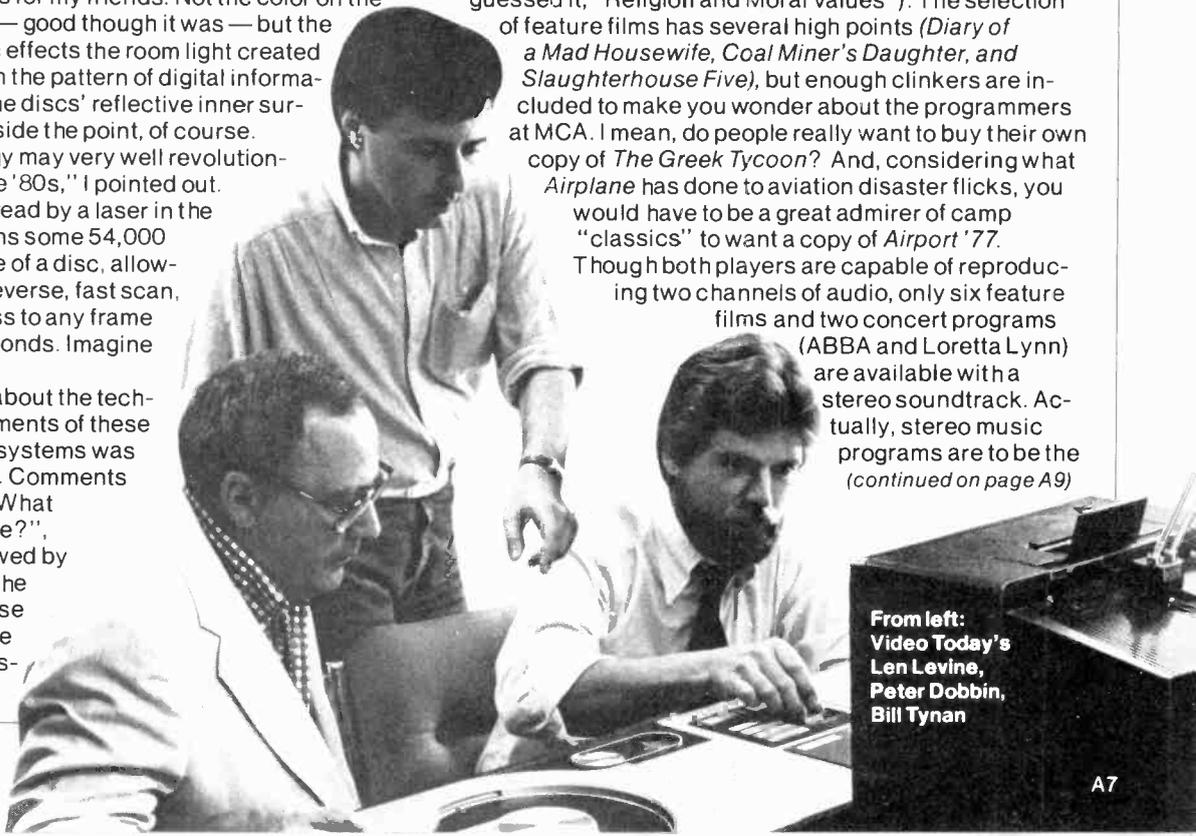
My excitement about the technological achievements of these optical video disc systems was hardly contagious. Comments like, "That's nice. What movies do you have?", were quickly followed by "How do you turn the thing on?" For those of you who have the same kinds of questions, here's a

hands-on look at the Magnavision and Laser Disc systems.

## Q. What movies do you have?

A. At present there are two suppliers of optical video discs, MCA DiscoVision Associates and Pioneer Artists Corporation. DiscoVision's catalog, updated every sixty days, lists about fifty feature films and a potpourri of other programs ranging from *VD: The Hidden Epidemic* (listed under "Educational") to *Who Is God?* (under, you guessed it, "Religion and Moral Values"). The selection of feature films has several high points (*Diary of a Mad Housewife*, *Coal Miner's Daughter*, and *Slaughterhouse Five*), but enough clinkers are included to make you wonder about the programmers at MCA. I mean, do people really want to buy their own copy of *The Greek Tycoon*? And, considering what *Airplane* has done to aviation disaster flicks, you would have to be a great admirer of camp "classics" to want a copy of *Airport '77*. Though both players are capable of reproducing two channels of audio, only six feature films and two concert programs (ABBA and Loretta Lynn) are available with a stereo soundtrack. Actually, stereo music programs are to be the

(continued on page A9)



From left:  
Video Today's  
Len Levine,  
Peter Dobbin,  
Bill Tynan

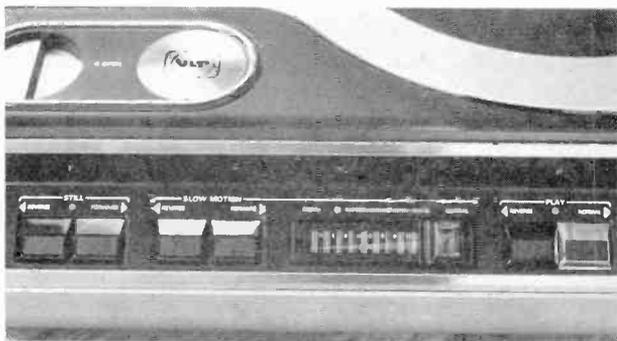


**Magnavision player**

Its chrome and aluminum exterior gives the Magnavision player a cool "futuristic" look, reminiscent of some art deco designs.



Seat the disc over the spindle, close the lid, and it's movie time. A magnetic interlock, however, prevents the lid from being raised again until the disc has stopped rotating.



All of the Magnavision's controls are neatly arrayed in one continuous horizontal row. Pictured above are the still-frame stepping, slow motion, and standard play controls.



A separate signal-splitting box (left) is necessary to accommodate the Magnavision's output as well as normal antenna or cable-TV feeds. High-quality stereo signals are available via left and right channel audio output jacks.

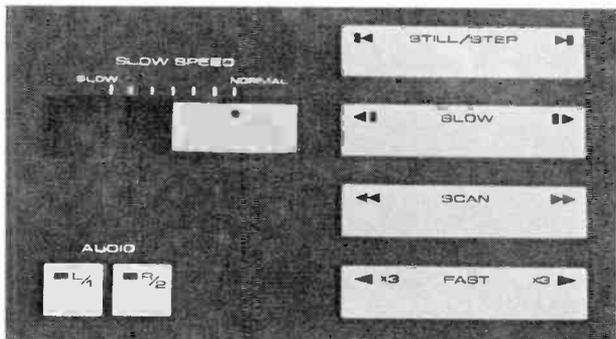


**Pioneer's Laser Disc player**

The VP-1000 has a clean, uncluttered look to its overall design. Bonus for the curious is a top-mounted window that allows a view of the spinning disc.



The laser in both players scans the underside of the disc, and "tracks" in a straight line from the inner to the outer circumference. A protective lens cap must be removed from the laser optic when unpacking the unit.



Controls on the Laser Disc player are grouped on the top plate. Pictured above are still-frame stepping, slow motion, fast scan, and triple-speed controls.



All antenna and cable-TV connections are made directly on the rear of the Laser Disc player, obviating the need for a signal-splitting box. The Laser Disc machine has a PCM adapter output jack for eventual use with a separate digital audio decoder.

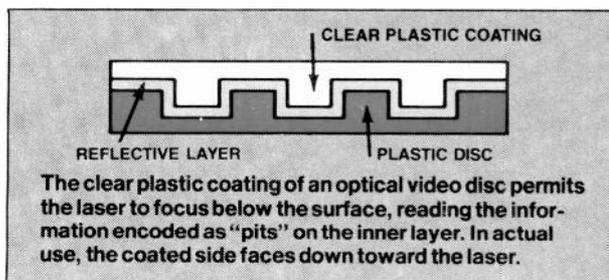
province of Pioneer Artists, whose planned releases have been held up by the actors' union negotiations over payment for video programs.

Prices for the discs range from \$5.95 for *Better Tennis in Thirty Minutes* ("Sports — How to") to \$24.95 for feature films and concerts. What you won't find for any price on MCA video discs is porn, which, ironically, appears to be the staple of prerecorded cassettes.

Each disc can store 30 minutes per side. That means that, for a 90-minute film, you pay for two discs but get only three recorded sides; the fourth is blank. And for those of you used to the long playing times afforded by VCRs, the need to turn a video disc over or to put on a third side every half-hour will seem like a nuisance; those of you who own audio record players should have little problem with this.

Video disc developers have talked about extended play — the technical term is "constant linear velocity," or CLV — capable of 60 minutes per side, but a number of manufacturing problems exist. A spokesperson at DiscoVision Associates informed me that, though laboratory versions of the CLV discs have been successful, large-scale reproduction is still a problem. For that reason, there are none in the MCA catalog. Both players, however, have built-in sensors that will automatically detect a CLV disc and set the speed accordingly.

Optical video disc playback is supposedly immune to degradation from such things as fingerprints and dust on the surface; since the laser in the player focuses on the inner reflective Mylar layer, bits of debris on the clear



plastic coating are invisible to the pickup circuitry. That's true to a degree, but precautions still must be taken. Like audio records, video discs are susceptible to warp and should be stored away from sources of heat. Though fingerprints and dust are largely ignored by the player, cigarette ash, bubblegum, and the like are not.

#### **Q. How do you turn it on?**

**A.** First you set up the system, and that's a cinch with both machines. The Magnavision player has a signal-splitting box, which connects to the antenna inputs on your TV set. Once the box is so attached, you hook up the lead(s) from the antenna or cable-TV feed as well as the cable from the player itself. The Laser Disc player conveniently has the splitter built in, and all you do is connect the standard antenna wires to appropriate posts on the rear of the unit; a single cable carries both normal broadcasts and the video disc output to the TV.

For proper playback, you have to set a channel-designating switch, marked channel 4/channel 3, on the rear of each player. It should be switched to the channel that is not active in your area. The machines also have two AUDIO OUT jacks on the back; since the audio quality of video discs rivals that of standard LPs, you'll want to bypass the tinny-sounding TV speaker, especially if you have a disc with a stereo soundtrack. Connect a cable from those

jacks to the auxiliary, tape, or tuner inputs of your stereo receiver (integrated amp or preamp), and you'll hear TV sound like you never heard before.

All that accomplished, and it's movie time. With the Pioneer player, you must turn the power on before the lid can be opened to allow access to the disc compartment. The lid on both players, however, locks shut once a play cycle has started. (With the disc rotating at 1,800 rpm you can guess what could occur if such interlocks were not included and the cover were opened during play.) With the disc seated over the spindle, you close the lid and touch PLAY to start things moving. But play is not immediate; it takes a few seconds for the disc to come up to full speed. That's really all that basic operation of the players amounts to; where the fun really begins is with the special features.

The two models share the same special effects: fast scanning in forward and reverse (for perusal of an entire side in 30 seconds), three times normal viewing speed in both directions, continuously variable slow motion (from the normal speed of 30 frames per second to 1 every 5 seconds), and still-frame stepping forward and backward. During any fast mode, the audio is automatically muted. For normal movie viewing, such effects are interesting in some instances — freezing the frame that discloses Alfred Hitchcock silhouetted behind a frosted window in *Family Plot*, for example — but most of the time you'll want to watch the film straight through.

Most of these features will operate only on standard-play discs, but since long-running films will probably be issued in the extended-play mode, this fact is of little consequence. The special speeds are most useful with educational or instructional programs; you can analyze a golf swing in slow motion or skip ahead to watch Julia Child drop a chicken on the floor before she pops it into the oven.

#### **Q. Aren't there any drawbacks?**

**A.** Evaluating the Magnavision and Laser Disc machines in light of their obvious qualities is quite simple: They are superb! Picture resolution, sharpness, and color quality are outstanding. The discs, however, are another story: Like audio LPs, some are magnificent pressings, and some noisy and of poor quality. In our own experience, discs of *Jaws 2* and *Family Plot* were displayed with marvelous color and clarity. But the color in *Love Story* had an anemic cast to it, and noise was evident in momentary disruptions of the image. *Smokey and the Bandit* was rendered with good color saturation, but in at least two places the laser jumped from the correct frame to a distant spot, in one instance causing the machines to switch into the still-frame mode. Reports from other users confirm the variability of disc quality.

#### **Q. What do you foresee for the future?**

**A.** A great deal. Both players incorporate something that is utterly astounding and foretells wide-ranging applications. Every video disc is made up of 54,000 continually spiraling tracks. A maximum, therefore, of 54,000 separate frames can be accommodated on one side of a standard-play disc. Encoded on each track is a sequential frame number, and on discs that contain two or more programs per side, a chapter number designates the start of each.

With both machines, frame and chapter numbers appear on the screen at the tap on a button; a second tap (continued on page A15)

# VideoFronts

**Screen brightness** has improved at least threefold with GE's new Widescreen 3000 Home Television Center (\$3,500), according to the company. The rear screen projection system is housed in a cabinet measuring 43 by 54 by 27 inches and includes an improved audio section (with separate woofers and tweeters). The screen measures 45 inches, diagonally; the picture is produced by three 5-inch picture tubes and then projected by three high-speed, three-element coated plastic lenses through two high-efficiency mirrors onto the molded-acrylic fresnel lens screen. A dual-mode (scan or random access) remote control is provided.

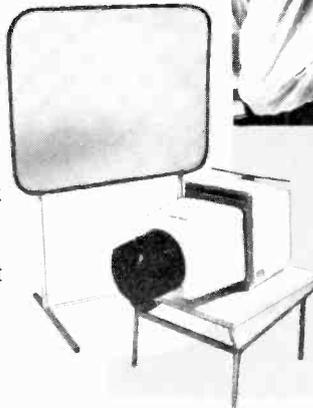
**Higher quality picture** resolution is claimed to result from new monochrome liquid self-cooling picture tubes in Sony's Videoscope 50 and 72 projection TV systems. The aluminum foil screens are washable and are mounted on casters. The projection unit,

which includes a built-in test pattern for focusing, is designed for use as a center table. Optimum viewing for the 50-inch (diagonal) screen at 10 feet; for the 72-inch screen, 12 feet. Optimum seating is within 45 degrees of centerline. The 50-inch system (KP-5020) costs \$2,495; the 72-inch system (KP-7220), \$2,995.

**The lightest portable** video cassette deck to date comes from Technicolor. The Model 212, manufactured in Japan by Funai, uses quarter-inch tape and weighs only 7 pounds, including battery. Its Micro Helical System is said to preserve picture quality in the smaller tape format. The tape itself, which is about the size of a standard audio cassette, is 20 minutes long. Features include a built-in dropout compensator. Cost of the deck, supplied with a number of accessories, is \$995.

**A projection TV** system for less than \$500 is being offered by F & F Sales. The low cost of UltraVision is made possible by the use of a conventional TV as part of the setup. You take your set to a service shop to have holes drilled in the screen mask at specific locations and a switch installed to invert the picture. The projection lens then attaches to the front of the screen. Four screens are available, varying in size from 4 to 7 feet (diagonally) and in price from \$499 to \$999 (including lens).

**A new line** of video cassette recorder maintenance products called the Videophile Edition comes from BIB. Included is a complete VCR care kit, VE-2 (\$24.95), which comprises special head-cleaning tools, cleaning fluid, Dust-Away (compressed air), an inspection mirror, antistatic cleaning cloth, and instruction manual for VHS and Beta decks.



# 10 Exciting New

**A new head cleaner** for VHS VCRs is available from TDK. The TCL-30 (\$25) comes in the form of a video cassette and contains 30 meters (approximately 100 feet) of special tape, which is said to be sufficient for about 200 cleanings in the SP mode. The device cleans the VCR's audio record and erase heads and the video record/playback head. You just insert the cassette in your deck and switch into the play mode for 30 seconds.



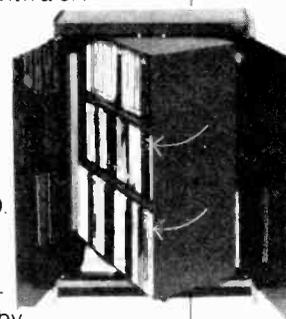
**High-quality home video movies** can be achieved even under the most taxing circumstances, Toshiba claims, with its IK-1850AF camera (\$1,400). It features a newly developed, highly sensitive 2/3-inch Univicon/2 vidicon tube, which is said to halve the amount of light required for good pictures. An automatic shutoff to protect the vidicon in extremely bright light has been incorporated. Automatic continuous focusing is made possible by a CCD, or charge-coupled device (see "In Focus," November). When you focus on an object, the CCD senses the (light) spectrum frequency(ies) of the scene, according to Toshiba. If the object moves out of focus, the



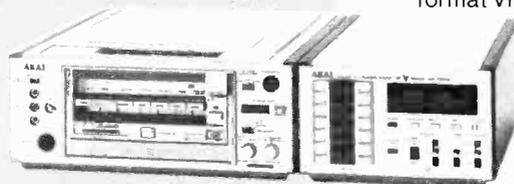
CCD senses the error (as a plus or minus value) and operates a servo motor on the lens to correct for it. "Continuous" focus, then, is really a series of very small, visually unnoticeable focus changes. Without the automatic focus

lens the camera sells for \$1,045. The IK-1850AF weighs only a little more than 2 1/2 pounds (3 3/4 with electronic viewfinder) and accepts all "C"-mounted lenses. It comes with a 6X zoom; a 10X is optional.

**You can store** up to 100 VHS or Beta video cassettes in Pyramid Manufacturing's Videnza. Half the tapes are always accessible; the other half are locked out of sight. When a key is inserted, the hidden shelves swing into view. Cost is \$219.



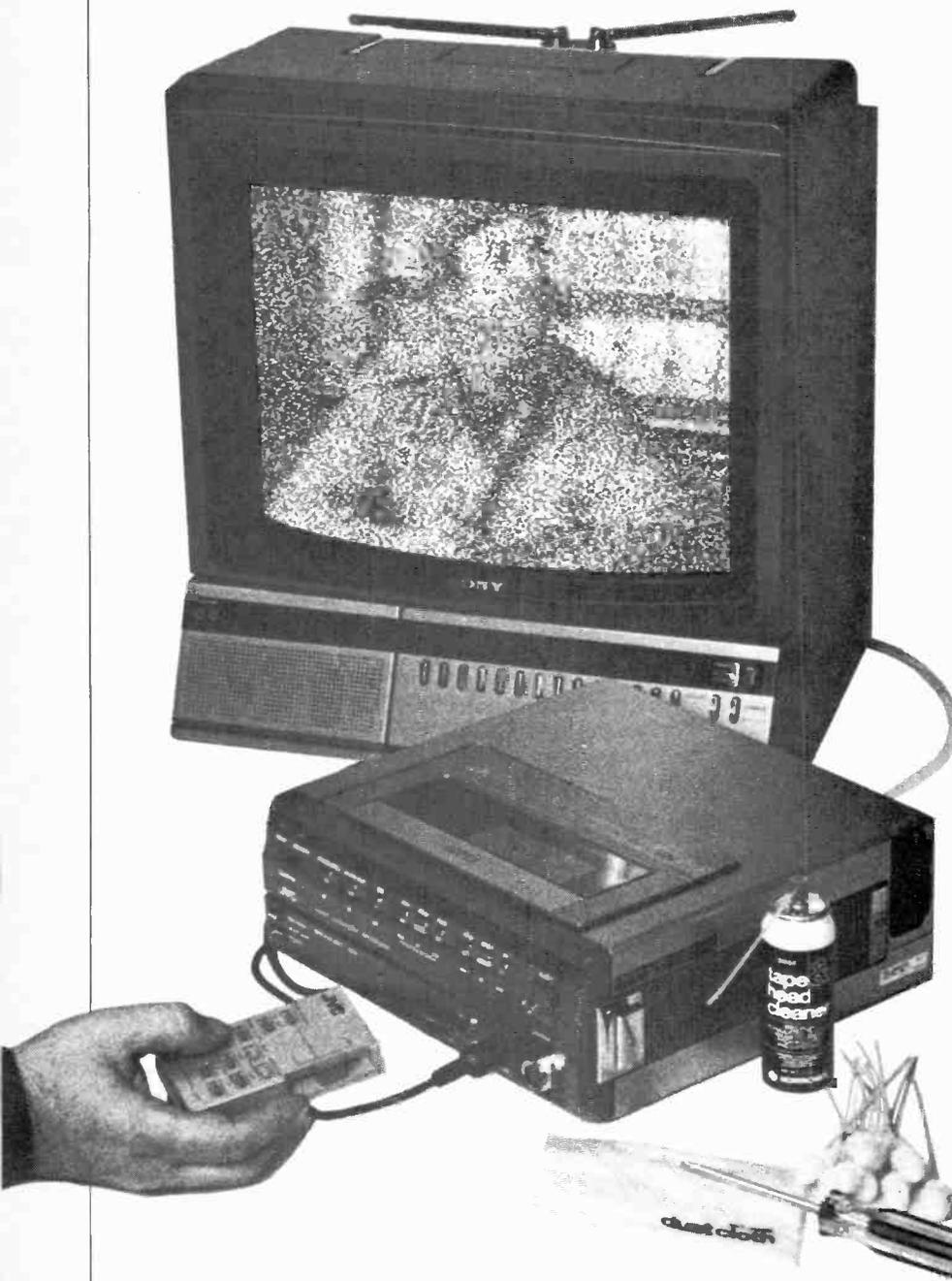
**The first VCR** to offer dual-channel audio and Dolby capability is Akai's VHS-format VP-7350 (\$1,200), accompanied by the VU-7350 tuner/timer (\$395). While audio S/N is only slightly more than 50 dB with Dolby, that figure is said to be up to 10 dB better than that of other VCRs. The recorder features a special key lock to prevent unauthorized use. Complete remote control is provided; speeds are standard (2 hours), extra slow (6 hours), and variable, from still-frame to 4 times normal; and a program search device (IPLS) advances the tape to unrecorded segments, allowing one to locate the beginning of separately recorded video sequences. A dew-warning indicator shows when excessive moisture may cause unstable tape travel across the heads. The tuner/timer can record six events over seven days on any channel.



**The question of storage** of both a video player and video tapes is solved by GUSDORF's Model 2440. The bottom shelf holds two dozen video cassettes; the middle shelf is retractable to allow easy access to the VCR. The unit, slightly more than 27 inches wide, is mounted on casters and is available in a walnut tone finish. Price: \$109.95.



# Video Products



# Looking for Trouble?

A guide to finding it, fixing it — and better yet, preventing it from occurring with your VCR

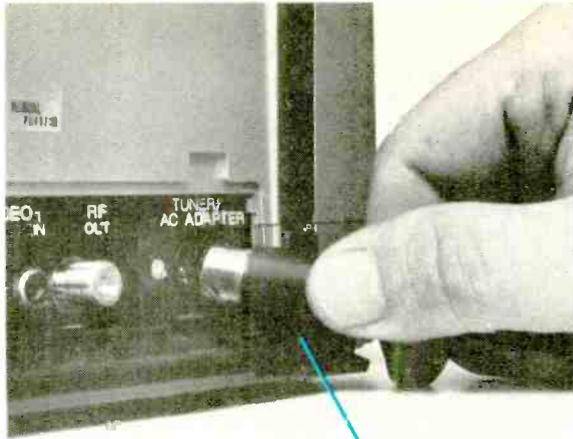
by Tony Galluzzo

You have just made the big decision: to go ahead and buy that VCR — and possibly the color video camera — of your dreams. Once home, you unpack the gleaming, impressive hardware, hook up all the appropriate cables, and connect everything to your TV set. At last you can generate your own exciting entertainment, instead of having to rely on the often dull fare of broadcast television. But sometimes something goes awry in that labyrinthian assemblage of wires, tubes, and video tape passageways.

Unless you fancy yourself an electronics expert, you can do little to rectify a serious malfunction — especially one that emanates from your TV set or camera. Kicking the equipment is not recommended, and punching it may be hazardous to your health. The most you can expect to do to a video camera is occasionally clean the lens and possibly the faceplate of the tube with lens tissue or a cotton swab. During cleaning, you should be especially careful not to point the camera at a strong light source, or even a strong reflection, to avoid burning out the tube.

VCRs are another matter entirely. Heads, guideposts, and other surfaces that come into contact with the tape become coated with magnetic oxide — just as with audio recorders — and should therefore be inspected and cleaned periodically. But a VCR is somewhat like children and pets when they are confronted by soap and water: It is often very difficult to get the cleaning process under way. In order to remove the top plate or cover, you first may have to unscrew the side panels. Then you press the eject button to levitate the cassette compartment. Some machines will not allow their covers to be removed at all, clinging to them like modest maidens. Force will not work, but a little ingenuity often goes a long way.

**How do you determine** that the video, audio, control, or erase heads require cleaning in the first place? If the problem is in the audio department, sound will become fuzzy and possibly distorted. If one of the two video heads on your VCR's rotating drum clogs up, the image on the TV will look very abnormal. Dirt usually shows up as noise or "snow" in the picture. The snowier the screen, the more gook in the heads. When both heads are seriously clogged, there'll be no picture at all. Then it's time for  
*(continued on page A16)*

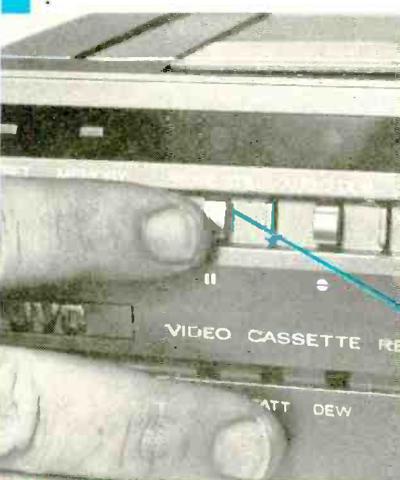


### You can't get the VCR to turn on

Have you checked to see that the deck is plugged in and that the power switch is on? ■ Is the AC adapter plugged into your (portable) VCR? ■ If you are using your VCR in the portable mode, have you inserted a battery, and is the battery fully charged?

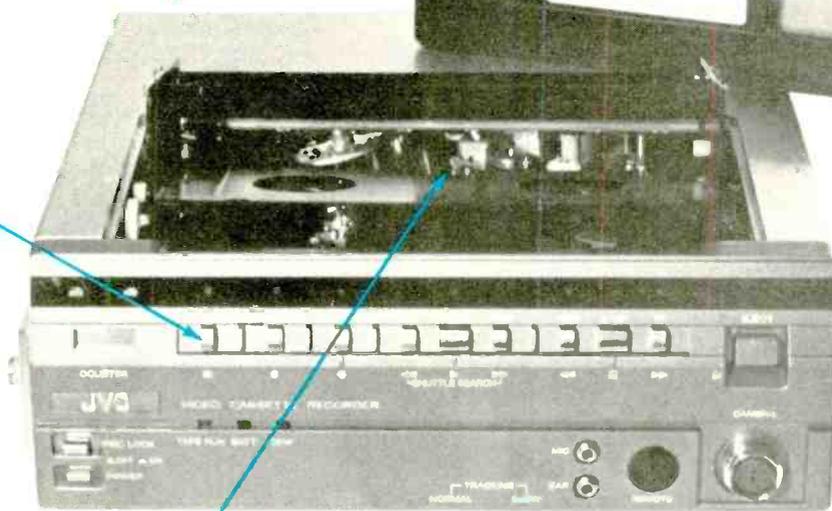
### The tape won't run in one or more modes (forward, fast-forward, and/or rewind)

The cassette is fully wound in the direction of tape travel you have chosen.



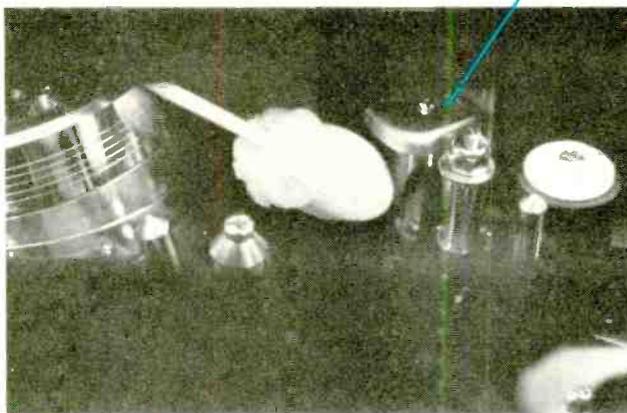
### The tape won't run in playback

The pause button may be depressed.



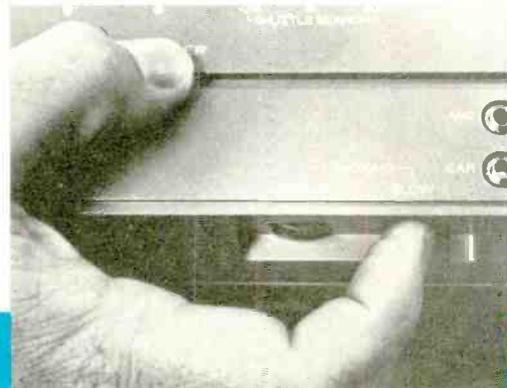
### Spots or other forms of visual distortion are seen during playback

Taking proper precautions, check the front and rear of the camera lens and the exposed end of the vidicon tube for dust or spots; clean carefully, if necessary. ■ Check VCR heads for dirt, and clean if necessary. ■ Adjust VCR tracking control during playback. ■ Try another tape; the one you're using may be of poor quality due to age or use.



### The sound is interrupted or distorted in some manner

If using a separate microphone, check the cable connection. ■ If using a condenser mike, check to see that the battery polarity is correct and that the battery is not dead. ■ Clean the audio head on the VCR.



# Troubleshooting

**Stripes or blotches are visible in electronic viewfinder when focused on a scene or during playback of tape**

Camera tube may be burned. ■ If the burn is severe, the tube must be replaced by a competent technician.

**No picture appears on your camera's electronic viewfinder**

Camera or VCR may not be turned on.  
 ■ Camera cable may be improperly inserted into VCR or may be faulty.  
 ■ VCR selector may be in the record mode. ■ Check batteries and AC power source.



**No picture appears on the TV screen when using the RF converter**

Refer to the operating manual for your deck to be sure you have correctly attached the TV antenna terminals. ■ Your TV should be tuned to either channel 3 or 4 (depending on where you live) for VCR operation.

**Recording is impossible**

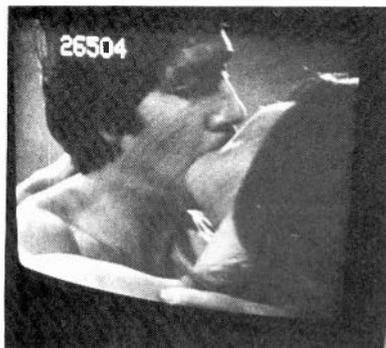
Examine all connections. ■ When recording with a camera, make certain the camera cable is inserted properly in the recorder. ■ The pause should not be depressed. ■ If all else fails, check your video cassette to be sure the recording-defeat tab is intact.

**The problem with your deck or camera persists**

If the steps we've outlined here haven't solved the problem, and you've read the instruction booklets closely and found no clues, you should consider taking the equipment to a qualified service shop. It may cost you \$50 or more, but video gear is delicate and fumbling fingers can cause expensive damage. For example, a new head drum alone costs more than \$300.



erases them. The Magnavision player has an INDEX that calls forth frame and/or chapter numbers. Once the numbers are displayed, you can direct the laser to scan the disc for the appropriate frame. The Laser Disc player uses a different approach: A built-in computer allows random access to any frame or chapter via a top-panel calculator-type keyboard. Tapping SEARCH and FRAME results in a screen display of the legend "SRCH. FRAME 0." If you want to skip immediately to, say, frame 26504, key that number in;



"SRCH. FRAME" appears. Tap SEARCH again, and the screen blanks out until the laser has reached the designated frame. The whole process takes less than 15 seconds.

Once again, for normal movie viewing, this seems like overkill, but let your mind wander a bit to other applications. Imagine, for instance, having the contents of a multivolume encyclopedia on a video disc. The entire *Encyclopedia Britannica* can actually fit quite nicely on one disc! Pop it into the player, and within seconds you can have the desired page displayed.

Or consider the educational possibilities of interfacing a home computer with an optical player. The computer could be loaded with a program intended to teach the elements of photography to a novice, from

composition to darkroom chemistry. The disc, in turn, could contain still frames of photographs demonstrating the techniques being taught, with the computer ordering the player to search out the correct frame when necessary. It may even be possible to store programs and data in computer language on the discs themselves.

**Q. Should you invest in a Magnavision or Laser Disc player at this point?**

**A.** There are both pros and cons. Matsushita's VHD/AHD system promises similar features at a somewhat lower price, and RCA's SelectaVision will probably be the cheapest of all — although it will lack many special-effects capabilities. But none of the systems can record programs. Of course, this shortcoming never seemed to bother purchasers of audio turntables and records. And, come to think of it, color TV wasn't perfect in the beginning, was it?

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# VIDEO TODAY

Special Report

## on Video Cassette Recorders

What's the Difference Between Beta & VHS?

FIRSTHAND REPORT: Our Editors Evaluate Portable VCRs

PLUS How to Record from Your TV Set

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### LOOKING FOR TROUBLE? (continued)

some serious laundering. But not with soap and water. The basic tools for the job are a can of compressed air, some spray head cleaner, and cotton swabs — preferably the long-stemmed variety made expressly for the job.

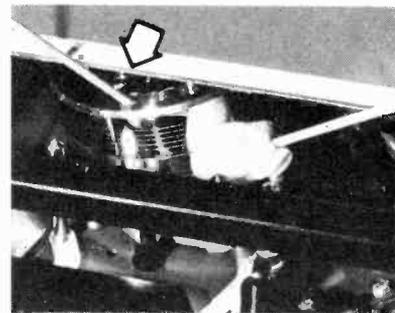
If you're dealing with a machine whose innards are uncommonly hard to get at, you might want to try a head-cleaning cassette. But since these devices contain a special abrasive tape to clean your video and audio heads, use only a reputable brand and follow the manufacturer's instructions to the letter. Overuse may wear away the heads, and damage to helical scan heads can be costly — in the area of \$300 to \$400 for replacement of the drum head alone.

One manufacturer's service rep I spoke to recently was adamant when he warned against "unqualified" fingers roaming around inside any video tape machine. He's probably right about major maintenance, such as having pinch-roller tension adjusted or replacing a drive belt. But since servicing and cleaning can cost between \$30 and \$50, you should certainly do light, routine preventive maintenance yourself.

Before tackling any cleaning job, first make certain the machine is turned off. If you can remove the cover, do so using the proper size Phillips screwdriver, which should be seated firmly so as not to damage screw heads. Engage the eject button to raise the cassette compart-

ment and lift the cover away, being careful not to force it off. If the cover sticks, inspect the entire rim to see where the hangup is. If the cover is not removable, replace all the screws and simply eject the cassette compartment. In most cases, you'll be able to work through the open compartment using a long-stemmed swab.

**Spray the swab** with head-cleaning solution and then lightly and carefully move it side to side over the head. Video heads are especially prone to damage and should be swabbed only in a *horizontal direction* — the direction of tape travel. Rotate the drum head by placing your fingers on top of it and turning it. Remember to clean the other side of the drum, where the second head is located. Try not to touch the side of the drum where the heads sit since oil from your fingers will be transferred to the tape and degrade performance. Often you can anchor the head drum by carefully inserting the wooden end of a swab into a machined hole on the top of the head



drum (see arrow). Got that? Okay. Now you can take a clean swab and perform the same operation on the stationary heads used for audio, erase, and control track. And don't forget the tape guides, which often wind up with some oxide residue.

Cleaning operation finished? Good. Now try a recorded cassette to see if you've cleared up the difficulty. If not, your machine may require professional servicing. But before doing anything — before even cleaning the unit — read through your instruction booklet and our troubleshooting checklist (see "VideoFile") to be sure you haven't contracted the dread disease called mechanico-electronicitis. This usually strikes when a person is so excited with a new piece of equipment that he forgets to connect something and causes the malfunction himself. The obvious is often the answer.



**GENUINE**  
**SHURE**

# V15 TYPE IV PHONO CARTRIDGE



## not simply a "cartridge"... but an innovative playback system

- Dynamic Stabilizer** Suspended from two viscous-damped bearings, acts like a shock absorber to maintain a constant cartridge-to-record distance and uniform tracking force; eliminates record groove skipping caused by warp; cushions the stylus from accidental damage.
- Telescoped Shank** Greatly improves trackability at the critical middle and high frequencies. Lowest effective mass, with no sacrifice of necessary stiffness or strength.
- Two-Function Bearing** Unique bearing system is optimized for both low frequencies and high frequencies independently. Enhances trackability across entire audio spectrum.
- Electrostatic Neutralizer** 10,000 conductive graphite fibers discharge static electricity from the record during play. Eliminates attraction of dust and tracking force variations caused by static charges.
- Laminated Core** Low-loss, laminated electromagnetic structure provides consistently flat frequency response, exceptional channel separation, higher signal level output.
- Hyperelliptical Tip** Elongated, uniform groove contact reduces harmonic and intermodulation distortion by as much as 25% over conventional Elliptical or long contact tips.



**GENUINE SHURE V15 TYPE IV... GETS THE MOST OUT OF TODAY'S "SUPER" RECORDINGS...**

**WHILE OVERCOMING ALL THESE PROBLEMS**  
**Hot Signals      Warp      Static Charges**

Digital recording, half-speed mastering, direct-to-disc—these and other recording breakthroughs deliver previously unattainable dynamic range. But, they also put unprecedented demands on the playback system. In the graph below, the dots show the actual measured recorded velocity of several commonly available "hot" recordings. A cartridge which cannot cope with such hot recorded signals *mistracks*; that is, the stylus loses contact with the record groove walls producing distortion and permanent audible damage to the groove.

The ability of the stylus to stay in contact with both groove walls is called *trackability* and it is the best measure of a cartridge's total performance. The trackability of the V15 Type IV (the solid curved line) is in excess of most measured hot signals or the graph below—even at an ultra-light, one gram tracking force. This is due in large part to the unique design of the stylus assembly—it incorporates a telescoped shank structure and a light-weight, high-energy magnet which reduce the effective mass of the moving system without sacrificing stiffness. Low and high frequency trackability have been independently optimized by means of a unique two-function bearing system for uncompromised trackability across the *entire* audio spectrum.

Your phono cartridge "sees" all records as twisted, heaving surfaces, jolting up and down 0.5 to 8 times a second. This is due to the record manufacturing process itself. Even most new records that look flat have warps, and a warped record can change the cartridge-to-record distance, the tracking force, and the vertical tracking angle. Warps produce frequency "wow" distortion, and subaudible signals that can dangerously overload speakers and amplifiers.

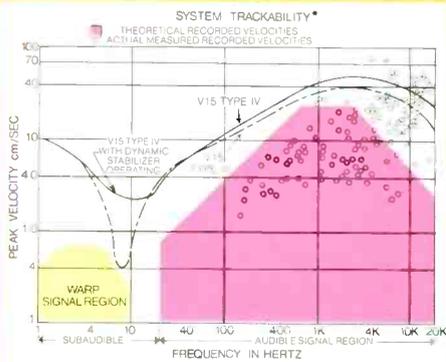
What's more, somewhere between 5 and 15 Hz, every tone arm-cartridge system has a resonance frequency—a frequency at which a warp will produce an exaggerated motion that may result in mistracking and in extreme cases, cause serious damage to both the record and stylus.

The Dynamic Stabilizer is viscous-damped to resist sudden changes in motion, such as those caused by subaudible warp. Instead, the damping ensures that the tone arm will follow the irregularities of the record surface, even at the frequency of arm-cartridge resonance. The original cartridge-to-record distance is thus maintained, and vertical tracking angle and stylus tracking force remain constant! Stabilizing the distance, angle, and force ensures that the full tracking capability of the cartridge is realized at all times. The V15 Type IV's Dynamic Stabilizer makes certain you hear the recorded information, not the warp effects.

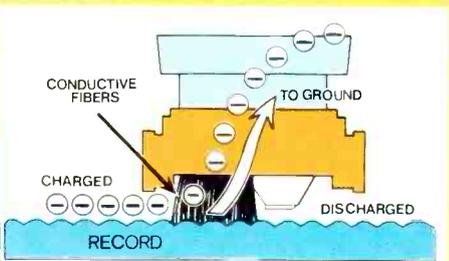
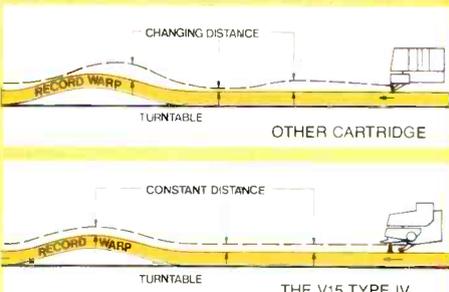
Electrostatic charges on the record can be caused by contact with the record jacket, the turntable mat, or other records. These charges on the record are omnipresent and unevenly distributed. As they attract the cartridge toward the record, they change the arm-to-record distance, the vertical tracking angle, and stylus tracking force. The result is undesirable wow and flutter.

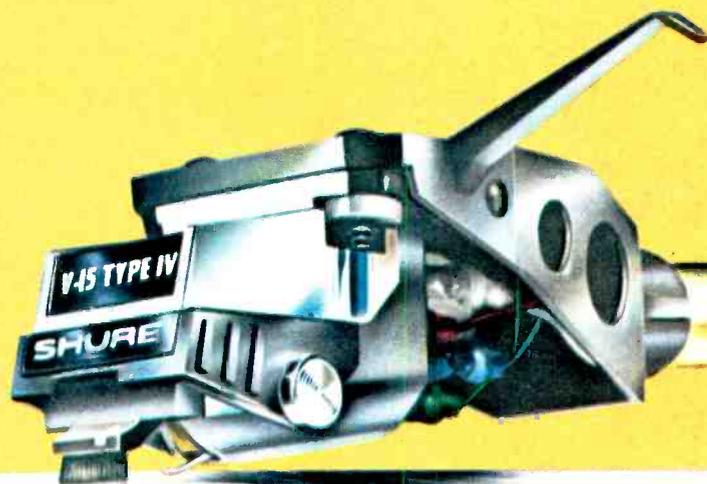
What's more, static discharge through the stylus and amplifying system causes annoying pops and clicks.

During play 10,000 electrically conductive fibers in the Dynamic Stabilizer continuously sweep just ahead of the stylus, preparing the groove about to be played. They pick up the static electricity and discharge it to ground, much like a miniature lightning rod. As a result, the record surface is electrically neutralized. The static charge is prevented from effecting arm-to-record distance or from altering the vertical tracking angle—and the tracking force is stabilized to minimize wow and flutter.



\*Cartridge-tone arm system trackability when mounted in SME3009 tone arm at 1 gram tracking force.





## Dust and Dirt Distortion

Dust particles on the surface of the record or in the record groove can have two detrimental effects on record playback. Particles that accumulate and foul the stylus tip prevent accurate tracking and can cause loss of contact with the record surface, resulting in gross distortion. Particles that remain in the groove can cause "pops" and "tics" or can be embedded in the groove wall causing permanent record damage.

Effective record cleaning is essential. However, when Shure engineers examined the record cleaning devices on the market today, they found that most of the bristles were actually too wide to fit inside the record grooves. They cleaned the surface, but left the grooves, where the music is, *untouched!*

The Dynamic Stabilizer, pictured below, contains over 10,000 ultra-fine graphite fibers, each one so thin that 10 of them can fit *inside* the average record groove. They "sweep" the grooves effectively, silently, just ahead of the stylus *every time the record is played* removing interfering particles from the record grooves and protecting the stylus tip from dust accumulation.

And because the record surface is electrostatically neutralized by these fibers, it does not attract airborne dust particles.

The remarkable sound of the V15 Type IV has been variously described by the most respected audio critics in the industry as "clean," "natural," and "easy to listen to." One reason is the incomparably low distortion afforded by its Hyperelliptical stylus.

The unique, Shure-developed Hyperelliptical nude diamond tip configuration is better suited to reproduction of the stereo-cut groove than *any* other tip configuration. The tracing radius is smaller to more accurately follow the groove. As the figures below show, its "footprint" (represented by black oval) is longer, narrower, and more uniform than the traditional Biradial (Elliptical) tip-groove contact area. As a direct result of this optimized contact area, the Hyperelliptical stylus reduces intermodulation and harmonic distortion to a significant degree—as much as 25%!

## the Critics' Choice...

"We have enough money to buy the best: Let's go with the Shure V15 Type IV. There are pickups that cost more...but none that beats its combination of superb tracking, flat frequency response, low distortion, and warp-malfunction resistance. It may not have the mystique of the moving coils, but it's an honest reproducer and a fine performer, which is more than can be said for some of the highly touted exotica..."

High Fidelity (U.S.A.)

"Like all of Shure's top cartridges for many years, this has become a standard in the industry—a cartridge against which others are judged.

"... (it) has earned its place in the cartridge pantheon honestly. When performance, price, and reliability are all taken into account, the V15 Type IV still comes out a top choice, even in the face of exotic competition."

AudioScene (Canada)

"Music of all types sounded natural, transients were crisp, string tone was good and the bass was full and solid. Stereo imaging was precise and stable, and distortion remarkably low."

Gramophone (England)

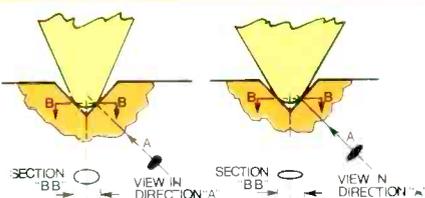
"The resolution in the medium and high frequencies was supported by the excellent trackability, and I was able to enjoy a delicate pianissimo sound, the likes of which I had not heard before."

Stereo Geijutsu (Japan)



BIRADIAL (ELLIPTICAL) STYLUS

HYPERELLIPTICAL STYLUS



## FREE! Trackability Record

When you buy a V15 Type IV cartridge and return the warranty card, we'll send you a free copy of *An Audio Obstacle Course, Era IV (TR115)* worth \$5.50. It includes tests to evaluate trackability, arm-cartridge resonance, channel balance, and phasing.





**Shure supplies  
a replacement  
stylus (needle)  
for virtually  
every cartridge  
we've ever made**

**... a sound  
investment  
in record care  
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No matter which Shure cartridge you own, from today's V15 Type IV all the way back to the M3D, the first true high fidelity stereo cartridge, you can get a Genuine Shure replacement stylus that can bring it right back up to its original performance specifications. Upgrade styli are available to fit some Shure cartridges for performance *beyond* original specifications.

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

# There's Gold (Well, a Little Silver, Actually) in Old Components

by Sam Sutherland



If you stop into Harvey Sound on West Forty-fifth Street in Manhattan, you'll find Izzy Meyrowitz presiding over the store's used-equipment department. Harvey's secondhand gear is all carefully checked and reconditioned and demands top dollar. Its prices for some of the equipment pictured above are: from left to right, front row, McIntosh XR-5 speaker, \$799 per pair, B&O M-70 speaker, \$440 per pair, KEF 105, \$1,400 per pair; on the shelf behind Izzy, a GAS Thaedra preamp, \$550, sits atop a GAS Ampzilla 2 power amp, \$650; to the right, an Audio Research SP-6A preamp, \$1,000, is stacked on an Audio Research D-76A power amp, \$1,000.

**Y**ou've finally decided to take that next major step in your stereo system, investing in higher performance components—but what will you do with the gear you already own? You could just lug your current equipment along as you visit local audio dealers and hope for the best in a trade. But unless you've done some preliminary homework on the secondhand market, you may be in for some surprises.

## What It's Worth

You can't assume every dealer will be equally interested in bidding on your used gear. The rise of audio mass merchandisers, along with the spread of audio products into broadly diversified chain stores, has kept a significant number of dealers out of the used-component market; many stereo merchants will offer little more than advice when you

approach them with an armload of hopeful has-beens.

Meanwhile, the performance-to-dollar ratio in newer midpriced designs has disrupted the resale viability of older products. High-end audiophile specialists and giant chain stores agree that the lower prices for entry-level component systems, decreased further by the large discounts commonly available, have brought the cost of new equipment in

# Sansui "Z" Receivers give you a spectrum worth analyzing.

What frequency range does your favorite singer's voice most commonly fall into? What about your favorite instrument?

How accurately does your cartridge handle those frequencies? How about your tape deck?

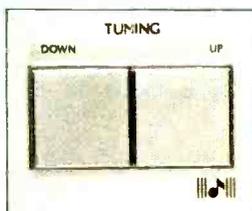
The newest Sansui "Z" Receivers all have an ingenious spectrum analyzer that answers these and other questions by letting you see exactly what you hear.



And it's what you *hear* that makes Sansui so special.

**SANSUI—THE LEADER IN DC TECHNOLOGY.** The DC-Servo Amp brings you coloration-free, superbly defined reproduction with the healthy, realistic bass response that only a DC configuration can provide. Gone are unwanted ultra-low frequencies—like record warps and tonearm resonance. What you hear is a clean, tight, transparent sound that sets a new standard for receiver performance.

**SYNTHESIZED DIGITAL TUNING.** You can't mistune a Sansui synthesized digital receiver. Not even a little. Press the up/down tuning buttons.

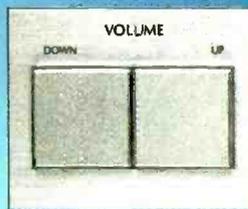


The digital circuitry ensures that every station received is automatically locked in for lowest possible distortion, with its frequency indicated both on a digital readout and by a LED indicator along an analog type dial.

**12 PRESET STATIONS.** To make FM and AM tuning still easier, up to 12 user-selected stations may be "stored" in all "Z" Receiver memory circuits for instant recall. The last station received will be remembered when the tuner is turned on again; and memories are kept "live" even during a power outage.

**TOUCH VOLUME CONTROL & LED PEAK POWER LEVEL INDICATOR.** The Sansui "Z" Receivers use a pair of touch-buttons to adjust the listening level. Relative volume control setting is indicated on a fluorescent display. On most models actual peak power amplifier output is shown by 14- or 18-segment LED indicators.

And there's more. Instead of up/down tuning buttons, both the 9900Z and the 8900ZDB have tun-



ing knobs linked to a rotary "encoder" disc. As you turn the knob, the encoded disc works with

an LED and a photo transistor to generate electronic pulses to raise or lower the tuned frequency. In addition, the 9900Z, 8900ZDB, and 7900Z have ceramic buzzers which signal unobtrusively while you tune in a station. There are three speaker select switches on the 9900Z for driving any two of three connected speaker pairs and two switches on all the other "Z" receivers. Included are LED's for every important function. Two Muting Modes. Two tape deck connections with dubbing. And much more.

The full line of Sansui "Z" Receivers are at your Sansui dealer now. Visit him for a complete demonstration soon. He has just the right model for your pocketbook and power requirements.



## SANSUI "Z" RECEIVERS

### 9900Z

160 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.015% THD.

### 8900Z/88

125 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.02% THD.

### 7900Z

100 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.02% THD.

### 5900Z

75 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.03% THD.

### 4900Z

55 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.03% THD.

### 3900Z

40 watts/chan., min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20kHz, with no more than 0.03% THD.

Cabinet of simulated wood grain.

*Sansui*

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# The secret of Onkyo.

Let Onkyo transport you to a world beyond electronics... to a world of more perfect sound. Where you'll hear music of such stunning purity and sensual richness, that you'll forget you're listening to an audio system.

That's the secret of Onkyo... and Onkyo's dramatic success. The unique ability to take you several steps beyond pure technology... to experience more exciting sound. And you'll find it in all our components... including all four of our new receivers.

The Onkyo TX-7000 Quartz-Locked AM-FM Stereo Receiver is an outstanding example. Both its power amplifier and FM sections are rich with important new design concepts.

The TX-7000's power amplifier provides two major innovations never before present in a stereo receiver. The first is called Super-Servo and it totally eliminates the sonic "ghost signals" common to DC power amplifiers. As a result, each instrument and voice sounds purer and more individually real... regardless of volume level. Perhaps for the first time, you'll experience stereo with true depth, spaciousness, and a remarkably discernable third-dimension.

The second innovation

is Linear-Switching which lets us provide Class A amplifier sound quality with Class B power efficiency. Crossover distortion is significantly reduced. And output power is very highly efficient... 90 watts per channel with no more than 0.02% THD.\*

The TX-7000's FM section is also clearly superior... picking up weak stations noiselessly and strong stations without distortion.

A unique Human Touch Sensor automatically controls the Quartz-Locked system for more reliable and convenient operation... releasing the system instantly when it senses your touch on the tuning knob... engaging it again as your fingers leave the knob.

Special circuits also monitor both channels... detecting and cancelling out sound distorting FM signal noise. Other circuits cancel out appliance noise.

Digital FM readout... separate bass, mid and treble controls... 2-way tape dubbing facilities... and dozens of other important features are all found in the TX-7000. And the TX-7000 is just one of four new

receivers from Onkyo. Hear "the secret of Onkyo". Hear receivers so advanced, they transcend mere technology. Onkyo USA Corporation  
42-07 20th Avenue  
Long Island City, N.Y.  
11105, (212) 728-4639



\*Minimum RMS at 8 ohms both channels driven from 20 to 20,000 Hz.

**The Onkyo TX-7000**  
A remarkably advanced new stereo receiver  
that provides dramatically superior sound quality.

# The Market Sets the Price

Prices for used audio gear vary widely across the country. To help us, we contacted Dave Wasserman of Audio Exchange in Manhattan and Dave Adams of Rebuy Hi-Fi in Santa Clara, California, for their opinions on the mint-condition market value of each component pictured here. The used value cited in Orion's 1980 *Audio Trade-In Guide* and the model's original retail price (derived from the Orion "blue book") are also given.



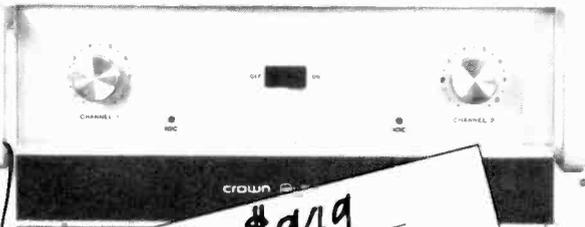
Yamaha CR-2020 receiver

Original	\$750
New York	\$449
California	\$600
Orion	\$683



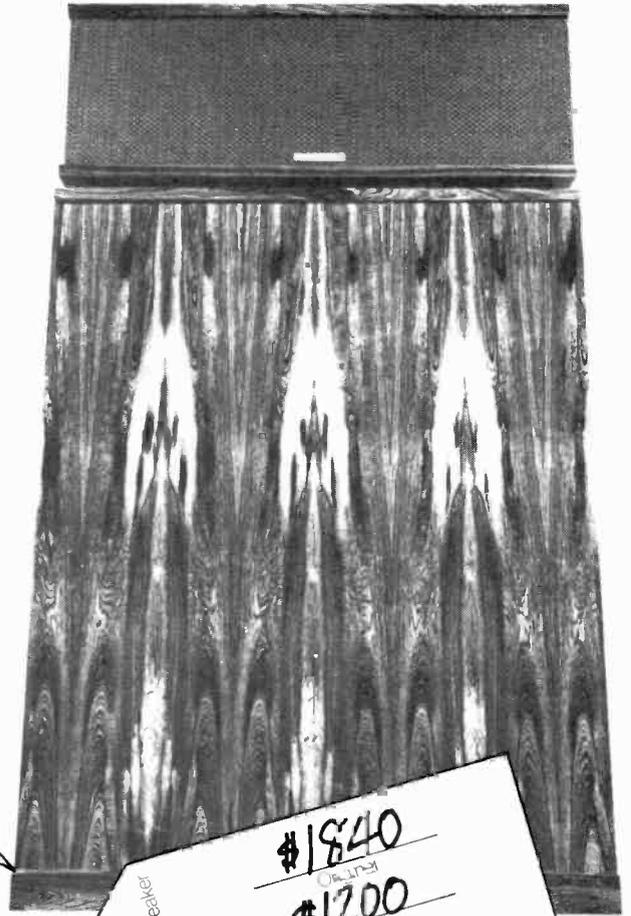
Marantz 7-C preamp

Original	\$285
New York	\$595
California	\$500
Orion	\$334



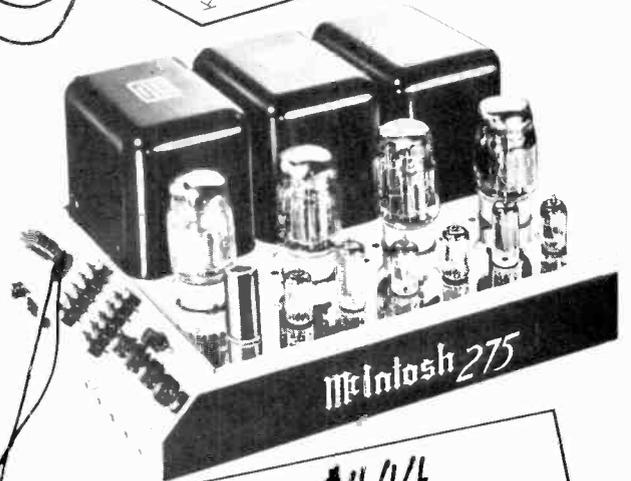
Crown DC-300A power amp

Original	\$949
New York	\$629
California	\$700
Orion	\$733



Klipschorn K-B BTL speaker

Original	\$1840
New York	\$1200
California	\$1482
Orion	\$1490



McIntosh MC-275 tube amp

Original	\$444
New York	\$1100
California	\$600
Orion	\$349

line with used gear offering equivalent (or sometimes lower) performance levels. That translates into a depressingly low trade-in value for what you bought just a year or two ago.

At the other extreme, certain prestigious high-end units have held their original value and, in some instances, appreciated dramatically. The mystique accorded such classics as McIntosh tube amps and tuners and tubed Marantz gear manufactured in the U.S. has yielded high resale bids here—and even created a lucrative overseas market, particularly in Japan, where consumers awed by these audio legends are sometimes willing to pay several times the original price.

Who determines these values? Ultimately, it's the consumer, but the medium through which prices are set is, once again, the retail market. Since the early Seventies, audio dealers have had their own "blue book" to consult: the *Orion Audio Trade-in Guide*, the primary national source for trade and resale price points. But even its publisher, Roger Rohrs, echoes dealers around the country in outlining the limitations of any averaged price.

Rohrs deduces those figures by polling dealers on various brands and specific models, asking them to report not only on typical dollar values, but on the products' reliability and local demand. The guide presents a model's original retail price, along with its resale value to the original owner. The dealer, of course, must add his own markup in order to realize a 30–50% profit, and those markups are cleverly (if a bit confusingly) built into the Orion listings. For example, a BGW power amp that sold new in '78 for \$999 shows up on the MINT-condition list as worth \$428 to the original owner if it is in perfect shape and retains original shipping materials and owner's manual; if it shows a bit of wear and tear and is lacking shipping carton and manual, the value can be found in the AVERAGE column: \$285. The dealer—who either pays cash for the unit or applies that amount against the purchase of new gear—can then sell the top-condition model for the high USED book value of \$714; a host of variables can lower that price.

"The values given in the guide," stresses Rohrs, "are an average, representing resale throughout the country. They also are an average throughout the year, rather than an indication of what the value might be seasonally." As a result, if you ask your local dealer for a

chance to consult the blue book and find that the bids you've been getting from him don't reflect the "book value," don't immediately assume he's trying to rip you off. Remember, too, that he has to recondition the equipment and display it—perhaps for months—before he makes a sale, and that adds to his overhead.

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### **Though high-end gear from small "esoteric" companies usually holds its value, one dealer lamented that "it's hard to sing the praises of equipment from a company that was in business for only two years."**

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Resale value is also largely dependent on the type of component in question. The highest values and longest market life generally fall to separate audio electronics: preamps, power and integrated amps, tuners, and signal processors. Speakers survive with somewhat less vigor, according to the Orion guide, but many dealers report that such well-known lines as Advent, Klipsch, and EPI rival electronics in resale and trade value.

Depreciating the most rapidly are mechanical components, where significant wear is likely. Thus, turntables and open-reel tape decks, even from top manufacturers, can be expected to yield only a fraction of their original value. Cassette decks, especially in the lower price regions, will likewise bring disappointing trade-in bids. An exception is high-end cassette decks, which hold their value far better than other mechanical audio products. The guide reflects dealers' reports of high trade-in and resale figures for high-demand units, such as Nakamichi's 1000 series.

Don't be seduced into thinking that the mere presence of tubes guarantees the kind of prices associated with prestige classics. A well-maintained McIntosh 2205 power amp or a Marantz 10B tuner will command bullish bids, but not most tube models from Fisher or Scott or Bogen.

### **High-End Is Hot**

With lower-priced new gear rivaling the performance of much more expensive models available just a few years ago, the market for used equipment is pretty soft right now. After all, why buy a two-year-old tuner for \$100 when a new one will give you better performance (and a warranty) for \$50–75 more? Along with that, of course, goes the assumption that even the new equipment you purchase today may be improved upon next year without a substantial price increase. So the secondhand market focuses primarily on high-end gear, in which heavy discounts are rare, and therefore can be counted on to maintain its value and aura of quality.

Dave Adams, whose Rebuy Hi-Fi operation in Santa Clara, California, devotes some 90% of its business to used gear with the remainder comprising discontinued pieces and factory samples, notes that most of his customers are interested in trades or purchases of individual components rather than full systems. But he adds that even high-rated, "esoteric" equipment can present problems. Not every esoteric line will find a market. "One of the things that's very frustrating about working in this business," he says, "is that it's very hard to sing the praises of a piece of gear from a company that was only in business for two years and has since shut down." Equipment orphaned by the bankruptcy or closure of its manufacturer can thus prove an albatross for its owner. On the other hand, it can represent a real bargain for the buyer—provided he knows the specific model and has already addressed the questions of service and parts replacement.

At the same time, even gear from full-line, nonesoteric manufacturers can sometimes hold its value, if cutrate prices are not available at retail. According to the Orion guide, some recent Yamaha products, for instance, command up to 85% of their original price at resale and more than 50% at trade-in.

### **Where It's Done**

Bargaining with the "wrong" dealer can prove pretty demoralizing if you've been expecting a good price. Used-stereo specialists and audiophile salons warn that many mass merchandisers whose business aims at high volume through generous discounts have

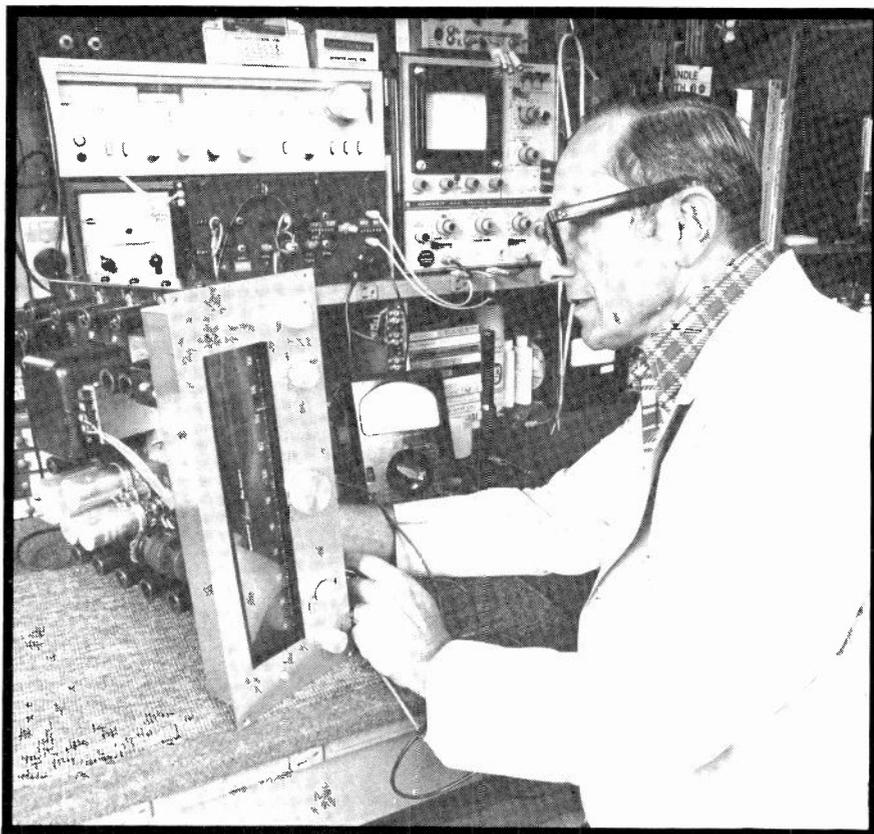
dramatically reduced their involvement in used equipment, in some instances eliminating trade-ins altogether or accepting only a fraction of the pieces offered—and then being somewhat capricious in their bids. Department stores that have added audio products to their array of merchandise won't be interested in handling trades at all. And audio chains that have eliminated their service departments can be expected to turn away offers as well, although they may give suggestions on where to trade.

Lester Cohen, vice president for the East Coast-based Audio Exchange stores, estimates that, because of the swing toward low-dollar, no-trade operations, the proportion of regular audio dealers handling used components has diminished by as much as 75%. For Cohen, the resulting increase in dissatisfied buyers means the active trade/resale merchant must be candid in outlining how market conditions will affect value. "When I sell a customer a used unit, I tell him the truth," he says. "I tell him about the features and performance, but I also tell him how much that unit will depreciate in value. We rely on repeat business in this kind of operation, and I can't afford to alienate customers."

Like other active traders, Audio Exchange offers limited warranties on its used gear, and Cohen notes that the chain prepares its own internal price guides, including a confidential in-store guide and a separate pricing list supplied to other dealers his chain regularly purchases from or sells to. "My system doesn't work on the same basis as the Orion guide," he says. "My values are based on what the unit actually sold for in my marketing area, not a national average derived from suggested retail."

Some major stereo retail chains do actively trade. Pacific Stereo and Tech Hi-Fi are among several that operate separate stores (Pacific's Recycled Stereo or Tech Hi-Fi's Bargain Center) to handle reconditioned components accepted in trade at their regular outlets—very much like the used-car lots run by new-car dealerships. Together with selected used equipment procured through audio reps and brokers, the trade-ins provide them with both an added sales tool toward new purchases and a lower-priced selection for shoppers on tight budgets.

There is also a trend toward consignment and brokerage services, such as those provided at Houston's Audio Concepts, with the store serving as a



Joe Maceranko, chief service technician at Harvey Sound, puts a venerable Marantz Model 10B tuner through its paces. Just for the record, when it was introduced, the 10B sold for about \$570; Harvey's is selling the unit above for \$649.

middleman in what are, in essence, direct sales between former and new owners. Shops sometimes even supply bulletin boards where customers can post their used-component offerings. And some operations, like the high-end-oriented Jonas Miller salon in Beverly Hills, include printed classifieds in their periodic product bulletins.

#### Do-It-Yourself Direct Sales

If you've toured local stereo dealers and still feel your equipment must be worth more than they're willing to pay, there is an alternative—but it will cost you added time and effort. In addition to audio dealers' resale bulletins and consignment services, for example, you can scour your area for classified advertising sections and trade/barter flyers that regularly list used equipment. As you will have learned from the bids made by dealers and the prices they're asking for reconditioned components, the gap between trade-in and resale values can swing between 50 and 100% of the former. Unless you can verify your com-

ponent's current performance or are willing to spring for the costs of testing and reconditioning it, you won't be able to garner the highest resale figures. But you can still pocket substantially more than you would in trade or sale to the stereo store simply by settling on a price somewhere in between.

In the case of high-end gear for which you know there's a demand, you may also want to find audio reps and brokers who regularly handle such requests from dealers. A sympathetic dealer who has enjoyed your business in the past or is assured of it in the future can help you track down these specialists (although they may balk at helping you find the handful of overseas brokers who can sell some units at highly inflated prices abroad). Expect to part with some of your money in the form of a commission, though.

Finally, if you've learned that your prized old component has no practical resale value at all, there is a last resort: Keep it for yourself, a relative, or a friend—and hope for better luck on your next purchase. **HF**

# How to Buy a Tuner

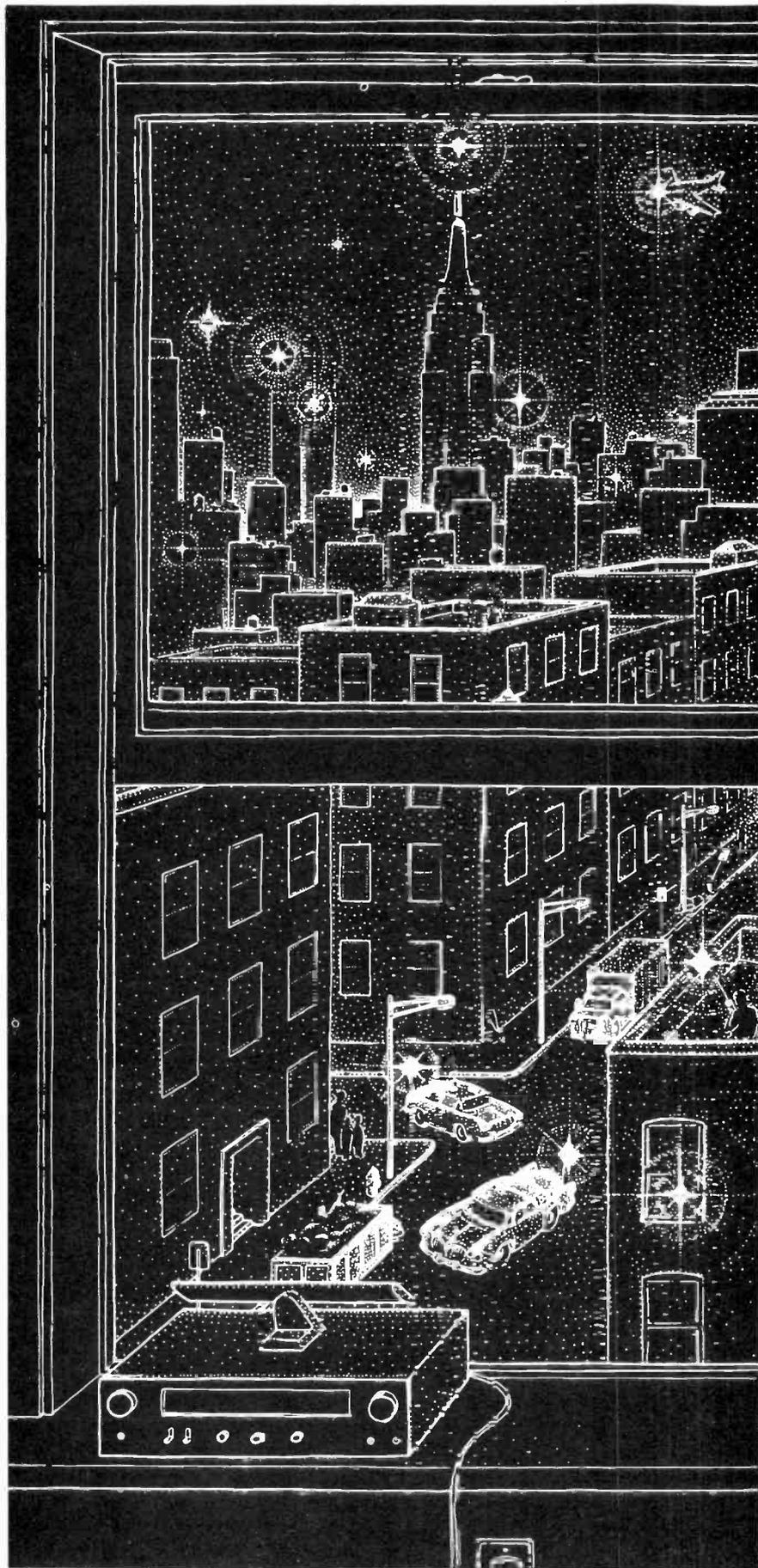
by Michael Riggs

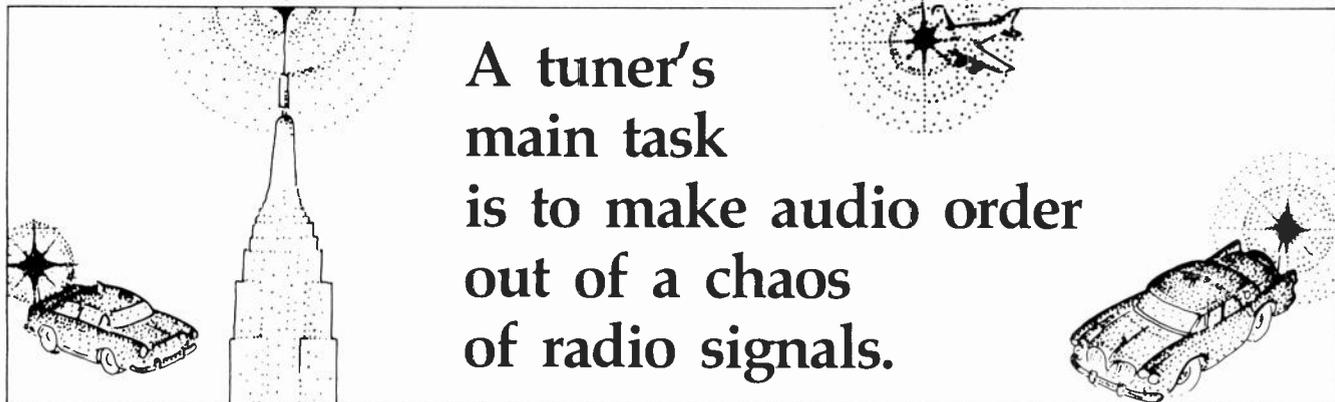
Nowhere in audio has the impact of microelectronics been greater than in the design of FM tuners. Fifteen years ago it was impossible to buy, at any price, a tuner with the performance and reliability of today's least expensive models. This transformation is almost entirely attributable to the development of cheap, high-performance integrated circuits that collectively do the work of hundreds of discrete electrical components. Where once it was difficult to find a tuner with no serious deficiencies, it now is hard to find one that has any. Good and better remain, however, so we will concentrate here on how to make the happy choice between them.

## Magic in the Air

In audio reproduction, difficulties arise whenever a signal has to be converted from one medium to another. The input of an FM tuner in a typical city is bombarded by many kinds of "radio waves," both intentional (communications) and unintentional (ignition "noise" and lightning "static," for examples) and covering a wide range of frequencies and amplitudes. Most of the important tuner specifications relate to its ability to make audio order out of this radio chaos: to pluck only the desired signal, free of distortion and interference, from a thicket of competitors—and to convert that broadcast into clean, quiet audio signals.

For many years, the main test of a tuner's mettle was its sensitivity: The weaker the signal it could pick up, the better. But tuners are now so good and so similar in this respect that sensitivity specifications are all but irrelevant. Most tuners, in fact, are close to theoretical perfection. Typical values for the old IHF 30-dB quieting sensitivity rating





## A tuner's main task is to make audio order out of a chaos of radio signals.

were 1.7 to 3.0 microvolts (millionths of a volt). This figure, a mono specification pegged at a virtually unlistenable signal-to-noise ratio, is of interest only to fanatics. Though some manufacturers continue to provide this specification, more and more follow the newer IHF/IEEE standard in showing sensitivity for -50-dB noise alone (not noise plus distortion), usually in stereo as well as mono, and stating it in dBf (femtowatts) of input power (instead of voltage, whose absolute meaning is influenced by the tuner's input impedance). Typical values are 14 to 26 dBf (3 to 10 microvolts) in mono and 35 to 40 dBf (30 to 50 microvolts) in stereo. Most tuners require about 65 dBf of input to achieve full quieting. Not incidentally, many measurements (including "ultimate signal-to-noise ratio") are made with a 65-dBf input under the present standard, just as the approximate equivalent, 1,000 microvolts, was used in the older one.

The more sensitive a tuner is, the more important its selectivity rating will be. FM channels are separated by 200-kHz intervals, and the FCC has taken precautions to ensure that receivers will have as little difficulty as is reasonably possible in separating the desired signals from those nearby on the dial. A tuner's ability to reject stations 400 kHz from the tuned frequency is called its alternate-channel selectivity. Most ratings are well above 40 dB for contemporary tuners, and even that figure is adequate for all but difficult situations in cities thickly populated with transmitters. Most tuners come in at about 60 dB, and premium models may boast figures of 80 dB or more, which is better than almost anyone is ever likely to need.

A sometimes useful by-product of very high alternate-channel selectivity is relatively high adjacent-channel selectivity, enabling the tuner to discriminate somewhat against signals only 200 kHz

from the desired transmission. Such virtuosity may be required to unscramble the many signals from both near and far pulled in by a very sensitive tuner connected to a high-gain outdoor antenna. Few manufacturers specify adjacent-channel selectivity, partly because it is irrelevant to the vast majority of users and partly because the numbers are usually so poor: only a few dB.

To achieve even moderate adjacent-channel selectivity requires the use of very steep filters in the IF (intermediate frequency) section of the tuner. Besides being relatively expensive, these filters introduce large phase shifts, which the tuner converts directly to distortion of its audio output. Over the years, improvements in the filters (for example, in the symmetry of their bandpass characteristics) have whittled away at this tradeoff to the extent that it is scarcely worth worrying about anymore.

Some top-line tuners incorporate IF-bandwidth switches that enable the user to tailor the width of the passband for either high selectivity (usually 80 dB or more, alternate channel) at the narrow bandwidth position to pull in weak stations on channels close to those of strong local transmitters, or moderate selectivity (usually 30 or 40 dB) at the normal position for minimum distortion, improved capture ratio, and maximum stereo separation. Although you may sometimes find the narrow position good for cleaning up reception problems, the difference in distortion or separation between the two is not likely to be audible.

A tuner must also be able to distinguish between multiple signals at the same frequency—not because it is likely to pick up two stations broadcasting on the same channel, but because in many locations, especially in cities with tall buildings, it will receive a direct signal plus one or more reflections, all arriving

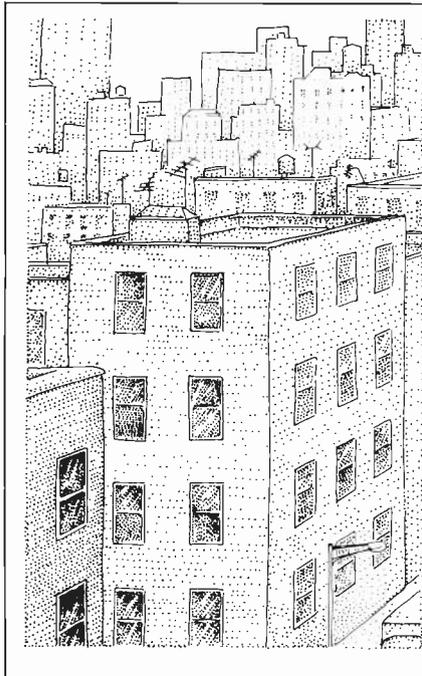
at different instants from different directions. This multipath interference is familiar to most people as "ghosts" on their television screens. In FM radio, it causes distortion.

The best first line of defense against multipath is a good directional antenna (see "The Missing Link: Your Antenna"), but you also need a tuner with high inherent multipath resistance. Capture ratio is a measure of how much stronger one signal must be than another at the same frequency for the tuner to lock onto or "capture" the more powerful and ignore the weaker. A capture ratio of 3 dB is the worst you should see for a modern component tuner, and 1½ dB or less is the norm. The best models have capture ratios of about 1 dB.

Once inside the tuner, multipath signals express themselves as amplitude modulation. FM tuners are by their nature insensitive to AM, although to varying degrees. AM-suppression specifications range from about 40 dB at the low end to as high as 70 dB in extraordinary cases. You should expect about 55 or 60 dB in a top-rank tuner.

Spurious-response rejection, a specification important to the city dweller, measures a tuner's resistance to front-end overload and cross modulation. In the latter, the grossest manifestation of spurious response, strong stations appear at more than one place (in bad cases, many places) on the dial, interfering with and sometimes obliterating weaker stations that would ordinarily appear at those spots. Intense out-of-band signals, such as pulse noise from automobile ignitions, may also intrude. Though not a perfect indicator, the spurious-response rejection spec gives some idea of a receiver's immunity to these effects. Look for a minimum of 70 dB; the best tuners yield more than 100 dB.

Image rejection is a similar speci-



## The Missing Link: Your Antenna

If you're using your tuner with the floppy dipole antenna that came in the box with it, you're probably not getting anywhere near its best performance. Even the finest electronics need a clean, clear signal to work with, and that means an appropriate antenna.

For good reception in a rural area, you will probably need a high-gain directional antenna mounted outdoors on a tall mast with a rotor. In some cases, a TV antenna can be made to serve double duty, but many include traps to filter out FM and none is really optimized for the job. A separate FM antenna can be mounted on its own mast or, provided there is adequate separation between the two, on the same mast as a TV antenna.

Moving into the suburbs, the need for high gain disappears. In fact, you may find that you have more signal than you want, in which case an RF attenuator should be installed in the signal line. The amount of attenuation should be selected to pass just enough signal for full quieting (plus a little safety margin) on all the stations you want to hear. This will help prevent front-end overload and cross modulation. Whether you need a directional antenna or can get by with a less expensive omnidirectional model will depend on location. If you have hills or tall buildings to contend with, you may want some directionality to fight multipath. You may still be able to get by without a rotor, however, if all the stations you want to receive originate from the same direction—often the case in suburban reception areas.

fication of interest mainly to those living near airports, where "images" of signals above the FM band might be picked up and appear at a spot on the dial 21.4 MHz below the frequency of the actual transmissions. Most tuners provide at least 60 dB of image rejection, and the best give more than 100 dB. If you have experienced interference from mobile or airport transmissions in the past, you probably will want a unit with better than average image rejection. Otherwise, you probably can ignore the whole issue.

Finally, FM tuners tend to be sensitive to signals occurring at their intermediate frequency of 10.7 MHz. Their resistance to this rather uncommon form of interference can be compared by means of a specification called (surprise) the IF rejection ratio. Ratings for a particular tuner tend to be in the same range as its image and spurious-response rejection ratios. In most cases, it's not something you need to worry about.

### Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch

What began as radio frequencies must come out as audio frequencies, returning us to those ubiquitous high fidelity desiderata: low noise, low distortion, and flat frequency response. Tuners have both mono and stereo specifications for noise and distortion, the stereo rating almost invariably being somewhat the poorer of the two. Ultimate stereo S/N should be no less than

60 dB on a good tuner and will be above 70 dB on the best. Since 70 dB is at least as good as any stereo FM transmission, anything beyond that is just padding: You won't hear any difference between 70 and 75 dB. The mono S/N ratio on some tuners is close to 80 dB.

Total harmonic distortion (THD) usually is measured at three frequencies: 100 Hz, 1 kHz, and 6 kHz. Sometimes the third measurement is taken at 10 kHz, but because its harmonics lie beyond the 15-kHz FM bandwidth limit, they are stripped off by the 19-kHz pilot filters used in many tuners. In such cases, what the stereo measurement represents is not harmonic distortion at all, but a miscellany of "garbage" including the 9-kHz tone generated by intermodulation of the test signal with the 19-kHz pilot.

This high-frequency IM, which now is specified separately, was the bane of virtually all tuners made before the introduction of phase-lock-loop (PLL) stereo decoders in the early Seventies. Some models, even expensive ones, generated as much as 24% IM from a 10-kHz test tone.

Thankfully, those days are gone. You should expect to see no more than 1% distortion at any frequency from a modern tuner—less than you will get from most broadcast signals. And less than 0.5% can safely be ignored as inaudible. The only fly in the ointment is that a tuner achieves its rated distortion only when it is tuned exactly to the center of the channel being received. The situ-

ation is made more problematic by the fact that most channel-center meters are not perfectly accurate, and even slight mistuning can cause a dramatic rise in distortion. If you buy a tuner that does not have a digital frequency-synthesis front end or some kind of automatic fine-tuning circuit, you may want lower distortion ratings to allow for some tuning "slop." But ordinarily, distortion will not be a serious problem unless the signal is extremely weak or strong or is subject to some kind of interference, such as severe multipath.

Stereo FM broadcasting depends on the 19-kHz pilot tone to tell the tuner that the signal is in stereo and a 38-kHz subcarrier to convey the stereo difference (L-R) information (which the tuner's multiplex circuit mixes with the regular L + R mono signal to re-create a complete stereo signal pair). Some stations add a 67-kHz subcarrier for so-called SCA transmissions (typically, to provide commercial background-music services). To minimize intermodulation-distortion "birdies," a tuner must expunge as much as possible of these artifacts from the signal. All tuners use filters to remove the high-frequency carriers. Many also filter out the pilot tone, though this may result in a roll-off of 2 or 3 dB at 15 kHz. Increasing numbers use cancellation circuits to remove the pilot tone completely, or nearly so, leaving audio response flat out to the 15-kHz effective limit of FM broadcasting. At worst, you should ex-

In the city, you will almost certainly want both directionality and RF attenuation. Multipath is likely to be fierce, and even a simple indoor dipole may deliver a volt or more to your tuner's input. Again, an outdoor antenna is usually the best, but this is not an option available to many apartment dwellers. If you live in a building with a properly installed master antenna system that provides FM as well as TV, the situation is saved. Unfortunately, such systems often do not include FM, and correct installation is rarer still. The remaining alternative is an indoor antenna. A simple, unadorned set of rabbit ears makes a good, cheap antenna with low gain and some directionality. And for more money, there are several units designed specifically for FM, including the B.I.C. Beam Box, the Winegard FM-

2400 Stereo-Cepton, and Technics' SH-F101.

Many companies make amplifiers to boost the signal from the antenna to the tuner. Rarely is there any need for such a device, and most produce enough noise to make reception of all but the weakest stations worse than it would be without the amplifier. They are best avoided.

If you are shopping for an outdoor antenna, you probably should select a commercial-grade model, which will stand up to wind and weather much better than an ordinary consumer unit. Unless impractical for some reason, connection to the tuner should be via 75-ohm coaxial cable (in preference to 300-ohm twinlead), and in all cases you should make absolutely sure that the antenna is adequately grounded.



pect a pilot suppression figure of 50 dB, though most good tuners will reduce the pilot by 60 to 70 dB.

As in any audio component, frequency response is a critical determinant of sonic quality. A tuner that uses a filter to remove the 19-kHz pilot tone should be flat within  $\pm \frac{1}{2}$ , -3 dB or better from 3 Hz to 15 kHz. One that uses a pilot cancellation circuit can easily be flat within  $\pm \frac{1}{2}$  dB. In either case, it is important that the response be essentially flat and smooth over the entire range almost up to 15 kHz. Few tuners fail to achieve this goal.

The only remaining audio specification of any significance is stereo separation. You need only about 20 dB at midband for good stereo, and it's hard to find a tuner that doesn't provide twice that.

### Tuning Aids

Without proper antenna orientation and accurate tuning, all is lost. Tuners sport a variety of features to help you get things right, the old standbys being the channel-center and signal-strength meters. Provided it is accurate (many aren't), a channel-center meter is a useful tool for finding the lowest distortion point for an FM broadcast. Signal-strength meters are another matter. Usually touted as an aid to antenna orientation, many read full scale at such low signal strengths that they are good indicators only of whether or not you're

getting "enough" signal.

A really useful meter would have enough range to show not only when a signal is too weak, but also when it is too strong. Coupled with a good antenna and a switchable RF attenuator (a LOCAL/DISTANT switch), it would help you obtain optimum signal strength for lowest noise and distortion. If it still were to be used as is for antenna orientation, the meter would have to be fairly large so that you could perceive the changes in signal strength as you rotate the antenna.

Some signal-strength meters can be switched to register multipath. Their performance in this capacity varies from fairly good to virtually useless—with the latter, unfortunately, predominating. The best multipath indicator is an oscilloscope, which also doubles as an excellent channel-center tuning display. A few tuners include small scopes, and many more have rear-panel jacks for connecting an external one. If you don't have an oscilloscope, you can still use these outputs: Connect the vertical scope output to an auxiliary input on your preamp or amp and adjust your antenna for minimum sonic output at the speaker. That will be the correct position for least multipath interference. The only restriction on this neat little trick is that you should not try it with a direct-coupled preamp input.

Superficially resembling an ordinary oscilloscope, the signal spectrum analyzer on the Sequerra Model I is perhaps the ultimate tuning aid. It has three

modes: One displays all signals within  $\pm 1$  MHz of the tuned station, along with their relative frequencies and signal strengths; the second shows the instantaneous modulation level of the tuned signal, its strength (from a few microvolts to almost a volt), and any AM multipath products; and the third is an X-Y display of the audio output. Pretty fancy footwork—but then, the Sequerra costs \$3,600.

Most of us will have to content ourselves with more modest fruits of high technology, in the form of servo-lock and digital tuning. The circuitry has worked its way down even to medium-priced tuners, ensuring growing numbers of users of almost dead-accurate tuning and eliminating the need for channel-center meters.

### Other Features

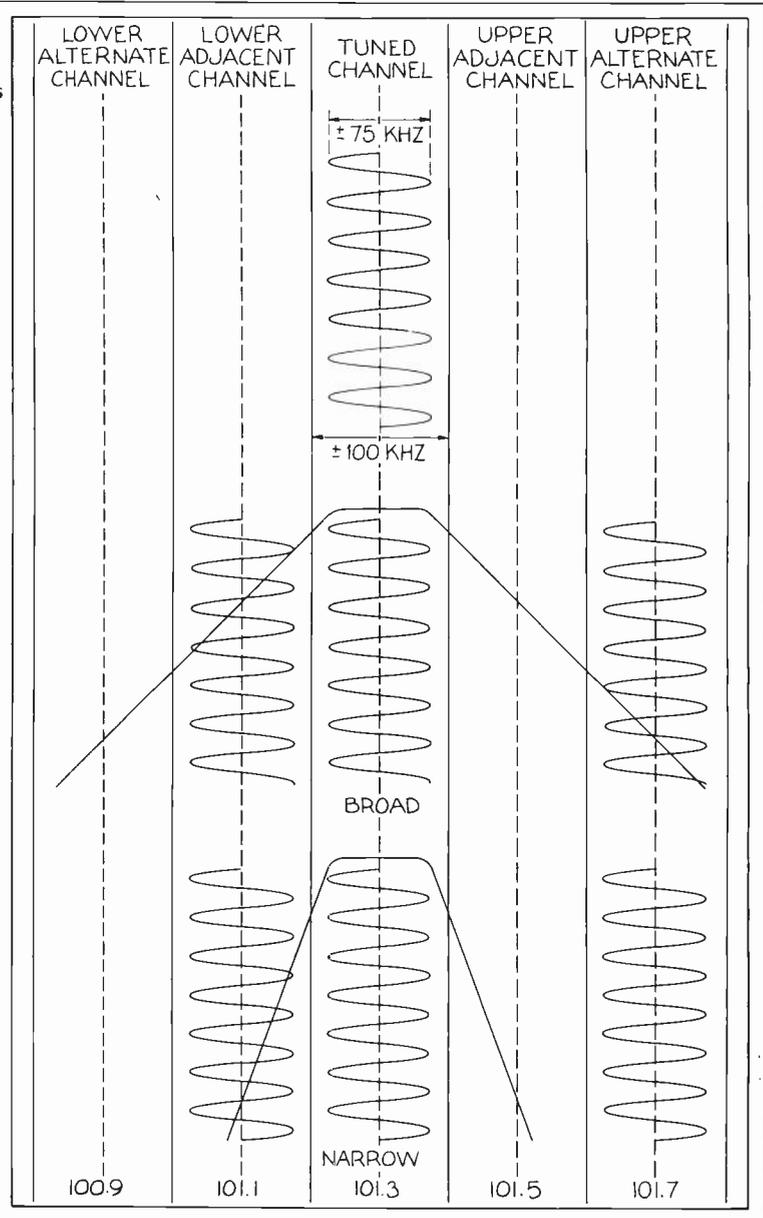
Beyond these "necessities," many tuners have additional features that make them more convenient to use. Most digital tuners, for example, have memories that enable you to store the frequencies of favorite stations. Thereafter, the press of a button will automatically select and tune the desired station perfectly.

Most tuners at all price levels have defeatable interstation muting that cuts the audio output when the input signal drops below a preset level, eliminating noise during tuning and preventing distraction by stations too weak to be re-

## The IF "Proscenium"

Much as the theater's proscenium arch frames the "stage picture," the tuner's IF filter establishes a frame around the channel you're tuning. To this end, the skirts of the filter—the sides of the "arch"—should be precisely vertical to exclude all but the tuned channel, allowing it to pass unimpeded through the opening; the channel's response (the top) should be as flat and the sides as symmetrical as possible to avoid distortion in the final audio. Unfortunately, steep filter skirts also tend to create distorted audio as a result of the phase shift that they induce in the IF they pass.

The diagram suggests how the design engineer uses an IF bandwidth switch to give you the best of two passband worlds. The sine waves represent fully modulated FM stations, whose carrier therefore is varying  $\pm 75$  kHz with respect to the center frequency. We show one potentially interfering station on the alternate channel, 400 kHz away (the worst case you'll normally have to deal with in most areas), and another on an adjacent channel, 200 kHz away. For all practical purposes, our ideal filter can exclude the alternate channel even in its broader passband mode, which allows a great deal of the adjacent channel to get through. When we switch to the narrow mode, we exclude even more of the alternate channel and reduce the portion of the adjacent channel that will come through the filter. But as the band narrows, phase shift impings more on the signal and tuning becomes more critical if the signal is not to get into one "corner" or the other of the opening, making the passband asymmetrical with respect to the center frequency of the selected station.



ceived clearly. A few models also allow adjustment of the muting threshold (the signal strength below which the muting circuit cuts in) to taste. And many have high-frequency blend switches that reduce hiss in weak stereo signals by reducing channel separation at high frequencies; some also include an output level control to match the tuner's sound to that of the system's other components.

For the recordist, there may be a switchable calibration tone, preset to an output level that would be generated by a certain modulation level, giving you a repeatable standard by which to set recording levels on your tape deck. And for those who live in areas served by a station that uses Dolby-B encoding, most tuners have a rear-panel switch that se-

lects either the standard 75-microsecond de-emphasis or the milder 25-microsecond curve required for accurate Dolby reception. A very few also include the decoding circuit or provide a socket for a plug-in Dolby module.

Finally, though you may question calling it a "feature," there's AM. Most tuners include an AM section, usually consisting of a single IC chip, and most are mediocre, even by table-radio standards. Although broadcasters are required to transmit a signal flat up to at least 5 kHz, most component AM sections begin rolling off above a few kilohertz. The reason is that it would cost more to make a really good AM tuner (and a few are available separately or as part of a complete FM/AM tuner) than most people would want to pay for ac-

cess to a medium that they consider, at best, mid-fi. By limiting bandwidth, manufacturers are able to provide reasonably noise-free voice reception at low cost, which is all most audiophiles want or expect.

Looking to the future, there seems to be little prospect for great breakthroughs in tuner design. Refinement will continue, and more of the features now restricted to the upper reaches of the tuner market will trickle down to lower priced products. And we may see more inroads from the digital side of the fence. For example, tuners with a microprocessor to orient an antenna automatically for best reception have been demonstrated. It's an expensive trick right now, but the price will come down. And it certainly is convenient. **HF**

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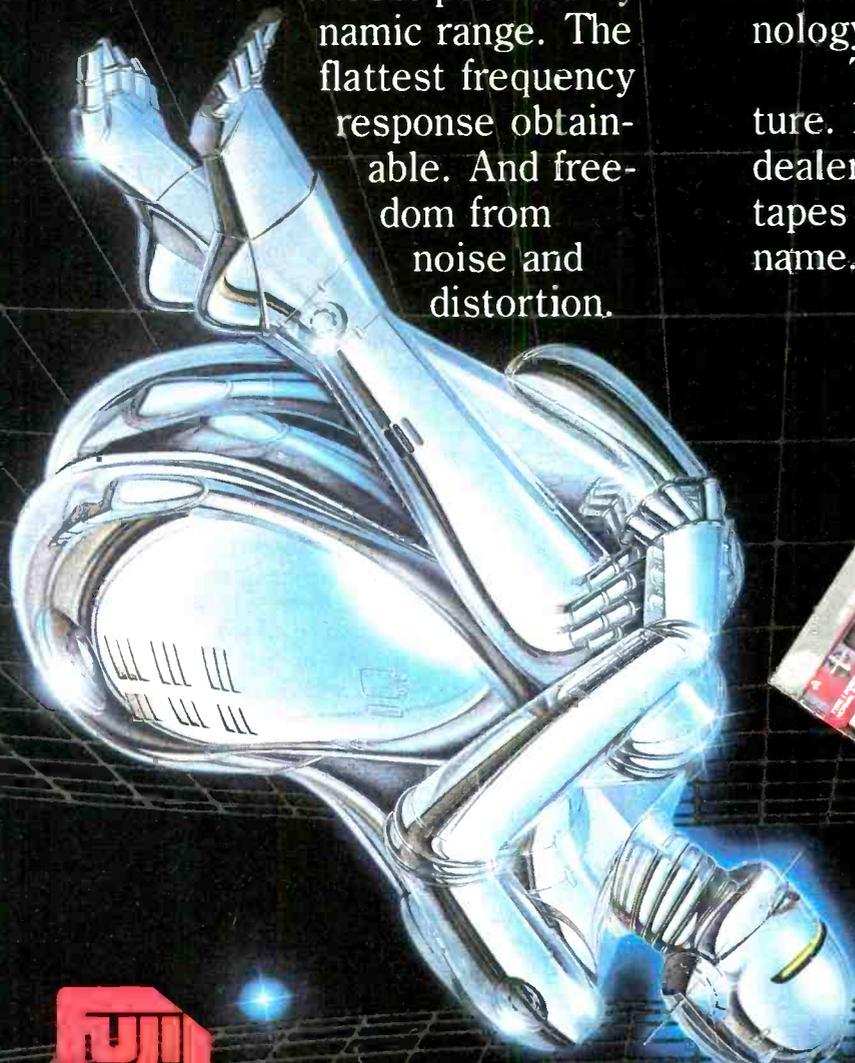
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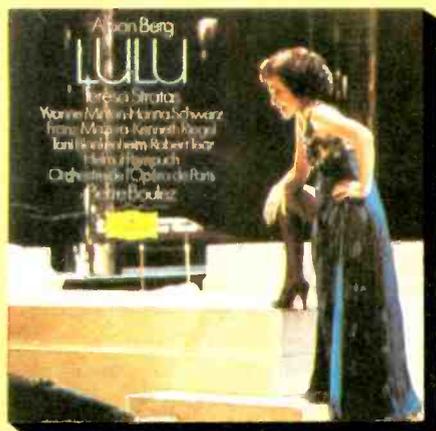
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# The Thirteenth Annual High Fidelity/ International Record Critics Awards



**BERG:** *Lulu*. Teresa Stratas, Kenneth Riegel; Paris Opera, Pierre Boulez. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2711 024 (4).



**SCHOENBERG:** *Gurre-Lieder*. Jessye Norman, Tatiana Troyanos, James McCracken; Boston Symphony, Seiji Ozawa. PHILIPS 6769 038 (2).

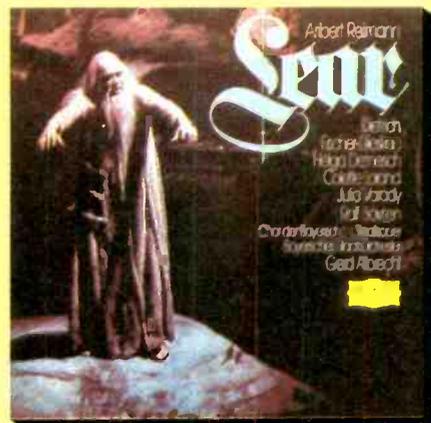


**SHOSTAKOVICH:** *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. Galina Vishnevskaya, Nicolai Gedda; London Philharmonic, Mstislav Rostropovich. ANGEL SCLX 3866 (3).

## Serge and Olga Koussevitzky International Record Awards



**LUCIA DLUGOSZEWSKI:** *Fire Flight*. Orchestra of Our Time, Joel Thome. CANDIDE CE 31113.



**ARIBERT REIMANN:** *Lear*. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau; Bavarian State Opera, Gerd Albrecht. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 089 (3).

## Special Prize

To Antal Dorati and Philips (Phonogram International) for their Haydn opera series recorded in association with Radio Suisse Romande and the European Broadcasting Union.

# An Enlightening Surprise

## Three 20th-Century Vocal Works Voted Best Records of 1980

by Leonard Marcus

**S**TOCKHOLM, SWEDEN—If artistic genius is the total submergence of technique in expression—that is, the transcendence of artistry in the communication of art—then Stockholm introduced me to two performing geniuses last September. One I had previously admired through his records. The other is intrinsically unavailable on recordings, except maybe someday on video discs.

By the strangest of coincidences, Russia's two major conductors—at least among the nondefectors—were both in the Swedish capital the week we were deciding upon the 1980 International Record Critics Awards there. (Latest joke in Scandinavia: What is a Soviet string quartet? The Moscow Philharmonic after a Carnegie Hall concert.) More divergent talents would be hard to imagine, not merely because Yevgeny Svetlanov gave every indication of being a hack, but because Gennady Rozhdestvensky is obviously one of those vanishingly rare conductors whose baton

technique alone would stamp him as a genius. Not only can his stick control an orchestra's every nuance, but it also can mesmerize an audience.

Rozhdestvensky looks like a character actor Hollywood might have hired in the 1940s to portray a second-rate Hungarian music "professor." His bald pate, separating long fringes of hair, emphasizes the caricature evoked by his thick glasses and nearly supercilious smile. On-stage he seems to shrink in height, and one observer compared him to a mouse. But as soon as he gives the downbeat, one is aware of a startlingly virtuoso performer who elicits sounds from the orchestra (in this case the Stockholm Philharmonic) with an infinite vocabulary of gestures. His baton will change from hand to hand or rest on the music stand, depending on the effect he is trying for. One can even find satisfaction in the way he turns a page. Usually he just hovers, plucking sounds, when necessary, from one or another in-

strumental choir, but he may eschew gestures altogether, like a champion jockey who instinctively senses when to do nothing so as not to disturb his winning horse. Such a sorcerer is Rozhdestvensky that he made a concert of Sibelius' *Night Ride*, Elgar's *Sea Pictures* (with Birgit Finnilä in luscious voice), and Nilssen's Third Symphony sound like an evening of major music-making.

Svetlanov, in contrast, was a simple time-beater, with hands as expressive as windshield wipers and a musical mind to match—at least during the rehearsal I attended. (I could not make the concert.) The conductor, following the Stockholm Radio Symphony and soloist Malcolm Frager in Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto, would stop the ensemble only on those occasions when Frager diplomatically whispered requests to have the players mold or shade a phrase in a particular way. In those passages alone would a listener get a sense of artistic striving from the orchestra. After one haphazard run-through, with half the rehearsal time remaining, Svetlanov exited to go fishing.

The other performing genius I saw was a young ballerina making her debut in a leading role as Juliet (or Julia, as the Royal Swedish Ballet styles it) in Kenneth Macmillan's choreography for Prokofiev's music. Her name is Madeleine Onne. Remember it. If a movie producer



Koussevitzky prize was awarded for the first time to a woman composer, Lucia Dlugoszewski. U.S. Embassy cultural officer Ann Gurvin accepted.



Inga Rothelius of Deutsche Grammophon receives the IRCA Award for Alban Berg's *Lulu*, an epochal recording of Friedrich Cerha's restoration. Leonard Marcus applauds approvingly.

finds her, she could become the most enticing embodiment of vulnerability since that other Swede, Greta Garbo. During the three-hour production she grew from a little girl to a tragic heroine in every part of her body. She was pure expression from forehead to toes. Technique simply was not apparent. I hope America gets to see her dance.

Our deliberations for the IRCA and Koussevitzky prizes were as enlightening as ever, and thus our surprise was muted when we found that we had voted as the best records of the year three twentieth-century vocal works, two of them operas about man-destroying women! (And last year a grand prize went to the Behrens/Karajan *Salome*.) Could we all be misogynists? After all, this year (and last) we had an all-male panel. But then again, for the first time we gave a Koussevitzky prize to a woman composer, Detroit-born Lucia Dlugoszewski, whom none of us had previously known of. Her *Fire Fragile Flight* shared the award with Aribert Reimann's *Lear*, one of the most talked-about new European works in years.

The hair-raising performance of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mitzensk District* conducted by Mstislav Rostropovich, with his wife in a hysterical role that seems perfectly mated to her unique voice, was the sole winner on the first ballot, despite some negative

comments about close miking. We voted unanimously, however, to give equivalent prizes to the second-ballot winners: Berg's *Lulu*, like the Shostakovich a first complete recording, in the Paris production directed by Pierre Boulez and with an excellent Teresa Stratas as the leading lady, and Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder*, with a superlative James McCracken, Jessye Norman, and Boston Symphony Orchestra led by Seiji Ozawa. While the differences between *Lady Macbeth* and the later watered-down *Katerina Ismailova* are fairly critical, the new *Lulu* is even more significant, incorporating for the first time the third act, which not only is the most dramatic act, but as it turns out, makes sense of the other two. At least three of the judges never liked the work at all until this production, even though most acknowledged that the previous recording, the incomplete version conducted by Christoph von Dohnányi, is a finer performance.

#### Highly Praised Blockbusters

As for *Gurre-Lieder*, all thought it about the best they had ever heard, despite some picked nits about Tatiana Troyanos and the "nonanalytical" sound. Also, our German judge, Ingo Harden, noted that "this is a German work. Ozawa is a very good German, McCracken is a very good German—but

not Werner Klemperer." The actor, best known in America for the television program *Hogan's Heroes*, "sounds as though he has potatoes in his mouth." Yet the Romanian Alfred Hoffman countered convincingly with, "If someone who has never before heard *Gurre-Lieder* picks up this record, he will fall in love with it. Sometimes we must forget we're critics and just be human beings."

Among sound spectaculars, the two most highly praised blockbusters were both from EMI (Angel in the U.S.): André Previn's London Symphony recording of Debussy's *Images* and the Philadelphia Orchestra under Riccardo Muti in Stravinsky's *Sacre du printemps*. The Europeans were disappointed in the sound of the Telarc recording of Lorin Maazel and the Cleveland Orchestra in Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4, whose sonics have received much acclaim from U.S. critics. A third disc recommended to impress neighbors or break leases was DG's *Alexander Nevsky* under Claudio Abbado.

There were other interesting runners-up in the IRCA sweepstakes, including the Bartók Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2, with Maurizio Pollini giving a rendition perhaps too polished, but the best in years. (Several on the panel preferred the Anda/Fricsay.) Bengt Pleijel of Sweden claimed that the Second reminded him of the way he heard Bartók play it.



Anders Holmstedt, director of EMI for Scandinavia and Finland, accepts the diploma for the Shostakovich opera from *Princess Lilian*.



Per-Arne Lindholm, director of Polygram-Sweden, receives the award for Philips' impressive live recording of Schoenberg's *Gurre-Lieder*.



Rozhdestvensky: Startlingly virtuoso.



Ballerina Madeleine Onne as Juliet: Pure expression from forehead to toe.

Leonard Bernstein's set of the Beethoven symphonies was described as "the best if you have to buy a box," although "the sound is not worthy of the performances," which themselves are "too consistent," according to our new French panelist, Alain Fantapié—a knowledgeable, serious, yet charming cosmopolite. "There's no sense of an evolution of style," he said. Herbert von Karajan's *Pelléas et Mélisande* is "the *Pelléas* of my dreams" for England's Ted Greenfield; is "clear and satisfying, not the usual foggy Debussy style," for Germany's Harden; and was even approved by Fantapié, if "not my idea of *Pelléas*." Vladimir Horowitz' concerts were praised, but again, RCA's sound was deemed not worthy of the artist. The Berg and Stravinsky violin concertos were played as they probably never have been played before, by Itzhak Perlman accompanied by Ozawa and the BSO.

Finally, we voted a special award to Antal Dorati and Philips for bringing to the attention of the civilized world those extraordinary masterpieces, Haydn's operas. Though *Armida* did not receive a prize, as part of the series it may still be the most important contribution the record industry has made to cultural life this year.

This year's awards were presented in the magnificent Stockholm City Hall—and in the room where the Nobel Prize ceremonies are held—by Sweden's Princess Lilian.

## Nominating Committee

### AUSTRIA

Peter Cossé, *Salzburger Nachrichten*

### BELGIUM

Jerge Martin Hambersin,  
*Hifi Musique*

Roger Hofmans, *De Standaard*

### BULGARIA

Dimiter Zenginov,  
*Bulgarska Musica*

### FRANCE

Staff of *Diapason*

Alain Fantapié, *Diapason*

Harry Halbreich, *Le Monde*

### GERMANY

Ingo Harden, *HiFi Stereophonie*

Staff of *HiFi Stereophonie*

Dr. Wolfgang Seifert, *Musikmarkt*

Dr. Gerhard Wienke, *Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik*

### ITALY

Luigi Bellingardi, RAI

### JAPAN

Toshio Oka, *Stereo Sound*  
and *Stereo Geijutsu*

Kenji Tsumori, *Asahi Shimbun*

### THE NETHERLANDS

Jan de Kruijff, *Disk*

### ROMANIA

Alfred Hoffman, *Romania Literara*

### SPAIN

José-Luis Perez de Arteaga, *Ritmo*

### SWEDEN

Bengt Pleijel, *Musikrevy*

### SWITZERLAND

Gerold Fierz-Bantli,

*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

Pierre Michot, *Journal de Genève*  
and *Gazette de Lausanne*

### UNITED KINGDOM

John Crabbe,

*Hi-Fi News & Record Review*

Edward Greenfield, *Guardian*  
and *Gramophone*

Robert Layton, *Gramophone*  
and BBC

### UNITED STATES

John Ardoin, *Dallas Morning News*

Martin Bookspan,

*Consumer Reports*

Milton A. Caine,

*American Record Guide*

Jay Carr, *Detroit News*

Peter Davis, *New York Times*

David Hamilton, *The Nation*

Harry Haskell, *Kansas City Star*

Paul Hertelendy, *San Jose Mercury*  
*News*

Staff of HIGH FIDELITY

Richard L. Kaye, WCRB (Boston)

Robert C. Marsh,

*Chicago Sun-Times*

Alan Penchansky, *Billboard*

Kenneth Terry, *Cash Box*

Heuwell Tircuit, *San Francisco*  
*Chronicle*

Tom Villella, *Cleveland Press*

Michael Walsh,

*San Francisco Examiner*

Daniel Webster,

*Philadelphia Inquirer*



## Judges

Left to right: Gerold Fierz-Bantli, Switzerland; Alain Fantapié, France; Ingo Harden, Germany; Alfred Hoffman, Romania; Edward Greenfield, England; Leonard Marcus, United States; José-Luis Perez de Arteaga, Spain; and Bengt Pleijel, chairman, Sweden.

## Other Recordings Nominated

C.P.E. BACH: *Symphonies* (8). Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood. OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 557/8 (2).

BACH: *Brandenburg Concertos* (6). Aston Magna Festival, Albert Fuller. SMITHSONIAN 3016 (3).

BARTÓK: *Piano Concertos Nos. 1, 2*. Maurizio Pollini; Chicago Symphony, Claudio Abbado. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 901.

BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concertos Nos. 1, 2*. Radu Lupu; Israel Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta. LONDON LDR 10006.

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet for Strings, No. 14, Op. 131 (arr.)*. Vienna Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 077.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphonies* (9). Vienna Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 216 SKL (8).

BERG, STRAVINSKY: *Violin Concertos*. Itzhak Perlman; Boston Symphony, Seiji Ozawa. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 110.

BRAHMS: *Symphonies* (4); *Overtures* (2). Chicago Symphony, Georg Solti. LONDON CSA 2406 (4).

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 8*. Cologne Radio Symphony, Günter Wand. GERMAN HARMONIA MUNDI 153-99853/4 (2). Imported by German News.

CABEZÓN: *Complete Works*. Antonio Baciero. HISPAVOX S 96.801 (8). Imported by International Book and Record.

DEBUSSY: *Images; Prélude à*

*l'après-midi*. London Symphony, André Previn. ANGEL DS 37674.

DEBUSSY: *Images; Estampes*. Paul Jacobs. NONESUCH H 71365.

DEBUSSY: *Pelléas et Mélisande*. Richard Stilwell, Frederica von Stade; Berlin Philharmonic, Herbert von Karajan. ANGEL SZCX 3885 (3).

HAYDN: *Armida*. Jessye Norman, Claes H. Ahnsjö; Lausanne Chamber, Antal Dorati. PHILIPS 6769 021 (3).

HAYDN: *Piano Trios* (43). Beaux Arts. PHILIPS 6768 077 (14). Available on single discs in the U.S.

HAYDN: *String Quartets* (6), Op. 20. Juilliard. CBS MASTERWORKS M3 34593 (3).

HINDEMITH: *Mathis der Maler*. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, James King; Bavarian Radio Symphony, Rafael Kubelik. ANGEL SZCX 3869 (3).

JANÁČEK: *The Makropoulos Affair*. Elisabeth Söderström, Peter Dvorský; Vienna Philharmonic, Charles Mackerras. LONDON OSA 12116 (2).

LASSO: *Moduli quinis vocibus*. Collegium Vocale, Philippe Herreweghe. ASTRÉE AS 44. Imported by Audio Source.

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 4*. Berlin Philharmonic, Herbert von Karajan. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 205.

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 5; Adagio*. London Philharmonic, Klaus Tennstedt. ANGEL SZ 3883 (2).

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 9*. Philadelphia Orchestra, James Levine. RCA RED SEAL ARL 2-3461 (2).

MASSENET: *Cendrillon*. Fred-

erica von Stade, Nicolai Gedda; Philharmonia Orchestra, Julius Rudel. CBS MASTERWORKS M3 35194 (3).

MASSENET: *Werther*. Alfredo Kraus, Tatiana Troyanos; London Philharmonic, Michel Plasson. ANGEL SZCX 3894 (3).

PROKOFIEV: *Alexander Nevsky*. Elena Obraztsova; London Symphony, Claudio Abbado. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 202.

REIMANN: *Lear*. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau; Bavarian State Opera, Gerd Albrecht. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2709 089 (3).

ROSSINI: *Otello*. José Carreras, Frederica von Stade; Philharmonia Orchestra, Jesús López-Cobos. PHILIPS 6769 023 (3).

SCHUBERT: *Symphonies Nos. 3, 8*. Vienna Philharmonic, Carlos Kleiber. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 124.

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Symphonies Nos. 6, 11*. Bournemouth Symphony, Paavo Berglund. EMI SLS 5177 (2). Imported by German News.

J. STRAUSS: *Waltzes (arr. Schoenberg, Berg, Webern)*. Boston Symphony Chamber Players. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 977.

STRAVINSKY: *Le Sacre du printemps*. Philadelphia Orchestra, Riccardo Muti. ANGEL SZ 37646.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 4*. Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel. TELARC 10047.

VLADIMIR HOROWITZ: *The Horowitz Concerts, 1978-1979*. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-3433.

# Behind the Scenes

The mail-order Musical Heritage Society has been eyeing the retail market for some time and will finally take the plunge next month. Under the name **Music Masters**, it will offer an initial release of eight discs—all original MHS recordings spotlighting American performers—half of which have not yet appeared in its mail-order catalog. Of particular interest will be the first of a new series of releases featuring the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Other retail items not previously released include an anthology of Elizabethan English songs intriguingly titled “So Quick, So Hot, So Mad” (parental guidance suggested). All titles will be issued in simultaneous disc and cassette editions at a suggested retail price of \$8.98.

Looking farther ahead, MHS plans for early next year a set of the Ives violin sonatas, played by Daniel Stepner and the noted Ives specialist, pianist John Kirkpatrick. In addition to the four sonatas, the package will contain the first recording of the original version for violin and piano of what later became Ives's *Holidays* Symphony. Producer Samuel Parkins reports that Stepner and Kirkpatrick recorded these works from memory, without the aid of scores—a remarkable feat in music of this complexity.

And more Ives: A new audiophile cassette recording company, A.A.G. Music, recently made a digitally taped recording of the *Concord* Piano Sonata played by Irma Vallecillo, heretofore better known as an accompanist for such performers as Benita Valente and Jean-Pierre Rampal. MacDonald Moore, founder of the company, plans next year to record two digital albums devoted to the vocal and piano works of Virgil Thomson. The emphasis on the home-grown is also reflected in the licensed material included in A.A.G.'s first release: from Philo Records, “Vermont Harmony, Vol. II,” an album of old American partsongs, and Jean Redpath's “Song of the Seals”; from Titanic, a recording by the Empire Brass Quintet and the Amadé Trio's performances of three Haydn piano trios.

The Montreal Symphony Orchestra, under its permanent conductor Charles Dutoit, has made its first recordings for London—two pairs of concertos. Kyung-Wha Chung played the Saint-Saëns Violin

Concerto No. 1 and Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* while guitarist Carlos Bonell recorded Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* and *Fantasia para un gentilhomme*. The company also journeyed to Detroit to wrap up the Szymanowski Second and Third Symphonies and to record some Dvořák (*Czech Suite* and waltzes) and Stravinsky's *Petrushka*—all led by Antal Dorati.

Brilly Imports, which last year began importing French Harmonia Mundi discs and has since added Chandos, Calliope, and other European labels, has just launched a more exotic venture with a release of Hong Kong Records. The recordings, made not in Hong Kong, but in Japan (in 1978), feature Japanese and expatriate Chinese musicians in the sort of Westernized “socialist-realism” music composed during the first two decades after “liberation”: a *Long March* Symphony and a *Butterfly Lovers* Violin Concerto (previously available in other versions on Everest and Candide).

CBS's current twenty-fifth-anniversary celebratory album of recordings by Glenn Gould contains the pianist's previously unreleased 1966 taping with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf of Richard Strauss's *Ophelia Lieder*. Still in the “icebox” from that remarkable collaboration are Strauss's “*Heimliche Aufforderung*” and “*Morgen*,” Op. 27, Nos. 3 and 4, “*Winterweibe*,” Op. 48, No. 4, and his setting of the Alsatian folksong “*Wer lieben will, muss leiden*,” Op. 49, No. 7. Who knows if and when those will be issued?

But CBS won't be bringing out the performances of Beethoven's middle piano sonatas by that other intellectual pianist/author, Charles Rosen. Rosen, whose three-disc album of the great composer's last five sonatas is one of the glories of the CBS catalog, is currently recording Op. 31, Nos. 1–3, the *Waldstein*, the *Appassionata*, and *Les Adieux*, along with one or two short sonatas of the period to fill out another three records. But this time the recordings, made under the guidance of award-winning Dutch producer Klaas Posthuma, will be issued by Nonesuch.

Harold Farberman is continuing his series of digital Mahler symphonies for the Moss Music Group's full-price MMG la-

bel. Nos. 1 and 4 were scheduled for issue by November, and last August the conductor led the London Symphony Orchestra in Nos. 5 and 6. Farberman, who feels that Mahler is usually played too fast, took notably slow tempos in the Fifth, particularly in the last movement. He also reversed the two middle movements of the Sixth from the printed score's version—as Mahler himself was wont to do—and reinstated a third hammer blow in its finale, which the composer deleted, reputedly because he felt it signaled his own death. The conductor took along his own cowbells, which he had purchased from a farmer after hearing sounds from them that he enjoyed. Producer for these August sessions was Max Wilcox, formerly of RCA.

Esoteric fare of a Gallic sort is due from Philips. Violinist Gidon Kremer, who apparently wandered in from DG (just one big happy family at Polygram!), has recorded a very mixed *sac* of French works with Riccardo Chailly and the London Symphony: Chausson's *Poème*, Milhaud's ballet *Le Boeuf sur le toit* in its violin-concerto version, Vieuxtemps's *Fantasia appassionata*, and the Canzonetta third movement from Godard's *Concerto romantique*. Who says there's no sense of adventure left in this business?

Meanwhile, Philips' “other” violinist, Salvatore Accardo, has taken to Haydn concertos of one sort or another in a series of recordings with the English Chamber Orchestra: three solo concertos (Nos. 1, 3, 4), a double concerto for violin and harpsichord (with Bruno Canino), and the Op. 84 *Sinfonia concertante* (with Heinrich Schiff, cello; Neal Black, oboe; and Graham Sheen, bassoon).

London Records completed its sessions for Boito's *Mefistofele* during the last days of August in the Walthamstow (England) Town Hall. The antagonists were Luciano Pavarotti as Faust and Nicolai Ghiaurov in the title role. Mirella Freni sang Marguerite and Montserrat Caballé Helen of Troy, Oliviero de Fabritiis conducting. The last time London made a recording of the opera, its *Mefistofeles* (Cesare Siepi) didn't whistle very well, so the Faust (Mario del Monaco) had to be called in to supply the devil's signal. Not so this time, we understand. **HF**

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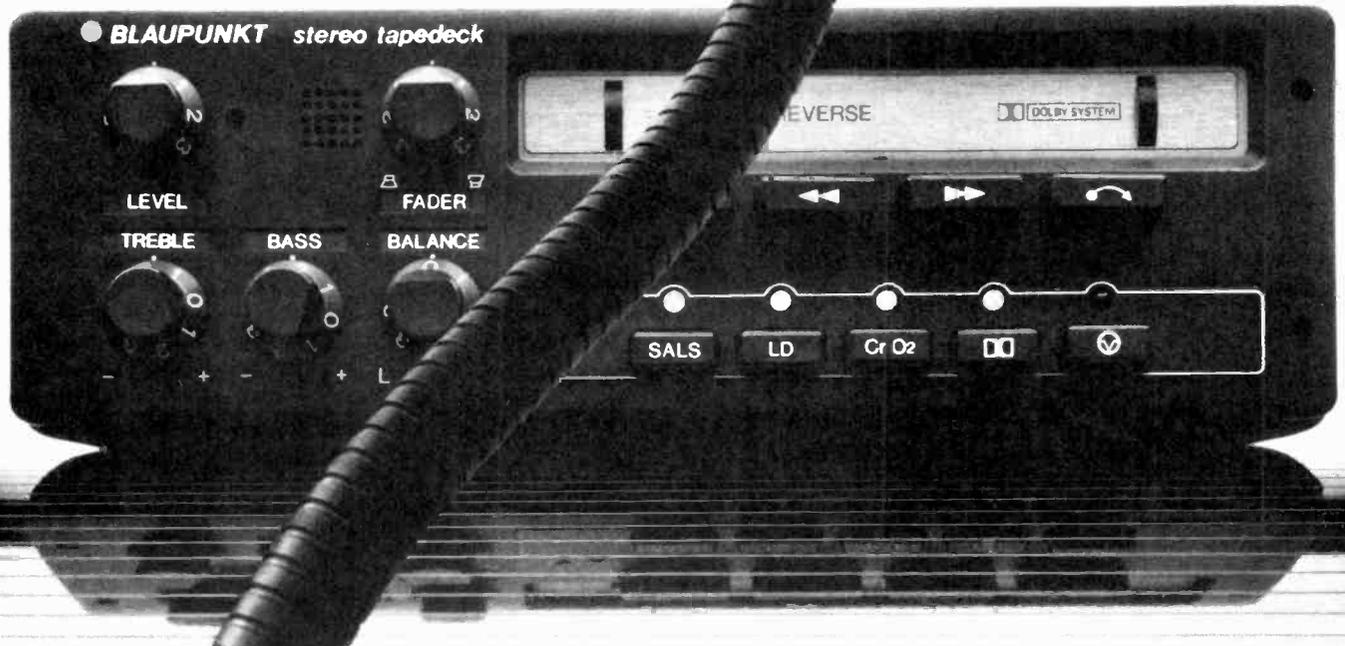
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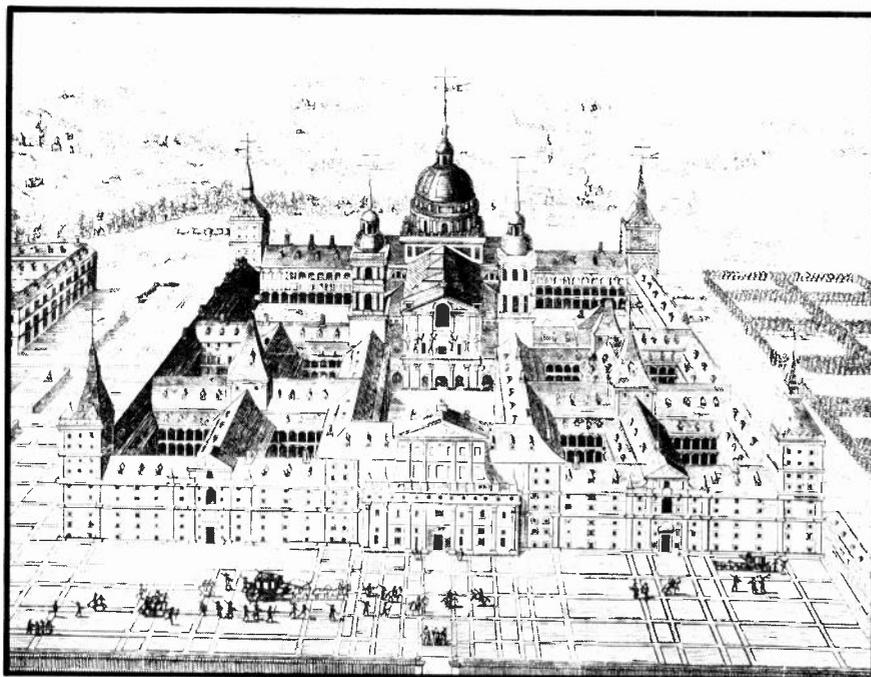


# Record Reviews

## Light from the Gloom

Performances on various keyboards point up the versatility of Soler's sunny creations.

by Kenneth Cooper



The Escorial—"Monkish necropolis" that Soler called home

Antonio Soler y Ramos (1729-83), born in the Catalan town of Olot de Porrera (Gerona), became one of a generation of native Spanish musicians to bloom after a century of his country's dependence on foreign talent. At age six he was enrolled in the *Escolanía* (singing school) of the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat [cf. Nicholas Kenyon's Gesualdo review in this issue—Ed.], which gave him as well rounded a liberal arts education as was possible in an ecclesiastical Spanish community. He held several "magisterio de capilla" positions as a youth, took his minor orders, and in 1752 became a "Padre" of the Hieronymite monastery of San Lorenzo at the Escorial, accepting the post of organist and chapelmaster there five years later. Upon the accession of Carlos III de Borbón in 1760, Soler began to give keyboard lessons to the Infante Don Gabriel (1752-88), for which service he was paid twenty-five doubloons a year. In 1762 he published his lengthy treatise *Llave de la Modulaci3n y anti-*

*güedades de la música*, and afterward he corresponded with Padre Martini about various theoretical matters.

The Escorial, where Soler spent his entire life after 1752, had been the burial place of Spanish kings since Philip II thought, in the words of Voltaire, that "God could be bought with buildings." It was, to all observers, one of the gloomiest places on earth. François René de Chateaubriand, visiting in 1808, was chilled by "its taciturn appearance" and noted that it "had 1,140 windows, about three-quarters of them broken." To Alexandre Dumas (1846), it evoked "not admiration, but terror," and Gerard Manley Hopkins (1860) declared, "There is a massy pile above the waste." Théophile Gautier (1843) called it a "desert of granite, this monkish necropolis . . . architectural nightmare which I thought would never end. . . . I advise those persons who have the idiocy to maintain that they are bored to go and pass three or four days at the Escorial; there they will discover

what real tedium means. . . ."

Apparently the hunting was good, for the court visited the Escorial every fall from late October to early December. During Soler's first five years there, the entourage included Queen Maria Barbara's music master, Domenico Scarlatti, who, if he didn't actually teach Soler (as Lord Fitzwilliam said), at least had a profound influence on his style; Soler, too, hints in his treatise that he was the copyist of some volumes of Scarlatti sonatas. He was famous for his diligence to the extent that, according to the *Memorias sepulcrales*, "He was always in his cell, and no one could see him outside it except during his religious services. Even then, he was always in a hurry because, in his own words, 'he was out of his surroundings,' and he used to add that his time was always too short and that he was surprised to see those who were always talking and who seemed to do nothing at all."

Whether Soler's religious music reflects the dreary surroundings of the Escorial is not yet known—a great deal of it is still in manuscript—but the atmosphere generated in his keyboard music could not be more opposite. Tragedy, moroseness, and coldness occasionally appear, but Spain's sunny side, her passion and wit, her lusty dances, and her bizarre and extravagant gestures are much more in evidence.

No autographs of Soler's 122 known sonatas survive; thus, their dating is largely guesswork. A clear stylistic change emerges, however, as he moves out of his Scarlattian baroque world into a classical Haydnesque one. Frederick Marvin suggests that he became acquainted with Haydn's music when Boccherini traveled to Madrid in 1769. Perhaps, too, his younger patrons preferred a somewhat "easier style," as Scarlatti put it. The decorative elements in the later, multimovement sonatas and concertos become rather desperately florid (though entertaining), as if to compensate for the concomitant loss of harmonic and melodic activity. The earlier, Scarlattian sonatas (single movements, occasionally paired) are energetic, poetic, imaginative, sophisticated works that, unlike the "classical" ones, are not easily spoiled by less inspired performances. The best we can do at present about a comprehensive Soler numbering system is to rely on the more or less complete edition by Samuel Rubio (*Unión Musical Española*, begun in 1957). Record collectors should be alerted that, prior to 1957, the only Soler

sonatas readily available were the fifteen edited in a heavy-handed, pianistic manner by Joaquín Nin (published in 1925 and 1928); most of the popular recordings use Nin's versions or, as more recently, Rubio's or Marvin's improved editions of the same sonatas.

Possibly the three greatest Soler discs are the 1975 Desmar (DSM 1001) by Fernando Valenti and the two present reissues from the late '60s by Rafael Puyana and Alicia de Larrocha. The sonatas are, with only two exceptions, extracted from the Nin fifteen, but to say that the recordings duplicate (or triplicate) one another would be like saying that Horowitz duplicates Rubinstein. There is hardly a sonata on any of the three records that isn't given a masterly performance.

Puyana uses a Pleyel with everything on it. Despite some muddiness (and some distortion on my copy) caused by heavy use of the sixteen-foot, there is no question that the registration has been planned with humor, variety, and a sensitive artist's eye for shapes and colors. Registration these days has taken an austere turn (compare, e.g., the Gilbert/Pinnock disc), and it is possible to debate the matter in terms of the available keyboard instruments of Soler's time. But Puyana seems to be more interested in showing us the orchestral and instrumental images behind these pieces, an equally valid and potentially more imaginative approach. This record is a ball, because he understands how to score all those oboes, bassoons, horns, guitars, etc., the way Soler might have heard them; in spite of the Pleyel's sometimes unharpichordlike sound, I cannot find Puyana's dazzling playing unnatural, unstylish, or disturbing. Standouts include R. 19, a passionate work, and R. 21, in which Puyana's coloristic flair and rhythmic surprise enable him to steal a nose ahead of De Larrocha. (Speaking of stealing, both artists play the same delicious Spanish broken-octave ornament in the second theme.)

Not to be missed is the incredible, relentless, spacy fandango, which Puyana shortens and strengthens slightly (rightly omitting Rubio's gross tonic ending), ornamenting it in the most daring and authentic way. It is 9 minutes and 43 seconds of hair-raising harpsichord playing, relieved finally by the operatic bustle of the most popular Soler sonata, R. 84. As in the opera buffa overtures (*sinfonias*) of the time, the 3/8 allegros and prestos of Scarlatti and Soler offer their greatest excitement as closers. De Larrocha's R. 84 is less bombastic but equally delightful, although her live recording of 1974 (London CS 6953) is naughtier and more naturally reproduced.

De Larrocha's recital is a charmer.

Each sonata is carefully planned in terms of its dynamic scale, contrast pattern, ornamentation growth, and needed variety of articulation. She demonstrates such a profound understanding of the piano that I cannot suggest she is trying to make it sound like a harpsichord, but every now and then the sonic dryness or the fastidiousness of the staccato or the discreet pedaling gives that impression. One can be over-careful in eighteenth-century music. In Bach, Handel, Scarlatti, and even Mozart, some seemingly articulate scale or arpeggio passages were meant to be heard lumped together, as it were, in one sound. Increasing speed (by introducing smaller note-values, for example) was one way of increasing volume on the old keyboard instruments, and harpsichordists make special efforts to hold notes down and exaggerate *legatos* in order to avoid unwanted dryness. It therefore seems to me authentic, appropriate, and legal to use pedal on a Steinway to clarify phraseology, shape rhetoric, and simulate room acoustics.

De Larrocha finds rhythmic syncopations in the most wonderful places: Her pointillistic texture allows miraculous tiny details to be shot into relief. In R. 89, for instance, she vivaciously and cinematically seems to change pianos from one phrase to the next; even in this tape age, I know (I hope) that this is her artistry, not her editor's. In R. 88 (the very first Soler sonata recorded, by Marguerite Roesgen-Champion for HMV in 1929), De Larrocha takes over the field with a demonic momentum. (Puyana does a great guitar imitation in this one.) Her most fascinating performance might be R. 90, in which she controls an unbelievable number of simultaneous sound levels. (Valenti, especially on a 1950 *Allegro* record he told me never to listen to, displays a tremendous grasp of the scene of this one.)

From the viewpoint of interpretive creativity, the discs by Bernard Brauchli and Kenneth Gilbert/Trevor Pinnock offer less than Puyana and De Larrocha; one is compelled to shift one's listening focus so as to concentrate on the sound rather than the drama. Indeed, the clearer and leaner textures of the clavichord, harpsichord (without sixteen-foot), and *fortepiano* are refreshing and enlightening.

Brauchli's performances of the long-neglected "classical" sonatas (R. 67 and 95) are, in a word, funereal. (Perhaps the Escorial, beautifully photographed on Titanic's cover, has been more depressing to him than it was to Soler.) But he plays a gorgeous, dark-toned, resonant clavichord by Eckehart Merzdorf of West Germany, a copy of the 1796 Carmo of Lisbon, one of

five surviving Iberian clavichords. The clavichord is a logical instrument for Soler. Traditionally, organists kept clavichords for teaching and practice during those hours when quiet was desired or when the church was unheated. One of the earliest references to the instrument (1478) is in the statutes of Sechau's Augustinian Choral Foundation, which "allowed clavichord practice, but scandalous and lascivious clanging and sounding of horns, winds, and musical instruments which can be heard outside the gates is forbidden." In the eighteenth century, the clavichord's inherent quiet and sensitivity were seen as positive values and were responsible for its popularity.

For some reason Brauchli chooses to play some of the more extroverted symphonic pieces, not an incorrect choice, but an insensitive one, especially as he sometimes imparts a "free fantasy" improvisational style to them. There are, furthermore, so many wrong (principal-note) trills that I took another look at his credentials; but discovering the same state of affairs chez Gilbert and Pinnock, whom I know to be musicologists of integrity, I confess suspecting a fad or a protest. I do not consider this point controversial. Upper-note trills, like good table manners, are not a matter of

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#### SOLER: Keyboard Works.

**R** Rafael Puyana and \*Genoveva Galvez, harpsichords. MERCURY SRI 75131, \$6.98 [from MERCURY SR 90459, 1967].

Sonatas: in F sharp, R. 90; in C sharp minor, R. 21; in D, R. 84; in D flat, R. 88; in D minor, R. 117; in C minor, R. 19. Fandango. Concerto for Two Keyboards, No. 3, in G.\*

#### SOLER: Sonatas for Keyboard (8).

**B R** Alicia de Larrocha, piano. TURNABOUT TV 34753, \$4.98 [from EPIC BC 1389, 1968].

Sonatas: in F sharp, R. 90; in C sharp minor, R. 21; in G minor, R. 87; in D flat, R. 88; in D minor, R. 24; in D, R. 84; in F sharp minor, R. 85; in F, R. 89.

#### SOLER: Sonatas for Keyboard (5).

Bernard Brauchli, clavichord. [Ralph Döpmeier, prod.] TITANIC TI 42, \$9.00.

Sonatas: in D minor, R. 24; in E minor, R. 52; in D, R. 67; in A, R. 95; in G, R. 116.

#### SOLER: Concertos for Two Keyboards (6).

Kenneth Gilbert and Trevor Pinnock, harpsichords and *fortepianos*. [Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 445, \$9.98.

Concertos: No. 1, in C; No. 2, in A minor; No. 3, in G; No. 4, in F; No. 5, in A; No. 6, in D.

opinion; essentially, they may not really matter, but failure to oblige is considered poor taste. As I've always understood it, the eighteenth-century trill consists of a tension between *two* notes, piqued by its initial dissonance; in the nineteenth century, a trill was conceived as a coloration of a *single* note. If, in fact, Frederick Neumann and others can demonstrate that performers in the eighteenth century were careless, it behooves us to be willing and able to make the necessary value judgment.

The Gilbert/Pinnock disc traverses the set of "*Seis Conciertos de dos órganos obligados. Compuestos por el Pe Fr Antonio Soler para la diversión del 55mo Infante de España, Dn Gabriel de Borbón.*" The artists give a well-executed and pleasant account of these gallant works, playing three each on two harpsichords and two fortepianos, all fine copies of eighteenth-century instruments. There are many brilliant runs, sparkling dialogues, stirring *unisoni*, and there are trite ideas and tedious times, too. The performers sometimes blunt Soler's classical charm by being reticent about ornamenting (or excising) repeats, about daring to exceed "normal" legato and staccato concepts, and about departing from the beat for a little lilt or rubato. It is delightful to hear some of the high-register passages—often lowered on organs lacking those notes—restored.

The major contribution of the Archiv recording is its version of the Second Concerto, in A minor, an almost C.P.E.-Bach-like excursion (unusual for Soler) into the realm of *Empfindsamkeit*, the sensitive style. Fortepianos sound best in this music, as they are much more expressive and communicative than organs, with which the work has been recorded previously. (Joseph Payne and Anthony Newman offer some wild registration in their 1966 two-harpsichord performance, Turnabout TV 34136.) The Third Concerto, best known of the six, receives what I thought was a lively performance, especially of the *menué* with all its flamboyant variations, until I heard Puyana/Galvez. Maybe Soler wouldn't have cared for two *Pleyels* any more than for one, but the piece careens to life, animated by the Colombian team's quicker tempos, more flexible rubato, zestier syncopations, and more finely tuned sense of orchestral color and balance.

I suppose someone will ask what the right instrument is for playing these sonatas and concertos. Soler, like other musicians of his time, enjoyed a wide choice and probably welcomed the variety, perhaps also giving a thought to who played the instruments. Nowadays, we are being given even more of a choice, so it seems reasonable to sit back and enjoy the merits of the right instruments as well as the wrong ones.

## Portrait of a Great Singer's Art

The G&T trove of De Lucia recordings yields a glimpse of an almost vanished world and an inspiration for our times.

by Andrew Porter



Fernando de Lucia—Tenderness and elegance in an intensely personal style

In a passage of his *Life of Rossini* (1824), Stendhal, with astonishing prescience, looked to the day when a means would be discovered to "take the portrait" of a great singer's voice and art—to set them down in sound images so faithful that all later ages could enjoy and learn from them. That day came. Effectively, it came just before the start of our century, in time for some of the great singers of the latter nineteenth century—including Verdi's first *Otello* and his first *Iago* and *Falstaff*—to make records of their roles. The "sound" of the nineteenth century at its greatest, I think, is heard in the records of two matchless sopranos, Adelina Patti and Lilli Lehmann. (Patti's recordings are collected in a Seraphim album, 60322; there are several Lehmann reissues, including one on Rubini GV 66.) The great bass is Pol Plançon (represented on three Rubini albums, GV 39, 76, and 93). The tenor who seems most different in technique, in taste, and in temperament from anything that we hear today is Fernando de Lucia.

He was born in Naples in 1860, ten

years before Alessandro Bonci, thirteen before Caruso. He made his debut at the San Carlo, as Gounod's *Faust*, in 1885. At the San Carlo he must often have listened attentively to Giuliano Gayarre, Angelo Masini, and Roberto Stagno—three famous tenors who did not record but who were written about in phrases that also describe what we hear from De Lucia, and with whom he was often compared. (For instance: "At times he delights in shading the voice; the *mezza voce* almost sighs in a way no longer heard since Gayarre.") The glorious, generous voice and the direct, irresistible art of Caruso gave the twentieth century a different tenor ideal; but De Lucia, a prolific recording artist, has always been an especial favorite of all who value elegance, individuality, and the utmost refinements of vocal art. This Rubini album collecting all the discs De Lucia made for the Gramophone and Typewriter Company (the predecessor of HMV) is a landmark.

Some thirty years ago, when HMV reissued a few De Lucia records in its Archive Series, Desmond Shawe-Taylor

wrote in *Gramophone*: "If there is one singer in the world whose records it would be nice to possess *en bloc*, that singer is Fernando de Lucia." Twenty years later, he confessed that he had not then known that there were some 300 De Lucia records—and that total has now been raised to 400. The tenor's recordings fall into three groups. Between 1902 and 1909 he made sixty-nine (or perhaps seventy, but one of them is unpublished and untraced) sides for the Gramophone Company—and these are what have been assembled in the present album. In about 1910, he made thirty sides (fifteen double-sided records) for Fonotipia, of Neapolitan and popular songs. From 1917 to 1922 he put much of his repertoire onto disc for the Neapolitan company of Phonotype—some 300 records, it seems, including a near complete *Barbiere* and a near complete *Rigoletto*. Rubini RS 302 collects De Lucia's *Almaviva*, and Rubini GV 502, an anthology of his Phonotypes, includes his "*Vesti la giubba*." (Also on Phonotype was the "*Che gelida manina*," in which he decides to improve on Puccini's musing, monotone start and sings the orchestral melody instead!) The last time he sang in public was at Caruso's funeral, in 1921.

At Covent Garden, De Lucia was the first Turiddu in *Cavalleria* (1892), and the following year the first Canio. At the Met, he made his debut (1893) as Canio. This bel-canto tenor was celebrated in the modern *verismo* repertory, and on it—as the *Tosca*, *Cavalleria*, *Adriana*, and *Fedora* pieces in this album show—he bestowed the same refined and intricate art that he brought to Rossini, Bellini, and Donizetti. Another of his famous roles was Lohengrin, which is well represented here. In French opera, he was exquisite. And in the popular songs of his native city, he was captivating.

But listeners who come to De Lucia for the first time, in any of this repertory, are in for a surprise and perhaps even a shock. And they may well ask: Is there not something overfanciful, excessively flexible, personal to the point of affectation about these executions? Was it not high time a Toscanini came along, to check singers' liberties and insist on a closer attention to the note values the composer wrote, even at the cost of curbing such beguiling vocal displays? (Toscanini's and De Lucia's paths crossed at a Scala *Iris* in 1899; it must have been an interesting occasion.) But one can answer that composers evidently admired De Lucia's art: For Mascagni, he created four roles (in *L'Amico Fritz*, *I Rantzau*, *Silvano*, and *Iris*), and one for Giordano (in *Marcella*). According to Michael Henstock, who writes one of the essays in the Rubini booklet, Puccini wanted De Lucia as his first Rodolfo and first Cavaradossi. (Verdi

admired Gemma Bellincioni, the first Santuzza, as Violetta, although—as her record of the aria shows—she took considerable personal liberties with the notes of "*Ah, fors'è lui*.")

By all accounts, De Lucia was a fiery and temperamental actor. After his first Naples Canio, a critic wrote that "the character was portrayed, complete with the appropriate physiognomy of expression, in the accents of that voice made to speak with passion; it took shape by expression, by gesture, by every movement of the body." At the tenor's Met debut, Philip Hale ranked his Canio an impersonation to set beside De Reszke's Romeo and Ternina's Isolde. What we hear on records is a passion enacted not by violence or by volume, but by tonal colors, shadings, and expressive molding of the phrases. Don José's Flower Song, for example (the earlier, piano-accompanied version is the more wonderful), is a kaleidoscope of emotions sounded through the voice alone so vividly that we can picture them passing across his features: nobility, sentiment, manly grace,

bitter reproach, ardor, entreaty.

I would pull out that word "grace" and add to it "gaiety" to characterize De Lucia's *Barbiere* recordings gathered on Side 7 of the set. (The arrangement of this album is a sensible one of basic chronology modified to bring the items of a particular opera together, in the right order.) They are a model of vivacity, supple coloratura technique, and rhythmic verve that includes a refined feeling for tenuto and rubato. The *Elisir* duet with Badini that opens the next side is another miracle of merriment and infectious high spirits. Modern singers and modern conductors (as more than one modern singer and modern conductor to whom I've played the records have remarked, with astonishment and delight) have forgotten—or have never learned—how this music was meant to go. One prime application of the invention that Stendhal looked forward to is being ignored.

In "*Dalla sua pace*," however, the tempo fluctuations are a shade more extreme than even I (so far) can become reconciled to; but there is a wonderful

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FERNANDO DE LUCIA: The Gramophone Company Recordings, 1902-9.

**H** Fernando de Lucia, tenor; various accompaniments. RUBINI RS 305, \$49.90 (five discs, mono) (distributed by Euroclass Record Distributors, Ltd., 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013).

BALDELLI: A suon di baci (11/02). BARTHÉLEMY: Serenamente; Sulla bocca amorosa: Triste ritorno (5/21/09). BELLINI: La Sonnambula: Prendi, l'anel ti dono; Son geloso del zefiro (both with Maria Galvany, soprano); Ah! perchè non posso odiarti? (1907). BIZET: Carmen: Votre mère avec moi sortait de la chapelle . . . Ma mère je la vois! (with Giusepina Huguët, soprano; c. 5/07); La fleur que tu m'avais jetée (11/02; c. 5/07). Les Pêcheurs de perles: Je crois entendre encore (c. 5/06); De mon amie fleur endormie (9-10/05); Ton coeur n'a pas compris (with Huguët; c. 5/06). (In Italian.) CILEA: Adriana Lecouvreur: L'anima ho stanca. Lontananza. (c. 9/04) COSTA: Era de maggio (5/21/09); Neapolitanata (11/02); Oili, oilà (5/21/09); Tu sei morta nella vita mia (11/02). COTTRAU: Fenesta che lucive (11/02). DE CURTIS: 'A surrentina; Carmela (5/21/09). DENZA: Occhi di fata (c. 9/04). DI CAPUA: O sole mio (5/21/09). DONIZETTI: L'Elisir d'amore: Ecco il magico liquore . . . Obbligato, obbligato (with Ernesto Badini, bass; c. 5/07). La Favorita: Una vergine, un angel di Dio (c. 9/04). GAMBARDELLA: Nun me guardate cchiù (5/21/09). GIORDANO: Fedora: Amor ti vieta (11/02); Mia madre;

Vedi, io piango (c. 9/04). GOUNOD: Faust: Salut, demeure chaste et pure (c. 5/06); Il se fait tard (with Celestina Boninsegna, soprano, c. 9/04; with Huguët, c. 5/07). Roméo et Juliette: Ah! lève-toi, soleil (1907). (In Italian.) MASCAGNI: Cavalleria rusticana: O Lola! (11/02). MASSENET: Manon: En fermant les yeux (11/02; c. 5/07). Werther: Pourquoi me réveiller (11/02). (In Italian.) MOZART: Don Giovanni, K. 527: Dalla sua pace; Il mio tesoro (1907). PUCCINI: Tosca: Recondita armonia (11/02). RICCIARDI: Luna lù! (5/21/09). ROSSINI: Il Barbiere di Siviglia: Ecco ridente in cielo (c. 9/04; 1907); Se il mio nome (11/02; 1907); All'idea di quel metallo . . . Numero quindici (both with Antonio Pini-Corsi, baritone; c. 5/06); Ah! qual colpo (with Huguët and Pini-Corsi, c. 5/06; with Galvany, 1907). Pietà, Signore (c. 5/07). THOMAS: Mignon: Adieu, Mignon! (9-10/05); Elle ne croyait pas (c. 5/06); Ah! que ton âme enfin (9-10/05) (in Italian). TOSTI: Ideale; Marechiare (11/02); La Serenata (c. 9/04). VERDI: Luisa Miller: Quando le sere al placido (1907). Rigoletto: E il sol dell'anima (with Huguët; c. 5/06); La donna è mobile (11/02). La Traviata: Ah si, da un anno . . . Un di felice, eterea (c. 9/04); De' miei bollenti spiriti (c. 5/06); Parigi, o cara (with Huguët; c. 5/06). WAGNER: Lohengrin: Nun sei bedankt, mein lieber Schwan (11/02; c. 5/07); Mein Held, mein Retter . . . Nie sollst du mich befragen; Das süsse Lied verhallt (both with Huguët; c. 5/07); Athmest du nicht; Kommt er dann heim (9-10/05) (in Italian).

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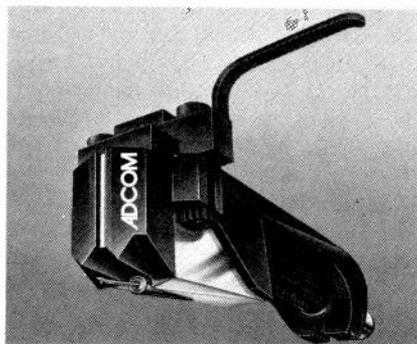
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sense of "presenting" the aria, treating it as a precious jewel, which modern Ottavios often miss. "Il mio tesoro" is harder to take: De Lucia plays fast and loose with the rhythms to a point where the piece loses its shape. But this instance of expressive rubato carried too far is an exception. There follow the three *Sonnambula* excerpts. "Melting" is the word that keeps recurring in my notes on the album, and the first phrase—the very first syllable—of "Prendi, l'anel ti dono" is a superlative example of De Lucia's ability to melt the heart by a melting tone and a caressing way with the words. Has an Elvino ever sounded more loving, more tender? Other examples are "di non amar" at the close of "Amor ti vieta"; all the *Pêcheurs de perles* and *Mignon* pieces on Side 3; and Faust's "Salve, dimora." In Des Grieux's *Dream*, there are two long-sustained notes: The first is led through a rainbow spectrum of timbres, each color "cross-faded" into the next; the second is sustained in an unfaltering, single, pure color. The case—well, one of the cases—against opera in translation fades when the new vowels are handled as things of beauty, each distinct and expressive in itself. Listen to the messa di voce at the cadence of Werther's "Ah! non mi ridestar." Enjoy the different kinds of shine as this Lohengrin presents horn, sword, and ring in his farewell to Elsa: "corno," "acciar," and "anello." De Lucia's Wagner is lyrical, tender, beautiful.

Many of the tempos will strike modern listeners as slow. De Lucia could sing fast when he wanted to. There is often rapidity in these performances—but never unseemingly hurrying. More often, there is lingering, dwelling, savoring, shaping. Lack of haste does not mean (except in "Il mio tesoro") a lack of urgency. De Lucia and Giusepina Huguet take about 3:56 over "E il sol dell'anima"; Domingo, Cotrubas, and Giulini take about 3:20. (I've subtracted 25 seconds for the chromatic cadenza, which the earlier singers omit.) Less of a difference than one might expect—for there seems to be a world of difference in the interpretation, and no one could be in doubt which Duke of Mantua would more effectively melt Gilda's heart. After De Lucia, Domingo sounds like a coarse, clumsy, insensitive brute. (Yet there are tenors around who make him sound like a stylist.) The moral need not be pressed. But let's hope that the album will not just be enjoyed by connoisseurs, but also be studied by those who have to coach, conduct, and sing this music. I'm not suggesting that this intensely personal singer should be slavishly copied, but rather that he can be an inspiration, a revelation of possibilities, and a link to an otherwise almost vanished world.

"Plus fait douceur que violence"—Shawe-Taylor quotes the old saying—could well be emblazoned over all dressing-room mirrors. Or Wotan's admonition to Donner: "Nichts durch Gewalt!" But I must add that De Lucia isn't all tenderness. He can be fierce. The voice can flash out like a bright sword, ring like a trumpet. The second track, "Ah! non mi ridestar," shows it. And the excitement is greater, the passion more passionate, because of the gentleness elsewhere.

The transfers, made from fine original copies in three private collections, notably the celebrated Stuart-Liff Collection, are clear, not fussed up, and convincing. Only "Recondita armonia" comes from a relatively worn copy. Most important, the speeds—and therefore pitches—are convincing, too. When I reviewed an earlier Rubini anthology drawn from this G&T material, nearly ten years ago, I suggested—but hesitantly, fearing to rush in where experts like Shawe-Taylor had been treading—that some of the discs had been transferred too fast, too high, imparting an unpleasant, bleaty brightness to the timbre. Messrs. Shawe-Taylor, Liff, and Henstock, who collaborated on the pitching of this new issue, now agree. Before, they had presumed for the first session two turntables, turning one at 74 and the other at 70 rpm. (It's easy to imagine—and on some earlier De Lucia reissues to hear—what happens when such discs are played at the "standard" 78 rpm.) Now the whole of the first session has been transcribed at 70 rpm, and five of the six sides of the second session even lower, at 67½. And so on.

De Lucia's voice was short. Fred Gaisberg, who recorded most of his earlier discs, gave him a highest note of "barely A." Here, he does soar higher—but in a limpid, beautiful, exquisitely formed head voice. There is abundant evidence to suggest that from an early stage in his career he transposed his arias downward—as they are here transposed, with careful annotations about speed and pitch.

Some of the records have orchestral accompaniment; many are piano-accompanied, and the accompaniments vary from the risibly incompetent to the (mildly) interesting—hearing Cilea in his own music. The booklet includes two good essays, the note on pitches, full discographical details, and the texts of French and German numbers sung in Italian translation and of several of the Neapolitan songs (no English translations). Some effort has been made—but not quite enough—to adjust the printed text to the words that De Lucia actually sings. His enunciation was so distinct and loving that listeners will be able to pencil in most of the necessary corrections.

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## BACH: Suites for Orchestra (4).

German Bach Soloists, Helmut Winschermann, cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4203/4, \$13.90 (\$8.90 to members) (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: MHC 6203/4, \$13.90 (\$9.90 to members) (two cassettes). (Add \$1.25 for shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724.)

Suites: No. 1, in C, S. 1066; No. 2, in B minor, S. 1067; No. 3, in D, S. 1068; No. 4, in D, S. 1069.

## BACH: Concertos (3) and Concerto Reconstructions (2).

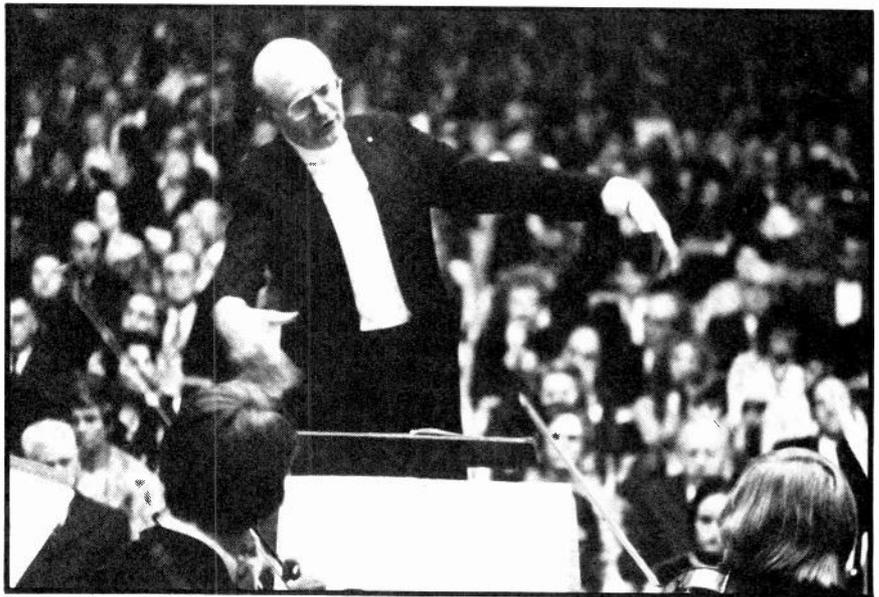
Christian Altenburger\*, Ernst Mayer-Schierning†, Jürgen Kussmaul‡, and Wolfgang Kussmaul‡, violins; Ingo Goritzki, oboe\*\*; German Bach Soloists, Helmut Winschermann, cond. [Wolf Erichson, prod.] ARABESQUE 8075-2, \$13.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: 9075-2, \$13.96 (two cassettes).

Concertos: for Violin and Strings, in A minor, S. 1041\*; for Violin and Strings, in E, S. 1042\*; for Two Violins and Strings, in D minor, S. 1043\*\*; for Violin, Oboe, and Strings, in C minor, from S. 1060 (reconstr. Schneider and Seiffert)\*\*\*; for Three Violins and Strings, in D minor, from S. 1063 (reconstr. Winschermann)††.

## BACH: Concertos for Violin(s) and Strings (3): S. 1041, S. 1042, S. 1043\*.

Arthur Grumiaux and \*Herman Krebbers, violins; Solistes Romandes, Arpad Gérecz, cond. PHILIPS 9500 614, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 731, \$9.98 (cassette).

The best of these recordings is the two-disc set of the orchestral suites. Helmut Winschermann's Deutsche Bachsolisten represent the liveliest and most musical traits in present-day German Bach per-



Helmut Winschermann—Lively suites, disappointing concertos

formance. The pervasive heaviness and solidity of Richter and his predecessors here give way to a sprightly, airy, fast-moving approach, which catches the dancelike quality of many of the movements in these suites. Indeed, the mood is rather too sprightly at times: Instead of the natural flow and rhythmic bounce one hears in the Leppard recording (Philips 839 792/3), or the inspired freshness of articulation in Pinnock's performances on original instruments (Archiv, various), Winschermann cultivates a mannered, jumpy style in the fast movements, with clipped staccatos. But it is refreshing to hear a version with light bass lines and plenty of space between the notes; the airy textures are most appealing. The chamber-music quality of the performances is most evident in the suites that feature solo winds—balanced very far forward, these instruments are given their head and allowed extensive ornamentation. (The Fourth's second Minuet is delicious.)

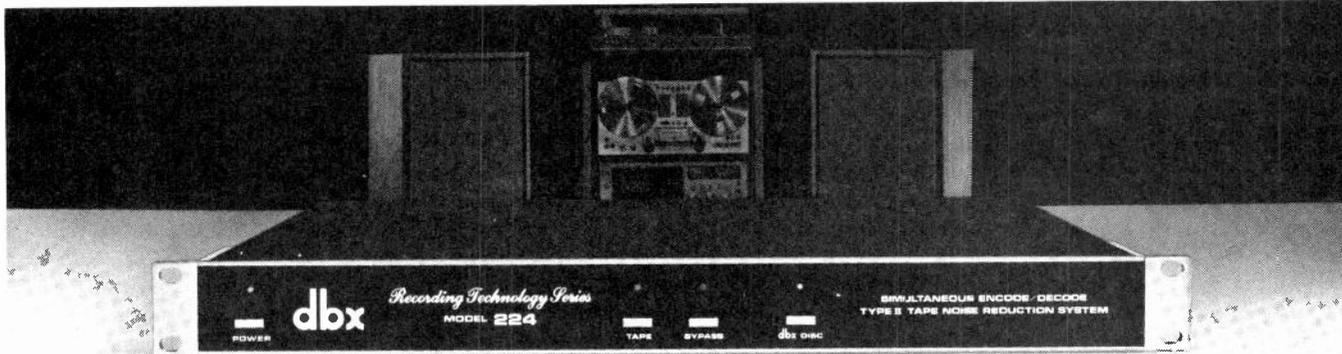
A less welcome Germanic feature is the slight sentimentalization of the slow movements: Many, like the Rondeau and Sarabande of the Second Suite (Paul Meisen is an excellent flutist here), are just too slow; the famous Air in the Third Suite is simply and movingly presented the first time around but then is souped up with pizzicato bass in the repeats. Most effective of all are the big showpiece movements with trumpets—the Gavotte and Gigue from the Third Suite and the Gavotte and Réjouissance from the Fourth—full of life and clear in texture. The Overtures' slow

sections are spoiled by stolid single-dotting. But for those who do not like the "authentic" versions of Pinnock or Harnoncourt (Telefunken 26.35046), this is an excellent introduction to these rich works. MHS provides an exceptionally long, detailed, and interesting (though just occasionally hypothetical) note by Teri Towe.

The set of five violin concertos is strikingly less successful. Though Christian Altenburger, a twenty-three-year-old violinist, is obviously prodigiously talented, his gifts are not specially suited to these works. There are richness of tone and rhapsodic phrasing in profusion, but with too little control. These strong readings, filled with personality, may appeal to many listeners; I find the overall effect slack. Rhythms slip from time to time, and there is little sense of progress and climax in each movement. Winschermann's direction does little to pull things together.

The works are a curious selection: the two solo concertos, obviously, and the two-violin concerto (in which Ernst Mayer-Schierning does not prevent the slow movement from drifting); then the concerto for violin and oboe reconstructed by Schneider and Seiffert from the two-harpsichord concerto in C minor (here Ingo Goritzki's oboe playing tightens up the performance and produces the best playing in the set); and a version by Winschermann for three violins of the three-harpsichord concerto in D minor. Altenburger's playing must have some special qualities, for I found this last performance very dull—and

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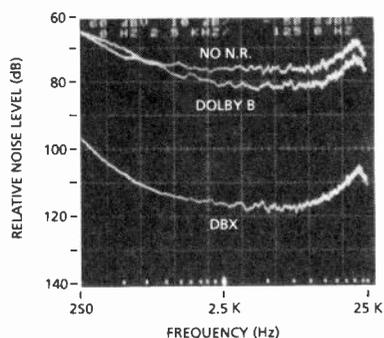
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# Critics' Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

**BARTÓK:** *Bluebeard's Castle*. Varady, Fischer-Dieskau, Sawallisch. DG 2531 172, Aug.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Symphonies (9)*. Vienna Philharmonic, Bernstein. DG 2740 216 SKL (8), July.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Triple Concerto, Op. 56*. Mutter, Ma, Zeltser, Karajan. DG 2531 262, Sept.

**DVOŘÁK:** *Symphony No. 7, Op. 70*. Philadelphia, Ormandy. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-3555, Nov.

**ELGAR, WALTON:** *Cello Concertos*. Kirshbaum, Gibson. CHANDOS ABR 1007, Sept.

**GRIEG:** *Olav Trygvason; Landkjenning*. London Symphony, Dreier. UNICORN RHS 364, June.

**GRIEG:** *Works for String Orchestra*. Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, Tønnesen. BIS LP 147, Nov.

**HANDEL:** *Ariodante*. Mathis, Baker, Lepard. PHILIPS 6769 025 (4), Aug.

**HANDEL:** *Concerti Grossi (6), Op. 3*. Northern Sinfonia, Malcolm. NONESUCH H 71376, Oct.

**HAYDN:** *Paris Symphonies (6)*. Orchestra of Naples, Vaughan. ARABESQUE 8047-3 (3), Oct.

**HAYDN:** *Symphonies Nos. 97, 98*. New York Philharmonic, Bernstein. CBS M 35844, Oct.

**JANÁČEK:** *Diary of One Who Vanished*. Márová, Příbyl, Páleníček. SUPRAPHON 1112 2414, Nov.

**JANÁČEK:** *Fate*. Hajóssyová, Příbyl, Jílek. SUPRAPHON 1112 2011/2 (2), Oct.

**MAHLER:** *Symphony No. 9*. London Philharmonic, Tennstedt. ANGEL SZB 3899 (2), Oct.

**OFFENBACH:** *Suites for Two Cellos (2), Op. 54*. Peclard, Pidoux. HARMONIA MUNDI FRANCE HM 1043, Nov.

**PALESTRINA:** *Song of Songs*. Czech Philharmonic Chorus, Veselka. SUPRAPHON 4 12 2141/2 (2), Sept.

**RUGGLES:** *Complete Works*. Thomas, Kirkpatrick. CBS M2 34591 (2), Oct.

**SCHUBERT:** *Piano Sonatas (2), D 571, 625*. Tirimo. SAGA 5469, Nov.

**SCHUBERT:** *Symphony No. 7, in E*. (arr. Weingartner). Berlin Radio, Rögner. SPECTRUM SR 116, Aug.

**SCHUBERT:** *Works for Violin and Piano*. Luca, Kalichstein. NONESUCH H 71370, Sept.

**SHOSTAKOVICH:** *Symphony No. 4, Op. 43*. London Philharmonic, Haitink, LONDON CS 7160, Nov.

**SIBELIUS:** *Symphony No. 2, Op. 43*. BBC Symphony, Beecham. ARABESQUE 8023, Sept.

**ARTHUR FIEDLER:** *Forever Fiedler*. RCA CRL 3-3599 (3), Sept.

**ANDRÉS SEGOVIA:** *The EMI Recordings 1927-39*. ANGEL ZB 3896 (2), July.

only on reading the small print discovered that he doesn't take part in it.

Arthur Grumiaux's record has all the solidity and expressive power we have come to expect from his interpretations, and these readings of the two solo concertos are highly recommendable, even though I would like the slow movements to flow more. His accompanists are undistinguished, and his collaborator in the two-violin concerto, Herman Krebbers, is noticeably less inspired in the molding of almost every phrase. The slow movement does capture some of the sublimity of Bach's simple writing, but for an inspired account that could never be wholly replaced by more "authentic" versions, go back to the Oistrakh's recording with Goossens (DG 138 820). N.K.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: No. 1, in C, Op. 15\**; *No. 2, in B flat, Op. 19\**; *No. 5, in E flat, Op. 73 (Emperor)\**.

**A** Radu Lupu, piano; Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta, cond. [Ray Minshull, prod.] LONDON LDR 10005\*/6\*, \$10.98 each (digital recordings).

Radu Lupu's Beethoven concerto cycle began with an analog Fourth (London CS 7108, August 1979) and will conclude with a digital Third (which Lupu recorded much earlier in his career with Laurence Foster and the London Symphony; CS 6715).

The Lupu/Mehta partnership functions at its unexpected best in the First Concerto (actually composed after No. 2, in B flat). Lupu's brilliantly incisive yet subtly graded passagework is heard for once in an orchestral context that is (for Mehta) uncharacteristically forthright and structured. The tension seems about to slip in the first-movement development, but danger is averted. London's suave, undistorted digital sound—with the piano a trifle close, though not hurtfully so—is uncommonly kind to the dialogue between horn and bassoon. Lupu plays the second of the three Beethoven cadenzas in the first movement—the shorter, more modest one also favored by Gieseking, Solomon, and Gilels. The complete work has been fit onto a single side with no loss of dynamic range.

Would that the overside Second were of like excellence. In this more lightly scored work, the conductor's attention begins to wander, as evidenced by a few ungainly rallentandos and some effeminate diminuendos where they hurt most. Lupu again plays well (he is admirably forthright about Beethoven's long pedal markings in the slow movement), but here, for some reason, he substitutes a relatively ineffectual first-movement cadenza of his own.

Whether because of the added weight and fullness of London's digital sound, a darker orchestra, or Lupu's more urgent and involved approach, the *Emperor* is altogether more satisfying than the account Mehta recorded in Los Angeles with Alicia de Larrocha (London CS 7121, August 1979). This is not to say it is perfect: The piano's higher reaches have a slightly tacky characteristic here, the Israeli orchestral playing is rather grainy in sound and short of detail, and there are even a few wrong notes (especially in the Rondo). But none of its problems seriously interferes with the poetry of a forthright and communicative interpretation. H.G.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 61*.

**A** Kyung-Wha Chung, violin; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond. [Christopher Raeburn, prod.] LONDON LDR 10010, \$10.98 (digital recording). Tape: LDR5 10010, \$10.98 (cassette).

Erich Gruenberg, violin; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein, cond. [Charles Gerhardt, prod.] NONESUCH H 71381, \$5.98.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 61\**; *Romances for Violin and Orchestra\*: No. 1, in G, Op. 40; No. 2, in F, Op. 50*.

**R** Arthur Grumiaux, violin; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Alceo Galliera, cond.\*; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond.\*. PHILIPS FESTIVO 6570 051, \$6.98. Tape: 7310 051, \$6.98 (cassette). [From PHILIPS 900 222, 1969\*; EPIC BC 1120, 1961\*.]

One might have expected Kyung-Wha Chung to play the Beethoven violin concerto with fast tempos and a fire-and-ice classicism, but her approach turns out to be rather broad, with a distinctly mellow ambience. A saving purity of phrasing and intonation keeps her performance from becoming shapeless and sentimental; her bowing becomes heavy only in the deliberately paced rondo, where she seems a bit poker-faced. Kondrashin and the Vienna Philharmonic offer admirable support, save for those self-effacing subito pianos in the coda of the finale. London's digital recording is warm, spacious, and ungimmicky, with a wide dynamic range, tuttis notably free of distortion, and a wealth of unobtrusive detail.

Though Arthur Grumiaux made a third recording of this work (with Colin Davis and the Concertgebouw; Philips 6500 775), in some ways I prefer this slightly earlier second version—most notably for Alceo Galliera's rhythmically alert orchestral framework. The close miking of the violin somewhat reduces dynamic range and dra-



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matic impact; but if Grumiaux seems reserved and more careful than in his later recording, his patrician playing—for all its elegance—is totally at the music's service. In this triumphant remastering, the velvety, impactful Philips engineering of more than a decade ago still sounds like state of the art. As added enticement, this midpriced reissue offers superb performances of both Beethoven romances.

The recording by Erich Gruenberg and Jascha Horenstein, originally made for Reader's Digest, offers violin playing of dis-

tingtion and probity and an interpretation with a strong profile—granitic and assertive, very much in the tradition of the gruff, craggy Menuhin/Klemperer version (Angel S 36369). A slight lethargy pervades the first movement (adding nearly five minutes to the already broad 19:45 of Chung/Konradshin; oddly, it doesn't seem *that* much slower). On the other hand, the rondo is quite fast, its keen, well-sprung rhythm reminiscent of the Heifetz/Toscanini (RCA ARM 4-0945), Milstein/Leinsdorf (Angel S 35783), and Grumiaux/Galliera accounts.

Nonesuch's sound, though entirely adequate, is less suave and realistic than London's and Philips', with occasional edginess from both soloist and orchestra.

All three violinists play the Kreisler cadenza in the first movement, each quite differently: Chung takes her time, shaping the episode that combines the two melodies with unusual breadth; Gruenberg takes an unusually strict, rigorous approach exactly in keeping with his ascetic treatment of the concerto itself; Grumiaux is all curvaceous line and subtle nuance. My vote goes to Festivo, but the recorded literature is decidedly richer for having all three of these editions. H.G.

**BOYCE: Anthems (4) and Voluntaries (4).**

Ely Cathedral Choir, Arthur Wills, dir.\* and organ\*. SAGA 5440, \$8.98 (distributed by Centaur Records, Inc., P.O. Box 23764, Baton Rouge, La. 70893).

Anthems\*: O where shall wisdom be found?; Turn thee unto me; By the waters of Babylon; I have surely built thee an house. Voluntaries Nos. 1, 2, 4, 10.\*

**BOYCE: Concerti grossi (3): in B flat; in B minor; in E minor. Overture in F.**

Cantilena, Adrian Shepherd, dir. [Robert Matthew Walker, prod.] CHANDOS ABR 1005, \$13.98 (distributed by Brilly Imports, 155 N. San Vicente Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211).

The 1979 bicentenary of William Boyce's death produced a couple of welcome additions to the record catalog. Mariner's Academy of St. Martin produced a new version of the eight symphonies (Argo ZRG 874), which represent most of what we know of his music. (The recent deletion of the Menuhin recording still leaves two other complete versions available.) More valuable is the Ely Cathedral record, which chooses four splendid verse anthems and intersperses them with organ voluntaries. These give the lie to the notion that Boyce is merely a mini-Handel: His writing for the church is both individual and English-traditional, looking back to Purcell in its dissonances and expressiveness, while echoing an eighteenth-century mood in its massive affirmative choruses. (Boyce was one of the first great collectors of old music; his *Cathedral Music* was a source book for many historians, including Burney and Hawkins.)

The Ely performances are gentle and musical, very much in the English cathedral tradition. It is difficult to enjoy the hooty altos and breathy trebles, but Arthur Wills's direction never lets the music flag. Wills plays the satisfyingly logical and serene organ voluntaries with great success.

The Cantilena recording also broad-



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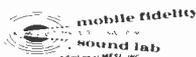
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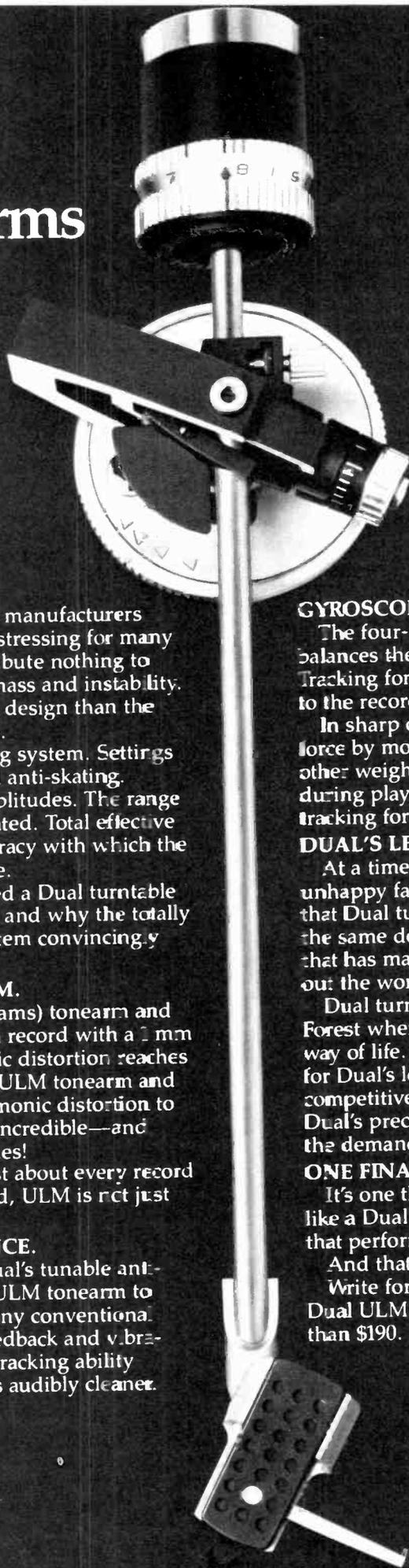
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ens the catalog with the three concerti grossi, unpublished in Boyce's lifetime. But the performances—by a chamber orchestra drawn from members of the Scottish National Orchestra—are over-Romanticized: bustling in the allegros, droopy in the largos, and fatally misunderstanding the nature of the final dance movements. The sleeve note rightly says, for example, that the Minuet that ends the B minor work is "purposeful and sturdy"; here it's merely sweet. Boyce deserves more stylish treatment. N.K.

**BRAHMS: Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 102.**

Itzhak Perlman, violin; Mstislav Rostropovich, cello; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond. [Suvi Raj Grubb, prod.] ANGEL SZ 37680, \$8.98. Tape: 4ZS 37680, \$8.98 (cassette).

COMPARISON:

Szeryng, Starker, Haitink Phi. 6500 137

**BRAHMS: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 77.**

Pinchas Zukerman, violin; Orchestre de Paris, Daniel Barenboim, cond. [Wolfgang Stengel and Steven Paul, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 251, \$9.98. Tape: 3301 251, \$9.98 (cassette).

**R** Albert Spalding, violin; Vienna Tonkünstler Orchestra, Wilhelm Loibner, cond. [Tom Null and Chris Kuchler, prod.] VARÈSE SARABANDE VC 81059, \$8.98 (mono) [from REMINGTON R 145, 1953].

COMPARISONS:

Perlman, Giuliani Ang. S 37286  
Krebbers, Haitink Phi. Fest. 6570 172

Haitink's superb recording of the Double Concerto with Henryk Szeryng and Janos Starker offered an utterly different interpretation from the present one. There, both solos and tuttis had a cameolike clarity and understatement; the new account is far more generous in gesture and extroverted in sweep. Ideas about phrasing and sonority are totally disparate. Though the new tempos are not that much slower, Perlman and Rostropovich suggest greater deliberation; note, for instance, how they ease up in the first movement's lyrical second theme. Angel's sound (in one of its really fine mastering jobs) has plenty of detail, and balance is exemplary, but the music's heft is stressed over its asceticism. The Philips Double has been one of my favorites, and I like the Angel just as much. One question, though: Is Rostropovich overmiked in his opening solo, or is his tone truly as huge as the recording suggests?

My favorite recordings of the epic violin concerto include Perlman's and one of Haitink's (with Herman Krebbers—far superior to the stolid, sleepy Szeryng/Hait-

ink full-priced account, Philips 6500 530). Both are broadly paced, spacious conceptions, beautifully played and richly reproduced; both achieve grandeur effortlessly. In contrast, from the first notes of the excellently played Zukerman/Barenboim, an aggressive emotionalism and a readiness to make points at every turn (or bump) of phrase proclaim that the music is being "interpreted." Zukerman is rather closely miked, and his intense, vibrato-laden sonority is slightly reminiscent of Zino Francescatti's in its wiry astringency. DG's recording is excellently balanced; in the second-movement recapitulation, the interplay between the reiterated oboe melody and the decorative solo part is as fine as I've ever heard. The same cannot be said for the sound Barenboim draws from his forces: Must the strings be so hysterical and opaque? Must the trumpets blare so crassly? Must the double basses thump and grunt so in the third movement? It all rings unctuous and untrue. Tempos tend to be deliberate, notably in the first movement.

American violinist Albert Spalding (1888-1953) made all too few concerto recordings, so this one, taped toward the end of his life (at a session that also included the Beethoven), has a certain documentary value. According to the Varèse annotations, it was made in single uninterrupted "takes"; the candid, rather hurried conditions produced a few flustered moments from the soloist (by then in semiretirement) and some ragged ones from the orchestra. But these substantial flaws are offset by passionate sincerity and exciting forward propulsion. Spalding's naturalness is an instructive antidote to Zukerman's gesturesome "profundity." True, it is Spalding's third movement—not Zukerman's—that inflicts all those nasty Zigeunerisms and Luftpausen once considered to be authentic (cf. Menuhin/Furtwängler, Seraphim 60232). Zukerman plays the usual Joachim cadenza; Spalding, who was also a composer, plays his own tasteful interpolation.

Varèse's careful remastering from an original 30-ips master tape, though generally excellent, becomes harsh at times. This noteworthy reincarnation will probably appeal chiefly to the specialist. Next, Varèse should turn its loving attention to the cycle of Brahms violin sonatas Spalding recorded with Dohnányi; that would be a *real* memorial tribute. H.G.

**BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 6, in A.**

Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. [Ray Minshull, prod.] LONDON CS 7173, \$9.98.

(Continued on page 74)

# Vocal Tricks from a Budding Superstar

by Kenneth Furie



Leona Mitchell  
Great potential needing control

In a *Musical Newsletter* piece on voice training several years ago, Conrad L. Osborne observed an important distinction between two pedagogical goals: stitching together a functional instrument, and developing a voice's full potential. Not only are these goals not identical, but they usually prove mutually exclusive. The expedients through which the first is achieved—some patchwork stabilization of the middle plus strategies for reaching a few more notes above (and perhaps below, though this isn't so important)—almost have to interfere with the healthy development of both registers and their integration.

If the singer heard on this disc were a conservatory student, you'd note her promise and hope she might find her way to the right teacher; with the right kind of work and a little luck, who knows what might develop? But Leona Mitchell isn't a student. She's a star, maybe a superstar—it's hard to keep track these days. And yet the reaction to her singing is the same, except for the

added question: What's a voice in such rough shape doing in such high places?

Not that the sound produced is actively unpleasant. As long as the music moves in mostly stepwise fashion, doesn't go especially high or low or overly fast or slow, and doesn't demand too full a sound, the basic timbre is rather pretty (if limited and predictable, given the makeshift technique by which it's produced). But when the music oversteps these bounds, Mitchell has to scramble.

Although her Met performances of such light lyric roles as Laetia and Micaëla have struck me as decidedly precarious, on this record, aria by aria, she often scrambles successfully, if we define "success" as negotiating the notes without audible breakdown. Sometimes even this measure of success eludes her. "*Tu che di gel sei cinta*" is too slow for her—and I mean the music, not this particular tempo, although a faster one might have helped a bit. There's no place to hide in such exposed writing; its simple lines test the ability to sustain a steady tone flow, and while it may not lie terribly high or low, it repeatedly draws the singer into the transitional areas around the two Es.

Along with the inevitable holes in the flow of sound, the accumulated strain takes its toll. After the climatic phrase "*Prima di questa aurora, di questa aurora,*" which calls for a crescendo ("with heat") at the same time that it's rising into dangerous territory, forces the voice out of balance and into an ugly sound, the phrase "*io chiudo stanca gli occhi,*" marked *p*, is sung in full voice. I don't mind that Mitchell has altered Puccini's dynamic; what's worrisome is that what should be an interpretive decision is so clearly a technical dodge. And not a terribly successful one, judging from the labored conclusion of the aria. Moral: If your voice is in this condition and you want to sing one of Liù's arias, stick to "*Signora, ascolta.*"

At the other extreme, the cabaletta to "*Ernani, involami*" has to move too briskly to accommodate Mitchell's stratagems for negotiating intervals of more than a step or so and for dealing with troublesome notes: cheating the value of the first note to set for the second, often with a slide; broadening both notes to create more time for maneuvering; overattacking the second note; substituting more convenient vowels, or abandoning words altogether. All singers know these tricks and use them—discreetly—in a pinch, but a technique built on them is another matter. Getting through "*Dove sono*" is undeniably an accomplishment, yet listen closely to how the feat is managed.

Unfortunately, Mitchell's bag of tricks gets her through most of these selec-

tions—"unfortunately" because such "success" makes it unlikely that she will back up and undertake the necessary structural work. Lyric sopranos in a rudimentary state of development are hardly in short supply, even in these impoverished times, and they often come equipped with this batted-eyelash, golly-gee interpretive posture, whose "sincerity" snows so many critics.

Here and there, one can catch glimpses of what this voice might do if properly developed. For example, Mitchell has the makings of a top, but she can't control it. Since "*Chi il bel sogno di Doretta*" permits the singer to set for the soft high A's on "*Folle amore,*" she gets out some nice ones. In the *William Tell* romance, she skips up to F and then A flat—"alla calma" in the first stanza, "esso solo" in the second—are decently managed in a gulpy, Caballé-esque way. In both cases, the notes are so detached from their surroundings as to make impossible any musical or dramatic coherence.

Maybe it's unfair to hold up the standard of Tebaldi and Callas (on a pair of deleted recital discs, respectively London OS 25020 and Angel S 36239), or then again, maybe it's not. Tebaldi, after all, was adapting a far larger voice to this delicately spun writing, while Callas' voice, in addition to being larger than Mitchell's, was in problematic shape by the time of that Rossini/Donizetti recital. All the same, both singers found vocal solutions that compromised the music minimally and made something personal of it—listen especially to what Callas does with the recitative. Neither, incidentally, gets much more help from her conductor than Mitchell gets from Kurt Herbert Adler.

While we're on the subject, Adler's accompaniments are just awful—clunky and plodding except for the occasional bout of clunky aggressiveness.

---

## LEONA MITCHELL: Operatic Recital.

Leona Mitchell, soprano; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Kurt Herbert Adler, cond. [Thomas Mowrey, prod.] LONDON OS 26591, \$9.98.

MASCAGNI: L'Amico Fritz: Son pochi fiori. MOZART: Le Nozze di Figaro: E Susanna non vien . . . Dove sono. PUC- CINI: La Bohème: Sì, mi chiamano Mimì. Madama Butterfly: Piangi? Perché? . . . Un bel dì, vedremo. La Rondine: Chi il bel sogno di Doretta. Gianni Schicchi: O mio babbino caro. Turandot: Tu che di gel sei cinta. ROSSINI: Guillaume Tell: Ils s'éloignent enfin . . . Sombre forêt (in Italian). VERDI: Ernani: Surta è la notte . . . Ernani, involami . . . Tutto sprezzo che d'Ernani.

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(Continued from page 72)

#### COMPARISON:

Barenboim/Chicago Sym. DG 2531 043  
 BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 7, in E.

Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Kurt Sanderling, cond. UNICORN RHS 356, \$10.98 (distributed by Euroclass Record Distributors, Ltd., 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013) [recorded in concert, January 1977].

Dresden State Orchestra, Eugen Jochum, cond. [David Mottley, prod.] ANGEL SZB 3892, \$17.96 (two discs, automatic sequence).

**BR** Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Max Rudolf, cond. [Israel Horowitz and John Sievers, prod.] MCA WESTMINSTER MCA 1412, \$4.98 [from DECCA DL 710139, 1967].

#### COMPARISONS:

Rosbaud/SW German Sym.	Turn. TV-S 34083
Masur/Leipzig Gewandhaus	Van. VSD 71242
Walter/Col. Sym.	Odys. Y2 35238
Karajan/Berlin Phil.	Ang. SC 3779
Karajan/Berlin Phil.	DG 2707 102

Bruckner interpretation falls into four basic categories: exhibitionistic ("sock it to 'em"), no-nonsense ("keep it moving"), straightforward ("let the music play itself"), and expressive ("feel it from the heart"). Each is conveniently documented here.

Solti has in his recent Chicago Symphony performances evinced a disturbing tendency to stress sound over content. Such is again the case: As virtuoso display, his Sixth is astounding; as music-making, it is appalling. In the Adagio, he luxuriates in luscious string sonority for its own sake, screwing up the vibrato until it becomes positively cloying. In the outer movements one senses that everything has been geared to the next fortissimo, which naturally must be more impressive than the last. Paradoxically, these efforts do not make his interpretation more overwhelming. In losing sight of the symphony's long-term structure, he leaves us inadequately prepared for those climaxes, thus dissipating their potency. His reading generates very little tension; silences are simply dead. So what we have is a phenomenally played exhibition utterly bereft of tonal and interpretive subtlety. London's brilliant recording matches Solti's conception perfectly.

To demonstrate how magnificent a Bruckner orchestra the Chicago Symphony can be, we need only turn to Barenboim's 1978 recording: Bruckner in the Furtwängler mold, richly colored, eloquently inflected, bristling with electricity; this is easily my choice among available Sixths.

Prospective purchasers might wish to wait, however, for Karajan's interpretation, due shortly from DG, or for an Angel reissue of Klemperer's, a reading of craggy nobility and enormous contrapuntal clarity.

For success, exhibitionistic music-making demands both exceptional players and an appropriate vehicle (say, Ravel's *La Valse*). Bruckner's music, essentially mystical and unostentatious, does not lend itself well to this approach. Nor does a fleet traversal usually work well, as it too represents a basic misunderstanding. For good or bad, the composer conceived his gigantic creations along extraordinarily spacious lines; they cannot be rushed. Rudolf would apparently like to emulate the Solti style; his brasses never miss an opportunity to blast away. But he cannot rely on his Cincinnati Symphony, a far cry from its Chicago counterpart, to overpower the listener. He therefore takes the no-nonsense approach to its ultimate: "Keep it moving" becomes "get it over with quickly." He rips through the Seventh in 55:12 (compared to Sanderling's 63:15 and Jochum's 69:14) in a crude, uninvolved run-through; quite simply, he lacks sympathy for the music.

The MCA/Decca recording provides a textbook exemplar of the vices of multimiking. Virtually every instrument has its own acoustical space; you can even hear individual strings—no plus, as their intonational discrepancies become all the more audible. Balances are ludicrous, enabling a flute to overpower the orchestra. At the beginning of Side 2, the perspective changes, and an enormous amount of tape hiss (which will plague the rest of the side) intrudes. If you're in the market for a single-disc budget-priced Seventh, Rosbaud's is very good. Though hardly elegant in sound or execution, that strong, stimulating, impassioned account interpretively outdistances many of its rivals at two and three times the price.

Sanderling is our representative of the straightforward school: unindulgent, without false sentiment, steady (even conservative) in tempo. In short, his reading does not call attention to itself. Time and again I find myself forgetting to listen for "interpretation," losing myself instead in the glorious music. This is not to imply undue sobriety or lack of individuality on Sanderling's part; his music-making is warm-spirited and powerfully shaped. Unicorn evidently draws this "performance" from a conflation of two live concerts of January 13 and 14, 1977. A welcome sense of spontaneity is present, as are some bloopers that probably would have been corrected in a studio recording. The Danish orchestra is technically on a par with the Cincinnati Symphony, but its intensity and

conviction here place it on an altogether higher plane; remarkably, this album documents the Danes' first collaboration with Sanderling. The sound, like the performance, is satisfying and refreshingly un gimmicked, though hardly spectacular.

This is as fine a modern single-disc recording of the Seventh as any in the catalog—certainly preferable to Masur's better-played and more overtly expressive but far less forceful version. Only slightly more expensive than the Unicorn, however, is Walter's *Odyssey* account, which manages to meld many of Sanderling's and Masur's best qualities into a vibrant, rich-sounding whole. It is spread out over three sides so as to avoid a break in the Adagio and includes as a substantial bonus Bruckner's *Te Deum*.

With good reason, Jochum has been perhaps more closely identified with Bruckner than with any other composer: He was the first to record an integral set of the numbered symphonies. At hand is his fourth Seventh. (No longer listed by SCHWANN are a c. 1940 Vienna Philharmonic performance for Telefunken, once available domestically on Capitol, and two Berlin Philharmonic performances: one c. 1952 for Decca, the other a 1966 DG release.) His latest account beautifully exemplifies the "expressive" approach, with extremely flexible tempos, highly inflected phrasing, unusually expansive pacing, and remarkable variety of color—even the different tremolos have their own special characters. Yet he never allows these loving details to detract from Bruckner's large-scale structure; everything is subordinated to a firm overall conception, which unfolds naturally, inevitably. The abundant lyricism and delicacy (with breathtaking soft playing) do not preclude enormous muscle. Angel's mellow sound nicely captures the dark, burnished tone of the superb Dresden orchestra, though the rather murky, cathedral-like ambience flatters the low frequencies far more than the higher ones.

If limited to a single Seventh, I would probably choose one of Karajan's incomparably resplendent performances. (At the moment, I favor the more demonstrative Angel over the later, sonically superior DG.) But Jochum's achievement is such that while listening to his recording I am convinced there is no better way to play this music.

The question of editions: Neither the Sixth nor the Seventh poses many problems, since both exist in but one version. In the Sixth, the differences between the rival Haas and Nowak editions are minor details of texture and orchestration, all in the first movement. In the Seventh, the discrepancies are similarly minuscule, with two exceptions: Nowak's dubious reintroduction

of extra tempo markings employed by Nikisch at the symphony's premiere, and the controversial slow-movement cymbal clash and triangle roll, present in Nowak but absent from Haas. Solti appears to use the Haas edition of the Sixth; all three conductors of the Seventh opt for Nowak. R.D.H.

#### DVOŘÁK: The Jacobin.

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Terinka Daniela Sounová (s)

Lotinka  
Jiří  
Benda  
Bohuš  
Adolf  
Count Vilém  
Filip

Ivana Mixová (a)  
Vilém Přibyl (t)  
Beno Blachut (t)  
Václav Zitek (b)  
René Tuček (b)  
Karel Průša (bs)  
Karel Berman (bs)

Kantiléna Children's Chorus, Kühn Mixed Chorus, Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra, Jiří Pinkas, cond. [Zdeněk Zahradník, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1 12 2481/3, \$26.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

(Continued on page 78)

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# DG Digital: A Magic Flute with a Tragic Flaw

by David Hamilton

Once again, Herbert von Karajan has made an operatic recording to confound conventional critical arithmetic, for the totality of this *Zauberflöte* is tangibly less than the sum of its frequently admirable details. And once again, it isn't easy to define what is wrong, why hardly any of the large and small things that usually delight and touch us in this transcendent work actually do so. Even Angel's 1972 Sawallisch recording (SCL 3807), less than subtly played and sung, for the most part, often projects a more vivid sense of both playfulness and pathos, and the 1966 DG version led by Karl Böhm (2709 017), a shade deficient in lightness, is far more involving when it comes to the music's serious side—not to mention the comparably vivid aspects of still earlier versions led by Fricsay (DG Privilege 2728 009) and (without spoken dialogue) by Klemperer (Angel SCL 3651), Beecham (Turnabout THS 65078/80), and Karajan himself in 1950 (EMI SLS 5052), or the bootleg Cetra sets of Salzburg performances led by Toscanini (1937) and Furtwängler (1951).

Perhaps one should begin by noting that there is nothing as obviously wayward about this new *Zauberflöte* as about Karajan's recent *Nozze di Figaro* (London OSA 1443, January), where whole stretches of the score were transformed into etudes for virtuoso orchestra—an approach occasionally prefigured in the conductor's 1950 Vienna recording of that opera. A few tempos are faster than the general practice—the beginning of the first finale, Tamino's flute tune ("Wie stark ist nicht dein Zauberton"), the Pamina/Tamino/Sarastro trio—but these are perfectly defensible as such. Also striking here, as in other recent Karajan operatic recordings (*Trovatore*, *Nozze*, and what should probably be referred to as Puccini's *Scarpia*), is a predilection for extreme dynamic contrasts in orchestral and choral material: the orchestral interjections in the Sprecher scene, for example, and the choral passage beginning the final scene of Act I.

Neither of these tendencies is automatically problematic, although the dynamic contrasts sometimes strike one as assertion of the conductor's presence and authority over his forces rather than as functional musical or dramatic gestures. But the basic problem, I think, is not something that is happening in the performance, but something that is not there—in fact, three things, perhaps not unrelated.

The first absent factor is attention to the specificity of musical events, particularly in the harmonic and rhythmic realms. For example, that extraordinary chorale-prelude with the two Armed Men is given an overall "envelope" of shape, but the agogics of the individual lines, the harmonic tensions set up by their simultaneities—these are evened out in favor of that overall shape; even the dotted rhythm of the opening motto is so underplayed as to be virtually suppressed altogether. Too many of the numbers in this performance are played with concern primarily for tempo, texture, and contour, which effectively writes off a large part of the opera's musical substance.

To achieve this kind of continuity, Karajan requires a degree of executive polish that seems to preclude much spontaneity, and that is the second thing missing here. Even though this recording was made from scratch in the studio, the Berlin Philharmonic plays with the same calculated gloss that we know from those Beethoven symphony recordings that have been rehearsed for twenty-five years. Not that the playing here is always flawless, but by now even the Berlin slips are played for Karajan just as coolly as the perfect notes.

Karin Ott  
A bright and fluent new voice



Not unrelated to this is the third lack, of a genuine interreaction between singers and conductor. Not infrequently—the *Bildnisarie* is a good example—the singers seem to be fitting their lines into a given framework, instead of generating them spontaneously in accord with the orchestra. I'm sure Karajan doesn't intend this, but by now it must be unavoidable; as he has grown older and more Olympian, the singers have become younger and less secure in background and tradition. The "awe factor" must be gigantic, for all that the maestro doubtless tries his best to be "only a colleague." It's certainly arguable that the best of Karajan's operatic recordings are those of the 1950s and early '60s, when he worked with singers such as Schwarzkopf, Callas, Seefried, Price, Tebaldi, Gobbi, Pannerai, and Taddei. (This is not, I think, a simple matter of good singing or bad—although, almost inevitably, singers with capable voices in good working order are the ones most likely to arrive at recording sessions with a broad awareness of interpretive possibilities and with real security about their own dramatic and musical intentions. And it's suggestive that Karajan's present approach seems to have arisen with the *Ring* cycle of the later '60s, arguably the first of his operatic recordings to suffer seriously from the diminishing pool of major voices.)

What I am suggesting, in effect, is that in today's Karajan opera sets the singers are functionally little different from members of the orchestra—an argument not unrelated to Conrad L. Osborne's stimulating reflections about the conductor's *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Angel SZCX 3885, April), which concentrated on the effect upon a particular work. I think that, to a greater or lesser extent, it's a bad situation for all operas, though some survive this imbalance better than others. Most of us have been willing to relish, at least once or twice, the orchestral splendors of that *Ring*, but in the long run opera without people is a diminished art form, and in certain styles of composition and dramaturgy it may vanish altogether without them.

Not all of *Die Zauberflöte* disappears here. Edith Mathis (Pamina), though hard put to enunciate her words clearly above the staff, does generate some independent expressivity, and the resulting interaction with Karajan and the orchestra in "*Ach, ich fühl's*" is a high point of the performance. One might have expected José van Dam to be similarly effective, but Sarastro is evidently not his part (in the forthcoming Levine recording, he will be heard in his usual role as the Sprecher); it lies uncomfortably for him, and the phrases come forth uneasily. In at least one piece where

the conductor must inevitably dominate anyway, the choral hymn "O Isis und Osiris," Karajan achieves powerful results.

Much of the rest, I'm afraid, comes out as a series of closed-end, static boxes; even the old recordings without any dialogue have more of a cumulative effect than this one. The dialogue here, incidentally, is spoken by the singers—a good idea, although both Tamino and Sarastro, when speaking, reveal Latin accents that have been refined away in their singing. The text is pretty much the standard abridgment used in recordings and most performances, with some minor excrescences of "humor" for Papageno; those who hanker after a more complete presentation of Schikaneder's words should probably wait for the Levine recording, for the Salzburg performances on which that is based offered more of it than I have ever heard.

There are some new voices in Karajan's cast. Karin Ott is a bright and fluent Queen of the Night, not quite up to the Edda Moser standard when she gets to the triplets in her second aria. Francisco Araiza (Tamino) makes lovely sounds at modest dynamic levels, but the voice turns hard and fixed when pushed. In the *Bildnisarie*, he sings the long appoggiaturas that Toscanini taught Roswaenge in 1937 (and that Beecham evidently untaught him a few months later!)—I don't know of any other use of these since then, even in Karajan's previous recording. In the scene with the Sprecher, too, there are more appoggiaturas than usual, and Araiza sings them with a nice sensitivity for their harmonic function. This is clearly a singer of potential; let us pray that he does not spoil it.

Gottfried Hornik may be the least "Viennese" Papageno in years—no bad thing in itself, for most of that local tradition is contained in hoary, unspontaneous "ad libs." More problematic is Hornik's singing, for above middle C the voice is markedly less happy, and he has much difficulty sustaining his line in "Bei Männern." Heinz Kruse becomes rather violent in Monostatos' aria, but you may not even notice, for the gossamer accompaniment is likely to rivet your ears. Claudio Nicolai is the gentlest Sprecher I've ever heard, making very little impression at all. The Three Ladies are a strong trio, though Anna Tomova-Sintov is inclined to peck at her notes. Three boy sopranos from the Tolzer Knabenchor are an outright disaster, and their micelike chirrupings haven't even been miked up to consistent audibility. If we must put up with this silliness, at least get good boys and use technology to make them musically plausible.

Which brings us, finally, to technology. This *Zauberflöte* was recorded dig-

itally. (So was Levine's, and there will be interesting comparisons when that appears.) Despite a palpable room resonance, the general effect, as often with digital recordings, is of a rather tight acoustic, though at times (e.g., the chorale-prelude) voices and orchestra appear to be in slightly different perspectives. Timbres have the clarity expected from the new process, and also another less happy characteristic that I'm coming to associate with it, a certain hardness of string tone that is not natural, not comparable to the best of analog recording. If this is an inevitable price to pay for increased solidity in lower registers, I'm not yet convinced that it is worth paying. Another jarring effect, in this recording at least, comes when quick repeated notes for the timpani generate a curious overload effect, as at the end of the Overture.

That particular problem isn't ameliorated on the 45-rpm bonus disc included with the set, which backs the new Overture with Karajan's very first studio recording, the same Overture played by the Berlin State Opera Orchestra in 1938. Both performances are expert, and not all that different (it is a piece presenting greater problems of executional clarity and balance than almost anything in the opera proper); you could persuade me that the sound of the violins in the old recording is in some ways more "natural" than that in the new recording.

As usual, DG has produced a reliable libretto with an interesting essay by Stanley Sadie.

**MOZART: Die Zauberflöte, K. 620.**

CAST:

- |                    |                        |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Queen of the Night | Karin Ott (s)          |
| Pamina             | Edith Mathis (s)       |
| Papagena           | Janet Perry (s)        |
| First Lady         | Anna Tomova-Sintov (s) |
| First Boy          | Wolfgang Buntten (s)   |
| Second Boy         | Christian Schulz (s)   |
| Third Boy          | Tobias Pfulb (s)       |
| Second Lady        | Agnes Baltsa (ms)      |
| Third Lady         | Hanna Schwarz (a)      |
| Tamino             | Francisco Araiza (t)   |
| First Priest       | Heiner Hopfner (t)     |
| Monostatos         | Heinz Kruse (t)        |
| First Armed Man    | Volker Horn (t)        |
| Papageno           | Gottfried Hornik (b)   |
| The Speaker        | Claudio Nicolai (b)    |
| Sarastro           | José van Dam (bs)      |
| Second Priest      | Leopold Valenta (bs)   |
| Second Armed Man   | Victor von Halem (bs)  |

Deutsche Oper Berlin Chorus, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Michel Glotz and Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2741 001, \$32.94 (three discs, manual sequence; digital recording). Tape: 3382 001, \$32.94 (three cassettes).

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(Continued from page 75)

Nationalism in music always gets a special chapter in music histories, but while the rise of national consciousness in the Romantic era was far-reaching in literature and the theater, the matter is not so simple to follow in opera. The East Europeans, lacking centuries of operatic tradition and development, were unable to create a form and idiom of specific national origin and distinctive quality; they joined the mainstream of opera too late for that. The Russians did have a certain operatic history, as the great empresses of the eighteenth century invited just about every noted Italian opera composer for a stay at court; these operas, however, like Handel's in the Royal Academy of Music, were for a restricted aristocratic audience. Russian ties to European opera remained tenuous, and talented and well-trained composers were few. Though European classical opera did find a few Russian adherents—we encounter a *Demofonte* or a *Quinto Fabio* in Russian—all these composers could do was to change the toga to a Russian tunic. They did not succeed in creating a new frame for their music, nor did they master operatic construction; even later, Tchaikovsky's nice mellifluous operas show a sketchy construction.

Russian Romantic opera started with Glinka but began really to flourish in the second half of the nineteenth century, with Pushkin replacing the Metastasio. Except for Glinka and Tchaikovsky, all its notable composers were dilettantes—military men, engineers, chemists—though posterity knows them only as musicians. Even the greatest among them, a true genius, Mussorgsky, was inadequately trained. Perhaps this quality, so different from our own world of music, is what makes them so interesting. All these composers were helpless when it came to form, procedure, and dramatic continuity; they did not want to ape the West, but they could not create an indigenous operatic idiom. The many refurbishings of *Boris Godunov* show this, though the work rightfully triumphed despite its shortcomings.

It was not the same in Bohemia, long an integral part of Central Europe musically. The leaders of the national opera movement, Smetana and Dvořák, were first-class professionals fully aware of the problems of starting from scratch, even though the Czechs, for centuries under Hapsburg rule, had long been acquainted with opera. Prague, an imperial city much favored by the Austrian emperors, had two opera houses, one German and the other Czech, which offered a large repertory. While the Russians naively groped for a solution, these two experienced and knowl-

edgeable masters realized that the only way out was to duplicate the accomplishment of the German Singspiel (the originator of national opera)—that is, to retain the basic Italian construction and procedure but fill them with genuine native music. This is why Smetana's *Bartered Bride* is such a delightful and successful opera—a latter-day Czech Singspiel, as it were. But Dvořák hewed closer to the Western model; he played in the Prague opera orchestra for nine years and became familiar with the repertory and with the métier of composing Western opera.

*The Jacobin* (1889) has everything that characterizes late-nineteenth-century opera, the Age of Verdi. It is a typical "grand opera" (in the strict, correct sense of that term). There are set pieces, arias, recitatives in the sense of Verdi's or Wagner's orchestrally accompanied parlando/quasi-recitative, lots of effective choral music and dances, and brilliant orchestration, yet the whole is suffused with Czech folk music. The opening scene, with the sound of organ and choir streaming from a church on the village square, is an old standby of grand opera, used not only by Mascagni and Gounod, but even by Wagner. Curiously, given Dvořák's great admiration for Wagner, there are only small traces of the Bayreuth master's influence; the procedures of contemporary Italian opera come into play, however, and there is a great deal of *Carmen* and *Freischütz*—though only in spirit. Dvořák does not imitate or borrow; his ideas are typically his own. Nevertheless, the explosive and bustling opening of *The Jacobin*, cymbals clashing, triangle tinkling, and brasses blaring, is unthinkable without the opening of *Carmen*. The opera's music is charming and entertaining, especially the choral numbers. One of the characters, a choirmaster, gave Dvořák the opportunity to handle the chorus almost as a protagonist; he was happiest when he could compose in his *Slavonic* Dances vein, with an antiphonal chorus of girls and young men singing delectable folk tunes.

So these three discs offer very pleasant music. There are two good singers in the cast, baritone Václav Zitek (Bohuš) and soprano Daniela Sounová (Terinka). Marcela Machotková (Julie), a dramatic soprano, sings passionately, but her vibrato can be a little too wide. Though tenor Vilém Přibyl (Jiří), one of the principals, does not quite live up to his role, he, like the others in the large cast, is adequate. The temperamental conductor, Jiří Pinkas, proves an experienced operatic hand, and both chorus and orchestra are fine. Still, the attractive choral numbers and the well-shaped solo pieces cannot hide the same conflict that confronted the Russians: The

opera is somewhat formless, the continuity is not always convincing, and there is no real dramatic confrontation.

The review copy has no accompanying literature on this unknown opera, no dates, no synopsis; all we get is an English version of the original text. Now you try to follow the singing in Czech by reading what is termed an "informative" English libretto without even an indication of side changes. Neither are we told that this is not the opera as Dvořák composed it, but a "revision" of an earlier revision made by some Kapellmeister in 1911—twice removed from the original! Though the music is well worth hearing, no critic can express firm and detailed opinions unless he knows just what he is given to appraise. P.H.L.

**GESUALDO: Responsoria; Benedictus; Miserere.**

Montserrat Monastery Schola Cantorum, Ireneu Segarra, cond. [Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2710 028, \$29.94 (three discs, manual sequence).

**GESUALDO: Responsoria: Sabato sancto.**

Deller Consort, Alfred Deller, dir. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4132, \$6.95 (\$4.45 to members). (Add \$1.25 for

shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724.)

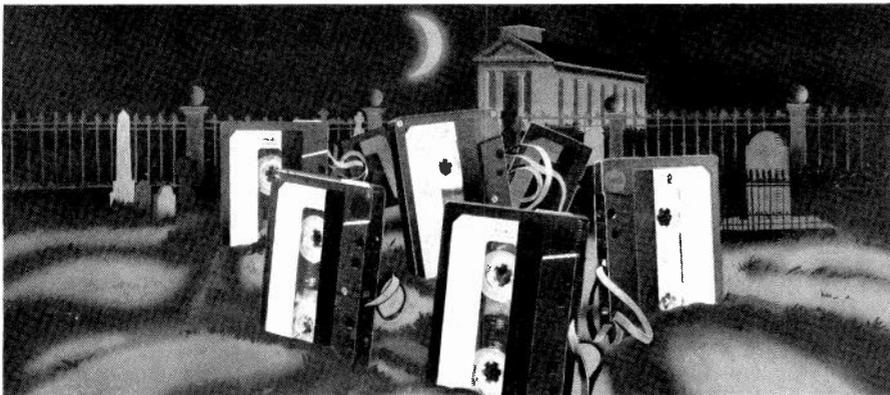
The music of Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, can be seen simplistically as a reflection of his tortured life. He is famous for having had his wife and her lover murdered (though contemporary opinion seems to have criticized him only for not carrying out the deed personally), and the rest of his life was dismally unhappy: He maltreated his second wife, saw the death of their only child, and lived in continual painful ill health. Is it any wonder, then, that his music should be so anguished, so chromatic, so powerfully pessimistic?

But recent work on Gesualdo, notably that of Glenn Watkins, has helped to modify our notion of him as an extraordinary eccentric, unrelated to the composers around him. This very fine, deeply affecting set of responsories for Holy Week is but one of a number of such settings from Italy in this period, by Lambardi, Dentice, Nenna, and others; and among the motets of Scipione Stella (who traveled to Ferrara with Gesualdo in 1594) are many that anticipate those of Gesualdo. Not that this makes his achievement any the less remarkable, but it helps to place him in context as a composer. In his music the poly-

phonically based techniques of the Renaissance are already being molded to the personal, expressive ends of the baroque. He was not just a nut case.

There is a long tradition of setting the three groups of responsories for the Tenebrae services of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday; these polyphonic settings would have taken their place among the plainchant, psalm-chants, and silences of the liturgy, and their concentration onto six continuous sides of a recording is a little artificial. Moreover, the extraordinary shifts of the music—the sudden use of unrelated chords, unprepared dissonances, and surprising chromaticisms—demand a firm-edged precision of performance. For all the wonderful atmosphere and integrity of the recording from the Abbey of Montserrat (a Benedictine monastery at Barcelona with an ancient tradition of church music and an enormously influential school of boys' voice-training), it does not capture the sharpness and penetration of Gesualdo's inspiration. The sound is warm, rounded, and rather woolly; the singers tend to slide around the notes rather than focus on them. At times the passion of the singing is affecting, but too often this is achieved at the expense of clarity.

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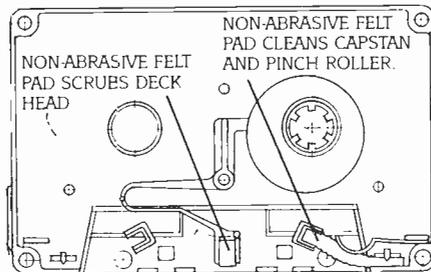


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Alfred Deller's single disc containing the responsories for Holy Saturday uses adult voices and sounds more artificial. The Deller Consort, obviously not made up of singers who live and breathe liturgical music, lacks the spontaneity and involvement of the Montserrat choir. But at least we can hear Gesualdo's music strongly and cleanly projected, and the result is compelling. Interestingly, Deller's versions, in a drier acoustic, sound faster; but in fact "Jerusalem surge" and "Plange quasi virge" turn out to be slower than on the Montserrat record; only the sublime "O vos omnes" is quicker. There is more sense of movement and harmonic direction from the Deller Consort; the Montserrat choir tends to drift.

The complete set offers excellent value, with the *Benedictus* and *Miserere* that accompanied the extinguishing of the church lights crowded onto already full sides. Reservations about the Montserrat performance notwithstanding, this is music that any adventurous listener should try to encounter; its unearthly anguish and despair haunt the soul. N.K.

HANDEL: Sonatas for Two Oboes and Continuo.

Heinz Holliger and Maurice

Bourgue, oboes; Christiane Jaccottet, harpsichord; Manfred Sax, bassoon. PHILIPS 9500 671, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 766, \$9.98 (cassette).

Trio Sonatas (Halle): No. 1, in B flat; No. 2, in D minor; No. 3, in E flat; No. 4, in F; No. 5, in G; No. 6, in D.

Ronald Roseman and Virginia Brewer, oboes; Edward Brewer, harpsichord; Donald MacCourt, bassoon. [Marc J. Aubert and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] NONESUCH H 71380, \$5.98.

Trio Sonatas (Halle), Vol. 2: No. 1, in B flat; No. 4, in F; No. 5, in G; No. 6, in D.

To those who share my susceptibilities both to Handel and to the often penetrating reedy tone of the oboe, this music—in either release—will prove irresistible. Even if you can't accept the legend that Handel wrote these trio sonatas in Halle when only eleven (it's more reasonable to assume that, however precocious the first drafts, they must have been revised later), you can't possibly disagree with his own subsequent judgment: "Ah, I could write like the devil in those days, especially for the oboe, which was my favorite instrument."

Since the 1970 Archiv disc, with

oboists Piguet and Haas, went out of print, we've needed a complete set of the Halle Sonatas. Now (if we include the earlier volume on Nonesuch H 71339, November 1977) we have two—a choice likely to set most of us echoing MacHeath (in Gay's *Beggar's Opera*): "How happy could I be with either/Were t'other dear Charmer away!"

But comparisons are stimulating rather than odious—if one insists on making them at all. For Heinz Holliger is one of the few truly peerless recording artists nowadays, and he inspires his partner Maurice Bourgue to play and sound almost exactly like him. The gifted American Ronald Roseman commands distinctive tonal qualities, too, and is ably, if less closely, matched by Virginia Brewer. The more relaxed and intimate chamber-music style of the American readings, generally slower, contrasts with the more polished, higher-tensioned, more brilliant concert-style European performances. While the recording qualities provide an ultravid sense of "presence" in both cases, the Nonesuch versions seem slightly more closely miked (but are decidedly more equably balanced than the Sonatas Nos. 2 and 3 in the earlier volume).

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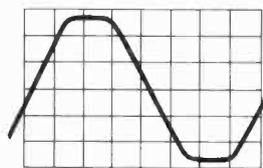
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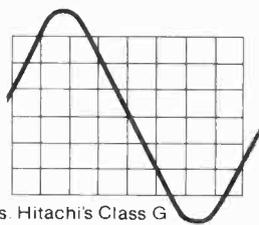
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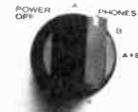
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series—one of the legacies of the invaluable fruitful Teresa Sterne era—cost little more than the single Philips disc and include two additional solo sonatas, Op. 1, Nos. 6 and 8, and fuller notes. On the other hand, the Philips release, at any price, must rank as one of the finest in the superlative Holliger discography. Both are Handelian oboe treasures no one can afford to miss. R.D.D.

#### LISZT: Hungarian Rhapsodies (7).

**H** Ignaz Friedman (2), Mischa Levitzki (6), Alfred Cortot (11), Gina Bachauer (12), Ferruccio Busoni (13), Mark Hambourg (14), and Solomon (15), piano. **ARABESQUE** 8011, \$6.98 (mono). Tape: 9011, \$6.98 (cassette). [From various COLUMBIA and HMV originals, 1922–53.]

Rhapsodies: No. 2, in C sharp minor; No. 6, in D flat; No. 11, in A minor; No. 12, in C sharp minor; No. 13, in A minor; No. 14, in F minor (*Mohac's Field*); No. 15, in A minor (*Rákóczy March*).

Seven Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, each played by a different "historical" pianist—an entertaining and at times riveting record.

The idea is wonderful, even if one

questions certain aspects of the anthology. One could quibble, for example, over the inclusion of Alfred Cortot's 1953 account of No. 11. Recorded toward the end of that once-great artist's career, the performance is replete with manner and almost scandalous in matter; the uniquely plangent, hazy sonority and the grand gesture are evident but severely ravaged by a stiff, unflowing lethargy in the introduction and by a coda that swarms with inaccuracies. Surely it would have made better sense to substitute his much earlier version of the same piece. Nor, with all charity, does the late Gina Bachauer's 1949 recording of No. 12 really stand up alongside such masterly music-making as Ignaz Friedman's 1931 account of No. 2 and Busoni's incredible No. 13 (1922; the only acoustical recording in this collection). Her playing, facile enough but not particularly intense, is further trivialized by the use of Saint-Saëns's abbreviated bowdlerization. Arthur de Greef's early electrical No. 12 would certainly have had more intrinsic interest (and, incidentally, would have furnished an example of at least one authentic Liszt pupil).

Certainly a more informed and responsible annotator than Alan Rich would have been appropriate. Quite apart from

some tedious attempts at humor and some jarring vernacular ("every g.d. note exactly in place" in Solomon's *Rákóczy March*, elsewhere characterized as "this most stunning of all knuckle-busters"), Liszt composed nineteen *Hungarian Rhapsodies*, not fifteen, and Cortot plays No. 11, not No. 8.

But consider the treasures resurrected in these grooves. Friedman, who deserves an anthology all to himself, shows a mesmerizing ability to delineate a large-scale structure and at the same time infuse passing details with poetic spontaneity. Busoni's recording, already familiar from an IPA/Desmar disc devoted to that legendary artist's entire disc legacy, is in a much cooler style, but his caustic detachment ultimately proves as overpowering and compelling as Friedman's swashbuckling commitment. Mischa Levitzki's 1927 performance of No. 6, after beginning a bit soberly, more than makes its effect through even rhythm and patrician control; the final octaves have a notable limpid ease. Mark Hambourg's reading of No. 14 is somewhat cavalier in detail, but one certainly gains a more favorable impression of that Leschetizky pupil from this 1929 recording than from his wildly erratic Tchaikovsky B flat minor Concerto. Solo-

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mon's 1932 version of No. 15 is, in truth, somewhat icy and noncommittal, although the playing does have more power and thrust than I recall from the genteel pianist of the Fifties.

Naturally, the sound quality varies from item to item. Bachauer's performance may indeed have been originally recorded on tape as stated, although the source material for this dubbing was obviously a shellac disc. Solomon's selection was transcribed by EMI's Keith Hardwick, who may have had vinyl pressings and metal parts at

his disposal; for whatever reason, there is less surface noise on that band. All of the others, though, have been honestly transferred by Ward Botsford, with the Friedman in particular revealing a bass retention and treble placency quite remarkable for its time. H.G.

**FERNANDO DE LUCIA:** The Gramophone Company Recordings, 1902-9. For a review, see page 62.

**MAHLER:** Songs.  
Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano:

London Philharmonic Orchestra, Andrew Davis, cond. [Paul Myers, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS M 35863, \$8.98. Tape: MT 35863, \$8.98 (cassette).

Songs of a Wayfarer; Rückert-Lieder (5); Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Rheinlegendchen; Wer hat dies Liedlein erdacht?

Though the *Songs of a Wayfarer* is obviously a man's narrative, it has often been successfully sung by women; the earliest recordings were by Carol Brice, Eugenia Zareska, and Blanche Thebom, while more recently Maureen Forrester, Christa Ludwig, and Janet Baker have made admired versions. What troubles me about Frederica von Stade's performance is not that she is a woman, but that she sounds, in the climactic pages of "*Ich hab' ein glühend Messer*," rather more like a young girl, not yet ready for these violent emotions. It is the scale and profundity of the persona offered, not its gender, that seems inappropriate.

The Rückert songs are not a cycle, of course; each one has its distinctive orchestration, and each makes distinctive vocal demands. Here again, against the large brass section at the climax of "*Um Mitternacht*," Von Stade seems seriously underpowered. But there is a restraint to this singing that is not merely dynamic, not simply interpretive (of the sort that is entirely appropriate to "*Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*," for example). The voice itself seems reluctant to speak; each note bulges and then withdraws, instead of carrying forward to the next one. Word and tone are not well matched, vowels turn nasal as they are closed off, and some notes (e.g., the repeated "um" of "*Um Mitternacht*") are almost lost. In the two *Knaben Wunderhorn* songs, the singer puts on her Mariandel voice, like a peasant costume, and lets the nasality run riot—not, I regret to say, a pleasant sound. Even Mahler's most *innig* phrases want more generosity of utterance than one hears in most of this recital (and, in spots, more precision of intonation as well).

A disappointing record, then, despite the efficient and shapely orchestral work. (The low instruments in "*Um Mitternacht*" are registered with rewarding clarity.) In general, the best complete set of the Rückert songs is Baker/Barbirolli (Angel S 36796), in which, as in the new Columbia, "*Ich bin der Welt*" is transposed up a tone—not a really harmful procedure, but the song's subtlest harmonic detail, the low dissonance on the downbeat preceding the singer's final words, always seems to sound more convincingly at the original pitch. For that pitch, and for the surest realization of the chordal balances and harmonic direction, don't miss the Ludwig/Klemperer version (Angel SB 3704, only three Rückert

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songs, plus two from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, as fillers to an impressive *Lied von der Erde*). Also very beautiful in its repose and breadth is Fischer-Dieskau/Böhm (DG 138 879, with the *Kindertotenlieder*), which omits "Liebst du um Schönheit," possibly on the grounds that it was orchestrated—if I read the appendix of La Grange's book correctly—not by Mahler, but by one M. Puttmann. For the *Wayfarer Songs*, nothing has ever surpassed the 1952 Fischer-Dieskau/Furtwängler version (Seraphim 60272, mono, coupled with a Kempe-led *Kindertotenlieder*). Columbia includes a sound note by Lionel Salter as well as texts and translations. D.H.

MOZART: Die Zauberflöte, K. 620. For a review, see page 76.

MOZART: Serenades: No. 9, in D, K. 320 (*Posthorn*)\*; No. 13, in G, K. 525 (*Eine kleine Nachtmusik*)\*.

Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra\*, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra\*, Karl Böhm, cond. [Hans Hirsch\* and Werner Mayer\*, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 191, \$9.98. Tape: 3301 191, \$9.98 (cassette). [\*From DG 2530 082, 1971.]

MOZART: Serenade No. 13, in G, K. 525 (*Eine kleine Nachtmusik*)\*; Ein musikalischer Spass, K. 522\*.

Amadeus Quartet; Rainer Zepperitz, double bass\*; Gerd Seifert and Manfred Klier, horns\*. [Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 253, \$9.98. Tape: 3301 253, \$9.98 (cassette).

One of my favorite Mozart works, the *Posthorn* Serenade, receives a performance of great breadth and majesty from Karl Böhm and the Berlin Philharmonic. Except in the introduction, however, I'm not sure those are the qualities one should look for in this piece. Other conductors, such as Eduard van Beinum in his long-deleted Epic Concertgebouw recording, have taken a headlong approach with exhilarating results. But Böhm, with his more leisurely tempos—particularly in the minuets and finale—gives a very distinguished reading, and of course, the orchestra plays superbly. The first movement is beautifully paced, and the first minuet's trio has a lovely *grazioso* feeling. Böhm's wonderfully spacious account of the slow movement evokes haunting premonitions of *Don Giovanni*.

My main reservation here concerns the recording of the woodwinds, which are rather recessed in the orchestral fabric; they really should be treated as solo instruments, especially since Mozart has marked one of the movements *Concertante*. Incidentally, James Galway is listed inconspicuously in the credits, a reminder that he

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was principal flutist of the Berlin Philharmonic at the time this recording was made in 1971.

The *Posthorn* is recoupled with a *Nachtmusik* that is not so "kleine"; Böhm's rendition runs almost twenty minutes. The finale, while not quite as slow as in Sir Thomas Beecham's famous (infamous?) recording, certainly approaches it. But again, Böhm offers a beautiful performance, this time featuring the strings of the Vienna Philharmonic, which has apparently relaxed its policy against appearing on the same record with another orchestra.

In an identical coupling of these works, George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra (Columbia MS 7273) give tauter, leaner performances with somewhat brisker tempos. Böhm's readings are very satisfying, however, and I would not want to be without this record as well.

The *Amadeus Nachtmusik*, with one player to a part, is more energetic and rugged than Böhm's. One might expect a string quintet to be more refined than a full string orchestra in this music, but it is the Vienna Philharmonic that is refined, while the quintet digs in more in a performance of great vitality that I prefer to any orchestral version I've heard. The decidedly brisk tempos would perhaps not be so effective if adopted by a full string section.

This delightful record also offers an absolutely captivating *Musical Joke*. Mozart, of course, wrote this work as a parody of poor composers and amateur musicians. It is really a wonderful little piece, which only serves to demonstrate that Mozart could not write even bad music poorly. The Amadeus and colleagues seem to be having a rollicking good time playing it, as should anyone hearing it.

Both discs benefit from bright, clear recording and immaculate surfaces. J.C.

**RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: Scheherazade, Op. 35.**

Herman Krebbers, violin; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond. Philips 9500 681, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 776, \$9.98 (cassette).

**A** Irvine Arditti, violin; London Symphony Orchestra, Loris Tjeknavorian, cond. [Brian B. Culverhouse, prod.] Chalfont SDG 304, \$15 (digital recording) (distributed by Varèse Sarabande).

COMPARISONS:

Haitink/London Sym. Phi. 6500 410  
Svetlanov/U.S.S.R. Sym. Mus. Her. 4096

Philips' latest entry in the warhorse sweepstakes is one of the better *Scheherazades* in many respects but, alas, not all. Herman Krebbers, perhaps the finest exponent of the eponymous sojo violin role, and the other Amsterdammers all play superbly,

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and they are beautifully recorded, with only faintly spotlighted woodwinds and percussion. But while Kondrashin's virtuoso reading of the bigger, more robustly energetic moments is effective, he tends to become sluggish and even a bit lachrymose in the more lyrical passages and fails to leave a consistently distinctive impression.

The much tauter, more powerfully characterized Chalfont version, of course, commands primary attention as the first digital (Soundstream system) recording of this favorite showpiece. And indeed it does exhibit both the minor weaknesses and the major strengths of digital technology: some (not excessively) sharp-edged highs and some lack of ambient warmth, on one hand; on the other, almost unbelievable transparency of textures, with especially clean definition of percussion parts (pianissimo as well as fortissimo) and nearly palpable sonic weight and impact. The blazing climaxes outdo even the most sensational analog engineering triumphs.

The London Symphony's playing and Tjeknavorian's reading are also admirable, if less exceptional. I had been so highly impressed by the young Iranian-Armenian conductor's American record debut (Khachaturian's three *Gayane* Suites, RCA CRL 2-2263, October 1977) that I feared he might show less charisma in more familiar music. Yet while he's not quite so startlingly authoritative here, his interpretation is first-rate: tautly controlled throughout, rhythmically crisp, electrifying in its dynamism but by no means lacking in lyrical grace.

This is, curiously, a more Slavic reading than Kondrashin's, if less so than the more coarsely played 1969 Svetlanov version reissued last June by the Musical Heritage Society—the only all-Russian recorded performance. But the most completely satisfying *Scheherazade* is still Haitink's with the London Symphony (March 1974). Its matchless (analog) sonic naturalness makes the digitally mastered sound, exciting as it is, seem preternaturally different from anything one expects to hear in an acoustically warm concert hall. And Haitink's truly magisterial interpretation is still unrivaled for poetic eloquence, kaleidoscopic coloring, and dramatic grandeur.

R.D.D.

**SOLER:** Keyboard Works. For a review, see page 60.

**VERDI:** Requiem.

Renata Scotto, soprano; Agnes Baltsa, mezzo-soprano; Veriano Luchetti, tenor; Yevgeny Nesterenko, bass; Ambrosian Opera Chorus, Philharmonia Orchestra, Riccardo Muti, cond. [John Mordler, prod.] ANGEL SZB 3858, \$17.96 (two discs,

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automatic sequence). Tape: 4Z25 3858, \$17.96 (two cassettes).

## COMPARISON:

Schwarzkopf, Ludwig, Gedda,  
Ghiaurov/Giulini

Ang. S 3649

Verdi's profoundly beautiful, profoundly moving drama of life, death, and salvation seems to bring out the worst in conductors with a taste for virtuoso display. Like such highly esteemed predecessors as Victor de Sabata and Sir Georg Solti, Riccardo Muti has a field day with the contrasts of harmony, sonic levels, textures, and mood that are so fundamental to Verdi's emotional response to the contemplation of last things. But in the young conductor's hands the mature composer's strength of feeling sounds almost hysterical. The heavens are at one moment rent asunder by cataclysmic cries of anguish and supplication and at the next lulled into repose by scarcely audible murmurings of acquiescence. The chorus delivers its fearsome prophecy about the end of the world and the Last Judgment at the same break-neck speed with which it proclaims the glory of the Lord in the Sanctus. When the time comes for lamentation in the "*Lacrymosa*," Muti becomes positively sluggish—as he does, too, in the "*Hostias*," where sacrifices and prayers of praise are offered. The net result is to deflect attention from the work and fix it on the conductor's skill. Thus is drama converted to melodrama, the profound to the merely striking.

Muti's soloists, while not ideal, make a more satisfactory team than those heard on most other recordings. Individually they are inoffensive rather than memorable, though there is much to be said for the confident vocalism and secure musicianship of Yevgeny Nesterenko, despite his lack of the right kind of plangent bass sound. Veriano Luchetti is less good here than on Solti's RCA Requiem (ARL 2-2476), his top notes having acquired an unpleasant edge in the intervening two years. Agnes Baltsa, a young singer much admired in Vienna, is reliable, but often deficient in vocal weight and color, not to mention the lack of temperament in her singing. In the latter respect she compares poorly with Renata Scotto, whose performance offers vibrancy as well as stylistic conviction. In her moving account of the "*Libera me*," the wonderfully dignified intensity of feeling shows how a first-rate artist can combine deep emotion with musical probity. But why this superb singer wants to assume roles for which she has not been equipped by nature I cannot understand. The soprano part in Verdi's Requiem was written for an Aida or an Elisabeth de Valois, not a Violetta or a Mimi. All through the "*Libera me*," for example, Scotto has recourse to the glottal

stop as if to compensate for the dramatic attack that the music so clearly requires and that she is unable to supply. Nonetheless, it is mostly through her performance that we sense the sublime reach of Verdi's eloquence. (It is for the latter quality that, despite my reservations about some of its singing, Giulini's account strikes me as the best on records.)

The Philharmonia Orchestra and the Ambrosian Opera Chorus are very accomplished. The sound, though clear and spacious, is occasionally disrupted by pre-echo. My pressings were noisy. Text and translation are provided. D.S.H.

## VERDI: Songs (16).

Klára Takács, mezzo-soprano;  
Sándor Falvai, piano. [István Juhász, prod.]  
HUNGAROTON SLPX 12197, \$8.98.

Sei Romanze (complete); Album di sei Romanze (complete); Il Poveretto; La Seduzione; L'Esule; Stornello.

It is not generally appreciated that the German Romantic song, the Lied, had a certain vogue in nineteenth-century Italy, too; Donizetti, Bellini, the retired Rossini, and others all indulged. But the Italian genius, attuned to opera, could not take over the German genre without adjustments to its own vocal idiom, so the Lied became the romanza, its operatic flavor somewhat reduced by the simple piano accompaniment.

In his earlier period, Verdi also composed romanzas, and though they must be characterized as pleasant music rather than masterpieces, it is good to have them available. Their tone is balladlike; their harmonic schemes and accompaniments are very simple. By the second side of the disc a certain sameness makes itself felt, but taken singly these are nice pieces, showing familiar traits of their composer; even in these early works he never fails to fashion a melody to suit the human voice admirably. Among the romanzas there is of course a preghiera and a brindisi, both well-known staples of contemporaneous opera, though Verdi also tries to reach into the real world of the Lied by setting "*Margaret at the Spinning Wheel*" and "*The Chimney Sweep*." Nothing better illustrates the fundamental difference between the German Lied and the Italian romanza than the settings of these Italianized German texts.

Klára Takács sings very well, with sensitive projection and fine dynamic nuances. But something must have gone wrong with the usually very reliable Hungaroton microphone technique and monitoring: There is some shrillness in her high notes that has not been apparent in her other recordings. Her accompanist, Sándor Falvai, is an intelligent musician, flexible and helpful. P.H.L.

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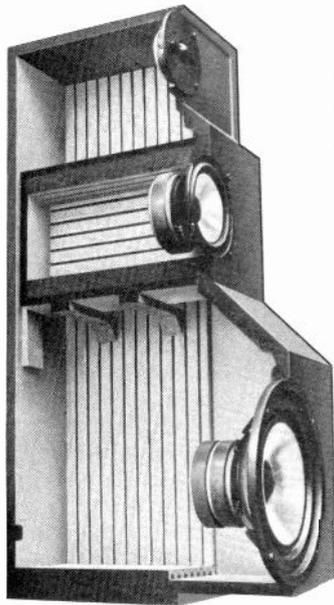
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Robert Angus. (The Auto-  
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 Shanefield. March.

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### MISCELLANEOUS

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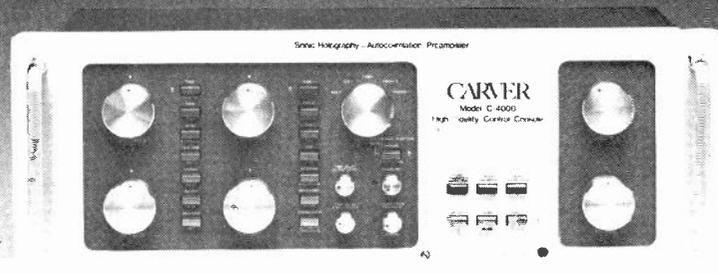
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 Larry Klein, Stereo Review.

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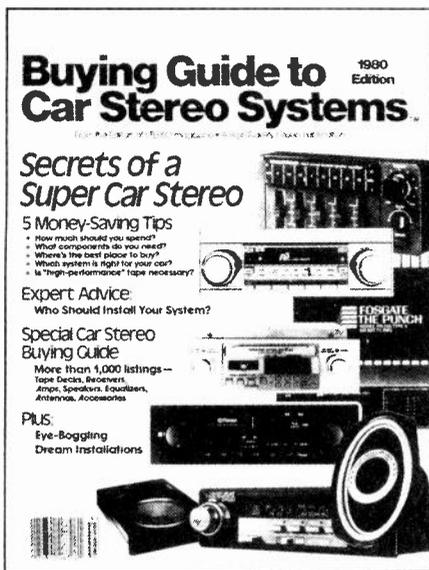
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Front-Panel Design—Zen and the Art of. Robert Long. (Soundings) February.  
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Marcus, Leonard (Editorial)—Good Luck, ACS of the AD of the CEG of the EIA! (Feb.); The Baton Passes (March); Too High Fidelity? (Apr.); Fidelity to What? (June); John Culshaw (July); IRCA Nominees (Oct.).  
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New products: A Cautious Entry into the Eighties. Robert Long and Peter Dobbin. April.  
New products: Guess What's Coming to Entertain You. Robert Long and Peter Dobbin. September.  
Noise-Reduction Systems and How to Get the Most Out of Them. Robert Long and Edward J. Foster. August.  
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## EQUIPMENT REPORTS

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Dennesen  
Design Acc  
Dynaco A-2.  
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HIGH FIDELITY

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Nakamichi High-Com II noise-reduc-  
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Sanyo Plus Series N-55 Super-D noise-  
reduction system. August.

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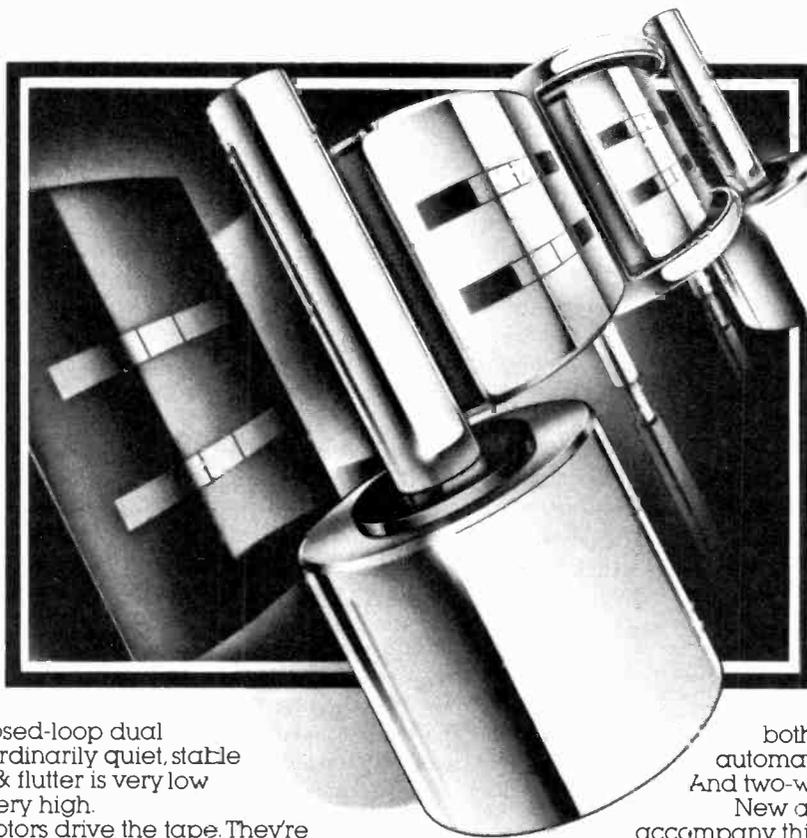
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# The Tape Deck

by R. D. Darrell

For mind-blowing holidays

This is the season when even Scroogian reviewers may see the light—as I just have in my own most precious gift: a sure record of the year and an irresistibly persuasive advocate for the use of period instruments even for the music of Mozart. It's the volume of eleven Salzburg symphonies by the Academy of Ancient Music (Oiseau-Lyre K 169K33, \$29.94, three-cassette box). Incomparably rewarding musically, it beguiles one into a reformation of long-held rigid aesthetic and historical beliefs.

Although I was an early convert to the desirability of period instruments for very old and baroque music, I've been an uneasy fence-sitter where rococo and early classical repertoires (except those for piano) are involved. Now I'm forced to realize that I just hadn't heard truly authoritative "period" Mozart before. Animating the theories of their musicological guru Neal Zaslaw, Jaap Schröder and Christopher Hogwood and their ensemble demonstrate, with the invaluable aid of engineers John Dunkerley and Simon Eadon, just how incredibly transparent and vibrant, how mercurially vital, how unquestionably "right" this treatment can sound. I learned, too, how deeply the teenaged Mozart's genius was rooted in baroque traditions. Indeed, the only thing unsurprising is the renewed proof that even "minor" Mozart (as some of these symphonies have been ranked) still can be major musical miracles.

There's also a rare discovery for operatic, especially Verdi, connoisseurs: the first recording of the 1850 *Stiffelio*, the long-obscure work that followed *Luisa Miller* and preceded the milestone *Rigoletto*. Its original failure must have been the result of its story's lack of appeal for the Italian public, not any musical deficiencies. But judge for yourself in Lamberto Gardelli's performance starring José Carreras and Sylvia Sass with the Austrian Radio Chorus and Orchestra (Philips 7699 127, \$19.96, two cassettes).

The general acclaim for the disc edition of Leonard Bernstein's new traversal of all nine Beethoven symphonies is sure to be echoed for its impressively packaged six-cassette tape edition (Deutsche Grammophon 3378 090, \$59.88). Indeed, the cassette layout on twelve rather than sixteen sides is superior in avoiding midwork turnovers except in the Third and Ninth. These Vienna Philharmonic performances reveal a more mature yet no less individualistic

Bernstein than did his late '60s Columbia cycle. And if the first-rate live-performance sonics are nevertheless variable and a bit hazy, they are always warmly true to auditorium sound. While the individual readings will be variously valued by connoisseurs, Bernstein aficionados will be ecstatic throughout.

To balletomanes, or anyone perhaps a bit fed up with even that loveliest of Christmas perennials, Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*, I suggest switching this year to the larger-scaled *Swan Lake*. The latest complete recording, by the Boston Symphony under Seiji Ozawa (DG 3371 051, \$26.94, three cassettes), is more a "concert" version than a danceable one but is probably the finest for pellucid sonic luminosity. And Haydn collectors who missed the 1968 RCA Red Seal disc edition of the Denis Vaughan/Naples Orchestra's urtext *Paris Symphonies* (Nos. 82-87) get a second chance in a most welcome Arabesque reissue (9047-3, \$20.94, three cassettes).

## Glittering superchromes and digitals: In combination...

At last I've been able to hear the full CBS Mastersound musicassette debut release (\$14.98 each), after only sampling it, with Zubin Mehta's *Petrushka*, back in October. As I'd hoped, the new Bernstein/New York Philharmonic account of Shostakovich's Fifth (HMT 35854) is decisively the best exemplar to date, technologically and musically, of superchrome tapings of digital recordings. To be sure, Bernstein's soberer, more magisterial reading lacks some—if by no means all—of the electrifying excitement (and eccentricities) of his memorable 1960 version, long out of print on tape. And as Derrick Henry's perceptive overview of the initial Mastersound disc release (September HF) pointed out, there may well be inherent listener-fatigue effects in these (perhaps all) digital recordings. This may be the consequence, I suspect, of excessively sharp-edged highs, overdry ambiances, and in disc playback, likely tracking distortion. Fortunately, chromium tapings avoid mistracking problems, and their expanded "headroom" copes better with high-end stridencies as well as with the deepest, most solidly impactful lows. I don't dare prophesy the long-run connoisseur reaction, but in the short run, whatever critical qualifications have to be made, the Mastersound series in general and this Fifth in particular are sure

to make a powerful impression.

The other two releases are far more uneven in both quality and appeal. The Max Roach percussion ensemble's "M'Boom" program (HCT 36247) is a paradigm of percussive-timbre differentiations but musically unimaginative. And Lorin Maazel's Strauss tone poems with the Cleveland Orchestra (HMT 35826) slope off from a thrilling *Tod und Verklärung* through an impetuous but overromanticized *Don Juan* to a *Till Eulenspiegel* utterly lacking in humor and charm. Throughout the series the sonic impacts are tremendous, but can't a premium price ensure at least *some* notes on the music?

... and separately

The latest Orion II and In Sync Laboratories superchrome tapings of analog recordings feature nothing as impressive as the best of those cited here last August and September. But Milhaud and two-piano fans will delight in the only available tapings of the two-piano concerto and *Carnaval à la Nouvelle-Orléans*, plus the ever delectable *Scaramouche*, by Joan Yarbrough and Robert Cowan with the Royal Philharmonic under Paul Freeman (Orion II/Classical Cassette Company OC 820S, \$14.95). Best of recent In Sync/Connoisseur Society programs for other than piano solo is the powerful Wilkomiriska/Barbosa coupling of violin sonatas by Grieg (No. 3) and Ravel (C 4035, \$14.98).

London, first with ferric cassettes of digital recordings, now becomes first to confound digital detractors by proving that excessively sharp-edged highs are *not* intrinsic to this technology. I still want warmer acoustic ambiances, but there is sonic warmth in excelsis in the glowing Kondrashin/Vienna Philharmonic Beethoven violin concerto and Dvořák *New World* Symphony (LDR5 10010 and 10011, respectively, \$10.98 each). The symphony is a beautifully lucid, highly Romantic reading lacking only folkish piquancy and dramatic bite. But the concerto, starring Kyung-Wha Chung, is absolutely extraordinary: markedly different from any previous version, distinctively original, enchantingly feminine, poetically eloquent, sonically lovely beyond compare. Perhaps it does lack Beethovenian muscularity and dramatic power, but for me it presents an uncommonly imaginative, entirely novel, yet richly rewarding approach to a familiar, too often hackneyed, masterpiece. **HF**

# BACKBEAT.



Maggie, Terre, and Suzzy: "It wasn't just the boys who were jeering"

## The Roches: A Triumph for Nurdity

by Stephen Holden

**I**t's an angry song, a serious song," declares Suzzy Roche, the author of *Nurds* and the youngest sister of the critically acclaimed folk/pop trio, the Roches. It's also the title cut from their second album, which represents a striking change of pace from the plain folk of last year's "The Roches." On that LP, their debut as a trio, their three-part harmonies flowed gently above their own strumming acoustic guitars, and the only ornamentation was producer Robert Fripp's harmonium-like guitar and tape-loop effects known as Frippertronics. But "Nurds" has a rhythm section. When the sisters exclaim, "I'm so glad I am one!" over a clatter of drums, it's almost rock & roll.

But though there's plenty of humor in *Nurds*, the note of angry triumph rings just as strongly. In the words of middle sister Terre, "It says that when you get older, the very things that people laugh at you for in high school—like not wearing the right clothes and not being cool—can turn into strengths, because you've survived the rejection and alienation. I was kind of a nurd when I was in high school, and it just made me put my roots down deeper."

"I remember one time in high school I was crowned Queen of the May," says Suzzy. "It was the only day you didn't have to wear a uniform and everyone else wore stockings with a garter belt. But I wasn't allowed to wear stockings. I had

these little ankle socks and it was very humiliating. My parents didn't go along with all the fads the way the other parents did. Although I resented it at the time now I'm very glad."

The immediate inspiration for *Nurds* came from the Roches' three-week tour in California last year with Bcz Scaggs. "Every night, as soon as we'd walk out on stage," recalls Suzzy, "people would start yelling at us to get off. They'd shout things like 'sit on my face' and 'you suck.' What made it even more painful was that it wasn't just the boys who were jeering."

The three sisters—Maggie, twenty-eight, Terre, twenty-seven, and Suzzy,



Maggie, Suzzy, Linda, and Terre

twenty-three—admit, however, that they were not totally surprised by the reception. First, a Scaggs audience expects rock & roll, and though the Roches use rock in their music, it's only one element of the acoustic-guitar-based mixture. Second, the three women know very well that they're breaking the rules of mass-market pop. They are perfectionist artists in a circus world who proudly resist classification as either "rock" or "folk." "I find the whole question of rock & roll oppressive," says Terre. "I hate the rock & roll sensibility and the people who think they're in charge of it and go around saying, 'This is real rock & roll,' and, 'That is not rock & roll.' That just gets in the way of my creativity. When folk music was popular, it too was oppressive—all these women standing in long dresses playing guitars."

Though "new wave folk" comes closest to describing their sound, the Roches' superb harmonies also evoke the great pop sister acts of the past like the Boswells in the '30s and the Andrews Sisters. Their folk associations conjure up a rural strain, with echoes of the Carter Family and barbershop tradition. But they didn't grow up in awe of the past—they only heard the Boswells and the Andrews Sisters long after they'd developed their own act. Their real roots are in Sixties rock and in the folk/pop of Simon & Garfunkel. Terre and Suzzy learned guitar from watching television; Maggie taught herself guitar and keyboards "like everything else, alone in her room," says Suzzy. As teenagers in the family living room, they imagined themselves as the Beatles, with Maggie playing John and George,

Terre as Paul, and Suzzy as Ringo. Today, there's almost no pop style they don't allude to. The bulk of their repertoire is original, but they cover everything from Cole Porter's *It's Bad for Me* to Dylan's *The Clothesline Saga* to Handel's *Hallelujah Chorus*, a cappella.

The Roches grew up in Park Ridge, New Jersey, near the New York State border. Their father, John A. Roche, was a speech-training consultant and a local politician who encouraged Maggie and Terre to sing campaign songs at Democratic fund raisers in the area. All three went to Catholic schools, something which Suzzy in particular feels quite positive about: "I was really into it. I loved the nuns and used to hang out at their house. I wanted to be one, but one of them told me I shouldn't be. She couldn't tell me why—just that I'd find out when I got older."

In the late Sixties, when Maggie was at Bard College and Terre still in high school, the two older girls left school to go on a folk tour. In 1970 they crashed Paul Simon's songwriting seminar at New York University and three years later sang backup on "There Goes Rhymin' Simon." With Simon's help, Maggie and Terre got a deal with Columbia, and in 1975 they released "Seductive Reasoning." An ambitious, uneven album that took over a year to make and involved four producers, "Seductive Reasoning" sank without a trace commercially, leaving the two women devastated.

After retreating for a few months to gather strength at a Kung-Fu temple in Hammond, Louisiana, they resumed performing in 1976 at a women's music festi-

val in Champaign, Illinois. Later that year, Suzzy dropped out of the State University of New York in Purchase (where she was studying acting), and moved to Greenwich Village to be near Terre and Maggie. The duo became a trio.

The three sisters began harmonizing at folk clubs like Kenny's Castaways and Folk City. That Christmas, they dressed up like Christmas trees—tinsel, ornaments, et al.—and carolled through the streets of New York. Along with local performers like Steve Forbert, Willie Nile, and George Gerdes, the Roches were tagged by pop observers as leaders of a "folk revival." Karin Berg of Warner Bros.' a&r staff had been following them for some time, and, as word of mouth spread, Robert Fripp went to see them. Fripp told Jerry Wexler—Warners' executive vice president of a&r—that he'd like to produce them, and the Roches were signed.

"The Roches" was dubbed the best pop album of 1979 by *The New York Times* and Most Promising Pop Group in these pages. Warner gave the album a major push and, though it received almost no airplay, the combination of touring, excellent press, and word-of-mouth boosted sales to well over 100,000. Producer Fripp, who is famous for his tirades against corporate rock, followed his theory that pop music should be smaller-scaled and more human than typical record company "product."

For their second album, the Roches chose the less eccentric Roy Halee, who engineered Simon & Garfunkel's biggest hits and produced their friend Willie Nile's debut. "The big difference between Roy and Robert," says Suzzy, "is that with Roy we did things over and over. Robert likes to keep the first take. On the first record we sound smooth, like hills, and I can hear now how we fitted into Robert's Frippertronics. On the new record the sound is rougher."

They started work on "Nurds" by going into a rehearsal studio with Jay Dee Daugherty, Nile's drummer, and Fred Smith, his tour bassist, and trying out some of their material with rhythm. "Jay Dee and Fred just played along," says Terre. "The rhythm on the album is almost exactly what they first played after we explained the songs structurally and they found a groove. There was never any question of making the music any harder. We didn't want a bunch of Stratocasters covering up our arrangements."

Seven of the nine songs on

"Nurds" are original, the exceptions being an a cappella version of the aforementioned Porter song and the Irish ballad *Factory Girl*. Whereas Maggie's music dominated "The Roches," Suzzy's punchy, anecdotal style is almost as prominent on the new album. Besides writing the angry title song, Suzzy wrote an amusing folk-Swing tune with Terre called *The Death of Suzzy Roche*. On it, a frustrated Laundromat operator fumes about having to handle Suzzy's "stinky crusty socks and underwear that shocks," then fantasizes killing her.

**M**aggie, the oldest, remains the guiding spirit. She's a woman of few words whose characteristic style is a haunting, introspective ballad. Her dark folk alto intensifies lyrics that are sometimes personal to the point of inscrutability. Some of her songs turn on word play. *This Feminine Position* describes getting pregnant as being "tripped up with reptile/ into that most feminine position/ too fat to turn-style." Both onstage and off, Maggie is painfully shy: every word seems to be wrenched out of some private grief, and she refuses to discuss the imagery in her songs lest she "diminish their meaning." She penned the new album's most musically ambitious number, *One Season*, which describes the claustrophobia of being a full-time Roche: "I've got to get away from you . . . if only for a day or two." Sung in daring harmonies, with the middle verses voiced in flatted fifths, the effect is startlingly dissonant. Though the Roches usually work out their harmonies together, in this case Maggie put them on tape ahead of time, then taught the parts to her sisters.

Terre is the most voluble of the three and the unofficial spokesperson. She's a sophisticated singer, whose torchy Joni Mitchell-like timbre complements her gamin beauty. Her best solo contribution to "Nurds" is a scarily amusing bit of self-analysis called *My Sick Mind*, which describes the feeling of dressing up to look normal while underneath you feel crazed. In concert between numbers she and Suzzy banter, sometimes to the brink of a cat fight. *Bobby's Song* captures this spirit of playful rivalry, as the two imagine that the same man has eyes for them.

"When we were in Bremen, Germany, performing in a college cafeteria, that song got us into trouble with some feminists," Terre recalls. "Right in the middle, a woman got up and screamed, 'This is too funny!,' and stormed out. I

looked at Suzzy, and she was in tears. We cut the set short. Afterward, the feminists collared Suzzy and told her it was degrading to women to portray sisters fighting among themselves. They didn't seem to have any sense of humor."

As the Roches' cut-up, Suzzy tries the hardest to break through the atmosphere of reserve created by Maggie's reticence, and in doing so she leavens the Roches' tendencies toward preciousness. Onstage she plays the bad girl/ clown, mugging, acting up, dressing in weird costumes that range, depending on her mood, from full mourning (complete with black veil) to jogging and baseball outfits. She says she finds the role draining and often feels she's acting out the repressed hostilities of the other two. If Maggie's intense taciturnity recalls the madonna image of women folksingers in the Sixties, Suzzy's rebelliousness is close to the spirit of rock & roll. She has a new wave sense of the absurd.

So does "Nurds," which, for all its musical richness, honesty, and humor, makes no concessions to the marketplace. It's a difficult album that demands sustained, rapt attention. That being the case, I asked Terre if they ever worried about having to go back and be waitresses. "It wouldn't surprise me," she replied. "I feel like we're under the Chinese curse, 'May you live in interesting times.' We haven't had to take outside jobs since signing with Warner Bros. But the other day Suzzy went to a fortune teller who asked her if she had a bread-and-butter job in addition to performing. When Suzzy said no, the woman said she might want to think about getting one."

Whether waitressing or singing, chances are the Roches' passionate sense of family—both among themselves and with their parents—will keep them together. "We're still very close," says Terre. "My brother lives nearby and we see our parents all the time. It's almost like we never moved out of the house. If I find I want to get away I just don't call for awhile. But I'm always interested in checking in with the rest of them." So strong is their sense of themselves as Roches that, at this point in their careers, if it came down to a choice between being a Roche and having a fulltime relationship outside the group, the former would win hands down.

"There's nothing else like being a Roche," Suzzy says. "It won't leave you, it won't desert you, it won't break your heart. Sooner or later, everything else goes, but family is family." ♪

### **The Roches: Nurds** **Roy Halee, producer** **Warner Bros. BSK 3475**

If the Andrews Sisters had grown up in Greenwich Village in the self-conscious '70s, gone through trans-actional analysis, and skirted the fringes of New York's new wave, they would have sounded an awful lot like the three Roche sisters. On "Nurds," Maggie, Suzzy, and Terre mix their quirky irreverence with emotionable perceptions of matters as disparate as romance and chocolate bars, money and loneliness, Laundromats and murder. And they make it swing.

The title track recalls a Broadway show anthem like *Hair*, its wild, wavy three-part harmonies taking to task the realities and ridicule of being an underdeveloped, pimply adolescent. Successfully getting away from the near-somnambulism of last year's Robert Fripp-produced debut, producer Roy Halee has spunked up the Roches' essentially folk-rooted material with a rhythm section. But the threesome's acoustic guitars are still the music's guiding light—variably delicate and certain, apprehensive and intense.

Neuroses and unrequited loves abound, treated with equal dashes of whimsy and mocking self-pity: *Bobby's Song*, with its playful, sprawling chorus; *One Season*, a melancholy tone poem punctuated with a reverberating acoustic bass; *The Death of Suzzy Roche*, a spry fantasy about jealousy and effiteness. A few numbers, notably *The Boat Family* and *This Feminine Position*, get a little bogged down in preciousness: The former alludes to the refugees from across "the Great China Sea," but seems to be more about chocolate bars and soy beans; the latter tries to incorporate food imagery into a metaphor about love and passion and doesn't quite manage it.

Still, one can't help feeling won over by the Roches' personable eccentricities, their wacky self-realizations. The sisters have a beguiling, assured grace and style. And they outdo themselves on Cole Porter's *It's Bad for Me*, taking those classic turn-phrase-inside-out Porter-isms and, well, turning them inside out. It's a stunning a cappella arrangement.

**Steven X. Rea**

# Input Output: Instruments and Accessories



## Dr. Rhythm: A New Breed of Rhythm Machine

by Fred Miller

**T**he DR-55, or Dr. Rhythm, is a distinguished offspring of a rather undistinguished family of instruments commonly referred to as rhythm machines. Rhythm machines can be found in Holiday Inns and small bars and lounges across the country, chugging their little hearts out next to guitarists, pianists, and various solo performers. Traditionally, these devices have sounded terrible—something like a band of chipmunks or little tin soldiers putting forth such profound built-in patterns as the samba, cha-cha, waltz, or fox-trot.

Dr. Rhythm is a different story. In addition to having eight presets that are relevant to contemporary music, it can be programmed for up to sixteen patterns of your own creation, all of which it will store in its memory and recall at the turn of a knob. It is lightweight and measures about 4 by 8 by 2 inches, fitting easily into a guitar bag. It connects to an amp via a standard 1/4-inch phone plug, is battery powered, and has an optional footswitch jack

and gate outputs for interfacing with synthesizers.

The front-panel volume control determines the output level fed to the amp, and TEMPO varies the speed of the patterns according to your needs. TONE is basically a simple bandpass filter; ACCENT gives more or less emphasis to the preset and/or programmed accents. If you want to play a pattern, you slide MODE to PLAY; if you're going to compose one, you slide it to WRITE. When composing, you'll use one or more of the SOUND positions: BD, SD, RS, AC, standing respectively for bass drum, snare drum, rim shot, and accent. The rotary knob on the right, marked RHYTHM SELECT, has eight positions. In PLAY it determines which program will be played, in WRITE, which memory position you'll assign your new program to. Positions A and B on the VARIATION selector each represent one measure of a pattern; if you wanted a two-measure pattern, you would use position AB. With the switch marked HI HAT you can

program eight, twelve, or sixteen beats to the measure. The two buttons below RHYTHM SELECT are marked with a sixteenth note (START) and a sixteenth rest (STOP) and are also used in programming.

Take heart—the DR-55 is a lot easier to operate than it is to describe. Supposing you wanted to compose a pattern in which the bass drum sounded on all 4 beats of a 4/4 bar, the snare on 2 and 4, and the high hat on every eighth note. First, you switch MODE to PLAY and rotate RHYTHM SELECT to a position that hasn't been programmed or that is retaining a pattern that you no longer need. Second, slide VARIATION to A, HI HAT to 8, and SOUND to BD. Since the DR-55 subdivides every bar into sixteenths, you would create the desired bass-drum pattern by pressing START and STOP as follows: **START STOP STOP STOP/START STOP STOP STOP/START STOP STOP STOP/START STOP STOP STOP**. Now that you have one measure of your bass-drum part, switch SOUND to SD and program the snare drum: **STOP STOP STOP STOP/START STOP STOP STOP/STOP STOP STOP STOP/START STOP STOP STOP**. (If you also wanted accents or rim shots, you'd program them in the same way as the bass and snare drums.) Now switch to PLAY, hit START, and Dr. Rhythm will play your pattern back to you.

A 3/4 rhythm is created the same way, using positions seven or eight (collectively marked 12-STEP, indicating twelve sixteenths) on RHYTHM SELECT. And if you're not interested in composing, the owner's manual has some excellent suggested programs, and the presets themselves are quite adequate.

The DR-55 costs \$195 and sounds excellent. The bass drum could fool anyone, the high hat is quite respectable, and the snare drum only slightly less so. But with a little equalization, it can provide rhythmic accompaniment of which you'll never be ashamed. In all, it's a delightfully complete and reliable package for those in need of a drummer who always shows up on time and doesn't run up a tab at the bar.

**Circle 121 on Reader-Service Card**



The Doobies: Bumpus, Simmons, Porter, McDonald, McFee, Knudsen, McCracken

## The Doobie Brothers: Surf 'n' Turf Music

### The Doobie Brothers:

#### One Step Closer

Warner Bros. HS 3452

Ted Templeman, producer

**T**he Doobie Brothers' tenth album finds them settling firmly into the Latin-inflected pop/jazz/soul groove that singer and keyboardist Michael McDonald introduced on the group's album of four years back, "Takin' It to the Streets." Gone are any allusions to the Doobies' earlier incarnation as a full-tilt boogie band with a Hell's Angels following. Gone too are founder-drummer John Hartman and ace guitarist Jeff Baxter. Replacing them are saxist/keyboardist Cornelius Bumpus, who played in a late-'70s edition of Moby Grape; jazz drummer Chet McCracken; and John McFee, multi-instrumentalist and ex-member of Clover. All apparently were chosen not for their strong musical personalities but for their general competence and ability to fit into producer Ted Templeman's concept of the Doobie Brothers.

Templeman's vision of the group as a grade-school pop version of Steely Dan places them almost totally outside the context of a rock band. Indeed, they sound more like a high-schlock lounge combo. With Baxter gone, the guitar is

used mainly for textural embellishment, and the studied arrangements permit very little riffing. All nine cuts on "One Step Closer" are studio set pieces characterized by florid electric keyboards, contrapuntal vocals, pointillist syncopation, and showy percussion. The LP seriously treads the thin line between taut, Latinized pop/rock in the mode of Steely Dan's *Do It Again* and dance studio practice music. Its nadir is a six-minute mambo, *Thank You Love*, whose sole raison d'être seems to have been to give Bumpus a lucrative writing credit.

The division of labor and writer's royalties among musicians with unequal talents is a problem many rock bands face, but with the Doobies it's an unusually touchy issue. Patrick Simmons, the one founding member to remain through ten years of personnel changes, is a competent guitarist and boogie-rock tenor. But McDonald is the only significant talent, and there are six other musicians to pay. I suspect what deters him from leaving the band for an adventurous solo career is the box-office security of the Doobie Brothers brand name. It's doubtful that he could command as wide an audience on his own since he lacks the kinetic showmanship of superstars like Billy Joel and Bruce Springsteen.

Still, in opting for security he has opted for mediocrity on "One Step Closer." He sings lead vocals on only four cuts, and only one of his songs—a collaboration with outside keyboardist Patrick Henderson called *Real Love*—is first-rate. A passionate swinger's lament in the same vein as *You Belong to Me* and *What a Fool Believes*, *Real Love* is a stunning exercise in tonal contrasts. McDonald's slurred, pop/blues legato glides sensually over the song's edgy chromaticism and nervous rhythms. If the melodic idiom suggests cool jazz, he sings it like a gospel song, and the contrast is emotionally explosive. *Keep This Train a-Rollin'* is an upbeat pop/funk anthem with a dumb message ("All you need's a song to survive") that is saved only by McDonald's powerful singing. His collaboration with Paul Anka, *Dedicate This Heart*, is an even slighter tune. Yet again his velvet timbre encases it like a diamond. The only unredeemable song, written with Bobby LaKind, is *One by One*, a numbing cha-cha filled with upbeat truisms. *One Step Closer* and the instrumental *South Bay Strut* offer bland, horn-inflected blue-eyed soul. The Simmons-McDonald-Christopher Thompson collaboration, *No Stoppin' Us Now*, features a choppy duet between Simmons and McDonald and boasts the album's

only electric guitar break.

I wouldn't be so disappointed with "One Step Closer" if McDonald's work outside the band this past year hadn't been so obviously superior to what he does here, except for *Real Love*. His duets with Christopher Cross (*I Really Don't Know Anymore*), Kenny Loggins (*This Is It*), Lauren Wood (*Please Don't Go*), Nicolette Larson (*Let Me Go, Love*) are all considerably stronger. McDonald has got to come to terms with his talent, even if it means leaving the Doobie Brothers. As things stand, they're a schlock band squelching a genius.

**Stephen Holden**

### Elvis Costello: *Taking Liberties*

Nick Lowe & Elvis Costello,  
producers. Columbia JC 36839  
by Mitchell Cohen

Elvis Costello's odd tracks and nerve ends, as exposed on "Taking Liberties," are evidence not only of his notoriously bitter stance, but of a fierce, wide-ranging musical intelligence. His sheer prolificity amazes: five albums in just over three years, twenty cuts apiece on "Get Happy!," and this package. Equally remarkable is the way he has melded attitude and craft, adapted elements of soul, country, and pop writing into rock that serves his own obsessions.

"Taking Liberties," going from his early Stiff days to the day before yesterday, is a breathless, erratic collection: mistakes and rough drafts, throwaways, fatuous "Revolver"-isms like *Dr. Luther's Assistant*, cool songs since Ronstadtized, cuts that reveal Costello as a canny interpreter (the rousingly claustrophobic *Getting Mighty Crowded*, a resonant, moving *My Funny Valentine*), alternate takes of "Get Happy!" songs, and a few neglected classics. In that last category are (*I Don't Want to Go to*) *Chelsea*, a crucial piece of England's "This Year's Model": *Tiny Steps*, as uncompromised a personal attack as rock has wrought; the ominous *Night Rally*; and *Stranger in the House*, where domestic displacement becomes a honky-tonk horror story.

The songs of Costello are marked as much by linguistic gymnastics and vaunted misanthropy (which fails to explain the compassion of *Talking in the Dark* or *Radio Sweetheart*) as by a precision that, along with the witty use of metaphor, is a lesson learned from r&b and country influences. His band, the Attrac-



**Bruce Thomas, Costello, Pete Thomas, Steve Naive**

tions, goes back to tightly wound models like Booker T.'s MG's for inspiration, makes the extended solo an endangered species, and is highly responsible for Costello's desperate, compressed sound. On *Crawling to the U.S.A.*, *Crowded*, and *Wednesday Week* they are a spunky, garagey rock band, and Costello deserves no less.

### Steve Forbert: *Little Stevie Orbit*

Pete Solley, producer  
Nemperor JZ 36595  
by Sam Sutherland

The warm reception accorded Steve Forbert's recording debut, "Alive on Arrival," was based as much on the LP's clean, uncluttered arrangements and production as it was on Forbert's passionate writing and lusty performances. Unlike many of his peers, Forbert was crafting an understated acoustic ensemble context that made his songs life-sized instead of overblown. That tempted some admirers to view the Mississippi-born performer as a new breed of folk singer.

Forbert has been trying to revise that image ever since, turning up his music both onstage and in the studio. Last year's "Jackrabbit Slim" thus brought criticism for its harsher dynamics and more layered sound, despite the presence of his touring band and his relative restraint in the use of studio coloring. On its successor, Forbert

continues to argue that he's a far broader stylist than his first record suggested, and this time he's convincing.

Producer Pete Solley assists him by restoring some of the spaciousness and clarity of "Alive on Arrival." As a result, the music sounds closer in finish to the first album while actually utilizing more dramatic effects than those on the second. Forbert's band, still new when "Jackrabbit" was made, has had the added seasoning of a year of live work, and it shows.

The heart of the matter, however, rests in Forbert's writing. If none of the new songs surpasses the standards set on "Arrival," they manage a freshness and consistent verve all the more surprising in light of Forbert's apparent stylistic limits. Whether tearing through a righteous up-tempo indictment (*Get Well Soon* and *Laughter Lou*), wistfully recalling or invoking a lover (*Song for Carmelita* and *Song for Katrina*), or ruminating on his place in the world (*One More Glass of Beer* and *A Visitor*), Forbert calls on many of the same verbal images and melodic twists heard in his earliest work. Yet somehow he never really repeats himself.

As before, humor is a recurrent motif, used both to relieve and illuminate the singer's more brooding moments. Here that yields a sly sexual come-on in *Schoolgirl*, as well as a knowing anthem for youth in *If You've Gotta Ask You'll Never Know*. Apart from the album's



Marie: a mixed success

opener. *Get Well Soon*, which threatens to fall into Springsteen territory, there isn't a false step here. "Little Stevie Orbit" makes no great leap forward, just steady progress in a musical career of an artist who may well become one of our most satisfying stylists.

### George Jones & Tammy Wynette: Together Again

Billy Sherrill, producer  
Epic JE 36764

by Mitchell Cohen

Careers in unparallel ascension and decline, marital flare-ups and break-downs, infrequent musical reunions: The professional/conjugal partnership of George Jones and Tammy Wynette has all the detail and dimension of a country *Star Is Born*. The melodrama of their lives is of passing interest; the expressive emoting of their voices is a continual source of very deep pleasure. On "Together Again," their first album as a duo in three years, each is singing at an especially high level of assurance and generosity. The groan and the sob are in complete harmony.

The duets, with their mutual recriminations and moral decisions of the flesh, bring snap to Wynette's singing, known to become soggy self-absorbed on its own. The heartfelt sentiment of Felice Bryant's mid-'50s ballad *We Could*, the transmuted clichés of *I Just Started*

*Livin' Today*, and the resigned sadness of the single *Two Story House* contain some of her best recent moments on record. Jones, a specialist in solitary lament (his joint LP with Johnny Paycheck is a strained, stiff affair), sounds gruffly authoritative as *A Pair of Old Sneakers'* habitual adulterer and as the squabbling husband on *It's Not My Fault*.

Jones's and Wynette's characters are admirably adult, as they examine momentary lust (*Right in the Wrong Direction*), coupling as an accumulation of memories (*If We Don't Make It*), and guilt as a significant side issue (*We'll Talk About It Later*). The contexts for these themes are, unfortunately, not as mature or accomplished as the singers giving them voice: the songs frequently settle for cleverness in the lyrics, rhythmic predictability in the melodies. It all sounds, as many Billy Sherrill productions do, too carefully laid out, lacking in spontaneity. The steam rising from George and Tammy on "Together Again" is primarily self-generated, but its warmth is palpable all the same.

### Teena Marie: Irons in the Fire

Teena Marie, producer  
Gordy G8 997M1

by Tom Vickers

Teena Marie is in an extremely odd position. She is a white, nineteen-year-old southern Californian working in a black

musical style—pop/funk with jazz shadings. Though singles from her two previous Motown LPs reached the Top 10 on the soul/r&b charts, she has yet to make it to the pop Top 10.

In an attempt to remedy this, for her third album Marie has taken on the monumental task of producer. Traditionally, female vocalists have been known as producers' tools. They sell their voices and vibes, and the producer fits the sound accordingly. This worked with increasing success on Teena's past efforts: Funkster Rick James placed her in the role of sassy street princess while Richard Rudolph bathed her in the soulful gloss he used with his late wife, Minnie Riperton. Marie combines these two contexts on "Irons in the Fire," and the result is street grit overlaid with sophisticated gloss. She also exhibits a jazzy scat side to her often shrill vocals, and, in so doing, expands her range and appeal as an artist.

The opening track and current single, *I Need Your Lovin'*, showcases that expansion. A hot rhythm track accented by an equally fiery horn arrangement and strong yet unobtrusive strings gives the tune a strong pop feel. Teena's vocal is shaded with grit and tempered by some imaginative scat singing on the chorus. But the rest of the album is uneven. Marie sounds best when she stretches out her phrasing and watches her high register. On the ballads (*Young Love*, *Irons in the Fire*) and midtempo jazz numbers (*You Make Love like Springtime*, *Tune in Tomorrow*), her rather straight vocalizing on the verses is flat. It's only during the intros, fades, and choruses that she scats and ad libs with any uniqueness. On the uptempo funkies (*Chains*, *First Class Love*), her singing sometimes shifts into shrill screaming, lacking any subtlety or control.

Overall, this experiment is a mixed success. Teena has matured as a songwriter and must be commended for breaking out of the mold and producing herself. But without an outside perspective, she tends to allow the shortcomings of her vocal range to show through. She might be well advised to produce another group or artist before she produces herself again.

### Joni Mitchell: Shadows and Light

Asylum BB 704 (two discs)

by Sam Graham

The last time Joni Mitchell made a double live album—1974's "Miles of Aisles"—she was still a folksinger. Nowadays, some people would say she was a

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Joni: in good company



Palmer: genuine eclecticism

jazz singer (though they'd get plenty of argument); others simply would call her an Artist, making them about as pretentious as her most recent studio album, the turgid "Mingus." Whatever she is, Mitchell has undergone some fundamental changes. "Shadows and Light" is an accurate and entertaining chronicle of just about all of them and it's also an opportunity to hear some good musicians out of their usual contexts.

The shape of her music has altered from the *Carey* and *Chelsea Morning* days. He songs are at once more verbose lyrically and more static melodically; they're less defined, based more on mood than structure, more on modes than specific chord progressions. Her later material isn't all fascinating—not by a long shot. But it's different, and it's adventurous, and for that she deserves credit.

It's no surprise that songs from "Hejira" (five of them) dominate this package, for the former was, until now, the least mannered realization of Mitchell's new style. The remaining tunes on "Shadows and Light" come from five of her other albums: there's also *Why Do Fools Fall in Love*, a true oddity amidst all this poetry and deep thought. The title cut, a little known offering from a little known record ("The Hissing of Summer Lawns"), becomes a stunning a cappella centerpiece with the help of the Persuasions.

The band is a *Who's Who* of the new jazz: Jaco Pastorius on bass, Pat Metheny on guitar, Lyle Mays on keyboards, Mike Brecker on saxophone, and Don Alias on drums. (Joni plays electric guitar.) It's a looser, more improvisatory assemblage than Mitchell's last band, the L.A. Express, and that's what the music calls for. Pastorius is the dominant player, buoyant and propulsive; the others

are less conspicuous, limiting themselves to little textural comments and a solo here and there. Only *Alias* doesn't fully cut it—a fine conga player, he is at best only an adequate trap drummer. Reports that he was the singer's boyfriend may explain his presence.

**Robert Palmer: Clues**

*Robert Palmer, producer  
Island ILPS 9595*

by Crispin Cioe

Despite a hit single here last year, *Bad Case of Loving You*, Robert Palmer is more widely known overseas than in the States. One reason is that the American audience often mistakes genuine eclecticism for lack of substance. More's the pity, because Palmer is that rock rarity—an artist with a variety of far-flung, legitimate roots and influences.

"Clues" is his self-produced attempt to showcase that diversity. His expressive tenor ranges from a sadly keening monotone on *Johnny and Mary*, a wistful tale of love and ennui, to a raunchy wail on the Stones-ish *Sulky Girl*. At times, the album's instrumental textures sound like a sleekly updated minimalist "Sergeant Pepper." (Lennon/McCartney's *Not a Second Time* is even covered here.) Other times Palmer is quite contemporary in his use of electronics. Side 2, for instance, begins with a strong Gary Numan composition, *I Dream of Wires*, that is an utterly haunting futuristic saga full of lacy, interlocking synthesizer parts. That segues immediately into a lilting Caribbean-spiced tune (he lives and records in the Bahamas) entitled *Woke Up Laughing*. Here, marimbas, steel drums, and Palmer's bouncing melody evoke an altogether different reality, as if to imply that the rushing technology of post-industrial

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Split Enz: Green, Crombie, Griggs, Finn, Rayner, T. Finn

society must learn to coexist with more traditional Third World cultures. But that's just one of many interesting clues on this sensitive, delicately textured album.

**Ellen Shipley:**  
**Breaking Through the Ice Age**  
 David Tickle, producer  
 RCA AFL 1 3626  
 by Crispin Cioe

Contrary to what much of the media would have us believe, a "female rocker" is not some new rare breed of musician. No one goes around referring to "male rockers," and let us not forget that Big Mama Thornton had the original hit version of *Hound Dog* in 1953 when Elvis was still driving big rigs in Tennessee.

That said, Ellen Shipley's second album reveals a rapidly developing singer and songwriter who—with the help of co-writer and keyboardist extraordinaire Ralph Shuckett—is already creating some memorable rock & roll. This music is basically from the hard-edged New York school of rock and as a whole deals with emotional isolation and the urge to "break out." Backed by her band, the Numbers, Shipley's best songs draw on early '60s East Coast r&b hooks. *Jamie* recalls the great girl-group tributes to rebel boyfriends ("nobody understands you... their eyes are lookin' through you"). *Fotogenic* sends up *Playboy* pinups as "cosmetic, synthetically yours" with crashing guitars that perfectly underline the message. *This Little Girl*, sung with Chic's Alfa Anderson, gets right down to the nitty-gritty about the kind of desire that little—and big—girls sometimes feel when a certain fella is in the room.

At times Shipley relies a bit too heavily on overly familiar minor-key rock progressions. But for the most part, her half-pouting, half-belting vocal style combines with her material like gangbusters.

**Split Enz: True Colours**  
 David Tickle, producer  
 A&M SP 4822  
 by Steven X. Rea

Five years ago, this New Zealand rock band was plying its trade dressed like a gaggle of goonish circus freaks in multi-colored costumes, clown makeup, and sky-high V-shaped haircuts. It specialized in arty pop that was decidedly off the beaten path. Now, on its sixth L.P., Split Enz has fairly forsaken the sight-gags and shenanigans to focus its considerable talents on making a thoroughly enjoyable record.

Brothers Neil and Tim Finns' pliantly commercial songs most often suggest late-period Beatles and the early work of Split Enz' down-under brethren the Bee Gees. (*I Hope I Never* is a sappy ballad cut from the same cloth as the Gibbs' overripe romanticism—save for the lyric's ever-present ironies.) *I Got You*, which has become the group's first certified global hit, is a driving midtempo tour de force: Nigel Grigg's bass lines propel things headlong, while Eddie Rayner's sublime keyboards splash rhythms of color across the lilting, slightly spacy harmonies. Like much of the Finn's material, the song manages to combine a lurking ominousness with a sense of elation and grand fun.

Other tracks, like *Shark Attack* and the instrumental *Double Happy*, have a



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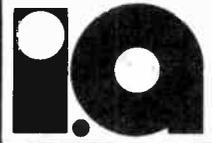
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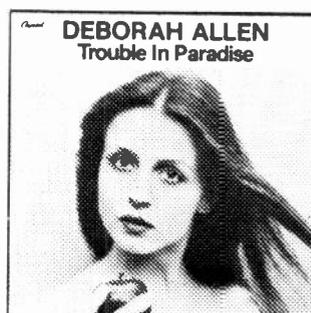
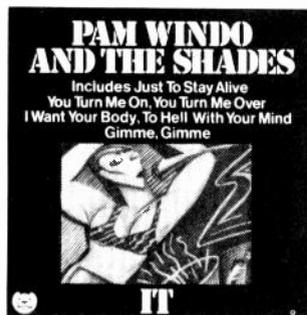
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## New Acts

by Steven X. Rea

**Deborah Allen:**  
**Trouble in Paradise**  
Steve Gibson, producer  
Capitol ST 12104

Tanya Tucker, Tammy Wynette, and other country notables have recorded Memphis-born Deborah Allen's plaintive ballads. Now she has recorded her own amiable pop/country outings in a willowy, seductive timbre. The gentle melody of *Nobody's Fool* wastes no time finding its m.o.r. groove; Allen could give country crossovers like Crystal Gayle a run for their money.

**Chevy Chase**  
Tom Scott & Chevy Chase, producers  
Arista AL 9519

Backed by top-notch sessioners like producer Tom Scott, pianist Richard Tee, and drummer Steve Gadd, Chevy Chase still manages to pratfall all over his innocuous parodies of standards like *Short People*, *I Shot the Sheriff*, and *Let It Be*. He does elicit a few mild guffaws here and there, but like his TV and movie careers, Chase's LP never quite gets off the ground.

**Michael Des Barres:**  
**I'm Only Human**  
Mike Chapman, producer  
Dreamland DL 1-5004

The gravelly voiced former frontman for Detective drives a mainstream rock course, occasionally veering to the left (the Talking Heads influence of the title track) or to the right (the heavy metal of *Dancin' on the Brink of Disaster*). Producer Chapman's patented, punchy upfront sound washes Des Barres's originals in a crisp, oft-times exhilarating glow.

**La Toya Jackson**  
Michael Jackson,  
Larry Farrow,  
& Ollie E. Brown, producers  
Polydor PD 1-6291

The Jackson sister is joined on her solo debut by brother Michael, Stevie Wonder, Ray Parker, and the like for a not uneventful fusion of pop and soul. *Night Time Lover* fires off those Jackson sparks, while other tracks run the gamut from quiet ballads to uptown funk.

**The Photos**  
Roger A. Bechirian, producer  
Epic NJE 36515

Lead vocalist Wendy Wu (she seems to rhyme every other lyric with her last name) fronts this English quartet, sounding alternately like Debbie Harry, Chrissie Hynde, and the Shangri-Las. The specter

of Spector is much in evidence—especially on numbers like *Friends*, with its lush, fleshy strings. *I'm So Attractive* and the Costello-exhumed Bacharach/David tune *I Just Don't Know What to Do with Myself* are the two standouts.

**The Psychedelic Furs**  
Steve Lillywhite, producer  
Columbia NJC 36791

The Psychedelic Furs are a five-piece British band (the sixth Fur writes the cerebral, circuitous lyrics) whose new wave acid rock can be trance-inducing, such as on *Sister Europe* and *Imitation of Christ*. However, more often than not the neo-psychedelic artiness is simply annoying.

**The Michael Schenker Group**  
Roger Glover, producer  
Chrysalis CHE 1302

Former UFO guitarist Michael Schenker specializes in teutonic heavy metal blues rock that is rampant with simplistic cosmic-shrouded lyrics, power chords, and lengthy solos. It all sounds like Led Zeppelin on a bad day.

**Steve Swindells:**  
**Fresh Blood**  
Steve Swindells, producer  
Atco SD 38 128

Swindells offers solid, upbeat rock with an underlying technoelectronic edge. The English keyboardist's eager,

artful Springsteen-isms burst out of the speakers on the opening track *Turn It On, Turn It Off*, but as the songs run on they tend to run out of gas.

**Charles Veal:**  
**Only the Best**  
Alan Abrahams, producer  
Capitol ST 12095

Former studio violinist and concertmaster (Carole King, Linda Ronstadt, Earth, Wind & Fire) Charles Veal treads lightly over ho-hum pop/soul terrain. With a voice that wavers somewhere between Michael Jackson's falsetto and Donny Hathaway's earthy tones, Veal metes out mild, optimistic messages amid heavy-handed arrangements. Included is a reverent reading of Hathaway's *Somebody We'll All Be Free*.

**Pam Windo and the Shades: It**  
Ian Kimmitt, Gary & Pam Windo, producers  
Bearsville BRK 3479

This is one of the worst records ever to emerge from the mush being touted as new wave. Pam Windo sounds like Grace Slick with a bad cold and writes riffy tunes with titles like *I Want Your Body, to Hell With Your Mind* and *Rock Star (I Don't Wanna Be No)* (don't worry, you won't!). Meanwhile, the Shades try to perpetrate some off-key musical con on any poor sod unlucky enough to be listening.



Yes: Howe, Downes, White, Squire, Horn

Continued from page 103  
Devo-esque franticness to them, a mechanical stop-and-start quality. But it's Split Enz' propensity for pop that makes "True Colours" a resounding success. At times, such as on *Missing Person* and *Poor Boy*, the band recalls Supertramp and Genesis. But, with its keen sense of playfulness, SE never falls into the trap of sounding pretentious: the lyrics are consistently wry and clever, but never cute, and the music bouncy and to the point. Even if you're not impressed by the disc's gimmicky, laser-etched vinyl, "True Colours" is one of the most brisk, unassumingly good-natured records to have been released this year.

**Supertramp: Paris**

Peter Henderson & Russel Pope, producers. A&M SP 6702.  
by Sam Sutherland

In concert appearances, Supertramp has long strived to match the high-tech sonic luster it achieves on its studio recordings. That commitment pays off on the group's first live album: Technically, at least, "Paris" is a stunner.

The key to the LP's immaculate production finish lies not only in the band's own involvement in concert sound amplification, but in its choice of producers. Pete Henderson, who engineered the last two Supertramp albums, teams with concert engineer Russel Pope, an even more seasoned technical ally. As a result, most of the common gremlins raised by amplified music, especially when complex P.A. and recording bridging is involved, simply aren't here.

The lushness and atmospheric de-

tail so meticulously invested in the studio survived both in the hall and here on vinyl: Bob C. Benberg's drumming is perfectly captured, his cymbal sound clean and transparent, while Rick Davies and Roger Hodgson achieve equally clear keyboard and guitar performances. Acoustic piano lines on such chestnuts as *School*, from "Crime of the Century," are recorded with the same airy, precise accuracy as the original, with the sound of the instrument's internal action caught much as it would be in a jazz or classical context.

Where some listeners may have mixed feelings is in the performances. They are letter-perfect, making this anthology of songs from the band's past a stylish hits package for those fans first earned with "Breakfast in America." Those familiar with earlier Tramp material will be less impressed, though, for apart from slight variations in tempo and the occasional extended solo, these versions are virtual duplicates of the originals.

Still, and lest the group be accused of using technology to mask any flaws in its art, "Paris" successfully proves that Supertramp comprises deft musicians. Here, without overdubs or punch-ins, they've achieved the same melodic bloom and intricate textures that characterize their recordings.

**Yes: Drama**

Yes & Eddie Offord, producers  
Atlantic SD 16019  
by Dave Kirby

Yes's music seems to have survived the departure of founder/vocalist Jon Anderson and keyboardist Rick Wakeman. Though the band relied heavily on the

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former's lilting falsetto and the latter's ongoing tribute to E. Power Biggs, their respective replacements, Trevor Horn and Geoff Downes (from the Buggles, of all places), prove quite adequate.

Left to pilot the new assemblage is bassist Chris Squire, and "Drama" is accordingly more percussive and spatially relaxed than "Tormato," the group's last outing. *Does It Really Happen?* and *Tempus Fugit* both feature breakneck bass lines and solid percussion by drummer Alan White, with *Tempus* sounding like a good contender for the new lineup's first hit single. *Machine Messiah*, a ten-minute opus reminiscent of *Perpetual Change* (from '71's "The Yes Album"), offers some startling contrapuntal exchanges between White and guitarist Steve Howe, whose fleet-fingered guitar lines sound more controlled and relevant than they have in some years. Keyboardist Downes avoids the technological overkill and self-indulgent noodling of his predecessor, and his classically influenced synthesizer work is well proportioned in the mix.

Horn and Squire share the lead vocals and, though neither has Anderson's range, their harmonies lend depth and a nearly choral texture to the singing. Horn teams with Downes for the album's most subtle moment on *White Car*, an intriguing haiku with gentle synthesizer strains in the background.

"Drama" is Yes's eleventh album in as many years, and, ironically, its strengths lie in the rhythmic simplicity and straightforwardness that characterized 1970's "Time and a Word" and especially "The Yes Album." Without Anderson's occasionally awkward lyrics the group now has room to stretch its formidable musical talents. Since it already sounds more like a band and less like a loose assemblage of virtuosos, there's little doubt that with some time to get used to each other, Yes can fulfill the promise of this auspicious beginning.

## JAZZ

**Arthur Blythe: Illusions**  
Arthur Blythe & Jim Fishel, producers. Columbia JC 36583  
by Don Heckman

Saxophonist Arthur Blythe's new Columbia album is one of the best jazz records of 1980 and a brilliant kick-off for the new year. Clearly, any doubts one might have had in the past about his and



Blythe: creative density

Columbia's sense of direction have been cleared up by this superb effort.

Blythe uses two groups. One, *In the Tradition*, consists of bassist Fred Hopkins, drummer Steve McCall (both from the group Air), and pianist John Hicks. The other, which he calls his "guitar band," includes guitarist James "Blood" Ulmer, drummer Bobby Battle, cellist Abdul Wadud, and tuba player Bob Stewart. Blythe apparently intends to bridge the gap between the traditional sound of the first ensemble and the somewhat more unusual timbres of the second.

That he succeeds in doing so is beyond question, but the truth of the matter is that his musical vision has become so strong that it could penetrate right through any instrumentation. What makes Blythe's music work so well, in fact, is that it is totally his. In both his compositions and his playing he manages to retain the creative density that is the very essence of artistic expression while at the same time achieving audience accessibility. I can't think of too many avant-gardists who can do that.

*Bush Baby*, the opening piece, is propelled by a modified African rhythm (actually an ostinato mostly in 6/4) that springs him loose. Blythe's alto improvisation here, as throughout the album, is stunning, yet he is very nearly matched by Ulmer's gutsy, thoroughly original guitar work. *Miss Nancy* uses the *Tradition* group to play a curiously structured line—it moves somewhat uncertainly through an A-B-C, A-B-C form—with the improvising based on a chromatic turnaround. Blythe plays joyously, floating freely above harmonic and rhythmic patterns

Continued on page 115



**Elwood and Jake: the rebirth of the blues**

by Elise Bretton

### Best of the Super Rockers

Warner Bros., 60 songs, \$8.95

In this case "the super rockers" are, for the most part, the megagroups: Led Zeppelin, Foreigner, Fleetwood Mac, the Eagles, Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band, the Doobies, the Cars, et al. The remaining pages are filled with the works of such individual practitioners as Patti Smith, Bruce Springsteen, Van Morrison, Neil Young, and Carly Simon. All of this material has been recorded, of course, and much of it has ascended the charts merely because of a vivid performance by the singer (also usually the writer) and/or a gimmicky instrumental accompaniment. So though you will be purchasing *My Sharona*, *What a Fool Believes*, *Fire Lake*, *Even It Up*, *Heartbreaker*, *Shakedown Street*, and other sizzlers of recent vintage, you and your axe—be it keyboard or guitar—will not be able to approximate the lush layers of sound that brought these songs to national prominence in the first place. A good cross section of material, but a potentially frustrating experience.

### The Blues Brothers Souvenir Songbook

Cherry Lane, 12 songs, \$7.95

Packaging *Saturday Night Live* graduates Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi

for the wide screen was a great idea, and this, their second Blues Brothers film has been a sellout all over the country. *The Blues Brothers* features such masters of the genre as Aretha Franklin, Cab Calloway, Ray Charles, and James Brown. *Think*, *Minnie the Moocher*, *Theme from Peter Gunn*, and *Jailhouse Rock* are in the folio, along with performance notes, biographies of the stars, and scads of stills from the flick. The easy-play two-line piano-vocals are arranged by Milt Okun and Dan Fox.

### Fame: Original Soundtrack

Warner Bros., 9 songs, \$8.95

What with the current plethora of celluloid paeans to perpetual adolescence, I'm about ready for the return of doo-wop. See the movie and buy the LP if you must, but avoid any closer contact with this clumsy disco/rock score.

### The Incredible 88 Super Hits

April Blackwood/Bradley, \$8.95

Incredible indeed—especially at this price. Imagine a folio with the works of Frank Loesser right alongside those of Laura Nyro, James Taylor, and Billy Joel. There's also a little E.L.O., a smidgen of Kansas, and a few m.o.r. specials from the '50s like *The Twelfth of Never*, *Memories*

*Are Made of This*, *Venus*, and *Cry Me a River*. The material is strong, fresh, and easily within the capabilities of the home musician. An excellent compilation, particularly well suited for vocalists.

### 110 Mellow

Warner Bros., \$9.95

Although some of the popular rock stylists here might be considered senior citizens—Paul Simon, Randy Newman, Gordon Lightfoot—their output holds up quite well alongside that of such younger comrades as Jackson Browne, the Eagles, Warren Zevon, Fleetwood Mac, Abba, and Bob Seger. If m.o.r. is your thing, this one's for you.

### Rock Lives!

ATV/Cherry Lane, 56 songs, \$7.95

What lies behind this misleading title is simply the latest Lennon-McCartney repackage, sprinkled this time around with a dash of Little Richard (not an illogical combination, since American r&b was certainly an influence on the Beatles' landmark style). If your folio shelf does not include *Can't Buy Me Love*, *Eight Days a Week*, *Paperback Writer*, *Day Tripper*, *All You Need Is Love*, *Long Tall Sally*, and *Dizzy Miss Lizzie*, you can find them here—plus twenty other tunes from "Abbey Road," "Magical Mystery Tour," "The White Album," and various other Beatles LPs. A serviceable collection consisting for the most part of two-line piano-vocals.

### Urban Cowboy: Music from the Original Motion-Picture Soundtrack

Warner Bros., 17 songs, \$8.95

### Urban Cowboy Music

Big 3, 29 songs, \$5.95

The songs in *Urban Cowboy* were by no means written expressly for the movie, so a large part of the Warner Bros. folio's uniqueness comes from the flashy color shots of heartthrob John Travolta. Among the seventeen proven chart hits that made up the soundtrack are the Eagles' *Lyin' Eyes*, Dan Fogelberg's *Times like These*, and the Charlie Daniels Band's *The Devil Went Down to Georgia*. Four of the magic seventeen (*Could I Have This Dance*, *Darlin'*, *Here Comes the Hurt Again*, and *Love the World Away*) are also in Big 3's giant economy-size "Urban Cowboy Music." The piano arrangements are not similar and in the case of *Darlin'* even the key differs. The

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remaining twenty-five are popular, if slightly passé ditties like *You Decorated My Life*, *Cover of the Rolling Stone*, *Before the Next Teardrop Falls*, and other standards recorded by pickin' and singin' titans Willie Nelson, Larry Gatlin, Don Williams, and their cohorts.

I have no idea how a deal for simultaneous printing was amicably consummated between Warner and Big 3, not to mention how the latter got away with using that title. But if you are into c&w, either of these collections should appeal.

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A selection of originals by the gifted bassist, three of which have lyrics.

#### Chuck Mangione: Fun and Games

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*Pina Colada*, transcribed here for small combo, is not Rupert Holmes's version.

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Dylan: not recommended

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*Big 3*, 11 songs, \$6.95

Winners all, but in most cases the keyboard arrangements are far too complicated to be negotiated while singing the song.

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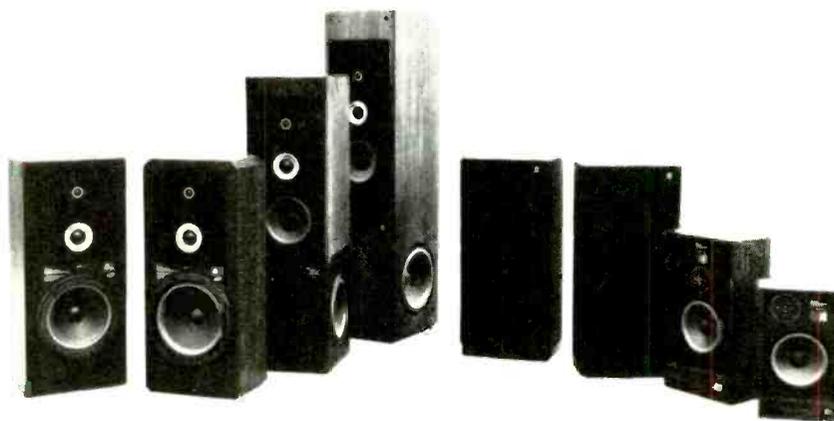
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## Christmas Shopping Guide

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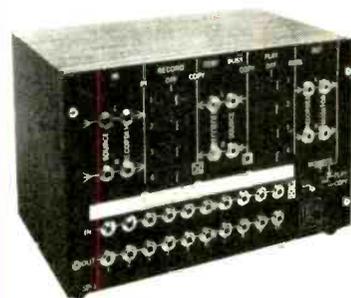
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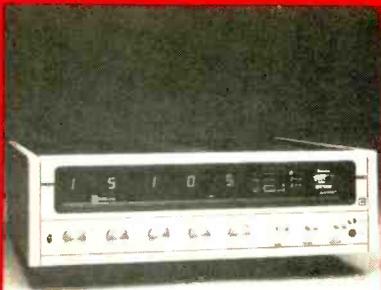


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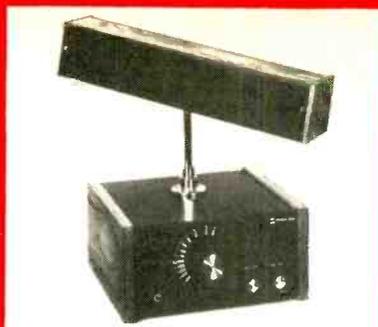


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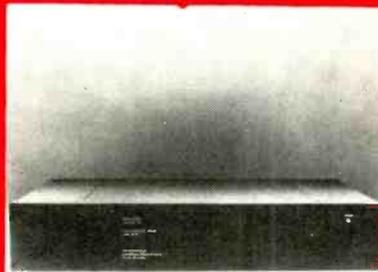
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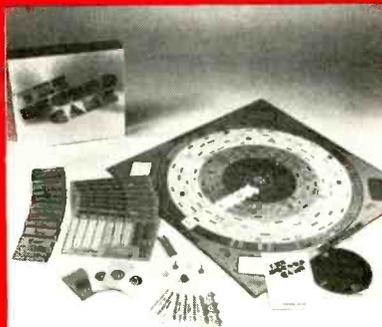
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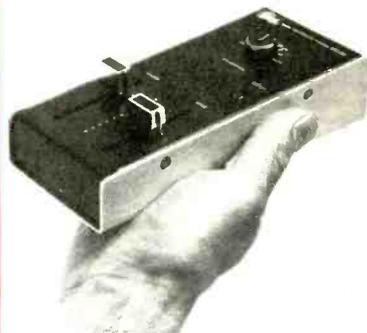
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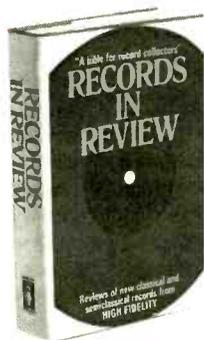


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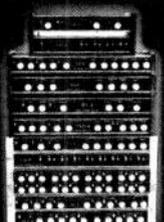
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Continued from page 106 that would paralyze the fingers of several slick fusion players who come to mind. *Illusions*, with the guitar band, is a marvelously eccentric piece that hops madly back and forth between the start-stop surprises of early Ornette Coleman and, curiously, the *Salt Peanuts* jolliness of Gillespie/Parker. Stewart's tuba lines in the uptempo sections are quite remarkable, and Blythe, once again, sails over everything with the sheer enthusiasm of a player who has finally, irretrievably, been liberated.

Despite the ambivalence of its title, Blythe's work for his son, *My Son Ra*, begins like a paean to John Coltrane. It soon shifts gears into a hip-cracking 7/4, and Blythe really plays 7/4 lines, taking the unusual rhythm as a stimulus rather than a test of manhood. *Carespin' with Mamie* has a nice, dark, chromatic quality, with fascinating use of tuba and cello. Blythe spins off from the cello, using its lines in his own alto improvisation while Stewart chugs out a bass line. The final piece, *As of Yet*, is a powerful recollection of Eric Dolphy. Blythe's solo follows the shape of the tune, leaping in and out of the odd-interval phrases that were so typical of Dolphy. One wonders, in fact, whether he may not be more directly connected to the late woodwind player than to the many other sources usually mentioned. Blythe too is a stunning harmonic improviser, building solos across the upper interval partials and moving around those difficult phrases with the same fluidity that Dolphy did.

But Blythe remains his own man. It is to his credit that he can take what he wants from his predecessors and blend it into his own vision. That's as much as we can expect from this world-class jazzman.

**Dave McKenna:**  
**Left Handed Complement**  
*Frank Dorritie, producer*  
*Concord Jazz CJ 123*  
by John S. Wilson

Dave McKenna is a pianist of extraordinary power, a cross between the single-note, right-handed keyboardist and the two-fisted chordal type. The title of this album, "Left Handed Complement," is quite apt, because his firm, solid left hand grounds his performances, leaving his right free to go dancing around. He does just that on *Just as Though You Were Here*, creating a lovely, positive sparkle reminiscent of Erroll Garner.



McKenna: swinging sensibility

McKenna's method for developing a tune is best demonstrated here on *Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams*. He makes a gradual, easy entry, then builds the phrasing to a rhythmically stronger level. As he gets into the second chorus, he expands and fills out the melodic line in the bridge. On the third chorus, he broadens the chords and applies a filigree of decorative trills before settling back to the simplicity of the beginning. McKenna also shares Garner's swinging sensibility. And though he lacks that pianist's walloping rhythmic kick on the very slow pieces (*When Day Is Done* and *I'll Be Seeing You*), for the most part he keeps that left hand rolling, adding exuberance and joy to *Have You Met Miss Jones* and keeping his dedicatory piece to Ted Williams, *Splendid Splinter*, churning along.

**Judy Roberts: The Other World**  
*Judy Roberts, producer*  
*Inner City IC 1088*  
by Don Heckman

Singer/pianist Judy Roberts has been attracting a great deal of well-deserved attention in the Midwest lately. Her first album, an independently recorded effort, was quickly acquired by Inner City and released as "Judy Roberts." "The Other World," her second LP for the label, is better produced and an effective introduction to a bright new talent.

Roberts obviously has listened closely to such performers as Flora Purim,

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Roberts: a solid understanding

Ursula Dudziak, and Angela Bofill. In fact, one of the unappealing facets of her singing is the somewhat raspy, tight throat tones that are so characteristic of Purim. More often, and particularly on *Senor Blues* and *'Round Midnight*, her sound is soft, naive, and enormously appealing, bringing to mind Sheila Jordan's early work.

Roberts' program is a well-chosen, diversified mix of jazz standards, contemporary pieces, and originals by her guitarist, Neal Seroka. Horace Silver's *Senor Blues* and Cootie Williams' / Thelonious Monk's *'Round Midnight* (more difficult to sing than one might suspect) are performed with good, solid jazz inflection and, more, with a solid understanding of the lyrics as well as the music. *Last Tango in Paris*, on the other hand, is representative of the essential shallowness of Gato Barbieri's writing skills; Roberts' gallant effort only reveals the tune's essential flatness. Gino Vannelli's *The River Must Flow* and Leon Russell's *Rainbow in Your Eyes*, better songs, emerge in far finer fettle from her treatment. *Rainbow* becomes a bright, up-tempo jazz line, full of the joy and enthusiasm of a loose, gifted performer. *River* has a nice, funky feeling, but suffers from Roberts' apparent attempt to produce a single via thick synthesizer lines, overdone vocal doubling, and a too far forward bass line. Sammy Cahn's wonderful little gem, *It's Always 4 A.M.*, is handled perfectly, the ultimate late-night, I don't want to go home to all that loneliness bar song.

No Turns. *The Roadrunner* (both by Seroka), and *The Other World* (by

Russ Long) lean too heavily in the direction of overcooked fusion, saved only on occasion by Roberts' fleet vocal. Guitarist Seroka receives too much solo space, and Roberts' keyboard improvising is no more than mildly pleasant. She's much better off providing harmonic accompaniment for herself, as on *Midnight* and *It's Always 4 A.M.*

At her best—and I suspect we are hearing only a bit of it on this album—Roberts has the makings of a thoroughly original performer, one who needs time to develop but who will, I'm quite sure, move quickly into the top rank of jazz singers.

Tenors Anyone?

Arnold S. Caplin, producer

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John S. Wilson

This miscellany of late '40s and '50s selections from the Dawn catalog provides a period view of four tenor saxophonists who, in varying degrees, were influenced by Lester Young. Wardell Gray and Paul Quinichette are heard at their peak, Stan Getz and Zoot Sims at a time when their maturity was a few years ahead.

Getz's and Gray's sessions are from 1949, and both use the rhythm section of Al Haig, Jimmy Raney, Gene Ramsey, Charlie Perry, and Carlos Vidal. Gray is fully in command, building a fluid, beautifully controlled ballad performance of *It's the Talk of the Town* and burrowing into an uptempo *In a Pinch*. Getz, on the other hand, sounds tentative, skittering across the surface and drawing strongly on bebop figures. But a portent of things to come can be heard in *Pennies from Heaven*. Unlike the other pieces, it is a full-length Getz solo, building chorus by chorus from simple, slightly choked phrasing through loose, rising runs to more decorative ideas. It shows him in the process of developing the clean, economical, edited style he reached by the Sixties.

Sims and Quinichette were re-recorded in the mid-'50s. Sims, like Getz, is lighter, less certain than he would become, burdened in one instance by a stiff Jerry Lloyd composition that he manages to smooth out but doesn't completely rescue. Quinichette is heard with a delightful group that includes Nat Pierce on piano, Freddie Green on guitar, and, on one piece, Gene Roland playing crisply muted trumpet. He was still carrying his "Vice-Pres" Lester Young tradition, but these pieces show that, while he lived up to it, he could also go beyond it with his own ideas.

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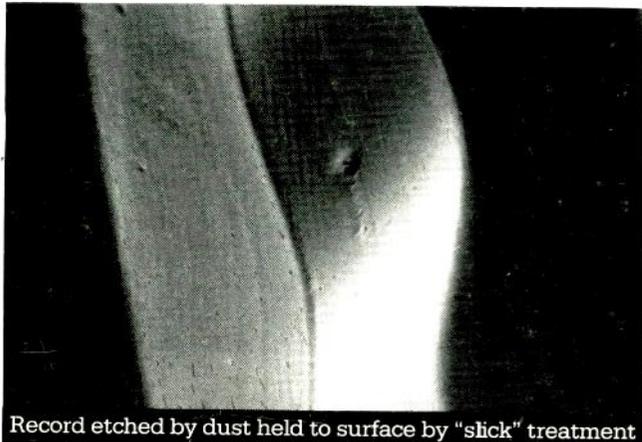


Figure 1

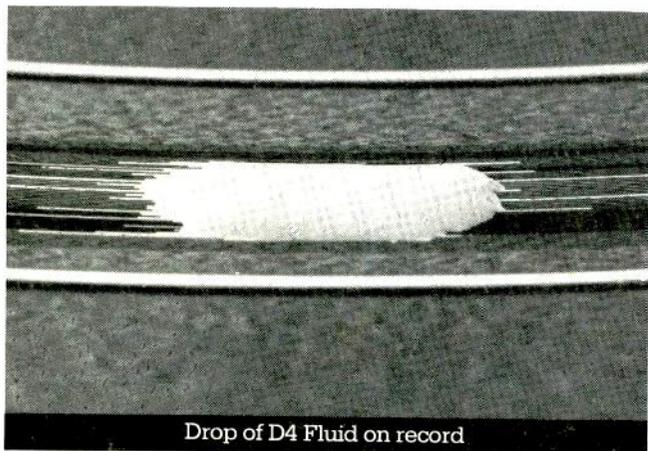


Figure 2

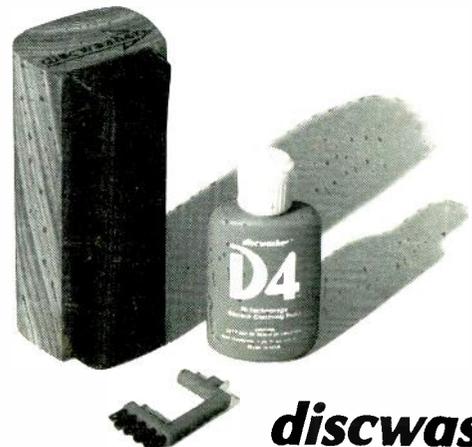
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Figure 3

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