Stereo Review

MAY 1973 • 60 CENTS

RACHMANINOFF: A CENTENNIAL MEMOIR

Power Bandwidth. 15–60 KHz –0.9% dist.

FM Sensitivity [IHF]: 1.9 uv [–30 dB noise & dist.].

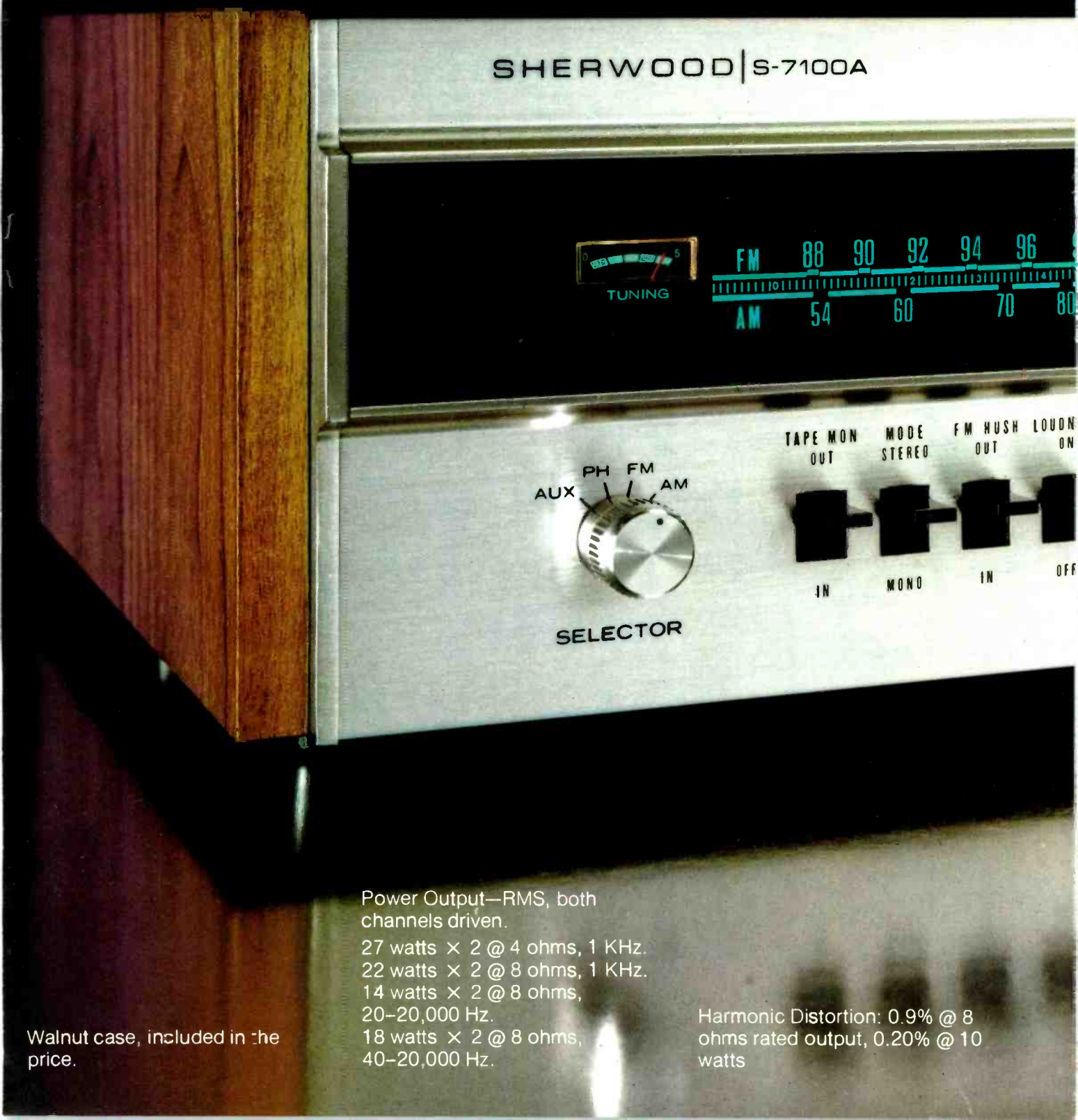
Capture Ratio: 2.8 dB.

Distortion: 0.5% @ 100% mcd.

Alternate-channel selectivity 50 d

What you don't see

is what you get



Power Output—RMS, both channels driven.

27 watts × 2 @ 4 ohms, 1 KHz.
22 watts × 2 @ 8 ohms, 1 KHz.
14 watts × 2 @ 8 ohms, 20–20,000 Hz.
18 watts × 2 @ 8 ohms, 40–20,000 Hz.

Harmonic Distortion: 0.9% @ 8 ohms rated output, 0.20% @ 10 watts

Walnut case, included in the price.

You won't see Sherwood advertised on television.

Manufacturers are constantly faced with an agonizing choice: How much do you spend **on** the product and how much do you spend promoting it?

With products like receivers, which require a great deal of handcrafting, whatever is spent on advertising must literally come out of the product itself.

It must be obvious to you that Sherwood is not a household word.

At the same time you see our competitors spending a great deal of money to advertise in very expensive places: The Johnny Carson Show, The Today Show, in Playboy, Penthouse, Time, etc.

Advertising dollars must come right out of the product.

Example: one of the two top hi-fi component manufacturers [and advertisers] in this field boasts that their $200 receiver puts out 10 + 10 watts RMS power @ 8 ohms from 40–16,000 Hz. The walnut case is extra.

Compare that to our S7100A [same price] spec: 18 + 18 watts from 40–20,000 Hz. And we include the walnut case.

Another major manufacturer gives you 17 + 17 watts RMS [@ 1KHz] and charges $240. Our S7100A offers 22 + 22 watts for $40 less.

Spec for spec, dollar for dollar, we'll match our receivers with any other manufacturer.

We put our marketing dollar into improving the receiver and rely on the equipment to speak for itself.

And that, obviously, is what has been happening. Sherwood receivers have consistently been getting top ratings from the reviewers.

For a recent review of the S7100A see **Stereo** & **HiFi Times,** Spring issue. Or write to us for a complete reprint: Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, Inc., 4300 North California Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60618.

Who knows, we might be starting a trend:
Television programs with fewer commercial interruptions.

Goodnight, Johnny

Sherwood

The word is getting around.

CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD

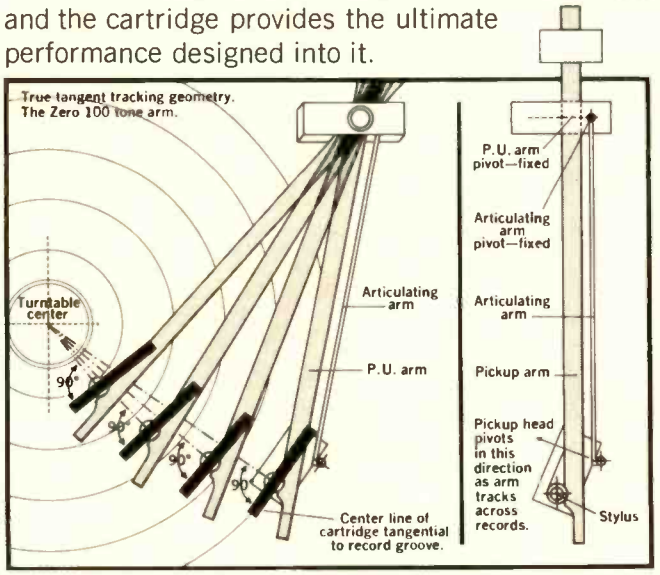
MUSIC GOES ON A RECORD AT A PERFECT TANGENT. NOW IT COMES OFF AT A PERFECT TANGENT.

For years, Zero Tracking Error has been the elusive goal of the automatic turntable maker.

The objective: to develop an arm which would keep the stylus perpendicularly tangent to the grooves... to each groove throughout the record, because this is the way music is put on a record.

Garrard's Zero 100 is the only automatic turntable to attain this. It is done with an ingeniously simple, but superbly engineered tone arm. Through the use of an articulating auxiliary arm, with precision pivots, the angle of the cartridge continually adjusts as it moves across the record.

The stylus is kept at a 90° tangent to the grooves... and the cartridge provides the ultimate performance designed into it.



The results have been recorded by experts in their reviews of the Zero 100. Some of them are saying things about this instrument that have never been said about an automatic turntable before.

They have confirmed that they can *hear* the difference that Zero Tracking Error makes in the sound, when the Zero 100 is tested against other top model turntables, in otherwise identical systems. Until now, we cannot recall any turntable feature being credited with a direct audible effect on sound reproduction. Usually that is reserved for the cartridge or other components in a sound system.

Zero Tracking Error is more than just a technical breakthrough. It translates into significantly truer reproduction, reduced distortion and longer record life.

Once we had achieved Zero Tracking Error, we made certain that the other features of this turntable were equally advanced. The Zero 100 has a combination of features you won't find in any other automatic turntable. These include variable speed control; illuminated strobe; magnetic anti-skating; viscous-damped cueing; 15° vertical tracking adjustment; the patented Garrard Synchro-Lab synchronous motor; and our exclusive two-point record support in automatic play.

The test reports by independent reviewers make fascinating reading. You can have them, plus a detailed 12-page brochure on the Zero 100. Write today to British Industries Co., Dept. E33 Westbury, New York 11590.

GARRARD ZERO 100

The only automatic turntable with Zero Tracking Error.

$199.95

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FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review

MAY 1973 • VOLUME 30 • NUMBER 5

THE MUSIC

THE EQUIPMENT

THE REVIEWS

THE REGULARS

COVER: Tempera portrait of Rachmaninoff by Alan Magee

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FRONT
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MASTER BALANC

IT SPEAKS LOUDLY AND CARRIES A LITTLE STICK.

The Fisher 504 receiver, top model in the new 2/4-channel convertible Studio Standard series, speaks even louder than its 4-channel power ratings (see table) would lead you to believe.

With its four power amplifiers "strapped" for 2-speaker stereo at the flick of a switch, it delivers 2 x 90 continuous (rms) watts into 8-ohm loads, at any frequency from 20 to 20,000 Hz. That's loud. (And clean.)

The little stick the 504 carries on its front panel is the 4-channel Master Balance Control. It operates exactly like the pan pots on professional studio consoles. Move it, say, toward left center and that's where the 4-channel sound becomes louder. The overall volume level is set by a separate slide control.

That, of course, is just a small example of the 504's engineering sophistication. In every respect, audio and RF, the 504 represents the latest thinking of Fisher Radio, the most experienced company in high fidelity. High Fidelity magazine called the 504 "the best value in a quadraphonic receiver." Some experts are inclined to believe it is Fisher's all-time showpiece.

At only $529.95, that's quite an image to live up to. But the 504 has a way of convincing people who take the trouble to listen to it and operate it for a few minutes. And, best of all, the other Fisher Studio Standard receivers, from $329.95 up, are equally advanced in concept and design.

They speak only a *little* softer.

Fisher Radio, 11-40 45th Road, Dept. SR-5, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

Fisher 504 Studio-Standard 4-Channel Receiver

Continuous sine-wave power, 20 Hz to 20 kHz (not just IHF music power!)	40/40/40/40 watts at 4 ohms 32/32/32/32 watts at 8 ohms
4-channel matrix decoder	SQ
FM sensitivity (IHF standard)	1.8 μV
Capture radio (IHF at 1 mV)	1.2 dB
FM front end	Dual-gate-MOSFET with AGC
FM input	Up to 3,000,000 μV (3 V)
MPX decoder	PLL (phase-locked loop)

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Prices slightly higher in the Far West and Southwest.

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

PLAY MELANCHOLY BABY

THE real "generation gap" in the lives of people my age (I'm fifty) is, I think, that period of suspended animation we call World War II: there seems to be a great gulf separating almost everything that went on before then from what has gone on since. Owing to my own four years of hibernation/estivation in the Army, I reached our centers of cultural gravity only in the mid-Forties, too late to hear Sergei Rachmaninoff, for example, in live concert. Rachmaninoff died in 1943, and, aural memory being both short and fickle, it is perhaps inevitable that we should now have lost most of our sense of him as a performer. That faded image is all but invisible on the other side of the gulf, and what we are left with on this side is another one entirely: Rachmaninoff as composer.

He was both, of course. For twenty-five years before the war, music lovers thought of him first not only as a pianist but, in the words of Walter Gieseking, as the greatest pianist of his time. He was also something of a dinosaur, among the last representatives (only Hofmann and Grainger outlasted him) of an illustrious line of composer/pianists stretching back down the years to Mozart. The roll of honor, even of only those names that come quickly to mind, is impressive: Beethoven, Johann Nepomuk (love that name) Hummel, John Field, Ignaz Moscheles, Chopin, Liszt, Sigismond Thalberg, Adolph von Henselt, our own Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Anton Rubinstein, Carl Tausig, Edvard Grieg, Moritz Moszkowski, Alexander Scriabin, and, finally, Rachmaninoff. They were not *just* pianists, but composers, conductors, and pedagogues as well. And though they were not all equally skilled in their various offices, they were nonetheless eminent members of a cosmopolitan community of musical gentlemen, friendly rivals rather than competitors when they were contemporaries, fatherly mentors and respectful students when they were not. When not busy with their own music, they concocted improvisations, variations, fantaisies, and transcriptions based on that of their peers, and they played everything. It was rather like a prestigious international club, with talent its only entry requirement, the world's concert halls its meeting places, arenas in which the members played a seemingly endless, almost ecstatic game of badminton with their musical ideas as shuttlecocks.

It takes no great exercise of the imagination to see that all this must have been terribly exciting for audiences of the time as well, nor any excess of sentimentality to regret that the tradition is, for our time, quite dead. Our modern virtuosos, if they are to work up the chilly efficiency critics seem to require of them, have no time left—even if they have the talent—for composing, conducting, or anything else. Too, when every concert means putting a reputation on the line, little of it is likely to be wasted on crowd-pleasing frivolities. Rachmaninoff was perhaps the last of the great virtuosos who could afford such "waste"; he played all the respectable, obligatory monuments of the literature—Brahms, Beethoven, Chopin—but he also played the bon-bons his audience clamored for: a Tausig transcription, a Henselt étude, his own C-sharp Minor Prelude.

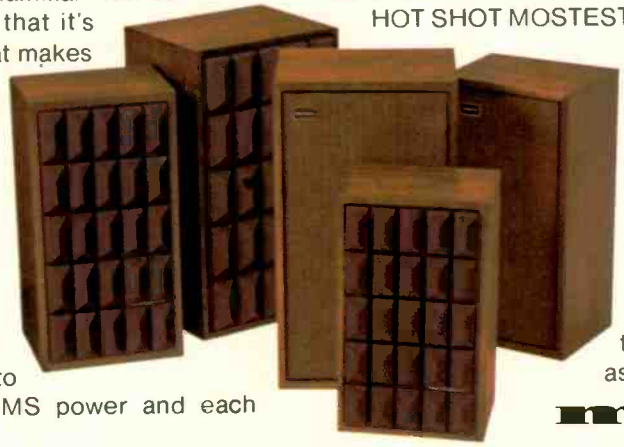
With the able assistance of Gregor Benko of the International Piano Library, RCA is just now assembling every recorded note of Rachmaninoff it can lay its hands on. The whole will be issued this October: five three-disc sets that will include even acoustical and film-soundtrack items. Rachmaninoff could get more out of a note than some of the composers he played had put in, rather like the Romantic-era actress Helena Modjeska reducing an audience to tears by reciting the alphabet in Polish. Therefore, though I am constitutionally opposed to most musical ancestor worship, I will welcome these releases as jogs to our memories, rejuvenators of our narrowed tastes, and, above all, the strongest of hints to our younger pianists that they not be too proud to play *Melancholy Baby* when asked to.

A Marantz speaker system breaks up that old gang of yours.

Separation of sound is a true test of a speaker system. And to put Marantz—or any speaker—to the test you should listen to something you are already familiar with so you'll be able to hear for yourself that it's the speaker and not the recording that makes the difference. Oh, what a difference Marantz makes! What you thought were two oboes are now clearly an oboe and a flute and that barbershop quartet...well, they're really a quintet.

Let's face it: ALL speakers claim to be the very A-1 HOT SHOT MOSTEST BEST.

But the proof is in the listening. And that's where Marantz speakers come in. Each model is engineered to handle a plethora of continuous RMS power and each employs a long excursion woofer and a tweeter with fantastic off-axis response. And Marantz offers you a wide selection of sizes. Each model for the money is truly the very A-1 HOT SHOT MOSTEST BEST.



However, keep this in mind. Marantz speaker systems are built by the makers of the most respected stereo and 4-channel equipment in the world. The same quality that goes into Marantz receivers and amplifiers goes into the entire line of Marantz speaker systems.

To find out how much better they sound, listen. That's all we ask. Listen.

marantz®
We sound better.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Dolby Establishment

● Re the Rodrigues Dolby cartoon in the March issue of STEREO REVIEW: I guess we are now part of the Establishment. Does that mean I have to cut my hair? I wonder if the FBI would be as interested in the Dolby system if they knew that it was being used in mainland China. Of course, this occurred after the President's trip there, so I guess it's all right after all.

MORLEY KAHN
V.P. & Mgr., U.S. Operations
Dolby Laboratories, Inc.
New York, N. Y.

Noel's Neils

● Magazines are printed under the pressure of a strict time schedule, and for this reason they are entitled to a few mistakes. However, the mistake in the March issue was so blatant that I cannot let it go unnoticed. I refer, of course, to Noel Coppage's article "The Troubadour as Middle-Class Hero," in which he discussed the musical attributes of Neils Young and Diamond and was *dead serious*!

DOUG SCHARF
Des Plaines, Ill.

More Beatlemania

● My eyes fairly popped when I saw all the material on the Beatles in the February issue. In spite of what is said, most, if not nearly all, of today's young people couldn't care less about anyone in the fantastic past of rock-and-roll. I am fourteen and discovered the Beatles last year when I saw *A Hard Day's Night*. I feel genuinely sorry for what millions of kids are missing, for the Beatles are still rock-and-roll at its best, even ten years later. We should never forget what four people accomplished—they changed our customs, our music, even our clothes and hairstyles. The force and the incredible melody lines of the many Beatles songs should be revived—and quickly! Do it now, before rock dissolves into folk-pop for good!

Maybe Lillian Roxon said it best: "Why not a Beatles museum in Times Square?" Please help bring them back, them and the whole marvelous era. Hurry!

KATHY EVERS
Dunwoody, Ga.

● My response to the Beatles tribute that appeared in the February issue of STEREO REVIEW: *Finally*! I don't know if anyone else will bother, but I would like at least to thank you for the effort.

It's hard to sum up how I feel about the article (being written by nine different writers makes it difficult to single out any particular theme), but in general I was disappointed with it. First, it contained some misinformation. There is *not* any kind of an upsurge in fourteen-year-old Beatlemaniacs who are interested only in the early Beatles as Lillian Roxon stated. And then there were the outright scandalous opinions of Lester Bangs. However, I found some very honest and complimentary ideas expressed about our beloved Beatles for which I'm truly grateful. And I would also like to thank David Chestnutt and the art staff for beautifying the tribute with the art work and photos.

There was an overall tone of finality predominating over much of the Beatles tribute and editor's note. The group was regarded as a past phenomenon lying stashed in somewhere between Elvis and Rod Stewart in the scrapbook of rock history. I would like to remind you that John Lennon, George Harrison, Paul McCartney, and Ringo Starr are still alive and thrilling us persistent Beatlemaniacs. Maybe all things must pass, but it's never the end as long as there's a heart left to sing. And believe me, our hearts are still singing . . . yeah, yeah, yeah!

ALLEN SEAL
Gretna, La.

Yeah, but they're not writing songs like that anymore.

Speaker Dispersion

● I strongly object to Julian Hirsch's statements in a February speaker review in which he claimed that: " . . . the unique sound character of a very wide-dispersion speaker can be heard by anyone, under almost any circumstances. In our judgment, wide dispersion at all frequencies is the major factor separating an excellent speaker from a merely good one."

I think it only fair for your readers to know that there is a whole body of opinion directly contra. John Crabbe, editor of the British *Hi-Fi News & Record Review*, has written extensively ("In All Directions," *Hi-Fi News*, April 1971) of just how omni loudspeakers do not represent *good stereophony* or *good sound reproduction*. I am not the only American contra—the entire sound reinforcement industry in the U.S. believes in directional sound for maximum transmission of the original program—and they can make a very convincing case.

IRVING M. FRIED
IMF Products
Philadelphia, Pa.

Technical Editor Larry Klein replies: We were fully aware when we published Julian Hirsch's comments that there is some controversy about the desirability of extra-wide dispersion in loudspeakers. And Julian did acknowledge its existence, perhaps too obliquely, by his "In our judgment . . ." phrase. Since some readers may have missed the point, we are pleased to have Mr. Fried reinforce it.

However, my ears agree with Julian's as to the virtues of very wide dispersion. The question of the real advantage of a speaker with a 360-degree radiation over one that radiates over an angle of 180 degrees is still open, but there is no doubt in our minds that 180-degree horizontal dispersion, at least, is desirable.

With reference to the Hi-Fi News *argument, I hesitate to approach the question simply on the basis of theory alone. Whatever the directional properties of the live performance, the original sound is forced into the Procrustean bed of perhaps a dozen microphones with various pickup patterns, and then a variety of phase-shifting devices such as mixers and compressors. If the music that ultimately emerges in our homes almost always sounds better with speakers that have extra-wide-dispersion characteristics, I do not question it—I just rejoice that such speakers are available. Furthermore, I suspect that much of the negative attitude of our British friends derives from their exposure to wide-dispersion speakers that are simply not good sound reproducers in other respects.*

Two other points should be made. Multidirectional or very wide-dispersion speakers, since they produce a much higher ratio of reflected to direct sound in a normal room, are necessarily more sensitive to room acoustics and placement. And the preference of the sound-reinforcement industry for directional speakers relates directly to this fact. The problem of reinforcement is how to get an even distribution of sound to all parts of a large auditorium. The engineers need efficient speakers that can be "aimed" at the specific areas to be covered. A speaker that is designed to bounce a large part of its output off nearby walls simply isn't going to make it when there aren't nearby walls to bounce on. Our view is that when you need to "focus" sound in specific areas and want to exclude reverberant effects, use directional speakers. If you want the most satisfying simulation of reality in the home, use wide-dispersion types.

Buddy Holly

● I have no quarrel with Noel Coppage's personal opinions when they are based on fact, but his review of Buddy Holly's album "A Rock and Roll Collection" which appeared in the February issue was an example of what ignorance of subject matter will accomplish. The album itself is not remarkable except for three instances: the cut *Listen to Me* has been enhanced by the "stereo" effect and now possesses a dreamy, ethereal quality that fits its mood; *Peggy Sue Got Married* is

(Continued on page 12)

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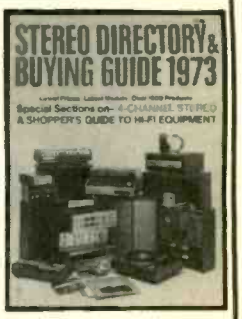

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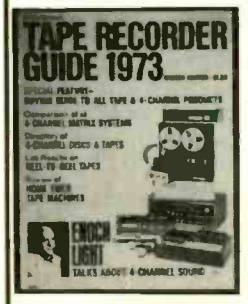

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the later version produced by Norman Petty with background accompaniment by the Fireballs—anyone who has heard the song before is in for a surprise if he heard the posthumously released version with background music by Dick Hansen; *Love's Made a Fool of You* is interesting because it is *not* by Buddy, but by the Crickets (or the remains of them), and was released on the album "In Style with the Crickets" put out after Holly's death. The rest of the album is simply by Buddy Holly, which is fine all by itself.

Mr. Coppage contends that "What made [Holly] stand so tall . . . was the fact that he was surrounded by dwarfs of rock-and-roll." Talent is talent and Holly had an abundance of it. His rise in 1957 was made in the midst of such giants of early rock as Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis Presley, Little Richard, Chuck Berry, and many, many others. Holly's talent asserted itself then and has maintained itself over the years. A little research would have shown that Mr. Coppage's contention that Holly "had a knack for stringing together catchy singles—often on tunes other people had written" is completely misleading. Of the thirty-four songs released as singles by Holly from 1956 to 1969, including three singles released after his death, nineteen were written by Holly (five solely by himself, the rest with others), eight were written by members of his group the Crickets or his recording manager Norman Petty, and only seven were written by others. The only song which was a real success and not written by Holly or his group was *It Doesn't Matter Anymore* by Paul Anka.

When Mr. Coppage states that Holly "made a great deal of hay with the uh-oh gimmick which someone else invented," is he implying that because Holly is not the acknowledged inventor of the technique this makes his use of it less effective? Does the fact that someone else invented the electric guitar in any way diminish the quality of George Harrison's or Eric Clapton's work with it? Are Dave Brubeck, Buddy Rich, or Erroll Garner any less talented or proficient because they did not create the instruments they use?

As for the remark about Holly's "transcending importance," I leave the decisions to rest on two things—those who have attested their allegiance to Holly and his style, such as Don McClean, the Beatles, and Bob Dylan, and those who have considered Holly's songs of enough worth to record cover versions of them, including the Rolling Stones, John Denver, and Peter and Gordon.

Buddy Holly was immensely talented, and I'm afraid Noel Coppage is grossly uninformed about him and has little or no qualification for discussing his music.

WILLIAM F. BAUERNFEIND
Des Plaines, Ill.

Mr. Coppage replies: "I am, of course, shocked and dismayed that anyone would even dream of implying that I don't know everything about everything. But I do detect perhaps a crack in the veneer of my sophistication. It's those damned statistics: I just can't arrange them with true creativity, when you get right down to the nub. If a man records thirty-four songs and it turns out he wrote five of them 'solely by himself' and wrote half, more or less, of fourteen others, I just don't see how I can statistically prove he was any great shakes as a songwriter. Being cursed with such a weakness in the math area, I was admittedly unequipped to undertake the research project Mr. Bauernfeind seems to be saying is necessary before anyone can truly give Buddy Holly a fair hearing. Being grossly misinformed where I should have been grossly informed, I had to fall back on listening carefully to what Buddy Holly sounded *like. Incredible thing to do to a Buddy Holly record, I suppose. But sometimes you just get caught short and have to improvise."*

Schlagoper

● Of special interest to me in the February issue was the report by Aram Bakshian on Viennese operetta ("Schlagoper"). At the present time I can recall only one previous article on Lehár and Tauber, which I believe George Jellinek wrote for STEREO REVIEW some years ago.

Mr. Bakshian's article was extremely helpful, presenting to the reader an appreciative glimpse of a theatrical form not usually available to us here in the United States. I am only sorry that the article wasn't more extensive. A supplementary list of operetta recordings, especially imports that are available here, would be welcomed by those readers who wish to enlarge their operetta collections.

In Vienna in January: George Jellinek, Robert Stolz, Hedy Jellinek, and Einzi Stolz.

While there has been much debate as to Robert Stolz's true birthdate, it certainly was not 1892, as stated. Stolz would have been thirteen when he conducted the record-breaking *Merry Widow* if this date were correct. Mr. Bakshian and readers might be interested to learn that a photograph of Stolz's birth record, in *Robert Stolz, Melodie eines Lebens*, a biography by Wolf-Dietrich Brümmel and Fredrich van Booth, shows an August 25, 1880 designation. It is my understanding that up to the end of 1972, Professor Stolz, age ninety-two, was still conducting and making recordings. Indefatigable!

Many of Stolz's recordings are still available on Eurodisc-Ariola (obtainable through Bremen House, Inc., 218 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y.) and on EMI-Odeon releases (Peters International, Inc., via local dealers). The Eurodisc-Ariola company has an extensive operetta catalog—over thirty releases. Stolz himself conducted more than twenty of them, including eight discs devoted to excerpts from his own operettas.

DAVID L. SEAVEY
York, Pa.

Mr. Seavey is correct in his birthdate information on Robert Stolz. And Contributing Editor George Jellinek visited Stolz in Vienna in January and reports that he is indeed indefatigable, having recently finished rerecording several landmarks of the Schlagoper *tradition. Mr. Bakshian confined himself to readily available items in his discographical asides. A more complete discography could be drawn up, but it would be heavily weighted on the side of imports, and the raising up of appetites that can be satisfied only with great difficulty is a no-no in our book.*

Two Views of Chicago

● This letter is in honest rebuttal to Joel Vance's review of "Chicago V" in the February issue of STEREO REVIEW. It is a shame that such a vault of talent as Chicago should be so scornfully humiliated by the reviewer of a magazine of such high caliber.

Chicago is an American band which tried to eliminate the tradition of three guitarists and a drummer by adding a horn section to put a little swing in the shallow places of rock. They broke the boundaries between rock and jazz, smoothly interweaving the two with amazing success. With superb songwriting, tight arrangements, and outstanding musicianship they managed to take the title of Number One Small Combo, and their album was so honored in a poll taken by a national magazine.

Finally, there are *three* lead vocalists, not one as Mr. Vance stated. They are Terry Kath, Robert Lamm, and Pete Cetera—and Pete has one of the most original voices in American music. None of these boys sound anything like the atrocity of David Clayton-Thomas. Not enough people realize what influence Chicago has had on rock music.

ROCCO ROBERT PIZZOLLO
Freehold, N.J.

● Since Chicago emerged as a music entrepreneur's dream several years ago, I have had a running battle with my husband and his siblings as to their musical talents. Yes, they are accomplished musicians! Yes, Robert Lamm is talented! I, too, have head-scratched, hummmmmed, and sought an apt description of my feelings about Chicago. Now Joel Vance has given me the answer. Yes, *they bore me* also. But more than anything their music and "preachy-lyric rock" drive me screaming from the house.

I hope they will soon go the way of many avant-garde groups. Then my husband can buy their recordings for one dollar at the local discount store.

BARBARA MARS
Racine, Wis.

El Señor Teddy Bear

● I was amused by Placido Domingo's harebrained comments as they appeared in the February issue. Sr. Domingo might buy all of RCA's extravagant publicity about his superhuman qualities, and not give a damn about the so-called "Golden Age," when *canto* was truly *bel*. And, indeed, he would not be the first tenor to stake all, or most, of his claims to fame on a "B-natural I can really hit—strong and with volume." In fact, scores of such plebeian fruit-vendors have been made quite wealthy by simpletons who really believe that "high notes and applause" are "the stuff that makes Italian opera unique. . . ." The truth as I see it, though, is that the Noble Art of Fine Singing consists of lofty achievements won through very hard and rigorous schooling, and Domingo is still a kindergartner.

The "easy life" Domingo speaks of is, I

(Continued on page 14)

The best time to upgrade your component system is before you buy it.

If you're a typical reader of this magazine, you most likely have a sizeable investment in a component system. So our advice about upgrading might come a little late.

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think, that of some contemporary singers who are "aloud" (humble apologies for the second-rate pun) to ask for four-figure checks as emolument for making a shambles out of phrasing and getting by the less demanding public purely on voices of a passably nice sheen. Domingo's attitude on falsetto, in fact, reflects the vapid, cavalier ignorance of many of today's singers concerning the vast technico-stylistic world of the *tempo rubato*, the *messa di voce*, the *filatura*, *rinforzamenti*, *smorzatura*, *gorgheggi*, *acciaccatura*, improvisation in general, and singing *sul fiato* in *mezza* or *sotto voce*.

Falsetto singing above the stave, as practiced by the Rossinians and their predecessors, was not the hooty croak that might be emitted by some of our modern nightingales, but a complicated, hard-to-achieve way of singing in a quaint head-tone which is called *voix mixte*. This is a strange and velvety sound that can be heard in some of Caruso's recordings (*Faust*, *Aïda*, *Regina di Saba*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*). Nicolai Gedda brought it off quite superbly in a recent, blood-chilling recording of an aria from Glinka's *A Life for the Tsar* (the middle section, with a gorgeous falsetto high-D to boot). Such beautiful sound would not only *not* be "laughed off stage," but would benefit the monochromatic singing of some modern tenors. As can be heard every time Carlo Bergonzi caps "*Celeste Aïda*" with a soft, floated, beautifully managed final note (a note that most tenorlings produce as if the Sphinx had just stepped on their toes), the intelligent part of the audience usually stamps its approval of this wonderful effect. (It is an effect that Verdi intended, for he marked the note "*pianissimo, morendo*." Most underschooled tenors change it, despite the fact that Verdi may be expected to know a little more about it than they do.)

I am not a nostalgic old die-hard—I am twenty years old, five years younger than the LP. But, for anyone who cares to listen, there is ample proof in historical recordings for a perceptive person to hear that, whether the likes of our jet-age warblers "give a damn and believe it" or not, there *were* singers who could do *anything*—including much that Domingo can't. Who today can approach anything like the gossamer, transparent glory of Giuseppe Anselmi's lyric flow? Or the virtuosic, coruscating agility and aristocratic *élan* of Fernando de Lucia's? Or the lean and witty enchantment of Edmond Clément's singing, or Alessandro Bonci's astonishing dynamic control and the perfectly balanced grace of his phrasing? Does anybody have the shimmering, heroic brilliance of an Escalaïs or a Lauri-Volpi? Who can "whisper" out a song in phrases of quiet, poetic expressivity as Tito Schipa did, creating a moment of magical beauty, always sought but seldom found? No, Señor Teddy Bear, the "excitement" is certainly *not* "the savage approach." *Hasta la vista*, Superstar. Go back to school.

EDUARDO DE TELLO Y ROSALES
Queens, N. Y.

The Editor replies: "Mr. Rosales has evidently learned a lot in his twenty years, but one would hope that he is not so frozen into youthful intransigence that he cannot realize that he is in possession of only half the truth, that both *he and Placido Domingo are right about opera. He puts his own finger on the heart of the matter: it is, indeed, the 'intelligent' part of the audience for whom all that*

(Continued on page 16)

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Italian vocabulary of the larynx and the nether bodily regions was invented, and it is for all those Mr. Rosales unkindly calls the 'simpletons'—by far the larger part of the audience, by the way—that the high-note stunts and the lung-busting volume are produced. Mr. Domingo is, after all, a toreador of the world's opera stages, an experienced performer who knows whereof he speaks; Mr. Rosales, in his twenty years, cannot well have heard *as many operas as Mr. Domingo has performed in, and Domingo's opinions of the audiences he has encountered around the world simply have to be listened to. It may be true that we are not living in one of opera's 'golden' ages. It may also be true that the Golden Age was not really all that golden for those who actually lived in it. That miniscule part of the total opera audience that embraces aficionados, connoisseurs, buffs, and critics has created a truly formidable arsenal of language to describe what they hear and, presumably, how they believe those things they hear are executed. But all such description is well after the fact of the actual singing, and the artists themselves (quite recently Joan Sutherland and Marilyn Horne, for example) are always the first to tell us that what they do 'just comes naturally.' Who knows but that some future operaphile, poring over the collected 'Art of Placido Domingo,' will not discover in his voice some as yet unclassified stroke of vocal technique which will require a new French, Italian, or even Spanish appellation (perhaps* golpe de osito*?). That same operaphile will then doubtless turn right around and curse the decayed vocal art of his age that cannot produce another Domingo. A pair of final cautions: we can continue to regard old recordings as evidence, but not as proof, of what actually went on in Golden Age opera houses; and the kind of singing offered today is certainly affected not only by the audience's expectations but by the enormous houses they hear their operas in."*

The Compleat Stereo Review

● In the February "Letters" column, a fellow from Philadelphia wrote to ask how he could sell his issues of STEREO REVIEW from July 1963. I cannot imagine what prompted him to make this decision. I think enough of your publication to go to the expense of binding my copies. My trouble is that my collection begins with Volume 6, 1961. Would anyone sell me the first five volumes?

ROBERT G. GENNETT
Saam Road, R.D. #1
Milford, N.J. 08848

Paganini Themes

● In his Basic Repertoire feature in the January issue of STEREO REVIEW, Martin Bookspan discusses Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, saying, among other things, that the theme of Paganini "had earlier served Liszt, Schumann, and Brahms as the subject of variations." Mr. Bookspan is quite right about Liszt and Brahms, but mistaken about Schumann. Though Schumann wrote variations on several themes by Paganini, this one in A Minor was not one of them. The theme *has* been used, however, by Witold Lutoslawski for variations for two pianos, and by Boris Blacher for orchestral variations.

MURRAY BAYLOR
Galesburg, Ill.

Mr. Bookspan replies: "I stand corrected. My thanks to reader Baylor."

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BOOKS RECEIVED

Compiled by
Louise Gooch Boundas

● *A Little Schubert*, by M. B. Goffstein. Harper & Row, New York, 1972, $3.95, unpaged.

A few simple words, almost as many delightful drawings, and a miniature 33⅓ rpm disc add up to a pleasant introduction to Franz Schubert for a child—or for anyone, for that matter. Ms. Goffstein, who is responsible for the words and the drawings, is an experienced children's author and illustrator; her husband, pianist Peter Schaaf, recorded the five "Noble Waltzes" that are included. The book and the music are charming, unpretentious, and unintimidating.

● *Tommy and Jimmy: The Dorsey Years*, by Herb Sanford, with an introduction by Bing Crosby. Arlington House, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1972, $8.95, 305 pp.

The Dorsey brothers' careers extended into four decades, decades that saw the rise and fall of the big bands. This collection of photographs and anecdotes about the brothers and their associates is a gossipy account of their ins and outs with each other, with the musicians who worked with them, and with the public. An appendix listing some of the musicians, singers, and arrangers connected with the Dorsey bands reads like a Who's Who of jazz.

● *Grand Opera: The Story of the World's Leading Opera Houses and Personalities*, edited by Anthony Gishford, with an introduction by Benjamin Britten. Viking, New York, 1972, $14.95, 272 pp.

This is a beautifully produced book, worthy of its subject. Anthony Gishford has collaborated with five other writers on opera to describe the great opera houses, the great performances, and, not least, the great performers of twelve nations. There are sixteen pages of color illustrations and one hundred thirty black and white illustrations. One quibble: the illustrations are so beautiful that I would have liked to see more of them in color—particularly the photographs of the interiors and the sets. But then, I suppose, an opera book as extravagant as its subject could not be as reasonably priced as this one is.

● *The TRUE Sound of Music, A Practical Guide to Sound Equipment for the Home*, by Hans Fantel. Dutton, New York, 1973, $7.95, 237 pp.

This book is one of the most useful introductions to its subject now around—as well it might be: Mr. Fantel is a former STEREO REVIEW staff member, and a good part of his book is drawn from the Audio Basics column of which he was the proprietor for a number of years. Illustrated with photographs and diagrams.

● *Black Music of Two Worlds*, by John Storm Roberts. Praeger, New York, 1972, $10.00, 286 pp.

This book is intended as an appreciation of and introduction to Afro-American music in its many manifestations. The book is divided into two sections: the first deals with African music and the changes and modifications it underwent in the New World; the second treats black music of the Americas and the Caribbean. Also included are a selected bibliography, a discography, and a series of photos.

● *A Gilbert & Sullivan Dictionary*, compiled by George E. Dunn. Da Capo Press, New York, 1971, $7.95, 175 pp.

Of interest to both amateur players and Gilbert & Sullivan enthusiasts, this reprint of a 1936 book contains meanings of Savoyard words and phrases, places and incidents, and translations of foreign and colloquial words; in addition it gives information concerning the original productions of the operas.

● *The Music of India*, by Peggy Holroyde. Praeger, New York, 1972, $8.95, 290 pp.

Miss Holroyde has designed this book as an introduction to Indian music on more than just the musical level. She explores the philosophical, religious, and cultural environments in which the music was developed, and contrasts this with Western ideals. There is also a discussion of Indian musical forms and technique. One of the popularizers of Indian music, Ravi Shankar, who is himself a well-known sitarist, has written a brief foreword, and the glossary of terms is very helpful.

● *The Glory of the Violin*, by Joseph Wechsberg. Viking, New York, 1972, $8.95, 314 pp.

Joseph Wechsberg, it turns out, is not only a journalist who writes books, memoirs, and "appreciations" for *The New Yorker* and *Gourmet*, he is also a musician, having studied at the Vienna Academy of Music. In this book, a tribute to his instrument, he traces the history of the violin and recounts stories about famous violin makers, violin collectors, violins, and virtuosos. And if you're in the market for a Stradivarius or a Guarnerius, you might find the section on violins as big business particularly interesting.

● *Mikis Theodorakis: Music and Social Change*, by George Giannaris. Praeger, New York, 1972, $8.95, 322 pp.

As its subtitle indicates, this is no mere biography of the man who composed the scores for *Zorba the Greek* and *Z*. Theodorakis is a political activist, to be sure, but his quarrel with his country's government should not be allowed to obscure his musical contributions—in theory and composition—which are discussed here in detail. His theories about the evolution of Greek music, for example, are fascinating. Theodorakis himself wrote the book's foreword.

● *Music of Latin America*, by Nicolas Slonimsky. Da Capo Press, New York, 1972, $12.50, 374 pp.

One of the softest percussion instruments of all is used by the Indians of Venezuela, who call it the *Culo-en-tierra* (buttocks-in-the-ground). . . . In 1914 a New York doctor described the appearance of a new disease, "tango foot" (in that same year, a man writing to the New York *Times* swore by the tango as a cure for indigestion).

These are samples of the lighter bits to be gleaned from this reprint of a book originally published in 1945, now reissued with a new foreword and addenda by the author. It is a highly informative, well-organized survey of the music of twenty Latin American nations—and it is entertaining as well.


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When it comes to tape, do like the pros do — use TDK.
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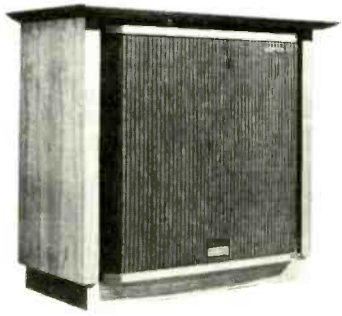
NEW PRODUCTS

THE LATEST IN HIGH-FIDELITY EQUIPMENT

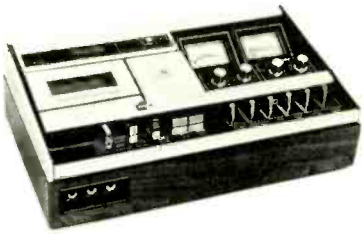
Onkyo Model 100 Speaker System



● ONKYO's Model 100 speaker system is a large floor-standing design—28 x 27 x 17 inches—with a 14-inch woofer and cast-aluminum sectoral-horn assemblies for the mid-range and high-frequency drivers. The mouth openings for the mid-range and tweeter are 11 x 4½ inches and 3½ x 2 inches, respectively. Both assemblies have Duraluminum diaphragms—1⅜ inches in diameter for the mid-range and 1 inch for the tweeter. Crossover frequencies are 700 and 7,000 Hz, and both of the horn drivers have step-type output-level controls (behind the removable grille) that provide a ±4-dB range of adjustment in 2-dB increments. Power-handling capability is 60 watts, with amplifier power of at least 15 watts per channel continuous at 8 ohms (the system's nominal impedance) recommended. Frequency response is rated at 20 to 20,000 Hz. The woofer cone has a ported dust cap that is said to reduce nonlinearity on long excursions. It operates in a sealed enclosure with a mounting panel that is tilted slightly (5 degrees) back from the vertical. The walnut-finish enclosure has a removable grille cloth, permitting access to the level controls immediately behind. The system weighs 83½ pounds. Price: $499.95.

Circle 115 on reader service card

Wollensak Model 4765 Dolby Cassette Deck



● 3M has incorporated the Wollensak heavy-duty beltless cassette transport in a new stereo cassette deck with B-Type Dolby noise-reduction circuits. A unique feature of the Model 4765 is the availability of the Dolby circuits (by means of the appropriate jacks and switching) for straight-through decoding of external Dolbyized sources such as FM broadcasts and open-reel tapes. The unit essentially retains the Wollensak transport controls: pushbuttons for PLAY, STOP, and RECORD, a single lever to select either fast forward or rewind, a latching pause control, and a separate cassette-eject lever. Recording bias and equalization are switchable for ferric-oxide or chromium-dioxide tapes. Below the two large recording-level meters are level controls for recording and playback, arranged separately for each channel. Both line and microphone inputs are provided, with mixing of the two sources possible. Separate indicator lights show the activation of the record mode and the Dolby circuits and the position of the tape-type selector switch, and warn against excessive recording levels that might cause tape-saturation distortion.

General specifications for the Wollensak 4765 include frequency responses of 35 to 14,000 Hz for standard tape and 35 to 15,000 Hz for high-performance tape, both ±2 dB. Wow and flutter (DIN weighting) are under 0.15 per cent. Without Dolby the signal-to-noise ratio exceeds 50 dB, with an improvement of up to 10 dB afforded by the Dolby circuits. Motion-sensing devices halt and disengage the drive mechanism at the end of a tape or when a cassette jams. The headphone jack will drive phones of any impedance. With the wood base provided, overall dimensions of the Model 4765 are 17¼ x 10¼ x 6½ inches. Price: $299.95. The unit is covered by an unconditional three-year parts warranty.

Circle 116 on reader service card

Pilot AM/Stereo FM Four-channel Receivers

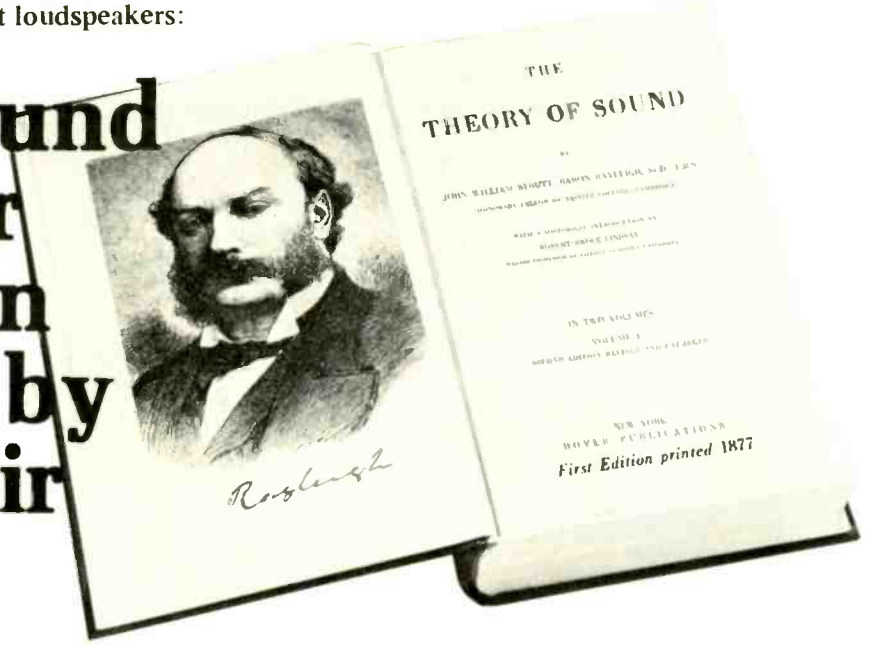
● PILOT is introducing a pair of AM/FM four-channel receivers with facilities for discrete four-channel sources, for decoding CBS SQ material and other matrices, and for enhancement of two-channel programs. Straight two-channel operation using the full power potential of the receivers is available. The top-of-the-line Model 366 (shown) has a rather elaborate control section, with two sets of knob-operated concentric balance controls for complete front-to-back and left-to-right adjustment, concentric bass and treble controls for individual adjustment of the left and right channels, a master volume control affecting all four channels, and a mode selector with positions for mono and two-channel as well as three four-channel modes. There are pushbuttons for low- and high-cut filters (12-dB-per-octave slopes), loudness compensation, tape monitor, FM interstation-noise muting, reversed stereo, and switching of main and remote speakers in both two- and four-channel arrays. Front-panel stereo headphone jacks for front and rear channels are provided, as well as an input for a single microphone with its own mixing-level control. For channel balancing a "Pilotone" pushbutton activates a built-in 1,000-Hz oscillator, the output of which is intended to be centered between the appropriate speaker pairs. There are FM tuning meters for signal strength and channel center (plus a channel-center indicator light), and light-up legends for the inputs (PHONO 1/MIC, PHONO 2, AUX 1, AUX 2, FM, AM).

The Pilot 366 has a continuous-power output of 30 watts per channel into 8 ohms with all four channels driven (60 watts per channel in the two-channel mode), with 0.5 per cent harmonic and intermodulation distortion. The power bandwidth is 10 to 40,000 Hz, and frequency response is 20 to 20,000 Hz ±1 dB. Signal-to-noise ratios: 75 dB, high-level inputs; 65 dB, phono inputs. FM specifications include: 1.8-microvolt IHF sensitivity; 1.8-dB capture ratio; 80-dB image and i.f. rejection; 60-dB alternate-channel selectivity; 36-dB stereo separation at 1,000 Hz; frequency response, 30 to 15,000 Hz ±1 dB. The unit's dimensions, including the wood cabinet supplied, are 18½ x 6½ x 17½ inches. Price: $499.90. The Pilot Model 365, with somewhat less elaborate con-

(Continued on page 22)

The most frequently asked question about loudspeakers:

Does the sound of a speaker depend upon the method by which the air is moved?



All speakers sound different from each other and when you hear a difference between two speakers that employ different principles of moving the air, it is only natural to wonder whether the variance in sounds is a consequence of the principles involved. After all, moving the air is what produces the sound.

Back in the 1950's, when electrostatic speakers reached a peak of popularity, some people thought that they might have a fundamental advantage because of the lower mass of the moving element compared to that of a cone speaker. Then, in the 1960's, ionic speakers were developed with no moving parts at all, and therefore, zero moving mass. Today, in the 1970's, a wide variety of transducers exists using principles ranging from piezoelectric to magnetostrictive, which either push the air with a diaphram or squeeze the air out between moving surfaces.

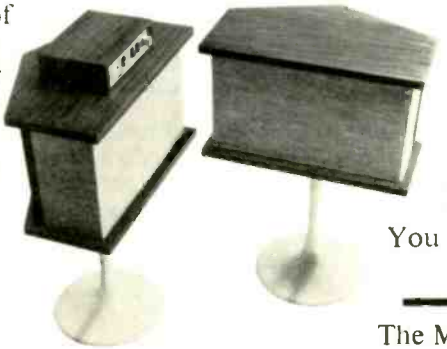
Indeed, some of the principles of moving the air do have advantages over others in terms of size, weight, efficiency, and cost. **But there is absolutely no advantage of any particular method of moving the air in terms of the potential quality of the sound that can be produced.**

Let's see why this is so. We experience sound through the medium of acoustic waves traveling in air. It has long been known that once the air is set into motion, it moves by the laws of acoustic wave propagation which are totally *independent* of the method by which the air was set into motion.

Therefore, a source (speaker) influences the sound field only through the amount of air it moves at each frequency and through the directions that the speaker moves the air. The method of moving the air in no way affects the sound that you hear.

In a basic experiment presented at a meeting of the I.E.E.E. professional group on Electroacoustics in 1964, it was demonstrated[2] that a multiplicity of full-range cone speakers can produce music that is subjectively identical to that produced (with the aid of computer simulation) by an ideal massless membrane free of all resonances and distortion. While this very basic result was proved only for full-range cone type speakers, the above discussion indicates that the same result could be obtained by the use of other types of full-range speakers as well. Thus, the secret of excellent performance doesn't lie in the type of speaker used (i.e. the way the air is moved). It lies in the use of a *multiplicity of full-range* speakers in one enclosure, in the *exact proportioning* of the *ratio and the directions of direct and reflected* sound radiated by the total enclosure, in the *precise equalization* of the speakers to radiate the correct balance of frequencies, and in *extreme quality control measures* that select and match all the speakers in the enclosure.

To fully appreciate the effect of a multiplicity of full-range speakers, with precise equalization and the optimum combination of direct and reflected sound, simply A-B the BOSE 901 Direct/Reflecting® speaker with any other speaker. Hear why the BOSE 901 is the most highly reviewed speaker regardless of size, price, or type of speakers.



References

1. The Theory of Sound. Vol. 1. By J.W.S. Rayleigh. 1877.
2. The results are documented in the Audio Engineering Society Paper, ON THE DESIGN, MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF LOUDSPEAKERS, by Dr. A. G. Bose. Copies are available from the Bose Corporation for fifty cents.

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trol facilities, has a continuous-power output of 15 watts per channel into 8 ohms (30 watts per channel in stereo), with noise and distortion specifications identical to those of the 366. IHF FM sensitivity is 2.5 microvolts, with a 2.5-dB capture ratio, 45-dB selectivity, and a frequency response of 20 to 13,000 Hz. Dimensions, including wood cabinet, are the same as for the 366 receiver. Price is $379.90.

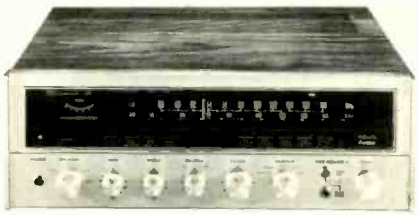
Circle 117 on reader service card

Memorex MRX$_2$ Cassettes

● MEMOREX has announced the development of a new ferric-oxide tape coating, MRX$_2$, that will initially be made available in the company's line of blank audio cassettes. The coating contains oxide particles with improved size, shape, and crystalline structure which permit a 25 per cent increase in particle density throughout the coating and an 80 per cent reduction in coating-surface porosity. As a result of the greater density, sensitivity is said to be about 2 dB greater at lower audio frequencies, ranging up to a 7-dB increase at high frequencies. In addition, the coating offers more "headroom," and tolerates recording levels 2 dB higher than conventional tapes without exceeding acceptable limits of distortion on playback. Memorex has designed the MRX$_2$ coating to be used with so-called "standard" recording bias and equalization characteristics, making the tape compatible with all existing cassette recorders. Memorex MRX$_2$ cassettes are available in lengths of 30, 45, 60, 90, and 120 minutes. Prices range from $1.79 for the 30-minute cassette to $4.19 for the 120-minute size.

Circle 118 on reader service card

Sansui Model Six AM/Stereo FM Receiver



● SANSUI's Model Six AM/stereo FM receiver has a continuous power output of 34 watts per channel into 8 ohms with both channels driven. Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are under 0.3 per cent at rated output, and hum and noise are −70 dB for the magnetic-phono inputs and −80 dB for high-level inputs. The FM section, with an IHF sensitivity of 2 microvolts, has a 2-dB capture ratio, alternate-channel selectivity of better than 60 dB, and spurious-response and i.f. rejection of better than 85 dB. Stereo separation exceeds 35 dB at 400 Hz. The Sansui Six has connectors and push-button switching for an unusual number of external program sources and signal processors. There are tape-monitor facilities for two tape machines (the connectors for one tape-monitor circuit are paralleled by a DIN connector on the rear panel and phone-jack connectors on the front panel), and a pair of pushbutton-switched input and output jacks that will handle an external noise-reduction device and a four-channel adapter. The inputs can also serve for additional tape machines. Two phono inputs and one high-level input are also provided. Finally, additional signal processors can be inserted between the preamplifier-output and amplifier-input jacks on the rear panel, which are normally connected by jumpers. On its front panel the receiver has stepped bass and treble controls (±15 dB at 50 and 15,000 Hz in 3-dB increments), volume and balance controls, and a speaker selector that switches three pairs of speakers individually or in combinations of two pairs, with an off position for headphone listening via the adjacent phone jack. Two rows of push-buttons switch the various tape-monitor and signal-processor circuits, as well as the high- and low-cut filters (12-dB-per-octave slopes), loudness compensation, mono/stereo mode, and FM interstation-noise muting. A signal-strength meter registers for both FM and AM broadcasts. Dimensions of the Sansui Six are approximately 16¾ x 5½ x 12½ inches. Price: $389.95, which includes a wood cabinet.

Circle 119 on reader service card

Beyer Microphone Chart

● REVOX, importer of Beyer microphones, is offering free of charge a two-page chart listing the applications for which various models in the line of Beyer dynamic microphones are and are not suited. The chart has been compiled from the experiences of Beyer microphone dealers and users—professional and otherwise—throughout the world. Fifteen microphones, including omnidirectionals, cardioids, and supercardioids (hypercardioids) operating on moving-coil or ribbon principles are examined for their suitability in twenty-two general applications (rock, jazz, orchestral, opera, public address, *etc.*) and for recording sixty-nine specific musical instruments; they are graded "outstanding performance," "good performance," or "blank." The chart also briefly explains directional properties and operating principles, and states the impedance and usable frequency response of each microphone. The chart may be requested through the Reader Service Card or from Revox, 155 Michael Drive, Syosset, N.Y. 11791.

Circle 120 on reader service card

Empire 1973 Audio-Products Catalog

● EMPIRE's 1973 catalog, entitled "Guide to Sound Design," is a fourteen-page four-color brochure with photographs, descriptions, and specifications of the company's line of eight phono cartridges, four speaker systems, and the 598 II manual turntable. The catalog devotes two pages to a chart that lists the Empire cartridges and the popular automatic and manual record players for which they are specifically recommended. Concluding the catalog is a listing of two- and four-channel disc recordings that provide a "test of full-frequency performance." The catalog is free, and can be requested by using the reader service card or by writing Empire Scientific Corp. Dept. SR, 1055 Stewart Avenue, Garden City, N.Y. 11530. Copies are also available from authorized Empire dealers.

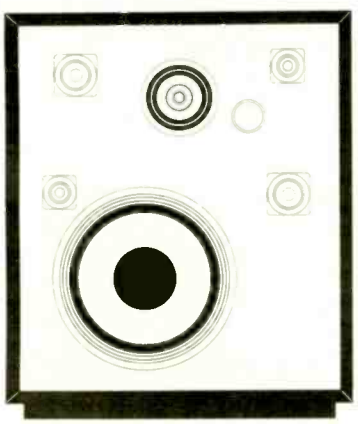
Circle 121 on reader service card

Rectilinear answers the question most people ask about quadraphonic stereo:

"Do my rear-channel speakers have to be as good as my front-channel speakers?"

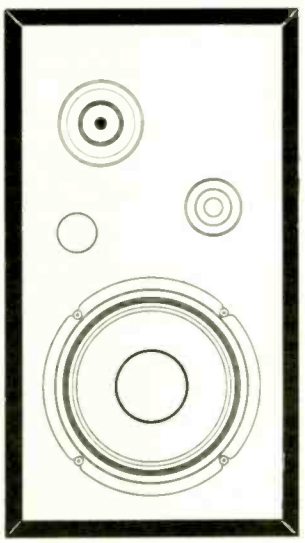
This is the question most people are asking today if they're getting ready to go four-channel. And we at **Rectilinear** would like to make it clear how we stand on the answer. Simply stated, we think that the rear speakers need to be of the same *quality* as the front ones, but not necessarily the same *size*.

Some people feel that you can stick a pair of "cheapies" in the back, as long as you have good speakers up front. Unfortunately, this won't work, because inexpensive, poorly-designed speakers have several inherent characteristics which make them totally useless for any quadraphonic system. (Some will even make you think that instruments are jumping around the room when they're not supposed to.)



So, if you're starting from scratch, we suggest you consider a pair of **Rectilinear III's** for your front channels, with a pair of **Rectilinear XII's** bringing up the rear. This way, you'll have up front the speakers that virtually every audio expert has been praising for over five years. (Remember, you'll still be listening to a lot of two-channel stereo.)

With the **Rectilinear XII's** in the rear, you'll have a pair of superb three-way speakers that thousands of people are using up front for regular stereo. The **XII's** will do a great job in reproducing the reflected "hall sound" in quadraphonic classical recordings, and will sound almost as good as the **III's** when you play pop or rock recordings with different musical material on each channel.



Of course, if you already have a pair of *top-grade* speakers, simply add a pair of **XII's** ($139.00 each) for the rear channels. But if your present speakers are only *good*, put them in the rear and get yourself a pair of **III's** for the front. Choose either the *original* **Rectilinear III,** at $279 each, or if you want to fling for our more sumptuous **lowboy** version, it'll cost you $40 more for the pair.

Just remember one thing: all four speakers must be as good as possible. Because in quadraphonic stereo, the worst thing you can do is cut corners.

(For more information, including detailed literature, see your audio dealer, or write to: Rectilinear Research Corp., 107 Bruckner Blvd., Bronx, N. Y. 10454. Canada: H. Roy Gray Co., Ltd., Ont. Overseas: Royal Sound Co., 409 N. Main St. Freeport N. Y. 11520.)

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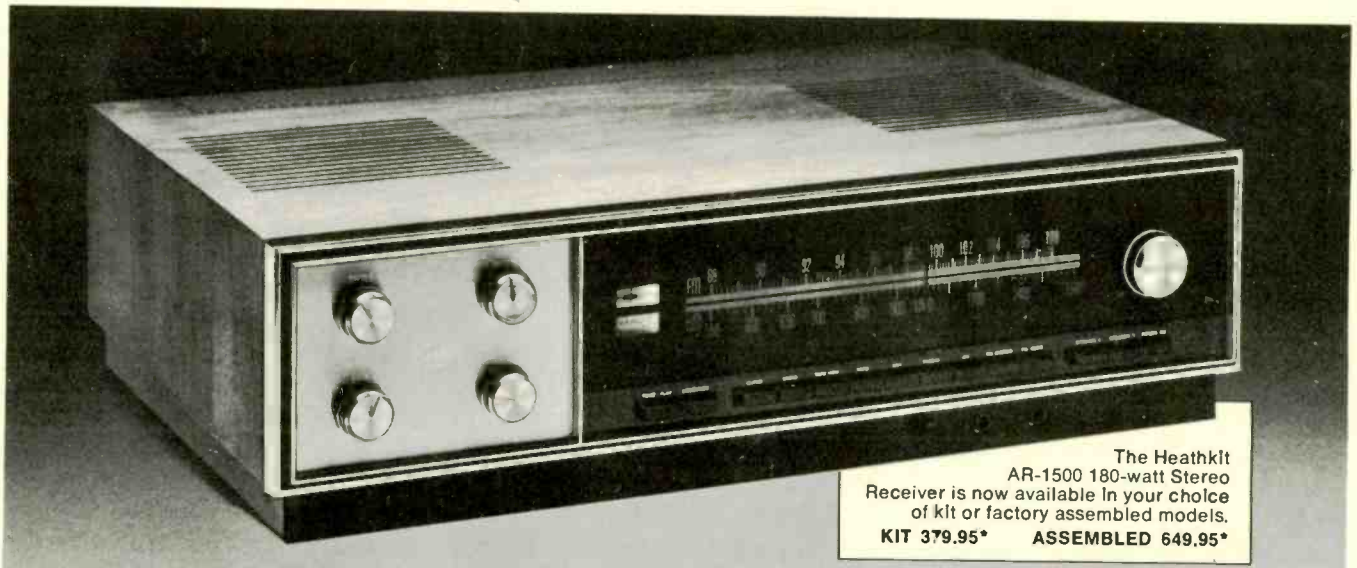
The Heathkit AR-1500 rates



The Heathkit AR-1500 180-watt Stereo Receiver is now available in your choice of kit or factory assembled models.
KIT 379.95* ASSEMBLED 649.95*

"The AR-1500 is the most powerful and sensitive receiver we have ever measured..."
– JULIAN HIRSCH, *Stereo Review*, Nov. '71

"...a stereo receiver easily worth twice the cost (or perhaps even more)..."
– *Audio Magazine*, Dec. '71

Mr. Hirsch goes on to say:

"The FM tuner section of the AR-1500 was outstandingly sensitive. We measured the IHF sensitivity at 1.4 microvolts, and the limiting curve was the steepest we have ever measured...The FM frequency response was literally perfectly flat from 30 to 15,000 Hz...Image rejection was over 100 dB (our measuring limit)...

"The AM tuner was a pleasant surprise...it sounded very much like the FM tuner, with distinct sibilants and a quiet background, and was easily the best-sounding AM tuner we have had the pleasure of using...

"...all input levels can be matched and set for the most effective use of the loudness compensation. This valuable feature is rarely found on high-fidelity receivers and amplifiers...

"The phono equalization was perfectly accurate (within our measuring tolerances)...The magnetic phono-input sensitivity was adjustable from 0.62 millivolt to about 4.5 millivolts, with a noise level of −66 dB, which is very low...When properly set up, it would be impossible to overload the phono inputs of the AR-1500 with any magnetic cartridge...

"...it significantly bettered Heath's conservative specifications. Into 8-ohm loads, with both channels driven, the continuous power at clipping level was 81.5 watts per channel. Into 4 ohms it was 133 watts per channel, and even with 16-ohm loads the receiver delivered 46.5 watts per channel. Needless to say, the AR-1500 can drive any speaker we know of, and with power to spare...

"At 1,000 Hz, harmonic distortion was well under 0.05 per cent from 1 to 75 watts per channel...The IM distortion was under 0.05 per cent at level of a couple of watts or less, and gradually increased from 0.09 per cent at 10 watts to 0.16 per cent at 75 watts...The heavy power transformer is evidence that there was no skimping in the power supply of the AR-1500, and its performance at the low-frequency extremes clearly sets it apart from most receivers...

"Virtually all the circuit boards plug into sockets, which are hinged so that boards can be swung out for testing or servicing without shutting off the receiver. An "extender" cable permits any part of the receiver to be operated in the clear – even the entire power-transistor and heat-sink assembly! The 245-page manual has extensive test charts that show all voltage and resistance measurements in key circuits as they should appear on the receivers built-in test meter...

"In sound quality and ease of operation, and in overall suitability for its intended use, one could not expect more from any high-fidelity component."

From the pages of Audio Magazine:

"As always, construction instructions are lucid enough for the inexperienced kit-builder and there is enough technical and theoretical information to satisfy even the most knowledgeable audio/RF engineer."

Kit or assembled, the Heathkit AR-1500 stands alone as a classic among audio components. Check the performance curves on the following page. Check the price again. Then draw your own conclusions.

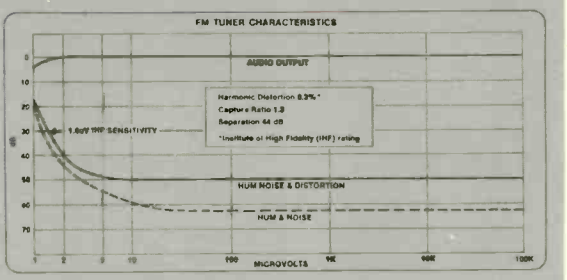
Kit AR-1500, less cabinet, 53 lbs. **379.95***
ARA-1500-1, walnut cabinet, 8 lbs. **24.95***
Model ARW-1500, assembled receiver & walnut cabinet, 42 lbs. **649.95***

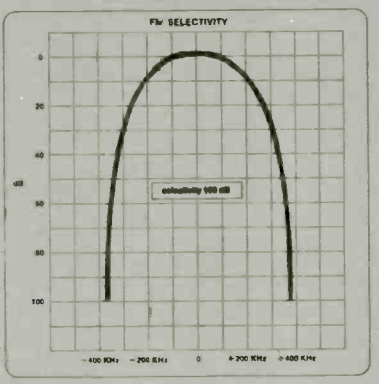
tops with the experts.

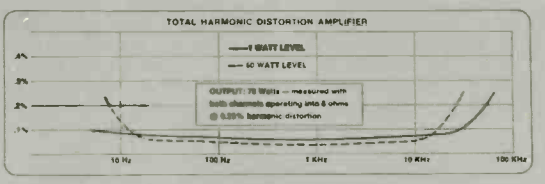
... you can see why.

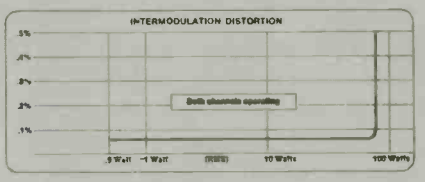
AR-1500 SPECIFICATIONS — TUNER — FM SECTION (Monophonic): Tuning Range: 88 to 108 MHz. **Intermediate Frequency (IF):** 10.7 MHz. **Frequency Response:** ±1 dB, 20 to 15,000 Hz. **Antenna:** Balanced input for external 300 ohm antenna. 75 ohm antenna input may be used between either FM antenna terminal and ground. **Sensitivity:** 1.8 uV.* **Volume Sensitivity:** Below measurable level. **Selectivity:** 90 dB.* **Image Rejection:** 100 dB.* **IF Rejection:** 100 dB.* **Capture Ratio:** 1.5 dB.* **AM Suppression:** 50 dB.* **Harmonic Distortion:** 0.5% or less.* **Intermodulation Distortion:** 0.1% or less.* **Intermodulation Distortion:** 0.1% or less.* **Hum and Noise:** 60 dB.* **Spurious Rejection:** 100 dB.* **FM SECTION (Stereophonic): Channel Separation:** 40 dB or greater at midfrequencies; 35 dB at 50 Hz; 25 dB at 10 kHz; 20 dB at 15 kHz. **Frequency Response:** ±1 dB from 20 to 15,000 Hz. **Harmonic Distortion:** 0.5% at 1000 Hz with 100% modulation. **19 kHz and 38 kHz Suppression:** 55 dB or greater. **SCA Suppression:** 55 dB. **AM SECTION: Tuning Range:** 535 to 1620 kHz. **Intermediate Frequency (IF):** 455 kHz. **Sensitivity:** 50 uV with external input; 300 uV per meter with radiated input. **Selectivity:** 20 dB at 10 kHz; 60 dB at 20 kHz. **AM Antenna:** Built-in rod type; connections for external antenna and ground on rear chassis apron. **Image Rejection:** 70 dB at 600 kHz; 50 dB at 1400 kHz. **IF Rejection:** 70 dB at 1000 kHz. **Harmonic Distortion:** Less than 2%.* **Hum and Noise:** 40 dB.* **AMPLIFIER — Dynamic Power Output per Channel (Music Power Rating):** 90 watts (8 ohm load)*; 120 watts (4 ohm load); 50 watts (16 ohm load). **Continuous Power Output per Channel:** 60 watts (8 ohm load)*; 100 watts (4 ohm load); 40 watts (16 ohm load). **Power Bandwidth for Constant .25% Total Harmonic Distortion:** Less than 8 Hz to greater than 30 kHz.* **Frequency Response (1 watt level):** —1 dB, 7 Hz to 80 kHz; —3 dB, less than 5 Hz to 120 kHz. **Harmonic Distortion:** Less than 0.25% from 20 Hz to 20 kHz at 60 watts output; less than 0.1% at 1000 Hz with 1 watt output. **Intermodulation Distortion:** Less than 0.1% with 60 watts output, using 60 and 6,000 Hz mixed 4:1 less than 0.1% at 1 watt output. **Damping Factor:** Greater than 60. **Input Sensitivity:** Phono, 1.8 millivolts; Tape, 140 millivolts; Aux, 140 millivolts; Tape Mon, 140 millivolts. **Input Overload:** Phono, 145 millivolts; Tape, greater than 10 volts; Aux, greater than 10 volts; Tape Mon, greater than 10 volts. **Hum & Noise:** Phono (10 millivolt reference), —63 dB. Tape and Aux (0.25 volt reference), —75 dB. Volume control in minimum position. —90 dB referred to rated output. **Channel Separation:** Phono, 55 dB; Tape and Aux, 55 dB or greater. **Output Impedance (each channel):** 4 ohm through 16 ohms. **Tape Output Impedance:** Approximately 50 ohms. **Input Impedance:** Phono, 49 k ohm (RIAA** Equalized); Aux, Tape, and Tape Mon, 100 k ohms. **Tape Output:** Tape or Aux inputs, 1 volt output with 0.2 volt input. **GENERAL — Accessory AC Outlet Sockets:** Two. One switched and one unswitched (240 watts maximum). **Power Requirements:** 120 or 240 volts 50/60 Hz AC. 40 watts idling (zero output) and 356 watts at full output with no load on accessory outlets. **Dimensions:** Overall — 18½" W x 5⅛" H x 13⅞" D.

*Rated IHF (Institute of High Fidelity) Standards.
**Rated RIAA (Record Industry Association of America).









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AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*

Amplifier-Clinic Inadequacies

Q. *I recently had my 700-watt power amplifier tested during an "amplifier clinic" run in an audio shop. To my dismay, the amplifier tested as having very high distortion at its rated power. I later had the amplifier tested at another clinic run by a different manufacturer, and it checked out fine. I returned my unit to the factory and they claimed that the amplifier met its specifications, and the tests at the first clinic had been improperly performed. Who can I believe?*

HERBERT BROWN
Houston, Texas

A. Let me present a not-too-hypothetical situation that might account for your experience. But first you'll need some background: almost without exception, modern amplifiers have a power/distortion "break point" as shown in Fig. 1. Note that the amplifier used as an example can deliver 90 watts at less than 1 per cent distortion, but if you were to try to drive it to 95 watts the distortion would be over 10 per cent. All good component amplifiers have such a "break" at some point in their power-output performance—and the manufacturer usually specs the power output of his amplifier somewhere safely below its break point. In the example shown, 80 watts might be the manufacturer's choice for "rated power" if he were inclined to be conservative. Low-fidelity amplifiers, which are designed *without* large amounts of distortion-reducing feedback, usually display a gradual rise—rather than a sudden "break"—in their power/distortion curve.

Now let's return to the clinic. Unless an amplifier has the correct a.c. line voltage reaching its power-supply section, it cannot achieve its rated power. Therefore, most amplifier test labs employ a variable transformer, such as a Variac, to adjust the a.c. line voltage to exactly 120 volts as read on an accurate a.c. voltmeter. Let us say, then, that several power amplifiers are tested in the clinic and meet their specs handily. Then a 700-watt unit is put on the test bench, the connections are made to it just as with the previously tested lower-power units, the line voltage fed to the amplifier is carefully adjusted to the proper 120 volts as indicated by the line-monitoring meter—and the amplifier shows high distortion at its rated power. Assuming that the amplifier is *not* defective, how could this occur? Several factors, none of them mysterious, are involved.

Fact 1: If the a.c. line voltage is low, an amplifier will lose output-wattage potential. For example, most high-power amplifiers (100 watts or more per channel) will lose about 20 per cent or so of their output potential (for a given distortion) if the a.c. line voltage is reduced from 120 to 100 volts.

Fact 2: Most a.c. meters used to monitor the a.c. line voltage respond to the effective or r.m.s. voltage of a sine wave. It is the r.m.s. voltage that we are referring to when we say 117 or 120 volts a.c. The r.m.s. voltage and the peak voltage

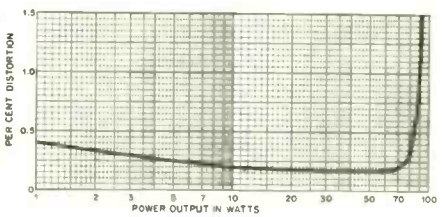

Fig. 1. Almost every modern audio amplifier shows a sudden rise in distortion as it reaches its maximum power-output level.

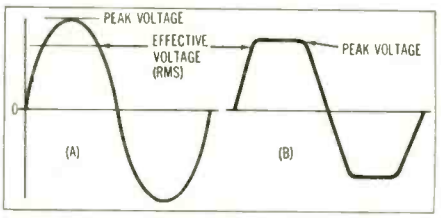

Fig. 2. As a sine wave becomes flattened (clipped), there is less and less difference between the peak and the effective voltages.

of a sine wave have the mathematical relationship shown in Fig. 2 (A) on page 26. The *peak* voltage of a sine wave is 1.4 times its r.m.s. voltage.

Fact 3: The filter capacitors in an amplifier charge to a level determined by the peak of the r.m.s. voltage coming out of the power transformer. It is this voltage charge that determines the output power of an amplifier—all other things being sufficient. Less voltage, less power available—it's as simple as that.

Now we finally come to the source of the testing problem: the adjustable line transformer. A common current rating for such a unit is 7.5 amperes or so, which will easily supply the current demanded by almost any amplifier. (One popular 300-watt amplifier draws less than 4 amperes of line current at full power output.) However, a 700-watt amplifier at full output draws about 9 amperes. This causes the 7.5 A variable transformer to distort the waveform of the a.c. line into something like a squared-off sine wave. The r.m.s. (or effective) voltage and the peak voltage of a *perfect* square wave (which, of course, the transformer doesn't produce) are of exactly the same value—and the type of meter commonly used for monitoring the a.c. line responds to the r.m.s. value. So the monitoring meter continues to read 120 volts (the r.m.s. value) without reflecting the fact that, with the squared waveform, the *peak* voltage may be 10 per cent lower than what it would be if the a.c. line voltage to the amplifier had the normal sinusoidal waveform. This is shown in Fig. 2 (B). In other words, as far as the amplifier's filter capacitors are concerned, the amplifier is being provided with perhaps 105 volts, despite the fact that the monitoring meter is reading 120 volts. The 700-watt amplifier can now deliver no more than, say, 650 watts. And when an attempt is made to drive it to 700 watts, it shows upwards of 5 per cent distortion—if its fuses don't blow before a reading can be made.

In case you have not been able to follow me through the technical details, let it suffice to say that if the a.c. line-voltage adjustment transformer (or Variac) is severely underrated—for a 700-watt amplifier, that is—this can result in the amplifier's receiving inadequate a.c. power despite the line-voltage monitoring meter's indication that the proper voltage is present. This, in turn, then causes the amplifier to produce severe distortion when driven to its 700-watt level. A lower-power amplifier tested under exactly the same conditions would test properly.

Because the number of questions we receive each month is greater than we can reply to individually, only those questions selected for this column can be answered. Sorry!

AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES

THE FREQUENCY OF MUSIC

JUDGING from our mail, readers of STEREO REVIEW seem especially interested in the frequency range of musical instruments. I suspect that their concern results mostly from the need to be reassured that their audio equipment can handle whatever musical sound comes its way. Here is a roll call of some of the orchestra's lowest-pitched instruments, together with their deepest fundamental frequencies (their lowest notes) as given by Harry F. Olson in his *Music, Physics and Engineering* (Dover Press): string bass, almost 40 Hz; tuba, about 42 Hz; grand piano, contra-bassoon, and harp, to below 30 Hz. As for the high-pitched instruments, Olson cites many, such as the violin, clarinet, piccolo, and even the harmonica, with harmonic overtones extending to 15,000 Hz and beyond. So, when equipment manufacturers talk about a frequency range of 20 to 20,000 Hz, this would seem to be a *minimum* requirement. But is it the whole story?

It would be a mistake to set up strict frequency-response specifications for music reproduction without taking into account at least three relevant factors. (1) Except for *very* loud sounds, the sensitivity of the typical human ear is considerably reduced below about 100 Hz, and somewhat lessened above 7,000 or 8,000 Hz. (2) Measurements have also shown that the upper overtones (or harmonics) produced by most musical instruments diminish appreciably in strength above 4,000 Hz, and are further weakened the higher they go. And at the lower end of the scale, a majority of those instruments that reach down much below 100 Hz are simply not efficient mechanical producers of such low frequencies, so that their fundamental tones in this range actually become a good deal softer than their second and third harmonics. (3) Home listening levels—even audiophile listening levels—are almost always *measurably* lower than live-music levels, although a listener may think them as loud or louder.

The combined effect of these three conditions—which boils down to the comparatively low levels of very high- and low-frequency sound energy in live and reproduced music, and the ear's difficulty in hearing these levels—is to reduce somewhat the frequency-range demands made on audio equipment for credible if not completely realistic reproduction. But every once in a while an instrument comes along that puts even the best equipment to the test. For example: the cymbal (and to some extent the snare drum, tambourine, and other "noise-generating" instruments) produces a burst of intense, high-frequency energy that extends well beyond 15,000 Hz; the orchestral bass drum, depending on its size, makes sounds as low as 30 Hz or so, and the instrument is built for power; many large pipe organs boast a lower limit of about 16 Hz, with cathedral-shaking sound levels. All these instruments produce very loud high or low frequencies that are so prominent in real life that their complete absence in reproduced sound will be quite apparent. Next month's column will discuss how high-fidelity techniques cope with both the ordinary and the extraordinary frequency requirements of music.

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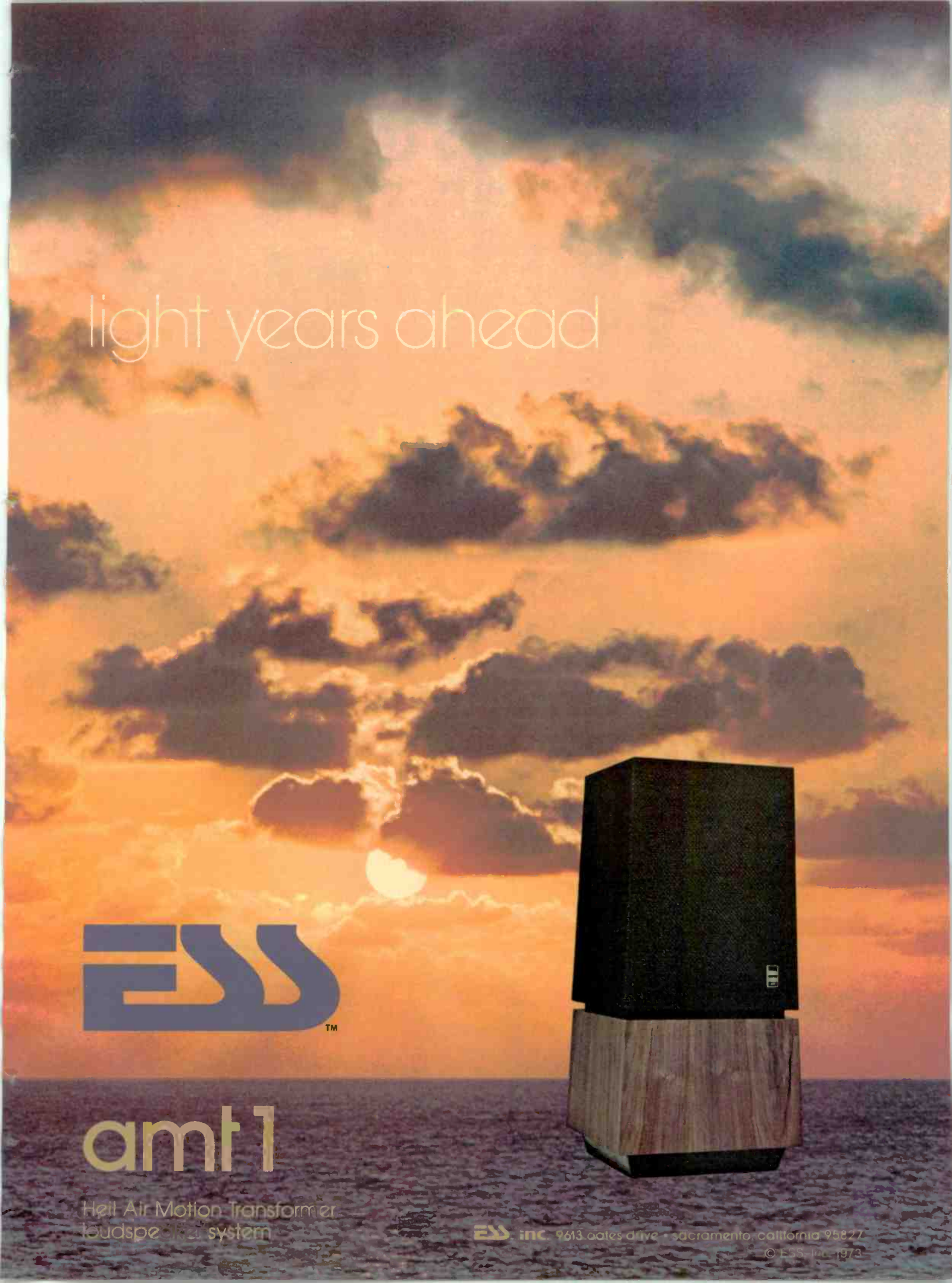
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TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **THE REVIEWER REVIEWED**: From personal experience, I am only too well aware of the limitations faced by reviewers, whether they deal with drama, canned fish, musical performances, or high-fidelity components. Among those limitations are the scarcity or the ambiguity of objective measurement standards (and the difficulty of correlating them with subjective effects), the greater or lesser variability from sample to sample, and the idiosyncrasies of the reviewer himself. Letters from readers not only remind me of these facts constantly, but, in addition, sometimes imply that a sinister subservience to the advertising dollar is the reason why "everything tests well."

One of the most active nonprofessional audio groups, the New York Audio Society, took reviewers to task in their January 1973 newsletter. They contrast American product reviews with those in the British publication *Hi-Fi News & Record Review* (which I follow as closely as they do), implying considerably more objectivity and "criticalness" in the latter. As an illustration, they reprinted the *HFN* review of a British-made record player, inviting their readers to compare it with reviews of the same product appearing in STEREO REVIEW and other American publications. I promptly did so—as objectively as I could—and it seems to me that we in no sense suffered in the comparison. It is true that *HFN* reviews are considerably longer than those that appear in STEREO REVIEW, so the reviewer has space for the kind of background information that we normally reserve for this Technical Talk column or even longer feature articles. And the British reviewer also makes a number of physical and mechanical measurements (such as turntable-platter inertia, vertical motion at the turntable rim, tone-arm mass and friction) that we do not single out for specific mention. But very few readers really have the background to assess these measured figures properly, and in any case their real significance lies not in how close they approach some theoretical level of perfection, but rather in how they affect the actual use and performance of the unit.

TESTED THIS MONTH

●

BSR McDonald 710/X Turntable
Micro/Acoustics FRM-1 Speaker
KLH Model Fifty-Two Receiver
Norelco 2100 Cassette Deck

In addition, and to the undoubted joy of at least some of his readers, the *HFN* reviewer takes what I consider to be an irascible tone, one apparently springing from a belief that changers are inherently bad because they force the product designer into less-than-ideal engineering decisions. And all without reference to how bad—or good—the actual performance is, or whether the goodness or badness derives directly from design "compromises." For example, on the question of tone-arm pivot friction, the *HFN* reviewer found it to be ten to twenty times that of good separate tone arms, "probably" requiring a tracking force of at least 1.5 grams. (Why "probably"? Didn't he check it?) We were equally concerned with the potential problems in the particular tone-arm design; in our tests, however, the tone arm operated flawlessly at less than 0.5 gram, and few cartridges are able to track even moderate recorded levels at that force. It seems to us that an arm that does not impair the operation of a cartridge tracking at 0.5 gram does *not* have excessive pivot friction. Quite obviously, the product samples tested by *HFN* could not be the ones we tested, and we can report only on *our* findings, not on what the manufacturer or anyone else may claim. And, judging from our experiences with other reviewed products, if the player's tone arm was in fact incapable of tracking at less than 1.5 grams, as the *HFN* writer claimed, we (and the U.S. importer) would have been buried under complaint mail by now.

Even though their measured rumble figure was slightly *better* than ours, the *HFN* reviewer nevertheless stated that the tested unit was *audibly* inferi-

(Continued on page 38)

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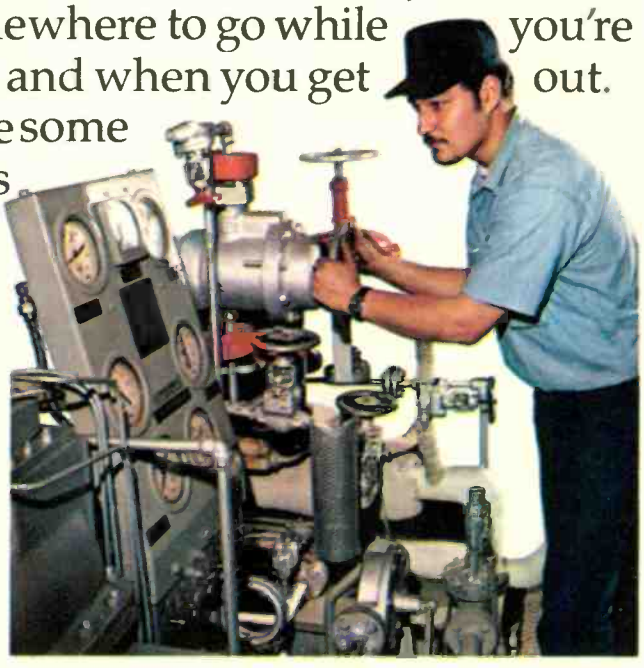

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or to belt-driven turntables in that respect. Our ears disagreed. It is true that some belt-driven or electronically controlled turntables do have substantially less measured rumble than the automatic turntable under discussion, but, in our experience, extraordinary physical isolation procedures are usually required to prevent external vibration (from passing cars, *etc.*) from interfering with measurements of these very low rumble levels. And, sad to say, under practical operating conditions, the theoretical advantages of many ultra-low-rumble turntables are often masked by ambient vibration levels. However, with almost any reasonably good modern turntable, rumble that is *audible* is probably on the record itself!

I DON'T propose to delve further into this or any other specific comparison. It seems to me that the hard data in the STEREO REVIEW and *HFN* reviews of the player are in substantial agreement, except for the question of pivot friction. And here one should be aware that to British audiophiles, and to the Japanese as well, the very concept of a "changer" is anathema, and many of the reviewer's comments are inevitably colored by that prejudice.

Now let's look at the bugaboo of the advertiser's supposed influence on our reports. Our regular, periodic explanations that we do not report on inferior products because of space and time limitations seems to leave many conspiracy-loving readers unconvinced. So let's look at the situation from another angle. In general, the major manufacturers (the ones likely to have the monetary "clout" in their ad budgets) who advertise in this magazine are technically competent. For this reason, it is simple fact that the vast majority of the products we test deliver honest value for the consumer's dollar. This is not to say that a given product may not have some slight technical superiority to others selling for the same price—but *none* of them could be called "bad buys." We do on occasion come across what we consider a flaw in the human-engineering design of an otherwise fine product and, while not necessarily making a big point of it, we *always* mention it. For example, we recently tested an expensive FM tuner whose Dolby circuits could not be set up so that you could record a Dolby-encoded program while listening to the program in decoded form. As far as I know, no other review in any publication mentioned that point, which we found significant and something a prospective purchaser might miss.

Speakers present particular problems to a test lab. The lack of generally accepted standards and testing techniques encourages many manufacturers to design to taste—either theirs or what they think the buying public prefers. Our principal test criterion is transduction accuracy—in other words, will a speaker render a reasonable acoustic analog of the electrical audio signal fed to it? There are a large number of both new and old companies designing speakers to this criterion of reproduction accuracy and, to the degree that they succeed, the review of their product is likely to be good. But there are also two or three well-respected big names in speaker manufacturing who feel that a speaker should have some special "pleasing" tonal quality, which implies a non-flat frequency response. The manufacturers of such speakers are certainly entitled to design any sort of product they like, and people who are pleased by them are entitled to buy—but such products, by their nature, simply cannot test well when evaluated by the criterion of flat response. Some brands of speakers are seldom reported on, therefore, because the manufacturer is aware that his speaker is not the kind that gets a good review, and, in his view, our tests are invalid.

I realize that a reader may infer from the absence of a report on a certain product that it falls into the above categories. Sometimes this is true; however, I would guess that at least ten times as many worthwhile products are announced each month as we can possibly accommodate in our test program. But we do keep our eyes and ears open for outstanding products, even those from new or unknown manufacturers who could represent no significant part of STEREO REVIEW's income, so that we can bring them to the attention of our readers.

NO commentary on product testing would be complete without a reference to Consumers Union. Their facilities and expertise are impressive, and I rarely disagree with their specific findings (although the *technical* content of their reports is a little on the lean side). Their purchase of products on the open market certainly eliminates the nagging suspicion that a manufacturer has provided a "hot" sample. But the fact that we and CU usually come to the same conclusion as to a product's performance—if not its merit—puts our mind at ease on the subject. In short, we believe that a purchased product is likely to be as good or as bad as one sent to us by a manufacturer.

However, CU's reports almost invariably appear late in the life of the product, often after it has been superseded by a newer model. Months can elapse between receipt of a product and publication of the report (even in the case of STEREO REVIEW), and we believe it is a real advantage to our readers that we are sometimes able to test a pre-production or early production model, so that the published report appears at about the same time the product reaches the dealer's shelves.

Finally, CU does what we would never attempt—to rate products in order of "quality." At one time, perhaps fifteen or twenty years ago, it was possible to find components at each price level that were substantially superior to their competition. Today, when dealing with the vast majority of components,

(Continued on page 40)


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it is meaningless, and often downright misleading, to suggest that A is significantly better than B, but not quite as good as C. In our view, the minor differences in power output, distortion, sensitivity, and so forth among brands competing at the same price level usually have far less practical significance then the presence or absence of some specific features, the feel, or the flexibility of a product. Therefore, all that I, or anyone, can do is present the important facts and figures as honestly as possible, make some positive or negative personal comments, and leave the ultimate decision to you. The world of testing is a part of the larger world around it and is no more—or less—perfect.

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

BSR McDonald 710/X Automatic Turntable

● THE BSR 710 is a two-speed (33⅓ and 45 rpm) automatic/manual record player that appears to be very similar to BSR's top model, the 810 (reported on in July, 1972). A careful comparison reveals only two significant differences between them: the 710 tone arm uses conventional ball-bearing pivots instead of the 810's gimbal pivots, and its 11⅞-inch, 5¼-pound cast aluminum platter is about one pound lighter than that of the 810.

A mechanical rocker switch at the front left of the motorboard changes the platter speed by moving the rubber idler wheel along the tapered motor-shaft pulley. A vernier speed control provides a nominal 6 per cent adjustment about each center speed. All the other controls are grouped at the right side of the unit on a silvered panel that contrasts with the otherwise black motorboard. Three pushbuttons (for 7-, 10-, and 12-inch records) initiate the automatic playing cycle and index the arm for the selected record size. Pressing the STOP button returns the arm to its rest and shuts off the motor.

An AUTO/SINGLE switch permits the 710 to function as a single-play turntable when the automatic center spindle is replaced by a short single-play spindle. In the single-play mode, pressing the MANUAL button starts the motor, and the arm is then positioned by hand. The arm returns to its rest and the machine shuts off automatically when the record is finished. The 710, like the 810 and several other BSR players, has an automatic arm lock that clamps the arm to its rest after the record player has shut itself off. It is also possible to use the record-index buttons to initiate the playing of single records, and if the mode switch is set to AUTO with the short spindle in place, the record will repeat indefinitely until the STOP button is pressed.

The 710 has the same four-pole synchronous motor as the 810, usable on either 120 or 240 volts by a simple wiring change, and on either 50- or 60-Hz power lines by changing the motor-shaft bushing (bushings for both frequencies are supplied with the unit). A stroboscope disc is mounted in the center of the ribbed rubber record mat.

The arm of the BSR 710 is relatively long (about 8½ inches), with an easily adjusted elastically mounted counterweight. The tracking force is set by a dial on the pivot structure and is calibrated at 1-gram intervals from 0 to 4 grams. A control on the motorboard, with separate scales for conical and elliptical styli calibrated to correspond to the stylus force, sets the anti-skating compensation.

Although the BSR 710 is available as a separate unit without base or dust cover, we tested the machine in its "total turntable" configuration. As the 710/X, the record player is supplied mounted on an attractive walnut wood base, with a smoky-plastic dust cover that can be lifted off or tilted back to an upright position and left on the unit. The plug-in cartridge shell is fitted with a Shure M91E cartridge. Set-up time is minimal, and the end result is a very fine, well-integrated record player at a modest cost.

The BSR 710/X is priced at about $150. The Model 710 turntable alone, without base, cartridge, or dust cover, has a minimum retail price of $129.95.

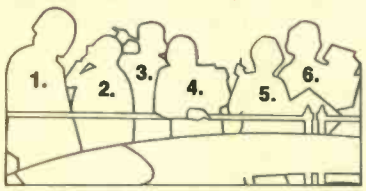
● *Laboratory Measurements.* The calibration of the tracking-force dial was very accurate, reading within 0.05 gram of the actual force except at 4 grams, where the error was an insignificant 0.1 gram. Raising the pickup ⅝ inch to simulate playing the top record of a stack increased the force by only 0.15 gram. Lateral tracking-angle error was a very good 0.4 degree per inch at the 2.5 inch (or inner groove) radius, and was under 0.5 degree per inch over the entire record. If another cartridge is to be installed, it is mounted using the supplied slide adaptor. The built-in cartridge alignment post on the motorboard (on which a soft stylus-cleaning brush is later mounted) is then used to adjust the cartridge for minimum tracking error.

Anti-skating compensation, although quite uncritical, was optimum when set about 1 gram higher than the tracking force. The cueing control worked very smoothly, with negligible drift during descent. It was somewhat slow, however, requiring about 2.5 seconds to raise the pickup fully and about 5 seconds to lower it. The operating time can be reduced considerably by moving the cueing lever only part way, so that the stylus just clears the record surface. (The lever will hold its position at any point in its range of travel.)

The turntable had an unweighted rumble of −32 dB. With RRLL weighting for relative audibility, the rumble was −55 dB, which is typical of the best automatic turntables. The wow and flutter were completely negligible—respectively 0.06 and 0.095 per cent at 33⅓ rpm, and 0.05 and 0.06 per cent at 45 rpm. The operating speeds

(Continued on page 42)

Can you spot the Camel Filters smoker?

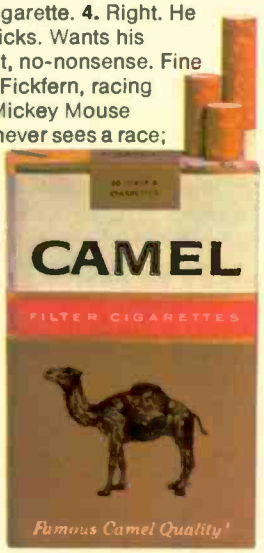


Here at the Speedway everybody has a gimmick . . almost everybody. Try picking the one who doesn't go along.

1. Nope. He's "Third Turn" Abanian. Has been in 263 races. Gimmick: always loses control on third turn where Bubbles Fickfern stands (see #5 below). He doesn't smoke. His car does. **2.** No. Second-Hand Sam Slick, used car dealer. Gimmick: buys what's left of Abanian's cars. Smokes "pre-owned" cigars. **3.** Hardly. He's Reggie J. Van Phynque II. Gimmick: filthy rich. Wears cashmere toupee. Smokes double-vented cigarette. **4.** Right. He likes his racing without far-out fads or gimmicks. Wants his cigarette that way, too. Camel Filters. Honest, no-nonsense. Fine tobacco. Easy and good tasting. **5.** Bubbles Fickfern, racing groupie. Gimmick: 18 stopwatches . . . with Mickey Mouse hands. Smokes Fellinis. **6.** Fellini. Gimmick: never sees a race; too busy following other sports events on portable TV and radio.

Camel Filters. They're not for everybody

(but they could be for you).



20 mg. "tar," 1.4 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report AUG.'72.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

were unaffected by a.c. line-voltage changes from 95 to 135 volts. The vernier adjustment had a range of +2.6, −1.6 per cent at 33⅓ rpm, and +3.9, −2 per cent at 45 rpm. The automatic change cycle was longer than average —about 17.5 seconds at 33⅓ rpm and 13 seconds at 45 rpm.

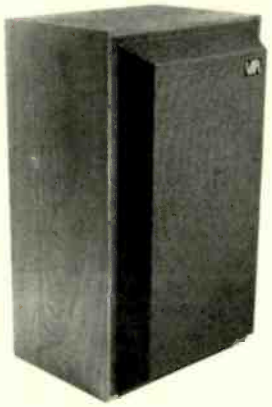
● *Comment.* The spring suspension of the turntable made it reasonably immune to jarring and acoustic feedback, even when the unit was placed directly on or in front of the speaker enclosure. There was nothing "fussy" or critical in the operation of this record player.

The lower price of the 710/X, compared with that of the 810/X, presumably results from the lighter platter and less refined arm pivots. The former can be dismissed as a practical consideration, since the rumble, wow, and flutter of the 710/X were not significantly different from the figures we measured on the 810/X. The arm pivots, however, do have more friction.

To put this matter in proper perspective, the arm friction of the 710/X has no effect on the performance of the M91E cartridge tracking at 1 gram, so that the integrity of the overall 710/X "total turntable" design is confirmed. And, after all, one could hardly expect it to be the complete equivalent of the fine 810/X—there would be little point in selling units with the same performance at two different prices. Let it suffice to say that we found the mechanical functioning of the BSR 710/X to be flawless and its overall ease of operation excellent.

For more information, circle 105 on reader service card

Micro/Acoustics FRM-1 Speaker System



● A WIDE-DISPERSION sound-radiation pattern, especially in the horizontal plane, is highly desirable in a speaker system, not only to project a frequency-balanced sound to all portions of the listening area, but also to form a more stable spatial stereo image. Several techniques have been employed to achieve wide dispersion (most difficult to obtain at the higher frequencies), but one of the most obvious and effective means is to use a number of high-frequency drivers angled in different directions.

The first consumer product offered by Micro/Acoustics Corporation was a high-frequency adapter containing four small cone tweeters mounted to cover 180 degrees horizontally. The Microstatic Adaptor, when connected across the input terminals of conventional speaker systems, reinforces their high-frequency output in addition to widening their angle of dispersion. As our test report in STEREO REVIEW (June 1971) stated, it was highly effective for those purposes.

Micro/Acoustics has now developed a full-range speaker system, the FRM-1 (Full-Range Microstatic), in which a 10-inch acoustic-suspension woofer operates with five tweeters that are oriented to provide nearly uniform output at any angle in front of the speaker. Three of the tweeters have 1¼-inch diameter cones, one facing directly forward and the others at 60-degree angles to the speaker's frontal plane. Two 1¾-inch tweeters are angled at 30 degrees to the front of the speaker, and in the vertical plane they are at right angles to the three smaller units (see accompanying photo). The reason this configuration was adopted was not so much to improve vertical dispersion as to permit consistently wide dispersion no matter what the mounting location or position of the system.

The crossover frequency is 1,700 Hz, and two continuously adjustable controls in the rear adjust the high-frequency level relative to that of the woofer. One, marked LEVEL, controls the single forward-facing tweeter, and the DISPERSION control affects only the four angled tweeters. The maximum settings for these controls are marked ANECHOIC FLAT. A lower NORMAL setting is also provided. The system impedance is nominally 8 ohms, and amplifier powers of 15 to 60 watts are recommended.

The walnut vinyl-covered cabinet is 15 inches wide, 12½ inches deep, and 25½ inches high; the system weighs 34 pounds. It can be used in either a vertical or horizontal position. The black grille is available in two styles: a "functional" design molded to reveal the shapes of the high-frequency driver array behind it, and a "decorative" style with a more conventional flat front. Price with either grille: $149.50.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* In our semi-reverberant test room, the output of the Micro/Acoustics FRM-1 was impressively uniform over the full audio range. When the controls were set at ANECHOIC FLAT, there was a slight increase in output in the 6,000 to 12,000-Hz range. The NORMAL setting produced the flattest overall response—±2 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz—in our test room. The woofer response, measured with close microphone spacing, was almost unbelievably flat, varying only ±0.5 dB from 55 to 1,000 Hz. The output dropped below 50 Hz, but with normal speaker placement the low bass is considerably enhanced, and we would judge the effective lower limit of the speaker to be about 40 Hz.

The bass distortion was under 2 per cent down to 60 Hz, using either a 1-watt drive level or a constant 90-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) output. At 1 watt, the distortion rose to 5 per cent at 45 Hz and to 10 per cent at 37 Hz. When a constant 90-dB output was maintained (as measured 3 feet from the speaker), the low-frequency distortion rose more rapidly, to 5 per cent at 50 Hz and 10 per cent at 46 Hz. Tone-burst response was very good at all frequencies. The system impedance was typically between 6 and 18 ohms, except for a rise at bass resonance to 30 ohms. The efficiency was relatively high for an acoustic-suspension system, with about 0.66 watt needed to produce a 90-db SPL in the mid-range measured at a distance of 3 feet.

● *Comment.* When the NORMAL high-frequency control settings were used, the simulated live-*vs.*-recorded listening test revealed a very slight loss of extreme highs. In-

(Continued on page 44)

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Whether you finally get delivery on your new car, or have to wait another week...
Whether alone, or in the company of friends...
We offer one very satisfying pleasure you can count on. J&B rare scotch. To celebrate or warm the uncertainties of life.

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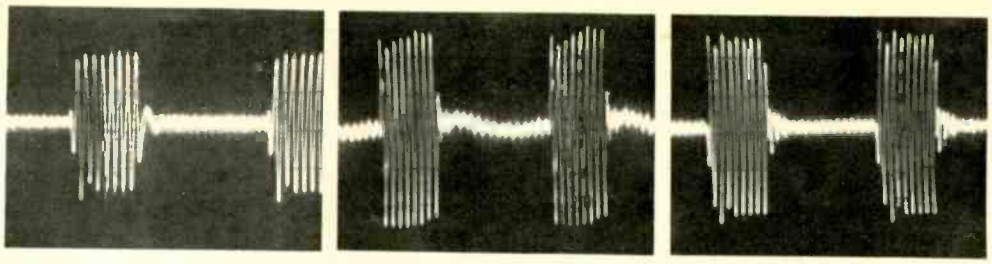

Tone-burst response of the FRM-1 was very good. These oscilloscope photos were taken at (left to right) 100, 1,000, and 5,000 Hz.

The special high-frequency driver assembly mounted on the outer surface of the front panel is designed to produce a hemispherical dispersion pattern. An acoustic-suspension woofer provides the lower frequencies.

creasing the control settings to their maximum ANECHOIC FLAT positions restored the missing output, with essentially perfect duplication of the highest frequencies in the original program. We could hear a slight shift in mid-range balance, difficult to isolate but probably due to the small response variations from about 2,000 to 4,000 Hz. Overall, the system earned an "A" rating in this test.

In listening to a variety of program material, the excellent dispersion and uniform high-frequency energy output were much in evidence, as was a satisfying and solid low bass. Although there was nothing in our measurements to indicate it, the FRM-1 had a slightly warm and full sound. The effect was slight, however, and not noticeable on much of the program material.

We wondered why the speaker has separate high-frequency LEVEL and DISPERSION controls. Micro/Acoustics' answer is that, in highly reflective rooms, the contribution of the angled radiators might produce an overbright sound off-axis, and the separate controls provide a means of adjusting the relative contribution of the tweeters. In most installations, both controls should probably be adjusted together to establish the high-frequency balance.

Micro/Acoustics' first full-range speaker system has effectively combined the principles of their excellent "add-on" tweeter array with an equally fine woofer. It is certainly one of the best-sounding speakers in its price class, and should provide tough competition to a number of more expensive systems.

For more information, circle 106 on reader service card

KLH Model Fifty-Two AM/Stereo FM Receiver

● THE KLH Model Fifty-Two is an AM/stereo FM receiver offering performance that is clearly above average in its price class. The published specifications are among the most comprehensive and conservative we have seen. Wherever possible, they conform to current IHF measurement standards, simplifying comparison with other products similarly rated. The audio amplifiers are rated at 30 watts per channel into 8 ohms, with both channels operating, at less than 1 per cent harmonic or intermodulation (IM) distortion. The FM tuner, which uses IC limiters and ceramic filters, is rated at 2 microvolts IHF sensitivity, with less than 0.5 per cent distortion (mono).

The upper half of the front panel contains the blackout dial face with AM, FM, and logging scales. The FM scale has linear calibration intervals, with frequencies marked every 2 MHz. To the left are two illuminated meters, reading AM and FM signal strength and zero-center FM tuning. A large knob to the right of the dial operates the flywheel tuning mechanism. Below the dial calibrations are illuminated legends indicating the operating mode and signal source: PHONO, FM, AM, AUX, and FM STEREO. The lower half of the panel, in a contrasting pale gold satin finish, contains all the operating controls. From left to right, there are knob controls for input selection, bass and treble, balance, and volume. The tone controls are concentric slip-clutch types for independent adjustment of the two channels, and the volume control operates the on-off switch.

Pushbutton switches control loudness compensation, mono/stereo mode, tape monitoring, FM muting, high-cut filter, and the main and remote speakers. The first four perform their indicated functions when pressed in; the speaker switches turn their respective speakers off when depressed. Normal stereo operation of the receiver is obtained with all pushbuttons out, although this disables the FM muting. At the rear of the KLH Model Fifty-Two are the input and output jacks, antenna terminals, pivoted AM ferrite-rod antenna, fuses, and an unswitched a.c. outlet. The screw-type main speaker terminals have no separating barriers, requiring reasonable care in installation to avoid accidental short circuits. The remote-speaker terminals are standard phono jacks. Each speaker output is protected by a fast-acting 2.8-ampere fuse (a special type obtainable from KLH), and a slow-blow 1.5-ampere fuse protects the entire receiver. Jumper links on the antenna terminals set up the ferrite-rod AM antenna and the line-cord FM antenna for reception of local stations. The links can be opened for connecting external antennas. The KLH Model Fifty-Two comes complete with a wooden walnut-grain cabinet: it measures 18

(Continued on page 46)

You buy us best When you buy us last

It's unusual when an audio system begins with headphones. You usually begin with receivers, turntables, and speakers. Along the way you learn a lot about performance differences and value. Just in time to select your headphones. We like it that way, because the more you know about audio, and value, the more likely you'll take the time to select a headphone specialist.

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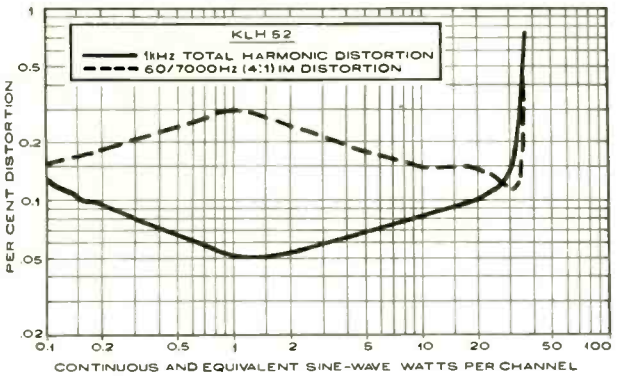
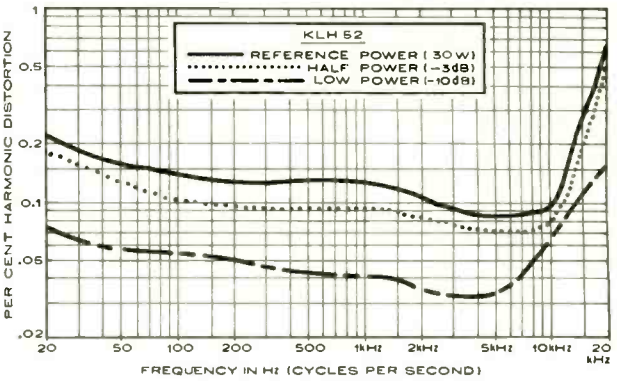




inches wide, 5¼ inches high, and 11½ inches deep, excluding knobs and AM antenna. Weight: 22½ pounds. Price: $289.95.

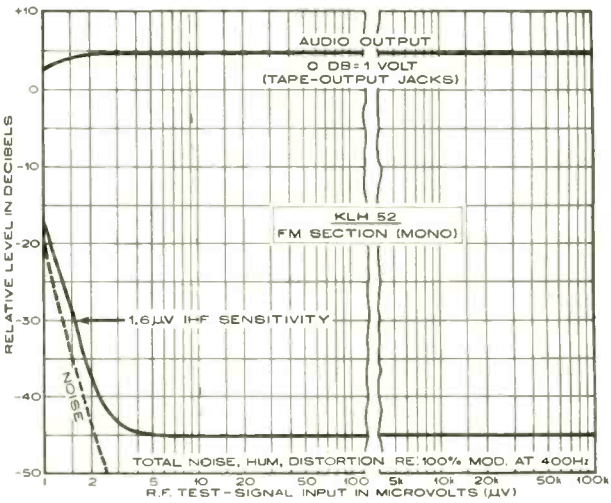
● ***Laboratory Measurements.*** The audio amplifiers clipped at 33 watts per channel into 8 ohms at 1,000 Hz, both channels driven. With 4-ohm loads, the maximum output was 42 watts per channel, and with 16 ohms it was 21.5 watts per channel. Harmonic distortion was between 0.05 and 0.1 per cent from 0.15 watt to 20 watts per channel, rising to 0.15 per cent at 30 watts, and it was still under 1 per cent at 35 watts. The IM distortion was between 0.15 and 0.3 per cent up to about 35 watts per channel. Using 30 watts per channel as a reference full-power rating, the harmonic distortion was between 0.1 and 0.2 per cent from 23 to 14,000 Hz, increasing to 0.7 per cent at 20,000 Hz. It was slightly lower at half power (typically about 0.1 per cent), and it increased to 0.5 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At one-tenth power, distortion was appreciably lower, reading between 0.03 and 0.06 per cent at most frequencies under 10,000 Hz, and only 0.15 per cent at 20,000 Hz.

The AUX inputs required 0.31 volt for a 10-watt output, with a 77.5-dB signal-to-noise ratio. Through the PHONO inputs, 2 millivolts was needed for 10 watts output, with a very good 76.5-dB signal-to-noise ratio. Phono overload occurred at 55 millivolts, which is a safe figure for most high-quality cartridges delivering less than about 5 millivolts at average recorded levels.

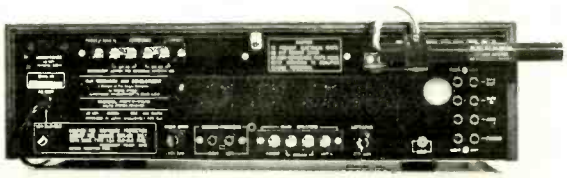
The tone controls had a shelved characteristic, hinged at about 1,000 Hz. Their range was moderate (about ±10 dB at the frequency extremes), but they were adequate for their purpose. The high filter had a 6-dB-per-octave slope, with the −3-dB response point at 2,500 Hz. The loudness compensation boosted the low frequencies moderately, and to a lesser extent also boosted highs above about 10,000 Hz. RIAA phono equalization was accurate within ±0.5 dB from 50 to 15,000 Hz.

The FM tuner had an IHF sensitivity of 1.6 microvolts, reaching a 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio at 2.5 microvolts. In the stereo mode, about 20 microvolts was required for a 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio. The mono distortion readings were very close to the 0.5 per cent residual of our signal generator. The ultimate quieting level of 73 dB was reached at about 100 microvolts in mono and 1,000 microvolts in stereo. FM frequency response was flat within ±0.5 dB from 30 to 4,000 Hz, and was down only 3.5 dB at 15,000 Hz. Overall flatness was a very good ±1.25 dB over the full audio range. Stereo separation exceeded 30 dB from 80 to 15,000 Hz, reaching a maximum of 47.5 dB at 1,000 Hz. The 19-kHz leakage signal was 76 dB below full modulation. Capture ratio

(Continued on page 48)



The dashed curve labeled "noise" shows how random noise (principally hiss) falls below the audio output with increasing signal strength. Ultimate quieting level achieved was −73 dB.

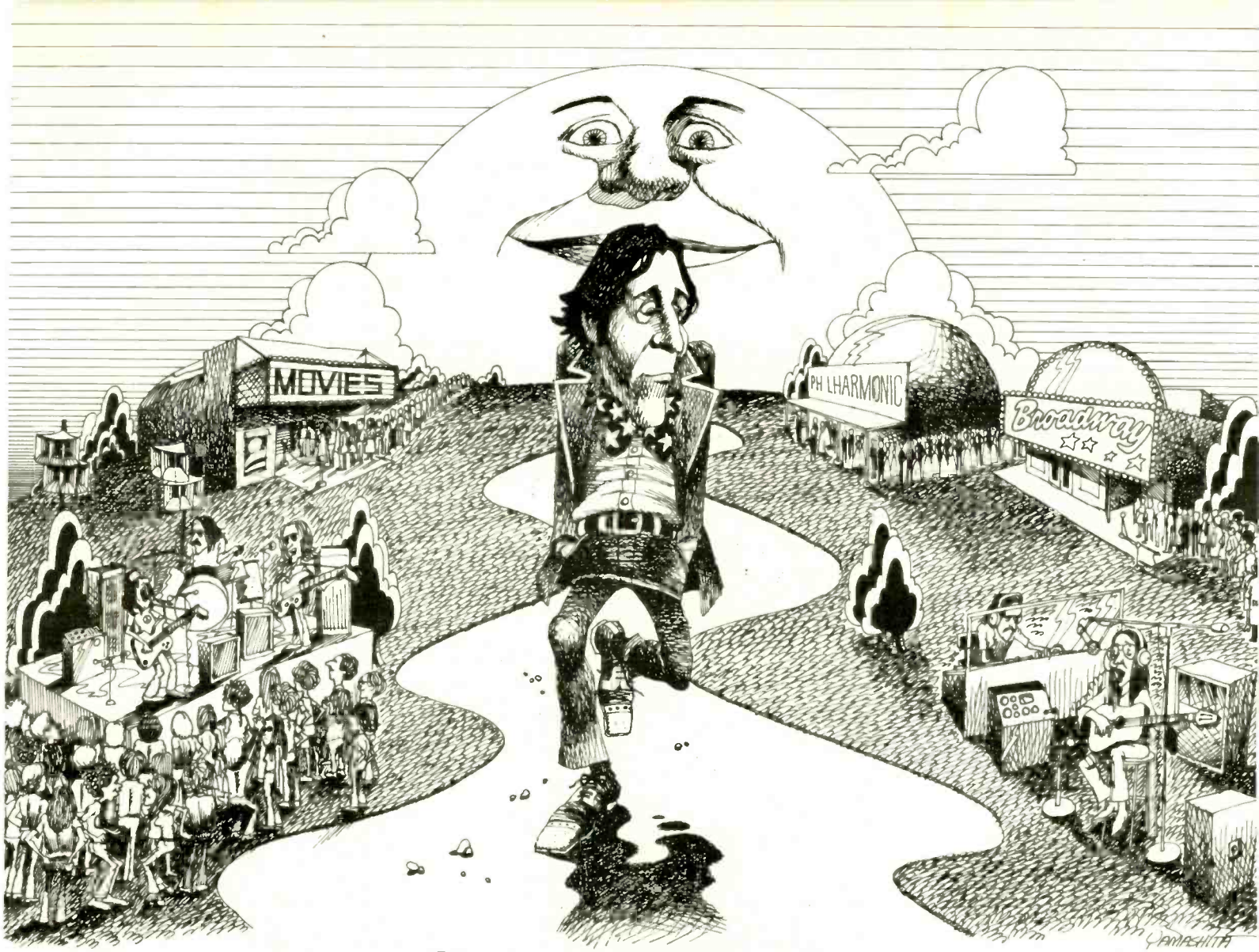


The rear panel of the KLH Model Fifty-Two is uncluttered and functional—quite in keeping with KLH's philosophy of product design. Output connectors for remote speakers are phono jacks.

ADDENDUM: JVC 1667 CASSETTE DECK

● IN our test report on the JVC 1667 cassette deck (February, 1973), we commented on an inexplicable "dip" at about 8,000 Hz in its playback-only response. We could not account for the dip—which was inaudible in any case—and suspected that it was not a product of the JVC's electronics but came about through some quirk in our test tape or procedure.

This was completely confirmed when we made a retest of the same machine, using the original tape and a Teac test cassette. The major difference between the two was that, compared with the Teac test tape's response, the Nortronics tape had about 2-dB less output in the 6,000- to 8,000-Hz region. This was a far cry from the original test results (which we had repeated on two occasions several days apart). We have not yet worked out just what factors were responsible for the original dip we found, but we are confident that it is not the fault of the machine and that the actual playback response of the JVC 1667 is a fine ±2 dB over the 31.5- to 10,000-Hz range of the test tapes.



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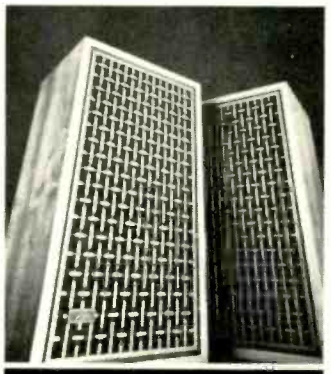

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was 1.5 dB, image rejection was 68.5 dB, AM rejection was 64 dB, and alternate-channel selectivity was 55 dB—all appreciably better than the specified performance. The FM muting action took place smoothly in the range of 3.5 to 7 microvolts, and the automatic stereo/mono switching threshold was 2.8 microvolts. The AM frequency response was flat from 20 Hz to just under 2,000 Hz, dropping to −6 dB at 4,000 Hz and more rapidly at frequencies above 6,000 Hz.

● *Comment.* Since the 2.8-ampere speaker-line fuses are nonstandard and obtainable only from KLH, we were surprised not to find a spare set included with the receiver. We also noted that the temperature of the rear panel of the receiver rose to levels somewhat higher than usual, even with no audio output being delivered. KLH, like most manufacturers, urges the use of adequate ventilation for the receiver; judging from our test sample, it seems especially advisable with the Model Fifty-Two.

KLH, with considerable justification, is proud of the forty-four-page instruction booklet accompanying the Model Fifty-Two. Not only is it complete and unambiguous, but its conversational style makes it a highly readable short course in stereo-system installation. The booklet also contains a systematic nontechnical approach to identifying and removing the "bugs" that can appear from time to time in the best systems.

As its measured performance shows, the KLH Model Fifty-Two is a first-rate receiver in every respect. Comparison against the specifications of other receivers makes it equally clear that it is one of the better values on today's market. Almost all receivers claiming comparable performance are considerably more expensive. In use tests, it sounded as good as the figures suggest, and its ability to drive low-efficiency speakers to more-than-adequate listening levels distinguishes it from many other receivers selling for less than $300.

For more information, circle 107 on reader service card

Norelco 2100 Cassette Deck

● THE Norelco 2100 cassette deck, which offers exceptional versatility in obtaining optimum performance with different types of tape, also features Philips' Dynamic Noise Limiter (DNL), a playback-only noise-reducing system that can be used with any cassette recording. The Model 2100 is distinctively styled, with a one-piece, satin-finish aluminum panel covering most of its top and sloping front. The cassette opening is covered by a transparent, tinted plastic window that exposes the entire cassette to view during operation. A pushbutton-reset index counter is located next to the cassette window. Tape motion is controlled by conventional piano-key levers, interlocked so that STOP must be pushed before operating any other control. Partially depressing STOP halts the tape and disengages the other controls, and pressing it down fully ejects the cassette. Next to the transport controls are a red recording light and a yellow DNL light.

On the sloping front panel there are two illuminated VU meters which monitor levels during recording and playback. To their right are six pushbuttons. The upper three adjust the recorder's circuits for tapes with standard (STD), high-performance/low-noise (SPL), or chromium-dioxide (CrO_2) formulations. These switches change the bias and recording levels for each type of tape. In the case of the CrO_2 tape, the recording and playback equalization characteristics are also modified. The lower row of buttons are for STEREO/MONO (recording only), DNL (playback only), and the power switch. To their right are two slider controls for setting recording levels. The playback levels are fixed. Along the lower front edge of the recorder are two miniature microphone jacks for low-impedance dynamic microphones, plus a standard stereo headphone jack. In the rear of the unit are the inputs and outputs and two screwdriver adjustments for the DNL circuits (which should not be changed by the user without proper instruments and service information).

The frequency-response specification of the Norelco 2100 extends to 10,000 Hz with standard tape, 12,000 Hz with high-performance tape, and 13,000 Hz with CrO_2 tape (the lower limit is specified as 50 Hz for all types). The DNL circuit is said to produce an improvement in signal-to-noise ratio of more than 5 dB at 6,000 Hz and more than 20 dB above 10,000 Hz, relative to an unweighted signal-to-noise specification of 45 dB without DNL. The DNL is, in effect, a dynamic low-pass filter that produces high-frequency attenuation in playback when there is little high-frequency program material. Unlike conventional filter circuits, the DNL circuit operates by shifting the phase of the affected portion of the frequency range and using it as negative feedback to cancel part of the original input. This makes possible a large reduction at the highest frequencies with little or no effect below about 5,000 Hz. The Norelco 2100 is 12½ inches wide, 3⅞ inches high, and 10½ inches deep; it weighs 6¾ pounds. Price: $219.95.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* The playback frequency response with a Nortronics AT200 test cassette was within ±2 dB from 31.5 to 10,000 Hz. We measured the record-playback frequency response with three kinds of tape for the three different tape settings: Norelco 200 (STD), Norelco 300 (SPL), and Norelco 400 (CrO_2). The two ferric-oxide tapes had almost identical frequency responses: ±3 dB from about 35 to 14,500 Hz. With CrO_2 tape, the response was extended to ±3 dB from 20 to 16,000 Hz.

An input of 89 millivolts (LINE) or 0.13 millivolt (MIC) was needed for a 0-dB recording level, and the corresponding fixed output (with high-performance tape) was 0.7 volt. The 3 per cent distortion level was reached at −3 dB with Norelco 200 tape, +2 dB with Norelco 300 tape, and 0 dB with CrO_2 tape. The corresponding unweighted signal-to-noise ratios were 49, 55, and 55.5 dB. The DNL circuits produced an improvement of 2 dB in each case, which agrees with the Philips specifications. The subjective improvement was much greater, however, because of the relative audibility of noise in the higher frequencies, which are heavily attenuated by the DNL circuit. The signal-to-noise ratio was the same when measured through the MIC inputs, unlike the case with most re-

(Continued on page 50)

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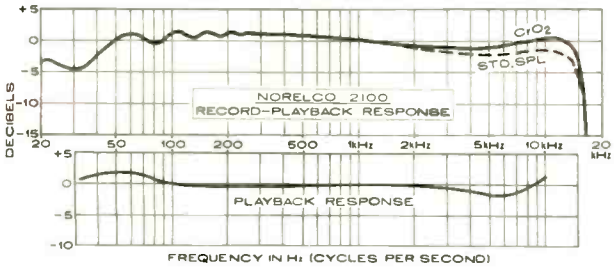


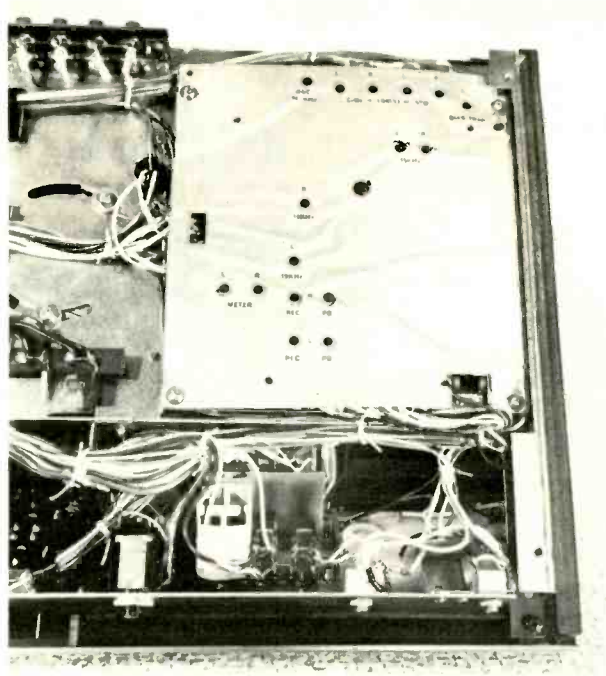
corders which have noise levels that are a few decibels higher through their microphone preamplifiers.

The volume level obtained from the headphone jack, tested using several common brands of headphones, was quite low—possibly adequate for monitoring channel balance, but certainly not for normal listening. The transport controls worked well, with a rather stiff feel. The wow and flutter were typical of today's better cassette mechanisms—respectively 0.03 and 0.16 per cent (unweighted). In fast-forward and rewind, a C-60 cassette was handled in 85 to 90 seconds.

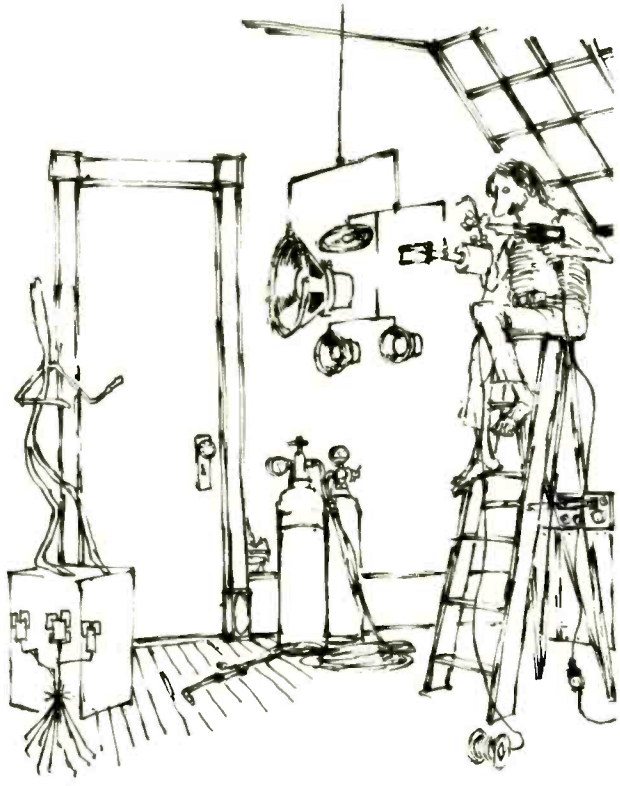
We made measurements of the DNL action by injecting control signals of different frequencies and levels, and measuring the action of the noise-reduction circuit at a number of frequencies using a wave analyzer. With no signal present, the noise reduction began at about 5,000 Hz, reaching a maximum of 14 dB at 10,000 Hz. Introducing a control (program) signal at frequencies above about 3,000 Hz gradually opened up the dynamic filter, except at levels of −30-dB or lower. With a 5,000-Hz control signal, even a −30-dB level was sufficient to disable the filter and produce a flat response.

● *Comment.* Putting aside, for the moment, the performance of the DNL system, the overall quality of the Norelco 2100 was truly excellent. When we taped wide-range records and compared the tape playback with the original disc through a wide-range system, there was absolutely no audible difference. Of course, this can be said of some other cassette recorders as well, but most are considerably more expensive than the 2100. The ability to achieve optimum performance with three basic tape formulations is highly desirable. A few more expensive recorders now have this feature, but most simply provide for some unspecified type of ferric-oxide tape plus CrO_2 tape. In this respect, the Norelco 2100 is ahead of its competition.

Philips probably chose the DNL approach because it can be used with any cassette and therefore conforms to their concept of compatibility. As we have mentioned in past equipment reviews, open-ended dynamic filters such as the DNL can be very effective in reducing hiss, but al-



The calibration adjustments on the Norelco 2100 (shown with bottom plate removed) are readily accessible—a feature that may perhaps be of little concern to most users, but which may attract audiophiles with the test gear to do their own maintenance.



most always produce some sort of swish or other audible side effects with certain types of program material. We were pleased—and impressed—to find none of this with the DNL system. It reduced hiss appreciably, with no dulling of highs or background noise "pumping." On a purely audible level, however, the noise reduction with DNL was considerably less effective than with the Dolby system. While it drastically cuts noise in the highest frequencies (above 5,000 Hz), it has essentially no effect on lower frequencies. And we could hear the audible hiss contributed by the band of frequencies from 500 to 5,000 Hz. In contrast, the Dolby B system functions from about 500 Hz up.

We also played Dolbyized cassettes through the DNL system and heard considerable noise reduction, though it was not as great as with a Dolby system. The "brightness" of some unequalized Dolbyized tapes seemed to be tamed only slightly by the DNL circuit. Of course, amplifier tone controls can be used to cut highs further. In other cases, the DNL action alone was sufficient to restore an acceptable balance to a Dolbyized cassette.

In summary, the Norelco 2100 offers: (1) overall performance comparable to that of many far more expensive machines, (2) the ability to get the most out of any kind of tape, and (3) the DNL noise-reducing system, which makes a hissy cassette listenable at no cost in audible high-frequency response. All of which makes it, at $219.95, one of the better values in cassette recorders.

For more information, circle 108 on reader service card

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It is not surprising, then, that Norman Eisenberg, audio writer for The Washington Post, remarked, "Considering all that the LR-4000 offers, its price tag of $499.95 does not seem unwarranted . . . it is a prime example of a 4-channel receiver"; and that FM Guide asserted, "it has taken a giant step forward . . . the LR-4000 epitomizes the art of matrixed 4-channel sound."

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GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND
Music Editor

A NOTE ON PERFORMANCE

A GREAT many of the same personality factors that determine the way music is composed also determine how it is performed. In other words, when we hear a performance of a piece of music we hear the effect of two musical personalities, not one. Even composers, if they *are* interpreters of any ability, seem to approach the interpretation of their own work from the outside, as if it were no longer theirs. So there too we are dealing with two psyches, not one.

These personalities can clash. The mismatching of performer and piece (mismatching in more than simple technical ability) is not an everyday affair, but it is common enough. The miracle is that it is not inevitable. Both composers and performers are people of considerable ego—or else they could not be successful composers and performers. And strongly egocentric people, when they are separated by as much as commonly separates the average performer and the composer whose music he plays (in years, nationality, background, what have you), could not be expected to be terribly tolerant of each other. What permits two strong musical personalities to literally "share" a given performance of a composition lies in the way music is notated, what is written down, what is indicated, what is implied, what is merely expected, and what is left open.

In dealing with music from, say, the death of Bach to the development of aleatory music in recent times, we can assume that the notes, the key, the harmonies, the meter are given. These are, for all intents and purposes, unchangeable. Also given are directions for tempo, which are often no more than a word or two: *allegro*, or *allegro non troppo*, for example. Obviously, there is a whole range of tempos that will fit under the rubric *allegro*, and even when the composer (from late Beethoven on) gives a metronome reading as a more specific guide, there are few performing musicians who think of that number as irrevocable, as anything more than a narrowing of the possibilities expressed by *allegro*.

The score also contains directions for dynamics, expressed as *forte*, *piano*, *mezzo-forte*, *fortissimo*, *sforzando*, *crescendo*, *diminuendo*, and so on. There is no equivalent of a metronome to further define these directions. Obviously, one man's *mezzo-forte* is another man's *piano*, and vice versa. We also have in a score, in greater or lesser amounts, directions for the modification of movement, such as *rallentando* (slowing down), directions for phrasing (an arc drawn over a group of notes meant to be played as a single phrase), directions for different kinds of bowing for string instruments, for different sorts of articulation for wind instruments, and so on. All of these define not a single correct way of playing, but a range of possibilities. "The player should always feel convinced that he plays only what is written," wrote the great pianist Josef Hofmann. With the wide range of possibilities open to one who plays "only what is written," we can see how personal interpretation can almost take care of itself.

But there are even certain things *not* in the score that are expected of the musical interpreter before he lets his interpretive ability run wild. For one thing, he is expected to know a little about the composer of the work he performs and where he fits into musical history, so that he can tell, in what the composer has written, what is ordinary from what is extraordinary. A *fortissimo* (*ff*) written during the time of Mozart has a different meaning from one written during the time of Mahler; in the former case, it means literally "very loud" (within, of course, the context of just how much loudness was available on instruments of Mozart's time), but in the latter case, when such signs as *fff* are not impossible, it can only mean a degree of loudness greater than *forte*, but not *all* the

loudness of which one might be capable.

The performer is also expected to know something about the style of the music and whether certain kinds of accents or rhythmic modifications, even though not written, are necessary to that style. American jazz and popular music, for example, are not played rhythmically the way they are written. Neither are Chopin mazurkas, nor, probably, any music based upon folk or popular dance styles. In most music before the death of Bach, not only may rhythms be different from their notation, but actual notes that should be played (ornaments and such) are notated only in the sketchiest form or not notated at all. These are all things the interpreter must be aware of, but, obviously, his range of possibilities is even greater here than in the translation of tempo and dynamic indications into actual sound.

THERE is also something called "tradition." Tradition has been labeled by at least one eminent musician as meaning nothing more than "the last bad performance." Sometimes it is just that, but often it is something real, something one must cope with—at least to the extent that if one is to violate it one must know why and how. Tradition is the sort of thing that allows a tenor to take a high note in an aria where no such note is written, that authorizes a pianist to play rubato where none is indicated, that determines the way ninety-nine out of a hundred conductors (capable ones, that is) will play a Strauss waltz. Such tradition may stem ultimately from the composer's own interpretation or teaching, passed down through generations of teachers and students, performers and listeners. Or it may, as sometimes happens in musical history, come into being after the composer himself is dead. There is a tradition, for example, of playing the ragtime music of Scott Joplin with a jazz inflection. But Joplin wrote his music before jazz was born. There is no indication in his scores of the sort of rhythmic modification jazz demands. That tradition, therefore, though it is valuable in itself as a species of jazz, has nothing to do with Joplin's music as he conceived it.

So the interpretation of any piece of music consists of the interaction not only of two different personalities, but of two different backgrounds, of musical and social milieus as well. Virtually all the things that go to make up the musical personality of the composer go into the makeup of the performer too, although their intensities may be quite different. It is the approximations of musical notation, the "open spaces" of the music, that allow a multitude of viable interpretations, viable in the sense that they express the musical personalities of both the composer and the interpreter and thereby permit the music to come to life.

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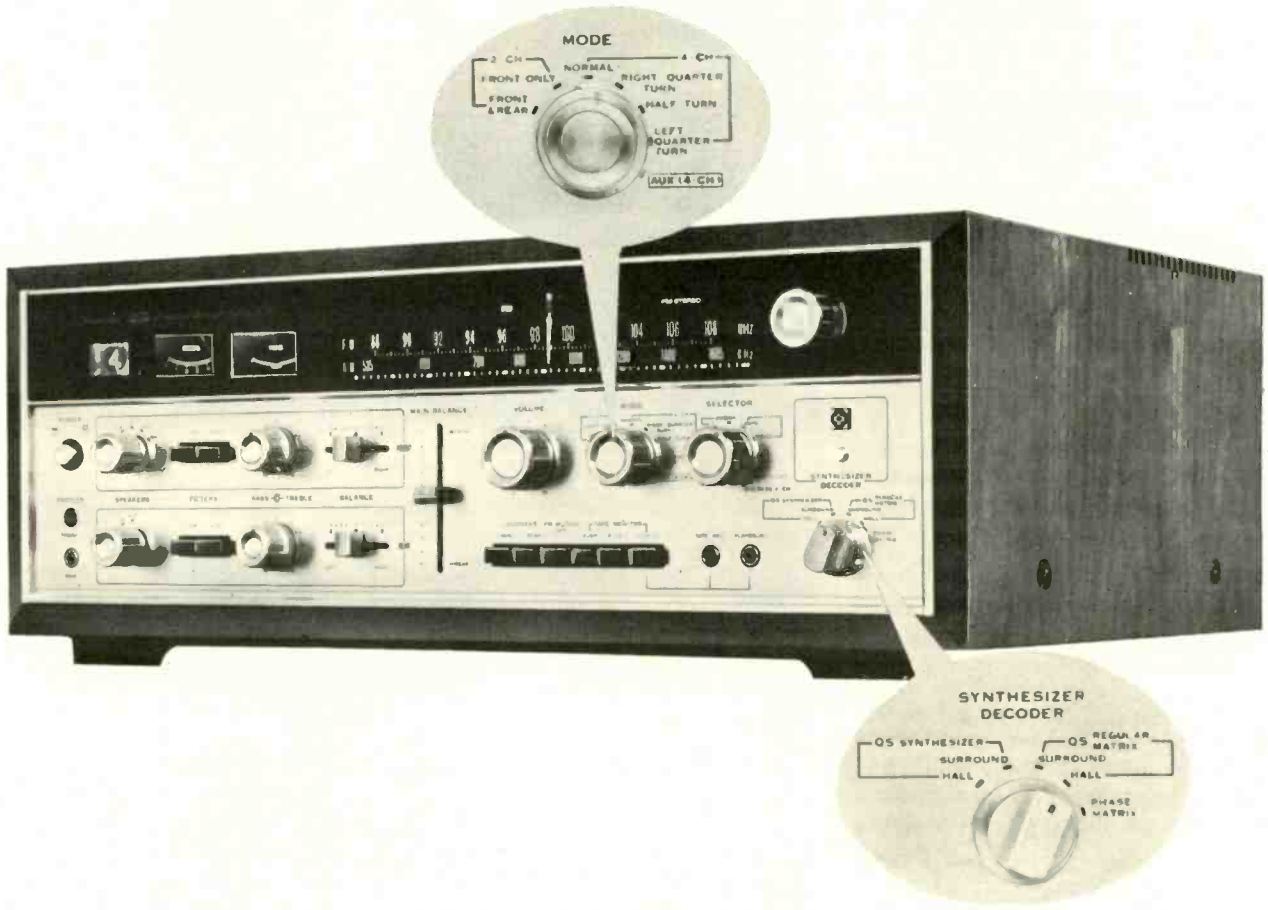

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Liszt's Piano Concerto in A Major

FRANZ LISZT sketched out the musical materials of his A Major Piano Concerto in 1839, when he was twenty-eight years old. Ten years later, when he was completing the E-flat Piano Concerto, he returned to the sketches of the A Major Concerto and completed that one as well. Since the E-flat Concerto was the first of the two to be published (in 1857), it was called the composer's "First" Concerto. Though the A Major Concerto was first performed in 1857, at a concert given to benefit the pension fund of the orchestra in Weimar, it was not until six years after its performance that it was published in revised form.

Along with the first of his thirteen symphonic poems, *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne*, Liszt's two piano concertos were the first orchestral scores that he was ready to submit for public inspection. All three works were scored with the help of Joachim Raff, but all three represent direct challenges to the formal precepts of Classical tradition: they have freed themselves from the strictures of customary sonata form, each being concentrated into a single movement that is episodic but integrated by the permutation and recurrence of melodic ideas. The two concertos could really be considered symphonic poems for orchestra, with a dominating part for solo piano; Liszt himself labeled the manuscript of the A Major Concerto "Concerto symphonique."

The theme of the concerto is stated by the woodwind instruments at the very opening of the work, and it is this theme that serves as the integrating element throughout. A lamenting, melancholy statement, it begins in the orchestra, the solo piano adding its voice after a dozen bars. Following horn, oboe, and solo cello episodes, the piano introduces a new theme in D Minor. There is a crescendo, and mood and tempo change to a brisk *Allegro agitato assai* and then *Allegro moderato*. Several other vigorous sections lead ultimately to a martial statement of the chief theme from both the orchestra and the piano, and there is a concluding coda of a heroic character.

The distinguished nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American musicologist William Foster Apthorp once suggested that, had Liszt wanted to append a descriptive title to the A Major Concerto, he might well have decided upon "The Life and Adventures of a Melody." Apthorp concluded his brilliant essay about the concerto with these words: "And ever and anon the first wailing melody, with unearthly chromatic harmony, returns in one shape or another, as if it were the dazzled neophyte to whom the magician Liszt were showing all these splendors, while initiating it into the mysteries of the world of magic, until it, too, becomes magical and possessed of the power of working wonders by black art."

AMONG the many recordings of Liszt's A Major Concerto, two tower above all the rest. The first is the almost legendary performance recorded in London in the early 1960's by Sviatoslav Richter, with Kiril Kondrashin conducting the London Symphony Orchestra (Philips 835 474, tape L 5474, cassette PCR4 900 000, and cartridge PC8 900 000). The other is the more recent Ivan Davis recording, with Edward Downes conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (London SPC 21081, tape L4 75081, and cassette M 94081). Both recordings are archetypes of individual artistry and personality: Richter's is more disciplined, more tightly controlled and organized, with great emphasis on the poetry, fancy, and diablerie in the music; Davis' is much freer, more daring and audacious in shifting moods and tempos, and more whimsical in overall attitude. Both performances receive superb sound reproduction, and the support of both orchestras and conductors is all one could wish. The choice between these two extraordinary recordings is extremely difficult; personally, I would not want to be without either one. Moreover, both the Philips and London recordings have persuasive performances of the E-flat Concerto on the other side.

Two lower-price couplings of the Liszt concertos are available: the late Samson François, with Constantin Silvestri conducting the Philharmonia (Seraphim S 60107); and Leonard Pennario, with René Leibowitz conducting the London Symphony (RCA Victrola VICS 1426). But the collector in search of a genuine musical thrill from the Liszt piano concertos will seek out either the Davis or the Richter version.


STEINWAY & SONS

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

as I knew him

A reminiscence by VICTOR SEROFF

Sergei Rachmaninoff was born on April 2, 1873, and this year marks the hundredth anniversary of his birth. It is also thirty years since he died, on March 28, 1943, just four days before he would have celebrated his seventieth birthday. I knew Rachmaninoff well, and I had the honor of commemorating his seventieth birthday with an article published in Vogue *magazine in April of 1943. I feel equally honored to be able to commemorate his centenary, and I would like to begin this remembrance with some account of the interview that produced the earlier article.* — V. S.

RACHMANINOFF was very reluctant in 1943 to have his birthday celebrated – in a magazine article, at least, and perhaps particularly in a magazine article by *me*. I have learned from a mutual friend that he had mentioned to Rachmaninoff, during a game of cards, that I was writing Dmitri Shostakovich's biography. "Well, let him write it . . . let him . . . if that is what interests him," Rachmaninoff murmured without taking his eyes from the cards he was holding. With such a beginning, it was understandably not easy for me to talk him into making an appointment so that I might secure some of the first-hand information I needed for a Rachmaninoff article. "Why do it?" he kept repeating to me. He always spoke slowly and thoughtfully in a baritone voice of great depth and richness: "Who would care to read about it? I am forgotten . . . now it is only Shostakovich," he would say, looking at me as if he would like to add "and why do *you*, of all people, want to do this?" But when I did not reply, he said – still looking at me, though somewhat less sternly – "Oh, well, all right . . . only please let me think about it. *When* could we do it?"

A few days later I received a typewritten letter (in Russian), from a man whom I was supposed to understand was his secretary (although I knew that at that time he did not *have* a secretary), saying that, if the suggested day and hour were convenient for me, Mr. Rachmaninoff would be pleased to see me. Of course, Rachmaninoff could have telephoned me himself, as he always had before, but apparently this was his way of keeping it all very "business-like." I in turn telephoned *him* (not the author of the letter) direct, saying that I would come to see him at the suggested hour. It was a brief, to-the-point exchange of a few phrases, and I thought the "formalities" were now completed. I was slightly mistaken.

When I arrived at the house on West End Avenue in New York City where the Rachmaninoffs lived (in the apartment formerly occupied by the composer's cousin Alexander Siloti), I was quite ceremoniously greeted by the doorman: he already knew my name, where I was going, and at what time Rachmaninoff expected me. With a murmured "I will take you later," he brushed aside a young woman waiting with her little girl at the elevator door and, bowing again, led me into the car.

At our ninth-floor destination, my escort, upon hearing the sounds of a piano in the apartment, remarked confidentially before opening the door, "Now he'll go lickety-split, like the devil," adding, with the proud air of a man in the know, and with a significant lift of a forefinger, "and then he'll stop." And, indeed, a few seconds later a volley of brilliant cascades did burst forth, and as abruptly ended. The doorman, smiling with satisfaction, rang the doorbell and gave me into the care of a maid who, muttering but a single word ("please," in Russian), ushered me into Rachmaninoff's small study and went off to announce me.

RACHMANINOFF had resumed playing, over and over again, the same pages of Chopin's Ballade in F Minor; then, interrupted, he struck the final four chords in a matter-of-fact way and a moment later joined me. "Just a second," he said as he carefully closed the door into the music room. Although I had been with him many times previously in that same room, this was the first and only time I had ever seen him take such stiff little "precautions."

◀ Culver Pictures

But it was the last of the "formalities" as well: he shook hands with me and, putting his arm around my shoulders, invited me to take an armchair next to his massive oak writing table.

Rachmaninoff was a tall man, over six feet, but not as towering in person as he appeared to be on stage. A musician in his orchestra once said to him, "It must be nice to be so tall." "Not at all," Rachmaninoff growled. "It makes you feel like a *kalancha* [a watch-tower or a maypole]." His shoulders were very broad, and he carried himself slightly stooped over, a little hunched, as if to make them less conspicuous. His face was heavily lined, and there were large pouches under the eyes. He wore his hair cropped, although he knew that to some people it looked "like a convict's." His face had something of a Mongolian cast, though there was no one of Mongolian origin among his ancestors; in many of my conversations with him, in fact, he emphasized that he was not merely a Russian, but a Slav. But whatever the lineage, the combination of his physical appearance and his stolid behavior on stage gave an impression of an extremely unhappy and gloomy man.

"Sergei Rachmaninoff is the archetype of the grim Russian." "He looks as if he carries all the burdens of Mother Russia on his shoulders." "He looks like an undertaker." These and other impressionistic remarks appeared regularly in journalists' and music critics' articles about him. "Does Rachmaninoff ever smile, does he ever laugh?" One heard such questions over and over again. "You know," he once told me, "Chaliapin tried to teach me how to come on stage, how to bow, and how to accept applause gracefully: always smiling. But I couldn't. Why, I would have looked like a grinning idiot. I must admit I failed completely in those lessons, but he did try hard to teach me."

For such a wryly delightful story I felt obliged to reply in kind, so I told him of one instance of Chaliapin's stage demeanor that I remembered from one of his concerts in Vienna in the early Thirties. Chaliapin was as nervous as any other artist during a performance, but he kept himself under perfect control. His behavior before a large audience seemed as informal as if he were addressing himself merely to a few close friends in his own sitting room. But during this performance, while making his own announcements from the program he held in his hand, he would suddenly look down into the front row of the audience and, as if recognizing someone, would smile, greet the person with a wave of the program, and even whisper something, presumably expressing his delight at seeing a friend.

"Of course," Rachmaninoff interrupted me, laughingly anticipating the punch-line of my story, "Fedya [the diminutive for Feodor] didn't know anybody in the audience! But that was just like him. He was a basso, but he used to bow like a tenor. Can you imagine me doing something like that? No, no, I completely failed him."

Continuing on this subject of stage demeanor and stage nervousness, I wondered whether the fact that Rachmaninoff was nervous off-stage didn't add a disturbing edge to his feelings while playing on-stage. He quickly picked me up on this: "I am *never* nervous on stage. Those who are should never play in public. There is no cure for it, and it is not true that eventually, after having played a great deal in public, one can get used to it. Chaliapin sang all his life before all kinds of audiences, and he was always nervous during his performances."

"Still," I argued, "Chaliapin managed to control it well enough to go on performing. Perhaps you yourself control it too, though you cannot completely disguise it."

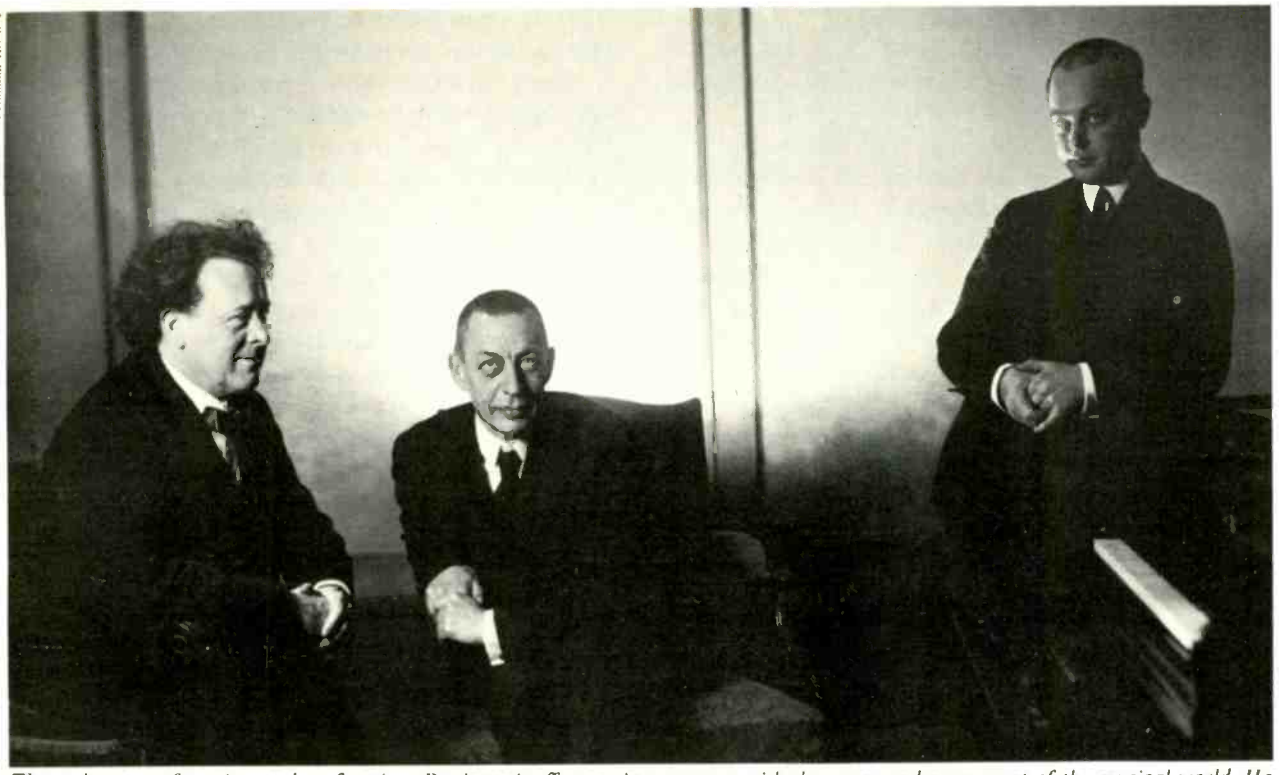
"What do you know about it?" he asked.

"Well, for one thing, before you play the first piece in a program, you keep adjusting the cuff of your right sleeve over and over again; I have seen you do this at so many of your concerts that I could not ascribe the gesture to anything else *but* nervousness. And I also have felt that you play—of course not always, but very often—the first piece on your program much faster than I imagine you would have played it had you scheduled it for later in the concert, when you had already accustomed yourself, so to speak, to your audience."

"Is that so?" he said. That—plus a smile and a shake of the head—was the only reply I got.

Persisting, I asked him whether it was true that he hated playing in public but loved practicing. "No, no," he protested vigorously. "It is just the other way around. I hate practicing—especially my own compositions—and I love to play in public."

When Rachmaninoff appeared on stage, a hushed silence used to descend upon the audience, and it seemed as if his listeners were holding their breath, waiting to witness something extraordinary, something mysterious. Without claiming to explain completely his unique power in performance, I do firmly believe, having observed him closely in his daily life, that a good part of the explanation lay in the fact that he was, so to speak, all of a piece. There was nothing artificial about him, no especially rehearsed stage behavior, and the fact that as many as three thousand pairs of eyes were carefully watching each move he made affected him no more than a much smaller number of eyes did in the privacy of



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Through years of touring and performing, Rachmaninoff came into contact with the great and near great of the musical world. He is shown here seated between the famed Dutch conductor Willem Mengelberg (left) and the Russo-American pianist Mischa Levitzki.

his home. Actually, beyond the slight business with the cuff, he sat down at the piano to begin a concert in the same natural way he would take his place at the dinner table. And he moved his arms and hands while playing with the same simplicity he did when using his knife or fork, in passing a plate or a glass to his neighbor at table. There was never anything in his artless behavior on stage that could have distracted an audience sufficiently to keep them from listening to his playing.

Something of the same simplicity was apparent even in the clothes he wore: there was no concession to changing fashion, nothing consciously exotic. He was always formally dressed; his suits and overcoats were not made according to the prevailing style, but as they had always been made for him all his life. He had never given up the custom of wearing a waistcoat, nor would he appear without a tie, or in an open collar or shirt-sleeves. I have seen only two photographs of him in his shirt-sleeves: one at a table in the garden of his country home in Russia, the other a photograph of Boris Chaliapin's painting of him practicing the piano, and in both cases he was wearing a tie with his shirt. I never saw him wearing casual clothes, and I am quite certain it would have been impossible for him to go out of the house without his hat. Dressing and behaving as he did, and living in a strictly organized way, Rachmaninoff was the very picture of a Grand Seigneur. He took his meals at home at the conventional hours, and I cannot even imagine him having a hamburger and a cup of coffee at a drugstore lunch counter.

As a rule, nothing is easier than interviewing a performer or a creative artist (writing up the interview, of course, is quite another thing). They are, most of them, so eager to see their names in print, so anxious to have the right (flattering) kind of publicity which, they believe, will enhance the marketability of their talents, that they will burst into a seemingly endless monolog at the slightest provocation—never failing, somehow, to omit criticisms of their colleagues. In addition, they want to appear witty, winning, and extremely happy—in short, to feel proud and pleased with themselves. Nothing of the sort could ever be said about Rachmaninoff. "When you are my age," he told me, "you will realize that people know about you only what you tell them." I did not argue with him, for I understood that this *was* his firm principle, and that any information about himself that he would be willing to share would be offered within that framework. He was indeed, as many have said of him, a man aloof, closed within himself—"buttoned up," as some Russians had it.

He once told me that, when they first arrived in the United States, he and Mrs. Rachmaninoff

"went much into society, but I am not much of a society man. And besides, I still have difficulty in speaking English. And so I was invited less and less, and now I hardly move out of my lair."

His difficulty with English, he told me, had also handicapped him in developing an acquaintance with modern American literature. He was irritated when he did not understand certain words in his reading, and reading with the help of a dictionary ruined his pleasure. He had read most of the classical English writers in Russian translations, but Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street* was the only American novel he ever managed to read through to the end in English. For the same reason, he did not go to the theater; American speech on the stage, he told me, was too rapid for him, though he did go to an occasional motion picture. Concerts, obviously, gave him no language problems, and he attended them as often as he had the time.

When he said that he no longer "moved out of his lair," he of course meant only when he was in New York, for he enjoyed being with his Russian friends, most of whom lived either in California or in Europe, and there he led and enjoyed the so-called "social life." At his homes in Beverly Hills and near Paris, at his villa in Lucerne, he rested from his strenuous concert tours and relaxed by playing, with his Russian friends, a card game called *Préfèrence* (a Russian version of bridge) or joined the parties of his two young daughters and their friends. And, if he went to the piano and chanced to play something too serious for the occasion, they would interrupt him with a request: "Oh, father, play us *Bublitcky*"—*Bagels*, a popular street song from the time of the beginning of the Russian Revolution. But most of all Rachmaninoff enjoyed Chaliapin's visits and their informal "*musicieren*" (making music), as he called it, together.

Rachmaninoff, when happy in the company of his family or friends, demonstrated that there was an abundance of kindness and love concealed behind that stern, austere appearance. He favored young people's company, especially if they were music students or aspiring performers. He was ready to help them with his advice, and although he did not "give lessons," he would spend hours working with a young pianist, for example, contributing what he called "occasional suggestions." And he loved children. Frederick Steinway (of the piano Steinways) remembers well the hours Rachmaninoff spent playing cards with him and his sister when they were children and how he used to laugh whenever he lost at the game of "fish." He was generous not only with his time, but with his money as well, and was known to have given financial assistance to Russian causes on many occasions, though always requesting that his name not be revealed.

During my somewhat "business-like" interview with him in 1943, he suddenly broke in with a laugh: "But you forgot to ask me about my hobbies. I wouldn't be human without them, I always hear. But what am I to do? I have to plead guilty to having none. Russians don't have any hobbies," he concluded, with the same characteristic finality with which he ended his compositions. Then, after lighting a fresh cigarette and leaning over the table closer to me, he whispered in an almost conspiratorial manner: "We don't want to get your article into trouble . . . leaving it incomplete. I have an idea. Can't you say that American automobiles are my hobby? Couldn't *it* be a hobby? I love them, I think they are the best in the world, and I love to drive them. What do you think?"

Pleased with this solution to the problem, he was ready to answer another "usual" question: When and how much did he practice the piano?

"I try to practice every day—an hour or an hour and a half in the morning, and an hour and a half in the afternoon. I try to keep to this schedule, but of course there are times when I practice much more. When we first arrived in this country [1918], I had to make a very serious decision about which of three professions to pursue: should I devote myself to composing, or to conducting, or entirely to a career as a concert pianist? For reasons of financial security, the last one seemed to be the best choice, but I soon realized that it was not enough just to play my own compositions—and I did not have a large repertoire otherwise. So, you can easily imagine that, in order to get a large repertoire at my fingertips, I had to practice a great deal. You see, when you are young you don't realize that the older

Though circumstances of exile dictated that he concentrate . . .

RCA

you become the more difficult it is . . . not so much to learn new pieces, but to have them sit firmly in your fingers and your memory. And so, of course, you have to devote more time to them."

At one time, long before our "official interview," he told me that he believed in making two days out of one—that is, he would plan to do as much work as he could before dinner (which, in the Russian manner, he took in the middle of the day), and then, after going to bed in exactly the same way he did at night, to sleep, rise, and live the rest of the day as if it were the *following* day. It was a wonderful idea, but hardly feasible as a permanent way of life.

Was Rachmaninoff forced to sacrifice his composing because of a lack of free time? "Yes, of course," was the reply. "It is not easy to be a conductor, a composer, a concert pianist, and a father all at the same time. I always admired Richard Strauss: he conducts constantly and he composes at the same time. You would think that studying and hearing other composers' works would influence him in his own compositions. I couldn't do that." Thus Rachmaninoff declined the post of permanent conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra because of the amount of preparatory work it would have required. And he left composing, the third profession in his musical activities, to the summer months, when he was free from his concert tours.

Since he had been such a prolific composer, why was it that during the twenty-five years of living in the United States his output of new works had been so meager? It was a difficult question to ask bluntly, even a difficult subject to discuss, for the answer was obviously a very personal one and weighed heavily on his conscience. He would not, I am sure, have liked to give it as a single, flat statement, and I had therefore to learn about it from many conversations at many different times.

In essence, I think, Sergei Rachmaninoff felt very strongly his absence from Russian soil, his separation from his people, his sounding board. For years his muse was silent, and, except for the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, which did mark a new style in his works, his later compositions were only a nostalgic echo of what he had said before. Rachmaninoff's tragedy was that *his* Russia was no more, but he could not live without it. Like many another Russian immigrant, he firmly believed that sooner or later the Soviet regime would collapse and he could return to the Russia that was. So, when he said to me "Even the air here is not like in Russia; it smells differently," I felt that he was revealing one of the main reasons for his lack of inspiration. With Rachmaninoff it was not merely a nostalgia for something that was better in Russia, or something so specifically Russian (mostly food) that one could not get it outside Russia. His homesickness went much deeper. I never knew—because to ask would perhaps have been to touch a very tender spot in his heart—whether he had read Ivan Turgenev's remark that a creative artist who leaves his country to live abroad is doomed so far as his creative work is concerned. But even if he had not read it, he obviously felt it.

There was still another aspect to this homesickness, one that was less spiritual, perhaps, but that nonetheless had an equally strong effect on his creative work. "You know, in Russia," he once told me, "we always had groups of composers and music lovers who used to meet regularly, and we would show each other our latest work long before it was published or performed in public. With whom and where could I do this here, please tell me?"

. . . on his piano performances, Rachmaninoff did not entirely forsake either his musical composition (far left) or his conducting.

Otto F. Hess

Bettmann Archive

It was inevitable that, sooner or later during our conversations, I would ask him about his famous Prelude in C-sharp Minor. There were in circulation a variety of romantic stories as to just what had served to inspire Rachmaninoff to this work, some of them going so far as to make a program piece out of it. I told him that I had seen, in the program notes for one of the innumerable editions of the Prelude, a description of Napoleon's invasion of Russia, Kremlin bells, and the defeated French Army. Another edition explained that the music contained an account of the cruel fate that befell Russians condemned by the czars to walk all the way to Siberia to forced-labor camps. Both program notes claimed to present the composer's authentic vision, the *true* programmatic background for his composition.

Rachmaninoff had of course heard of this and other drivel written in connection with his Prelude, but said that the background of the work was really very simple, even prosaic. Not yet twenty, and needing money, Rachmaninoff was approached by the music publisher Karl Gutheil with an offer of 200 rubles (about one hundred dollars) if he would write five short, publishable piano pieces. This Prelude, according to Rachmaninoff, was one of them. And, as he repeatedly stated, the composition *has* no "program," and was neither a tone poem nor a piece of musical impressionism. On the contrary, it was conceived as a piece of pure music. So plagued was he by questions about the music, however, that the composer finally had to set down, in an article in the *Delineator* (Vol. 75, February 1910), an account of what the piece was and what it was not, including directions on how to practice and play it. Rachmaninoff told me that he had neglected to have the Prelude copyrighted in his name, and he was in some doubt whether that had acted to his advantage or not. If he had bothered to copyright it, he might perhaps have amassed a fortune; but, on the other hand, perhaps the Prelude would not have become so popular had it not been freely published and republished in all sorts of editions. It became more popular in America than anywhere else and, as the composer remarked, it was therefore all the more amusing that it was composed in a Moscow boarding house which was called *Amerika*. Except in Russia, Rachmaninoff once told me, none of his recitals were considered complete until he had played it. He became so tired of it finally that he began to play it with slight variations. "Thereupon," he said, shaking his head, "the English critics wrote that 'Rachmaninoff does not know how to play his own composition.' "

As a pianist, Rachmaninoff stood on a lofty, lonely height. He was no specialist in the works of any composer except himself. He played Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, and Chopin with distinction—his own distinction. He came on the scene of concert pianism when the old-fashioned virtuoso, with his romantic and even sentimental playing, was on the way out. His style, one which could only have been compared to monumental, finely chiseled sculpture, was a reflection of his own personality: clear and musical, but unmistakably unique and personal.


Keystone

Whether crossing the Atlantic (above) or crossing the street . . .

As a composer, Rachmaninoff did not perceive the passing of the Romantic era of composition. He remained not a bridge between the Romantic and the Modern, as some music critics have maintained, but a solitary figure firmly holding on to "outmoded" forms. He lived unromantically, composed or said little that was epic; he was a musician of major gifts to whom success and recognition came slowly, without excitement. "Not like Chaliapin," he said, with a finger upraised for emphasis, "in one season. Yes, he became famous in one season!"

Apparently, even after the fifty years that had elapsed since his own debut in St. Petersburg, there was a slight note of envy in his reminiscing. He was, after all, "only human," as he often said about himself, and, for all his masculinity and strength, there was nonetheless an almost equal amount of weak-


Culver

. . . *Rachmaninoff always dressed with old-fashioned elegance.*

ness. I had suspected something of this from his revelations about himself to me, and it was later substantiated when, in working on his biography, I came across the following in letters he wrote in 1912 (he was thirty-nine) to Marietta Shaginian, a poet who was selecting some poems for him to set to music:

> . . . My 'criminal humility' is unfortunately very obvious. . . . And it is true because I have no faith in myself. Teach me to have faith in myself. If I ever had faith in myself, that was a long time ago, a very long time ago in my youth when I was a disheveled musician. . . .

In another letter to Marietta he wrote: ". . . there is no critic in the world who is more doubtful about me than myself." As he continued his "confession," he revealed some almost incredible characteristics of his nature:

> My windows have big wooden shutters which I close with iron bolts. I feel more secure that way during the evenings and nights. There is again, of course, my 'criminal' timidity and cowardice. I am afraid of everything: mice, rats, cockchafers, bulls, burglars. I am afraid of the strong wind that blows and howls and wails in the chimney. I am afraid when the raindrops beat against the windowpane, and I am afraid of the dark. I do not like old attics and I am ready to believe that ghosts live there. I am frightened even during the daytime when I am alone.

But above all, he was afraid of death. He constantly brooded about it: "How can one live if one has to die? How can one bear the thought that one is going to die?" Of his home in Beverly Hills, where he took his vacations after strenuous tours and rested in the company of the many Russian friends he had made there, he would say, "I am going to die in this house." His words were prophetic. The 1942-1943 season was the last Rachmaninoff played. It marked almost fifty years of his life as a concert pianist, and he was nearing his seventieth birthday. His friends advised him to retire from concertizing and devote himself to composing, but he said, "I am too tired to compose . . . and where am I to get the necessary strength, the necessary fire?" And he felt it would be difficult for him to give up concerts, for "what life will I have without them?"

I saw him in his New York apartment on the eve of his departure, with Mrs. Rachmaninoff, on the last stretch of his final tour. Everything was topsy-turvy: his shirts, suits, suspenders, and shoes were lying about on chairs and sofas, and Mrs. Rachmaninoff, it seemed to me, was engaged simultaneously in putting things in order and packing them. This time we did not talk behind closed doors, though we had to move from one room to the other to keep out of Mrs. Rachmaninoff's way. We spoke of, among other things, American composers and the future of American music.

"The trouble is that there are no proper teachers here for beginners," Rachmaninoff said. "The modern and ultra-modern composers are not the right ones for an American student to go to. The young musician must first learn the rules and gain a fundamental knowledge of the language he is going to write in, as did Beethoven and Chopin; he must know these rules thoroughly before he can afford to tear them down and begin to write any way he pleases—and calling it 'modern.'

"I have had young men come to me with their compositions, and when I point out to them what is obviously a wrong note, they tell me that I do not understand, that this is the 'modern' way of composing. It does not take me long to discover that they do not know the simplest, the most elementary rules of harmony that the students of my time in the Moscow Conservatory had mastered by their second year of study. If they persist the way they are going now, there is no hope for them."

Thirty years have passed since Rachmaninoff told me this in 1943, and I cannot help but wonder whether he would still be of the same opinion today.

Victor Seroff, *Russian born and a pianist himself, is the author of biographies of Rachmaninoff, Liszt, Shostakovich, Chopin, Mozart, Debussy, and Ravel, and a book on the Russian Five.*

Rachmaninoff DA

"...no less real than the music of Schoenberg"

By Eric Salzman

IT WAS not so very long ago that Sergei Rachmaninoff was the biggest bugaboo of modern music. No other composer—not even Sibelius—was the subject of more vituperation than the ever-popular Russian. In the age of mass media and instant co-optation, wide popularity has often been suspect. Rachmaninoff's music was, for many orchestras, conductors, pianists, critics, and audiences, an acceptable substitute for the "modern" music they could not or would not support.

Rachmaninoff's music gave the lie to those who said that Romanticism was dead; it was a living, breathing obstacle to the flow of new ideas into the concert hall. How do you deal with an anachronism? No music was more savagely attacked by the avant-garde, and none was more ardently embraced by its supporters.

And yet how old-fashioned the battle itself now seems. The very arguments put forth against Rachmaninoff—his lack of originality, his popularity, his emotional wallowing, his conformity, his alienated aloofness—are themselves criticisms that grow out of a Romantic point of view.

How reasonable is the anachronism argument? Rachmaninoff's most popular works were written before or just at the turn of the century. By far the greater part of his life's work precedes the First World War. So his work, although a bit out of sync with the times, is hardly a major chronological retrogression. And his handful of later works—notably the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini and the Symphonic Dances—although not exactly avant-garde in approach, certainly show a development from the more purely introspective and emotional approach of the earlier pieces.

And how valid is all our ultra-historical criticism? Do we knock Bach for being a *rétardaire*, behind the times, a conservative in *his* own time? How far, then, can we extend the argument that Rachmaninoff's music was irrelevant to its own time, let alone to ours? Obviously, for millions of people, it has not been irrelevant. For them the escape from the troubles of our times into a personal world of inner emotion—the personalizing of the neuroticisms of our times—has been just as valid in Rachmaninoff's music as in (to take an obvious parallel) many a Hollywood movie of similar vintage and quality.

In the end, most of the attacks on Rachmaninoff's music represent an elitist point of view—the notions of critics and taste-makers who reserve to themselves the right to interpret history and dictate the course of culture. The larger music audience—let alone the "mass public," whatever that is—has never particularly accepted the taste-maker or avant-gardist view of culture. And now the avant-garde—or at least those who like to think they are concerned with the health of our culture—increasingly rejects the old modern-art criteria of originality and innovation for its own sake.

The old modern-music battles are over and the dust has long since settled. Rachmaninoff's music is as much a part of the past as that of Brahms and

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Rachmaninoff

NYET

"It is the extreme case of narcissism in music"

By Eric Salzman

Higgledy-piggledy
Sergei Rachmaninoff
Said to his analyst,
"Sadly enough,
Doctor, I fear that my
Latest concertos are
Dodecaphonically
Not up to snuff."

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF's famous visits to the alienist/hypnotist Dr. Dahl cured him of depression and creative sterility, enabling him to write his Second Piano Concerto. But those visits took place long before twelve-tonism or any other avant-gardism was even dreamt of, and it is unlikely that the unhappy Sergei was really very much concerned about his lack of up-to-datism. But, even if there is little *literal* truth in the double dactyl above, there is enough to excuse the poetic license of it. Rachmaninoff was a deeply disturbed creative artist, born out of his time, trying to escape to a past that never was, and he ended up the victim of Romantic self-pity, bathos, and disabling neurosis.

There is a well-known cycle that takes a great creative idea or movement from an intellectual inner sanctum (or, on occasion, a folk inspiration) to the cultural mainstream; it is eventually turned (at least in mass society) into watered-down, pseudo-popular merchandise before finally achieving the status of a stale joke or, perhaps, a nostalgia item. Nothing illustrates this better than the Romantic piano concerto. From Schumann and Chopin to the *Warsaw Concerto* and the wicked Hoffnung "*Concerto Popolare*" is a circuit of little more than a century, and between the authentic tradition and its latter-day degeneration one finds not much more than two or three Rachmaninoff concertos.

Rachmaninoff, by the age of nineteen, had written an opera based (like virtually all Russian operas) on Pushkin, a piano concerto, and the C-sharp Minor Prelude. By the age of twenty-five, he was a world-famous composer, had conducted his own works in London, scored a disastrous failure with his First Symphony, entered a period of profound neurotic depression, and found himself unable to compose a note. Enter the mysterious Dr. Dahl and his hypnotic-suggestion therapy. The ever-popular Second Concerto bears his name as dedicatee.

Rachmaninoff's newly rediscovered creative impulse carried him through the next decade and a half—until his final departure from Mother Russia. His Third Piano Concerto, a series of choral works (including a setting of a Russian translation of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Bells*!), his two major symphonic works (the Second Symphony and *The Isle of the Dead*), and most of the rest of his solo piano music belong to his post-Dr. Dahl period. All of this music is the last word in late Romanticism: introverted, agonized, and morbid.

At the present time we are undergoing a major re-evaluation of the music of the late- and post-Romantic period—in particular, those large turn-of-the-century canvases that usher in the modern age. The most dramatic of these re-evaluations have concerned those composers who, working in the

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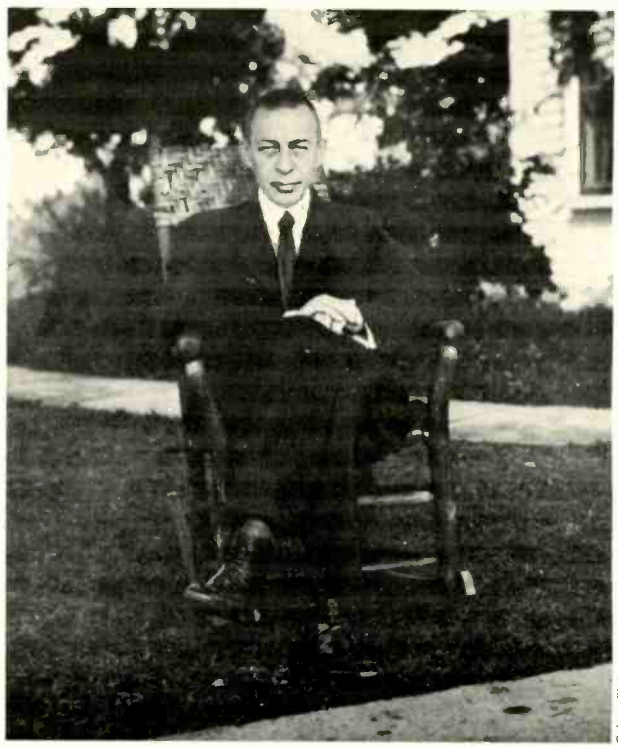
Rachmaninoff DA

(Continued from page 66)

Tchaikovsky (within whose lifetimes a good bit of Rachmaninoff's music was in fact written) or Schoenberg and Stravinsky (whose chronology also overlaps that of Rachmaninoff). As we wander through our cultural museums—whether they are the walled museums we call concert halls or the "museum without walls" that our recorded heritage now constitutes—it is really only a matter of anecdotal concern exactly when those pieces were written and what they meant to Rachmaninoff's contemporaries. And, as we go back and assess Rachmaninoff both as a creative figure and an interpreter, we can sense the relationship between these two aspects of his personality. No one doubts that Rachmaninoff was a great interpreter of Romantic music, and I personally feel that his recording of Schumann's *Carnaval* puts us as closely in touch with the real well-springs of Romantic pianism as we will ever get—the perfect blend of Schumann's Eusebius and Florestan, the dreamy and the fiery. And certainly these elements can be sensed in Rachmaninoff's own music—in the "Paganini" Rhapsody most of all, where the dialectical personality opposition (we call it schizophrenia nowadays) already found in Schumann is so perfectly expressed by the interaction of the playful Paganini theme itself and its counterpoise, the *Dies Irae*.

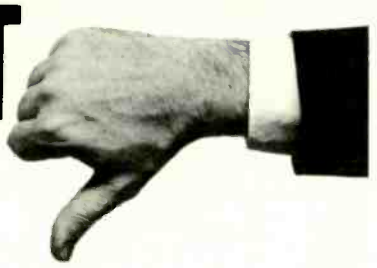
One of the prime characteristics of contemporary electronic culture—a characteristic that is going to have to be accounted for in any understanding of where we are going—is the global network, the electronic connections that extend our nervous systems around the globe and back into the past as well. We have, in effect, more and more of the past with us all the time, transformed, through loudspeakers, into the present. We don't know how Schumann—Robert or Clara—actually played *Carnaval*, but we do know how Rachmaninoff played it, and we do know how he played his own music as well. This is all simply part of history now, part of our heritage and, to the extent to which it is firmly preserved and repeatable at the present moment, part of our present as well. In a deep sense, Rachmaninoff's music (like his playing) as well as its popularity, past and present and possibly future, simply *is*. It is a cultural phenomenon no less real—in some senses *more* real—than the music of Schoenberg; neither one nor the other can be argued away.

We are clearly approaching a whole new view of these questions. The old cultural view—essentially the Romantic one—belongs to a period that can be traced back to the late eighteenth century, and in my view the periods of late Classicism, Romanticism, and "modernism" are really beginning to look—and sound—more and more like a single larger era. Only now do we begin to see and understand the beginnings of a transition to something *really* new. The music of Rachmaninoff is, in this larger view, very much a real part of the cycle. It is, in effect, the necessary complement to modernism in the earlier twentieth century, the necessary foil which only throws the modernist reaction into sharper relief. It is Morton Feldman—the compatriot of John Cage and inventor of free choice and aleatorism in new music—who, when asked to name his influences, always cites Rachmaninoff. This is not mere perversity. Rachmaninoff's music—driven, rich, tormented, popular, always as good as it has to be—is now unthinkable without the balancing counterpoise of the delicate, spare, purposeless "it-ness" of Morton Feldman's music, just as Feldman—or indeed the aging twentieth century—is unthinkable without Rachmaninoff.



Culver Pictures

Rachmaninoff NYET



(Continued from page 67)

shadow of Romanticism, cast their nets widely and, in one way or another, anticipated a truly twentieth-century temper and awareness. The political and social crises that came after 1900—more than a half-century of war and political upheaval—are anticipated in the cultural crisis expressed in the music of Mahler, Ives, early Schoenberg and Berg, Stravinsky, and others. No artist of that fateful period could remain entirely untouched by the temper of the time and the swift passage of events. But for Rachmaninoff, the crisis was somehow merely a personal one: a neurosis expressed as a fear of sterility and death and translated musically into an orgy of virtuosic Slavic breast-beating.

The Russian Revolution was the end of the old order—for Rachmaninoff as for so many others. He left Russia, never to return; he also left his creative career behind. From then on Rachmaninoff was to be known principally as an interpreter of other people's music—briefly as a conductor but mainly, of course, as a pianist. As an interpreter he stood with the greatest. At the keyboard he had the ability to externalize his inwardness, to objectify his personal crisis in terms of the great nineteenth-century masterpieces. Thus, his playing had passion and sweep without the excess that marred so much late-Romantic interpretation—the ability to objectify and universalize that eluded him in his creative work.

Rachmaninoff seems to have found his creative voice again briefly before his death during World War II. From the Thirties we have the Symphonic Dances, the Third Symphony, and, most significantly, the Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini. Here, for the first and perhaps only time in his creative life, there is a sense of certainty, a balance between emotion and idea, a process of universalizing in which, nevertheless, the expressive commitment is maintained. But Rachmaninoff's typical morbidity is never very far around the corner. The *Dies Irae*—the old, portentous, Gregorian chant for the dead, virtually the *leitmotif* of Rachmaninoff's career—is almost as important in this piece as the familiar Paganini theme itself. The demonic virtuosity of the Paganini/Liszt tradition is really only a thin veneer over the unnameable restlessness that is always Rachmaninoff's real subject matter.

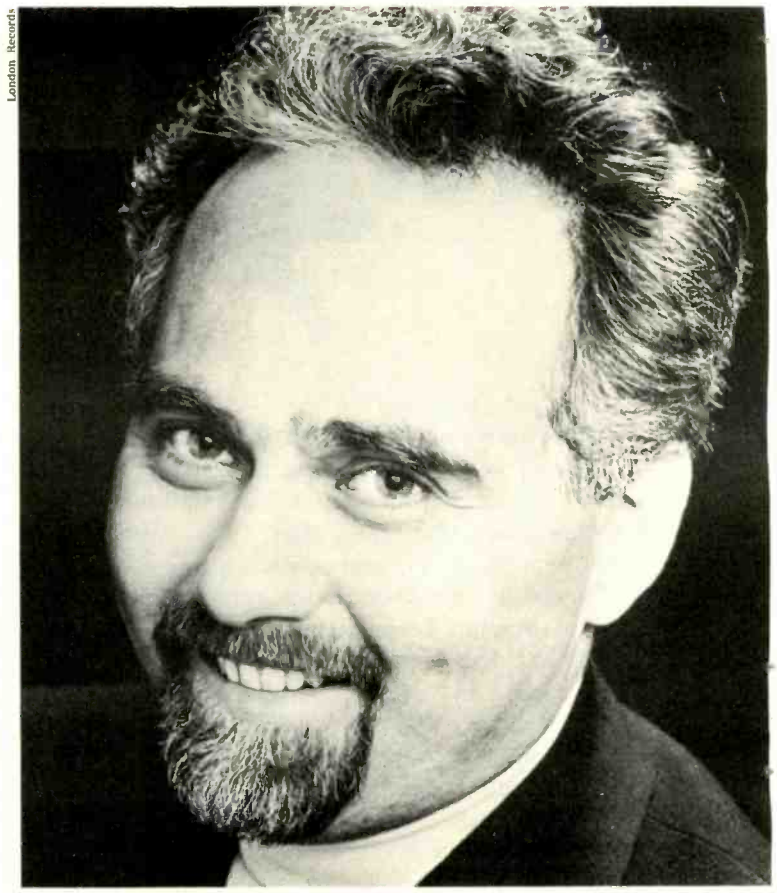
Finally, in my opinion, the most damning thing that can be said about Rachmaninoff's music is that it is—to use Bertolt Brecht's term—"culinary." Unlike most great art, it tells us nothing; it merely tries to evoke sympathy in the listener. By the sheer outpourings of sound, by a series of familiar and mostly minor harmonic contrivances, by running up the flag and constantly drawing on familiar reminiscences of the Romantic tradition in a highly emotional manner, Rachmaninoff creates a kind of background for daydreaming—music to stupefy the listener, to stroke his emotions, to create and accompany his bathetic musings. It is the extreme case of narcissism in music, and it is meant to produce the same narcissism, the same inner emotional bath, in the listener. This style of communication—the old Romantic ideal in its *reductio ad absurdum*—is further intensified by the presence and virtuosity of the soloist as the principal in the psychodrama, the sufferer himself (or, at any rate, the sufferer personified). No wonder the pop arrangers and film makers of the period took so quickly to the Rachmaninoff substance and image. He became the prototype of the suffering Slavic artist, his concertos the prototypes of the *schlock* Romantic film concerto, and his style the model for a generation of film-score composers.

WILL history be kind to Rachmaninoff? I doubt it. His music, which so long represented late Romanticism in the popular imagination, has already been replaced by more authentic and significant examples of the genre. Rachmaninoff occupies—and will continue to occupy—a disproportionate space in the record catalog. But pianists and conductors of major symphonic programs increasingly turn their attention to other, more pressing, matters, and works like the Second Concerto are more and more confined to pops concerts and the like. The old favorites will not disappear—nor am I arguing that they *should*—but at least we don't have to take them seriously any more. Ironically, as we take Rachmaninoff less and less seriously, he actually becomes a bit more listenable. Perhaps, indeed, the very corniness, the mushiness, of Rachmaninoff's music gives it a campy quality that will help it to survive. Like old Hollywood movies—and Rachmaninoff's Romantic style is perfectly Hollywoodian—it has instant nostalgia value. Whether this is a fate better than death is another question; but, for better or for worse, this *is* going to be its fate.

ISTVÁN KERTÉSZ

"I was impressed by the silence..."

By STEPHEN E. RUBIN



CONDUCTOR Istaván Kertész has come to the realization that he is, despite some unfortunate downs in an otherwise up career, "on the sunshine side of life." The forty-three-year-old Hungarian has also come to understand that, for him, the sun shines more favorably in Europe. Thus, in the future, one of the most popular guest conductors of orchestras on this side of the Atlantic will be less in evidence here than he has been in the past. Still there to warm the hearts of sympathetic Americans, however, are his varied, steadily forthcoming recordings.

Kertész has, in effect, relieved himself of being a prime candidate for a post with an American orchestra by tying himself up contractually in Cologne, Germany, until 1979. Recently, the conductor accepted the position of music director of the Gürzenich Orchestra, which is also the resident ensemble of the Cologne Opera, of which Kertész has been director since 1969 (and music director since 1963).

The bearded, blue-eyed conductor admits to no regrets about pulling out of the American race for music directorships. "I don't think there will be any openings," Kertész says in his accented, high-pitched voice. "Mr. Ormandy is a young man, and he's in very good shape. He's only seventy-three. I don't want to wait for anybody's retirement. Now I'm in a state where I can really choose my destiny. I decided that Cologne is my home; my children are going to school there, I have a marvelous house in the suburbs, and the air is beautiful because the forest cleans the dirt of the city. That is my home! At least one of the positions I will keep for a very long time—if not both. Probably, if I got another offer, I would leave the opera and keep the orchestra."

Kertész's actions, he says, were prompted by an unpleasant experience he had with the Cleveland Orchestra. In August 1970, the orchestra musicians voted ninety-six to two in favor of asking their board to engage Kertész as music director of the Cleveland. Ignoring them, the board instead signed Lorin Maazel to a long-term contract as head of the ensemble.

The Cleveland affair was not the first time Kertész has been vexed by orchestra politics. For three years in the mid-Sixties he was principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, but he found that he could not continue because the restrictions imposed on him by the self-governing ensemble were unbearable. "I sacrificed guest conducting," he recalls. "I did not go to the Berlin Philharmonic or the Vienna Philharmonic or to Salzburg. I almost did not come to America, except to Philadelphia. I was not allowed to conduct other orchestras in New York because of my LSO engagements here. I really gave up visiting great orchestras, great countries, great cultures. Finally, I decided that conducting the LSO, great orchestra that it is, was not worth what I had to sacrifice." And for the next couple of years, in the late Sixties, he was pleased not to be involved in orchestral politics.

KERTÉSZ's attitude toward taking on a permanent position has changed since then, however. "Now I've forgotten the troubles and only see the good side," he says, smiling. "Now I'm a little fed up with living from the luggage. Now I want to find an orchestra and say, 'This is mine forever!' Like Ansermet, like Karajan, like Schmidt-Isserstedt."

According to Kertész, "The Gürzenich Orchestra is

good. What's not good is the present conductor [Günther Wand]. He is a very difficult older man, and has trouble with everybody. I certainly believe I can do something with the orchestra." That something should eventually result in the orchestra's developing a "Kertész sound."

"The sound I strive for is warm," he explains, "not *gemütlich*, but warm. Bringing out, perhaps more than necessary, the basses and the cellos and letting them play with a long bow, smooth and with majesty, grandiosity, and not using a general dynamic. I make contrasts. If there is written a true forte, it must be a true forte. This is what I do most at rehearsals. I ask that every dynamic, every kind of characteristic, must be overdone. Either it's fortissimo or pianissimo. Either it's legato or staccato. This must be very clear, even to the last row.

"By this kind of almost-exaggeration, the orchestra sounds alive—like the Sleeping Beauty, it comes awake. Certainly colors improve. Therefore, after many performances, people say to me, 'We have never heard this piece like this before!' I know that I will lose five years of my life because I'm so overworked at rehearsals."

Overworked yes, but not overbearing. Kertész belongs to what he calls the Bruno Walter school. "By being an authoritarian," he says, "one can never succeed. You must be nice to instrumentalists. If you are not, and ask them to repeat things, they will be so furious they will never achieve the sound you like."

THE Kertész method obviously works. He has guest-conducted virtually every major orchestra in the world and is almost always invited to return. "Every orchestra has a different personality, a different face," he explains. "I look at orchestras like human beings; they are all different from each other."

A seasoned connoisseur, Kertész considers the Chicago Symphony the greatest orchestra today. But even in Chicago, he cannot get a pianissimo as fine as the London Symphony's. "If I ask for a pianissimo with the greatest intensity, which has a sound, a vibration, so that the air is moving, only with the London Symphony is this possible. I've never gotten it anywhere else in the world, not in Philadelphia, not in Chicago. It's *misterioso*, frightening, scary."

Kertész has been carrying this sound in his head ever since he was a child. "My childhood is very much alive in my brain and in my heart," he says. "When I was six and started music, it was 1935 and cruel things were going on in Europe. I was affected, of course, by Nazi Germany. But whatever happened in my private life, I found my 'exile' in music, practicing the piano, the fiddle, and writing little compositions. This separated me from the problems of the world, and gave me a feeling that my real home is music.

"At a very early age, I went every night to concerts or the opera. I had a friend who ran a concert bureau and gave me free tickets. I heard all the artists who were allowed to come to Hungary at that time. I remember all of it. And I remember that I felt I must be a conductor. The profession is so great. To reign over an orchestra, to create great sounds. The pianissimo interested me when I was a child—a beautiful, lively pianissimo was what I cared for then and still care for most. I was impressed by the silence more than by a loud fortissimo.

"Of course, as a child, I was also impressed by nice melodies and tunes, and how a conductor can build a concert. I asked all my teachers, 'How can I become a conductor?' 'Just practice the piano and the violin,' they said, 'read scores, and go to concerts.' I decided I must have the kind of musical power to bring what I imagined to life. Things got worse and worse in my private life and better and better in my spiritual life.

"When the war was over I was sixteen and in high school, but I definitely knew what I wanted to do. The rest was almost automatic. I finished high school and went to the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. The first year I studied composition and violin, and the second year I started studying conducting. Three subjects were too much. First I gave up composition, and in 1949 I stopped the violin. I've never touched the fiddle again since then. I figured it was over, finished. I had a beautiful instrument, but I sold it. I really committed my soul, my spirit, to music and to conducting."

In 1953, Kertész graduated from the Liszt Academy and was appointed chief conductor of the Gyor Philharmonic in western Hungary. Within two years he was back in Budapest as a conductor of the State Opera. It was during this period that he developed his orchestral and operatic repertoires, both of which are unusually broad.

In 1957, Kertész settled in Germany, a move that helped toward establishing him as a top conductor among those on the international circuit. By 1960, he had already made his first recordings for London Records. The next year he came to America, and the year after that he signed an exclusive contract with London. By this time, he was globe-trotting with regularity. Beginning with the 1964-1965 season, Kertész was music director of the Cologne Opera. Today, the company he has built is a first-rate one which prides itself on unusual as well as standard repertoire. Of particular interest is the series of Slavic operas he has produced, including such rarely heard works as *The Legend of the Invisible City of Kitezh*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, and *Khovantchina*.

Despite a busy career, Kertész found the time, in 1951, to marry a fellow student from the Liszt Academy, Edith Gabry, a lyric soprano who specializes in contemporary music. They have three children. Gabor, nineteen, Peter ten, and Katherin, eight.

TODAY, more than ever, Kertész is able to appreciate both his family and the rewards of a career that is the envy of colleagues much older. "I feel very happy," he says. "I don't think I have to work for history. I never felt in my life that I am a man of whom writers must later write a book. I am a simple musician. As a simple musician who enjoys music, and in the same way tries to enjoy life, I have completed my life. Whatever comes after is a gift. I enjoy it as it comes. I don't think I'm a tremendously ambitious man, certainly not now. But I was. Before, I was worried about many things. Maybe I was even jealous of my colleagues. I wanted to be here, I wanted to be there, I wanted to be two places on the same day.

"Once, recently, during a four-month vacation, I was thinking to myself, what else is there that I really can reach? I'm not a man who works for musical history; I'm not a man who wants a statue in Central Park; I'm not interested in having my portrait in the Hungarian National Gallery. What I'm interested in is that my children should be normal and nice human beings and that my life should be satisfactory. I think it would be very ungrateful if I still had those other impossible wishes. I don't want to force my destiny."

Ten golden ears in listening attitudes: Julian Hirsch, Craig Stark, Plato, Larry Klein, and Ralph Hodges.

Results of an informal test project on the audibility of

AMPLIFIER DISTORTION

By Robert Carver

DISTORTION is one of those specifications that everyone talks about but few really seem to understand. For example, newcomers to the world of high fidelity frequently have the impression that distortion is something that bad amplifiers have and good ones don't. A manufacturer revises the distortion specification of one of his products from, say, 0.1 per cent to 0.05 per cent, and audiophiles immediately assume that it will now sound "cleaner" as a result. Or an engineer discovers that a product under test suffers from high "crossover" distortion at low power levels, and he immediately assumes that it will sound rotten in actual use.

Considering the efforts expended to reduce distortion to ever-lower levels, it seems curious that few, if any, engineers have ever stepped back from their test instruments long enough to ask themselves exactly what specific goal they are striving for. The difficulty, of course, is that the meters on distortion-test instruments have only numbers on them rather than such meaningful legends as HIGH, LOW, and SUB-AUDIBLE. And in the absence of some definitive word from the psychoacoustics labs stating that "the trained listener is unable to hear distortion of complex program material when it is below *x* per cent," engineers will continue to strive onward—or is it "downward"?—for ever-lower distortion numbers.

At this point some readers may be thinking, "So what? Even if there is only a questionable advantage in lowering distortion *far* below the level at which it is audible, what's the harm?" Well, there is harm if the product thereby ends up costing more than it really has to, or if the money spent on lowering distortion could have been used elsewhere in the design to produce some more practical user benefits.

I have touched on these matters from time to time in my monthly *Audio Questions and Answers* column, and Julian Hirsch has also devoted at least one of his recent *Technical Talk* columns to the question of the audible effects of crossover distortion, but neither of us then had access to any hard experimental data to back up our suppositions and speculations. During a conversation with Robert Carver, designer of the Phase Linear equipment, I mentioned our interest in the subject and struck gold. It seems that he had been investigating the question of the audible threshold of distortion for years and had notes, laboratory data, and, what is more, firm opinions on the subject. But, since some of his findings seriously contradicted accepted audio dogma, he felt that, for credibility's sake, it would be best not simply to write an article (as I immediately urged him to do) telling what he had found, but rather to recapitulate, in condensed form, his original experiments for the eight "golden ears" attached to the technically oriented editors and contributing editors of STEREO REVIEW and allow us to come to our own conclusions. And so, one Saturday morning early this year, Julian Hirsch, Ralph Hodges, Craig Stark, and I came together in Craig's basement laboratory/listening room and awaited the arrival of Robert Carver, his 200 pounds of test instruments, and what turned out to be some mind-blowing revelations. The following article, with some additional explanatory notes, is Mr. Carver's description of *some* of what we discovered during that fascinating weekend. —Larry Klein, *Technical Editor*

THE prospect of conducting a weekend of technical demonstrations for the assembled technical editors of STEREO REVIEW caused me a certain amount of trepidation. Was I being simply perverse in trying to prove that very low distortion really wasn't necessary—when I had already designed and was marketing two super-low-distortion high-power amplifiers? I knew what my measurements had shown and what my ears had heard, but would I be able to convince the others? Would they find some flaw in my procedures, my instrumentation, logic—or even my ears?

After I arrived at Craig Stark's home and unpacked and set up the test equipment and a specially modified Phase Linear 400 amplifier, we measured the background ambient noise level of our temporary laboratory. It was found to be a mere 31 dB—about the same level of quietness as is found in the country, far from the city, in the early morning hours. That is very quiet indeed, so there was little or no chance of masking effects interfering with our ability to hear whatever distortion was present. To "calibrate" our ears we played an excellent wide-range recording (an early English pressing of a folk-rock album, "The Pentangle," Transatlantic Records TRA 162) with, among other instruments, drums, snares, and a solo female vocalist. One side of the record was played several times so that we all became very familiar with the overall character and sonic "flavor" of the material. (The very low tracking force we used precluded audible groove damage that might result from repeated plays.) After listening for perhaps thirty minutes, the group unanimously agreed that the overall fidelity and "sound" of our system was almost awesome. Transients were clean and clear, plucked strings had a transparency that was absolutely chilling, and the low-frequency detail was superb—nothing was missing.

At this point we substituted an excellent 300-watt amplifier (made by a competing manufacturer) to convince ourselves that the Phase Linear 400 was indeed performing properly and that there was nothing in its sound quality that might somehow cloud our judgments during the experiments to follow. When we were finally able to get the output levels of the two power amplifiers *exactly* matched, there was absolutely no audible difference when switching between them while listening to either white noise or music. During the adjustments of the amplifiers, it was demonstrated dramatically that minute differences in volume level (sound *quantity*) that are too subtle to be heard as such are interpreted by the ear as "obvious" differences in sound *quality*. Everyone was startled by the effect—everyone, that is, except Larry Klein, who had touched upon the phenomenon some time ago in his *Audio Questions and Answers* column.

And so, psychologically and sonically prepared, we were all set, we felt, to deal with the big question: In what amounts and under what circumstances do the effects of distortion become audible? The additional signal sources we used for our tests included master tapes, a white-noise generator, and a variety of music with a wide dynamic range drawn from commercially available records. The speakers we used were AR-LSTs, chosen for their linearity, very wide frequency range, and high power-handling capability. An assortment of other lab instruments was employed to produce the scope photos and check the measurable data, but the basic point was not what could be measured, but rather what could be heard and how it correlated with what was measured.

OUR primary "test instrument" was the Phase Linear 400 stereo power amplifier that had been modified at the factory to have switch-selectable, pre-measured amounts of "crossover" distortion (see accompanying box). Klein, Hirsch, Hodges, and Stark assumed positions around the left-channel speaker. The amplifier, fed by a Hewlett-Packard generator, delivered a pure 60-Hz tone at a 1-watt level to the LST. The distortion switch on the Phase Linear was stepped upward: 0.05 per cent, then 0.07, 0.1, 0.15, 0.2—stop! There it is! 0.2 per cent. Wow!

Everyone was in agreement that there was some *ever-so-slight* change in the tone at 0.2 per cent distortion. The next increment was a large one—a jump to 0.75 per cent, at which point the distortion sounded like a separate buzz on top of the 60-Hz tone. It was audibly obvious, and all were in complete agreement as to its presence. Repeating the test at 4 watts into the speaker increased our perceptual sensitivity, and it was discovered that distortion of 0.15 per cent could then just barely be detected. (The STEREO REVIEW people all expressed surprise that such small amounts of distortion were audible.)

We next used two mixed tones: 60 and 7,000 Hz. At 0.15 per cent nobody heard the distortion. In fact, up to and including a level of 2 per cent, no one was certain that he was hearing distortion. However, the distortion suddenly became obvious to everyone at 2.5 per cent. It was heard as an "overlay" or harmonic tone added to the 60-Hz tone.

For the next test, three tones—60, 3,000, and 7,000 Hz—were mixed and fed to the speaker at a four-watt level. Even at 2 per cent no one heard the distortion. The *lowest* distortion perceptible to any

of us was a whopping—and startling—4 per cent!

Two more tests were performed, this time using music. The music was the recording of Pentangle used earlier for "ear calibration." The amplifier power output averaged about one watt. Distortion was stepped upwards as previously, and at 6 per cent we just began to detect a "strained" quality in the singer's voice. However, even at 6 per cent, distortion was *not* evident on the percussive instruments. It was only at 12 per cent that distortion began to affect the sound of the guitar and cymbals. Higher distortion levels caused an obvious "fuzziness" in the sound. To test the relationship of volume level to the ear's ability to detect distortion, we played the music at a very loud level with peaks exceeding 100 dB. There was no difference: distortion was again just barely audible at 12 per cent.

So far, our tests indicated that very small amounts of distortion (0.15 per cent) are perceptible *if* the program material is sufficiently simple—for example, a single pure, steady tone. Mixing two tones dramatically raised the threshold of perception to over 2 per cent. Three simultaneous tones, representing increasingly complex program material, resulted in a perception level of a surprising 4 per cent. With normally complex music, it was necessary to increase distortion to a full 6 per cent before it became just perceptible.

Although there were five different listeners of varying age involved in the tests, whatever distortion was present was usually heard by everyone—or no one. There was no disagreement. For example, on the single-tone test, 0.1 per cent was not perceptible to anyone, but 0.2 per cent was immediately evident to everyone.

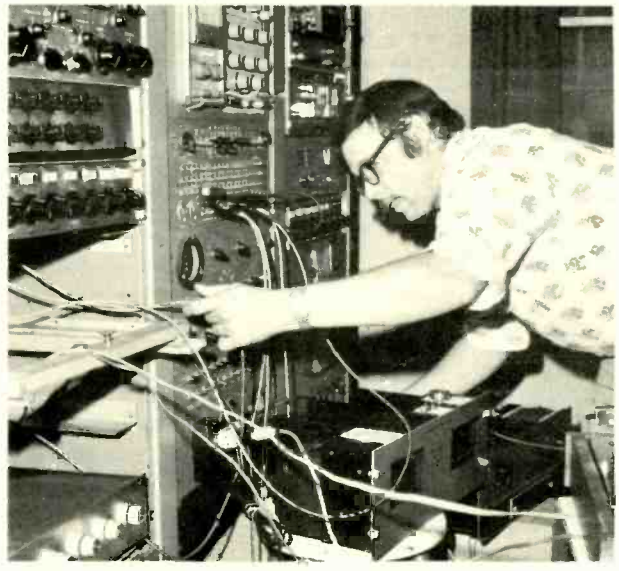
It seems clear that, since crossover distortion levels below 6 per cent are not audible when listening to *complex* musical material, an amplifier whose measured crossover distortion is below 6 per cent will probably sound fine *most* of the time. But since distortion as low as 0.15 per cent *was* audible with a single test tone, we therefore set out to determine to what degree our test tone resembled anything that might be encountered in normal program material. In other words, could we find a recording that contained musical material "simple" enough to allow us to perceive distortion at a level below 6 per cent? We found one: a recording of Mozart's four horn concertos (Vanguard S-173) in which a single French horn is featured in several solo passages.

During these sections, we found that some change of tonal quality could be heard with distortion at a very low 0.35 per cent. With the distortion switched in, the horn acquired a "richer" quality, presumably because the harmonic distortion generated by the crossover notch added a little harmony (no pun). As higher levels of distortion were switched in, the added harmonics subtly changed the character of the horn, each time making it sound as if it had been exchanged for a different—though equally good—instrument. Only when the crossover distortion climbed above 12 per cent did the horn begin to sound fuzzy or "bad."

The objection might be raised that when distortion was not perceptible it was because the total "normal" distortion in the complete recording-playback chain was great enough to mask the distortion added during the experiment. However, our high sensitivity to added distortion on a single test tone and our low sensitivity to distortion with three test tones suggest that entirely different psychoacoustic mechanisms were operating.

THE human ear has a loudness-sensitivity response that is roughly logarithmic—which means that for every doubling of subjective loudness the objective power level of the sound has to be boosted ten times. It is this logarithmic characteristic that permits the ear to hear sounds over a loudness range of about ten trillion to one. In addition, the sensitivity of the ear varies not only with volume; its sensitivity to any given frequency may also be affected by the presence of other adjacent frequencies. This would explain why increasing the number of test tones resulted in a decrease in our ability to perceive distortion. When a single 60-Hz tone was used, our ears were operating at maximum sensitivity for frequencies far away from the fundamental. Hence, it was relatively easy to hear the higher

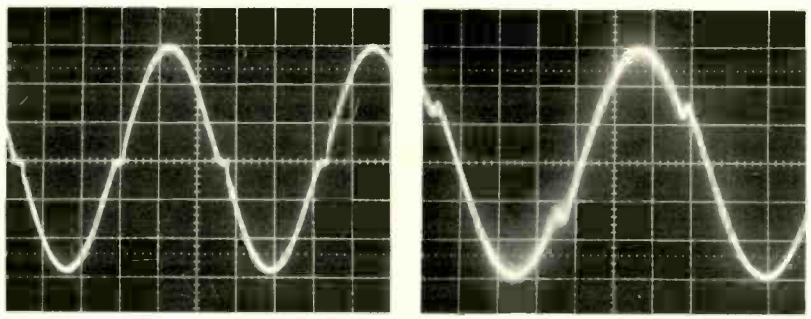
The author is shown "patching in" the specially modified Phase Linear 400 power amplifier. Distortion-setting controls are visible on the top right corner of the amplifier's chassis cover.



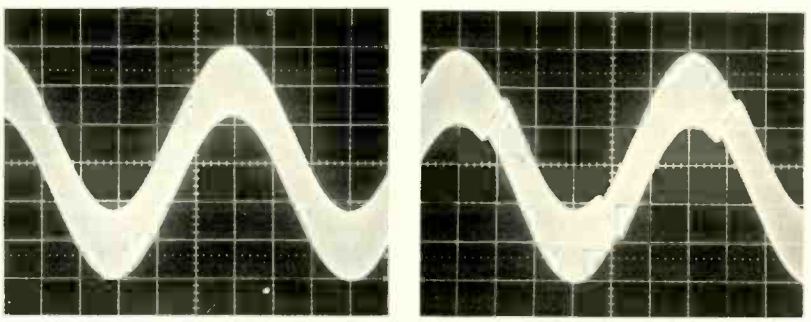
A NOTE ON CROSSOVER DISTORTION

CROSSOVER distortion is so named because it usually takes place at that point on a signal waveform where there is a change in polarity (or a crossover) from positive to negative or negative to positive. (The concept of signal polarity is easy to grasp if you think of a speaker cone at rest as being at zero, and being at positive or negative at its "out" or "in" positions. The record groove can also be thought of as pushing the phono stylus in positive and negative directions, with a silent groove representing zero.) Crossover distortion occurs because transistor-amplifier power-output circuits, for reasons having to do with their mode of operation (technically speaking, class B rather than class A) have difficulty operating linearly at the point where the output transistors that handle the positive part of the cycle must take over from those handling the negative part—or *vice versa*.

In designing our test conditions we spent some time discussing the validity of using purposely introduced crossover distortion (see the accompanying oscilloscope photos) to represent the distortion normally encountered in modern audio equipment. It was finally agreed that, given today's amplifier designs, crossover distortion *is* the most common type of distortion one finds in amplifiers when they are not clipping. (Note that the descriptive terms "crossover distortion" and "clipping distortion" refer to the appearance or source of the distortion.) However, an IM or harmonic-distortion analyser doesn't care about either the source or the type of the waveform aberration; it simply reads it out as a certain percentage of IM (intermodulation) or THD (total harmonic) distortion. Some waveform aberrations produce higher percentages of certain types of distortion than others, but it must be remembered that the percentage numbers have no one-to-one correlation in respect to audible disagreeableness. It is generally accepted that high-order, non-harmonically related distortions such as are produced by "crossover" aberrations are subjectively the most irritating—yet they do not produce any higher numbers on a distortion analyser. It therefore seems safe to assume that crossover distortion is truly representative of "worst-case" conditions. In other words, if you can't hear *x* per cent of crossover distortion, you wouldn't be able to hear a similar percentage of distortion arising from some other cause. One other point should be made. Crossover distortion is present at normal listening levels since it is a *constant* quantity whose percentage of the total output signal increases as the power level decreases. In contrast, clipping distortion usually occurs only on momentary peaks when the signal level is very high. —*L.K.*



Waveform at left shows classic crossover notch and represents 12 per cent IM distortion. An IM distortion of 30 per cent is shown at right. Displacement of the crossover notch from the zero axis is caused by the reactive (speaker) load.



Waveform at left represents two tones (60 and 3,000 Hz) with 0.15 per cent distortion. The same frequencies are shown at right, with the difference that distortion is now 12.5 per cent and the signal is appearing across a reactive load.

harmonics produced by the distortion components added to the fundamental. However, when the second tone was added, enough "masking" energy was present at the upper frequencies to cause the sensitivity of our ears to decrease significantly. The reduction in sensitivity was sufficient to render the distortion components inaudible until they were boosted by a factor greater than ten. This psychoacoustic masking phenomenon is well known today, and is made use of in the Dolby and some other noise-reduction systems. However, it has not generally been thought of as having any bearing on distortion perception.

In our final discussions, the editors admitted to some shock and surprise at both their sensitivity and lack of sensitivity to distortion under the various test conditions. And I pointed out, perhaps unnecessarily, that we had investigated only the most common and "worst-case" type of distortion encountered in amplifiers, that there are many other design factors that affect the sound of today's transistor equipment. However, that must await another time, another discussion, one which will include some of the other data and insights that have emerged on the question of what makes transistor amplifiers sound bad—or good.

Robert Carver *has taught physics at California State University. Designer of the Phase Linear equipment, he's just completed a preamp with noise reduction based on psychoacoustic masking.*

CAROLE KING

"You can get to know me through my music"

By Robert Windeler

THE unquestioned queen of the singer/songwriter phenomenon that has already led to some quieter sounds and more thoughtful lyrics in the music of the 1970's is Carole King. (The question of kingship remains highly debatable and must be taken up another day.) And where Carole has led, others have followed. In fact, the disc jockeys and record buyers of the United States haven't had such an array of female voices to choose from since the days when Patti Page, Jo Stafford, and Rosemary Clooney were singing about sand dunes on Cape Cod, jambalaya and crawfish pie in New Orleans, waltzes in Tennessee, and pyramids along the Nile, and that was so long ago that it only cost a nickel a song to hear Teresa Brewer on the jukebox. However, there is a crucial difference between now and those earlier times: most of today's women write their own material.

Carole King was a successful songwriter for a dozen years before she released, at the age of thirty-two, her second solo album as a performer. The record was called "Tapestry," and the songs on it do weave a highly subjective view of life. They have also kept Carole King and half a dozen other singers at the top of music surveys ever since. "Tapestry" at last count had sold more than 5,500,000 copies in this country alone and has long since surpassed the movie soundtrack of *The Sound of Music*, the original Broadway-cast recording of *My Fair Lady*, and Simon & Garfunkel's "Bridge over Troubled Water" as the best-selling record album of all time. Carole won three Grammy Awards at the 1972 ceremonies of the Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences in Hollywood. Such artists as Peggy Lee, Barbra Streisand, and James Taylor sing Carole King songs, as do Blood, Sweat and Tears and Dionne Warwicke, but so far no one sings *You've Got a Friend*, *I Feel the Earth Move*, or *Where You Lead* as successfully as Carole herself does.

She is a near-recluse who is married for the second time and the mother of three. She didn't attend her triple-win Grammy ceremonies because she was still nursing her latest baby. When not rehearsing, performing, or recording, she keeps house in Laurel Canyon, West Hollywood, and still considers herself a writer rather than a performer.

Carole's long climb to the top has been dazzling, but she is most reluctant to talk about it. She likes her three dogs, her privacy, and most other musicians. She dislikes interviews, and even the very rare one she grants will have to take place after a whole long list of other more

important things get done, such as taking empty soda bottles to the recycling center. The young woman who stuns audiences whenever she appears on tour, and sits at the piano nearly mesmerized by her own music, says simply "I want my music to speak for me. You can get to know me through my music." Music industry insiders have been doing just that since 1959 when she wrote (ironically, with her ex-husband) *Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?*, a Shirelles hit then and a standard now.

She was born in New York, went to high school in Brooklyn, attended college in Manhattan (City) and Queens (Queens), married her high-school sweetheart, and had two children (her third was not born until November 1971). Carole and her husband-collaborator, Gerry Goffin, had a string of hits, including a song they wrote and produced for their maid, who billed herself as Little Eva when she performed her employers' *Loco-Motion*. Goffin and King survived rather than participated in the brasher sounds of the 1960's, and created songs in their own style for Aretha Franklin (*Natural Woman*), the Drifters (*Up on the Roof*), and others. The marriage did not survive, however, and in 1968 Carole left New York for Los Angeles. "I needed to get together a new identity," Carole says. "It's very hard to maintain a marriage writing together." But the Goffins found they were occasionally able to collaborate after their breakup.

As early as 1961, Carole had auditioned as a recording artist, doing a demonstration record of her own *It Might as Well Rain Until September*, which was eventually recorded by Bobby Vee. And Atlantic Records' president Ahmet Ertegun says he remembers "this little Jewish girl constantly hanging around begging me to let her make a record." But Carole didn't really get the chance to record until she joined with guitarist Danny Kootch and a drummer in a Los Angeles group called the City in 1968. James Taylor came to L.A., and Kootch, who had worked with him in New York, introduced Taylor to Carole. Taylor played guitar in jam sessions with the City, and they produced a nice, straightforward sound that was slightly ahead of its time.

Taylor asked Carole to play piano on his second album, "Sweet Baby James," which introduced the phenomenal *Fire and Rain*. Carole then approached Lou Adler, producer of "Tapestry" and founder/head of Ode Records, Carole's label, to help her do a solo record. She had known him in the late Fifties and early Sixties when she was under contract to Colgems Music Publishing and he was their West Coast manager. Although a fan of Carole's who had often tried to persuade her to record, Adler was still busy with the Mamas and the Papas, so he turned her over to a friend, John Fishback, who produced her first album. "Carole King: Writer," as it was called, contained twelve King songs and ten lyrics by Gerry Goffin, who also mixed the recording. "Writer" sold all of eight thousand copies, mostly to friends and fans in the business who had been collecting her old demos and tapes all those years anyway. But the album was critically acclaimed, and Adler, one of the boy wonders of the music business since his Dunhill days, took personal charge of Carole's second, third, and fourth albums.

Taylor, Kootch, and Charles Larkey (a bass player with a group called Jo Mama and Carole's current husband), played on her first album and all subsequent ones. Carole began touring with Taylor, at first just playing the piano for him, then doing an occasional solo, finally as second act on the bill (with Jo Mama opening the show). She electrified audiences, but the album remained a dud commercially. Adler, who speculates that it was because "Writer" was soft-sell and had more of a jazz feel than "Tapestry," which managed to be commercial without compromising Carole's basic musical integrity, said, "Nothing discouraged me. I'm a fan and in love with her."

Suddenly it was Carole King, performer, and she, for one, was scared. "As a writer it's very safe and womblike," is Carole's view, "because somebody else gets the credit or the blame." She was nervous about performing live, and credits the laconic country-tinged singer/composer Taylor with teaching her how to relax. As for the singer/songwriter phenomenon she finds herself such an important part of, "It's a question of everything moving in cycles. In the Sixties, after President Kennedy's death, everything got very 'anti.' The Beatles in all their glorious insolence were the start of anti-heroism, anti-romanticism. Now the cycle has gone back to romanticism. People got sick of the psychedelic sound and wanted softer moods."

She counts herself fortunate to have "happened to be there at the right time." And Carole characterizes herself as not being success-motivated. "I want to play music, but I have no particular desire for the limelight itself.

"I have always written more in the direction of my friends and family," she says. "I like to touch them with my songs; touching a mass of people is a whole other trip—it is a high-energy trip and it's very exciting, but it's another trip. I don't want to be a Star with a capital S. The main reason I got into performing and recording on my own was to expose my songs to the public in the fastest way. I don't consider myself a singer."

Carole's husband Charles is several years her junior (Carole is quite hung up on being 34, an advanced age for a pop heroine, and wishes she were a good deal younger). She lives with him, her two daughters by Goffin, who are now eleven and thirteen, and the Larkeys' own child in her white frame house in Laurel Canyon.

WHEN she writes a song (now often serving as her own lyricist), Carole has a general idea about what she wants, discusses it with Adler, and then sits down with the musicians selected, always including Taylor and her husband. "We play it a couple of times and we learn it just by listening because we are all so close," she says. "Then it's only a question of polishing and refining it, until it has a degree of spontaneity about it but is still tight."

Carole's third and fourth albums, "Music" and "Rhymes and Reasons," have come and gone. Although "Music" did not come close to the sales total for "Tapestry," it sold 1,200,000 copies, hardly an embarrassment in an industry in which $1,000,000 in sales is recognized by a gold record award. The acceptance she's received as a composer is what keeps her going as a performer. And it is in writing that she really expresses herself, as in her poignant *Child of Mine* (which Anne Murray and others have also recorded), a song written to and rejoicing in her daughter. If others like to listen—and today's increasingly sophisticated and honest audiences apparently do—that's fine too.

"But she's still basically a writer," says Lou Adler. "The performing part is amazing to her. All of those artist trips don't interest her at all. She's a Laurel Canyon housewife. She's always been writing and thinking in much the same way; the only difference is that now, with a different kind of music listener, she's being heard."

Fania Records

A scene from the popular film Nuestra Cosa (Our Latin Thing). *Under that hat at far left Hector LaVoe may be planning another riot.*

THE LATIN CONNECTION

By Joel Vance

LATIN music is, in many ways, an unacknowledged member of that large, disorderly family loosely designated as American pop music. Though it appeals to an extensive and numerous audience, it remains largely invisible and barely heard except within the boundaries of the Latin community for which it is continually being created. True, this kind of cultural myopia is not a new phenomenon in America—it wasn't so long ago that James Brown, for instance, was grossing millions without the general public's having even the foggiest idea of who he was—but it's a terrible shame. Latin music is great fun; it's sweepingly passionate, good-natured, and, like the Latins themselves, both proud and generous. It can be subtle, but it is rarely introspective. It is, in essence, "people" music, and Lord knows there's precious little of *that* around.

There are signs, however, that Latin music is beginning to filter out of the *barrio* (as Soul did) and into the general pop consciousness, not surprisingly through diluted versions of the real thing performed by mainstream artists. Much recent rock music, in particular, reflects Latin influences. Those well-known Latinos Simon and Garfunkel, for example, had a hit with *El Condor Pasa*, a Peruvian folk song (to which Simon wrote dippy lyrics) that is scored for the homemade flutes of the Argentinian *carnavalito* musicians. And the rock group Santana has built a highly lucrative career out of a calculated combination of basic Latin rhythms and imitations of Eric Clapton's more excessive electric guitar solos. (One of Santana's biggest hits, *Oye Como Va*—"How's it going?"/"How are you?"/"What's happening?"—was lifted almost intact from an original by Tito Puente, the Duke Ellington of Latin music.)

Still, even with such easy-to-come-by stylistic proselytizing, Latin music remains centered primarily in New York. The Latin migration, like nearly all the great migrations to this country in the last hundred years, came through the port of New York. Most of the Puerto Ricans have stayed in the city, and the Cuban exiles who did not pause to rest in Florida have settled in New York or at least visit frequently. The Cuban musical influence is very strong, since Cuba, the mother country of Latin rhythms, has extended its influence to Puerto Rico and beyond, absorbing parts of American jazz and

Caribbean calypso as well. Until the late Fifties, when Fidel Castro came to power, Cuba was highly Americanized and was where Latin music, Afro-Cuban music, and jazz cross-pollinated in, among other places, a very active record industry.

Out of this feverish musical miscegenation arose the four basic styles grouped together under the comprehensive rubric "Latin music." Specifically, they are: (1) *típico*, the typical "old country" sound, (2) Afro-Cuban, represented by such as Cándido and Mongo Santamaria, (3) *moderno*, or "Latin soul," which blends jazz and rock with the basic rhythms, and (4) South and Central American styles, including the bossa nova and the samba. Most New York-based Latin bands make regular tours of Central and South America; when they return, they experiment with the local music they've heard and incorporate it into their personal styles.

The standard Latin band is made up of eight men: the lead vocalist (he is crucial), bass, piano, two horns (trumpets, trombones, or one of each), and the rhythm section (conga, bongos, and timbales). Optional rhythm instruments include the *güiro*, a serrated dried gourd (a stick is drawn across the "teeth," giving the effect of about twenty people cracking walnuts a split second behind each other), and the *claves*, two thick, resonant sticks beaten against each other in a rhythm complementary to the basic one. A cowbell is mandatory, but the full set of standard drums (standard in American bands, that is) is seldom used.

The lead singer is considered an instrument. He is part of the band and helps to make up the total sound. To be effective, a singer must have superior phrasing—like a Crosby or a Sinatra—because the Latin audience knows what it wants to hear from him: a perfect understanding, lyrically, rhythmically, and emotionally, of the song's message. The bolero, for example, is a slow lovers' dance, and you do not dance the bolero with someone unless you really like him. The dancers know this, the band knows it, and the singer had better know it—and how to put this knowledge across. And that is why Santos Colón, the lead singer with Tito Puente for nearly twenty years (he now free-lances in Puerto Rico) can still make a young girl's heart flutter; like Sinatra, he knows what to do, how to do it. and to whom he is doing it.

Latin music, at home or in the night club, is mostly for dancing. The movement now is generally back to *típico*, although a good band can and will play whatever its audience wants. This is determined by age group. Most young people now want the *guaracha*, *guajira*, or *guaguanco*, all of which involve a minimum of foot movement and a lot of shaking and twitching from there on up. The cha-cha and merengue are ageless. A Latin girl can tell if her partner knows how to dance the merengue well by how firmly he places his hand on her spine—properly done, it is much like the way a guitarist puts his fret-hand thumb on the back of the instrument's neck. There is supposed to be space between the partners in the merengue, but if you like your partner a lot, the space gets progressively smaller.

You may never have heard of the Tico or Alegre or Fania labels, but most of the best Latin music has been recorded by them. Tico and Alegre are owned by Roulette, a jazz and pop label formed in the Fifties, for which many of the Fifties rock stars recorded (including the memorable Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers). Fania is an independent label owned in part by Latin star Johnny Pacheco. But there are dozens of other small labels, some based in New York, some in Florida. Latin recordings are relatively inexpensive to produce; the tunes on them have been tested many times in front of audiences, the bands are well drilled, and there is a high sense of professionalism—all of which means less time in the studio and lower production costs. This is one of the reasons why there are so many Latin albums available. Three—or, in some cases, as many as five—Latin albums can be produced for the same money as one album by a popular rock group. In any case, there's a tremendous amount of fine Latin music around. The following list does not pretend to be complete, but the records are all both representative and tasty. So, if you like the taste, remember that there's much, much more to be had.

For starters, there's Tito Puente, generally considered the grand master, and, as mentioned before, the "Duke Ellington of Latin Music." His compositions and arrangements are the most colorful, his orchestra is tightly disciplined, and it swings simply ferociously. Like Ellington's, many of his men have been with him for years, and when a musician joins Puente's band he takes on new prestige. (Doc Severinsen, by the way, did a stint with Puente, just as jazz trombonist Miff Mole once did with Toscanini.) For some representative Puente, try "*El Rey Bravo*" (Tico 1086) and "*Pa'lante*" (Tico 1214).

Among the other major figures is La Lupe (Tico 1167 and 1179), a fiery, sexy, all-woman vocalist, the Tina Turner of Latin music. Formerly with Puente and now a star on her own, she specializes in the bolero, and she is the only Latin vocalist who can, by her sheer presence, command an audience to stop dancing and just look and listen. She has been known to pull off her hand jewelry in mid-song

and throw it into the crowd. This is not a planned gesture, just honest exuberance—but she runs up a big bill in jewelry. With Graciela (Orfeon 3312-406) and Celia Cruz (Tico 1227 and 1232), she is one of the "big three" female Latin singers.

Both La Lupe and Celia Cruz, by the way, believe in *Santería*, a religion which has a large following in the Latin community. It centers around various saints to whom the faithful pray for gifts and powers. It is, in general, a benevolent spiritualism, but some of the believers have been known to pray that safes will fall from roofs onto the heads of their enemies. A mixture of African, Cuban native, Catholic, and voodoo beliefs, *Santería* counts many musicians and singers among the faithful, and often finds expression in a remarkable "gospel" music, some of which can be heard on "Santería" (Gema LPG 1193).

Ray Barretto recorded *El Watusi* (Tico 1087), a song about a man being taught to dance by a *mulata* (black woman). It's nearly the same thing as Edith Piaf's *Milord*, in which a little barmaid teaches a rich guy to dance and forget his troubles. The ad-lib conversation with the band is part of the plot and the charm, which is considerable. Barretto is also the author of *Hard Hands*, a character song about a conga player. He has lately been emphasizing Latin self-pride in his music, dispensing something akin to James Brown's consciousness-raising *I'm Black and I'm Proud*. Barretto can be heard on Fania 391 and 362.

Willie Colón (Fania 00424, 00406, and 384) is a twenty-two-year-old trombonist whose band already has several *número uno* albums to its credit. Colón's vocalist is the erratic Hector LaVoe, who is sometimes very good and sometimes very silly. LaVoe once started a brawl in a club by misjudging the ability of the Cubans, Dominicans, and Colombians in the audience to take a joke when he proclaimed: "Anybody here who isn't Puerto Rican—go to hell!" Result: several busted lips, shots fired in the air by the club owner, and the summoning of a flying wedge of policemen to restore order. Colón's "greatest hits" album is titled, appropriately, "Crime Pays."

Ricardo Ray (Alegre 8800) leads a reliable and long-running band whose efforts are sparked by the vocals of Bobby Cruz and newcomer Micki Vimarie. In addition to regular club appearances, Ray often plays gigs at prisons and has moved toward social topics in his music.

Johnny Pacheco is on Fania 00409 and 380 (he is co-owner of the label), and he has also co-produced the Latin-music film documentary *Nuestra Cosa (Our Latin Thing)*. In the Sixties he introduced the popular dance the pachanga. He is also a flute virtuoso, and the release of each of his albums is regarded as an important musical event, perhaps because he seldom appears on stage. Pacheco was born in Santo Domingo, but musically his influences are mostly Cuban.

Willie Bobo (Tico 1108, Sussex SXBS 7003), like Cándido (Solid State 18066) and Mongo Santamaria (Atlantic SC 1621), manages to mix jazz with Afro-Cuban rhythms, a synthesis that is both compelling and highly charged. All to the good.

Eddie Palmiere (Alegre 817) is an extraordinarily influential composer and arranger whose band nearly all Latin musicians listen to for inspiration and education. Eddie's brother Charlie (Alegre 816) is a free-lance keyboard man, considered by all his peers to be a master musician. Eddie used to be *típico*, but recently he has brought in jazz and rock elements.

Other interesting Latin musicians include Roberto Roena (Fania 383), Orchestra Harlow (Fania 385), the Fania All-Stars (jam sessions on Fania 355 and 364), Santos Colón (Fania 00405 and 387), and Airto Moreira (Buddah BDS-21-SK and 5085). Moreira, a Brazilian percussionist who spent six months in the rain forests living with the natives and learning how to make and play their instruments, has appeared many times with Miles Davis, and heads a loose group including guitarist-flutist-arranger Hermeto (Cobblestone 9000) and vocalist Flora. They play what might be described as "jungle jazz."

THIS brief overview will, I hope, suggest to you that what jazz and, later, rock used to be capable of—a direct emotional communication that makes you forget your troubles and gives you an identity that makes you comfortable and proud—is now pretty much the exclusive province of Latin music. It has not yet (*gracias a Dios*) become intellectualized, and there seems to be little danger that the professors will take it over in the foreseeable future. Latin music in America is a culture within a culture; it can reach both the inner and the outer circles without compromising itself or turning into sugar water because it is basically an attitude, a life style.

At a Latin party once I noticed a quiet old man who'd been sitting on the couch all evening. Suddenly he jumped up, grabbed the prettiest girl in the room, and led her into a happy dance. The friend who'd brought me laughed and said, "*El tiene la música adentro*" ("He has the music inside him"). *Sí, tenemos la música adentro.* Very simple: we all have the music within us—and *that*'s the Latin Connection.



Above, vocalists Bobby Cruz and Micki Vimarie bracket Ricardo Ray; center, Hard Hands Barretto; right, the one and only Lupe.



Left above, the powerful Celia Cruz; center, singer Santos Colon; and right, Charlie Palmieri, a very contemporary keyboard wizard.



Left, Larry Harlow of Orchestra Harlow; center, Johnny Pacheco, film maker (Nuestra Cosa); right, Grand Master Tito Puente.



Left, Mongo Santamaria and his group; center above, Roberto Roena, leader of the Apollo Sound Orchestra; right, trombonist/bandleader Willie Colon.

Wide World

Carmen Miranda, shown here at Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood, March 24, 1941, made a big impression in the U.S.

A LATIN POSTSCRIPT

By William Livingstone

IN the foregoing article, "The Latin Connection," Joel Vance discusses the contemporary music of the Spanish-speaking community in New York and the effect it is beginning to have on American popular music. Such Latin influences are not new in the United States; we Americans have long been intrigued by the seductive melodies and exotic rhythms of Latin dance music. The Argentine tango, for example, was introduced in this country before World War I; popularized by the dancers Vernon and Irene Castle, it set off a tango craze that lasted through the Twenties and well into the Thirties. (On New York's Broadway there is still a dance hall called the Tango Palace.) Other Latin rhythms and dance steps quickly followed—the rumba, the conga, the samba, the mambo, the merengue, the cha-cha-cha, the bossa nova, and a number of others.

In the Thirties and Forties, producers of Hollywood movie musicals often exploited the local color of Latin American settings—in *Cuban Love Song*, *Flying Down to Rio*, and countless others. The scores for these pictures included songs by such Latin composers as Ernesto Lecuona from Cuba and María Gréver and Agustín Lara from Mexico, or by Americans who became quite adept at composing in Latin styles—Mabel Wayne, Vincent Youmans, and Cole Porter, among others. From the start, Latin performers such as Lupe Vélez and Ramón Navarro were prominent in movie musicals, and even Dolores del Rio, who was known principally as an actress and a Great Beauty, made a record or two. (Her recording of *Ramona* can be heard on "Stars of the Silver Screen," RCA LPV 538.) And in the Forties it seemed that no Hollywood musical extravaganza was complete without the Spanish pianist José Iturbi, the Mexican singing cowboy Tito Guizar, the Cuban bandleader Desi Arnaz, or the Brazilian Bombshell Carmen Miranda.

The Forties were the great days of

bandleader Xavier Cugat. Born in Spain, Cugat specialized in Latin American—particularly Cuban—dance forms and had one of his greatest hits in the Afro-Cuban number *Babalú*. (Cugat is *still* in the catalog with "Merengue! Cugat!", Caytronics CYS 1136.) In 1945, Cugat and Bing Crosby made a Decca record which popularized Agustín Lara's *Solamente una Vez* in an English version, *You Belong to My Heart*. Cugat also made a hit of *Tico-Tico*, a Brazilian song by Zequinha Abreu, which he played in the movie *Bathing Beauty* in 1944. And *Tico-Tico*, as some will remember, subsequently became the theme song of the popular organist Ethel Smith. Many American artists' most successful records were of Latin tunes. For example, among Jimmy Dorsey's greatest hits were *Maria Elena* (by Lorenzo Barcelata), *Green Eyes* (by Nilo Menéndez and Adolfo Utrera), *Amapola* (by the Spaniard José Lacalle), and *The Breeze and I* (by Lecuona).

This Latin phenomenon continued, moreover, through the Fifties. Georgia Gibbs' recording of *Kiss of Fire* (1952), which sold more than a million copies, was a resetting of the famous Argentine tango *El Choclo* (A. G. Villoldo). And two Portuguese songs made the all-time American hit parade in the Fifties: *Lisbon Antigua* (*Lisboa Antiga*, by Raul Portela) in a Capitol recording by Nelson Riddle and *April in Portugal* (*Coimbra*, by Paul Ferrão), which was recorded by many performers. Dinah Washington received a Grammy award for her 1958 recording of *What a Difference a Day Made* (*Cuando Vuelva a tu Lado*, by María Gréver).

Some of the popular American songs with Latin subject matter were homegrown products, written far from Spain or South America. *Lady of Spain* (1931) had lyrics by Erell Reaves and music by Tolchard Evans, and Gene Autry's great hit *South of the Border* (1939) had words and music by Jimmy Kennedy and Michael Carr.

Other songs by American composers were so well cast in the Latin mold that they were accepted as the real thing by Latin recording artists. Mabel Wayne's *Ramona* was recorded by no less a star than Carlos Gardel, and her *In a Little Spanish Town* so appealed to Agustín Magaldi that he had Spanish lyrics written for it and recorded it as *En una Aldea en España*, one of his most beautiful performances. (*In a Little Spanish Town* was revived in the Fifties by mambo king Pérez Prado, and it can be heard in the album "The Best of Pérez Prado," RCA LSP 3732.) Vincent Youmans' *Orchids in the Moonlight* (1933) was such an excellent tango that it was recorded by several Argentinians, including Libertad Lamarque. And Carmen Miranda's big hit *South American Way* was the work of Al Dubin and Jimmy McHugh.

The Latin thing was so strong in the Forties that it became a subject for satire in Harold Rome's *South America, Take It Away* (1946), a comic plea for the Latins to take back such athletic dances as the rumba, the conga, and the samba and give Anglo-American sacroiliacs a rest. The Decca recording of this song by Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters was one of their biggest hits. Noel Coward's *Nina from Argentina*, another satirical number about an eccentric Latin girl who resolutely refused to dance, is still sung regularly by the cabaret artist Greta Keller, and it was recently recorded by Roderick Cook in "Oh Coward" (Bell 9001) and by John Moffatt in "Cowardy Custard" (RCA LSO 6010).

LEAVING the current episode in the love affair between Americans and Latin music in the capable hands of Mr. Vance, I would like to call to the attention of STEREO REVIEW readers a few albums from the great treasures of Latin popular music on records that have given me special pleasure in my many years of collecting them. My list is a very personal sampling, with no attempt at chronological or geographical completeness. I've had to leave out many of my own favorites, so please don't blame me if I've neglected some of yours. A few of the records may be hard to find, but in searching for them you are almost bound to make other discoveries of your own (is there a word for "serendipity" in Spanish?).

New York is well supplied with record stores that stock domestic Latin releases on all labels plus a wide variety of imports from Spain, Portugal, and Latin America. They include Casa Moneo, 210 West 14th Street; Spanish World Records, 151 West 14th Street; King Karol Records, 111 West 42nd Street; Spanish Music Center, 319 West 48th Street, and others. Your area may not be so well served, but most large suppliers, such as the Discount Record Store chain, include an international section where you will find some, if not all, of the records listed below. Peters International, 600 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018, which imports records from Spain and Latin America, sells primarily to stores, but they will fill individual orders (and send catalogs on request), and King Karol Records does a large mail-order business.

A great boon to the distribution of Latin records in the United States recently has been the entry of Caytronics Corporation into the field. Caytronics (240 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016) represents such foreign labels as Ariola of Spain and has leased the rights to the enormous Latin catalogs of both CBS International and RCA. On such labels as Arcano, Caytronics, Mericana, and Pronto, the company has reissued not just recent hits, but some of the finest performances by Latin pop artists of the past, restoring to circulation many items long out of print. Caytronics has earned a debt of gratitude from us *yanqui* collectors who have Latin hearts if not Latin blood.

To me the most seductive of all the Latin dance rhythms is the tango, and when I heard that Marlon Brando had made the movie *The Last Tango in Paris* I hoped it would set off a *new* tango craze because I was not around for the last one. Since the movie apparently deals with other things, let's get on to the many good tangos on records. Any tango collection *must* begin with Carlos Gardel. Born in France in 1887, Gardel grew up in Argentina and became the most famous and most authoritative interpreter of the Argentine tango.

Through live performances, movies, and records he won from the public the kind of adoration that is reserved for such great stars as Greta Garbo and Rudolph Valentino (Gardel was sometimes called the Singing Valentino).

His death in an airplane accident in Medellín, Colombia, in 1935 was regarded as a cultural tragedy throughout the Spanish-speaking world. But Gardel's legend is still very much alive, and new books continue to be written about him. He recorded (on 78's) about one thousand songs, of which the best have been kept in print on LP on one label or another. Since they all date from the Twenties and Thirties, there is a barrier of poor sound, but the interpretations are great and well worth putting up with a little needle scratch. A good sample of Gardel's work is "Tangos Sung by Carlos Gardel" (RCA LPM 1230), which includes some of his most famous recordings, such as *Mi Buenos Aires Querido* (*My Beloved Buenos Aires*) and *Volvió una Noche* (*She Returned One Night*). A good alternate choice is "*Memorias de Gardel*" [RCA MKL, MKS 1021(e)], or "Carlos Gardel" (Odeon J060 80759, imported from Spain by Peters).

A later Argentine singer who became one of RCA's biggest Latin recording stars is Libertad Lamarque, *La Novia de America* (The Sweetheart of America). She began as a tango singer and as such had a distinguished career in Argentine movies. During the Perón dictatorship she left Argentina and went on to an equally distinguished career in Mexican films, often appearing not as a singer but as a dramatic actress.

Miss Lamarque recorded everything—boleros, rumbas, Mexican cowboy songs, Cuban theater music, and folk songs of the Peruvian Andes—but I prefer her tangos. Her voice is a bit hard and bright and it sounds smallish, but her temperament is big, and she gets plenty of emotion across. I would recommend her album "*Ayúdame a Vivir*" ["Help Me to Live," RCA FSP 284(e)], which contains *Caminito* (*The Little Road*) and my favorite tango, *Madreselva* (Honeysuckle). You can then go on to her "*Lo Mejor de Libertad Lamarque*" ("The Best of Libertad Lamarque," RCA MKLA 62), an excellent three-disc survey of her entire recording career.

There are some lighthearted tangos and a few funny ones, but most of them are sad songs about the bitterness of slum life or impossible love affairs (the first lines of *Yira, Yira* are: "You'll see that everything is a lie/You'll see that love is nothing"), and a couple of hours of listening to this sort of thing can be depressing. A good antidote is any record by the Trío los Panchos, who have produced some of the happiest sounds ever recorded. Even their broken-hearted songs sound almost cheerful. The trio, composed of Alfredo Gil and Jesús (Chucho) Navarro from Mexico and Hernando Avilés from Puerto Rico, was formed in New York in 1943. They sang on CBS broadcasts and made mountains of records for Columbia. There have been a couple of replacements for Avilés, but the trio is still recording (not sounding quite as fresh as they did thirty years ago, needless to say), and one of their most recent albums featured, of all people, Eydie Gormé as soloist (and don't underestimate Eydie; her Spanish is excellent).

To me the best introduction to los Panchos is the album "*Epoca de Oro*" ("Golden Age," Caytronics 1006), on which the trio sings twelve classic boleros [most of them were composed by Gil or Navarro, but one, *No Me Quieras Tanto* (*Don't Love Me So Much*), is by the great Puerto Rican songwriter Rafael Hernández]. The songs have not dated; they sound as fresh and peppy today as they did twenty-five years ago.

An underground best-seller is the album "Lecuona Plays Lecuona" (RCA LPM 1055), on which the Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona plays eighteen of his most popular works on the piano. In terms of accessibility, this album is probably the cornerstone of any collection of Latin music. Everyone I have ever played it for, no matter what his musical tastes, immediately wanted a copy. Lecuona's songs (no vocals here) and short pieces evoke the languorous, sensuous quality of life in the Caribbean islands better than any other music I know. They are beguilingly melodious and romantic, and Lecuona plays them in a pleasing, rather emphatic, romantic style.

A good sampling of Mexican music and Mexican recording artists is the album "*Pedro Vargas con sus Amigos*" [RCA MKS 1412(e)]. A tenor, Vargas was a popular favorite for decades, and he recorded everything from the love songs of Lara, Gréver, and Guty Cárdenas to rumbas, tangos, and Mexican *rancheras*. This album demonstrates the variety of his repertoire in twelve duets with singer-songwriter Agustín Lara, Libertad Lamarque, Jorge Negrete (a much beloved movie actor), Beny Moré, Miguel Aceves Mejía,

and Alfonso Ortiz Tirado—all of whom, like Vargas, were best-selling recording stars. The songs in this collection are all good, but I especially like *La Negra Noche* (*The Black Night*), sung here with Negrete, and *Quiéreme Mucho* (*Love Me a Lot*), sung with Libertad Lamarque.

Mexican *rancheras*, recorded by the thousands, are the very exuberant songs of the Mexican *charros* (cowboys). Their subject matter is often love (especially unrequited), patriotism, general enthusiasm for some specific region of Mexico, or just an outburst of manly good spirits. *Rancheras* are often punctuated by high-pitched squeals, yells, or mooing sounds imitating the cattle herded by Mexican ranch hands.

The women who sing *rancheras* seem to pick the saddest songs and sob their way through them relentlessly. Among the most popular is Amalia Mendoza—lachrymose, but musically convincing. The records of Miguel Aceves Mejía are the best introduction to *rancheras* because of his incontestable authority in the style and his impressive vocal equipment. The ease with which he shifts his clear strong voice into falsetto, a characteristic of the *ranchera*, is simply awesome. Good albums to start with are "*El Gallo Colorado*" ("The Red Rooster," RCA MKL 1055) and "*Lo*

Mejor de Miguel Aceves Mejía" ["The Best of Miguel Aceves Mejía," RCA VPS 3005(e)]. Listen particularly to *La Malagueña*, which is on both of them.

The popular ballads of the Mexican Revolution, such as *La Cucaracha*, *Adelita*, and *La Mujer Ladina* (*The Crafty Woman*), are excitingly performed on the album "*Canciones de la Película La Cucaracha*" ("Songs from the Film La Cucaracha," Caytronics CYS 1327) by Cuco Sánchez and the Dueto América. Sánchez, who began his career as a composer of songs for Mexican Western movies, has gone on to great success as a performer. His husky voice, of a really striking emotional intensity, is enhanced by the unusual, but very Mexican, accompaniment of guitar and harp in his first of many albums "*Guitarras a Media Noche*" ("Guitars at Midnight," Caytronics CYS 1071). A collection of Sánchez's own songs in his unequaled interpretations, the album includes the well known *La Cama de Piedra* (*The Stone Bed*) and *Anillo de Compromiso* (*Engagement Ring*). The guitarist on this album is not identified, but he is probably Antonio Bribiesca, the most sought-after accompanist in Mexico. Bribiesca has also made solo albums such as the aptly named "*La Guitarra que Llora*" ("The Guitar That Weeps," Caytronics CYS 1115). It includes haunting renditions of *La Paloma*, *Estrellita*, *La Golondrina*, and many other standards such as the Mexican waltz (by Juventino Rosas) *Sobre las Olas* (*Over the Waves*).

Through movies, personal appearance tours, and especially records, several Spanish singing actresses have made their names household words in almost every Spanish-speaking home. Among the most prominent are Imperio Argentina, Lola Flores, Sarita Montiel, and Nati Mistral.

Imperio Argentina is a link with an older tradition. Her bright, cleanly focused voice is best heard in theater songs of the early part of the century, such as *El Relicario*, *Nena*, and *Clavelitos*. Montilla issued three of her albums in this country in the 1950's; they still turn up often in shops, and any one of them is a real find. If you can't get those, try "Imperio Argentina" (Odeon J060 80426) or "*El Día que Nací Yo*" ("The Day I Was Born," Regal J040 20799), imports which are a bit heavier on flamenco-flavored Spanish atmosphere—lots of castanets and hand clapping (*jaleo*).

Sarita Montiel is a beautiful woman and an appealing actress whose fans are legion, loyal—and belligerent when crossed. Opinions differ as to the quality of her singing, but her popularity is undeniable. Most of her recordings are from her films. You might try "*El Ultimo Cuplé*" ("The Last Couplet," Alhambra C 7035), an import, "*Mi Ultimo Tango*" ("My Last Tango," Caytronics CYS 1099), or "*La Violetera*" ("The Violet Seller," Caytronics CYS 1092). And if you like her, you will find a bargain in the two-disc set "Sara Montiel" (UA Latino L 61904).

A singer who consistently raises popular music to the level of fine art is Nati Mistral. Her voice is a beautiful instrument with a warm expressive lower register and a bright clear top. She commands a variety of styles ranging from Andalusian folk music to witty theater songs of Madrid and the work of the best Latin American songwriters, such as Lecuona and the Argentinian Atahualpa Yupanqui, informing everything she sings with rare subtlety and musical taste. She sings in night clubs (occasionally in New York), in films, and on stage. And Srta. Mistral appeared with great success in productions of *El Hombre de la Mancha* (*Man of La Mancha*) in Madrid, Buenos Aires, and Mexico City. In an inspired bit of casting, London Records engaged her as the soloist for Manuel de Falla's *El Amor Brujo* with the New Philharmonia conducted by Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, London CS 6521, an exciting and idiomatic performance.

But Miss Mistral is better represented in her popular albums, which are not so easy to find. A good introduction is "*La Maravillosa Nati Mistral*" ("The Marvelous Nati Mistral"), which has circulated in this country on the Orfeon label in pressings from Mexico (LP 12-686) and from Spain (S26-148). Her versatility is well displayed on her recitals on Ariola 85031 H and Spanish Columbia CS 8055 and C

7004—the first two are called simply "Nati Mistral"; the third is entitled "*La Trascendencia Universal y Madrileña de Nati Mistral*," which defies translation.

Antonio Carlos Jobim and Luiz Bonfá, the leading exponents of Brazil's bossa nova, are so well known and so current that they need no discussion here. The present nostalgia boom, however, has revived interest in an earlier gift from Brazil, Carmen Miranda, who is now widely regarded as a camp heroine. But listening to her records today proves that she deserved better musical treatment than she received in Hollywood. Among her current reissues I recommend "Carmen Miranda, The Brazilian Fireball," World Record Club SH 114.

The foregoing are among the greatest recording stars of Latin music—some past, some present. Carlos Gardel died nearly forty years ago, yet his records are still selling well. Will any of the names on today's charts of Latin hits be remembered forty years from now? I don't know, but I think the following current idols bear watching: Raphael, Marisol, Leonardo Favio, Julio Iglesias, and Camilo Sesto. In any case, though Brando may have had his last tango in Paris, the rest of us can stay comfortably at home, confident that the Latin world will continue to send us other dances, other singers, and other songs.

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH

CLASSICAL

SPANISH TREASURE: *LAS CANTIGAS DE SANTA MARIA*

The Waverly Consort presents a wonderfully atmospheric program of thirteenth-century music

KING ALFONSO X (1221-1294), the Spanish ruler who hoped at one point to reign over the entire Holy Roman Empire, was particularly interested in education and the encouragement of cultural activities in his realm, and he was successful enough in his efforts in their behalf that he eventually won for himself the nickname "the Wise." He is credited with at least organizing if not himself actually writing *Las Cantigas de Santa Maria (Songs of Holy Mary)*, a collection of music and poetry recounting miracles credited to the Virgin Mary—a compendium that was eventually to include over four hundred items. These songs of praise tell such stories as how the Virgin Mary came to the aid of those devoted to her, how she cured invalids, punished some of those who took advantage of the Church, pardoned others—and in general present a marvelous picture of the medieval preoccupation with courtly lyricism and idealized love. From miniatures illustrating the *Cantigas* manuscripts, scholars have been able to reconstruct not only the kinds of instruments that were employed in their performance, but also, to some extent, the actual troubadour manner in which they were presented in thirteenth-century court performances.

In a new Vanguard recording of selections from the *Cantigas*, the Waverly Consort has drawn heavily on this fund of information, using instruments of the period (including those that reflect the Moorish influence) to make a moving entertainment—in the best sense of the word—after the manner of the New York Pro Musica in its splendid recreations of such medieval works as the *Play of Herod* (Decca DXS 7187). Using a narrator (Troubadour) who reads the introduction, translates, and provides a commentary for continuity, the ensemble under the direction of Michael Jaffee does a remarkable job historically, stylistically (note the superb embellishments), and musicologically with this material. The results, though they lack the visual impact of the ensemble's live appearances, in authentic costume, in such appropriate venues as the Metropolitan Museum's Cloisters in New York, have great sensitivity, undeniable vitality, and authentic atmosphere without any of that slickness which so often creeps into well-rehearsed, highly professional productions.

MICHAEL JAFFEE
Standing in for Alfonso at the psaltery

It is possible that the use of a narrator (an obvious advantage in the Consort's stage presentations) can begin to weigh a little heavily in repeated hearings on disc, but the texts are read quite beautifully and they do give something of a sense of occasion to this succession of isolated songs. For those who prefer the music by itself, another selection of the *Cantigas* (twenty-three of them, plus a sung prologue) is available on Musical Heritage Society OR 302. They are at times a bit slower in tempo, but they also use a variety of period instru-

ments in both instrumental and vocal settings. Since there are only three relatively brief items duplicated between the two collections, I will be bold enough to recommend both: the Waverly Consort disc as an introduction to this fascinating and (particularly with the Moorish instruments) often exotic-sounding thirteenth-century repertoire and, as an amplification of the experience, Musical Heritage Society's collection performed by the Capilla Musical y Escolania de Santa Cruz del Valle de los Caídos under the able direction of José Luis Ochoa de Olza. Both recordings include commentary, texts and translations, and both feature wonderfully atmospheric sound. *Igor Kipnis*

ALFONSO X (attrib.): ***Las Cantigas de Santa Maria. Prologue and Cantigas 1, 158, 318, 8, 117, 340, 200, 221, 377, 189, 231, 56, 7, 327, 166, and 10.*** **ANON. (Thirteenth and Fourteenth C.):** ***Benedicamus "Verbum Patris"; Stella splendens in monte; Laudemus virginem/Splendens sceptrigera.*** The Waverly Consort (Nicholas Kepros, narrator; Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano; Constantine Cassolas, tenor; Kay Jaffee, recorder, rauschpfeife, psaltery, and organetto; Sally Longemann, shawm, recorder, nun's fiddle; Judith Davidoff, medieval fiddles; Michael Jaffee, Moorish guitar, psalteries); Michael Jaffee dir. VANGUARD VSD 71175 $5.98.

GLUCK'S RICHLY EXCITING *IPHIGÉNIE EN AULIDE*

A new recording makes a strong case for returning the work to the repertoire

CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD GLUCK'S *Iphigénie en Aulide* was his first opera for the Paris stage, an opportunity to try out, in a new cultural environment, those far-reaching reforms which had already met with considerable opposition in the field of Italian opera. The year was 1774, and Gluck was to deepen his understanding of the French operatic idiom in such later works as *Alceste* and *Iphigénie en Tauride*, but he was unquestionably on firm ground with his initial effort. The score of *Iphigénie en Aulide* still retains, to be sure, some traditional *da capo* arias, but these are not encumbered with ornamental excesses and therefore do not delay the drama. The recitatives, moreover, are filled with meaning and are supported by orchestral writing of unvarying interest. The second-act ensembles, with choral participation, attest unmistakably to the success of Gluck's innovations. And, perhaps most significantly of all, the chorus itself occupies a crucial role in the drama.

A new recording of *Iphigénie en Aulide* has just been made available on the Eurodisc label. A German production based on the edition created by Richard Wagner in 1847, it not only makes a strong case for the opera as a dramatic work, but whets the appetite for closer acquaintance on the stage. The most penetrating kind of scholarship would be required to determine where Gluck ends and Wagner begins in this exciting and rich-sounding work. Surely, Iphigénie's aria "*Bald von Fürchten*" (Act 2) bears an obvious Wagnerian imprint, to say nothing of her third-act passage "*Nun führt zum Altar mich.*" The latter, particularly, would be perfectly in place in *Lohengrin*, the opera Wagner was working on in 1847 when his attention turned to Gluck.

The vocal performances are generally satisfying. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau projects the inner torments of Agamemnon believably and eloquently. His remarkable interpretive powers once again compensate for what his voice now lacks in range and weight, and the aria "*O du, die ich so innig liebe*," with its long recitative, is a major achievement. The role of Iphigénie would profit from a soprano voice with a little more weight and dramatic thrust than Anna Moffo's, but she handles her assignment nonetheless in a clear, effortless, and altogether musicianly manner. (I would guess, however, that both Miss Moffo and Mr. Fischer-Dieskau have received engineering assistance toward the achievement of a tonal weight appropriate to their music.)

A new mezzo, Trudeliese Schmidt, reveals a first-rate voice and a fine dramatic gift in the role of Klytemnestra, Thomas Stewart delivers the music of his priestly role with dignity and a fine sonority, and Bernd Weikl sings his brief but important part with an engaging lyricism that is immediately reminiscent of Hermann Prey. The role of the goddess Artemis (added *in toto* by Wagner) is neatly sung by the young American soprano Arleen Auger, cur-

Promising newcomers Arleen Auger and Trudeliese Schmidt

Eurodisc

Battery Records

ALICE PLAYTEN: *a mainstay even in glittering company*

rently quite a hit in Vienna's Staatsoper. Only the raw, unmodulated tenor voice of Ludovic Spiess is disappointing here, though he can be commended for raising up some stalwart and warrior-like sounds in his role of Achilles.

This thoroughly convincing performance has been quite evidently well prepared by conductor Kurt Eichhorn. The very important choral contributions are admirably executed, and the recording is technically outstanding as well. *George Jellinek*

GLUCK: ***Iphigénie en Aulide.*** Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone), Agamemnon; Trudeliese Schmidt (mezzo-soprano), Klytemnestra; Anna Moffo (soprano), Iphigénie; Ludovic Spiess (tenor), Achilles; Thomas Stewart (bass), Kalchas; Arleen Auger (soprano), Artemis; Bernd Weikl (baritone), Arkas. Bavarian Radio Chorus and Orchestra, Kurt Eichhorn cond. EURODISC 86271 XR two discs $13.96.

POPULAR

"PAINTED SMILES OF COLE PORTER"

Ben Bagley slyly releases the album first; the Broadway revue will follow

DO YOU remember those full-color, full-page advertisements they used to have in the glossy magazines, the kind in which a handsome couple in evening clothes could be seen lounging gracefully on a thickly carpeted floor, shiny records spread about them gathering lint and dust, while they listened to music from a gigantic, hand-finished, rare-woods console containing a high-priced radio-phonograph? I sometimes wondered about those two. What were they listening to, anyhow? And why were they all dressed up like that just to stay home and listen to records?

I was reminded of those ads just recently as I lay on the floor listening to Ben Bagley's new album, "Painted Smiles of Cole Porter." You don't have to put on formal dress to enjoy this preview of Mr. Bagley's forthcoming Broadway musical, but I'm sure it would help. And it certainly would have been perfect fare for an evening in front of a shiny old Capehart. Mr. Bagley, who has previously given us discs of the forgotten works of Richard Rodgers, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern, and other American songwriters in his celebrated "Revisited" series, is planning as of this writing to dazzle what's left of New York's sophisticated public with a gaudy revue, topped with "luscious frosting," in which a suave cast dressed in glittering costumes and surrounded by sets of Ziegfeldian sumptuousness will offer no less than *forty* unpublished Cole Porter songs.

The revue will obviously be a long way from the modest economies of Bagley's much-missed Shoestring Revues of the Fifties, but if this recorded sample of fifteen songs is any gauge, the new musical should run forever. To be sure, elegant as they once were, some of these items come to us just a bit dated and shopworn, but the producer has wisely put them on the counter "as is," never tampering with hoary topical references or period style to try to make them sound younger than they are. Nor is such face lifting necessary. Some of the items out of Mr. Porter's attic trunk may be old, but none of them are tired. And nothing could be more wide-awake and vital than Ben Bagley's cast, some of whom have served him with distinction in earlier productions. Listen to Karen Morrow's *Kate the Great*, a portrait of the Russian ruler who'd "never mix in affairs of state/But in affairs of the heart she sure was great." Then there's *If Ever Married I'm*, with Blossom Dearie, Carmen Alvarez, Laura Kenyon, and Alice Playten joining in for a choral dissertation on the prospects of matrimony ("Will I vegetate in grandeur or in grime?") that reflects the pre-women's lib values of its period with merciless precision.

Miss Playten is a mainstay even of this glittering company. Whether she is applying her baby voice to *After All, I'm Only a Schoolgirl*, or saluting in a mock-French accent the super dimensions of Paris beauties, she is always right for the job. But then, so is Carmen Alvarez, as she sings of the "humble Hollywood executive" who "works for MGM in the daytime and Fox at night"; so is Laura Kenyon,

in her Mabel Mercerish approach to one of the best Porter tunes of the lot, *When Love Comes to Call*; and so are Edward Earle and Charles Rydell, who mix impudence with suavity whenever they're called upon. It all ends up with a slyly subersive tribute to America, *Give Us the Land* ("Give me the land of malted milk and honey . . ."), an appropriately wry finale to the most refreshingly decadent record I've heard in years. *Paul Kresh*

BEN BAGLEY'S "PAINTED SMILES OF COLE PORTER." Carmen Alvarez, Blossom Dearie, Edward Earle, Laura Kenyon, Karen Morrow, Alice Playten, and Charles Rydell (vocals); Judd Woldin (piano); Bill Crow (bass); Al Germansky (drums); Ben Bagley dir. *Get Yourself a Girl; When Love Comes to Call; After All, I'm Only a Schoolgirl; If Ever Married I'm; Kate the Great; What Does Your Servant Dream About?; Oh, It Must Be Fun; Pets; If You Like Les Belles Poitrines; To Think That This Could Happen to Me; Humble Hollywood Executive; I Know It's Not Meant for Me; Where Would You Get Your Coat?; I Could Kick Myself; Give Us the Land.* PAINTED SMILES PS 1358 $4.98.


RSO Records

THE BEE GEES:
Barry, Maurice, and Robin Gibb

THE BROTHERS GIBB: A TRIUMPHANT RETURN

Their latest release, "Life in a Tin Can," finds them back on top of their special heap

WHEN "Come Home, America" didn't work, I tried switching to "Come Home, Bee Gees." *That* seems to have worked: after two or three quirky but smarmy bubblegum efforts, my favorite brother act has now delivered "Life in a Tin Can" on the new RSO label, and it is beautiful. It continues the growth promised by "Horizontal" and "Odessa." Naturally, the pack of elitists who patrol the rock scene will have their usual fun picking on Robin Gibb's vibrato, Barry's McCartneyesque sweetness, or what Gary Von Tersch once described as the "beatific pretentiousness" the boys sometimes affect (although it must be noted that Gary, taken in context, is a Bee Gees aficionado and good guy like me). But let them prattle on; the lucky ones love certain things with a purity that involves having forgotten why they love them, and for me those things include Pogo, Porsches, the New York Knicks, and the Bee Gees.

Moving along, then, with my objective evaluation, I entreat you to listen to this new effort as a sort of comeback album, for that's what it is, right down to the fact that only three (of eight) songs are short enough for convenient Top-Forty airplay. Listen to Barry's shouted whispers and ol' Robin's throbbin' as they trade the vocal lead back and forth—not just verse-to-verse, but line-to-line—and to Maurice doing whatever it is he does vocally to give those full-blown harmonies that special textural richness. Listen to Maurice also as he puts in those mildly shocking but ultimately right keyboard and bass-guitar licks. Listen, too, to the lyrics and realize that, in spite of their persistently melancholy tone and occasional awkwardness, they are intelligently crafted and not mired in Hipness. And listen, finally, to the melodies and mark the grace, the delightful small surprises, and that just-so touch of schmaltz that makes them believable. *Living in Chicago* may be taken as the prototype, although there isn't a weak song in the batch.

The Bee Gees have considerable seniority in rock. That does not mean they have picked up any heavy torch, or even that someone has offered to pass one, but "Tin Can" does reaffirm that, in their own division of rock—the Spectacularly Romantic Division—they stand on a pinnacle with the Moody Blues. That's a pretty good place, pretty good company. Welcome home, lads. *Noel Coppage*

THE BEE GEES: ***Life in a Tin Can.*** Barry Gibb (vocals, guitar); Robin Gibb (vocals); Maurice Gibb (vocals, guitar, bass, mellotron, clavinet, piano, organ); Jim Keltner (drums); other musicians. *Saw a New Morning; I Don't Wanna Be the One; South Dakota Morning; Living in Chicago; While I Play; My Life Has Been a Song; Come Home Johnny Bride; Method to My Madness.* RSO SO 870 $5.98, ® TP 870 $6.98, © CS 870 $6.98.

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CIRCLE NO. 7 ON READER SERVICE CARD

POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by CHRIS ALBERTSON • NOEL COPPAGE • PAUL KRESH
PETER REILLY • JOEL VANCE

BATDORF & RODNEY. John Batdorf and Mark Rodney (vocals, guitar); orchestra. *Between the Ages; Happy Town; All I Need; Under Five*; and five others. ASYLUM SD 5056 $5.98, ® TP 5056 $6.98, © CS 5056 $6.98.

Performance: **Low-profile**
Recording: **Okay**

Although the names "Batdorf and Rodney" sound like the names of partners in a shady law firm in an old Warner Brothers gangster movie (played, naturally, by Sydney Greenstreet and Elisha Cooke, Jr.), they actually provide in this recording a slippery folk-jazz sound that is about as raffish and dangerous as a night on the tiles with Mary Poppins. All is mild, cheerful, and forgettable. John Batdorf sings all of the lead vocals, probably because he wrote all of them. Doesn't leave Rodney much to do but be cooperative, which he is, on guitar and second vocals. *P.R.*

BEAVER & KRAUSE: ***All Good Men.*** Paul Beaver (keyboards); Bernard Krause (keyboards, guitar, vocals); other musicians; orchestra, Jimmie Haskell, Beaver, and Krause arrs. *A Real Slow Drag; Legend Days Are Over; Loves of Col. Evol; Sweet William; Bluebird Canyon Stomp; Looking Back Now; All Good Men*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BS 2624 $5.98.

Performance: **Mixed bag**
Recording: **Very good**

Explanation of symbols:

® = *reel-to-reel stereo tape*
8 = *eight-track stereo cartridge*
© = *stereo cassette*
□ = *quadraphonic disc*
R = *reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape*
8 = *eight-track quadraphonic tape*
C = *quadraphonic cassette*

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

How nice—and it came when I was into my Indian Lore Period too. The photo on the back of the jacket is of General O. O. Howard and Chief Joseph of the Nez Percé (an Oregon and Northern California tribe), and the song *Legend Days Are Over* is narrated (in a surrealistic style, thanks to tricky tape editing in the studio) by Elizabeth Wilson, who knew Chief Joseph. Unfortunately, the remainder of the album doesn't deal with Indians at all, but with the odd mixture of styles that Paul Beaver and Bernie Krause like to play around with—a twang or two of rock, a modicum of Moog, a dash of classical, and roughly a carload of big-orchestra pap. There are some elegant melodies here by Krause and Adrienne Anderson, and one of them, *Sweet William*, gets a fine vocal effort from Chris Williamson. Adrienne sings the title song. Krause's own vocals sound preoccupied, and the electronics are neither intrusive nor creative. The long stretches of instrumentals are too careful and too pat. Did the damned cavalry arrive in time to spoil all the fun again? *N.C.*

PAUL BUTTERFIELD
Cheers for his harmonica and "Better Days"

BEE GEES: ***Life in a Tin Can*** **(see Best of the Month, page 88)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BETTER DAYS. Paul Butterfield (harmonica, vocals, and piano); Geoff Muldaur (vocal, guitar, piano); Christopher Parker (drums); Amos Garrett (guitar, bass, vocals); Ronnie Barron (vocal, keyboards); Billy Rich (bass); Maria Muldaur (violin, vocal); Howard Johnson (baritone sax); Peter Ecklund (trumpet); Sam Burtis (trombone); Gene Dinwiddie (tenor sax); Dave Sanborn (alto sax); Stan Shafran (trumpet); J. D. Parron (tenor sax); Gary Brocks (trombone). *New Walkin' Blues; Please Send Me Someone to Love; Broke My Baby's Heart; Done a Lot of Wrong Things; Baby Please Don't Go; Buried Alive in the Blues; Rule the Road; Nobody's Fault but Mine; Highway 28.* BEARSVILLE BR 2119 $4.98.

Performance: **Wonderful**
Recording: **Excellent**

Praise is a difficult thing to control. It is much easier to list why something or someone goes wrong than it is to list why something or someone goes right. The enthusiasm of praise often leads to gurgle and gush, but the enthusiasm of disapproval can be wielded at a surgical distance. Even as I tell myself all this, though, it is still difficult to control my praise for the Better Days album, or to say just why I think it is so good. It is more than a white blues album. It is more than a blues album. It is not perfect, but it is so friendly, so satisfying, and so right that its flaws are part of its charm. It is *music*. The form does not matter; the performances here go beyond form or style. It is honest, direct, relaxed music. It is *human* (my Gush-O-Meter just exploded). Loud and prolonged cheers for all concerned, especially Paul Butterfield on harmonica. You'll be playing this album for years and years, but now's a good time to start. Snatch it up quick and get satisfied. *J.V.*

VIKKI CARR: ***En Español.*** Vikki Carr (vocals); chorus and orchestra, Bob Florence arr. and cond. *Y Volveré; Somos Novios; His-*

toria de Amor (Love Story); Amanece; Adoro; and five others. Columbia KC 31470 $5.98, ® CA 31470 $6.98, © CT 31470 $6.98.

Performance: **Romantic**
Recording: **Excellent**

A number of American pop singers, such as Andy Russell, Connie Francis, and Eydie Gormé, have recorded albums in Spanish, and many others, such as Roberta Flack, have learned and recorded one or two songs in that language. Since Vikki Carr is Mexican-American, sings Spanish fluently, and understands the lyrics thoroughly, she is better qualified than most to perform the Latin repertoire. In this album, Miss Carr, an old-fashioned club singer, brings all her professionalism to bear on interpreting eleven love songs in Spanish. They include *Somos Novios* (*We Are Sweethearts*), which you may remember in an English version, *It's Impossible*, recorded by Perry Como, and the familiar *Historia de Amor* (*Love Story*). The others are certified Latin hits, which Miss Carr sings idiomatically and with appropriate temperament. She belts a little when she lets out her big voice, but she can fine it down to an intimate whisper, and most of the songs have been arranged to exploit both her extremes. They are best juxtaposed, for my ear, in *La Nave del Olvido* (*The Ship of Forgetfulness*), and I especially enjoyed *Adoro* (*I Adore*) and *Ahora que Soy Libre* (*Now That I Am Free*).

The songs are relatively simple and tender, but the general production is Very Big Deal, with pronounced stereo effects and lush orchestral and vocal accompaniments that provide a Hollywood setting for the soloist. Unabashed romantics will love it. The album has been given special treatment by Columbia—there is a pretty picture of Miss Carr on the cover and a very beautiful one (twice as big) in the centerfold. Full Spanish texts and English synopses are provided on a separate sheet. *William Livingstone*

HARRY CHAPIN: ***Sniper and Other Love Songs.*** Harry Chapin (vocals, guitar); Tim Scott (cello); Ron Palmer (guitar); John Wallace (bass). *Sunday Morning Sunshine; Sniper; And the Baby Never Cries; Burning Herself; Barefoot Boy; Better Place to Be; Circle; Woman Child; Winter Song.* ELEKTRA EKS 75042 $5.98, ® 85042 $6.98, © 55042 $6.98.

Performance: **Oh, shut up**
Recording: **Very good**

Ouch! Some of these taxi drivers talk your ears off. This album leaves little doubt that Harry Chapin is, like Leon Uris, one of those compulsive, lapel-grabbing storytellers. *Taxi*, his first big hit, is followed here by the ten-minute *Sniper* and the seven-point-something-minute *Better Place to Be*, and those are just the long ones. The entire album is sort of a loose-jointed narrative about losers. Unfortunately, Harry overtells the story. He reminds me of a gang of neo-Surrealist painters who, noticing the excitement Dali kicked up, rushed into a style in which they could conceive well enough but couldn't execute with any great clarity. What they hadn't noticed was that however zany he was, Dali was also an excellent draughtsman. Chapin can plot and he can create characters, but he uses the language as if it were a dishrag. *Sniper*, which purports to be both a story and a full-blown (fractured Freudian) analysis of the principal, is told in such a weary montage of narrative clichés (the only thing left out is the familiar "Somewhere a dog barked") that its afterimage looks patly smug.

Chapin does sing well the kind of song he writes; his voice is rangy, strong, and easily diverted into melodrama. And he knows how to arrange such songs—a cello in the band was just the thing. But this album, on my turntable, just doesn't begin to overcome the technical limitations of the songs themselves. They're amateurishly written, creating (in me) a vague depression but no real sense of how it *is* to be one of those loser-heroes. *N.C.*

JOE COCKER. Joe Cocker (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Pardon Me Sir; High Time We Went; She Don't Mind; Black-Eyed Blues; Something to Say; Midnight Rider; Do Right Woman; Woman to Woman; St. James Infirmary.* A & M SP 4368 $5.98, ® 4368 $6.98, © 4368 $6.98.

Performance: **Solid**
Recording: **Good**

JOE COCKER
An authentic, roaring funker

I don't think Joe Cocker has ever made a bad record. He has been consistently good, and he has been fortunate in the quality of his backing musicians. His style hasn't changed—except for an improvement in enunciation—and if he doesn't do anything new, well, he doesn't have to. He maintains his standard of quality, and for that I'm glad. He's an authentic funker. This album, for which Cocker people have been waiting a long time, is solid and swingy. Cocker roars on! *J.V.*

MAC DAVIS: ***Baby Don't Get Hooked on Me.*** Mac Davis (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Dream Me Home; Naughty Girl; Poor Boy Boogie; The Words Don't Come Easy*; and seven others. COLUMBIA KC 31770 $5.98, ® CA 31770 $6.98, © CT 31770 $6.98.

Performance: **Teary**
Recording: **Good**

Mac Davis looks a little like Kris Kristofferson, has an average c-&-w voice, almost no projection, and probably a trunkful of royalties from such compositions as *In the Ghetto* and *Friend, Lover, Woman, Wife*, which have made a lot of chart noise in the recent past. This album isn't going to do very much for him as a performer, but it makes a nice demo for some alert manager somewhere, who I'm sure already has his clients recording such things as *The Lonesomest Lonesome* or *Spread Your Love on Me. Whoever Finds This, I Love You*, with its mildewed sentimentality, can be considered archetypal Davis. It's about this lonely old man who, on his way to his lonely room one day, finds a note on the street that says "Whoever *etc.*" He looks up to the window of an orphanage where the tearstained face of a little girl is looking down at him. Next day he hobbles to the orphanage and talks to the little girl through the fence. As the friendship blossoms they make little gifts for each other. One fatal day the old man doesn't show up, and the little girl just knows he never will again. So, returning to her room, she gets out her Crayola, writes another "Whoever . . . etc.", and tosses it out the window.

Quick thinker, that kid, and obviously destined to grow up to be a great little tap dancer. Mac Davis' intention would appear to be a c-&-w Hans Christian Andersen. My own thoughts strayed to what Vladimir Nabokov would have done with the same plot. *P.R.*

THE DOOBIE BROTHERS: ***Toulouse Street.*** The Doobie Brothers (vocals and instrumentals); various musicians. *Listen to the Music; Rockin' Down the Highway; Mamaloi; Toulouse Street; Cotton Mouth; Disciple*; and four others. WARNER BROS. BS 2634 $5.98.

Performance: **Bland**
Recording: **Very good**

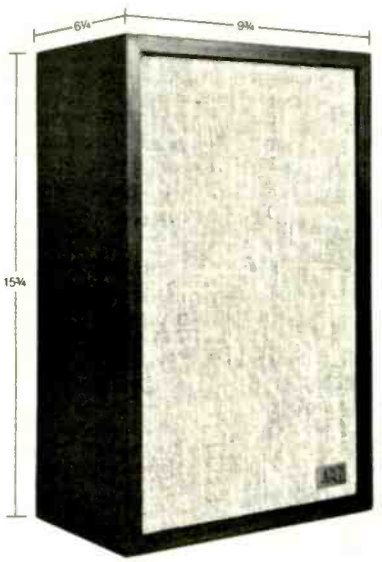
You let one Three Dog Night into the musical neighborhood and next thing you know, nobody's musical flowerbed is safe. Record executives are just as eager to copy success as TV executives are (you've no doubt noticed the Archie Bunker look-alike explosion on the tube). So be it. The Doobie Brothers have just as much style as Three Dog Night (about seven on a scale of 100), they write most of their own stuff, and they all play instruments—and Pat Simmons' *Toulouse Street* isn't a bad song, actually—so why shouldn't they also cash in on the fact that our national appetite for blandness seems limitless? At least AM radio listeners will hear Simmons play better guitar than they're accustomed to. I suppose I can abide the enlargement of the pack, but I do wish they wouldn't shed all over my favorite speakers. *N.C.*

JOSÉ FELICIANO: ***Memphis Menu.*** José Feliciano (vocals, guitar); orchestra. *Magnolia; River Song; One More Mile; Movin'; Good Times*; and five others. RCA LSP 4656 $5.98, ® P8S 1884 $6.98, © PK 1884 $6.98.

Performance: ***Prix fixe***
Recording: **Good**

José Feliciano is unquestionably very good. His guitar playing continues to be idiomatically special, and often, as in Dylan's *Lay Lady Lay*, is so at one with his singing that it seems to double as an extra set of vocal cords. At the beginning of his career, it seemed that we were listening to the emerging tip of a big talent. But lately, album after album finds him still rooted in a "style" that is no longer special but commercially set. Where-is-it-safe-to-go-from-here has always been a problem, once a performer has the Big Dollar. Feliciano seems unwilling to take many chances in order to find out, and his last few albums have been unsatisfying. That can only lead to diminishing returns—in every way. *P.R.*

(Continued on page 94)



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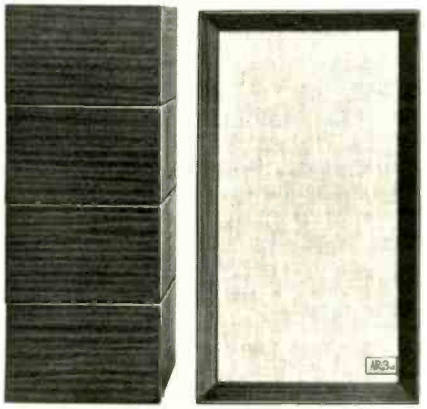

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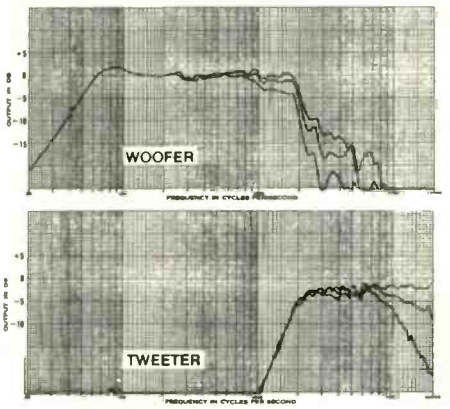

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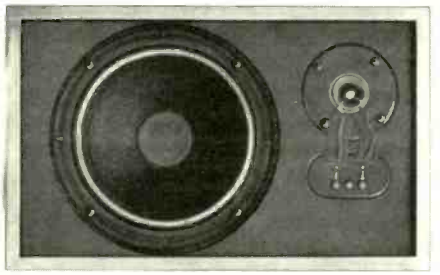

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GRATEFUL DEAD: ***Europe '72.*** The Grateful Dead (vocals and instrumentals). *Cumberland Blues; He's Gone; One More Saturday Night; Jack Straw; You Win Again; China Cat Sunflower*; and eleven others. WARNER BROS. 3WX 2668 three discs $9.98, ® L8 2668 $7.95, © L5 2668 $7.95.

Performance: **On the road**
Recording: **Good low-key live**

One of the great mysteries of the era of rock just past was the very special position and following of the Grateful Dead. The Beatles and the Airplane were, of course, *the* groups, but somehow the best minds of a generation had their heads very far into the Stones and the Dead. The Dead never had a superstar, never had a real hit, and have a very limited musical range. And they sing and play—with a curiously spacey detachment—a simple sort of San Francisco rock that has turned into a kind of c-&-w and yet has not really changed much at all. You figure it out.

I finally did when I was dragged off to hear them play in a dilapidated old movie theater in a section of Brooklyn so obscure I've never succeeded in finding it on a street map. The secret of the Dead is that they stayed together. Of all the good-vibes groups from the good old days, only the Dead survive. They never sold out—maybe no one was buying—and they never lost sight of their ideals. They just do their thing: at the Avalon, in Brooklyn, in Copenhagen, anywhere, it's just that good old Dead beat. Now somehow this "honesty" really can be heard in the music, and a real Dead head would rather not listen to anything else. You get a sense of what this is all about in live performance, and some of the very best Dead albums have been made from recordings of the group in concert.

When they went to Europe in the spring of '72 their rolling commune of forty-three included a recording team. These discs contain the best cuts from five or six of the concerts on that tour. As usual, I find the group weakest in other people's material, at their best in their own. If you can get into this, you can get a sense of why the Dead are still kicking. Slow and steady does it every time; the Dead keep plugging away, and if you stick with it long enough it's bound to get to you.

Eric Salzman

WAYLON JENNINGS: ***Ladies Love Outlaws.*** Waylon Jennings (vocals, guitar); other musicians. *Ladies Love Outlaws; Never Been to Spain; Sure Didn't Take Him Long; Crazy Arms; Revelation; Delta Dawn; Frisco Depot*; and three others. RCA LSP 4751 $5.98, ® P8S 2016 $6.98, © PK 2016 $6.98.

Performance: **Mellow**
Recording: **Very good**

Waylon Jennings is one of the truly fine country singers—almost a Ray Price without sincerity problems. He doesn't have the great voice that Price has, but he does have a rich, tough-vulnerable baritone that communicates, to me, even more fully than those of Charley Pride and Merle Haggard.

This album, though laughably flawed in spots, deserves to be heard by a broad spectrum of listeners; it's good enough to easily cross the (vaguer and vaguer) line between country and pop. Unfortunately, the arrangements straddle that line a little too nonchalantly, ranging from pop-slick production that incorporates a Moog to some mighty corny steel-guitar playing by old-timer Ralph Mooney. The happy-go-lucky backing given Jennings' only songwriting effort in the batch, *I Think It's Time She Learned*, makes no sense and thwarts what could have been a truck-stopper. Jennings, however, does have the ability to direct attention to himself and away from such things. He might even make you forget how contrived and patronizing a song Bobby Braddock's *Revelation* is—the only song, incidentally, that begs to be excused because it's on a *country* album. The power of Jennings' voice and the connection he makes with most songs, especially such good ones as *Never Been to Spain*, *Delta Dawn*, and Mickey Newberry's *Frisco Depot*, is something more people have just got to know about.

N.C.

JETHRO TULL: ***Living in the Past.*** Jethro Tull (vocals and instrumentals). *Song for Jeffrey; Love Story; Christmas Song; Living in the Past; Sweet Dream; Teacher; Witch's Promise; By Kind Permission of; Hymn 43*; and twelve others. CHRYSALIS 2 TS 2106 two discs $9.98, ® P 2106 $11.95, ® M 82106 $6.95, © M 52106 $6.95.

LITTLE RICHARD
The "rill" king of rock-and-roll

Performance: **Give us a whip, luv**
Recording: **Good**

I am not a Tull person, so I can only assume that this collection is made up of old sides from previous albums; the live Carnegie Hall performances may not have been issued before. Ian Anderson, guiding light of the group, is a fair singer and a good flutist. I very much admire John Evans' piano on *By Kind Permission of*; everyone else in the band, even with its changing personnel, seems capable enough.

Jethro Tull is unmistakably a British group; what guides their sound, besides Anderson's writing and personality, is a running demonism of which the English are masters, a mixture of cynicism, bitter humor, cruelty, and feigned madness that may not be so feigned. There are also throwbacks to traditional British-Scots-Irish ballad forms and modulations in Tull's sound.

Pink Floyd's version of English demonism is intellectual and mechanical. Procol Harum's is deliberately "poetic" and therefore overblown. The Rolling Stones' version is disguised, but just barely, by their r-&-b orientation. And the Tull version is direct and theatrical, interesting and sometimes arresting. I recommend "Living in the Past" as I would recommend a ghost story: it is exciting to hear it every once in a while, but too much of it will make you sleep with the lights on. And remember, folks, just because you're paranoid doesn't mean you aren't *really* being followed.

J.V.

THE KINKS: ***The Great Lost Kinks Album.*** The Kinks (vocals and instrumentals). *Til Death Do Us Part; There Is No Life Without Love; Lavender Hill; Groovy Movies; Rosemary Rose; Misty Water; Mr. Songbird; Plastic Man; Pictures in the Sand; Where Did the Spring Go*; and four others. REPRISE MS 2127 $5.98.

Performance: **Wildly variable**
Recording: **Generally good**

'Ere now, wot's all this? *The* lost Kinks album? No. *A* lost Kinks album? John Mendelsohn tries to make a case for that in the notes, but Logic, even after being tortured, insists that it's simply an unmysterious attempt by one record company to cash in on some old tapes left behind by an act now reportedly fattening the coffers of another company. Considering what sort of tapes tend to get left behind in such cases, it is not surprising that there are several songs here of little consequence, several performances that seem just a little tired or bored.

And yet, the Kinks are always fun, aren't they? Ray Davies' eclecticism is well represented: the album opens with the music-hall flavor of *Til Death Do Us Part*, swings through some more fashionable and less demanding forms, and wanders into *When I Turn Off the Living Room Light*, which allows the band to rock with its familiar precision-slapdash quality and allows Davies, as lyricist, to think (listen carefully now) even more like Peter De Vries thinks than Davies usually does. Then there's the oddly tight playing on *This Man He Weeps Tonight*, Davies mixing up bile and pathos in *Where Did the Spring Go*, and a really lovely romantic ballad, *The Way Love Used to Be*, written for a movie soundtrack.

None of this is really great, however lost it was, but some of it is pretty funny or sad or both, most of it makes a nice addendum to a string of Kinks albums, and *all* of it will interest the confirmed Kinkophile. In general, it catches the Kinks in a much more spidery, whimsical mood than one of their "own" albums would, which is fine if the listener knows what to expect.

N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LITTLE RICHARD: ***The Second Coming.*** Little Richard (vocals and piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Mockin'bird Sally; Second Line; It Ain't What You Do, It's the Way How You Do It; The Saints; Nuki Suki; Thomasine; Rockin' Rockin' Boogie; Prophet of Peace; Sanctified Satisfied Toe-Tapper.* REPRISE MS 2107 $5.98, ® M 82107 $6.95, © M 52107 $6.95.

Performance: **Oowweeee!**
Recording: **Good**

There really is no one else like Little Richard. He is truly the king of rock-and-roll, or, as he

(Continued on page 97)

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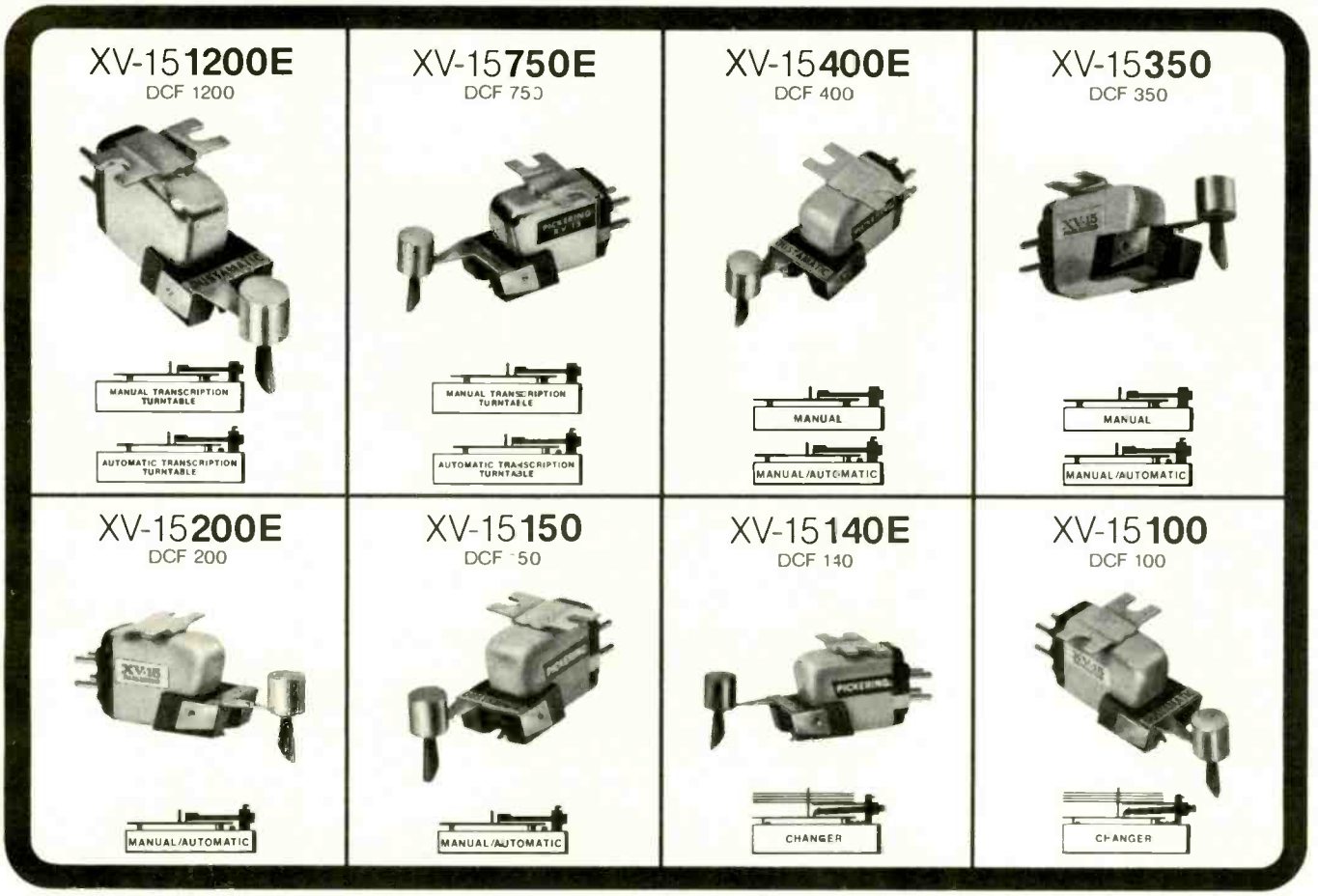

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Kinks left to right: Dave Davies, John Dalton (he came in for Pete Quaife in 1969), John Gosling, Ray Davies, and Mick Avory.

THE KINKS: WHAT COMES NEXT?

An Early Retrospective by Steve Simels

PROPHECY, under any circumstances, is an extremely risky business, but trying to predict the effects of the sociological and musical forces that mold rock-and-roll is just asking for trouble. On a purely surface level, you see, rock-and-roll has a habit of going through rather dizzying changes, and the fact that on closer scrutiny the child often resembles the parents is not always too helpful. Why, just prior to the release of "Exile on Main Street" the rock press was having a field day crying doom for the Rolling Stones—pointing out that, for all their success, they were relics of another era, and that the average kid was probably more influenced by Jimmy Page than Mick or Keith. And yet the other night I saw a kid band, ages twelve to fourteen, doing *Sympathy for the Devil* while their pubescent lead singer minced around the stage brandishing a long scarf and a petulant sneer in a performance that was positively heartwarming. You figure it out. Anyway, I was reminded of this recently as I thumbed through my copy of the redoubtable Lillian Roxon's *Rock Encyclopedia* and noted the following: "People have written a lot about the Kinks, but there is little to say because there is no spectacle, no drama, no intrigue—just that music."

I have a feeling Lillian rather regrets that one now, for if there's anything the Kinks have *not* been short of these days, it's spectacle, drama, and intrigue. I recall particularly one evening in 1970 at the old Capitol Theater—which, by the way, was terrific for concerts: the place was an old vaudeville house, lousy with red velvet and painted angels, and the audiences were generally so young you could yell insults at the performers without fear of embarassment. On this occasion, the Kinks were the nominal headliners, but many of those in attendance were there to wallow in the elephantine theatrics of guest star Grand Funk Railroad. The previous night, I was told, the crowd had been so pathetically eager to get Funked that Ray had stormed off after a half-hour set ("It's great to be back in New York," he said), but *this* evening sympathies were more evenly divided, the Kinks were in fine form, and everything proceeded swimmingly. Finally, brother Dave began the monster chords that open *You Really Got Me*. Then, in a move straight out of a high-school dance, Ray began screaming at the other members of the group, gesturing like a mad windmill; the song fizzled out, and his fellow Kinks were left staring apprehensively while he got himself together enough to talk to the audience. "I just wanna say I got a really good band," he croaked. After a brief pause, he seemed to remember where he was. "Play, Dave," he said sheepishly, and they began again. For the Kinks, this kind of conduct has become obligatory, the classic example being their 1971 Philharmonic Hall engagement, at which, in the middle of *Lola*, Ray unnaccountably fell down, winding up somehow underneath two large amplifiers. The group continued undaunted, and Ray, game trouper that he is, finished the song on his back. Needless to say, this sort of thing never seems to happen to Jethro Tull.

The odd thing about the Kinks, however, is that despite their frequent inability to remain vertical on stage, and despite the fact that they've been known to give performances in which they sounded like, in John Mendelsohn's phrase, "the first rehearsal of an inept teenage garage band," they've managed to create a body of recorded work that is quite clearly in the Beatles/Stones/Dylan class. Yet they've never really achieved the commensurate superstardom. Of course, as I suggested earlier, prophecy is a risky business; by the time this sees print, the group may well have made their breakthrough. While we're waiting, though, perhaps some history is in order.

Discussions of the Kinks have invariably centered around Ray Davies—not surprisingly, since he sings lead, writes most of the group's material, and lately produces them. But in the beginning it was the Kinks as a *band* that knocked people out. And, strangely enough, they made their initial reputation as avant-gardists. But there really is no rock avant-garde anymore, John Lennon's protestations to the contrary, and the style of amphetamine raving pioneered on their early singles is by now—eight brief years later—totally absorbed into the mainstream. But avant-gardists they were, a totally electric rock-and-roll band that produced a cataclysmic wall of sound unlike anything that had ever been heard in rock before. The drummer, Mick Avory, played with the ferocity of a demolition-derby driver; Pete

Quaife, along with the Yardbirds' Paul Samwell-Smith, was among the first to use the electric bass as a truly metallic voice (check his entrance on the live *You Really Got Me* and see what I mean); and Dave Davies—well, no one except Peter Townshend has ever chorded quite so majestically, and certainly not at the age of seventeen, when Dave was producing some of the most exciting solos ever recorded. The music the Kinks were playing in those days was r-&-b, which in England meant Chuck Berry and a lot of maracas. It's unfortunate that Reprise has seen fit to delete a large portion of their early catalog, which displayed a side of the band only rarely in evidence any more, a side they were awfully good at. On the first album, for example, there's a version of *Too Much Monkey Business*, a Berry song that has been performed by innumerable people—the Youngbloods, Tom Rush, and Roy Kalish, to name a few. The Kinks' version wins, cutting even Chuck's own rendition, and that's no mean feat.

SOMEWHERE along the line Ray began to write. At first his lyrics were the conventional boy-girl stuff of the period (though laced with a rather unambiguous sexuality that was perfectly mated to the sonic blitz the band was laying down), but he soon began to get itchy for something more serious. What he eventually came up with, *A Well Respected Man*, was Archie Rice with a backbeat. A clever merger of his r-&-b roots with his other major passion, the music-hall style, it was to serve as a model for an entire school of British rock. Lyrically, it was vaguely Dylanesque, but purely Davies' own were the song's wit and its particular kind of contempt for middle-class values.

From there Ray took off, turning out an uninterrupted series of brilliant singles and albums on subjects as diverse as steam-powered trains, session men, lower-class drug addiction, and the setting of the sun on the British Empire. He became a sort of rock-and-roll Damon Runyon, filling his songs with telling little character studies—as in *David Watts*, in which he neatly skewers both the eternal golden schoolboy and his own jealousy of him. And he couched it all in a verbal style of almost Gilbertian cleverness: "We are the Custard Pie Appreciation Consortium," he declares in one number. "God save the George Cross and all those who were awarded 'em." As Mendelsohn observed, "He was the first English Rock essayist to blow the whistle on his society's shoddy execution of its post-war dream of a classless society. He has been rock-in-general's most loyal advocate of the little working people." And more, "Nearly all that he has written of, he has written of with incisive perception, colossal wit, and profound humanism." Amen.

Since Ray is also perhaps the greatest rock-and-roll singer who ever lived, the possessor of dozens of different voices that run the gamut from Howlin' Wolf to Marlene Dietrich, this lyric genius should by rights have served to put the Kinks up there with the major mythic figures of the past decade. No such luck, however. In fact, sometime around the middle of 1966, just as they were beginning to perfect the new approach, their work died an absolutely unheralded death in this country, and it stayed buried until late 1969. Granted, the American audience often has its head in the sand, but at least some of the fault is Ray's; he has obstinately refused to be fashionable—he claims, for instance, that he didn't even *listen* to "Sgt. Pepper" until two years after it came out, and I believe him.

This almost masochistic streak has run through much of his recent work, which has become increasingly autobiographical: the post-"Arthur" Kinks songs are more often than not as concerned with Ray's personal psychological problems as they are with the plight of the workingman. Ironically, as the Davies persona has emerged, the group has begun to sell records again. Perhaps time has simply caught up with them; these days, the sexual confusion of some of the songs (Lola, you recall, "walked like a woman and talked like a man") and Ray's on-stage antics are, thanks to Alice Cooper, not quite so problematical. Or perhaps, more disturbingly, it's the old Judy Garland fan syndrome: the perverse appeal of watching someone of immense talent and sensitivity fall apart before your eyes. After all, Ray has gone so far as to set his own suicide note to music, and the counter-culture has amply demonstrated a taste for such ghoulishness. Or, most likely, it's just that the music the band has made since Ray allowed himself the luxury of public self-analysis is in some ways more brilliant than ever. I find myself playing "Muswell Hillbillies" quite as often as "Face to Face" or "Something Else," which leads me to think that Ray as an individual is every bit as interesting as Wicked Annabella, or Dandy, or Pretty Polly, or any other creation of the Davies fancy.

For whatever reasons, people are aware of the Kinks now; their albums get respectable FM airplay, their concerts are sellouts, and even Andy Warhol's *Interview* has courted them—a far cry from the days when you had to hunt around to find a copy of *Autumn Almanac* or *Mr. Pleasant*. Even if they start playing up to their audience to extend that success (as witness the frequent intrusions of bisexual chic on "Everybody's in Showbiz"), I for one do not begrudge it to them. As Greg Shaw put it, "I wouldn't cast my pearls before swine either. It's just a shame there aren't enough rock-and-roll fans of pure and noble breed to keep the Kinks in the pearl business." As for what comes next, however, I think I'll leave the predictions to Lillian.

THE KINKS ON DISC

You Really Got Me (Reprise S 6143)
Kinks-Size (Reprise S 6158)*
Kinda Kinks (Reprise S 6173)
Kinks Kinkdom (Reprise S 6184)*
The Kink Kontroversy (Reprise S 6197)*
The Kinks Greatest Hits (Reprise S 6217)
Face to Face (Reprise S 6228)*
The Live Kinks (Reprise S 6260)
Something Else (Reprise S 6279)
The Kinks Are the Village Green Preservation Society (Reprise S 6327)
Arthur (Reprise S 6366)
Lola *vs.* Powerman and the Moneygoround (Reprise S 6423)
Muswell Hillbillies (RCA LSP 4644)
The Kink Kronikles (Reprise 2XS 6454)
Everybody's in Showbiz (RCA VPS 6065)
The Great Lost Kinks Album (Reprise MS 2127), reviewed in this issue

*No longer in catalog.

describes himself and his music, "the rill thing." But until he made this album he hadn't made an entirely satisfying record. "Second Coming" can stand with his classic performances of the Fifties, when he helped make rock-and-roll what it was.

Part of the credit goes to "Bumps" Blackwell, his original producer and co-writer, and to the New Orleans musicians who backed him on his first records. They are all reunited here for a grand slammer of an album. Modern recording techniques allow the musicians much more room to blow than they had in the Fifties, and much room is given them here, especially saxists Earl Palmer and Lee Allen (the latter doubled as Fats Domino's lead sax on records).

Little Richard's furious energy, sexiness, and ego, his almost brutish piano playing, his quicksilver voice (able to dip to growls and shoot up to falsetto hysteria), his flamboyant personality, and his ability to manipulate, hypnotize, astonish, and kid an audience are all here on this glamorous, glorious album. It is so powerful, so rich, and so funky that it should be taken a little at a time so that it can be savored.

Little Richard is one of my rock-and-roll puberty heroes. I have been waiting for him to come back for a long time and kill me the way he did fifteen years ago. With this album, he done killed me again! *J.V.*

KENNY LOGGINS AND JIM MESSINA. Kenny Loggins (vocals, guitar, harmonica); Jim Messina (vocals, lead guitar, mandolin); Larry Sims (bass); Merel Bregante (drums); other musicians. *Good Friend; Whiskey; Your Mama Don't Dance; Long Tail Cat; Golden Ribbons; Thinking of You*; and five others. COLUMBIA KC 31748 $5.98, ® CA 31748 $6.98, © CT 31748 $6.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Excellent**

The who-influenced-whom questions this album raises are so complex I almost want to forget the whole thing. Almost. Jim Messina writes a song (*Golden Ribbons*) that sounds an awful lot like Steve Stills' work for Crosby, Stills and Nash, and plays electric guitar in a style disturbingly similar to the almost-Eastern-flavored decorations Stills fashioned for CSN. But Messina and Stills come from the same place—the Buffalo Springfield—and I can't recall the Buff's influence on splinter groups without thinking of Neil Young's influence on the Buff.

Egad. Well, anyhow, there's Kenny Loggins, whose writing and singing styles show their *own*—differently colored—brush strokes. However original or unoriginal the sound is, it's a pretty good sound. Loggins has the more colorful voice, but he's better off, in the long run, with the ballast of Messina's cool technique than he would be solo. The album's main problem for me was that the songs peaked too early—all but a couple are fairly strong in the way one measures songs, but none really has that unmeasurable spark one hopes for. Few duos could do better with this material. Loggins and Messina are growing fast. *N.C.*

DANNY O'KEEFE: *O'Keefe*. Danny O'Keefe (vocals, guitars); various other musicians. *Good Time Charlie's Got the Blues; Shooting Star; The Question (Obviously); Honky Tonkin'; The Road; Grease It; An American Dream; I'm Sober Now*; and four others.

SIGNPOST SP 8404 $5.98, ⑧ TP 8404 $6.98, © CS 8404 $6.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Very good**

Danny O'Keefe's second album places him squarely among the up-and-coming folkies. He has a pleasingly subtle nasal-bluesy vocal quality and good instincts about the language. *Good Time Charlie's Got the Blues* is not only commercial but a well-plotted, if unambitious, song, and Danny sings it well. *An American Dream* is the other bright spot, an awkward song (it *is* ambitious) but a nice one, and expertly played by O'Keefe and some Memphis musicians. O'Keefe doesn't rock comfortably, however, as *The Question (Obviously)* proves, and his compositions have a tendency, which surfaces along about *The Road* on side one and *The Valentine Pieces* on side two, to become wearisome. His lyrics, however, stand up long after the melodies have hit the dirt. It is an erratic album, but the good things that it says about O'Keefe are heartening. *N.C.*

LITTLE JIMMY OSMOND: *Killer Joe.* Jimmy Osmond (vocals); orchestra. *My Girl; Rubber Ball; Tweedlee Dee; Killer Joe*; and six others. MGM SE 4855 $5.98, ⑧ 8130 4855 $6.98, © 5130 4855 $6.98.

Performance: **Too cute for words**
Recording: **Unnecessary**

The recent Osmond Brothers tour of England created more commotion there, I've been told, than anything since the assault of the Spanish Armada. Though Donny Osmond was the object of most of the hysterical attention, he is fast reaching the senility of his late teens, and Little Jimmy Osmond is now apparently being groomed to take his place. (The rumor is that there is yet another Osmond, still in his crib at the delivery hospital, but already booked for a twelve-city tour to begin in late summer.) Jimmy's album is cute; he sounds like Shirley Temple with several shots of testosterone. He is *so* cute on something like *Killer Joe* that I developed an irresistible, W. C. Fieldsian impulse to strangle him on the spot. If you are interested in this sort of thing, the album liner advises you that you can become one of the gang by sending two dollars (plus 25¢ for postage) to the Osmond Fan Club in Salt Lake City. *P.R.*

THE PERSUASIONS: *Spread the Word.* The Persuasions (vocal quintet). *The Lord's Prayer; Lean on Me; Heaven Help Us All; Three Angels*; and six others. CAPITOL ST 11101 $5.98, ⑧ 8XT 11101 $6.98, © 4XT 11101 $6.98.

Performance: **"Hhhhmmmm. . . . . "**
Recording: **Good**

A cappella means voices unaccompanied by instruments, and it's the Persuasions' thing. After I had played two bands of this album, the word also came to mean unaccompanied by a listener. It's very dull stuff indeed—sincerely meant, I'm sure. But when they launched into the old Youmans *Without a Song* I felt I was being serenaded by a barbershop quintet that had strayed in from a revival-meeting hall. *P.R.*

CAMILO SESTO: *Algo de Mí.* Camilo Sesto (vocals); Alfredo Pareja (guitar); Jaime Torregrosa (bass); Vicente Jorro (organ); Conrado Martínez (percussion); others. *Algo de Mí; Lanza tu Voz; Todos los Tiempos; Buenas Noches; Yo soy Así; Hoy como Ayer*; and six others. PRONTO PTS 1002 $4.98, ⑧ PT8S 1002 $6.98.

Performance: **Impressive**
Recording: **Good**

Most young Spanish and Latin American singers have been affected by one of two major foreign influences—the British and American rock sound or the "international" sound of French and (especially) Italian popular music. Like Leonardo Favio and Julio Iglesias, Camilo Sesto is very much in the international group, where there is greater emphasis on projection of lyrics and on beautiful vocal quality. Not surprisingly, his greatest assets are his clarity of diction and the beauty of his voice.

The title song of this album is Sesto's greatest hit and a good example of what he does best—frankly emotional, pleading love songs. Camilo Blanes, the composer of *Algo de Mí*,

SIEGEL-SCHWALL BAND
Consistently represents the best in rock

contributed five other songs in the same vein to this collection. The album also includes contemporary versions of Brahms' Lullaby (*Buenas Noches*) and Eduardo di Capua's *Oh Mari* and *O Sole Mio* (*Todos los Tiempos*); corny as these ideas may seem, Sesto brings them off well. For some time his records have been high on the charts in Madrid, and this album was quickly listed among the top ten Latin hits in New York. If you have any interest in the Latin field, Sesto is a performer you should know. Unfortunately, the album includes no liner notes, texts, or translations, but the sense comes through, whether you know the words or not. *William Livingstone*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SIEGEL-SCHWALL BAND: *Sleepy Hollow.* Siegel-Schwall Band (vocals and instrumentals). *I Wanna Love Ya; Something's Wrong; Sleepy Hollow; Blues for a Lady; His Good Time Band; You Don't Love Me Like That; Sick to My Stomach; Always Thinkin' of You, Darlin'; Hey, Billie Jean.* WOODEN NICKEL WNS 1010 $5.98, ⑧ P8WN 1010 $6.98, © PKWN 1010 $6.98.

Performance: **Intoxicating**
Recording: **Very good**

I can't make up my mind whether Corky Siegel is the best blues harp (*Somethin's Wrong*) or the best blues piano (*Blues for a Lady*) of the last twenty years. He is consistently brilliant in distilling all the known styles of blues playing into his own smooth whiskey. Some of the phrases he plays have been played before by others, and yet Siegel always seems to be doing things in his own way.

Corky is the most remarkable member of that remarkable quartet, the Siegel-Schwall Band, which also includes Jim Schwall's delicately tasteful and swingy guitar, Rollow Radford's reliable bass and standout vocals, and Shelly Plotkin's skillful drumming. They have been playing together for several years now and know each other's talents intimately. They have also maintained a sense of humor, which is a great boost to their music. I can think of only one other group—Booker T. & the MG's in their great days—that so consistently represented the best in the American music classified as "rock." The MG's could take a mediocre pop tune and transform it into an artistic statement of their own. The astounding thing about Siegel-Schwall is that, though the material they write is not really *that* good, they manage to clothe their tunes so gloriously in performance that they sound better than they actually are.

There is a good self-description of the group's attitude in *His Good Time Band*, and they do a devastating satire on country music and currently hip socio-political attitudes in *Sick to My Stomach*: the lyrics prove that vulgarity, if carefully used, can be wonderfully funny.

This isn't the first time I've raved about this group and it won't be the last. Anyone who is concerned about the pomposity, arrogance, and dullness of current rock will find manna in "Sleepy Hollow." This is how music can be, should be, and isn't very often. *J.V.*

SPRING. Marilyn Rovell Wilson and Diane Rovell (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Tennessee Waltz; Thinkin' 'bout You, Baby; Mama Said; Superstar; Awake; Sweet Mountain; Everybody; This Whole World; Forever*; and three others. UNITED ARTISTS UAS 5571 $5.98.

Performance: **Surf's up**
Recording: **Very good**

Spring is the wife and sister-in-law of Brian Wilson. Marilyn and Diane Rovell had a tentative music career before hooking up with the head Beach Boy, of course, but this has to be considered the big push. All I can say is, it's a setback for Women's Lib. Brian has made them sound like thoroughly modern female Beach Boys. No doubt some inventive, creative work went into that, but that isn't quite the point, is it? I can't imagine what the girls would sound like (maybe two Karen Carpenters?) without those complex vocal harmonies and those brilliant studio manipulations—Brian has his signature on this like some Leonardo da Vinci who, in painting the Mona Lisa, splashed his name across the old girl's face in foot-high script. The girls have pleasant, professional-sounding voices that seem to communicate genteel good humor, no matter what the song at hand is about, and I think, once they find their own arrangement, they can consider the pretty part of things accomplished and devote their energies to interpreting what the song means. Most others this well equipped, the Carpenters in-

(Continued on page 100)

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cluded, I don't *ever* expect to get into that, but these women just might. There's something here that seems to foretell it—*there*! there's a little corner of it, sticking out from behind Brian's surfboard. *N.C.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TANYA TUCKER: *Delta Dawn.* Tanya Tucker (vocals); orchestra. *Delta Dawn; He's All I Got; Soul Song; Love's the Answer; If You Touch Me*; and six others. COLUMBIA KC 31742 $5.98, ® CA 31742 $6.98, © CT 31742 $6.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Excellent**

Columbia's child bride, Tanya Tucker (age thirteen), proves here that she is a lot more than a one-shot freak success. *Delta Dawn* was a hit for her recently, and this album has several tracks that are more than its equal. She has a strong, fresh voice with a pulsating vibrato that gives an extra stimulus to everything she does. *He's All I Got* is her best work here, with *Love's the Answer* following closely. In fact, the whole album is an example of beautiful production and performance in a style that is Nashville at its best. Perhaps it has something to do with Miss Tucker's obvious enthusiasm and natural charm or Billy Sherrill's fine production job, but there isn't a moment of that wearily routine sound that's all too common in c-&-w recordings. *P.R.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JERRY JEFF WALKER. Jerry Jeff Walker (vocals, guitar); Bob Livingston (bass); Craig Hillis (guitar); Mary Egan (violin); Michael McGarry (drums); Gary Nunn (keyboards); David Bromberg (guitar, violin); other musicians. *Hill Country Rain; Charlie Dunn; That Old Time Feeling; Her Good Lovin' Grace; Hairy Ass Hillbillies; David and Me; L. A. Freeway*; and five others. DECCA DL 7 5384 $5.98, ® 65384 $6.98, © 735384 $6.98.

Performance: **Super**
Recording: **Fair to good**

Jerry Jeff Walker never made it easy on himself. Most who cut similar figures as knockabout, hard-drinking ramblers—Kris Kristofferson, for example—obviously have been doing a deal of posing all along, asking us from the start to suspend disbelief as we would in the theater. Those of us who find merit in their work realized that and went along with it. Some who *didn't* realize it are now splashing "We wuz conned" all over the public print and generally having a high time in their newfound role as exposé artists. But Jerry Jeff suckers you into hoping there actually is a Real Thing—which of course means the venom will really fly if it turns out there wasn't. I'll just say, for now, that he sure as hell didn't make as much money as the creator of *Mr. Bojangles* as he *could* have made, and let it go at that.

That aspect of Walker's personality that engenders such speculation, however, is definitely linked to the easy, relaxed grace with which his music just rolls along, and may be connected to whatever it is that has him stop and see the ninety per cent of the environment that others can't be bothered with. Anyway, it makes for good lyrics: "That old time feelin' goes sneakin' down the hall/Like an old grey cat in winter keepin' close to the wall"—this to waltz (!) tempo. And if he really isn't the lonesome rambler he represents himself to be, how come he can get so quickly, so deeply into that essential aloneness of his tribe, with these almost casual strokes: "If I can just get offa this L. A. freeway/Without getting killed or caught . . ."?

I guess I didn't let it go at that after all. Sorry. This is a fine album, anyway, a bit draggy in a very few spots, but the performances, all mixed live, never flag and never overreach. *Hill Country Rain*, which sets a high standard, is topped by *That Old Time Feeling*, which is topped by *L. A. Freeway*. . . . The guy is quite a writer. I'll let it go at *that*, then. For now. *N.C.*

WAR: *The World Is a Ghetto.* War (vocals and instrumentals). *The Cisco Kid; Where Was You At; City, Country, City; Four Cornered Room; The World Is a Ghetto; Beetles in the Bog.* UNITED ARTISTS UAS 5652 $5.98, ® U 8462 $6.98, © K 0462 $6.98.

Performance: **Glorious/glum**
Recording: **Excellent**

The first side of this album is marvelous, a stunning combination of Latin, rock, jazz, and soul, performed with faultless technique matched with sensitivity and fire. *The Cisco Kid* and *Where Was You At* are presented with such robust energy and brilliance of performance that they seem to be better tunes than they really are. *City, Country, City* is a breathtaking instrumental. All three of these performances show War to be one of the tightest bands ever. Huzzahs for all concerned, but especially for the reed work of Charles Miller, Lonnie Jordan's organ and timbales, Papa Dee Allen's congas and bongos, and Lee Oskar's amazing harmonica. The first side has everything: wit, discipline, audacity, and powerhouse funk.

Pay no attention, therefore, to the second side, which is more or less standard "soul" with pop and jazz elements. *Four Cornered Room, The World Is a Ghetto* (aw, c'mon fellas, it *isn't*), and *Beetles in the Bog* (which is so bad I can only describe it as sloth-rock) are all beneath the band's talents. But what a treasure side one is! *J.V.*

WET WILLIE: *Wet Willie II.* Wet Willie (vocals and instrumentals). *Shout Bamalama; Love Made Me; Red Hot Chicken; It Hurts Me Too; Keep a-Knockin'; Airport; Grits Ain't Groceries; Shotgun Man; Shaggi's Song.* CAPRICORN CP 0109 $5.98, ® M 80109 $6.98, © M 50109 $6.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Tinny**

Everything seems to be right with this band except the recording. They have made wise selections from among the best of old rock (*Shout Bamalama, Keep a-Knockin*, and Elmore James' immortal *It Hurts Me Too*), and the performances are fine. But everything is not as it should be—the fault, I think, of either the producer or the engineer. The actual sound of the record is weak; there's no body to it, though the band itself seems to have a healthy one.

Wet Willie is a Southern band, and Southern bands—as long as they stay Southern and don't get fancy—are capable of fine things. I have the impression that very good music was done for this album but that the console-board dial twisting, or lack of it, betrayed the band's effort. I would like to hear them again under more favorable circumstances. *J.V.*

JAZZ

MOSE ALLISON: *Mose In Your Ear.* Mose Allison (piano, vocals); Clyde Flowers (bass); Eddie Charlton (drums). *Look What You Made Me Do; Fool's Paradise; I Don't Worry About a Thing; Powerhouse; Hey Good Lookin'; I Ain't Got Nothin' but the Blues; You Can Count on Me to Do My Part; You Are My Sunshine; Don't Forget to Smile; The Seventh Son.* ATLANTIC SD 1627 $5.98, ® TP 1627 $6.98, © CS 1627 $6.98.

Performance: **Heavy-handed monotony**
Recording: **Club sound**

Mose Allison's nasal blue-eyed-soul style of singing and heavy-fisted, blues-rooted piano playing won him a good following in the Sixties and, I gather, is keeping him fairly busy in clubs as we head toward the mid-Seventies. But his music—stagnant, Brubecky, and virtually devoid of nuances—has a somniferous sameness about it.

This album was recorded live at In Your Ear, a club in Palo Alto, California, but *Mose In Your Ear* tends to go out the other. The best I can say is that if you must have everything Allison puts out, here's another one—including, for the umpteenth time, *The Seventh Son*. I'll sit this one out. *C.A.*

EDDIE CONDON: *Jazz at the New School.* Wild Bill Davison (cornet); Kenny Davern (clarinet, soprano saxophone); Dick Wellstood (piano); Eddie Condon (guitar); Gene Krupa (drums). *I Want to Be Happy; Sugar; Shim-Me-Sha-Wabble; Avalon; That Da Da Strain; Blues in C; The Mooche; I Can't Believe That You're in Love with Me.* CHIAROSCURO CR 110 $5.98 (available by mail from Chiaroscuro, 15 Charles St., New York, N.Y. 10014).

Performance: **Potbelly, crewcut, and beer**
Recording: **Victim of circumstances**

It was a concert at New York's New School for Social Research. And, I suppose, the star of the evening was legendary band leader Eddie Condon, whose public appearances have become more and more infrequent. I gather from the notes by George Avakian that Condon's presence provided the *raison d'être* for the event and, of course, the album. However—as is often the case when old-timers of jazz reunite—an atmosphere of nostalgia plays tricks with one's ears, creating the illusion that what is played is far better than it actually is. Recordings tend to strip performances of such veneer, preserving for sober scrutiny what would have remained beautiful in fading memories. Judging by the audience's reactions on this album, what *we* hear seems to fall considerably short of whatever filled the hall that night.

Sixty-nine-year-old Condon might as well have left his guitar at home, and perhaps he

(Continued on page 102)

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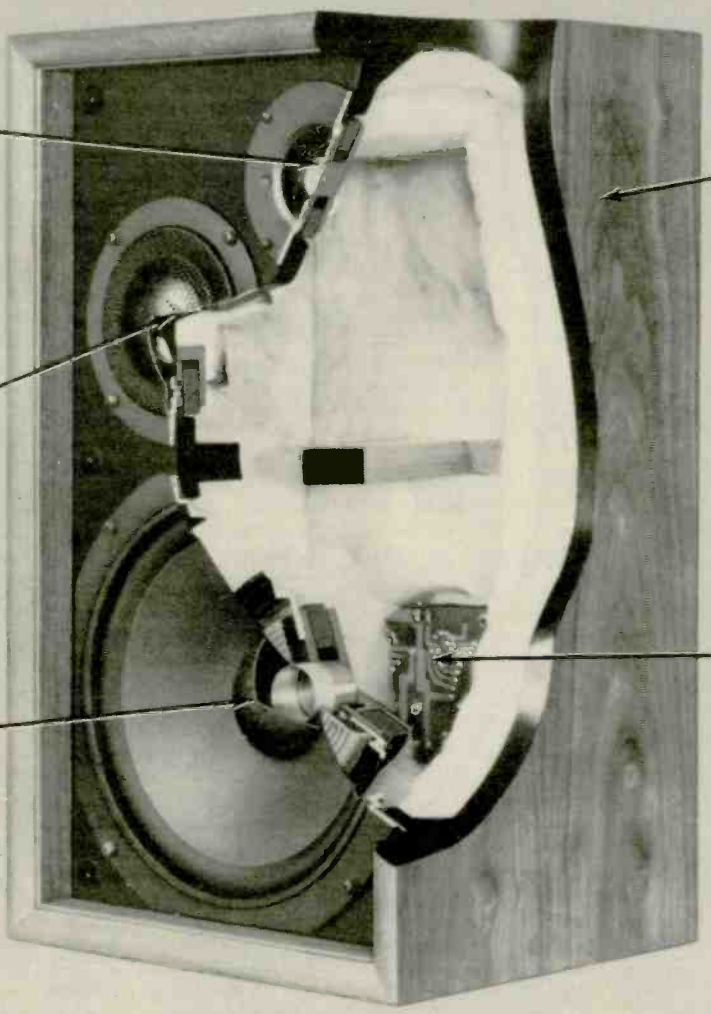

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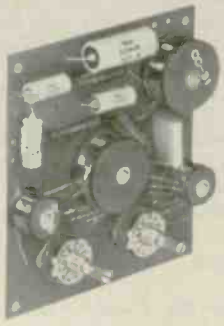

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did; Krupa's drums drag pitifully; Wellstood plays with his usual good taste, but his left hand does not make up for the absence of a bass player. The lack of a bass is attributed to the school's limited budget, but I would sooner have sacrificed one of the horns, though both play admirably.

Producer Hank O'Neal has been responsible for a series of fine recordings in the recent past (Bobby Henderson, Earl Hines, *etc.*), but he should not have attempted to revisit the Commodore jam sessions. "You *can* go home again," states Avakian in his notes, but this album's message seems to be that you *shouldn't*. *C.A.*

RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK/AL HIBBLER: ***A Meeting of the Times.*** Al Hibbler (vocals); Leon Thomas (vocal on *Dream*); Rahsaan Roland Kirk (tenor and baritone saxophones, manzello, stritch, flute, clarinet); Hank Jones and Lonnie Liston Smith (piano); Ron Carter and Major Holley (bass); Oliver Jackson and Charles Crosby (drums). *Do Nothing till You Hear from Me; Daybreak; Lover Come Back to Me; Don't Get Around Much Anymore; This Love of Mine; Carney and Begard's Place; I Didn't Know About You; Something 'bout Believing; Dream.* ATLANTIC SD 1630 $5.98, ® TP 1630 $6.98, © CS 1630 $6.98.

Performance: **Great Kirk, abysmal Hibbler**
Recording: **Excellent**

I must confess that Al Hibbler's singing has never turned me on, and this album is no exception. In fact, at fifty-seven Hibbler has become a mockery of himself in the days when he was one of Duke Ellington's many vocal mistakes. From 1943 to 1951—his years with Duke—Hibbler's grotesque growling and Mrs. Millerish flutter (Duke called it "tonal pantomime") wrecked many a record for me, but never has his presence been more annoying than at this meeting with Rahsaan Roland Kirk. The most irritating features of his style are now so exaggerated that his voice assaults the ears, and, against the background of Kirk's tasteful, thoroughly musical accompaniment, becomes an infuriating intrusion. It's hard to figure out why this meeting took place, much less why it was preserved.

But the album is not a total disaster, for Hibbler appears only on the first half, and the second side is pure joy from beginning to end. *Carney and Begard's* [sic] *Place*, Kirk's tribute to Ellington stars Harry Carney and Barney Bigard, is alone worth the price of this album. What a genius Kirk is! As his all-star rhythm section does Ellingtonesque things, he adds his clarinet and baritone sax and comes on like the whole Ellington band, capturing not only the overall sound, but the characteristics of Carney and Bigard as well. The beauty of it is that he does not imitate Duke's sound, but traps the essence of it and gives it modern dress. *I Didn't Know About You* and *Something 'bout Believing*, both from the Ellington repertoire, are outstanding instrumentals, and Kirk's own composition *Dream*, which has a different rhythm section (Smith, Holley, and Crosby), features a vocal by Leon Thomas. Thomas, who fortunately doesn't yodel on this one, should have been the vocalist for the whole album. *That* would have been a true "meeting of the times." *C.A.*

CHUCK MANGIONE QUARTET: ***Alive!*** Chuck Mangione (flugelhorn, electric piano); Gerry Niewood (tenor and soprano saxophones, alto flute); Tony Levin (electric bass); Steve Gadd (drums). *High Heel Sneakers; Legend of the One-Eyed Sailor; St. Thomas; Sixty-Miles-Young.* MERCURY SRM 1 650 $5.98, ® MC8 1650 $6.98, © MCR4 1650 $6.98.

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

Cannonball Adderley heard the Mangione brothers, Chuck and Gap, in their hometown, Rochester, N.Y., in 1960, brought them to the attention of Riverside Records, supervised their first album, and paved their way to that year's Randall's Island Jazz Festival. Chuck, then a crewcut twenty-two-year-old, was playing a trumpet with turned-up horn (a gift from Dizzy Gillespie) and co-leading a "soul-jazz" sextet modeled after Adderley's—an excellent, if not wholly original, group that showed great promise.

Chuck ventured out on his own in 1965 and has only partly fulfilled his early promise. In the intervening thirteen years his style has developed, he is more technically proficient, there is a bit of today's Miles in him (just as there was the old Miles in him back then), and he verges on the avant garde at times, but he is still only a very capable musician, lacking the individuality we early listeners predicted would come.

The group plays well together. *Legend* is a good track, and Gerry Niewood is usually the most interesting member of the quartet, but the music is just not interesting enough to justify paying for all the clinkers contained in the album. *C.A.*

SONNY ROLLINS: ***Next Album.*** Sonny Rollins (soprano and tenor saxophones); George Cables (piano); Bob Cranshaw (bass); Jack De Johnette and David Lee (drums); Arthur Jenkins (conga drums and percussion). *Playin' in the Yard; Poinciana; The Everywhere Calypso; Keep Hold of Yourself; Skylark.* MILESTONE MSP 9042 $5.98.

Performance: **Routine**
Recording: **Good**

Every ten years, it seems, Sonny Rollins returns to the music scene from a voluntary absence. His latest return wasn't exactly triumphant, but Rollins' stint at the Village Vanguard last summer proved that he can be as exciting a player today as he was in the late Fifties when he was setting trends. That some of those evenings at the Vanguard were not preserved becomes all the more regrettable as you listen to this album, for Rollins' return to the recording studio is a study in apathy, a "blowing session" like those snapped together in the heyday of Riverside and Prestige mass production. Not that some of those sessions didn't produce positive results—you just didn't expect a gem every other week when someone hurled Sonny Stitt into a studio, waved the checks, signaled the organ player to start another "original" blues, and pressed the Ampex's start button. Yet, when a musician of Sonny Rollins' stature makes a relatively rare studio appearance, it is only reasonable to expect that the result will be interesting, at the very least. But this album is not only disappointing, it is a plain bore: *Playin' in the Yard* and *Poinciana* don't get off the ground; *The Everywhere Calypso* is nowhere (or ought to be). *Keep Hold of Yourself* and *Skylark* are the set's best tracks, but neither will raise any eyebrows. I wish this album had not been made. *C.A.*

THEATER • FILMS

ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND (John Barry—Lewis Carroll—Don Black). Original-soundtrack recording. Fiona Fullerton (Alice); Davy Kaye (Mouse); Michael Crawford (White Rabbit); Sir Robert Helpman (Mad Hatter); Peter Sellers (March Hare); Dudley Moore (Dormouse); Dame Flora Robson (Queen of Hearts); Peter Bull (Duchess); Michael Hordern (Mock Turtle); and Spike Milligan (Gryphon). Orchestra, John Barry arr. and cond. WARNER BROS. BS 2671 $5.98.

Performance: **Alice in England**
Recording: **Excellent**

Joseph Shaftel's production of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is the latest in a whole series of movies that have tackled the Reverend Dodgson's instructive fantasy with varying degrees of magicality. Down through the years Alice has come to us surrounded by Hollywood character actors, up to her knee-sox in puppets, and totally Disneyfied. Now the British have reclaimed her. (The movie has not yet crossed the Atlantic at this writing.)

Any *Alice* that has Robert Helpman as the Mad Hatter, Peter Sellers as the March Hare, Dudley Moore as the Dormouse, Denis Price as the King of Hearts, and Flora Robson as the Queen cannot possibly be all bad. Alice herself has been recorded several times—marvelously portrayed by Joan Greenwood (Caedmon), in a full-length BBC production directed by Douglas Cleverdon (London), and read complete by Cyril Ritchard (Riverside). But what we have here are excerpts from John Barry's score for the new movie, and a mighty good score it is. The main theme, *Curiouser and Curiouser*, is likely to become as popular as *Born Free*. *I've Never Been This Far Before*, sung with unadorned charm by Fiona Fullerton, who is Alice in the movie, is neat and hummable. *The Lobster Quadrille* is so winning I wish it had been allowed to run longer than a minute and forty-six seconds. Dame Flora singing *Off With Their Heads* is entirely convincing. The dances are deft, the orchestrations suitably twinkling. But it is Mr. Sellers, Mr. Helpman, and Mr. Moore who steal the honors at the Mad Tea Party with *Pun Song*, which has such ingenious lyrics and such a lively tune that it is almost worthy of Gilbert and Sullivan. If Mr. Barry's music owes its charm to any source, it might be to the languidly melodious and inventive qualities of Deems Taylor's undeservedly forgotten *Through the Looking Glass* suite. In any case, the music is right for its subject, and lyricist Don Black is to be complimented for his courage in attempting to match wits in the word department with Lewis Carroll himself. *P.K.*

FRIML: ***Music for the Theater—Selections from the scores of The Three Musketeers, The***

(Continued on page 104)

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Vagabond King, and Rose Marie. Dennis King, Adrienne Brune, Raymond Newell, Jack Livesey, and Robert Wollard (vocals); chorus; New Mayfair Orchestra and Savoy Havana Band; Drury Lane Theatre Orchestra, Herman Finck cond. MONMOUTH-EVERGREEN MES 7058 $5.98.

Performance: **Haunting—in a dreadful way**
Recording: **Grating**

The archeological branch of the record industry is ever busy ferreting out old artifacts—and some of them I only wish could be put back in their mummy cases and kept there. The music of Rudolf Friml is the sort of thing my mother used to sing to herself during the Depression to keep her spirits up when it was time to start pawning the furniture. I have waited patiently for it to go away, but evidently those cloying melodies, those plots about vagabond kings, musty musketeers, and mealy-mouthed mounties, those gallant love lyrics for narcissistic baritone and twittering soprano are not so easily laid to rest, and no restaurant lunch is safe from some Muzak resurrection of one medley or another. "I trust that your conclusion and mine are similar/'Twould be a happier world if it were Frimler," wrote Ogden Nash for the composer's ninetieth birthday party in 1969. Here Nash and I, for once, part company. But I never thought that, in addition to all the Friml that dribbles out of the radio, we would once more have to listen to Dennis King and his stage companions of the Twenties warbling this material. How wrong I was! Is the technology that can revive Caruso to stop at King? "No," saith Monmouth-Evergreen, who have unearthed the "original-cast recordings" of scenes from both *The Three Musketeers* and *The Vagabond King* from pressings originally loosed upon the world *circa* 1928. The sound is excruciating, the scores every bit as sticky as I remember them from childhood, and Mr. King and his cohorts swashbuckle and trill their way through musketeer marches, vagabond songs, and other historically costumed products ultimately consigned to Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy for motion picture use. (Mr. King in his heyday was nothing if not manly, but a little of him goes a long way.) And as if this were not enough to make a man doubt whether Mr. Edison's invention should ever have been allowed to reach the public in the first place, the producers have added medleys by a group of instrumental torture-experts called the New Mayfair Orchestra, who have to be heard to be believed (only I don't wish it on you). As a *coup de grâce*, this incredible group, summoning up images of ancient tea gardens attached to British hostelries, are brought back for a medley from *Rose Marie*, complete with the most listless of *Indian Love Calls*, that sent me screaming into the streets—where I was rescued by a rock group that offered to revive me with a medley for electric guitar, harmonium, and buzz-saw based on themes from *Blossom Time*. *P.K.*

KORNGOLD: ***The Sea Hawk—Excerpts from the Classic Film Scores of Erich Wolfgang Korngold.*** *The Sea Hawk, Of Human Bondage, The Adventures of Robin Hood, Juarez, Kings Row, The Constant Nymph, Captain Blood, Anthony Adverse, Between Two Worlds, Devotion, and Escape Me Never.* Norma Procter, (contralto, in *Constant Nymph*); Ambrosian Singers and National Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles Gerhardt cond. RCA LSC 3330 $5.98.

Performance: **Titanically tepid**
Recording: **Very good**

At the age of thirteen, Erich Wolfgang Korngold was a *Wunderkind* whose first work was being performed at the Vienna Opera. Puccini is supposed to have exclaimed, "His talent is so great he could easily afford to give us half and still have enough for himself." At seventeen his works were getting attention from great conductors throughout Europe, while Schnabel and Cortot were playing his piano works and Lehmann, Schumann, Jeritza, Tauber, and Slezak were singing his arias (one still occasionally hears those from *Die Tote Stadt*). Then, in 1934, at the age of thirty-seven, Korngold received the Call from Hollywood. Max Reinhardt summoned him there to improve on Mendelssohn's music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the spectacular film version being made at Warner Brothers. For the next thirteen years the great Korngold stayed on at Warner Brothers, turning out scores for epics starring the likes of Bette Davis, Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, John Garfield, Eleanor Parker, and Claude Rains.

Scorning cue sheets and other technical aids—even a stopwatch—Korngold sat night after night at a piano in a private projection room running films and sketching out his scores. When he finished a film, he would grandly conduct a whole symphony orchestra to record the music track. "What other composer," he once asked, "can enjoy the luxury of having a fine symphony orchestra play his music immediately after he composed it?"

On this new record, produced for RCA by Korngold's son George and apparently already a smash hit in sales, there are excerpts from the music for a dozen of the movies he scored. So much of a piece are they that, if the label had not said otherwise, I for one would have been quite willing to believe all the music had been written for the same movie. Korngold's music sighs, sobs, storms, throbs, bristles, laments, and bays. Above all, it yearns. Whether Anthony Adverse is coming to grips with adversity, or Bette Davis is being bitchy to Claude Rains, or Errol Flynn is crossing swords with Basil Rathbone, the titanic Korngoldian surge is never far below the level of action or dialogue. It is like a great warm bath surging over us in an oceanic tide. On closer acquaintance, however, we become aware that it is a tide not so much of emotion as of eyewash.

Heard on this record, away from their visual and dramatic settings, the compositions prove to be much ado musically about very little indeed. The tone poem from *The Constant Nymph*, those great swoons of torrential melody from *Kings Row*, the themes from the *Of Human Bondage* remake, and the seagoing title music from *The Sea Hawk* add up to virtually nothing when they are considered apart from the action they underlined. Mr. Korngold could outdo even Max Steiner in the orchestral commotion he could work up for an episode, but he seemed to lack the latter's gift for inventing a memorable melody. Of atmosphere, however, Korngold was undisputed master. Lapped about in a lofty Loew's by those great meaningless sounds, Mrs. Grundy could easily forget the life-sized world of human affairs outside and concentrate on the super-emotions of Miss Davis, Miss Fontaine, or Miss de Havilland. Yet, once in a while, there turns up a lovely, uninflated stretch, like the elegy during Emily Brontë's death scene in *Devotion*, revealing for a minute or two what Mr. Korngold's serious admirers saw in his work.

For this album, Charles Gerhardt urges his forces through a series of heart-on-sleeve, ardently exclamatory performances that would no doubt have warmed the cockles of their composer's gentle and simple heart, and Korngold's son contributes a fascinating and highly informative set of liner notes describing not only his father's working methods but the plot of every picture from which a stretch of music is played. He does not exclude the ten forgettable themes for *Escape Me Never*, which culminate in one of those Hollywood endings that leave no doubt whatever in your mind that the movie is over and it is time to leave. Not a moment too soon, either. *P.K.*

COLE PORTER: ***Ben Bagley's "Painted Smiles of Cole Porter"*** **(see Best of the Month, page 87)**

WALTON: *Music from Shakespearean Films. Richard III: Prelude and Shakespearean Suite; Hamlet: Funeral March; Henry V: Suite.* Philharmonia Orchestra, Sir William Walton cond. SERAPHIM S 60205 $2.98.

Performance: **Stirring yet sterile**
Recording: **Improved version**

William Walton has written scores for Sir Laurence Olivier's Shakespeare films that are distinguished for panache, for color, and for the invocation of the mood of a scene as well as the Elizabethan period and its music. They work beautifully as movie music, and are surely a superior form of it, yet the composer himself regards them as lesser achievements among his efforts. The entire Walton *oeuvre* consists of only two symphonies, three concertos, two operas (one of them a one-acter), the music for Edith Sitwell's *Facade*, and a couple of overtures, choral works, and minor pieces. Yet every piece is so superbly crafted and persuasively composed that it remains admirable over more hearings than many contemporary scores can bear. The movie music has all the external Walton virtues—the marvelous use of brasses and banked strings, the propulsive passages *alla marcia*, the feeling for atmosphere, the ability to breathe new life into familiar forms. But there is something missing: spontaneity. The commissions are getting filled with extraordinary competence, but the music lacks the mysterious ingredient of inspired writing. An exception is the *Hamlet* funeral march, a haunting piece with somber references to Beethoven's *Eroica*; it is heard to immense effect at the beginning and end of the movie, and it is also impressive outside that context, as pure music. But the music for *Richard III* and even the far more intricate score for *Henry V* are mostly pomp and pageantry, as though they had been penned for a coronation. The dark, indigo-deep passage for the scene about the princes in the tower in *Richard III* and the subtle interlude for strings that accompanies the death of Falstaff in *Henry V* do not relieve sufficiently the rhetoric of all those battle episodes and fanfares which so well grace a scene, yet have so little to say on their own.

This album is a re-release of Angel S 36198. Muir Mathieson's notes for the earlier, more expensive version were better than the perfunctory ones on Seraphim, but the sound is crisper in this remastered edition. *P.K.*

SPOKEN WORD

MAURICE CHEVALIER: ***A Xerox Recorded Portrait.*** Maurice Chevalier in conversation with Arnold Michaelis. XEROX XRP 1003 $6.98.

Performance: **Entertaining**
Recording: **Good**

Maurice Chevalier was born in a Paris suburb in 1899, and lived on for seventy-three productive years, most of which were spent spreading his own idea of French charm and *joie de vivre* with enormous energy. Indeed, after a while he became a kind of parody of himself—like one of those meals you get in a French restaurant in Los Angeles where they double the amount of spices in everything to make sure the dullest palate will taste the flavor and get the point. This "recorded portrait" from Xerox (other "immortals" in the gallery include Eleanor Roosevelt, Oscar Hammerstein II, and Martin Luther King, Jr.) actually is a replica of an interview (or "conversation," as the company calls it) conducted by Arnold Michaelis when Chevalier was seventy and enjoying a great success with a one-man show.

Always a superb raconteur, Chevalier tells enchantingly of his beginnings—how at the age of ten he was so carried away by the sight of a troupe of acrobats playing at a music hall in the Paris suburb where he lived that he nearly put himself into the hospital afterward trying to emulate them; how as a youth he worked as a "thumbtack finisher" and "carpenter's apprentice" and "doll painter" until he got a chance to sing professionally for the first time in a little café; how "work and mother" were the two central things in his life—and he never got over his mother's death, news of which came to him when he was still a young man playing one of those doggedly cheerful roles in *The Smiling Lieutenant.*

Well, Chevalier's was a long career and it takes quite a while for him to tell about it. Yet the record isn't boring. His stories of his long partnership with Mistinguette, his friendship with Colette, and his meeting in London with George Bernard Shaw (Shaw had never seen him perform and Chevalier wasn't acquainted with a single Shaw play, but after that mutual confession they got along fine) are touching in their revelations of Chevalier's innocence and surprising lack of arrogance. His sane acceptance of age is refreshing. In fact, it is only when he begins to spout philosophical silliness—to doff that rakish straw hat, as it were, and pull in the lower lip that was the hallmark of his charm, or to sound excessively coy, as he did in his roles, on the subject of women—that he becomes at all tedious. The "portrait" is at its best when the voice of its subject is talking honestly of the profession he understood so well—when he admits of performers, for example, that "We are toys" and that to succeed "you've got to top yourself all the time." *P.K.*

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CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

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ALFONSO X (attrib.): ***Las Cantigas de Santa Maria*** **(see Best of the Month, page 85)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BABBITT: ***Quartet No. 3.*** **WUORINEN:** ***Quartet.*** Fine Arts Quartet. TURNABOUT TV-S 34515 $2.98.

Performance: **Dazzling**
Recording: **Superb**

The conception of Milton Babbitt's Third Quartet, I learn from the liner notes of this fine Turnabout release, is "a refreshing one in an age of artistic gimmickry. Babbitt has written a work that is all bone and sinew, argued from first note to last with a sense of absolute inevitability and an air of consuming intellectual passion. . . . By creating true polyphony, and by exercising uncanny judgment in the matters of harmonic weight and linear driving power, Babbitt has triumphantly mastered the art of genuine movement in a nontonal idiom."

Of the Charles Wuorinen Quartet on the other side of the record, I read further that, "Without recourse to secondhand romantic mannerisms," the composer "creates a rhetorical vocabulary all his own. It is founded on the interplay, understated at first and gradually intensifying, of regular rhythmic periodicity and timeless, suspended lyricism. The music is hectically expressive, even expressionistic, in tone. At one moment it rears up in a gesture of vehement oratory, at another it sings a song of desperate far-off beauty, and then again it pounds away like a drill at an exposed nerve. And as the argument unfolds, so the implicit accents gradually emerge and converge in a concluding processional of potent tragic force."

WANDA WILKOMIRSKA
An impressive unaccompanied violin

Ordinarily I disapprove of critics who lift their record reviews from liner notes. But since the above observations come originally from my own newspaper reviews of the world premieres of the works in question, perhaps I may be forgiven for further recycling the best summations I can formulate of this exhilarating music.

Let me add, for the information of non-Chicagoans, that these quartets are two in a valuable continuing series commissioned for the Fine Arts Quartet by Mr. and Mrs. Lee A. Freeman of Chicago; that performance and recording seem to me beyond cavil; and that, hearing the works again now in close proximity to each other, I find them just as exciting as I did at first—the Wuorinen the more expressive and probably the more rewarding in the long run, but the Babbitt fascinating too in its single-minded absorption in the kinetic interplay of musical line and pulse.

And let me also add a caveat I expressed in one of my original reviews: that I do not think either of these pieces is, or ever will be, music for the many. The demands they make on the listener's concentration mean that they will always be works for the segment of the public that may be termed initiates, or insiders, or specialists. But, on the other hand, unlike much contemporary esoterica, they make sense in terms of lasting musical values, not on the basis of arbitrary modishness. In other words, it's hard work listening to this music, but it isn't pointless hard work. *B.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BACH: ***Partitia No. 2, in D Minor, for Unaccompanied Violin (BWV 1004); Sonata No. 1, in G Minor, for Unaccompanied Violin (BWV 1001).*** Wanda Wilkomirska (violin). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2040 $5.98.

Performance: **Highly accomplished**
Recording: **Excellent**

Because of the enormous technical demands of Bach's unaccompanied violin sonatas, I have a tendency while listening to them to consider their performance as some kind of high-wire act. It is to Wanda Wilkomirska's credit that the music emerges pretty much as music rather than as a test of whether the player can get through all those double and triple stops unscathed. The Polish violinist's interpretation manifests a great seriousness of purpose, and she is particularly effective in conveying the quality of the dance movements. Stylistically, the performance is not especially in the Baroque mold (but then there is hardly *any* recording of the sonatas and partitas that is that); Miss Wilkomirska, with only the exception of the Chaconne in the D Minor Partita, does manage to scale her full tone down, avoiding any kind of high voltage or aggressive approach. I am sorry that she did not include repeats, but otherwise this is very impressive playing. The sonics, barring some intermittent background noises, are excellent. *I.K.*

(Continued on page 108)

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓡ = *reel-to-reel stereo tape*
- 8 = *eight-track stereo cartridge*
- Ⓒ = *stereo cassette*
- □ = *quadraphonic disc*
- R = *reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape*
- 8 = *eight-track quadraphonic tape*
- C = *quadraphonic cassette*

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

BIZET: *Carmen Suites Nos. 1 and 2.* **GRIEG:** *Peer Gynt Suites Nos. 1 and 2.* New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein cond. COLUMBIA M 31800 $5.98, © MT 31800 $6.98.

Performance: **Cool but colorful**
Recording: **Excellent**

One test of a really great conductor is how he approaches the warhorses of the standard repertoire when it seems that nobody of consequence is out there listening. Nobody ever caught Toscanini delivering a pedestrian version of Saint Saëns' *Danse Macabre* or *The Blue Danube*. As a matter of fact, the maestro did record Bizet's *Carmen Suite No. 1* for RCA, and it still blazes with excitement and brilliance when you put it on the turntable today. Since Bernstein attracted so much attention last winter at the Met when he conducted *Carmen* with Marilyn Horne in the title role, it is interesting to hear what he does with the purely orchestral side of the opera here.

Bizet wrote both *Carmen Suites* himself, but they are seldom heard complete, and conductors have a way of touching them up to reflect their own preferences in scoring what are essentially ornamental showpieces. Beecham had a marvelous way with this material, whipping it out in firework displays of pageantry and pulsing rhythms. Bernstein's approach is cooler: he is more affectionate and patient with the more somber passages in both of the uncut suites here. I have never heard the *Intermezzo* sing more persuasively; it is usually just a dull stretch I am relieved to have over. His *Seguedilla* and *Habanera* are sinuous and sensual—but oh, for a singer here! That is the real frustration of having *Carmen* without its heroine. At times there could be more drive and tension from the New York Philharmonic, and their leader might have lost his head a little more. But the *Toreador Song* is delivered with marvelous dash and vigor, and the *Bohemian Dance* is unrivaled by any of the many other versions that have been recorded.

The same is true for the even more overplayed suites from Grieg's *Peer Gynt*. (But to hear this music as originally composed for singers and orchestra in, say, the Barbirolli version of the score for Angel is an exhilarating revelation.) Bernstein again draws more drama than most out of the slow pieces like *Dawn* and the *Death of Ase*, ordinarily an interminable passage as moribund as its subject matter, but Peer's adventures need more than an orchestra to make them sound more than merely pretty. Yet, given the limitations of the suites themselves, this version holds its own with any on discs. It is an excellent recording, in any case, and one that might help particularly in introducing the classics to children. And the Dolbyized cassette sounds very nearly as crisp as the disc. *P.K.*

BRAHMS: *Cello Sonatas: No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 38; No. 2 in F Major, Op. 99.* Pierre Fournier (cello); Wilhelm Backhaus (piano). TURNABOUT TV S 34461 $2.98.

Performance: **Warm and virile**
Recording: **Good for its age**

At the price, these 1955 Fournier-Backhaus readings of the two Brahms cello sonatas represent good value, especially for Backhaus' pianism, which was still up to par at the time. The interpretations are warm and expansive, though Fournier's tone as conveyed by the recording seems a bit thin in the upper registers. This is not intrinsic to the music and was not the case with the remarkable Starker-Sebok disc that I had on hand for comparison.

The stereo enhancement by Turnabout is unobtrusive, and the recorded sound is quite respectable. Backhaus fanciers will not go wrong with this disc. But those listeners who want the best possible recorded performance regardless of price will do better, in my opinion, to invest $5.98 in the wonderfully intense and sharply pointed performances of Janos Starker and Gyorgy Sebok on Mercury. *D.H.*

BRAHMS: *Ein deutsches Requiem, Op. 45.* Edith Mathis (soprano); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Edinburgh Festival Chorus; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim cond. *Vier ernste Gesänge, Op. 121.* Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Daniel Barenboim (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 066 two discs $13.96.

Performance: **Imposing Requiem**
Recording: **Excellent**

The gloomy and grandiose German Requiem admits of a number of different interpretations: some lighten its somber orchestral textures (Ansermet), some heighten its drama through propulsive tempos (Klemperer), some insist on crisp rhythmic definition (Karajan). But the solemnity remains, for it is the essence of this profoundly spiritual music. Now comes Daniel Barenboim with an interpretation that seems to *emphasize* the solemnity and gloom to an almost unprecedented degree. The recording brings Furtwängler to mind, though I never heard him conduct this particular work.

YONG UCK KIM
Penetrating the subtle art of Brahms

Barenboim's tempos are consistently slow, but his pacing seems logical and effective everywhere except in the soprano solo of the fifth section. Orchestral details emerge with clarity, including the woodwinds and harp in the first section. The dirge-like second section reaches an impressive climax in which the timpani are given striking prominence without overpowering the rest of the orchestra. The engineers have supported the conductor intelligently in this technically troublesome work: the chorus and orchestra are well balanced, and the chorus is especially intelligible.

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau delivers his solo in the third section with a mellowness, dignity, and eloquence matched on records only by his own previous performance under Klemperer (Angel 3624). Edith Mathis brings a lovely tone quality to her solo, but her light timbre reveals a sense of strain, possibly due to the extremely slow pacing of what is the most soothing and consoling passage in the entire work. In my view, Agnes Giebel's performance of this solo (in the Ansermet version, on London OSA 1265) is more satisfying. Overall, Klemperer and Karajan (DGG) are the standards against which the new version must be measured. Though Barenboim's statement is a very personal one, it is offered with impressive conviction and will undoubtedly please many.

The fourth side is devoted to the spiritually kindred *Four Serious Songs*. Here, Fischer-Dieskau's admirable artistic intentions are betrayed by vocal resources no longer ample enough for their full realization. Comparing the way the baritone sings the second line of the first song, "*Wie dies stirbt, so stirbt er aus*," with the way he sang it on an early recording (Decca 9668, long deleted) tells the whole story. The present version is clear, noble, and eloquent, but it suffers from effortful vocalism and some interpretive mannerisms that detract from the result. Alexander Kipnis (Seraphim 60076, mono) is still the best interpreter of this music. Barenboim plays the piano part superbly for the DGG set. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRAHMS: *Sonatas for Violin and Piano: No. 1, in G Major, Op. 78; No. 3, in D Minor, Op. 108.* Yong Uck Kim (violin); Karl Engel (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 298 $6.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Very good**

These are exceptional performances by two performers not previously known to me. Anyone who thinks that the new Eastern school of fiddle playing is all technique should hear the extent to which Yong Uck Kim—a young Korean violinist, I presume—has penetrated the subtle art of Brahms both intellectually and emotionally. I would question only the tempo of the first movement of the Sonata in G Major—which is more *non troppo* than *vivace*. The result is that all the tempo relationships of the movement are out of focus: for example, the *più sostenuto* comes out faster than the main tempo. Perhaps a climax here and there falls just a touch short of the kind of breadth that Brahms should have at his most rhetorical. But let me quickly emphasize that these performances compare very well indeed with the best available versions, not only in the violin playing but also in the piano-and-violin partnership and in the attractive recorded sound. *E.S.*

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 9, in D Minor.* New Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer cond. ANGEL S 36873 $5.98.

Performance: **Otherworldly**
Recording: **Excellent, but low-level**

This is an otherworldly performance of the Bruckner Ninth, and I'm not sure I like it. The spiritual qualities of this symphony are well known and often commented upon, but frankly, the first two movements strike me as pretty corporeal. In any case, spirituality in this life must often be achieved by first getting it together physically. I feel this has not been done here: slowness, heaviness, a lot of inten-

sity and a certain world-weariness do not quite add up to inner glow. Perhaps Klemperer admirers, sensitive to his insight and spiritual energy, will find the values that are clearly meant to be there; I have difficulty, and so, I think, will the casual listener.

At any rate, the performance is very well recorded and, except for a pressing defect near the end of side one of the review copy, the sixty-five minutes seemed to be very expertly and economically squeezed onto the single disc. *E.S.*

CHÁVEZ: ***Soli*** **(see CORTÉS)**

CHOPIN: ***Polonaise No. 7, in A-flat Major ("Fantasy Polonaise"), Op. 61; Impromptu No. 3, in G-flat Major, Op. 51; Mazurkas, No. 39 in B Major, No. 40 in F Minor, and No. 41 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 63, Nos. 1-3; Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60; Nocturnes, No. 17 in B Major and No. 18 in E Major, Op. 62, Nos. 1 and 2.*** Stephen Bishop (piano). PHILIPS 6500 393 $6.98.

CHOPIN: ***Scherzo No. 2, in B-flat Minor, Op. 31; Preludes, No. 15 in D-flat Minor ("Raindrop") and No. 24 in D Minor, Op. 28; Ballade No. 1, in G Minor, Op. 23; Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise in E-flat Major, Op. 22; Nocturnes, No. 7 in C-sharp Minor and No. 8 in D-flat Major, Op. 27, Nos. 1 and 2.*** Gary Graffman (piano). COLUMBIA M 31934 $5.98.

CHOPIN: ***Introduction and Variations in B-flat Major, on a Theme from Hérold's "Ludovic," Op. 12; Ballade No. 4, in F Minor, Op. 52; Berceuse in D-flat Major, Op. 57; Études, No. 3 in E Major, No. 5 in G-flat Major ("Black Key"), and No. 12 in C Minor ("Revolutionary"), Op. 10; Trois Nouvelles Études.*** Grant Johannesen (piano). GOLDEN CREST CRS 4101 $5.98.

Performances: **Each has merits**
Recordings: **Columbia and Philips best**

Stephen Bishop's first Chopin recording reveals the American pianist's high degree of sensitivity and poetic impulse. The program itself is a particularly interesting one, one that I don't believe has been recorded before: only works of Chopin's last period, the eight or so years before his death, are included. The composer had developed a fondness for counterpoint, chromaticism, and a higher sense of embellishment, and these are some of his most advanced and intriguing works. Though Bishop, whose playing I very much admire, executes this collection with warmth and careful attention to phrasing, I must confess to a slight disappointment; I miss a feeling for the rhetorical, for the grand sweep and line. In the briefer pieces, such as the mazurkas, the charm is not always apparent. Perhaps the main problem with the large-scale Polonaise and the Barcarolle is that they tend to sound sectionalized. The recording itself is very good, but forte passages lack fullness and tonal variety. No such complaint can be made about either the sound or quality of Bishop's softer playing, such as in the Nocturnes, which are very lovely indeed.

Gary Graffman's Chopin disc, released in honor of his twenty-fifth season as a performer, is a collection of favorites both large-scale and small. It includes new versions of the *Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise* and the First Ballade, both of which the pianist had previously recorded for RCA. Overall, this is exciting, gutsy playing. It is especially impressive in such virtuosic works as the Twenty-Fourth Prelude, the Polonaise, and the end moments of the Ballade and Scherzo. If these are interpretations not always able to captivate, to melt one emotionally, they do have the advantage of a sweeping and often spectacular brilliance. Soundwise, the piano could have benefited from a less shallow bass, and my copy also suffered at times from a severe surface swish on side one.

Grant Johannesen's collection includes, with one exception, Chopin that is by and large familiar. The exception, a set of four variations on "*Je vends des scapulaires*," for soprano solo and chorus, from Hérold's opera *Ludovic*, is a highly interesting and charmingly effective novelty. Both it and the difficult Fourth Ballade are played with good style, understanding, and a sense of ebb and flow. The remaining pieces, however, lack variety of dynamics and color, perhaps partly because of the rather dry, shallow, recording; in addition, these works seem to call for a more temperamental approach. The disc, which is labeled "SQ System Compatible Quadrophonic" and which I heard only in conventional stereo, is not always clean. *I.K.*

RAMIRO CORTÉS: ***Three Movements for Five Winds; Duo for Flute and Oboe.*** **REVUELTAS:** ***Two Little Serious Pieces.*** **GINASTERA:** ***Duo for Flute and Oboe.*** **CHÁVEZ:** ***Soli.*** The Westwood Wind Quintet; Thomas Stevens (trumpet, in Revueltas); Roger Greenberg (baritone saxophone, in Revueltas). CRYSTAL S812 $5.98.

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

The Westwood Wind Quintet, with assisting artists, have done valiant service to some exceedingly minor music on this disc. Granted that it is more difficult to find interesting, high-quality music for ensembles of woodwinds than for some other instrumental groups, even so, the situation is hardly so desperate as to lead a fine performing ensemble to spend its time and talent on such weak stuff as this.

With the exception of *Two Little Serious Pieces* by Revueltas (which are anything but serious), I find no musical qualities worth attention in any of the other music. Ramiro Cortés' two pieces are dry, uninspired, and cavalierly facile. Ginastera's duo is dull, old-fashioned academicism. Chávez's *Soli* is just embarrassing. What a dismal lapse. *L.T.*

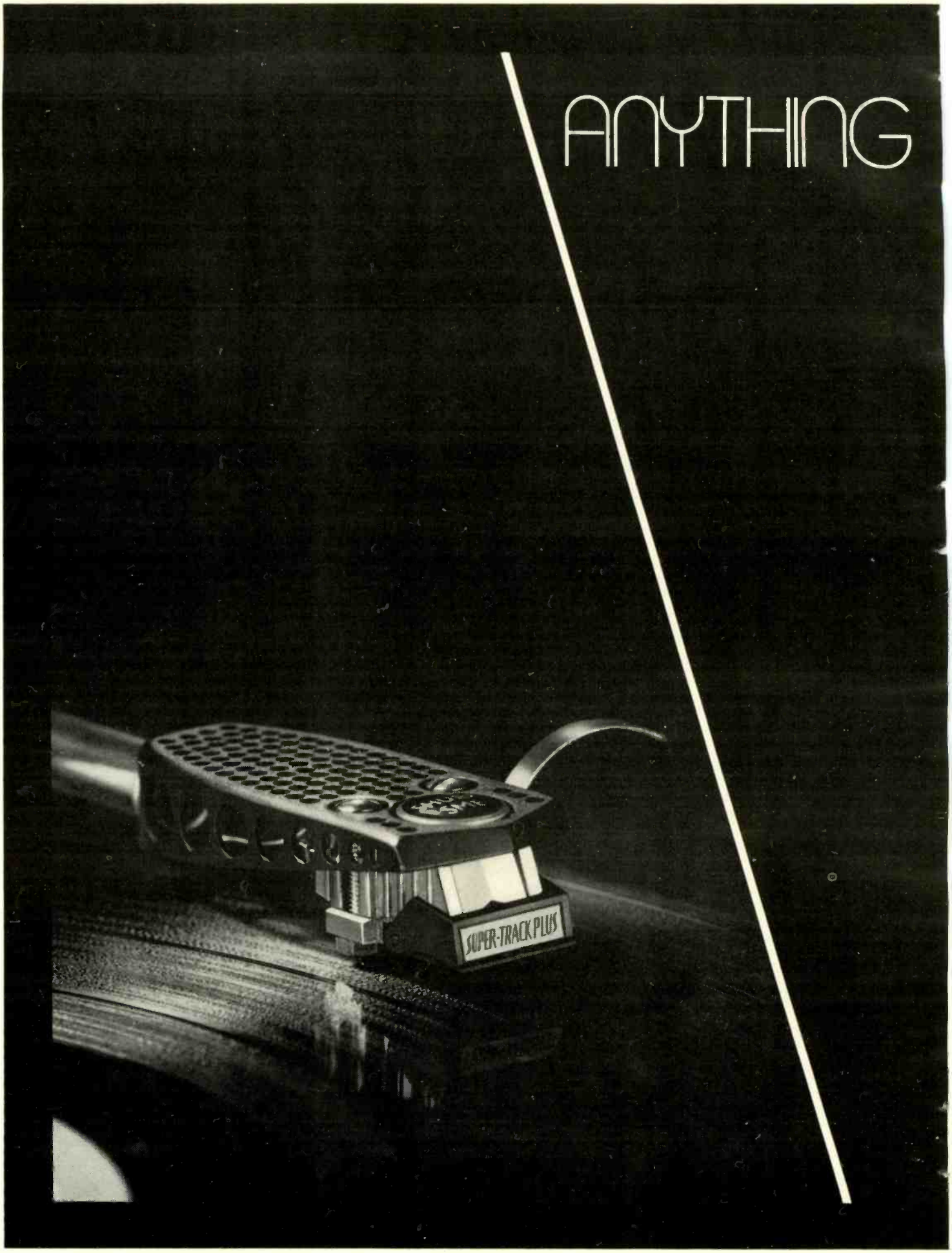
RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DELIBES: ***Lakmé.*** Mady Mesplé (soprano), Lakmé; Roger Soyer (bass), Nilakantha; Charles Burles (tenor), Gerald; Danièle Millet (mezzo-soprano), Mallika; Joseph Peyron (tenor), Hadji; Bernadette Antoine (soprano), Ellen; Monique Linval (soprano), Rose; Agnès Disney (mezzo-soprano), Miss Bentson; Jean-Christophe Benoit (baritone), Frederick; Orchestra and Chorus of the Opéra-Comique, Paris, Alain Lombard cond. SERAPHIM SIC 6082 three discs $8.94.

Performance: **Charming and convincing**
Recording: **Very good**

It may not be easy nowadays to run into a staged performance of Léo Delibes' opera *Lakmé*, but here is its second recording in stereo, and it is, like its 1969 predecessor

(Continued on page 113)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EDWARD ELGAR

Bernard Jacobson reviews three new recordings

"GENTLEMEN," said a conductor to an English orchestra as he began a rehearsal at London's Queen's Hall back in 1908, "let us now rehearse the greatest symphony of modern times, written by the greatest modern composer—and not only in this country!"

The speaker was no chauvinistic Englishman. He was Hans Richter, an eminent member for years of Wagner's own circle and a compatriot of Mahler himself. But he was referring to Edward Elgar.

It was Elgar—"the first progressive English musician," as Richard Strauss hailed him—who, even before Vaughan Williams, began the rescue of his country's musical life from a century and more of creative doldrums. Unlike Vaughan Williams, he made his contribution not by turning inward toward the roots of English folk music, but—and those who think of Elgar as an artistic jingoist should bear this in mind—by wholeheartedly embracing "Continental" aesthetics and practices. He took the foreigners on at their own game. And in my judgment, developed over the years and just now intensified by several days of complete immersion in Elgar's music, he matched them at it.

I don't think this view is unduly influenced by my own English background. Quite apart from the opinions of men such as Strauss and Richter, I've been pleasantly surprised to find that reviews of Elgar have consistently drawn a warm response from readers in the United States. And now those still unconvinced have a splendid new opportunity, through an important group of current releases, to test for themselves my contention that Elgar at his best—pre-eminently, that is, in the two symphonies, the two concertos, and *Falstaff*—is a master whose work is on a level with Mahler's and with any of Strauss' except the very greatest operas. Moreover, two of the three recordings under review were made by conductors outside the English tradition.

Of the three works in question here, the two symphonies and the oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius*, you will have noticed that I do not include the last in my personal list of topflight Elgar. This is not because I do not love the work—I do—but because ultimately I find Elgar, like several other composers, most satisfying on the plane of relatively abstract expression. When he puts into words his vision of all that is grand and expansive and noble in (and, I suppose I should add, after) life, the element of banality held at bay by purely symphonic inspiration tends to push its way uncomfortably close to the foreground.

Gerontius, a setting of a text by Cardinal Newman, is the work of a devout Catholic, and it is the very vividness with which the music captures the spirit of the words that bothers those who, like me, do not take kindly to a Guardian Angel's addressing a protégé soul as "my child and brother," or in general to the kind of religious feeling exemplified by the intransitive use of the verb "to thrill."

But if you are not troubled by such a purely subjective distaste, or if, sharing it, you can overcome it, then you will find abundant rewards in this work of rich, exquisite, almost painfully spiritual sensibility—the more so hearing it in Benjamin Britten's fine new London recording, which I think surpasses Barbirolli's Angel version, admirable though that is, by a handy margin.

Britten's reading, much tauter technically than some of the Mozart he has recorded in the past, is paced with an unerring ear for the dramatic sweep and continuity of the music, and its effect is enhanced by a spacious recording that is particularly sympathetic to Elgar's marvelously resonant bass-string writing. The choral singing—especially the precisely chorded work of the semichorus—is excellent, and the soloists are superb. Peter Pears, who sings the part of Gerontius, is still at sixty-two able to camouflage his technical problems with amazing aplomb. In such phrases as "Use well the interval" (which he certainly does!) and "I go to meet my judge" he achieves a profound thoughtfulness even more compelling than Richard Lewis' more innocent conception for the Angel recording. Yvonne Minton is less predictable than Pears, but for this London set she emulates Janet Baker's radiance, contributing what seems to me the best sustained performance I have ever heard from her; and John Shirley-Quirk is much more at ease in the two bass roles than his Angel counterpart, Kim Borg.

For Sir Georg Solti's performance of the First Symphony and Daniel Barenboim's of the Second, the first Elgar recording in each conductor's career, it happens that the currently available competition again includes Barbirolli, this time on Seraphim. But for my own comparisons I have also used a number of English discs: Elgar's own recordings of the two works on World Record Club, Sir Adrian Boult's on Lyrita (available here as Musical Heritage Society MHS 1285 and 1335), and another, earlier Boult version of No. 2 on Pye.

Of these recordings (the imports can occasionally be found in specialty stores), the composer's performances are still exemplary in their directness and musical clarity, though, of course, the recorded sound is extremely dated. Boult's No. 1 is probably the greatest performance of the work I have encountered, and his No. 2 is rewarding too, particularly in the more vital (but more difficult to find) Pye version.

But in any case Solti and Barenboim, aided by generally first-rate modern sound, are so good as to rival any competitors, and both, I think, are preferable to Barbirolli, who is a shade too lingering and self-indulgent in this music.

Solti's interpretation of No. 1 closely follows the lines of the composer's recording. It is at once opulent and straightforward. The flaws are inconsequential: Solti slows the tempo noticeably at the fortissimo restatement of the "great beautiful tune" (Elgar's own description) that opens the symphony, making it seem as if the music is only now beginning in earnest; he misses the snap of the ejaculatory triplet rhythm in the main theme of the finale; and the engineers have allowed what sounds like a sneeze to obtrude on one of the most breathlessly lovely moments in the slow movement. But far more important is the skill with which Solti shapes the music, and above all the discretion with which he handles the recurrences of the "beautiful tune"—perhaps the most subtly and inventively treated motto theme in symphonic history.

The freshness of this exultant music makes the First Symphony probably the better introduction of the two for those new to Elgar's symphonies. But No. 2, even more compellingly unified through its proliferating web of trochaic rhythms, is no less a masterpiece, and Barenboim's performance—more lingering certainly than Elgar's, but more cogently carried through on its own terms than Barbirolli's—is stupendous, reaching a throat-catching climax of noble lamentation in the slow movement, and outstripping all its predecessors in the lithe springiness of the rondo and in the orchestral splendor of the outer movements.

Whatever his departures from the "tradition"—he limits his first trumpet, for instance, to one measure for the climactic note a measure after 149 in the finale, conforming strictly to the score, whereas the English conductors extend the note in accordance with Elgar's own practice—Barenboim's feeling for the Elgarian idiom is overwhelmingly eloquent, and he has been supported by splendid recording and production. From the evidence here, his forthcoming *Falstaff* should certainly prove to be an invaluable addition to the lists. Meanwhile, Barenboim, Solti, and Britten have all served the composer magnificently.

ELGAR: *The Dream of Gerontius, Op. 38.* Peter Pears (tenor), Gerontius; John Shirley-Quirk (bass), Priest and Angel of the Agony; Yvonne Minton (mezzo-soprano), Angel; London Symphony Chorus, Choir of King's College, Cambridge, and London Symphony Orchestra, Benjamin Britten cond. LONDON OSA 1293 two discs $11.96.

ELGAR: *Symphony No. 1, in A-flat Major, Op. 55.* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON CS 6789 $5.98.

ELGAR: *Symphony No. 2, in E-flat Major, Op. 63.* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim cond. COLUMBIA M 31997 $5.98.

(London OSA 1391) a very successful one. I recommend it heartily to all who like *Lakmé* or, at least, who like operas like *Lakmé*. By this I mean operas about those East-West doomed-at-the-start romances bathed in perfumed, mystical, skillfully contrived musical orientalism. There is not a trace of condescension in this on my part: I like *Lakmé*, but it *is* somewhat dated, and I am not evangelistic about it.

In any case, the new recording is very attractive, and it holds its own against the Sutherland-enriched London set. Mady Mesplé is not only an artist of international front-rank quality, but she has gained particular recognition for her portrayal of Lakmé. Her authority here is quite evident. Her delicate, almost fragile timbre is more appropriate to the character than the Australian diva's fuller, juicier tones. Naturally, Miss Mesplé, with her admirable diction, brings out verbal nuances that remain veiled or slurred in her celebrated colleague's interpretation. The Sutherland Lakmé, of course, offers the kind of technical and tonal brilliance that is altogether unique. But then neither can Miss Mesplé's attributes be glossed over: her intonation is excellent, her *staccati* in the Bell Song are spectacular, and she sings the role in the original key throughout (with a culminating high E-natural in the Bell Song, as compared with Sutherland's half-tone-downward transposition).

In the Nilakantha of Roger Soyer, the Seraphim set has another great asset: this is an artist in the grand tradition of Gallic bassos, with an unspectacular but attractive voice, secure stylistic command, and intelligent theatrical resources. Tenor Charles Burles is typical of the skillful representatives of the light genre. With a resourceful employment of the *voix mixte* he is capable of elegant phrasing and of such niceties as expert diminuendos. But the voice itself is slight, and tends to whiteness when stressed.

None of the supporting singers are inadequate, but the characterization they offer is rather pale. The baritone in the role of Frederick, in particular, fails to pull sufficient weight. The London set has an edge in this area.

The conducting of Alain Lombard, on the other hand, is a distinct asset. His tempos are natural: the music *flows*. Tension and menace are handled without undue overstress: everything is in perspective and good balance. Passing instances of imprecision—the opening vocal ensemble, for one—failed to dim my overall positive reaction.

Owners of the London set may not need another *Lakmé*. Otherwise, this praiseworthy version is entitled to serious consideration, particularly at the low Seraphim price. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DELIUS: ***A Village Romeo and Juliet.*** Elizabeth Harwood (soprano), Vreli; Robert Tear (tenor), Sali; John Shirley-Quirk (baritone), Dark Fiddler; Corin Manley (treble), Sali as a boy; Wendy Eathorne (soprano), Vreli as a girl; Benjamin Luxon (baritone), Manz; Noel Mangin (bass), Marti; John Alldis Choir; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Meredith Davies cond. ANGEL SBLX 3784 two discs $11.96.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Good**

When I was a college freshman one of my assigned readings in German was Gottfried Keller's *Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe*, the short tale of feuding and childhood tragedy in a Swiss farm community which Frederick Delius took as the basis for what is regarded as his most masterly stage work. So I knew the story when the 78-rpm discs of the complete work, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham, came along more than a decade later in 1948. Unhappily, for all of Beecham's enthusiasm, effort, and superb musicianship, this first recorded realization was less than a major success, chiefly because of technical defects in the recording (over-cutting of the climaxes and tiny pitch descrepancies from one side to the next), and this probably is the reason why the Beecham performance has never seen the light of day in LP format.

A Village Romeo and Juliet consists of six tableaux, the first of which serves as prologue depicting the quarrel between two farmers over a strip of contested land between their properties and hinting at the tragedy that is to befall their star-crossed offspring. The Dark Fiddler, bastard heir and rightful claimant to the land, appears as a figure of Fate and sower of discord.

In the five scenes that follow, the tragedy of the young people unfolds as Sali and Vreli, now adolescents, fall in love. Meanwhile, their fathers have ruined themselves in the litigation arising out of their implacable enmity. There is a confrontation between Vreli's father and Sali, and the two young people are left to their own devices. Their piteous failure to cope with the world of reality, as at a village fair, impels them to take to the countryside. Here they come upon the ruined Para-

dise Garden country inn, where they meet the Dark Fiddler and his companions taking their ease and a bit of pleasure. Again Sali and Vreli must face reality as they choose between a roving, disorderly life and trying to be sufficient unto themselves. A hay barge moored in the river by the inn provides the answer, for they find their self-sufficiency in taking refuge on the barge, slipping the mooring, and pulling the seacocks, thus drowning themselves.

Out of this bit from the "short and simple annals of the poor" (which Keller himself got from a newspaper account), Delius has created a score of poignance and loveliness. As in Debussy's *Pelléas*, much of the poetic musical essence is embodied in the orchestral interludes, the climax being reached in the interlude preceding the final scene, best known in its concert form as *The Walk to the Paradise Garden*. (Delius expanded this episode to its present form for Beecham's London performance of 1910). To some, the prologue to the opening scene may seem superfluous, but I for one would be reluctant to part with the glorious "outdoors" music that Delius has written for the ploughing scene of Farmer Manz. Indeed, every orchestral interlude paints a landscape and evokes the sense of human heartache in it—this is Delius in peak creative form. Here he shows his kinship to the Sibelius of the later symphonies and tone poems, and every so often his links to Wagner emerge, as in the *Parsifal*-like bell tollings of the dream-wedding sequence. Only in his "action" music—for the fair in particular—does Delius seem out of his element. Yet he is capable of writing music of enormous vigor, as witness the very opening scene.

In a very real sense *A Village Romeo and Juliet* is a Delian tone poem with vocal *obbligato*; for, to me at least, what is sung by the voices is far less memorable than what is conveyed through the unique magic of the orchestral timbres and harmonic textures. Perhaps this is because the English text is a makeshift translation from the German text originally set by Delius and used at the Berlin world premiere in 1907. The Hammond translation is used in the present recording—and I *do* regret the use here of the German diminutive "Vrenchen" rather than the infinitely more singable and musical Swiss form, "Vreli."

Meredith Davies, who conducted the 1962 Sadler's Wells revival (a private album of which has been around for some time), provides a thoroughly sensitive and poetic rendition in this first LP recording of the work. Elizabeth Harwood is definitely the singing star here with her poignant characterization of Vreli, and John Shirley-Quirk is suitably fateful as the Dark Fiddler, but I find Robert Tear's Sali a disappointment in its lack of vocal freshness. A number of unnamed singers participate in the fair and inn scenes, and whoever sings the part of the vagabond girl seeking to lure the young lovers to the free and easy life communicates the sense of the situation superbly.

The British issue of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* is spread out over five sides, with the sixth being devoted to recollections of Delius by Eric Fenby, who was companion and secretary to the composer during his last years, when he was both blind and crippled. The compression onto four sides by Angel explains in all probability the unfortunately abrupt break between sides two and three of the present album. Otherwise, the recorded sound is warm and well balanced in all its elements.

I don't think there is another LP recording of *A Village Romeo and Juliet* planned for any time in the immediate future, though one in video-disc format might be released. I myself would not be without this music now that it is finally available in its entirety. Even with all its flaws, it is a unique and altogether haunting listening experience. *D.H.*

ERNST: ***Concerto in F-sharp Minor for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 23*** **(see HUBAY)**

GINASTERA: ***Duo for Flute and Oboe*** **(see CORTÉS)**

GLAZOUNOV: ***Violin Concerto in A Minor, Op. 82.*** **PROKOFIEV:** ***Violin Concerto No. 1, in D Major, Op. 19.*** Josef Sivó (violin); Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Horst Stein cond. LONDON CS 6736 $5.98.

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

Josef Sivó is a new name to me among contemporary violinists, but I am more familiar with the work of conductor Horst Stein, who has recorded standard repertoire for the Stereo-Fidelity label, and whose recording of Sibelius tone poems with the Suisse Romande Orchestra is still to be released by London.

In any event, Sivó and Stein collaborate in perfect accord for these performances of the lovely Glazounov concerto—a kind of Rus-

(Continued on page 116)

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sian counterpart of the Mendelssohn concerto, though not as brilliant—and the ever-fresh D Major Concerto by the young Prokofiev. They have departed from usual practice somewhat by emphasizing the lyrical aspects of the Prokofiev rather than its prickly bits, and the recorded sound is a fine full-bodied one, excellently balanced. However, whether a listener would choose this disc over other recordings of the music—of the Glazounov by Heifetz or Milstein, or of the Prokofiev by Oistrakh, Stern, Ricci, Milstein, or Friedman—depends in large measure on preference in matters of coupling. Milstein is the only violinist who has recordings of both the Glazounov and the Prokofiev in the catalog, but they are on two separate records (both Angel). Stern and Ricci both pair the two Prokofiev violin concertos. In my opinion, those who like Prokofiev will find Glazounov insufferably bland, while those who want Glazounov's pleasantries will find Prokofiev too acerbic regardless of the lyrical episodes. *D.H.*

GLUCK: ***Iphigénie en Aulide*** **(see Best of the Month, page 86)**

GRIEG: ***Peer Gynt Suites Nos. 1 and 2*** **(see BIZET)**

HAYDN: ***Cello Concerto in C Major (H. VIIb No. 1); Cello Concerto in D Major, Op. 101 (H. VIIb No. 2).*** Christine Walevska (cello); English Chamber Orchestra, Edo de Waart cond. PHILIPS 6500 381 $6.98.

Performance: **Lush**
Recording: **Excellent**

"The D major concerto of Haydn," Karl Grebe reasonably remarks in his liner notes for this release, "is to cellists what the Beethoven violin concerto is to most violinists—their 'classical' concerto."

Well, how would you fancy a performance of the Beethoven Violin Concerto that gingered up the instrumentation, added half a measure—not a whole measure, but *half* a measure!—to the music here and there, and cut about one-fifth of the first movement, including such small matters as the recapitulation of the principal theme?

These are among the offenses perpetrated on the Haydn D Major Concerto by the notorious Gevaert edition, and Christine Walevska's use of it (whatever further contribution may have been made by H.R. Zilcher, who is also "credited" on the jacket) rules her record out of contention as a serious contribution to the Haydn discography. It's a pity, for this young American commands a luxurious, well-focused tone that probably sounds marvelous in music of a different kind, and her technique is strong enough to make one or two lapses of intonation on the disc quite startling.

The recording is splendid, and the orchestral playing under Edo de Waart (complete with harpsichord continuo) is nicely pointed. But though the C Major work (the one that was rediscovered a decade ago) does not suffer from the same butchery here as the D Major, I find the atmosphere of both performances unsuitably romantic, and the pacing of both finales in particular is much too sleepy.

Alternative recommendations: I suggest Du Pré/Barenboim on two separate Angel discs for either concerto (though the absence of a harpsichord is regrettable) or, for the C Major, either Gendron on Philips (again, no harpsichord) or Rostropovich on London (though the sheer dash of this performance might be thought excessive). *B.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HONEGGER: ***King David.*** Christiane Eda-Pierre (soprano); Jeannine Collard (alto); Eric Tappy (tenor); Jean Desailly (narrator); Philippe Caillard Chorale; Instrumental Ensemble, Charles Dutoit cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY INC. MHS 1392/1393 two discs $5.98 (plus 65¢ handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Rich and reverberant**

Arthur Honegger's Biblical tragedy *King David* was the composition which, when he was just twenty-nine years old, abruptly and permanently lifted his name to a position of

CHARLES DUTOIT
A compelling performance of a gorgeous work

world fame. The piece was composed in a period of two months, between late February and April of 1921, and premiered in a theater that had been founded in the little village of Mézières, Switzerland, by René Morax, the poet whose play provided Honegger with a libretto, and who actually commissioned the composer to write the work for the theater's reopening after World War I.

It is magnificent music, and has no less appeal and impact today than it had in the Twenties. According to the jacket notes, this recording is the original version, with an instrumental ensemble comprising woodwinds, two trumpets, solo horn, solo trombone, solo cello, solo bass, timpani, percussion, piano, and celesta. From time to time, however, it sounds as if the strings might be more numerous than in the original version (the revised version added more strings). There is an organ here, too, according to the notes, but elsewhere those same notes say the part for the organ was added when the work was revised from a theatrical piece into an oratorio. All a bit confusing. And, given the highly reverberant (though handsome) sonics of the recording, it is impossible to tell for sure whether one is really hearing an "original" version or not—especially without a score, which I didn't have at hand.

But putting these items aside, this is a compelling performance of an utterly gorgeous work. The music has the indefinably stirring quality we usually recognize as "inspiration." Certain sections simply send chills up my spine. Some of this effect is partly theatrical and partly musical, which confirms my feeling that Honegger achieved in this piece an almost perfect fusion of the two artistic forces. When the Witch of Endor summons the Ghost of Samuel from the grave—or even when Samuel says "Why have you troubled me/To make me rise?"—the atmosphere is transformed. You are no longer in your living room, or wherever your equipment may be. When the Narrator, in exquisite French and with heart-rending fervor, speaks, cries out, almost sings the long poem that laments the death of Jonathan, while the chorus intones a Ravellian (or is it Debussyan?) background, I defy anyone to remain unmoved. This may be a slightly flawed masterpiece, but it is most certainly a masterpiece. *L.T.*

HUBAY: ***Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 99.*** **ERNST:** ***Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in F-sharp Minor, Op. 23.*** **YSAŸE:** ***Chant d'Hiver for Violin and Orchestra.*** Aaron Rosand (violin); Orchestra of Radio Luxembourg, Louis de Froment cond. CANDIDE CE 31054 $3.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Very good**

Aaron Rosand has been doing for the Romantic violin repertoire what Raymond Lewenthal and others have done for the virtuosic piano literature of the nineteenth century. There are really three different aspects of a long century represented here. Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst, born in 1814, belongs with the early Romantics, and this mid-century concerto—in the dark and difficult key of F-sharp Minor—suggests Mendelssohn and Wieniawski. Jeno Hubay and Eugène Ysaÿe, a still better remembered pair of virtuoso-composers, were almost exact contemporaries and both works represented here date from the very beginning of this century. The Hubay, actually the latest piece on the record, is representative of full-blown, Central European, late Romanticism—basically in the Brahms tradition with a touch or two of Liszt/East Europe. It is very attractive and extremely well written. The Ysaÿe *Chant d'Hiver* is something else. Very much in the French idiom, it is close to Chausson, Fauré, and even impressionism. It is the least obviously virtuosic music of all, but in many ways it is the most impressive and memorable.

Rosand's playing is exceptional and entirely convincing in all of this: his tone is suave and beautiful, and he is at his ease in the most demanding passages, always looking toward the poetry of this far-from-superficial music. The orchestra is something less than first-class, but certainly manages well enough, and the recording is attractive. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LEHÁR: ***The Best of Franz Lehár. The Merry Widow: Lippen Schweigen. Friederike: Warum hast du mich wachgeküsst? The Count of Luxemburg: Lieber Freund . . . Bist du's lachendes Glück? Schön ist die Welt: Frei und jung dabei; Schön ist die Welt; Ich bin verliebt. The Land of Smiles: Bei einem Tee en deux; Dein ist mein ganzes Herz; Wer hat die Liebe uns ins Herz gesenkt? Paganini: Gern hab' ich die Frau'n geküsst; Niemand***

liebt Dich; Liebe, du Himmel auf Erden. Der Zarewitsch: Wolgalied; Kosende Wellen. Werner Krenn (tenor); Renate Holm (soprano); Vienna Volksoper Orchestra, Anton Paulik cond. LONDON OSA 26220 $5.98.

Performance: **Very enjoyable**
Recording: **Good**

Here is one "The Best of . . ." collection for which the appellation is close to the mark. The tunes from the seven Lehár operettas—including the rarely documented *Schön ist die Welt*—are all topflight inspirations by a master melodist. Both singers are engaging stylists. Soprano Renate Holm has appeared on many operetta recordings before, so her contributions are not surprising. Tenor Werner Krenn, on the other hand, has been better known as a Mozart and lieder specialist. But he is Viennese, he knows the style, and he uses his voice gracefully and skillfully. Except for one moment, when he succumbs to a sudden attack of *tenoritis* and flings out an unnecessary high D-flat, his work is consistently enjoyable. Anton Paulik, an old hand at this sort of thing, effectively adjusts the sound of the orchestra to the modest dynamic level of his soloists. There are highly informative liner notes by an uncredited writer. In all, this is a disc I can heartily recommend to lovers of operetta.

By the way, the label on this record indicates "sides two and three," which means that it was part of a two-disc set when originally released in England. According to London Records, sides one and four are scheduled for release in this country in a few months. More Lehár of this quality is something to look forward to. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LISZT: ***Prelude and Fugue on B.A.C.H.; Trauerode; Evocation à la Chapelle Sixtine; Tu es Petrus.*** Daniel Chorzempa (organ). PHILIPS 6500 376 $6.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

Wonderful claptrap on the Flentrop! If you are a lover of organic Romantic claptrap, here it is at its finest. Liszt's first big involvement with the *other* big keyboard instrument seems to have taken the form of encounters with Bach, of which the Prelude and Fugue recorded here is an outstanding example. B.A.C.H. (B-flat, A, C, and B-natural in our notation) makes a excellent little chromatic cell used first by Bach himself and later by all sorts of Central European composers. The *Evocation* and *Tu es Petrus* date from Liszt's Roman sojourn and the incredible flirtation with Catholicism in the 1860's from which he emerged an abbé. The Sistine Chapel *Evocation* is based on Allegri's *Miserere*, which was forbidden to be printed or performed outside the chapel but which Mozart copied down from memory, and on Mozart's own *Ave verum corpus*. Liszt completed the secularization of the sacred; his liturgical meditations on these old tunes are typically ostentatious and beautiful. The *Trauerode* (*Funeral Ode*), however, dates from the 1880's and is typical late Liszt, belonging with the intense, spare, truly otherworldly late works.

All of this is brilliantly realized by the American organist Daniel Chorzempa. The organ is a modern Flentrop concert instrument in Rotterdam that has the tonal variety

and richness of a Romantic organ without the mushiness that destroys clarity on real Romantic organs. Chorzempa has an excellent instrument, knows exactly how to use it, and has the benefit of an excellent recording. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAHLER: *Das Lied von der Erde.* Yvonne Minton (mezzo-soprano); René Kollo (tenor); Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Georg Solti cond. LONDON OS 26292 $5.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Fine and mellow**

In our time two orthodoxies govern the performance of Mahler's orchestral works. One stems from the conductor's personal identification with the composer; the *Angst*-ridden results generally leave little room for doubt that the conductor is suffering anew, measure by measure, the master's creative agonies. The second orthodoxy derives simply from accepted contemporary canons of taste and high seriousness. Its partisans are generally content to see that Mahler's notes are accurately rendered and his plentiful instructions closely followed, let the *Angst* fall where it may. Georg Solti is of the latter group, and his new release, the latest in his celebrated Mahler series, makes a powerful case for his party.

Solti's is a faithful rendering of the score, but never merely a literal one, for he renders the spirit with the letter. Neither the tumultuous climaxes nor the poignant details in which this music abounds are stinted, but all are subsumed under a strong sense of rhythmic motion and of the span of phrases, periods, and movements. This sets Solti well apart from Bernstein, and this new disc can serve both as a useful alternative for those who find Bernstein's an embarrassment of riches and a welcome one for those who find it merely an embarrassment. It is not simply that markings such as *"molto expressivo"* and *"zart leidenschaftlich"* ("tenderly passionate") are vastly different things to Bernstein and Solti. What stays with you after hearing the American conductor's interpretation is how superbly this climax was prepared, how urgently that phrase was shaped—a nosegay of impressive *moments*. What Solti leaves you with is a vision of the structure of each movement and the expressive content that structure bears.

Because Solti's conception is symphonic in nature, he places the vocalists very much *in medias res*, and this may be a source of irritation for those who, in spite of Mahler's view of his work as a "symphony for tenor, contralto (or baritone), and orchestra," would like to think of it as a set of orchestral songs. Neither the vocalists nor any of the occasional solo instrumentalists are shamelessly brought "up front" as they are by Bernstein. It is the Chicago Symphony as an ensemble that is the protagonist here, and it should be common knowledge by now that this is a first-class Mahler orchestra.

Of the soloists, the contralto is put to the sterner expressive test by the music, and Yvonne Minton—decidedly a mezzo-soprano and not a contralto—measures up well, but not quite memorably. Still, when the chips were down she did not fail to move me. René Kollo has not yet thoroughly polished the difficult tenor lines, but he has the high notes (at least the loud ones) and the breath control for his assignment, and carries it out creditably, though rather monochromatically.

If I have correctly judged the premise of Solti's interpretation, the recorded sound enhances it. It is a rather mellow, resonant, blended sound, especially rich in the bass. Yet wind and upper string phrases emerge clearly without spotlighting. I suspect some electronic manipulation of the balance between Miss Minton's voice and the orchestra, however; it is particularly disturbing in the final pages of *Der Abschied*—beginning at the words *"Die liebe Erde . . ."*—where the relation between voice and strings seems to fluctuate artificially several times in succession.

With music that strikes so close to the heart, preferences are likely to be very personal and differences of opinion irreconcilable. So it is pointless to speak of a "best" recorded *Lied von der Erde*. There are several good ones. Otto Klemperer's Angel set has superb singing by Christa Ludwig and Fritz Wunderlich and fine sound, but with this one must suffer a lack of tempo contrast

DANIEL CHORZEMPA
Brilliant Lisztian claptrap

and a frequently ramshackle air to the leadership. Bruno Walter's recording with the Vienna Philharmonic, Kathleen Ferrier, and Julius Patzak has deservedly found a niche among the immortals. I do not share the general reverence for Ferrier's contribution here, but Walter's Identification-with-the-Master understanding of the music cannot be gainsaid. The version I personally find most satisfying, in spite of only adequate sonics, is the 1960 Angel recording with Paul Kletzki, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, and Murray Dickie. Still, Kletzki's singers are—by design or recording-studio accident—in the foreground (and they are both male). Solti's new disc would be remarkable for its treatment of the voices alone, even if it did not have so much else to recommend it. Texts and translations are included. *Robert S. Clark*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 1, in D Major.* Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink cond. PHILIPS 6500 342 $6.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Excellent**

This recording completes the cycle of Mahler symphonies by Haitink and the Concertgebouw. For what it's worth, this is one of fourteen Mahler Firsts currently available, and Haitink's is the fourth complete set of the nine symphonies (Bernstein, Solti, Haitink and Kubelik; the last two, who both include the Adagio from the Tenth, are also the only ones to complete the entire cycle with the same orchestra).

This is one of the best performances and recordings of Haitink's series. Mahler's orchestration, brilliant though it is, is not of the self-balancing variety, and in a recording there must be a close collaboration among conductor, producer, and recording engineer. Otherwise, much essential matter disappears into that glorious haze that is so often mistaken for good orchestral sound. European taste of late has been running to gorgeous, indecipherable sonic glop, but I am happy to report that this is not the case here. One can really hear into the depths of the orchestral mass nearly all the time.

The sonic clarity—achieved without loss of strength and quality—is matched by the clarity of interpretation. It is an excellent realization of the intensities and conflicts of this difficult work. Even the huge last movement—a whole other symphony, following three pastoral or genre movements with a stormy orchestral drama—seems to be in proportion here. This First is a strong finish for Haitink's Mahler cycle. *E.S.*

MOZART: *Operatic Arias* **(see Collections—The Art of Ina Souez)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PETTERSSON: *Symphony No. 7.* Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. LONDON CS 6740 $5.98.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Excellent**

With this recording, Antal Dorati, the present chief conductor of the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, introduces to this country and to the Schwann catalog one of the most remarkable symphonies I've heard in a long time.

Allan Pettersson, the composer, was born in Sweden in 1911, grew up in the slums of Stockholm, studied violin and viola at the Royal Academy of Music in that city, and was a member of the Stockholm Philharmonic's viola section from 1939 to 1951. He made his late debut as a composer in 1949, after which he went to Paris to study with Arthur Honegger and René Leibowitz.

Pettersson is an intensely philosophical composer, a post-post-post-Romantic who has created for himself a melodic-harmonic idiom and an attitude toward form which, though some elements might be said to have roots in Mahler and Sibelius, are really his own very private property. They are so far from the sources that to speak of "influences" would be invidious. Symphony No. 7 is cast in one colossal movement of forty minutes' duration, and it holds your attention with mesmerizing tenacity for every second of every one of those minutes. Its organization must be something of a miracle, and I'm eager to see the score. For, without obviously subdividing itself into movements, sections, or episodes of any shorter duration, the work gives a sense of flowing forward with perfect emotional and intellectual logic, and of being perfectly balanced and shaped in its entirety—not exactly an "arch" from beginning to end (that would be too simple for Pettersson,

I suspect) but something resembling the irregular kind of "arch" sometimes formed by the profile of a mountain range.

Pettersson's melodies don't seem to exist as classical formations, whose meanings reside primarily in their shape and gesture, but rather as symbolic characters in some kind of humanistic, emotive, philosophical scenario. Nor is it only his melody which acts this way. His harmony does so also, and the rhythm, and the orchestration. The composer seems to be talking (or singing) about states of mind and of being, and he is impressively getting his messages across. (I used the word "singing" because, more than almost any symphonic work I've ever heard, this one comes close to being pure, unadulterated song.)

The liner notes for the Seventh Symphony, written by one who obviously knows and understands Pettersson's music, are so revealing that I can do nothing better than to quote them at this point: "Allan Pettersson is outside of every group, every generation. His music speaks its own language. He does not regard himself as a subjective composer: 'When I work I forget Pettersson of whom I am sincerely tired. But there, inside my ribs, is a square, the heart's red square, where I meet mankind, where everybody always lives and where everybody is one. The wide open fields with the thieving magpies lead there too. You can try to frighten the magpies with dolls of fashion as scarecrows, but there they stand as unorganized constructions while the ghosts of bygone centuries are howling in them.'"

Shall I write that Pettersson's use of the orchestra is brilliant; that his employment of the *idée fixe* is compelling; and that he communicates in familiar melodic and harmonic gestures what these gestures have not before communicated? Shall I say that Dorati gives one of the most stunning performances I've ever heard from his baton, and that the Stockholm Philharmonic plays as gorgeously as the Philadelphia Orchestra? I will. *L.T.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PIERNÉ: ***Cydalise et le Chèvre-Pied (First Suite); Divertissements sur un thème pastorale, Op. 49; Concertstück for Harp and Orchestra, Op. 39.*** Lily Laskine (harp). National Orchestra of the O. R. T. F., Jean Martinon cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY INC. MHS 1489 $2.99 (plus 65¢ handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Superb**

French composers of the early twentieth century (pre-eminently, of course, Ravel and Debussy) revolutionized the art of orchestration. Their achievements in elegance, subtlety, and color influenced almost every important composer of the century, and most of the less important composers as well. Gabriel Pierné (1863-1937) is one of the latter.

If I cannot get excited about the depth or originality of Pierné's musical ideas, I am nonetheless impressed by his use of the orchestra. His ballet *Cydalise et le Chèvre-Pied* is a conventional work of its genre, and separated from the theater its ideas are pretty thin stuff. But it does glow on the surface. *Concertstück* for Harp and Orchestra (now why would a French composer call his *pièce de concert* a "concertstück"?) is also quite minor, its statement being limited by the composer's standard treatment of the harp, which

dictated that everything in the accompaniment be conventionalized too. The most interesting piece here is the *Divertissements sur un thème pastorale*. Perhaps because of its use of variation form, this work seems to have called up a more sturdy structural sense in the composer, and it presents a different face to the world. There are moments reminiscent of the styles of British composers Elgar and Vaughan Williams (the *Pastorale* theme may be the influence here). There is also a moment so startlingly sweet that it sounds, in 1973, not really saccharine but more like "high camp." With all these quirks, the good spirits and luxuriant sound of the piece are winning. And the recording, by Erato, is a beauty. *L.T.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

POUND: ***Le Testament de Villon.*** Philip Booth, Renee Blowers, John Duykers, Dorothy Barnhouse, Dan Parkerson, Sandra Bush, Lawrence Cooper (soloists); University of California Chamber Singers, Renee Blowers, director; instrumentalists of the Western Opera Theater of the San Francisco Opera, Robert Hughes cond. FANTASY 12001 $6.98.

Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Superb**

Here is a rather startling phenomenon—an opera by the poet Ezra Pound composed on texts by the poet François Villon in a musical style that harks back to that of the troubadours and to the instrumentation of medieval music. Almost all of Pound's music is monodic, with the accompaniment simply (or sometimes not so simply) following the voices in parallel intervals. Pound had immense sensitivity to the verbal rhythms of poetry in ancient French, and the rhythmic structure of his arias and ensembles is as a result complex in a way that sounds very off-beat but utterly convincing. Indeed, it may have been true (as Pound said of himself) that "in music, apart from accommodating notes to words [he was] an incompetent amateur." But it is at least equally true, on this evidence, that he had a splendid talent for setting texts. Virgil Thomson, than whom there is no finer authority on the subject of prosody, is quoted on the jacket as saying: "The music was not quite a musician's music, though it may well be the finest poet's music since Thomas Campion. For one deeply involved with getting words inside music, as I was, it bore family resemblances unmistakable to the *Socrate* of Satie; and its sound has remained in my memory." This describes perfectly my own reaction to the opera. It is very, very special stuff, and calls for a very special taste. But, in its own odd way, it is the real thing.

The performance on this recording, by the Western Opera Theater of the San Francisco Opera, with Robert Hughes as conductor, is a miracle of scrupulous perfection in every dimension. The recording itself is equally splendid. *L.T.*

PROKOFIEV: ***Violin Concerto No. 1, in D Major, Op. 19*** **(see GLAZOUNOV)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RACHMANINOFF: ***The answer; Oh, never sing to me again; Lilacs; Oh, do not grieve; The storm; To the children; Christ is risen; At my window; In the silence of the night; Vocalise; How fair this spot; Fragment of Alfred de Musset; Arion; The morn of life; The harvest of sorrow; Day and night; The floods of spring.*** Nicolai Gedda (tenor); Alexis Weissenberg (piano). ANGEL S 36917 $5.98.

Performance: **Often spectacular**
Recording: **Problems of balance**

This uncommon recital offers a very generous selection of Rachmaninoff songs, an area in which the composer was active virtually throughout his career. The early songs reveal an effortless lyric flow akin to Tchaikovsky's best inspirations. In the later ones—as the piano parts assume more significance and the harmonic idiom grows more adventurous—some of the spontaneity was lost, but this late period also produced some remarkably powerful and expressive songs. (The mighty chords in the accompaniment of *Christ is risen*, a song from 1906, could have come from one of the piano concertos!)

It is hard to sum up this recital concisely. In many ways it is spectacular. Nicolai Gedda

Eurodisc

WOLFGANG SAWALLISCH
Conductor/pianist of a convincing Petite Messe

does things in some of these songs no contemporary tenor could duplicate. The high *mezza-voce* effects in *The answer* and *How fair this spot*, the tremendous climax with its top C in *Oh, do not grieve*—these are special demands brilliantly met. Yet his tone reveals a hard edge in other songs, nor is it always as steady as it has been. And the *Vocalise*, in spite of Gedda's remarkable effort, calls for a high soprano voice.

Gerald Moore once observed that "Rachmaninoff in his piano writing did not take lesser mortals into account." He was referring to the song accompaniments, and Alexis Weissenberg is clearly among the few pianists who can deal with this music on the composer's own terms. He is unquestionably a superb pianist, but as collaborator he is far too overpowering in *In the silence of the night*, *The storm*, and *The floods of spring*. The last song also suffers from distorted sound.

The engineers must have had their hands full in balancing two brilliant and outgoing performers into a "collaboration." They succeeded frequently, but certainly not always. The disc is nonetheless commendable for its valuable content and imperfect but frequently spectacular performances. *G.J.*

RACHMANINOFF: ***The Covetous Knight.*** Lev Kuznetsov (tenor), Albert; Aleksei Usmanov (tenor), Money Lender; Boris Dobrin (bass), Baron; Sergei Yakovenko (bass), Duke; Ivan Budrin (baritone), Servant. Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky cond. ***The Isle of the Dead, Op. 29.*** U.S.S.R. Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SRBL-4121 two discs $11.96.

Performance: **Vital though imperfect**
Recording: **Good**

The Covetous Knight, a study of greed, is one of three operatic treatments of Pushkin tragedies dealing with Deadly Sins; Dargomizhsky's *The Stone Guest*, which is about lust, and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mozart and Salieri*, about envy, are the other two. The Rachmaninoff opera was composed with Chaliapin in mind, and it was the great basso who created the role of the miserly Baron so obsessed with wealth that he refuses to share his possessions with his own son.

Rachmaninoff wrote only three operas. By 1906, the year *The Covetous Knight* first reached the stage, he had completed all three of them. Though he was drawn to various other operatic subjects from time to time, none of these plans materialized. Unquestionably, his early operas owe a great deal to Tchaikovsky, but the brooding drama of *The Covetous Knight* is realized with a mastery characteristic of the creative period (1901-1909) during which Rachmaninoff composed the Second and Third Piano Concertos and the Second Symphony. The seething, darkly colorful orchestration frames flowing melodic declamations and the one lengthy, probing monologue given to the Knight. There is no padding of any kind: the libretto faithfully follows the Pushkin text to the end, where it omits the operatically superfluous final lines Pushkin wrote for the Duke: "What dreadful times and what dreadful hearts!"

With a singer of Chaliapin's stature—with a Boris Christoff or an Ivan Petrov—the title role can be an impressive tour de force. Boris Dobrin's timbre sounds light for the part, but he characterizes it forcefully. The two tenors—Lev Kuznetsov, the young Albert whose hatred of his father barely stops short of murder, and Aleksei Usmanov, the oily local Shylock—are first-rate. The role of the Duke, who tries to arbitrate between father and son, is sung by Sergei Yakovenko; unfortunately, he is no more successful vocally than he is at making peace. But the opera is definitely worth hearing, and its appearance on the occasion of the Rachmaninoff centenary is certainly welcome.

The fourth side of the set offers a version of *The Isle of the Dead* that appears to be identical to the performance released in 1968 on Melodiya 40019. The brooding work is typical of Rachmaninoff at the peak of his symphonic ingenuity. Svetlanov's exciting and atmospheric treatment is reproduced here with less than utmost clarity but with undeniable effectiveness. *G.J.*

REVUELTAS: ***Two Little Serious Pieces*** **(see CORTÉS)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ROSSINI: ***Petite Messe Solennelle.*** Kari Lövaas (soprano); Brigitte Fassbaender (alto); Peter Schreier (tenor); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (baritone); Munich Vocal Soloists; Hans Ludwig Hirsch (second piano and choral director); Reinhard Raffalt (harmonium);

(Continued on page 122)

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Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Good live**

Since I have so recently had occasion to wax enthusiastic about this big, little, not-so-solemn Mass (see STEREO REVIEW, October 1972), I can only add here my expressions of pleasure at the appearance of a first-class recording of one of the masterpieces—I am carefully measuring my words—of the vocal literature. The occasion of this recording was the German premiere—109 years after it was written!—of the original version for soloists, small chorus, two pianos, and harmonium. The performance, which took place last summer in the rococo church of the Baumburg Monastery in Chiemgau, Bavaria, was presented with the collaboration of Bavarian Radio, television, and Ariola-Eurodisc. It sometimes takes the Germans a long time to get around to things, but when they do they do it up right.

Kari Lövaas is occasionally too "operatic" for my taste—by "operatic" I mean that fat, vibrato style of singing that came into vogue in the mid-nineteenth century and which Rossini destested—although she is basically a good singer. I have nothing but praise for the others—soloists and chorus. Some of the high points: Peter Schreier's beautiful tenor singing and nearly all the ensembles, choruses included. There is lots of spirit, blend, and insight, and even a hint or two of passion, Italian style. I find I am critical of more than one of Sawallisch's tempos, but this may be in part the result of my knowing the music too well from the score and not well enough from actual performance. Sawallisch's piano playing is excellent, particularly in the *Preludio Religioso*, which contains some of the most astonishing music in the whole piece as well as the biggest keyboard solo. In general, the phrasing and pacing are so excellent and convincing that I came to feel that my tempo preferences are, at the very least, arguable.

I am not always a fan of live recording—usually preferring to keep my media unmixed—but the result here is excellent. The harmonium seems unnecessarily distant—as if it were a faint embarrassment—but all the other balances are excellent. Perhaps a better or more Italianate *Petite Messe* could be imagined—but how many really effective Rossini singers are there before the public today? The more one listens to this performance the more its achievement—its very simplicity, clarity, freshness, earnestness, expressive musicality—grows on you. My reservations should deter no one from seeking it out. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SCHÜTZ: ***Christmas Oratorio (Weinachtshistorie).*** Hans-Joachim Rotzsch (tenor), Evangelist; Herta Flebbe (soprano), Angel; Hans-Olaf Hudemann (bass), Herod; Westphalian Kantorei and Ensemble, Wilhelm Ehmann cond. VANGUARD BACH GUILD HM 11SD $2.98.

Performance: **One of the best**
Recording: **Good**

Heinrich Schütz's 1664 setting of the Christmas story in its simplicity and heartfelt spiritual emotion is one of the best introductions to the music of this important seventeenth-century German composer. And this performance, recorded by one of the great Schütz specialists and his splendid choir and instrumental ensemble, is one of the most ingratiating renditions I know. It was originally released in Germany on the Cantate label about a decade ago, then in the United States by Vanguard in its regular series; and it has also appeared as MHS 1197 in the mail-order catalog of the Musical Heritage Society. Its latest reincarnation is as part of Vanguard's new Historical Anthology of Music series, which is arranged somewhat like the old DGG Archive system.

As a recording, it does show slight signs of age (some lack of clarity in the massed ensembles), but as an interpretation it can still be recommended with both pleasure and enthusiasm; only the very recent performance directed by Norrington on Argo ZRG 671 is a possible peer. Vanguard commendably includes the texts, translations, and brief annotations of the original issue. *I.K.*

Philips

RUGGERO RAIMONDI
A noble, expressive, mature Attila

TCHAIKOVSKY: ***Manfred Symphony, Op. 58.*** Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Lorin Maazel cond. LONDON CS 6786 $5.98.

Performance: **A bit tame**
Recording: **Mostly very good**

Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* is no great favorite of mine. It does have its moments, though: the impressive *Manfred* motif itself, the whole of the fleet, yet lyrical, scherzo in the style of Berlioz's *Queen Mab*, and the slow movement. The overlong finale, as far as I am concerned, stamps the whole business as a poor relation of Berlioz's *Fantastique*.

Neverthless, in the hands of a topnotch conductor and a virtuoso orchestra, *Manfred* definitely can become a real "gut" listening experience, a great showpiece. Arturo Toscanini's reading, with a cut finale, is a case in point; and so too, despite moments of haste, was the Igor Markevitch performance once available on Philips. Of the presently available stereo recordings, the Svetlanov Melodiya/Angel recording has the spirit but not the super-virtuosity that the music demands. Lorin Maazel, on this new London recording, exhibits the necessary virtuosity, and—with the exception of one episode—the recording has superior sonics. But there is not much in the way of knock-'em-dead drama, which is what this piece needs in the end movements to make a genuine impact. In common with Svetlanov and Markevitch, Maazel gives us the music uncut. His first movement is beautifully clean in texture and polished in execution. The scherzo is a bit slow but consequently lacking in mercurial quality, but things get somewhat better with the slow movement, though the first stormy episode lacks proper dramatic impact. The finale—lengthy orgy and all—proceeds in good order right up to the climax of Manfred's death, but then the organ chorale enters with an impact and acoustic having such excessive loudness and body that it has no relation to what has gone before. It is clear that the disc should be remastered, with the organ mixed down to a properly matched level. And if this were done, I would choose Maazel's reading, despite my reservations, as the better of the two currently available (Svetlanov's blaring brass and excessive room resonance pall after a while). In any event, a wholly satisfactory Tchaikovsky *Manfred* in stereo has yet to be achieved. Anybody for Bernstein or Solti? *D.H.*

TCHAIKOVSKY: ***Songs. Reconcilement; Mignon's Song; Do not believe me, my dear; My little minx; No answer, no word, no greeting; O stay!; In the clamour of the ballroom; Cradle Song; Disappointment; To forget so soon; Don Juan's Serenade***; and eight others. Robert Tear (tenor); Philip Ledger (piano). ARGO ZRG 707 $5.95.

Performance: **Laudable, but . . .**
Recording: **Excellent**

At least half of the Tchaikovsky songs in this generous program are unfamiliar, and two of them—*O stay!* (Op. 16, No. 2) and *Great Deeds* (Op. 60, No 11)—are exciting discoveries. I only wish I could summon more enthusiasm for such a worthy and well-intentioned release. Robert Tear, an artist known for his English opera and oratorio recordings, is obviously a cultivated and versatile singer with an unusual linguistic command and an ability to bring the texts alive with meaning and color. Vocally, however, he is not up to this task. His tone is wavery, and his top range becomes too effortful and unpredictable in the songs that call for heightened dynamics. Too bad, because the artistic effort expended here is uncommon, the accompaniments are brilliant, and the recorded sound is outstanding. The total effect, however, cannot measure up to Irina Arkhipova's Tchaikovsky recital on Melodiya/Angel S 40047. *G.J.*

VERDI: ***Attila.*** Ruggero Raimondi (bass), Attila; Sherrill Milnes (baritone), Ezio; Cristina Deutekom (soprano), Odabella; Carlo Bergonzi (tenor), Foresto; Ricardo Cassinelli (tenor), Uldino; Jules Bastin (bass), Leo. Ambrosian Singers; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli cond. PHILIPS 6700 056 two discs $13.96.

Performance: **Imperfect but vital**
Recording: **Very good**

Attila stems from a crucial period in the life of the young Verdi. Success had crowned everything he touched during the years (1842-1844) of *Nabucco*, *I Lombardi*, and *Ernani*. Then came the mixed and puzzled reception of *I due Foscari*, the unexciting one of *Giovanna d'Arco*, and the downright failure of *Alzira* in 1845. Verdi very much wanted *Attila* to be a success as well as a reaffirmation of his operatic dominance. The choice of Zacharias

Werner's gloomy and distinctly Teutonic drama as the source for the opera's libretto was his, and librettists Piave and, later, Solera received detailed instructions about how to proceed. At this point in his career, however, Verdi did not yet possess the dramatic flair that was to become unerring in the later years. *Attila*'s period of gestation was relatively brief, probably *too* brief. At the premiere, in Venice, March 17, 1846, Verdi achieved the success he had so fervently desired, but it was a success largely due to the opera's canny exploitation of Italian revolutionary sentiments. In any case, it did not last very long.

Attila consists of a prologue and three acts, but the acts are so brief that, for once, conciseness appears to be a drawback. Everything happens in sketchy episodes, the characters lack dimension, and their motivations are ill-defined and puzzling. There is, furthermore, an underlying flaw: our sympathy never for a moment leaves Attila, the supposed villain. Rome triumphs at the end, but it is a triumph born of treachery, and it is impossible to muster admiration for the conniving trio that brought about Attila's downfall. So much for the drama. Musically, the composer's inspiration frequently rises to impressive levels, but *Attila* is, alas, an uneven and decidedly non-stageworthy score. Nonetheless, every Verdian should be in Philips' debt for this strong representation, which is the full opera's first recording.

It is presided over by Lamberto Gardelli, who was responsible for an excellent previous recording of *I Lombardi*. His interpretation conveys the work's raw vigor with conviction, without losing sight of its occasional lyric beauties (the lovely orchestral touches in the soprano aria "*Oh! nel fuggente nuvolo*," for one). Ruggero Raimondi offers a near-ideal portrayal in the title role. The music lies well for his high *basso cantante*; his singing has nobility, it is phrased with expressive art, and the scene of the vision is projected with mature dramatic force. The part of Foresto could do with a more heroic timbre than that of Carlo Bergonzi, but this reservation aside, we get the consummate artistry we have come to expect from that ever dependable tenor. As a matter of fact, the aria "*Ella in poter del barbaro*" reveals an elegance of phrasing and tonal refinement on which Bergonzi seems to have a monopoly at present.

The other two principals do not match the fastidious musicianship of Raimondi and Bergonzi. The singing of Cristina Deutekom lacks neither dramatic vigor nor extension of range, but her spreading, unsteady tone interferes with enjoyment. Sherrill Milnes makes a commanding figure of the warrior Ezio, and he delivers the aria "*Dagli immortali vertici*" effectively, but his tone is singularly unrefined and not too secure in intonation. (Listeners familiar with the Gigli-Rethberg-Pinza rendering of the third-act trio will find a disappointing treatment of that music here.)

Occasionally rough singing, however, is not likely to do great damage to an opera full of its creator's restless energy and revolutionary fire. There is no such thing, as far as I am concerned, as a bad Verdi opera. *Attila* is imperfect, but it is invaluable. This recording is also imperfect, but it is a first, it is finely annotated, and it, too, may be said to be invaluable. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VILLA-LOBOS: ***Chôros No. 2 for Flute and Clarinet; Trio for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon;***

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Performance: **Superb**
Recording: **Excellent**

This recording of woodwind music by Heitor Villa-Lobos, performed by the Soni Ventorum Wind Quintet, presents some of the finest wind-ensemble playing presently available on records. The group was engaged in 1968 for the newly created quintet-in-residence at the University of Washington in Seattle, where the members teach. One of the remarkable features of the ensemble is the players' balancing and blending of dissimilar woodwind tone colors to produce a fusion all too unusual in such groups. I don't know how they do it, though their intonation may be a factor. It is unbelievably "just."

Villa-Lobos' music is, of course, a unique phenomenon: sometimes beautiful and technically smooth, at other times folky-eccentric and lumpy. He always wrote what he meant, but sometimes he meant surprising things (at least to North American ears). The assemblage of pieces on this disc includes many kinds of music, some with quirky and charming Brazilian rhythms that the players seem to understand in their bones (thanks, probably, to having played the music a great deal). There is something here for anybody who likes Villa-Lobos, and I never expect to hear woodwind music better played. *L.T.*

VIVALDI: ***The Four Seasons, Op. 8, Nos. 1-4.*** Michel Schwalbé (violin); Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530296 $6.98.

VIVALDI: ***The Four Seasons, Op. 8, Nos. 1-4.*** Pinchas Zukerman (violin); Philip Ledger (harpsichord); English Chamber Orchestra, Pinchas Zukerman cond. COLUMBIA M 31798 $5.98, © MT 31798 $6.98.

Performances: **Both on high instrumental level**
Recordings: **Both excellent**

The new DGG recording of the familiar *Four Seasons* concertos exhibits all of the expected Karajan qualities: refinement, smoothness, and absolute control. The string playing *per se* is quite beautiful (the solo violin part by the Berlin Philharmonic's concertmaster is really ravishing), but in the process a good many Baroque characteristics get smoothed out altogether. The phrasing has, of course, a very long line indeed here, but the concept of contrast, at least, should be maintained. All too often, though, the dynamic scheme imposed by the conductor is more appropriate to the nineteenth century. To be sure, there are some splendidly realized pictorial effects, such as the storms or the dying of the stag. But those listeners seeking a more apt Baroque realization (including an audible harpsichord continuo) had better look elsewhere. DGG's sound cannot be faulted in any way, though the ensemble seems slightly distant.

Columbia's version, with Pinchas Zukerman playing the solo violin part and directing the excellent English Chamber Orchestra, features a closer and more detailed ambiance with far better balance of the imaginatively played harpsichord continuo. Zukerman plays with his customary skill and brilliance, and his ensemble responds with vigor and considerable sprightliness. Yet, with the exception of some correctly played ornaments, there are no special Baroque insights in this performance; for example, there are no embellishments of the solo violin part in the slow movements. Curiously, also, a number of the pictorial effects—the death of the stag, for one, come across without much affect. Zukerman tends to treat his massed strings too heavily and without the kind of bouncy up-beat pattern that is such a trademark of the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. The recording of the *Four Seasons* that the Academy made for Argo is still my favorite.

Incidentally, the cassette version of the Zukerman performance appears to boost the high end slightly; there is some muddiness in the inner texture and less richness and clarity in the bass, and, during the last few minutes of the second sequence, the solo violin tends to warble. Overall, it is not a bad sounding cassette, but it does not match the disc. *I.K.*

WUORINEN: ***Quartet*** **(see BABBITT)**

YSAŸE: ***Chant d'Hiver for Violin and Orchestra*** **(see HUBAY)**

COLLECTIONS

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BAROQUE TRUMPET RECITAL: Cazzati: *Sonata in D Minor ("La Pellicana").* **Fontana:** *Sonata No. 10, in E Minor; Balletto e pass'e mezzo.* **Marini:** *Sonata in D Minor for Trumpet, Bassoon, and Continuo; Romanesca.* **Telemann:** *Der getreue Music-Meister: Air trompette.* **Anon. (early 18th C.):** *Sonatas in F Minor, F Major, and C Major.* Gerard Schwarz (trumpet); Leonard Sharrow (bassoon); Albert Fuller (harpsichord). NONESUCH H-71274 $2.98.

Performance: **Virtuosic**
Recording: **Very good**

This collection of seventeenth-and eighteenth-century pieces featuring the trumpet differs from the majority of collections for this instrument in one important respect: the accompaniments are not orchestral but are restricted to continuo instruments. Not all of the pieces this disc contains were necessarily intended for trumpet either. But, considering the standard practice of interchanging instruments during the Baroque period, I doubt whether Biagio Marini, Giovanni Battista Fontana, or any of the other composers represented would seriously have objected to a sonata for violin, cornet, or what-have-you being rendered on the modern trumpet (the Baroque trumpet would have been technically incapable of playing most of this music). Gerard Schwarz understands this literature as very few performers of his instrument do today; stylistically, he is on very firm ground, adding some highly effective embellishments to his part, ornamenting correctly, and choosing tempos and phrasing that all make sense. Schwarz is also an exceptionally brilliant performer; there are moments when a listener could be excused for mistaking his soft, high opening note to a sonata's slow movement for the sound of a violin. He is really that skillful! The accompaniments, too, are well managed, though I would have liked to hear more of Albert Fuller's imaginative playing. *I.K.*

(Continued on page 126)

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THE HAPPY DOMRA. Paganini (arr. Yakovlev): *Caprice No. 24; Variations on "The Carnival of Venice"*; Bizet-Sarasate (arr. Chernov): *Carmen: Gypsy Dance;* Shchedrin (arr. Gavrilov): *Not Love Alone; Quadrille;* Kravchenko: *Spring Holiday;* Gorodovskaya: *Fantasy on Russian Themes; The Happy Domra;* Lokshin: *Piece for Russian Folk Instrument Orchestra;* Lvov-Kompaneyets: *Quadrille;* Yakovlev: *Mischief Dance.* Vladimir Yakovlev (domra); Osipov Balalaika Orchestra, Viktor Dubrovsky cond. MELODIYA/ANGEL SR 40201 $5.98.

Performance: **Mindlessly charming**
Recording: **Very good**

Still numb after a recent bout with "Music for the Domra," in which virtuoso Vladimir Yakovlev and the Osipov Balalaika Orchestra played relentlessly an entire program of "contemporary" folk music by Russian composers, I approached "The Happy Domra" with all the enthusiasm of a small boy climbing into a dentist's chair. I'm happy to report, though, that the domra, a stringed Russian folk instrument, is a lot easier to take in short works by Paganini, Bizet, and Shchedrin. True, the *Gypsy Dance* has all the tension of a nap on a bus, but the Russians manage to make diverting music out of the rest of the first side of this album, even stirring up a bit of gaiety with Kravchenko's *Spring Holiday*, which brings out a surprising kind of Trinidadian steelband sound from the balalaikas. Side two, however, is all downhill, offering a glut of filler material in the form of those "fantasies" on Russian themes of an incredible stolidity. Mr. Yakovlev's own *Mischief Dance* is colorful, but not as mischievous as it might have been. From Vera Gorodovskaya's *The Happy Domra*, I gather that she is something of a local Leroy Anderson in the domra department, but she is nowhere near as ingenious an arranger. *P. K.*

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Performance: **Scintillating**
Recording: **Superior**

If you enjoy Renaissance music, or even if you don't but like the sound of plucked stringed instruments such as lutes, do, I implore you, get this entertaining, beautifully programmed disc. The repertoire starts with late fifteenth-century chansons transcribed for lute duet by the Flemish composer, Johannes Tinctoris, and extends to the beginning of the seventeenth century with four country dances by the Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Besard (some of these dances, incidentally, were arranged by Respighi in his *Ancient Airs and Dances* suites). In between is an enormous variety of music, mainly English and Italian, giving quite a grand scope to the basic theme of this collection: duets for lutes and related instruments. In spite of the fact that such players as Presti and Lagoya, the Romeros, and more recently Bream and Williams have delved into ensemble pieces, there has been virtually no opportunity of hearing this earlier repertoire, not even in guitar arrangements. To hear it played on the original instruments is an even bigger bonus, for the sound of the lutes in duet, the bass citern (bass lute with wire strings), orpharion (English version of the cittern, with wire strings), and, for even more variety, a tenor viol in the Spanish pieces is quite irresistible. The playing, nicely spaced for stereo without gross exaggeration, is equally scintillating, technically on the highest level, and full of bounce. The program, including a small handful of solos as well, is designed to entertain, and it succeeds admirably. The quality of reproduction is, moreover, superb. *I.K.*

THE ART OF INA SOUEZ. Mozart: *Don Giovanni: Crudele? Ah no, mio bene . . . Non mi dir; Don Ottavio, son morta . . . Or sai chi l'onore. Così fan tutte: Ei parte . . . Per pietà. Temerari, sortite . . . Come scoglio.* Puccini: *La Bohème: Mi chiamano Mimì.* Bizet: *Carmen: Micaëla's Aria.* Bellini: *Norma: Casta diva.* Verdi: *Ernani, involami.* Ina Souez (soprano); Orchestra of the Glyndebourne Festival, Fritz Busch cond; London Philharmonic Orchestra, Alberto Erede and Sir John Barbirolli cond. ORION ORS 7293 $5.98.

Performance: **Good to excellent**
Recording: **Acceptable pseudo-stereo**

Ina Souez, a voice from the past, surrounded by precious memories! Colorado-born and trained in Italy, this uniquely gifted soprano had a successful career in Europe, particularly in England, during the decade leading up to World War II. She achieved international fame in the memorable *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte* performances conducted by Fritz Busch at Glyndebourne, and subsequently became the first Donna Anna and Fiordiligi on records in the Glyndebourne sets.

Side one of this reissue (released with EMI's cooperation) is devoted to Ina Souez's renditions of two arias of each of the Mozart heroines. Her voice is remarkably rich and well supported, handling the recitatives with verve and clarity, and she negotiates the difficult ascent from E-flat to B-flat in the first *Don Giovanni* scene spectacularly well before launching into the aria. She disposes of the fearsome leaps in Fiordiligi's music with similar expertise. This entire side, in fact, abounds in listening delights.

Side two begins with an opulently sung "*Mi chiamano Mimì*" and ends with an "*Ernani, involami*" rendered with dramatic sweep, but the Bizet and Bellini scenes are rather uneven and receive uncharacteristically indifferent orchestral support from Barbirolli. Still, this is a rewarding disc. The voice of Souez, who now lives in Southern California, had a mid-range plushness of the Milanov-Horne variety, high notes of firmness and fullness, and an admirably homogenized scale. Her vocal agility was limited, but she could handle Mozart and Verdi resourcefully, with reasonable accuracy and pleasing musicianship. The recording was made in the mid-1930's, and the technical quality is very good for its age. *G.J.*

BEYOND THE BASIC REPERTOIRE

By ROBERT S. CLARK

RACHMANINOFF'S SONGS

SINCE the solo songs of Sergei Rachmaninoff turn up infrequently on recital programs and discs nowadays, the average music lover is likely to think of songwriting as only an occasional activity of this composer, who found his most natural medium in writing for the piano. But a glance at a catalog of Rachmaninoff's works corrects this impression: he wrote more than seventy songs, and published them at regular intervals from 1893 until 1916. All the texts are Russian (a few are translations of Heine, Goethe, and Shelley, among others), and are often chosen from the finest poets: Tolstoy, Lermontov, Blok, and of course Pushkin. John Culshaw, in his admirable monograph on the composer, ranks Rachmaninoff's songs second only to his piano music in quality.

It is Culshaw's opinion that Rachmaninoff gave up song-writing after 1916 because, with the Russian Revolution of the following year, he was driven into exile from his native land and was thus cut off from the wellspring of inspiration for his songs. Perhaps. But if so, it is strange that, apart from an occasional harmonic touch reminiscent of Borodin and a folk-like motif here and there (the opening of *O cease thy singing, maiden fair*, for example), the music of the songs is not identifiably Russian in flavor. With only a couple of exceptions, the songs are not memorable for melody, either; Rachmaninoff's songs second only to his best tunes for his piano works. But the songs do have in common a kind of impassioned rhetorical surge that grows out of the intensification and expansion of short phrases and motifs, usually culminating in a loud high note or passage for the voice. The piano, as one might expect, plays much more than a supporting role in most instances, although sometimes its contribution boils down to just an elaborated series of arpeggios. Often it has the last word, in a postlude.

Back in the days when Rachmaninoff was a world-renowned touring piano master and consequently an advertisement for himself, the songs were heard more often on concert stages here and in Europe. Several singers active at that time—John McCormack, Alexander Kipnis, Nina Koshetz, Jennie Tourel—sang them, and also recorded a few. Of these, one of the most notable—McCormack's performance of *O cease thy singing* in an English version, accompanied by piano and a violin obbligato played by Fritz Kreisler—remains in limbo even in this age of the ubiquitous reissue. But we do have Kipnis' superbly idiomatic performances (in the original Russian, of course) of *O cease thy singing* and *The harvest of sorrow* (RCA Victrola 1434), and McCormack's *To the Children* in English (Victrola 1393). Jussi Björling sings—again in translation—*Lilacs* and *In the silence of the night* on two RCA discs (LM 1771 and LM 2784, respectively). For those who, like me, still consider him the ultimate tenor, these are cherishable samples of his art, but I do not deny that the songs must be heard in Russian if one is to experience their full effect. There are two fine collections that are both up to date sonically and sung by artists close to the motherland. The Russian mezzo-soprano Irina Arkhipova, with John Wustman at the piano (Melodiya/Angel SR 40198), sticks largely to the obvious in her choice of seven songs to back Moussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death*; luckily, she is a stirring artist, and her performances are moving ones. And the team of Nicolai Gedda (tenor) and Alexis Weissenberg (piano) offers seventeen songs on a new Angel recording (S 36917), ranging from early (Op. 4) to late (Op. 34). Weissenberg does seem to become the whole show now and then, but by and large this is a representative collection done in a manner that shows Rachmaninoff's song-writing flair (and, obviously, his piano accompaniments) to fine advantage. (It is reviewed on page 120.)

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TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK

MIKES FOR LIVE RECORDING

NEWCOMERS to the art of recording live music are usually disconcerted to see photos of symphonic recording sessions showing a dozen or more $500 microphones scattered among the musicians. Can anyone possibly expect to get worthwhile results with only a single pair of mikes, each of which may cost well under $100? The answer is yes—*if* the microphones are selected and placed properly. Most of my own recordings have been made this way, and since a number of them have ultimately been broadcast or turned into discs, I *know* it can be done. But to place your microphones properly, you must know something about their general characteristics.

The pickup patterns of almost all mikes today are classified either as "omnidirectional" or "cardioid." As their name implies, "omnis" pick up sound equally well from all directions. They must be spread farther apart to get as good a stereo perspective as cardioids, but for ease of placement where a large area must be covered, they're hard to beat. I once made a rather well-balanced tape of the Mozart Requiem using only two omnis placed *behind* the orchestra, close to the soloists, who stood in front of a full chorus. (I don't recommend trying to get quite so large an ensemble with only two microphones as a rule, but it can be done in a pinch.)

The trouble with omnidirectional mikes is that, if placed in *front* of a performing group, they tend to pick up too much noise from the direction of the audience. For this reason, most recordists prefer cardioid or "unidirectional" microphones, which sharply discriminate against sounds from the rear. These must be aimed toward the sound sources, but that is not really difficult, as most good cardioids will work well over an arc of about 120 degrees—a third of the circular pattern of an omni. So, if you're buying a single pair of mikes for live-music recording, I would recommend cardioids.

If you go beyond the mikes and cables supplied with your recorder (and do try them before assuming they are worthless!), you should look for a "low-impedance" model (rated from 50 to 600 ohms), together, of course, with appropriate connectors for your machine. This will permit you to use long cables that, with high-impedance microphones, would introduce hum and high-frequency losses. For professional low-impedance microphones, however, most home recorders will also need a "microphone cable transformer." This goes at the *recorder* end of the cable and matches the microphone to your machine. If in doubt as to whether you need such transformers, ask your dealer; if you do need them, they're worth the $10 to $15 price.

As to microphone type, few can afford the $100-plus professional "capacitors," and their ultra-high output would probably overload the input stage of audiophile recorders in any case. There are, however, excellent "dynamic" mikes available for $50 to $150, and several companies have recently introduced a variety of "electret condenser" microphones (in the $25 to $100 range) whose output level is designed for home tape decks. But for high-fidelity purposes, "crystal" and "ceramic" types should be avoided.

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STOP
PAUSE
EJECT
LEFT
TEAC
RECORD
OUTPUT
REGULAR TAPE
LINE INPUT
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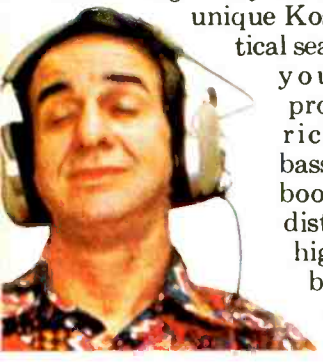

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