

Stereo Review®

JUNE 1975 • ONE DOLLAR



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PL-A45D

PL-55X

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Both units are even equipped with a strobe light directed at the strobe marks for easy viewing.

Combine the best automatic features with manual operation

While many hi-fi enthusiasts demand completely manual turntable operation, there are many purists who prefer semi-automatic operation. Pioneer provides this extra convenience in the PL-55X and PL-15D/II. Both models incorporate automatic tonearm return and shutoff. When the record has finished playing, the tonearm automatically returns to the arm rest and the power is turned off.



Automatic tonearm return and shutoff



Fully automatic operation in single-play

The PL-A45D is completely automatic. You don't ever have to touch the tonearm when you play your records. This 2-motor model has a special precision

gear motor to exclusively handle automatic tonearm lead-in, automatic return, automatic shutoff and repeat play. And when you prefer, you can switch to fully manual operation.

The PL-71 and PL-12D/II, at both ends of Pioneer's turntable lineup, offer the total involvement that can only be attained by completely manual operation.

Superb S-shaped tonearms for better tracking

The tonearm of every Pioneer turntable system is the S-shape design, for optimum groove tracking. All are statically balanced and all use adjustable counterweights with direct reading of tracking force. All have adjustable anti-skate control and oil-damped cueing for the gentlest application of stylus tip to record groove. Lightweight plug-in cartridge shells insure positive electrical contact and optimum stylus position and angle for lower distortion and reduced record wear.



S-shaped tonearm for better tracking

Unexcelled performance

Still, all of these features and refinements do not guarantee the performance specifications of Pioneer's new turntables. Each tonearm and turntable platter combination is shock mounted in its specially designed natural grain base (with hinged dust cover). Precision machining of all rotational parts plus continuous quality control insure that each will meet or exceed its published specifications — a time honored tradition with all Pioneer components.

Choice of the professionals

Engineers, experts and enthusiasts agree: to get the best performance, select a manual turntable. And to get the best manual turntable, you need a Pioneer. Every Pioneer manual turntable offers a level of precision and performance unparalleled in its price range. And every one is a total system — with dust cover and base — designed for years of professional, trouble-free sound reproduction.

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**For
the best
performance,
get a manual
turntable.**



PL-12D/II



PL-15D/II

For the manual turntable

The manual turntable is rapidly becoming the first choice of hi-fi enthusiasts everywhere. The reason why is quite simple. Today's enthusiasts are more knowledgeable, more sophisticated and more involved with their music. And only the manual turntable can provide the involvement and performance they demand.

At Pioneer, this trend comes as no surprise. We have long recognized the superiority of the manual turntable. And long recognized a simple fact: a record changer in no way improves performance. It can detract from it.

As a result, we now offer the finest and most complete line of manual turntables available. Manual turntables that are designed with the needs of today's hi-fi enthusiast in mind. Turntables that are engineered for precision response.

When you get right down to it, good record playing equipment really has only two requirements: uniform rotation of a turntable, and accurate tracing of a record groove by a tonearm and its cartridge.

Pioneer's engineers have long recognized that these requirements are best met by single-play turntables

and precision engineered tonearms. Our five new belt-drive and direct-drive turntable systems mean you needn't settle for the higher wow and flutter and the poorer signal-to-noise ratios (rumble) of record changers. Whether you've budgeted \$100 or \$300 for this vital element of your high fidelity system, there's a Pioneer turntable that outperforms any record changer in its price class.

Consider the performance advantages

Belt-drive, featured in Pioneer's PL-12D/II, PL-15D/II and PL-A45D, means smoother, more uniform platter rotation than can be achieved with typical idler-wheel/pulley arrangements normally found in record changers. Even changers



Belt-drive for rumble-free rotation



Direct-drive motor reduces friction

equipped with synchronous motors transmit vibration to the turntable platter. This is picked up as low-frequency rumble by the tonearm and

cartridge. By driving the platter with a precision-finished belt, vibration is effectively absorbed before it can be translated to audible rumble.

Pioneer's direct-drive models, PL-55X and PL-71 go even a step further in achieving noise-free, precision platter rotation. The DC electronically controlled servo-motors used in these models rotate at exactly the required 33 1/3 and 45 rpm platter speeds. Their shafts are directly connected to the center of the turntable, with no intermediate pulleys or other speed reduction devices. This means no extra friction producing bearing surfaces.

Because of the unique technology embodied in these new, direct-drive motors, it's possible to control the speed electronically. This is more precise than any mechanical drive system. Both our PL-55X and PL-71 offer individual pitch control for both 33 1/3 and 45 rpm speeds. Their turntable platters are edge-fitted with stroboscopic marks, so you can adjust precise speed while a record is playing.



Electronic speed adjustment for each speed



PL-71

There's a Pioneer turntable that's just right for your needs

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Type	Manual	Semi-Auto.	Fully Auto.	Semi-Auto.	Manual
Drive System	Belt	Belt	Belt	Direct	Direct
Drive Motor	4-pole synch.	4-pole synch.	4-pole synch.	DC servo	DC servo
Speed Control	---	---	---	±2%	±2%
S/N (RUMBLE)	Over 48dB	Over 48dB	Over 47dB	Over 58dB	Over 60dB
Wow & Flutter (WRMS)	0.08%	0.08%	0.07%	0.05%	0.05%
Tonearm Type	Static Bal. "S"	Static Bal. "S"	Static Bal. "S"	Static Bal. "S"	Static Bal. "S"
Tonearm Length	8 ¹ / ₆ "	8 ¹ / ₆ "	8 ¹ / ₆ "	8 ¹ / ₆ "	8 ³ / ₄ "
Turntable Dia.	12"	12"	12"	12 ¹ / ₄ "	12 ¹ / ₄ "
Price	\$99.95	\$129.95	\$169.95	\$249.95	\$299.95

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Stereo Review®

JUNE 1975 • VOLUME 34 • NUMBER 6

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

FUTURE TENSE

WHATEVER else our troubles may be these days, we cannot complain of any shortage of prophets, either of the millennial or of the Millerite variety. On the one hand, the late Dr. Jacob Bronowski tells us with proud confidence (courtesy BBC TV) that our technocratic guardians are even now fumbling for that last switch, the one that will finally turn this place into an automated Eden, and Future Shocker Alvin Toffler, on the other, gloomily confides that he is putting all his trust in real estate. Half the West Coast, it seems, is laying down freeze-dried pemican so they can survive some as yet unidentified but quite certainly impending holocaust, and now comes hustling down the pike another set of breathless optimists panting to tell us that a bright new future has *already* arrived, entertainment-wise. Well, not *quite* arrived, but by Christmas of 1976, they swear, the last and final (until the advent of the feelies, that is) word in home entertainment will be on every lip: the home video-disc system, a \$500 or thereabouts gadget that will enable us to play, through our own TV sets, in color, from our personal video libraries, an open-ended selection of movies old and new; Broadway musicals; rock concerts; soap, horse, and grand operas; instruction films; sports outdoor and in; and even, one would imagine, a little of the high-class porn of our choice.

The elephants amongst us will remember that we have been down this particular road before, first with that brave new world of video *cassettes* promised us in the mid-Sixties, and then again with a video-disc harbinger (the Teldec system) in 1970. The principal solicitors of our credibility right now are two new video-disc systems, the first being proffered by the unusual partnership of Hollywood's MCA (among other things—aha!—a producer of movies) and Holland's Philips (manufacturer of, among other things, electric shavers and cassette machines), the second by RCA (which needs no introduction in these pages). Since all that is likely to filter through to the general public between now and V-Day 1976 is a series of bulletins in yet another War of the Press Releases, there is time to reflect, before the future comes tumbling in upon us, on what it all signifies.

Spoilsport that I am, I suspect not much, and for a variety of reasons. First is the question of competition: we are talking (instruction possibilities aside) of "discretionary" time, and even confirmed TV buffs confess that the passage of the years (to say nothing of programming decay) has so worn the novelty of viewing that it now competes more and more with traditional spare-time activities—reading, active sports, gardening, and the like. Then the medium itself will compete: it would be foolish to assume that commercial TV (to say nothing of cable and pay TV) will hold still while its audience is being seduced away by video discs. Second is the question of economics: granted that it might be possible to persuade a sizable portion of the audience that the video disc's gourmet delights are preferable to free TV's fast-food pap—but just how *much* would they pay? It may safely be predicted that scarcely a performer contract of any kind will be signed from now on without a video-residuals clause; artists, agents, and unions are getting smarter every day, and rising royalties of all kinds make the projected (under \$10) selling price of the video disc look rather visionary even now. And this presents us with a paradox: the hardware economics of the video disc are, it appears, predicated on its being sold to the mass, but the software philosophy is quite the opposite, being geared to serve a number of small, mutually exclusive, specialty markets! And finally, of course, there is the basic question of just how often one can *stand* to see any particular video program. Speaking for my odd self, I have a very low tolerance for old movies (even good ones), I am apparently at one with most of the TV audience in my distaste for reruns, and I know that even porn palls. The prospect is not unrelievedly bleak, however, for there is no such thing as useless technology; we will in time find valid uses for the video disc.



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Shown above, left to right, 501, 901, and Model 301. For information, write to us at room SS.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Elisabeth Schwarzkopf

● I enjoyed Music Editor James Goodfriend's article on Elisabeth Schwarzkopf in the April issue, and I would love to see the release of his two suggested recordings. Could you pass my enthusiasm on to Angel records?

DEAN H. MILLER
New Orleans, La.

● "The Art of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf" (April) pays a fine tribute to a great recording artist who has been one of the glories of the Angel label since our very first release. Music Editor James Goodfriend's imaginary Seraphim releases have aroused much interest in the office, but I feel that his last paragraph is rather uncalled for. I wonder why Mr. Goodfriend expects vital information about historic recordings to have "a way of disappearing" either at Angel Records or in the EMI offices in London. The archives at Hayes and their microfilms in the London office go back to the earliest of Fred Gaisberg's recordings at the turn of the century. I can recall that it was occasionally difficult to find peripheral information about recordings in prerevolutionary Russia, but coupling and matrix numbers are never mislaid as far as I know.

MICHAEL W. ALLEN
Angel Records
Los Angeles, Calif.

Music Editor James Goodfriend replies: Certainly I did not say that I would "expect" vital information to disappear at the EMI offices. But having been in and around the record industry for twenty years, I have found that information does get lost at times, and the most vital information that gets lost is the knowledge that certain records—released or unreleased—ever existed at all. That little folk-song disc is exactly the sort of thing that does get forgotten, for one will not find it in any composer listing, and numerical systems are of no use if one does not know that something is there that should be searched for. But no matter. My offer (the point contested was contained in an offer) was made with no objective other than that of lending aid, and I am glad to know the aid is not needed!

Hall of Obscurity

● A nominee for the "Hall of Obscurity" (April): Mason Williams, who, despite his Emmy Award for writing the old Smothers

Brothers *Comedy Hour*, his Grammy for "Classical Gas," and such gems as *Road Song*, *Saturday's Night at the World*, and *Gift of Song*, never managed to capture the public's continued attention.

DONALD W. SKINNERS
Wauwatosa, Wis.

Oistrakh Bach

● I fully concur with Irving Kolodin in his lamenting the total lack of unaccompanied Bach by David Oistrakh on records ("Choosing Sides," April). I have never even heard of the existence of any pirate material. But I am the proud owner of an LP containing, among other items, a performance of the Sonata No. 1, in G Minor, BWV 1001. It's on a Soviet disc (MK 04044) which I acquired during my travels in Eastern Europe some years ago.

JEFF RAINER
Hartsdale, N.Y.

Ives Demurrers

● It is my custom to compliment Editor William Anderson on his good work (1) in the privacy of personal mail, and (2) infrequently (can't risk the ruin of a good editor). However, this time we must go public. His March editorial, "Composer Charles Ives Enters History," merits re-reading and contemplation. As he says, there *are* lessons in there. Perceiving one, I am mounting the editorial on the inside front cover of Henry Pleasants' *Agony of Modern Music* as a fitting preface, keeping it there while I search for others.

P. M. THOMPSON
Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y.

● Your recent editorial comment about the life and work of Charles Ives recalls an assessment by the late Professor Walter Bricht, of the Indiana University School of Music. Bricht used to say that he regarded Ives as "an experimental non-talent." That judgment further reminds me of Samuel Johnson's analysis of a certain writer's work, which the good Doctor said was both good and original—except that what was good was not original, and what was original was not good.

As for myself, recent hearings of works such as *Central Park in the Dark*, *Fourth of July*, certain portions of the Second Symphony, and the Concord Sonata have brought

forth the following doggerel, with which you may deal as you find appropriate:

Various works of Charles Ives
Cause me to feel not joy, but hives.
My heart does not leap up—it grieves,
When Ives (again) brings in the sheaves.
Columbia, that gem of ocean,
Inspires ennui but not devotion.
Each raucous musical finale
Leaves me feeling less than jolly.
Were I a cat with many lives,
I'd spend not one as Charles Ives.

It's no threat to Emily Dickinson, gentlemen, but it's from the heart.

MARK YOTHER
Cedar Rapids, Ia.

Ampico J. Steinway

● Great Mother of Pearl! How in the sacred name of Fields could you make such a grievous mistake in your April review of the new Fields albums? According to the Pulitzer Prize-winning author Robert Lewis Taylor in his book *W. C. Fields: His Follies and Fortunes*, the great man's original name was William Claude *Dukenfield*, not *Dunkenfield* as Paul Kresh alleges in the review. Those of us honoring the memory of him who thought that anyone who hated dogs and children couldn't be all bad may never forgive you. One way to atone for your sins, however, is to keep on publishing your fine magazine.

BILL CALTRIDER
Baltimore, Md.

¡Salsa!

● John Storm Roberts' "¡Salsa!" (March) was excellent and has rekindled my affinity for the music. That particular Latin trend was long due for wider recognition.

FRANK CANTU, JR.
Fort Sill, Okla.

● John Storm Roberts deserves a great big thank you from all the salsa lovers in New York and elsewhere for his March article.

IRIS M. PANTOJA
New York, N.Y.

Mozart's Messiah

● Reviewing the recording of Mozart's arrangement of Handel's *Messiah* (March), my friend and colleague Eric Salzman writes that it "is not as great a novelty as the Archiv program annotator seems to think, in the English-speaking world at least. It was still in common use in *this* country within the last quarter-century."

True, all kinds of versions of *Messiah*, not including Handel's, were in common use, and they included elements taken from Mozart's. But Mozart's *own version* in its pure state disappeared from circulation not long after Mozart's death: nineteenth-century editions and performances of the Handel-Mozart *Messiah* were notoriously corrupt, and Mozart's score was not practically available until the complete Mozart edition currently in progress got around to it in the 1960's. There is, in fact, every reason to believe that the performance conducted by Thomas Dunn with the Handel and Haydn Society in Symphony Hall, Boston, on December 8, 1967, was the first since the eighteenth century, certainly in America. One could quibble about this, since it did restore Handel's English text instead of keeping Mozart's German one, but close attention to that version reveals a curious and beautiful work of Mozart's rather than a means of access to Handel's *Messiah*. In Mozart detail is
(Continued on page 8)



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everything. The difference between Mozart and the sort of Mozart-plus Mr. Salzman was really referring to in his review is crucial. I think that for many people the Archiv recording provides first access to this perverse and seductive hybrid, and that Mr. Salzman underestimates its importance and interest.

MICHAEL STEINBERG
Boston, Mass.

Kirsten Flagstad

● I am presently at work on a discography of the great Norwegian soprano Kirsten Flagstad, in which I'd like to include her published and unpublished commercial recordings and recordings of her public performances. I would appreciate any information STEREO REVIEW readers can give me.

HOWARD C. SANNER, JR.
4903 56th Avenue
Hyattsville, Md. 20781

Wilhelm Furtwängler Society

● The aim of the newly founded Wilhelm Furtwängler Society is the dissemination of the writings and (unduplicated) recordings of the master. Additional information can be obtained from the Society at 6112 West 77th Street, Los Angeles, Calif. 90045.

HANS A. ILLING
Los Angeles, Calif.

Bicentennial Opera

● I took great pleasure in noting in your March issue that Columbia has decided to beef up its comparatively minuscule vocal catalog. With the goal being to fill in the gaps in the present recorded vocal literature, and with great emphasis being put on American music around the nation due to the upcoming Bicentennial, it would seem appropriate for Columbia to record a new production of Aaron Copland's opera, *The Tender Land*. This magnificent score and libretto are truly American, and the opera could really take place nowhere else except the American Midwest.

STEVEN GAINEY
New Carrollton, Md.

Wire Recording

● I have a wire tape recording which I treasure very much for personal reasons. I am very anxious to have the wire recording reproduced on conventional tape. Can you give me a lead where this recording can be made? I suspect that others have the same problem and that some laboratory is equipped to make this transfer.

OSCAR T. EICHMANN
Port Charlotte, Fla.

Great General Truths

● I was fascinated by William Livingstone's interview with Mabel Mercer in the February issue. It was full of quotations and great general truths. And it was very sly of Donald Smith to work in a quotation from Ruth Draper's masterly monologue *The Italian Lesson*: "Mabel . . . you know the things that will always be true." I think the album that contains Miss Draper's *Italian Lesson* is probably the finest spoken-word record ever made. I need a new copy of the disc and can find it nowhere. Is it still in print?

ARTHUR CROOKSHANK
New York, N.Y.

Alas, no. But Spoken Arts, which for a time leased the rights from RCA, is negotiating to get them again and hopes to re-release.

Mabel Mercer

● Are you aware that William Livingstone broke at least five of the Cardinal Rules for Interviewing Celebrities? First, he allowed Mabel Mercer to put him at ease. Second, he passed on the courtesy to us readers. Third, he undertook research *before* the interview. Fourth, he let Miss Mercer speak for herself, and at length. Fifth, he prepared an article that was a pleasure to read, learn from, and enjoy.

Any more interviews like that and Mr. Livingstone will surely be drummed out of the corps of professional interviewers.

PAUL ELLIOTT
Arlington, Va.



We just happen to have lying around the house about five hundred of these Mabel Mercer buttons left over from a recent wild party or two, and we'll give one of them free—as long as they last—to anyone who sends a stamped, self-addressed envelope to the Mabel Mercer Fan Club, c/o STEREO REVIEW, 1 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016.

The Beatles

● Reading Lester Bangs' vituperous article on the Beatles (March) was a most unpleasant experience. Out of several columns of colorful narrative I could discern only four or five sentences of relevant comment, the remainder consisting of a collection of unconsidered epithets and personal insults. Ringo may not be the greatest creative artist around today, but this does not make him a "jackass"; nor is it seemly to describe somebody's religious beliefs as "snivelling genuflections" regardless of what they may be. In any case, what has this name-calling to do with a record review?

PAT BAGWELL
Regina, Saskatchewan

● Billions of Beatle-boppers must have blasted Lester Bangs for his candid Beatles article (March), but Mr. Bangs is right. McCartney's material could pass for the soundtrack of the Mickey Mouse Club Show; Lennon's latest album shows us the commercial ploy of an undertalented star with overdone music resulting in unartistic balance and nausea; Ringo, without his all-star back-up friends, is beyond intelligent discussion; Harrison at least seems honest about his own limitations. The major contribution by the indulgent and mostly overrated ex-supergods of rock seems to be the vinyl shortage.

L. SMART
Havre de Grace, Md.

● Lester Bangs' characterization of the Beatles' "collective output" as "Muzak" and his conclusion that "perhaps it's time to let go of the Beatles once and for all" because "Dark Horse" and "Goodnight Vienna" were not up to his standards are incredibly fallacious arguments. As a Beatles fan, I have been somewhat disappointed in the musical products of the ex-Beatles *in relation to that of the group*. Even so, all four still take their music very seriously and in my opinion are still highly creative.

FRITZ ZIMMERMANN
Cookeville, Tenn.

● I agree with Lester Bangs (March) on George Harrison. This new tune he's got out sounds incredibly like the same thing he's been putting out for years. But Ringo Starr . . . something's always "obnoxious" if it's forced upon you. Ringo's just *there*, an innocent victim of the dissolution of the Group. As Mr. Bangs stated, females had a soft spot for that face. Maybe I still do. I've never taken Ringo's *music* seriously, but I still feel sorry for him, I guess. How could you attack that innocent face—and that nose?! Ringo's just a little boy playing make-believe. Would you take candy from a baby?

STEPHANIE MALIK
Sharon, Pa.

● Thank you for Lester Bangs' panning of the latest Ringo Starr and George Harrison products. I'm all for calling strikes when they are warranted. (Such scabrous criticism placed Dylan back on the right road, as his recent "Blood on the Tracks" will attest.) But until there is ample time for Harrison to assort the barrage of reprobations his recent tour and LP have garnered, and to act in aesthetic autosalvage, I have to take exception to Bangs' claim that "it's time to let go of the Beatles once and for all."

There is no shortage of output this year, nor even a shortage of competent output. Neither is there any deficit of new, strong prospects for mid-Seventies superstardom. But, at the same time, many that receive boosterish backings end up more resented than deified (Leo Sayer, Roy Wood, Suzi Quatro, Gary Glitter, etc.), and people still pack Jethro Tull and Led Zeppelin concerts to the gills. All I'm saying is that we *need* our satiated demagogues. The Seventies are too hard to face, seemingly, without the security of their presence. And many are still viable, creative entities. I cite Lou Reed, Steppenwolf, Rod Stewart, and Johnny Winter, all slammed in your March issue for their recent releases.

CARY BAKER
Wilmette, Ill.

● I must take exception to Lester Bangs' treatment of the Beatles in his March review. I completely agree with Mr. Bangs about the ex-Beatles, and perhaps even admit to the hollow "Magical mystery pose" of their music as a group, but let them go? I don't think Mr. Bangs has any understanding of what the Beatles mean to me and possibly everyone else my age (twenty-eight). Letting them go would be like a prefrontal lobotomy—that's where my head was at for *ten years*. The Beatles alternately reflected and dragged me into a period of tremendous change. Of course they're hollow, but compared to now, so were we probably all.

STEVEN PERRIN
Sioux City, Ia.

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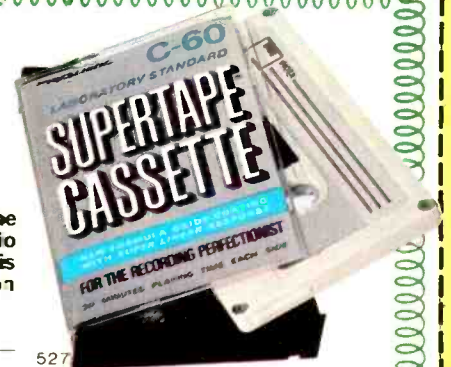
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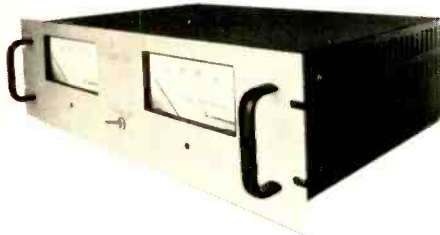
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C/M Labs Model 912 Stereo Power Amplifier

The Model CM912 from C/M Laboratories is a dual-channel power amplifier rated at 150 watts continuous per channel (8-ohm loads), both channels driven, from 20 to 20,000 Hz with less than 0.1 per cent harmonic or inter-



modulation distortion. The 4-ohm rating of the amplifier is 250 watts per channel under the same conditions. Noise is better than 100 dB below full output. Frequency response is within ± 0.1 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz. The unit, which can be rack mounted, has peak-reading meters for both channels on its front panel, calibrated in per cent of full power output. An internal cooling fan is controlled by a thermostat, switching on when heat-sink temperatures exceed 140 degrees F. A front-panel light glows when the fan is in operation. Relays at the speaker outputs delay connection of the speakers at turn-on to prevent low-frequency thumps. The CM912's weight is 46 pounds and dimensions are 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 19 x 14 inches. Price: \$700. A wood cabinet is optional at \$45.

Circle 115 on reader service card

Dynaco A-25XL Speaker System

The new Model A-25XL speaker system from Dynaco matches the existing A-25 in size and styling, but it is 3 dB more efficient and has an increased power-handling capabil-



ity of 50 watts. The drivers, a 10-inch woofer and 1-inch soft-dome tweeter, are linked through a simplified crossover network that

divides the frequency range at 1,200 Hz. The cabinet employs the Dynaco "aperiodic" design with a highly damped vent that presents a large acoustic resistance to the woofer cone. A three-position switch adjusts the output level of the tweeter. The A-25XL has a nominal impedance of 8 ohms. Minimum recommended amplifier power is 15 watts per channel. The cabinet is finished in oiled walnut with a beige grille cloth attached by Velcro fasteners. Dimensions are 20 x 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10 inches. Price: \$109 (\$114 in the West).

Circle 116 on reader service card

Add-n-Stack Tape-Storage System

Royal Sound offers a modular storage system for cassettes and eight-track cartridges that lends itself equally well to fixed installations and portable applications. Called the Add-n-Stack system, it consists of interlockable plastic trays with spaces for six cartridges or eight cassettes which can be slid in so that their spine labels are visible. The fact that the



modules can be interlocked on all four sides, with their edges lined up or offset, affords considerable flexibility in designing multi-module arrangements of almost any size and shape. Holes in the backs of the modules facilitate hanging.

The Add-n-Stack modules are available in black, dark and light blue, green, yellow, and orange. They are priced at \$1.98 per single module for cassettes or eight-track cartridges. Other Add-n-Stack products include a Carousel (a rotating assembly of four cassette or cartridge modules, priced at \$14.95), a two-module assembly with wrap-around vinyl carrying case for portable use (\$9.98), and a single module with weighted carrying handles intended to hold it in place on the drive-shaft tunnel of an automobile (\$4.50).

Circle 117 on reader service card

Maxell UD Back-coated Tape

The Maxell "Ultra Dynamic" tape-oxide formulation is now available on a back-coated tape. The back coating, consisting of a thin layer of carbon particles, is said to improve tape-motion stability and winding because of the friction it provides, and to defeat the accumulation of static charges on the tape because of its high electrical conductivity. The treat-

ment is also claimed to reduce print-through.

The UD formulation is intended to be used with a bias strength of 15 per cent above normal, with which it can yield a flat frequency response extending to about 24,000 Hz. The UD back-coated tapes all employ polyester base materials with thicknesses of 1.5 or 1 mil. The 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch tape-pack offerings cost \$26.20 (number UD50-120B, 1.5 mil, 2,500



feet) and \$31 (number UD35-180B, 1 mil, 3,600 feet). Prices for 7-inch reels are \$9.20 (UD50-60B, 1.5 mil, 1,200 feet) and \$11.35 (UD35-90B, 1 mil, 1,800 feet).

Circle 118 on reader service card

Bose Model 301 Speaker System

A new "Direct/Reflecting" speaker-system design from Bose, the Model 301, is the smallest and least expensive in the company's current line. A two-way system, the Model 301 employs an 8-inch woofer in a ported enclosure and a 3-inch cone tweeter. The woofer is mounted frontally on the cabinet, while the tweeter occupies a small sub-panel within one corner of the cabinet and is angled somewhat away from the front. In front of the tweeter but within the grille is a sound-deflecting vane that the user can orient by means of a control on the enclosure's exterior. This vane adjusts the amount of tweeter output that is projected directly forward into the listening area, and hence the ratio of direct to reflected sound. The 301's are built and sold as "mirror-image" pairs, meaning that when two systems are set up for stereo with horizontal placement the tweeters are outermost.



The Model 301 is an 8-ohm system with a power-handling capacity of 60 watts continuous. Amplifiers with rated outputs as low as 15 watts continuous per channel are said to be

(Continued on page 12)

Announcing the Sherwood 2+2+3

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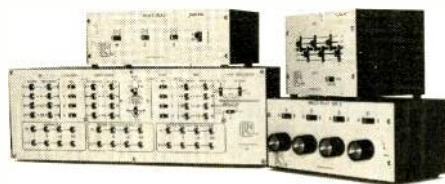
adequate to drive the system. The crossover network permits the outputs of the two drivers to overlap by about an octave: the woofer is rolled off at 3,000 Hz, and the output of the tweeter extends down to 1,400 Hz. The cabinet, walnut finished with dark-colored contrasting foam grille panels, measures 17 x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Price: \$96 each (somewhat higher in the west).

Circle 119 on reader service card

Russound QT-1 Switching/Patching Center

The new Russound QT-1 (shown at lower left) is an entirely passive switching/mixing complex and patch panel for up to four two- and four-channel tape machines, plus external Dolby and/or dbx noise-reduction processors, equalizers, four-channel decoders, etc. The basic tape-recorder connections are arranged in three groups serving, respectively, the TAPE OUT jacks, DUBBING jacks, and TAPE PLAYBACK jacks. The main inputs precede the tape-output jacks, while the main outputs follow the playback connectors and tape-monitor switching. These are intended for connection to the tape-monitor loop of a stereo or four-channel system, enabling any of the program sources or processors plugged into the QT-1 to be inserted into the system signal path in any combination or order.

At each internal stage of the QT-1 are front-panel jacks for miniature phone plugs. With the jumper cables provided, these permit the insertion of noise-reduction devices or equalizers at any point in the signal path, and they also permit main stages of the QT-1 to be conveniently bypassed. Mixing facilities are also provided for combining front and rear or left and right channels. There are input and output jacks for a four-channel matrix decoder. To handle two- and four-channel sources,



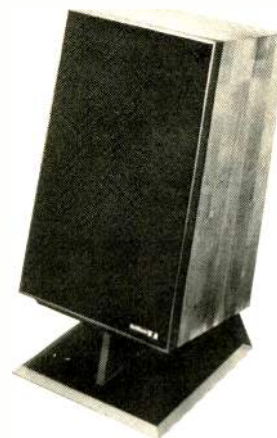
the QT-1 employs thirteen high-quality slide switches, forty-eight patching jacks, and seventy-two rear-panel phono jacks. No electronics are used except in the mixing stage, where resistors are switched in to maintain proper load impedances. Insertion loss is a negligible 0.5 dB except for mixing, which typically introduces a loss of approximately 6 dB. In its vinyl-clad wood cabinet the QT-1 measures approximately 14 x 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 inches. Twelve patch cables are supplied, with more available in packages of four. Price: \$249.95. Other Russound control units, shown in the

photograph, include the SWB-2W switch box for three sets of speaker systems (upper left), the TMS-1W three-way tape-recorder switch box (upper right), and the MP-2 speaker-control unit with switching and level controls for four sets of speakers (lower right).

Circle 120 on reader service card

Rectilinear 5 Speaker System

Efficiency was a prime consideration in the design of the new Rectilinear 5 speaker system, which provides a sound-pressure level of 91 dB at a one-meter distance for a pink-noise



input of 1 watt. The fully sealed enclosure has four forward-facing drivers: a 12-inch woofer, a 7-inch sub-woofer/midrange with "whizzer" cone (mounted in its own internal sub-enclosure), a 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch dome mid-range, and a 1-inch dome tweeter.

Except for the 12-inch woofer, all drivers are operated full-range above the frequencies dictated by their 12-dB-per-octave high-pass filters. For the 7-inch driver the frequency is 200 Hz. The 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ - and 1-inch domes are rolled off below 1,800 and 10,000 Hz, respectively. Frequency response of the Model 5 is 32 to 20,000 Hz \pm 2 dB. The system has a nominal impedance of 6 ohms and a power-handling capability of 250 watts program material. Protection from excessive drive levels is provided by a 3-ampere fuse. No controls are used on the speaker.

The Rectilinear 5's enclosure is constructed of a high-density synthetic material covered with walnut veneer and a dark cloth grille (removable). Dimensions are 25 x 15 x 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Price: \$299, or \$319 with the base shown, which supports the enclosure with an upward tilt of 10 degrees.

Circle 121 on reader service card

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE: Recent fluctuations in the value of the dollar will have an effect on the price of merchandise imported into this country. So, please be aware that the prices quoted in this issue may be subject to change.

THE LAST LOUDSPEAKER, SHRUNK.

The last loudspeaker, as all good audiophiles know by now, is the "coherent-sound" transducer invented by the late Lincoln Walsh (U.S. Patent 3,424,873) and developed by Ohm Acoustics.

We believe it's the last loudspeaker in the same sense as the wheel was the last device for transmitting rotary or rolling motion. A mathematically perfect concept, utterly simple and unimprovable.

That doesn't mean, of course, that its physical construction can't evolve further or that its dimensions can't change. There are big wheels and there are little wheels, and now there's a smaller but no less perfect Walsh speaker.

The Ohm G.

It's still a single-driver, crossoverless system with an exceptionally flat response over the entire audio range. (In this case, from 32 to 18,000 Hz.) It still behaves like a terminated transmission line. It still has a cylindrical output in perfect phase with the input signal at all frequencies (except the bottom octave, where phase effects are inaudible). And therefore it still passes square waves like no other type of speaker.

But it's about half the size, overall, of our top-of-the-line Ohm F. In fact, it doesn't look significantly different in size from an upended bookshelf speaker.

Better yet, the Ohm G is priced at only \$300 in walnut-finished vinyl (\$350 in oiled walnut). Barely higher than some fancy bookshelf speakers that are hopelessly outclassed by it in measurable and audible performance.

How did we shrink the last loudspeaker?

It isn't so much shrunk as chopped. The 8-inch Ohm G driver is virtually identical to the top half of the Ohm F driver. We made up for the chopped-off part with the unusually sophisticated design of the enclosure.

The air volume behind the Ohm G driver is only a little over one cubic foot. A 10-inch passive radiator in the back of the enclosure acts as a kind of super-vent, relieving the abbreviated Walsh driver of the need for excessive excursion without interfering with coherent sound radiation above approximately 64 Hz. Response is down only 3 dB at 32 Hz!

The mathematics of low-frequency loading with a passive diaphragm are rather complicated, the Ohm G configuration being a fourth-order Butterworth filter. Not many speaker designers even know what that means,

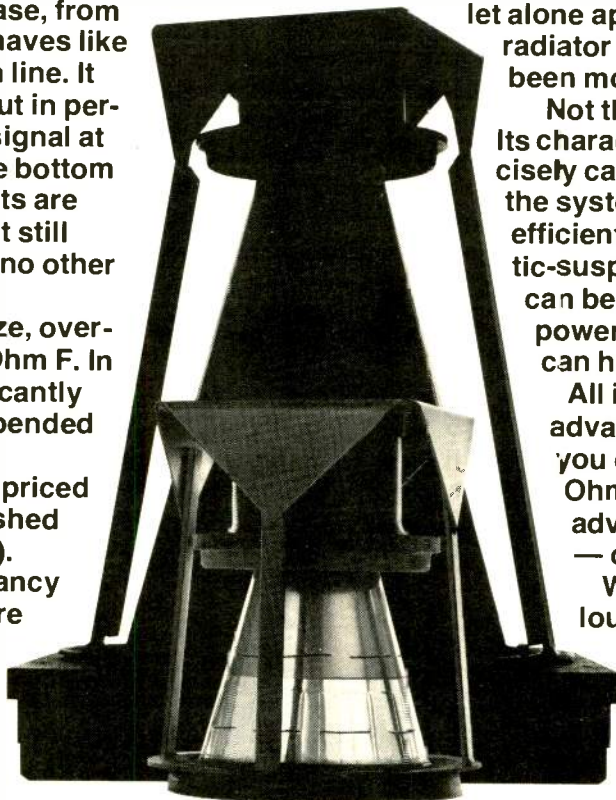
let alone apply it, so that passive-radiator systems in the past have been mostly cut-and-try.

Not the Ohm G enclosure. Its characteristics have been so precisely calculated and optimized that the system is at least 4 dB more efficient than the equivalent acoustic-suspension design. The speaker can be driven with medium-powered amplifiers, although it can handle the monsters.

All in all, the Ohm G is the most advanced small speaker system you can buy and, along with the Ohm F, one of the most advanced regardless of size — or price.

We may have shrunk the last loudspeaker but we're stretching the state of the art.

Ohm Acoustics Corp.
241 Taaffe Pl.
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N.Y. 11205



AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*



twenty-five years old, but I prefer its design to the new chrome- and gingerbread-decorated versions of today. Are the arm and the cartridge too heavy on this older machine?

OSCAR E. TAUBER
Ames, Iowa

A. Right—but record slippage because of excessive stylus pressure is the least of your problems. I will bet that every disc you have played has suffered severe groove damage as well. After twenty-five years, your changer—if not the entire console—certainly deserves to be retired, or perhaps relegated to the playing of 78-rpm discs on alternate Sundays. I'm sure that with a little research you can find a modern record player that will physically replace the older model and can be easily connected to your console's amplifiers.

Two notes of caution: (1) the LP discs played by your old groove grinder will probably be terribly noisy (and lack highs) when played by a new machine; and (2) if your new player has a magnetic phono cartridge, you'll have to get an inexpensive separate preamplifier unit (under \$15) to bring its output up to the voltage level of your previous "crystal" cartridge.

No-load Danger

Q. Is there any danger in operating a solid-state amplifier without a load? A friend of mine pulled out the headphones that were plugged into my Pioneer SA-9100, and it was about thirty seconds before I realized what had been done and could turn it back onto the speakers.

DAVID BURGESS
Dallas, Tex.

Record Mutilation

Q. Why is it that 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ -rpm records sometimes have holes punched in the jacket corners or even have the jacket corners cut off? Also, 45-rpm records often have holes punched or melted right through the center labels. I have even noticed that prerecorded cassette tapes sometimes have small holes burnt into the end of the cases.

JOHN CARDONI
Worcester, Mass.

A. The "mutilation" of the record jacket or label area of a disc is done by the record company to differentiate between records meant for normal retail distribution and those sent out as "review" copies to magazines and

radio stations. The fact that some of these review copies find their way into retail stores does not, I'm sure, make the manufacturer very happy. As far as cassettes are concerned, the cases are punched in order for them to be installed in a locking rack. I've never seen any cassettes—or eight-tracks—punched for any other reason.

Disc Slippage

Q. Time-Life Records suggested that I write to you for a possible solution to a problem that I have with the new, very lightweight discs. If I put five or six records on my changer spindle, the third, fourth, and later records are likely to slip at the beginning of their plays. My console is not new; it's about

Today's L&M... Proud tradition. Proud heritage. Proud taste.

The proud smoke.

Filter King, 18 mg. "tar", 1.2 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette, by FTC Method.

A. There seems to be absolutely no risk of damage in simply operating a transistor amplifier with no load on its speaker terminals (or headphone jack). If there could be a problem resulting from such operation, the manufacturers wouldn't make it quite so easy to switch off the speakers for headphone use. However, you *can* damage an amplifier—or at least cause it to self-protect—by operating it at a high level into too low a load, such as two pairs of 4-ohm speakers connected in parallel.

TV Color Interference

Q. *The living room in my home is not very spacious, and I had to install my bookshelf speakers on each side of the color television set. To my surprise, the speakers distort the color at the edges of the picture. I would appreciate your advice and suggestions for a cure.*

JOHN KONNICK
Riverhead, N.Y.

A. As you have discovered, the stray magnetic field surrounding loudspeakers is capable of causing deflection problems in the picture tube of a color TV set. This should not be surprising, considering that even the very weak geophysical magnetic field of the earth can affect a color tube.

The obvious solution is to put enough distance between your TV and your speakers to avoid the problem, but if this is not possible, there are a couple of other possibilities. You might try turning your speakers upside down, so that the tweeters rather than the woofers (which are radiating the field) are closest to the TV set. If that doesn't work, try "shielding." The situation requires not the electrostatic

shielding normally used with hi-fi components, but rather an electromagnetic "shield." You will have to install a sheet of ferrous (iron or steel) material between the set and the speakers. The thickness or shape of the sheet doesn't matter since its sole purpose is to deflect the magnetic field away from the picture tube. You can make a deflector/shield from a 2-pound coffee can with its ends removed, cut up the side, and flattened. Tape the sharp edges to avoid finger damage. Move the shield about between the speakers and the TV set to find a location in which it eliminates the color distortion. Don't be afraid to bend the deflector to an odd shape if it appears to help. There are too many variables involved for me to advise you specifically as to the size and the physical placement of the deflection shield, but any piece of ferrous sheet metal should do the job if the proper position is found. Once the magnetic shield is in place, it can be disguised with contact paper or paint.

Tone Controls

Q. *I've been reading STEREO REVIEW long enough to form some idea as to what tone controls do. But I still don't know where they do it. My receiver's tone controls have no effect on the signal coming through the tape-output jacks, only on the tone of the signal going to the speakers. I understand this is normal since the recorder should be fed an "as is" signal from the amplifier and the signal from the tape recorder should be tone-controlled, if desired, during playback. I want to tone-control the signal that goes onto the tape, but I'm having difficulty interpreting the equipment reports to find out whether a given unit will allow me to make bass and treble*

adjustments before its tape-recorder output. What do I look for in the specification sheets?

AL HASTINGS
Port Jervis, N.Y.

A. Unless the specification sheets (or our test reports) specifically state that tone-controlling effects are available at the tape-output jacks, assume that they are not. However, all is not lost; it is easy to get an equalized (tone-controlled) signal on the tape, even if you don't have equipment with that facility built in.

First of all, it is clear that for your purposes conventional bass and treble tone controls won't do an adequate job. You need a five-band (at least) equalizer such as is available from BSR/Metrotec and others. The equalizer unit should be installed between your amplifier's tape-output jacks and the input to your tape recorder. The tape-monitor function on your amplifier will then let you judge by ear the effect of the controls. When you apply high-frequency boost, be careful not to overload the tape recorder. A signal with hot highs may be in the overload region even though the recorder's meters show that everything's cool. A three-head open-reel deck playing through its monitor head will give you an audible early warning of overload distortion, but a cassette deck (unless it has a monitor head) probably will not.

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



©LIGGETT & MEYERS INCORPORATED, 1975

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



Before you buy a manual turntable, consider what "manual" really means.

"Manual" means more than just "single play." Every time you play a record, you must pick up the tonearm and move it to the record. And at the end of play, you must stop whatever you're doing, go to the turntable and return the tonearm to its resting post. All by hand.

Not only is this inconvenient, it's also risky, because the business end of a tonearm is virtually weightless. Handling it without damage to the delicate stylus and your fragile records takes a very steady hand.

What about the automatic turntable's extra moving parts?

An advantage often assumed for the manual turntable is simplicity: few moving parts. The automatic turntable does have additional parts, but they serve only to move the tonearm to and from the record when cycling. During play, a fully automatic Dual turntable has no more moving parts than a manual: motor, platter and drive system.

What's more, every manual turntable requires one additional moving part that no Dual ever requires: you.

Why many manual turntable owners switched to Dual.

From warranty cards, we know that many Dual owners formerly owned manual turntables and switched to enjoy Dual's quality performance plus fully-automatic convenience and safety.

For many years, more audio experts —

hifi editors, engineers and record reviewers — have owned Duals than any other make of quality turntable. So have the readers of the leading music/equipment magazines. Certainly no group is more concerned about record protection and the quality of music reproduction than these people.

Even the lowest priced Dual, model 1225, at \$139.95 has more precision than you are ever likely to need. As for the highest priced Dual, the \$400 electronic, direct-drive model 701, test reports have been extraordinary. Most independent test labs acknowledge that its rumble, wow and flutter are below the measuring capability of their test equipment.

A word for those who still think they want to play records manually.

Despite all the above, you may still prefer to play your records manually. The Dual tonearm gives you this option, because it is as free-floating during play as any manual-only tonearm. Thus you can always place it on the record or lift it off — manually.

However, we predict that you will soon take full advantage of the convenience and security of Dual's full automation. Which is what most Dual owners prefer.

And considering what kind of people own Duals, that's something you really should consider.



United Audio Products
120 So. Columbus Ave.,
Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553
Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual

The multi-play automatic Dual 1229Q, \$269.95; Other multi-play automatics from \$139.95. All less base and dust cover. Single-play automatics are the Dual 601, \$270; and the electronic direct-drive Dual 701, \$400. Both include base and dust cover.

CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD

"THE BEST TURNTABLE IN THE WORLD"



Acclaimed by the Critics...

"A silent giant that's built to last — probably forever."

Stereo & Hi Fi Times

"The feel of precision machinery."

Hi Fi Stereo Buyers Guide

"The turntable is almost impervious to jarring or bumping."

Audio Magazine

Admired by the Public...

"I'm glad I bought it!"

E.G., Lowell, Mass.

"It has no faults!"

H.W., Birmingham, Ala.

"The best turntable in the world!"

H.M., Honolulu, Hawaii

The 598 III comes complete with walnut base, plexiglass dust cover, and the world's finest cartridge (4000 D/III). List price \$399.95. It plays any stereo or 4-channel records at tracking forces so low you can't wear out your records. Write for your free full color Empire catalogue:

EMPIRE SCIENTIFIC CORP.,
Garden City, N.Y. 11530

Mfd. U.S.A. **EMPIRE**

AUDIO NEWS

VIEWS AND COMMENT

By LARRY KLEIN

Technical Editor

DESPITE optimistic predictions by marketing pundits, the home video tape recorder (HVTR) never made it as an entertainment medium. However, the home-entertainment industry is nevertheless still convinced that the world's audio/video consumers have needs that records, TV, and movies do not adequately fill. And so for the past five to ten years the big push has been to develop a video *disc*—simply because a disc and its player are bound to be less expensive than a video tape and its complex machine. The video-disc concept is simple: a recording superficially resembling a standard phono disc is placed on a special player hooked up to a conventional TV set, a button is pushed, and the disc delivers sound *and* moving pictures in living color for 15 minutes or more. The concept is simple, but the development of a recorder that makes movies has been enormously difficult. For example, almost five years ago I wrote of Teldec's video-disc demonstration ("The Amazing Video Disc," December 1970) and their promise of a \$250 to \$300 automatic changer and 15-minute \$6 discs. Although Teldec had promised production models for sometime in 1972, I understand that they have only recently appeared on the market in Europe—and with a \$600 price tag.

With all this as a background, the invitation from MCA and Philips to view their new Disco-Vision system was received with interest, and—I must admit—some slight skepticism. To minimize the suspense, let me say that I went as a cynic and I left, if not a convert, at least very much impressed with the technical good sense *and* performance of the Disco-Vision approach. But, first things first: what are the projected costs? (When a company spokesman says "projected" he means this is what we *hope* we can sell it for at the time we *may* be able to bring it to market, technical bugs and God willing.) Would you believe that a half-hour video disc will sell for about the same price as an LP? That the player itself (TV set not included) will be in the \$500 bracket and that it will include a built-in indexing system (the importance of which will become clear shortly)? Those are the Philips/MCA goals, to be reached—if everything goes well—by the end of 1976.

It's important to understand that the D-V system uses neither magnetic nor mechanical/electronic techniques, but is a true optical system. During play, which produces a picture as sharp and stable as the TV set is capable of, the rapidly rotating plastic disc is scanned by a laser beam aimed at and reflected from the underside of the disc. There are no grooves as such, only a reflecting modulated layer *beneath* the disc surface, obviously one with a very high density informa-

tion-storage potential. What we have, in other words, is the long-awaited beam-of-light pickup and a disc it can play. The light beam tracks the "groove" electronically and is capable of freeze-frame *and* slow motion in both forward and reverse. Single locked frames provide a picture so stable and clear that each one of the 54,000 (!) frames on each disc may be viewed individually. I see no reason why a complete multivolume encyclopedia could not be embodied page by page on a single disc—and think of the illustration possibilities! The indexing system (which appears as a numerical readout on the TV screen) plus a fast-forward provision would render the "discopedia" as easy to use as a conventional reference work.

BUT what are the *audio* ramifications of all this? I came away from the press conference with the distinct impression that not much thought had been given to the audio that will accompany the video picture—even though, to be sure, one of the mock-up albums displayed was of the recent Elton John Madison Square Garden concert. Since the sound channel of the disc is fed into a TV set's antenna terminals along with the picture information, the quality we will hear, by and large, will be determined by the TV's audio circuits and its 4- or 5-inch speaker. If the demand for quality sound were there, however, I'm sure that players would be available with low-impedance audio outputs for feeding a compo-



The Philips/MCA Videodisc player

nent system. But with how many channels? It seems obvious that any recording/playback system that can deliver a half-hour of 4-MHz signal should be able, as a straight audio product, to work multichannel wonders, and a Disco-Vision spokesman envisioned an eventual 15-hour stereo disc. There's also no reason why there couldn't be a somewhat shorter-play product with as many as five or ten discrete channels.

There are several other important pluses that should be noted. For one, the D-V disc is immune to playing wear (no stylus), dust, and scratches. It also appears that the mastering and production processes are not susceptible to many of the physical ills that trouble the fidelity of conventional LP's. In April 1974 I suggested in this column that the same technology that will one day present us with video discs could easily be applied to the problems of multichannel sound reproduction. I envisioned a single, inexpensive dual-purpose player connected to your TV set and to your audio system as well. Depending on the "record" you put in the player, it will provide color pictures with stereo sound—or straight multichannel sound. Is it right around the corner? No—but it now seems clear that we will see it within the decade.

The Speaker.

Rather than starting with an existing speaker, Yamaha began with a speaker idea.

A speaker system with the lowest distortion and coloration, and the best possible transient response.

Instead of merely modifying one, Yamaha has re-invented it. And in doing so, has improved every aspect of speaker design.

We call it the NS-1000 M Monitor.

Transparency and The Dome.

Existing technology has largely solved a major problem of speaker design through the use of the acoustic suspension driver: extended frequency response. Today, what's missing from most sound in most people's living rooms is something a touch more subtle. It's called *transparency*.

The hemispheric dome tweeter allows a wider dispersion of high frequencies.

But the dome's own material weight causes it to lag behind the input signal. It simply doesn't respond fast enough, creating an opaque, masked sound that lacks fine detail and definition.

The ideal dome material for mid-range and high frequency drivers would be extremely rigid and, most importantly, virtually weightless.

Introducing the Beryllium Dome.

After all, beryllium is the lightest, and most rigid metal known, and has a sound propagation velocity twice that of commonly used aluminum.

Beryllium is lighter and stronger and propagates sound better than other metals.

	ATOMIC WEIGHT	RIGIDITY (ELASTIC MODULUS) kg/mm ²	SOUND PROPAGATION velocity m/sec
BERYLLIUM (Be)	9.013	28000	12600
MAGNESIUM (Mg)	24.32	4500	5770
ALUMINUM (Al)	26.98	7400	6420
TITANIUM (Ti)	47.90	11000	5990
IRON (Fe)	55.85	19700	5950

But because of beryllium's inherent characteristics, it resisted attempts by any manufacturer to form it into a diaphragm, let alone a dome. Until now.

The New Yamaha Beryllium Dome, formed by Yamaha's unique vacuum deposition process, is lighter than any other speaker diaphragm found today. So it's more responsive

to direction changes in amplitude and frequency of the input signal.

Dome Tweeter Comparison			
	SIZE OF DOME	THICKNESS	WEIGHT
YAMAHA NS-1000 M (BERYLLIUM DOME)	3 cm	0.03 mm	0.03 g
TYPICAL SOFT DOME	3 cm	0.3 mm	0.1 g
CONVENTIONAL DRIVER	2.5 cm	0.45 mm	1.03 g

This is called transparency. It can be noticed best in complex musical passages and can be best described



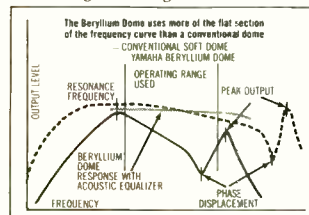
as highly defined and finely detailed. Only Yamaha has it.

Midrange: The Voice of Your Speaker.

It's no secret that between 500 Hz and 6 KHz is where most audible differences in speakers occur.

It's where we hear the human voice, and it is the hardest part of the frequency spectrum to reproduce accurately.

Once again, beryllium solves the problem of uneven response. Since it's so lightweight, the dome can be made larger and lighter than before



possible for a midrange driver. It extends the linear portion of its response curve.

The midrange driver's frequency response is so wide that we can select only the choice flat section of its frequency response, thereby eliminating the peaks and valleys most competitors are forced to use.

The Beryllium Dome creates simply the flattest response; least colored, most natural sounding midrange of any speaker around.

Carefully designed acoustic equalizers flatten the frequency

system that holds the beryllium dome to the speaker frame with less contact allowing it to move more freely. It's called the Tangential Edge. (You may not hear the difference at first, but you will.)

The crossover system was specially designed to have a very low DC resistance, increasing the system efficiency.

Most highly accurate systems need a large amp to drive them properly. The NS-1000 M Monitor requires only 15 watts RMS to fill an average room with loud music, yet can handle RMS power outputs exceeding 100 watts.

By Our Own Skilled

Hands. Yamaha's philosophy is one of self-reliance.

That's why, for example, we build the critical speaker components (like cone materials and speaker baskets) rather than purchase them.

That includes the speaker enclosure made from material designed for anti-resonance characteristics. (Our piano making experience was essential here.)

There are enough speaker system modifications and copies around, already.

This is something original.

Proudly Presenting the NS-1000 M.

It's not inexpensive or easy to find. The NS-1000 M is sold as right and left-hand units, and by the pair only.

They cost \$960.00 the pair, when you can get them.

Yamaha is making them as fast as we can, but you may have to wait a short while until your Yamaha Audio Dealer has a pair for you to audition. (He also features Yamaha speakers based on the same technology and quality at less money.)

Patience, please.

Part of the Yamaha

System. The NS-1000 M Monitor is the ultimate air suspension speaker system.

That is a strong claim to make. In the future, Yamaha will present the ultimate power amplifier, tuner, preamplifier, and turntable.

Actually advancing the state-of-the-art of the major components of a music reproduction system.

In short, the ultimate system.

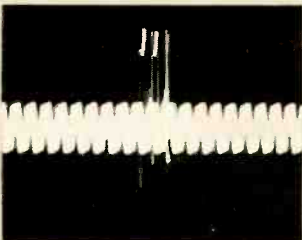
We're convinced that no matter what you think is the best today, we'll make you dissatisfied with it.

Don't say we didn't warn you.



YAMAHA

INTERNATIONAL CORP., P.O. BOX 6600, BUENA PARK, CALIF. 90620
CIRCLE NO. 40 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Actual, unretouched photo of an oscillograph test.

The oscillograph you see is an actual photo of a high-quality audio system "playing" a fingerprint.

You're hearing fingerprints now through your speaker system. Instead of the sound your precious discs are capable of. And no vacuum record cleaner, brush-arm or treated cloth will remove them. None.

The sound of your fingerprint

But Discwasher™—with new **du** fluid—removes fingerprints completely. Along with dust. And manufacturing lubricants (added to make pressing faster) that can act like groove-blocking fingerprints. All this cleaning without pulling polymer stabilizers from your vinyl discs.

Discwasher™. The only safe, effective way to silence the printed finger. At Audio specialists world wide.



Discwasher, Inc.
909 University,
Columbia, Mo. 65201



AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES



GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS—19

● **Impedance** is opposition to the transfer of energy: in electronics, it is opposition to the flow of alternating current, and it consists of the complex sum of the resistances and reactances of a circuit.

The input and output impedances of each component in an audio chain should be chosen so that the desired performance is obtained when it is connected to associated components. This does *not* mean that the two impedances should be matched or equal, but rather just compatible. To cite a frequently encountered example, speaker systems are commonly designed with input impedances ranging from 4 to 16 ohms; most component amplifiers are thus specifically designed (and specified in terms of power output and distortion) to drive impedances in that range. The amplifier output (or source) impedance may be well under 1 ohm. In systems employing separate preamplifiers and power amplifiers, the input impedance of the power amplifier should be chosen to fall within the range of impedances the output circuits of the preamp can comfortably drive. The impedances at most component input/output interconnection points are pretty much standardized, and compatibility problems are rare, but they still occur. When impedance incompatibility occurs, symptoms may be a decrease in output, a loss of high or low frequencies, or distortion.

● **Infinite baffle** is used to describe any speaker mounting that totally isolates the cone's front radiation from the rear. For example, a speaker mounted in a wall with the front of its cone radiating into one room and its rear into another is a true infinite-baffle arrangement.

● **Integrated amplifier** combines a power amplifier, phono preamplifier, and control section (volume, bass, treble, etc.) on the same chassis, along with an appropriate power supply. In effect, it's a mating of a preamplifier and power amplifier (both usually stereo) in one unit.

● **Integrated Circuit (IC)** is an electronic circuit, often quite complex, that has been entirely constructed on a single small block of semiconductor material. It is not uncommon for hundreds of electronic elements (transistors, resistors, capacitors, diodes, etc.) to be contained in a single IC, the whole taking up less space than a pencil eraser. Modern audio-equipment manufacturers tend to make use of IC's wherever possible in their designs. Aside from the space-saving advantages, they provide certain benefits in consistency of circuit operation and permit a complexity that would be virtually impossible in a unit of comparable size and cost using conventional circuit techniques.

● **Intermodulation Distortion (IM)** involves the generation (in a piece of audio equipment) of spurious frequencies corresponding to the mathematical sum and difference of two or more frequencies and their harmonics. In simpler language, IM differs from harmonic distortion (1) because it involves at least two frequencies and their interaction, rather than a single frequency; and (2) because the distortion products are not direct multiples (harmonics) of the test frequencies. This second point is deemed responsible for the higher "irritation value" many listeners ascribe to audible amounts of IM: since IM distortion products are discordant, they are therefore audibly more objectionable.

An intermodulation distortion test for audio equipment is customarily made according to the SMPTE (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers) test method, in which two test frequencies a considerable distance apart (usually 60 and 7,000 Hz) are used in a strength ratio of 4 to 1. The IM analyzer, connected to the output of the device under test, suppresses the input test frequencies, leaving only the products of the low frequency's modulation of the higher frequency expressed as a percentage of the test signal.

Today, underdog. Tomorrow, topdog.

We make receivers, tape recorders and speakers.

We're good at it.

Because we've been putting most of our energy into our products. Not our advertising.

After all, if our products weren't any good then you wouldn't want them.

No matter how big our name was.

But the fact remains someone can make the best components in the world

and still not sell many of them because not enough people know about them.

That doesn't mean we're going to tell you our components are the best in the world. No one can say that.

What we're saying is this:

We're going to start telling you more about them. But there's going to be no false promises, no empty claims.

We're going to tell you exactly what we make. And how to get the most out of it.

We're going to prove that a sale doesn't end when you walk out of the store.

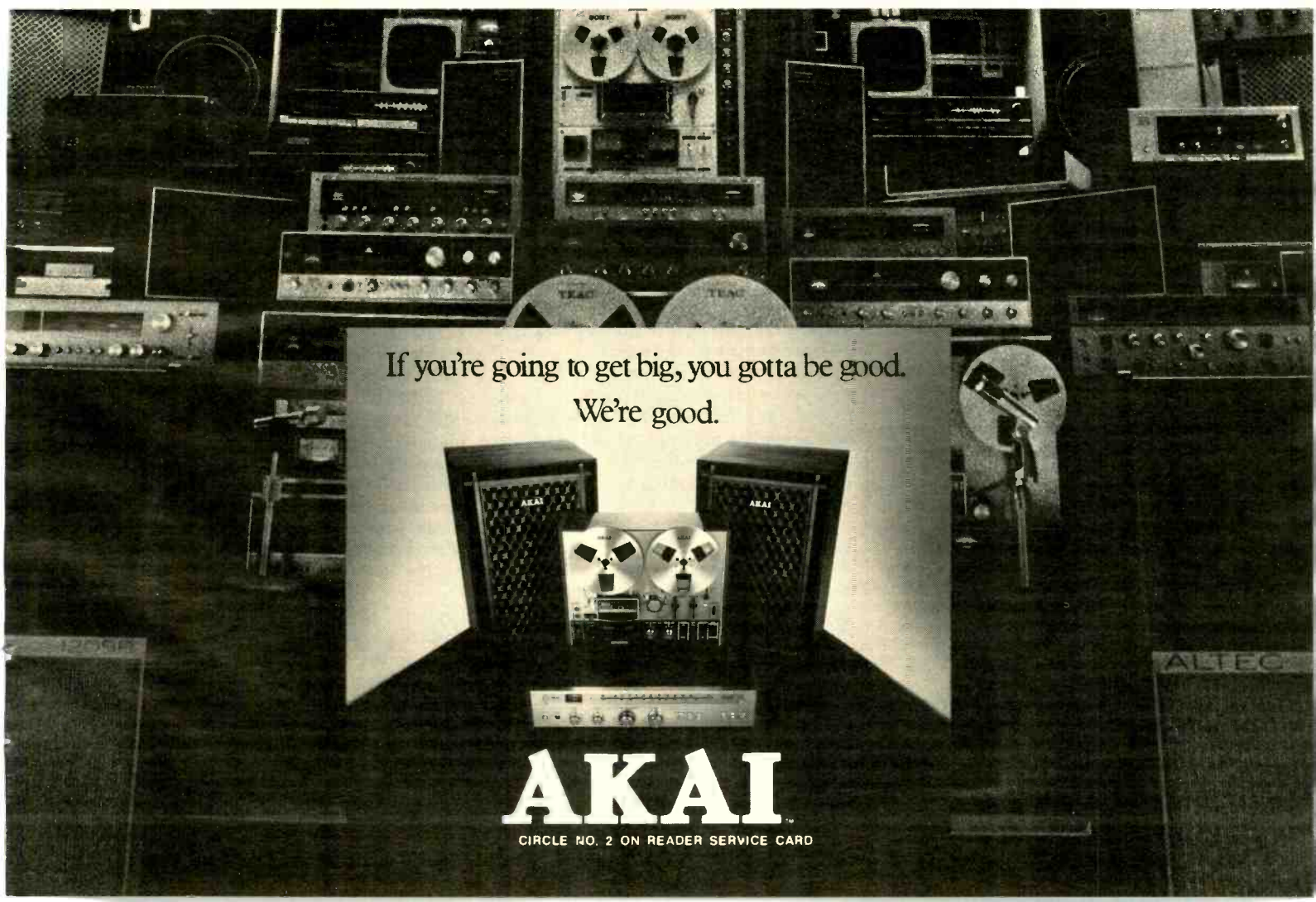
We're going to do some things to shake up this business. And turn a few heads.

We have some big names to compete with.

You know who they are.

So from now on the underdog is going to look more and more like the topdog.

Because that's exactly what we intend to be.

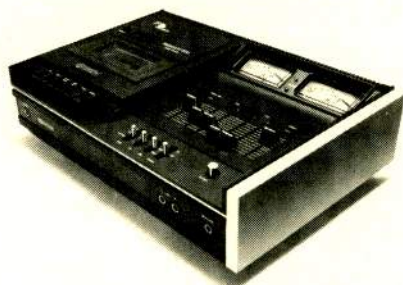


If you're going to get big, you gotta be good.
We're good.

AKAI

CIRCLE NO. 2 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Nakamichi Revolution.



A Critical Evaluation.

When we introduced the Nakamichi 500 Dual-Tracer, we modestly stated that cassette recording would never be the same.

Now, the experts have had their say and their findings speak for themselves.

Here is Julian Hirsch commenting in *Stereo Review* (April 1975), "The Nakamichi 500 is an exceptional recorder... in the key specifications of frequency response, S/N, and distortion, it is at least the equal of any under-\$500 cassette recorder we have tested and better than most."

Hi Fi Stereo Buyers' Guide declared, "Performancewise, the Nakamichi 500 is outstanding... and the end result is recording equal to, if not better than, that of many high quality reel-to-reel recorders."

And finally, Len Feldman, writing in *Tape Deck Quarterly*, summed it up with, "...it has become a bit of a cliché on the part of many top quality cassette deck manufacturers to compare their product's capability with that of the finest open reel decks. Conservative Nakamichi refrains from making that statement... though if anyone comes close to justifying (it), they certainly do."

The Nakamichi Revolution. An idea whose time has come.

For complete information and the name of your nearest dealer write: Nakamichi Research (U.S.A.) Inc., 220 Westbury Avenue, Carle Place, N.Y. 11514. In California: 1101 Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica 90404.

PERFECTION THROUGH PRECISION.



NAKAMICHI®

TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK



HISS SOURCES

GREEK mythology tells of the frustration (and ultimate ingenuity) of Herakles, who had to kill a multiheaded serpent called the Hydra. Whenever he cut off one head, two others grew in its place. The audiophile and the tape and recorder manufacturers alike are equally frustrated when they try to rid themselves of that noise with multiple origins that we label "tape hiss."

It doesn't all come from the tape, as can easily be demonstrated. Set your amplifier controls for normal tape playback. Put your tape deck in the 7½-ips playback position, but without tape in the machine. (You may have to circumvent the automatic shutoff function to prevent the recorder's amplifiers from being turned off.) As you turn up the playback-level control, at some point hiss will be heard, obviously contributed by the playback circuits in the recorder. Now shift the recorder to its 3¾-ips speed, and the jump in the hiss level will be dramatic. The reason is that the slower speed requires more treble boost in the playback equalization to achieve flat response at high frequencies. And, unfortunately, the high-frequency hiss gets boosted along with the signal.

Next, put on an unrecorded ("virgin") tape and start playing it back as if you had already recorded it. The hiss level will *again* rise at both speeds by perhaps the same differential, indicating that even a new unrecorded tape contributes some hiss.

Now, with the record-level controls turned fully down but everything else as before, start recording with *no* input signal. The hiss level will jump again, because now the recorder's ultrasonic "bias" current is affecting the tape. There's a complex interrelationship here that is not fully clear even to the experts, but one thing is certain: if the recorder's internal bias signal (say, 80 kHz) is not a pure sine wave and contains even a minuscule amount of second-harmonic distortion (160 kHz), there will be an appreciable increase in audible noise. For this

reason, high-quality recorders have a special "bias-linearity" adjustment. But unless you have a technician's knowledge and instruments, you must leave the setting of the control to an expert.

Another experiment you can conduct is to intentionally record a signal containing substantial high-frequency content (from an audio generator, if you have one, or from FM or LP's if you don't) at an extremely low level—barely audible above the hiss at 7½ ips—and then to shift the machine to 3¾ ips. When you play back, there will be a somewhat greater increase in hiss at the slower speed than when you played back an unrecorded tape because, again, to achieve good treble response, the machine has had to boost the 3¾-ips high-frequency record equalization.

If the noise level is acceptable when you record through your AUX or "line" jacks, but seems excessive when you use a microphone, you may be using a mike that does not electrically match your machine's requirements either because of inadequate output level or because of what is called an impedance mismatch. If the dealer can't help you on this, the respective manufacturers can. Here's a quick check, however.

In the quietest surroundings possible (and preferably listening through headphones), plug in a microphone and begin recording. Gradually turn up the record level until there is a sudden jump in the hiss level. (Obviously this is easier with a machine that permits instantaneous record/playback comparison, but by noting the index counter and the knob settings you can find the spot even with a two-head deck.) Now begin speaking in normal tones with the mike a foot or two away. If the microphone is mismatched, it will barely stir the recording-level meters (if it is matched, it will swing your meters well into the red area). If you're not knocking the meter needles against the stops at the top of the scale, you've got an inherently noisy mike/preamplifier combination.

INTRODUCING TDK SUPER AVILYN. IT OUTSOUNDS CHROME. AND THE #1 FERRICHROME.

INDEPENDENT LAB TEST RESULTS

	TDK SA	A	B	C	D
Signal-to-Noise Ratio	1 st	4 th	1 st	6 th	7 th
Distortion (I.M.)	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	7 th	6 th
Low-Frequency Response Accuracy	1 st	1 st	1 st	1 st	1 st
Mid-Frequency Response Accuracy	1 st	2 nd	5 th	5 th	2 nd
High-Frequency Response Accuracy	2 nd	2 nd	6 th	5 th	1 st
Maximum Output Level (3% thd)	1 st	2 nd	4 th	6 th	5 th
Output (0 VU)	1 st	4 th	5 th	2 nd	2 nd
Surface Abrasiveness	low	high	high	high	low



Seven tapes were tested (TDK SA, TDK KR, Scotch Chrome, BASF Chromdioxid, Advent Chrome, Scotch Classic, and Maxell UD) and ranked 1st to 7th. The chart shows the results for 5 representative tapes tested.

The following tape decks were selected for use in the tests: Nakamichi 500 & 1000, Advent 201, and TEAC 450.

You want the best sound you can get from your cassette recorder without worrying about headwear. And until now, chrome and ferrichrome had the sound — they outperformed ferric oxide tapes in extended high frequency response with lower noise.

Well, TDK has advanced cassette recording to a new standard of high fidelity. It's new Super Avilyn, the cassette that outsounds chrome, the best-selling ferrichrome, and the top-ranked ferric oxide tapes.

Its magnetic particle is new. It soaks up more sound and plays it back with less distortion. That's power and clarity you can hear.

Super Avilyn doesn't require special bias/eq. setting for optimum performance. It is compatible with any tape deck that has the standard CrO₂ bias/eq. setting.

Distortion — that's the big story. Look at these lab test figures.

LEAST DISTORTION — CLEAREST SOUND.

RECORD INPUT LEVEL	TDK SA	A	B	C	D
0 VU	11%	13%	26%	50%	32%
-5VU	4.5%	5.4%	11%	17.5%	5.4%
-10VU	4.2%	4.5%	8.5%	7.8%	4.8%
-20VU	4.9%	5.0%	8.0%	5.2%	6.0%

SMPTE METHOD: I.M. DISTORTION — 7000 Hz — 60Hz, 4:1 ratio.

There's just no contest. Super Avilyn delivered the clearest, cleanest sound. More lifelike sound — and to a discriminating ear, that's the ultimate test. Fact is, Super Avilyn is the new state of the art.

TDK Electronics Corp.
755 Eastgate Blvd., Garden City,
N.Y. 11530. Also available in Canada.



Wait till you hear
what you've been missing.



TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **PHONO TRACKING-ANGLE ERROR:** Apparently—judging from recent reader mail—there is still some confusion as to the real significance of lateral tracking-angle error in phono pickups. To some extent, this confusion has been exacerbated by the emphasis placed on the question—frequently without explanation—by record-player and tone-arm manufacturers. Old-timers will please forgive me if at this point I devote a paragraph or two to introducing newcomers to the nature of the problem.

The difficulty arises from the fact that the “cutter” that engraves the groove on the master disc travels along a radius of the record toward the record center. At all points the cutter stylus moves at a 90-degree angle to a line tangent to the spiral groove. Ideally, the playback cartridge should have the same orientation over the playing surface of the record. If the cartridge is mounted so that its long dimension is precisely tangent to the groove in which the stylus is riding, the *lateral tracking-angle error* is said to be zero, and the groove modulation will move the pickup stylus in the same plane that defined the original cutting-stylus motion. (See accompanying illustration.)

If the cartridge axis is not truly tangent to the record groove, the angle between it and the tangent is the *tracking-angle error*. When a tracking error exists, the portions of the jewel tip contacting the two groove walls are “seeing” slightly different aspects of the recorded signal. The cartridge output, instead of being an exact replica of the program waveform engraved in the groove, is slightly distorted.

If the pickup moved along the exact radial path taken by the cutting head, there would be no lateral tracking-error distortion. Over the years, a number of so-called “radial” tone arms have been devised that permit the pickup to do just that, although they exact a price in convenience of installation, complexity, and cost. The overwhelming majority of rec-

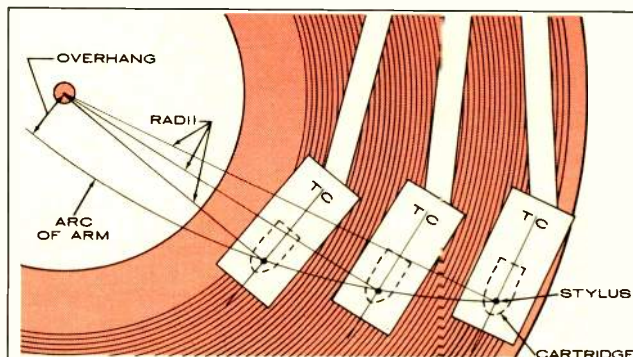
ord players therefore use tone arms that are pivoted at one end and support the cartridge at the other end. In its simplest (straight) form, no longer in use, such an arm would be tangent at only *one* point in the arc it follows over the record surface. The angular error elsewhere would be a function of the arm length (from stylus to pivot), but only with an infinite arm length could it be reduced to zero.

By mounting the cartridge at an angle (in the horizontal plane) to the line joining its stylus to the pivot, and by positioning the arm so that when the pickup is moved to the center of the record the stylus “overhangs” the center point by the correct amount, it is possible to have tangency at *two* points on the record and to keep the tracking-angle error within reasonable limits elsewhere as well. The *offset* tone arm is now used almost universally, although a couple of radial arms are still available. One company’s variation of the pivoted offset arm maintains essentially zero tracking-angle error over the entire record by varying the offset angle of the cartridge as the playing radius changes.

Fortunately, the distortion produced by a lateral tracking-angle error is almost entirely second harmonic, which is the least objectionable distortion from the listener’s standpoint, for it does not introduce dissonant sounds into the program. At worst, the timbre of the sound

might be changed slightly, but in most cases a moderate amount of second-harmonic distortion cannot be heard as such in a musical program. Nevertheless, I think we can all agree that *any* distortion is undesirable, especially if it can be easily eliminated or reduced to insignificant levels.

What is the relationship between tracking-angle error and the distortion it produces? At a given playing speed, distortion is directly proportional to tracking error and recorded velocity, and inversely proportional to the playing radius. A given error (in degrees) produces more than twice as much distortion at the inner record grooves as at the beginning of the record. To correlate with the distortion it causes, tracking-angle error should therefore be expressed in *degrees per inch* of playing radius, and this is the practice we follow in our test reports on tone arms. A 1-degree error at a 3-inch radius has the same audible (or inaudible) effect as a 2-degree error at a 6-inch radius. To put the actual distortion percentages in perspective, a tracking error of 1 degree per inch with a recorded rms signal velocity of 10 cm/sec (centimeters per second) will cause just under 2 per cent second-harmonic distortion. A 10-cm/sec velocity is fairly high, and the maximum velocity on modern records will not often exceed twice that level (*peak* velocity, however, which is the ba-



With a properly designed and adjusted tone arm, the line of tangency to the groove (T) at the stylus position and the centerline of the cartridge (C) correspond almost perfectly at all disc radii.

sis for our measurements of pickup tracking distortion, is about 40 per cent greater than the rms value for the sine-wave test signals commonly used).

As our test reports show, most modern record players (whose arms are 8 to 9 inches long) have a maximum tracking-angle error of less than 0.5 degree per inch, and over much of the record it can be considerably less. Therefore, one can expect less than 1 per cent distortion from this source, which is of a type that is much less audible than the multitude of other distortions inherent in the recording and playback processes.

To achieve the low tracking-angle error that a good arm is capable of, the cartridge must be installed with exactly the correct distance between pivot and stylus tip, and it has to be parallel to the mounting axis established in the cartridge shell by the mounting screws. Many record players come with plastic jigs or other aids to setting the correct overhang, and these should be used carefully. Occasionally, the mounting instructions simply state that the cartridge must be located with its stylus at some critical distance from a reference point on the arm or motorboard. And when they say *critical*, they mean just that! An error of only *one-sixteenth* of an inch in setting this dimension can negate

TESTED THIS MONTH



Kenwood 700C Preamplifier and
700M Power Amplifier
Lafayette Criterion 777 Speaker
Burwen DNF 1201 Dynamic Noise Filter
JVC 4VR-5626X Four-channel Receiver

much of the careful design that went into the geometry of the tone arm.

Many tone arms and cartridges unfortunately permit a certain amount of angular "play," and if you are not very careful you may install the cartridge with a couple of degrees of fixed tracking-angle error. This could cause a substantial increase in distortion at the inner grooves. Sometimes the stylus cantilever of the cartridge is offset slightly from the correct axis. This could easily produce a larger tracking-angle error than all other sources combined. It is difficult to evaluate by eye, so one must place his faith in the quality-control procedures of the cartridge manufacturer. A similar effect is possible if the tone-arm bearings have sufficient lateral friction to force a very

compliant stylus off-center as it plays the record. This is highly unlikely unless a top-grade cartridge is mounted in an inferior arm, which is against all the rules of common-sense system selection. But even in such an extreme case, the error should not exceed about 1 degree.

Before getting too concerned about tracking-angle error distortion, it is well to consider what it means to you as a listener. I have experimentally introduced tracking-angle errors of several degrees and have not heard any obvious differences in sound quality. This, of course, does not mean that the difference will *never* be heard. I can imagine a state-of-the-art cartridge playing a very clean, low-distortion record whose high-level inner-groove modulation would be audibly distorted by a gross error, of, say, 5 degrees. In other words, it is certainly possible to set up an *audible* tracking-angle-error situation. The point I wish to make is that undue emphasis should not be placed on *minute* differences in tracking-angle error (say, between 0.6 and 0.2 degree per inch) when comparing turntable/tone-arm specifications and test reports, whatever your choice of equipment. Lack of care in installing a cartridge in some ideal arm can produce worse results than careful installation in some theoretically inferior arm.

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Kenwood 700C Preamplifier and 700M Power Amplifier



700C Preamplifier



700M Power Amplifier

● KENWOOD's deluxe 700 series consists of the company's finest and most expensive "separate" audio components and includes a tuner, a preamplifier, and a power amplifier. For this report we tested the 700C stereo preamplifier and the 700M stereo power amplifier. All the units in the series have similar styling, with heavy gold-finished panels and matching knobs.

The 700C preamplifier has exceptionally elaborate input-control facilities, selected by a combination of a three-position lever switch and an adjacent five-position rotary switch. The lever selects either the TUNER or AUX 1 input, and its center position transfers control to the rotary switch, with positions for MIC (microphone), PHONO 1, PHONO 2, AUX 2, and AUX 3. The two front-panel MIC jacks are for use with low-impedance (600-ohm) dynamic microphones. They accept standard two-conductor phone plugs.

At the upper left of the panel are the push-button power switch and the balance control, which is detented at its center position. Occupying most of the upper portion of the panel are six three-position lever switches. Two are tone-control turnover selectors with frequencies of 200 or 400 Hz for the bass and 3,000

or 6,000 Hz for the treble. Each has a center-off position bypassing the tone-control circuits. The three-position loudness switch, off in its center, provides two different sets of response characteristics. An ATTENUATOR switch applies 0, 15, or 30 dB of attenuation to the signal so that the volume control can be operated in a convenient portion of its range (and can be set to give almost any desired degree of loudness compensation). The two filter switches, also off at their centers, introduce 12-dB-per-octave rolloffs below 36 or 18 Hz (marked SUBSONIC) in the bass, and 6-dB-per-octave slopes above 7,000 or 12,000 Hz in the treble.

At the lower left of the panel is a headphone jack, fed by its own amplifier stage, and the bass and treble tone controls. Each is an eleven-position switch with 2-dB increments of

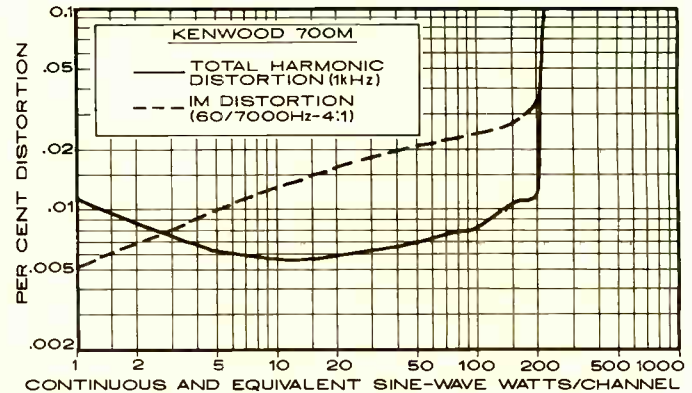
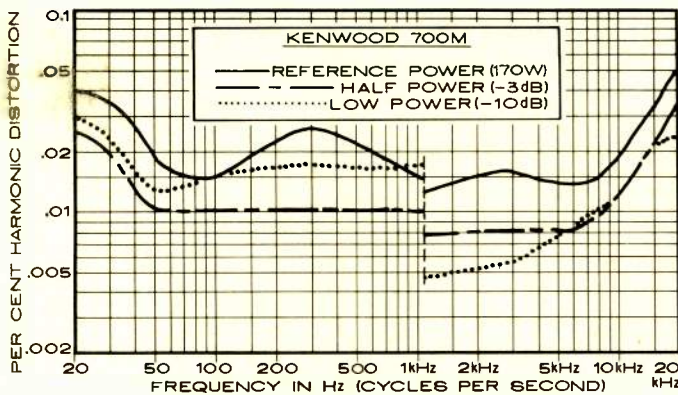
high, and 11¼ inches deep; it weighs 21 pounds. Price: \$650.

The companion power amplifier, Model 700M, is an impressively constructed and handsomely styled component. Its panel, which matches that of the 700C in finish and general style (although it is somewhat larger), displays two large illuminated output-level meters calibrated in decibels relative to the rated power output of 170 watts per channel. Four pushbuttons below the meters serve to turn them off or set their sensitivity at 0, -10, or -20 dB so that useful readings can be obtained with power outputs of less than a watt.

A SUBSONIC FILTER button introduces a 12-dB-per-octave rolloff below 18 Hz. There is also a headphone jack at the lower left of the front panel. A pushbutton DIMMER switch controls the brightness of the meter illumina-

volt rating, since it was below the residual noise level. From 1 to 6.5 volts, the THD with a 1,000-Hz test signal was less than 0.01 per cent. The intermodulation distortion (IM) was less than 0.01 per cent up to 3 volts, and reached 0.022 per cent just below the clipping point.

As might be expected from the choice of tone-control turnover frequencies, there is an almost limitless assortment of response curves available. The ability to concentrate the tone-control effects at the frequency extremes makes these controls considerably more useful than most for equalizing speaker and room characteristics. The loudness compensation was mild, with a slight high-frequency boost to complement the low-frequency emphasis. The loudness-compensation settings provided in the 700C differed



level change at frequencies of 50 or 100 Hz in the bass and at 10,000 or 20,000 Hz in the treble, depending on the chosen turnover frequencies. At the lower right are the TAPE and MODE switches. The latter provides normal or reversed-channel stereo, mono, or either L or R inputs through both outputs. The tape switch can control two tape decks, with off-the-tape monitoring from either, and dubbing from either recorder to the other. While dubbing from recorder A to recorder B, it is also possible to listen to a separate program selected by the normal preamplifier controls.

The center of the panel is dominated by a large volume knob which is actually a 22-position rotary switch. This control has 2-dB steps down to -30 dB and 3-dB steps from -30 to -45 dB; the last settings provide an attenuation of 60 dB and complete cut-off of the signal. Since the volume control actually uses a large number of separate resistors instead of the usual variable potentiometer, it maintains an exceptionally close balance between channels at all settings.

In addition to the input and output jacks for the facilities described, the rear panel of the Kenwood 700C has two pairs of output terminals, two switched a.c. outlets with a 1,200-watt combined rating, and a 150-watt unswitched outlet. Each of the tape-machine input/output jack groups is supplemented by a DIN connector. A separate switch for each of the phono inputs adjusts its input resistance to values of 600, 30,000, or 50,000 ohms (normal). A small knob controls the volume of the headphone output, which is also controlled by the main volume control. Each unit comes with an individually drawn curve of its frequency response and harmonic distortion versus signal level. The 700C is approximately 17¼ inches wide, 5¾ inches

high, and 11¼ inches deep; it weighs 21 pounds. Price: \$650.

tion, and below each meter is a level control for that channel. A SPEAKERS switch connects the amplifier output to any of three pairs of speakers or to two of them in parallel, and an input switch connects the amplifier inputs to either of two signal sources.

In the rear of the 700M, in addition to the inputs and outputs, are two switched a.c. outlets with a total rating of 150 watts and two similarly rated unswitched outlets. The binding-post speaker terminals have holes to receive the speaker wires and are widely spaced to prevent accidental short circuits.

The Kenwood 700M is rated to deliver 170 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads (both channels driven) from 20 to 20,000 Hz at less than 0.1 per cent harmonic or intermodulation distortion. Like the 700C, it comes with an individually drawn curve of its total harmonic distortion (THD) at rated power across the audio range. In the event of an overload or short circuit, a protective circuit cuts off the supply voltage from the output stages and disconnects the speakers. Normal operation is restored as soon as the fault is removed. The amplifier input impedance is 50,000 ohms, and its sensitivity is relatively high, with only 1 volt of signal needed to drive it to full output. The 700M is a large, heavy unit about 17¼ inches wide, 8 inches high, and 14¼ inches deep; it weighs 60 pounds. Price: \$750.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Kenwood 700C preamplifier has a rated output impedance of 600 ohms and is specified to have a maximum output of 1.5 volts into a 600-ohm load. Our tests confirmed these claims. Into higher-impedance loads, such as the 50,000 ohms of the 700M amplifier, the output clipped at about 8.5 volts. Distortion was literally unmeasurable at outputs under the 1.5-

principally in the boost they provided between 50 and 200 Hz and above 10,000 Hz. Switch position 2 had a slightly greater effect in these frequency ranges. The availability of the separate output-level attenuator, which makes it possible to set the volume control at almost any desired point for any listening level, also gives the loudness compensation of the Kenwood 700C exceptional utility, since the listening level can be adjusted independently to match the amount of compensation introduced by the volume control.

The filters had the rated response characteristics. The low-frequency 36-Hz filter in particular was able to remove most rumble frequencies with negligible effect above 40 Hz; the 6-dB-per-octave slopes of the high-frequency filters were not particularly effective, however. The RIAA phono equalization was as perfect as our instruments could measure—within ±0.25 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz. Equally impressive was the fact that the response was not affected significantly by phono-cartridge inductance. The microphone-input frequency response was down 3 dB at 80 and 10,000 Hz.

At maximum gain, the Kenwood 700C required 90 millivolts (mV) at the high-level inputs, 1.5 mV at the phono inputs, and 2.15 mV at the microphone inputs for a 1-volt reference output. The respective unweighted noise levels at these inputs (referred to 1-volt output) were -77.5 dB, -73 dB, and -75 dB. With IEC "A" weighting, all noise measurements were below our 100-microvolt minimum measurement capability (better than 80 dB below 1 volt). If these noise levels were to be referred to the actual maximum undistorted output of the 700C rather than to a 1-volt level, each would be improved by

(Continued on page 28)



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The specifications are so exciting that we hope you will write to Pickering and Company, Inc., Dept. SR, 101 Sunnyside Blvd., Plainview, New York 11803 for further information.

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18 dB, which suggests that the 700C can, for all practical purposes, be considered a "noiseless" component. This achievement is not an exercise in "specmanship," since the input-level controls of the associated power amplifier can (and should be) turned down so as to use most of the output capability of the 700C, resulting in a total amplifier signal-to-noise ratio of well over 100 dB referred to full amplifier output if the 700M power amplifier is used.

The phono inputs were able to take a very high input signal of 420 mV before overload, and microphone overload occurred at 300 mV. The 1,000-Hz crosstalk from the high-level inputs to the phono inputs was below -120 dB, so that there is no need to turn off the tuner when listening to records to prevent audible signal leakage.

Before testing the 700M power amplifier we "preconditioned" it for one hour at one-third of full power. The result was a mildly warm amplifier, and it certainly could have gone on indefinitely without mishap at this level. At 1,000 Hz, with both channels driven into 8-ohm loads, the outputs clipped at 207 watts per channel: into 4 ohms the power was 298 watts, and into 16 ohms it was 129 watts. An input of 0.21 volt drove the 700M to a reference 10-watt output (corresponding to 0.86 volt for full rated power), and the unweighted noise in its output was 92 dB below 10 watts, or 104 dB below 170 watts.

On a steady-state basis, the meters were accurate indicators of power output over most of their range. The error was typically less

than 2 per cent, although it reached 6 to 7 per cent at some points. Of course, the meter indications with program material corresponded only roughly to the average output and not at all to the peak levels.

At 1,000 Hz, the THD was less than the noise level until we reached a 10-watt output, where it measured 0.0055 per cent. It rose only slightly at higher power levels, to 0.011 per cent at 200 watts. The IM was extremely low at all power outputs from about 5 milliwatts to just below the clipping output of 210 watts. It did not exceed 0.045 per cent at any level below this, and was typically about 0.01 per cent or less. This performance suggests that the 700M is free of crossover-notch distortion, and our tests confirmed this fact. Most of the distortion was second harmonic, with small amounts of third and virtually no higher-order harmonics.

At the rated 170 watts output, the THD was typically between 0.015 and 0.02 per cent, reaching 0.04 per cent at 20 Hz and 0.05 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At half power or less, the distortion was always lower than at rated output. The frequency response was, as expected, almost perfectly flat within the audio band, down less than 0.25 dB at 20 and 20,000 Hz from the mid-band level. The 3-dB-down response points were at 5 and 85,000 Hz. The subsonic filter reduced the 30-Hz output by only 0.2 dB, but cut the response at 20 Hz to -1.7 dB, at 10 Hz to -11.2 dB, and at 5 Hz to -24.4 dB. The square-wave rise time was 6 to 8 microseconds, depending on the level-control settings.

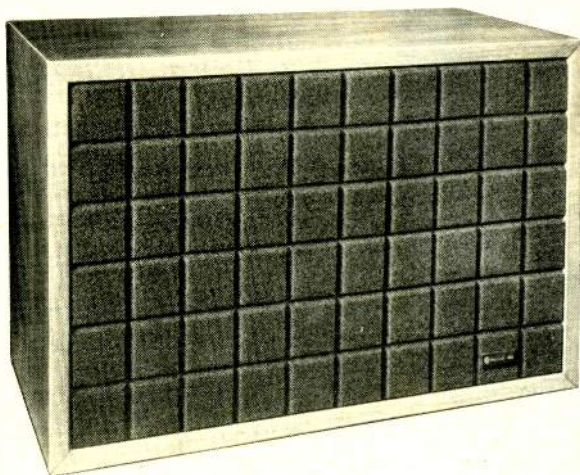
A 2-microfarad capacitor across the 8-ohm load (to stimulate the effect of an electrostatic speaker) produced 1½ cycles of damped ringing at about 50,000 Hz, which is a typical reaction of a good amplifier to this atypical load.

● *Comment.* The overall performance of these Kenwood "twins" is sufficient to justify liberal use of superlatives. Not only do they easily surpass their imposing specifications, but they show abundant evidence of tender loving care in their design and construction. The separate headphone amplifier of the 700C produced useful listening levels with phones of any impedance from 8 to 600 ohms, although full volume was well below that obtainable from the 700M headphone jack (or from any modestly powered amplifier or receiver, for that matter).

We cannot comment on the sound qualities of these components, for they *have* none that we could detect. Even noise, a frequently audible deficiency, was essentially absent, since a properly adjusted system using the Kenwood 700 units will have a noise level at least 90 to 100 dB below maximum output—which is very much better than that of any program source. Although it is a purely subjective reaction, we also enjoyed the "feel" of the operating controls of these units—as smooth, yet as positive, in their action as anything we have ever handled. In short, we found the Kenwood 700C and 700M to be two beautiful pieces of equipment, both technically and aesthetically.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Lafayette Criterion 777 Speaker



● THE Criterion 777 falls roughly in the middle of the broad line of speaker systems marketed by Lafayette Radio Electronics. It is a medium-size, three-way "bookshelf" system with a 10-inch high-compliance acoustic-suspension woofer, a 6-inch cone mid-range driver, and a 2-inch cone tweeter. The crossover frequencies are 800 and 4,000 Hz, and the system is rated to handle up to 80 watts. The nominal impedance is 8 ohms. The walnut-finish cabinet (real wood, not vinyl covered) is 23 x 15 x 12 inches, and the system weighs 38 pounds. The brown acoustical-

ly transparent foam grille is held in place by Velcro fasteners. In the rear of the cabinet are the speaker terminals, plus a phono jack for simplified installation without risk of incorrect phasing. There are level adjustments for the mid-range and high-frequency speakers. Price: \$119.95.

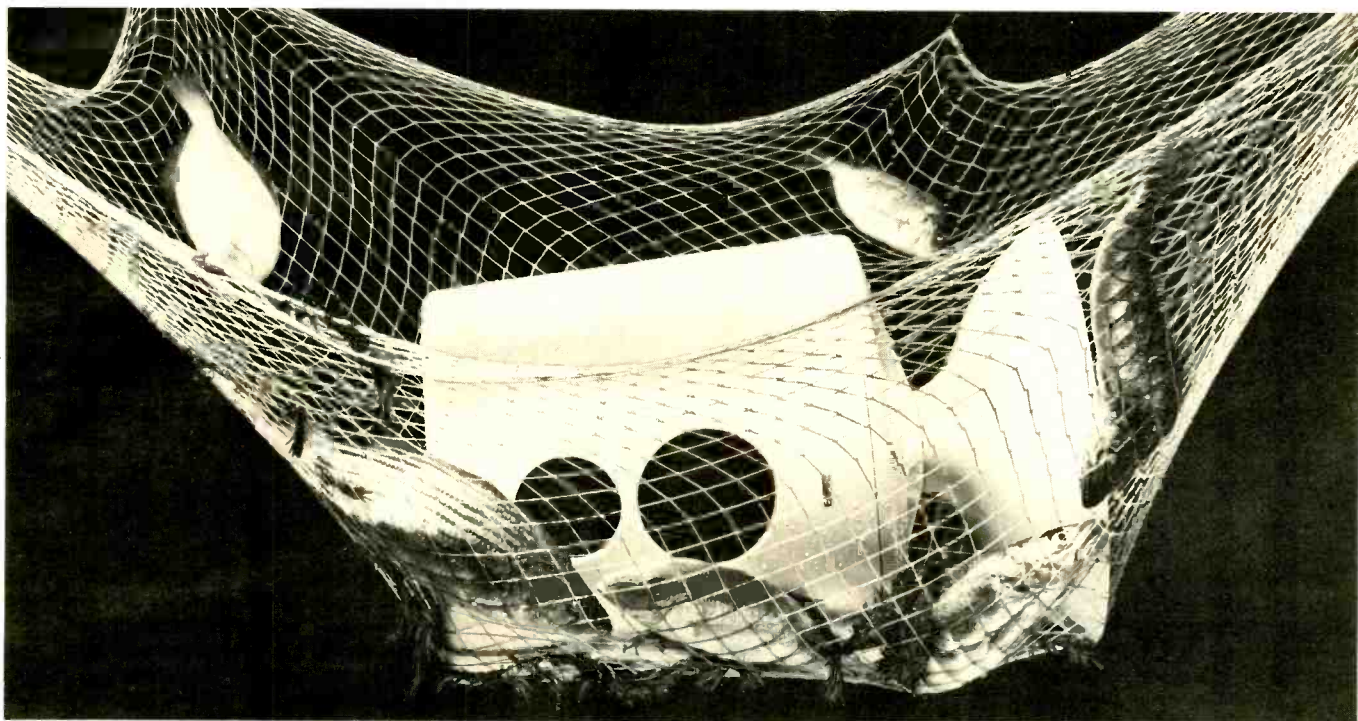
● *Laboratory Measurements.* The averaged and smoothed frequency response of the Lafayette Criterion 777, in the reverberant field of the room, was very uniform over the audible frequency range. Optimum "flatness" was

obtained with the mid-range level set at its halfway point and the high-frequency level at maximum. The resulting curve was within ±3 dB from 50 to 14,000 Hz, falling to about -8 dB at 20,000 Hz and to -13 dB at 20 Hz. Considerable adjustment is possible to suit the system's response to a particular environment. The mid-range and high-frequency levels can each be varied over a range of 6 to 8 dB.

For an acoustic-suspension system, the Criterion 777 is relatively efficient. A 1-watt input in the octave centered at 1,000 Hz produced an SPL of 95 dB at a distance of 1 meter, and 85 dB in the reverberant field about 12 feet from the speaker. At the 1-watt input, the bass distortion was very low—only 2 per cent at 50 Hz and 5 per cent at 30 Hz. At a 10-watt drive level (which is more than most people would find necessary), the distortion was under 2 per cent down to 80 Hz, reaching 8.5 per cent at 50 Hz and 18 per cent at 30 Hz. The tone-burst response of the system was good at all frequencies within its range, with little sign of ringing and no generation of spurious frequencies. The impedance of the 777 remained between 8 and 13 ohms from 60 to 20,000 Hz, rising to 50 ohms at the system's bass resonance of 39 Hz.

● *Comment.* In the simulated "live-vs.-recorded" test, the Lafayette Criterion 777 proved to be as good as its response curve (Continued on page 30)

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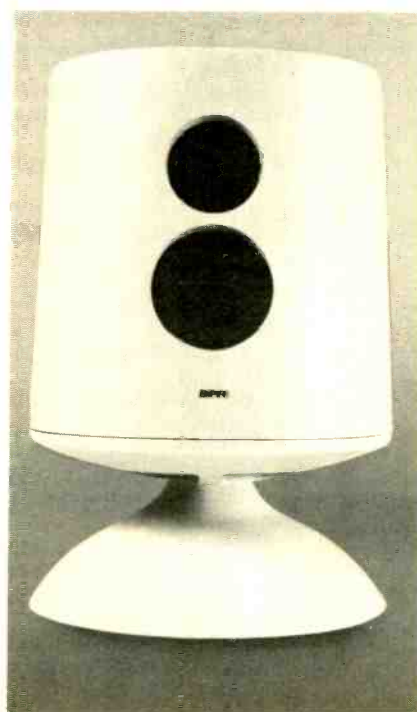
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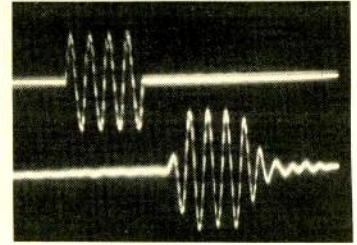
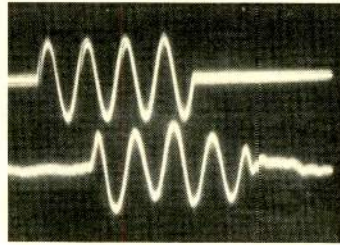
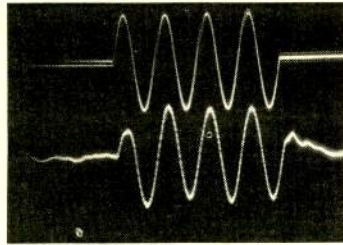
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The good tone-burst performance of the 777 is illustrated by these oscilloscope photos at (left to right) 150, 2,000, and 10,000 Hz.



would suggest. There was a trace of mid-range coloration when reproduction was compared to the original sounds. However, using an equalizer to provide a 5-dB cut between 600 and 700 Hz, and a 3-dB boost in the octave centered at 4,000 Hz (which also flattened the response curve obtained in the previous tests) resulted in essentially perfect reproduction of the "live" program from our reference speaker.

Listening to a number of program sources

over an extended period of time (without equalization) we were constantly impressed by the "characterless" sound of the 777. It does not impart its own qualities to the music (the small aberrations mentioned above are undetectable except by comparison to the original sound) even in the mid-bass, where many speakers develop a "boomy" quality that some people mistake for real bass. In fact, it is so lacking in bass boom that one might assume on first hearing that the speaker

is a bit "thin" sounding. On the contrary, it can emit a solid and room-filling low bass when the program calls for it. Overall, it is an outstandingly neutral-sounding system. Even though it falls in a price range noted for a number of very fine speakers, the Lafayette Criterion 777 can more than hold its own in any comparisons. It is an excellent speaker system and an especially fine value at its price.

Circle 106 on reader service card

Burwen DNF 1201 Dynamic Noise Filter



● **THE** Burwen DNF 1201 Dynamic Noise Filter is an audio accessory designed to reduce noise (hiss) in any program by 6 to 14 dB. It is a two-channel *dynamic* filter—which means that its operating frequency and total attenuation are constantly controlled by the audio signal's frequency and amplitude characteristics. The DNF 1201 can be installed in the tape-monitoring path of any amplifier or receiver, or between a preamplifier and power amplifier. The gain of the unit is adjustable, and it is able to handle audio-signal levels of up to 3 volts. The instantaneous operating bandwidth of the DNF 1201 is indicated by two LED's (light-emitting diodes) on the front panel. The red LED shows that the filter is operating (SUPPRESSION) while the green LED (WIDEBAND) comes on when the filter has been turned off momentarily by the signal characteristics. A horizontal SENSITIVITY slider control is used to adjust the signal threshold at which the filter goes into action, to suit various program requirements.

Four pushbuttons provide flexible control of the operating time constants of the DNF 1201. The TAPE/FM button gives the preferred conditions for most high-quality program material, with a fast attack and decay time (not specified, but judging from the response of the LEDs, not more than a few milliseconds and possibly much less). In the PHONO mode, the filter frequency characteristics are the same, but the attack time has been slowed

to reduce the effect of record ticks and pops, which could otherwise introduce momentary noise bursts by opening the filter "gate." The PHONO 78 mode has an even slower response and provides a more drastic bandwidth reduction for optimum noise reduction with 78-rpm records. The OUT button disables the filter, permitting the signal to pass straight through the device without being processed. If all the buttons are left in their disengaged positions, the bandwidth of the filter is similar to the TAPE/FM mode, but the response time is that of the PHONO 78 mode. This is useful with piano music, which can produce an audible "swish" if background noise is appreciable. The final button is the POWER on-off switch.

The Burwen DNF 1201 has a rated bandwidth of 10 to 30,000 Hz ± 0.5 dB in its WIDEBAND mode. When it is fully on, the filter reduces the response -3 dB at 500 Hz; the attenuation of the signal is 8 to 9 dB per octave above that frequency. During operation, the filter's cut-off frequency, which varies constantly with the program, is usually much higher. The input impedance is 50,000 ohms and the output impedance is 50 ohms. Output noise is rated at less than 100 microvolts (rms) over a 20- to 20,000-Hz bandwidth, with harmonic distortion of less than 0.2 per cent between 20 and 10,000 Hz at a 3-volt level. The DNF 1201's brown metal cabinet with walnut wooden side plates measures approximately $3\frac{3}{4} \times 9 \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Price: \$299.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Because of the dynamic nature of its operation, it was not appropriate to measure the DNF 1201's frequency response with steady-state signals. However, we did measure the threshold sensitivity of the filter as a function of frequency by noting the input level required at each frequency to just turn on the filter (as shown by both LEDs glowing with equal intensity).

At full sensitivity, a 3-volt signal at 50 Hz activated the control circuits and the sensitivity increased with frequency at a fairly constant rate up to several thousand hertz. At 500 Hz, a -30 -dB input (about 0.1 volt) opened the filter, suggesting that any program with a low-to-moderate mid-range content (the fundamental musical frequencies) will open up the filter to allow passage of harmonics. The sensitivity continued to increase with frequency, to the point where a -80 -dB signal at 10,000 Hz opened the filter. Thus, even the weakest high-frequency program elements, if they are of sufficient duration for the attack time selected, are not suppressed.

The measured frequency response in the WIDEBAND condition was 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 0.5 dB. The output signal clipped at 9.2 volts. Harmonic distortion (with a 1,000-Hz test signal) was 0.013 per cent at 3 volts in the WIDEBAND mode. In the SUPPRESSION mode, the distortion was higher—0.85 per cent at 1 volt and 1.5 per cent at 2 volts. At 100 Hz, the distortion was very low at all times, measuring 0.009 per cent at 3 volts (WIDEBAND) and 0.022 per cent at 3 volts (SUPPRESSION). The internal noise (unweighted) was 130 microvolts (-88 dB, referred to the rated 3-volt output) in the WIDEBAND condition and approximately 80 microvolts (-92 dB) in the SUPPRESSION condition. The maximum insertion gain of the DNF 1201 was 4.5, adjustable to zero by sensitivity controls in the rear.

● **Comment.** As is true of any dynamic filter, the performance of the Burwen DNF 1201
(Continued on page 34)

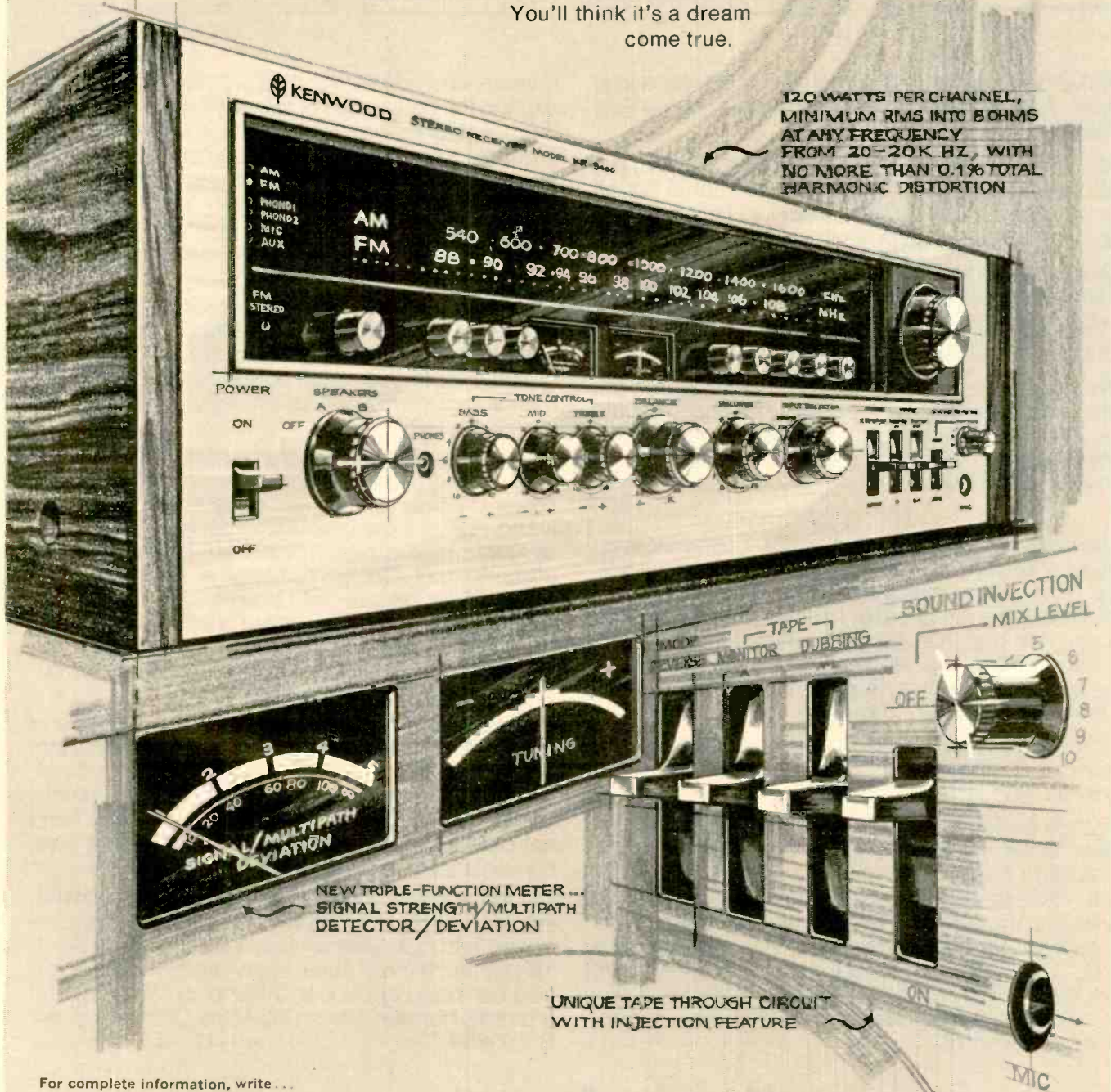
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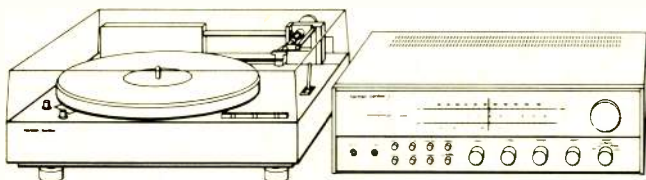
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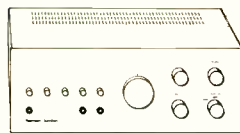
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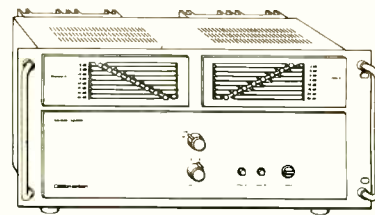


Rabco ST-7

430



A401



Citation 16

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For us, it's certainly *not* about mass production, nor about squeezing products into traditional "price points". What we are about is to find, without qualification, the best way to reproduce music in the home.

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We believe the products in this advertisement are the finest expressions of the attitudes that motivate us. They are *diverse*, but *consistent* with our commitment to bring the highest quality to every function of music reproduction.

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Diverse and consistent. The Citation 16 amplifier is a remarkable synthesis of brute force, technological precision and sonic sensitivity: awesome power with flawless performance. When measured by the criteria that *together* most accurately predict musical results—square wave response, slew rate and rise time—Citation 16 is without peer. The excitement we feel at Harman/Kardon these days is in part due to the reaction from audiophiles who have experienced Citation 16.

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-11.00
-13.00
-15.00
-17.00
-19.00
-21.00
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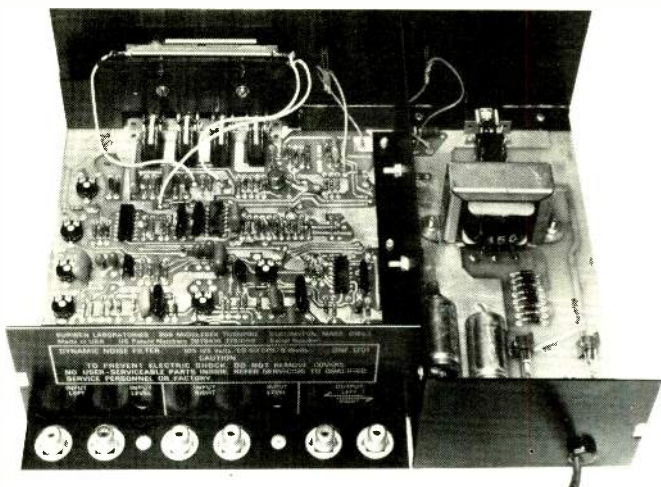
FM/AM
Tuner
Volume
Balance
Bass
Treble
Mute
Power

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Volume
Balance
Bass
Treble
Mute
Power

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The connectors of the DNF 1201 occupy a narrow ledge on the rear panel. The unit's cover has been removed to expose the internal circuitry.



can best be evaluated subjectively. We used it with a variety of program material and associated amplifiers and speakers over a period of months, and we have formed some fairly definite ideas as to its strengths and weaknesses. There is no question that the DNF 1201 can reduce a hiss level that is already moderately low to virtual inaudibility. However, if the noise level is relatively high, as would occur when receiving a weak stereo FM broadcast, for example, it is less successful. As with any noise-reducing device, the better the signal-to-noise ratio of the incoming signal, the more subjectively noise-free will be the output.

It is with phonograph records that the noise reduction is most effective, since hiss is usually rather subdued to begin with. As the instructions suggest, the very fast attack in the TAPE/FM mode injects occasional "puffs" of noise due to record scratches or dust, but slowing the response by releasing all the buttons completely cures this problem.

It is possible to enjoy the results of noise reduction without apparent loss of highs in the program, but it can require very careful adjustment of the SENSITIVITY control for various selections if they differ widely in their dynamics. It is best to make this adjustment at

a fairly high listening level so that the changes in noise can be heard clearly.

It is in the setting of the SENSITIVITY control that the user makes the compromise between noise reduction and audible loss of highs. With most orchestral material, there is no need for compromise, but with solo instruments or small instrumental groups, especially if the background noise is appreciable, one must find a setting of the control that does not noticeably dull the highs, even at the expense of some noise reduction. Alternatively, the setting can be in favor of greater noise reduction with some sacrifice of highs.

As with every dynamic-type filter we have ever used, the filter action can sometimes be heard. This occurs because the bandwidth increase necessary to admit the harmonic spectrum of the music must inevitably let in some noise as well, and exact matching of attack and decay time constants to the music characteristics (which will minimize the effect) is nearly impossible. In the DNF 1201, at least, the user has a choice between a number of different time-constant characteristics so that he can choose the most suitable one. The noise modulation, when it is heard (and 95 per cent of the time it is *not* audible) appears as a slight "swish" or brief fuzziness on

the attack of a transient. But anyone who simply wishes to enjoy his records, tape, or FM tuner (and is not concerned only with picking noise nits) will almost certainly be rewarded by a much quieter program with no obvious change in signal quality.

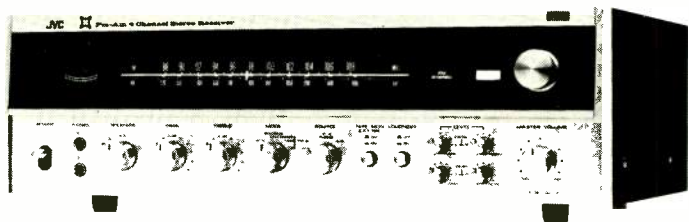
A comparison is inevitable between the Burwen DNF 1201 and competitive noise-reduction systems. Actually, there are only two competitors—the Philips DNL and the Phase Linear autocorrelator circuit—and in a sense neither truly competes. The Philips system is a dynamic filter operating at much higher frequencies than the DNF 1201, and it is therefore not capable of as much hiss reduction. It has not been offered in the U.S. as an add-on accessory, and is found only in a handful of cassette recorders. The Phase Linear system is closer to being a functional competitor, but at present it is available only in a complete preamplifier that sells for twice the price of the DNF 1201. Systems such as Dolby, ANRS, and dbx are not comparable to the Burwen system since their noise-reduction circuits operate only on preprocessed programs.

Our A-B comparisons show that the DNF 1201 and the Phase Linear autocorrelator circuit are about equal in noise-reduction effectiveness at high frequencies. On some programs the DNF 1201 removes noticeably more hiss, and in no case did we find it inferior in hiss reduction. However, as we noted, the DNF 1201 requires careful adjustment for each program to obtain optimum results, and in some cases its filter action can be heard. By contrast, the autocorrelator requires no critical adjustments, and we have never heard any undesired side effects with any program we have tried.

Thus, for the listener who wishes to reduce hiss on *existing* program material, the Burwen DNF 1201 remains a unique product readily usable with any existing system. It brings much of the technology developed by Burwen for the company's very expensive professional noise-reduction equipment into the consumer market at a reasonable price, and it does so very effectively.

Circle 107 on reader service card

JVC 4VR-5426X Four-channel AM/FM Receiver



● THE JVC 4VR-5426X (also known simply as the 26X) is perhaps the lowest-price four-channel receiver that has both a built-in CD-4 demodulator and matrix-decoding circuits. Recent advances in integrated circuits (IC's) have made it possible for JVC to produce a fully flexible four-channel receiver with excellent all-around performance at a price competitive with those of many medium-price stereo receivers. The amplifiers of the 26X

are rated at 13 watts per channel between 20 and 20,000 Hz, with all channels driven into 8-ohm loads, at less than 1 per cent distortion. The front and rear channels can also be "strapped" in what JVC calls a "BTL" (balanced transformerless) configuration to deliver an output of 30 watts per channel in stereo under the same conditions used to define the four-channel ratings.

The FM tuner section has an FET r.f. am-

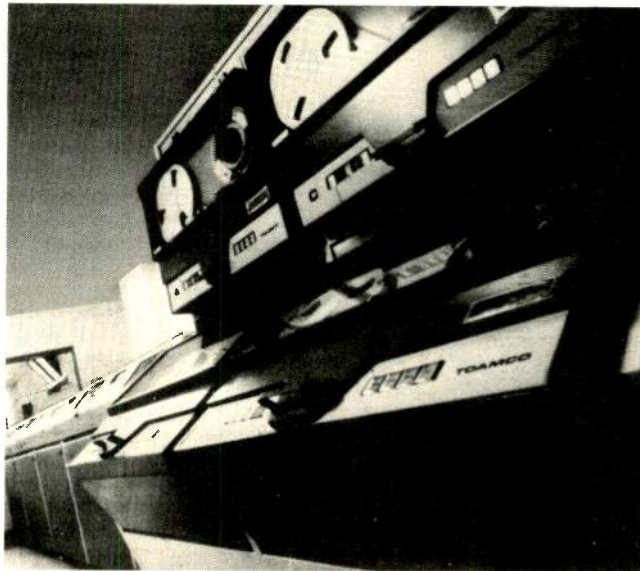
plifier and makes liberal use of IC's (including phase-locked loops) for all the tuner functions. The CD-4 demodulator also uses IC's, plus a large number of additional components. The eight output transistors (two per channel) are mounted on a single heat sink, which has a large finned area for its size.

The blackout tuning dial has linear calibration spacing. The tuning meter functions as a zero-center type for FM and a relative-signal-strength indicator for AM. The words FM STEREO light up on the dial scale to indicate reception of a stereo transmission, and a large CD-4 indicator glows when the phono inputs sense the 30-kHz carrier of a CD-4 disc. The tuning knob, at the upper right of the panel, operates a smooth flywheel mechanism.

The lower portion of the panel contains the other controls. There is a large on/off toggle

(Continued on page 38)

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into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.3% total harmonic distortion.

Inside, the Sansui engineers use eleven computer-grade ICs (integrated circuits) for ultra-stable, long-term performance. Plus special CBM (Circuit Board Module) construction to simplify assembly and eliminate a lot of the internal wiring which could move and cause instability.

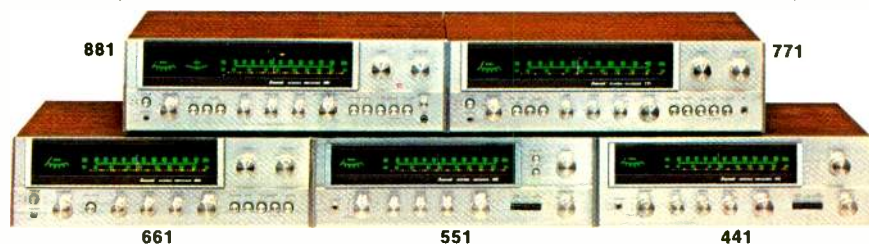
Outside, rugged controls tailor the sound and direct 'signal traffic' throughout the 881 for 3 pairs of

stereo loudspeakers, tuner section, turntables, decks, tape dubbing, microphone mixing, and much more.

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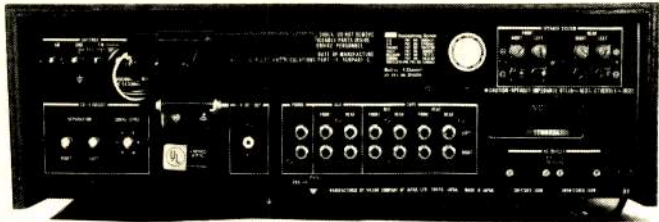


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Sansui. Dynamic audio answers.



The CD-4 adjustments on the rear panel of the JVC 26X are at the lower left. The center of the panel contains the input and tape jacks, while the speaker terminals are located at upper right.

The levels of both random noise and total noise plus distortion are compared with the audio-output level as input-signal strength increases. Both mono and stereo are shown.

switch and two stereo headphone jacks for front and rear channels. The speaker-selector switch connects the outputs for four-channel operation, straps the front and rear channels for two-channel BTL operation, or shuts off the speakers for headphone use. The bass and treble tone controls affect all four channels. The MODE switch has positions for 2 CH, DISCRETE 4 CH, MATRIX 1, and MATRIX 2. The MATRIX 1 setting is for the basic SQ matrix, while the MATRIX 2 position partially blends the left and right channels before decoding them.

The SOURCE switch selects AM, FM AUTO, CD-4 PHONO, or AUX inputs. The CD-4 PHONO position is also used for listening to stereo records, the MODE switch being put in the 2 CH position to by-pass the CD-4 demodulator. Two pushbuttons control the tape-monitor and loudness functions. The TAPE MON switch is also marked EXT NR, to indicate that it can also be used with an accessory noise-reducing device such as the Dolby system or JVC's ANRS. The AUX and TAPE circuits are in quadruplicate for use with discrete four-channel sources or tape recorders. Four small knobs control the gains of the individual channels for balancing levels or to permit the adjacent master volume control to operate in a convenient portion of its range.

In the rear of the 26X are the inputs and outputs plus insulated screw-type speaker terminals. There is an FM DET OUT jack for possible use with a future FM quadrasonic discrete demodulator. The AM and FM antenna terminals (the latter can be used with 75- or 300-ohm antenna systems) are supplemented by a hinged AM ferrite-rod antenna and a jumper wire that lets the a.c. line cord serve as an FM antenna. Three CD-4 adjust-

ments on the rear panel set the 30-kHz carrier-level sensitivity and the left- and right-channel separation for a specific phono cartridge with the aid of a 7-inch adjustment/test disc supplied with the receiver. There are two a.c. outlets, one of which is switched. The JVC 26X is supplied in a wooden walnut-finish cabinet. It measures 18 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep; weight is 27 pounds. Price: \$399.95.

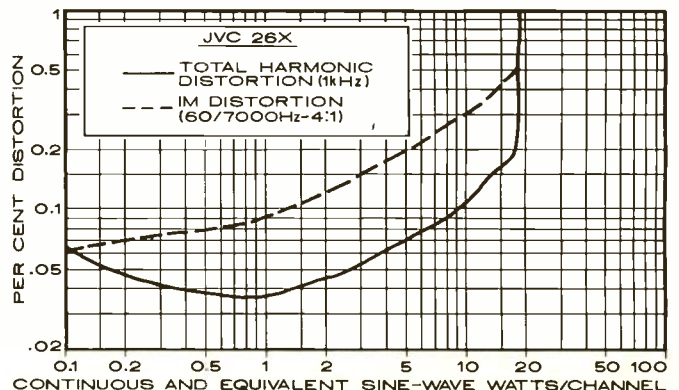
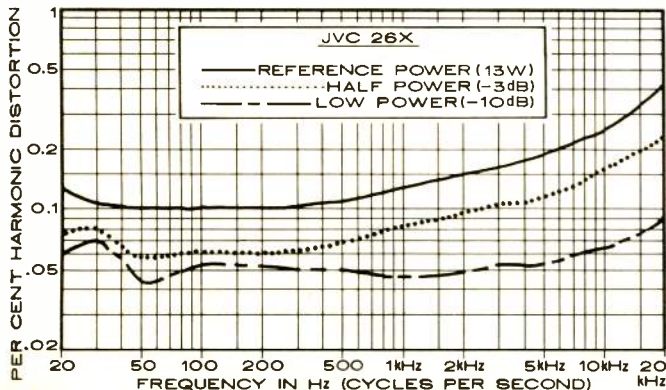
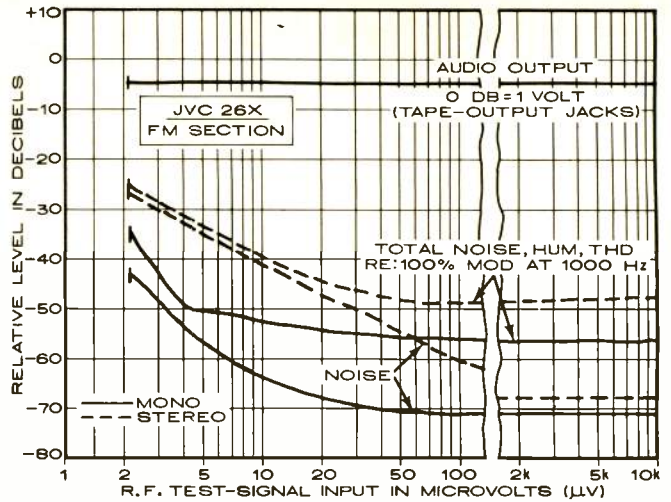
● **Laboratory Measurements.** After a preconditioning period at one-third of full power (which the receiver passed easily), the amplifiers were tested with all channels driven into 8-ohm loads. At the rated 13 watts per channel, the total harmonic distortion (THD) was under 0.15 per cent from 20 to 2,000 Hz, rising smoothly to 0.4 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At half power the distortion was lower and followed the same pattern. At one-tenth power, which is close to a typical listening level, the distortion was under 0.09 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz, measuring typically about 0.05 per cent. At 1,000 Hz, the outputs clipped at 18.9 watts per channel into 8 ohms, 28.1 watts into 4 ohms, and 10.7 watts into 16 ohms. In the stereo BTL mode, the power at clipping for 8-ohm loads was 37 watts per channel. (As with most four-channel units that employ some variant of power strapping, caution is advised in respect to driving the amplifier very hard in the BTL mode with 4-ohm speakers.) The THD at 1,000 Hz was less than 0.06 per cent from 0.1 to 4 watts, rising to 0.14 per cent at the rated 13 watts and to 0.2 per cent at 18 watts. The intermodulation distortion rose from about 0.06 per cent at 0.1 watt to 0.38 per cent at 13 watts and 0.5 per cent at 18 watts. At very low power levels

it also increased slightly to 0.28 per cent at 1 milliwatt.

The input sensitivity for a 10-watt reference output was 87 millivolts (mV) for the AUX inputs and about 1.3 mV for the phono inputs. The respective noise levels were -76 and -75 dB. The phono sensitivity in the CD-4 mode varies with the settings of the separation adjustments. When set for a typical CD-4 cartridge, the phono sensitivity was 1.25 mV, with a noise level of -69.8 dB. Phono overload in stereo as well as this CD-4 setting occurred at a rather low 38 mV (this is a characteristic of all CD-4 demodulators we have tested—in fact, some overload at even lower levels).

The tone controls provided a moderate range of boost or cut, up to about 8 dB. The loudness compensation boosted both lows and highs rather strongly, but the individual channel-gain controls could be set so that the volume control could be used at a higher setting and hence did not produce excessive loudness compensation. And, of course, the compensation can be switched out. The RIAA phono equalization was within ± 1 dB from 30 to 19,000 Hz. As with most phono preamplifiers, the equalization was affected by cartridge inductance. However, unlike the usual case that shows a loss of highs, the 26X had an elevated response at 10,000 Hz of about 2 to 4 dB. The output fell to normal or lower values above 17,000 Hz.

The FM tuner has fixed (non-switchable) interstation-noise mixing, but the 2.2-microvolt (μ V) threshold effectively suppresses only the interstation hiss and does not affect the receiver's ability to tune in weak signals. The muting action was very good, with virtually no "thump" or transition noise while



tuning. Stereo operation is also possible down to the 2.2- μ V threshold, although it is too noisy for listening at that level. There is no way to disable the multiplex circuits for listening to weak stereo-broadcast signals in mono (the manual suggests using a better antenna to reduce the noise), but placing the MODE switch in MATRIX 2 substantially blends the left and right channels and hence significantly reduces the noise. The FM frequency response in stereo was ± 1 dB from 30 to about 13,000 Hz; it cut off sharply at higher frequencies to -6.8 dB at 15,000 Hz. Stereo separation was both very good and unusually uniform, measuring between 40 and 43 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. The ultimate THD in FM was 0.15 per cent (mono) and 0.39 per cent (stereo), and the respective ultimate S/N measurements were 71 and 67.4 dB.

The capture ratio was so good it was literally unmeasurable because of the abrupt capture by the stronger signal. Although it is rated at 2 dB, our measurements suggested that it might be closer to one-tenth that value. AM rejection was 53 dB, image rejection was 50 dB, and alternate-channel selectivity was about 60 dB—all representing quite good performance, especially for a low-price product. The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage into the audio outputs was 60 dB below 100 per cent modulation. The AM tuner had the usual high-frequency response limitation and a very restricted low-frequency response as well. Its output was down 6 dB at 300 and 4,800 Hz.

● *Comment.* The JVC 26X is a remarkable receiver in many ways. Its performance is all the more impressive in light of the compromises we found in some of the earliest "low-price" four-channel receivers, many of which scarcely merited serious consideration for a good-quality system. In contrast, the 26X has a first-rate FM tuner and versatile and clean audio amplifiers with more power output than the numbers might imply (well over 50 watts total across the entire audio band in the four-channel mode, and a good 70 watts or so in stereo).

The four-channel performance of the 26X was evaluated entirely subjectively. The CD-4 demodulator, as one would expect from the company that developed the CD-4 system, was excellent. In fact, judging from its freedom from break-up and noise, even with our oldest Quadradiscs, this IC circuit is at least the equal of either the separate "add-on" units or those incorporated in some recent very high-price four-channel receivers.

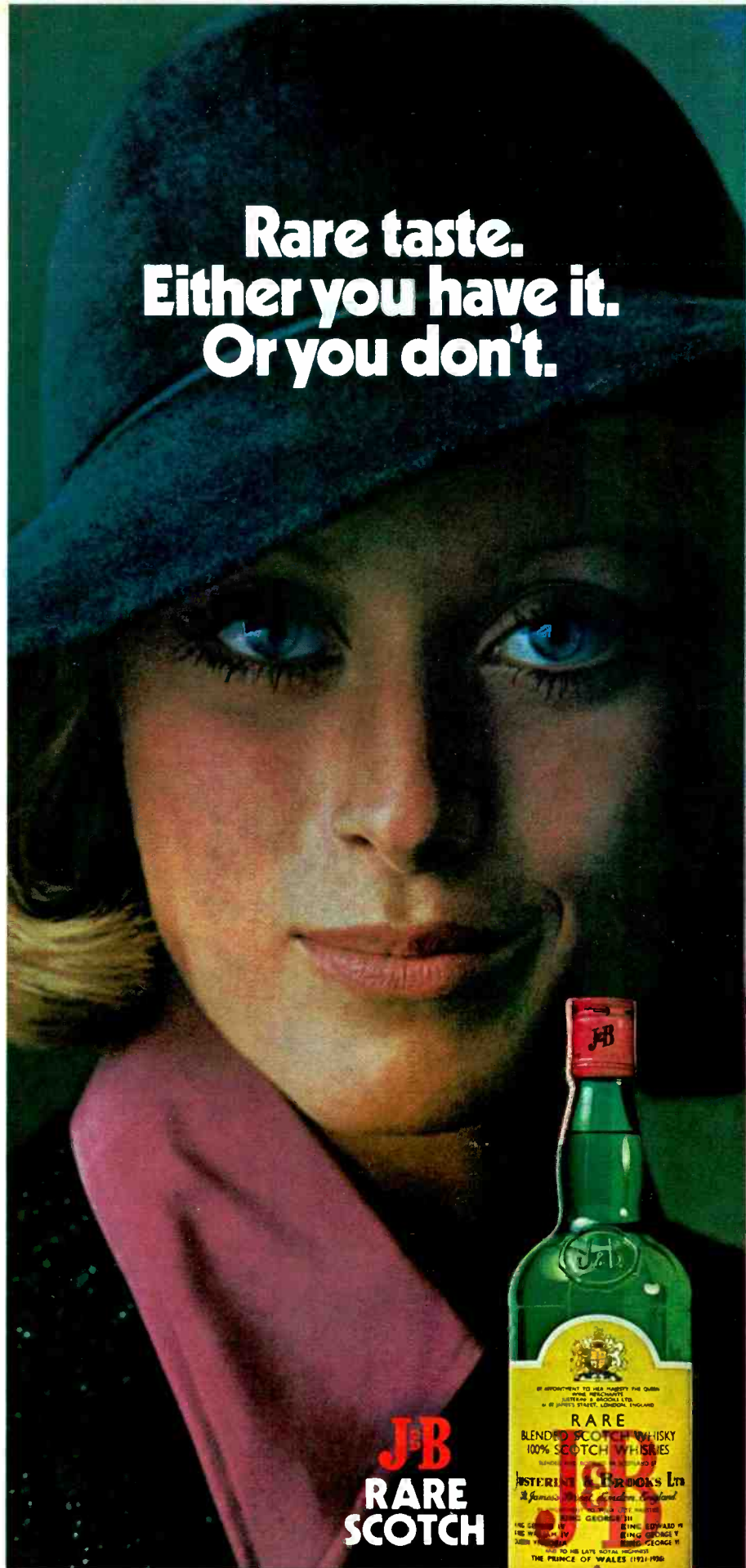
The built-in matrix systems are less impressive. Because it lacks logic assistance, the basic SQ matrix built into the 26X provides at best a vague directionality, most of the time amounting to little more than ambience enhancement. Aside from its role in FM-noise reduction, the MATRIX 2 mode seems to have little value. We tried it with QS-encoded records, but they sounded much better with MATRIX 1.

Nevertheless, most four-channel receivers do not offer more features and useful performance than we found in the 26X, at least until their prices get well over \$500. Given today's economic conditions, it is surprising to see so much receiver being sold for only \$400, especially when it also works as well as this one does. The JVC 26X is definitely an outstanding value, either for a new four-channel system or as a stereo receiver bought with a view toward future four-channel use.

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JUNE 1975

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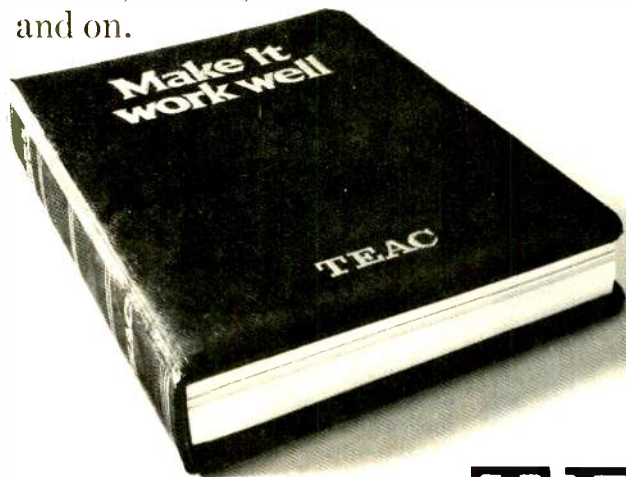


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THE SIMELS REPORT

By STEVE SIMELS



RAMBLIN' ON (PART TWO)

FIRST of all, I'd like to mention that I'm much, much cuter than the caricature of me that appears elsewhere in this issue, and that all interested females may address inquiries care of this magazine. That out of the way, and since nothing earth-shaking seems to be happening in the world of pop, I thought that, once again, I'd just ramble a bit.

To start with, I'd like to put my two cents in on the great Rolling Stones guitarist sweepstakes. Of course, by the time this sees print, Mick Taylor's replacement will probably already have been announced, and I am, of course, understandably miffed that Jagger and Keith didn't immediately tag me for the job. (The day of the announcement of Taylor's departure, as a matter of fact, I sat by the phone for hours. They *still* haven't called. The heartless bastards.) Anyway, you all know who the major contenders are (were)—Jeff Beck, Mick Ronson, Peter Frampton, Rory Gallagher, Ron Wood, and a variety of unknown youngsters including at least one American, Wayne Perkins, and Wilko Johnson, of a British pub band called Dr. Feelgood, who reportedly are heavily Stones influenced. However, in my considered opinion, the *ideal* replacement would be one of three *well-knowns*; to wit, Robin Trower (blond, almost a ringer for Brian Jones at a distance), in his Procol Harum days, at least, the most moving blues soloist yet out of England; legendary guitarist/producer Dave Edmunds (check out his brilliant "Rockpile" album); and—hold on to your hats, kiddies—the Kinks' Dave Davies, the man who sounds

most like Brian in terms of guitar style. None of them could possibly get the job for any number of reasons, but if I were king, that's who I'd choose. All of them have the image and the chops, and I hope whoever does wind up filling Taylor's shoes is at least as good. Cross your fingers for the World's Greatest Rock-and-Roll Band.

Moving from the sublime to the ridiculous, I thought you might be interested in hearing about the last gasps of the New York rock-and-roll scene. Well, we all know that the New York Dolls didn't turn out to be the Next Big Thing—not even the Next Small Thing. (Mercury apparently took quite a financial bath on them, and word has it that the boys will get one last crack at a single. If that isn't a hit, it's bye-bye record contract.)

Anyway, in the wake of the great failed New York hype, the whole scene has pretty much dried up. It's mostly due to economics, I suspect. The live clubs increasingly are going disco, and there are fewer and fewer places for new young bands, regardless of their expertise, to work out. However, I should mention a few that I've seen that, for the moment at least, are still hanging in there.

There's Television, for example, who are at once the most colossally inept and hysterically funny group I've ever witnessed. Not one of them can even come close to being able to play their instruments—they're about at the level of a fourteen-year-old garage band rehearsing for the first time—and their material consists of fifteen-minute pseudo-Velvet Underground atonal drones. Visually, they're

a panic: one friend of mine described them as "looking like the Waltons on LSD."

On the same bill (this was a memorable evening, folks) were the Miamis, some friends of the Dolls, who are a wee bit more competent than Television. They actually attempt harmony singing, and their energy is quite infectious. Still, they come off as not much more than an updated Lovin' Spoonful, only without the blues roots or the talent.

Of the rest of the bands in town, only one has legitimately impressed me. They're called Snake, and they're an offshoot of another band known as the Stilletoes, whom I missed, but who from all reports were equally fabulous. The original ensemble featured three tough chicks in varying degrees of hoodlum drag doing material roughly in the vein of the early Sixties Spector girl groups. I caught their final incarnation recently, but they're down to one girl, and it was practically a cabaret act. No drummer. Very disappointing.

But Snake . . . ah, *there* is a band after my own heart. Their lead singer is an adorable gum-chewing blonde with frizzed-out Little Orphan Annie hair and an absolutely deadpan delivery, and the back-up is provided by an *excellent* little Who-derived power trio in black leather. The young lady has an ace voice, heavily and charmingly New York accented—whether faked or not, I couldn't tell, on stage or off—and they do mostly originals which are all quite good, with really witty female-chauvinist lyrics. Added to all this were a few bonuses like the Stones' *Stupid Girl* (neatly turned around into a male put-down) and the Shangri-Las' immortal ode to teenage rebellion, *His Heart Belongs to the Streets*. Aspiring producers, take note: this band really has it. I doubt that there's an act anywhere they couldn't steal a show from. (Unless, of course, as is possible, they're the kind of phenomenon that has to be seen in the proper context of sleaze to be really enjoyed. I can't quite imagine them at, say, Carnegie Hall.) Anyway, they're great. I love them, and if you're ever in a position to catch them, do so without fail.

THAT'S about it for New York (with the exception of poet-turned-rocker Patti Smith, who is worth a column herself; any rumors you may have heard about her having the creative potential to be the first female rock star with the impact of an Elvis or a Dylan are absolutely true). Unless, of course, you count the "professionals," like Atlantic Records' latest darlings, Manhattan Transfer. They're a quartet, enjoyable in a minor camp way, whose basic shtick is their ability to mimic both Cab Calloway and Sha-Na-Na—simultaneously. Again, no great shakes. Personally, I'm waiting for the emergence of a Baltimore rock scene. I haven't the faintest idea what any of the bands down there sound like, but if John Waters and his *Pink Flamingos* gang are any indication of the level of culture in the city that also gave us Spiro Agnew, we may be in for some very odd times indeed.

Finally, I'd like just to mention that everyone should go out and buy the new Elton John single, *Philadelphia Freedom*. I'm not a rabid Elton fan myself, but the single—which will doubtless be a monster hit regardless of my feelings—comes complete with a live B-side on which John Lennon sings an old Beatles number (*I Saw Her Standing There*—and doesn't *that* take you back?) which has given me more enjoyment than almost anything else I've heard recently. The man rocks on.

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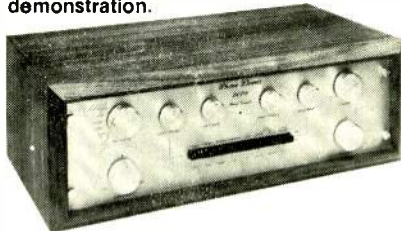
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THE BASIC REPERTOIRE • 182

By MARTIN BOOKSPAN

BIZET'S L'ARLÉSIENNE

GEORGES BIZET was thirty-three in the spring of 1872 when he was invited by Léon Carvalho, the director of the Théâtre du Vaudeville in Paris, to compose incidental music for a planned production of the play *L'Arlésienne* (*The Woman of Arles*) by Alphonse Daudet. Daudet was one of the most respected men of letters in France at the time, while Bizet was just beginning to make a name for himself as a composer of operas. He had already written *The Pearl Fishers*, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, and *Djamileh*, but he did not begin *Carmen*, the work destined to win him immortality, until the following year. Daudet's play is now thoroughly forgotten, but the two suites from Bizet's incidental music for it are among the most familiar and most cherished works in the orchestral literature.

Daudet's *L'Arlésienne* dealt with raw passions in Provence in southern France. The story was based on an actual happening: the frustrated love and eventual suicide of a relative of the Provençal poet Mistral. The characters of the play bear some resemblance to characters Bizet was to immortalize in *Carmen*: the love-tortured Frédéric is not unlike Don José in the opera, Vivette, the girl who loves Frédéric, is a forerunner of the opera's Micaëla, and *L'Arlésienne* is a prototype for *Carmen* herself. The story of Daudet's play appealed very strongly to Bizet—as would the story of Mérimée's *Carmen*—and he quickly produced no fewer than twenty-seven separate pieces for *L'Arlésienne*.

The play barely managed to squeak out a run of some twenty performances before it was canceled, but Bizet quickly put together a suite of four pieces from his score, and its first performance—a bare six weeks after the play opened—was a great success. The first movement, *Prélude*, consists of two parts, a series of variations on an old Christmas song from Provence, *Marcho dei Rei*, which is succeeded by a pastoral episode for alto saxophone. The *Minuet* that follows was the entr'acte between Acts III and IV in the play: it is vigorous and sharply accented on the first beat, with a contrasting lyrical section. Next is the *Adagio*, which in the play accompanies the reunion of an elderly couple who had renounced their love for one another fifty years earlier. The suite concludes with the *Carillon*, in which a chiming figure persists for fifty-six measures; there is also a plaintive interlude.

In 1879, four years after Bizet's death, a second suite of four numbers from his music for *L'Arlésienne* was put together by his friend and associate, Ernest Guiraud. This second suite is made up of a *Pastorale*, *Intermezzo*, *Minuet*, and *Farandole*: the *Farandole*, one of the most familiar of all the

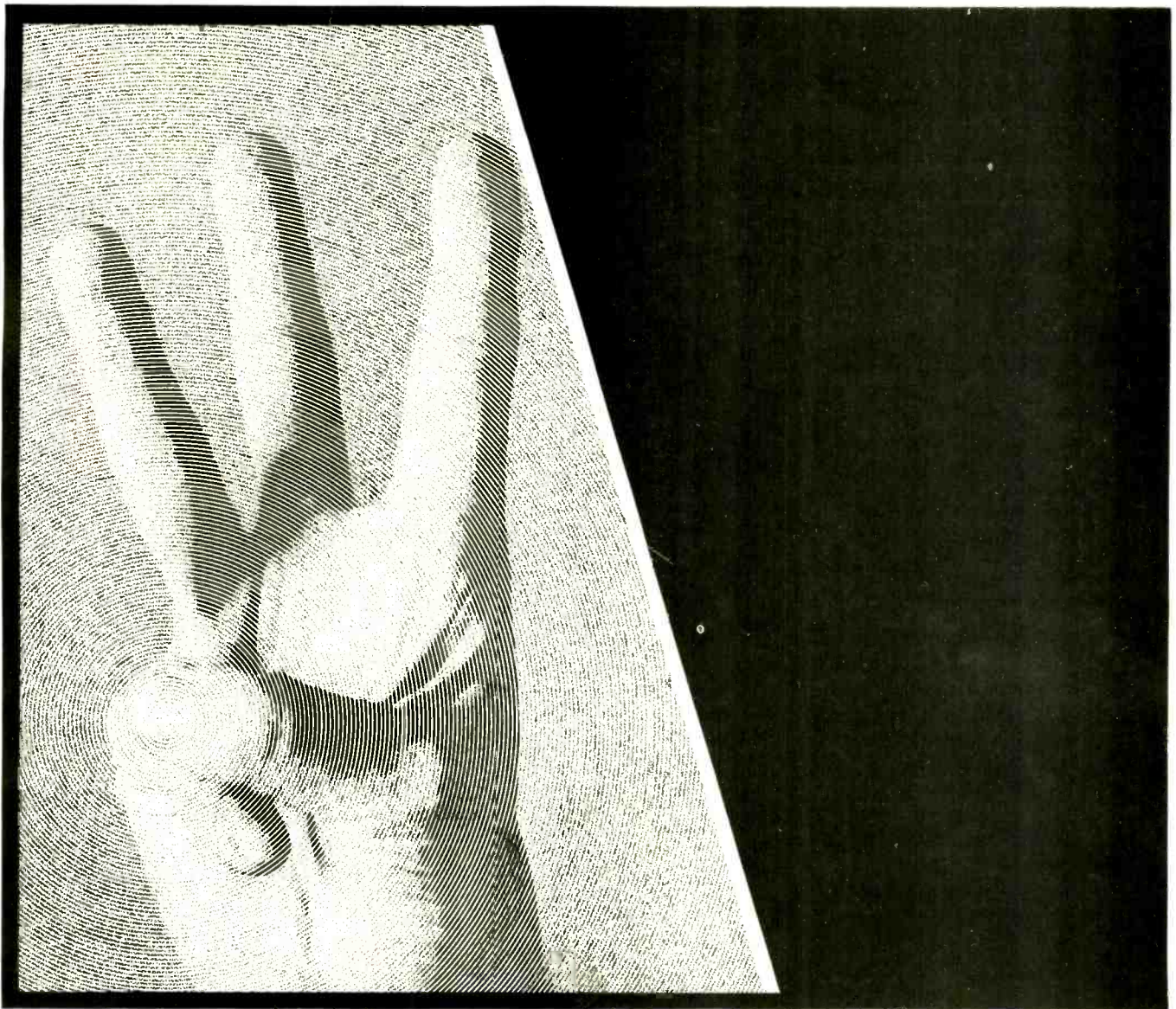
L'Arlésienne pieces, is actually more Guiraud than Bizet. In it, the *Marcho dei Rei* returns in vigorous fashion and is treated in a brief fugato which is followed by another traditional Provençal tune, the *Danse dei Chivau-Frus*; the folk melody is developed and then combined in rousing counterpoint with the *Marcho dei Rei* to conclude the suite in a blaze of excitement.

THE recordings of Bizet's *L'Arlésienne* music take various forms. Some include all eight pieces of both suites, among them Leonard Bernstein's (Columbia MS 31013, cassette MT 31013) and Jean Martinon's (RCA Victorla VICS 1593). Others present the entire First Suite along with the *Farandole* from the Second, and the choice ones in this group are those of Charles Munch (London SPC 21023, reel L 75023) and George Szell (Columbia MS 6877). Of those that offer just the First Suite, my preference is for Daniel Barenboim's (Angel S 36955), which, despite some instances of ragged orchestral ensemble, is full of character; some listeners may feel it is on the whole over-interpreted, but I cannot agree.

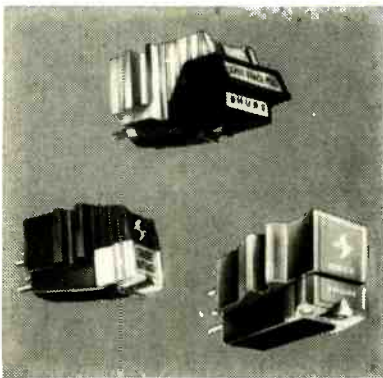
Probably the best buy among all the various available combinations is the performance by the Suisse Romande Orchestra of Geneva conducted by Alexander Gibson (London STS 15174). Six of the total of eight pieces from both suites are contained on a single side of this disc—the entire First Suite plus the *Minuet* and *Farandole* from the Second. Gibson secures an atmospheric and colorful account of the music from the orchestra, and the sound reproduction is first-rate. The other side of the disc is devoted to a lithe and lively account of the Bizet Symphony. And at London's Stereo Treasury price the attractions of the disc are well-nigh irresistible.

Bernstein's recording with the New York Philharmonic is an attractive proposition for anyone who wants all the music from both suites. Aside from an impossibly rushed tempo for the *Farandole*, Bernstein delivers a sensitive account of the music. The recorded sound is vivid, and the disc also contains a flamboyant account of a suite from Offenbach's *Gaité Parisienne*.

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MUSIC'S NORTHERN LIGHTS

Richard Freed opens up
some recording vistas
beyond the usual Grieg,
Sibelius, and Nielsen

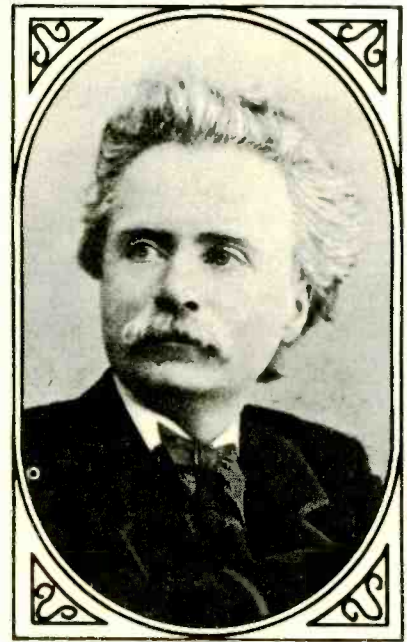
ANYONE who spends much time listening to music soon develops an awareness of certain national or regional styles—the distinctive rhythms and harmonies, the inflections and textures, the shapes of melodies that identify one work as being Russian or another as being Spanish. Most of us, in fact, tend to classify composers geographically, whether or not identifying national characteristics are actually discernible in their music.

One region in which we have not bothered or not been able to place very many composers is Scandinavia—Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, of course, but including Finland and Iceland as well. This lack of interest or curiosity on our part—tantamount to assuming that only Edvard Grieg, Jean Sibelius, Carl Nielsen, and (stretching recognition somewhat) Franz Berwald wrote music of consequence in their respective countries—is astounding. But so, perhaps, is the Northerners' own lack of aggressiveness in exporting their native music (in contradistinction to their performing musicians, who have always circulated most successfully). In any event, creative activity of a particularly robust variety has been thriving in Northern music since well before Berwald's time, and it has only intensified with the passing of the generations, by now going well beyond what one might call "normal" expectations in proportion to the area's population.

Though it would certainly be interesting to trace the emergence of Scandinavian music—country by country—out of the foreign influences that prevailed in each of them until well into the nineteenth century, this examination will concern itself more with the results than the process, with the music that can be heard now (thanks to the ubiquitous phonograph) rather than how it came to be written. Let it be said, though, that there *is* a definitive Nordic character underlying virtually all the music composed in the region for at least the last hundred years (to say nothing of a good part of what came earlier), and that what defines it goes far beyond the simple matter of using folk materials, a habit traceable in the works of many composers active before Grieg.

It was Grieg's success, of course, that constituted the declaration of musical independence—not only for Norway, but for the North as a whole, for the Nordic spirit had never asserted itself so successfully before.

It was in the generation immediately following Grieg's that great figures began to appear throughout the region. Denmark's Carl Nielsen, Finland's Jean Sibelius, and Iceland's Jón Laxdal were all born in 1865, and the next half-dozen years saw the births of the two Swedes whose influence would largely determine the course of music in their country: Wilhelm Peterson-Berger (1867-1942) and Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927). From that generation on, the cultivation of the Nordic character has been continually fostered by an



EDVARD GRIEG (1843-1907)

outlook which, however strong it may be on national/regional identity, is anything but smug or ethnically delimited. This means, among other things, that "foreign influences" may be absorbed without fear of their becoming dominant.

That "Nordic" character, of course, is many-faceted. Peterson-Berger followed and expanded upon his predecessor August Söderman's (1832-1876) use of folk material, and he was particularly interested in tunes from Lapland (his Third Symphony is titled *Lapland*). Although Stenhammar made infrequent reference to actual folk music, he nevertheless succeeded in creating an identifiably Swedish style in which, as he himself said, "Swedish leaves rustle and Swedish springs play." Sibelius, on the other hand, used *no* folk materials, but more or less created the Finnish

musical character as a reflection of his own style. He and Nielsen, of course, exerted the broadest "pan-Nordic" influence, while their Swedish contemporaries celebrated a more distinctly national approach. The point is that, whether we are aware of "a" Nordic style, of a variety of styles loosely related to each other, or whether we are not particularly aware of any common strain, the North simply happens to be the source of a great deal of interesting music we outsiders have been getting to hear only in recent years.

wegians few of us had even heard of. Later in the same decade Westminster issued more Swedish music from the catalog of the Swedish Society "Discofil." All these are gone now, as are all but three or four of the Scandinavian discs offered recently in the Peters International catalog of EMI Odeon imports (a really substantial collection which touched almost all the bases in all five of the Nordic countries). Some of the Discofil material is again available (on Vox's Turnabout label), however, and more is offered in the form of direct imports

ALFVÉN: *Swedish Rhapsody No. 1* ("Midsummer Vigil"), Op. 19. The Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy cond. (with works of Grieg and Sibelius). COLUMBIA MS 7674 \$6.98.

ALFVÉN: *Symphony No. 3, in E Major*, Op. 23. Stockholm Concert Society Orchestra, Hugo Alfvén cond. *Swedish Rhapsody No. 3* ("Dalecarlian Rhapsody"), Op. 48. Stockholm Radio Orchestra, Hugo Alfvén cond. ODEON (M) E053-34620 \$6.98.

ALFVÉN: *Ballets: The Mountain King; The Prodigal Son*. Royal Swedish Orchestra, Hugo Alfvén cond. SWEDISH DISCOFIL SLT-33182 \$7.50.

Peterson-Berger and Stenhammar may have been the most "influential" Swedish composers of their pivotal generation, but Hugo Alfvén (1872-1960) was surely the most beloved. His single internationally known work, *Midsommarvaka* (*Midsummer Vigil*), the first of his three Swedish Rhapsodies, has suffered from its popularity since its introduction in 1903: it has been truncated, battered, and mutilated at the hands of various arrangers to suit the formats of juke box and pop concert, but in its original form it is a superbly crafted and most effective piece of nature-painting. Ormandy and his great orchestra give a beautiful demonstration of how really substantial the work is, and their disc is sumptuously recorded. The utterly different *Dalecarlian Rhapsody*, or *Dalarapsodi*, which Alfvén described as a work closer to his own heart, is longer and more introspective. While the *Midsommarvaka* (No. 1) evokes the merrymaking of St. John's Eve and the mysteries of youth and summertime, the *Dalarapsodi* (No. 3) is, in Alfvén's own words, "sad music, the music of the wild forests . . . only momentarily brightened by some happier tunes and dances."

The composer's own recordings of his Third Symphony (a reminiscence of a holiday in Italy) and the *Dalarapsodi*, made in 1940 and 1950, respectively, constitute a touching document, but later stereo versions of both works may be had from Swedish Discofil: the symphony is conducted by Nils Grevillius on SLT-33161, the *Dalarapsodi* by Stig Westerberg on SLT-33145 (whereon it is paired with Alfvén's own reading of the *Midsommarvaka*, the first stereo recording

Consulate General of Finland



JEAN SIBELIUS (1865-1957)

Danish Information Office



CARL NIELSEN (1865-1931)

Recordings of this music have been available here from time to time, but their availability has not always been conspicuous and, for one reason or another, it has seldom been sustained. There is, however, a large pool from which American companies may draw, for few composers anywhere have been more fortunate than the Scandinavians in the attention they receive from their own recording companies. Back in the early 1950's, when London Records gave us our first exposure to the music of Carl Nielsen, the same company released several recordings of other significant Danish and Swedish works, most of it orchestral material composed in our own century. At about the same time, in a series called "Music of the North," Mercury gave us more Nielsen, still more Danish composers, and music by a number of Nor-

from Sweden (the latter in somewhat limited distribution).

While the recordings of Scandinavian music available in the U.S. constitute a list neither comprehensive nor truly representative (nothing at all by Peterson-Berger, Moses Pergament, Fartein Valen, and Arne Nordheim, for example), there are some fascinating things among them. Most of the music is orchestral and speaks for itself with powerful directness, being neither dated nor experimental—nor, for that matter, terribly parochial. Twenty orchestral discs have been selected for listing here, and it is to be hoped not only that the responsive listener will be encouraged thereby to undertake further exploration independently, but that the interest thus manifested will encourage record companies to make even more of this music available.



Hugo Alfvén

Swedish Information Service



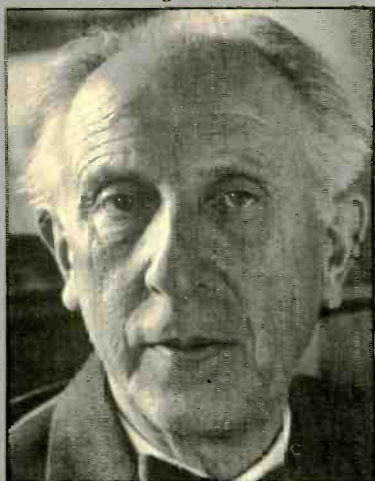
Niels Viggo Bentzon

Danish Information Service



Karl-Birger Blomdahl

Hilding Rosenberg



made in Scandinavia). The Second, Fourth and Fifth Symphonies are available from the same source.

The ballet scores, like the rhapsodies, show a fine sense of fantasy as well as an intuitive feeling for the folk idiom; a polka from *The Prodigal Son*, which Alfvén composed at the age of eighty-four, became a big pop item in Sweden.

BENTZON: *Pezzi Sinfonici, Op. 109*. Louisville Orchestra, Robert Whitney cond. (with Piston *Serenata* and Van Vactor *Fantasia, Chaconne and Allegro*). LOUISVILLE (M) LOU 586 \$5.95.

Niels Viggo Bentzon (born 1919) traces his ancestry back to Johan Ernst Hartmann (1726-1793), the transplanted Silesian who founded a whole dynasty of Danish composers, most prominent among them being his long-lived grandson Peter Emilius Hartmann (1805-1900). Bentzon's cousin Jörgen Bentzon (1897-1951), also a composer, was a pupil of Carl Nielsen. This Louisville disc is apparently the only recording of any of Bentzon's works available here now, though the recently deleted Turnabout disc of the Chamber Concerto and the Symphonic Variations (with the composer at one of the three pianos in the concerto—TV-S 34374) may still turn up in shops here and there. For simplicity's sake, Bentzon's style might be described as neo-Classical, with an emphasis on the *neo*.

BLOMDAHL: *Sisyphos, Ballet Suite*. **ROSENBERG:** *Voyage to America (excerpts)*. **BERWALD:** *Sinfonie Capricieuse*. Stockholm Philharmonic, Antal Dorati cond. RCA VICTROLA VICS-1319 \$3.49.

BLOMDAHL: *Symphony No. 3 ("Facets")*. Stockholm Philharmonic, Sixten Ehrling cond. **ROSENBERG:** *Symphony No. 6 ("Sinfonia Semplice")*. Stockholm Philharmonic, Stig Westerberg cond. TURNABOUT TV-S 34318 \$3.98.

Together with Sven-Erik Bäck (born 1919) and Ingvar Lidholm (born 1921), Karl-Birger Blomdahl (1916-1968) was one of the major composers of his generation in Sweden; all three studied with Hilding Rosenberg. Blomdahl received some notice here when Columbia issued a recording of his "space opera" *Aniara* and when parts of that work were used in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, but not enough to draw attention to his other music—even though his Cham-

ber Concerto was one of the few contemporary Scandinavian works recorded in the United States (by MGM in the mid-Fifties). Musicologist Bo Wallner has described Blomdahl as "very much a *lyricist*, even if his lyricism does take a form at variance with that found in the general run of Scandinavian music." The Third Symphony is regarded as Blomdahl's finest orchestral work, and the music from *Sisyphos* shows a distinctly Nordic brand of fantasy.

EGGE: *Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 21*. Robert Riefling (piano); Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Øivin Fjeldstad cond. (with Barati *Cello Concerto*). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS INC. (M) CRI 184 \$6.95.

Klaus Egge (born 1906), who occupies a position in Norway comparable to that of Larsson in Sweden or Holmboe in Denmark, differs from them stylistically, flavoring his music more strongly with the folk idiom. The concerto form is an especially sympathetic one for him, apparently, as is further demonstrated in his handsome Violin Concerto played by Camilla Wicks on a Philips disc available here in the late Sixties. This recording of the Second Piano Concerto was issued earlier in Mercury's "Music of the North" series.

HOLMBOE: *Symphony No. 8, Op. 56 ("Sinfonia Boreal")*. **NØRGÅRD:** *Constellations, Op. 22*. Royal Danish Orchestra, Jerzy Semkow cond. TURNABOUT TV-S 34168 \$3.98.

Vagn Holmboe (born 1909) is regarded as the heir to Carl Nielsen, holding the position of leadership among today's Danish composers. Like Nielsen, he favors large forms: he has written nine symphonies and nine string quartets. And like his Swedish contemporary Dag Wirén, he has disclaimed a parochial approach, citing a multiplicity of influences ranging from Arabic and Oriental music to Bartók and Monteverdi as well as Nielsen and Sibelius. The record of the expansive and impactful *Sinfonia Boreale*, composed in 1951-1952, serves also to introduce a work of Per Nørgård (born 1932), the concertogrosso-like *Constellations* for twelve groups of strings.

ISÓLFSSON: *Passacaglia*. **LEIFS:** *Icelandic Overture, Op. 9*. Iceland Symphony Orchestra, William Strickland cond. (with Cowell *Symphony No. 16, "Icelandic"*). COMPOSERS RECORDINGS INC. (M) CRI 179 \$6.95.

Páll Isólfsson (1893-1974) and Jón Leifs (1899-1968) were Iceland's most prominent composers. Leifs emphasized Icelandic themes in his music (the overture listed here, introduced in 1926, is the most widely performed of all his works), while the music of Isólfsson, who was active as an organist as well as a composer, reflects to a degree the influence of one of his teachers, Max Reger.

LARSSON: *Violin Concerto, Op. 42.* André Gertler (violin); Stockholm Radio Orchestra, Sten Frykberg cond. **FERNSTRÖM:** *Concertino for Flute, Women's Chorus, and Chamber Orchestra, Op. 52.* Erik Holmstedt (flute); women's chorus; members of Stockholm Radio Orchestra, Sten Frykberg cond. **E. VON KOCH:** *Oxberg Variations.* Stockholm Symphony Orchestra, Stig Westerberg cond. TURNABOUT TV-S 34498 \$3.98.

LARSSON: *Orchestral Variations, Op. 51.* Swedish Radio Orchestra, Sixten Ehrling cond. **KARKOFF:** *Symphony No. 4, Op. 69.* Swedish Radio Orchestra, Stig Westerberg cond. SWEDISH DISCOFIL SLT-33164 \$7.50.

Lars-Erik Larsson (born 1908) is unquestionably the most widely known Swedish composer of his generation. His lyric, late-Romantic style has made him extremely popular in Scandinavia and earned him a good reception (if less than prominence) abroad. About twenty-five years ago he modified his style to embrace serialism, but in a highly personal manner which enabled his new music to retain the expressive qualities of his earlier works (such as the charming *Pastoral Suite*). The record featuring his *Violin Concerto* is one of the most intriguing discussed here.

The concerto itself, composed in 1952 and dedicated to André Gertler, is a splendid work which could very well be a successful addition to the violin repertoire in this country. The set of variations on a robust Dalecarlian march tune by Erland von Koch (born 1910) is at the very least ingratiating (if less substantial than Blomdahl's *Pastoral Suite* for strings, which occupied its position when this collection was originally issued on London International). But perhaps more striking than either, in its way, is the irresistible *Concertino* of Fernström (1897-1957), who composed eleven symphonies but is remembered almost entirely on the

strength of this single work. Fernström was born to missionary parents in China and spent some time in the Orient and the Pacific islands before he saw his homeland. His *Concertino* is filled with simulated gamelan effects and other engaging little exoticisms, the flute is skittish rather than fluid, and the soft but insistent drumbeats almost never stop.

The *Orchestral Variations* of 1962 may be regarded as Larsson's most brilliantly realized serial work (a counterpart to the *Connotations* produced the same year by Aaron Copland, with whom Larsson shares more than a few common traits). The Fourth Symphony of Larsson's pupil Maurice Karkoff (born 1927) reflects an interest in the Middle Eastern folk music he encountered during a sojourn in Israel in 1963.

NYSTROEM: *Sinfonia Concertante for Cello and Orchestra.* E. VON KOCH: *Nordic Capriccio.* Erling Blöndal Bengtsson (cello, in Nystroem only); Swedish Radio Orchestra, Stig Westerberg cond. SWEDISH DISCOFIL SLT-33136 \$7.50.

Hilding Rosenberg (born 1892) and Gösta Nystroem (1890-1966) were the first Swedes to develop truly modern vocabularies; their work marks a new level of substance and importance in Swedish music, following that of the Peterson-Berger/Stenhammar period. Nystroem was a painter as well as a composer, and his musical language is not unlike that of his Russian contemporary Prokofiev. It is tempered, however, by a strain of impressionism and that peculiarly Nordic variety of fantasy evident in Swedish music from Berwald to the present. The *Sinfonia Concertante* is the only major Nystroem work available on records here at present (his *Sinfonia del Mare* was once available on the Dial label, and a superb recording of his Piano Concerto is available on Philips in Europe but not here). With it is one of Erland von Koch's most impressive scores (more substantial than the *Oxberg Variations*), the *Nordic Capriccio*.

PETTERSSON: *Symphony No. 7.* Stockholm Philharmonic, Antal Dorati cond. LONDON CS-6740 \$6.98.

Allan Pettersson (born 1911) is a composer virtually unheard of in this country until the release of this recording two years ago. He has written nine symphonies; the Seventh, dedicated to Dorati, suggests that Mahler has been a bigger influence in Petters-



Klaus Egge

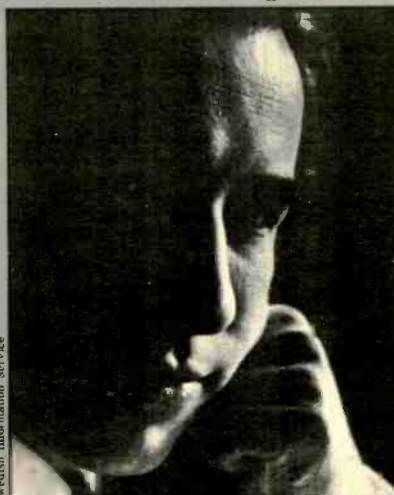


Lars-Erik Larsson



Erland von Koch

Maurice Karkoff





Gösta Nyström

Swedish Information Service



Knudåge Rørsager

Danish Information Office



Dag Wirén

Harald Saeverud



Norwegian Information Service

son's work than the expected Scandinavian factors. (This is borne out by the literature on his other symphonies, the most recent of which reaches the Mahlerian length of an hour and a quarter.) The Mahler influence is felt in a very general way, however, and not in terms of anything resembling imitation; this is a vast, brooding, strangely exalting work, in a language very much Pettersson's own.

RIISAGER: *Ballets: Qarritsiluni; Etude.* **NIELSEN:** *Helios Overture, Op. 17; Saga-Dream, Op. 39.* **GADE:** *Echoes of Ossian.* Royal Danish Orchestra; Jerzy Semkow cond. (in Riisager and Nielsen *Helios*); Igor Markevitch cond. (in Nielsen *Saga-Dream*); Johan Hye-Knudsen cond. (in Gade). **TURNABOUT TV-S 34085 \$3.98.**

Denmark's Knudåge Riisager (1897-1974), best known here for his saucy *Concertino for Trumpet and Strings*, showed great originality in his more ambitious works, and particularly in his chamber music. *Qarritsiluni* (1942), the more striking of the two ballet scores on this disc, is based on Eskimo themes from Greenland; *Etude* is an adaptation of Czerny's piano pieces.

ROSENBERG: *Symphony No. 2 (Sinfonia Grave).* Stockholm Philharmonic, Herbert Blomstedt cond. **WIRÉN:** *Symphony No. 4, Op. 27.* Swedish Radio Orchestra, Sixten Ehrling cond. **TURNABOUT TV-S 34436 \$3.98.**

ROSENBERG: *Symphony No. 3 ("The Four Ages of Man").* Stockholm Philharmonic, Herbert Blomstedt cond. **ODEON SCLP-1071 \$6.98.**

Hilding Rosenberg (born 1892) has been the musical father of a whole generation of important Swedish composers, numbering Sven-Erik Bäck, Karl-Birger Blomdahl, and Ingvar Lidholm among his pupils. His massive *Symphony No. 4*, a choral work titled *The Revelation of Saint John* (he conducted the U.S. première in 1948), is no longer available even on imported discs, but two of his purely orchestral symphonies can be heard now on Turnabout (see under Blomdahl for No. 6), and the especially admired No. 3 is on one of the few remaining Swedish Odeons. Dag Wirén (born 1905), is perhaps better known here for his credo than for his music: "I believe in Bach, Mozart, Carl Nielsen, and absolute music." He has declared further: "I prefer

that my music be regarded as European and not as specifically Swedish."

SAEVERUD: *Peer Gynt, Suite No. 1, Op. 28.* Louisville Orchestra, Robert Whitney cond. (with Rochberg *Night Music*). **LOUISVILLE M LOU 623 \$5.95.**

Harald Saeverud (born 1897), like his Norwegian compatriot Fartein Valen (1887-1952), is less recognizably Norse in his music than the younger Klaus Egge. Saeverud, who has nine symphonies to his credit, was deliberately more astringent than Grieg in writing his incidental music for Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, one of the very few modern Norwegian works to have been recorded outside Scandinavia. (A more recent recording of both of Saeverud's *Peer Gynt* Suites, played by the Oslo Philharmonic under Miltiades Caridis, has been issued on European Philips—but not in the U.S. or Britain.)

STENHAMMAR: *Symphony No. 2, in G Minor, Op. 17.* Stockholm Philharmonic, Tor Mann cond. **SWEDISH DISCOFIL SLT-33198 \$7.50.**

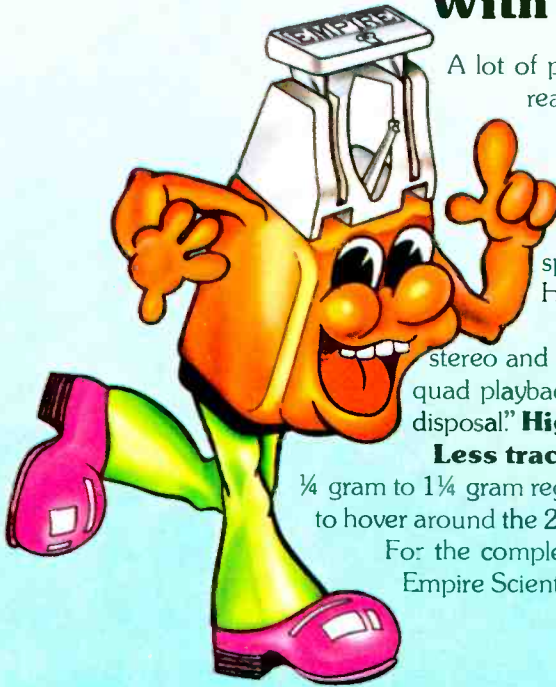
This recording, vintage 1957, shows its age more readily than the earlier ones made by Alfvén, and Tor Mann's direction is hardly the last word in propulsiveness. This impressive work deserves more spirited treatment, but, since there is nothing else of Stenhammar's available here now (Rafael Kubelik's recording of the *Serenade* with the Stockholm Philharmonic having vanished some years back with the rest of the MGM Heliodor line), this is included as the sole illustration of his broad-stroke style.

WIRÉN: *Serenade for String Orchestra, Op. 11.* **GRIEG:** *Holberg Suite, Op. 40; The Last Spring, Op. 34, No. 2.* English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary cond. **VANGUARD/CARDINAL VCS-10067 \$3.98.**

Ingratating (or perhaps "delicious") is the word for the *Serenade*, by far Wirén's best-known work (this is the third recording of it to appear here) and one of the most attractive things of its kind for string orchestra. In the light, breezy, but deeply satisfying manner of Holst's *St. Paul's Suite*, it is a far cry indeed from the austere intensity of Wirén's own Fourth Symphony (see above, under Rosenberg) or his Fourth String Quartet. An utterly delightful work, superbly played and recorded. □

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Judy Garland

“...a waif amidst forces”

By Robert Kimball

*There are names that live, names of people we can speak of at any moment as though they were present. . . . Everyone knows them well and yet is ever eager to hear about them again, always hoping to learn a little something new. Glamour, romance, a life filled with excitement, devotion, tenderness—and some touching misfortune. These are the things that cling to such poetic figures and when transmitted and perpetuated keep them ever fresh in the mind of posterity, causing an undying legend to grow up around them. . . . Adrienne Lecouvreur is one of those names.**

JUDY GARLAND is one of those names, too. A legend in her own time, she was an object of devotion for her legions of admirers who gladly shared the excitement and misfortunes of her life. But Judy Garland was also the greatest singing star in motion-picture history—as well as a gifted comedienne with a wonderful flair for parody, a fine dramatic actress, and an accomplished hooper who could keep step with Gene Kelly and Fred Astaire. Her movies, including *The Wizard of Oz*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, *The Pirate*, *Easter Parade*, and *A Star Is Born*, have endured the test of time and changing tastes. Moreover, she was a major recording artist who made classic recordings of countless songs and a live performer who projected a song's meaning so convincingly that the best of her personal appearances are deeply etched in her audiences' memories.

Yet today, six years after her death at the age of forty-seven, we know more about her pills, her depressions, breakdowns, suicide attempts, and other personal calamities than we know about Judy as an artist. And the parade of recently published Garland biographies with their newer,

bigger, “never-before-told revelations” about “the real Judy,” though it throws plenty of carrion to the glutinous Garland Cult, contributes few clues and insights into the nature and quality of her art. Yet neither the authors of these new tomes nor their publishers have felt any necessity to explain why they have so egregiously skirted and glossed over the most important part of Judy's life.

Those who recall her pitiful last years in the public spotlight must remember how Garland's fans egged her on as if she were some aging, hopelessly out-of-shape and over-the-hill bullfighter who had to fight, bleed, suffer, and ultimately die for his public. Toward the end her audiences often showed as little sense or control as she did—or the people around her, with their mixture of love, devotion, exploitation, and anger. For Judy was, quite simply, a commodity who was bought and sold so that others could make money. And vulnerable though she was, she had learned her role too well, allowing herself to be exploited and continuing to sing even when her voice was like a decayed ruin, because applause nourished her when nothing else could.

There is, of course, a morbid fascination for some, an exhilaration for others, in reading about the life of one who has known the heights of fame and suffered the evident agonies of effort it apparently takes to remain there. Of the new books, Anne Edwards' *Judy Garland: A Biography* (Simon and Schuster) is the most compact, and Gerold Frank's *Judy* (Harper & Row) is the most comprehensive and includes the most new material about Judy's life. But neither is “definitive” as their publishers so modestly claim. Indeed, publishers have abused that word so much that I wince every time I see it.

IF you have read this far, you will know this article is not intended for Judy's already persuaded fans. It is addressed rather to those who might not be old enough to remember her or who knew her work only during her last years of pathos and tragedy and didn't quite understand what all the shouting was about.

Judy Garland was born Frances Ethel Gumm on June 10, 1922, in the small town of Grand Rapids, Minnesota (not Gerald Ford's Grand Rapids, Michigan). She was the youngest of three daughters born to a couple involved in show business. At her birth her father was running a local movie house. Her ambitious mother saw her daughters as the surrogate fulfillment of her own blighted hopes as a performer.

The most talented of the three Gumm Sisters, Judy was a seasoned professional entertainer long before she was signed by MGM in 1935 at the age of thirteen. When a marquee at a theater where they were playing erroneously billed them as “The Glum Sisters,” George Jessel, who was appearing on the same bill, suggested they take the name of Garland after his friend the theater critic Robert Garland. Frances became Judy because of her infatuation with Hoagy Carmichael's song *Judy*.

In June 1936, Judy cut her first recordings. Her earliest releases dis-

THE JUDY BOOKS

- *Judy*, by Gerold Frank, Harper & Row, New York (1975), 704 pp., illustrated, \$12.50.
- *Judy Garland: A Biography*, by Anne Edwards, Simon and Schuster, New York (1975), 349 pp., illustrated; includes discography and list of films, \$9.95.
- *Young Judy*, by David Dahl and Barry Kehoe, Mason/Charter, New York (1975), 230 pp., illustrated, \$9.95.
- *Rainbow: The Stormy Life of Judy Garland*, by Christopher Finch, Grosset & Dunlap, New York (1975), 256 pp., primarily pictures, \$19.95, scheduled for September publication.
- *Little Girl Lost*, by Al DiOrno, Jr. originally published by Arlington House (1974), reissued in paperback by Manor Books, New York (1975), 256 pp., \$1.50.

There have been others—and there will undoubtedly be more.

*From a review by the French critic Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869) of the play *Adrienne Lecouvreur* by Augustin Eugène Scribe and Ernest Wilfrid Legouvé, first performed in 1849. The play was the basis of the libretto of Francesco Cilea's opera *Adriana Lecouvreur* (1902).



Liz Minnelli and Judy Garland photo

My favorite of my mother's recordings is "Judy at Carnegie Hall," and as a singer, I was heavily influenced by it. Considering it quite fairly and judiciously, I think it is the best live-performance album I've heard by anybody. If I had to choose a second favorite, it would be "Judy Garland and Liza Minnelli 'Live' at the London Palladium."

Of all my mother's records my favorite individual song is *On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe*. She sang it in the picture *The Harvey Girls* and

recorded it with the Merry Macs for Decca. To me this song represents a sort of turning point in her career, for after that her style changed. The original recording is included in the MCA set "The Best of Judy Garland." My favorites of her albums are "Judy in Love" and "Judy at the Palace." Both albums are now out of print. However, all the songs but one (*This Is It*) from "Judy in Love" are included in Capitol's "The Judy Garland Deluxe Set." I hope MCA will rerelease "Judy at the Palace."

play the vocal savvy and refinement of an adult. Judy appears to have always had an innate sense of style, phrasing, clear projection, impeccable diction, and as much respect for a song's lyric as its music. At her best she evinced a subtle ability to change speed, a fine sense of pacing, and an uncanny way of building songs to logical climaxes. She did not have a large range, but when she sang she conveyed a rush of joyful energy, a natural unforced gaiety, a compelling warmth, and something that said to many, "Join me. Love me. Share these songs with me."

She turned her classic *Over the Rainbow* into a national anthem of hope, a universal longing for a better world full of bright promising things, the life we all imagine in our dreams. She made *The Man That Got Away* into the quintessential lament for lost love. She made many recordings, several of which have been rereleased numerous times. Yet on the whole she has not been as well served by the record companies for whom she made scads of money as she should have been. Anyone who seeks to build a Garland collection will need the advice of confirmed Garland fans and helpful record-store salespeople.

Judy Garland is no longer listed in the main Schwann catalog, and the "popular over two years old" section of Schwann-2 lists only a handful of recordings as being still available. This does not mean that others are not around, but that they will be much harder to find.

One should begin with her years at MGM (1936-1950) when she was also a Decca recording artist. Her first recordings and several of her lesser known numbers are in "Judy Garland: Collector's Items (1936-1945)"; this two-record set (Decca DEA 7-5) is the most precisely researched, annotated, and carefully assembled of the reissues and the

only one to indicate original recording dates. Many of her early standards appear in "The Best of Judy Garland" (MCA 2-4003), also a two-disc album. "The Uncollected Judy Garland" (Stanyan SR 10095) includes four previously unreleased Decca singles, four 1953 Columbias with Gordon Jenkins' orchestra (she recorded very briefly for Columbia), and four songs from the animated film cartoon *Gay Purr-ee*.

Judy is well represented in the MGM series of original-soundtrack albums released under the umbrella title "Those Glorious MGM Musicals." Included are the soundtracks of some of her best movies, such as *Easter Parade*, *In the Good Old Summertime*, and *Summer Stock*. The soundtrack of the film *The Wizard of Oz* is available on MGM SE-3996ST; Judy's commercial recordings of songs from the movie with Victor Young's orchestra fill one side of MCA 521. I prefer the original soundtrack on MGM because it includes the other members of the cast, such as Bert Lahr, Jack Haley, and Ray Bolger. Judy's recordings from *Meet Me in St. Louis* and *The Harvey Girls* are no longer in Schwann, but they have been kept alive in England and are available on an imported disc (MCA-MCFM 2588). Judy's association with MGM ended bitterly in 1950. After a period of personal appearances, she made *A Star Is Born*; the soundtrack of that picture, once available on Columbia, is now hard to find on Harmony 11366.

In 1955 Judy began recording for Capitol Records. The high point of that collaboration is the still big-selling "Judy at Carnegie Hall" album (Capitol SWBC 1569), recorded live on April 23, 1961. This album more than any other shows Judy's extraordinary effect on a live audience. A three-record grab bag from her Capitol years is "The Judy Garland De-

luxe Set" (Capitol STOL 2988). Pickwick's two-disc "Judy Garland: Her Greatest Hits" duplicates some of the songs in Capitol's "Deluxe Set," but includes some that are not otherwise available. Finally, there is "Judy Garland and Liza Minnelli 'Live' at the London Palladium" (Capitol ST 11191) recorded on November 8, 1964, a single record of solos and duets by Judy and her now-famous daughter, who won the coveted Oscar that Judy never attained.

For the Garland specialists there is much, much more, including records of live performances, especially airchecks of radio performances. Quality and distribution of the many pirated Judy Garland records are so variable and unreliable that I will not discuss them here. It is, in any case, difficult to square the notion of giving any money at all to ghouls when one reflects how just a little of it might have made the singer's exit more graceful. Obviously, there is an urgent need for a complete Judy Garland discography that traces the origins and history of each of her recordings, following them through all their various reissues.

WHILE the orchestral sound on the Decca and Metro recordings is large, it is not too large for Judy, who rides over it triumphantly. The bloated, brass- and percussion-heavy, fake-Latin, souped-up arrangements from the last years, however, are a distraction and an encumbrance. Though they are no better or worse than most standard arrangements of the period, they are no help to Judy who, in her last fading years, was like Dreiser's Sister Carrie, "a waif amidst forces." See her movies, listen to her recordings, for they are her legacy. And if the flood of new books creates a new desire to see and to hear Judy, then that might be their most significant contribution. □

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Motors	3
Heads	3
4-Channel Record and Playback	Yes
Built-in S-O-S/Echo	No
Overdub	Yes
Frequency Response at 7½ ips	±3 dB, 40-18,000 Hz
S/N	55 dB
Wow and Flutter at 7½ ips	0.08%
Manufacturer's suggested retail price	\$739.50

DOKORDER 7140

Motors	3
Heads	3
4-Channel Record and Playback	Yes
Built-in S-O-S/Echo	Yes
Overdub	Yes
Frequency Response at 7½ ips	±3 dB, 30-23,000 Hz
S/N	58 dB
Wow and Flutter at 7½ ips	0.08%
Manufacturer's suggested retail price	\$629.95

Features and specifications as published by respective manufacturers in currently available literature.

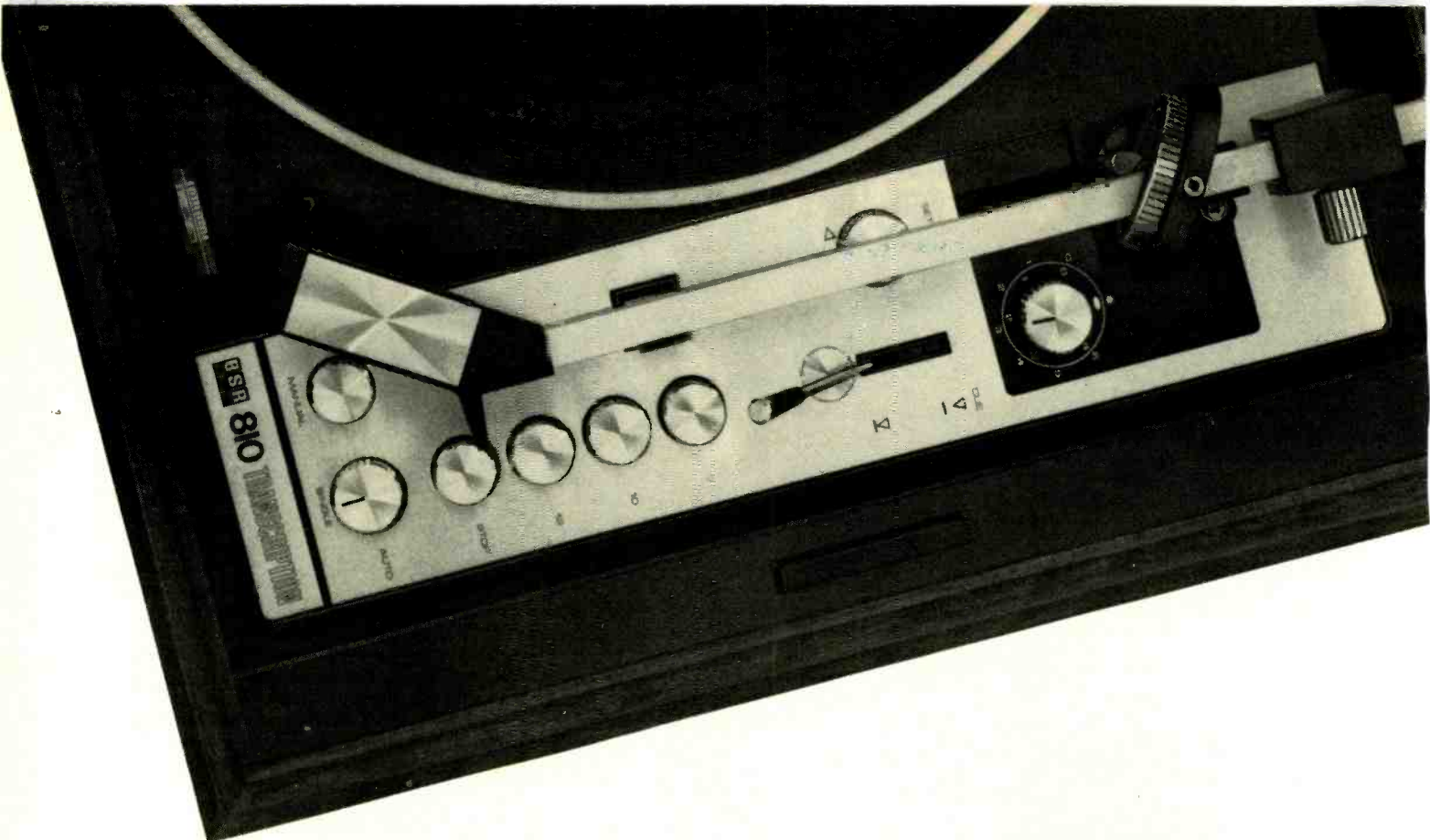
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Ralph Hodges spells out the options
for equipment buyers who are ready to take

THE 4-CHANNEL PLUNGE

IN the many months since our last large-scale survey (October 1971) of quadraphonic developments, a number of predictable events have taken place. *First*, four-channel equipment overall has gotten better—not just here and there, but in almost every aspect of performance and flexibility. *Second*, the catalog of four-channel recordings has grown appreciably in recent months, with most of the major U.S. companies issuing new releases on a routine basis and some of the overseas giants reportedly ready to begin at almost any time (Angel is already releasing some four-channel discs without calling attention to them as such). *Third*, the entire industry—equipment and record manufacturers alike—has become more sophisticated about the medium. The software producer is starting to learn how to work within the technical and aesthetic limitations imposed by (and on) the hardware designer, and vice versa. In short, the nature of the quadraphonic beast—what it's good at and what it isn't—is gradually becoming clearer to all. And *finally*, meaningful progress is at last being made toward adopting an "official" format for quadraphonic FM broadcasting under the auspices of the National Quadraphonic Radio Committee.

What with all these extensive resources and energies already invested, the idea that quadraphonics is simply something that is going to dry up and blow away—as some predicted (or perhaps hoped) not so long ago—seems more unlikely than ever. On the contrary, informed prognosticators are expecting a rather quiet and slow-moving (compared to the two-channel stereo explosion some years ago, that is) revolution to establish four-channel firmly within the next decade, perhaps at a moderate but significant growth rate of 10 or 20 per cent per year. If so, a lot of STEREO REVIEW readers, being naturally more receptive than average to new

audio techniques, will be acquiring four-channel equipment in a very short time. How might they—or you, if you count yourself among them—best proceed just now?

IN its present form, four-channel stereo began about six years ago as a series of speculative experiments to determine whether live-performance realism could be approached more closely by extending the techniques of stereophonic reproduction. Two-channel stereo is capable of placing voices or musical instruments anywhere within a broad panorama bounded (approximately) by the two speakers. As such, it offers a dramatic increase in spatial realism over single-channel "mono" reproduction. However, even stereo at its best tends to be a somewhat remote listening experience. The performance is *there*, out front in its spacious concert hall, while you are *here*, in a rather smallish listening room.

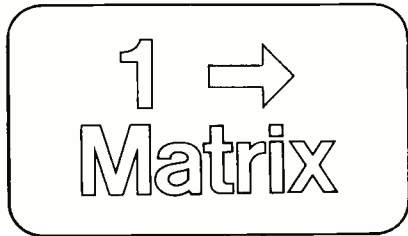
The quadraphonic solution to this shortcoming was an obvious one: add two more channels emanating from speakers behind the listener, and reproduce through them the sounds we would hear (or that the producer would like us to hear) from behind if we were actually present at the performance. This gives a total of four stereo "panoramas"—in front, in back, and to either side—totally enclosing the listener.

Actually, it was hoped that the technique would do more than just surround the at-home audience with stereo "stages," all of them typically remote. The experimenters looked to this multisided sonic bombardment for a complete transcendence of the basic stereo illusion. They wanted to overwhelm the listener's sense of apartness and persuade him that the performance actually *was* taking place around him, and to a certain extent they succeeded, although the illusion is still a difficult thing to produce consistently.

Today's four-channel recordings make use of two types of quadraphonic "presentation." One is the "surround" approach, in which performers actually seem to be behind and to the sides of the listener. In the other, the rear speakers' main function is to contribute to the sense of an enveloping concert hall by reproducing the side and rear sound reflections that would occur within such a hall. The surround approach can be very impressive for jazz or rock, and we may in time even hear serious works composed especially for it. The second effect—that of bringing to the listening room a reasonable facsimile of concert-hall acoustics—is, of course, of most concern to the classical-music listener. A listener to a quadraphonic recording of this sort will not be particularly aware of the rear speakers as actual sound sources; their contribution is the enhancement of the sense of concert-hall space. Briefly, this recording technique tries to provide a sense of "you are there"; the surround approach more often aims at an illusion of "they are here"—in your living room, that is. Still other illusions are possible. A few recordings have toyed with multiple echoes and exaggerated reverberation coming from all sides. Some of these can produce a profound sense of disorientation in the listener, reminiscent perhaps of the more bizarre effects of experiments with sensory deprivation.

As we proceed into the area of quadraphonic equipment, it will be a good idea to keep in mind a clear distinction between the four-channel effect and the hardware used to create it. What illusion a listener experiences with a four-channel recording is the decision of the record producer, and it should ideally be the same whether he chooses to commit his work to SQ, QS, or CD-4 disc—or even discrete four-channel tape. In evaluating the various quadraphonic systems and their associated equip-

ment, we're concerned only with such mundane things as how well they can preserve the individuality and integrity of the four separate channels the recording carries. In other words, the four-channel medium and its contribution to listening satisfaction is one thing; the *means* of reproducing quadrasonic sound is another.



Naturally, the first quadrasonic recordings were on four-track tape, and since this format provided physically separate channels, what was picked up through the microphones was exactly what we heard, undiluted by anything but the normal distortions of the recording process, through the four speakers. Right from the beginning, however, it was felt that the new medium would not go far unless it could be handled successfully by a phono disc, which remains still the central medium of sound reproduction. How to get *four* channels into a record groove with only *two* walls became the question of the day. "Matrixing" was the first proposed answer to become a commercial reality.

Expressed as simply as possible, the matrix systems (principally SQ and QS at the present time) encode the original four signals (from the "discrete" master tape) into two channels by combining them in complex *phase* as well as *amplitude* relationships that can subsequently be unscrambled by the proper decoder in the playback system. For example, the decoder receives, from the inner record-groove wall, the left-front and the left-rear channels mixed together in a composite signal. But within that signal there is "encoded" some special information intended to tell it which part to assign to the left-front speaker and which to the left-rear speaker. Right-channel information from the outer groove wall receives the same treatment. Play a matrix-encoded recording on a normal stereo system and it will sound like a conventional stereo recording; play it through a four-channel system with the correct type of decoder and you should hear a reasonably accurate facsimile of the four-channel tape

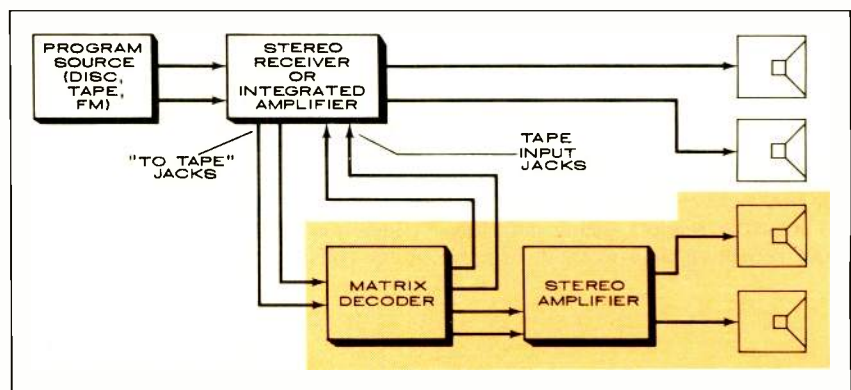
original. In other words, the matrix technique is quite compatible with two-channel reproduction; it is also theoretically as adaptable to other two-channel formats — FM and stereo tape — as it is to the phono disc.

The hitch with the matrix systems lies in the unscrambling processes of the decoders; they are not perfect. Into the left-front channel inevitably leaks a little bit of the left-rear signal, and the left-rear always has a trace of the left-front. This breakdown in interchannel *separation* is frequently responsible for imprecise and unstable localization of sound sources; you can't be quite sure *where* the rhythm guitar is, for example, and sometimes it even seems to move about. The Columbia SQ and Sansui QS systems base their cases for consumer acceptance largely on the special ways in which they cope with the separation problem — that is, between *which* channels they tolerate this signal leakage, and *how much* leakage they allow. In the final analysis, the worth of their separate approaches has to be judged in the ear of the listener, and each company has published extensive data intended to show that their way provides the greatest audible satisfaction for the majority of people. In addition, each has also sought to increase this audible satisfaction by developing "logic" circuits to work in conjunction with their decoders; these circuits are designed to improve the "which" and the "how much," so to speak.

A simple, unadorned matrix decoder for SQ or QS treats every incoming signal the same. The ear, however, is highly selective (or so the theory goes), and it is likelier to notice faulty separation more readily in some circumstances than in others. If these circumstances are predictable, then it should be possible to design a sort of control circuit to manipulate the output of the decoder at the critical moments, thereby increasing the *apparent* separation of the system. This is the rationale for the *logic circuits* in matrix quadrasonics.

Throughout their development, the SQ and QS systems have offered a number of built-in logic options to enhance their basic decoders. At present, the highest form of QS logic is "Vario-Matrix," which is rapidly becoming standard in all Sansui four-channel equipment. The best decoders for SQ combine the "wave-matching" and "variable-blend" logic techniques. Lesser forms of SQ logic exist as well, variously termed "front-back" or "wave-matching with front back." A good many four-channel receivers contain SQ decoders with no logic assistance whatever. But, on the other hand, SQ decoders more advanced than many now being offered are waiting in the wings — the highly applauded Tate decoder, for example, an even more elaborate version from the Tate distributor, Audionics, and CBS' own "Paramatrix" configuration. In every case, the better (and costlier) logic systems provide an audible improvement. (Non-logic decoders that will handle QS recordings are also found in quadrasonic receivers and amplifiers; often these are designated RM, or "Regular Matrix." They are a "plus" feature if your real interest in the component is its SQ facilities, but they do not work nearly as well as the Vario-Matrix decoders.)

The great majority of matrix decoders is found already built into four-channel receivers. The number of available "add-on" matrix decoders has actually declined from two or three years ago. For some time Sansui has offered none for QS, although the QSD-1, a rather elaborate and expensive unit, is expected to appear soon (price is not yet announced). As for SQ, logic-enhanced separate decoders are widely available only from Lafayette and Sony. Clearly, most four-channel purchasers are expected to want to trade in their present receivers and amplifiers for completely equipped quadrasonic units. However, if you wish to retain the equipment you have now, conversion to matrix four-channel can be made

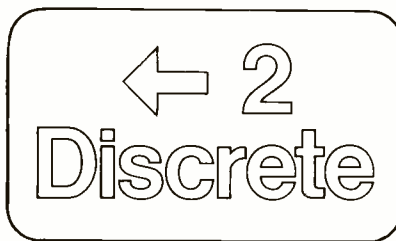


without discarding a thing. You'll require one of the separate decoders (SQ or, when available, QS) plus two more speakers and an integrated stereo amplifier—or a preamp/power-amp combination if you prefer. Figure 1 illustrates the way to connect the new components. The actual decoder can be connected to the tape-monitor loop of your existing receiver or amplifier, or at the preamp/power-amp junction jacks. In the first case the rear channels will not be affected by any of the front-channel controls; in the second, the tone, balance, volume, and filter controls of your original receiver/amplifier will act on the rear channels as well as the front. Each connection scheme has its practical advantages, and a little experience will tell you which one you prefer.

Another possibility is to buy one of the decoder/integrated two-channel amplifier combinations available from Hitachi, Lafayette, Sony, and probably a few others by now. These have a built-in stereo amplifier for the rear speakers, which are the only additional components you'll need. Your present turntable and phono cartridge are almost certainly adequate for matrix four-channel (a distinct advantage of the matrix systems), and the signals from the discs, intercepted before they reach the decoder, can be taped on almost any two-channel recorder with acceptable-to-good results as well. Also, many FM stations nationwide are now broadcasting matrixed material, in some cases "live," that you can receive and decode. If this is an attraction, you'd be wise to check what system(s) your local stations are using. While SQ and QS are compatible to the extent that you'll always get *something* out of the rear speakers even if you're using the wrong decoder, it will not always be the *right* something.

Four-channel decoders vary widely in price, with "full-logic" SQ, for example, priced at as little as just over \$100 and as much as \$200 plus. Quadraphonic receivers and facilities

containing amplifiers span an even broader price range, depending on amplifier power and other variables.



The original discrete (meaning "separate") quadraphonic format was four-track tape, which gave to each channel its own separate and inviolable magnetic track. The CD-4 "discrete" four-channel disc system, developed by JVC in Japan and sponsored originally by RCA in this country, depending heavily though it does on matrix techniques, is *virtually* discrete, audibly and measurably, when set up and operating correctly. In other words, the separation between the four channels that the listener hears is generally as good as the separation in stereo FM.

As is the case with the matrix systems, the four channels to be recorded on a CD-4 disc are combined into two channels. However, the information necessary to unscramble them is not expressed in the signal as either phase or amplitude differences. Instead, it takes the form of an *additional* high-frequency signal (above the range of human hearing, and beyond the frequency response of most speaker systems as well) that is cut into each record-groove wall *along with* the composite audio-frequency signal. A conventional two-channel system ignores this frequency-modulated "carrier," and a satisfactory two-channel presentation of the recorded material can therefore take place. But a *four*-channel demodulator (the current term for a CD-4 decoder) separates the carrier from the audio-frequency signal, diverts it through demodulating circuits, and ultimately uses it to achieve a very successful separation of left-front

from left-rear (etc.) signals. The system is quite analogous to the present technique of stereo FM broadcasting, in which a special carrier to which only stereo tuners are sensitive is used to separate left and right from the composite left-plus-right signal the station transmits.

The limitations of the CD-4 system derive solely from the suitability of the phono disc as a medium for the super-high-frequency information of the carrier. From the start it was argued that (1) few commercial phono cartridges have the frequency response to manage the 45,000-Hz upper limits of the carrier signal (true, so special cartridges were developed, equipped with specially shaped styli to negotiate the tiny ridges of the carrier in the groove wall); (2) CD-4 records would involve fantastic complications of the record production process (also true, so steps were taken to deal with these complications one by one); (3) wear, particularly if an inferior cartridge were used for the critical first few plays, would wipe out all the carrier information on the disc (true again, so work was begun on finding a plastic compound for molding the discs that would obviate the worst problems of wear); (4) additional record "space" taken up by the CD-4 signal would necessitate a reduction in recorded level, playing time per disc, or both (also true, but playing times of *typical* length—under twenty-five minutes per side—are well within the capabilities of CD-4). Given these difficulties, it is a tribute to the persistence of modern technology that the CD-4 concept still survives. And not only does it survive; it apparently prospers.

Most current four-channel receivers have built-in CD-4 demodulators, and there is a goodly number of add-on demodulators besides. Adding CD-4 to an existing stereo system involves the same additional equipment as adding matrix capability: a demodulator (about \$120 and up), two more speakers, and an integrated stereo amplifier (or the equivalent) to

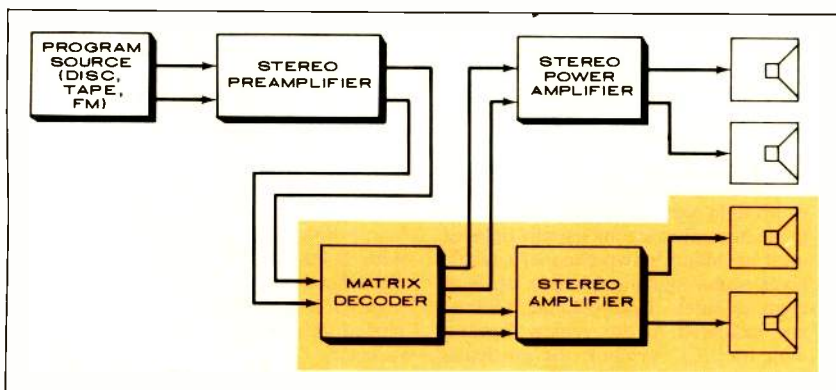
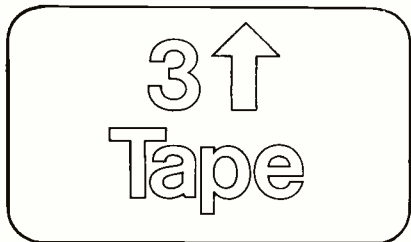


Fig. 1. Left, two schemes for adding matrix four-channel to an existing stereo system. Shaded areas contain the additional components required. The scheme at near left can also be used with stereo receivers and integrated amplifiers having external jacks that connect the preamplifier and power-amplifier sections. Note that the second stereo amplifier required can be an integrated amp, preamp/power-amp combination, or, if the decoder has adequate rear-channel controls, simply a power amplifier.

drive them (see Figure 2 for the proper mode of connection). However, in the case of CD-4, the record player becomes especially critical and usually must be altered as well. First, the phono cartridge must be capable of the required frequency response (45 kHz), and this almost always means replacing an existing stereo model with a CD-4 type using a Shibata or similar stylus (and if you are particularly attached to a given make of cartridge, please note that not *all* cartridge manufacturers offer CD-4 equivalents as yet). Second, the cables that connect the turntable to the demodulator must exhibit a minimum of high-frequency loss. Such low-capacitance cables are standard on many current turntables and they can often be purchased for older models, but it's best to look before you leap. Finally, in the past there have been enough instances of incompatibility between cartridge and demodulator—and even cartridge and tone arm—to warrant mention. All evidence suggests that these problems are disappearing rapidly, but if and when they occur, they may call for drastic remedies, such as replacement of one or the other of the components concerned. A start-from-scratch alternative to this sorting process is offered by several complete turntables with suitable cartridges and CD-4 demodulators built in.

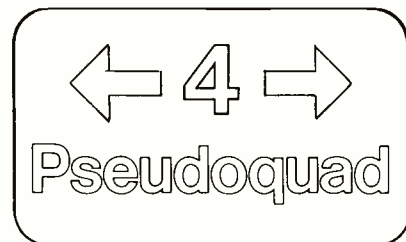


We shouldn't, of course, neglect the *truly* discrete four-channel program sources, all of which are tape. Open-reel four-channel tape machines have been around for years. Most of today's models can play back and record four channels; probably because of the limited availability of pre-recorded quadrasonic tapes, these are most often promoted as equipment for the serious home recordist who seeks multi-track recording capability. Eight-track quadrasonic tape players abound, and there are even a few machines that can record in four channels. As stated earlier, essentially perfect inter-channel separation can be expected from all of these tape devices. They

connect to a system in the same way as a CD-4 demodulator, and they require the same two additional speakers and amplification channels. Otherwise, choice of a four-channel tape machine should be based on the same criteria you'd apply to any tape deck: noise, distortion, frequency response, and wow and flutter.

While matrix four-channel discs can usually be taped by any stereo tape machine, a true four-channel machine will be required for CD-4 dubbing if the tape is expected to provide four channels on playback. This is because the CD-4 carrier exceeds the frequency response of the audio tape medium; CD-4 material must therefore be first demodulated (into four separate channels) and *then* taped. Likewise, the CD-4 carrier is beyond the transmission capabilities of stereo FM and cannot be broad-

cast at the present time. (Presumably, any FCC-approved system for quadrasonic FM will take care of this shortcoming.) Matrix four-channel material is currently being transmitted via the stereo FM facilities of quite a few stations around the country, however. Such broadcasts are received as conventional stereo unless processed with a suitable decoder by the home listener.



Quadrasonic sound is still a new medium, and the supply of commer-

QUADRAPHONICS: THE PROGRAMMERS AND THE PLAYERS

SQ	CD-4	QS
A&M	A&M	A&M
Advent	Asylum	ABC
Angel	Atco	ATQD
Audio Spectrum	Atlantic	BASF
Blue Sky	Capricorn	Black Jazz
Capitol	Chrysalis	Bluesway
Columbia	Discreet	Blue Thumb
Connoisseur Society	Elektra	Candide
CTI	Fania	Command
Enterprise	Finnadar	Impulse
Epic	Grunt	Kilmarnock
Golden Crest	JVC	Longines Symph.
Halcyon	Mirror	Ode
Kudu	Nonesuch	Ovation
Monument	Project 3	Project 3
Owl	RCA	Quad Spectrum
Philadelphia Int.	Reprise	RTV
Project 3	Rolling Stones	Tumbleweed
Stax	RSO	Turnabout
Vanguard	Warner Bros.	Vox

Caveat lector: there are undoubtedly other labels releasing discs in four-channel formats in addition to those listed, and it should be noted that no company as yet releases everything it produces in the four-channel format. Most of the companies listed make some (not all) releases available on discrete Q-8 eight-track cartridges, and a few of them put an occasional best seller on discrete open-reel tape as well. STEREO REVIEW reviews most recordings in the stereo-disc format, and in the quadrasonic formats as well *when they are available*. But the issuing companies remain cautious with their four-channel releases—not everything is brought out in quadrasonic, and those items that are are usually delayed until an album's two-channel success gives some slight guarantee of four-channel sales. Four-channel reviews are indicated in the review heading with the "□" symbol; the particular

format (SQ, CD-4, or QS) is indicated in the review proper.

- **SQ:** The matrix system developed by CBS Laboratories and originally marketed through the joint efforts of CBS and Sony of Japan. Some form of SQ decoding is now offered in practically all four-channel equipment.

- **CD-4:** The "discrete-disc" system developed by JVC of Japan and promoted in this country by JVC and RCA. CD-4 facilities are now almost as common in advanced four-channel equipment as SQ decoding.

- **QS:** The matrix system developed by Sansui of Japan. Although very simple QS decoders are found (along with SQ facilities) in a great deal of four-channel equipment, the advanced logic (Vario-Matrix) decoders are included only in Sansui equipment at the moment.

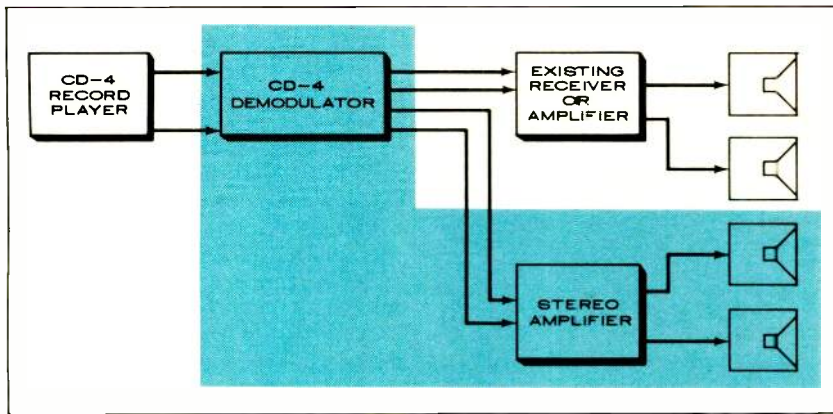
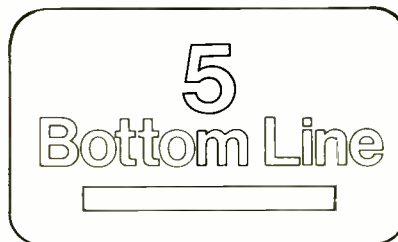


Fig. 2. Connecting CD-4 facilities to an existing stereo system. The record player should be equipped with a suitable CD-4 phono cartridge and low-capacitance cables. Any "discrete" four-channel program source—a quadrasonic tape deck, for example—can be substituted for the record player and demodulator.

cial four-channel recordings has yet to meet the demand created by the successful hardware. To be sure, the total number of quadrasonic recordings available would amount to a very large record collection indeed, but within any given category it would probably be impossible for a music lover, whatever his tastes, to live by quad alone. Fortunately, however, it turns out that the matrix decoders—the simplest as well as the most (logic-assisted) complex—can be tricked by most conventional stereo recordings into assigning a certain amount of recorded information to the rear channels. This is of course a random phenomenon; the stereo recordings simply contain (by mere chance, in most cases) some information that looks to the decoder as if it belongs in the rear channels—but it often sounds very good when reproduced that way. This is the so-called "synthesized four-channel effect," and it has kept many quadrasonic enthusiasts going when a true four-channel rendition of Buxtehude's Cantatas still looked too far in the future to hope for. There are, in fact, several stereo recordings around, made long before quadrasonic sound was ever dreamt of, that seem almost to have been deliberately encoded for some future matrix system. The most striking of these, from all reports, is the Stockhausen *Kontakte*, Deutsche Grammophon 138811. Another demonstration favorite of four-channel illusionists is "Last Night of the Proms," Philips 6588011.

Only the matrix systems can synthesize a quadrasonic effect from stereo recordings; CD-4 demodulators can't do a thing for them except route the same information that the front channels get to the rear channels as well. Of the matrix systems, QS has made the greatest point of this

capability, going so far as to add synthesizer circuits to its decoders to get as much from the effect as possible. CBS has also developed a circuit for the purpose, and it may become available from SQ licensees in the near future. Most other matrix decoders will yield enough to impress you, however. And though it may at first seem rather Rube Goldberg, this approach to four-channel sound has genuine technical validity, and it really has to be tried to be believed.



When you get down to the point of purchasing any four-channel equipment, you naturally want your options spelled out as clearly as possible. Briefly, they are these. Columbia's SQ (in its best logic form) and Sansui's QS Vario-Matrix are both very good. CD-4, when operating at its full potential (refer to the discussion above), is a bit better at delivering the optimum quadrasonic effect, but this is a distinction you may be able to perceive only at odd, isolated moments during a musical performance. (The reason CD-4 has only a small edge here probably has to do with imponderables—room acoustics, differences between front and rear speakers, and peculiarities of recordings—as much as with anything else.)

If the choice still stumps you, you may want to be influenced by the number and the nature of the recordings available for each system. CD-4 and SQ have balanced offerings; the companies involved are, well, muscu-

lar in this market, and many of the best-known pop groups as well as classical performers record regularly for them. QS does not yet have quite this clout; much of its pop repertoire is obscure, and its classical offerings are largely small-scale in both repertoire and performer reputation. But if you want the best possible synthesized quadrasonic effect from two-channel stereo recordings, QS is the logical choice at the moment.

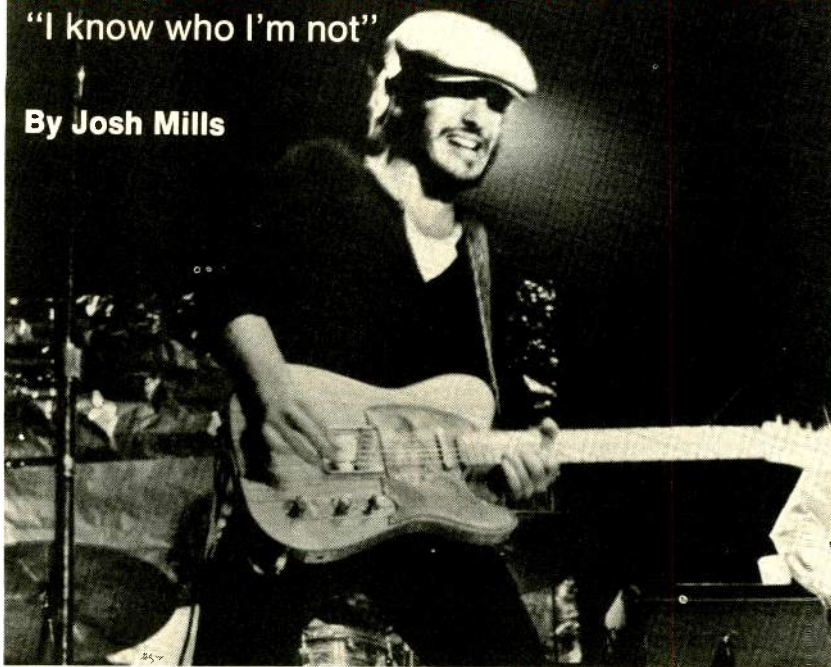
It would be some kind of bliss to report that all these facilities are available in a single piece of equipment, but they're not, of course. CD-4 comes in many (if not most) four-channel receivers. Some of these receivers also have logic-enhanced SQ. The QS Vario-Matrix is currently available only as a built-in feature of Sansui products (it is likely that QS licensees—and Sansui itself, with the upcoming QSD-1—will soon fill the gap, however). So if you have your heart set on the best of all three systems, you will have to buy a Sansui receiver (containing QS Vario-Matrix and CD-4) and then add a separate SQ decoder from Sony or Lafayette if the CBS SQ facilities (frankly no match for full-logic SQ) do not prove adequate. An ideal combination of CD-4 and SQ can be had in several receivers, but the elementary (logic-lacking) "RM" switch position is the best they offer for QS.

Thus, though the overall situation may be frustrating, it is not likely to reduce you to mere coin-flipping for the final decision. If you have firm requirements and/or cool powers of objectivity, the choice should not involve an insurmountable number of variables. But even if you find yourself hunting, wavering, and vacillating from option to option, you can be comforted by the knowledge that almost any equipment you choose will have facilities for expansion and updating. This is the real trademark of component audio equipment, the designer's *sine qua non* that has remarkably preserved even some quasi-antique mono-era equipment from obsolescence.

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

"I know who I'm not"

By Josh Mills



LESS than two years ago, in the time before the Flood, a host of young songwriters were being touted as the "Young Dylans." The three most prominent were Bruce Springsteen, Jackson Browne, and Elliott Murphy. Far more impressive than their commercial sales were their press notices: Murphy, who sold the least records of the three, had the thickest press kit, roughly the heft of the Greater Detroit telephone book.

Then came the heavy winter dose of Dylan, from "Planet Waves" to the tour album, and next his triumphant "Blood on the Tracks," which made "Young Dylan" an obsolete phrase. With the master back, there was no longer a need to establish an heir. Or was it, perhaps, that Browne and Springsteen, through moderately successful albums and more successful tours, had established their own identity with the public?

"I dunno," Bruce Springsteen reflected, scratching his beard. "If I'd immersed myself in this Dylan stuff, it could have been a burden. But like if you know who you are, nothing can bother you . . . and I'm not bothered with who I am. I know who I'm *not*. And that's enough. I know where I come from."

On the floor next to Bruce, in his manager's dim New York office, was

a reprint from *Melody Maker*, the English pop paper, with Bruce's photo and a headline reading "Hail to the New Genius!" He scuffed it with his toe. "I suppose this type of stuff affects different people differently. I don't know about me. You don't always believe, but it's encouraging. When you're not making money, it's all you have to go on."

Springsteen, though, has little to do with Master Dylan or his disciples. "Two years ago, people were pretty unfamiliar with what I was doing, and I was really unfamiliar with Jackson Browne and Murphy. And they didn't know who *I* was, either, you know. And . . . they just didn't *know*! It was totally . . . it was . . . you know, like . . .?" Stymied, Bruce stopped and picked at a scab on his forehead. "People were relating to us totally on a superficial level. There's an attempt when something new comes along to try and lump it all together in some kind of category."

"I lived in a surfboard factory for a year and a half."

Springsteen displays many of the qualities of a traditional minstrel, right down to the way he came out of the frontier, well beyond what some consider to be the pale of civilization.

In his case, it was Asbury Park, New Jersey, a bit-longer-than-commuter's drive from the Big Apple. (One West Coast music critic, with typical Californian dizziness, lauded Bruce's music as "songs bristling with the fire, energy, passion, and sensuality of the New Jersey streets." Oh, well.)

Though Asbury Park is less than one hundred miles from New York, it, like Atlantic City, is more a part of the South Jersey surf scene, and Bruce, when he was twenty, lived in a surfboard factory where he had once worked. It was drafty and lonely, but that was fine with him. He was performing and playing in local clubs, and the local surfboard entrepreneur managed him for a while, then introduced him to Mike Appel, his current manager, who had written hits for the Partridge Family. "I didn't have much bread, you know, but it was okay; I lived there alone, and it was quiet, and I saved money."

The period in the factory was a calm one: Bruce had broken up his band to go off and write songs. "It wasn't so much that I did a lot of thinking about writing. I never thought about it. I just knew that I couldn't afford a band: it was always getting in my way. I decided that if I was going to make it in the world, I'd have to make it by myself. So I said to myself, well, you're going to have to get on to something that you can do alone, that'll work. And so, since I didn't have a great guitar thing, and I wasn't a great singer, I decided that I'd better write some decent songs. And so that's what I did, and it worked out, and then I got my band back together."

From the way he tells it, you can't accuse Bruce of overplanning his career. "I was in Asbury Park and I walked into a bar with a guitar, and the band wanted to know if I could play, and I said yeah. So I played with some of them. Then at the bar I met Gary Tallent, my bass and tuba player. I met Danny Federici, who does accordion and keyboards, years ago in another club, and I met . . . some of them answered an ad I put in the paper. And Suki, who plays violin with us now, she's Louie's [Lahav, his recording engineer] wife."

On the verge of going into the studio for a third album, Bruce was unsure what material they would record. "No formula, it's just never the same, you know. Songs don't come to me the same. It changes all the time. We'll just see when we're there."

"I don't expect anything from anybody. I used to. But I stopped."

Life is just a shrug of the shoulders for Bruce Springsteen, despite the ambitious plans of his manager, his record label (Columbia), and, perhaps, his fans. While they all wait and scheme for a hit single, more airplay on the radio, and a really attractive concert tour that would put Bruce over to a wide national audience (the way, say, Jackson Browne has gotten over in the last year), Bruce is perfectly willing to take it as it comes.

"I don't set myself up in terms of goals and stuff. I just try to get out there every day . . . and *do* it. Whatever it is, you know. I just follow myself about."

Promoters are reluctant to book him because he still has opening-act status in most of the country, and few headliners like to follow two and a half hours of roaring rock-and-roll. But cut his set? He has—always under duress—but he objects: "I gotta do it, do it the way I wanna do it. If I'm not gonna do it, and I can't do it the way I wanna do it, then why bother? I don't know if I'm explaining it clearly."

Part of his approach comes across in his attitude toward his band: it's simply unimaginable to him that he should think about performing the material of anyone else in his ensemble. If a band member had that in mind, he would just have to quit, because Springsteen won't ever do that. And if somebody quits (as did pianist David Sancious), Springsteen understands. It's the only way to go. "A benign dictatorship," he calls his band. "We have a very good working and living relationship."

"I never hang out with other musicians," he said, mulling over the New York and Asbury Park scenes. "Just guys in my band. Oh, I used to go to clubs and stuff. I used to play there. Once in a great, great while, you know. Like maybe two or three times during the summer . . . only once so

far this winter. I don't like to go to a club to do anything else but play. And I usually end up playing, so I don't like it too much."

Concerts are more of the same. With few exceptions, the only time Bruce has been to a concert was when he performed: he's hardly ever seen the front door of a concert hall. And it's not that he says it sadly so much as grimly. "I never did that. Before now I never had the money, and not that many people interested me enough to go. And lately I've been to just a few, usually when the artist is a friend. [He jammed an encore recently with Billy Joel.] There's so many people I've never seen: the Rolling Stones I've never seen, the Beatles . . . and, yes, I've never seen Dylan. I just didn't have the money. I never traveled in a circle of kids that went to those things. I liked the Beatles, but I just never realized that I could go see them."

"The first time I was ever conscious that there was a radio was driving in a car."

Bruce doesn't have much to say about his childhood. He was born in Freehold, New Jersey, and lived in South Jersey until his parents left for the West Coast when he was in his mid-teens. Like Dylan's and Nilsson's, his early days remain vague and undocumented.

"There were no records in our home. Never, never, never had records because there was no record player until I was about . . . old enough to buy one myself. I don't remember any music being in the house until I was like thirteen. And then, man, *something*: you hear the radio for the first time. *I Want to Hold Your Hand* came blasting across it and you want that record, you know, you want to hear it, so somehow I got a record player and that was it. Then I bought records and listened to the radio. I used to . . . they had the Top Twenty

countdown every Wednesday night. It changed every Wednesday. I'd be sittin' there on the bed, listenin', waiting. There were a lot of great records in the Top Twenty. The Beatles always had four or five there, the Dave Clark Five, the Searchers, you know, *Needles and Pins*. . . . There were some great ones. So it was fun."

From the radio it was, for Bruce, a remarkably short jump into the clubs. Within three years he had a band that toured the South Jersey area, playing rock-and-roll in clubs, *Moon River* and the like in lounges, and even country classics on the trailer-park circuit. But it didn't work. The pay was bad, and Bruce was dissatisfied with the songs they were doing, learning country tunes from his bass player. So he broke it up and went on to songwriting, met his manager, signed with Columbia, and out came, to critical raves, "Greetings from Asbury Park." And then "The Wild, the Innocent and the E Street Shuffle" to even greater raves—one must be recorded for posterity: Jon Landau of *Rolling Stone* said, "I have seen the future of rock-and-roll and his name is Bruce Springsteen." ("Man," Bruce said, "I was sorry they made an ad out of that. They shouldn't have done that to Jon.")

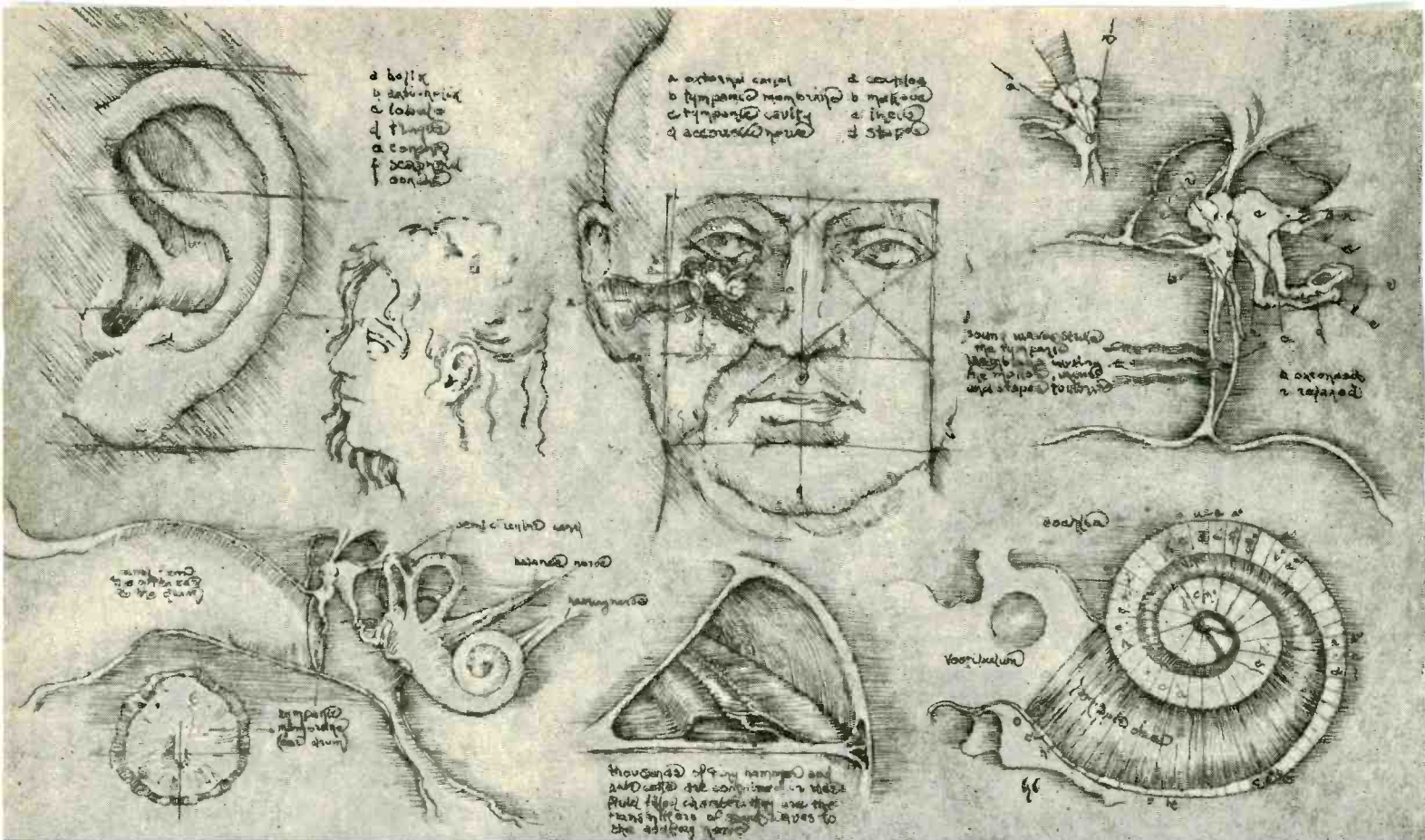
And amid the fanfare Bruce toured as much as he could, becoming something of a Big Name in the East ("the king of the Mid-Atlantic region," Mike the Manager said), with particular success in Philadelphia and, inexplicably, Phoenix, Arizona.

Now he has a new album in the works, and everybody—his manager, his label, and his fans with radios—are hoping he has a HIT SINGLE! Bruce: "Yeah, there are a couple of tunes that might make singles: I don't really care." And then what, another tour? "I dunno, ask Mike." And what are you going to do now?

"I'm gonna take the bus back to Asbury Park." And he stood up and stretched, flexed his arms into the brown leather jacket, pulled his blue-hooded, faded sweatshirt up to his ears, tugged at his beard again, and got ready to leave. And I couldn't help being reminded of the end of Altman's *California Split*, where George Segal has just won \$80,000 shooting craps and is sitting there despairing, and Elliott Gould comes over and says, "Whatsa matter, buddy, do you always take winning so hard?"

Bruce Springsteen surrounded by (left to right) ex-drummer Vinnie Lopez and current associates Danny Federici, Gary Tallent, and saxist Clarence Clemons.





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STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT BEST OF THE MONTH



Stardell Anders Artists Management

THE PRAGUE QUARTET: *unexpected abandon*


The Prague Quartet's Impassioned Summons To the Demonic Delights of Dvořák

THE Prague String Quartet, which performs Dvořák's *Quartet in G Major* on a New Deutsche Grammophon disc, was founded only twenty years ago and is therefore linked only indirectly with the similarly named ensemble which made the first recording of the work (released here as Victor album M-195) in the early Thirties. It is astounding that there have been—by my count—no more than *four* other recordings of this music in the more than forty years separating these two, and that this Op. 106 is so infrequently heard in our recital halls as well, for it is surely Dvořák's greatest achievement in the realm of chamber music and thus, by definition, one of the highest peaks among all quartets produced between those of Schubert and those of

Bartók. The only recording available here for the last several years has been the one by the Kohon Quartet in one of its three-disc Dvořák sets (Vox SVBX-550). It is a good job, but one would expect to have this masterwork represented in the catalog at least as well as, say, the Debussy and Ravel quartets are, with a large variety of different interpretations to choose from or even to enjoy in alteration.

The new DG recording will provide a striking contrast with *any* of its predecessors, however, and *most* strikingly in its very opening bars, so brisk and aquiver as to seem over-impetuous to anyone accustomed to the usual, more deliberate phrasing of those upward leaps—just as other versions may seem, in turn, overly reticent after one has heard this intense, impassioned, undeniably exciting summons. The Prague Quartet plunges in with a totally unexpected abandon, as if these four men, thinking as one, were themselves improvising the music Dvořák set down eighty years ago. There is certainly nothing earthbound about their interpreta-

tion—at times the animation reaches a level approaching giddiness—but there is also nonetheless an anchoring sense of depth and expansiveness, especially in the magnificent slow movement. The scherzo and finale, traditionally regarded as much weaker movements than the first two, have never glowed so with life as they do here.

To those fortunate enough to own the noble old Barchet Quartet version of this work (Vox  PL-9250) and/or the warmhearted Vlach Quartet performance (Crossroads 22 16 0072), the new DG disc is recommended not as a duplication, but as a fascinating opportunity to contrast the traditional "majestic" approach with an unprecedentedly demonic one. In its own right, this is simply one of the most stimulating chamber-music recordings yet offered from any source.

Richard Freed

DVOŘÁK: *String Quartet in G Major, Op. 106*. Prague String Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 480 \$7.98.

(Continued overleaf)

A Janet Baker Recital Invites The Tribute Of Brevity

THE altogether rare combination of sumptuous vocal gifts and vivid interpretative qualities makes Janet Baker the delight of all music lovers. It also makes her something of a benefactress to busy music critics, for time and again she tempts them into an energy-saving terseness, short-cut summations such as "excellent repertoire flawlessly performed."

Her latest for Philips, a disc of Haydn and Mozart works, presents precisely this kind of temptation, but lest the reader mistake the intended tribute of conciseness for mere laziness, I had better elaborate. *Berenice* (1795) and *Arianna* (1789) are late Haydn cantatas containing the kind of impassioned vocal writing seldom found in his operas. The keyboard-accompanied *Arianna*, a special favorite of the composer, is perhaps a bit too long, but I have heard Janet Baker perform it in concert (as she does here) with great effect. *Berenice*, which I discovered only with this recital, is more tightly written and even more beautiful, with a really magical *andante* middle section. Miss Baker knows how to inject passion and wrath into the dejected Arianna's utterances without distorting the vocal line, and in both cantatas her warm and beautifully centered tones are poured through the music with an effect that soothes and stimulates at the same time.

The two well-known Mozart songs get characteristically charming and unmannered interpretations. Sextus' two arias from the rarely heard *opera seria* *La Clemenza di Tito* (1791), however, call for florid fireworks, and these are masterfully delivered. Though Miss Baker is not a true contralto, she manages the low tessitura here comfortably. Her intonation, moreover, is a marvel, and she sings with a sensitive dynamic variety and without a trace of that chesty quaver that is the mezzo's occupational hazard. In sum: excellent repertoire flawlessly performed.

Whether leading the orchestra or providing his own delicate yet assertive *Hammerklavier* accompaniment, Raymond Leppard makes a valuable

contribution to the proceedings. The back liner promises texts, but they were not included in my review copy; the notes are not adequate by themselves. Philips tells me this is an accidental omission, but it might be well to check your copy and drop them a postcard if the texts are missing.

George Jellinek

HAYDN: *Berenice che fai*; *Arianna a Naxos*. **MOZART:** *Arias and Songs. La Clemenza di Tito* (K. 621); *Parto, parto, ma tu ben mio*; *Deh, per questo instante solo. Abendempfindung* (K. 523); *Das Veilchen* (K. 476). Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); Raymond Leppard (fortepiano); English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. PHILIPS 6500 660 \$7.98.

and prepare to be overrun by Emmylou Harris, the best new thing I've been flattened by lately.

Emmylou produced an album in 1970, but she produced a child at about the same time and retired temporarily, later to sing on a couple of the late Gram Parson's albums. Now "Pieces of the Sky," her first for Reprise, is freshly released, and it is rich and solid. The songs are country (mostly), and the backing (headed up by Elvis Presley's crew) is worldly-country, almost slick, and, in a very quiet way, spectacular. Brian Ahern, whose production of Anne Murray's albums has often left me peevish and morose, does a precision job here.



JANET BAKER: at once soothing and stimulating

Emmylou Harris: Transcending Both Church And Honky-tonk

COUNTRY singers who are aware of the world that lies beyond the honky-tonk at one end of Main Street or the church at the other (and all that triangulating Family Life in between) are not as rare as they once were, but still we haven't exactly been inundated with female ones of that sort. Hold onto your hat or whatever, then,

It occurs to me that Ms. Harris may have some trouble with fidgety listeners because her voice sounds something like Linda Ronstadt's, but the song selection and arrangements lead to the kind of relaxed, openminded listening in which differences rather than samenesses become important. Emmylou's voice is smooth, it has good range and a lovely tone that shimmers on the high notes, and she complements all this with a folksinger's straightforward phrasing. She puts across the too-rural-to-be-modern-country air of a Dolly Parton song (*Coat of Many Colors*), introduces another (*Boulder to Birmingham*) she wrote with Bill Danoff (he

Mike Evans/Photogram International

who co-authored *Take Me Home, Country Roads* with John Denver), does well by Merle Haggard, the Louvin Brothers—you name it. Even a slow-as-molasses experiment with Lennon and McCartney's *For No One* seems to work, profiting as it does from a wondrously economical and deeply felt electric guitar solo by Amos Garrett. The "regular" (Elvis') guitarist, James Burton, plays with similar economy and fine style, and it's all just . . . well, it's so good I've been sitting here instead of making the rounds. The church and the honky-tonk could've both burned down for all I know.

Noel Coppage

EMMYLOU HARRIS: *Pieces of the Sky*. Emmylou Harris (vocals, guitar); Rick Cunha (guitar); James Burton (guitar); Glen D. Hardin (piano); Ron Tutt (drums); Bernie Leadon (banjo); Richard Greene (fiddle); other musicians. *Bluebird Wine; Too Far Gone; If I Could Only Win Your Love; Boulder to Birmingham; Before Believing; Bottle Let Me Down; Sleepless Nights; Coat of Many Colors; For No One; Queen of the Silver Dollar*. REPRISE MS 2213 \$6.98.

Loudon Wainwright III And His Antidotes For Reverent Hogwash

I'M always cheered when an intellectual seems to be able to communicate Down in the United States, as Bob Dylan has phrased it, and Loudon Wainwright III is one who's getting better at it all the time. His latest album, "Unrequited," is quite an accessible one, as we cultural elitists tend condescendingly to put it, but it is also bedecked, as is usual with Wainwright, with layers—increasingly subtle ones—of *less* accessible tidbits. The first side, except for one cut, is even designed to give you all the *sound* you could want, and there's some fiddling by Richard Greene, formerly of Seatrain, you'll find a little hard to believe.

The second side, recorded live at the Bottom Line in New York, presents new songs, but the only accompaniment is Wainwright's acoustic guitar, on which he has a firm, almost angry touch. And so it balances out



EMMYLOU HARRIS: a folksinger's straightforward phrasing

rather well, both sides having Wainwright's usual okay-sounding melodies but the second having the more interesting lyrics. Reading between the bars, one might discover that our boy's been going through the old one-two on the domestic front, that he is, further, using a healthy method of dealing with the ensuing perplexities—writing funny and insightful songs about them. In this same vein, *Mr. Guilty* performs a real mental-health service, for its bug-eyed hyperbole brings into focus how silly it is to feel *too* guilty about it all, as some (most?) of us have a scarcely resistible tendency to do.

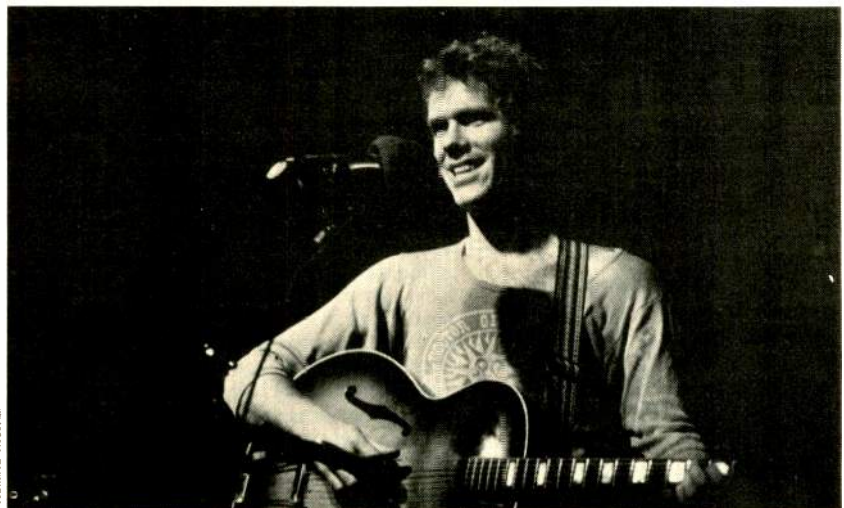
There are other subjects similarly illuminated here (Wainwright jabs again at nasty old Mr. Death, among others), and, except for a couple of

spots where the melody doesn't sustain, I find them remarkably reliable antidotes for pious, reverent hogwash. The best song subjects are still the universals—if you have the head for them, and Wainwright does.

Noel Coppage

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III: *Unrequited*. Loudon Wainwright III (vocals, guitar); Richard Greene (violin); Klaus Voorman (bass); Jim Keltner (drums); Freebo (bass); other musicians. *Sweet Nothings; The Lowly Tourist; Kings and Queens; Kick in the Head; Whatever Happened to Us; Crime of Passion; Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder; On the Rocks; Guru; Mr. Guilty; The Untitled; Unrequited to the Nth Degree; Old Friend; Rufus Is a Tit Man*. COLUMBIA PC 33369 \$6.98, Ⓟ PCA 33369 \$7.98. © PCT 33369 \$7.98.

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III: getting better at it all the time





POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ACE: *Five-A-Side*. Ace (vocals and instrumentals). *Sniffin' About*; *Rock & Roll Runaway*; *How Long*; *The Real Feeling*; *24 Hours*; and five others. ANCHOR ANCL-2001 \$6.98, Ⓣ 8308-2001 H \$7.98.

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

Reading the back of the album cover and seeing that one of the primary musical influences on Ace was the Beatles, I smiled. Reading further and seeing that another primary influence was Motown, I grew apprehensive. But after hearing the record I am much taken with Ace. They are indeed a band that has successfully merged the basics of Beatles melodic and harmonic realizations with the rhythm constructions and vocal phrasings of mid-Sixties Motown music. But they do it gently, with skill and care. Ace reminds me—and this is about the highest compliment I can pay a rock group—of Motherlode, the superb Canadian quartet whose career was short but who most successfully fused rock, soul, and jazz.

Ace's restraint, discipline, and sureness of purpose are admirable and very welcome in these days of bands that just make noise and try to sound busy. This is Ace's first album; I will look forward to their next while enjoying this one. J.V.

ALICE COOPER: *Welcome to My Nightmare*. Alice Cooper (vocals); other musicians.

Welcome to My Nightmare; *Devil's Food*; *The Black Widow*; *Only Women Bleed*; *Escape*; and five others. ATLANTIC SD 18130 \$6.98, Ⓣ TP 18130 \$7.98, Ⓢ CS 18130 \$7.98.

Performance: **Mechanical**
Recording: **Very good**

Alice Cooper has been what Chet Flippo called a "celebrated brat" long enough; now Alice wants to be a notch or so beyond that, an entity known as an American Institution. He has been working the institutionalization-by-association angle, hopping into camera range to hug George Burns, hobnob with Ethel Kennedy, play golf with Bob Hope, and so forth. This flurry of image adjustments has undermined his old pose as a creepy transvestite and the old act that went with it, but Alice is still doing the act. Maybe it's the only act he knows, or maybe he hopes it will be institutionalized, too. I wouldn't be surprised if it is. He may have shucked the drag bit (though not the mascara) and some of his old band members (here the help includes Vincent Price in some B-horror-quickie self-parody that is almost as embarrassingly ill-humored as a Bob Hope monologue), but he's trading on the same old pretended gore and the same old fraternity-house boasting (check out *Department of Youth*) about his own degeneracy. When you think about the crowd he wants to run with, you can see how they probably all deserve each other's company, and that it isn't going to hurt the average much to admit Alice and the stuff that got him this far—simulated baby beheadings and Santa Claus punch-outs, and, in the present case, words about making love to a dead woman he keeps in the fridge—to the so-called shrine they inhabit. In fact, the transparency of Alice's hustle puts the whole subject of notoriety in better perspective, as does the sound of this latest batch of garbage Alice has turned out. There isn't an idea in it anywhere, musical or otherwise, that isn't third-rate . . . except for a couple that are fifth-rate. It's just another assembly and exploitation of some tired old trappings of rock-and-roll with practically none of the fun an actual musician can find in the idiom. The band, technically, isn't too bad; Alice's band technically never has been, but even if it were great in that sense, its

commitment to The Gimmick would keep it from playing real music. But I do take some satisfaction in seeing Alice Cooper turning out to be America's latest thing in conservative businessmen. N.C.

BONAROO. Bonaroo (vocals and instrumentals). *Sally Ann*; *Dream On*; *Life's Sweet Song*; *Nobody Knows*; *Don't Tread on Me*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2838 \$6.98, Ⓣ M8 2838 \$7.98, Ⓢ M5 2838 \$7.98.

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

Here's a very well produced, well written, and well performed album. Bonaroo's sound is straight-ahead Top-Forty pop with no pretensions but with a good deal of craft to it. There are echoes and hints of other groups, such as the Hollies-like harmonies in *Sally Ann* (remember *Carrie Ann*?), plus riffs and passages taken from other records by other people. But the group and their producer have shown good taste in the excerpts they have chosen. This album won't save the world, but, by Gar, it doesn't clutter it up. J.V.

ROY BUCHANAN: *In the Beginning*. Roy Buchanan (guitar); Bill Sheffield (vocals); other musicians. *Rescue Me*; *I'm a Ram*; *In the Beginning*; *C C Ryder*; *Country Preacher*; and three others. POLYDOR PD 6035 \$6.98, Ⓣ 8F 6035 \$7.98, Ⓢ CF 6035 \$7.98.

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

Most improvisational musicians are more inventive at some tempos than at others. A slow beat allows some the time, the large blank canvas they need to deal with major sweeps of ideas, while others need to be driven by the beat precisely so they won't go messin' 'roun' no big ideas and just play the thing. I'm drawing closer to a decision on whether Roy Buchanan is one of the latter. I listen to a draggy blues like *She Can't Say No* and become increasingly disenchanted with Buchanan's taste (continuing, of course, to be amazed at his technique), but then I listen to something just a little faster, *You're Killing My Love*, and the question of taste doesn't even come up because I'm so busy listening to that old Telecaster go. I assume taste is exist-

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓣ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓢ = stereo cassette
- = quadraphonic disc
- Ⓣ = reel-to-reel quadraphonic tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track quadraphonic tape
- Ⓢ = quadraphonic cassette

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓢ

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

tential, therefore, and Buchanan should keep the tempo up and his fingers busy. Of course, his electric guitar is not the *only* thing going on in one of his recordings made with a band (whose personnel keeps changing), but, even though the band has improved somewhat, it's still something of a foil for Buchanan. That's one of the problems of being so facile as to be regarded almost as a freak—other musicians always picked in awe of, instead of with, Chet Atkins, too. This album is fairly satisfying but not thoroughly so. The vocalist this time, Bill Sheffield, is Buchanan's best yet, but the song selection is uninspired, lacking even the quaint strangeness that sometimes touches Buchanan's repertoire, and the master picker is awfully self-indulgent a few times. When he's right, though, he continues to be just slightly beyond belief. *N.C.*

JOHN CALE: *Fear*. John Cale (vocals, guitar, bass, keyboards, viola); Phil Manzanera (guitar); Fred Smith (drums). *Fear Is a Man's Best Friend; Buffalo Ballet; Barracuda; Emily; Ship of Fools*; and four others. ISLAND ILPS 9301 \$6.98.

Performance: **So-so**
Recording: **Good**

John Cale used to be labeled avant-garde in a field (rock) that's supposed to be exciting because it's so primitive, so you could say he's been in trouble all along. Actually, this is his second straight not-very-far-out album that has a rather (I know how this must hurt, John) *pleasant* sound to it, with some token strange noises sort of grafted on in a crafty but not necessarily arty way. If you never heard of the Velvet Underground and can manage not to learn anything about it, you might like this; that is, if Cale could just appear to have come out of nowhere, without all these old expectations hanging on him, he could probably attract a small audience whose tastes are kinky but essentially musical. Here he gets exceptional mileage out of his thoroughly mediocre singing voice, pushes an orchestrated rock sound that points somewhere but needs more refinement, and trots out a batch of songs that are well enough constructed and do have their quirks but don't seem to connect with other human beings, either intellectually or emotionally. One hears them and says, "Oh." But he's gaining on it, whatever it is he's chasing. *N.C.*

COMMANDER CODY AND HIS LOST PLANET AIRMEN. Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen (vocals and instrumentals). *Don't Let Go; That's What I Like About the South; Four or Five Times; Willin'; House of Blue Lights*; and six others. WARNER BROS. BS 2847 \$6.98, Ⓜ M 82847 \$7.98, © M 52847 \$7.98.

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

Cody's outfit is a deliberate joke, like Frank Zappa's bands, only Cody's humor is good-natured. Despite the sci-fi group name (based on an old movie serial), the band plays a kitsch imitation of country music with rock and jazz elements thrown in. Thus guitarist Bill Kirchen and violinist Andy Stein perform some commendable approximations of early jazz on *Four or Five Times*, a tune from the Twenties in an arrangement based on the bubbly pop sound of Les Paul. In *That's What I Like About the South*, Cody impersonates Phil Harris (of the Jack Benny radio reper-

toire company) who did the original version. Most of the rest of the selections are pastiches of country music and rockabilly. Still, Cody and his crew *like* the music they're kidding. I give this album an 83 because you can politely chuckle to it. *J.V.*

ZEZ CONFREY: *Novelty Piano Solos*. John Jensen (piano). *Poor Buttermilk; Dancing Shadow; Kitten on the Keys; Flutter By, Butterfly; Elihu's Harmonica*; and ten others. GENESIS GS 1051 \$6.98.

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

ZEZ CONFREY: *You Tell 'em Ivories!* Milton Kaye (piano). *Kitten on the Keys; Jack in the Box; Grandfather's Clock; You Tell 'em Ivories!; Valse Mirage*; and nine others. GOLDEN CREST CRS-31040 \$5.98.

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

Edward Elzear ("Zez") Confrey, born in Peru, Illinois, in 1895, was trained at the Chi-

cago Music College for the concert hall, but wound up on the pop scene and, to hear his admirers tell it, is the missing link between ragtime and jazz. He spent his formative years as the pianist-arranger of a piano-roll company, and then went on to compose "novelty piano solos" that sold in the hundreds of thousands. His place in the popular-music firmament, where candles are lit in his honor daily by certain pop musicologists, is assured by the composition of that revered masterpiece, *Kitten on the Keys*. He also wrote *Dizzy Fingers*. The Genesis record, featuring the pianism of an earnestly expert young keyboard artist named John Jensen, is devoted entirely to the masterworks of Mr. Confrey. The pieces range in length from two to three minutes each, and it is easy to see why they didn't all enjoy the crazy success of *Kitten on the Keys*: too arty. Mr. Confrey's grounding in classical music led him far more to rely on the harmonic paths explored by Claude Debussy and those other Frenchmen than to face up to the native rag idiom that got him started.

(Continued overleaf)

ALICE COOPER

America's latest thing in conservative businessmen



Atlantic Records

... of compromise and sweet surrender



'Arry Nilsson's Peers

THIS is not Harry Nilsson's most remarkable album, just as *Mr. Arkadin* is far from Orson Welles' best film, but for artists like Nilsson (or Welles) you have to make allowances. There is no reason to despair, in other words, since most of what Nilsson does is equal to or more provocative than what almost anyone else does. All the world knows, for instance, that he is a master technician (even here), that he is one of the few people able to turn the garden-variety recording session into a real art form: it is as impossible to divorce his performances from the studio as it would be to have a Sir Laurence Olivier without the stage.

This time out, Nilsson attempts to make some kind of compromise with current mass taste, letting a starry cast of supporting musicians not only back him up but influence the way he delivers his songs. Not good, not good, however pleasant it may be, for Nilsson's is a very *private* talent, one that depends on his being mostly by himself in the studio, dictating the arrangements to a few yeoman but non-famous musicians so that he can always retain full control of his art. (Why else is he known as "the best male chorus in pop music"?)

The effects of the compromise are clearly heard here in *Kojak Columbo*, which is by itself a funny, ribald, even disturbing little song about a man who has his machismo all tied and tangled up with his TV set. But the presentation of the tune turns out to be a courtly bow and complete (though sweet) surrender to the New Orleans style of Dr. John, who plays piano on the track. It's all very nice, but it isn't Nilsson, and the meaning and effect of the tune get lost in there somewhere. On those tracks where Nilsson is not being deferential to the various styles (reggae riff and steel-drum bump) of the guest stars behind him, he sounds a lot like Randy Newman, whom he also admires. But the dreamy *Turn Out the Light*, the best performance in the album, is all his own.

That socio-psychological thriller of some years back called *The Lonely Crowd* put a name to the ailment: other-directedness. It means letting other people's opinions and expectations determine *your* direction. Harry appears to be making music not for himself (and therefore not for us), but for Ringo, Van Dyke, Dr. John, and I don't know who all else. Chase all them peers out of the studio, 'Arry. It's been fun, but Sunday's over and we gotta get back to work. And this time let's *duit* for *wei*. —Joel Vance

NILSSON: *Duit On Mon Dei*. Harry Nilsson (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Jesus Christ You're Tall; It's a Jungle Out There; Down by the Sea; Kojak Columbo; Turn Out the Light; Easier for Me; Salmon Falls; Puget Sound; What's Your Sign; Home; Good for God.* RCA APL1-0817 \$6.98, Ⓞ APS1-0817 \$7.98, Ⓞ APK1-0817 \$7.98, Ⓜ APT1-0817 \$8.98.

His *Valse Mirage* is a paraphrase of Chopin; his *Blue Tornado* is a false alarm—a tidy tempest in a tiny teapot. He could work up an attractive miniature, all right, but the twenty pieces in this program show more evidence of prettiness of taste than of invention. And Mr. Jensen's thin-lipped approach to these dainties is less than exhilarating.

Milton Kaye covers pretty much the same ground for Golden Crest with results that are considerably more winning. His background, like Mr. Jensen's, is the concert hall and broadcasting, but he brings to his Confrey concert a more flexible and far more carefree attitude, putting his hands on the material instead of keeping them off, adding his own inventive touches to help make these little works sing out and sparkle more than they do when conveyed with too much academic rigidity and detachment. P.K.

JOHN ENTWISTLE'S OX: *Mad Dog*. John Entwistle (vocals, bass); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *I Fall to Pieces; Call Number Seven; You Can Be So Mean; Lady Killer; Who in the Hell?;* and four others. MCA 2129 \$6.98, Ⓞ MCAT 2129 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good, but . . .**
Recording: **Evocative**

This album isn't as funny as Entwistle's last outing, the hilarious "Rigor Mortis Sets In," nor is it as delightfully vicious and selectively vulgar. Here Entwistle concentrates more on the form of Fifties rock-and-roll (which he satirizes so well) instead of the content, which is what made "Rigor Mortis" so devastating. "Mad Dog" is more like Roy Wood's brilliant "Eddy and the Falcons" in its re-creation of period-piece rock, except that Entwistle satirizes types of songs rather than specific artists as Wood does. Entwistle's great gift is to portray the banal as the violently ridiculous. Here he seems to be concentrating on the emotions that made Fifties teenagers embrace Fifties rock. Since that emotional range was never very wide or deep, the satire can't penetrate. It can be sentimental and poignant, but not really funny.

Entwistle uses his real gifts of satire in only a few tracks, notably the title tune, which is a reworking of the oldie *My Boyfriend's Back*, wherein a girl trio mews about how the pimply schemer who's been trying to move in on the heroine will be crushed as soon as the hero returns from out of town. But even here Entwistle is only being mild. That's too bad. As a satirist, he is a clever captain of artillery rather than a sharpshooter. J.V.

DAVID ESSEX: *David Essex*. David Essex (vocals); orchestra. *Ooh Darling; Stardust; America; Dance Little Girl; Miss Sweetness;* and five others. COLUMBIA PC 33289 \$6.98, Ⓞ CA 33289 \$7.98, Ⓞ CT 33289 \$7.98.

Performance: **Synthetic**
Recording: **Clever**

David Essex is one of those totally synthetic pop stars the British have been stamping out since the days of Cliff Richard, and by now you surely know what to expect: anonymous good looks of the kind that automatically frees teeny-boppers from their fear of flying; a pinched, unmusical voice surrounded by a huge production that labors cunningly around it; and a collection of songs, in this case by Essex himself, that never rise much above the level of special material. Essex may or may not make it. That will be up to the segment of

the public that buys on the basis of something other than what they hear. Regardless, you know that the career will be brief. The album contains tinny, unconvincing performances by a near automaton, and it is "Produced, Arranged and Conducted by Jeff Wayne"—who, for all I know, just might be Gordon Mills under another name. *P.R.*

FANNY: *Rock and Roll Survivors.* Fanny (vocals and instrumentals). *Beggar Man; I've Had It; Butter Boy; Long Distance Lover; From Where I Stand;* and five others. CASABLANCA NBLP 7007 \$6.98, © F 87007 \$7.98, © F 57007 \$7.98.

Performance: **Amusing**
Recording: **Very good**

Fanny, the quartet of ladies who long ago proved that their rock group is more than a lark, have come up with a consistently entertaining album this time out. There is a fine, unserious tang to their work, and they communicate their good time in such things as *Get Out of the Jungle* and even *I've Had It*. Their instrumentals tend to be on the long and complex side. Whether this is merely to prove again that they are "up to it" musically, or that they enjoy listening to themselves, or, perhaps, that they merely like to show off isn't important. What is important is that they play so well and so vividly that you can relax and enjoy and not worry about sexual politics. *P.R.*

DAVID GATES: *Never Let Her Go.* David Gates (vocals); orchestra. *Angel; Part Time Love; Watch Out; Chain Me; Someday;* and five others. ELEKTRA 7E-1028 \$6.98.

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

David Gates, once of Bread, is still on his own and still doing a better job of writing and composing than of performing. He has a godawful voice and a mike technique that makes him sound as if he were suffering the heartbreak of psoriasis. Some of his songs, however, are not bad at all; for example, *Chain Me* isn't as leathery as it sounds but is instead a quickly paced song about newly awakened passion, as believable as it is articulate in its teenage way. Gates has a talent for approaching the cliché idea from a purely personal point of view, and the result is a hint that he might write some very interesting work. If he ever does, I hope he gives himself a break and has someone else record it. *P.R.*

GLORIA GAYNOR: *Never Can Say Goodbye.* Gloria Gaynor (vocals); orchestra. *Honey Bee; Searchin'; False Alarm; Real Good People;* and four others. MGM M3G 4982 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good but strait-jacketed**
Recording: **Poor**

Here's some hard-driving, big-voiced work by Gloria Gaynor, who is currently the hottest act on the disco scene. She stirs up some excitement, particularly in the title song and *All I Need Is Your Sweet Lovin'*, but she has been sloughed off so routinely (by strait-jacketed, big-beat arrangements and tin-ear production) that the tracks blur into each other like a juke box playing the same record a hundred times in a row. Too bad; she deserves a whole lot better. *P.R.*

(Continued overleaf)

“... so all-out, willy-nilly congenial ...”



John Denver's Critics

JOHN DENVER picks up bad reviews the way Robert Redford picks up women's pulse rates—for valid but not musical reasons. There's such a thing as accentuating the positive too much, and John Denver's image does that for some people, and the critics among those go on at some length trying to make a perfectly legitimate gut response look like logic. How well or badly he sings doesn't get too much print, but a hundred years from now it may be the only thing about Denver that people care to discuss. There's a certain amount of fashion in this matter of ideas. "An Evening," since it offers a two-disc cross section of Denver's songs and more data on how he gets along with audiences (this one at the Universal Amphitheatre in California), which, incidentally, Denver learned to do before he learned how to sell records by the million, is the kind of album that invites some sort of summing-up.

And so, all right. As a singer, Denver shows again here that he has extraordinary range, hints at a broader emotional articulateness than the songs tap, is more secure than ever in his phrasing and timing, and still has a tendency to be sloppy with intonation. His lyrics, which technically aren't bad song lyrics as far as how they rhyme and how they scan and

such things go, show up in a big batch like this as being too nearly of the same mold, one after another; but his melodies are steadily among the finest anyone is writing these days. Most people probably aren't as deeply involved in pop music as its critics are and therefore don't mind if they have to balance Denver's unrelentingly positive approach with someone else's talk about warts and bullfrogs on the mind and stuff to get the kind of contrast that makes music, or any experience, make sense. The lack of contrast in Denver, which is to say in his lyrics, does fail to close the circle in the head of the intense listener, for fumbling around somewhere in the back of such heads is a yen for closure, for completeness. The impossible search for perfection, which the critic attends to, is frustrated early on if this yen is not satisfied, since a perfect thing would surely be complete.

So this album, like Denver, does not all by itself bstride the fulcrum—you have to balance it with something else. It administers to certain needs extremely well, though, and is so all-out, willy-nilly congenial that it's worth sidetracking whatever quest for perfection you're on for a couple of hours to listen to it.

—Noel Coppage

JOHN DENVER: *An Evening with John Denver.* John Denver (vocals, guitar); Dick Kniss (bass); Steve Weisberg (guitar, steel guitar, dobro); John Somers (guitar, banjo, fiddle, mandolin); Herb Lovelle (drums). *The Music Is You; Farewell Andromeda; Mother Nature's Son; Today; Saturday Night in Toledo, Ohio; Matthew; Rocky Mountain Suite; Sweet Surrender; Annie's Song;* and thirteen others. RCA CPD/CPL2-0764 two discs \$12.98, © CPS2-0764 \$9.95, © CPK2-0764 \$9.95.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TOMPALL GLASER: *Tompall*. Tompall Glaser (vocals, guitar); Fred Newell (guitar, banjo, harmonica); Rick Maness (bass); Ken Malone (drums); other musicians. *I Ain't Lookin' for the Answers Anymore*; *Roll On*; *Mendocino*; *Country Gospel Good Book Rock & Roll*; *Put Another Log on the Fire*; and six others. MGM M3G-4977 \$6.98.

Performance: **Natural mix**
Recording: **A trifle noisy**

Tompall Glaser and Shel Silverstein are two pretty wacky, rather charming individuals. Glaser and Silverstein's songs are well matched spiritually; Glaser is from stout, rural beginnings (the Glaser Brothers) and Silverstein comes, as far as anyone knows, from about three-quarters of an inch down in *Playboy*, but Glaser was one of the first country boys to go around like a hippie and Silverstein was one of the first hippie satirists to really get involved in Nashville. Technically, it works just fine, as Tompall has wonderful diction and a delivery as clear and natural as the water that goes into Coors, and every one of Shel's words can be apprehended without strain. That's desirable because Silverstein doesn't pretend to offer much in the way of music to go with the words—and in this case Glaser has mitigated that by insisting on excellent picking in the background.

Some of Shel's words don't even do much for me, but Glaser's singing consistently does, and such ditties as *Put Another Log on the Fire*, explaining the attitude of a backwoods fellow who never heard of Women's Lib, and *Musical Chairs*, about all this divorcin' and remarryin' and child-havin' that goes on closer to town—well, that's what Silverstein is all about, that and lines like "Give me another toke and watch this guitar smoke." And there are enough such bits to keep me cheerful, so I reckon I like it right smart, as they used to say before the hippies discovered Tennessee.

N.C.

HENRY GROSS

The élan of a basset in heat, but one of the best rock guitarists around



HENRY GROSS: *Plug Me into Something*. Henry Gross (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Southern Band*; *Only One*; *Evergreen*; *Dixie Spider Man*; and six others. A & M SP-4502 \$6.98.

Performance: **Splendid guitar**
Recording: **Good**

Henry Gross makes the kind of music (lumpy, leadenly overarranged Fifties replays) and writes the kind of songs (one more spastically frantic than the next) that can definitely "give mother a headache, dear." Since he also sings with the élan of a basset hound in heat, you may wonder why any notice at all should be taken of this album. Well, it just so happens, surprisingly enough, that he is one of the best rock guitarists around. Even if you have to fight everything else coming out of your speakers—and you will, you will—listen to him in *All My Love* or *One More Tomorrow*. Splendid, now isn't he? P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GUESS WHO: *Flavours*. Guess Who (vocals and instrumentals). *Dancin' Fool*; *Hoe Down Time*; *Nobody Knows His Name*; *Diggin' Yourself*; and five others. RCA CPL1-0636 \$6.98, (B) CPS1-0636 \$7.98, (C) CPK1-0636 \$7.98, (D) APT1-0636 \$8.98.

Performance: **Suave and savvy**
Recording: **Very good**

Burton Cummings' singing, one of the quality items from the Big Rock Thing, just keeps getting better. He's maturing in the matter of nuance, but keeping something of his cocky rock attitude, which I find preferable to the cabaret singer's throat-babying, O-this-is-so-serious stance. The Guess Who nowadays are a classier outfit, almost a sophisticated one, and they are slowly, painfully building a repertoire that takes advantage of their particular attractions, starting with Cummings' voice. The lyrics are consistently shallow, even now as less pressure seems to be applied

to lyrics by the audience, but there is real textural and melodic variety in the album. *Diggin' Yourself* has a jazz inflection; *Seems I Can't Live with You* has one of those dopey, delightful World War II melodies of the *Now Is the Hour* sort; *Dirty* is a tidier-than-average piece of junk rock; *Eye* is that French-cuff, clinking-glass kind of near-jazz; and *Loves Me Like a Brother* is a strutting put-on a jug band could have fun with. *Long Gone* is an aberration, not because it's directed, apparently, at some critic (considering the Guess Who's track record in reviews, it could be any one of a huge number of us), but because it's a hot-collar diatribe that becomes stuffed-shirt funny in spite of itself, as such temperamental flare-ups often do. Otherwise, though, this is a neat job. N.C.

LANI HALL: *Hello It's Me*. Lani Hall (vocals and piano); orchestra. *Peace in the Valley*; *Banquet*; *Happy Woman*; *Save the Sunlight*; *Time Will Tell*; and five others. A & M SP-4508 \$6.98, (B) 8T-4508 \$7.98, (C) CS-4508 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good**
Recording: **Splendiferous**

Lani Hall is a very good singer indeed, but there were moments in this album that made me wonder if what I was hearing from her was actually what was going on. It was the arrangements and the production that threw me. They are by Herb Alpert, and again he proves that he is some sort of middle-brow (somewhere on the landing between "Upstairs" and "Downstairs") pop genius. The damned things float around Miss Hall like a cloud of Bulgarian attar-of-roses scent, and things often get so heady, as in *Exclusively for You*, that one wouldn't particularly care if it were Redd Foxx singing. Well, almost. Hall has a lovely, clear voice, and she phrases beautifully. Her biggest drawback is a certain monotony of tone and a repertoire (Rundgren's *Hello It's Me* and Joni Mitchell's *Banquet*, for instance) somewhat at odds with Alpert's splendiferous attention to packaging. You could carry peanut-butter sandwiches around in a Vuitton case, I suppose, but somehow I don't think they'd taste quite right. But then again, perhaps they would. Your move. P.R.

JOHNNY HAMMOND: *Gambler's Life*. Johnny Hammond (electric piano, synthesizer); orchestra; background vocals. *Star Borne*; *Virgo Lady*; *Yesterday Was Cool*; *Rhodesian Thoroughfare*; and four others. SALVATION SAL 702 S1 \$6.98, (B) SA8 702 \$6.95, (C) SAC 702 \$6.95.

Performance: **Mizell mess**
Recording: **Very good**

Johnny "Hammond" Smith, so called because he played the Hammond organ, recorded extensively for the Prestige label during the Sixties. A good, though rather ordinary, organist, he has now changed his name to Johnny Hammond, vowed never to play the organ again, and joined the vast league of chart contenders. Such moves are often regrettable, but Smith's exit from the jazz scene does not happen to represent any measurable loss.

Now playing electric piano and synthesizer, he is actually better than he was in his organ days, and this album will undoubtedly prove to be more successful commercially than anything he has done in the past. Artistically, (Continued on page 79)

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Columbia

Barbara Cook Is Back

IS IT better to weigh three hundred pounds and sing *Carolina in the Morning* in Carnegie Hall and assorted supper clubs than to have weighed a hundred and ten and sung *Glitter and Be Gay* on the stage of the Martin Beck Theater? Is it better to be Barbara Cook—just Barbara Cook—and not Barbara Cook as Cunegonde, Marian the Librarian, and assorted other ingenues? I don't know, but Barbara Cook seems to think so. So too, apparently, did the audience that turned up at Carnegie on the evening of January 26 this year to hear her, and who in turn can be heard, in obvious appreciation and highly irritating measure, all through Columbia's first recording of the "new" career of the "new" Barbara Cook. But the overabundance of frozen applause on the disc is merely a part of the hype apparently necessary to launch a new career for anybody. What is really important is not the hucksterism and bandwagon tactics, but what is being launched (if Miss Cook will forgive the unintentional implications of that particular image).

As an artist, Barbara Cook has a lot going for her. She has an impressive voice, impres-

sive control, and all the tricks of vocalism that go with it. One doesn't need to pull for her to "make" that top note or successfully carry the breath across the phrase: she has it all quite firmly in hand. And it is, to a certain extent, a recognizable voice. (I say "to a certain extent" because I asked a record-store clerk if that were the new Barbara Cook record he was playing, and he said, "Huh? I thought it was Streisand.") Miss Cook sings in the soprano range, and of all singers who work in related repertoire, perhaps only Elly Stone (consistently) and Barbra Streisand (sometimes) do that. The voice has a distinctive timbre to it, but I wonder if it isn't just a bit too pungent to exercise in the top register song after song after song.

Miss Cook also has excellent diction and a natural rhythm that keeps her perfectly at home in a waltz or a jazz- or rock-inflected tune. What I don't find in her yet is a *consistent* sensitivity to lyrics (it's there at times), a feel for building a logical progression out of a program, and a dominating personality that can take a disparate variety of songs and unify them through the force of a single, personal viewpoint. Such an accomplishment is the performer's way of getting across to the audience just who she is. But you can't get such a thing across if you are not yet quite sure yourself who you are.

She poses the question herself in the Styne-Merrill *Who Are You Now?*, a song she sings deliciously. But the answers that follow do not so much outline a personality as present a number of mutually exclusive hypotheses. Rodgers' and Hart's *Wait Till You See Him* (it was originally "Her") is curiously lacking

in the exhilaration, the sheer bubbling quality that an interpretive singer (particularly one who sang ingenue roles) should find in it. But the three Bock-Harnick songs that follow go very well indeed. The problem is that not one of them is a "big" song, and so what we get is artistry on the small scale. *Glad Rag Doll* is light relief—well done, but still light. With Judy Collins' *My Father*—a song I have begun to think is among the best of the last twenty years—Miss Cook is onto something of wider import. She sings just beautifully, and this may well turn out to be her first real hit. But moments here and there tell us that either she does not understand the real pathos of the song or she prefers to play it down in favor of singing for its own sake. *Dancing in the Dark* comes into this sequence like a Chopin waltz into a Beethoven sonata. When it is followed by *Carolina in the Morning*, complete with Jolsonisms, it is clear that any sense of direction in the program (if there was one) has been abandoned. Who is Barbara Cook? I still don't know.

Miss Cook is being booked these days as a concert and recital singer, and maybe that is part of the problem, for I don't know what you do in a concert if you haven't got a string of previous hits to fall back on and intersperse with trials of new material. There isn't a thing on this record from *Candide*, the show most people would most associate her with, and I can only assume that the omission is intentional. On the other hand, she has also sung (and I assume she will continue to sing) in supper clubs, and you don't need hits in supper clubs. What you do need is the ability to draw a set of songs together, to draw the audience in to you (rather than belt it out to them), and to be, for twenty or thirty minutes at a time, a personality unified and expressed through music. The songs may all have been written by someone else, but they should sound to the audience as if they were being made up right at that moment. Parts of this recorded recital do that; other parts do not.

And so, which is it? Will the new Barbara Cook own up to and build on the old Barbara Cook? Or does she want to be something really different from what she was before? The ability to do either is there, but all the ability in the world won't let you have it both ways. This record, of course, is drawn from the Carnegie Hall recital, and it would be unfair to put *too* much weight on what it seems to tell. I wait for the next one for a better indication of what will be.

The recording, by the way, is excellent for an on-location job. —James Goodfriend

BARBARA COOK: *At Carnegie Hall.* Barbara Cook (vocals); instrumental accompaniment, Wally Harper dir. *Sing a Song with Me; Who Are You Now?; Wait Till You See Him; Dear Friend; Will He Like Me?; Vanilla Ice Cream; Glad Rag Doll; My Father; It Takes Nothing Away from Me; Dancing in the Dark; Carolina in the Morning; He Was Too Good to Me; Time Heals Everything; A Song for You.* COLUMBIA M 33438 \$6.98, Ⓜ MA 33438 \$7.98.

however, the album is rather bland fare burdened by Larry Mizell's gimmick-ridden, monotonous arrangements. Unlike Bobbi Humphrey — for whom Mizell also arranges — Smith, or I should say Hammond, has something to say, and it is only through the strength of his playing that this album is spared from total disaster. C.A.

EMMYLOU HARRIS: *Pieces of the Sky* (see Best of the Month, page 70)

HUDSON FORD: *Free Spirit*. Richard Hudson (vocals, guitar); John Ford (vocals, bass); Micky Keene (guitar); Chris Parren (keyboards); Ken Laws (drums). *Take a Little Word: Free Spirit; Mother Mild; I Don't Want to Be a Star; Silent Star*; and three others. A&M SP 3652 \$6.98.

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

Richard Hudson and John Ford seemed to represent the down-to-earth element of Strawbs when they toiled at giving that esoteric bunch some working-class credence, but their own band sounds a little esoteric in its turn. Sounds something like Strawbs, in fact, but then something like Steeleye Span, too, with a little poor man's Moody Blues on the top. Trouble arises when it becomes apparent the band isn't much more excited about this synthetic process than I am. They do everything well enough, in a technical sense, but they don't make it matter. The tunes are a little too thin for this sort of thing anyway, although *How Many Times* is a happy exception in which the instrumental pretending thins out and the tune thickens up, and it has every right to be a successful single. The band is rhythmically secure and probably capable of cooking up some pretty good arrangements, but right now it's vague. N.C.

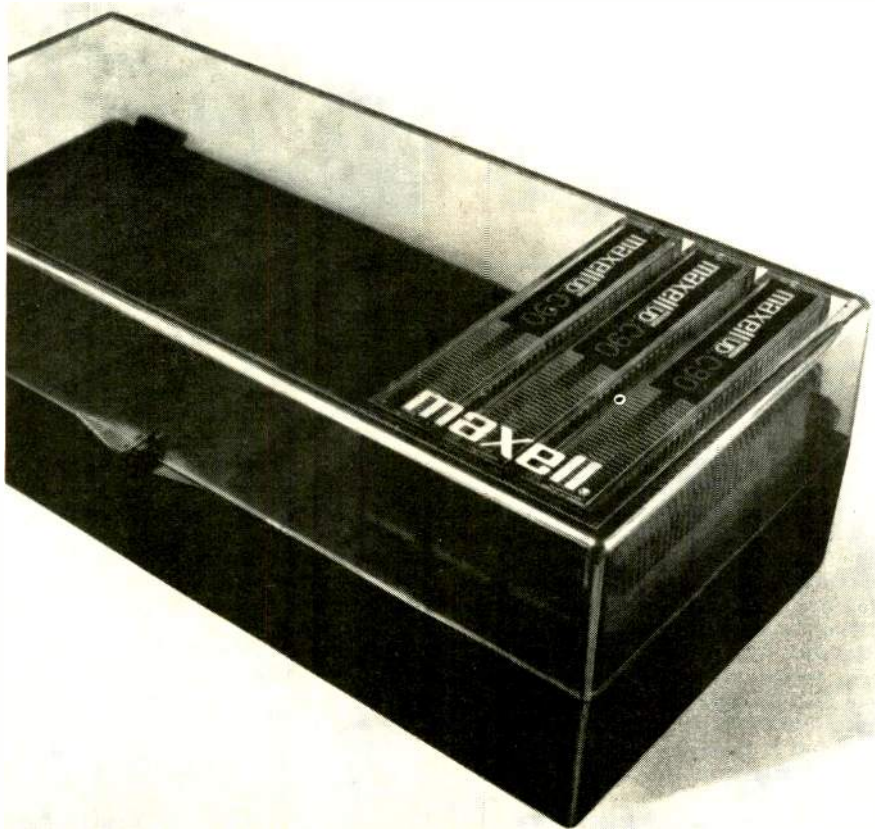
SAMMY JOHNS. Sammy Johns (vocals, guitar); Jim Gordon (drums); Chuck Rainey (bass); James Burton (guitar); Buddy Emmons (steel guitar); Larry Knechtel (keyboards); other musicians. *Early Morning Love; Chevy Van; Jenny; Rag Doll; Hang My Head and Moan; Friends of Mine*; and four others. GRC GA 5003 \$6.98 (from General Recording Corp., P.O. Box 100074, Atlanta, Ga. 30348).

Performance **Passable**
Recording **Very good**

I don't know. Sometimes Sammy Johns sounds like a professional and diligently derivative songwriter who turns out Eagle-style songs, and sometimes he sounds like a rank amateur determined to go Mac Davis one better in the area of how rank you can get. There is such a thing as amateurish charm, of course, and sometimes I think Johns has some of that. Can't tell from this what his aspirations are, that's the problem. *America*, more soap opera than soap box, looks like a Top-Forty pot-boiler: *Holy Mother, Aging Father* has that maudlin edge that suggests the guy may have a decent amount of eccentricity in him somewhere, and then *Way Out Jesus* is gross in the style of Porter Wagoner. The kid writes some decent melodies, though, even if they do have a familiar ring to them. The lyrics aren't too bad (usually), and the backing, from Nashville, Memphis, the West Coast, is understated and generally excellent. The album isn't going to affect history much, but at

(Continued on page 81)

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“... Roger Daltrey is much prettier than Ann-Margret.”

Left to right,
the Who's Pete Townshend,
Keith Moon, and
John Entwistle

The Soundtrack “Tommy”



HARD-CORE Who fans (the kind who discovered the band on *Shindig* in 1965) have never forgiven the Who for “Tommy” for two reasons. First is the obvious one—the financial success the album gave the band in America quite literally saved them from bankruptcy and removed them forever from the loving clutches of a simple cult following. Second, the record was dismissed by these same people as a fatal softening of the Who aesthetic—it marked the beginning of their musical decline.

For the rest of us (and I number myself a Who fan from days just as early as the aforementioned hard core) the questions about “Tommy” were a bit more complicated. Like, for instance, what the hell *was* it, anyway? If it was, as they were claiming, an opera, how come the plot was so hard to follow? (Of course, lots of “real” operas have plot holes big enough to drive trucks through—*Prince Igor* and *Il Trovatore*, for example). Or was it, perhaps, as some suggested, really an oratorio, an interpretation seemingly borne out by the now infamous All-Star Christmas presentation of the work with the London Symphony Orchestra (immortalized in all its overripe glory on Ode Records) and sanctified as well by the English holiday tradition of institutionalizing such works as Elgar’s *Dream of Gerontius* and Handel’s *Messiah*?

Actually, all of Townshend’s operatic pretensions were simply gimmicks, no different really from his outfitting the band in Union Jack T-shirts for publicity ends. What it finally came down to was that “Tommy” was just another Who album (though a bit more padded than usual) filled with some great Who songs, some spectacular Who playing, and the first indications that Roger Daltrey was no longer just an endearing punk-rock vocalist but one of the great rock singers *period*. And I, for one, have never regretted the tremendous commercial success it brought the band, despite the fact that in its wake (and Townshend, aware of his position in rock history, is

profoundly conscious of this) we have had to suffer through such unmitigated imitative garbage as *Jesus Christ, Superstar* and the like. It is testimony to Townshend’s genius (and I use that word with all due deliberation—if there is *anyone* in rock who deserves that appellation, it’s Pete Townshend) that no one has yet been able to pull off another major conceptual piece of rock-and-roll—until he himself tried it again, that is, and far more successfully, in my opinion, with the “Quadrophenia” album.

When word arrived that a film of “Tommy” was in the offing, my initial reaction was like everyone else’s, I suppose—what, not *again*? But there was a difference: Townshend had promised that the band would rescore the piece totally and that the Who themselves—not some collection of Royal Academy of Music alumni—would be playing the new arrangements. Second thoughts on a major work by a major composer, as it were.

Unfortunately, owing to time limitations, Ken Russell’s ego, or whatever, Pete has copped out on his promise. As a consequence, Polydor’s new soundtrack version of the film music is, at best, a curiosity, a chance to hear several well-known English rock musicians banging away at the familiar songs. For example, *Pinball Wizard* (the role itself is played in the movie by Elton John—and brilliantly, I’m surprised to say) is recorded here by Elton and his band *in toto*. Yes, it’s preferable to Rod Stewart singing the same song backed by the LSO on the Ode version (at least it rocks), but it doesn’t come *close* to cutting the Who’s original rendition. Clapton’s performance of *Eyesight to the Blind* is very good, and Tina Turner’s *Acid Queen* is devastatingly erotic (on film, at least—it doesn’t come across as strongly on vinyl). But again, neither of these measures up to the originals. And so it stumbling goes, especially since most of the rest of the singing is provided by actors—Oliver Reed, Ann-Margret—who perform nobly despite the fact that they are neither rockers

nor singers, and the remaining instrumental work, performed both by authentic greats and merely competent session men, is all basically formulaic and faceless.

So what we get in the soundtrack album is simply a *souvenir* of *Tommy* which, with one or two exceptions, doesn’t make it either as a rock or a Who record. The moral is, if you love the Who, you won’t particularly care for the soundtrack, and if you have just begun to love the Who as a result of seeing the film, get the *original* album and hear how the whole business is supposed to sound. The film itself is studded with Ken Russell’s usual heavy-handed Fellini-isms—and some things that are quite genuinely brilliant. You should see it, by all means, if only to observe how the story line has been clarified.

AND two final observations: first, they’ve dropped the Overture, which is one of my favorite things in the score. Second, Roger Daltrey, for whatever it’s worth, is *much* prettier than Ann-Margret. —Steve Simels

TOMMY (The Who). Original-soundtrack recording. Ann-Margret, Oliver Reed, Roger Daltrey, Elton John, Jack Nicholson, Robert Powell, Tina Turner, and the Who (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Prologue-1945; Captain Walker/It’s a Boy; 1951/What About the Boy?; Bernie’s Holiday Camp; Amazing Journey; Christmas; Eyesight to the Blind; Acid Queen; Do You Think It’s Alright (1); Cousin Kevin; Do You Think It’s Alright (2); Fiddle About; Do You Think It’s Alright (3); Sparks; Extra, Extra, Extra; Pinball Wizard; Champagne; There’s a Doctor; Go to the Mirror; Tommy Can You Hear Me?; I’m Free; Mother and Son; Sensation; Miracle Cure; Sally Simpson; Welcome; T.V. Studio; Tommy’s Holiday Camp; We’re Not Gonna Take It; Listening to You/See Me, Feel Me.* POLYDOR PD2 9502 two discs \$9.98, 8F2 9502 \$11.98, CF2 9502 \$11.98.

least it is tuneful enough not to do any harm. Later, perhaps, we'll find out more about what Johns wants to do. N.C.

KEITH AND DONNA. Donna Godchaux (vocals); Keith Godchaux (keyboards); Jerry Garcia (guitar, vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *River Deep, Mountain High; Sweet Baby; Woman Make You; When You Start to Move*; and five others. ROUND RX-104 \$6.98.

Performance: **Stale**
Recording: **Very good**

Keith and Donna Godchaux are a rather undistinguished duo singing and playing the kind of music you could have heard more than ten years ago by walking into the local espresso café during the last-gasp period of the little folk boom before the Liverpudlians took over. Dames Baez and Collins, back then, had the female style of folk singing sewed up; all other girl singers imitated them in sound, in phrasing, and in selection of material. One of the few woman singers who was doing anything at all different and who had developed her own style was Maria Muldaur, but she had to wait until both the folk and rock booms went bust before she was recognized.

With the exception of *River Deep, Mountain High* (there are some songs that belong to the performer who gives them the definitive version; *River* belongs to Tina Turner, and Keith and Donna should have let it alone), there is no quality material in the album. The performances are droopy. Jerry Garcia performs his famous magic trick in which he creates the illusion that he is a guitarist. The front cover of the album shows a very worried-

looking four-month-old baby. Apparently he's heard his folks' record. J.V.

FREDDIE KING: Burglar. Freddie King (vocals, guitar); other musicians. *Pack It Up; My Credit Didn't Go Through; I Got the Same Old Blues; Only Getting Second Best; Texas Flyer*; and five others. RSO SO 4803 \$6.98.

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

Knowing how much everyone likes to keep the Larger Truths organized, I'd suggest filing the lesson from this with Hugh Downs' Butter-Box Principle. That's the one about a warm box inside a cold box (fridge) inside a warm box (house), a metaphor for how our tinkering and inventing lead us around in circles. King, who has a pliant, powerful voice and plays a pretty mean guitar, is fenced in here by the spiraling logic involved in using many, many instruments and then slapping hard and fast controls on them so they don't seem so numerous. The blues does not yield to strong controls. King, with leaner, freer backing, could swing with this same song selection—even if the lyrics don't get much funkier than "She manicures my nails/Scratches the dandruff from my head." As it is, the horn textures work in *Only Getting Second Best*, but they and the electric piano's basically ugly, basically petty sound keep getting in King's way in other selections. Give the man some room. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT
GORDON LIGHTFOOT: Cold on the Shoul-

der. Gordon Lightfoot (vocals, guitar, piano); Terry Clements (guitar); Red Shea (guitar); Rick Haynes (bass); other musicians. *Bend in the Water; Rainy Day People; Cold on the Shoulder; The Soul Is the Rock; Bells of the Evening*; and six others. REPRIS MS 2206 \$6.98, Ⓜ M8 2206 \$7.98, Ⓢ M5 2206 \$7.98.

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

Few words of intriguing implication—words, say, sporting a positive and colorful mantle of romanticism—fit a performer better than *troubadour* fits Gordon Lightfoot. Time has shown him to be *the* troubadour of this modern bunch, and his new "Cold on the Shoulder" album for Reprise—in addition to adding evidence that quality will surface and be recognized—shows how gracefully the consummate troubadour goes about the business of traveling, writing, and singing songs.

It is a mellow album that rocks when the mood arrives, and some of it is just about timeless. It is also much more varied than it at first appears; *Rainy Day People* is one type of song, and an almost classically elegant example of that type, and *Bells of the Evening*, without fussing over its own individuality, is a fine example of an entirely different sort. There's a magnificent children's song, *Fine as Fine Can Be*, that Lightfoot wrote for his eight-year-old daughter: its melody will give pickers, at least, some insight into the inventiveness Lightfoot brings to the basic, non-tricky, three-chord progression. *All the Lovely Ladies* suggests a round; Lightfoot *knows* music inside out, you see. *Rainbow Trout* puts the emphasis on lyrics ("She was all dolled up/Like a blue-eyed pup./Lookin' for

SECRETS FROM THE AUDIO FILE



Headroom headaches

ADVICE FROM: Ed Flaherty, recording engineer, Capitol Records, Inc.

PROBLEM: When you're low on headroom your recordings are cramped by distortion and lost highs.

RECORDING TIP: Plan ahead for headroom. If you're recording a live band, have them rehearse the loudest passage while you set your record level at "0" on the VU meter. Or so your peak indicator doesn't flash excessively. Now record the whole session at that pre-set level. (Do the same whether you're recording live or dubbing.)

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something to spill") to offer a glimpse of the whimsy in Lightfoot's sense of humor. And the detail work everywhere is as fine as fine can be.

The singing is, as usual, just what the songs want, and Clements, Shea, Haynes, and company, nicely assisted by Pee Wee Charles' steel guitar, do another tasty job with the instruments. Only the first cut is a little flat, and the next-to-last one, *Now and Then*, is a little slow and overly tantalizing about the way it delivers. But brace yourself, America, for one of those infrequent jolts of that thing grandparents lament when the handles of new station wagons come off in their hands. Quality, they call it. N.C.

MELISSA MANCHESTER: *Melissa*. Melissa Manchester (vocals and piano); other musicians. *We've Got Time*; *Party Music*; *Stevie's Wonder*; *Midnite Blue*; *I Got Eyes*; and five others. ARISTA 4031 \$6.98, © 8301 4031 H \$7.98, © 5301 4031 H \$7.98.

Performance: **Slick**
Recording: **Professional**

Melissa Manchester is the kind of performer-composer who would have a large audience no matter how much the critics pouted. Her work is actually modishly clever salon music for the Seventies, and so it fashionably shivers with sensibility (*Just Too Many People*), quakes with "deep feeling" (*We've Got Time*), and, of course, can be cutely horny (*I Got Eyes*). How can she miss? She can't—and won't. Her total professionalism is as unquestionable as it is oily, and listening to her new album would have made me very happy if I were the sales manager of Arista Records. As it was, I couldn't have cared less. P.R.

RAY MANZAREK: *The Whole Thing Started with Rock & Roll Now It's Out of Control*. Ray Manzarek (vocals, piano, clavinet, electric piano, synthesizers, celeste); other musicians. *The Gambler*; *Whirling Dervish*; *Begin the World Again*; *Art Deco Fandango*; and four others. MERCURY SRM-1-1014 \$6.98, © MC8-1-1014 \$7.98, © MCR4-1-1014 \$7.98.

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

What I recall most about Ray Manzarek's organ playing in the Doors—my memory jolted as it is by this turkey—is how he found no riff too boring to repeat all night if the song lasted that long, as some Doors songs almost did. Now he's outfitted in the Emerson-Wakeman-Preston style, leading a token band and posing among his synthesizers for fish-eye-lens photographs and everything, and appearing (again in the Emerson-Wakeman-Preston manner) to have practically no music worth playing on those so-called instruments. Granted, you'd find me prejudiced on the subject anyway, since I'm too much of a puritan about keyboards to even suffer myself to use an electric typewriter (no soul in the damned things), but even so, it's fair to say that Manzarek, while he retains a little more of something resembling a rock beat than the other synthesizer whizzes of r-&-r, pays more homage here to typing than to music. And speaking of typing, how could the title be so long and yet so mediocre? N.C.

COUNTRY JOE McDONALD: *Country Joe*. Joe McDonald (vocals, guitar, harmonica); Sam Brown (guitar); Sal Ditroia (guitar); Frank Owens (piano); Gary Chester (drums);

Joe Macho (bass); Charlie Brown (guitar). *Dr. Hip*; *Old Joe Corey*; *Making Money in Chile*; *You Messed Over Me*; *Memories*; *Chile*; *Pleasin'*; and three others. VANGUARD VSD-79348 \$6.98, □ VSQ 40043 \$7.98.

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

Hmmm. Country Joe has made himself a comeback. Not a boisterous one, rather a laid-back comeback, but this is rather a stupendous improvement over his last several albums. As political rockers went, I think Joe was an honest politician, but he was seldom eloquent . . . and this thing, music, is, after all, a matter of how as well as what. Here he is back into being tuneful and salty, and the album shows how much better he performs when he is relaxed and having a good time. Maybe having been right about Nixon and several other things cooled down his anger. Anyway, he's written some nice tunes and got

of Olivia Newton-John's career so far, you'd go down to Toy City and fetch the "Barbie Goes Down on the Farm" set in expensive plastic-covered cardboard. And I don't mean to take away a thing, boys, from how cute she is in jeans. It's just that either (a) she's been ordered to sing songs in which the lyrics are pap, filler, not to be bothered about, or (b) she has a knack for making songs *sound* as if they were designed that way. I think it's mostly been (a), although there are a couple of clear-cut (b) cases here—compare her blank-stare reading of Tom Jans' *Loving Arms* to, say, Jody Miller's (as long as we're thinking about who looks good in jeans), and you'll soon stop blaming that particular song. Newton-John seems to me a child of television, the kind of act video's dynamics foster: get on looking great, skip through the song without foolishly trying to compete, on the side of the lyrics, with all that twinkle and glow of the elaborate color set, engage the host in a few



RICARDO RAY AND BOBBY CRUZ
Performances that leap with color and inventiveness

himself some excellent pickers, and his singing, though not very good, is doggedly likable. For some reason *You Messed Over Me* and *Memories* drag on too long, unless the idea in *Memories* was to see if they could exhaust Frank Owens' supply of vocal-backing runs on the piano. They don't even come close, of course. With him on piano and Sal Ditroia on guitar, there's some pretty sneaky stuff going on—and that may be the way to complement McDonald's rather frontal way of putting his thoughts into words. Anyway, it's good to get through politics and a little bit into a personality that has some real stuff in it. N.C.

OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN: *Have You Never Been Mellow*. Olivia Newton-John (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Have You Never Been Mellow*; *Loving Arms*; *Lifestream*; *Goodbye Again*; *Water Under the Bridge*; and six others. MCA MCA-2133 \$6.98, © MCAT-2133 \$7.98, © MCAC-2133 \$7.98.

Performance: **Breezy**
Recording: **Very good**

Funny she should ask if we've never been mellow. If you wanted a graphic presentation

minutes of bright patter his committee of writers polished and fussed over for weeks, and get off. But I'm sounding harsher than the subject merits: Olivia is pleasant enough to listen to when the beat is going bippity-boppity—*Water Under the Bridge*, for example—and, as something to look at, she's certainly a nice change of pace from TV detectives, grey-haired, curly-haired, bald, or fat. N.C.

NICO: *The End*. . . . Nico (vocals, harmonium); Phil Manzanera (guitar); Eno (synthesizer); John Cale (guitar, xylophone, synthesizer, bass, organ, percussion, piano); others. *It Has Not Taken Long*; *Secret Side*; *You Forgot to Answer*; *Innocent and Vain*; and four others. ISLAND ILPS-9311 \$6.98, © Y81-9311 \$7.98.

Performance: **Fraudulent**
Recording: **Overdone**

Nico broke into rock showbiz as the vocalist for Andy Warhol's ersatz rock group, the Velvet Underground, during the bygone days of the First Discotheque Era in the mid-Sixties. She has put out sporadic solo albums since then. Here she is supported by Warhol's musicians Eno and John Cale, among

others. Nico is to singing what Yoko Ono is to painting, drawing, and sculpture: it takes a willing suspension of disbelief to entertain the idea that she has any talent. The music behind her is that huffing-puffing Moog synthesizer stuff with classical references, all very Dada and psychedelic and so on.

We might have been spared the efforts of Warhol's disciples and imitators in music, art, and movie-making some years ago if the girl who walked into his office and shot him had had better aim. She was studying to be a chemist, as I recall, and spent her evenings writing the manifesto for S.C.U.M. (Society for Cutting Up Men). We might have been spared a lot of other things if Warhol, mortally wounded, had drawn a Derringer from his sleeve and plugged her back. Ah, well. J.V.

OLD AND IN THE WAY. Jerry Garcia (vocals, banjo); David Grisman (vocals, mandolin); Peter Rowan (vocals, guitar); John Kahn (bass); Vassar Clements (violin). *Pig in a Pen; Midnight Moonlight; Old and in the Way; Knockin' on Your Door; The Hobo Song;* and five others. ROUND RX 103 \$6.98.

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

This album is interesting because it's so extraordinarily clear for a live recording of bluegrass acoustic instruments, because it shows you can't really parody bluegrass, and because the musicians did it mainly for fun. David Grisman, a hot dog on the mandolin, has done this sort of thing with rock musicians before, and Jerry Garcia reportedly has already recorded another bluegrass album on the Grateful Dead's Round label with another set of rock musicians. This was recorded at the Boarding House in San Francisco (back in the fall of 1973) by Owsley Stanley, whose name you may have heard in a completely different context. Super job. What I say about parodying you can easily check by concentrating on the solid rhythm guitar playing of Peter Rowan (famous for giving the world the weakest song here, *Panama Red*). His picking is straight Lester Flatt, except he makes more use of the Flatt lick (that little *te-donk-dong* at the end of a phrase) than Flatt would. But it works: do a decent job of parodying bluegrass and you're doing a decent job of playing bluegrass. Garcia on banjo flashes indications that he's heard Earl Scruggs, Ralph Stanley, even the fine off-the-wall stuff of Vic Jordan. And of course there's a Bill Monroe whine in the vocals now and then. The exception is Vassar Clements, who's always been a stylist and still is, and gives any bluegrass bunch a rakish touch that normal fiddling doesn't get into. This band is exceptionally tight, properly respectful, and has selected good songs. If you find a bluegrass fan so pure he can't forgive these lads their backgrounds and tap his foot, you'd better check his pulse. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ELVIS PRESLEY: *Promised Land.* Elvis Presley (vocals); orchestra. *Mr. Songman; Help Me; It's Midnight; Thinking About You; Love Song of the Year;* and five others. RCA APL1-0873 \$6.98, Ⓢ APS1-0873 \$7.98, Ⓢ APK1-0873 \$7.98, Ⓢ APT1-0873 \$8.98.

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

Also sprach Elvis. Again. We all know that Elvis represents much more than just the su-

perstar of superstars. In some ways he is what America has been all about for the past twenty years. Or at least *was* until this last year or so. Before we rush to embalm him in the nostalgia that we all seem to love so much, it might be a good idea to listen to his newest album. Not an ounce of progress or change, of course, only that same country boy with the performing skill of a genius. Bland? Old hat? Sure. But also classic. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RICARDO RAY & BOBBY CRUZ: 1975. Bobby Cruz (vocals); vocal accompaniment; Ricardo Ray Orchestra. *Richie Ray 1975; Cristobal Celai; Gan Gan Y Gon Gon; Mi Amigo Juan;* and four others. VAYA XVS-33 \$5.98.

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

The performances fairly leap out of this very exciting album. Ricardo Ray's orchestra uses some of the most inventive and colorful arrangements of any big band playing in any style. Each tune is given a carefully crafted setting. Some of the arrangements are spare and folkish, other are nearly "symphonic" in the sense that Duke Ellington's and Paul Whiteman's were. And I cannot overpraise vocalist Bobby Cruz. His voice is a fine instrument, he knows how to use it, and his taste and discipline are impeccable. Impressive work on what is probably the Latin album of the year. J.V.

LOU REED: *Live.* Lou Reed (vocals); Dick Wagner (guitar); Ray Colcord (keyboards); Pentti Glan (drums); Prakash John (bass); Steve Hunter (guitar). *Walk on the Wild Side; I'm Waiting for the Man; Vicious; Satellite of Love; Oh Jim; Sad Song.* RCA APL1-0959 \$6.98, Ⓢ APS1-0959 \$7.95, Ⓢ APK1-0959 \$7.95.

Performance: **Tired**
Recording: **Okay**

In case anybody is still interested after the disaster of Lou's last effort, the preposterous "Sally Can't Dance," this new live record simply contains the numbers left over from the concert at which his earlier live set, "Rock and Roll Animal," was recorded. I attended that concert and found it terminally boring: Lou couldn't or wouldn't sing, and he looked, with his close-cropped hair, black short-sleeve T-shirt, and stove-pipe jeans, uncomfortably as though he had just been discharged from the Marines. Definitely not *my* idea of a rock-and-roll star, especially since he seemed to be totally ill at ease without a guitar in his hands.

Anyway, this new set is just more of the same, and overall I've about given up on Lou. If you want to hear him when he was at his peak, get the Velvet's live set on Mercury or "Loaded" on Cotillion. This stuff is nowhere near as exciting, despite the fact that the band is excellent and that together with Lou they almost turn something as banal (albeit amusing) as *Vicious* into a real live rock-and-roll song. Steve Simels

MICK RONSON: *Play Don't Worry.* Mick Ronson (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Billy Porter; Angel No. 9; This Is for You; White Light/White Heat; Play Don't Worry;* and four others. RCA APL1-0681

(Continued on page 86)

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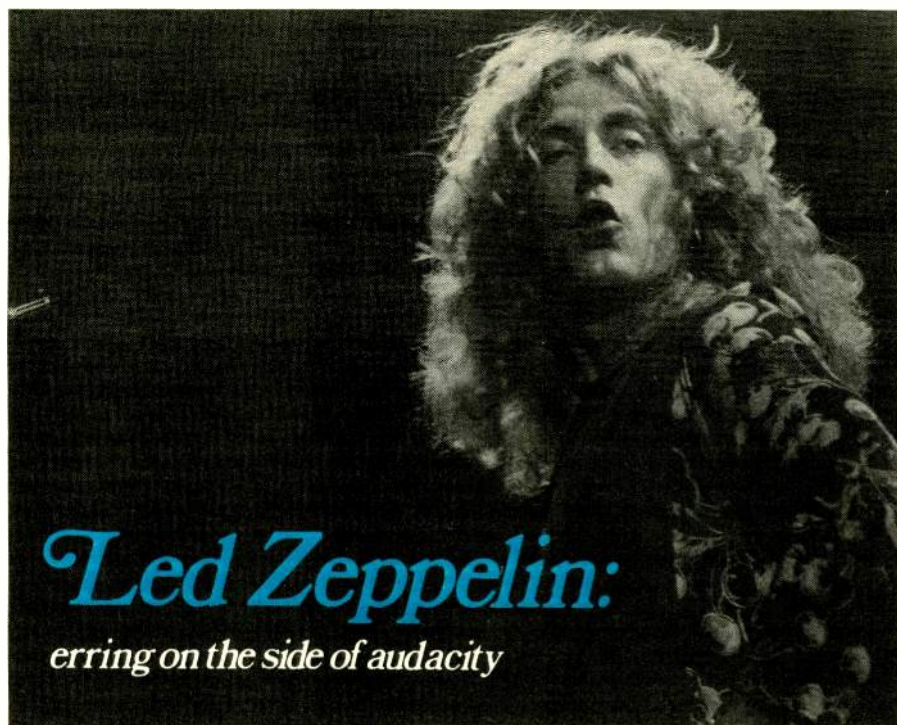
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THE only band to have made it, intact and thriving, out of the recently ended gun-guitar era and into the Seventies is Led Zeppelin. Originally a “hot-rod blues band” (thanks to Steve Miller for the term) at least superficially similar to its contemporaries the Jeff Beck Group, Cream/Blind Faith, and Ten Years After, Led Zeppelin has carefully broadened its base with each successive album (there are now six) without ever noticeably undercutting its stance as purveyors of power-rock and flash.

Their leader, Jimmy Page, is not only a virtuoso player on both acoustic and electric guitar, but also has an unerring sense of drama and atmosphere, which he exercises in his dual roles as musician and producer. Through his highly developed sense of dynamics, Page can turn an outlandishly rudimentary three-chord rocker (like “Physical Graffiti’s” *Custard Pie*) into a riveting experience, and with only the briefest of solos. Page and his cohorts—muscular drummer John Bonham, understated bass player (and sometime keyboardist) John Paul Jones, and vocalist Robert Plant (who’s chiefly responsible for putting the manic rasp into their heavy metal)—play a basic, sinewy brand of music that depends for its impact more on simple relentlessness than on dramatic development. Not many bands could get away with working within such a simple framework, but Led Zeppelin takes a seemingly arrogant delight in flattening everything in its path through a perfect execution of fundamentals.

In the Sixties, it would have been hard to imagine a band like Zeppelin winning a mass following (it may now be the most popular single attraction in rock) with such hard, uncompromising music, but this outfit has cer-

tain other characteristics that have combined with its raw sound to make it appealing in a very broad way. One of the most important of these is Led Zeppelin’s playing off its almost austere amplified blues and rock-and-roll against the flamboyant and exotic public personalities of Page and Plant. Both in the music itself and in the way it’s perceived by the listener, this exotic suggestion has lent mood and mystery to the bulk of the group’s recorded work.

If all this makes Led Zeppelin seem overwhelmingly ominous (and here comes characteristic number two), this great heaviness has always been balanced by a pervasive sense of humor: they’re capable of making fun of their own identity: for example, Page and Plant originally called their publishing firm Superhype Music, and their second album’s hit single, *Whole Lotta Love*, was at once a crushingly effective heavy-metal number and a winning heavy-metal parody.

A third aspect of Led Zep’s character is the group’s willingness to be adventurous within the stylistic parameters its members have set for themselves, and, as a consequence, each of their half-dozen albums has a distinctive identity. Of the six, the only ones not generally satisfying are “Led Zeppelin III” and the fifth album, “Houses of the Holy,” the problem in each case being caused by the group’s allowing itself to drift too far from its basic forms—that is, by their being *too* adventurous, *too* confident.

Led Zeppelin’s most obvious success, the ubiquitous *Stairway to Heaven* (from their fourth album) was remarkable because it placed what may well be the band’s most explosively passionate performance into a formal, sequential context, complete with appro-

priate imagery and a basic metaphor that paralleled the relentlessly ascendant musical movement of the track. So, seemingly paradoxically, the group was best able to present its all-stops-out style by carefully measuring it to fit a precisely conceived structure. But that sort of adaptability is simply proof of the remarkable (if often masked) intelligence at the core of this band’s work. What *Stairway to Heaven* makes clear is that the band is most successful when it innovates from *out* of its basic style, rather than by moving away from it.

THEIR new “Physical Graffiti” shows both that that intelligence is still very much present, and that, when it errs, Led Zeppelin still errs on the side of audacity. This is the band’s first double album, and playing its four sides straight through is—as I’ve learned—a *whole lotta Led Zep*. But the wealth of ideas presented do justify the expanded format, even if some of those ideas don’t quite come off.

This time out, Page has chosen to present the band in a context that is the antithesis of the sonically elaborate second and fourth albums—a stark, roomy, flatly realistic ambience that serves to make the rockers roar like nothing they’ve done since their relatively crude (but still tremendously exciting) first album. And in the several quiet segments that are contained here, the roominess oddly lends a feeling of intimacy to Plant’s heretofore cutting and two-dimensional singing; surprisingly enough, his restraint wears rather well.

What’s wrong with the album is that it is programmed to showcase its three least successful tracks. These are *In My Time of Dying* (eleven minutes in length, closing side one), *Kashmir* (almost ten minutes long, ending side two), and *In the Light* (8’46”, the opening of side three). The first is an electric Delta blues in which the band attempts to transform—through endless repetition—a relatively standard progression into something tangibly, er, ghostly. Its Robert Johnson metaphysics notwithstanding, the track seems to me to be doubly irritating: it’s interminable and it lacks Page’s usual subtlety. *Kashmir* is a more ambitious failure. On this track, Page attempts to use the tone colors of Middle Eastern music to turn a medium-paced rocker into a dramatic, image-evoking piece. While its unorthodox textures produce a dusky and exotic effect, it never really gets beyond the point of sounding like the soundtrack to some Charlton Heston bigger-than-life epic about the Third Crusade.

In the Light provides a classic example of how a particularly dumb or ugly track can set up, by sheer contrast, the particularly pretty or tasteful track that immediately follows it. The first two-thirds of *In the Light* has the distinction of being both ugly and dumb. It begins with a collage of bleats and drones which combine to create a sort of sci-fi bagpipe, develops into the most unlistenable sort of heavy-metal dirge, only to open abruptly into a lovely guitar/electric-piano section. Then, after the progression is repeated and the track concludes, along comes *Bron-Yr-Aur*, a pastoral acoustic-guitar solo that introduces it-

self like a peppermint Cert into a tired mouth.

Much more successful (though less obviously ambitious) than the three aforementioned major clinkers are the companion pieces *Down by the Seaside* and *Ten Years Gone*. Although hampered somewhat by a plodding tempo in its primary section, *Seaside* makes good use of some unexpected devices, such as a Beatlesque "aahhh" chorus and segmented structure. The lyric is rather Beatlesque, too, in its juxtaposition of hazy images and ambiguous lines, and it is inexplicably poignant, especially in the brief "twist again" middle segment. The track foreshadows *Ten Years Gone* in both mood and theme, touching as it does on a half-recalled, half-dreamed scene. But *Ten Years Gone* goes directly into the past and comments overtly on change and the passage of time. The song is made convincing by an unusually sensitive Plant vocal and by Page's variously textured layers of electric and acoustic guitars. In a modulated, unflashy way (they seem almost meek at first by Led Zeppelin standards), these two tracks provide the album's most imaginative and dramatic moments.

THE rest of the album (there are fifteen tracks in all, containing around eighty-five minutes of music) is made up of Led Zep's stock in trade: rockers, riff songs, and—for lightening of tension and deepening of mood—an acoustic number here and there. Particularly appealing are the Faces-style strut, *Night Flight*, and *The Rover*, which boasts a resounding guitar passage that echoes the classic Page line in *Stairway to Heaven*. Most unusual of the bunch is *Trampled Under Foot*, which brazenly quotes the Doobie Brothers and Billy Preston. Side four is the album's most playable: its five tracks are all in the four-minute range (for them, a four-minute track is *short*) and all appealing in one way or another. Side two—half of which is taken up with *Kashmir*—is the one easiest to ignore.

Because its big programmed moments don't work, and because its general tone is more serious than other Zeppelin albums (the only frivolity here is in the lighthearted quoting of riffs and lyric lines from the music of other bands, including—aside from those mentioned above—the Who, the Stones, and Black Sabbath), "Physical Graffiti" is not Led Zeppelin's most impressive work. But Plant's much more controlled and varied singing, the set's wealth of modest rockers, and its subtle innovations make it abundantly attractive nonetheless. As always, part of the fun stems from the fact that this band can do so much while working in such a severely limited idiom, from both the dramatic and textural viewpoints. Within the areas it has chosen, Led Zeppelin still has no peers. —Bud Scoppa

LED ZEPPELIN: *Physical Graffiti*. Jimmy Page (guitar); Robert Plant (vocals); John Paul Jones (bass and keyboards); John Bonham (drums). *Custard Pie*/*The Rover*; *In My Time of Dying*; *Houses of the Holy*; *Trampled Under Foot*; *Kashmir*/*In the Light*; *Bron-Yr-Aur*; *Down by the Seaside*; *Ten Years Gone*; *Night Flight*; *the Wanton Song*; *Boogie with Stu*; *Black Country Woman*; *Sick Again*. SWANSONG SS2-200 two discs \$11.98. © TP2-200 \$9.97, © CS2-200 \$9.97.

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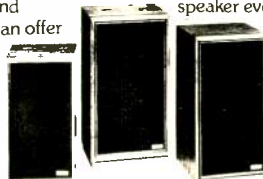
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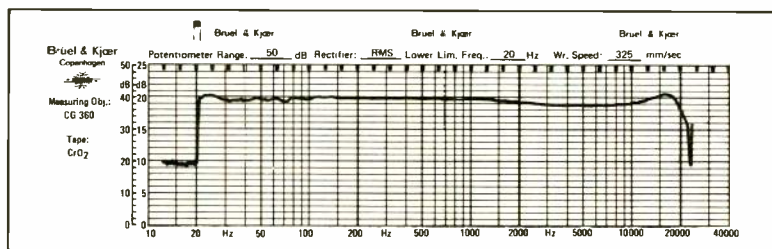


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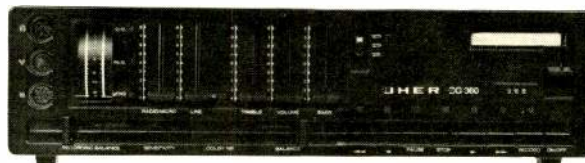
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Performance: **Whoopee, etc.**
Recording: **Very good**

I know you're tired of hearing about David Bowie, and I suspect you're weary of British rock musicians named Mick, but still we've got to try to avoid venality in greeting this solo effort from Bowie's former guitarist. *Somebody* has to make music to play in the kitty litter to, as long as there's a demand for it. Outrageous posturing is a part of growing up, and pretentious nonsense coming through a wad of bubblegum can't hurt you. Now, me, I wouldn't hire Ronson to play guitar, unless for some weird reason I wanted half a dozen guitar styles vaguely imitated at once, and I certainly wouldn't hire him to sing, but I can live with recordings like this as long as Big Brother lets me go on ignoring AM radio. There are some cuts, you see, that are catchy—the title tune, a French song Ronson's written some so-called English lyrics for and calls *The Empty Bed*, and one called *Woman*—and if you can put aside your weariness regarding the Bowie crowd and the name Mick, you might see that this stuff actually sounds a great deal better than the average smash single from Tony Orlando and Dawn. It's all rotten, of course, but children are not bothered by rot the way you and I are. N.C.

EVIE SANDS: Estate of Mind. Evie Sands (vocals); orchestra. *Take It or Leave It; Call Me Home Again; I Love Makin' Love to You; Love in the Afternoon*; and six others. HAVEN ST-9202 \$6.98, Ⓟ 8XT-9202 \$7.98.

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

Whatever happened to the dumb-but-appealing girl singer? Nowadays all the girl singers seem formidably earnest, aggressively liberated, and as "involved" as Kali operating a switchboard. Evie Sands is another recorded ripple of this new wave, and while she isn't bad, particularly as a writer, she isn't all that striking either. Her best efforts here are (*Am I*) *Crazy 'Cause I Believe*, entertaining despite the moronic "Won'tcha come back oh baby please" refrain, and a sophisticated, sour little tale about an Ivy League heel by Dennis Lambert and Brian Potter, *You Brought the*

Woman Out of Me, that leaves the nasty aftertaste of a John O'Hara short story. Otherwise, the album's a routine example of the new kind of role-playing women are forcing themselves into in the Seventies. P.R.

SPARKS: Propaganda. Sparks (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *Propaganda; Ah-choo; Reinforcements; BC; Bon Voyage; Who Don't Like Kids*; and five others. ISLAND ILPS 9312 \$6.98, Ⓟ Y81 9312 \$7.98.

Performance: **Cute**
Recording: **Slick**

I thought Sparks' last album was a witty, enjoyable prank. I still think so, though I now wonder whether one reason I liked it so much was because I was hearing the group for the first time. This current album mostly reflects what will probably be written on the gravestone of rock-and-roll when a consensus is reached on its death: "Here lies more of the same." There are some occasionally funny moments, such as *Ah-choo*, the best number here, which closes with what sounds like the soprano section of the London Young Charwomen's Choir attempting to sneeze and sing a madrigal at the same time. But most of the record is given over to echo-chamber gimmickry with rat-a-tat, box-square instrumental patterns designed to say: "THIS IS SATIRE: KINDLY REALIZE HOW CLEVER WE ARE."

The defect of Sparks' music—the same joke can be told only once—is largely compensated for, I would guess, by their stage act. My spies report that an evening spent watching the Mael Brothers, who are the core of the band, is rewarding. An hour spent listening to this album is somewhat less gratifying. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE STARS OF FAITH: Living to Live Again. Stars of Faith (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Ezekiel (sic); Have You Tried Him; Thy Life; Let Jesus Fix It; Tell God*; and six others. NASHBORO 7143 \$4.98.

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

The Stars of Faith, who once made up most of the personnel of the Clara Ward Singers in

their hot, great days, are a smooth, highly disciplined vocal sextet from Philadelphia whose singing has the glow and flame of "mid-period" gospel. I say "mid-period" because their style falls between the august concert performances of church choirs and the "new" gospel that uses rock and jazz rhythms to find a contemporary way to express faith.

There are many forms of gospel. Most white Americans who have heard any part of it know it from the work of the sublime Mahalia Jackson or the Edwin Hawkins' Singers' *Oh Happy Day* of 1969. These are both good examples, but there are many other artists (I use the word deliberately) in gospel music who should be heard as well. I have hoped for some years now that gospel would make a breakthrough as a nationally familiar, broadly enjoyed music. It is infinitely more satisfying than the cosmopolitan turkey-gobble of black jive-pop, and it has been an essential part of black American life for more than a hundred years. Many young middle-class blacks today think it corny, confining, or irrelevant, but there must be thousands who find it honest, vital music.

This album, which is, though excellent, not necessarily the very best you can hear in gospel, is something like the middle of a very good movie that you happen to tune in on and wish you had seen from the beginning. Unlike movies, however, gospel has no end. J.V.

STRAWBS: Ghosts. Strawbs (vocals and instrumentals). *Ghosts; Lemon Pie; Starshinel; Angel Wine; Where You Go*; and four others. A & M SP 4506 \$6.98, Ⓟ 8T 4506 \$7.98, Ⓞ CS 4506 \$7.98.

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

Strawbs started as a British kid's idea of bluegrass but soon went orchestral on us—using, as youth does, electronic keyboards to get about the same result Nelson Riddle would with fiddles. David Cousins, leader and chief songwriter, seems to want cathedral-scale hoopla behind his words, which are better but no less grimly pious than the average rock-song words trying to do the profound bit. This album has a nice overall sound and yet continually suggests Strawbs is in some unreal place. People have to be primed to bother with this kind of worry-wart treatment of

small insights, and they have to be innocent to be uplifted by such grandiose sweeps of melody and ornamentation. I'm pretty sure many listeners have lost the prime they had back in 1970, and I know they've lost a lot of innocence. Since a rock album that isn't in touch with the very latest in collective moods doesn't work, I'm afraid Cousins will pay for failing to notice the back-breaking load of healthy skepticism the years have bestowed upon us. *N.C.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

10cc: *The Original Soundtrack*. 10cc (vocals and instrumentals). *Une Nuit à Paris; I'm Not in Love; Blackmail; The Second Sitting for the Last Supper*; and four others. MERCURY SRM-1-1029 \$6.98.

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

I don't think 10cc is a rock band as such. I would guess that its members spend a fair amount of time writing until they hit on something they like. That done, they spend more time planning how to present it. This is rather like working on a script for a radio play, casting the parts with the appropriate actors, and deciding on what sound effects should be used.

Well, the album (their third) is smashingly good. I especially admire the lyrics and the ideas of several songs. From *Second Sitting for the last Supper*: "Another guru in the money/Another mantra in the mail/An easy way from rags to riches/God's little acres up for sale." And this, from *Brand New Day*: "The devil got you running everywhere, boy/I smell cooking, and it might be you." And from *The Film of My Love*: "A clapper board kiss/There's an Oscar in this/A hit or a miss whatever/A box office wedding/A première for two/We'll be on location forever." That is the kind of writing you very seldom get nowadays. The arrangements and delivery are true to the material and walloping good. Few bands can plan as well as they can execute and vice versa. 10cc does both equally well, and you should hear them. *J.V.*

BIG MAMA THORNTON: *Sassy Mama!* Big Mama Thornton (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Rolling Stone; Lost City; Mr. Cool; Big Mama's New Love*; and three others. VANGUARD VSD 79354 \$6.98.

Performance: **Vocals fine, band lousy**
Recording: **Good**

Big Mama Thornton is the writer of *Ball and Chain*, recorded and made famous by the late Janis Joplin. Big Mama herself is a fine old tigress, the possessor of a very pleasing and ingratiating "baritone" voice, and she has a real sense of timing—the singer's instinct for spacing the lyrics a little behind or ahead of the progression of the tune in order to create surprise and/or tension.

It is possible to hear and appreciate all her gifts in this recording if you can tune out the miserable, hackneyed accompaniment behind her, in which every cornball blues riff and figure is played with determined sterility. I hope to hear Ms. Thornton again, but in better company. *J.V.*

ROBIN TROWER: *For Earth Below*. Robin Trower (guitar); James Dewar (vocals, bass); Bill Lordan (drums). *Shame the Devil; It's Only Money; Confessin' Midnight; Fine Day; Alihea*; and three others. CHRYSALIS CHR

1073 \$6.98. ⓑ M8C 1073 \$7.98, Ⓒ M5C 1073 \$7.98.

Performance: **Dated**
Recording: **Very good**

Robin Trower is a synthetic, thoroughly competent rock band that probably was *born* a victim of rock's built-in obsolescence. A few years ago it might have been different, but now this kind of blues-based hard stuff from a basic three-piece electric band reminds us not so much of Cream as of the non-dairy substitute. Riffing, even when tight and clean, doesn't do me much good any more, and neither do vocals imbedded in the instrumentals. And I've given up on the notion that standard chord progression plus inflection is close enough to melody. There's workmanship here, and Matthew Fisher's production is good, but I admire all that in the most detached way you can imagine. To paraphrase the ESP people, the Present doesn't care whether you believe in it or not. *N.C.*

LOUDON WAINWRIGHT III: *Unrequited* (see Best of the Month, page 71)

DIONNE WARWICKE: *Then Came You*. Dionne Warwick (vocals); orchestra. *Then Came You; Sure Thing; It's Magic; Who Knows; How Can I Tell Him*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2846 \$6.98. ⓑ M8 2846 \$7.98, Ⓒ M5 2846 \$7.98.

Performance: **Mostly strained**
Recording: **Good**

Dionne Warwick sounds as good as she ever did, but her new material, most of it by Jerry Ragovoy (who also produced this album), is so thin, and she has to work so hard at it, that her glamour takes on the forlorn taintness of Christmas tinsel in July. Her hit single, *Then Came You*, the only track here not written or produced by Ragovoy, is just fine, and she pounces on it with all her remembered stylish ferocity. Everything else is an uphill fight, a very long way from the days of her glittering work with Bacharach and David. *P.R.*

WET WILLIE: *Dixie Rock*. Wet Willie (vocals and instrumentals). *She's My Lady; Dixie Rock; Poor Judge of Character; Mama Didn't Raise No Fools*; and six others. CAPRICORN CP 0149 \$6.98. ⓑ M 80149 \$7.98, Ⓒ M 50149 \$7.98.

Performance: **Stale**
Recording: **Very good**

I don't remember being especially impressed by Wet Willie in the past, and this album confirms that it will probably be a long time before I'm crazy about the group. Wet Willie is a huff-puff white blues band which tries, every once in a while, to sound like a pop-soul group. I think there should be a moratorium on blues until somebody, somewhere, writes a few good ones, and until some new riffs and figures are invented. The blues as an exciting, valuable form died about thirty years ago. The social conditions and musical traditions of black people that helped to create the blues have changed radically, and the playing of the blues in the last two decades has largely been left to young white imitators. With rare exceptions, they have contributed little to the form, and what is left of the blues is really only the shell: a style of singing and a few riffs. Wet Willie is not one of those rare exceptions. *J.V.*

(Continued overleaf)

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PAUL BLEY: *Open, to Love*. Paul Bley (piano). *Closer*; *Ida Lupino*; *Started*; *Open, to Love*; and three others. ECM 1023 ST \$6.98.

Performance: **Sensitive and searching**
Recording: **Excellent**

In 1949, when Oscar Peterson left Canada for the States, Paul Bley—then seventeen—took over his rhythm section. Five years later, Bley was making a name for himself in U.S. jazz circles, playing with Ornette Coleman's group, his own, and—in 1959—Charles Mingus. Throughout the Sixties, Bley was deeply involved in the avant-garde jazz movement, but he never gained wide public acclaim.

These seven piano improvisations, recorded in Oslo, Norway, in 1972, are introspective, highly personal statements. Fragile and beautiful, it is music you will want to listen to alone, but hear it you must. *C.A.*

LESTER BOWIE: *Fast Last!* Lester Bowie (trumpet and flugelhorn); instrumental accompaniment. *Lonely Woman*; *F Troop Rides Again*; *Hello Dolly*; and two others. MUSE 5055 \$6.98.

Performance: **Ill-conceived**
Recording: **Very good**

Once, in a review of an album by the Art Ensemble of Chicago, I threatened to send producer Michael Cuscuna a box of Q-Tips. I should have. Trumpeter Lester Bowie comes from the Art Ensemble, and this is his first recorded effort as a leader. In his notes, Cuscuna makes much of Bowie's flair for comedy; that may be what parts of this album are all about, but I think Mr. Bowie's horrendous version of *Hello Dolly* (accompanied only by Hicks' piano) is simply an ill-conceived attempt at doing something different with that tired tune. It's different, but it's dreadful as well. *Banana Whistle* is an Art Ensemble-type free-for-all with little more than volume going for it; *F Troop Rides Again*, credited to Bowie, is actually a ten-minute drum orgy played by Philip Wilson, Jerome Cooper, and Charles Shaw with occasional sound effects by Bowie, seemingly inspired by one of TV's *Creature Features*. I am a great admirer of bassist Cecil McBee, and it is obvious, even from this album, that pianist John Hicks is a talent to be reckoned with, but both would do well either to go it on their own or to seek employment with a leader of comparable ability.

Like abstract art, free-form jazz, which can be of very high order, very often becomes an outlet for people who lack the technical skill to express themselves in more conventional forms. Mr. Bowie simply does not have what it takes, and those responsible for giving him the recognition of recording at this time are

doing him and the music he allegedly represents a great disservice. *C.A.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

KENNY CLARKE/FRANCY BOLAND BIG BAND: *At Her Majesty's Pleasure*. Kenny Clarke (drums); Francy Boland (piano); orchestra. *At Her Majesty's Pleasure*. *Jazz Suite in Seven Parts*. BLACK LION BL-131 \$6.98, ⑧ 8T-131 \$7.98.

Performance: **Pleasure indeed**
Recording: **Excellent**

The Clarke/Boland band has been giving concerts since 1966, but it was recording five or six years before that. Made up of American expatriates and some of Europe's top jazz musicians, it is as good as any big band we have in the U.S., and better than most. *At Her Majesty's Pleasure* is a seven-part jazz suite composed and arranged by Francy Boland with the unlikely theme of British penal institutions. It's an album I wouldn't mind being locked up with. Woven into the brisk, imaginative arrangements are outstanding solos, such as tenor saxophonist Tony Coe's brooding *Holloway*, Boland swinging ever so lightly on *Pentonville*, and tenors Johnny Griffin, Ronnie Scott, and Tony Coe on *Wormwood Scrubs*. Most impressive, however, is the overall sound of this very tight sixteen-piece band. If big bands are your thing, then so is this album. *C.A.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STAN GETZ: *Captain Marvel*. Stan Getz (tenor saxophone); Chick Corea (electric piano); Stanley Clarke (bass); Airtro Moreira (percussion). *La Fiesta*; *Five-Hundred Miles High*; *Lush Life*; and three others. COLUMBIA KC 32706 \$5.98, ⑧ CA 32706 \$6.98, ⑨ CT 32706 \$6.98.

Performance: **What generation gap?**
Recording: **Excellent**

Stan Getz, whose rise to fame began in the Woody Herman band in the late Forties, is now forty-eight. Getz's exquisite solo on Herman's recording of *Early Autumn* first

made people take note of him. Chick Corea was not able to appreciate that at the time; he was only six. Stanley Clarke wasn't even born, and you could probably have fitted Airtro into a conga drum with room to spare. But Stan Getz today is as up-to-date and vital as he was back in the Herman days. "Captain Marvel" is a well-conceived, expertly played album, and Getz is splendid whether he's stomping through *Day Waves*, soaring *Five-Hundred Miles High*, or floating through Billy Strayhorn's brittle, bluesy *Lush Life*. Shazam! Stan Getz has lost thirty years! *C.A.*

BOBBY HACKETT: *Strike Up the Band*. Bobby Hackett (trumpet); Zoot Sims (soprano and tenor saxophones); Hank Jones (piano); Bucky Pizzarelli (guitar); Richard Davis (bass); Mel Lewis (drums). *Zoot's Toot*; *These Foolish Things*; *What Is This Thing Called Love?*; *Full Circle*; *Teresa Be*; and five others. FLYING DUTCHMAN BDL1-0829 \$5.98.

Performance: **Relaxed swing**
Recording: **Excellent**

Bring together a group of first-rate musicians, give them four standards, some blues, and a couple of nice melodies, record the whole thing very well, and you have a nice album. That's what this is, a nice album: nothing earth-shattering, no assaults on your ears, just good music blown to perfection. *C.A.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

EARL HINES: *Tea for Two*. Earl Hines (piano and vocals). *Velvet Moon*; *Blues After Midnight*; *Sweet Lorraine*; *Blues in Third*; and four others. BLACK LION BL-112 \$6.98, ⑧ 8T-112 \$7.98.

Performance: **Evergreen and inspired**
Recording: **Very good**

In 1927, when Earl Hines became musical director of Louis Armstrong's Stompers at Chicago's Sunset Cafe, he had already been playing piano for fifteen years. Now almost seventy-two, he is still a phenomenal artist who combines brilliant technique with a fertile musical imagination.

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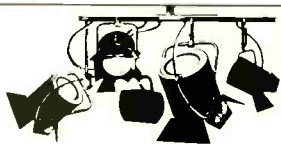


Black Lion Records

In 1964, a year before these recordings were made, Hines, who had more or less buried himself in a Dixieland setting, appeared in concert with a trio at a small midtown Manhattan theater. The concert was a triumph, the critics raved, and the record companies scrambled to get Hines into their catalogs. By the end of 1965 Hines had added close to one hundred new selections to his already impressive recording career, and seven different labels—including RCA and Columbia—released new Earl Hines albums; the market was saturated, which rarely happens in the case of jazz performers. But, although such proliferation probably hurt album sales at the time, Hines' evergreen creativity never allowed him to render a stale performance.

Caution Blues (also known as *Blues in Third*) is a case in point. Hines first recorded it as a solo for the QRS label in 1928, and thirty-three years later, when I asked him to play it on a Riverside date I was producing, he did two takes, neither of which was an attempt at re-creating the original. In fact, there was such a vast difference between the two takes that I chose to issue both. The present version, recorded four years later, and a more recent version made for the Chiaroscuro label show equal originality.

Earl Hines had young ideas in the Forties when his big band gave a platform to such as Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Sarah Vaughan, and Billy Eckstine. He continues to exude youth whenever he performs. C.A.



THEATER • FILMS

REALLY ROSIE (Maurice Sendak—Carole King). Original TV soundtrack. Carole King (vocals); orchestra. ODE SP 77027 \$5.98.

Performance: **Really poor**
Recording: **Flossy**

Carole King is overshadowed here by the otherwise greatly gifted Maurice Sendak, who wrote, animated, and provided the lyrics for this recent TV show. King composed the music and sang the songs. The special itself was fairly awful—whimsey amuck—and about par for that particular brand of patronization that overcomes most adults writing for children. King's melodies are metronomically rigid, apparently to accommodate Sendak's stiff lyrics, and her performances almost caramelize from her heavy and inept attempts at "acting." Sendak, by the way, is the same man whose recent retelling of the Grimm stories and magnificent illustrations for them have resulted in what I consider to be modern masterpieces. One can only hope that he now stays forever away from TV and records and anything else that will keep him from working on more of his magical books. And Carole, you stay away from Maurice too, y'hear? P.R.

THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW (Richard O'Brien). Original-cast recording. Tim Curry, Jamie Donnelly, Boni Enten, Abigale Hanes.

Alan Martin, Meat Loaf, Kim Milford. B. Miller, Susan Morse, John Mark Robinson, Bruce Scott (vocals); Graham Jarvis (narrator); orchestra, D'Vaughn Pershing cond. ODE SP-77026 \$6.98, 8T-77026 \$7.98, © CS-77026 \$7.98.

Performance: **Noisy nonsense**
Recording: **Souped up**

As the latest entry in the "rock musical" sweepstakes that already includes *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*, this "science fiction" musical staggers on stage in a leaky rocketship of book, music, and lyrics by Richard O'Brien and promises a trip that turns out to go only about as far as the corridors in a Coney Island funhouse. From what I could make out from the lyrics supplied with this original-cast re-

ording of a production that seems to have sprouted somewhere in Southern California, *The Rocky Horror Show* concerns the adventures of a lad named Brad and his goofy girl Janet. There are glimmers of entertainment in the midst of all the murkiness—notably the Sweet Transvestite's ballad of weird blandishments, as he offers, among other things, to accompany our nebulous hero and heroine to "an old Steve Reeves movie" to help pass the time. Any resemblance between *The Rocky Horror Show* and any real late-night double feature—a topic that would still seem worthy of satirical attention—seems, however, purely coincidental. The music is hard-driving, hysterical, doggedly deafening, and in no way distinguished by the kind of material that made *Hair* a musical-comedy landmark. P.K.



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The search for vintage jazz continues to yield its rewards

MILES DAVIS' Capitol sessions of the late Forties are generally regarded as the "birth of cool," but actually Lester Young was way ahead of the game; his "cooler" tone was causing consternation as far back as 1934, when he replaced Coleman Hawkins in the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra. Young lasted only a few weeks with Henderson, but he was soon to gain national prominence with the Basie band and challenge Hawkins' position as the reigning tenor king.

Current recordings reflect a dearth of good jazz as performers who are capable of produc-

technical quality is superb, sounding more like 1960 than 1940, and the music, a Benny Goodman rehearsal in one of Columbia's studios, takes on added significance because it is the embryo of what ten days later—with Cootie Williams and George Auld replacing Buck Clayton and Lester Young—officially became the much-celebrated Benny Goodman Sextet.

Don't expect any interplay between Young and Christian—it never takes place; when Young solos, Christian plays rhythm guitar. But both men solo brilliantly, and it's somehow nice just to have them together. The rest

The Esp-Disk title, "Newly Discovered Performances," is a hype; tapes of these Royal Roost broadcasts have been circulating among collectors for years, and some of them have previously appeared on the Charlie Parker label. This company pulled the same trick when it bootlegged Billie Holiday material, but the music in both cases is honest, and such releases will perhaps lead to its discovery by people who have not been so blessed before. The technical quality of these airchecks is remarkable, considering that they were made in pre-FM 1948 (pre-FM for this kind of broadcast, at least), and Lester is in good—if not exceptional—company. One track, *How High the Moon*, features a more notable group, with Kai Winding, Allen Eager, and Hank Jones taking good solos and with Ella Fitzgerald scatting a chipper version of the pop warhorse.

INTEREST in previously unavailable jazz material is mounting in this country (the Europeans have been doing this sort of thing for years), and it was inevitable that a good deal of attention would eventually be paid to Lester Young. Besides these three sets, Onyx recently issued private club recordings of Young in Europe, and Columbia is about to release a monumental series of five double albums produced by Michael Brooks. Now if Decca would only let us have their Louis Armstrong treasures. . . . —Chris Albertson

Lester Young on Saxophone



ing it thrash down more commercial avenues. Perhaps for this reason, there seems to be increased activity not only in the reissue department but also in the search for such hitherto unissued vintage material as private recordings and broadcasts. Such ventures are most often undertaken by small, privately owned labels—though Columbia has issued some Charlie Christian and Clifford Brown material of this nature—and the results are often artistically rewarding. Such is the case with three newly released Lester Young albums featuring private recordings and broadcasts made between 1940 and 1948.

Most sensational is a Jazz Archives set containing five selections with Young and Charlie Christian in their only known appearances together (except for three selections in Vanguard's "Spirituals to Swing" set). Young is heard only on the five opening tracks, but if the album contained no more than that it would still be a good buy. Thought lost for many years, these recordings turned up at a Greenwich Village auction in the late Sixties and reputedly were acquired for \$2,000. The

of the album consists of previously unissued Goodman Sextet alternative takes made interesting chiefly because of Christian's presence.

Young is heard throughout the Jazz Archives "Jammin'" album, which consists of recordings made during the summer of 1944 in connection with Gjon Mili's *Jammin' the Blues*, a remarkable little jazz film that won an Oscar nomination, and three selections recorded at 1946 "Jazz at the Philharmonic" concerts. The technical quality is not quite so good here, but the music is superb, with fellow tenors Coleman Hawkins and Illinois Jacquet joining in on *Lady Be Good* and Buck Clayton rendering *I Can't Get Started* exquisitely between stunning Young and Hawkins solos. The three soundtrack items—which were previously released by the Palm Club label in Europe—and three other tracks from the same sessions, which have never been available before, are also in the jam-session vein. Young is in top form, Dicky Wells and Harry Edison solo splendidly, and Marie Bryant's two vocals make one ponder the reason for her subsequent disappearance.

CHARLIE CHRISTIAN & LESTER YOUNG: *Together 1940*. Lester Young (tenor saxophone); Charlie Christian (guitar); with various groups including Buck Clayton (trumpet), Benny Goodman (clarinet), Count Basie (piano), and Jo Jones (drums). *Ad-Lib Blues*; *Lester's Dream*; *Royal Garden Blues*; *Breakfast Feud* (three versions); *Benny's Bugle* (two versions); and eight others. JAZZ ARCHIVES (M) JA-6 \$5.98 (from Jazz Archives, Box 194, Plainview, N.Y. 11803).

LESTER YOUNG: *Jammin' with Lester*. Lester Young (tenor saxophone); with various groups including Buck Clayton, Harry Edison, and Joe Guy (trumpets), Coleman Hawkins and Illinois Jacquet (tenor saxophones), Dicky Wells (trombone), Barney Kessel (guitar), and Sidney Catlett and J. C. Heard (drums). *Jamming the Blues*; *Tea for Two*; *Sweet Georgia Brown*; *Midnight Symphony*; and five others. JAZZ ARCHIVES (M) JA-18 \$5.98 (from Jazz Archives, Box 194, Plainview, N.Y. 11803).

LESTER YOUNG: *Newly Discovered Performances, Volume 1*. Lester Young (tenor saxophone); Jessie Drakes (trumpet); Ted Kelly (trombone); Freddie Jefferson (piano); Ted Briscoe (bass); Roy Haynes (drums); and, on *How High the Moon*, Kai Winding (trombone), Allen Eager (tenor saxophone), Hank Jones (piano), Ray Brown (bass), and Ella Fitzgerald (vocal). *Lester Leaps In*; *Sweet Georgia Brown*; *I Cover the Waterfront*; *Just You, Just Me*; *How High the Moon*; and three others. ESP-DISK (M) ESP-3017 \$5.98.

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CHOOSING SIDES

By IRVING KOLODIN



BEETHOVEN: RARE, RARER, RAREST

ARE YOU eagerly awaiting an arrangement for two violins and viola of Benjamin Britten's Suite for Unaccompanied Cello (No. 3) recently introduced to this country by Mstislav Rostropovich (to whom it is dedicated)? Or perhaps you want a transcription for piano and cello of Elliott Carter's new quintet for brass? It may take quite a little while. But if you were a member in good standing of the Vienna chapter of the *Hausmusikfreunde* through much of the nineteenth century, you could have readily entertained hopes for arrangements of works by contemporaries just as exalted as these. They would have included Beethoven himself, as the Kinsky catalog abundantly testifies and as a group of record releases at hand from Deutsche Grammophon and its Archiv affiliate affirm. The motivation for all this arranging was, of course, market demand.

In an entertainingly impartial way, the Beethoven arrangements recorded on these discs are a varied lot: treatments of the symphonies for solo piano and for trio; a conversion of a sonata into a string quartet; the celebrated E-flat Septet (Op. 20) made over into a trio; the great concerto for violin refashioned into one for piano (making six in all); as well as a whole bundle of excerpts from diverse works converted into songs, with words selected by Friedrich Silcher (who also composed: *Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten—Die Lorelei*—and other "folk" songs are among his creations) from poetry in print about 1840.

Would Beethoven have revolted against these "deseccrations" of his carefully—not to say laboriously—crafted creations? Not, evidently, for any basic aesthetic reasons, for the list would contain a fair share from his own hand; but he *is* on record extolling his own products as "creative" and those of others as mechanical and without merit.

Beethoven's F Major Quartet (made by the composer himself from the E-flat Piano Sonata, Op. 14, No. 1) is a particularly good instance of care in conversion. In its original form, the work has many marks of quartet style, so the decision to arrange it so was musically a justifiable one. The opening movement begins with a theme in half notes over a typical quartet background: an eighth-note rest followed by three eighths against each half note. It is so typical of string-quartet style that it is exactly the same pattern Haydn utilized in his famous *Quinten* Quartet (Op. 76, No.

2). Haydn's theme, though, is a succession of descending fifths (hence the nickname), whereas Beethoven's sequence is a *rising* one.

The key change, from E-flat to F, is also thoughtfully made: it enables the cello to bottom out on his C string (the dominant of F). Many subtle touches throughout (such as the substitution, in passages of gathering intensity, of tremolo figures in the strings for the Alberti-bass design suited to the piano original) in effect convert the pre-Op. 18 sonata



FRIEDRICH SILCHER (1789-1860)

into a post-Op. 18 quartet. It is beautifully played by the Amadeus Quartet (in company, on DG 139 444, with the Op. 29 Quintet) and may be happily recommended to anyone not satisfied with the conventional total of sixteen Beethoven quartets.

The circumstances under which the E-flat Septet, Op. 20, was arranged by the composer as a trio for piano, clarinet, and cello were quite different. The Septet was first performed as the eighteenth century was ending (1799), and the favor it enjoyed was not only immediate but *lasting*; thus, much as Beethoven profited from the former, he was increasingly irritated by the latter. Following its original publication in 1802 (with a dedication to Austria's Empress Maria Theresa,

whose taste it perfectly embodied), Carl Czerny prepared a version for woodwind quintet which was published in 1805, the same year as the composer's own trio version. Opus 38 is a pleasant enough piece, especially if you play the piano, cello, or clarinet. For some listeners, though, the immediate discovery that the reconstructed version lacks the luscious, string-woodwind sound of Op. 20 loses for the piece the special distinction of being the last of the eighteenth-century divertimentos (and *that* they will not buy). The performing group on the DG Archiv recording of the work (2533 118) is chaired by a spirited pianist, Eckart Besch, who is technically well supported by clarinetist Karl Leister and cellist Wolfgang Boettcher.

With violinist Thomas Brandis as replacement for Leister, Besch and Boettcher are also heard in a Beethoven-made transcription of the Second Symphony (DG Archiv 2533 136). This is less a conversion or reconstruction than an arrangement, in which the highly qualified Besch leads a reading that might have been enjoyed—pre-radio, pre-recordings—of a misty evening in the music room of the Bürgenstock, a treasured memory of a hotel situated high over Switzerland's Lake Lucerne. These days, however, it tends to be an experience in diminishing returns, not for any reason of dissatisfaction with the performers, but because Beethoven's objectives in the original work changed as the score progressed. The Second Symphony is Janus-faced: for the backward-looking first two movements, the trio suffices well; but as the orchestral elements accumulate in the forward-looking scherzo and finale, Beethoven piles more of the texture into the piano part, and the arrangement tends to become a solo with cello and clarinet obbligato rather than a trio.

The last of Beethoven's reworkings in this group of issues departs most widely from its prototype, even inviting another kind of virtuosity. This is the conversion, at the instigation of fellow-composer, friend, and publisher Muzio Clementi, of the Violin Concerto of 1806 into the D Major Piano Concerto of 1807. It is something of an irritating none-such, in that Beethoven assigns the pianist's right hand to doing much of what was originally written for the violinist's left hand, adding a new part in the bass clef to keep the soloist's other hand busy.

I would have preferred a fresh treatment of all the material for *both* hands of the pianist, which might have given us a real Sixth Piano Concerto, but Beethoven obviously didn't. What we have now is an entertaining oddity, with a timpani-supported cadenza by Beethoven in movement one as its most distinctive feature. The *Larghetto* offers the widest latitude for the pianist, and Daniel Barenboim does more for it (in his self-conducted performance on DG 2530 457 with the English Chamber Orchestra) than any performer or performers in the several partial or complete previous recordings.

So much for provenance and authenticity. The succeeding items lack the legitimacy of those in which Beethoven himself participated, but the love child (or bastard, if you will) often has charms the legitimate lacks. This may be the case with Franz Liszt's arrangement of the Eighth Symphony, but the place it might have won in our attentions has so long been usurped by the many orchestral recordings of the work that only a real connoisseur of period pieces can respond to it. It

might be interesting to have all nine of the symphonies performed on the piano, if only to document the degree to which they became more orchestral, less pianistic, as one followed the other. I would especially welcome such a sequence if the pianist were Felix Weingartner or one of the Georges (Szell or Solti)—any one of the three could add “how” to “what” in the interpretations. Leonard Hokanson’s performance on DG Archiv 2533 121 is mostly concerned with the “what,” though it is capable enough on that level.

The other side of the same disc, however, not only provides much after occupation for Hokanson in his best role—that of top-ranking accompanist—but the most delectable diversion of this entire group of recordings. It is really an instance of the dessert—in the form of a musical twelve-layer cake or a delicious twelve-part parfait—making the whole meal. Each musical selection, beginning with the slow movement of the *Pathétique* (Op. 13) Sonata and ending with the Allegretto of the Seventh Symphony, has been wedded (sometimes with a degree of insistence suggesting a mating of the shotgun variety) to poetic texts. Words drawn from Schiller produce a *Sehnsucht* (“Longing”) out of the flowing slow movement of the Op. 2, No. 2 Piano Sonata; others by Ludwig Uhland make a *Gruss der Seelen* of a similar section from the second Piano and Violin Sonata of Op. 30.

But it is unquestionably “*Unbekannt*” (the German equivalent of Anon.) who gets in the best licks in the slow movement of the Fifth Symphony (*Durch dich so selig*—“Just by you! so happy!” reads the translation); in the introduction to the A-flat Sonata (Op. 26), also called *Sehnsucht*; in the *Andante Favori* (*An sie*); and in the slow section of the *Appassionata* (*An die Nacht*). Something tells me that all these texts were written by Silcher himself, and that he was either too modest or too wise to take the credit.

At the outset of the disc, in the association of Wilhelm Waiblinger’s *Das Auge der Geliebten* with the *Pathétique* melody, one senses that Hermann Prey is bent on being the parlor baritone of all the parlor baritones who might ever have sung these fruity delights on the shores of the Möhne, the Mosel, or the Main. Prey is too great an artist to keep his best under wraps for long, however, and the other eleven “songs” are given the best of which he is capable, with Hokanson his right- (and left-) hand man at the piano.

Two things: This group of songs, for all its triumphantly diverting character, has an undercurrent of true musical interest in the demonstration that Beethoven’s slow movements were the wellspring from which Schubert, Schumann, and Mendelssohn drew for much of their German lieder. And finally, this record is something to be prescribed only with caution for the young. It took years for this Damrosch-inculcated listener to forget that “Bring the flag and the drum/Summon good men to come” was *not* what Beethoven had in mind when he got into the C Major section of the slow movement of the C Minor Symphony, and years more to learn that Brahms would not have recognized “Strolling along, sing a song/In fair or stormy weather” as the “text” for the Allegretto of his Second Symphony. In other words, DG Archiv 2533 121 is an *adult* pleasure not to be shared with the youngsters, for it contains far too much in the way of attractive mnemonics for them to unlearn. Give it an “X” rating.

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CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • IGOR KIPNIS
PAUL KRESH • ERIC SALZMAN

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

J. S. BACH: *Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 1-6 (BWV 1046-1051)*. Jean-Pierre Rampal, Alain Marion (flutes); Pierre Pierlot, Jacques Chambon, Claude Maisonneuve (oboes); Maurice André (trumpet and horn); R. Tassin (horn); Paul Hongne (bassoon); Gérard Jarry (violin); Anne-Marie Beckensteiner (harpsichord); Jean-François Paillard Chamber Orchestra, Jean-François Paillard cond. RCA CRL2-5801 two discs \$7.98. © ARS1-7004/5 two cartridges \$15.90.

Performance: **One of the best**
Recording: **Excellent**

No matter how many sets of *Brandenburgs* there are in the catalog, there is always room for one as attractive as this one; it is, I think, quite the finest thing Paillard has done on records. The ensemble has been scaled down to the most intimate proportions, and all participants—some of whom must have taken part in dozens of recordings of these works by now—are at the top of their form, exuding both infectious joy and the polished virtuosity symbolized by the names Rampal, André, *et al.* Paillard's pacing is about as close to ideal as anyone is likely to come, and so, for the most part, is the instrumental balance in all six works. Rhythms are firm, yet flexible; the invigorating allegros never deteriorate into mechanical chug-chug, and slow movements are caressed without losing their crispness.

Maurice André, who has been performing

and recording various works for violin, oboe, or flute on the trumpet (including the Bach Suite in B Minor), has not taken over any of those instruments' parts here, but he does put in an unexpected appearance as first horn in the Concerto No. 1, and he and his partner do push out those triplets in the first movement. Among the soloists whose names are less familiar, Anne-Marie Beckensteiner does very well indeed in the formidable harpsichord part of No. 5, in which she must yield to some better-known virtuoso players only in the elaborate first-movement cadenza; she inserts a tasteful little cadenza extracted from the keyboard Toccata in G Minor (BWV 915) between the two allegros of the Third Concerto. Gérard Jarry (of the French String Trio, which toured here this year) handles the violin solos with distinction—and a consistently beautiful tone.

RCA has not only offered the set at a special price and put the two discs in a space-saving single jacket, but has sensibly distributed the six works over the four sides in a sequence that avoids the gratuitous "sandwiching" of No. 5 one finds in the sets that follow strict numerical order. The sound itself is absolutely first-rate in every respect.

The one drawback, for some listeners, will be the omission of the "original instruments." Among recordings made with recorders, gambas, etc., my preference is Ristenpart's (Nonesuch HB-73006), even though his No. 5 is sandwiched. Of the several sets using modern instruments, there is not now, and has never been, any as pleasing as Paillard's. *R.F.*

Archiv recording omitted as inauthentic: they were probably added by W. F. Bach, possibly under J. S. Bach's direction) and a sensitive version of *Lobet Gott*. The choral sound is not always as clear as it might be, but the vigor and excitement of the big opening choruses are undeniable. I found the peal of the organ continuo a curious presence in these large numbers: one hears only certain upper partials in the registration but rarely the harmonic essentials—which makes for an odd halo around the sound. Other than this, the instrumental sound is sumptuous and the sense of pulse and direction untiring.

A very strong feature of the performances is the solo quartet. In this respect, *Lobet Gott* is particularly outstanding. This work, a kind of miniature oratorio for Ascension Day, is given a highly expressive treatment, and the singers, always within the framework of Baroque style, make the most of it. Somary's shaping is excellent (*Ein feste Burg*, although a worthy performance, tends to jog along, which its companion never does). Helen Watts' singing of "*Ach, bleibe doch*"—the music is essentially that of the Agnus Dei of the B Minor Mass—is very touching. The four-channel version of the record is as sumptuous as the stereo in orchestral sound and clearer in the choral sound. *E. S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BARTÓK: *Concerto for Orchestra*. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 479 \$7.98.

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

Kubelik's 1959 recording of the Concerto for Orchestra with the Royal Philharmonic, issued together with Bartók's *Two Portraits* on Capitol, was one of the great ones: I expected to see it reissued on Seraphim long ago, but that has never happened. His remake with the orchestra that gave the first performances of the work (just over thirty years ago) is even more welcome, however, even though the DG price is twice that of Seraphim and there is no second work on the disc. The sonic frame provided by Kubelik's long-time studio collaborators (recording director Hans We-

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

J. S. BACH: *Cantata No. 80, Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott; Cantata No. 11, Lobet Gott in seinen Reichen*. Felicity Palmer (soprano); Helen Watts (alto); Robert Tear (tenor); Michael Rippon (bass); Amor Artis Chorale; English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary cond. VANGUARD VSD 71193 \$6.98, □ VSQ 30040 \$6.98.

Performance: **High style**
Recording: **Full**

This is a forceful reading of *Ein feste Burg* (with the trumpets and drums, which the DG

ber. engineer Heinz Wildhagen) is possibly the most realistic yet achieved in a recording of this work, and Kubelik's insight seems even deeper than in his earlier version. He seems to have organized his approach in such a way that the music is allowed to speak for itself—and it does so most convincingly: tempo selections are ideal throughout the five movements (how effective the central *Elegia* is when it moves along as it does here!), the orchestra is in fine fettle, and the variously showy, frolicsome, lyrical, ruminative, nostalgic, burlesque, and exultant elements of the work make their respective points without underscoring or understatement. *R.F.*

BEETHOVEN: *Transcriptions* (see *Choosing Sides*, page 92)

BIZET: *L'Arlésienne* (see *The Basic Repertoire*, page 46)

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, István Kertész cond. LONDON CS 6836 \$6.98.

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, István Kertész cond. LONDON CS 6838 \$6.98.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68*. London Symphony Orchestra, Leopold Stokowski cond. LONDON SPC 21131 \$6.98, © 821131 \$7.98, © 521131 \$7.98.

Performances. **Kertész fair to excellent; Stokowski superb**

Recordings: **All good**

Among the last recording projects István Kertész completed for London before his premature death two years ago was a Brahms symphony cycle with the Vienna Philharmonic, which has been available in England for some time. The Second Symphony was released here earlier, the Third is imminent, and we have on hand Nos. 1 and 4, together with a reissue from London Phase 4 of the First Symphony as taped from Leopold Stokowski's sixtieth-anniversary performances in London.

In the Fourth Symphony, Kertész leans toward the lyrical approach of a Bruno Walter. I favor the all-out heroic manner in this work, but I must say that on his chosen level of musical discourse, Kertész delivers a most satisfying reading abetted by beautiful orchestral performance and fine recording. Whether through the conductor's intent or that of the recording engineers, the horns sound more than usually prominent among the inner voices of the Brahmsian texture.

Not so successful is Kertész's version of the First Symphony. One senses from the very first—in the brisk pace adopted for the tremendous opening pages—that things are not going to work out right; and, as the reading of the first movement proceeds, I feel a curious lack of the momentum, the undeviating sense of purpose, that the music needs in order not to sound merely labored. The remaining movements fare better, though, as in the Fourth Symphony, the horns become somewhat overprominent.

The apparent unsureness of Kertész is brought into sharp relief by Stokowski's extraordinarily powerful reading, which I cited two years ago in these pages as being "the best Stokowski reading I have heard on rec-

ords since he made the original Victor M-15 with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1927 or thereabouts." In its reissue, the London Phase 4 people appear to have done a good deal of cleaning up in matters of balance and extraneous noise resulting from the circumstances of public performance. The result is not only a notable historical document, but a thrilling realization of one of the keystones of the symphonic repertoire. *D.H.*

CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO: *Coplas* (see **GOLD**)

CHOPIN: *Scherzos: No. 1, in B Minor, Op. 20; No. 2, in B-flat Minor, Op. 21; No. 3, in C-sharp Minor, Op. 39; No. 4, in E Major, Op. 54. Fantasia in F Minor, Op. 49*. Garrick Ohlsson (piano). ANGEL S-37017 \$6.98.

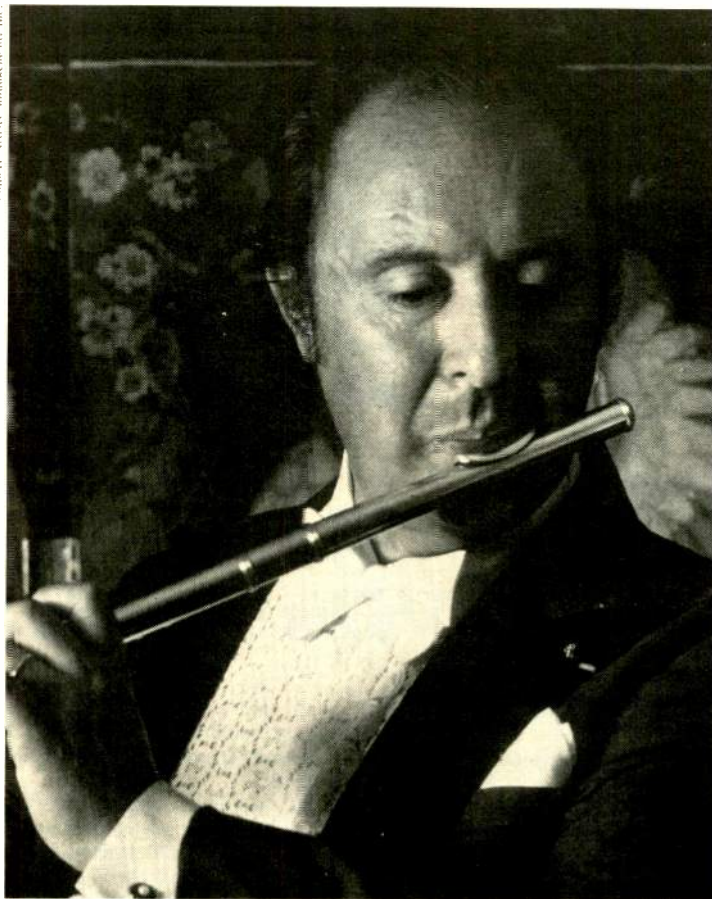
Performance: **Fluent**
Recording: **Excellent**

Garrick Ohlsson's technical equipment is of the very best—his sheer velocity and dynamic

more restrained and formally more complex E Major Scherzo that Ohlsson is heard to best advantage. The most controversial of his readings is likely to be that of the C-sharp Minor Scherzo, in which he adopts extreme tempo contrasts and a provocative and rather fascinating *rubato* in the central chorale.

The F Minor Fantasia, perhaps the most interpretively challenging of all the bigger Chopin works, also suffers in Ohlsson's reading from fluency at the expense of its inherent drama. Jakob Gimpel's Genesis recording underlines the shortcomings of Ohlsson's reading, especially in the introductory pages, which under Gimpel's fingers become a time bomb setting off all that follows, while for Ohlsson it appears to be but one of a series of linked episodes.

It will be interesting to hear what Mr. Ohlsson does with this music a decade from now. Meanwhile, the Angel disc is a fine documentation of the beginning of what probably will be a major career. The recording, moreover, is first-rate. *D.H.*



JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL: just one of the *Brandenburg* virtuosos

control are right up there in the big league. But I wonder if this total control is not leading him somewhat astray when it comes to effective communication of the dramatic rhetoric that dominates the first three of the Chopin scherzos. Despite recorded sound that is thin by today's standards, Artur Rubinstein's 1960 recording remains a totally gripping experience in this respect, while the 1968 Ashkenazy London disc offers better sound, plus a highly satisfying interpretation that stands midway between Ohlsson's fluency and Rubinstein's theatrics. It is in the expressively

DEBUSSY: *Settings of Verlaine Poems* (see *Collections*—Carole Bogard)

DVOŘÁK: *String Quartet in G Major, Op. 106* (see *Best of the Month*, page 69)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ELGAR: *Cello Concerto in E Minor, Op. 85; Introduction and Allegro for Strings, Op. 47; Serenade in E Minor for String Orchestra, Op. 20*. Paul Tortelier (cello, in Concerto only);

(Continued on page 98)

"Little in these performances calls for anything but praise..."

ONLY one of Haydn's last twelve symphonies is called the *London* Symphony, though they are all "London symphonies"; only one is called the *Surprise*, though every one of them is filled with surprises; and only one is called *The Miracle*, though none of them is anything less than that. No composer of the past or present makes one happier to have ears than the one described by H. C. Robbins Landon (in his annotative booklet for Antal Dorati's new set of these final dozen symphonies with the Philharmonia Hungarica on London Records) as "the greatest orchestral and formal experimenter of the eighteenth century," the same one the *Morning Chronicle* of London saluted, after the première of *The Clock* in March 1794, as "the inexhaustible, the wonderful, the sublime HAYDN!"

No single musician has more abundantly substantiated these various observations than Antal Dorati has in his phenomenally successful recordings of all the Haydn symphonies (successful commercially as well as artistically, as confirmed by the presentation of a gold record to Dorati in London last January to mark the sale of a million discs of these works in Europe and America). Dorati is not the first conductor to record a complete Haydn cycle, but his is somewhat more "complete" than Ernst Märzendorfer's for the Musical Heritage Society by virtue of the inclusion of alternate versions of Nos. 22 and 63 and of alternate finales for Nos. 53 and 103. These are supplied, along with the unnumbered symphonies labeled "A" and "B" in Landon's complete edition, in London's just-released two-disc set of "Appendices" (STS-15316/15317).

It is, moreover, a good deal more than just covering all the bases that makes Dorati's achievement so extraordinary: he has absorbed the essence of these works fully—abetted not only by both insight and scholarship, but by the most genuine enthusiasm as well—and he shapes each one according to its individual character, with absolutely no hint of mass production. The joy, freshness, vigor, wit, and authority that shine through his superbly fashioned realizations add up to an unimaginable step toward making the entire Haydn symphonic canon part of the active repertoire. To sustain this level of inspiration and commitment through so vast a series seems hardly less remarkable than Haydn's own genius in creating it. The Philharmonia Hungarica has been in beautiful shape throughout the series, too, progressing from excellence to excellence in terms of both solo playing and disciplined ensemble and continually surpassing itself as Haydn's (and Dorati's) demands intensified; the package of the final dozen is, for the performers as for the composer, a capstone as well as a conclusion.

Dorati has recorded several of these symphonies before, for Mercury. I was especially interested in comparing his ingratiating 1958 versions of Nos. 94 and 103, played by the same orchestra, with the performances in the new set. The earlier recording of No. 103 began in the old, time-honored way, with a *crescendo* and *diminuendo* in the opening drum-roll, while the remake, based on the

Landon edition (which Hermann Scherchen followed as early as 1950, but which no one else followed, apparently, for another decade or so), opens *fortissimo*; the rhythmic buoyancy of the movement proper is beyond description, and so is the inspired playing of the timpanist throughout the work; the slow movement is tauter now, the horns more proclamatory in the finale. The new *Surprise* is



Dorati Completes His Haydn

similarly contrasted with its predecessor in terms of tautness and crispness, especially as felt in the brisker tempos now taken in the inner movements.

The overall impression throughout the twelve sides is that everything moves naturally at its own pace, a pace determined by the nature of the music and the most comfortable phrasing of Haydn's marvelous themes. Opening movements are so scaled as to exude grandeur, charm, and warmth of heart in near-ideal proportions. Slow movements such as the great adagio of No. 102 gain in dignity because there is no dawdling (yet Dorati always manages to let the music breathe), and there is no lack of high spirits in the effervescent finales. Everywhere there is wonderful momentum and a feeling of great spontaneity, and yet these are large-scale interpretations, befitting Haydn's large-scale concepts.

Perhaps a bit more might have been made of the bassoon joke in the slow movement of No. 93—it is hardly a "raspberry" as heard

here—and the trio in the minuet of No. 97 might also have been set off more pointedly. I tend to agree, too, with Eugen Jochum, who said regarding his own remake of No. 98 that it makes more sense to have a harpsichord as continuo throughout that work than to bring the instrument in from nowhere for its tiny cadenza at the end of the finale, as Dorati does, but I cannot pretend to feel deeply about this. There is precious little in these performances that calls for anything but praise, gratitude, and deep satisfaction. The fact that the set is further enhanced by Landon's twenty-seven pages of detailed commentary and is nevertheless the least expensive offering of these works on discs compounds the attractiveness of the issue to almost embarrassing proportions.

DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON released Jochum's recordings of the "London" symphonies about a year and a half ago as one of the label's specially priced anniversary sets (it was then about \$33 list); by this time last year it had been withdrawn, and the two discs containing Nos. 95 and 96 and Nos. 99 and 100 are the first to reappear on their own. Jochum's very human sort of elegance and his special virtues as a Haydn conductor are well known, but neither his own earlier recordings nor any others known to me could have prepared me for the virtually unprecedented urgency and strength of his matured statements of these dozen masterworks. These are surely the finest things Jochum has done on records. His tempos and phrasing are invariably forthright, unfussy, and eminently convincing; his whole approach is at once robust and refined, as free from archness as from bluster. The London Philharmonic has never sounded better, and neither, really, has Haydn.

Leonard Bernstein's Haydn is more personally infected than Dorati's or Jochum's (the three are surely the greatest Haydn conductors alive today). He shows the highest regard for orchestral color and the pointing of individual phrases, encouraging his fine first-chair players to make the most of the opportunities Haydn provided for them. Dramatic tension goes hand-in-hand with ingratiating charm, subtle wit with unobtrusive fastidiousness. I find his performances of Nos. 95 and 96 less thoroughly persuasive than his "Paris" set; the final movement of No. 96 strikes me as unnecessarily sedate, and I suspect the rather fussy handling of the trios in the two minuets will put off as many listeners as it entices. The cello solo in No. 95 and the oboe in No. 96 are beautifully played, but they are distended and overcharacterized at the slow tempos Bernstein favors. This is, of course, a subjective reaction—and it is just such touches, after all, that make the idea of duplicating these works so intriguing.

With the exception of Fritz Reiner's recording of No. 95 (RCA LSC-2742) and George Szell's pairing of Nos. 93 and 94 (Columbia MS 7006), I know of no current recordings of any of the twelve "London" symphonies that afford more pleasure than those of Jochum and Dorati; choosing between these two is delightfully difficult. In matters of tempo,

Jochum tends to be more brisk than Dorati except in the slow movements, in which Dorati is usually faster. Jochum feels that "one cannot play the last movements fast enough"; his exhilarating treatment of the finale of No. 96 makes a fine case for that view, and without a hint of breathlessness or untidiness. But tempo differences are for the most part not great: in No. 100 both conductors take almost identical speeds in all four movements. There are more significant contrasts in accent and shaping: Dorati may put more lilt into his phrasing and express Haydn's humor more broadly, while Jochum is more sturdy and straight-faced but no less witty. I especially like Jochum's emphasis on the robust, peasant-dance character of the splendid minuet of No. 99, and I'm equally won over by Dorati's superb balance of gracefulness and exuberance in the first movement of No. 93.

AT this level of excellence, selection simply cannot be based on considerations measurable on any objective scale; the reassuring corollary is that there is little likelihood of disappointment in either case. It can hardly be overlooked that the Dorati discs carry a list price less than half that of Jochum's as reissued individually, and in this case those who allow price to be the determining factor will not be ill served. Dorati's Nos. 103 and 104 are already available on a single disc, and others from his set no doubt will be soon, so various nonduplicatory combinations become possible, but with such glorious realizations of these glorious works from both Dorati and Jochum, the idea of limiting oneself to one or the other in part or in whole seems a gratuitous deprivation. My practical advice is to buy the ridiculously economical Dorati set (with Landon's invaluable documentation) at once and add the Jochum discs as they reappear—and, of course, to fill in any gaps in the pre-existing portions of the Dorati series without delay.

—Richard Freed

HAYDN: Symphonies: No. 93, in D Major; No. 94, in G Major ("Surprise"); No. 95, in C Minor; No. 96, in D Major ("The Miracle"); No. 97, in C Major; No. 98, in B-flat Major; No. 99, in E-flat Major; No. 100, in G Major ("Military"); No. 101, in D Major ("The Clock"); No. 102, in B-flat Major; No. 103, in E-flat Major ("Drum-Roll"); No. 104, in D Major ("London"). Philharmonia Hungarica, Antal Dorati cond. LONDON STS-15319/15324 six discs \$20.94; STS 15324 (Nos. 103 and 104) available singly \$3.49.

HAYDN: Symphony No. 95, in C Minor; Symphony No. 96, in D Major ("The Miracle"). London Philharmonic Orchestra, Eugen Jochum cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 420 \$7.98.

HAYDN: Symphony No. 99, in E-flat Major; Symphony No. 100, in G Major ("Military"). London Philharmonic Orchestra, Eugen Jochum cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 459 \$7.98.

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London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult cond. ANGEI S-37029 \$6.98.

Performance: **Irresistible**
Recording: **Richly realistic**

Elgar's Cello Concerto, the last of his major works, may well be the finest of them: it is more concise than the symphonies or the Violin Concerto (to say nothing of the oratorios, which have all the appeal of root-canal therapy), and it is blessed, in its finale, with one of those inspiring tunes (like the ones in the much earlier *Cockaigne* Overture) that take hold in the listener's mind and dance there happily for days. I doubt that the work has ever had more compelling advocacy—on records or otherwise—than in this performance. Tortelier has recorded the Cello Concerto before, more than twenty years ago, and Boult must have conducted it hundreds of times by now: their mutual affection for the work is apparent, not in the form of sentimental indulgence, but in an energetic sweep and subtly controlled intensity that blaze with the excitement of fresh discovery. If this record gets the attention it deserves, the Elgar Concerto could become genuinely popular—and not just among cellists.

These are also surpassingly fine performances of the two string-orchestra works. Through the years I have doggedly held on to the now deleted Anthony Collins mono recording of these pieces, which had a vividness and flow unmatched in any stereo version—until Boult's. Not at all surprisingly, Sir Adrian's reading of the Introduction and Allegro has all the electricity of the old Collins version, plus an eloquence that is his alone. What a splendid piece this is, after all, and what a really lovely one the Serenade is!

The London Philharmonic is said to be once again the best in Britain: it certainly sounds it on this disc, and the EMI engineers were apparently as inspired as the musicians. The whole package is downright irresistible, and surely basic to any Elgar collection. *R.F.*

FAURÉ: Settings of Verlaine Poems (see Collections—Carole Bogard)

GOLD: Songs of Love and Parting. CASTELNUOVO-TEDESCO: Coplas. Marni Nixon (soprano); Vienna Volksoper Orchestra. Ernest Gold cond. CRYSTAL S501 \$6.98.

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

Marni Nixon, a well-known (among musicians) interpreter of twentieth-century music, is also noted as the excellent (and uncredited) voice behind such film stars as Deborah Kerr, Audrey Hepburn, and Natalie Wood in movie musicals. The second phase of this double career has probably been a lucrative one, which is just as well, since I entertain no illusions about the financial rewards of the first. In any case, she is a topnotch artist whose work is characterized by expressive power and rare clarity of enunciation. The repertoire offered on this disc could hardly ask for a better interpreter.

I am less enthusiastic about the music, though both works are skillfully written and certainly not of negligible quality. Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco (1895-1968) had such champions as Jascha Heifetz and Andrés Segovia during his long career, and, while his concertos and other orchestral works are relatively more familiar, he was an expert composer of vocal music (songs and operas). The



PAUL TORTELIER: a compelling advocate for Elgar's Cello Concerto

eleven brief *Coplas* date from his youth (1915), but they were orchestrated as late as 1967, specifically for Marni Nixon. She sings them with passionate commitment and good Spanish enunciation, but I do not find the music inspired or even authentic-sounding.

More interesting are the seven *Songs of Love and Parting* by Ernest Gold, fusing musical settings of Shakespeare, Shelley, Emily Dickinson, Robert Burns, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and James Thomson into a coherent sequence through the similarity of their subject matter. The musical settings may not be very memorable, but they are varied, lively, and colorful in an eclectic sort of way, mixing echoes of Mahler and Vaughan Williams with more contemporary touches.

The recorded sound is full, but there is a distinct aura of studio "enhancement." *G.J.*

HAYDN: Cantatas (see Best of the Month, page 70)

LALO: Cello Concerto in D Minor (see SAINT-SAËNS)

LISZT: Sonata in B Minor; Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6. Aleksander Slobodyanik (piano). COLUMBIA/MELODIYA M 33119 \$6.98.

Performance: **Impressive**
Recording: **Dry**

LISZT: Sonata in B Minor; Funerailles; Waltz from Gounod's "Faust"; Liebestraum; Gnom-enreigen. Simon Barrère (piano). TURNABOUT THS 65001 \$3.98.

Performance: **Thunderingly live**
Recording: **Old transcriptions**

Aleksander Slobodyanik is one of those Russian keyboard heroes who never fail to be impressive. His version of the Liszt B Minor

Sonata has a strength and clarity that is genuinely moving. But comparing Slobodyanik's performance with Simon Barrère's—probably from a radio transcription or an in-house recording of a live concert—is illuminating. Half the time Barrère flings notes, tempos, and caution to the winds, but there is never any doubt about the dramatic intensity, deep feeling, and motivating idealism of his performance. Slobodyanik couples the Sonata with a delightful performance of the little-known but appealing Hungarian Rhapsody No. 6. The Russian Melodiya recording is dry, clear, and not unpleasant until the inner grooves, where there is some deterioration of sound quality.

The Barrère album makes room for an entire second side of shorter works, including big-scale performances of the serious, impressive *Funerailles*, an extraordinary fantasia on the Waltz from Gounod's *Faust*, the exceedingly familiar *Liebestraum*, and the less familiar *Dance of the Gnomes*. This is one of the Vox/Turnabout historical series from masters "licensed from Tapeworld" but otherwise completely unidentified as to origin. The *Funerailles* sounds like a concert performance and has rough-and-ready quality. Most probably both it and the sonata are the same live recordings issued many years ago on the Remington label and long out of print. The other cuts are studio performances and are much more careful and controlled, although they are certainly effective in their way; the *Gnomesreigen* alone contains enough keyboard clatter for all the elves in the Black Forest. *E.S.*

MASSENET: Thais. Anna Moffo (soprano). Thais; Gabriel Bacquier (baritone), Athanaël, José Carreras (tenor). Nicias; Justino Diaz (bass), Palémon; Patricia Clark (soprano),

Crobyle; Antonia Butler (mezzo-soprano). Myrtale; Elizabeth Bainbridge (mezzo-soprano). Albine; others. Ambrosian Opera Chorus; New Philharmonia Orchestra. Julius Rudel cond. RCA ARL3-0842 three discs \$20.94.

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

In the fine annotations accompanying this set, Robert Lawrence makes the unassailable point that we must not expect every opera to be a masterpiece and that there ought to be room "for works that can excite, entertain, move us while lacking in perfection." And he goes on to suggest that "whenever a piece so inherently colorful as *Thaïs* receives its due from a cast and conductor gifted in the art of re-creation, the work's luminosity must come through."

Alas, this is not the case here. Anna Moffo is vocally so precarious, interpretively so tentative and artificial in the crucial title role that the overall success of the enterprise is doomed at the outset. There is no lack of dramatic conviction in Gabriel Bacquier's Athanaël, the Cenobite monk who comes under the courtesan's spell; he is an exceptional singing actor and knows everything about the role, but his imposing characterization should have been recorded about ten years ago, when he could still encompass the upper range without difficulty.

José Carreras sings pleasantly and stylishly, but without much projection of character. Justino Diaz and Elizabeth Bainbridge perform their ecclesiastical roles with dignity, and chorus and orchestra are fine. Although conductor Rudel succeeds in the sensitive evocation of Massenet's languid moods and mystic atmosphere, he understates the music's passion. On the other hand, presiding over inadequate protagonists makes a conductor's task exceedingly difficult, and the resulting disappointment is not to be held against him.

This version of *Thaïs* includes the frequently omitted, yet essential, second scene of Act III, where Athanaël first discovers his sexual attraction to Thaïs. Unfortunately, the scene is no better than the rest of the performance. The less complete 1961 recording, still available on Westminster Gold 2-WEST 8203E, remains the preferred version. It offers a far more idiomatic performance by a cast of front-line French singers, and its excellence is more evident to me now than it has ever been before.

G.J.

MILHAUD: *Sacred Service for the Sabbath Morning*. Heinz Rehfuss (baritone); Chorus and Orchestra of the Théâtre National de l'Opera, Darius Milhaud cond. WESTMINSTER GOLD WGS 8281 \$3.49.

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

It is hard to believe that the same Milhaud who wrote *Le Création du Monde* also wrote the *Sacred Service for the Sabbath Morning*, reissued here on the Westminster Gold label in his memory after he died last year at the age of eighty-two. Yet Milhaud was nothing if not protean, and it was one of his celebrated qualities to be able to adapt himself and his several styles to the exigencies of whatever musical assignment was at hand.

The *Sacred Service*, as a piece of Jewish religious music, is a puzzling work until you get used to it. Instead of the traditional melo-

dies and cantillations associated with the Hebrew prayers recited on the Sabbath, there is a kind of balmy, Provençal choral treatment bathed in muted impressionist harmonies; instead of the assertive drama that usually accompanies the proclamation of the oneness of God, we hear a gentle chanting; when the gates are opened for the entrance of the King of Glory, they are not grand and gilded and celestial, but like the humble carved wooden gates that might lead to some village garden in the Basses-Alpes. After the mighty choirs of Ernst Bloch's *Sacred Service*, this quiet, reflective treatment of the same prayers seems a letdown. Yet Milhaud was a devout Jew to the end of his days, and his approach to the Jewish liturgy was based on something deeper than a desire to please the directors of Temple Emanuel in San Francisco who commissioned this work. As it builds, the service extends its musical tendrils like a living vine to proliferate ever more intensely into rapt lyrical passages, fugues, and pastorales quite unlike any music commonly associated with Jewish worship, yet altogether appropriate to it.

This is the only recorded performance of Milhaud's *Sacred Service*, and it was around for some years as Westminster WST-17052. It is valuable to have it back, complete with English translation of the text. The splendid baritone of Heinz Rehfuss and the Orchestra and Chorus of the Théâtre National de l'Opera offer a noble, classically proportioned, and entirely controlled performance under the composer's deliberately restrained direction. The sound, though mono, remains acceptable.

P.K.

MILHAUD: *Saudades do Brasil*. SATIE: *Les Aventures de Mercure; La Belle Excentrique (excerpts); Jack-in-the-Box*. London Festival Players, Bernard Herrmann cond. LONDON SPC-21094 \$6.98.

Performance: **Grim**
Recording: **Close-up and dry**

It was a good idea to bracket these works by "Erik Satie and His Friend Darius Milhaud."

as the disc is titled, and an especially good idea to do the *Saudades* in their orchestral guise, but the presentation is not very appealing. Herrmann's phrasing is stiff, his rhythms lifeless, and the thinnish group at his disposal does not sound at all attractive in the dry sonic frame of the recording. Listening to the Milhaud side, in particular, was a chore: I began to think the music had become dated, but when I followed up with Milhaud's own recording of *Saudades* (Capitol P 8358) I found myself happily listening through the sequence for the sheer pleasure of it. That would make a nice reissue on Seraphim, and I would rather wait for that to happen than settle for Herrmann's grim, charmless account. The Satie pieces are available in several better versions—under Abravanel on Vanguard (all three titles), Cerha on Candide (a complete *Belle Excentrique*), and Dervaux on Angel (*Mercure*).

R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MONTEVERDI: *L'Incoronazione di Poppea*. Helen Donath (soprano). Poppea; Elisabeth Söderström (soprano). Nero; Cathy Berberian (soprano). Ottavia; Paul Esswood (countertenor). Ottone; Giancarlo Luccardi (bass). Seneca; Rötraud Hansmann (soprano). Drusilla; Carlo Gaifa (tenor). Arnalta; Maria Minetto (contralto). Ottavia's Nurse; other soloists; Herbert Tachezi and Johann Sonnleitner (organ, harpsichord, virginals); Concentus Musicus Wien, Nikolaus Harnoncourt cond. TELEFUNKEN S 6.35247-1-5 (HD) five discs \$34.90.

Performance: **Richly dramatic**
Recording: **Excellent**

Monteverdi's final opera, *The Coronation of Poppea*, is a work that is admired by many music lovers, yet enjoyed by very few. The fault lies not with the music, some of the greatest Monteverdi ever composed, or with the libretto, adapted from Tacitus by Francesco Busenello to re-create historical intrigues

(Continued on page 101)

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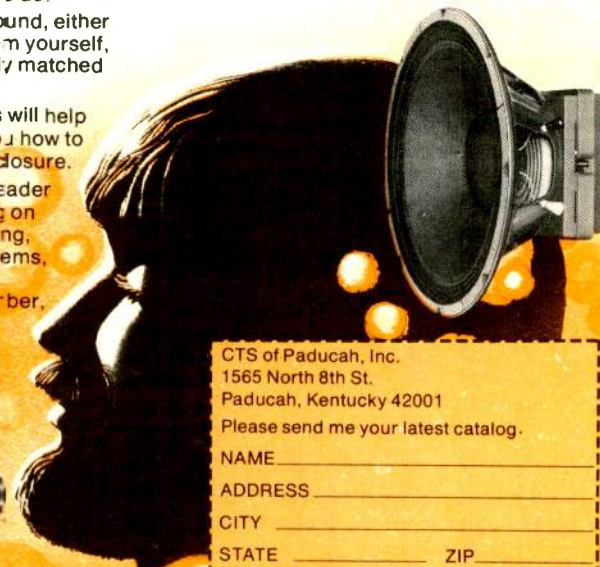
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“muting the timpani with a small broom of birch twigs...”

THE six symphonies of Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) and the seven of Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) constitute virtually the whole of Scandinavian symphonic output that can be spoken of in the same breath as that of Beethoven, Brahms, or Tchaikovsky. Yet, though the work of Nielsen and Sibelius was almost exactly contemporaneous, the Nielsen symphonies achieved no significant amount of international recognition or recorded representation until the middle 1950's, while those of Sibelius were hailed far outside the Scandinavian orbit and recorded entire a full twenty years before.

The Danish State Radio Symphony, conducted by Erik Tuxen, Thomas Jensen, and Launy Gröndahl, was the first orchestra to

mentary of Robert Naur, music critic for the Copenhagen *Politiken*) and a separate lecture disc by Dr. Simpson with rather scraggly insertions of musical examples taken from the complete tapes. Clearly, this was meant to be a “definitive” disc documentation of Nielsen's symphonies.

So far as the supplementary material goes, I for one would have vastly preferred some solid written analysis from Dr. Simpson and would gladly do without both the lecture disc and the five pages in the booklet of annotations given over to the rather opaque commentary offered by Messrs. Schmidt and Gabold. In regard to the recorded performances themselves, the first thing to say is that the London Symphony plays with great

with quite the astonishing clarity of the Martinon/Chicago Symphony recording.

Musically, the Ole Schmidt readings are on the lithe and lean side—a bit too much so in the *flemmatico* movement of *The Four Temperaments* (No. 2), which needs more of the genuinely torpid feeling that Bernstein achieves in his beefier and sometimes exaggerated reading of the work on Columbia. His recording brings out more of the essential spirit and musical detail of each movement—*collerico*, *flemmatico*, *malincolico*, and *sanguineo*—than I have ever heard on records or in the concert hall, and it even includes the odd effect called for in the score of muting the timpani with a small broom of birch twigs in the third movement. Unfortunately, the sound is somewhat over-reverberant and the high percussion somewhat overbalanced.

By and large, it is the last three symphonies that come off best in Schmidt's interpretation (like Horenstein on Nonesuch, he uses the original published version of No. 5 rather than the 1950 revision with its altered details of dynamics and scoring). I don't feel that either Schmidt or Bernstein has solved all the interpretive problems posed in the *Espansiva*—especially in the finale, which can sound embarrassingly banal. Bernstein overdoes it, while Schmidt's performance sounds somewhat pallid next to the remarkable drive and brilliance exhibited by an old Philips/Epic mono recording conducted by John Frandsen.

SUMMING up, I would say that the Unicorn package offers a good integral set of the Nielsen symphonies, but there are other recorded performances of individual works that equal or surpass Schmidt's, or which offer unique interpretive insights: Previn's of No. 1 (recently deleted); Bernstein's of No. 2; Bernstein's of No. 3; Markevitch's of No. 4 (a fantastic bargain on Turnabout); and Bernstein's or Horenstein's (preferably on the Advent cassette) of No. 5. Just to complicate matters a bit more, latest information from England tells of a forthcoming release of all the major Nielsen orchestral works, including the six symphonies and three concertos, with the Danish State Radio Orchestra under its gifted Swedish conductor Herbert Blomstedt. It might be wise to hold off on any large investment in Nielsen until we get further word on that project.

—David Hall

NIELSEN: Symphonies: No. 1, in G Minor, Op. 7; No. 2, Op. 16 (“The Four Temperaments”); No. 3, Op. 27 (“Espansiva”); No. 4, Op. 29 (“The Inextinguishable”); No. 5, Op. 50; No. 6 (“Semplice”). Jill Gomez (soprano); Brian Rayner Cook (baritone); London Symphony Orchestra, Ole Schmidt cond. “An Introduction to the Symphonies of Carl Nielsen,” by Dr. Robert Simpson. UNICORN RHA 324/330 seven discs \$47.98.

NIELSEN: Symphony No. 2, Op. 16 (“The Four Temperaments”). New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein cond. COLUMBIA □ MQ 32779 \$6.98, M 32779 \$6.98. Ⓜ MA 32779 \$7.98.

Carl Nielsen: A Not Quite Definitive Edition



record the complete Nielsen symphonies. But, oddly enough, since the advent of stereo recording not a single Danish conductor has been represented on the fifteen discs of this repertoire issued from 1963 to the present, and only three of those recordings were done by Danish orchestras. The conductor who has taken the lead in recording the Nielsen symphonies has been Leonard Bernstein, not even a Scandinavian and certainly not a Dane.

Now, a whole assortment of Danish foundations and financial institutions has sought to remedy the imbalance by contributing to the production of a deluxe seven-disc set of all the symphonies with the London Symphony Orchestra under the direction of the Danish conductor-composer Ole Schmidt. Ingolf Gabold, one of Denmark's leading younger composers, and Robert Simpson, England's internationally known authority on Nielsen's works, were producer and consultant, respectively, and the recording was done for Unicorn by the highly esteemed free-lance engineer Robert Auger. Supplementing the recorded performances are an elaborate illustrated booklet (notable for the illuminating com-

virility and dash under Schmidt's direction, and the complex, sometimes dense, Nielsen symphonic textures are recorded with great clarity and presence. I have reservations about the recording, but they chiefly concern the application of the multi-microphone technique to Nielsen's epic style of symphonic writing. The technique works best in the Sixth Symphony, whose scoring is almost chamberlike, but poorly with the vast sonic canvases of Nos. 3, 4, and 5. True, the details and inner voices emerge superbly, but in the huge climaxes that usher in the recapitulations and perorations in the final movements of these works I get no sense of the total orchestra in all the overwhelming grandeur that Nielsen clearly intended. Listening to the recording of Bernstein in No. 3, Markevitch or Martinon in No. 4, or Bernstein again in No. 5 (despite flaws in the recording of the first movement) will provide ample illustrative comparison. I find also that the quality of presence of the timpani and brass, relative to the strings, verges on the obtrusive—especially in the end movements of the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Symphonies. The great timpani duet at the end of No. 4 comes off splendidly, though not

in the grand manner of Shakespeare, but rather with the almost insuperable difficulties faced by modern interpreters of the score. It should come as no surprise to Monteverdi enthusiasts who have admired Harnoncourt's performances of *L'Orfeo*, the 1610 *Vespero della Beata Vergine*, and *Il Ritorno d'Ulisse* that in the present recording he has solved the problems of performance brilliantly.

Composed in 1742, two years before Monteverdi's death, *The Coronation of Poppea* represents both the climax of the composer's operatic writing and the beginning of a new genre—the historical music drama. At the time, it was a very modern work, quite different in style from *L'Orfeo* (1607), for instance. The music, whether vocal or instrumental, was designed as a support for the dramatic and psychological elements of the text, and there is evidence that Monteverdi worked closely with the librettist. The extant copies of this music record only the vocal parts and the accompanying bass, along with several short instrumental interludes. Before a performance can even be contemplated, a performing edition must be constructed.

Raymond Leppard's reconstruction, which appeared on Angel in 1964 and has since been re-released on Seraphim (SIB 6073), caught the dramatic impact of the opera through a severe pruning of the long libretto and the addition of highly colorful instrumentation. Not very seventeenth-century, but highly entertaining, his set is still an excellent introduction to early Baroque opera for those who prefer a spicy snack to a full-course banquet. The banquet was subsequently offered by Alan Curtis in his superbly scholarly recording in 1967 on Cambridge (CRS 1901 or 901). In bending over backwards to be authentic, however, the Curtis set is low-key and not very dramatic. As Robert Donington commented in the newly revised edition of *The Interpretation of Early Music*, the chamber-music quality of Curtis' interpretation belies the large-scale nature of the opera and would never have been possible in the large public theater of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, where the opera was first performed.

In drawing a fine line between the possible extremes, Harnoncourt's "arrangement" (as he calls it) is sheer genius. The instrumentation he has devised is discreet and tasteful, yet highly dramatic, matching the tonal qualities of the different instruments with the characters and situations presented; thus, for example, the harp is used for the voluptuous Poppea, the organ for the imperious Ottavia and for gods, recorders for erotic passages, the chittarrone for comic scenes, trumpets for gods and the coronation scene. As in the Curtis version, the strings are the base of the accompaniment, but Harnoncourt has varied the continuo sound to point up the varying moods and emotions expressed in the text. The instruments are either antiques or modern reproductions and are excellently played by the members of the *Concentus Musicus*.

Harnoncourt's intense, highly expressive performance owes much to the uniformly superb singers. There are some surprises in the cast, as the original voice range has been used throughout. While it is somewhat unnerving at first to hear Nero sung by a soprano, Elisabeth Söderström's dark vocal quality and projection of the character of the unstable emperor soon become utterly convincing. The part, with its roudades and florid runs, must have been stunning as sung by a castrato. Arnalta, Poppea's nurse, is sung by a

tenor, Carlo Gaifa, a practice that Harnoncourt defends as a peculiarly Venetian casting for the "funny old woman." Countertenor Paul Esswood is excellent as the milque-toast, cuckolded Ottone (originally for alto castrato), with a vocal range that deliberately emphasizes the weak part of the voice. The unnamed Vienna Choirboy alto who sings Amore is especially fine. The wide gamut of emotions in the libretto—indignation, fear, longing, cunning, humor, infatuation—are expressively projected even by the secondary characters (soldiers, tribunes) through skillful pacing of dialogue, and one is constantly aware in this recording of the gorgeous richness of the vocal writing.

Harnoncourt's edition includes an entire scene (Ottone's monologue in Act II) and portions of the trial scene in Act III that were purposely omitted by Curtis, and he uses a numbering for the scenes in Act II that includes two missing scenes. As a result of these additions plus a more varied pacing and wider groove spacing, Harnoncourt's set is on five records to Curtis' four. Whether for the Baroque enthusiast or the general music lover, however, the Harnoncourt set is well worth the higher price. *I.K.*

MONTEVERDI: *L'Orfeo*. Nigel Rogers (tenor), Orfeo; Emilia Petrescu (soprano), Euridice, Musica; Anna Reynolds (soprano), Silvia, Proserpina; Ian Partridge (tenor), Pastore I, Apollo; James Bowman (countertenor), Pastore II, Speranza; John Elwes (tenor), Pastore III, Spirito I; Stafford Dean (bass), Pastore IV, Plutone; Alexander Malta (bass), Caronte, Spirito II; Monteverdi-Chor Hamburg; instrumental soloists; Camerata Accademica Hamburg and Hamburger Bläserkreis für Alte Musik, Jürgen Jürgens cond. **DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ARC-2710015** three discs \$23.94.

Performance: **Disappointing**
Recording: **Okay**

This is an uninspiring performance of the first great masterpiece of the operatic literature. We had a right to expect more. The Archiv production is directed by Jürgen Jürgens, who has at his disposal a veritable Monteverdi orchestra: clarino, cornetti, recorders, virginals, chitarrone, lute, harp, various small organs, viola da gamba, and various strings made or played in the old manner. This instrumental authenticity is remarkable, and the sound of the various toccatas, sinfonias and ritornellos, choruses, and dances is superb. But the instrumental sound of this performance is not, alas, matched by anything equivalent in the vocal domain. The choral singing has merits, although a large group is employed and the sound is on the heavy side. Except for the two resonant basses singing Charon and Pluto, the solo singing is by and large undistinguished. Nigel Bruce can handle the remarkable written-out ornaments in the part of Orfeo, but his rendition of them is unconvincing; he makes the impossible sound ordinary and a little dull.

There is a quality of detachment and remoteness that runs through most of the singing of this largely English cast that seems to me to be directly contrary to the ideas of passion and expression that are at the heart of the "new" dramatic music of 1607. Furthermore, although Jürgens makes a good intellectual argument for ornamentation, he in fact puts very little of it into practice. Orfeo's aria, "*Possente spirito*," stands out because in this

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single case a written-out ornamented version was printed by Monteverdi together with the original melody. When we look at and listen to that we begin to suspect what the real potential of this art might have been. The recitatives should be close to speech and full of passion; every author of the time makes it quite clear what the point is. But here they are draggy and uninflected. There is too much space everywhere, too many holes, very little sense of dramatic timing as reflected in the music. I doubt that this production was ever actually put on the stage. But *Orfeo* is, above all, dramatic, not abstract, music!

Jürgens provides extensive program notes, mostly concerning details of his edition. As always, Archive has provided extensive documentary information. And yet, important matters concerning singing and singing style go unmentioned. With one exception, we are not

Mr. Barenboim is a supremely gifted musician, but even he cannot become an authoritative interpreter of such a complex opera overnight. It should surprise no one, then, to find here a limited view of Mozart's unique *dramma giocoso*. Melodrama and sentiment are stressed and the *giocoso* element is understated in a deliberately paced reading that is generally uninspired and lacks incisiveness, precision, and sharpness of detail.

A superior cast of singers might have provided the spark that is missing in the conductor's work. Unfortunately, the singing rarely rises to a high level. Roger Soyer's malleable, light bass-baritone has a certain elegance, and he may yet develop into a first-rate Don; Antigone Sgourda, too, may be able to refine her art to become a more secure and polished Donna Anna (she is defeated here by the aria "*Non mi dir*," but no more so than a number

zart was less famous than the celebrated court poet Pietro Metastasio, whose text had been set by eleven composers before Mozart, including Gluck. As a matter of fact, the shadow of the old-fashioned *opera seria*, manifest in lengthy arias with their obligatory *da capos*, hangs heavily over the work. But hints of musico-dramatic genius do shine through in both the vocal and the orchestral writing. Mozart also wrote his five violin concertos in 1775, and his preoccupation with the instrument is displayed in the marvelous soprano aria "*L'Amerò, sarò costante*," with its violin obbligato, to say nothing of the aria "*Aër tranquillo*," which anticipates much of what was to become the Violin Concerto in G Major, K. 216.

This opera is worth doing only in a first-rate performance, and, happily, such is the case here. It was recorded at Salzburg, scene of its première two centuries ago, and the size of the Mozarteum Orchestra, the liner notes assure us, is "more or less identical with that of the Salzburg Court Orchestra of 1775." Casting the role of Aminta (originally a castrato part) as a soprano is a serious handicap, but Edith Mathis skillfully injects a determined (masculine?) note into her singing to suggest a certain contrast in the important duets with Elisa. These duets, incidentally, are exquisite, and they are beautifully sung here. Both Miss Mathis and Miss Auger perform with tonal purity, agility, and precision. In a smaller role, Sona Ghazarian is also above reproach.

The tenor roles are quite demanding, but Peter Schreier and Werner Krenn manage the bravura writing with considerable skill and agreeable tone, although Schreier's Teutonic inflections are distracting. Leopold Hager leads a well-paced performance. His tempos are spirited but unhurried, and he allows some interpolated cadenzas for the singers, which is just fine. I do wish he had asked for (or provided) some cembalo improvisations too, because the opera becomes rather static in the *secco* recitatives and could use some color.

In sum, this is minor but intermittently inspired Mozart, done in style, and I recommend it to Mozartians. G.J.



ARTHUR GRUMIAUX
Sublime Mozart concertos



PINCHAS ZUKERMAN
Gorgeous fiddling, but . . .

even told what kind of singers are singing the various roles; I have somewhat arbitrarily assigned them voice categories in the listing above. A four-language libretto is supplied with a fuddy-duddy English translation. E.S.

MOZART: *Don Giovanni*. Roger Soyer (bass), Don Giovanni; Antigone Sgourda (soprano), Donna Anna; Luigi Alva (tenor), Don Ottavio; Peter Lager (bass), Commendatore; Heather Harper (soprano), Donna Elvira; Geraint Evans (baritone), Leporello; Alberto Rinaldi (baritone), Masetto; Helen Donath (soprano), Zerlina. Scottish Opera Chorus; English Chamber Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim cond. ANGEL SDL-3811 four discs \$27.92.

Performance: **Uninspiring**
Recording: **Very good**

Daniel Barenboim's career as an operatic conductor began with his performances of *Don Giovanni* at the 1973 Edinburgh Festival. For reasons that must have made eminent sense to the directors of EMI-Angel (but which they may find difficult to explain to their stockholders later on), the event was immediately perpetuated on records despite the fact that Angel already had two all-star versions of the opera in its catalog under Giulini (S-3605) and Klemperer (S-3700).

of more celebrated and experienced sopranos). The rest of the cast ranges from solid competence (Heather Harper's Donna Elvira) downward, reaching bottom with Luigi Alva's unacceptable Don Ottavio.

The opera is complete here, but the two arias Mozart composed after Prague for the Vienna première ("*Dalla sua pace*" and "*Mi tradi*"), but which are by now an integral part of a standard *Don Giovanni*, are placed on side eight as an addendum, together with the generally omitted Leporello-Zerlina duet.

Of the six other stereo versions of *Don Giovanni* in the current catalog, at least five are clearly superior to this one. G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *Il Re Pastore*. Peter Schreier (tenor), Alexander; Edith Mathis (soprano), Aminta; Arleen Auger (soprano), Elisa; Sona Ghazarian (soprano), Tamiri; Werner Krenn (tenor), Agenore. Salzburg Mozarteum Orchestra, Leopold Hager cond. BASF KBL 22043 three discs \$20.98.

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

Il Re Pastore is an opera written on commission by the nineteen-year-old Mozart to honor a visiting archduke. At that time (1775) Mo-

MOZART: *Songs and Arias* (see Best of the Month, page 70)

MOZART: *Violin Concerto No. 2, in D Major* (K. 211); *Rondo in C Major* (K. 373); *Adagio in E Major* (K. 261); *Rondo Concertante in B-flat Major* (K. 269). Pinchas Zukerman (violin); English Chamber Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim cond. COLUMBIA M 33206 \$6.98.

Performance: **Gorgeous fiddling, fussy conducting**
Recording: **Good**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *Violin Concerto No. 3, in G Major* (K. 216); *Violin Concerto No. 5, in A Major* (K. 219). Arthur Grumiaux (violin); London Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis cond. PHILIPS 835 112 AY \$7.98.

Performance: **Sublime**
Recording: **Good enough**

With these releases both Zukerman and Grumiaux complete their cycles (the latter's second) of Mozart's undisputed violin concertos.

Grumiaux's approach in K. 216 and K. 219 (the disc was first issued in 1962 but has just

been reinstated as an import), as throughout his Mozart series, is aristocratic, elegant, impeccable, but by no means aloof. Slow movements are expressive but never overindulged: finales are vigorous but never boisterous; the most refined sense of proportion is everywhere evident. There is, in short, no better version of either of these concertos on records. The orchestra might have been brought forward a bit more, but the sonics are certainly more than adequate. Cadenzas, incidentally, are those written by Eugène Ysaÿe for the G Major Concerto; in the A Major Concerto, Grumiaux plays Joseph Joachim's cadenza in the first movement and his own in the other two.

Zukerman and Barenboim, too, continue to display the characteristics observed in their earlier Mozart collaborations. Zukerman is a gorgeous fiddler: to everything he does he brings an air of spontaneity which, reinforced by terrific technical security, can hardly fail to be appealing. But "spontaneity" is as conspicuously missing from Barenboim's overemphatic conducting as it is dominant in Zukerman's playing, giving us more of a distracting contrast than a blend. I rather wish Zukerman had been his own conductor here. As for the three short works on the Zukerman disc, I would wait hopefully for Angel to make the late David Oistrakh's performances available on a single LP. Oistrakh was his own conductor, and these three spare movements are among the most attractive things in his Mozart concerto set with the Berlin Philharmonic (Angel SD-3789). R.F.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PANUFNIK: *Sinfonia Sacra*; *Sinfonia Rustica*. Monte Carlo Opera Orchestra, Andrzej Panufnik cond. UNICORN RHS 315 \$7.98.

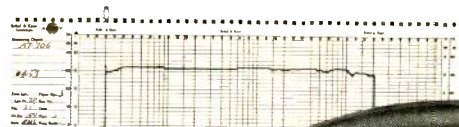
Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

The *Sinfonia Sacra*, the third of Panufnik's four published symphonies, was composed in 1963 on a commission from the Kosciuszko Foundation in honor of the millennium of the Polish state and its Christian church, observed in 1966. The work won first prize in Prince Rainier's competition in Monaco in 1963 and has been performed with some frequency in Europe and America since then, but not in Poland, where Panufnik's music has not been played since his departure for England in 1954. The first of the two movements is a sequence of three "Visions," successively intense, lyrical, and violent; the second is a "Hymn," based on an ancient plainchant hymn, the *Bogurodzica* (*Mother of God*), whose religious and patriotic significance to the Poles may be likened to that of the Hussite chorale *Ye Who Are Warriors of God* to the Czechs. In fact, Panufnik's treatment of the Polish hymn—and the character of his *Sinfonia Sacra* in general—may suggest an interesting parallel with Karel Husa's *Music for Prague, 1968*, in which the Hussite chorale is used. Panufnik is somewhat less subtle and self-disciplined than Husa in his use of his materials, but the *Sinfonia Sacra*, by turns brooding, tragic, exalted, and defiant, is moving and powerful.

The *Sinfonia Rustica* (Panufnik's first symphony), composed in 1948, is an altogether less striking work in which geniality is the keynote; its four concise, folk-derived movements are scored for two string orchestras and a small group of winds. Both performances

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are excellent, and the recording itself (originated by EMI in 1966, transferred to Unicorn last year and pressed in Germany) is first-rate, too. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAVEL: *La Valse; Menuet Antique; Ma Mère l'Oye*. New York Philharmonic, Pierre Boulez cond. COLUMBIA M 32838 \$6.98.

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

You might assume that Pierre Boulez is not as close to the music of Ravel as he is to that of Debussy, but you would hardly know it from these performances. Boulez, like Debussy, is definitely not a neo-Classicalist. Nevertheless, there is a very French streak of classical lucidity, craftsmanship, preciseness, and taste in the work of Ravel which is also central to the work of Boulez. An evocation of a Viennese waltz might seem far from the personal style of a Boulez, but the conductor's total immersion in the richness and clarity of *La Valse*—its shifting colors, accents, overlapping phraseology, and pulsing dynamics—is more than enough to bring out its brilliance. With no more than a gentle rhythmic shift or bend here and there, the three-quarter time pretty much takes care of itself.

This is not really true of the *Menuet Antique*, Ravel's first published work, later orchestrated by the composer himself. This is neo-Classical music; it is not good enough by itself, and its point of view is too remote from Boulez for anything much to emerge.

Ma Mère l'Oye is *Mother Goose* in the less familiar ballet version; Ravel added a Prelude, a Spinning Wheel Dance, and a series of interludes to the original orchestrated piano pieces. I would not call this reading magical—music-as-magic is a Romantic, Wagnerian idea which had more than a trace of influence on Ravel, but it is certainly not Boulez's ball game. Yet, the performance has Boulez's characteristic brilliance, and there is a measure of fantasy in the clear play of lines and colors. This is the third volume of the Columbia Boulez/Ravel series with the New York Philharmonic, a very worthy successor to the justly famed Boulez Debussy recordings. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Scheherazade*. Orchestre de Paris, Mstislav Rostropovich cond. ANGEL S-37061 \$6.98.

Performance: **Sensational**
Recording: **Superb**

Another *Scheherazade*? Is the Sultana to go on telling tales to the Sultan forever? Aren't a thousand and one nights enough? Isn't it time he cut off her head? Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic suite, with its Arabian Nights allure, its giddy rhythms, its spectacular orchestral palette, was the sumptuous seductress who enticed so many of us into the evil habit of music loving in the first place. The list of recordings is endless—there were twenty-one others still for sale before this new one came along. My own favorite for years was a twelve-record Decca set on 78's under the baton of a man listed as "G. Cloez" who swept you along until it was time for Sinbad's ship to crash to pieces "on a rock surmounted by a bronze warrior"; one of Mr. Cloez's horn players was apparently asleep at that crucial moment and the ship never crashed.

To Mstislav Rostropovich, who has laid aside his celebrated cello to be a conductor here, *Scheherazade* is music he still loves. "Rimsky-Korsakov's marvelous orchestral suite," he says, "transports me to the East with all its vivid and exotic colors and I am indeed happy to live with Scheherazade also for all the Thousand and One Nights which Rimsky-Korsakov portrays in such a masterly way!" His enthusiasm is conveyed irresistibly on this sensational record. Even if Beecham's method with this music, at once so crisp and so sensuous, or Stokowski's heady tone-painting has provided your yardstick, or if the chance for a thousand-and-second night with this lady strikes you as one too many, Rostropovich will soon have you in his power. There has never been a *Scheherazade* quite as alive as this one, nor one so brilliantly recorded. Once the silky-smooth strings of the Orchestre de Paris take the tide with Sinbad's ship on that perfumed Oriental sea, there is no turning back. When the gigantic genie menaces the Calendar Prince, you'll grip your chair in terror and suspense. And what love-making between the Young Prince and the Young Princess! What a first-class de luxe sightseeing tour of eighth-century Baghdad! And when Sinbad's ship crashes on that warrior-surmounted rock this time around, you know it—down to the last smithereen. As for the Sultana herself, she is portrayed with such swooning voluptuousness by violinist Luben Yordanoff that all long-nursed churlish thoughts of decapitating that garrulous lady fled from me. I hope I have not heard the last of her—or of Rostropovich, for that matter, who, with his baton as with his bow, raises hopes that we may look forward soon to more exciting adventures in his company. *P.K.*

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

SAINT-SAËNS: *Cello Concerto No. 1, in A Minor, Op. 33; Cello Concerto No. 2, in D Minor, Op. 119; Suite for Cello, Op. 16; Allegro Appassionato for Cello, Op. 43*. Christine Walevska (cello); National Opera Orchestra

of Monte Carlo, Eliahu Inbal cond. PHILIPS 6500 459 \$7.98.

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

SAINT-SAËNS: *Cello Concerto No. 1, in A Minor, Op. 33*. LALO: *Cello Concerto in D Minor*. André Navarra (cello); Lamoureux Orchestra, Charles Munch cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3023 \$3.50 (plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

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

For my taste, the facile genius of Camille Saint-Saëns is at its freshest and most ingratiating in his earlier works. The A Minor Cello Concerto seems to me to be about the best in this particular medium, regardless of its specific musical gravity, and I can well understand why almost every cellist of consequence over the past two generations has had a go at it on records.

Christine Walevska continues her series of topflight concerto performances for Philips not only with a zestful and warm-blooded account of the A Minor Concerto, but also with no less than three first or near-first recordings from the Saint-Saëns repertoire. The Op. 16 Suite and the Op. 43 *Allegro Appassionato* were both composed originally for cello with piano, and the sleeve notes fail to indicate whether the able orchestrations are those of Saint-Saëns himself or somebody else. In any event, the Suite is a delectable essay cast for the most part in the "olden style"—charmingly balletic in essence, but with a fine slow movement to provide a measure of genuine substance. The *Allegro Appassionato* and the Op. 119 D Minor Cello Concerto offer considerably more virtuosity than expressive content within their somewhat formularized confines, but both are highly effective solo vehicles. Miss Walevska plays them all with great warmth, vitality, and
(Continued on page 107)



CHRISTINE WALEVSKA:
warmth, vitality,
and virtuosity
in Saint-Saëns
cello music

ample virtuosity. Eliahu Inbal and his Monte Carlo players provide fine orchestral support, and the recorded sound is first-rate.

The Musical Heritage Society coupling of the Saint-Saëns A Minor with Lalo's Cello Concerto is some years older than the Philips recording (Munch died in 1968), but the sound is by no means inferior. Veteran cellist André Navarra lays somewhat more stress than Walevska does on the virtuosic brilliance of the Saint-Saëns, the dynamic nature of Munch's accompaniment possibly being a determining factor. Indeed, Munch's conducting does much to lift the Lalo Concerto out of its rather murky sonic ambiance (a result of the thick scoring of the first movement). Except for the middle movement, parts of which evoke something of the picturesque quality of Lalo's earlier *Symphonie Espagnole*, I never have had much fondness for this piece, but Navarra and Munch manage to get all there is to be gotten out of the music. *D.H.*

SATIE: *Les Aventures de Mercure; La Belle Excentrique; Jack-in-the-Box* (see MILHAUD)

SKALKOTTAS: *Octet. Melos Ensemble. Eight Variations on a Greek Folk Tune. Masters-Simpson-Gazelle Trio. Third String Quartet. Dartington String Quartet. ARGO ZRG 753 \$6.98.*

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

Nikos Skalkottas, born in Athens in 1904, studied with Philipp Jarnach, Kurt Weill, and Arnold Schoenberg in Berlin, where he lived until the Nazis came to power in 1933. He then returned to Athens and worked there in obscurity until his early death in 1949. The extraordinary circumstance of a Greek pupil of Schoenberg's composing twelve-tone music for his desk drawer in his native Athens is matched by the unusual mixture of Romantic Expressionism, Greek folklore, and strict dodecaphony found in his work.

Although a Skalkottas Committee was founded in Athens after the composer's death, most of his posthumous fame is owing to the indefatigable English, who have championed the cause of many a non-native son. This record is part of a contemporary series financed by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which is directed by the English writer David Drew. Skalkottas' Third Quartet, premiered in 1965 by the Dartington String Quartet, is probably the major work here, although, like many neo-symphonic pieces, it has a bad case of fallen arches in the finale. The Eight Variations, the only music here that is not twelve-tone, is an effective, Expressionist treatment of folk material. The Octet, one of the few of his works performed in the composer's lifetime, was played at a concert in Berlin in 1931 and subsequently lost. Astonishingly, it turned up in a Berlin music shop in 1955. It is a twelve-tone divertimento of a type that I for one find particularly unconvincing: a kind of jocular ugliness in chromatic notes and hidebound Germanic rhythms. Everything is very well played and recorded, and the accompanying program information is copious and informative. *E.S.*

J. STRAUSS, JR.: *Waltzes* (see Collections—The Golden Parade of Viennese Waltzes)

VERDI: *La Traviata.* Mirella Freni (soprano). Violetta Valéry; Franco Bonisoli (tenor). Alfredo Germont; Sesto Bruscantini

(baritone), Giorgio Germont; Hania Kovicz (mezzo-soprano), Flora Bervoix; Peter Bindzus (tenor), Gastone; Rudolf Jedlicka (baritone), Douphol; others. Berlin State Opera Chorus and Orchestra, Lamberto Gardelli cond. BASF KBL-21644 three discs \$20.94.

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

This German-made recording is a byproduct of a 1973 film with the same cast. Mirella Freni is, of course, its central attraction, as well as the only conceivable justification for releasing yet another edition of such a much-recorded opera. A gratifyingly natural singer, she offers a very effective portrayal here; it is not overwhelming in a theatrical sense, but it is musically strong and vocally appealing. While she has a few uncomfortable moments in the florid passages of the first act, she is very moving in the long scene with Germont and outstanding in the "Addio del passato." Franco Bonisoli is an ardent Alfredo of less than impeccable vocal manners (excessive use of aspirates mars his attacks), but his attractive dark timbre and free, ringing top notes make a positive impression. Unfortunately, this cannot be said for Sesto Bruscantini, whose frayed tones betray his age (though his many years of valuable experience do show up in his dignified and musicianly approach to the role of Giorgio).

These three "imported" stars are surrounded by a cast of singularly undistinguished *comprimari* . Their mediocre voices and Germanic inflections naturally inhibit the otherwise impressive efforts of Lamberto Gardelli. He is a conductor who interprets Verdi with incisiveness and well-judged tempos. Occasional imprecisions in choral and orchestral attacks may be attributed to the live performance and are not really detrimental. The true "ensemble" feeling is missing, however, and therefore I cannot recommend this set as a serious contender in an arena already teeming with *Traviatas*. *G.J.*

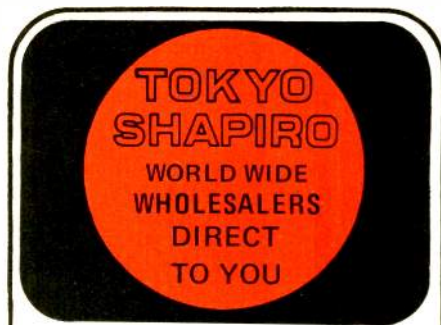
COLLECTIONS

THE ART SONG IN AMERICA, VOLUME II.

Rorem: *A Christmas Carol; Guilt; For Susan; Clouds; What Sparks and Wiry Cries.* **Persichetti:** *The Grass; Thou Child So Wise; The Death of a Soldier; The Snow Man; Of the Surface of Things.* **Duke:** *In Just Spring; I Carry Your Heart; The Mountains Are Dancing.* **Cumming:** *Go, Lovely Rose!; Memory, Hither Come, The Little Black Boy.* **Trimble:** *Tell Me Where Is Fancy Bred?; Love Seeketh Not Itself to Please.* **Earls:** *Entreat Me Not to Leave You; Arise, My Love.* John Kennedy Hanks (tenor); Ruth Friedberg-Erickson (piano). DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS DWR 7306AX \$6.50 (from Duke University Press, 6697 College Station, Durham, N.C. 27708).

Performance: **Rarified**
Recording: **Very good**

This second volume in "The Art Song in America" by Duke University Press takes us past the works of the early Fifties, where the first volume left off, into the second half of our century. Ruth Friedberg-Erickson and John Kennedy Hanks, who have provided the information as well as the performances for this album, predict that "the twentieth century will emerge as the greatest era of the English-language art song since Purcell." Would they were right, but the intimate, lyrical music they



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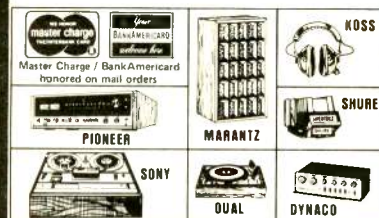
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have chosen to champion still appears to attract a rather private coterie. Ned Rorem, for example, goes on gathering far more fame for his gossipy diaries than for his ever-swelling bag of exquisitely fashioned songs.

Surely it is not the difficulty of this music that puts off the public. Both Mr. Rorem and John Duke, the oldest composer represented in this collection (he is seventy-six), are neo-Romantics who write immediately attractive and accessible songs. Even the efforts of Paul Earls, whose Biblical settings employ a more advanced vocabulary, are far from hard to take. I was impressed and charmed by Rorem's medieval paraphrase of an ancient Christmas carol and his feel for prosody in the setting of *Guilt* with a text by Demetrios Capetanakis, which contains the devastating line "Murder means less than nothing to the dead" (*too* devastating, perhaps—it is lines like that which defeat our composers of art songs). Rorem's treatment of three poems by Paul Goodman also are clever and apt, and here there is a genuine fusion of text and tunes. But other composers who aspire this way have chosen, I think, texts too powerful for their purposes. Persichetti takes the tools of his craft to the lyrics of Wallace Stevens, which are steeped in their own music and have little need of his ingenious neo-Classical structuring. I still cannot make up my mind whether I was delighted by John Duke's Delius-like treatment of three poems by e. e. cummings or simply won over once again by the joyous exuberance of the verses themselves. Lester Trimble applies melodic strength to Blake and Shakespeare and retains the eloquence of old lines in a modern idiom, but Richard Cumming's *Little Black Boy* cannot help but suffer by comparison with Virgil Thomson's more memorable setting of the same poem.

As for Mr. Hanks' tenor and Miss Friedberg-Erickson's accompanying piano, he is not Donald Gramm and she is not Gerald Moore. His voice is somewhat rough, his enunciation too mannered for my taste; she is conscientious and competent, but a bit too literal and plodding. Yet the concert as a whole is performed with taste and insight and is well worth hearing; the album is beautifully designed, with a handsomely set text and exceptionally astute notes. The surfaces are slightly noisy, if that matters to you. But you're not likely to find any program quite like this one in your local record store. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CAROLE BOGARD: *Settings of Verlaine Poems. Fauré: Cinq Melodies, Op. 58: Mandoline; En Sourdine; Green; À Clymène; C'Est l'Extase. Clair de Lune; Spleen. Debussy: Ariettes Oubliées: C'Est l'Extase; Il Pleure dans Mon Coeur; L'Ombre des Arbres; Chevaux de Bois; Green; Spleen. Fêtes Galantes (Set 1); En Sourdine; Fantochez; Clair de Lune. Mandoline. Szulc: Clair de Lune. Dupont: Mandoline.* Carole Bogard (soprano); John Moriarty (piano). CAMBRIDGE CRS 2774 \$6.98.

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

Parallel settings of Verlaine poems by Gabriel Fauré and Claude Debussy are such a natural for a record recital that it is surprising the idea has occurred so seldom to record men. (If memory serves, the last time it happened was on this same Cambridge label some ten years

ago, when Phyllis Curtin was the singer.) The settings are more or less contemporary, falling between 1880 and 1892, within the unhappy poet's lifetime. Debussy was seventeen years younger than Fauré, and, though these are early songs for him, they already show a growing concern for sensuous sounds as opposed to linear melody.

The Fauré songs are decidedly more "vocal" in conception, and I have always preferred his versions of these songs to Debussy's. In fact, I have never been able to develop much enthusiasm for Debussy's songs, and yet I enjoyed this recital thoroughly. Carole Bogard pays little attention to the "tradition" that demands these songs be performed with wispy, evanescent tones. She sings them in a natural manner, with a clear tone that nonetheless exhibits a palette of colors, and with flawless intonation. Given this delivery,



CAROLE BOGARD
Haunting Verlaine settings

even such a trifle as *Fantochez* comes off as a rewarding musical experience. Needless to say, her singing produces even more attractive results in the Fauré songs, often with hauntingly realized passages, such as the closing line, "Le rossignol chantera," in *En Sourdine*.

The Dupont and Szulc settings, more literal and non-impressionistic, are worthy additions to the collection. Indeed, Miss Bogard offers some of her most insightful and sensitive singing in the Szulc *Clair de Lune*. She is an exemplary singer and receives excellent support from pianist John Moriarty. G.J.

THE GOLDEN PARADE OF VIENNESE WALTZES. J. Strauss, Jr.: *The Blue Danube; Wiener Blut.* Lanner: *Die Schonbrunner.* Ziehrer: *Wiener Bürger.* Komzák: *Bad'ner Mad'ln.* Fučík: *Vom Donauufer.* Czechoslovak Brass Orchestra, Rudolf Urbanex cond. SUPRAPHON 114 1458 \$6.98.

Performance: **Strictly bandstand**
Recording: **Good**

WALTZES OF J. STRAUSS, JR.—PARAPHRASES. Schulz-Evler: *Arabesque on "The Blue Danube."* Grünfeld: *Emperor Waltz; Voices of Spring; Paraphrase on Themes from "Aschenbrödel."* Schnabel: *Four Old Vienna Waltzes.* Dohnányi: *Treasure Waltz.* Schulhoff: *Pizzicato Polka.* Hans Kann (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1959 \$3.50 (plus 75¢ handling charge from

Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Nimble and flashy**
Recording: **Very good**

The Czech "Golden Parade" collection of six old-fashioned waltzes is played by a brass band, just as such music might be played in a European park on a sunny spring Sunday. Apart from that positive factor of pleasant associations, though, the album is disappointing, for these all-too-complete treatments of works from the pens of Johann Strauss, Jr., Joseph Lanner, and their imitators oom-pah away for almost a full hour in a manner more exasperating than beguiling. Karel Komzák, a native of Prague who once made music at Baden, had a depressingly military bent that prompted him to precede his *Bad'ner Mad'ln* waltz with a wearying march. The same ele-



CATHERINE MALFITANO
Arresting contemporary songs

ment intrudes on the otherwise graceful *Wiener Bürger*, by Michael Ziehrer, whose background as a regimental bandleader is obvious from his music. The whole concert cries out for the balm of a string section and some real Viennese blood.

Quite another matter are the "Waltz Paraphrases" on the works of Johann Strauss, Jr., which Hans Kann brings to life in a series of exceptionally felicitous and deft readings. Paraphrases of the sort heard here were popular in the nineteenth century, when virtuoso pianists were sought-after salon entertainers. Each of these pieces was intended, through a brilliant piano setting featuring dazzling arabesques and daring arpeggios, to show off the skill of a performer, but many of them also display taste and some valid musical ideas. This is especially true of the contributions of Dohnányi, Schnabel, and Schulz-Evler. The Grünfeld paraphrases are fussier than these, but attractive all the same. Mr. Kann, a virtuoso if ever there was one, proves equal to everything. P.K.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MUSIC FOR VOICE AND VIOLIN. Holst: *Four Songs for Voice and Violin, Op. 35.* Hovhanness: *Hercules, Op. 56, No. 4.* Blacher: *Francesca da Rimini, Op. 47.* Vaughan Williams: *Along the Field.* Villa-Lobos: *Suite for Voice and Violin.* Catherine Malfitano (soprano); Joseph Malfitano (violin). MUSI-

CAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1976 \$3.50 (plus 75¢ handling charge from Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Entrancing**
Recording: **Very good**

At a time when just about every programming gimmick seems to have been tried, it is a real pleasure to encounter a program that is original and arresting in content, utterly free of gimcrackery, and superbly effective in its sharing between performer and listener. Such is this unusual Musical Heritage Society disc, devoted in its entirety to works for voice with solo violin accompaniment, all in fine performance by New York City Opera soprano Catherine Malfitano and her violinist father (and teacher) Joseph Malfitano.

With the exception of the Holst songs, all

telescope. Yet the end result is exquisite and strangely affecting.

Indeed, the affective quality of this entire recording bespeaks not only the taste and resourcefulness of the Malfitanos, daughter and father, but is testimony to Miss Malfitano's rare beauty of voice and total command of the musical substance and expressive potential of each of the works she sings here. And the recorded sound, like the performances, is flawless. *D.H.*

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEVERLY SILLS: *Favorite Duets with Tenors. Massenet: Manon: Oni! Je fus cruelle et coupable. Offenbach: The Tales of Hoffmann: C'est une chanson d'amour. Donizetti: Lucia di Lammermoor: Sulla tomba. Anna Bolena: Debole io fu.* Beverly Sills (soprano); Nicolai Gedda, Stuart Burrows, and Carlo Bergonzi (tenors); New Philharmonia and London Symphony Orchestras, Julius Rudel and Thomas Schippers cond. ABC ATS-20018 \$5.98.

BEVERLY SILLS: *The Mad Scenes. Bellini: I Puritani: Qui la voce. Donizetti: Lucia di Lammermoor: Il dolce suono. Anna Bolena: Piangete voi? Thomas: Hamlet: A vos jeux, mes amis.* Beverly Sills (soprano); other singers: Ambrosian Opera Chorus; London Philharmonic, London Symphony, and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, Julius Rudel, Thomas Schippers, and Charles Mackerras cond. ABC ATS-20019 \$5.98.

Performances: **Convincing**
Recordings: **Fine**

If such stars as Sutherland, Horne, and Pavarotti have made the London catalog flourish, Beverly Sills has been the virtual reason for ABC Audio Treasury's existence during the past few years. Her many fans, whose bel canto enthusiasm may stop short of acquiring all the complete opera sets built around this singular diva, may now consider two well-chosen and very attractively produced highlight discs.

"Favorite Duets with Tenors" offers the tense and torrid St. Sulpice scene from *Manon* and the tender Antonia episode from *The Tales of Hoffmann* on side one—both convincingly done, the soprano's sensitive vocalism being paired with two tenors (Nicolai Gedda and Stuart Burrows) who bring stylistic rightness to the task. These scenes are admirably conducted by Julius Rudel, who also presides over the less familiar Anna-Percy duet from Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* on side two, again with the cultivated Burrows in the tenor part. Since the "*Debole io fu*" scene, though quite extended, concludes with an abrupt fadeout, however, it was a mistake to end the side with it. That position should have been given to the *Lucia* duet, in which the conducting of Thomas Schippers seems a shade over-energetic but the singing of Beverly Sills and Carlo Bergonzi cannot be faulted.

"The Mad Scenes" collection contains appropriate episodes from *I Puritani*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Anna Bolena*, and *Hamlet*. The singing of Beverly Sills is a model of musical accuracy, dramatic insight, and expressiveness. The florid embellishments in the repeat of "*Vien diletto*" (*I Puritani*) are overdone, and the final high E-flat is not the firmest note imaginable, but these are minor flaws. Full texts and good annotations are supplied with both albums. *G.J.*



BEVERLY SILLS
Sensitive, convincing arias

the works here appear to be first recordings, and, while not every one is an imperishable masterpiece, there are no duds either. Among those that are imperishable masterpieces are the four songs from Helen Waddell's *Medieval Anthology* that Gustav Holst set in 1916, the nature of the setting being suggested by the accidental experience of wandering into a church where a woman violinist happened to be improvising and singing wordlessly to herself. Of comparable merit, and with its own deep poignancy, is the second of Ralph Vaughan Williams' cycles on poems of A. E. Housman, *Along the Field* (1927). The music is spare and austere when heard alongside the youthful and impulsive *On Wenlock Edge* cycle of 1909, but it is piercingly beautiful. In a more exotic and colorful vein is the broodingly bardic *Hercules* by Alan Hovhaness, whose sliding violin tones lend just the right eastern Mediterranean touch to his own text telling how Hercules built, from the notes of a singing swan, "a path to hell and up to heaven, to part the dead from the living." The Villa-Lobos songs are colorful vignettes in the composer's most spontaneous Brazilian national style. Finally, the setting of the Paolo and Francesca episode from Dante by the late Boris Blacher is something of a curiosity. The small scale of the voice-and-violin combination (remember the orchestral interpretations of the story by Liszt and Tchaikovsky) gives me the feeling of witnessing Francesca's pathetic narrative as through the wrong end of a

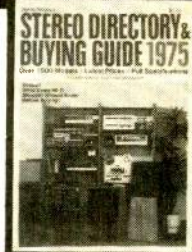
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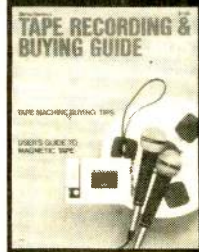
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Steve Reich drumming



New Music: Uptown and Downtown

RECENTLY I was trying to describe to some friends the way new music in New York has become polarized between two very powerful messianic persuasions when a young musician chimed in. “Oh sure,” he said. “we call ‘em the uptown composers and the downtown composers.”

Well, like it or not, the Uptowns and the Downtowns dominate new music in America—more so than ever since the demise of the so-called “counterculture” and the multimedia and pop art it nurtured. The Uptowns are, of course, our old friends the serialists, still doing business at the same old academic stand. American serialism was born at Princeton, largely under the influence of Milton Babbitt, and it still survives at many far-flung academic outposts across the land; it has a strong and influential base in New York in the Columbia University/Manhattan School of Music area in upper Manhattan. Its opposite number these days is the firmly entrenched Downtown school of repetition and slow transformation, which seems to have its world headquarters in the SoHo region of lower Manhattan. This music has been called Head Music, Minimal Music, Structural Music (a term also appropriated, but with apparently different meaning, by the Uptowns!), the *New* New York School, Doodle Music, and (by the *New York Times*, no less) Trance Music. One of its pioneers was a composer named Terry Riley, who tried to bring about an assimilation of avant-garde and pop music, failed gloriously, and virtually disappeared. Mike Oldfield’s *Tubular Bells* owes a great deal to Riley, and the engaging Phil Glass—a composer essentially unrepresented on commercial recordings—has created a substantial following with a related kind of music. Other major Downtown practitioners include La Monte Young, whose work has a strong East-

ern, meditative character, and Steve Reich, probably the best-known of this group today.

Reich first attracted wide attention with his tape pieces based on the idea of manipulating a short phrase on tape endlessly back on itself to create slow, shifting rhythmic effects. Subsequently, he applied this idea to performed music in a very systematic way and created an extraordinarily skilled and disciplined ensemble for its realization. Although the technical details vary somewhat, all of Reich’s music is based on one premise: slow, audible change rung in on simple basic patterns over more or less long stretches of time. And that’s all.

In 1970-1971, after a visit to Ghana to study drumming with a master musician of the Ewe, Reich produced his own *Drumming*, a big hour-and-a-half-long rhythmic study that is at once exciting and boring. *Six Pianos* and the *Music for Mallet Instruments, Voice, and Organ* are subsequent works stemming from slightly different principles but directed to the same divine boredom that seems to be the end possibility.

Ironically, the early pieces of Reich and Riley on the Columbia label, although widely circulated, failed to sell enough to reach the expected popular levels, and a hope-filled new-music program was dropped by the company. Now Reich makes his recorded reappearance on these shores courtesy of Deutsche Grammophon. All of the material in his new album has been impressively recorded in Germany by Reich’s own group. It is an imposing, formidable, and expensive three-record package. At the very least, *Drumming* should have been issued separately, for it is Reich’s *magnum opus*, and its two record’s worth of slow rhythmic change would have been enough; as it is, though, all but the faithful are likely to be discouraged by the size and cost of the set.

There is nothing in the world that would seem more remote from Reich’s rather irritating and/or hypnotically fascinating music than the serialism of the Uptown variety, but in fact the two kinds of music share a similar moral position, a position that requires, at the very least, a leap of faith. Both are concerned with process. Both are subject to the ancient modern-art fallacy that technique and form can somehow become—or at least determine—content. And they are further related by their notions of economy. Reich wrings the maximum amount of change out of the agonizingly slow transformation of the minimum. The serialists make as little as possible of the maximum; that is, they take all the notes and a wide rhythmic spectrum and attempt to tie them down rigorously by some basically simple process.

A number of Nonesuch’s recent contemporary releases have been devoted to Uptown. In one of them, Donald Martino’s fluent, expressive *Notturmo*, the 1974 Pulitzer Prize winner, is paired with a work by Charles Wuorinen, an earlier winner. Wuorinen himself notes the influence of Babbitt on both composers. He also quite rightly points out the differences between the two works. His own *Speculum Speculi* (like its companion piece, written for the excellent *Speculum Musicae* ensemble) has a rhythmic quality that seems to punch through the abstract note manipulation.

Wuorinen, who wrote the liner notes for all three of the Nonesuch discs considered here, also mentions the influence of Wolpe and Carter. Elliott Carter’s music has become widely known, but, outside of certain New York circles, Stefan Wolpe’s music, although equally influential among composers, has generally gone unnoticed. Wolpe’s *Quartet for Trumpet, Tenor Saxophone, Percussion, and Piano*, one of the few of his works to have been recorded in his lifetime (he died in 1972), now appears again here in an excellent (if not inspired) performance by the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble under Arthur Weisberg. In this curious and striking work, Wolpe combined certain elements taken from jazz with his own very personal kind of abstract expressionism. He was very close to the New York art world of the day, and music like this is very close to the visual work of a painter like Willem De Kooning.

WOLPE’s formal techniques are extremely fluid compared with Milton Babbitt’s strict and highly formalistic serialism, but Babbitt managed at least once to adapt his ideas to a fluid medium: a “big-band” jazz ensemble. *All Set*, written for and premiered at a jazz festival in 1957, is a very clever jazz/Baroque piece with a cool sound that is actually very far away from Wolpe’s intense expressionism. And it is very effectively performed and recorded here.

Still another piece that assimilates jazz and twelve-tone ideas is T. J. Anderson’s striking and puzzling *Variations on a Theme by M. B. Tolson*. The settings of excerpts from the work of black poet M. B. Tolson—Anderson himself is black—start out from a kind of ab-

stract lyricism that is hard to connect with the poetry. Spoken declamation takes over, eventually turning into a very striking and moving out-of-the-blues finale that rises far above the unevenness of the rest and the too-cultivated tone of the performance.

The original attraction of twelve-tone music for many composers was not its mathematical delights but the way it could be used for intense expression. George Rochberg was one of the leading American practitioners of twelve-tone music and one of the first to give it up. His twelve-tone Blake Songs of 1957 are simple, direct, and expressive; the performance by Jan DeGaetani is perfect. The lyric, evocative approach to twelve-tone music typical of Martino and early Rochberg also characterizes Jeff Jones' *Ambiance*, settings of four French poems by Samuel Beckett. All of this music—excellently performed with exceptional singing by DeGaetani and Phyllis Bryn-Julson—has the highly aristocratic, alienated quality typical of much American serialism. The external world rarely intrudes; the agony of life is expressed in a cool, distant, smoothly disjunct, high-minded, dissonant, faraway tone.

ONE piece in this collection remains to be discussed: Richard Wernick's *Kaddish-Requiem*. It begins as an intense piece of chromatic expressionism and gradually, across quotations from Brahms, a tape collage of the Hebrew Kaddish, the twanging of a sitar, fragments of Lassus and Palestrina, and a setting of the Latin Requiem, moves on to another part of the forest. The work barely holds its diversity together; nevertheless, it is a highly moving conception, not Uptown, not Downtown, not hermetic, not pop, not abstract, not flamboyant, not expressionistic, not formalistic, but very much itself. It has something to say and says it strongly and affectingly. I like it, and it just might be closer than the rest to the mainstream of new musical expression in America in the Seventies. At least, I hope it is.

—Eric Salzman

REICH: *Drumming; Six Pianos; Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices, and Organ.* Steve Reich and Musicians (small tuned drums, marimbas, glockenspiels, whistling, piccolos, voices, pianos, organ). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 106 three discs \$23.94.

WUORINEN: *Speculum Speculi.* Speculum Musicae, Daniel Schulman cond. **MARTINO:** *Notturmo.* Speculum Musicae, Fred Sherry cond. NONESUCH H-71300 \$3.98.

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BABBITT: *All Set, for Jazz Ensemble.* **ANDERSON:** *Variations on a Theme by M. B. Tolson.* **WERNICK:** *Kaddish-Requiem (A Secular Service for the Victims of Indochina).* Jan DeGaetani (mezzo-soprano, in Wernick); Ramon Gilbert (cantor, in Wernick); Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, Arthur Weisberg cond. NONESUCH H-71303 \$3.98.

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Introducing the Staff...

Since readers from time to time understandably display a natural human curiosity about the backgrounds of the writers and editors who bend their ears each month in these pages, we will be offering, in issues to come, a series of capsule biographies and autobiographies designed to satisfy that expressed need and at the same time to circumvent some of the hazards of mere speculation. —Ed.



Popular Music Editor

Steve Simels

STEVE SIMELS was born in 1947 in Teaneck, New Jersey (home of the young Lesley Gore), a town whose major claim to fame is that a Clearasil commercial was once filmed there, and had a typical suburban adolescence, except for the fact that he was a self-confessed classical music snob. "I was studying to be a concert pianist—to this day, I can do a killer rendition of the first movement of the Bach D Minor Concerto—and my attitude was that if they don't play it on WQXR it's worthless." Eventually, about the time of the Beatles and the British Invasion, his attitude began to change. "I severed a tendon in my right hand in a dumb accident, which kind of put an end to my piano career, and at that point it dawned on me that the few girls I was meeting weren't terribly interested in Stravinsky. So I started listening to Top Forty radio and got hooked on rock. I can still remember the first rock album I ever bought—it was "The Beach Boys Today"

and I was so embarrassed I had to sneak it into the house."

Steve has been described by some people as a "late Sixties type," which he hotly denies. "Of course, I was a hippie just like everybody else, but I never really had the dedication to pull it off. I never wanted to get back to the land, my beard refused to grow, mysticism gave me a pain, and although I was as indignant as the next guy about the war and all, the various Movement people I met at school always reminded me of moonlighting Boy Scout leaders, and when I would point that out to them, they weren't particularly amused, so my revolutionary ardor was more or less cooled as a consequence."

After an unsuccessful stint at Lake Forest College, he wound up at C. W. Post on Long Island, where he majored in theater "on the eight-year plan. I was lousy, but I kept at it because I knew that if I stuck it out long enough, eventually they would drop all the difficult required courses like biology that I was spiritually incapable of passing." Upon graduation, he was confronted with the harsh economic facts of life ("It came as something of a shock when I found out that the major corporations weren't hiring actors") and drifted a bit, until someone suggested that the rock criticism he had been doing in the school paper ("solely to annoy people") might possibly be salable in the real world. After a few weeks of hustling, he soon realized the folly of that sort of thinking, having had several reviews published in a now-defunct *Village Voice*-ish weekly without receiving any payment and having been favored with a rejection slip from *Rock* magazine that read, in part, "We believe the Youth Culture is dead, and there is no future in this business anyway."

FACED with the very real prospect of starvation, he remembered *STEREO REVIEW*, which he had read in his purist days. "So I wrote Jim Goodfriend a really snotty letter claiming that I was the greatest thing since indoor plumbing, and for reasons that are still unclear to me, he believed me." Today, more than two years later, Steve is happily ensconced as Popular Music Editor, demonstrating monthly the kind of critical acumen that has given rise to his reputation as the George Metesky of Rock Writing. When not at his desk, however, he is playing guitar ("loudly") with a rock-and-roll band whose name he won't mention because "If and when we con somebody into signing us, I don't want anybody to know that a critic is involved. Suicidal I ain't."

Generally speaking, Steve's attitude toward popular music—though not necessarily toward its producers and consumers—is best summed up in Sturgeon's Law, which has it that 95 per cent of practically everything is . . . er . . . heifer dust. But that leaves a beautiful 5 per cent still to be dealt with, more than enough to keep whole schools of critics busy.

His future plans? "I don't know," he says, "but I have three professional ambitions: singing *I Left My Heart in San Francisco* on the *Mike Douglas Show*, playing the Leslie Howard part in a remake of *The Petrified Forest*, and replacing Keith Richards in the Rolling Stones. Of course, I'll settle for just the first in a pinch." —Drummond McInnis

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