Stereo Review®

DECEMBER 1975 • ONE DOLLAR

SPECIAL FOR CHRISTMAS SHOPPERS: JULIAN HIRSCH'S GUIDE TO TUNERS

The reason Pioneer's tuners and amplifiers keep getting better.

To achieve improved linearity and transient response, plus absolute stability, each amplifier has a 3-stage, direct-coupled equalizer-amplifier section, as well as a first stage differential amplifier. By using low noise transistors in the critical first stage of the equalizer (an FET, in the SA-9900), an exceptional level of phono performance, heretofore unattainable in integrated amplifiers, is attained. See Table 1 for Preamplifier section highlights.

Tape-to-tape duplicating and monitoring

Two tape monitor circuits are incorporated in each model and include tape copying switch positions for dubbing from one deck to another while listening to another program source.

Advanced chassis layouts for improved performance and increased reliability

Input and output terminals on the SA-9900 and SA-9500 are segregated from each other by being located at opposite sides of the chassis. More important, the full rear of the chassis serves as a heat radiating surface and reduces the length of internal shielded wires. The result: less attenuation of high frequency audio signals.

Pioneer's new amplifiers provide power output for every audio requirement and a maximum number of inputs and outputs to go with it. See Tables 2 and 3.

The Tuners: TX-9500, TX-7500

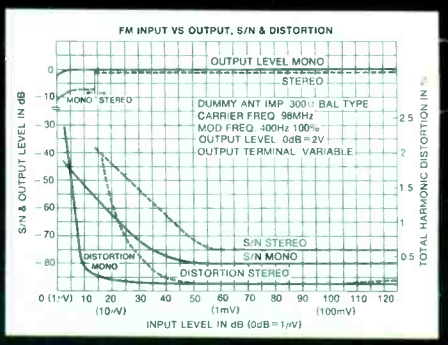
Totally new in styling and appearance, these Pioneer tuners are loaded with circuit refinements that finally allow you to realize the full static-free, high fidelity potential of FM and stereo FM. They even improve AM reception.

The FM front end — key to sensitivity and noise-free reception

In the TX-9500, three dual-gate MOS FETs combined with a linear 5-section variable capacitor reject all forms of interference by an incredible 110dB. Desired signals of as little strength as 1.5 microvolts are received with noise and distortion sufficiently suppressed to make them listenable.

Phase Lock Loop (PLL) circuitry for stable stereo FM separation

The Phase Lock Loop circuit used in both new tuners insures optimum separation of all audio frequencies. Completely drift-free, this PLL circuit requires no alignment — ever. A sharp low-pass filter lets you tape FM programs without interference from audible "beats".



8-stage limiters

High selectivity and good capture ratio are vital with today's crowded FM radio band. Pioneer's TX-9500 IF section, with its seven ICs, four ceramic filters and 8-stage limiter provides outstanding capture ratio and selectivity. You hear the station you want — and nothing else.

Unique muting controls

The two-position variable muting control on the TX-9500, as well as the muting switch on the TX-7500, employ electronic switching. Both utilize a silent, reed-relay which eliminates noises of turn-on popping and interstation tuning.

*The values shown are for informational purposes only. The actual resale prices will be set by the individual Pioneer dealer at his option. Optional cabinets are available for all models shown and are constructed with wood grained walnut veneer top and side panels.

Why would Pioneer change the world's best-selling tuners and amplifiers?

The entire world of high fidelity acknowledged that Pioneer's SA-9100 integrated amplifier and TX-9100 stereo tuner were the best products of their type and value ever built. They established new standards for high fidelity performance. In fact, people recognized their greatness by buying more of them than any other tuners and amps in the world. Why then would Pioneer want to change these top-performing, top-selling components? There can only be one answer:

Dedication.

And it's the kind of dedication that gives you the opportunity to own high fidelity components that offer more power, sensitivity and features at better values. Components that not only meet, but exceed the challenges posed by changes and improvements in current broadcasting and recording technology.

Pioneer recognizes that high fidelity enthusiasts are also a dedicated group. That's why we invite you to examine the new Pioneer tuners and amplifiers now.

The Amplifiers: SA-9900, SA-9500, SA-8500, SA-7500

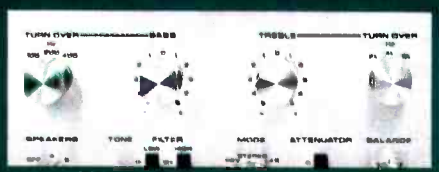
The power amplifier section

Each model is direct-coupled in all stages for lower distortion and wider frequency response. The SA-9900 uses a 2-stage differential amplifier and optimized negative feedback from output to input for improved stability and transient response. A newly developed bias system compensates for any temperature drift; while an automatic electronic protection circuit prevents current overload and guards against speaker shorts. A thermal detection circuit protects power output transistors in each model.

The control amplifier section: twin stepped tone controls and selectable turnover for precise tonal tailoring

With Pioneer's exclusive twin tone control system (SA-9900, SA-8500), you can make the most critical and precise bass and treble adjustments with ease. 5,929 tonal variations are possible on the SA-9900.

Twin stepped tone controls. (SA-9900, SA-8500)



Selectable turnover tone controls. (SA-9500, SA-7500)

You can select thousands of individual tone settings on the SA-9500, SA-8500 and SA-7500, too. A tone defeat switch on all models instantly restores wideband flat frequency response.

Tone control settings are calibrated for precise repeatability in discrete 1.5dB steps on the SA-9900. All four models feature low and high frequency filters (with multiple settings for each on the SA-9900 and SA-9500). The master volume control on the SA-9900 and SA-9500 is a 22-step professional attenuator. It is complemented by a selectable muting switch for lowering sound levels without altering master volume settings. This feature also permits easy settings of the master volume control regardless of program source levels.

High phono overload capability for unprecedented dynamic range

Good phono sensitivity in a phono equalizer is not enough to insure distortion-free reproduction of high transient musical peaks. Until now, a 150 millivolt overload capability was considered to be quite good for a phono preamplifier-equalizer circuit. Pioneer's SA-9900 remarkable equalizer-amplifier can handle peak signals as high as 500 mV. That's 46 dB greater than its nominal 2.5 mV input sensitivity.

SA-8500

SA-9900

State-of-the-art features

Of course, both new Pioneer tuners have selectable deemphasis (25μS or 75μS), a must for listening to the newer Dolby FM and stereo FM broadcasts. Both have separate fixed and variable output terminals, too, for adjusting listening level to match other program sources. In addition to the signal-strength and center-of-channel meters, both tuners feature separate output terminals which can be connected to an oscilloscope. This permits visual tuning for best reception and lowest multipath interference.

The TX-9500 has a built-in recording signal level check. Use it to set recording levels on your tape deck for best results *before* you start recording.

For the great specs that make great performance, see Table 4.

This new series of tuners and amplifiers is unquestionably the most technically advanced ever developed. It represents the high fidelity industry's most outstanding value in performance, features, precision and versatility. And visually, it carries Pioneer's traditional handsome styling.

Hear these magnificent components at your local Pioneer dealer.

U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 75 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, New Jersey 07074
West: 13300 S. Estrella, Los Angeles 90248 / Mid-west: 1500 Greenleaf, Elk Grove Village, Ill. 60007/Canada: S.H. Parker Co.

PIONEER®
when you want something better

(1) Amplifiers: Preamplifier section

	SA-9900	SA-9500	SA-8500	SA-7500
Phono Overload	500/1000 mV	250/500 mV	200/400 mV	200 mV
S/N Ratio	70dB	70dB	70dB	70dB
Dynamic Margin	46dB	40dB	38dB	38dB
RIAA Accuracy	±0.2dB	±0.2dB	±0.3dB	±0.3dB
Input Impedance	35K, 50K, 70K, 100K, selectable	35K, 50K, 70K, 100K, selectable	50K	50K

(2) Amplifiers: Inputs and outputs

No. of Inputs-S/N Ratio	SA-9900	SA-9500	SA-8500	SA-7500
Tape Monitor	2-95dB	2-90dB	2-90dB	2-90dB
Phono	2-70dB	2-70dB	2-70dB	2-70dB
Auxiliary	2-95dB	2-90dB	1-90dB	1-90dB
Microphone	1-65dB	1-65dB	1-65dB	1-65dB
Tuner	1-95dB	1-90dB	1-90dB	1-90dB
Outputs				
Speakers, Headsets	2+1	2+1	2+1	2+1
Tape Decks	2	2	2	2

(3) Amplifiers: Power output specifications

	SA-9900	SA-9500	SA-8500	SA-7500
Min. RMS power/channel, both channels driven, 8 ohms	110 watts	80 watts	60 watts	40 watts
Min. RMS power/channel, both channels driven, 4 ohms	110 watts	100 watts	75 watts	45 watts
Max. total harmonic distortion	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
Power band	20Hz-20kHz	20Hz-20kHz	20Hz-20kHz	20Hz-20kHz
Priced under*	$750	$500.	$400.	$300.

(4) Tuners: Specification highlights

	TX-9500	TX-7500
FM Sensitivity (IHF), mono	1.5 uV	1.9uV
50dB Quieting Sensitivity, mono (stereo)	2.5 uV (35 uV)	4 uV (50 uV)
Selectivity	85dB	80dB
Capture Ratio	1.0dB	1.0dB
S/N Ratio mono, (stereo)	80dB (75dB)	73 dB (68dB)
Image, IF & Spurious Rejection	110dB	85dB, 90dB, 90dB
Stereo Separation 1kHz (50Hz-10kHz)	40dB (35dB)	40dB (35dB)
Distortion, mono 1 kHz (10 kHz)	0.15% (0.15%)	0.2% (0.2%)
Stereo	0.2% (0.5%)	0.3% (0.6%)
Priced under*	$400.	$250.

CIRCLE NO. 59 ON READER SERVICE CARD

"It's a good turntable by itself, and as an added bonus it also stacks records."

Creem, MARCH 1975

In the old days, a serious audio enthusiast wouldn't touch anything but a manual turntable.

He felt he had no choice.

That anything with automatic features simply didn't perform. But as *Sound* magazine says in its August 1975 issue:

"In recent years... the quality of the automatic turntable has risen dramatically. And the performance of the B.I.C. 960 certainly substantiates our belief that a serious music lover can attain extremely high quality in an automatic unit just as in the best manuals."

B·I·C™

In a Sept. 1975 test report, *Radio & Electronics* agrees, noting that B.I.C:

"might well be considered a top-performing manual turntable in its price category."

Modern Hi-Fi and Music (Aug./Sept. 1975) reports:

"wow and flutter of 0.03% at 33⅓ rpm and rumble less than −65db; specifications which are more typical of a good manual than most automatics."

And because they're *not* imported (B.I.C. turntables are built entirely in the U.S.) the price of this performance comes as a pleasant surprise.

If you're serious enough about your system to spend $100 or more on a turntable, a B.I.C. 940, 960, or 980 has what you want and more of it — all three are multiple-play manual turntables sharing the same quality features and high performance.

See if your high-fidelity dealer doesn't agree. He has literature with all the details. Or write to B.I.C. ("bee-eye-cee") c/o British Industries Co., Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review ®

DECEMBER 1975 • VOLUME 35 • NUMBER 6

The Equipment

The Music

The Reviews

The Regulars

COVER: Design by Borys Patchowsky; photo by Bruce Pendleton

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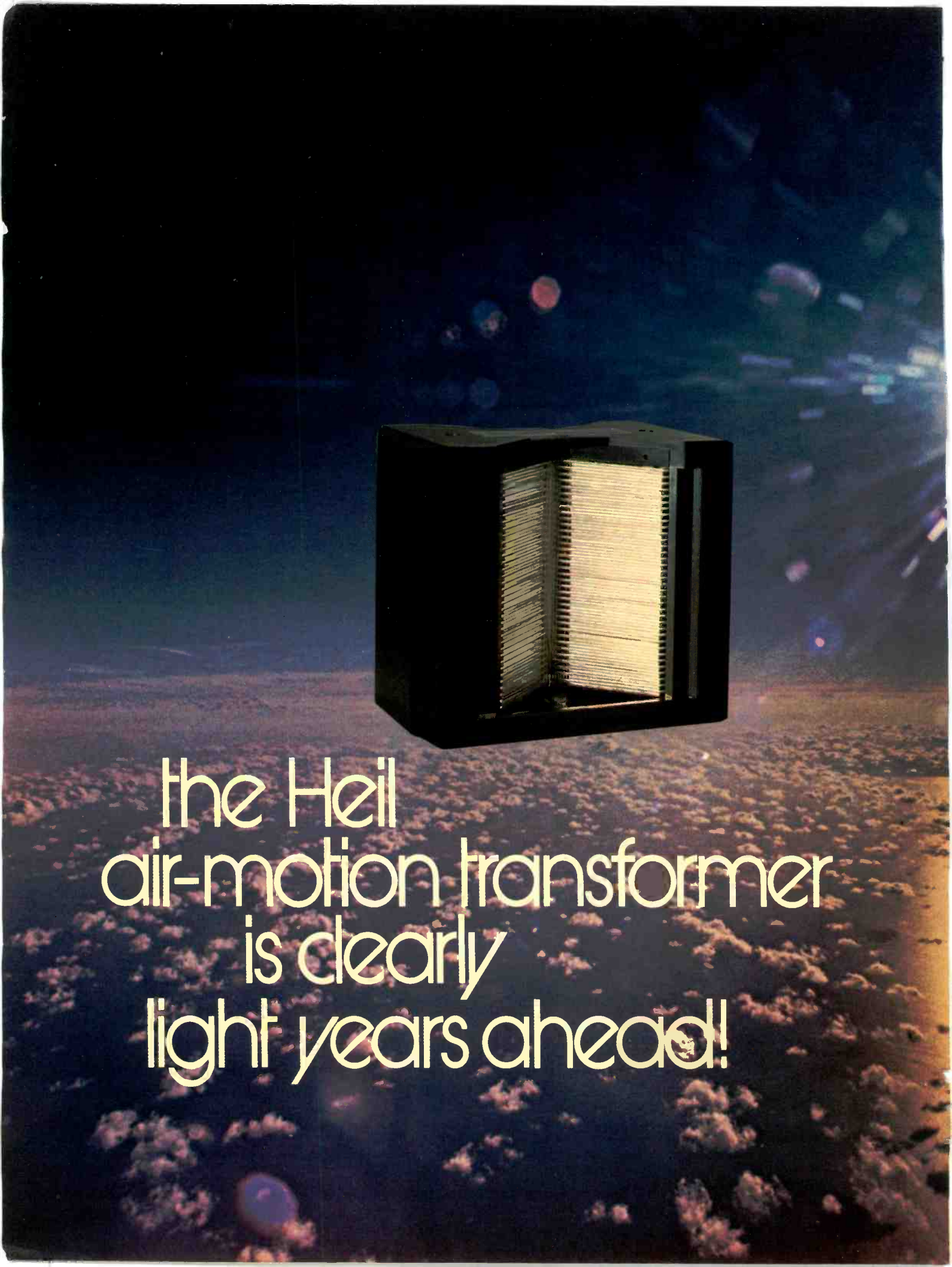
the Heil
air-motion transformer
is clearly
light years ahead!

"Does it have a Heil?" This is the most important question you can ask when contemplating the purchase of a quality loudspeaker system. Why? Because the ESS Heil air-motion transformer, developed and perfected by physicist and musician Dr. Oskar Heil, obsoletes conventional loudspeakers.

It *does* matter how the sound in a loudspeaker is propagated. It *does* matter that sound is "squeezed" instead of "pushed." It *does* matter that *one* speaker —the Heil—accelerates air faster than others. It does matter whether it's a Heil air-motion transformer. Why? Because the Heil air-motion transformer is superior. This is more than mere opinion, it is fact based on the laws of physics. By discarding bankrupt design concepts rooted in past technology the ESS Heil air-motion transformer approaches theoretical limits of perfection.

ONLY the ESS Heil air-motion transformer diaphragm can, alone, accelerate air to a speed five times greater than that of its own moving surfaces. Instantly. Accurately. Cleanly.

ONLY the ESS Heil air-motion transformer has been acclaimed around the world as the first really new air moving principle in five decades.

ONLY the ESS Heil air-motion transformer is the loudspeaker of the future, free from bondage to cones, domes, voice coils, mass and inertia.

Revolutionary today and the standard of comparison for tomorrow, the Heil air-motion transformer is available in a wide range of superbly engineered speaker systems from ESS. Each model achieves a level of accuracy that sets it light years ahead of the industry.

Hear the new ESS standard of excellence yourself. Visit a franchised ESS dealer, one of a handful perceptive enough to bypass the conventional and premier the most advanced state-of-the-art designs in high fidelity, a dealer who understands the loudspeaker of tomorrow—the ESS Heil air-motion transformer. Listen to ESS, you'll hear sound as clear as light.

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING

By WILLIAM ANDERSON

HEARTS AND HEADS

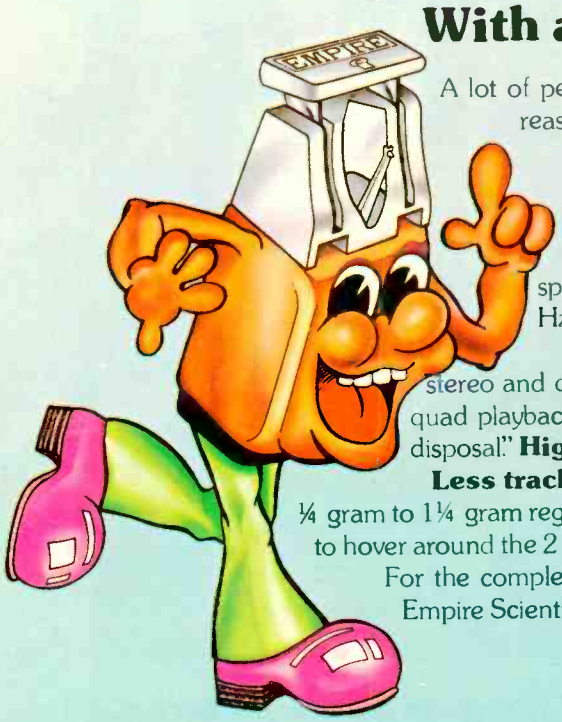
SOMEHOW it seems to me only yesterday, but it was 'way back in 1967 when we were moved to print an anthology of critical confessions under the title "My Ten Favorite Composers." The assignment so delighted our classical reviewers at the time, and the results so pleased the editors, that we quickly followed it with its obvious obverse, "Ten Composers I Hate." The reviewers, glorying in the heady challenge and suddenly strangers to caution, found it easy to leaven their usual sober probity with an unaccustomed dash of passion. I don't know where you were when the quips hit the stands, but I was right here at my desk, submerged in the backwash of outraged reader mail. Experience is our teacher as well as everybody else's, and the lesson we learned from her then was a simple one: do it again. And that is why, in this issue some eight short years later, we are mounting another assault on the bastions of received opinion, unleashing our champing popular reviewers and their slavering typewriters on the tempting targets of "Ten Performers I Hate."

Well aware that some of these targets rate in the popular esteem all the way from certified genius to sacred cow and holy icon, and mindful of the shortness of most fuses when it comes to matters of taste, I would nonetheless like to suggest that you pause a moment before returning your fire and ask yourself just why it is that professional critics are so rarely in agreement with popular taste, why their respect for artists so often seems to be in inverse proportion to their success. And don't settle for any of the easy answers. Critics are not, for example, envy-ridden misanthropes; the proportion of "failed performers" among them is no higher than it is among the rest of the audience (I do not, as a matter of fact, know a single critic who would qualify). Nor are critics innately perverse, deliberately taking a position contrary to prevailing opinion either for the twisted pleasure they take in it or to make a name for themselves. On the contrary, the world's rewards are easily and plentifully available to any critic whose enthusiasm is for sale, whatever the currency; the critic with principles and standards can count on remaining despised, rejected, and poor. And granted that the profession, being made up of human beings like any other, contains its quota of fools, their frailty is quickly unmasked—they must, after all, sooner or later go into print (can anyone tell me who it was who said "O, that mine enemy would write a book"?).

For myself, I have temporarily concluded that critics, while they may be a lot like *some* people, are not like *most* people. Most people, either because they won't think or because they can't, are ruled by their hearts; good critics are ruled by their heads. I would not go so far as to suggest that this is because they don't *have* hearts, but they have, at the very least, a built-in or hard-won mechanism that makes it possible to ignore them. (If they don't, they suffer: softhearted critics must be constantly on guard against meeting performers—if they do, they are instant groupies. Clever performers realize this and, when they can, make pets of critics—some of whom, alas, continue to publish puffs for their artist patrons.) Popular success is, by definition, a matter of numbers, and if those "numbers" decide with their hearts, then the appeal must be to the heart as well. Set aside the whole question of talent and consider instead the one essential attribute of the "superstar": whether you call it "star quality," "charisma" (ugh!), or simply "it," it is (a) a nonrational appeal based on a sympathetic personality, and (b) it has nothing to do with performing skill. This is not to say that a superstar may not be genuinely talented, only that it is unnecessary that he be. And so the public gives its heart wholly, sincerely, and irreversibly to its attractive heroes and heroines; the critic, unimpressed by glamour, reputation, or numbers, continues to say "show me." That leaves unresolved the question of how to discover who among the superstars has real talent, but for the time being you might try staying tuned to the critics in these pages.

Keep on trackin'

With an Empire wide response cartridge.



A lot of people have started "trackin'" with Empire cartridges for more or less the same reasons.

More separation: "Separation, measured between right and left channels at a frequency of 1 kHz, did indeed measure 35 dB (rather remarkable for any cartridge)." **FM Guide, The Feldman Lab Report.**

Less distortion: "...the Empire 4000D/III produced the flattest overall response yet measured from a CD-4 cartridge—within ±2 dB from 1,000 to 50,000 Hz." **Stereo Review.**

More versatile: "Not only does the 4000D/III provide excellent sound in both stereo and quadriphonic reproduction, but we had no difficulty whatever getting satisfactory quad playback through *any* demodulator or with *any* turntable of appropriate quality at our disposal." **High Fidelity.**

Less tracking force: "The Empire 4000D/III has a surprisingly low tracking force in the ¼ gram to 1¼ gram region. This is surprising because other cartridges, and I mean 4 channel types, seem to hover around the 2 gram class." **Modern Hi Fi & Stereo Guide.**

For the complete test reviews from these major audio magazines and a free catalogue, write: Empire Scientific Corp., Garden City, N.Y. 11530. Mfd. U.S.A.

EMPIRE

Choose the Cartridge Designed to Play Best in Your System

Plays 4 Channel Discrete (CD4) and Super Stereo — Plays 2 Channel Stereo

Plays All 4 Channel Matrix Systems (SQ, QS, RM)

Model	4000 D/III	4000 D/II	4000 D/I	2000 E/III	2000 E/II	2000 E/I	2000 E	2000
Frequency Response in Hz:	5-50,000	5-45,000	10-40,000	5-35,000	6-33,000	8-32,000	10-30,000	10-28,000
Output Voltage per Channel at 3.54 cm/sec groove velocity:	3.0	3.0	3.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Channel Separation	more than 35dB	more than 35dB	35dB	35dB	35dB	35dB	30dB	30dB
Tracking Force in Grams:	¼ to 1¼	½ to 1½	¾ to 1½	½ to 1½	½ to 1½	¾ to 1½	1 to 3	1 to 3
Stylus Tip:	miniature nude diamond with 1 mil tracing radius ™4 Dimensional	miniature nude diamond with .1 mil tracing radius ™4 Dimensional	miniature nude diamond with 1 mil tracing radius ™4 Dimensional	nude elliptical diamond .2 x .7 mil	nude elliptical diamond .2 x .7 mil	nude elliptical diamond .2 x .7 mil	elliptical diamond .3 x .7 mil	spherical diamond .7 mil
For Use In:	turntable only	turntable only	turntable or changer	turntable or changer	turntable or changer	turntable or changer	changer only	changer only
	(White)	(Yellow)	(Black)	(Clear)	(Blue)	(Green)	(Red)	(Smoke)

Bell & Howell Schools invites you to BREAK INTO 4-C

Pick up new professional skills in this exciting field as you build Bell & Howell's new quadraphonic audio center. It's the very first learn-at-home program of its kind!

You've probably heard a lot about 4-channel sound by now. It's the most talked about and impressive technical advancement in sound in years. Separately recorded channels literally wrap a room in sound for a totally new listening experience.

And the excitement doesn't stop there. Thanks to Bell & Howell Schools' brand new learning program, now you can explore quad sound for yourself—from the inside out—and master the technology behind this important advancement right in your own home!

It's your opportunity to break away from the everyday routine and learn new occupational skills that could lead you in exciting new directions. Mail the attached card, postage free, to get the facts today!

Take hold of opportunity with both hands now!

The world around you is changing every day. Forging ahead. The man who keeps pace is the man who continues to learn and grow. He's in the mainstream of life. Interested in what's going on. And he's much more interesting, too.

Bell & Howell Schools' new 4-channel audio program was designed to help you learn and grow. To put you in the mainstream of audio electronics technology. Where you can delve into fascinating electronics principles. Solve challenging problems and get actual hands-on, build-it-yourself experience.

And where you can acquire a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment you may not currently be getting.

Completely different from the typical kind of school you grew up with.

Learning all about quad sound with Bell & Howell Schools is a lot more interesting and convenient than "school" used to be. First of all, we know you can't afford to quit your job. So we set up a program that lets you work at home in your spare time.

There are no classes to attend. No dry lectures to sit through. Everything comes to you in the mail. Lesson by lesson. Exciting package after package. And you work at a flexible pace in the relaxed atmosphere of your workshop—or wherever your favorite spot may be.

Sure, books are important. But they're only the beginning.

With this fascinating learn-at-home program, you do a lot more than just read about electronics. You'll conduct dozens of experiments . . . build your own laboratory equipment for testing out electronics principles . . . and also as part of this program you put together a 4-channel amplifier and FM/FM stereo tuner as you delve into advanced audio technology.

We try to make learning so interesting you look forward to receiving each new lesson. And enthusiastically dive into each new project we send you.

We'll start you off on the right foot.

You may be thinking, "I don't have any training in electronics . . . I might be getting in over my head."

Well, you can stop worrying about that. You don't need previous experience. You'll begin with the basics and acquire a thorough understanding of the fundamentals before moving on.

And remember, it's not just reading. With your very first lesson you get our LAB STARTER KIT, consisting of a simple voltmeter and electronics "breadboard" you can experiment with right away.

Of course, if you're already into electronics, you might be thinking, "I already know the basics . . . I want to get into the advanced stuff right away!"

For you there's an advanced standing program that lets you skip the beginning lessons.

Next you build the exclusive Electro-Lab® electronics training system.

Once you've mastered the basics, we'll send you everything you need to put together these three important testing instruments:

The design console. You use it to set up and examine various kinds of circuits. It's completely modular . . . no soldering!

The digital multimeter. Use it to measure voltage, current and resistance. Displays data accurately in big, clear numbers—just like on a digital clock.

The solid-state "triggered-sweep" oscilloscope. Use it to analyze modern,

HANNEL AUDIO!

state-of-the-art integrated circuits. Triggered-sweep feature locks in signals for easier observation.

These three superb testing instruments are the basis of your own home electronics laboratory. You'll use them throughout the program as you move into more advanced electronics principles and work into audio technology.

Bell & Howell's high performance 4-channel audio center you actually build and experiment with yourself!

You need practical experience with high caliber equipment to develop professional skills and understand the ins and outs of today's audio technology.

So we came up with a system that Bell & Howell is proud to have its name on:

First, there's the sophisticated outstanding 4-channel amplifier with SQ full-logic decoding and front to back separation.

35 watts per channel—Min. RMS into 8 ohms at less than 0.25% total harmonic distortion from 20-20,000 Hz, all channels fully driven.

As you build and experiment with this remarkable piece of equipment, you'll learn about matrix 4-channel and discrete—including CD-4 when processed through an external demodulator.

And with it you'll have the advanced circuitry you need to get into signal tracing low level circuits . . . trouble-shooting high power amplifier stages . . . and checking the operation of tone control circuits.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Altman's *Nashville*

● I've been reading the various write-ups on Robert Altman's *Nashville*—especially of the soundtrack recording which ABC stupidly chose to issue—with increasing amusement. Noel Coppage seems to have more of an appreciation of Altman's work than most (October), but I still think he has missed the point of the music. Now, *I* am not quite sure what the point is myself; I waver between feeling that Altman was more interested in having convincing performances than in good music and feeling that he *wanted* bad music and intended that as a commentary in itself. But of one thing I am certain: Altman makes films, and that's it. He never intended that a viewer of *Nashville* already be familiar with the songs. If you go to see the movie cold, it doesn't grate all that much on the nerves—although you can't help noticing how trite and silly most of the songs are. I'm sure Altman is sitting at home laughing himself sick over the notion that people are buying and listening to a record of the songs from the movie.

LESLIE GERBER
Phoenicia, N.Y.

● Noel Coppage's review of *Nashville* was fine as far as it went, but it didn't say anything about *why* Robert Altman made it. I think he made it because he knows what I know: the answer to the question of where American pop music is going is straight to Country, but most people would rather die than admit it. Will anyone down at STEREO REVIEW admit it?

ESTELLE KELLY
New York, N.Y.

Yes.

● It distressed me greatly to see Noel Coppage insert this ridiculous myth into an otherwise excellent review of the movie *Nashville* (October): "Anyone can, and in fact, always does, act." Horsefeathers. Weaseling out of an invitation or trying to appear interested in a boring situation is not acting; it is a widely accepted form of lying. Acting is the art of creating a character doing, saying, and thinking things appropriate to a given situation and the character's relation to that situation and the other characters. Seeing a well-known personality, often a singer, on a television show or in a movie or play, with no knowledge of how to present any other character besides his own, is just as nauseating to me as Telly Savalas' tempoed murmurings are to Mr. Coppage. I did not see John Denver on *McCloud*, but I found it very difficult to make allowances for Glen Campbell's "performance" in *True Grit*.

Very few people attending a musical event consider themselves expert enough to comment on a violinist's bowing technique, a conductor's interpretation of a score, or a singer's phrasing, and yet everyone seems to be an expert on acting. Acting is a difficult art, just as singing or writing a novel is. Mr. Coppage is probably more easily offended by musical ineptitude because of his deeper involvement with music. Appreciating his concern, I would, however, suggest that he confine his comments to subjects musical, or at least control his scorn for arts in which he has not become as deeply involved or educated.

ALAN L. HUTCHESON
Mesa, Ariz.

Mr. Coppage replies: This is an interesting ramble, but I don't see anything in it that actually refutes the statement that we all do a little acting. The kind of actor Mr. Hutcheson means, one being directly paid for it, "creating a character doing, saying, and thinking," etc., has more help *than the kind I referred to, if anything; the script-writer and the director have something to do with the character being created and what he or she does, says, and thinks. The liar has to write his own lines and direct himself. Obviously, some people are better actors than others, but then, on the local level, some of those lies are believed, so they must be told, as well as written, with* some *sort of skill. No one is suggesting that everyone who's good at weaseling should be in the theater or movies. We should remember, somewhere in here, what we started talking about: Altman and his script, however skeletal, required very little of some of the players in* Nashville *besides singing. Like everything else, this is a matter of degree and of individual cases; while Alec Guinness obviously can do things histrionic that we liars cannot do, I have my doubts about whether Karen Black did anything in* Nashville *that Dolly Parton couldn't have done, except sing badly.*

October's Turntable

● About that turntable on the October cover: is it for real? I've never seen anything like it.

GARY NORBUTT
Fall River, Mass.

It is real, and imminently available—at a price of just under $2,000. The Gale CT-2101 turntable, with a three-point-support "platter," has a rather unusual three-point suspension system as well and a d.c. servomotor. The control module in the foreground continuously varies the turntable speed from about 10 to 99 rpm, with a digital-readout speed indicator. The Gale CT-2101 is a British import; further details are available from the company's agency, Roth/Sindell, 540 Kelton Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90024. Incidentally, the tone arm, which is not supplied with the turntable, is the Audio-Technica AT-1009 ($139.95).

Metropolitan Opera on the Air

● I do hope that STEREO REVIEW will publish the schedule of the Saturday afternoon broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera. Your periodical is very, very good; the schedule will make it better.

SOUTHWICK PHELPS
Columbia, N.J.

Listed below are the Texaco-Metropolitan Opera Broadcasts (EST) for the 1975-1976 season, subject to change upon notice:

12/6, 2 p.m.	*Un Ballo in Maschera* (Verdi)
12/13, 1:30 p.m.	*Carmen* (Bizet)
12/20, 2 p.m.	*Così Fan Tutte* (Mozart)
12/27, 2 p.m.	*Hansel and Gretel* (Humperdinck)
1/3, 2 p.m.	*Il Trittico* (Puccini)—new
1/10, 2 p.m.	*Elektra* (R. Strauss)—pre-curtain
1/17, 2 p.m.	*L'Assedio di Corinto* (Rossini)
1/24, 1:30 p.m.	*Boris Godunov* (Moussorgsky)
1/31, 2 p.m.	*Il Barbiere di Siviglia* (Rossini)
2/7, 2 p.m.	*Fidelio* (Beethoven)
2/14, 2 p.m.	*La Traviata* (Verdi)
2/21, 1:30 p.m.	*Le Nozze di Figaro* (Mozart)
2/28, 2 p.m.	*Norma* (Bellini)
3/6, 2 p.m.	*Aida* (Verdi)
3/13, 2 p.m.	*I Puritani* (Bellini)—new
3/20, 2 p.m.	*Ariadne auf Naxos* (R. Strauss)
3/27, 1:30 p.m.	*Der Rosenkavalier* (R. Strauss)
4/3, 2 p.m.	*Madama Butterfly* (Puccini)
4/10, 1:30 p.m.	*La Gioconda* (Ponchielli)
4/17, 1 p.m.	*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Wagner)

Bolshoi

● William Livingstone's "Opera File" review of the Bolshoi Opera (October) was right on the button. I too was amazed at the way the "stars" of the company turned up in minor roles. This is necessary when performing a work with a vast panorama of characters such as *Boris Godunov*. Assigning the role of Shchelkalov to the reigning Soviet baritone Yuri Mazurok is an example of the total ensemble nature of the company. Of all the operas I saw (all but *The Dawns . . .*), I was moved by *The Gambler* the most. The music rips by at gut-punching speed and intensity. With the hallucinogenic strobe lighting and electronic amplification in the second act, it was totally riveting. It was a pity that it was a box-office failure. Perhaps the New York audience was represented by the woman who sat next to me. She grumbled about the lack of overture, arias, and melody. I can name many repertoire pieces that have no overtures (when was the last time she saw *Butterfly*?). I, how-

(Continued on page 14)

To Your Taste

Even the most perfect of high fidelity systems cannot escape those little inconsistencies that nag the ear. Room acoustics, speaker inadequacies, or even recording quality can produce listening environments that are less than optimum.

Then, too, each person has his own tastes in frequency response that can vary from time to time, or recording to recording.

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ever, thank the Bolshoi and would welcome them back any time. Artists like Mazurok, Milashkina, Galina Borisova, Elena Obraztsova, Vladimir Atlantov, Alexei Maslennikov, and Alexander Ognivtsev, to name but a few, would be stars anywhere.

CRAIG ZEICHNER
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Great Eagles Debate

● Although I count myself as one of the truest of Eagles fans, I have to rise to the defense of Steve Simels in the "Great Eagles Debate." In his October letter, Kenneth M. Leonard argues that Mr. Simels has no right to pass judgment on the true "country spirit" of the Eagles' music because he doesn't live in a country atmosphere or undergo the conflicts facing a person residing in the country. Ridiculous! The true appreciation of music lies in being able to experience it with the musician, to understand the message he is conveying. If the Eagles' words are convincing in the "country-rock" vein, then it matters little whether they were raised in Abilene, Texas, or Providence, Rhode Island. As a matter of fact, I believe Bernie Leadon is currently the only member of the Eagles who was raised on "country sunshine."

As for Mr. Simels, I have never read a review of his that didn't make itself perfectly clear that the material within was an *opinion*. He is as unbiased and open-minded a critic as I've found yet, and I'll defend his right to express his opinions to the end.

LORA JEAN GARDINER
North Kingstown, R.I.

Garland's Graduates

● With a desire to update Richard R. Lingeman who, in his October review of "Judy Garland Concert," yearns for the golden age when the "faghaggerie" of Garland will be effaced by time, I would like to call something to his attention: although there may be some who still weep in their martinis while listening to Garland, by far the majority of us faggots are turning on these days with Phoebe Snow and Cleo Laine. Granted, deserting Garland may be another indication of our emotional instability and fickleness, but I just wanted to set the record . . . er . . . straight. Anyone for Tchaikovsky?

BUD BARRICKLOW
Seattle, Wash.

Venus, Mars, and Others

● A note of complete irrelevance concerning Lester Bangs' October review of the McCartneys' LP, "Venus and Mars": I couldn't care less if "the lovely Linda" plays, sings, or serves cupcakes at the MacCartney sessions. I merely want to be entertained by the "faceless" Tom Scott, Dave Mason, and others. I especially like Scott's solo on *Man Said*. McCartney is just one of rock's finest bassists, vocalists, and producers. Aside from that he hasn't a lot going for him. That's all for now—must put on "For the Roses" and get relevant.

JOHN GILMORE
Los Angeles, Calif.

Electric Dulcimer

● I was somewhat surprised to read of Noel Coppage's apparent shock at the use of the electric dulcimer in the new Richard and Linda Thompson album (October). Far from being a potential "rampaging horror," the electric dulcimer is now part of the English contemporary folk medium. The works of classically oriented Roger Nicholson or folk-rock-minded Tim Hart on his albums with Maddy Prior or with Steeleye Span are proof of the advanced application of the dulcimer put forth by the English. The ghost of Richard Farina seems to have come to rest in Britain.

CHARLES H. SMITH
New Hartford, Conn.

The Original Piano Trio

● I'm certain Paul Kresh's October review of the Original Piano Trio's "Nostalgia" record would have been quite different if he had known that the selections were not newly recorded at a 1975 reunion of the trio, but were the actual piano-roll recordings made for the Ampico (American Piano Company) reproducing piano in 1922. This information was clear in my original notes, but it was edited out by the producers for some unknown reason.

Incidentally, John Green's suite *Night Club* was never performed by the Original Piano Trio, as Mr. Kresh claims. Rather, it was introduced by Roy Bargy, Ramona, and the composer with Paul Whiteman's Concert Orchestra in 1933.

PETER MINTUN
San Francisco, Calif.

Ah, Ramona! Where are you today? And what, for that matter, ever became of the Tune Twisters?

Davis/Rodrigo Adagio

● John Hogle's October letter alludes to a supposed arrangement of Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*, namely the "absolutely unique and superb transcription for trumpet and orchestra by Miles Davis and Gil Evans." Actually, this is both less and more than an arrangement of the familiar guitar concerto as such, for only the Adagio movement is involved. Of course, that is the haunting part everyone remembers from the original work; nevertheless, it is sloppy titling to equate it with the whole *Concierto*.

The Davis/Evans rendition of the Adagio is, on the other hand, more fully *developed* than the original, with a very free treatment of the solo part. Lasting over sixteen minutes in all, it is much more than a regular transcription. This heady brew is part of the still available "Sketches of Spain" record (Columbia PC-8271), and *Aranjuez* lovers certainly ought to know it. The point at which I most miss the guitar is where, in the original score, the increasingly rapid and intense chordal strumming in the written cadenza—which is completely out of the province of a wind or brass instrument—leads up to the glorious climactic reprise that breaks out in the orchestra.

JACK DIETHER
New York, N.Y.

Viva Diva

● I enjoyed William Livingstone's "Viva Diva" (September) very much, having seen all three of Mme. Olivero's performances at the Met. Nevertheless, I disagree with his views on enthusiastic audiences. An overly enthusiastic audience can ruin a performance. For example, in Act III, Tosca (Mme. Olivero) relates the story of how she finally killed Scarpia, ending with: "*Io quella lama gli piantai nel cor.*" On the word "*lama*" Mme. Olivero struck a very high note, prompting some idiot in the audience to scream "Bravo!" A lot of people tried to shut him up, but the tenseness of the scene had already been broken. Opera, as performed by artists of Mme. Olivero's caliber, is drama at its best, and having it spoiled by the shouts of exhibitionists is unfortunate.

I believe that it was within reason to have applauded Mme. Olivero at her entrance and at her spectacular final exit in Act I and that the audience's concentration should be on the performance and not on itself.

PETER GEIDEL
Bronx, N.Y.

Mr. Livingstone replies: Perhaps. But does "reason" have much to do with all this? Who is to decide when an outburst is irrepressible enthusiasm and when it is simply shameful exhibitionism?

Brownsville Station

● Bravo, Steve Simels! It's about time Brownsville Station received some good press (October), even if Mr. Simels doesn't like "Motor City Connection" (he's forgiven only because he's good-looking). I'd like to add that there are two other members of Brownsville Station, both of whom are also very talented and personable: Michael Lutz and Bruce Nazarian.

TERI FARRIS
New York, N.Y.

Recording Wire

● I would be very grateful if STEREO REVIEW or any of its readers could help me find spools of recording wire for a Webster Model 80 wire recorder.

WILLIAM D. CROWELL, JR.
48 Oxford Drive
Lincolnshire, Ill. 60015

Correction

● Before you hear from a justly indignant admirer of the music of Henri Lazarof, I must correct the transcription error that caused his name to appear as "Henry Lazarus" in the interview with Maurice Abravanel (October). One of this composer's works, *Structures Sonores*, was recorded for Vanguard by Abravanel, and there are at least half a dozen other currently available recordings of his music on the Desto, Candide, CRI, and Everest labels.

ROY HEMMING
New York, N.Y.

Me Too

● Unfortunately, I am probably not the first to discover the reference, in one of my October reviews, to William "Kross" as pianist Artur Balsam's partner in his recordings of the Mozart sonatas for piano and violin. The error was mine (typists will understand how this can happen: the third finger left hand rests on the "s" key, third finger right hand on the "l", and sometimes the signals get switched), and I offer sincere apologies to both musicians. William Kroll, the distinguished violinist and leader of the string quartet that bore his name, deserves better. While I am registering corrections, I must note that I was off the mark in speculating that the sessions for Mr. Balsam's new MHS set of the Mozart sonatas were spaced over a longer period than those for his earlier recording on L'Oiseau-Lyre; I am advised that he taped the entire cycle in *four days*.

RICHARD FREED
Rockville, Md.

While everyone is still trying to make V-FETS at any price, we now make them at a lower price.

When Sony introduced the first amplifiers with vertical field-effect transistors last year, the reactions were nothing short of incredible.

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It has a direct coupled power amplifier stage. As well as direct coupled FET amplifiers in the tone control and buffer stages.

Its bass and treble controls have a turnover frequency selector that starts at 250HZ/500HZ for bass and 2.5kHZ/5kHZ for treble.

Its volume control is equipped with a switch for 20dB muting. And it has a level control memory device so volume can be set at any predetermined point.

But as good as our new V-FET amplifier is, we're just as proud of the components we make to go along with it.

Our ST-4950 AM/FM stereo tuner, for example, has a MOS FET front end, uni-phase solid state filters and IC's in IF stages. This allows an FM capture ratio of only 1.0dB, selectivity of 80dB and an S/N ratio of 70dB. The ST-4950 also has a phase-locked loop (PLL) MPX section. Which means you get excellent stereo separation and low distortion.

Of course, if you're going around looking for a turntable, by all means take a look at our PS-4750 (cartridge sold separately).

It has a direct drive servo motor with a wow and flutter rating of only .03%.

Its base and platter are made from molded compound instead of metal, so resonance has been greatly reduced. It also has air-damped cushions, which compensate for warpness in records (again reducing resonance). The end result is a much cleaner sound.

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The first product from Janis Audio Associates is an add-on "sub-woofer" designed to be used in existing audio systems with loudspeakers that have limited output capabilities at extremely low frequencies. The frequency response of the Janis Woofer is within 1 dB from 100 to 30 Hz, over which range it is said to be capable of sound-pressure levels up to 106 dB at a distance of 1 meter under anechoic conditions. Below 30 Hz a 12-dB-per-octave rolloff minimizes the effects of low-frequency noises such as turntable rumble. Harmonic distortion for an 85-dB sound-pressure level at 30 Hz is under 2 per cent. Amplifier power of 60 watts per woofer is said to be adequate under most conditions; amplifiers capable of more than 150 watts per channel are generally not recommended. The nominal impedance of the Janis Woofer is 8 ohms.

The 15-inch driver of the Janis Woofer is enclosed in a low commode cabinet, 22 x 22 inches and 18 inches high, finished in oiled

walnut with decorative walnut inlays. The driver radiates through a slot running around the top of the enclosure; otherwise the enclosure is sealed. A separate amplifier must be used with each Janis woofer, with the signal for the amplifier obtained from a suitable electronic crossover. The manufacturer specifies a crossover frequency of 100 Hz with slopes of no less than 18 dB per octave. A variety of crossovers, some of which provide summed outputs so that one or two woofers can be driven from as many as four channels, are available from Janis at prices ranging from $123 to $242. Price of the Janis Woofer: $599.

Circle 115 on reader service card

Telephonics Stereo Headphones

A new series of stereo headphones comprising the models Stereo-20, Stereo-30, and Stereo-50 are the latest products from Telephonics. Two of them, the 20 and the 30 (shown), employ enclosed drivers along with acoustically transparent foam cushions that rest on the ear. The Stereo-50 has ear-encircling seals (for acoustical isolation and extended low-frequency response) with interior foam cushions. All three use 1-inch dome-type drivers with nylon diaphragms. Frequency responses are generally 20 Hz to beyond 20,000 Hz (the Stereo-50 is rated down to 16 Hz), and power-handling capabilities are just under

half a watt. Impedance is suitable for use with conventional amplifier stereo-headphone jacks. Harmonic distortion is under 0.5 per cent at a 103-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) for the Stereo-20, 0.2 per cent at 110-dB SPL for the Stereo-30, and 0.2 per cent at 100 dB SPL for the Stereo-50.

All three models are similar in construction, with extendable headbands and, on the 30 and 50, pivoting yokes to support the earpieces. Eight-foot cables are standard, terminating in the usual three-conductor phone plugs (the Stereo-50's cable is coiled). Weights are 6 (Stereo-20), 8 (Stereo-30), and 12 (Stereo-50) ounces, and prices (in the same order) are $25, $30, and $50.

Circle 116 on reader service card

Scott Model R31S AM/Stereo FM Receiver

A new stereo receiver from H. H. Scott provides 15 watts per channel continuous output (into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz) for a particularly modest price ($199.95). Harmonic and intermodulation distortion are both 0.5 per cent at rated output, and noise levels are −60 dB for the phono inputs, −70 dB for high-level inputs. For the FM section, IHF sensitivity is 2.5 microvolts (5 microvolts for 50 dB quieting), and alternate-channel selectivity is 55 dB. Capture ratio is 2.5 dB, and image and

spurious-response rejection are both 60 dB. Frequency response is 20 to 15,000 Hz ±3 dB, and stereo separation is 35 dB at 1,000 Hz. Harmonic-distortion levels, mono and stereo, are 0.5 and 0.8 per cent, respectively.

On its control panel, the Scott R31S has pushbuttons for program-source selection (AM, FM, PHONO, AUX) and speaker switching (two pairs accommodated), loudness compensation, tape monitor, mono/stereo mode, and FM interstation-noise muting, plus rotary controls for volume, balance, bass, and treble. A signal-strength tuning meter and stereo headphone jack are also provided. In the rear are the outputs and inputs, including 300- and 75-ohm antenna terminals, and an unswitched a.c. convenience outlet. Overall dimensions are approximately 18 x 5½ x 12 inches, including the integral wood cabinet.

Circle 117 on reader service card

Dual 1249 Automatic Turntable

United Audio announces the introduction of the Dual 1249, the premiere model in a new line of belt-driven automatic turntables from this manufacturer. The two-speed (33⅓ and 45 rpm) design employs a 12-inch, 4½-pound aluminum platter with stroboscopic markings cast into its circumference, where they are illuminated by a strobe light beneath the motorboard. A fine-speed adjustment is continuously variable over a 6 per cent range; 33⅓ or 45 rpm is selected by means of a mechanism that

shifts the drive belt from one diameter to another on the motor pulley. The motor itself is an eight-pole synchronous device.

The tone arm is pivoted by the latest version of Dual's familiar gimbal configuration, with an integral calibrated stylus-force adjustment that applies force via a spring after the arm has been zero-balanced by means of a counterweight. A separate anti-skating adjustment is calibrated separately for conical, elliptical, and CD-4 styli. A damped tone-arm cueing mechanism, operated by an upright lever next to the arm rest, is adjustable in respect to the height to which the arm is raised. Another lever raises the pivot assembly up or down, providing correct vertical tracking angle for one record or the center of a stack of six (the maximum number accommodated by the change mechanism).

The operating controls of the 1249 follow the pattern of previous Dual models, with a single lever to initiate or interrupt automatic play and another to select speed. A small knob selects a single-play cycle only or continuous repeats. In manual operation the turntable motor is started when the tone arm is raised and brought toward the platter. A manual spindle (shown) that rotates with the record is included along with the automatic spindle.

Basic specifications for the 1249 include a rumble level of less than −63 dB (weighted) and wow and flutter less than 0.06 per cent.

(Continued on page 18)

Good News from the good hands people

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Of course, the Allstate Repair Guarantee does not cover manufacturer's defects in any operating parts. And it's available only through Allstate Insurance Company-operated claim locations.

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NEW PRODUCTS

THE LATEST IN HIGH-FIDELITY EQUIPMENT

The width and depth of the 1249 are about 16½ and 14½ inches, respectively, with base. Two styles of base are offered, both at $15.95, and two dust covers, one that will accommodate the change spindle ($13.95) and one for use with the manual spindle only ($12.95). Price of the basic Model 1249: $279.95.

Circle 50 on reader service card

3M Model CTR-1 Stereo Cassette Deck

One of the largest and most elaborate stereo cassette decks now available is the new Model CTR-1 from the Mincom division of the 3M Company. The well-known 3M cassette transport that has long been a feature of the finer cassette decks offered under the Wollensak brand name is used in the CTR-1, modified to suit a front-loading layout. All transport controls, including a pause function, are activated by means of light-touch pushbuttons operating through solenoids. The deck has a memory-rewind feature working in conjunction with the three-digit index counter, and a continuous-play mode in which the cassette is automatically rewound and played again indefinitely. The index counter, besides being manually resettable, is also returned to zero whenever a cassette is ejected.

The CTR-1's Dolby noise-reduction circuits can be used to process tapes, decode Dolbyized FM broadcasts, or to record such broadcasts while they are being auditioned in decoded form. The separate bias and equalization switches both have three positions (for chromium-dioxide, ferri-chrome, and standard) that operate in conjunction with twelve rear-panel bias and equalization calibration controls. Microphone and line sources can be mixed for recording via separate input-level controls; playback-level controls are also separate. The unusually large recording-level meters can be switched to read average or peak levels, and they are calibrated separately for that purpose: from −20 to +5 dB for average, −40 to +5 dB for peak.

Frequency response is 35 to 15,000 Hz with iron-oxide tape, and 35 to 17,000 Hz

with chromium dioxide or Ferri-Chrome. Referenced to a 0-VU recorded level, the CTR-1's signal-to-noise ratio is 50 dB without Dolby noise reduction. Wow and flutter are 0.1 per cent (weighted rms). The microphone inputs are designed for low-impedance microphones and have a sensitivity of 0.15 millivolt for a 0-VU level. The headphone jack has a nominal output of 1 milliwatt into 8-ohm phones. The CTR-1 has wood end panels with a vinyl-coated metal top and dimensions of 24 x 7 ¼ x 8 inches. Price: $629. A remote-control unit duplicating the functions of the transport pushbuttons will soon be available.

Circle 118 on reader service card

Sylvania's GTE Speaker Systems

GTE-Sylvania has launched a new brand name—GTE—for a new line of speaker systems representing the company's best products of this kind. The initial three models are four-way, three-way, and two-way systems designated, respectively, the 412, 312, and 210. The two larger systems employ 12-inch woofers in sealed cabinets, 4½-inch cone mid-range drivers, and ¾-inch dome tweeters. The Model 412 adds a 1½-inch dome tweeter that is also used, along with a 10-inch woofer, in the two-way Model 210.

The Models 412 and 312 have power-handling capabilities permitting use with amplifiers rated at up to 150 watts per channel con-

tinuous. Crossover frequencies are 500, 2,000, and 8,000 Hz for the 412, and 500 and 3,500 Hz for the 312. In both systems, each driver except the woofer has a switch to alter its acoustical output over a range of ±3 dB in three steps. The Model 210 has a crossover frequency of 1,500 Hz and similar switches for high and mid-range frequencies. The GTE speakers are designed for wide, uniform dispersion, with frequency response flat within ±3.5 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz up to 45 degrees off-axis for the Model 412 (30 to 15,000 Hz ±4 dB for the 312). All systems have nominal impedances of 8 ohms. The GTE 412 has dimensions of 28½ x 18½ x 12½ inches; the 312 is 27 x 17⅛ x 11½, and the 210 is 24 x 15⅝ x 11¾ inches. All cabinets are identical in appearance and are walnut-finished with handsome knit grille cloths. Prices: Model 210, $119.95; Model 312, $179.95; Model 412, $249.95.

Circle 119 on reader service card

Luxman M6000 Stereo Power Amplifier

The largest power amplifier in the new Luxman line of audio components is the M6000 stereo unit which provides 300 watts per channel of continuous power into 8 ohms, both channels driven, with less than 0.05 per cent harmonic or intermodulation distortion. Rated power is available at any frequency from 20 to 20,000 Hz and the noise level is at least 100 dB below rated output. Frequency

response is 5 to 50,000 Hz ±1 dB; damping factor is 100 for 8-ohm loads.

The construction of the M6000 involves entirely separate power supplies for each channel, with driver and output stages within

each channel electrically isolated from each other to prevent interference. Protective devices include temperature and current sensors, plus a relay that disconnects the speaker systems in the event of abnormal current surges or d.c. voltages appearing at the outputs. The relay circuitry also provides a delay in turn-on of about 5 seconds, during which time an LED warm-up indicator flashes.

Output levels of the M6000 are continuously monitored by large front-panel meters indicating average levels and a pair of LED displays indicate peak levels. The sensitivities of these indicators can be altered by 10 dB (with a front-panel switch) to permit them to register at low output levels. Separate level controls for the two channels are detented in 1-dB steps from 0 to −20 dB. A wooden case surrounds the top and sides of the amplifier, leaving the unusual "honey-comb" heat sinks in the rear open for ventilation. Approximate dimensions are 22½ x 8¾ x 16¾ inches, and the weight is 115 pounds. Price: $2,995. The M4000, a somewhat smaller amplifier rated at 180 watts per channel continuous with identical distortion and bandwidth, offers virtually all the construction and control features of the M6000 at a price of $1,495.

Circle 120 on reader service card

SAC Consumer Membership Program

The Society of Audio Consultants, which for several years has offered audio training and certification to high-fidelity retailers, is now extending its membership to include interested consumers. Such members will be designated Consumer Associates. An annual membership fee of $10 ($7.50 if received before January 15, 1976) will entitle members to a monthly newsletter, information on audio-career possibilities, and rental privileges for home-study courses that SAC currently makes available to dealer and industry members. The newsletter will provide free classified space for members wishing to buy or sell equipment. In addition, manufacturers and SAC-affiliated retailers will periodically offer discounts and rebates to Consumer Associates. For further information write: Society of Audio Consultants, Dept. SR, 393 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

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.

AUDIO QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

By LARRY KLEIN *Technical Editor*

Double-Dolby FM?

Q. *In your Double-Dolby Q & A (October issue) you recommended that when copying Dolby tapes one should decode the original and then re-encode as one makes the copy. Should the same decode-encode approach also be used when one is taping Dolby FM broadcasts?*

SUSAN EDWARDS
Palo Alto, Calif.

A. As you may recall, the problem in copying Dolbyized tapes came about because of the lack of a 0-reference Dolby tone on the "master" tape. (Professional A-encoded master tapes always have such a reference tone.) However, since the proper performance of the Dolby encode-decode process depends on the use of a consistent reference level, all you need do is set up the output-level controls on your tuner and/or the input controls on the Dolby adapter so that the reference tone broadcast by the station produces the correct Dolby-level meter reading on your equipment. (A few recent tuners have a built-in test tone that corresponds to the proper broadcast-reference level.) The answer to the question, therefore, is that you can record a Dolbyized FM program *directly* if you can set the levels correctly, but make sure that your equipment has the proper 25-microsecond de-emphasis characteristic.

Instant Evaluation

Q. *When evaluating the sound quality of audio components do you believe it is necessary to listen to the components over an extended period of time, or do you think that quick A-B switching comparisons are adequate to appreciate different characteristics?*

JERRY L. WALKER
Tacoma, Wash.

A. Although I can't imagine why there should be a difference of opinion in this matter, there is. I find that instant A-B switching is the *only* way I can detect subtle differences between components. By "subtle," I mean differences that are small enough that if I were to leave the room I would not be able to tell by sound quality alone which component was playing when I returned. The problem, as I see it, is that in making critical distinctions one naturally focuses on whatever audible differences exist. And difficulties arise when the differences among the systems are so small that one cannot pick out a specific quality (such as "peaky," "shrill," "warm," etc.) and use that as an identifying characteristic. However, if I'm listening to three speakers, for example, each of which has a distinctive frequency balance, then it is easy to fix on the differences and pick out which is playing during a blind A-B-C comparison. Of course, the program material must cover the frequency ranges where the differences exist. A solo flute would be useless in discriminating between three speakers, one of which had a boomy bass response, another a low, tight bass, and the third no low bass at all.

In short, if the above conditions are met, I find that I can make instant comparisons that, even if they don't reveal "objective truth," are at least consistent over time. The only reason I would have to "live with a component" is to make sure that I've covered all the bases in respect to what it does to a wide variety of program material. I've checked with Julian Hirsch on the question, and he feels the same way. He pointed out to me that neither one of us has ever experienced the so-called long-term listening fatigue phenomenon. In those circumstances, when the sound reproduction was bad enough to cause listening fatigue in the long run, we always heard the problem in short-term A-B testing first.

On the other hand, my associate Ralph Hodges, who prefers long-term comparisons of equipment, feels that further, small audible differences almost always come to light after lengthy, concentrated listening with a wide variety of program material. Since any sort of listening test is by nature subjective, I guess everybody has to see what works best for himself after accumulating enough experience to generalize. However, if you were to ask me where to go to get the listening experience, the best I could suggest would be to find yourself some friendly local audiophiles.

In this connection, if there are hi-fi audio clubs out there that would like to be listed, please notify me as to your whereabouts and membership requirements.

Phono-cartridge Tracking Force

Q. *The instructions accompanying phono cartridges specify a range of tracking forces such as 1 to 2 grams or 3 to 5 grams, the first number being the recommended minimum force and the second the maximum. But assuming that 1 gram does the job adequately, why should anyone consider a higher tracking force—one which would cause more*

(Continued on page 22)

Introducing the BSR Silent Performer

The only rumble from this belt-drive turntable comes from our competitors.

For years most expensive manual record-playing devices have used belt-drive as a smooth, trouble-free—and most important—silent method for transmission of power. Now, our engineers have succeeded in integrating a highly-refined belt-drive system into more affordably-priced turntables. They offer a combination of features and performance not yet available in even more expensive competitive models. We call them the Silent Performers.

Our Model 20 BPX is a fully automated single-play turntable with a precision machined platter, high-torque multi-pole synchronous motor, tubular "S" shaped adjustable counter-weighted tone arm in gimbal mount, viscous cueing, quiet Delrin cam gear, automatic arm lock, dual-range anti-skate and much more. It is packaged with base, hinged tinted dust cover, and ADC K6E cartridge. See your audio dealer for more information, or write to us.

BSR

Consumer Products Group
BSR (USA) Ltd.
Blauvelt, N.Y. 10913

CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD

record wear? Isn't it sufficient for the manufacturer to indicate one *optimum tracking force and for the user to adjust his tone arm accordingly?*

MORRIS LINTSKY
New York, N.Y.

A. A range of forces is specified only because the cartridge manufacturer has no way of knowing what sort of record player any particular cartridge will eventually find itself in. The lowest specified tracking force is suitable only for low-mass tone arms with low-friction bearings and a gentle end-of-play trip mechanism (if it is an automatic). A cartridge used at too low a tracking force for a given player is likely to inflict more groove damage (as the stylus bounces from wall to wall in the groove) than would result from the slightly greater groove-wall indentation caused by a higher-than-necessary tracking force.

On the Rack

Q. *I have often seen in hi-fi advertisements and test reports the line "suitable for rack mounting" in reference to amps, preamps, and similar electronic components. Exactly what kind of "rack" is used for the "mounting"?*

RAYMOND ST. PIERRE
Chicopee, Mass.

A. If you asked the question of a medieval dungeon keeper you would probably get a more interesting answer than that which follows. However . . . at one time we used to call them *relay* racks, which suggests that they were first used in telephone installations. Today, the so-called relay rack consists of anything from a small desk-mounted enclosure to, say, a 7-foot tall structure. What makes both of these "racks" is that they are designed to take standard 19-inch-wide panels that have slotted ends which match (for screw-bolt mounting) the threaded holes tapped into the upright frame of the rack structure. Most radio-station broadcast and recording-studio electronic equipment is designed for rack mounting. As a matter of fact, this is also true of most professional and industrial electronic equipment, except when the instruments are too small or are intended for portable use. (Incidentally, I suspect that at least 99 per cent of the hi-fi equipment designed to be suitable for rack mounting will never find itself so installed.)

Spring Power

Q. *Can you tell me why my stereo signal drops to half power every fall and returns to full power in the spring? The amplifier has 55 watts.*

EDWARD J. CARLIN
Philadelphia, Pa.

A. I can't provide a positive answer, but I suspect it has something to do with the vernal equinox. Seriously though, I'm curious as to how Mr. Carlin—who I suspect lacks the required test equipment—knows exactly how much power his amplifier is delivering at each of the four seasons.

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!

Creation of the new Calibration Standard filled a need...the acceptance of Stanton's 681 TRIPLE-E is unprecedented!

It was no accident!

The Recording Industry needed a new calibration standard because it had been cutting discs with higher accuracy to achieve greater definition and sound quality.

So, the engineers turned to Stanton for a cartridge of excellence to serve as a primary calibration standard in recording system check-outs.

The result: the *new* calibration standard, The Stanton 681 TRIPLE-E.

The rest is history!

Major recording studios adopted it . . . as did many of the smaller producers. Radio stations across the world put the 681 TRIPLE-E on all of their turntables, both for on-the-air broadcasting and for disc-to-tape transfer.

And, audiophiles by their purchases have voted it the outstanding stereo cartridge available.

The Stanton 681 TRIPLE-E offers improved tracking at all frequencies. It achieves perfectly flat frequency response beyond 20 kHz. Its ultra miniaturized stylus assembly has substantially less mass than previously, yet it possesses even greater durability than had been previously thought possible to achieve.

Each 681 TRIPLE-E is guaranteed to meet its specifications within exacting limits and each one boasts the most meaningful warranty possible. An individually calibrated test result is packed with each unit.

As Julian D. Hirsch of Hirsch-Houck Labs wrote in Popular Electronics Magazine in April, 1975: "When we used the cartridge to play the best records we had through the best speaker systems at our disposal, the results were spectacular"

Whether your usage involves recording, broadcasting, or home entertainment, your choice should be the choice of the professionals . . . the STANTON 681 TRIPLE-E.

STANTON

AUDIO BASICS

By RALPH HODGES

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS—23

● ***Multiplex*** generally refers to the technique for broadcasting stereo FM. The multiplex system involves the transmission of two "channels" on a single FM "carrier" frequency, but these channels are not "left" and "right," as might be expected. Instead, one is a *sum* audio signal (left plus right) and the other a *difference* signal (left minus right). Through simple manipulation of these two signals, the receiving instrument (the tuner or receiver) is able to reconstitute the pure left and right channels accurately. (The main point of broadcasting stereo in this sum-and-difference form, however, is to provide compatibility with mono receivers. The sum signal, which is the only part of the composite that a mono receiver pays attention to, is of course a mono version of the full stereo program. CD-4 four-channel recordings employ the same sum-and-difference scheme to accommodate their four separate signals, and for the same reason—stereo and mono compatibility.)

● ***Muting*** usually designates a circuit in an FM tuner or receiver that eliminates the loud rushing noise that would otherwise be heard between stations as the tuning control is rotated. This "interstation-noise" muting can usually be disabled by means of a switch that permits reception of weak (or noisy) stations that would otherwise be muted.

Muting may also refer to a switch often found on amplifiers and receivers to reduce sharply—usually by about 20 dB—the volume level at which the audio system is playing without disturbing the setting of the volume control. This is useful for sudden interruptions such as telephone calls.

In addition, most automatic record players have an *internal* muting switch that prevents their inherent cycling noise from reaching the amplifier.

● ***mV*** is the abbreviation for millivolt, or one thousandth of a volt; 10 mV equals 0.01 volt.

● ***Noise*** has acquired a number of semantically tricky definitions over the years, most of which boil down to "anything audible that you don't like." For less subjective purposes, we can call noise any signal that intrudes on reproduced program material and is totally unrelated to it in cause or manifestation. (This, of course, distinguishes noise from distortion, which can be said to *arise* from the program material and which is expressed as a percentage of it.) This definition embraces hum, record noise, the omnipresent hiss from tape and electronics, and interference coming from any device that radiates radio-frequency energy. It does not, strictly speaking, include modulation effects from tape or other sources, or any "noise" that just happened to be picked up as sound by the microphones when the recording was being made. Note that noise which can be measured but is either too low in volume or too high (or low) in frequency to be heard ("inaudible" noise) is still noise.

● ***Notch filters*** sharply reduce the level of a very narrow band of frequencies, causing a "notch" to appear in a frequency-response graph of the resulting signal. Such filters are very useful in removing noise associated with a single frequency (such as hum) with minimum effect on the rest of the frequency spectrum. They can also make very precise correction of frequency-response irregularities; the more elaborate multi-band equalizers employ a *series* of notch filters closely spaced in frequencies at which they act.

● ***Octave*** is a range of frequencies spanning a numerical two-to-one ratio, such as 20 to 40 Hz, 1,000 to 2,000 Hz, or 5,000 to 10,000 Hz. The audio range, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, is almost exactly ten octaves wide.

● ***Ohm*** is the unit of measurement used to express resistance or opposition to the flow of electric current.

and you'll drop all the others.

There is a new cassette on the market. The FUJI FX, a Pure Ferrix cassette that soon will be the standard of excellence for top quality, truly high fidelity reproduction. It already is in many parts of the world.

FUJI FX gives you the music you want, the way you want your music. Clear, crisp sound over the entire audio frequency range without perceptible distortion. A signal-to-noise ratio of better than 58 db. No hiss. Virtually failure-proof. The finest music at your fingertips without the need for any special bias. Drop in at your FUJI dealer today; then drop in a FUJI and hear music as you have never heard it before.

FUJI FX cassettes come in lengths of 46, 60 and 90. Also available, a full line of FUJI FL Low Noise cassettes in lengths of 30, 60, 90 and 120 minutes. FUJI Photo Film U.S.A., Inc. The Empire State Building, New York, New York 10001.

FUJI FILM

THE TAPE THAT'S HEARD AROUND THE WORLD

CIRCLE NO. 23 ON READER SERVICE CARD

TAPE HORIZONS

By CRAIG STARK

FACTS ABOUT FLUTTER

LISTENING to a 3,000-Hz sine-wave tone from an audio signal generator is musically rather dull, but if you *record* that pure "note" and play it back against the original, your boredom may give way to shock. It takes no golden ear to spot instantly that something is definitely wrong with the tape reproduction. More than just a little gentle background hiss has been added: to a degree, the whole *character* of the tone has acquired a certain granular or fuzzy quality. The same process obviously affects our music recording as well, though its results are certainly more audible on a single tone.

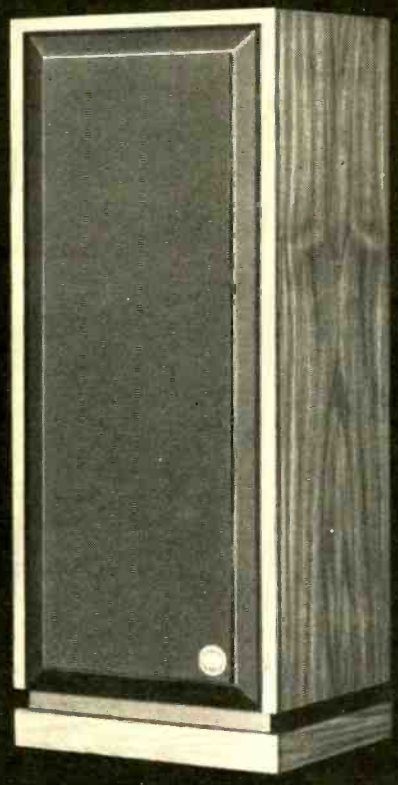
Generically, this kind of disturbance is called "modulation noise," one form of which is caused chiefly by brief variations in the speed at which the tape passes across the heads. Such instantaneous speed aberrations momentarily change the pitch of a note, thus "modulating" its frequency. The tape itself is literally jiggling, and hence the name "flutter." So, for example, if a 3,000-Hz tone is caused to wobble back and forth by 3 Hz (one part in 1,000), the *percentage* of flutter is 0.1.

The sources of flutter in a recorder are many. If you've ever held an electric motor while it was running, you will have felt a certain amount of vibration. Its shaft and bearings may not be perfectly true, and its internal rotor may not be perfectly balanced. Special motor mountings and a belt-drive system will reduce the amount of this vibration reaching the capstan and tape, but they cannot totally eliminate it. The capstan and rubber puck roller that drive the tape may also be slightly eccentric, introducing further flutter components at their rotational speeds. If rubber idler pulleys are used instead of a belt drive, these may develop their own flat spots that get passed along as speed variations every time they go around. A heavy, dynamically balanced flywheel will somewhat alleviate but not cure the problem. Even an inertial flutter filter (a rotating guide, often with its own flywheel, located between the supply reel and the heads) will have its own rotational period. The holdback and take-up tension mechanisms make their contributions too, as do the "tics" of warped reel edges. Pressure pads, especially if worn or dirt-clogged, can be very effective jitter generators. And, to top it off, the length of tape that stretches across the head assembly has its own frequency of vibration.

With so many different factors (and those above are but part of the list) contributing to overall flutter, it's useful to break the term down into more limited categories. The same *percentage* of flutter is perceived very differently by the ear, depending on its *rate*. Even a miniscule amount of very slow-speed flutter (*e.g.*, a rate between 0.5 and about 12 times per second) is highly audible as a kind of artificial vibrato. Often it sounds like an LP with an off-center hole, and this kind of flutter has acquired the nickname "wow." High flutter rates, up to about 250 or 300 Hz, may register much higher percentages on conventional meters, but are relatively less audible. When you do hear them, they tend to contribute a "graininess" to the sound. But flutter rates can go up to many kilohertz, producing, in the 2,000- to 5,000-Hz range, a kind of hissing modulation noise known as "scrape flutter."

A single overall flutter-percentage figure won't tell you where to look for a malfunctioning part unless, for example, a wow component is so dominant that you can audibly synchronize the wavering with the rotation of a specific wheel. In comparing recorders for potential subjective annoyance, however, a meaningful single figure can be obtained with a "weighted" measurement, one which typically gives a "wow" rate about ten times the importance of, say, a flutter component with a rate of 150 times per second. As a rule, flutter (at all rates) will increase with age and use, but careful maintenance will put off the day it becomes too severe to tolerate.

The SCX³. A significantly better way to listen to music.



The KLH Research Ten SCX³ is an awesome performer. Its uncanny ability to recreate the timbre and texture of every instrument in an orchestra will absolutely astound you. All too often, loudspeakers that can successfully reproduce the bite of brass unfortunately bring the same brittleness to the sound of violins. Or if they can capture the sizzle of the cymbal, they fizzle when it comes to the plucking of a string. Clearly this is due to the severe limitations of the single-ended tweeter – cone or dome. Too much mass has to be started, accelerated and stopped too quickly. The structure just doesn't allow for it. Consequently there's a lack of air between instruments, a kind of a blur and overlapping that squashes the music together.

Not so with our new DVR Tweeter.

The DVR combines the best attributes of dynamic and electrostatic tweeters. It has an ultra thin membrane with an etched printed circuit "voice coil" – plus an array of many rare-earth samarium-cobalt magnets on either side of the membrane to create a push-pull effect. Because the membrane mass is so low and the magnets have such extraordinary force, the inertial qualities are exceptional. The membrane can be accelerated and stopped with *extreme accuracy*. The result is very extended frequency response with truly low distortion. Overlapping completely disappears. Fuzziness is gone. The inner voices of the orchestra come alive. There's the kind of airiness and transparency you find only in the concert hall. And all of this is achieved without the traditional drawbacks of the electrostatic tweeter – no capacitive load to drive your amplifier crazy and no need for a power supply.

The DVR Tweeter.

But a tweeter, even a great tweeter, doesn't make a loudspeaker.

Actually, though, there isn't much we can say about the SCX³'s mid-range. It's just the best mid-range made.

Period.

As for the 12" Megaflux™ Woofer, it is probably the most unique magnetic structure available today. It uses many specialized strips of magnetic material which, housed in its large, box-like structure, create and focus magnetic energy (flux) into the voice coil gap with essentially *no external stray field*. Since all of the energy is directed to an exact and predetermined area of the voice coil, very large woofer excursions are possible. Also the magnetic field produced is so uniform that many non-linear types of distortion found in conventional designs simply are no factor in this configuration. But perhaps even more important is the staggering power handling capacity of this woofer – over 200 watts RMS at 30 Hertz.

In short, the SCX³ has an exceptional woofer. And exceptional metalized Mylar® capacitors. And exceptional air core inductors (as opposed to iron core inductors which saturate at high listening levels and cause major distortion).

What we're obviously trying to say is that the SCX³ is an exceptional loudspeaker – a significantly better way to listen to music.

At $400, it darn well better be better.

For more technical information, write to KLH Research & Development, 30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139. (Distributed in Canada by A. Allen Pringle Ltd., Ontario, Canada.)

KLH Research Ten Division
KLH Research & Development Corp.
30 Cross St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139

CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD

TECHNICAL TALK

By JULIAN D. HIRSCH

● **THE NEW IHF TUNER STANDARD:** When the first IHF (Institute of High Fidelity) "Standard Methods of Measurement for Tuners" (IHF-T-100) was issued in December of 1958, it replaced a 1947 Standard which had little relevance to the products of the high-fidelity industry. The 1958 Standard (and the addendum which followed a year later) formalized the test conditions without which any numerical specifications would have been meaningless. It also dealt with the then-current practice of designing tuners with a narrow i.f. bandwidth in order to increase their measured sensitivity. (Designers at the time did not take into account the distortion produced by insufficient i.f. bandwidth.) The 1958 Standard created the concept of *Usable Sensitivity*, which was the 100 per cent modulated r. f. signal input needed to produce a 3.2 per cent (−30 dB) level of noise plus distortion (N + D) in the tuner's audio output. Any manufacturer who skimped on bandwidth to gain "sensitivity" soon found that he had lost more than he gained, and this disturbing trend was nipped in the bud.

The value of the 1958 standard can be appreciated from the fact that it is still used today and—though far from perfect—does provide a valid basis for rating and comparing FM tuners (it covers AM tuners as well). Its chief weakness is the lack of measurements in the stereo mode, since stereo FM had not been fully developed when the standard was drafted. By extension of the mono techniques, many of the pertinent aspects of stereo tuner performance could also be checked, but this had no formal standing throughout the industry.

Over the past couple of years I have served on an IHF standards committee, chaired by IHF technical director Leonard Feldman, which has worked closely with parallel groups from the Electronic Industries Association (EIA) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE). The result of this joint effort was the new combined IEEE/IHF "Standard Methods of Testing Frequency Modulation Broadcast Receivers" bearing the dual nomenclature of IEEE Std 185-1975 and IHF-T-200 (1975).

The new standard is some thirty-five pages long, and obviously it cannot be treated in any detail in the space available here. It is exceptionally complete, covering every aspect of FM tuner performance contained in the old standard plus a number of new ones, and it includes all pertinent stereo measurements. Every test condition is explicitly defined, and it is sufficiently universal to cover measurements on component-type FM tuners, receivers, and even inexpensive battery-operated portable radios. At present it does not cover AM tuner measurements, but this section should be completed in the near future. Copies of the standard are available from the IEEE Standards Office, 345 East 47th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017, for $6 prepaid or $8 if ordered in advance of payment.

The new standard lists twenty-five specification items, all of which are required for a complete performance specification. The old standard had eleven items, five of which were deemed sufficient for a manufacturer's published ratings. A comparison of the two standards, item by item, shows that many of the sections of the older one, which contained several different but related sections, have been divided into separate sections in the new standard. When these format changes have been allowed for, we see that the 1975 standard has new tests for stereo separation, stereo subcarrier (19 kHz) product suppression, and SCA rejection. None of these was included in the 1958 standard, since stereo FM had not yet reached commercial fruition and the present SCA service—the "Muzak" broadcasts provided by many stations to commercial subscribers—did not exist (and even if it had, it could not have interfered with mono reception).

The major difference between the two standards, as it affects the readers of STEREO REVIEW, is in certain aspects of sensitivity, distortion, and noise measurements. As will be seen, the Hirsch-Houck Laboratories' test reports have incorporated most of these changes for over a year in anticipation of the formal acceptance of the new standard (which took place in May, 1975).

For most readers, the most obvious change will be the disappearance of the term *microvolt* (μV) from the audio lexicon. Anyone who has made radio-frequency sensitivity measurements is aware of the pitfalls they present, even for the experienced technician. Depending on the design of the signal generator and the type of network used to couple it to the tuner's antenna terminals (as well as the tuner's rated input impedance), there were a host of possible "sensitivities." Any one of them might be correct in and of itself, but it would be nearly impossible to compare with other measurements made under different conditions. A good example of the confusion is provided by the specifications of FM tuners manufactured or sold in Great Britian, where 75 ohms is the standard antenna impedance, and those sold in the United States, where 300 ohms is commonly used. To the receiver's circuits, I

TESTED THIS MONTH

●

Creative Environments Speaker
Pilot 540 AM/FM Receiver
B.I.C. 980 Record Player
Dual Autoreverse Cassette Deck

microvolt across a 75-ohm impedance is exactly the same as 2 microvolts across 300 ohms. Thus, a tuner rated by a British manufacturer or reviewer would seem to be twice as sensitive as a similar unit (or even the same one, since many have inputs for both 75- and 300-ohm antennas) rated by an American laboratory.

In IHF-T-200 (1975) we have actually gone back to the system employed in the old 1947 IRE standard, in which the input signal is defined in terms of *available power* rather than voltage. When this is done, the sensitivity of a tuner will measure the same regardless of its input impedance. In 1947, signal levels were specified with reference to a level of 1 watt. This is an impossibly high power for a tuner input, and it resulted in sensitivity figures of −130 dB or less. (The common reference input for some measurements, 1,100 μV, became −90 dB.) The 1975 standard uses a 0-dB reference of 10^{-15} watts, or 1 femtowatt (the very term did not exist in 1947). All input-signal levels are expressed in decibels referred to 1 femtowatt, or dBf. The numbers will all be positive, since 0 dBf is below the theoretical sensitivity of an FM broadcast receiver.

What we used to call "1 μV" (actually 0.97 μV) will be called 5 dBf from now on. Since a power change of 10 times, or a voltage change of 3.2 times, is equivalent to a 10-dB change, 3.1 μV becomes 15 dBf. We will have to adjust our thinking to the fact that most FM tuners will have usable sensitivity ratings between 10 and 15 dBf. The standard level for tuner signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) and distortion measurements, formerly 1,000 μV, becomes 65 dBf (970 μV) under the new system.

CONVERSION TABLE
(dBf to microvolts—and vice versa)

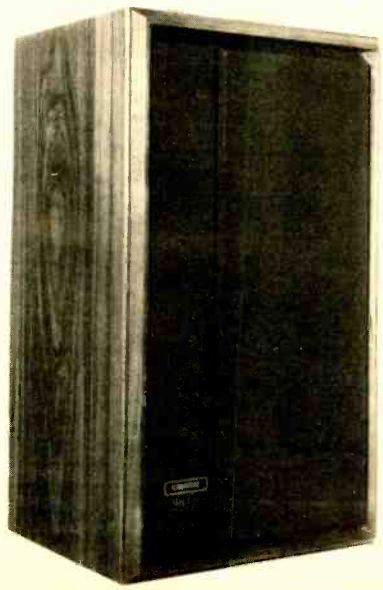
dBf	Microvolts	Microvolts	dBf
0	0.55	1	5.2
5	0.97	2	11.2
10	1.7	3	14.7
15	3.1	4	17.2
20	5.5	5	19.2
25	9.7	10	25.2
30	17	20	31.2
35	31	30	34.7
40	55	100	45.2
45	97	300	54.7
50	170	1,000	65.2
55	310	3,000	74.7
60	550	10,000	85.2
65	970	30,000	94.7
70	1,700		
75	3,100		
80	5,500		
85	9,700		
90	17,000		
95	31,000		
100	55,000		

Effective immediately our tuner and receiver test reports will use the dBf nomenclature, but we will list the microvolt equivalents in parentheses until the new standard becomes thoroughly established in the industry (we have not yet seen any manufacturers issuing ratings based on dBf). The accompanying table should help to bridge the gap by showing the relationship between μV and dBf over the range of levels used in tuner testing.

The second "new" tuner specification has been used in our tests for some time. It is the input sensitivity for a 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio (S/N)—the 50-dB *Quieting Sensitivity*. Together with the distortion (D) at this signal level, this figure defines the weakest signal that might be considered to be of entertainment quality. The old Usable Sensitivity input rating provided a N + D output only 30 dB below 100 per cent modulation. Anyone who has listened to such a signal knows that it can hardly be considered "listenable" unless you are a "DX hunter" searching for distant stations and not concerned about noise-free reception.

Although we have been performing most of the applicable tests under the old IHF standard, only the major ones have been presented in the reports, for reasons of space economy and intelligibility to the average reader. With the number of possible tests more than doubled, we certainly will not attempt to subject every tuner to the full process. As before, we will concentrate on the most important tests as they apply to a consumer product evaluation. The most visible change in our published reports will be the use of linear graph paper for the quieting and distortion curves. Instead of a logarithmic scale for input-signal level, spanning a range from 1 to 30,000 μV, we will present the equivalent range of 0 to 95 dBf on a linear scale.

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS
By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



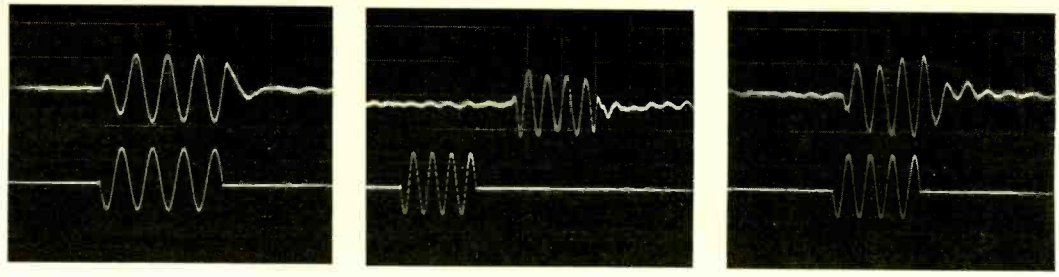
Creative Environments Model 100 Speaker System

● THE Model 100 loudspeaker from Creative Environments, Inc. is a three-way "bookshelf" system containing a 12-inch acoustic-suspension woofer, a 5-inch cone mid-range, and a 1-inch Mylar dome tweeter. The crossover frequencies are 700 and 3,000 Hz. The woofer and mid-range crossovers have 6-dB-per-octave slopes, but a steeper 12-dB-per-octave slope is used between the mid-range and tweeter to protect the latter against damage by high input levels.

In the rear of the enclosure are insulated spring-clip connectors to accept the speaker cables and separate level adjustments for the tweeter and mid-range drivers. The Model 100 system is protected by a thermal circuit breaker with a relatively slow response that permits brief high-level transients to pass but will cut off the drive to the system at levels corresponding to an acoustic sound-pressure level (SPL) of 105 dB. A pushbutton in the rear of the cabinet resets the breaker should it be tripped.

The Creative Environments Model 100 is nominally an 8-ohm system designed for use with amplifiers delivering at least 15 watts per channel. The oiled walnut veneered cabinet, which has a removable black plastic perforated grille, is 23¾ inches high, 14¾ inches wide, and 12¼ inches deep. The system weighs about 35 pounds. Price: $179.95.

● *Laboratory Measurements.* The smoothed, averaged frequency response of the Creative Environments Model 100 was within ±4 dB from 43 to 16,000 Hz. It was relatively free of peaks or holes throughout that range, sloping downward gently from the maximum bass out-



The Model 100's tone-burst performance was very good, as shown by these oscilloscope photos taken at (left to right) 100, 1,000, and 5,000 Hz.

put at 80 Hz to about 2,000 Hz and varying only ±2 dB from that frequency to 16,000 Hz.

The flattest response was obtained with both level controls set at maximum. The mid-range control was able to alter the output by up to 5 dB between 1,000 and 3,000 Hz. It had a range of about ±1 dB at lower frequencies down to about 200 Hz. The tweeter control effect began at about 7,000 Hz, with a maximum range of about 8 dB between 10,000 and 15,000 Hz.

The low-frequency harmonic distortion was under 1 per cent from 100 to 60 Hz at a constant 1-watt input or at a constant 90-dB SPL output as measured at a distance of 1 meter in front of the speaker. At lower frequencies it rose gradually to 5 per cent at 40 Hz (1 watt) or 4 per cent at 45 Hz (90 dB SPL). At a 10-watt input, as would be expected, the distortion was higher. It measured 4 to 5 per cent between 100 and 55 Hz and rose rapidly to 10 per cent at 44 Hz and 16.5 per cent at 40 Hz.

The system impedance averaged about 8 ohms over most of the audio range, varying between 7 and 10 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz except for the rise to 20 ohms at the 57-Hz bass system resonance. The efficiency was relatively high for an acoustic-suspension system, with 1 watt of mid-range input producing a 93-dB SPL at a distance of 1 meter. The tone-burst response was very good at all frequencies, with no significant ringing or other distortion of the tone-burst pattern.

● *Comment.* The simulated live-*vs.*-recorded listening test proved that the Creative Environments Model 100 was a very accurate reproducer of the high audio frequencies, including the difficult octave from 10,000 to 20,000 Hz. We could hear a warmth in the mid-range by comparison with the original program, and heard by itself, the Model 100 had a trace of upper mid-range brightness, especially on axis. The overall sound, however, was well balanced, even when the speakers were located above the floor and several feet from the back wall, where they received no bass or lower mid-range reinforcement from the room boundaries.

To check the effectiveness of the "Life Saver" protective system (which the manufacturer states permits the speaker to be used with *any* amplifier in normal audiophile use without fear of excessive drive power), we drove the Model 100 speakers at continuous music program levels of about 100 watts until one of the circuit breakers tripped—which required about five minutes. The speaker was undamaged, and service was restored by pushing the reset button. It is noteworthy that during this test the average SPL in the reverberant field of the room some 12 feet or more from the speakers averaged 105 to 108 dB. Even at this deafening volume, we heard no obvious distortion.

The price of the Model 100 (whose warranty covers parts and labor for the first year, and parts alone for the next four years) places it squarely in competition with many other worthy speakers. While we cannot say that it is distinctly better than any of these competitors (a risky judgment to make about *any* speaker), it is at least as good as most, and it outperformed several far more expensive speakers with which it was compared. The Model 100 is a good value, honestly rated, and well worth auditioning if you are in the market for a good, efficient, and reasonably heavy-duty compact loudspeaker system.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Pilot 540 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

● PILOT's top stereo receiver, the Model 540, is a medium-power unit rated to deliver 40 watts per channel into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz at less than 0.3 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD). Its FM tuner section features a linear dial scale with the "Pilotune" pointer that changes color from white to red when a station is tuned in. A zero-center tuning meter is also provided (it reads relative signal strength for AM).

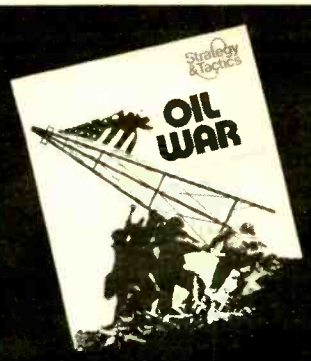
The dial scales, hidden behind a "blackout" face plate when the receiver is off or when the tuner sections are not in use, are illuminated in green. Stereo reception is indicated by a red MTPLX label below the scales, and other symbols light in yellow to show the selected input (PHONO 2, PHONO 1, FM, AM, AUX, MIC).

A single line of controls across the panel includes the input selector, bass and treble tone controls (concentric for the two channels, with slip-clutch knobs), and balance and volume controls. Pushbuttons control the loudness compensation, mono/stereo mode, tape monitoring, a high-cut filter, FM interstation-noise muting, and the main or remote speakers (either or both can be activated by pressing the appropriate buttons). At the left of the panel are two phone jacks for a microphone input and tape-recording outputs (paralleling the regular tape jacks in the rear of the receiver). At the right of the panel are the pushbutton power switch and the stereo headphone jack.

On the receiver's rear apron are jacks for the various inputs and outputs, plus separate preamplifier outputs and main amplifier inputs, joined by jumper links. There is a hinged AM ferrite-rod antenna, plus terminals for an external AM wire antenna and either 300- or 75-ohm FM antennas. The two pairs of speaker outputs use insulated spring-clip connectors. One of the two a.c. outlets is switched. The Pilot 540 is furnished in a walnut veneered wooden cabinet measuring 18 inches wide, 12 inches deep, and 5½ inches high. It weighs 27 pounds. Price: $419.90.

● ***Laboratory Measurements.*** The one-hour "preconditioning" period at one-third of rated output caused the metal cover over the output transistors to become almost too hot to touch, but there was no damage to the receiver or apparent degradation of its performance. The

(Continued on page 32)



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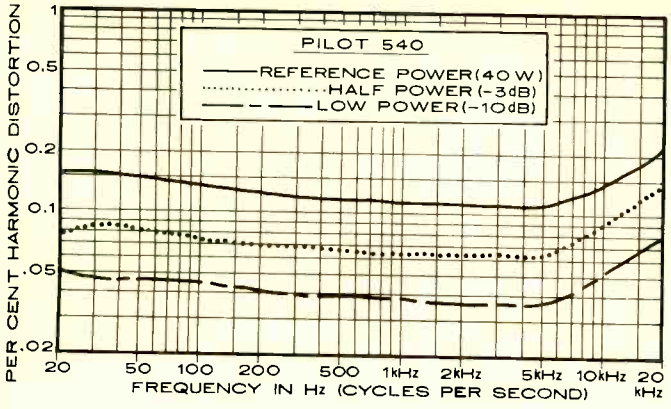
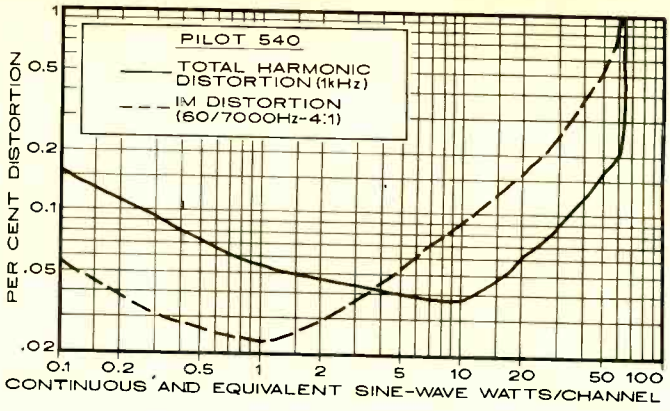
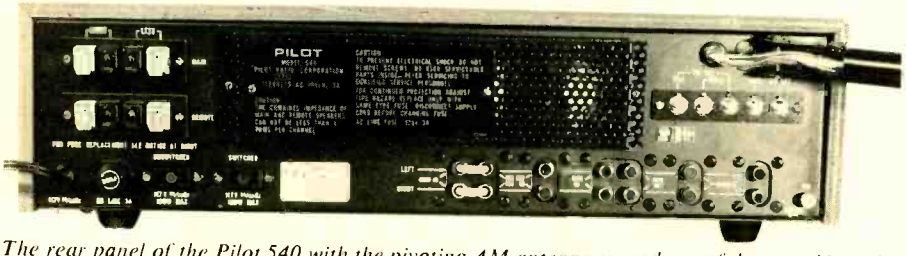




power rating of the Model 540 is obviously conservative, since the output waveform clipped at 65 watts per channel at 1,000 Hz into 8-ohm loads. Into 16 ohms the maximum power was 40.6 watts per channel, and with 4 ohms the receiver's protective relay cut off the outputs at 61.6 watts.

At the rated 40-watt level, the THD reached a maximum of 0.21 per cent at 20,000 Hz, but over most of the audio range it was between 0.1 and 0.15 per cent. Unlike the case with many amplifiers, the distortion of the Pilot 540 decreased at lower power outputs, measuring between 0.06 and 0.09 per cent at half power and between 0.035 and 0.05 per cent at one-tenth power—except at 20,000 Hz, where it was, respectively, 0.15 and 0.08 per cent.



The rear panel of the Pilot 540 with the pivoting AM antenna moved out of the way. Note the jumpers joining the preamplifier and power-amplifier sections and the speaker spring-clips.

At 1,000 Hz, the THD was less than the noise level for power outputs under 1 watt, measuring typically between 0.04 and 0.05 per cent from 1 to 15 watts and 0.2 per cent at 60 watts just before clipping occurred. The intermodulation distortion (IM) reached its minimum of 0.023 per cent at 1 watt, increasing smoothly to 0.4 per cent at 40 watts and 0.9 per cent at 60 watts. At very low power levels, the IM rose to 0.6 per cent at just over 1 milliwatt (mW), which indicates the presence of crossover distortion, but at such low power levels that it is not audibly significant.

Through the AUX inputs, the sensitivity for a 10-watt reference output was 100 millivolts (mV), with a signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) of 75 dB. The phono sensitivity was very high: 0.68 mV, with an excellent 74 dB S/N. The phono circuits overloaded at a rather low 40 mV. The microphone-input sensitivity was 0.4 mV, and the microphone amplifier began to show asymmetrical rounding (second-harmonic distortion) at about 10 mV input.

The tone controls had the popular combination of a sliding bass turnover frequency and a hinged treble characteristic (at 2,000 Hz). The loudness compensation boosted the low frequencies considerably and the high frequencies slightly. The high-cut filter had an effective slope of about 9 dB per octave, with the −3-dB frequency a rather low 3,000 Hz. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate to within ±1.5 dB over the extended range of 20 to 20,000 Hz. It was affected in an unusual manner by phono-cartridge inductance. As inductance increased, the response rose, beginning at about 5,000 Hz, to a maximum of 4 to 5 dB at 10,000 Hz, and then fell off rapidly above 13,000 to 15,000 Hz.

The FM tuner section had a sensitivity of 11 dBf (1.95 μV) in mono and 28.7 dBf (15 μV) in stereo. The latter was also the stereo-switching threshold. The 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 16.8 dBf (3.8 μV) in mono and 37 dBf (39 μV) in stereo, with respective distortion levels of 0.5 and 0.4 per cent. The S/N at a 65-dBf (1,000 μV) input was 64 dB in mono and 63.5 dB in stereo. Tuner distortion at 65 dBf was 0.58 per cent in mono and was actually lower—0.41 per cent—in stereo.

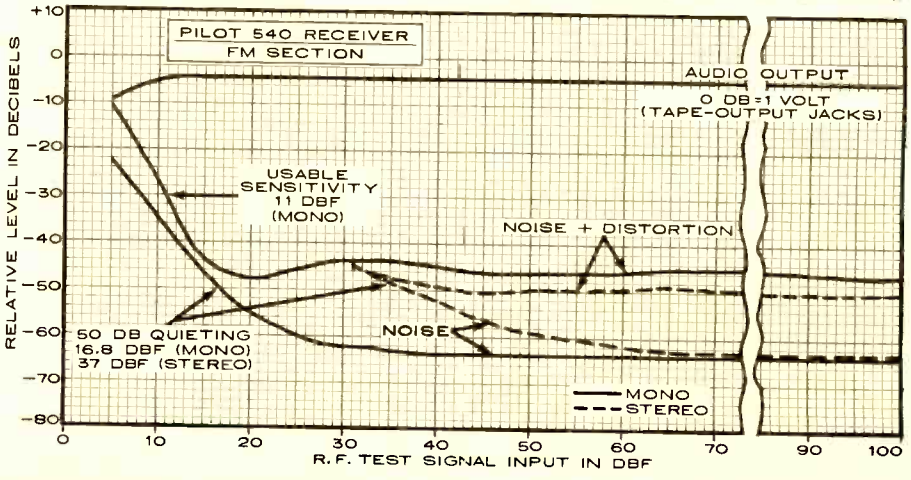
The FM capture ratio was 2.4 dB at a 65-dBf input, and the AM rejection was 47 dB. These figures represent adequate performance. The other tuner characteristics were excellent, and well above the average for receivers in this price class. Image rejection was 80 dB, alternate-channel selectivity 84 dB.

The FM frequency response was flat from 30 to 4,000 Hz, rose 2 dB at 10,000 Hz, and then dropped to −2 dB at 15,000 Hz. This implies the use of a low-pass filter in the multiplex section to remove 19-kHz leakage, and this was confirmed by the very low leakage level of −79 dB referred to a 100 per cent modulation level. The stereo channel separation was better than 28 dB from 40 to 15,000 Hz and reached a maximum of 47.5 dB between 400 and 1,000 Hz. The AM tuner frequency response was within ±2.5 dB from 20 to 3,200 Hz, and was down 6 dB at 3,800 Hz relative to the mid-range level.

● ***Comment.*** The FM muting operated with a slight thump or noise burst, as with many tuners we have tested. Although the actual tuning-dial calibration error (about 200 kHz maximum) was no greater than we have seen on many receivers and tuners, because the FM dial scale is calibrated at widely spaced 1-MHz intervals there is still some uncertainty as to the frequency of the station being received. In an A-B test against another FM tuner having very flat frequency response, we could hear a slight brightness in the sound of

(Continued on page 34)

Levels of random noise and total harmonic distortion (which includes noise) are compared with audio-output level as input-signal strength increases. Both mono and stereo are shown.



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the Pilot 540, corresponding to the 2-dB rise in output at 10,000 Hz. It was very slight, however, and would never be noticed without such a comparison. In respect to the Model 540's limited phono-input overload capability, since it is combined with a higher-than-usual input sensitivity, we would recommend using the 540 with one of the better low-output (not more than 3 to 4 mV) phono cartridges. Cartridges with outputs of 7 to 10 mV – typical of lower-price models – should be avoided.

In summation, it is evident that the Pilot 540 offers excellent audio power and distortion characteristics, and an FM tuner section that is free of serious faults and more than adequate for good-quality music systems. Operationally, the Pilot 540 acquitted itself well. Although it has no "gimmicks" (other than the Pilotune dial-pointer light), it is a flexible receiver that leaves little to be desired.

Circle 106 on reader service card

B.I.C. 980 Automatic Record Player

● IT has long been an accepted "fact" of record-player design that the torque required to operate the changing mechanism of an automatic turntable calls for a relatively tight drive coupling between the motor and platter. Until recently, the conventional idler-wheel drive system seemed the only way to go, but the B.I.C. (pronounced B-I-C) line of automatic single/multiple-play turntables from British Industries Co. is convincing evidence that excellent alternatives are available.

The B.I.C. "Programmed Multiple-Play Manual Turntables," to give them their full title, are belt-driven from a twenty-four-pole synchronous motor whose 300-rpm speed places the primary rumble frequency components well below the audio range. A lever on the motor board shifts the belt to select either 33⅓- or 45-rpm operation. The nonferrous platter is 12 inches in diameter and is covered with a ribbed rubber mat.

Like other automatic multiple-play turntables, the B.I.C. models have interchangeable center spindles for single-play or multiple-play operation. The automatic spindle has record-dropping fingers and is aided in supporting the record stack by a post positioned to one side of the platter.

The "programmed" aspect of the B.I.C. design refers to the lever on the motorboard, just forward of the speed-change lever, which can be set for any number of sequential plays from 1 to 6. It also has a MAN (manual) position and an OFF setting. When a stack of records is loaded on the spindle, the PROGRAM lever is set to the number of records in the stack. Pressing lightly on the CYCLE button at the right front of the turntable starts the playing cycle, with records being dropped and played in sequence. An automatic shut-off operates after the programmed number of plays has been completed.

For manual play of a single record, the short spindle is substituted for the changer spindle and the motor is started by moving the programming lever to MAN. The arm can be cued manually (retaining the automatic end-of-play shut-off feature) or the CYCLE button can be used to initiate a single-play automatic cycle. Alternatively, a single record can be played any number of times up to six by choosing the appropriate "program" setting.

The B.I.C. tone arm is a straight tube mounted on gimbal ball-bearing pivots. It is balanced by an elastically isolated threaded counterweight. A calibrated scale within the pivot structure, marked in 0.25-gram intervals from 0 to 4 grams, is used for both tracking-force and anti-skating adjustments. Separate control tabs for the two functions rotate next to the scale, a convenient arrangement for setting them to the same number (as is customary) or to different numbers if desired.

The detachable cartridge shell mounts on the arm through a four-pin plug on its side. This is inherently a more reliable system than the sliding contacts used on most arm slides or shells. Its only drawback is that the shell must be retained by a small knurled screw which is easily lost if frequent cartridge changes are made. B.I.C. wisely includes an additional replacement shell-locking screw with the machine.

A screwdriver adjustment on the side of the shell tilts the cartridge in the vertical plane for correct orientation to the record surface, and a button on the side of the shell then shifts the vertical angle appropriately for single or multiple play. A plastic jig is supplied for mounting the cartridge with correct vertical angle and horizontal overhang. Next to the pivots is a cueing lever that operates with a damped action in both directions, and there is also a small lever that adjusts the anti-skating compensation for conical or elliptical styli.

So far, everything we have said applies equally to both the B.I.C. 960 and 980 models. The two are identical, except that the 980 (which we tested) has an electronic drive system for its motor while the 960 has a motor that draws its power directly from the a.c. line. The 980 has a vernier speed-adjustment knob at the left of the motorboard and an optical system through which the stroboscope markings underneath the platter can be viewed while the player is in operation.

Optional walnut or molded plastic bases, with or without dust covers, are available for the B.I.C. players. An unusual feature is their clear plastic bottoms, which permit the multicolored mechanism of the unit to be seen in operation. Prices: B.I.C. 980, $199.95; B.I.C. 960, $159.95. A wooden walnut base is $16.95, a molded base is $7.95, and a dust cover is $9.95.

● ***Laboratory Measurements.*** With a Shure M91ED cartridge, the arm of the B.I.C. 980 resonated at 8 Hz with an amplitude of about 7 dB. The tracking-force dial calibrations were exact within the 50-milligram resolution of the gauge we used, and from the first to the last record of a six-record stack the force (set at 1 gram) did not change detectably. The tracking error was less than 0.3 degree per inch of radius (about as low as we have ever measured on an arm of this length), and over much of the record it was near zero (errors of less than half a degree are almost impossible to judge visually, and can be considered "zero"). The capacitance of the arm and signal cables was 120 picofarads (pF) per channel, which should be suitable for CD-4 cartridges even though it is slightly above the recommended 100 pF maximum value.

The anti-skating compensation had to be set about 1 gram higher than the tracking force for optimum symmetrical tracking of high-velocity recordings. The cueing system was not only very smooth, but was one of the very few we have seen that caused absolutely no outward drift of the arm during its descent (there is an adjustable descent time, which on our test unit could be set between about 2.5 and 4 seconds). The 980's resistance to external shock and acoustic feedback was about average.

The turntable speeds, which were correct when the stroboscope pattern was stationary, were stable with line-voltage shifts between 100 and 135 volts and dropped only 0.3 per

(Continued on page 36)

The Empire 598 III Turntable
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The Main Bearing

The stainless steel shaft extending from the platter is aged, by alternate exposures to extreme changes in temperature, preventing it from ever warping. The tip is then precision ground and polished before lapping it into two oilite, self-lubricating bearings, reducing friction and reducing rumble to one of the lowest figures ever measured in a professional turntable; -63 dB CBS ARLL.*

The Suspension

Piston damped, 16 gauge steel coil springs cradle the arm and platter. You can dance without your stylus joining in.

The Tonearm

The aluminum tubular design boasts one of the lowest fundamental frequencies of any arm, an inaudible 6 Hz. Acoustic feedback is unheard of, even with gain and bass turned all the way up. The vertical and horizontal bearing friction is 1 milligram. This allows the arm to move effortlessly, imposing only the calibrated anti-skating and tracking force you select.

The Cartridge

Empire's best, the 4000D/III, wide response cartridge is a standard feature. The capabilities of this cartridge allow you to play any 4 channel or stereo record at 1 gram or less. And the frequency response is an extraordinary 5-50,000 Hz, with more than 35 dB channel separation.

The Controls

The coordinated anti-skating adjustment provides the necessary force for the horizontal plane. It is micrometer calibrated to eliminate channel imbalance or unnecessary record wear.

Stylus force is dialed with a calibrated clock mainspring more accurate than any commercially available stylus pressure gauge.

A true-vertical cueing control floats the tonearm up or down from a record surface bathed in light.

At Empire we make only one model turntable, the 598III, but with proper maintenance and care, the chances are very good it will be the only one you'll ever need.

*Independently tested and recorded in High Fidelity's 1974 Test Reports.

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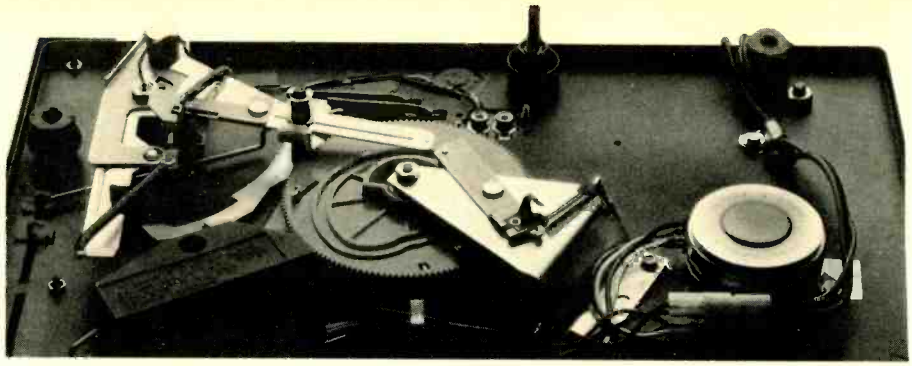
cent at 95 volts. The vernier range was +4.3 to −2.9 per cent at 33 ⅓ rpm and +3.8 to −3.4 per cent at 45 rpm. A slight speed drift was observed as our test unit warmed up from a cold start; it was barely detectable on the stroboscope and lasted less than 30 minutes. At both speeds, the unweighted rms wow and flutter were each 0.03 and 0.04 per cent. Unweighted rumble was −32 dB, and with RRLL audibility weighting it was a very low −61 dB. In automatic operation, the change cycle required about 12 seconds, an average figure.

● *Comment.* During an extended use period, the B.I.C. 980 functioned beautifully. Although operating features of the B.I.C. machines are slightly different from those of most automatic turntables (the "programming" procedure and the use of a CYCLE button to get playing under way), the 980 never failed to function properly.

The quietness of the 980 was impressive. It had as a low a rumble level as we have ever measured on an automatic turntable. The rumble could accurately be called "inaudible," since we never heard any that was not in the record itself. The same comment applies to wow and flutter.

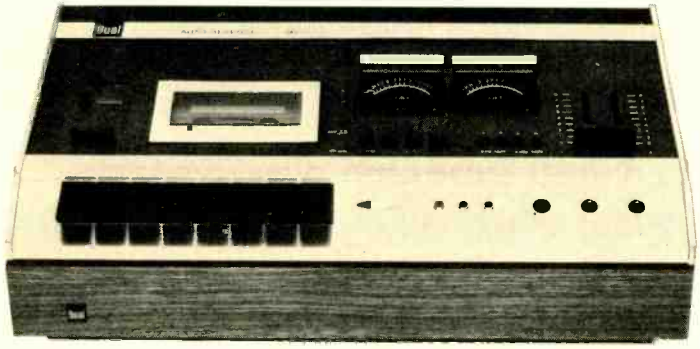
Features aside, we would say the performance of the B.I.C. 980 matches or exceeds that of any "automatic multiple-play" turntable we have used. The fact that it is less expensive—by a considerable amount—than almost any other unit with its rated level of performance will be welcome news to prospective purchasers.

Circle 107 on reader service card



A large plastic cam (center) coordinates the cycling operations of the B.I.C. 980 turntable. The motor, the speed of which is electronically regulated, is shown at the lower right.

Dual Autoreverse Cassette Deck



● THE first Dual cassette product to be sold in this country is a deluxe bidirectional deck that is able to record and play back in both directions without the necessity of turning over the cassette. In playback, it reverses the direction automatically at the end of the tape and can be set to repeat a cassette indefinitely. The single-motor transport is driven by the same continuous-pole/synchronous motor that powers Dual's Model 1229Q record player. A heavy flywheel smooths out vibration, and separate belts drive the capstan and the reel hubs. The single record/playback head is mechanically stationary, with the appropriate sections of the gap length selected for operation in two directions. The machine has Dolby noise-reduction circuits and an automatic level control (ALC) system that permits recording from sources of widely different levels without risk of overload or distortion.

Externally, the Dual cassette deck appears to be a conventional machine in the usual horizontal format. Its two illuminated VU meters (they are described as having the ballistic response of true VU meters) can be tilted upward about 30 degrees for easier viewing from the front. To the left of the top-loading cassette well is a sliding lever that selects bias and equalization for ferric oxide (STD) or chromium dioxide (CrO_2) tapes. This switch is also automatically operated by an internal mechanism that senses whether the cassette has the special rear notch now commonly found on CrO_2 cassettes. If the notch is not present, the recorder remains set for STD tape, but it can be reset manually for CrO_2 if desired.

The index counter and EJECT button are also near the cassette compartment. When the EJECT button is pressed, the cassette cover (carrying the cassette) opens slowly under damped control. The cassette is lightly, but firmly, retained by a spring so that it will not fall out if the recorder is operated vertically. Accessory mounting feet are supplied for vertical installation. A large window in the cassette cover exposes most of the cassette area for verification of its contents.

To the right of the cassette are the two meters and two vertical slider controls for setting recording level. The playback output level is fixed. In front of the meters are four pushbuttons—for MONO recording (paralleling the two inputs), ALC, DOLBY, and injecting a TEST tone for calibrating the Dolby system to a specific tape. There are four easily accessible screwdriver adjustments to the right of the buttons for this purpose (for both channels and for both STD and CrO_2 tapes). Small signal lights along the front edge of the deck indicate recording level peaks that might cause distortion, the record status of the machine, and the operation of the Dolby system. Either of two red arrows light up to show the direction of tape motion. There are two microphone input jacks and a stereo headphone jack for low-impedance (8 to 16 ohm) phones.

The transport controls appear to be conventional "piano-key" levers along the front edge of the recorder. However, they operate with a rather unusual, smooth, and very light touch. Except for a narrow red stripe on the RECORD lever, all the controls are black and are identified by words on the top of the recorder next to the control area. There is no separate power switch; when any one of the control levers is pressed, it switches on the recorder which then goes into operation in about a second. Four levers, identified by single- and double-arrow symbols, control normal and fast tape movement in both directions. They are flanked by a PAUSE lever and a RECORD interlock lever. To the left of the latter is the CONT PLAY lever which, when depressed, will cause the machine to repeat a cassette indefinitely with automatic reversal at both ends. Finally, at the left of the group is the STOP lever, which also shuts off the power when it is pressed. The LINE input and output jacks, plus a DIN connector, are in the rear of the deck.

The Dual machine has a wooden walnut base, and the control surface is finished in contrasting silver and black matching the appearance of the Dual record players. It is approximately 16½ inches wide, 4¾ inches high, and 11¼ inches deep; it weighs about 15 pounds. Price: $450.

(Continued on page 40)

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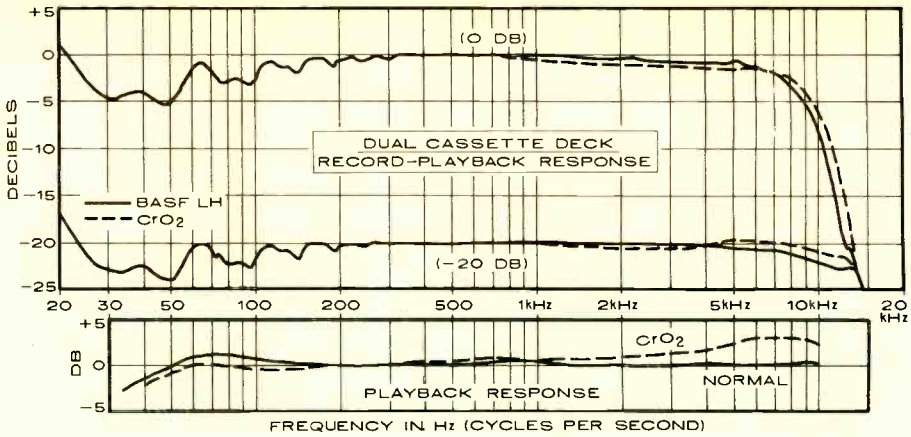
Sansui 9090 Sansui 8080

● *Laboratory Measurements.* The playback frequency response was measured with two calibrated test tapes whose equalizations were 120 microseconds for STD and 70 microseconds for CrO_2. With the STD tape, the overall response was within +1.5, −3 dB from 31.5 to 10,000 Hz, and an almost perfectly flat ±0.5 dB from 100 to 10,000 Hz. The CrO_2 response was within +3 and −2 dB from 40 to 10,000 Hz.

To test the overall record-playback response, we used BASF LH SUPER tape for STD and TDK KR for CrO_2. At a −20-dB recording level, there was little difference between the two, with an overall variation of ±2.5 dB from 20 to 14,000 Hz. Most of the variation took place at low frequencies, where the head-gap fringing effect common to many cassette recorders caused a cyclic variation of response below about 200 Hz, with an amplitude reaching several decibels at lower frequencies. The frequency response was essentially identical to that of several other tape formulations, although the machine was factory-biased for the BASF tape. Although there were minor changes in the high-frequency response with TDK ED and SA, Maxell UD-XL, and Scotch Classic tape, all fell within the recorder's rated ±2.5 dB from 20 to 14,000 Hz.

The frequency response was essentially the same in both directions of tape movement. The tracking of the recording and playback Dolby characteristics was checked by comparing the overall record-playback frequency response at levels of −20 and −30 dB with the Dolby system turned on and off. At both levels, the two curves were very similar, with less than 1 dB of change at any frequency.

To reach an indicated recording level of 0 dB, an input of 70 millivolts (LINE) or 0.2 millivolt (MIC) was needed. The playback output was 0.78 volt with STD tape and 0.85 volt with CrO_2 tape, corresponding to meter readings of +0.5 and +1.5 dB. The meters are marked with the Dolby symbol at their +3-dB points (a 200 nW/meter Dolby tape played back with a +4-dB reading), but (as per the instruction book) the Dolby calibration is made at a 0-dB meter reading.



With both tapes, the distortion was about 1.3 per cent at 0 dB; it reached the 3 per cent reference level at +7.5 dB with STD tape and +5.5 db with CrO_2 tape. The unweighted noise level, referred to the 3 per cent distortion playback output, was −54.5 dB. With IEC "A" weighting, it was −60 dB (it was the same with both tapes). Switching on the Dolby system resulted in a very impressive −67.5-dB noise level with STD tape and −66 dB with chrome tape. The noise increased by 11 dB when the MIC inputs were used at maximum gain, but at normal gain settings the increase was slight. The PEAK light flashed at a +2-dB input level. The meters' ballistic response, as claimed, exactly matched VU standards, with 0.3-second bursts giving 100 per cent of a continuous-tone reading.

The flutter was a very low 0.1 per cent (unweighted rms) in both directions of tape movement, and wow was at the residual level of our test tape and instruments (about 0.01 per cent). The "fast" speeds of the Dual deck were faster than most cassette decks, only 49 seconds being required to handle a C-60 cassette. The operating speed was as close to the required 1⅞ ips as we could measure (within 0.1 per cent).

The ALC system gradually adjusted the recording gain to the input-signal level (the recording-level controls are inoperative when the ALC button is pushed. The circuit responded almost instantly to level increases but showed a very long time constant in supplying the increased gain demanded by a *decrease* in input level. Depending on the highest level reached, full recovery took from 20 seconds to several minutes. However, this is not a problem when recording speech (for which this circuit was intended), and it was found impossible to overload the recorder or cause distortion when using ALC.

Comment. Although the operating controls of the Dual deck function in a somewhat unconventional manner, it is not difficult to become accustomed to them, and it is as straightforward a recorder to use as any we know of. The controls can be operated in any sequence, without going through STOP, and by holding the STOP lever down while operating either of the fast-speed controls the tape can be speedily shuttled to any point, stopping instantly when the fast lever is released. Normally, the PAUSE control is engaged before starting the machine to avoid the brief start-up delay associated with the application of power to the electronic circuits. Since there is no distinction between the various levers (other than the red band on the RECORD lever) in size, color, or shape, we found it necessary to recheck the control functions constantly during use before we became accustomed to their arrangement.

The auto-reverse operated very smoothly and rapidly, complete reversal taking only a second or two. When recording, the tape must be reversed manually to avoid accidentally recording over a previously recorded program. We would have liked to be able to disable the auto-reverse (not possible) for those occasions when one wants to play only one side of a cassette. (The reversal is so rapid and unobtrusive that it can easily be missed if you are not attentive to the program.)

It would seem that Dual has chosen to omit some of the "extra" features (such as FM Dolby decoding, 25-microsecond de-emphasis conversion, mixing microphone inputs, etc.) currently found in some de luxe cassette decks in favor of a very well constructed, easy-to-use automatic reversing system. However, they have created a recorder that reaches the state of the current cassette art in respect to flutter and low noise, and it sounds as good as its measurements suggest. Dual's enviable reputation in the record-player market should be enhanced by this venture into the cassette area.

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THE SIMELS REPORT

By STEVE SIMELS

SOMETHING IN THE AIR

CRITICS (myself included) have been lamenting the Death of Rock for years, at least since 1968, and yet it lingers on, which is confusing at the very least. Example: the two most successful new acts of the past year were Bachman-Turner Overdrive and Bad Company, and regardless of what you think of them qualitatively, there's no doubt that they are bedrock r-&-r. Too, Elton John literally dominates the airwaves, and though he straddles categories somewhat, we all know he's a rocker.

Of course, "rock is dead" means something else, at least in critical parlance; it means that the Sixties theories about what was "progressive" and what constituted quality have gone down the tubes, and perhaps what we should be saying is that "real" rock is dead—rock that stems from the same impulses that gave us the records we acknowledge as legitimately great—early Elvis, the seminal work of Chuck Berry, Dylan in his prime, the Beatles and the Beach Boys and Phil Spector and the Who. These records were somehow more than simply words and music; they had, well—there's no other word for it—*magic*. So, "rock" is still around but, with few exceptions, the quality of magic has been sorely lacking the last few years, and I think *that's* what the critics have been decrying. What is there around today that literally *compels* you to listen to it? There was a time when the answer to that question was easy, but I doubt somehow that today's kids are going to feel as strongly about Jethro Tull or Nektar in ten years as I feel now about "Blonde on Blonde" or "Out of Our Heads."

I wouldn't even bring up this subject except for the fact that, for the first time since the very dawn of the Seventies, I begin to sense the stirring of . . . I don't quite know what. All of a sudden there's a lot of remarkable music around, and I'm tending toward cautious optimism. Maybe it's a feeling that standards have been raised. Thanks to the Dylan tour and "Blood on the Tracks," the Stones' spectacular showing this summer, the unprecedented success of Bruce Springsteen, the remarkable return from the dead of the Starship and Neil Young, and some other things, one can't help but feel that quality is beginning to count again. As Paul Williams observed, no longer can somebody like David Bowie hustle himself into superstardom just by making a few smart moves and spending a lot of money. I suspect 1976 is going to be the crucial year—if Patti Smith makes it, if the long-overdue commercial breakthough for reggae occurs, if our older stars make consistently good records for a change . . . if, if, if. Anyway, *I* think it's going to happen. Then again, some folks *still* think the Big Bands (or the Small Combos) are coming back.

CLIVE DAVIS' new label, Arista, has attracted a remarkably varied roster of performers in the short time it's been in business, and late in September he trotted out the heaviest ones for two benefit concerts. (The proceeds were donated to the beleaguered city of New York, which, God knows, needs all the help it can get.) The afternoon show featured Arista's jazz artists, including their most recent signing, Larry Coryell, but it was a little too esoteric for my tastes, and I didn't attend. The evening concert, however, was truly remarkable.

Not since the days of Murray the K's Easter extravaganzas at the Brooklyn Fox has there been such a bizarrely programmed all-star rock-and-roll show. Scheduled to appear were Linda Lewis, Eric Carmen (the short guy from the Raspberries, the one with delusions of being Paul McCartney), Barry Manilow, Melissa Manchester, Loudon Wainwright (!), and Patti Smith (!!). Weird, especially considering that only Barry and Melissa have what might be termed mass followings, but I was really looking forward to seeing how their audiences would react to such—shall we say—*unusual* talents as Loudon and Patti, neither of whom make the kind of polite music that is Clive and Arista's long suit. In the case of Patti, in particular, I was almost hoping for the rock equivalent of the reaction at the première of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*.

No such luck, of course. If there were any major freakouts I didn't observe them, but it *was* a really fun evening anyway. Such a wide spectrum of performers is unusual at a rock event nowadays (unless you count those ghastly three-day mud fests), and since the show was so tightly packed, everybody involved did relatively short sets, parading only their finest wares. Downright refreshing.

Briefly: Linda Lewis was charming in a mild sort of way; Eric Carmen didn't show (which would have been a blessing, except that he was replaced by Gil Scott-Heron, about whom the less said the better); Loudon Wainwright was crazed, brilliant, hilariously funny, and (surprisingly) totally at ease and in control of his performance; and Barry and Melissa were . . . well, Barry and Melissa. I found them unbearable; the crowd adored them. *De gustibus*.

But Patti—ah, I think I'm in love again. She was nervous (this was her concert debut, after all) and her band was a little ragged (I doubt they've ever played through a professional-grade P.A. system before), but it didn't matter. The energy level was close to breathtaking, and *magic* was most definitely in the air. During her closing number, a long half-spoken and half-sung number about how she got into rock as a kid ("Seventeen and I saw Mick Jagger on the *Ed Sullivan Show*/My father said 'It's him or me'/And I went out walking"), I found myself shaking my head in absolute disbelief; it *couldn't* be this good, I *couldn't* be this moved by a performance any more. If one tiny bit of this can be captured on record (she's being produced by John Cale, and if he can't do it, no one can), then I really envy those of you outside New York who will be exposed to this wonder for the first time. What I mean is, is it too early to be calling anyone The Next Bruce Springsteen?

Patti Smith: "My father said, 'It's him or me,' and I went out walking."

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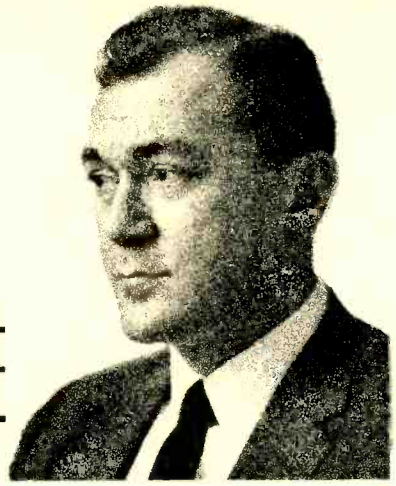

THE OPERA FILE

By WILLIAM LIVINGSTONE

OPERA IN AMERICA

DANCE has become the fastest-growing of the performing arts in the United States, and a few years ago Nancy Hanks, of the National Endowment of the Arts, said she could think of no better way to celebrate the Bicentennial than by taking pride in American dance. I'll drink to that. I'm very big on the Bicentennial. Tired of constantly hearing about what's wrong with this country, I look forward to a year when we can emphasize some of the many things that are *right* with it. And while we're saluting dance in America, I'd like to do a "me-too" for Opera in America.

When I was younger, opera was available in the provinces almost exclusively on records and radio. The genuine, live article was pretty much a New York thing, though there were short seasons in such cities as Philadelphia and San Francisco. There were occasional touring companies and isolated local efforts, but who knew when Boston and Chicago would ever manage to put together another opera company? Well-traveled fans assured us hicks that Germany was operaphile heaven, with a resident company in every major city. Though longing for such a situation in the United States, I resigned myself to the fact that it would never happen here.

But you know what? It *is* happening. Boston and Chicago have long since gotten their seasons together, and so have Seattle, Houston, Dallas, Baltimore, Miami, New Orleans, San Diego, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Newark, Hartford, Santa Fe, and I don't know where all. A new company was started in Norfolk last season, and another begins in Tulsa in January. American opera companies (like those everywhere else) rely on the standard repertoire, but most of them are planning Bicentennial events as well, some in the current season, others in 1976-1977.

According to a bulletin from the Central Opera Service last fall, about a hundred American opera companies and workshops were planning special performances for the festival year, with more than thirty world premières scheduled. These include Conrad Susa's *Black River* and Dominick Argento's *The Voyage of Edgar Poe* (both in Minneapolis), Carlisle Floyd's *Bilby's Doll* (Houston), Julia Smith's *Daisy* (Charlotte, N.C.), and Thomas Pasatieri's *Ines de Castro* (Baltimore), to name only a few. And there will, of course, be performances of such other American works as Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha*, and John Philip Sousa's *El Capitan*.

I won't pretend that I'm a great *fan* of American opera. With the exception of Gershwin, no American opera composer whose work I've heard has come up with a vocal line that really thrilled me. I didn't care for Floyd's *Susannah*, and Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* left me cold. Verdi demanded of his librettists *la parola scenica*, the "theatrical word," but, like most other American operas, *Vanessa* had such lines as: "Do you remember? . . . The mumps, the chicken pox, the scarlatina?" I submit that on the meter of theatricality "chicken pox" registers zero.

Kansas City Lyric Theater

Beeson's "Captain Jinks"
Walter Hook, Carol Wilcox, Carolyn James

I don't claim to know a lot about American opera either, but I'm a reasonably quick study, and by this time next year I plan to be an expert. With that in mind I went happily off in late September to the world première of the first opera commissioned for the Bicentennial by the National Endowment of the Arts: Jack Beeson's *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines* staged by the Kansas City Lyric Theater. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and it made me wonder whether I've been completely fair to our home-grown opera.

Set in the 1870's, *Captain Jinks* is a romantic comedy about a young American singer, Aurelia Trentoni, who has become an international diva in Europe and is returning to make her New York debut in *La Traviata*. She is wooed and won by a young man about town named Jonathan Jinks. The libretto (by Sheldon Harnick) is based on the 1901 play (by Clyde Fitch) that made Ethel Barrymore a star, and it proves that there is still life in the old boy-meets-girl formula. And, too, in addition to moments funny and touching, there are amusing parallels with the plot of *Traviata*.

More striking than the plot is Beeson's use of musical quotes from several operas, and I admire his nerve in inviting comparison with Verdi by quoting frequently from *Traviata*. I found him most successful in the lyrical passages he wrote for the lovers, and less so in the music provided for the impresario Col. Mapleson and Aurelia's guardian, Papa Belliarti. The concerted numbers in Acts I and II seemed rather diffuse, and the marriage of music and lyrics was not always happy—at times strong melodic accents fell on unmelodious words (and don't you think Harnick thought to spare us a reference to Aurelia's childhood case of chicken pox!). But the singers projected the words clearly and everybody laughed at all the jokes, so overall the opera was a very pleasant musical evening.

The Lyric Theater's general director Russell Patterson described *Captain Jinks* in the program as "a valentine to opera," and the production designed by Patton Campbell made it a very pretty one indeed, with a lacy forecurtain framing the proscenium for all three acts. The costumes, particularly Aurelia's, were attractive, and I found all three sets charming.

OF as much interest to me as the new work was the Lyric Theater itself. The only singers whose names I knew were Robert Owen Jones (Jinks) and Carolyn James (Mrs. Gee), who had impressed me in this same company's recording of Beeson's *The Sweet Bye and Bye* (Desto). All were at least competent, and the very beautiful Carol Wilcox (Aurelia) was considerably more than that.

As explained to me by composer John Kander, who is on the board of directors, the Kansas City Lyric Theater is a real *resident* company of young American singers, one that can be heard to good advantage in the small house (1,200 seats). They have a month's rehearsal and perform everything in English, including this season *The Flying Dutchman*, *La Bohème*, *La Perichole*, and *The Marriage of Figaro*. Leading singers in one opera often take small parts in another. For example, Karen Yarmat, who sings Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*, appeared in *Captain Jinks* as Jonathan's mother, and tenor George Livings, the company's Rodolfo in *La Bohème*, sang the small part of a New York *Times* reporter.

This is surely not the only way to run a regional opera company, but it is a very good way, and a measure of its success is the Lyric Theater's three complete opera recordings. In addition to Beeson's *Sweet Bye and Bye* on Desto, the company has recorded Vittorio Giannini's *The Taming of the Shrew* for CRI, and RCA has already recorded *Captain Jinks* for release next June.

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GOING ON RECORD

By JAMES GOODFRIEND
Music Editor

A CRITICAL EDUCATION

WOVEN into the fabric that constitutes the history of music has been, for many centuries, a single, cynical thread that questions the origins and the purposes of music critics. It is no secret that aspersions have long been cast on the legitimacy of birth of such people, and, further, we have been told that music critics are merely frustrated composers, frustrated singers, frustrated instrumentalists, (even) frustrated musicologists, and so on, *ad infinitum* and *ad hominem*. But very little has ever been said or written about the training of music critics, probably because no one outside the circle seems to know anything about it. How do music critics rise (or fall) to their station? What are the critical qualifications? It can't be *all* peptic ulcers and bad dispositions.

I don't think I am doing the reader an injustice if I assume that he has never heard of an organization called the Music Critics' Association. It comprises a large number of music critics who work in radio and television or on newspapers and magazines of every description. Needless to say, there is also enormous variety among the critics themselves. I can think of no noun other than "dog" that embraces such an assortment of different types as does the term "music critic." Some are smarter than others; some are merely older than others. Some have PhD's; others have highschool diplomas. Some know a great deal about music; others know very little. Some are full-time critics; others are practicing composers, performers, musicologists, teachers, doctors, dentists, or candlestick makers as well. Some are basically reporters; others are basically critics or theorists. Some write very well indeed; others write abysmally. The *average* level of ability and accomplishment is, I'm sure, mediocre by what many of us like to think of as the proper standards. It is one of the major purposes of the Music Critics' Association to raise that average as much as possible.

To that end, the MCA organizes each year a number of cram-course institutes in which "senior" critics are invited to pass on to "junior" critics the benefit of their experience in both music and the mechanics and politics of writing criticism. There are also other institutes in which those same senior critics are invited to become students of musicological specialists. I have recently returned from teaching a portion of an institute of the first type, and I am just about to participate, as a student, in one of the second type. At this point, then, I can at least tell you what sort of thing went on at the first.

It was held at the University of Maryland in College Park in conjunction with a piano festival and a piano competition, and the major critical subject was naturally piano repertoire, interpretation, and performance. The institute ran approximately ten days. The first part was

Lincoln Perry

taken by Thomas Willis of the Chicago *Tribune*, the second by me, and in between were sandwiched lecture demonstrations by Harold Schonberg of the New York *Times* (on Romantic performance practice) and by Martin Williams, critic and author of many books on jazz (on jazz improvisation—his session was done in conjunction with pianist Bill Evans). There were eight participating Fellows in the institute, three women and five men, all practicing critics (all except one professionally so) representing newspapers and other publications from Seattle, Kalamazoo, Houston, Yale University, and elsewhere. Both their qualifications and their interests were varied, and so were their problems.

Tom Willis, in his sessions, concentrated on the specifics of newspaper work and the reviewing of live performances. I worked on record reviewing and aspects of piano technique and style as demonstrated in recordings. The eight Fellows and I had classes together morning and afternoon, attended lecture recitals or master classes of the piano festival in between, went to the concerts in the evening, ate breakfast, lunch, and dinner together and talked about music, and stayed up late at night writing assigned reviews or, in my case, writing criticisms of them. The whole was one giant submersion in piano music and the techniques of writing about it and criticizing it.

The reader may be interested to know some of the specific critical problems that came to the surface during that time, if for nothing else than to make him aware of the very real qualifications demanded of a conscientious, professional music critic. Many of the Fellows complained of simply not being able to hear enough music or enough varieties of music in their home towns. Even limiting the subject to pianists, such performers as, say, Michelangeli do not go everywhere, nor do Rubinstein, Horowitz, Berman, Freire, Moravec, and a lot of other topflight artists. Nelson Freire was playing at the Maryland Piano Festival. Every critic went—it was the first time most of them had heard him at all. The answer to this problem? Listen to a lot more records. Nobody gets very far as a soloist today without records, and it is often possible to hear a promising new artist on record before he makes a major concert appearance *anywhere* in the country.

Another problem: many of the critics had never thought hard enough about whom they were writing *for*. All too often they simply assumed their readers were completely familiar with the work under discussion, and they wrote about fine points in the score—or the opposite, how the performers were dressed—as if they were writing on the one hand for their colleagues or on the other for their nonmusical neighbors. But most of these critics work for general-circulation newspapers, and, practically, one can assume an *interest* in classical music on the part of someone who is going to read a review, but not much more than that.

Third, the most common fault of younger or less-experienced critics is overkill. There are dozens of ways, on dozens of levels, of expressing the same, honest, critical opinion. An artist who has been around for decades deserves respect, even if his fingers can no longer cope with all the technical difficulties or his temperament control an impatience born of overfamiliarity with a piece. Vicious reviews are easy to write, but they are only rarely justified, mostly when an artist has achieved a reputation that is far beyond his actual accomplishments and strong countermeasures are needed to set the standards straight.

APART from such problems (and there were many others), the Fellows did—and all critics have to do—a large amount of direct comparative listening, for this is musically revealing in a way no simple following of a performance with a printed score can be. The most striking such comparison we engaged in (done for purposes of studying stylistic approaches and not for choosing the "best" record) was one of three performances of Debussy's *Reflets dans l'Eau* (from *Images*, Book 1): Philippe Entremont (Columbia MS 6567); Walter Gieseking (Angel 35065); and Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli (Deutsche Grammophon 2530196). Try it—it's a critical education in itself.

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THE BASIC REPERTOIRE

By MARTIN BOOKSPAN

BEETHOVEN'S SEVENTH SYMPHONY

DURING the course of the New York Philharmonic's recent European tour, our fourteen-year-old daughter Deborah had the privilege of hearing Beethoven's Seventh Symphony three different times in as many cities during the period of a couple of weeks. Overexposure? Hardly. She now loves that work perhaps above all others in the repertoire. Not that she came to it absolutely cold—it had resounded through our household scores of times in her experience, but her familiarity with it had been largely osmotic. Now, however, she claims the Seventh as her very own, she has her own recording of it (the New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Bernstein, Columbia MS 6112), and she and Beethoven have become fast friends.

". . . the first Beethoven symphony to acquire in building a record library."

At first flush Beethoven's Fifth Symphony might have been the more logical candidate to introduce an eager enthusiast to the symphonic world. After all, that opening four-note motto is probably the best-known extract from the entire literature. And the drama and excitement of the Fifth are quite irresistible. But the Seventh has a power and impact uniquely its own, and I think I would choose the Seventh ahead of the Fifth as my recommendation for the first Beethoven symphony to acquire in building a record library.

One reason is that the Seventh conveys a feeling of massiveness—and it does so despite a rather modest framework: it is not particularly long (most conductors do it in about thirty-seven or thirty-eight minutes), and it is scored for the normal classical orchestra (woodwinds and trumpets in pairs, tympani, and strings). The late John N. Burk attributed the feeling of immensity to the composer's "wilfully driving a single rhythmic figure through each movement, until the music attains (particularly in the body of the first movement and in the Finale) a swift propulsion, an effect of cumulative growth which is akin to extraordinary size."

But there are other reasons, too, for the visceral and emotional impact of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. There is a soaring lyricism, even in the Finale, where the energy and forward motion are propelled on the wings of a melody of sheer exuberance. And the architectural proportions of the work are quite simply perfect. Wagner labeled Beethoven's Seventh Symphony "the Dance in its highest condition; the happiest realization of the movements of the body in an ideal form." The metaphor holds; the fluid and easy motion of an athlete's body finds its counterpart in the organic unity, perfect integration, and flowing grace of this music.

Years ago, when the Seventh Symphony first figured in this "Basic Repertoire" series, my prime recommendation for a recorded performance of the music was Bruno Walter's with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra. It was then available either as a single disc or in a seven-record album devoted to Walter-conducted performances of all the Beethoven symphonies. The single-disc edition is now no longer available, but the Walter stereo recordings of the Beethoven symphonies have been brought together and reissued on Columbia's budget-price Odyssey label (Y7 30051). It is an album well worth having as a cherishable reminder of Walter's very humanistic approach. Throughout the Seventh Symphony his pacing of the music is masterly, and he builds to a final movement of overwhelming buoyancy and *élan*. Though an early product of stereo recording technology, the sound is still eminently satisfying.

Of course there are many other splendid recordings of the Seventh Symphony currently available. My own favorites among them are Bernstein's (Columbia MS 6112), Klemperer's (Angel S 35945), Davis' (Angel S 37027), and Reiner's (RCA disc LSC 1991, cassette RK 1150). All four of these conductors respond intuitively to the thrill and thrust of the music, all secure superb playing from their orchestras, and all are richly recorded. Klemperer's is perhaps the most surprising of the lot, for he combines a fleet elegance with his accustomed monumentality.

Also eminently satisfying is the budget-price recording by the late Guido Cantelli (Seraphim S 60038), a supple and lively performance that is now two decades old but still sounds amazingly alive.

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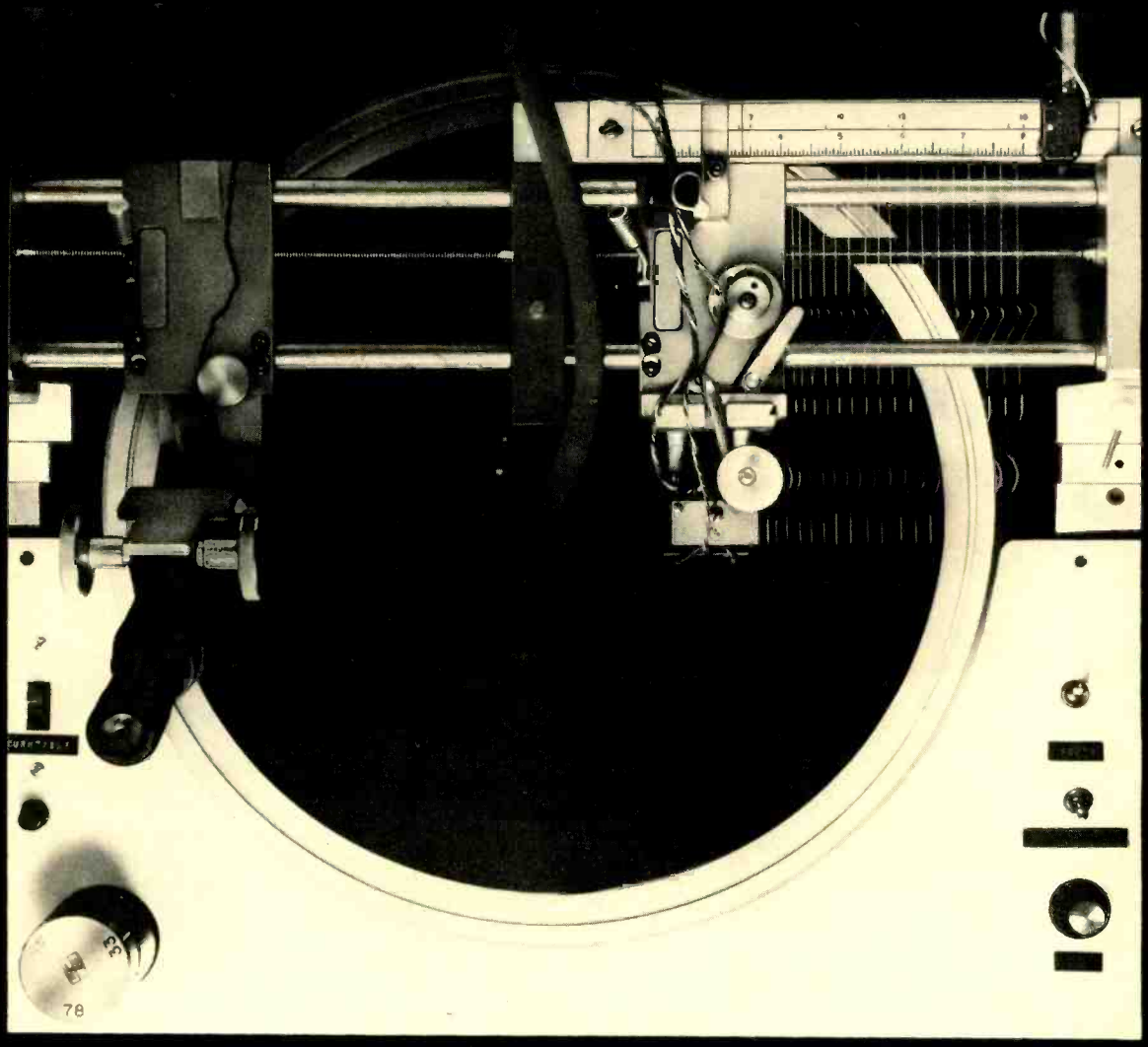

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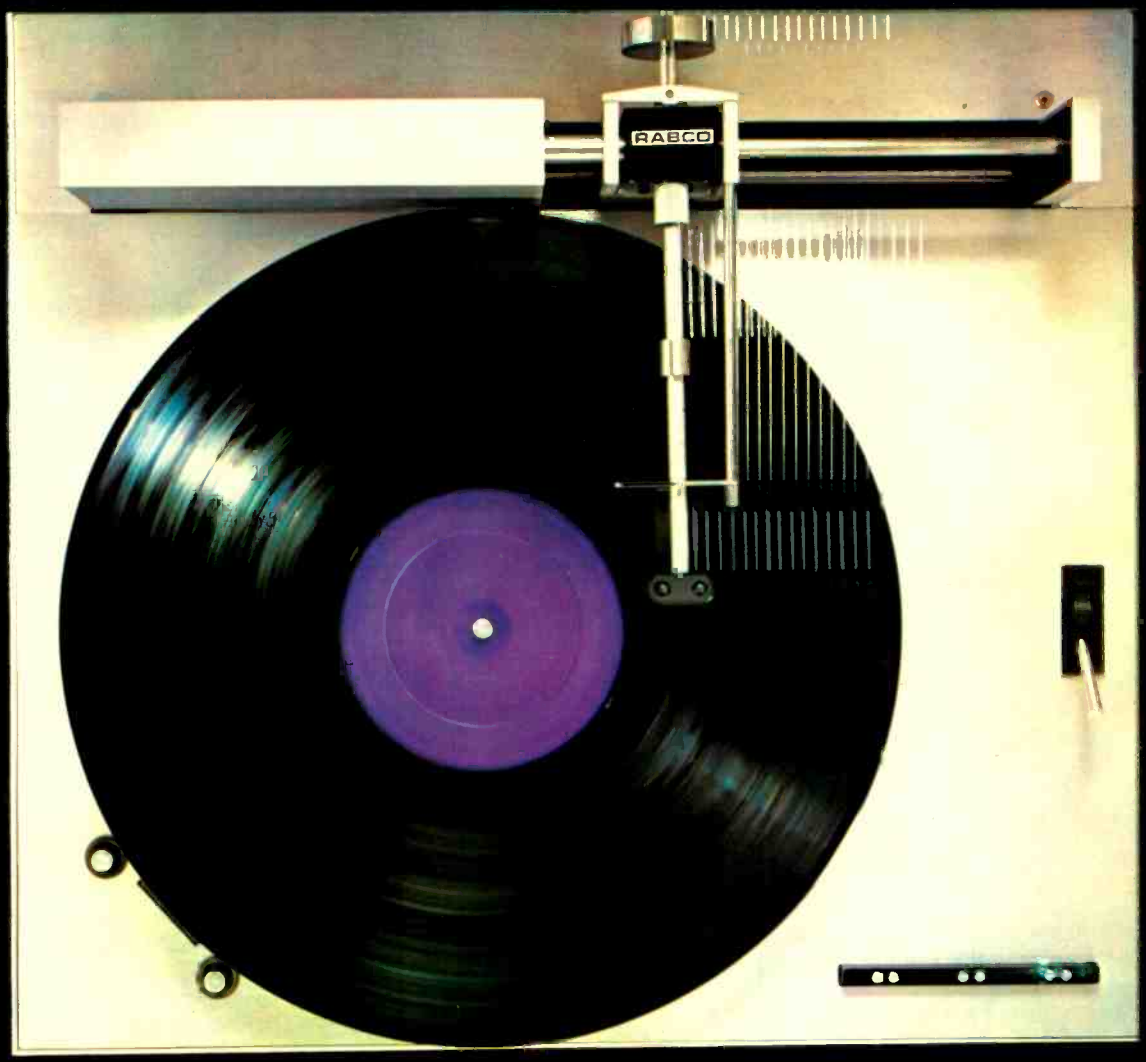

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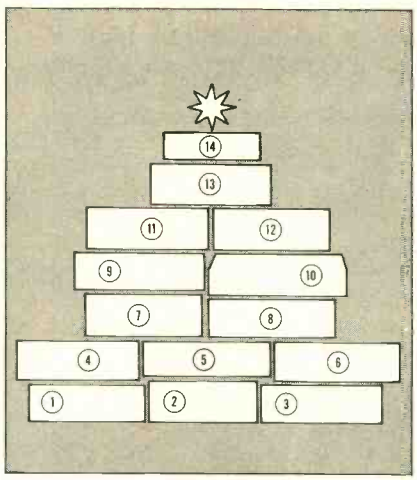
Julian Hirsch tells you how to go shopping for a CHRISTMAS TUNER

THE TUNERS ON THE COVER

(1) Pioneer TX-9500 AM/stereo FM, approximately $400. (2) Marantz 150 AM/stereo FM, $599.95. (3) Yamaha CT-7000 stereo FM, $1,200. (4) Kenwood 700-T AM/stereo FM, $749.95. (5) Revox A720 stereo FM tuner/preamplifier, $1,665. (6) Kensonic Accuphase T-100 AM/stereo FM, approximately $700. (7) Sansui TU-9900 AM/stereo FM, $499.95. (8) Scott T33S stereo FM, $999.50. (9) Luxman T-310 AM/stereo FM, $595. (10) Heathkit Module I AM/stereo FM tuner/preamplifier kit, $599.95. (11) Sony ST-4950 AM/stereo FM, $350. (12) Sherwood SEL-300 AM/stereo FM, approximately $500. (13) Sequerra Model 1 stereo FM, $2,500. (14) Dynaco AF-6 AM/stereo FM kit, $240.



WHEN you go shopping for an FM tuner or receiver, it is helpful to keep in mind just what you want it to do—or not do—for you so that you can keep the specifications in perspective. If you "buy blind," so to speak, it is all too easy to "overbuy," to select a tuner whose performance capabilities (and therefore cost) are greater than you really need.

The best way to approach this rather complex subject is through a simplifying systemization, so I have divided the FM tuner's operational characteristics into four separate sections. Within each I will describe the applicable specifications and features and give typical numerical values for them where appropriate. (The new IEEE/IHF "Standard Methods of Testing Frequency Modulation Broadcast Receivers," IHF-T-200, 1975, is the basis for all the FM specifications that involve measurements; it differs in a number of significant respects from the older 1958 Standard which it replaces and is discussed in more detail in this month's "Technical Talk" column starting on page 28.)

-1- SIGNAL RECEPTION

A tuner's ability to bring you the programs of certain chosen stations—they may be near or far, strong or weak—with an absolute minimum of noise and distortion is obviously a prime consideration in buying. The tuner characteristic most directly related to this task is its *sensitivity*, a quality which is currently defined in two ways. The familiar but not complete *Usable Sensitivity* is defined as the lowest signal voltage required at the tuner's antenna terminals that will produce a noise-plus-distortion (N + D) level in the audio output of 3.2 per cent (−30 dB). For some years this sensitivity has been expressed in microvolts (μV), but henceforth, according to the new Standard, it will be expressed in decibels relative to a signal-power input level of 1 femtowatt (10^{-15} watt—which is a "1" fifteen places to the right of the decimal point) or dBf. As a rough guide to equivalency, 1 μV equals 5 dBf, 10 μV equals 25 dBf, etc. (see the table of comparable values on page 29). In the past, the Usable Sensitivity specification was defined only for mono operation, but the new standard calls for a stereo rating as well.

The old Usable Sensitivity figure was never representative of *really* usable listening conditions since an N + D level of −30 dB is unacceptably noisy, even by minimum hi-fi standards. The

second (newly adopted) rating, *50-dB Quieting Sensitivity*, is the minimum signal level needed to reduce noise (hiss) to −50 dB relative to maximum program level. Such a signal is quite listenable, although the hiss may be audible during quiet passages. The 50-dB Quieting Sensitivity rating is also given for both mono and stereo modes.

Although the 50-dB Quieting Sensitivity is the more important of the two ratings (since it is more representative of really usable listening conditions), a comparison of the two gives a positive indication of the *rate* at which the tuner is able to "quiet" very weak signals, and this affects other aspects of its performance. Most component-grade tuners can be expected to have a Usable Sensitivity between 10 and 15 dBf (1.7 to 3.1 μV), which is more than adequate for almost any listening situation. The 50-dB Quieting Sensitivity is usually 5 to 10 dB higher (numerically), falling in the 15- to 25-dBf (3.1 to 9.7 μV) range. On some of the finest tuners there may be very little difference—perhaps less than 1 dB—between the two ratings. Because of the importance of the 50-dB quieting specification in real listening situations, a tuner whose Usable and 50-dB Quieting Sensitivities are, respectively, 13 and 15 dBf is actually more sensitive, in real terms, than one with 10 and 20 dBf ratings, although the latter is 3 dB better in Usable Sensitivity.

It is obvious that background noise is higher in stereo FM reception than in mono. Putting it another way, more input-signal level is needed to achieve a 50-dB signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) in stereo than in mono. The stereo 50-dB Quieting Sensitivity will usually fall between 33 and 37 dBf (25 to 40 μV). In stereo, the Usable Sensitivity may be unmeasurable, since the tuner's multiplex circuit will often switch to mono before a signal input weak enough to produce a −30-dB N + D figure is reached. In this case, the switching threshold is the Stereo Usable Sensitivity. (Note, however, that the signal level at which switching takes place is chosen by the manufacturer. If it is higher than that figure on some other tuner, this does not necessarily mean that sensitivity is poorer.)

-2-
SIGNAL REJECTION

One of the major advantages of the FM medium is its ability to reject most interference and produce quiet, noise-free reception. This ability has its limits, and any FM receiver can suffer from interference problems under some conditions (and when interference *does* occur it is likely to obliterate the program rather than mar it slightly).

The most obvious and common source of interference is a strong signal located very close in frequency to the desired signal—say, in an "alternate" channel only 400 kHz away, or even in an "adjacent" channel just 200 kHz away. In any given geographic area, station assignments are made on an alternate-channel basis, but it is conceivable that you might be in range of (and wish to receive) a distant signal only 200 kHz away from some more powerful local station. A highly directional antenna is the prime requisite for this, but when both stations lie in the same direction, the tuner should have the best possible *selectivity* also, and it may nevertheless be insufficient.

With a 400-kHz channel spacing, the task becomes much more practicable. The *Alternate-Channel Selectivity* of a tuner is a measure of how much stronger a signal from an alternate channel (400 kHz away) must be to create interference with the desired signal at a level of −30 dB referred to its fully modulated program level (see accompanying box). Low-price tuners typically have 40 dB or so of Alternate Channel Selectivity, while values of 60 to 80 dB are available in the better ones. For the most demanding circumstances, a few of the finest tuners have 90 to 100 dB of selectivity. The latter rating means that the interfering signal would have to be 100,000 times as strong as the desired one to interfere at a −30-dB level. This is a most unlikely condition, and if such a tuner doesn't meet your needs, you would be advised to change your listening habits!

Adjacent-Channel Selectivity (measured in the same manner, but with an interfering signal only 200-kHz away) is almost never specified by tuner manufacturers. We do not attempt to measure it at Hirsch-Houck Laboratories because it is of comparatively minor importance to most users, and it is very difficult to measure with either accuracy or consistency.

Another category of interfering signal originates at frequencies far removed from the 88- to 108-MHz FM broadcast band. The most common is *image* interference, which, though it is usually caused by aircraft and other mobile transmissions, is a result of a deficiency in the tuner rather than the interfering transmitter. The "image" appears as a signal on the FM dial just 21.4 MHz lower in frequency than the transmitting station. Good *Image Rejection* is associated with a tuner that has a number of tuned circuits in its "front end" (between the antenna and the mixer stage). When a manufacturer proudly announces that his tuner has a "five-section" tuning capacitor, he is telling you that it should be relatively immune to interference from signals outside the FM band. Inexpensive tuners may have only three tuning sections, while deluxe models often have five or even more (the current record holder has a seven-section capacitor).

The numbers specifying image rejection are fairly similar to those for alternate-channel selectivity. A 40 to 50 dB image-rejection rating is rather undistinguished, but it may be perfectly adequate if you do not live near an airport (one of the principal areas of image interference). Good tuners usually have 60 to 80 dB of image rejection, and the top ones exceed 100 dB.

FM tuners also have an inherent response to signals at their "intermediate" frequency (i.f.) of 10.7 MHz and to signals at almost *any* frequency if they are strong enough. The *IF Rejection* and *Spurious-response Rejection* ratings refer to the tuner's immunity to these types of interfering sources. In general, the design features that give good image rejection also discriminate against other out-of-band interference (which rarely troubles the consumer).

-3-
REPRODUCTION ACCURACY

Once we have succeeded in tuning in the desired station without obvious interference from other transmissions, we are still faced with the problem of extracting a true facsimile of the original program from the received signal. This implies, among other things, correct frequency response, negligible added noise and distortion (that is, not enough to be audible) and, in the case of stereo, no audible reduction in channel separation.

Frequency Response is largely determined by the accuracy of the components of the tuner's de-emphasis circuit. There is normally no difficulty in achieving a response "flat" within ±2 dB (more usually, ±1 dB) over the entire frequency range. Most tuners have 15,000-Hz cut-off filters in their audio circuits to remove any 19,000-Hz stereo pilot carrier leakage that might cause "birdies" when tape-recording FM programs. These filters commonly reduce the output slightly at the highest frequencies, and a loss of 2 to 3 dB at 15,000 Hz is not unusual (and generally not audible) so long as the response is not affected at frequencies of 13,000 Hz or below.

Occasionally an FM tuner will be found to have a roll-off at very low frequencies (typically below 50 Hz). If not

". . .AM broadcasting is not, and cannot be, a high-fidelity medium in the sense we know FM to be."

where, unless this feature is of no importance to you.

A numerical (digital) read-out of tuning frequency, found on a few high-price tuners, neatly solves this problem. Sometimes it is coupled with a so-called "synthesized" tuning system that is referenced to a precise, stable frequency generated within the tuner itself. This permits the tuner to be set to any channel with virtually absolute accuracy. Occasionally a synthesizing tuner employs a conventional (analog) dial display. If so, be sure that you can still identify the frequency unambiguously; there is little benefit in being exactly tuned to the *wrong* channel!

Needless to say, the tuner should not drift to another frequency once you have set it to a station. Before the advent of the transistor, this was a serious problem, and most tuners had automatic-frequency-control (AFC) systems to correct for their inherent drift. Very few modern tuners have significant drift, but some still have AFC. It can be considered a tuning aid, but it adds little to the utility of the tuner.

Some kind of tuning indicator *is* important, however. In fact, if the tuner is not of the synthesizing variety, it is a *must*. The best kind of indicator is a zero-center meter which clearly indicates center-of-channel tuning (sometimes a lamp or a light-emitting diode is used for this purpose; either can be equally effective). Most lower-price tuners and receivers have a meter whose deflection is proportional to signal strength and which supposedly reads a maximum when the station is tuned in correctly. If such a meter gives a reasonably definite maximum indication, it is adequate, but some hold a maximum reading over a very broad tuning range, and are therefore nearly useless as tuning aids. The better tuners usually employ both types of meters.

-5-
CONVENIENCE FEATURES

Along with the circuitry needed for its basic operation, a tuner frequently has some features that make it simply pleasanter to use. Even if these "extras" do not contribute directly to the quality of the sound, they can have much to do with one's overall satisfaction with the product. For example, all but the least expensive tuners have interstation-noise muting systems. The loud rushing noise between stations was a disturbing aspect of FM reception in its early days, until manufacturers began installing circuits that mute the audio until a station is properly tuned in. The manner in which the tuner mutes, or un-mutes, as you tune it off or on to a signal can have much to do with the real usefulness of this feature. If, as often happens, each transition is accompanied by a loud burst of noise or distorted sound, the muting system is of questionable value. A good muting system will give *no* audible indication that a signal is present until it is tuned in correctly, when it will be heard emerging from a silent background. When tuning off a station, the sound should simply disappear and be replaced by silence. Like dial calibration, this is an easy thing to check for yourself in the dealer's showroom.

All muting systems are designed to act at a certain threshold level of broadcast-signal strength. If the signal exceeds this level, the system unmutes; if not, it doesn't. Depending on the manufacturer's choice of threshold, some particularly weak or distant stations may not be brought in by the tuner when the muting is in use. A few de luxe tuners offer means of varying the muting threshold with a switch or a rotating control. Otherwise, the muting must be switched off entirely to receive such stations.

Many tuners have a "high-blend" noise-reduction switch that can be set to reduce hiss in stereo FM reception by partially blending the two channels at the higher audio frequencies. This is a useful feature, especially if some of your favorite FM stereo stations do not deliver a signal strong enough to quiet the tuner fully—and if it does not significantly affect the stereo image.

Some tuners, especially at the higher price levels, have outputs for connecting to an audio oscilloscope, which then serves as a rather advanced (and expensive) multipath-tuning indicator. Such scopes are made by several hi-fi equipment manufacturers, and they can generally be used to monitor other aspects of system performance as well. A few rather costly tuners have such scopes built right in. Although they contribute nothing directly to listening quality, they can be very useful as diagnostic tools, and they are interesting to watch as well. Perhaps the most worthwhile use of the scope is as a multipath distortion indicator. With its help, it is easy to orient the antenna for minimum distortion. However, some de luxe tuners already have a meter for this purpose, or one of the tuning meters can be switched to indicate multipath distortion nearly as effectively as a scope.

With no FCC-approved discrete four-channel system yet available, most tuner and receiver manufacturers are hedging their bets by providing a jack, typically labelled "4 CH MPX," which makes the detected program available before multiplex processing and de-emphasis. The assumption is that suitable decoders will reach the market if and when one of several competing systems is approved, as occurred with FM stereo broadcasting.

-6-
THE AM QUESTION

Finally, we must consider the AM tuner. From time to time I am taken to task by people connected with the AM broadcast industry for either ignoring the AM sections of tuners and receivers or for refusing to downgrade the standing of an otherwise excellent tuner for having an inferior AM section. I plead guilty to these "offenses," which are deliberate and reflect my view that AM broadcasting is not, and cannot be, a high-fidelity medium in the sense that we know FM to be. This goes far beyond the mere question of bandwidth (frequency response), which can be good enough to qualify for "hi-fi" standing, although it almost never is. The background noise in AM reception, I feel, is intolerable unless one is located very close to the transmitting antenna. Another factor is the excessive distortion of the AM detectors used in today's tuners and receivers.

Some of these problems are inherent in the AM medium, others result from poor design, but if your listening habits include AM programs, you can judge for yourself whether the quality of the AM section of a given tuner is satisfactory. There are indeed differences among them. A few will have a frequency response extending to 5,000 Hz or even higher, but most fall off rapidly above 3,000 Hz, and some cannot even achieve that frequency! Fortunately or unfortunately, these are differences that can readily be heard, so if tolerable AM is important to you, do not neglect listening comparisons when making your tuner choice. □

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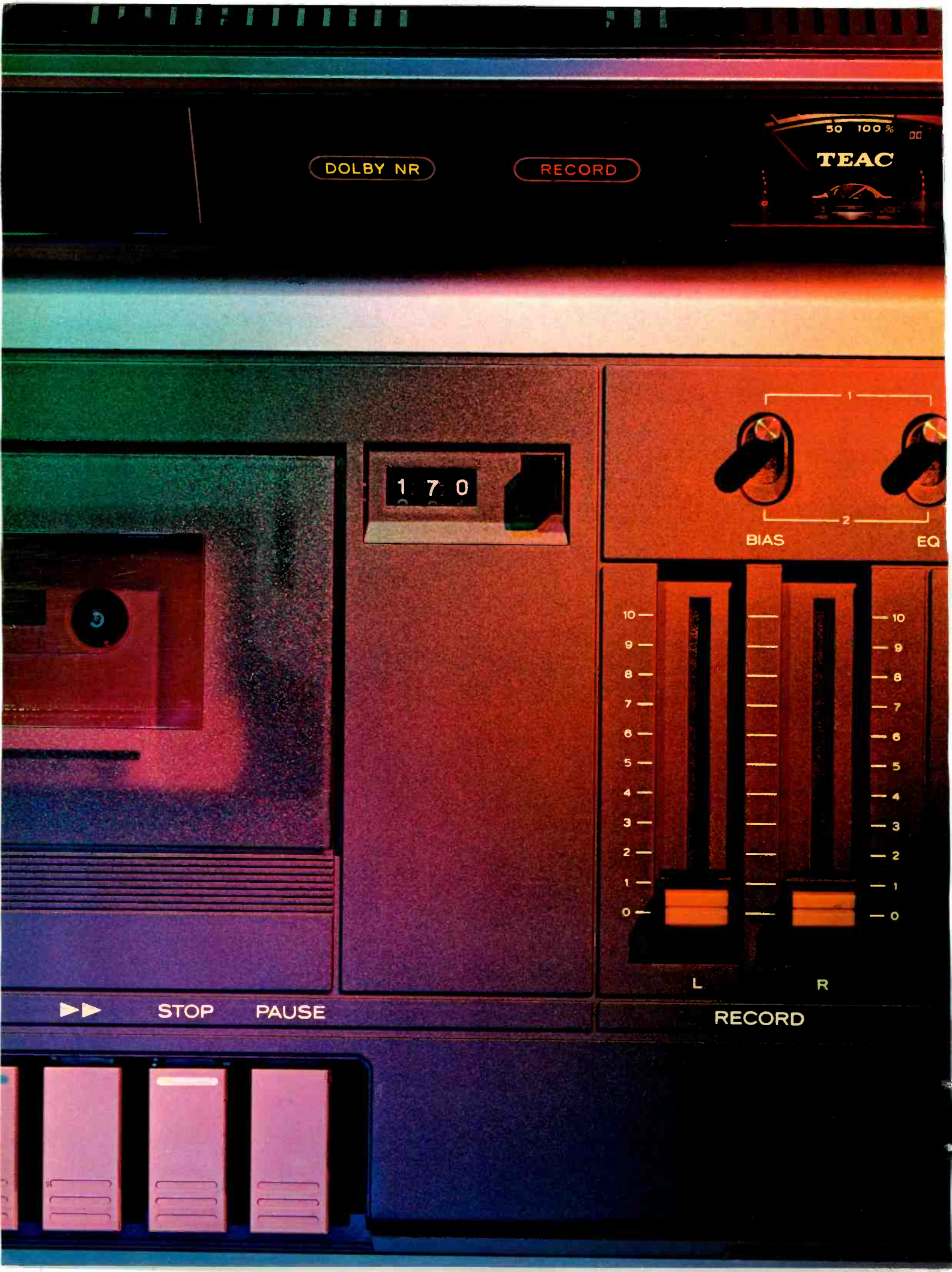
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A Partridge in an Etymologicon

The Truth about that Pear Tree

By Martha Bennett Stiles

In the English-speaking world, a partridge in a pear tree, or even any identifiable abstraction of same, has become an immediately recognized symbol of Christmas. Less widely recognized is the fact that this pictogram utilized on so many Yuletide cards would be equally appropriate on the jacket of an etymologicon, which is, as everyone knows, the place for looking up the derivations of words.

No one knows whether *The Twelve Days of Christmas* is a medieval French or Languedoc song translated centuries ago into English, or whether it was the other way around. Whoever is to blame, though, by 1718 an English broadsheet was rejoicing in the whimsical, not to say cumbersome, gift of the implausibly perched bird we celebrate today. The growing market for religiously neutral winter solstice cards insures that this bird will retain its unlikely perch, that true love will continue his unlikely offering, in picture after beautiful picture. Only a Scrooge would mind, but, like pearls growing around accidentally ingested sand, these beautiful pictures are all really the products of a mistake.

Back when *The Twelve Days* was new, the French words for "a partridge" were *une pertriz*, the first word bisyllabic, the second one properly pronounced "pear-tree," even if you weren't an Englishman full of egg nog. And on neither side of the English Channel at the time was there a winter traffic in fruit trees. What that true love on the first day sent was "a partridge, *une pertriz*," but what began as a small flourish of some Englishman's fragmentary bilingualism has slurred into beloved gibberish. The same centuries which have, in French lexicons, altered *pertriz* to *perdrix* have in *The Twelve Days* caused it to put forth branches and fruit—as miraculously as the pole of St. Christopher after he bore Jesus across the river. This transition from fauna to flora was pointed out by England's *Folk-Song Society Journal* decades ago, with all the effect on our cherished pear-roosting partridge that recent Vatican scholarship has had on the wearing of St. Christopher medals. Scholarship is no match for sentiment, luckily for Christmas.

The Twelve Days, as anyone who turns on his radio between Thanksgiving and January 1 soon learns (and stands small chance during that period of being allowed to forget), is a carol enumerating, in the increasingly dazed voice of the recipient, the presents sent by a lover to his lady on each of the twelve days from Christ's Mass to the Epiphany. Today the biggest gift appears to be the song's own inspiration to the minor arts. Centerpieces, window displays, fabric designs, sculpted pins and pendants—the partridge and the pear seem to be an inexhaustible motif. Each time they are celebrated, of course, the spurious pair become more established. This is especially true when they are offered to small children, few of whose impressionable minds have been fortified by delvings into the *Folk-Song Society Journal* and who are furthermore prone in after

years to cling to whatever version of a song they were exposed to first, not because it is necessarily more true, more beautiful, or more good, but simply because it reminds them of their youth.

Alas for academic purity, illustrators, whose book royalties double if their textual subject lies in the eminent domain, cannot resist *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. At least one new artist has favored children's libraries with his version every other year for the past thirteen. In addition, now in its fifth printing is the late Ben Shahn's treatment of the carol for adults.

Published by the New York Museum of Modern Art, Mr. Shahn's *A Partridge in a Pear Tree* includes such clarifying scholarly assertions as that the carol's "four calling birds" were really *collied*, or coal black, and such obfuscating ones as that the "five gold rings" refer to the ringed pheasant. The latter is unlikely, because whether pheasants come singly or by fives, their rings (one apiece) are not golden but white. Old Scottish dictionaries divulge that back when a partridge was *une pertriz*, "gulderer" was the onomatopoeic name of the turkey gobbler, so it is very likely that what that medieval lass bagged on the fifth day was five *turkeys*. Perhaps, and this is only a guess, they were immature turkeys, and so "five gulde-*rings*."

Like all the children's illustrators, Mr. Shahn also tripped over the roots of that pear tree. "The pear tree," he suggested, "possibly refers to a one-time christmas [*sic*] custom wherein a young girl, upon backing into a pear tree, then circling it three times, was to be rewarded by seeing the image of her true love."

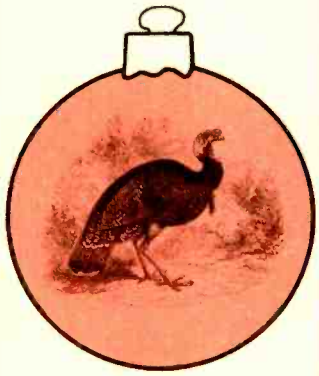
What that partridge aloft was supposed to make of such goings on Mr. Shahn did not confide. This researcher does not wish to argue that many a young girl has *not* found a lover through her behind, but merely to suggest that the observation is irrelevant to a discussion of this carol.

Difficult as it is to parody a song that already suggests young girls running around orchards looking for lovers (no doubt those same girls will find their babies in cabbage patches), *A Wart Snake in a Fig Tree*, by George Mendoza and Etienne Delessert, does succeed in laying Pelion on the top of Ossa. This heroine's deportment should be an inspiration to us all. She receives such presents as three cobwebs and two bags of soot and finds a use for every one with unruffled aplomb. (Her essence of lizard, for example, she bottles exquisitely for perfume.)

The Mendoza-Delessert girl's *sang-froid* (and what would vast quantities of wassail make of *that* borrowing?) is not matched by the heroine of the latest of the succession of children's books, whose creator, Jack Kent, is only too blandly literal. After all, even had her true love sent her each day's gift but once, she would have wound up with seventy-eight presents, most of them hyperactive at that. Mr. Kent, however,

demonstrates—and with a vengeance—that he knows his carol's history, and the result is that what his heroine finally winds up with is bedlam.

Back when bedlam was St. Mary's of Bethlehem, a London lunatic asylum, *The Twelve Days* was a cumulative game, prized by English country folk as a test of memory and endurance, not to mention sobriety. Each player sang in turn—his own verse, plus all the verses sung by the players ahead of him. (If a player forgot a verse, or even faltered, he paid a forfeit, which forfeit was often the obligation to down another alcoholic drink without delay.) Thus the twelfth singer was adding to the first verse's one gift the second verse's three, the third



verse's six, and so on through verse twelve and the final repetition of verse one, for a total of 365 presents, one for every day of the year. This means that by the fourth day, for instance, Mr. Kent's dismayed heroine is receiving not only four collie birds, but her fourth partridge, her sixth turtledove, and her sixth hen.

Mr. Kent ruins the erudite effect of sending collie birds instead of calling birds by coloring them for some reason brown, but his lady forgives that and everything else next morning when the gold rings arrive. She is transported, as centuries of gloating female singers have been. No use for learned folklorists to natter about gulderings: triumphant sopranos will continue to make the fifth day the big one. Mr. Mendoza sends his lady "five useless things," and serves the greedy breed right.

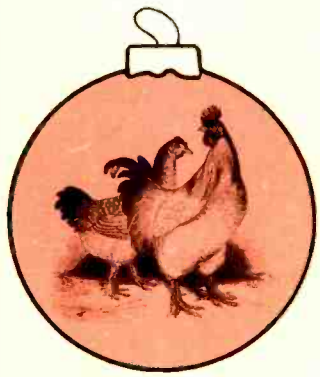
Our Kentish heroine's golden glow soon dims. By the sixth day of Christmas she is looking for shelter, and confronted by the eleventh day's stampede, she splits (to quote the book's jacket) the scene. Imagine what illustrators will be making of *that* phrase in 256 years!

Had there always been an unbroken succession of books that illustrated *The Twelve Days*, probably no pear tree would ever have appeared in any of them, certainly not in so prominent a role. Even had unillustrated versions of the song been published continuously, fewer of its words would have altered. Neither the surviving Languedoc nor the French version contains any mention of pear trees or jewelry. In England, however, the medieval carol's career was disrupted.

Carol, noun and verb, comes from the Old French word *caroler*, meaning "to dance." Speaking strictly, Christmas favorites such as *Adeste Fideles* and *Silent Night* aren't Christmas carols but Christmas *hymns*, for a carol was by definition a dancing song. In pre-Cromwellian England, work customarily ceased for Christmas and did not resume until after Epiphany, the twelve intervening holidays being mostly occupied by gorging, swilling, caroling, and playing other traditional games considered anything but holy by England's Puritans. When these worthies came to control Parliament they quite accurately pointed out the pagan origin of most Christmas celebrations and, in 1647, outlawed the lot.

THE English Christmas carol went underground and printed versions all but vanished. Puritan scholarship was no more match for sentiment than anybody else's, and Christmas carols came back with Charles (that's *Carolus* in Latin, by the way) II, but Restoration publishers concentrated on new compositions, a publishing preference which persisted for well over a hundred years. Meanwhile, the perpetuation of pre-Cromwellian carols was dependent on what *The Oxford Book of Carols* calls "humble broadsheets of indifferent exactitude" and on the shifting and chancy memories of grandparents.

In 1850 the early sixteenth-century manuscript of a London grocer's apprentice was discovered concealed behind a bookcase and was found to contain, along with pious ejaculations, remedies for poisoned dogs, instructions for the breaking in of horses, and so on, the transcriptions of many songs popular in England in 1504. Other theretofore unknown manuscripts began turning up at about the same time, and the scholarly vogue of collecting, publishing, and comparing the orally surviving forms of pre-Cromwellian carols began with these early manuscript versions. Naturally a fair amount of garbling was exposed. In *The Twelve Days*, for instance, the grandmothers of Cornwall had installed Cornish birds for colley birds; those of



Somerset, a juniper tree for *une pertriz*. The pear tree flourished even more widely, and *everybody* was in covetous agreement on the "five go-old rings!"

But the exposure of these errors has not affected our artists, craftsmen, or choral unions much. Like most of the rest of us, they prefer their songs the way their grandmothers sang them, especially at Christmas. Some men's birds are always going to be other men's pear trees. □

Martha Bennett Stiles *is the author of* Dougal Looks for Birds, *which is a child's picture book on birdwatching.*

MUSIC ON THE AIR

Getting a fix on the present state of classical-music broadcasting in these United States

By Roy Hemming

✓ **News Item:** *The New York Philharmonic, which holds the record for the longest continuous symphonic broadcast series in U.S. radio history (1922–1967), returned to sponsored, nationwide, weekly broadcasts of its regular concerts this October—after an absence of eight years. Said Philharmonic President Carlos Moseley: "To be back on radio has been a long-sought goal. Letters literally* begging *us to restore the broadcasts have come from far and wide. Our gratitude to Exxon runs deep for making our return to the air possible."*

It would seem, judging from all the good news, that 1975 has been an "up" year for concert-music broadcasting. Add to the items cited above the live broadcasts this fall of the San Francisco Opera over KKHI in that city, those of the Chicago Lyric Opera over WFMT, and the annual return this December of the Metropolitan Opera to its weekly series of sponsored (by Texaco) nationwide broadcasts and the picture looks even brighter.

There's a catch, however. Most of these examples involve only a handful of our nation's major cities. And at least one classical music station, WHAS in Louisville, went off the air this fall. Another, WCRB in Massachusetts, dropped its AM classical-music programming although it is continuing it on FM and has expanded the number of live concerts it broadcasts on FM.

There are many more examples of both ups and downs—so many, in fact, that it is difficult to get a fix on the exact state of classical-music broadcasting in the U.S. as a whole right now. But, on the theory that a selective view is better than none at all, I talked to some of the people involved in broadcasting today in a few key areas, those who have been the most influential, whose stations have been the most imitated.

Of the more than 6,500 radio stations operating in the United States today, fewer than 3 per cent are involved in any significant way with classical music. According to the Concert Music Broadcasters Association, there are now thirty-nine commercial and sixty-nine noncommercial (mostly college-affiliated) stations in thirty-three states that devote *more than 50 per cent* of their daily programming to classical music. There are an additional twenty-one commercial and forty-six noncommercial stations in thirty states that program classical music regularly, but for *less than 50 per cent* of their total air time. California leads the list with fourteen stations, followed by Wisconsin with twelve, New York and Pennsylvania with eleven each, Michigan with ten, and Minnesota with nine. The vast majority are FM stations.

Since the CMBA was formed only five years ago, it has no exact figures for earlier years. But everyone agrees the number used to be higher.

"There's no question but that the number of classical-music stations has diminished greatly over the past twenty years, and that bothers me greatly," says Walter Neiman, president of the nation's oldest full-time commercial classical station, New York City's WQXR. "And most of the stations that have survived are much more reliant today on recordings, less on live music by far."

Although the total number of stations may be down, the number of listeners to existing stations appears to be higher than ever. WQXR, for example, estimates that its audience these days is 1,403,000 a week. When you consider that the total New York City radio audience is estimated at 12,788,000, WQXR's share becomes a fairly impressive percentage. And, of course, WQXR is not the only New York station broadcasting classical music (although it is the only one doing so almost full-time on both AM and FM).

One man who clearly feels optimistic about the growing size of the audience for classical-music radio is Ray Nordstrand, general manager of Chicago's WFMT and chairman of the CMBA's executive committee. "Our surveys indicate," he says, "that the concert-music audience has grown considerably throughout the U.S. since 1971, at a time when the listenership for other types of programming has either declined or remained constant."

In Boston, the executive vice-president of WCRB, Richard L. Kaye, says, "Our audience is numerically much greater than it was twenty years ago—and it's kept 'way ahead of just normal population increases. Twenty years

✓ **News Item:** *In a city whose local government is beset with headline-making economic crises, New York's WNYC celebrated its fiftieth anniversary this year as the nation's oldest municipally run station dedicated exclusively to public affairs and classical-music broadcasting, a bit bloodied, perhaps, by budget cutbacks, but still vigorously on the air. "And at a cost of only forty cents per person a year!" adds radio-TV commentator Lee Graham.*

✓ **News Item:** *Chicago's fine arts radio station WFMT announced the largest and longest advertising agreement in FM history—covering some 11,000 hours of classical-music programming for the next five years (through December 1980)—to be sponsored by the Talman Federal Savings and Loan Association, present sponsor of the station's all-night classical programs.*

✓ **News Item:** *New York's WNCN (now WQIV), until October 1974 the only station broadcasting primarily a classical-music format twenty-four hours a day in the nation's largest city, returned to that format in August following a year-long public campaign against the station's changeover to a progressive rock format. (RCA promptly took a full-page ad in the New York* Times *to celebrate the station's return to the classical fold.) Once again a private corporation made the return possible—in this case the GAF Corporation.*

ago we had about 80,000 listeners. Today it ranges from 180,000 to 225,000. What's especially encouraging is the dramatic upswing in interest among young people."

"We're sometimes accused of having just an old, effete audience," bemoans WQXR's Neiman, "but our surveys show that 16 per cent of our audience today is between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. That compares with 23 per cent for one of the market's biggest rock stations, WABC—not as big a difference as many might expect. And we're ahead of *all* the so-called middle-of-the-road music stations like WPAT (13 per cent) and WRFM (12 per cent). In the twenty-two to thirty-four age bracket, we have 22 per cent of the total audience, compared to WABC's 20 per cent and WNBC's 24 per cent. And at the upper end, age sixty-five and over, where we're often accused of having the bulk of our audience, we have 17 per cent—compared with WCBS' 16 per cent, WINS' 18 per cent, WOR's 21 per cent, and so on. So you see, classical music obviously appeals across the board to a sizable number of people of *all* ages."

A study by CMBA of listeners to more than twenty-five individual stations with a classical-music format showed them generally more affluent and better educated than the national average. More than 62 per cent of the families surveyed earn $15,000 or more; 15 per cent earn more than $30,000. The total of professional people and executives exceeds 70 per cent. The proportion with college degrees is also just above 70 per cent.

"I think there's a real feeling of demand on the part of more and more people for good music, and they'll go out of their way to hear it," says WCRB's Kaye. "When you can go into Central Park in New York City, as I did this summer, and hear Andre Kostelanetz conduct the New York Philharmonic in a program that was *not* a pops program but one with standard concert fare, and have 150,000 people turn out to hear it, or when a weekend at Tanglewood will bring in 50,000 paid admissions—well, things are looking good for classical music."

WQXR's program director Robert Sherman agrees, and feels also that the audience for classical music has grown more sophisticated and demanding in recent years. "That's why we've had to change the focus of some of our programs and move toward a more clearly classical image," he says. "We've upgraded the music we play on our luncheon and cocktail-hour programs, and on our *Bright and Early* program in the morning. We still program short works at these hours, because those are the 'drive' hours for automobile commuters, and these hours attract the most advertising dollars and pay our bills. But instead of playing Mantovani or pop-type mood music as we used to, we now play a Chopin étude or a Beverly Sills opera aria."

Economic belt-tightening has eliminated scriptwriters from most classical music stations, too, so that announcers today rarely get a chance to say more than what work is being played and who's playing it. In an age when pop disc jockeys are often known for their on-the-air outspokenness, this can be frustrating for some classical-station announcers. Occasionally, one will let loose—as did the announcer for Syracuse's WONO who said: "For those of you who believe that vulgarity is the garlic in the salad of life, here is Respighi's *Roman Festivals*."

Says WQXR's Bob Sherman: "We make a distinction at WQXR between an announcer and an on-the-air personality such as George Jellinek, Karl Haas, or myself. Naturally, a personality is going to let his opinions come out now and then. But announcers are not automatons, and if a particular piece of music moves them so that once in a while they want to say 'Wow!' when it's over, well, why shouldn't they!"

But dignity is the key word for a classical-music station's "air style" to WFMT's Nordstrand. For him, that also means no pre-recorded advertising jingles or so-called "production" commercials. Instead, WFMT insists that advertisers provide commercial copy that the station's own announcers read.

"We tried to do that," says C. K. Patrick, president of Cleveland's WCLV. The result? "We lost $35,000 over a three-month period. We decided that if we wanted to stay on the air, we'd have to accept pre-recorded spots. And the public's reaction was much less negative than expected."

"Years ago," says WQXR's Neiman, "you used to be able to say to an advertiser that you don't put the same ad into *Intellectual Digest* that you put into *Playboy*. But economic pressures within the advertising agencies have forced changes. There are few agencies today that can afford to prepare separate commercials for individual stations. It's just too expensive for a major advertiser who may also be in TV and print as well as radio. Finally the agencies said to us, 'Either you take the jingle or you don't get our business.' We took the jingle.

"But we found out something that surprised many of us," Neiman says. "While a commercial must not stick out of the environment in which it is presented, music commercials per se are not heinous to most listeners. Many, in fact, find some of them imaginative, charming, and pleasant. Obviously, if you have a raucous commercial coming right after the quiet ending of a Requiem, it's going to be disconcerting. So we try our best to buffer against that sort of thing. The commercials that we're likely to get complaints about aren't so much musical ones as *any* kind of commercial that talks down to our listeners and insults their intelligence. There are good commercials and bad commercials, offensive ones and inoffensive ones, and it doesn't matter what the production technique is."

WFMT's Nordstrand is not so sure. "We tried a jingle once, for an instru-

ment manufacturer, and we had over 1,000 complaints," he says. "If we ever played another jingle on WFMT, we'd probably have picket lines around the studio."

ALMOST as open to dispute as the question of commercials is that of program content. "Many commercial stations today still tend to play bits and pieces rather than complete works," says Dick Bungay, classical promotion manager for London Records. "That situation hasn't changed much over the past fifteen or twenty years. They'll play one movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight* Sonata, or just an aria from an opera. Much of that, of course, is dictated by the strictures of commercial considerations."

Neiman: "Our surveys show that 16 per cent of our audience is between 18 and 24."

Nordstrand: "The concert-music audience has grown considerably since 1971."

Sherman: "We've had to move toward a more clearly classical image."

WQXR's Bob Sherman agrees that that's true during what stations call 'drive' time. "We can't play the Bach *St. Matthew* Passion at 8 o'clock in the morning, much as we might like to. We're a fully commercial AM and FM station competing for advertising dollars to keep going, so our focus has to be different during certain hours. A noncommercial station, on the other hand, can afford to be a classical jukebox, playing one complete major work following another all day long. And, certainly, there are many listeners who like that. It's like having your own record collection without having to get up to change the records or make a decision as to what to play."

But Sherman believes that many more listeners prefer the "isolated program" concept he has helped to further at WQXR. One program, for example, may be devoted to "Great Orchestras of the World," another to "Piano Personalities," still another to "First Hearing," all at specific time slots during the week.

"And in prime evening time," says Sherman, "we do one- or two-hour specials—such as George Shirley's series on black composers, or one we've just started for the Bicentennial with William Schuman on American composers. On four nights a week, our specials include the live concerts—'live' on tape, that is—of the Boston Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Israel Philharmonic. And on Sunday afternoons, at the old traditional 3 o'clock time, we now have the New York Philharmonic. That's quite a line-up, and not just presenting complete works but complete *concerts* by major orchestras. But to be able to do that, we have to have a heavy, constant commercial load at other key times."

PIERRE BOURDAIN, the director of classical marketing for Columbia Records, believes that "people today react most favorably to those classical-music stations that give them a wide variety of really fine, special programming. I'd put WQXR in that category, WFMT in Chicago, and WCLV in Cleveland. There are some other classical-station people who look upon themselves as some sort of above-it-all keepers of the flame. They program for themselves, sometimes playing the same lengthy work, in several different versions, one after the other. They forget that if you're going to be a keeper of the flame, you have to buy the oil that keeps your flame alive—and that keeps you in business."

Whether a station adheres to the "isolated special program concept" or to the "classical jukebox concept," the playing of recordings makes up the major part of virtually all classical-music broadcasts. In fact, most stations' music libraries exist on the largesse of record companies that provide them with releases. "It works both ways," says Columbia's Bourdain, "for we subsist on their exposure of our recordings."

Ernie Gilbert, RCA's classical marketing director, says, "I suppose it sounds simplistic to say that radio stations are invaluable to the classical record business, but it's true. There's no other way to expose an auditory product except for it to be *heard*. You can have beautiful album covers and you can put all the ads you want in the papers, but until people can actually *hear* the music that you have to offer, it is all an abstraction."

"In the old days of 78-rpm records," says Bourdain, "you could go into a record store and listen to a recording before you bought it. With the coming of the LP record and its more delicate grooves, it became *de rigueur* for a customer to want a factory-sealed record. Few dealers can afford to take one copy of every release, bust open the skinwrap, and make each record available as a 'play' copy. What's happened is that radio has become the record buyer's listening booth."

"No one knows for sure just what impact a radio play has on the sales of a record," says London's Bungay. "I've seen a fairly obscure recording get played by a station in a particular area, and all of a sudden sales of that record jump in that area. On the other hand, I've also seen new releases get played with quite a bit of fanfare, and *nothing* happen as far as sales go.

"Some dealers will tell us that they're losing sales because people tape a recording off the air when it's played," Bungay adds. "Personally, I think taping records off the air is minimal. The people who do that are people who wouldn't buy records anyway. If they couldn't tape from radio they'd tape from library copies or friends' copies or something. Also, people who want good stereo sound aren't going to be satisfied with what they get taping it second-hand, especially off the air and onto a cassette."

"We've written off the segment that tapes records off the air," says Bourdain. "That's one of the prices we have to pay for getting airplay. But I think there are far more listeners who prefer to relax when they listen to records, and who don't want to have to go to all the trouble of *working* to tape off the air. To tape a classical work, you have to set and watch all the levels, and keep watching to make sure the tape doesn't get clogged in the pinch-roller halfway through, and worry about whether you can get it all on one side of the tape or have enough time to turn the tape over without missing anything. I think most people would rather go out and buy the record."

"I think radio is invaluable in turning people on to *new* works," says RCA's Gilbert. "People will hear an unfamiliar work on radio, or even part of a work, like 'The Battle on the Ice' from Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*, and then go to a store to buy it."

"The playing of classical records on radio definitely *builds* audiences for classical music," stresses London's

Bungay. "I know so many cases of young people, in particular, who started listening to a station and got hooked on a particular composer or period of classical music, and then spread out to other composers and periods. I feel very strongly that classical-music stations serve a function of proselytizing for the next generation of classical-music lovers."

Just as record companies benefit from classical-music stations, so too do musicians playing and getting paid for playing. Broadcasts do that."

At present there are more symphony orchestras broadcasting regularly over more stations throughout the country than ever. The list includes the Boston Symphony, the Philadelphia and Cleveland Orchestras, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Utah Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonia, and the Boston Pops. In addition, through the were on the air weekly, getting station clearances for the live broadcasts was often a problem. The Philharmonic, for example, originated from New York's Carnegie Hall at 3 o'clock on Sunday afternoons—which was noon on the West Coast. Tape has eliminated that problem. Since most major orchestras perform the same program more than once during any given week, tapes can be made of each performance, and the best one chosen for broadcast.

Freebies: The Sound of One Hand Washing the Other

Bungay: "No one knows for sure just what impact a radio play has on the sales of a record."

Bourdain: "We've written off the segment that tapes records off the air."

Gilbert: "Until people can actually hear what you have to offer, it is an abstraction."

Because most record companies know the value of airplay, they willingly "service" a station committed to a classical-music format with records. London's Bungay, for example, indicates that there are now about seventy-five radio stations that receive most of London's new releases each month at no cost to the station. The number should be at least doubled for RCA and Columbia. ("It's certainly more than 100, but less than 500," is all Columbia's Bourdain would admit publicly.)

"Our list has to be limited," Bungay says, "considering what it costs us to manufacture and import our records today." It's the same with Philips and Deutsche Grammophon, who also import all their records.

Stations that are unable to get on a record company's free list can—*if* they provide more than Sunday morning or one-hour-a-day tokenism to classical music—get most new releases from the major companies for about $1.25 a record (mostly to offset mailing and processing costs). This policy has been especially beneficial to college radio stations, many of which are predominantly classical.

"College stations," says RCA's Gilbert, "are caught between low budgets and a growing awareness of classical music among the student body. I believe that's where the real potential for future record sales is. But with today's tight budgets on our end, too, there are very few records we can give away. We have to consider what we're getting for our money. When we give a record to a station like WFMT or WQXR, we know it will reach a couple of million listeners. But the personnel time and costs of shipping a record to a small station where it may be heard by just a few hundred is a problem."

the nation's major symphony orchestras and opera companies. "Every time a station plays a live concert or a tape of one," says Dick Kaye, "it makes people aware that there *is* such great live music available to them. In terms of what is going to bring people into the concert hall, playing records has less effect."

That is one of the reasons why the American Federation of Musicians has cooperated in the syndication of broadcasts by most of our major orchestras, reducing or even waiving broadcast fees in some cases.

"There are two views within the union," Kaye points out. "One is the hard-and-fast idea that you should never do anything for nothing. The other is the point that if you don't get actual concerts on the air, then only *records* get on the air. The statesmen in the union understand that you must *promote* live music if you want to get more music."

nonprofit Broadcasting Foundation of America, a number of European orchestras and festivals can be heard regularly. And the Association of German Broadcasters makes available a wide variety of performances to American stations, as does the Dutch broadcasting service. These concerts give listeners a reason to turn on a particular station knowing they're going to get more than twenty-four hours of recorded performances. "What makes them so exciting," says WQXR's Neiman, "is the fact that they're a one-time event. You may never hear a particular work played like this or by these performers again."

What has made the proliferation of such concerts possible, of course, is the ability to tape them for rebroadcasting at times convenient to individual stations. Back in the pre-tape 1930's and 1940's, when the New York Philharmonic and the NBC Symphony

Tape, of course, has also made it possible for serious fluffs to be amended before radio listeners hear the broadcasts. If a soloist or player makes a noticeable mistake, the correct passage can be spliced in almost imperceptibly from another day's performance. "That," deplores New York *Times* music critic Harold C. Schonberg, "means that taped performances are not necessarily the real thing."

What happens if a conductor or a major soloist won't approve a tape for syndication? "It's happened," says James W. Keller, commentator for the Philadelphia Orchestra broadcasts. "There was a Rubinstein performance a few years ago that he wasn't happy about and wouldn't let us release—and that was that."

Most commercial stations are restricted in the number of commercials they can have during these taped concerts. With some of the European

tapes, moreover, there can be none at all. New York's WQXR, for example, does not carry "Dutch Concert Hall" or BBC tapes because the tapes are released by their respective organizations with the understanding that there can be no commercials whatsoever for the entire length of the program. "We just don't have an hour and a half or two hours we can give away like that," says Bob Sherman.

The syndication of live concert tapes has created what David Levenson, public relations director of the Cleveland Orchestra, calls "our orchestra's second audience." People who have moved out of the city and therefore no longer subscribe or attend concerts regularly any more "still keep in touch with the orchestra through the broadcasts—and they still send in money every year to support us."

The broadcast tapes also provide several orchestras with a lucrative fund-raising source every year. Both the Boston Symphony and Cleveland Orchestra, for example, now hold annual marathons over WCRB and WCLV, respectively, during which listeners may request the rebroadcast of a work from the tape archives in return for a specific donation to the orchestra.

Just how lucrative these marathons can be is shown by the Cleveland Orchestra's experience with three on WCLV. The first year's goal was $10,000—and $33,000 was raised. The second year's goal was set higher, at $40,000—and brought in $45,000. Last year the goal was $75,000, and, as broadcast producer-commentator Robert Conrad puts it, "with the recession we thought we'd be lucky to hit it. We got $102,000!"

The rebroadcasting of past concerts at other times is prohibited by union rules. In fact, a station may broadcast a given concert from the current season's syndication only *once*. In a world accustomed to annual TV re-runs, and in the light of recent commercial interest in the Furtwängler and Toscanini archives, some listeners argue that tapes now languishing in the vaults of various transcription trusts should be made available for the benefit of a whole new generation of listeners.

Dick Kaye, who manages the Boston Symphony Transcription Trust among his other broadcasting activities, has mixed feelings about this. "The Boston Symphony Transcription Trust has indeed preserved the masters of all our tape broadcasts, and they're locked away in a vault at the Boston University Library. There are some very great treasures in there, and as the years go by they're increasing. Every so often there's talk about putting together a 'Best of' or 'Most Interesting of' series. Personally, I want to see the amount of non-disc music that is broadcast expanded, but it's more important to expand the broadcasting of *new* material than to repeat from the past."

On the subject of repeats, there are also some who wish that popular daytime interview shows on classical-music stations would be repeated in the evenings for the benefit of professional men and women who work during the day and therefore miss them. In New York, for example, Bob Sherman's "Listening Room" on WQXR offers the opportunity to hear an extraordinary number of musical personalities over the course of the year—if you can catch them between 10 a.m. and noon. Similarly, WNYC's "Lee Graham Interviews," which are often devoted to serious music or musicians, are heard at 2 p.m. Since they're on tape, it would seem simple enough to rebroadcast them later in the evening—if only as a counterpoint to TV's Johnny Carson or Tom Snyder.

THERE's much more that can be written about the state of classical-music broadcasting today in many other parts of the nation. In some areas, there's an absolute dearth of classical music—and little apparent public concern about it. And in others, classical-music radio has never had it so good. But isn't that sort of the way it is with classical music *generally* in the United States today?

Roy Hemming *was program director of WAVZ AM/FM in New Haven, Connecticut, before becoming a writer and editor.*

The Art of Staying on the Air: Two Ways

Graham: "Many of us were tired of going from crisis to crisis every year over the fate of WNYC."

IN addition to her on-the-air duties, WNYC's Lee Graham has also been active during the past year as chairwoman of the Committee for Municipal Broadcasting in New York City. "We formed the committee," she says, "because so many of us were tired of going from crisis to crisis every year over the fate of [city-run] WNYC at budget time. I think we've been effective in proving that committees are much more than just names on paper. Mayor Beame even agreed to become honorary chairman of our committee, and has gone out of his way to protect the station."

Another woman who has actively spearheaded campaigns to keep classical-music stations on the air is Marguerite Sutherland of Mercer Island, Washington. Four years ago STEREO REVIEW reported on her work with Classical Music Supporters, an organization composed of nearly 14,000 households (with some members as far away as Canada), which supports and encourages the stations broadcasting classical music in the Seattle-Tacoma area.

This year Ms. Sutherland says CMS members are keeping a rather watchful eye on KXA, the area's only AM station that broadcasts classical music full time. A few years ago the station was playing only one hour of classical music a day because, as she says the station manager at that time told her, "classical music is the kiss of death to a radio station." Ms. Sutherland printed the manager's comment in her *CMS Newsletter*—and the war was on.

Sutherland: "As WNCN proved, serious-music listeners are extremely loyal to a station they enjoy."

Since the newsletter also printed the address of the station's owner in California, he was soon swamped with hundreds of letters and cards. Result: he came to Seattle to find out what was going on. The manager quickly resigned, and the owner made friends with Ms. Sutherland and converted the station to a full-time classical format.

However, that owner, now in his eighties, decided last year that he had to sell the station. According to Ms. Sutherland: "We spent months looking for a buyer friendly to classical music, and found an ideal candidate. But the attorney handling the sale sold it to someone else. The new owners have promised to keep the classical format, and I've pledged CMS support to KXA and its advertisers if classical programming is not weakened. As WNCN proved, serious-music listeners are extremely loyal to a station they enjoy. Advertisers like that, and wise owners use this loyalty to make their stations prosper."

The Man Behind The Philharmonic Broadcasts

If any one man stands out today as Mr. Classical Music Radio, it is Richard L. Kaye. The rotund, soft-spoken, somewhat shy Kaye presently holds down five jobs: executive vice-president of WCRB in Waltham, Mass. (just outside Boston); president of WONO, Syracuse, N.Y.; manager of the Boston Symphony Transcription Trust; manager of the Exxon-sponsored New York Philharmonic broadcasts; and a founding member of the Concert Music Broadcasters Association.

All of this activity makes Dick Kaye a hard man to pin down for an interview, but I succeeded in doing so this summer at Tanglewood—on a day when the Boston Symphony was unable to broadcast (or even tape for later broadcast) because of copyright restrictions on that particular day's program (Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*).

"I was recruited to broadcasting on a calisthenics mat at Harvard around 1942 or 1943," he reminisced. "I was huffing and puffing away, when the man doing the same next to me paused to ask if I knew someone who knew something about classical music who'd like to be a candidate for the college radio station.

"I was a chemistry major, but I loved classical music and had studied piano, so I applied. In due course I became the station's program director, and finally its president.

"I must say we had a most remarkable music department at that station: Martin Bookspan (today a contributing editor to STEREO REVIEW and the intermission commentator on the New York Philharmonic broadcasts), Alan Rich (now music critic with *New York* magazine), a fellow named Willie Sullivan who never went on in music but who became fairly well-known in TV, and myself. We all did some announcing, program preparation, engineering, *everything*.

"During the war I also got recruited into some electronics research work, which led me further into the technical side of radio. After the war, I got a job as engineer with a new station that had just been set up in Boston, WBMS, and which had just hired Marty Bookspan as music director. The day the station was to go on the air, some rather dramatic personnel changes were suddenly made. Before we knew exactly what was happening, the program director disappeared, and Marty and I found ourselves co-directors of the station."

In the early 1950's Kaye joined WCRB in Waltham. In 1954 he led the station into FM broadcasting and in 1956 into stereo broadcasting. The early 1950's was also the time the Boston Symphony Orchestra lost its network broadcasts, as the networks increasingly cut back on radio in favor of TV. WCRB approached the BSO management about broadcasting rights. "They were sympathetic to us," Kaye recalls, "but felt we wouldn't be able to afford the amount of money ABC and NBC had."

Eventually, however, WCRB was able to join WGBH (a noncommercial Boston station) and New York's WQXR in live broadcasting of Boston Symphony concerts—but with all sorts of restrictions designed to keep the broadcasts "noncommercial." WCRB, thanks to Kaye, was the first to broadcast a major orchestra in stereo. "The telephone company had never had a request for stereo lines for such a remote until then."

In 1958 a major broadcasting breakthrough occurred when Thomas D. Perry and Harry Kraut, then the BSO's manager and assistant manager, respectively, helped devise a new system under which all the Boston Symphony's concerts could be taped with union permission but with broadcast fees going to the orchestra's pension fund through the Boston Symphony Transcription Trust. It was the first such system set up by a major orchestra, and has since become a model for others. Dick Kaye has been manager of the Transcription Trust since 1963.

Today some 115 U.S. radio stations regularly broadcast the Boston Symphony using Transcription Trust tapes, all of which Kaye personally supervises. Some stations, like Chicago's WFMT, do so using quad-encoded tapes.

"The Trust was so well set up," Kaye says, "that production costs can be met by about five stations: WCRB, WFMT, WQXR, WGMS (Washington), and WFLN (Philadelphia). That means the cost of engineering and announcing, some BSO overhead, some of my salary, wear and tear on tape equipment, payment for the cost of tapes, copyright clearances, and so on. Virtually all other income beyond tape duplicating costs goes into the Trust for the orchestra. The Trust has brought in an enormous amount of money to the orchestra's pension fund. I'd hazard a guess of close to a million dollars."

Why is the sound of the BSO broadcast tapes generally so much better than that of other orchestras, including some whose broadcasts Kaye has helped launch (such as the Cleveland Orchestra)? "I like to think some of it is my own imaginativeness as an engineer," Kaye replies, "but the basic reason is Symphony Hall in Boston. Acoustically it's one of *the* great halls. So is the Shed at Tanglewood."

Not so Avery Fisher Hall in New York's Lincoln Center, from which Kaye is managing the New York Philharmonic's current new series of broadcasts. How has he approached the problem of getting a good broadcast sound out of Fisher Hall? "We checked over the hall very carefully," he says, "and for a basic sound—and in order to get a live concert ambiance—we decided to use two nondirectional microphones for the main stereo pickup. We placed these fairly high up, about on a level with the second tier, and reasonably far out into the audience. We found that this, in fact, gives us a fairly good sound.

"There were some special problems. We found our microphone placement did not delineate the solo winds well—but that's not a hall problem as much as one of individual player preference—so we're using an additional, single-directional mike aiming down and fairly close over the spot where the four woodwind soloists converge. Then, while we found the strings were there in volume, they didn't have character, so we've placed two directional microphones closer in, lower, and pointing down just slightly to the audience side of the violins and cellos.

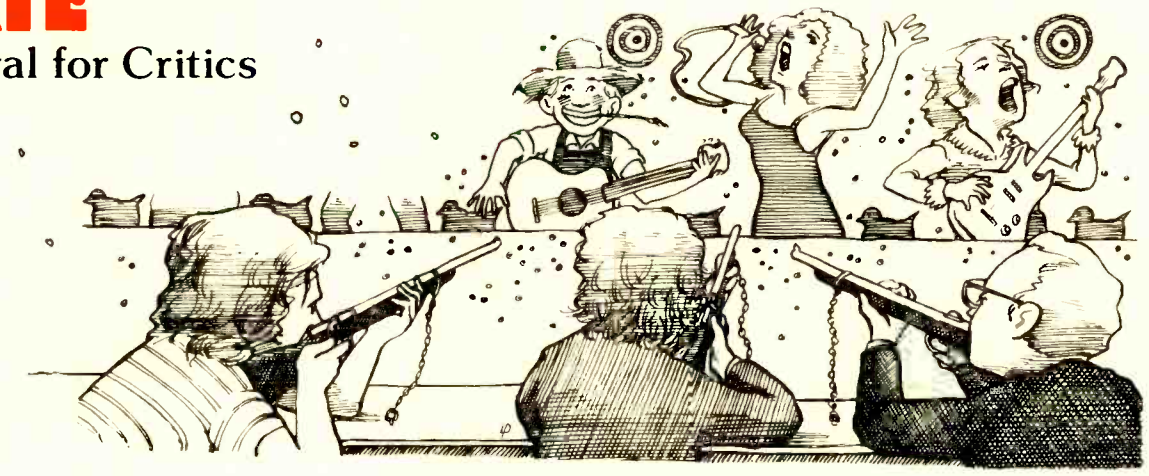
"Those five microphones were the standard ones for the first six broadcasts we taped. We use a sixth mike on occasion for a particular solo need. And when we mix the microphones, we also add a very small amount of reverberation—and I know some people will disagree with me on that.

"I'm trying to produce a sound the listener can relate to in terms of being in a concert hall—not what he is likely to hear on record. After all, the broadcasts are going to have all the distractions of the hall: the coughs, the small mistakes, even the times when someone drops an instrument—and people *do* drop them, or parts of them, like mutes. They're *live* concerts!" —*R.H.*

STEREO REVIEW's popular-music critics (and editors, too), for reasons having to do with their busy schedules and notorious biases, our chicken-hearted assignment desk, serendipity, propinquity, and the phases of the moon, don't always get a chance to review those performers and performances they'd really like to sink a tooth into. They can, of course, build up a considerable head of unused steam that way, so we are making available to them a pressure-relief valve that will let them get it off their chests, clear their passages, and let it all hang out. —Steve Simels, *Popular Music Editor*

TEN PERFORMERS I HATE

A Festival for Critics



TEN is a small percentage of the artists I would like to have silenced or, at the very least, relegated to a night club somewhere outside Council Bluffs, Iowa, for the duration of their careers. Selecting them has not been an easy task, and I cannot truthfully say that I hate them, but I find their performances most distasteful, and if I am to heap such a strong emotion as hatred on anyone, it would have to be on the behind-the-scenes people, the record promoters, talent coordinators, disc jockeys, booking agents, etc., whose encouragement is responsible for the success of inferior talent. At any rate, I submit that the music world could do very nicely without the following:

•**Dionne Warwick:** Truly the product of other people's talents and deceptive devices employed in modern electronic reproduction. Ms. Warwick has been unbearable since she left the Rhoda Scott Trio as a back-up singer.

•**The Hudson Brothers:** A cruel TV hoax has gotten out of hand. Flimsy as the tissue whose name they bear, but far less meaningful or useful.

•**Alice Coltrane:** As Alice Jones she would have gone unnoticed.

•**Dick Hyman:** A capable pianist whose impersonal style should have kept him in studio work. Columbia Records deserves numerous demerits for allowing him to insult the music of Jelly Roll Morton.

•**Bobbi Humphrey:** She has been posing as a musician for too long. Will the real Herbie Mann please stand up and end this joke?

•**The King Family:** As in the case of the Osmonds, the pill came too late to prevent disaster.

•**Diana Ross:** Berry Gordy's almost life-size Barbie doll. She served her purpose as a Supreme, but the Great Gardenia Hoax completely turned me off.

•**Sammy Davis, Jr.:** Some baby acts should never be allowed to grow up. A constant embarrassment, Mr. Davis is the eternal token.

•**Clifton Davis:** We knew he couldn't act, now we know he can't sing. When will *he* find out?

•**Billy Paul:** No redeeming qualities here. He may already be in Council Bluffs, but wherever he is, I hope he stays silent.

—*Chris Albertson*

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LISTS such as these are, I suspect, a good deal more fun to read than to compile. I've made my selections on the basis of performers who actually sell a lot of records, and so my judgments may be directed more to the vagaries of pop taste than to the awfulness of the artists themselves.

•**Cher:** Although she is a dazzling visual act in the tradition of great cabaret stars that stretches all the way back to Gaby Deslys, Cher has yet to develop any vocal style at all. Her charmless voice etherizes in recording after recording without a trace of wit or individuality.

•**Bobby Vinton:** The nadir of pop taste, beyond which, I hope, there is no place to go. There is a truly unique adenoidal giggle seemingly built into his voice, and his records always conjure up for me wishful thoughts of old-fashioned wardrobe trunks left indefinitely at railway stations, handmikes hooked up to high-tension lines, and/or strangulation by *kielbasa* (the last in honor of his newly found, and relentlessly exploited, guise of "Mr. Polish-American"—as if that group didn't already have enough trouble with jokes in bad taste).

•**Tom Jones:** Mr. Sweaty Sex, who blunders and bludgeons his material with all the *savoir-faire* of a bull moose cornering a Pekingese in heat. The voice itself isn't *too* bad, but his performances of calculated pandemonium are so hokey that you aren't likely to notice. A male Jayne Mansfield (may she rest), and about as pertinent.

•**David Bowie:** Packaged and promoted in America like some new brand of hair dye ("Is he, or isn't he?"), Bowie moves around in a welter of gimmicks and stunts that shriek more of desperation than of "the new decadence." There is (or was) a kernel of talent here, but he's mortgaged himself into the hands of the promoters and the exploiters whose antennae for insecure performers are remarkably acute. They're going to foreclose eventually, but not, of course, until the well runs dry.

•**John Denver:** I feel much more sympathetic toward Denver after reading Noel Coppage's perceptive profile of him in the September issue. Unfortunately, he still strikes me as the Jack Horner of pop, insistent on showing his beplummed thumb and expecting us all to join in the oh-what-a-good-boy-am-I chorus. So archly sunny, wholesome, and warm that his huge audiences seem to think of bread baking at the mere sound of him. To me, he's a musical Betty Crocker, a carefully assembled commercial image of The Plain Amuriken (as we'd all like to think of ourselves) designed to give legitimacy to the kind of ingredients that go into "home-

made" cake mixes—in this case, his songs. They are such careful blends of artificial additives that they can't help but look tempting on the plate, but there is something definitely spurious in the tasting.

•**Aretha Franklin:** A real tragedy. Six or seven years ago Aretha was about the most creative force in pop singing. The slide since then has been swift and sorry. Her albums today are stupid exercises in vanity and the kind of dumb-ass "showmanship" of the Mighty-Wurlitzer-Rising-Through-the-Floor-of-This-Very-Stage breed. She has apparently lost all interest in communicating, and is content to merely traipse through her material doing an impersonation of herself.

•**Melissa Manchester:** Together with Laura Nyro and Melanie, the three step-sisters to the Cinderella of Janis Ian. Janis hasn't quite made it to the ball yet, but Melissa has been more than happy to go in her place, dispensing her wheezy "philosophy," her gooey "compassion," and her muddy "sensitivity" to anyone she can buttonhole. That she's managed to buttonhole as many as she has proves only that it takes more than talent to make it in show biz. But the slipper will never fit.

•**The Carpenters:** Industrial-strength Preparation H, the Carpenters' music gives prompt, temporary relief to middle-class sensibilities still inflamed by the youth revolt of the Sixties. The Carpenters and their performances are to a large segment of the American public proof that young people are just as cozy and controllable and cute as they were in Andy Hardy's day. The glare of unreality about their work doesn't bother their fans, so grateful are they for a salve that soothes the pain and itching of burning social issues.

•**Bob Dylan:** The Prophet of an Entire Generation whose every enigmatic mutter is still parsed and studied by his acolytes. His early work was historic, mostly because he was in the right place at the right time, cleverly repeating in song the ferment and anger that were sweeping the campuses. Today, he is a very rich businessman biding his time for a full-scale return, when conditions are right. He remains a sphinx and lets others speculate. That's clever, for he is a sphinx without a secret.

•**Tony Orlando and Dawn:** More fun than a bon voyage party on the Titanic. Easily the worst group ever to perform publicly.

—Peter Reilly

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You understand, of course, that we're not being strict constructionists in the way we're using *hate* here. Obviously, I don't hate any of these people in the belly-grinding way I hate those sons of bitches at the Internal Revenue Service. Those listed here are simply those whose *work* consistently annoys me these days.

Even though we're thinking of contempt in this broad, almost casual way, some pop images are beneath it: poor old Jerry Vale, of course, and Liberace and Lawrence Welk and Sonny Bono and such. I surprised myself by finding I no longer care to expend the energy to loathe, in this sense, Frankie Avalon, Bobby Vinton, and all those other Clearasil-encrusted pets of Dick Clark from the late Fifties and early Sixties. I tried counting them all as one entry, but even collectively they remained so bland and ineffectual, so empty of any quality—talent, taste, body odor, you name it—that I couldn't be bothered. I tell you this to illustrate the irony that makes it a compliment, of a sort, to be on a list like this—it means someone recognizes you have the power to commit what he construes to be mischief.

"... the most annoying, most obnoxious songs available anywhere..."

•**Frank Sinatra:** He should have retired and *stayed* retired years ago; all that remains is his bitter arrogance. People have been tolerating that, but he seems to have taken their tolerance for admiration or fascination of some kind. Power corrupts singers as much as it does anyone else.

•**Helen Reddy:** Her approach is chauvinistic, abrasive, and politicking; her tone is nasal and tinny; and her phrasing is ill-humored. You *can* be a good liberal and admit you don't like her singing; show a little courage.

•**Elton John:** He proved he had talent with his first couple of albums, and then proved, by turning to visual *and* musical junk, that he'd much rather rake in some quick bucks than develop that talent.

•**Emerson, Lake & Palmer:** They give any music they touch a bad case of the uglies. Rococo uglies, at that.

•**Sammy Davis Jr.:** A credit to his wallet.

•**The Fifth Dimension:** Through the years they've probably filtered the color and feeling out of more pretty good songs than anyone. I hear more soul in the thumping of a manhole cover.

•**Harry Chapin:** Harry sounds like a local attempt at either D. H. Lawrence (the sensitive working-class boy Given a Chance) or John Steinbeck (always making up tales about the Little Man): he has an eye for the obvious and an awkward grip on the English language, and he frequently reminds me of the difference between the desire to be a writer and the desire to write. John-Boy Walton is going to turn out a lot like Harry, I predict.

•**New Riders of the Purple Sage:** Within a mile of where you live, there are probably ten people who can sing better than any of these lads can. If you want to hear this kind of thing done right, buy some Poco or some early Eagles. The New Riders have so little style and pay so little heed to details that I really can't understand why they don't have their own TV series.

•**Tony Orlando and Dawn:** Working an ethnic shell game is part of their act, with the thoroughly homogenized black girl routine played against genial Tony's ability to resemble any Caucasian minority you could want—Polish, Jewish, Italian, Greek, Spanish, *any*thing—and a precision-tuned knack for picking up the most annoying, most obnoxious songs available anywhere is the *rest* of their act.

•**Mac Davis:** He is utterly shameless in his shuffle-footed, sniffle-nosed pandering to some audience's presumed sentimentality. He also writes doggerel and sings it badly. "I ain't too talented, but I sure am wholesome" is what his performances say to me. I can stand wholesome people only if they keep quiet about it.

—Noel Coppage

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Back in October 1967, when this magazine published lists of "Ten Composers I Hate," I was among those who contributed. Looking back over that list today, I see how my tastes have changed. The Mahler and Berlioz I fled from then are among my favorites now. Sometimes the Point of Highest Irritation with any composer or performer is only a symptom of a forthcoming change of heart. I am sure the same is true in the world of popular entertainment. I "hated" the Beatles at first (or was it their squealing fans?), only to become a shameless admirer as I watched their career unfold, and to lament their passing when the group dissolved. I take my own prejudices, therefore, with the proverbial grain of salt.

•**Rod McKuen:** Every time I hear that husky voice intoning that simplistic, sentimental poetry, or murmuring the lyrics of a love song into my twitching ears, I mark time morosely, assuring myself as best I can, "This, too, will pass."

•**Sammy Davis Jr:** Mr. Davis is all energy and talent—totally misdirected in a tasteless hullabaloo of misfired jokes and gagging garrulity. Tripping over his golden chains and glittering like a rhinestone, he dances his way right out of my heart. His chief genius seems to be for selecting precisely those songs he ought never to allow himself to sing—and then singing them, at length and *ad nauseam*.

•**Julie Andrews:** My idea of the musical equivalent of a toothache—all that sweetness and self-conscious innocence sets my whole nervous system aflame with immediate resentment. As Winnie-the-Pooh did to

Dorothy Parker, she just makes me want to "fwow up."

•**Barbra Streisand:** La Streisand has the reverse effect—her abrasive personality and crude, sly, snide remarks combine with the aggressive harshness of her style to benumb all my sensibilities. Once she made me laugh; now, all wrapped up and delivered, like so many star performers, in a schemingly designed prefabricated fancy package, she simply wears me out.

•**Dolly Parton:** Put me side by side with a sentimental ballad sung by Miss Parton, milking a plot about a poor country girl brought to her downfall by heartless men or a child who goes to heaven with her puppy, and my usual reaction, once again, is to guffaw insanely. But then, most of the "Nashville sound" has that effect on me.

•**Cher:** Another package, this one as hard and cold as a tile wall. Cher's wooden expression, flashy getups, and monotonous voice send my hands to my ears and my eyes to my watch until it's all over.

•**Rodney Dangerfield:** From me, he'll never get "no respeck." I choose him out of a gaggle of equally unfunny comedians because he seems to be the most uninspired, repetitious, and depressing representative of the breed. But there's keen competition from his peers.

•**Phyllis Diller:** For sheer raucous vulgarity, nobody in the industry can come near her. Her patented shrill laugh sets my teeth on edge as I run shrieking for cover.

•**Johnny Cash:** Mr. Cash has taken the folk song and turned it into an instrument of terror. Again, it is the packaging that distresses—the overblown arrangements, the jingoistic recitatives, the smarmy trappings turn me off as much as the undistinguished voice and the lack of genuine style.

•**The Carpenters:** Here, too, I single out one group as symptomatic of a drooling, deadening performance approach that clings and cloys like a cologne that won't wash off. Or have they gone away by now? I haven't dared ask.

—Paul Kresh

"PERFORMERS I *hate*" is perhaps a bit too strong—it suggests too much concern, too much involvement, for what I really feel about certain indefensible acts being committed regularly before consenting audiences in what passes for the world of entertainment. *Dislike* is closer, and considering that I'd hardly even walk across the street to see or hear most of them, *indifference* is right smack up against. I'm so indifferent, in fact, that I find it a little hard to get down to specific cases; I'll settle instead for categories, trusting the wretched illustrations to leap to my mind (or yours) somewhere along the way.

Most likely to leave me fast asleep at the tube or whatever are the Mr. Wonderfuls, the Show Biz Pal Joeys (they are, alas, to be found in other lines of work as well), the (at best) modestly talented, invincibly conceited, and abrasively good-natured tap dancers some ephemeral fluke of public taste has thrust, shamelessly smirking, into the spotlight—shall we say, oh, Tony Orlando?

What put me to sleep in the first place was very likely one of those Sensitive Lyric Poets of the Rock Persuasion whose underblown, feebly bathetic rhetoric might once have kept him out of Freshman Comp. but these days will probably get him a doctorate. The fact that rock's center of gravity lies somewhere south of the belt buckle is an embarrassment to some of its more literate admirers (it shouldn't be—the same might be said of the waltz). Eagerly overreacting, they go tilt at the drop of a dithyramb, overpraising, with unerring aim, the underdone—like the work of, uh, Leonard Cohen.

I started yawning when they tried to get me to go along with one of those cloying, gratuitous, quite immaterial husband-and-wife jokes ("aren't they cute together, such

Warner Bros.

"... she sends my hands to my ears and my eyes to my watch..."

a lovely couple, and so in love"). I am devoted to both the idea and the fact of accomplished duo singing—Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper, Anne Murray and Glen Campbell, Nelson and Jeanette (!), Emmylou Harris and Gram Parsons—but Steve & Eydie, Sonny & Cher, and the like will get my goat before they earn any gold stars just for being *married*.

No awards for all that all-in-the-family stuff, either. As far as I'm concerned, the Kings, the Osmonds, the Jacksons, and the Trapps can sing together, play together, and stay together—without me. So can all the sisters, all the brothers—Lennons, Pointers, Hudsons, Smothers, others.

And of course I'm *never* home to any child performers, most particularly those pathetic tykes—Lena Zabaglione and all the rest—pushed out there on the runway to innocently peddle lewd wares before they're old enough for training bras.

I'm also notorious for shrugging out from under all heavy musical trips; song lyrics ecological, sociological, and political (sexual or otherwise) will always find me out of town. Sinner that I am, I would prefer not to be sandbagged unawares under the guise of entertainment by shrill accusers, public scolds, or any patriotic bores, whether wrapped in the flag or burning it. So much for you, Pete Seeger, Bob Dylan, Helen Reddy, Buffy Ste. Marie, Barry Sadler, etc.

I must confess, too, that I am deaf to the charms of scat singers, perhaps because I consider the voice the first, best instrument, and using it to imitate some lesser, mechanical music maker perversely unnecessary and wasteful. Equally dispensable are the phonologically wayward, those who try to persuade us there is soulful significance in their ability to turn any ordinary vowel into a triphthong. Paul Williams and Cher Bono come easily to mind, and their company is not a small one.

And away, while we're at it, with all those song stylists, the ingenious warblers who solicit approval—nay, *admiration*—for having so disguised a familiar tune that we no longer recognize it. I also give my leave to leave to all belters, shouters, hollerers, and sweaters, all screamers without apparent cause, of whatever sex, who think a song is an excuse to throw a conniption fit.

The mischief that Rex Harrison wrought in the role of 'Enry 'Iggins is with us yet, actors and actresses still believing (or being told) that singing is easy. Richard Harris, Tony Randall, and others already having demonstrated otherwise, what are, say, Telly Savalas and Dennis Weaver trying to prove?

And before I forget, to hell with all those anti-culture Vandals hopping about painting moustaches on the Mona Lisa, watering the wine, turning Shakespeare into comic books, Debussy into Moogish jingles. I refer, of course, to those engaged in the jazzing of the classics, the whittling down of cannon balls so they might serve as sling shot and spit balls for small bores. Tomita, ELP, and other such purveyors of denatured goods qualify, but consider the champ, Waldo de los Ríos, who has a whole new album of chicka-boom-chick classics on the Warner Brothers label. There he stands on the back cover, holding in his hands a tiny bass viol, trumpet, violin, and piano. On the disc itself he gives a perfect demonstration of how to make nothing out of Something. It's the very last thing in the world we need.

—William Anderson

I FIND it somewhat constraining, in compiling a list such as this, to be limited to musicians, but fortunately they compensate by being easy targets. Actually, the hardest challenge is bucking the tides of your own jaded inclination (they increase as the years roll by and the music peters down to computerized professionalism) to *assent* to each new permutation of the banal with a certain twisted pleasure. When two of the best songwriters of the Sixties, Van Morrison and Lou Reed, make albums like "Veedon Fleece" and "Sally Can't Dance," it is pointless elitism not to accept the products of more diminutive talents, particularly when the fact that they never represented anything to respect in the first place adds so to their pagan charm.

On the other hand, there are those who purvey a product so stupid, so lifeless, and at the same time so insultingly *pretentious* that even I, who listen to almost anything and have a highly developed taste for absolute garbage, can find no excuse for them. It

is not only that their music is badly played (quite often, in fact, it is at least technically proficient), but that there is in it no discernible trace of the spontaneous, brash, life-giving energy which vitalized and validated pop music in the first place. The Rolling Stones may have a *right* now to be cold, but the names on the list that follows have earned nothing of the kind, either because they were born cold or because they smothered the spark so early in the game and bought their own myths so quickly that even one-time fans are turned off.

•**Emerson, Lake & Palmer:** Positively *the* most overbearing, mechanically strenuous, frenetically irritating band alive today. The all-time worst example of the excesses accruing to the myth of the "supergroup," they have not, in their five years together, come up with a single memorable melody. What's worse in their case is that none of the three of them has ever played a decent solo, a particularly stunning achievement since practically all they do throughout their three-hour marathon concerts is play endless solos.

• **Queen:** A British entry of more recent vintage, Queen's records are tolerable, but any place they happen to be performing is a torture chamber. I once saw them at the Uris Theater in New York. I had a headache from mixing beer and wine at a press party that afternoon, and when their guitarist revved up—strident, shrill, pure steel wool—my lobes began to throb with a vengeance. When the lead singer, Freddy Mercury, began to yowl in a fervently hideous Robert Plant imitation, I made a dive for the lobby. When I got there, I found half the audience ahead of me.

•**John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra and Chick Corea's Return to Forever:** Jazz is healthier than its Cassandras would have you believe, but their doom-yaps gain more credence every time a record by one of these "cosmic" configurations of once-promising musicians is spun at a "progressive" rock station. Why is it that when musicians get religion the fire gets flushed out with the secular naughties? *I* don't know, but if you have the exact equation, I wish you'd impart it via divine pigeon-drop to Chick Corea, who makes haunting solo albums and yet leads a band that is one of the most unlistenable sellouts in jazz.

•**Bad Company:** If you took away the vocals from recent hits or even randomly selected tracks by groups like Bad Company, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and Aerosmith, even their most fanatical adherents would have trouble telling one from another. For those listeners who feel that they must have some kind of inside line on this sort of thing, Bad Company is the one with more beefcake/chest-hair, more lyrics claiming that their singer is a "bad man," and so much more plod to the groove that they constitute a kind of brandy-addled Long March.

•**David Bowie:** He sings like an electric eel expiring on a rotisserie, and those glottal squiggles are not so much fey affectation as trilling rage at the insufficiency of his talent. He writes strings of words so mired in self-deceit that they are a kind of *gauche* futurist poetry. Rather than a sci-fi messiah, he is the last, most absurd pop star to be molded out of the tacky flamboyance of the Sixties. When the end of the world comes, I promise it will *not* look or sound like this.

•**The J. Geils Band:** They may well be the hottest, razor-strappinest, high-steppinest, funkiest, jivetalk bar-band in the world, the blackest dudes in white rock. But what they fail to realize is that in 1975 all those achievements are irrelevant. Their first album blistered the synapses indeed, but five years and six albums later they have yet to surpass it, having hustled themselves instead into a blind alley where they refuse to deviate a silly millimeter from their formula.

•**Robin Trower:** Can you name a thing more ludicrous and passé than Jimi Hendrix guitar riffs and spaced-out lyrics plowing on into the mid-Seventies? Answer: A timid Englishman carving out pallid imitations of Hendrix's sounds and stories without an ember of their progenitor's fire.

"He sings like an electric eel expiring on a rotisserie."

•**Todd Rundgren's Utopia:** Poor Todd. He used to write some of the sweetest treacle in popdom, sad love songs in which the lack of requital was a foregone conclusion, and so wimpy that they validated themselves as hits and as pop art simply on the basis of their incredibly mawkish authenticity. But Todd, a gifted musician, fell prey to that rampant contemporary virus, the desire for "legitimate" recognition as a "serious artist." The result: mind-flattening thirty-six-minute instrumentals with titles like *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* and a not unexpected failure to achieve the commercial success he thirsted after. In fact, these sonic assaults may very well be his vengeance tantrums.

•**Jethro Tull:** Ian Anderson is an unnecessarily crummy curmudgeon who plays flute as if he bought a Roland Kirk cheat book yesterday and sings as if his tonsils were sheathed in flypaper. His band no longer knows how to play anything but the simplest circular progressions—no wonder, since he's been writing the same song for five years. That part of his audience not already asleep is falling off, which is also understandable, since most of his recent albums are made up of that song in its forty-minute version.

• **George Harrison:** George is actually too pathetic to hate, but one finds it difficult to forget his most recent tour, for which Krishna's blandest visible adherent charged ten bucks a ticket in spite of the facts that (a) he can no longer sing; (b) his new songs were uniformly pabulumesque and (with a couple of tortured exceptions) he didn't do his old ones; (c) his guitar playing is weak-kneed; (d) Billy Preston, perhaps the most obnoxious single performer in rock, stole the show; (e) nobody likes Ravi Shankar any more; and (f) the Beatles are at their rest.

—Lester Bangs

●

I DON'T know, maybe I'm getting old, but it's become increasingly harder for me to work up sufficient passion to really hate *anybody* these days. Had somebody asked me to do this five years ago, I could have had a field day. I despised just about everybody who was big then—the Grateful Dead, Leon Russell, Carole King—but I've since come to realize that I was probably reacting more to the over-adulation of their fans than to anything intrinsic in the music. And today, with pop at its lowest ebb since the days of Patti Page, I find it almost impossible to work up much more than bemused indifference to the musical garbage we're surrounded with. Still, I'll give it a go (cheating a bit by occasionally substituting schools of performers rather than individuals), and if boycotting ever comes into vogue in rock-and-roll, these would be my first candidates.

•**Roberta Flack:** There was once a popular rock-and-roll band called the Vanilla Fudge with a specialty of taking well-known r-&-b numbers and performing them at about one-tenth their original speed. If those four Italian boys who composed the Fudge were magically metamorphosed into one large black woman, she'd be Roberta Flack, who has somehow convinced people that somnambulance is synonymous with soul. I find her the single most boring performer now before the public.

•**The Nouveau Nostalgia Movement:** We have with us these days a large number of performers whose theatricality cannot disguise the fact that they have absolutely nothing to say and whose attitude toward our collective musical past is not, as they would have you believe, affectionate and loving but condescending and insulting. Among these affronts to musical sensibility I include Bette Midler, the Pointer Sisters, Manhattan Transfer, and Bryan Ferry. Listening to any one of them is, in a small way, degrading.

•**David Bowie:** The single worst thing to happen to rock music since the deaths of Brian Jones, Janis Joplin, and Jimi Hendrix.

•**Labelle:** Even in their early Sixties heyday, when they made a few great records, they were strictly minor league in comparison with the other girl groups around, and today, in those ridiculous outer-space outfits that are reminiscent of what Raymond Massey wore in the film version of *Things to*

Come (nothing dates as badly or as fast as the futuristic), they're *still* minor league. Had it not been for a talented producer (Allen Toussaint, and why isn't *he* a star?), they'd never have appeared. But, if nothing else, they've forever ended speculation about whether Gays are smarter than Straights. Thanks, girls.

•**Barry Manilow and Melissa Manchester:** I lump these two together because they're both cashing in on their connection with Bette Midler, they're both on Arista, and they both make me urp. All that forced show-biz enthusiasm could bleach muslin at ten paces. Rock's greatest unintentional coincidence of the year is that *Mandy*, Manilow's disgustingly maudlin hit single, is also a slang term for a well-known English brand of tranquilizers. "You kissed me and stopped me from shaking," indeed.

•**John Denver:** Johnny Mathis disguised as a hillbilly. He has never written a decent song, his voice is an Irish tenor only a whit less offensive than Dennis Day's, and, as far as I can tell, his only function is to provide adolescent girls with records to cry over in the privacy of their bedrooms.

•**Phoebe Snow:** *The* most overrated artist of the day, a white girl who sings the blues and is found wanting, a songwriter who makes Harry Chapin look like Vladimir Nabokov. That she can be taken seriously when there are such talented girl singers as Sandy Denny and Linda Thompson around is no less than mind-boggling.

•**David Bromberg:** The most repulsive folk performer since the days of the New Christie Minstrels. If he hadn't played (poorly) on a Dylan album (his worst, of course) no one would ever have noticed him. If he's ever had an original musical idea, he's kept it a neat secret up 'til now. This is the kind of facile picking that gives hacks a bad name.

•**Jazz-Rock:** I don't care *what* anybody says, 99 per cent of this stuff (with the possible exception of Larry Coryell) is unadulterated trash, listenable only if you're totally zonked out. Prime offender is Mahavishnu John McLaughlin, whose guru act is itself an affront (it'll serve his fans right if he goes country-and-western), but as far as Chick Corea, Weather Report, and the rest go, I'd prefer a new edition of the Spanish Inquisition. Sterile and, what is worse, grievously pretentious.

•**Disco Soul:** Something happened when Otis Redding died, I guess. At any rate, black music is at an all-time low these days, as a trip to any disco should convince you (and don't tell me about Stevie Wonder either—he's got a jive streak in him a mile wide, and I tend to agree with the critic who said that he plays more instruments badly than anyone since Paul McCartney). With a few exceptions (there's still some real music coming out of Memphis, courtesy of Willie Mitchell, and if reggae catches on, things could pick up), what passes for soul these days is about as moving as a doctoral dissertation on the circumcision of tropical fish. The worst offenders? Gloria Gaynor, Barry White, the Gamble-Huff hit factory, and the resurrectionist responsible for turning Monti Rock III into Disco Tex. —*Steve Simels*

Apple

"... as welcome in rock as a Baptist sermon at a poker game."

I PREFER to say "do without" rather than "hate." It is too emotionally expensive to hate someone unless you have the opportunity to do them some real dirt. I also have difficulty in identifying ten disposable pop performers—the names change so quickly, and besides, every once in a while one of the Great Avoidables surprises me and does something well. So, a compromise: I will name five individuals for the sake of scandal, and flesh out the list with types of performers who particularly irritate me.

•**Bob Dylan:** It is extraordinary how, with so little talent, Dylan could have established himself as a demigod. Leaving aside his miserable, nasal whine, his clumsy rhythm guitar playing, and his hopelessly amateur passes at the harp, there is the matter of his songs: there are so few good ones, and the overwhelming majority of them are so sloppy, pompous, and even snidely condescending. In my opinion, Dylan constructed his image very carefully—the lonesome, brooding anti-hero—and was absolutely correct in gauging what motivated the thoughts and actions of his generation: a desperate, frantic, and ultimately cowardly refusal to grow up. He gave the young excuses they were quick to turn into reasons.

•**Barry White:** The most successful exponent of that deadly musical vapidity known as "disco-soul." He has written, *in toto*, one song, plus any number of variations on it. The gist of them all is the same: "Mama, my love gonna come down on you like a squatting hippopotamus." Ugh.

•**George Harrison:** Potentially a very tasteful and occasionally even a forceful rock guitarist, he had more imagination fifteen years ago than he has now. For a brief time he seemed to show promise as a composer, though his lyrics were usually overblown. But since his solo career began he has steadily rid himself of whatever style he once had, perhaps as a result of embracing a religious system which, while it may rid one of the burden of ego, substitutes for it a smug and bloated sense of the superiority of one's inferiority. Bland and preachy, Harrison's music is as welcome in rock as a Baptist sermon at a poker game.

•**Curtis Mayfield:** After a distinguished career as writer, producer, and lead singer of the Impressions, one of the greatest of the black groups, Mayfield went solo in 1970, losing or discarding his common sense and most of his talent in the process. He replaced it with a blowsy, stuffy attitude and took to addressing himself to such topics as "Whither America?" and "What is the condition of the human spirit?" He compounded these errors by singing in a monotone falsetto *all* the time, where once he had used that trick sparingly and to passably good effect. Borrring.

•**Barbra Streisand:** The term "genius" has been applied to her frequently, if inaccurately, for most of these last fifteen years. To me it all smacks of that same canny exploitation that has marked the career turns of Dylan, though where Dylan has gone after Woody Guthrie's old audience, Streisand has gone after Judy Garland's.

•**Little Mary Tulip:** This female folksinger's pact with the devil remains in force—she will *never* lose the sweet purity of the voice that has filled coffee houses and record-company coffers for nigh onto twenty years now. Her extensive real estate holdings have not been permitted to interfere with her principles, she can still cry at the premature extinguishment of a lightning bug, and her three kids are enrolled in a Life School somewhere in the Arizona desert where they manufacture granola cookies under license from the Highbush Cranberry and Wild Hickory Nut Foundation.

•**The Armchair Streetfighter:** His abrasive vocals are a thunderously cathartic mixture of urban guerrilla, alternate lifestyle, counterculture, revolution, and cleansing fire—all strictly on the rhetorical level, you have to understand.

•**The Group That Is Finally Getting the Credit It Deserves:** Well, really *two* groups—the one that made it big with the pimple set ten years ago and is in the throes of a revival engineered by now comparatively grown-up First Fans convinced of its Social Significance, and another that *didn't* make it ten years ago but has hung on long enough for a few members of its clique to muscle their way onto the platform to acclaim them. The world will reject both these fave raves, of course, thus proving once again that ultimate good taste is given to only the few.

•**The California Organic Food Farm Folkie Band:** Pity the People, love Mother Earth, reverence all the Jack Rabbits, Starlings, and Coyotes. Certainly . . . but don't get any of it on *my* music.

•**Otis Larynx:** If you howl loud enough, sweat long enough, and move fast, you can keep any number of people from finding out you can't sing while you give them a tantalizing, if scarcely accurate, glimpse of "the black experience" and grant them absolution from the sins of their grandfathers. That's *something*, but it ain't music.

—*Joel Vance*

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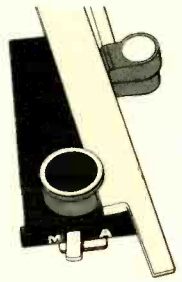

There are some who believe that a single-play turntable is somehow inherently better than a multiple-play unit. All right—the Z2000B *is* a single-play turntable. Its capacity to function as a multiple-play unit offers convenience with no compromise of performance. The *automatic* mechanism which gently indexes the arm, lifts it at the end of play, returns it to the arm rest and shuts off the motor—is completely disengaged during record play. A 2-position control sets the proper vertical tracking angle for single or multiple play. The Z2000B can truly be called the automated, single-play turntable with multiple-play capability.

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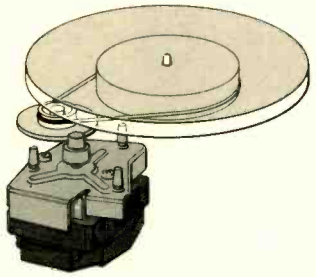

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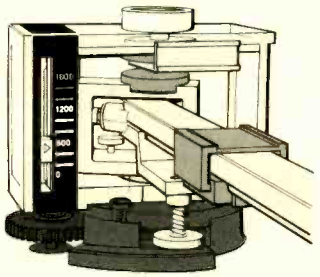

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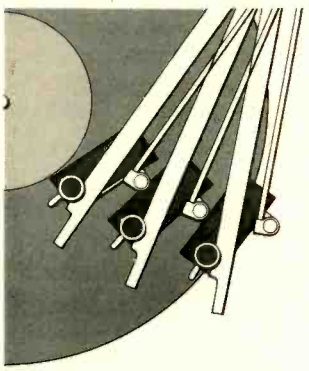

The grooves of a record are cut by a stylus that travels in a straight line. Conventional playback tonearms move in an arc. The difference between these two paths is called "tracking error." Simply stated, tracking error launches a cycle of distortion and record wear. In good design, the error is averaged over the record so that distortion is minimal. But such compromise was unacceptable in the Z2000B. What Garrard engineers did about it was summed up by High Fidelity Magazine which described the Zero Tracking Error Tonearm as "...the best arm yet offered as an integral part of an automatic player." The Z2000B is the *only* automatic turntable in the world without tracking error.

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CIRCLE NO. 22 ON READER SERVICE CARD

EMMYLOU HARRIS

By Carol Offen

EMMYLOU HARRIS' recording of *If I Could Only Win Your Love* reached the top of one of the charts of best-selling country singles in the middle of September, and her album "Pieces of Sky" was in the top ten on another. Although she doesn't knock success, she can't help wondering why she was an underground country artist one day and a commercial success the next. As the singing partner and protégée of the late Gram Parsons, Ms. Harris developed a small but intense cult following a few years ago. Now she's drawing crowds and selling records with the same country-rock fusion Parsons pioneered but couldn't broaden enough for a wide audience.

"Sometimes I stop and think, 'What am I doing *wrong* that makes this music acceptable to so many people?' " she says with a laugh. "What *is* it? I wonder because I'm really so mistrustful, and I'm trying very hard to be true to myself."

The obvious integrity and depth of Ms. Harris' music explain at least the critical success of "Pieces of Sky" (Reprise), her first major solo album, as well as her live act. Her voice has been compared to Linda Ronstadt's, but it has a beauty and expressivity all its own. She shies away from the label "country-rock," explaining, "I never got off on 'country-rock' because there was nothing pure about it at all. Gram was never trying to do country-rock; he was doing country *and* rock, and that's what I'm trying to do."

The album, though it was recorded in Los Angeles, is distinctly country—with early tunes such as the Louvin Brothers' *If I Could Only Win Your Love* and a few modern ballads that include Billy Sherrill's *Too Far Gone*. The only song by Ms. Harris on the album, *Boulder to Birmingham*, is a strong, very personal number with a decidedly folk element. Her live act, well-paced and diverse, includes several early rock songs, such as *Shop Around*.

Although the Alabama-born singer grew up in the South (in North Carolina and Virginia), her interest in straight country music didn't emerge until she began working with Parsons in 1972. "He had a natural feel for the music and I just picked up on it," says Ms. Harris, whose background was in folk music. "I'd never tried to do that kind of thing before, but I think Gram knew I had a natural talent for it. So, without telling me he was going to do it, he decided to teach me to be a country singer. After listening to the music Gram turned me on to—the Louvin Brothers, George Jones—it was as if it had been around me all my life and I could never hear it. It was really a big change in my life," she added, her soft-spoken voice almost at a whisper.

She pushed her long straight brown hair away from her face as she picked up the black afghan she'd been crocheting. Wearing patched jeans and tennis sneakers, the twenty-seven-year-old singer seemed strangely at ease in the posh St. Moritz Hotel room overlooking New York's Central Park. New York is almost like home for Emmylou Harris. It is where she learned her trade as a folk singer in the late Sixties, working mainly at Gerde's Folk City. She'd dropped out of the University of North Carolina in 1967 and then gave up plans for drama school for a shot at a music career.

"I'd been reading *Sing Out* magazine for five years, and I was under the impression there was this huge audience for folk music, but it had all disappeared." Though it was a frustrating period, she made some valuable acquaintances in the music community, including David Bromberg and Jerry Jeff Walker, and also began writing songs.

AFTER a couple of years in New York, she signed a recording contract with Jubilee Records that resulted in her first album and a four-year commitment that now seems like a bad dream.

"I had absolutely no control over that album. And they had me. They owned 50 per cent of my publishing, for one thing. I had a lawyer who told me to sign it," she said with a shrug, "and I didn't know anything about that. *Man*, if I had to give anybody a piece of advice in this business, it's not to sign *anything*," she said, pounding the air with her fist, "until you really know every word of what you're signing, because you can just get *trapped*."

Shortly after the album was released in 1970, Ms. Harris gave birth to her daughter Holly (her short-lived marriage ended in divorce). Putting her career plans behind her, she went back to Washington, D.C., where her parents lived.

"I had other things to think about besides music then—like paying the rent." She earned a living waiting on tables and showing model homes. "And music had become genuinely painful for me." But gradually, at the insistence of friends, she began singing in local clubs. "It was a good transition for me, because in Washington there was no music scene. There was just a very open-minded public, and it was very laid-back. I didn't have to feel like I was under a microscope."

For about a year she worked six nights a week, taking home as little as $5 on a slow night. "At the end of that year I had no voice, and I think my nerves were like the end of a piece of twine. But I was very lucky, because I always had one thing to keep me going and that was my daughter. I never needed anything besides music and her."

While playing at the Cellar Door in Washington she met Chris Hillman, a former Byrd, who introduced her to the Flying Burrito Brothers. They asked her to join their band. One week later, before she'd even had a chance to pack, the group had split up. However, Hillman did arrange for his former colleague, Gram Parsons, to hear her. Parsons immediately asked her to record with him, and about a year later she did "GP" with him, then accompanied him on his spring 1973 concert tour. That summer she joined him on his last album, "Grievous Angel."

The tour with Parsons was a relatively carefree period for Emmylou. "All I had to do was go up there and sing. I didn't have to worry about a thing. I needed to have that taken off my shoulders because I'd never enjoyed performing before I started working with Gram. I don't think I really believed in what I was doing." The Parsons/Harris duets on "Grievous Angel," particularly, display what she calls the "natural duet" the two had.

> *"...if I thought I had anything to do with people getting turned on to George Jones I would really feel like I'm accomplishing something."*

After Parsons' death later in 1973, Ms. Harris toured with a band for about a year before she recorded the Reprise album. "I just had to start working immediately, but I was doing it like a zombie. It was a good band and it was really painful for me to fire them and go with the Hot Band. But I felt there was a chance to bring this music to a lot of people, and these were the musicians to do it with. But I'll always be indebted to those guys because they really held me up and helped me get through that year."

Among the musicians who make up the Hot Band are a few members of Elvis Presley's band: James Burton on electric guitar, Glen D. Hardin on piano, and Ronnie Tutt on drums. "I think I have the best country band in the business," she said proudly, then paused for a moment, as if the sacrilege had caught in her throat. "Well, maybe I shouldn't say that. But really, I would stack my band up alongside the Strangers [Merle Haggard's band] any time."

Emmylou Harris and the Hot Band apparently draw a large noncountry following, too. "I haven't figured out yet why people come to see me," she says seriously. "I'm doing more country music than most of the people playing on country bills in high schools in West Virginia."

That's no exaggeration. Ms. Harris' country repertoire is decidedly hardcore. "I think I'm getting people at my concerts who are getting into country through the back door, and I've really tried to turn people on to the roots of the music. I'd rather have somebody come see me and, instead of going out and buying my album, go buy a Louvin Brothers album and experience what I experienced the first time I heard it. I would really get off on that. And if I thought I had anything to do with people getting turned on to *George Jones*," she said, her voice rising excitedly, "I would really feel like I'm accomplishing something in my life." She laughed at the dramatic note, but the remark was sincere. She reveres Jones.

Ms. Harris plans to do more writing and is hoping to put together a bluegrass show—as her own opening act. But she doesn't like to look much further ahead. She's enjoying her newfound security, but at the same time she's determined to keep her priorities in order. "It's really very hard. The pressures get really great, but I don't want to compromise. I'm not going to do music that I don't get off on. I mean, if somebody says, 'Do this song and it'll definitely be a hit,' well, a 'hit' just doesn't *mean* that much to me." □

The Dual tonearm.

Some of the ways that "precision makes the difference."

The essential beauty of a tonearm is not in its appearance, but in the performance of its critical role in the interaction of stylus and record. The conversion of groove modulations into music—as well as the life of one's records—is significantly influenced by every aspect of tonearm design: geometry, balance, mass, resonance, bearing friction and the application of stylus pressure and anti-skating.

Serious music lovers know this. And some who are now Dual owners tell us they wish they had understood more about tonearms hundreds of dollars in ruined records earlier.

If you are uncertain about the quality of your present tonearm, here are some guidelines to consider. They are the design principles that allow every Dual tonearm—even on Dual's least expensive model—to produce optimum performance from today's finest cartridges and maximum longevity from all records.

Why a straight line is the preferred shape

The effective length of any tonearm is the distance between the pivot and the stylus tip. A straight line—the shortest distance between these two points—achieves maximum rigidity and lowest mass. Both highly desirable characteristics. Tonearms whose shape deviates from the straight and narrow may appear interesting, but their unnecessary mass and hence increased resonance can only detract from the quality of music reproduction.

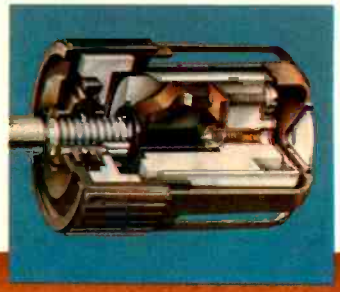
Why stylus force must be applied perpendicular to record.

Stylus force should be applied in such a way that there is equal pressure on each groove wall. This balanced pressure should then be maintained throughout play, independent of groove velocity, location, or turntable leveling. Further, tracking force should be constant even under (all-too-frequent) record-warp conditions.

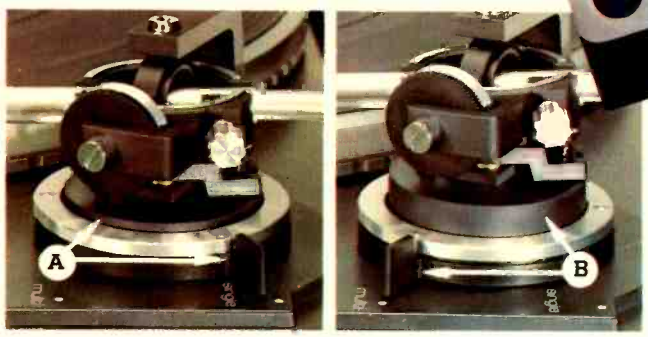
All these requirements are met by Dual's technique for applying stylus force: a long coiled spring centered around the vertical pivot. With this system, the tonearm tracks flawlessly even under such extreme conditions as the chassis being tilted 45° or more.

Mechanical sensor indicates when Dual 510 semi-automated tonearm is positioned precisely over 12" or 7" lead-in groove.

Unique counterbalance of Dual CS701 houses two separately tuned anti-resonance filters which absorb resonant energy in the frequency ranges of the tonearm/cartridge system and the chassis to minimize acoustical feedback.



(A) Mode Selector of Dual 1249 parallels tonearm to record in single-play for perfect vertical tracking.
(B) Tonearm moves up to parallel center of stack in multi-play.



Tonearm of Dual 1249 pivots in four-point gyroscopic gimbal, suspended within a rigid frame. Each gimbal is hand-assembled, and special gauges assure that each will conform to Dual's stringent specifications. Other Dual models with gimbal-mounted tonearms: 1228, 510, 601 and 701.

Dual's anti-skating system also contributes significantly to maintaining equal stylus pressure on both groove walls. In addition to the three separate precise calibrations for conical, elliptical and CD-4 styli, there is automatic adjustment during play for the inherent change in skating force that occurs as the stylus moves toward the record center.

Why bearing friction should be both low and consistent.

Dual uses the best (and most costly) way to manufacture precision low-friction bearings. The metal is first hardened, then honed; a process which produces microscopically smooth surfaces. All pivots are hand-assembled and individually checked with gauges specially designed by Dual. The extremely low bearing friction thus achieved is compatible with the finest cartridges, which are usually designed for ultra-light tracking. Further, the high standards of production consistency in unit after unit assure highly accurate stylus pressure and anti-skating calibrations.

Dual owners who know the difference

These are a few of the reasons why serious music lovers—record reviewers, hi-fi magazine editors and their readers—own more Duals than any other turntable. This may be all you need to know in order to select a Dual. But which Dual?

Until recently, all Dual turntables were fully automatic and could be used in both single-play and multi-play. There are now four such models. Three other Duals are single-play only (two fully automatic, one semi-automatic). Dual also employs all three types of drive systems: belt, rim, or direct.

There's no need to decide on a specific Dual model right now. The best time and place for that is when you're at your United Audio dealer, where you can have demonstrated all the differences that Dual precision does indeed make.

The Dual 1225.
Fully automatic, single-play/multi-play. Viscous damped cue-control, pitch-control, 10⅝" platter, less than $140.00, less base. Dual 1226, with cast platter, rotating single-play spindle, less than $170.00. Dual 1228 with gimballed tonearm, synchronous motor, illuminated strobe, variable tracking angle, less than $200.00.

The Dual 1249.
Fully automatic, single-play/multi-play. Belt-drive, 12" dynamically-balanced platter, less than $260.00, less base. Full-size belt-drive models include: Dual 510, semi-automatic, less than $200.00. Dual 601, fully automatic, less than $250.00. (Dual CS601, with base and cover, less than $270.00)

The Dual CS701.
Fully automatic start and stop, single-play. D.C. brushless, electronic direct drive motor, tuned anti-resonance filters. Electronic pitch-control (8%) for each speed (33⅓ and 45 rpm) with illuminated strobe, less than $400, including base and cover.

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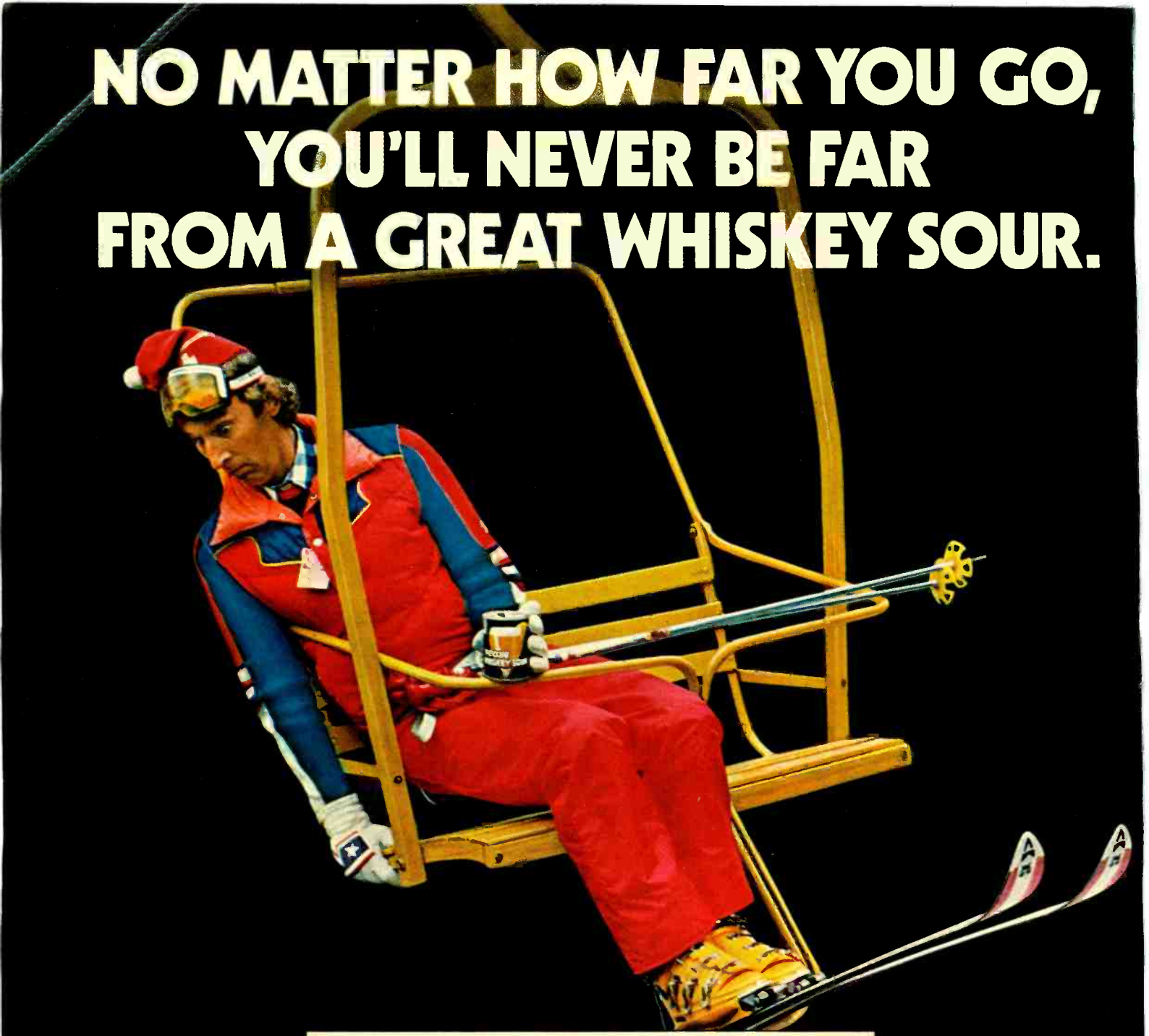

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STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH

Praise and Prophecy: A New Recording of Beethoven's Fifth By Carlos Kleiber

WHAT many of us considered to be the finest recorded performance of the Beethoven Fifth Symphony to come our way during the earlier years of this LP era was that of Erich Kleiber and the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra on the London label. There is therefore an odd poetic symmetry in having Carlos Kleiber, brilliantly gifted son of a distinguished father, present us now with what may well be remembered as the finest recorded performance of the Fifth to be issued in two-channel stereo.

From the very first phrase of Carlos Kleiber's reading on the newly released Deutsche Grammophon disc, I felt myself present at a very special event—just as I did when I first heard the Furtwängler-Berlin Philharmonic performance issued by RCA Victor in 1938. (I still consider it to be the finest recorded performance of the 78-rpm era, although it has yet to be reissued on LP.) Young Kleiber has clearly restudied every note and every nuance of this most performed and recorded of all symphonies, not with the aim of offering a new and different revelation of Beethoven's eternally stirring message, but rather of showing us afresh what has been there all along. The effect on our ears is comparable to the delight of our eyes in the restoration not so long ago of Rembrandt's celebrated painting *The Night Watch*—the same one recently vandalized by a madman in Amsterdam.

A little room, then, if you will, for some High Critical Praise: call first to your mind's ear the fiery passion of Arturo Toscanini in the Thirties, then the grandly lyrical impulse of Furtwängler in the above-mentioned 1938 recording, and finally the classic architec-

CONDUCTOR CARLOS KLEIBER: *an extraordinary level of artistry*

DG/Festspiele Bayreuth/Kaub

tural cohesion achieved by Felix Weingartner in his 1927 reading of this symphony for Columbia. Combine all these conductorial elements with the magnificently responsive playing of the Vienna Philharmonic and the flawless recorded sound produced by DG's recording staff, and you will have the measure of what has been accomplished here.

And a little more room for Prophecy: if Kleiber can maintain this extraordinary level of artistry over the years, if he pursues his goals with the same diamond-hard integrity and self-demanding fastidiousness that marked the career of his father in and out of Germany, he will surely be remembered as one of the major conductors of this last quarter of the twentieth century. Until such a historical judgment can be rendered, I will simply point out that this Beethoven Fifth recording is for me among the half-dozen best discs in the entire catalog.

David Hall

BEETHOVEN: ***Symphony No. 5, in C Minor, Op. 67.*** Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlos Kleiber cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530516 $7.98, © 3300472 $7.98.

Evans/Phonogram International

ELLY AMELING AND DALTON BALDWIN: *a charming recital*

The Piano Works of Mrs. H. H. A. Beach: Demonstrating the Irrelevance of Gender

AFTER Amy Marcy Cheney, at the age of eighteen, married Dr. H. H. A. Beach, she never signed any of her compositions with any name but "Mrs. H. H. A. Beach." Lucy Stoners and later feminists must deplore the idea of such abandonment of personal identity on the part of a creative artist; what *all* of us might well deplore is the circumstances of our knowing nothing of the work of this significant composer except two or three songs. The situation has only now begun to be corrected in a way that can be expected to reach a sizable segment of the listening public.

Turnabout recently released a recording of Mrs. Beach's Piano Quintet (TV-S 34556) and is said to be preparing one of her Second Piano Concerto, and now Genesis, showing its customary enterprise, has issued a solid hour of her solo piano works, played with great fluency and obvious commitment by Virginia Eskin and recorded with uncommon clarity and realism. Dates are not given for the respective works, but from the opus numbers—and from the transition in character from the lighthearted, Saint-Saëns-colored *Valse-Caprice* (Op. 4) to the introspective, reflective *Improvisations* (Op. 148)—one gathers they represent a comprehensive span of the composer's productive years (nearly six full decades).

What these pieces demonstrate with certainty is that the question of gender is as irrelevant in music as that of color; there would seem to be no hyperbole in suggesting that Mrs. Beach is entitled to an honored position among such New England contemporaries as Horatio Parker, Henry Hadley, Henry F. Gilbert, Frederick Converse, Edward Burlingame Hill, and Daniel Gregory Mason—and that she may, indeed, have more to say to today's listeners than any of them.

MRS. H. H. A. BEACH: *significant*

Culver Pictures

If there are inevitable echoes of Chopin, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, and Schumann here and there, they are no more obtrusive than in the works of numerous European composers; one may just as easily hear anticipations (or likenesses to) Rachmaninoff in the proclamative Prelude and Fugue, and more than a few flashes of Scriabin. The point is that virtually every one of the sixteen pieces has a pronounced character of its own: these are not mere period pieces or curios. The evocative Barcarolle (first of the *Morceaux Caracteristiques*) is no more "dated" than those of Chopin and Fauré, while the two *Hermit Thrush* pieces and the Four Sketches (*In Autumn*, *Phantoms*, *Dreaming*, *Fireflies*) are more intriguing than the similar and far better-known works of MacDowell. *Fireflies*, in particular, is a gem, the sort of thing that would immortalize any composer; no wonder (as Mrs. Eskin remarks in the annotation) Josef Hofmann loved to play it.

The annotation, incidentally, is in the form of a conversation between Mrs. Eskin and "musicologist Rawle Dryson." The latter's contributions are minor, and my suspicious nature leads me to speculate about the possibility of an anagram (for Elynor S. Ward? Andrew Sorly? Lory Andrews? Lord Ernsway? Earl Rydowns?). That, of course, matters not at all; Eskin's comments are enlightening, her performances are splendid, and the production as a whole fills a real need with distinction. The only nit I can find to pick is the listing of Mrs. Beach's maiden name as Amy *March* Cheney.

Freudian slip, I guess; the composer may have been Dr. Beach's little woman, but all *my* sources say *Marcy*.

Richard Freed

BEACH: ***Valse-Caprice, Op. 4; Ballad, Op. 6; Four Sketches, Op. 15; Trois Morceaux Caracteristiques, Op. 28; Prelude and Fugue, Op. 81; Hermit Thrush at Eve, Op. 92, No. 1; Hermit Thrush at Morn, Op. 92, No. 2; Nocturne, Op. 107; Five Improvisations, Op. 148 (Nos. 1, 2, and 4).*** Virginia Eskin (piano). GENESIS GS 1054 $6.98.

Elly Ameling in a Schumann/Schubert Recital That Could Hardly Be Bettered

ELLY AMELING has few rivals as an interpreter of intimately scaled songs, which means that *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Robert Schumann's breathtakingly beautiful song cycle of love lost, and the group of ten well-chosen Schubert songs making up her latest recital disc for Philips find her on ideal terrain.

In the Schumann she captures the varying emotions of each song, from childish naïveté and innocence through rapturous love to final dejection, with complete and convincing naturalness. In addition to exercising her instinctive feeling for just the right dramatic mood and expression, including an appropriate and affecting darkening of timbre for the last song, she employs some lovely vocal and coloristic effects as well.

The Schubert sequence is all aquiver with springtime, rustling bushes, agile fishes, and birds in flight. Once past the somewhat overlong—but still irresistible—*Das Lied im Grünen*, the songs simply bubble with life, joy, and sunlit melody. Miss Ameling's singing could hardly be bettered: her touch is light and charming, her tone pure, effortless, and graced with neatly executed embellishments. And of course Dalton Baldwin's masterly accompaniments are an undeniable asset throughout.

George Jellinek

SCHUMANN: ***Frauenliebe und Leben, Op. 42.*** **SCHUBERT:** ***Das Lied im Grunen; Der Schmetterling; An die Nachtigall (Claudius); An die Nachtigall (Hölty); Der Wachtelschlag; Im Freien; Die Vögel; Fischerweise; Die Gebüsche; Im Haine.*** Elly Ameling (soprano); Dalton Baldwin (piano). PHILIPS 6500 706 $6.98.

Willie Nelson Presents an Adult, Love-and-Death Western in Song

SNEAKY is a good way to be in music, and Willie Nelson, unofficial father figure of the Texas underground, knows how to sneak; he has, in "Red Headed Stranger" for Columbia, combined old, new, borrowed, and blue elements to make himself a horse opera about love and death in the late-early Western United States. It's an adult western, set in 1901, and although it purports to make no large statement about the passing of the frontier for our still westering society, it does suggest how one wild-spirited, trigger-happy fellow accommodated himself to civilized ways. The story line, though, isn't terribly strong or important, and it's really a *story*, not an "opera," the whole thing related by the narrator, Willie, who looks, according to the drawings (a story board, no less) on the back of the jacket, just like the hero. Nelson has taken old, familiar songs such as *Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain* and *Remember Me* and used them as set pieces in his story, and they do an interesting job of helping authenticate the dating of the yarn.

The new music is well written and at times brilliantly sung, although you may be shocked at first to find the instrumentation so spare. Nelson has, as Bob Wills did, that kind of Texas-country ear that has a lot of pop in it (early songs like *Crazy* had a clinky sophistication that reminded some people of Duke Ellington), and when he combines that trait with the kind of discipline he uses here in the interests of simplicity and a narrative line . . . well, the result is a sense of much energy under meticulous control. Add to that a voice with textures almost as engrossing as those of Bryce Canyon, and you have an album to be taken almost one note at a time. The more times I listen, the more I find in it. Sneaky album.

Noel Coppage

WILLIE NELSON: *sneaky*

Columbia Records

WILLIE NELSON: ***Red Headed Stranger.*** Willie Nelson (vocals, guitar); Paul English (drums); Jody Payne (guitar, mandolin); Bee Spears (bass); Bobbie Nelson (piano); Mickey Raphael (harmonica); other musicians. *Time of the Preacher; I Couldn't Believe It Was True; Blue Rock, Montana/Red Headed Stranger; Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain; Just as I Am; Denver; O'er the Waves/Down Yonder; Can I Sleep in Your Arms; Remember Me; Hands on the Wheel; Bandera.* COLUMBIA KC 33482 $6.98, ⑧ CA 33482 $7.98.

An Ideal Combination: Songs by Jimmy Webb, Performances by The 5th Dimension

THE 5th Dimension's new ABC release, "Earthbound," is pure entertainment, a commodity we could all use a lot more of these days. It has been produced and arranged (by Jimmy Webb) so superbly that it is practically a model of musical professionalism, demonstrating what can be done by a super-pro working with something worthy of his attention—in this case, the 5th Dimension, a group that has had its ups and downs but has always communicated an infectious joy in its performances.

That is certainly good news, but it is even better news that Webb has found able performers for some of his own songs. It is no secret by now that Webb, as good a composer as he is, can't quite put across his own material as a performer; he needs other performers to communicate through. And how beautifully the 5th Dimension serves him on *When Did I Lose Your Love*, *Lean on Me Always*, *Speaking with My Heart*, and *Walk Your Feet in the Sunshine*, swinging out and arcing through the words and music with the free grace and superb control of a glittering Frisbee. They do almost as well

on a Lennon-McCartney song (*I've Got a Feeling*) and a few others, but it is the Webb material, in his own gem-setting arrangements, that will bring you to your feet. Perhaps protecting us from the shock of so much near-perfection are the *Prologue* and *Epilogue* here, two bits of "special material" that can be forgiven their false ring as easily as we welcome the ring of truth in the rest.

The whole disc is magnificently produced and recorded, of course (we have Larry Coryell, for instance, handling the acoustic solos and Harvey Mason the drums), but most of all it's a pleasure ride with a group that responds to Webb as an Amati responds to a Heifetz. *Peter Reilly*

THE 5TH DIMENSION: ***Earthbound.*** The 5th Dimension (vocals); orchestra. *Prologue; Be Here Now; Don't Stop for Nothing; I've Got a Feeling; Magic in My Life; Walk Your Feet in the Sunshine; When Did I Lose Your Love; Lean on Me Always; Speaking with My Heart; Moonlight Mile; Epilogue.* ABC ABCD-897 $6.98, ® 8022-897H $7.98, © 5022-897H $7.98.

Bell Records

THE 5TH DIMENSION: *about as earthbound as a Frisbee*

Jean-Luc Ponty: Stylistically Updating the Jazz Violin

ONLY a handful of notable jazz violinists have been heard from since the music itself took its first known form: Eddie South, Joe Venuti, Stuff Smith, Stéphane Grappelli, Ray Nance, and Svend Asmussen. Had their instrument not been such a novelty—most jazz polls still list it under "miscellaneous"—some of these men might, in fact, have had less success, but that is not the case with Jean-Luc Ponty, a recent, important addition to the ranks.

Ponty, a thirty-two-year-old Frenchman, possesses both musicianship and style that transcend the uncommonness of his instrument. A remarkable technician with liberated ideas, he has brought the jazz violin out of the past, making even Michael White—at one time considered *the* modern jazz violinist—seem a bit old-fashioned.

Ponty's direction was clearly demonstrated on a 1966 album ("The Violin Summit," Prestige 7631) which teamed him with Grappelli, Asmussen, and Smith. Soaring stylistically past his veteran colleagues, he provided the album with its highlights. We have since heard him with John McLaughlin's Mahavishnu Orchestra, the Mothers of Invention, and Elton John, and he has had numerous albums of his own, but nowhere has he blossomed as brilliantly as in "Upon the Wings of Music," his first Atlantic album. Employing multitrack techniques, Ponty—clearly influenced by the Mahavishnu-Weather Report-Cobham sound that came in the wake of Miles' "Bitches Brew"—dispenses with his group for *Echoes of the Future*, but the rest of the music uses two guitars, bass, keyboards, and drums in cohesive interplay. Except for Leon Chancler's percussion, everything is highly electrified, but it is also electrifying.

Chris Albertson

JEAN-LUC PONTY: ***Upon the Wings of Music.*** Jean-Luc Ponty (violins, strings synthesizer); instrumental quintet. *Upon the Wings of Music; Question with No Answer; Now I Know; Polyfolk Dance; Waving Memories; Echoes of the Future; Bowing-Bowing; Fight for Life.* ATLANTIC SD 18138 $6.98, ® TP 18138 $7.97, © CS 18138 $7.97.

JEAN-LUC PONTY: *musicianship and style transcendent*

Atlantic Records

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CR-400	.1%	1.0%	.9%	1.0%

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CIRCLE NO. 61 ON READER SERVICE CARD

POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

ARTHUR BROWN: ***Dance with Arthur Brown.*** Arthur Brown (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *We've Got to Get Out of This Place; Helen with the Sun; Take a Chance; Crazy; Hearts and Minds; Dance;* and five others. GULL GU6-405S1 $6.98.

Performance: **Low vaudeville**
Recording: **Noisy**

Arthur Brown was briefly noted sometime in the late Sixties for appearing on stage with a bunsen burner thingie that sprouted flame atop his head. He had a minor hit single that opened with his announcement: "I am the god of hell fire!" This was delivered much in the manner of a resolute child in a grade-school play making his entrance and proclaiming: "Um . . . hearken! I am Tamerlane, conqueror of . . . gosh! . . . the whole world."

Brown is one of those youngish, second-rate English neo-vaudevillians, like Screaming Lord Sutch, who use rock as a complement to their act. The British have indicated they'll have none of Sutch's corn, and doubtless they hold a similar opinion of Brown. Sutch and Brown do, however, have a genealogical place in the periphery of British rock; their shenanigans begat the slightly more sophisticated antics of Jethro Tull. Which, come to think of it, is not much to be remembered for. *J.V.*

BROWNSVILLE STATION: ***Motor City Connection.*** Brownsville Station (vocals and instrumentals). *Automatic Heartbreak; One That Got Away; Self Abuse; Crazy Legs; Load of Love;* and four others. BIG TREE BT 89510 $6.98, ⑧ TP 89510 $7.98, Ⓒ CS 89510 $7.98.

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

Brownsville Station is a run-of-the-mill rock band given, as many are, to wearing funny clothes and jumping up and down as if the clichés they're playing were The Word itself. There are the usual ragged-throat band-singer vocals to contend with, and plenty of that simplified, inarticulate "street" language that has become such a bore. The group does, however, have a touch of blues sensitivity and an occasional burst of energy, and the instrumentals aren't all bad; the instrumental tune *Crazy Legs*, a blues progression, is the most impressive thing here. Enthusiasm keeps these guys going, no matter how dumb the song gets or how weatherbeaten their tools are, but it isn't anywhere near enough to keep them going in what you would call first-class style. *N.C.*

JOHN CALE: ***Slow Dazzle.*** John Cale (vocals, keyboards); Chris Spedding (guitar); Pat Donaldson (bass); Timi Donald (drums); other musicians. *Mr. Wilson; Taking It All Away; Dirtyass Rock 'n' Roll; Darling I Need You; Rollaroll; Heartbreak Hotel;* and four others. ISLAND ILPS 9317 $6.98, ⑧ Y81-9317 $7.98.

Performance: **Slow, all right**
Recording: **Good**

The only fair thing to say here is that I've run out of things to say about John Cale albums. They're never as bad or as complicated as I expect them to be, and neither is this one, but once you've identified the kind of posture Cale is striking in a particular song, there isn't much else to listen for. "Slow Dazzle" is somewhat melodic, and the vocals (more than vaguely reminiscent of the late Jim Morrison's, although I'm not sure they seemed that way in the past) are adequate but not interesting enough to carry the big-deal histrionics he lays on *Heartbreak Hotel* or interesting enough to make me want to sort out his own sometimes tedious, sometimes convoluted lyrics. Life's too short. *N.C.*

GLEN CAMPBELL: ***Rhinestone Cowboy.*** Glen Campbell (vocals, guitar); Scott Edwards (bass); Michael Omartian (keyboards); other musicians. *Rhinestone Cowboy; Country Boy (You've Got Your Feet in L.A.); Pencils for Sale; Count On Me; I'd Build a Bridge; Marie;* and four others. CAPITOL SW-11430 $6.98, ⑧ 8XW-11430 $7.98, Ⓒ 4XW-11430 $7.98.

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

Glen Campbell is an exceptionally talented singer *and* guitarist, but who, one still wonders, is he? I have a sense of who, for example, Tom Rush is (when I'm fishing for other exceptional singer-guitarists to set up a comparison), based on what Rush does and, more important, on the way he conveys that this is what he *wants* to do. I'm not so sure that what I hear in various recordings comes that close to representing what Glen Campbell wants to do. Jim Webb got him off to a good start with some *melodies* of subtlety and depth, something a truly capable voice has to have—otherwise, it eventually dawns on everyone that something is being wasted. But Campbell, a hungry studio sideman from Arkansas, went Hollywood in some ways, getting involved with television, massive string sections, lots of *financial* success, and maybe a touch of the artistic conservatism that usually goes with all those things.

Ironically, here's an almost-theme album that keeps returning to the sentiment of the title hit, put even more directly in the first piece, *Country Boy (You've Got Your Feet in L.A.)*: "You get a house in the hills/You're payin' everyone's bills/And they tell you that you're going to go far./But in the back of my mind/I hear it time after time/—Is that who you really are?" The words of several songs here make you stop and think, all right, and so does the dogged use of the string section that continually threatens to suffocate Campbell and his tangy, tasty guitar. So do the lack of subtlety and imagination in the melodies; the title tune is nothing more than a series of very hackneyed melodic phrases strung together, though its foregone success as a single may be the reason for the album in the first place. It turns out be to a relief to find *Marie* in there,

Explanation of symbols:

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

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

even though it's no better than average, if that, among Randy Newman's songs. Campbell does a good job of singing it, considering it isn't really his kind of song. The brightest spot may be, oddly enough, a variant of the old hard-times ballad, *Pencils for Sale*, written by Johnny Cunningham. It is not wildly original, but there is a certain naturalness and integrity in its melody as well as its words, and for once the background pap doesn't get into the foreground.

Textural redundancy, I would say, is technically what's wrong with the production of this and most Campbell recordings. Someone should remember that the basic reason they have all gathered together is a silky smooth vocal delivery. The sensible thing isn't to *fight* with it, or commission a silkier-than-thou bank of fiddles to fight with it, but to set it up, spotlight it, give the listeners a little something of contrasting texture so they can better define it. As it is, this album is likely to provoke an aesthetic response that is meager compared to (contrasted to) the stimulation it gives to speculation on what Campbell would do if Campbell were running his own act. *N.C.*

ERIC CLAPTON: ***E. C. Was Here.*** Eric Clapton (guitar, vocals); Jamie Oldaker (drums); Carl Radle (bass); other musicians. *Have You Ever Loved a Woman; Presence of the Lord; Drifting Blues*; and three others. RSO SO 4809 $6.98, ® TP 4809 $7.98, © CS 4809 $7.98.

Performance: **Disappointing**
Recording: **Good, considering**

Eric Clapton naturally plays a lot of notes here, and his guitar technique is as impressive as ever, but this seems sandbagged by the usual characteristics of live albums: long, drawn-out, overblown endings that sound ludicrous to one person alone at home; long, drawn-out *songs*, which, by physically taking up so much space on the record, put the screws to variety, along with posing once again the question of who wants to hear *Rambling Man* ramble on for seven minutes; a boogie-oriented, simple-beat program, since a live audience, the thinking goes, likes things kept moving and easy; and the quirks of live-recorded sound—Clapton's guitar (and his voice, too, in fact) seems harsher here than in studio recordings, and Carl Radle's bass seems muddy. The whole thing is spartan and more blues-oriented than I think best suits Clapton; there just aren't enough ideas for him to invent with. It is one of the least satisfying Eric Clapton albums I've heard. *N.C.*

MERRY CLAYTON: ***Keep Your Eye on the Sparrow.*** Merry Clayton (vocals); orchestra. *How'd I Know; Gold Fever; Sink or Swim; If I Lose*; and seven others. ODE SP 77030 $5.98, ® 8T 77030 $7.98, © CS 77030 $7.98.

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

Merry Clayton's big, barrelhouse voice and rat-a-tat delivery make for some very good moments here. There are generally *only* moments, however, because of arrangements that have a deadening sameness about them. Dylan's *Rainy Day Women*, for instance, should be a showpiece for Clayton, but by the time she fights her way through her own vocal arrangement and Hugh McCracken's instrumental one, the song itself almost disappears. She does really lovely work on *Loving Grows Up Slow*, which is a charming song. Next time she records, Clayton might be wise to lighten up on the accouterments and concentrate on the story line of her material. *P.R.*

NATALIE COLE
A big, musical voice and an engaging manner

Capitol Records

JOE COCKER: ***Jamaica Say You Will.*** Joe Cocker (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *(That's What I Like) In My Women; Where Am I Now; I Think It's Going to Rain Today; Forgive Me Now; Oh Mama*; and five others. A&M SP-4529 $6.98, ® 8T-4529 $7.98, © CS-4529 $7.98.

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

I wonder what the market for Joe Cocker is these days. Public ardor has cooled since the time of his brassy stardom and the sensational "Mad Dogs & Englishmen" concert tour masterminded by Leon Russell. Despite the blustery opening selection, the rest of this album is mid-tempo, bluesy, and a bit tired. Cocker was, and is, a sturdy talent, but he was never so good as during his days with the Grease Band. That commendable back-up group was the first casualty of his brief stardom; he himself is the last, lingering one. *J.V.*

NATALIE COLE: ***Inseparable.*** Natalie Cole (vocals); orchestra. *Needing You; Joey; This Will Be; You; Inseparable*; and five others. CAPITOL ST-11429 $6.98, ® 8XT-11429 $7.98, © 4XT-11429 $7.98.

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

This is a thoroughly professional recording debut by Natalie Cole, daughter of Nat "King" Cole. In fact, she's so much better than the average star offshoot, so much better than Nancy Whatsername or Desi Whatsisface ever got to be, that there is a temptation to overpraise her. Keeping it cool, I'd say that what she *has* got is a big, musical voice, a bit pinched at the top and the bottom, a very engaging, earnest manner, and the seeds of a nifty little dramatic talent in projecting lyric. What she *hasn't* got are the right songs (they are all written by the album's producers, Chuck Jackson and Marvin Yancy, and the clack of the assembly line is quite audible), the right arrangements, or a consistent style with which she seems comfortable. As all newcomers are, she is an amalgam of styles and influences, but it's to her credit that she registers as an individual through her vitality and her sincerity. *Inseparable* is probably the best track to give you an idea of what she might become someday—if she works hard enough. *P.R.*

THE 5TH DIMENSION: ***Earthbound*** **(see Best of the Month, page 81)**

GRAHAM CENTRAL STATION: ***Ain't No 'Bout A-doubt It.*** Graham Central Station (vocals and instrumentals). *The Jam; Your Love; It's Alright; I Can't Stand the Rain*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2876 $6.98, ® M8 2876 $7.97, © M5 2876 $7.97.

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

I imagine that Graham Central Station, led by Larry Graham, former bass player for Sly Stone in Sly's great days, is a dynamite band on stage, one that keeps the dancers moving and pleases the crowd no end. But on record its work sounds hackneyed. The band cannot be faulted for the performances, which are crisp, disciplined, energetic, and at all times professional. But these people are peddling

stale bread. Even heating it up as they do makes it no more than stale toast. *J.V.*

GRATEFUL DEAD: ***Blues for Allah.*** Grateful Dead (vocals and instrumentals). *Help on the Way/Slipknot; Franklin's Tower; King Soloman's Marbles; Stronger Than Dirt or Milkin' the Turkey; The Music Never Stopped; Crazy Fingers*; and four others. GRATEFUL DEAD GD-LA494-G $6.98, ⑧ GD-EA494-H $7.98, © GD-CA494-H $7.98.

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

Innovative art seems ugly at first, eminent critics tell us, so the new Grateful Dead album isn't innovative art—it doesn't seem ugly so much as inconsequential, so abstract as to be irrelevant, as if the players learned to read music and it interfered with their playing. The sound doesn't lean on the improvisational spirit of jazz, nor does it carry the vitality of rock. It is perhaps the normal thing that happens to hippies with Eastern thought freshly into their heads and Western nuance planted firmly, for a lifetime, in their bones. It *is* more interesting than "Wake of the Flood," the other low-energy album of the recent past, sounding more "natural" (being richer melodically, too, which may be the same thing) where that one seemed esoteric the hard way. But this one doesn't really sound *organic*, balanced, centered—which is, I suspect, one of the things the band, or at least Jerry Garcia, wants now. The lyrics, mostly by Robert Hunter, are unlinear, unspecific, nongraphic; and the instrumental parts, as opposed to the old idea of a solo with back-up charging ahead on an idea parallel to the melody, are more a matter of concerted meandering. The trouble is, the sound on the record isn't as interesting as the *talk* we could have about the way the Dead are evolving. Or about the energy shortage in general. *N.C.*

HUDSON-FORD: ***Worlds Collide.*** Richard Hudson and John Ford (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Did Worlds Collide?; Mechanics; When Love Has Overgrown; As Hours Go By; Bootleg*; and five others. A&M SP 4535 $6.98.

Performance: **Blah blah**
Recording: **Good**

Oh, *somebody* out there must like it. Apparently there will always be a market for two young men with large eyes and a suitable amount of hair who sing harmony and write songs addressed to universal themes. The lyrics pass as "pop poetry," the performances are breathy, and the studio musicians never miss a beat. And someone out there must be saying "It's deep."

There have been other Hudson-Ford-type teams. Eight years ago there was Boyce & Hart, who wrote hitsie-ditsie pop tunes and gussied them up with high-powered production. Then there was Brewer & Shipley, folkies who wrote songs about freeeeeeedom. And boring? My dear! Compared to them, your maiden aunt reading her grocery list is pure porn. *J.V.*

QUINCY JONES: ***Mellow Madness.*** Quincy Jones (piano, arranger); vocalists; orchestra. *Paranoid; Mellow Madness; Beautiful Black Girl; Listen (What It Is); Just a Little Taste of Me*; and five others. A&M SP-4526 $6.98, ⑧ 8T-4526 $7.98, © CS-4526 $7.98.

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

Here's another ho-hum black cliché trip. The single most offensive track is *Beautiful Black Girl*, wherein a male vocalist goes through such watermelon theatrics that any soul sister I know would dismiss him with at least a sneer or maybe even a quick and righteous knee to the collards. False poses do not a funky album make. *J.V.*

KRAFTWERK. Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider (vocals, keyboards, string and wind instruments, drums, electronics). *Electric Roulette; Mountain of Sound; Crystals; The Bells of Home: Dance Music; Pineapple Symphony.* VERTIGO VEL-2006 $6.98, ⑧ VC8-2006 $7.95, © VCR4-2006 $7.95.

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

Kraftwerk is a cargo of electronic gear, two or three quaint old "musical instruments" left over from the twentieth century, and two German persons, Ralf Hütter and Florian Schneider. What happens is that the persons manipulate knobs and buttons and other controls on the electronic gear and it yields sounds vaguely like music. The "notes" they play are not set up in an atonal or any other kind of far-out or "progressive" relationship; what you get is tunes thought up in and amongst and reactive to humanity (and not very original or unusual tunes at that) and played as coldly and impersonally as the computer age can manage so far (it's early yet). I suppose there's supposed to be something interesting about that paradox, but I can't find it. *N.C.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE METERS: ***Fire on the Bayou.*** Joseph Modeliste (drums); Arthur Neville (keyboards); Leo Nocentelli (guitar); George Porter, Jr. (bass); Cyril Neville (congas). *Out in the Country; Fire on the Bayou; Love Slip upon Ya; Talkin' 'Bout New Orleans; They All Ask'd About You; Can You Do Without?*; and five others. REPRISE MS 2228 $6.98, ⑧ M8 2228 $7.97, © M5 2228 $7.97.

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

Unless the Meters start doing discotheque material or descend to wearing pink jump suits on stage, I will never say anything against this delightful New Orleans group. They are the successors to Booker T. and the MG's, who were about the best r-&-b band in the world back when, just as the Meters are among the best the world has now. The Meters have taste, experience, good judgment, a sense of humor, and dignity. The only thing they lack at this moment is a good album-cover designer. Smeary photographs and squiggly title type are not the way to package or promote a class band. *J.V.*

MIRABAI. Mirabai (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *Determination; Exactly What You Are; To Be Young; Magical Time; Cosmic Overload*; and six others. ATLANTIC SD 18144 $6.98.

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

Mirabai believes in making an impression. Her opener, *Determination*, is seven minutes of racket, composed by her (as are all the other songs), and best described as a cat fit set to music. She follows that (change of pace) with an *Exactly What You Are* in such stately canticle fashion that comatose is exactly what you are, baby, eventually. After those two show-stoppers Mirabai settles down a bit and does some nice, unremarkable things. Her voice has a young-girl charm but not much more, and the whole album only *just* reaches professional level—and that's probably because of Bob Johnston's excellent production work. *P.R.*

(Continued on page 92)

THE METERS
No pink jumpsuits for a class band

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"I go all warm and runny when she sings 'Love Has No Pride.'"

Linda Ronstadt: Extraordinary Collaboration

For a long time now, I've been trying to pretend that Linda Ronstadt doesn't exist—for frankly extra-musical reasons, you understand. For one thing, I've never been able to comprehend the lustful frenzy she induces in so many of my male friends (and in so many members of her audiences). You've seen one chin, you've seen 'em both, has been my thinking, and I much prefer Nico as a pop sex object. For another, Linda insists on hanging out with, and, worse, singing the songs of J. D. Souther, who could well be the most mediocre songwriter in America today. Finally, she has always struck me as a crybaby. Sure, in my heart of hearts I go all warm and runny when she sings *Love Has No Pride*, but I'm much too cynical to admit that publicly, and she's limited herself pretty much to songs that express that same basic sentiment. Despite a lovely voice, her emotional range just isn't that broad, and her success, I suspect, is more a result of her lucking out on the uniform mediocrity of the competition than anything else.

But. . . . On her last album, amidst the usual L.A. session men who generally provide the formula back-ups that have also always annoyed me about her work, she hooked up with a heretofore unknown fellow named Andrew Gold (his is the spectacular guitar playing that graced her hit version of *When Will I Be Loved*) who was obviously functioning as her musical director, and the collaboration was at times extraordinary. I would venture to say that Mr. Gold has assimilated the influence of the Beatles better than any other rock musician now before the public, British or American, and as a result "Heart Like a Wheel" was the first Ronstadt album that sounded like the work of people who knew how to make records, as opposed to just music. (There *is* a difference, you see, and unfortunately most of the country rockers Linda hangs out with don't understand that.)

Anyway, her new one, "Prisoner in Disguise," continues the collaboration, and though it's got the usual problems (weak song selection, hackneyed back-ups), they are wonderfully mitigated whenever Andrew is center stage. I refer you to the album's major success, an absolutely incredible version of Jimmy Cliff's great *Many Rivers to Cross*. Linda sings it nicely enough (though I still prefer Jimmy, who doesn't have the low-register problems she does), but Gold's guitar solo is stunning—relentlessly logical the way some of George Harrison's were before he picked up the slide exclusively—and it is followed by some of the most imaginative and economically placed background vocals (Gold's arrangements) I've heard since, um, "Abbey Road," perhaps. Almost as good is *Heatwave*, on which he does the one-man-band routine with spectacular results. This song is so overly familiar (there was a time when it was the must-do break tune for most bar bands) that it would seem impossible to breathe new life into it, let alone temporarily erase memories of the original, but with another magnificent guitar break and some really fine singing, these folks *almost* do it.

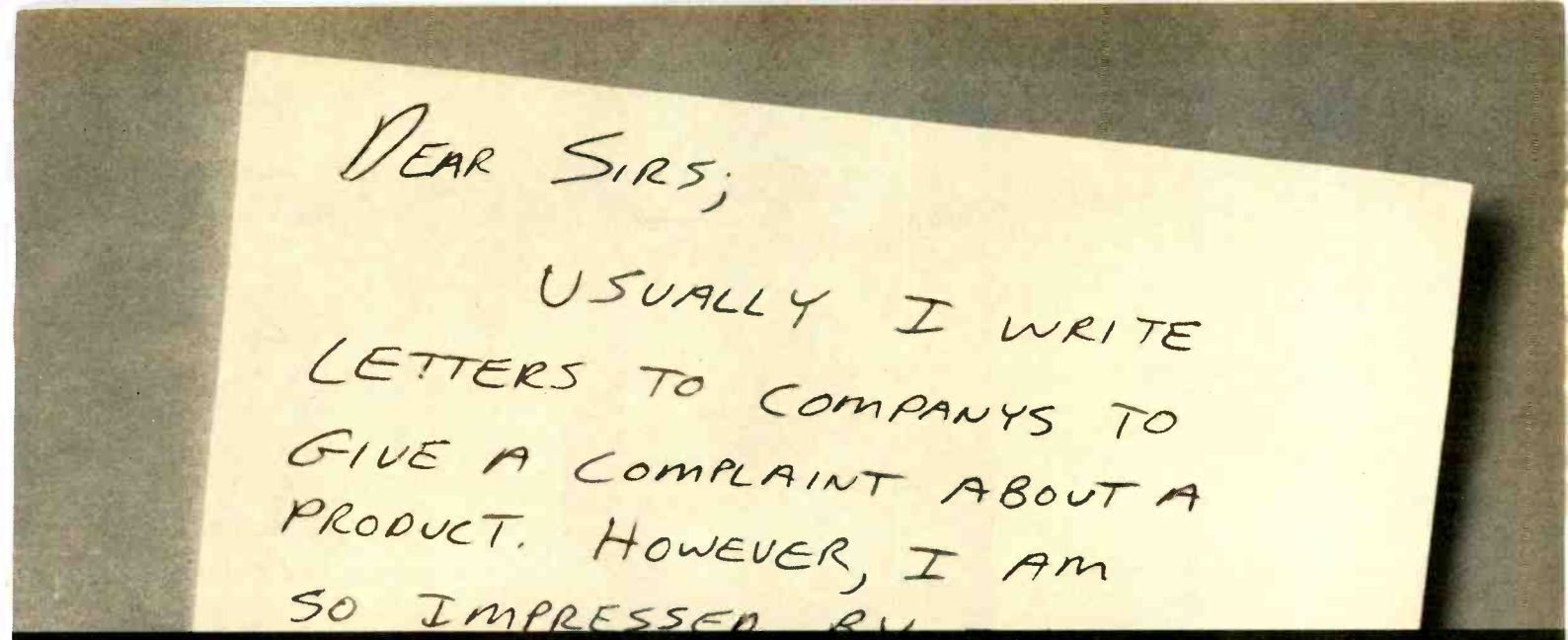
And I shouldn't slight Linda, of course. On Dolly Parton's *I Will Always Love You*, the album's *other* high point, her vocal (it is, wisely, the focus of the performance in this case) is absolutely gorgeous, full-bodied and intense in a way that made me think of Smokey Robinson's best moments (odd, because she also tackles his *Tracks of My Tears*, and it defeats her).

The rest of the album is nothing much, the standard Hollywood c-&-w stuff that's been Linda's stock in trade from the beginning. There's a new Neil Young song that may or may not work when Neil gets around to doing it, but it strikes these ears as being a throwaway. There's also a Lowell George/Little Feat rocker, similarly forgettable; James Taylor's banal-beyond-belief *Hey Mister That's Me Up on the Jukebox* (what *madness* is it that makes otherwise intelligent people continue to record this tune?); and finally and most fatally, there are two songs by (you guessed it) J. D. Souther, utterly rotten, and rendered unlistenable in any case by the presence of their composer on guitar and harmony vocals.

All this has probably sounded a little sour, so let me end on a positive note. First of all, the good cuts here are so good that—for me, anyway—they more than justify the album's purchase. (That's for all you Eagles fans out there who, I've learned, usually go for Ms. Ronstadt as well.) Second—and this is for *you*, Linda—since you're obviously so good at singing great standard rock, r-&-b, and country songs, and since your friend Andrew is such an outstanding arranger of same, why don't the two of you do a "Pin-Ups" next time out? There are one hundred and three old songs I'd rather hear you singing than the bulk of what's on "Prisoner in Disguise." I bet you know them all, and a few that haven't occurred to me yet as well. Think about it.

—*Steve Simels*

LINDA RONSTADT: ***Prisoner in Disguise.*** Linda Ronstadt (vocals); Andrew Gold (guitar, keyboards, vocals); Kenny Edwards (bass, vocals); Russ Kunkel (drums); other musicians. *Love Is a Rose; Hey Mister That's Me Up on the Jukebox; Roll Um Easy; Tracks of My Tears; Prisoner in Disguise; Heatwave; Many Rivers to Cross; The Sweetest Gift; You Tell Me That I'm Falling Down; I Will Always Love You; Silver Blue.* ASYLUM 7E-1045 $6.98.



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CIRCLE NO. 8 ON READER SERVICE CARD

WILLIE NELSON: ***Red Headed Stranger*** **(see Best of the Month, page 81)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAY NOBLE: ***Ray Noble Encores.*** Al Bowlly (vocals); Ray Noble and His Orchestra. *Evergreen Medley; Mad About the Boy; Japanese Sandman; Lady of Madrid; With Love in My Heart; Tiger Rag*; and nine others. MONMOUTH EVERGREEN MES/7070 $6.98.

Performance: **Suavely immortal**
Recording: **Carefully restored**

Not too long ago I was yammering about why weren't some of the classic Ray Noble recordings currently in print. Monmouth Evergreen, a record company whose patience with reviewers who don't bother to do their research is apparently as glorious as their catalog (almost everything in it is something that I not only want to hear, but want to own), promptly sent a friendly corrective note and a copy of their new "Ray Noble Encores"—Volume Seven, yet, of their re-releases of Ray Noble recordings. It is one of those rare delights, along the lines of having a Dusenberg in perfect condition suddenly pull up alongside you at a stop light. Elegance, glamour, and master craftsmanship—that's a Dusenberg, and that's Ray Noble. The recordings date from 1930 to 1934, and they all reflect the singularly sauve but vital approach of Noble and his orchestra. Among the irresistible tracks are an *Evergreen* medley, from the Rodgers and Hart show of the same name, which conjures up for me improbably chic people drifting around the Savoy dance floor

Reprise Records

RAY NOBLE
The elegance of a Dusenberg

(the floor itself a mirror-like black, of course) telling each other that somehow, they aren't quite *right* for one another; *Must It End Like This?*, with Al Bowlly, whose voice has always defied description but whose style was the sad-sweet Thirties incarnate, singing in that very special way of his; *Happy Ending*, with Freddy Gardner contributing a superb alto sax solo; and even *Lady of Madrid*, a rip-off of a previous Noble success, *Lady of Spain*, that is done with such superb style that all is forgiven.

Merely listening to ensemble work and pop perfectionism of this caliber in 1975 is enough to make one feel a bit tacky about the current pop scene. But then actually, you see . . . I don't really know how to say this, but I'm beginning to feel that . . . well, somehow, the current screaming, sweating pop scene and I aren't quite *right* for one another. . . . *P.R.*

TONY ORLANDO AND DAWN: ***Greatest Hits.*** Tony Orlando and Dawn (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Tie a Yellow Ribbon 'Round the Ole Oak Tree; Say, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose?; You're a Lady; Who's in the Strawberry Patch with Sally; You Say the Sweetest Things*; and six others. ARISTA AL 4045 $6.98, ® 8301-4045 H $7.98, © 5301-4045 H $7.98.

Performance: **Magnificently mediocre**
Recording: **Very good**

Putting together a "greatest hits" album from previous recordings by Tony Orlando and Dawn is a little like trying to extract heavy cream from skimmed milk. Tony tackles all sorts of styles—Nashville, modified soul, defanged rock—and everything comes out sounding pretty much the same: invariably pleasant, easy to take, and, when it's all over, just as if it had never happened. In one of the trio's most popular numbers, *Candida*, Tony sings of himself as "just an ordinary guy." This must be the key to his popularity. Fans won't have to think twice about acquiring this

one. Others should be able to survive, somehow, without it. *P.K.*

THE OSMONDS: *The Proud One.* The Osmonds (vocals): instrumental accompaniment. *I'm Still Gonna Need You; Where Would I Be Without You; Someone to Go Home To; Take Love If You Ever Find Love; The Proud One*; and five others. MGM/KOLOB M3G-4993 $6.98, ⑧ M8G-4993 $7.98, © M5G-4993 $7.98.

Performance: **Okay**
Recording: **Overloaded**

Although there isn't any *musical* worth to what they do, the Osmonds perform a necessary and beneficial social service. Twelve-year-old girls need and deserve heroes, just as grown-ups need theirs.

To their credit, the Osmonds are always highly disciplined and professional. As stylists they are indistinguishable from many polished black croon squads, except they lack sass and bite. But it is interesting to note that the monotonous programming of this album, the series of stifling, gooey arrangements, is broken only once, on *The Last Day Is Coming*, which was produced by the clan. The Osmonds are probably better than their material usually allows them to be.

The world will little note nor long remember, when their fame passes, that for a time the hearts of mid-pubic youth beat faster to the steadfast, squeaky vocals of the performing children of a fecund Utah family. It was ever thus. For who is so cruel and negligent to former toys as the twelve-year-old girls such groups as the Osmonds help make into little women? *J.V.*

THE OUTLAWS. Henry Paul (vocals, guitar); Frank O'Keefe (bass); Billy Jones (guitar, vocals); Monte Yoho (drums); Hughie Thomasson (guitar, vocals). *There Goes Another Love Song; Song for You; Song in the Breeze; Cry No More; Waterhole*; and five others. ARISTA AL 4042 $6.98, ⑧ 8301-4042 H $7.98, © 5301-4042 H $7.98.

Performance: **Drugstore-cowboy rock**
Recording: **Very good**

In the early Sixties every label had to have an answer to the Kingston Trio, each "answer" being a little paler than the last one, like the copies from a mimeograph machine. You had your Brothers Four, and before you could say that's as bland as you can get, you had your New Christy Minstrels, and so on. So it goes. The Outlaws give Clive Davis' label something vaguely countering Poco and the Eagles. This recording is, in a word, boring. It also has that familiar sound of the middle class playing cowboy again. Imaginary crow's feet around the eyes are what we get now; what we logically get next, if the formula continues to hold, is crow's feet painted on with mascara. Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings will still be around, for those who can stand the real thing. *N.C.*

MIKE POST: *Railhead Overture.* Orchestra, Mike Post arr. and cond. *The Rockford Files; The Viking; Blade; Lay Back Lafayette; Railhead Overture*; and five others. MGM M3G-5005 $6.98, ⑧ M8H-5005 $7.98.

Performance: **One hot track**
Recording: **Good**

On the basis of the success of his hit single *The Rockford Files*, Mike Post has put to-

gether this album, surely the most uneasy fusion since Tom Thumb and the Fat Lady. Seems that Post is convinced that the old big-band sound with its massed brass ensembles is just what rock needs to give it a shot in its moribund arm. Aside from the *Rockford* track, which took that idea about as far as it is worthy of going, the rest of the album is mere repetition of the rock/brass-ensemble motif. It's elaborately and meticulously engineered, but in such a way as to convince me, finally, that Post himself regards the whole thing as a commercial, one-time-only novelty. *P.R.*

BILLY PRESTON: ***It's My Pleasure.*** Billy Preston (vocals, keyboards); instrumental accompaniment. *Fancy Lady; Found the Love; That's Life; Do It While You Can*; and four others. A&M SP-4532 $6.98, ® 8T-4532 $7.98, © CS-4532 $7.98.

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

It is a restrained and relatively low-key Billy Preston who has sallied forth this time around, which is a welcome relief. There are some sappy, puerile lyrics (all the material is Preston's) about how he plays with love because of his God-given (thanks, Pater) talent, and there are the usual appearances by guest stars—in this case Stevie Wonder, Syreeta Wright, and George Harrison, who has refined his guitar style to the point where it is all but nonexistent.

But the album serves to remind us that Preston is, after all, a pretty good singer and keyboardist. He is apparently shedding his star-skin. Now if he would just pick (or have forced upon him) some solid songs, he might be a lot better than pretty good. *J.V.*

CHARLEY PRIDE: ***Charley.*** Charley Pride (vocals); orchestra. *Fools; One Mile More; Now and Then; I Ain't All Bad; Lovin' Understandin' Man*; and five others. RCA APL1-1038 $6.98.

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

Here is the phenomenal Charley Pride performing the kind of material that he seems all too content to sing, that his fans obviously adore, but that still leaves me wondering when he's ever going to risk the jump from virtuoso to artist, the kind of jump that, say, Johnny Cash made several years ago. Pride has it all going for him: the voice, the communicative skill, and, most important, that spark of natural, easy command that all true artists display, whatever their material. However, he continues to insulate himself from himself with his huge popular success, singing, apparently, just about anything that's presented to him. No question at all about how well he does it. *I Ain't All Bad*, for instance, about one of those c-&-w Romeos, is done with exactly the right touch of gentle, caddish irony, and his work in *She's as Close as I Can Get to Loving You* raises what would otherwise be just another lament, commercial Nashville style, about substituting an available love for a true love, into a poignant little vignette, delicate and wistful.

But why does he continue to play the alchemist when there is so much better material around—especially for someone with as much clout in the industry as he has? *P.R.*

PROCOL HARUM: ***Procol's Ninth.*** Procol Harum (vocals and instrumentals). *Pandora's Box; I Keep Forgetting; Eight Days a Week; Fools Gold; The Pipers Tune*; and five others. CHYSALIS CHR 1080 $6.98, ® M8C 1080 $7.98, © MSC 1080 $7.98.

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

I find it fitting that Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, writer-producer kings of Tin Pan Alley rock back in the Fifties and early Sixties (*Yakety Yak, Hound Dog*) should pilot this latest album by Procol Harum, a prestigious group never convicted—or even suspected—of mediocrity. Leiber and Stoller's business-like way of doing an album with no frills, technical stunts, or hoked-up "atmosphere" allows the listener to note the schizophrenic difference between what the band and vocalist are doing (sturdy, blues-based rock) and what their indulgent and morose lyricist is writing.

RCA Records

CHARLEY PRIDE
The natural, easy command of a true artist

True stereo separation is achieved between the sense and the nonsense.

The two most interesting tracks here are those which are untypical of the group: an obscure old Leiber-Stoller song that makes them sound like a bunch of teenage studio musicians recruited from the local union barracks, and a hesitant version of *Eight Days a Week*, one of the few lackluster Beatles songs. It is as if the band or the producers wanted to show that Procol Harum has been so long locked into its shrunken-prunes-of-your-mind "poetic" stance that it cannot understand or cope with anything simple.

I hope to hear next that Bob Dylan is being produced by Bill Haley, which would be less than Haley deserves. *J.V.*

HELEN REDDY: ***No Way to Treat a Lady.*** Helen Reddy (vocals); orchestra. *Bluebird; Ten to Eight; Long Time Looking; Birthday Song*; and six others. CAPITOL ST 11418 $6.98, ® 8XT 11418 $7.98, © 4XT 11418 $7.98.

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

This is another spotty album by Helen Reddy, the curtest girl in town. She does make a valiant effort to uncurl her lip when a song calls

(Continued on page 96)

(You Can Spend Two or Three or Four Times Its Price And Not Do Better.)

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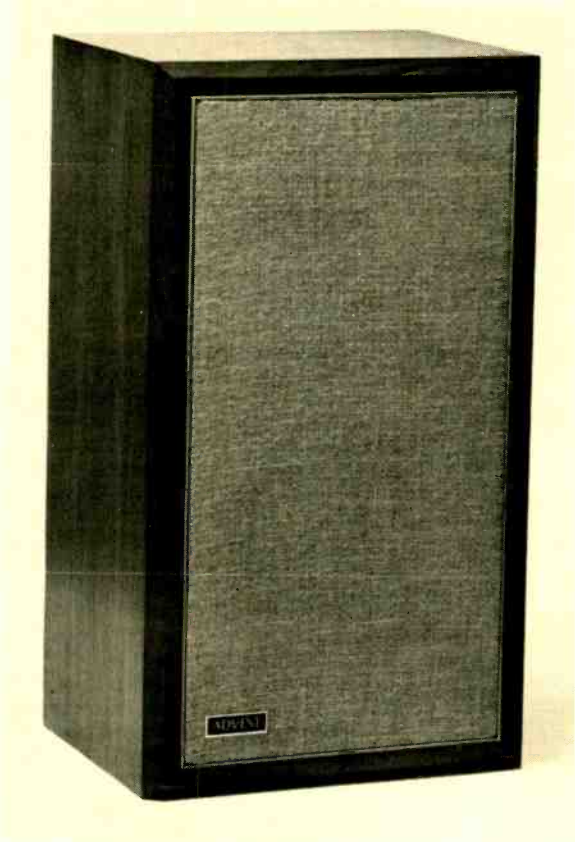

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for a free flow of positive feelings, as it does in Don McLean's lovely *Birthday Song*, but the strain is all too apparent. However, when the material matches her own brittle, let's-get-on-with-it manner, as it does in David Castle's *Ten to Eight*—a perceptive little ballad about a girl too busy getting ready to go to work to let herself think about someone she's still in love with—or Harriet Schock's rueful *Ain't No Way to Treat a Lady*, Reddy's acidic touch adds a note of provocative stimulation. It's a bit like seeing the unexpectedly beautiful crossed legs of an otherwise plain girl in an airport waiting area. There's no question that in the right kind of musical material Reddy has something, but it's definitely not the easy ability to express that warm-all-over feeling. *P.R.*

SHA NA NA: ***Sha Na Now.*** Sha Na Na (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Shot Down in Denver; Runaway; Breakin' Up Is Hard to Do; (Just Like) Romeo and Juliet; Party Lights; Basement Party*; and six others. KAMA SUTRA KSBS 2605 $6.98, ® KMS 8321-2605 H $7.98, © KMS 5321-2605 H $7.98.

Performance: **Weak**
Recording: **Okay**

Sha Na Na's problem was (and is) how to translate their stage act to recordings. There was (and is) no reason to listen to their versions of rock-and-roll oldies since it is so easy and often more pleasant to listen to the originals, which have many times been reissued and are often played on the radio. Sha Na Na did get a gold album, a two-record set of a live performance; its success was doubtless aided by the nostalgia wave. But their albums before and since that one have done only middling well.

Scott Simon, pianist for the group, wrote some promising songs at one time, but this current album is a complete failure. It has a veneer of discotheque rhythms and a production of the add-water-and-serve variety. Only a few oldies are included, and their period charm is obscured by the go-go orchestrations. The new material is bland, the performances amateurish. The band had been living beyond its musical means for some time. This disc is a declaration of bankruptcy. *J.V.*

JOE SIMON: ***Get Down.*** Joe Simon (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Get Down, Get Down (Get on the Floor); Fire Burning; It Be's That Way Sometimes; Music in My Bones*; and four others. SPRING SPR-6706 $4.98, ® 8F-6706 $7.95, © CF-6706 $7.95.

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

Every now and then one of Joe Simon's soul hits crosses over into the pop market. Simon has been around for a while, and his voice is powerful and disciplined, but it is wasted on the abysmal material here. He is responsible for most of it, including the *Get Down, Get Down (Get Down on the Floor)* disco hit. Dear God, is there anything duller and more vapid than disco music? *J.V.*

SLADE: ***Slade in Flame.*** Slade (vocals); orchestra. *This Girl; Bangin' Man; Lay It Down; How Does It Feel?; Far Far Away*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2865 $6.98, ® M8-2865 $7.98, © M5-2865 $7.98.

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

This one's billed as "The original sound track from the film 'Flame' starring Slade." That's a good thing to know because it's a film that I'm sure I'll enjoy missing. Slade is still feverishly at work pounding out yesterday's blini dough in the shape of thunderous rock effects and vocals so leaden that I had to keep checking the turntable to make sure that it wasn't revolving too slowly. Material and performances are dated and dull, about as lively as *Death and Transfiguration* played at 16⅔ rpm. *P.R.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: ***Born to Run.*** Bruce Springsteen (vocals, guitar); Garry Tallent (bass); Max Weinberg (drums); Clarence Clemons (saxophone); other musicians. *Thunder Road; Tenth Avenue Freeze-Out; Night; Backstreets; Born to Run; She's the One; Meeting Across the River; Jungleland.* COLUMBIA PC 33795 $6.98, ® PCA 33795 $7.98, © PCT 33795 $7.98.

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

Bruce Springsteen is one of the few American rock musicians to write with a real punk's consciousness (as opposed to middle-class sympathies poured over some punky words) of his country's caste system. He has many counterparts in England, where the caste system is formally recognized—rock deals best with the almost-obvious—but these do not

(Continued on page 98)

THE ART ADVANCES

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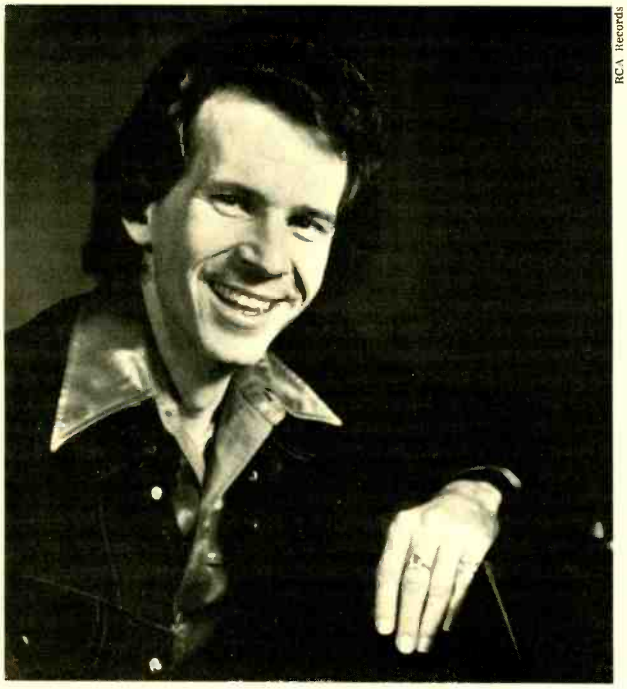


RCA Records

GARY STEWART: *the most exciting new honky-tonk singer in a long time*

include the first one you might think of, Ray Davies of the Kinks. Springsteen tells you what life with one leg in the sewer is like, gives you a close-up, subjective view of its rakishness and its precariousness; he does not step back, as Davies does, and try for an objective look at the big picture. He does not, therefore, as Davies does (and logically so, the big picture being what it is), wind up railing at the rich and powerful.

"Born to Run" seems closer to reveling in the dirt and flash, the greasy prettiness, the scrambling sadness of those who, as Dylan put it, have to live all out on the street. This probably is the most ambitious mosaic of grubby tidbits from down there that Springsteen has undertaken. Perversion and depravity tint an atmosphere for sleek machines ("moving," Billy Joe Shaver said in another song, another album, "is the closest thing to being free") to glide ominously through, bearing desperate adolescents. Springsteen's language continues to be urban and believable, and his music is raw and, in a stylized way, very emotional. His singing isn't improving much, though, and, while I agree that the character type needs a certain amount of slurring, his way of muddying the diction (or covering it with guitars) to the point of incoherence is at odds with his obvious belief in his words. And the album, speaking of words, is redundant, even for rock; the same thing is said too many ways, and the monochromatic, chant-like tunes in the verses (Springsteen seems to save his melodic strength for choruses, refrains, and other climaxes) seem too much alike. Instrumental backing can, and here often does, mitigate both those circumstances, and Springsteen's writing voice does come through clearer than his singing voice. He's a good reporter. *N.C.*

STEPPENWOLF: ***Hour of the Wolf.*** Steppenwolf (vocals and instrumentals). *Caroline (Are You Ready for the Outlaw World); Annie, Annie Over; Two for the Love of One; Just for Tonight*; and four others. EPIC PE 33583 $6.98, ⑧ PEA 33583 $7.98, © PET 33583 $7.98.

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

Long ago, in the late Sixties, Steppenwolf was a pretty good blues band. They split up so that

lead singer John Kay could make forgotten, forgettable solo albums and unsuccessfully run for political office. This is the band's second comeback album since their reunion. I don't see that there's very much for them to come back to; the era in which they thrived is over, and almost everyone who participated in its loonier moments is a little embarrassed about having done so. The group sounds dated and silly when they sing about "the outlaw world." Instead of coming on like revolutionary hero-punks, they now come on like the Beach Boys in a snit. *J.V.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GARY STEWART: ***Out of Hand.*** Gary Stewart (vocals, guitar, piano); Buddy Harman (drums); Reggie Young (guitar); Henry Strzelecki (bass); other musicians. *Drinkin' Thing; Honky-Tonkin'; I See the Want-to in Your Eyes; This Old Heart Won't Let Go; Draggin' Shackles*; and five others. RCA APL1-0900 $6.98, ® APS1-0900 $7.98.

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

Donald Barthelme caps a vignette about a child conning her way into bed with her parents, and then wetting the bed, with the father (one of the consistent victims of our constant revisionism) saying, "Is there no end to this *family life*?" The honky-tonk song arises from the same restlessness that formed such a question, and some think the restlessness—like the honky-tonk song itself—got started in the uprootings of World War II. I doubt it's that simple, but Gary Stewart, for what it's worth, was part of the post-war baby boom, and Gary Stewart is the most exciting new honky-tonk singer to come along in a long time.

What I would like is for him to develop into more than that—the honky-tonk, after all, is just one of many theaters for this restlessness—and he may do so in time. Here he has an album that sounds like a collection of singles, which is pretty much what it is, and it is good but a little too intense and choppy. Listen to a side of it and you realize all your jaw muscles have been tightened up for some time and you're *tired*; Stewart has been varying the tempo but not the mood. His main problem as a singer right now is how to handle the quiet parts; he doesn't take them on with anywhere near the kind of assurance he brings to the crux of the matter—the agonizing high note or whatever it happens to be. But this is a good start; it shows you various ways the honky-tonk song can be done and the kind of rhythmic, driving vocal style that is rife with the main ingredients of restlessness, energy, and sadness. *N.C.*

ROD STEWART: ***Atlantic Crossing.*** Rod Stewart (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Three Time Loser; Alright for an Hour; All in the Name of Rock 'n' Roll; Drift Away; Stone Cold Sober*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2875 $6.98, ® M8 2875 $7.98, © M5 2875 $7.98.

Performance: **When he's right . . .**
Recording: **Good**

Rod Stewart is an always interesting but often uneven artist. His hoarse, whiskey singing could easily become mannered, but he really does have style—his phrasing is excellent and he displays genuine sentiment. He is one of the few vocalists who can sing about "love"

without having it sound like he just looked the word up in the dictionary.

Although Stewart's singing is consistently good, his writing and choice of material are uneven; he is either absolutely right or only half-right. I am not wholly convinced by his version of *This Old Heart of Mine*, partly because I am stuck on the Isley Brothers' original and partly because, like most Holland-Dozier-Holland Motown-period songs, it depends on an upbeat tempo to disguise its defects. Stewart's version of *Drift Away*, however, must be definitive; no one else can sing about rock as he can. *Stone Cold Sober* was written by Stewart and Steve Cropper, former guitarist for Booker T. and the MG's and a gifted producer. The rest of the material is spotty—and Stewart gives it more than it deserves—except for *Sailing*, which closes the album and which is superb.

This is Stewart's first album recorded in the U.S. using only American musicians. He is reportedly happy with the results; he has reason to be pleased with 50 per cent of them. *J.V.*

TRIUMVIRAT: *Spartacus*. Triumvirat (vocals and instrumentals). *The Capital of Power; The School of Instant Pain; The Walls of Doom; The Deadly Dream of Freedom; The Hazy Shades of Dawn*; and four others. CAPITOL ST-11392 $6.98, ⑧ 8XT-11392 $7.98, © 4XT-11392 $7.98.

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

Triumvirat is a German trio with phonetic-English voices. They rely heavily on synthesizer yawps and bleeps and a *Kindergarten* sense of classical music. Their sound is huffy and puffy, deadly earnest, and overwhelmingly silly. In the great tradition of Emerson, Lake & Palmer, Triumvirat's motto is: "Sound busy." (I wish Focus would make another record; at least they can yodel.)

I quote from the liner notes: "This album is based on the story of SPARTACUS, a Roman gladiator, who was the leader of a rebellion against Rome around 73 BC." Some of you may remember the splashy movie wherein Kirk Douglas, in the title role, pits the dimple in his chin against the might of the Empire, as represented by Laurence Olivier, and loses, getting crucified in the process. Assuming that the real Spartacus could be brought here through time-transportation to listen to this album, I have no doubt that he would, at first, be boyishly embarrassed at being made such a fuss of, but after listening to most of the first side would grow more and more uncomfortable, fidgeting and chewing his lip, looking again and again at the door, and muttering: "Where *is* that fellow with the cross? What *can* be keeping him?" *J.V.*

URIAH HEEP: *Return to Fantasy*. Uriah Heep (vocals and instrumentals). *Return to Fantasy; Shady Lady; Devil's Daughter; Beautiful Dream*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2869 $6.98, ⑧ M8 2869 $7.98, © M5 2869 $7.98.

Performance: **Average**
Recording: **Average**

Uriah Heep is another example of how rock has become routine and show-business-as-usual. The band does some basic rock and occasionally grafts on the sound of a synthesizer or a mellotron or both. You might swear you've heard this whole album before, and you *have* heard all its elements bunched together in various complements for years. The band isn't incompetent, just routine. Incompetence *might* be a relief. *N.C.*

BOBBY VINTON: *Heart of Hearts*. Bobby Vinton (vocals); orchestra. *Lovely Lady; Feelings; Adios Amigos; My Song; Charlie; Polka Pose*; and five others. ABC ABCD-891 $6.98, ⑧ 8022-891 H $7.98, © 5022-891 H $7.98.

Performance: **Omigawd!!**
Recording: **Good**

You'll probably never be the same again once you've heard Bobby Vinton's new outburst containing his inimitable performances of such bijoux as *Polka Rose, Beer Barrel Polka*, and *You've Got Your Mama's Eyes*. Like Thurber's seal barking in the bedroom, it is an album that challenges and confounds any as yet known reality. *P.R.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MARION WILLIAMS: *Prayer Changes Things*. Marion Williams (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Prayer Changes Things; Dark Was the Night; A Pity and a Shame; I'd Rather Have Jesus; In These Dark Hours of Distress; Just Over the Hill*; and six others. ATLANTIC SD 18142 $6.98, ⑧ TP 18142 $7.98, © CS 18142 $7.98.

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

Marion Williams is a gospel singer so fer-

MARION WILLIAMS: *a gospel voice to touch the heart of the staunchest atheist*

vent that the mere sound of her voice might make the soul of an atheist tingle with revelation—at least for as long as the song lasts. On this disc she tackles a program of heavy gospel classics and vintage hymns which provides a worthy challenge for her skills. At times here she awakens memories of the near-terrifying conviction and energy of the late Sister Rosetta Tharpe—although her approach to *Ninety-Nine and One-Half Won't Do*, long a Tharpe staple, is far less fierce and primitive and relies more on artful musical phrasing than on the sheer insistent missionary zeal that was Sister Rosetta's forte. For Miss Williams *can* be as stately and majestic as Marian Anderson when she pleases—as in the plaintive *Stand By Me* and the dignified nineteenth-century hymn *Dark Was the Night*. But whether the tempo is fast or slow, the mood somber and contemplative or accelerated and zealous, Marion Williams is plainly a superb gospel singer. And here only *her* voice is heard—no choir, no close-harmony quartet. The instrumentalists—Lloyd Gary on piano, Jessy Dixon on organ, Earl Williams on drums, and the singer's seventeen-year-old son Robin on bongos—provide a tactful, apt background. *P.K.*

NANCY WILSON: ***Come Get to This.*** Nancy Wilson (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Come Get to This; All My Love Comes Down; Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight; If I Ever Lose This Heaven; Happy Tears*; and five others. CAPITOL ST-11386 $6.98, ® 8XT 11386 $7.98, © 4XT-11386 $7.98.

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

Nancy Wilson hasn't lost her touch. She is still able, through her expert phrasing and her plausibly hard-breathing approaches to some songs and swooning way with others, to make you believe you are hearing the sentiments of a sexy, three-dimensional woman. She can also turn on the dreamy nostalgia when she pleases—as in *This Time Last Summer*—or make you feel she knows precisely what love is about, as in *Like a Circle Never Stops*. The only thing she *can't do* is transcend the monotony of a program that seems designed to debilitate the listener through sheer excess of drive and the bludgeoning of overblown arrangements. The result—what with the incredible banality of the tunes, the pounding of the drums, the wail of the saxophones, the blare of the trumpets, and the gurgle of the background vocals—is that one begins to yearn for a little peace and quiet. *P.K.*

FRANK ZAPPA & THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION: ***One Size Fits All.*** Frank Zappa (guitar, vocals); George Duke (keyboards, vocals); Napoleon M. Brock (woodwinds, vocals); Chester Thompson (drums); Tom Fowler (bass); other musicians. *Inca Roads; Can't Afford No Shoes; Po-Jama People; Evelyn, a Modified Dog*; and four others. DISCREET DS 2216 $6.98. ® M8D 2216 $7.98, © MSD 2216 $7.98.

Performance: **Too cute**
Recording: **Very good**

Frank Zappa really should go into television or film or something visual and stop waiting for many of us to grasp the significance of the ugly sounds he makes in the name of music. Here, for example, his lyrics are funny if you read them and have a tolerance for half-assed surrealism, and the jacket design isn't bad as sophomore-level satire of astrology, astronomy, and several social attitudes—but adding the Mothers' kind of "progressive rock" or "jazz-rock" overlay of bops and squeaks and cowbells makes it less funny. Zappa has not really improved on Spike Jones or Somethin' Smith and the Redheads at setting jokes to contemporary pop conventions; he has merely made it seem more complicated. *Po-Jama People* sounds almost as interesting as it looks, but even there the instrumental waffling seems at war with the words. Zappa seems to be trying to combine whimsey and outrage here, but those two qualities don't really blend. What it *sounds* like is cute decadence, and I've had enough of that. *N.C.*

(Continued on page 104)

"... a warmth that must be something like what love is in his voice"


United Artists

Doc Watson's Up-to-date "Memories"

I CONFESS I don't quite know where pop music is, as they say or said, "at" right now (I'm not alone in this), but I know where it should be—right where Doc Watson and his son Merle and their picking buddies are in the United Artists album "Memories." Small irony noted: yes, they are memories; yes, it is a retrospective album; and yes, it turns out to be a crackerjack album for *right now*. From all this you may feel free to infer that we have escaped the surly bonds of nostalgia and are talking about higher things. Sweet picking is where it's at, I hope, sweet picking and believable singing that can be believed *in*, and if you want to speculate on the reasons why this is so, please don't overlook the judicious pressure constantly being applied by the imperturbable *musicianship* of the Nashville studio sidemen. Doc Watson is the kind of musician who's particularly aware of the astounding quickness of those cats, and he is the only fine *singer*—front man, star—I know of who can meet those boys on their own turf and outpick them.

Yet he has this other quality that may be just as important and maybe even a little *more* fascinating. It has to do with the *kind* of memory he has. You would call *Tennessee Stud* a natural classic from the instant it was written? You would do well to recall that it sure seemed headed for oblivion until Watson picked it up and beamed it out to the people. It's a classic *now*, all right, and in spades. So here you go, with this album, into that kind of awareness of things past . . . and what you get is songs with a wry or droll little odd twist to them, time and again, and they just aren't the things other people remember—not without help, at least. They may be old ones such as *Curly Headed Baby* or *Miss the Mississippi and You*, or ones of indeterminate age that you vaguely remember, such as *Blues Stay Away from Me*, or not-so-old ones such as *Moody River*, which means Watson doesn't appear to be biased toward any particular period; the consistent thing is how he keeps noticing the kinks in the flood of blandness that goes by year after year. There's a great and subtle element of taste involved in this—the songs aren't grotesque and repulsive, they are kinky and charming. The more I hear of Doc Watson the more I am persuaded he is a great and subtle man.

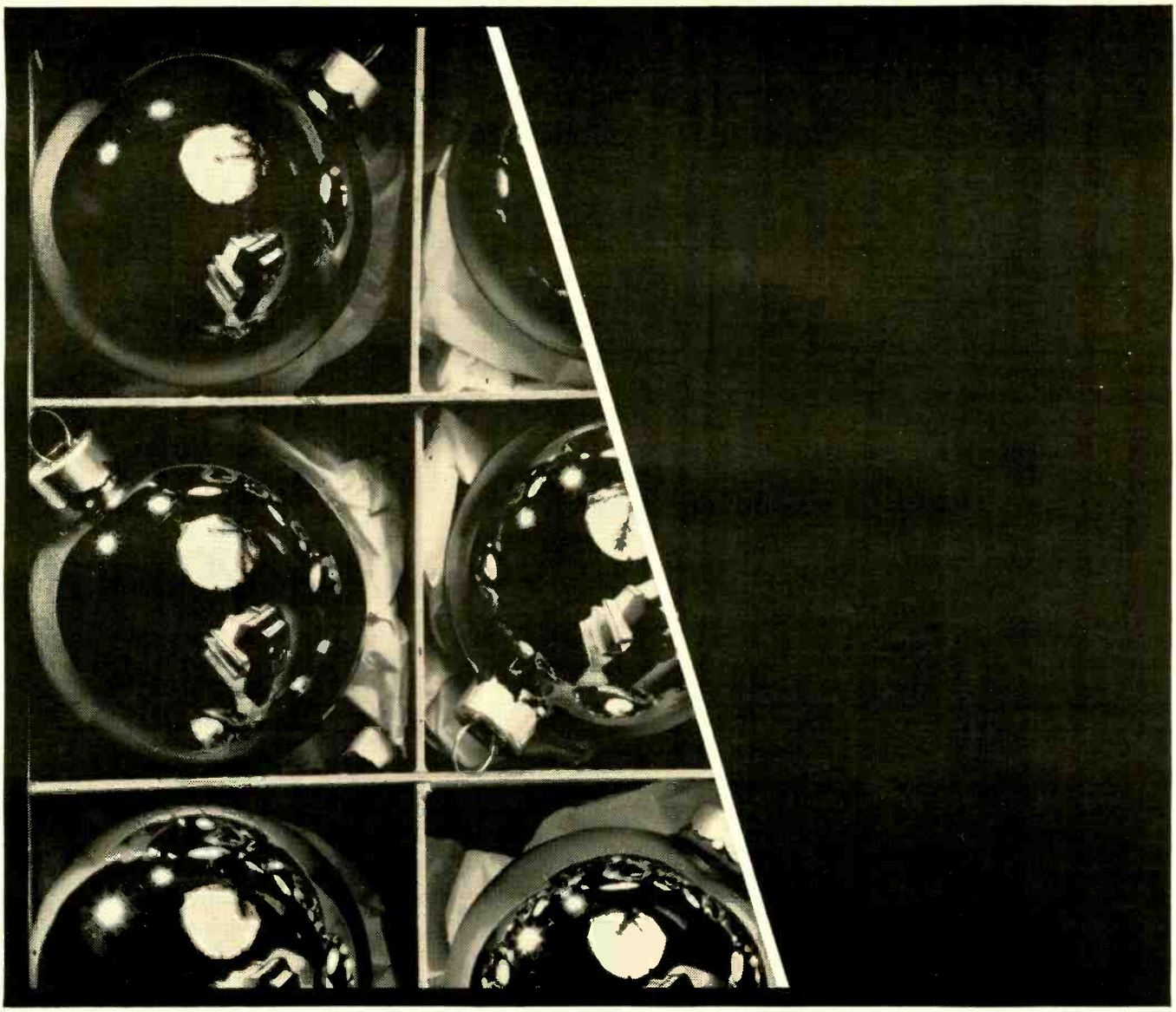
Chet Flippo, in the liner notes for this double album, discusses the futility of labeling Watson's music while himself giving up and labeling it "Southern Music," which didn't strike me as bad, and then Chet gives up some more, as they'd say in the South, and calls it "American." And so it is. And if we hadn't bandied the word about so much as to make it meaningless, you could also consider calling it timeless. The song selection is not exactly what I thought I wanted before I heard it; but when the band comes to a piece that everyone else has played through the years, one you'd really like to get away from for a decade or so, like *Wabash Cannonball* (Ol' Diz, rest his soul, didn't do *that* one any favors), Doc has the voice and the hot guitar and the backing to put some new pleasure into that, even that.

The group also shows understanding and verve in a Bill Monroe bluegrass tune; recalls pieces from the years when Watson played electric guitar in the local swing band, Jack Williams and the Country Gentlemen; makes connections with Clarence Ashley, the Delmore Brothers, John Hurt, Leon McAuliffe, A. P. Carter, British traditional ballads; and picks sweetly all the way. And yes, you could call it American. It's American from Doc's viewpoint (a word I don't use lightly, for it calls up more irony: Watson is blind, which is bound to influence *all* he does in ways sighted persons cannot really comprehend), which started out geographically in North Carolina—the Southern Mountains, and don't underestimate the mountains' part in shaping it. "American" *always* has to be defined from a viewpoint that started somewhere.

LISTENING to "Memories," I can't help remembering another American balladeer whose viewpoint, though shifty, constantly on the move (he was, like Jack Williams, a railroad man), was always in the South. You could (they did) put a slide guitar and a black-blues way of playing into Jimmie Rodgers' music and it sounded right, or you could give it a dobro and a flatland-country consciousness, or mandolins and such and a hillbilly, mountain awareness, or a Dixieland complement of instruments and attitudes . . . and it *still* sounded right. Somehow or other, angle of view acknowledged, he managed to sum it all up, get a feeling for the whole of it, come close enough to actually touching the tribal spirit that it'd almost give you the creeps thinking about it. Doc Watson, without writing songs, has shown the same kind of Southern-based gadabout nature Rodgers had. He's done it with musicianship, making flat-picking a work of art of a soaring emotional quality, by being able to sing with a warmth that must be something like what love is in his voice, by listening to the other musicians and helping them shine (just *listen*, here, to how Merle is taking to the slide guitar), and he has done it with that remarkable memory of his.

—*Noel Coppage*

DOC WATSON: ***Memories.*** Doc Watson (vocals, guitar, banjo); Merle Watson (guitar, banjo, dulcimer); Chuck Cochran (piano); Jim Isbel (drums); Joe Allen (bass); Sam Bush (fiddle); Michael Coleman (electric bass). *Rambling Hobo; Shady Grove; Wake Up; Little Maggie; Pear Tree; Keep on the Sunny Side; Double File and Salt Creek; Curly Headed Baby; Miss the Mississippi and You; Wabash Cannonball; My Rose of Old Kentucky; Blues Stay Away from Me; Walking Boss; Make Me a Pallet; In the Jailhouse Now; Steel Guitar Rag; Hang Your Head in Shame; You Don't Know My Mind Blues; Moody River; Don't Tell Me Your Troubles; Columbus Stockade; Mama Don't Allow No Music; Thoughts of Never.* UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA423-H2 two discs $7.98, ⑧ UA-EA423-H $8.98.



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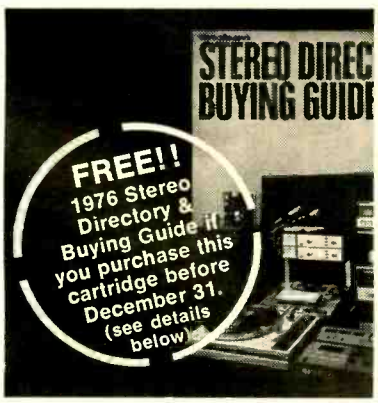

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CIRCLE NO. 49 ON READER SERVICE CARD

AFRICA—CEREMONIAL AND FOLK MUSIC. Recorded in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania by David Fanshawe. *Acholi Bwala Dance; Aluar Horns; Turkana Songs; Samburu Warriors' Initiation; Wagogo Soothing Song; Wagogo Marimba*; and seven others. NONESUCH EXPLORER SERIES H-72063 $3.98.

Performance: **Intriguing**
Recording: **Remarkable**

David Fanshawe is an indefatigable explorer who not only has practically worn out the trails of Africa in his quest for authentic tribal music, but last year went so far as to mix the cultivated voices of the Ambrosian Singers with the sounds of his field recordings to present his own *African Sanctus* on the Philips label. This latest record contains strictly field recordings, and we follow Mr. Fanshawe a thousand exhausting miles across Africa. Only the hardiest lover of folk music should be prepared to accompany Fanshawe on this odyssey, filing past Bwala dancers in a Ugandan village; escaping sixty horn players, drummers, and singers on the border of Zaire; sliding down the slopes of Ugandan giraffe songs and Turkana songs in praise of elephants and rhinoceroses; drinking blood in the bush with Kenya warriers wearing tinkling bells on their legs . . . and on and on. Anybody who ever saw a travelogue about Africa probably has been exposed to this sort of music in one form or another over the years, but what distinguishes Fanshawe's recording is the sharp focus that enables us to recognize the music of one tribe as contrasted with that of another—the bells on the legs of those Kenya warriors, for example, as compared with the unexpected sound of stringed instruments in the Tanzanian *Wagogo Soothing Song* (designed, by the way, to induce sleep in insomniac children). There's enough on this one disc to intrigue a dedicated Africa-phile through countless replayings, and even the most casual listener will be struck by the remarkable clarity and presence of the stereo recording that puts you in the midst of the explosive, exhausting action. *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FESTIVALS OF THE HIMALAYAS. Recorded in Chamba and Kulu, Himachal Pradesh, by David Lewiston. *Kulu Nati; Kore, kore, coat mereya Purana; Phota lo jatu ra khana; Tikmu Lariye; Sahoo Nati*; and five others. NONESUCH EXPLORER SERIES H-72065 $3.98.

Performance: **Astonishing**
Recording: **Amazing**

David Lewiston, who recorded the material on location for this remarkable album, describes the Indian Himalayas as "a region of soaring snow-capped peaks and high pastures, subtropical valleys and verdant rolling hills" that once consisted of separate princely states but now belongs to India. Three million people live in the area, and on festival days fifty thousand of them troop down in traditional costumes to celebrate the Dussehra festival in Kulu. There, according to Lewiston, "they buy and trade, meet old friends, dance, sing and generally have a good time." The festival is climaxed by a procession in which the images of two hundred hill gods are carried along on palanquins.

Lewiston's field recording is quite startling in its realism, and the music, accompanying the singing at the fair and the dancing by the village groups in a nearby amphitheater, is astonishing stuff. Woodwinds and percussion dominate the sound; the chanting has an Asian cast, but the music of each village, like the dialect spoken in each, is somewhat different from that of the others. Some songs have a Tibetan flavor, others reveal Kashmiri influences. There are wedding songs performed by farming families, love songs, and verses like ambulatory commercials, to be sung while walking through the cattle market. There are a song about a weeping bird, a haunting chant performed by the young people of Chamba Valley as they dance, odes dedicated to local dieties. And over all, piercing and elemental, comes the sound of horns—the straight-shaped *kahal* and *karnal*, the S-shaped *haransinga*. The stereo sound of this recording, considering the conditions under which it was made, is remarkable. *P.K.*

JAZZ

RUBY BRAFF/GEORGE BARNES QUARTET: ***To Fred Astaire with Love.*** Ruby Braff (cornet); George Barnes and Wayne Wright (guitar); Michael Moore (bass). *They Can't Take That Away from Me; A Shine on Your Shoes; Be Careful, It's My Heart; Isn't It a Lovely Day to Be Caught in the Rain?; I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket; Easter Parade*; and four others. RCA APL1-1008 $6.98, ® APS1-1008 $7.98.

Performance: **Mini-portion**
Recording: **Very good**

Mainstreamers Ruby Braff and George Barnes swing lightly on this tribute to Fred Astaire, but the album is also light in another way: the total playing time is 24' 20", equivalent to a single side on many discs. Records are expensive enough these days, so I suggest you teach RCA a lesson by purchasing the quartet's Chiaroscuro album (CR-121)—it costs the same, gives you nearly fourteen minutes more of music, and, as it happens, contains what I consider to be unquestionably superior performances. *C.A.*

DUKE ELLINGTON AND RAY BROWN: ***This One's for Blanton.*** Duke Ellington (piano); Ray Brown (bass). *Do Nothin' Till You Hear from Me; Sophisticated Lady; Fragmented Suite for Piano and Bass* (four movements); and three others. PABLO Ⓜ 2310-721 $7.98, ® S 10721 $7.98.

Performance: **Worthy tribute**
Recording: **Good**

Bassist Jimmy Blanton's career was strikingly similar to that of guitarist Charlie Christian: both surged to fame, if not fortune, with a major band in 1939, Christian with Goodman, Blanton with Ellington; both revolutionized their instruments during the two years that followed; both were stricken with tuberculosis in 1941 and died the following year, Christian at twenty-three, Blanton at twenty-one. Younger generations are largely unaware of Charlie Christian, and fewer still have heard of Blanton, but the impact they had on jazz will continue to be felt as long as the music is played.

Ray Brown's generation was the first to pick up Blanton's innovation of transforming the bass into a solo instrument. In fact, Brown—who was fifteen when Blanton died—attributes his interest in the instrument to the Blanton/Ellington records he heard on a neighborhood juke box. Yielding such classic sides as *Ko-Ko*, *Jack the Bear*, and *Conga Brava*, the Blanton period was one of the most memorable in the long history of the Ellington Orchestra, and so important was Blanton's contribution that Ellington recorded some duets with him: four for Victor and three for Columbia (one of the latter remains unissued). These duets served Norman Granz

as inspiration for this album recorded in Las Vegas, presumably in December of 1972 (the album gives conflicting dates).

Ellington and Brown tackle only two of the Blanton duets here, *Pitter Panther Patter* and *Sophisticated Lady* (unless *See See Rider* is the same as *Blues*, recorded for Columbia in 1939). The rest of side one is from the orchestra's repertoire, and side two is devoted in its entirety to a four-movement *Fragmented Suite for Piano and Bass*, written by Ellington and Brown for the occasion.

Accustomed as we now are to the bass in the role of a solo instrument, these recordings don't have the impact of the Ellington/Blanton duets, but they capture the flavor. Ellington's approach to the old material is new, but, of course, characteristic, and Brown (who these days plays, largely unappreciated, in the band on the Merv Griffin Show) is his usual superb self. Granz could not have made a better choice. The album is excellent, and my only complaint is really a very minor one: the jacket is labeled stereo, the recording is mono. *C.A.*

GIL EVANS: ***Pacific Standard Time.*** Gil Evans (piano and arrangements) with various orchestras, including Curtis Fuller, Frank Rehak, and Jimmy Cleveland (trombones); Cannonball Adderley, Steve Lacy, and Budd Johnson (reeds); Chuck Wayne (guitar); Paul Chambers and Tommy Potter (bass); Art Blakey, Philly Joe Jones, and Elvin Jones (drums). *Django; Lester Leaps In; Struttin' with Some Barbecue; Manteca; Davenport Blues; St. Louis Blues*; and nine others. BLUE NOTE BN-LA461-H2 two discs $7.98.

Performance: **Still fresh**
Recording **Very good**

Gil Evans' arrangements first caught the attention of critics in the Forties, when they were played by the Claude Thornhill Orchestra, but it was his work with Miles Davis—beginning with the celebrated 1949 Capitol sessions—that sparked Evans' eventual recognition as one of the most important jazz arrangers. In the late Fifties, as he firmly established his importance by constructing classic frames around the eminently suitable playing of Miles Davis—resulting in such Columbia albums as "Miles Ahead," "Porgy and Bess," and "Sketches of Spain"—Evans assembled an impressive array of players for a series of World Pacific sessions. The result, fifteen great arrangements of standard jazz material, appeared initially as two albums ("New Bottle, Old Wine"—WP 1246, and "Great Jazz Standards"—WP 1270), but the first reappeared in 1962 as a Cannonball Adderley item (World Pacific PJ-40), repackaged to cash in on the Adderley Quintet's successful Riverside recordings. Both the original albums and the repackaged one have long since disappeared from the catalogs, so their return in this double-album format is doubly welcome.

Evans' new recipes for such old jazz fare as *King Porter Stomp*, *Struttin' with Some Barbecue*, and *Davenport Blues* are as delicious today as they were almost twenty years ago; he chose his ingredients well, and good performances are timeless. Adderley solos on every track of sides one and two, sounding a lot more like Charlie Parker than he did in later years, but there is also excellent solo work by Steve Lacy (playing the soprano saxophone before it became popular in modern jazz) and a wealth of beautiful, lyrical sounds from the trumpet of Johnny Coles, a Miles-influenced player who deserves wider public recognition.

In a sense, these fifteen selections are like a history of jazz painted with vivid tone colors and bold strokes by a master impressionist. Fifteen years ago I played one of these recordings, *Struttin' with Some Barbecue*, for Lil Armstrong, who wrote it in 1927. "I didn't know I'd written something *that* beautiful," she said. "That guy sure dressed it up fine." He sure did, and it has worn well. *C.A.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TOMMY FLANAGAN: ***The Tokyo Recital.*** Tommy Flanagan (piano); Keter Betts (bass); Bobby Durham (drums). *Caravan; Chelsea Bridge; Something to Live For; All Day Long; Mainstem*; and four others. PABLO 2310-724 $7.98.

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

Pablo's house annotator, Benny Green, would have us believe that Tommy Flanagan's career has been that of the eternal accompanist, suggesting to the less informed reader that this set of trio performances not only marks some sort of coming-out for Flanagan, but also that it is a revelation of hidden talent. True, Tommy Flanagan has spent most of the last ten years or so as a vocal accompanist—mainly for Ella Fitzgerald—but he has also performed and recorded extensively with instrumental groups whose leaders

have ranged from Pee Wee Russell and Herbie Mann to Mingus and Coltrane, and he has had several albums of his own.

Rather than being a new revelation of Mr. Flanagan's considerable talent as a soloist, this "Tokyo Recital" (which is not, as implied, a live recording) is a reaffirmation of something about which even the most casual Flanagan follower never had any doubt. What *should* be pointed out is that this is one of the finest examples of Tommy Flanagan's artistry to be released in quite some time, a superb album of music from Duke Ellington's repertoire that ought to secure the forty-five-year-old Detroit pianist a place in the foreground.

The assisting players are bassist Keter Betts—who backed up Earl Bostic and Dinah Washington but was not taken seriously until he teamed up with a budding Charlie Byrd in the late Fifties—and drummer Bobby Durham, best known for his playing with the Oscar Peterson Trio. Whether the tempo is driving a *Caravan* or delicately transporting us across *Chelsea Bridge*, both perform excellently with Flanagan, showing the kind of rapport usually present only in working groups. *C.A.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ANDREW HILL: ***Spiral.*** Andrew Hill (piano); Ted Curson (trumpet, piccolo trumpet, flugelhorn); Lee Konitz (soprano, alto, and tenor saxophones); Robin Kenyatta (alto saxophone); Cecil McBee, Stafford James (bass); Art Lewis, Barry Altschul (drums). *Tomorrow; Today; Quiet Dawn*; and four others. ARISTA AL 1007 $6.98.

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

This album is not likely to catch your attention from the record bins, but behind its dismal cover—surely the year's dreariest—there hides some very worthwhile, sparkling music. Andrew Hill played on the fringes of the avant-garde about ten years ago, convincing many that he was among those who eventually would take jazz in a new direction. He didn't, but neither did he stagnate.

"Spiral" consists of quintet, quartet, trio, and duo performances recorded last December and January. It is better than any of Hill's Blue Note recordings—at least the ones released so far (about ten mysteriously remain unissued)—and much of its appeal is due to the presence of Ted Curson, who has mostly been active in Europe in recent years, and Lee Konitz, whose duet with Hill on *Invitation* is a highlight. There is also excellent rhythmic support, most notably by bassist Cecil McBee on the quintet tracks, but it is Andrew Hill's playing that brings it all together. Just why the Haitian-born pianist, now almost forty, hasn't received more recognition is hard to understand; his playing is vibrant, inventive, and rhythmic, his style is Monkish, yet personal. Alto saxophonist Robin Kenyatta is the least interesting musician here, but he is only heard on the two quartet tracks and everything else in this album transcends the annoyance of his presence. Let's hope for more from Andrew Hill. *C.A.*

BILLIE HOLIDAY: ***A Day in the Life of Billie Holiday.*** Billie Holiday (vocals); Jimmy Rowles (piano); Artie Shapiro (bass). *Jeepers Creepers; I'm Restless; Just Friends; Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone* (two versions); *I Don't Want To Cry Anymore*; and seven others. DIFFERANT (*sic*) DRUMMER DD 1003 M $6.98.

Performance: **Candid**
Recording: **Uneven**

Billie Holiday has been dead sixteen years, but unissued recordings of this extraordinary artist keep surfacing. Unearthed material released so far has included a few worthy performances and—courtesy of unconscientious exploiters—some that Miss Holiday herself undoubtedly would rather have seen destroyed. As with any artist of Billie Holiday's stature, the barrel will be scraped until we have heard the scratch at the very bottom, but there are occasionally gems among the scraps. And, as scraps go, this album is not without merit. Recorded informally at a California rehearsal for a Norman Granz Verve session (probably in 1957), this material has quietly circulated among collectors, portions of it appearing on a Paramount album two years ago.

Since there is no scarcity of well-recorded Billie Holiday performances from this period—both good and bad—this unbalanced and fragmented album is most interesting as a document of Lady Day at work. Not that her vocal performances here are that bad, but the candid talk that appears between these vocals is far more intriguing. Billie *sounds* inebriated, but that was simply her way of talking; it was almost as if she were singing. Jimmy Rowles' piano all but obscures some of the talk here, but we do hear Billie recalling her first audition—when she was about thirteen—with

(Continued on page 109)

"...*the authentic joyousness of a lady communicating her loving.*"

Kay Swift: Civilized Pleasure


Lynn Farrol Group

UNEXPECTED, civilized pleasure of a rather special kind was my first reaction on hearing the new Mark 56 album of Kay Swift's work, the same sort of pleasure I've experienced from such random, easily available discoveries as the comfortable, unpretentiously elegant lobby and dining room of the Hotel Sheraton Russell, unexpectedly plunked down in the lower reaches of Park Avenue; the incisive, witty novels of Elizabeth Taylor (no, *not* Ms. Taylor-Hilton-Wilding-Todd-Fisher-Burton-Burton, but an English writer whose masterpiece is probably *The Soul of Kindness*, a story shaped by a laser scalpel but told with a compassionate smile); the films of Max Ophuls; Sarah Lee's frozen walnut layer cake; and the new D. W. Griffith postage stamp.

Kay Swift's music, whether in her show tunes or in her more "serious" work, sports a curious, jaunty exhilaration in accomplishing so very well what it sets out to achieve within its own modest, small-scale, but beautifully crafted boundaries. Take, for example, her most famous song, *Fine and Dandy*, so oversung, so overplayed (and now reduced to a gag *a cappella* accompaniment for TV comics pretending to be magicians) that it might almost be a joke. The indignities it has suffered in the forty-five years since she wrote it with her husband "Paul James" (James Paul Warburg) can probably please only Miss Swift's accountant, but as sung here by Louise Carlyle, with Miss Swift at the piano, the song comes back as the real pop classic it is.

This disc's whole group of show songs, dating from *Can't We Be Friends?* of 1929 through *Calliope* of 1952, are graceful, elegant examples of a Broadway musical theater genre that has simply vanished. It is a style perhaps best recognized in the songs of Rodgers and Hart, the music unendingly melodious and romantic, the lyrics crisp and smart and worldly. (Although she was brought to an appreciation of popular music by George Gershwin, Kay Swift's own music seems closer to that of Richard Rodgers and, at times, to that of Arthur Schwartz.) Swift has a free-flowing gift of melody, and her husband provided the kind of lyrics that combined sophistication and gentle wisdom, a combination that—can you believe?—people once expected, took for granted in popular music. There are two beautifully crafted gems in this group that certainly deserve revival today in the burgeoning new cabaret rooms: *Up Among the Chimney Pots* and *Can This Be Love?* (Are you listening, Barbara Cook or Marc Allen Trujillo or Ellen Greene?)

The three more "serious" works here—the dances from *Alma Mater*, newly revised in 1974 but composed for a Balanchine ballet in 1935, the 1960 Theme and Variations for Cello and Piano, and *Century 21*, a suite for orchestra from 1962—all display not only Miss Swift's solid classical training but her witty self-assurance. They are all brisk without being brittle, full of sentiment yet never sentimental, humorously and delightfully balanced between the rigors of classical form and of personal expressiveness. They are as playful and as immaculately realized as a Magritte painting, in which everyday perception is rearranged and reinterpreted even as the artist strictly observes all the rules of good draftsmanship. Kay Swift's music has that same ability to engage and parry the classical forms, to change the expected dark to the unexpected light, to toy with melody and to be seriously unserious. On very first hearing, particularly in the dances from *Alma Mater*, the music may seem to have that too-crisp *chic* reminiscent of the more arid work of Les Six, but a second hearing makes it apparent that Miss Swift may be flirtatious, but she is assuredly not vacuous.

Surely the greatest joy of this album is an enchanting song cycle, *Reaching for the Brass Ring*. It is a series of songs Miss Swift has composed over the last twenty years or so for her grandchildren, and it is filled with sunlit charm and happiness. Although addressed to children, Miss Swift's lyrics never condescend to, or cheek-pinch, their young audience. They concern such vital matters as *Ridin' His Bike* or *My Teeny Restaurant* or *I've Got a Horse*, and they are radiant with the kind of grave excitement, curiosity, and sense of adventure that any child can identify with immediately. Louise Carlyle sings nine of them sensitively and beautifully with an orchestra conducted by Robert Russell Bennett.

It was only a short time after a performance of the cycle by the Philadelphia Orchestra (again with Miss Carlyle) that further additions to the family impelled Grandma Swift to add two more songs, *The Singing One* and *Three Balloons*. She sings both these P.S.'s here, to her own piano accompaniment, and, as fine as Miss Carlyle's performances of the others are, Kay Swift's renditions, replete with her devil-may-care but gallant sense of vocal pitch, have the authentic joyousness of a lady communicating her loving.

IT would be tiresome in discussing a creator such as Kay Swift to drag in that (by now) noisy old harridan, Women's Lib. Suffice it to say that Kay Swift seems to have lived a very full and complete life, both personally and professionally. That she is a fine musician and composer is obvious, and the fact needs no gender qualifications. Several years ago there was a popular potboiler of a novel called *The Best of Everything* teeming with a cast of unhappy female characters who were precursors of the typical victim as seen nowadays by the women's movement. Yet that title seems to describe Kay Swift and her life very accurately, and this album demonstrates wonderfully well how hard she has worked and how completely she has succeeded in getting the best of everything out of her own considerable talents.

—*Peter Reilly*

KAY SWIFT: ***Fine and Dandy.*** Kay Swift (piano, vocals); Louise Carlyle (vocals); various instrumentalists; orchestra. *Fine and Dandy; Can This Be Love?; Calliope; Once You Find Your Guy; Up Among the Chimney Pots; Can't We Be Friends?; Three Dances from Alma Mater; Theme and Variations for Cello and Piano; Reaching for the Brass Ring (song cycle); Can't Win 'Em All; Two on a Bicycle; Century 21.* MARK 56 RECORDS 700 two discs $11.98 (available from Mark 56 Records, P.O. Box One, Anaheim, Calif. 92805).

Charlie Johnson's band at Small's Paradise, we get her account of a disastrous record date with Charlie Shavers at which all the musicians got so drunk that she begged Norman Granz not to release the session, and we learn that she hated *What a Little Moonlight Can Do*, one of her most popular numbers. We also hear her trying out a new song, *I'm Restless*, but Rowles' piano dominates.

Two "medleys" listed on the album are not really that, but fragments of songs edited to run together, and the liner notes are obviously written by someone not too well informed. Example: "She remembers when she was recording in Japan. . . ." Billie Holiday never visited Japan, but she does refer on the record to Norman Granz's having been in Japan at a certain time. The annotator didn't listen very carefully to this album, but I suggest you do—it's a fascinating glimpse of a remarkable artist at work, and you are the lucky fly on the wall. *C.A.*

ELVIN JONES: *New Agenda*. Elvin Jones (drums); Steve Grossman (reeds); Roland Prince (guitar); Dave Williams (bass); with "guests" Joe Farrell and Frank Foster (reeds), Kenny Barron and Gene Perla (piano), Candido (percussion). *Naima; My Lover; Someone's Rocking My Jazzboat; Haresah*; and three others. VANGUARD VSD 79362 $6.98.

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

If you owned all the albums on which Elvin Jones appears, you would—even if that were the extent of your collection—have an impressive number of albums ranging from Willie "The Lion" Smith and Insect Trust to Miles Davis and Roland Kirk. You would also have quite a stack of John Coltrane recordings, representing exciting, creative years in the career of the ground-breaking drummer whose radical concept of percussive support freed the drums from a strictly rhythmic role and molded the styles of such disciples as Tony Williams and Billy Cobham.

This is Jones' first album for Vanguard, and it is a worthy addition to any collection. Apart from the leader's percussive work, which is uniformly excellent, there are fine soprano-saxophone solos by Miles alumnus Steve Grossman and particularly interesting performances by guitarist Roland Prince. Not surprisingly, there is a Coltrane air about this music, but there has never been anything wrong with that.

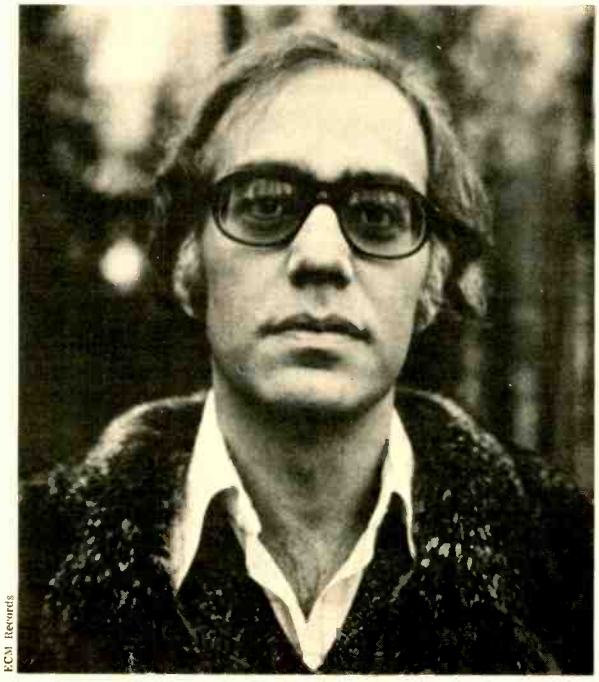
The basic Elvin Jones Quartet and the "guest artists" who here augment it are some of the most talented people around today, musicians who don't need a gimmick to get their message across. It's too bad producer Ed Bland doesn't seem to understand this, for he and his engineers have marred an otherwise excellent album with reverbs and other distracting, unnecessary electronic tricks. It is good in spite of such tampering. *C.A.*

STEVE KUHN: *Trance*. Steve Kuhn (piano); Steve Swallow (bass); Jack DeJohnette (drums); Sue Evans (percussion). *Squirt; The Sandhouse; The Young Blade; Silver*; and four others. ECM ECM-1052 $6.98.

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

Brooklyn-born Steve Kuhn is one of the most innovative pianists on the scene today. His few weeks with John Coltrane's band at New York's Jazz Gallery in 1960 went largely unnoticed, but that musical encounter, though brief, had a striking effect on Kuhn's musical thinking. If you compare his playing in Kenny Dorham's "Jazz Contemporary" album (Time 52004), recorded shortly before the Coltrane experience, with his work with Stan Getz on Verve the following year, you'll hear what I mean. A further comparison of Kuhn's Cobblestone albums of 1972 and this new ECM release, recorded in November of last year, shows that he is continuing to develop—his style is freer and more lyrical, his inventions more personal.

The instrumentation is one that Kuhn seems partial to—piano, bass, drums, and percussion—and the players for this occasion are outstanding: Steve Swallow and Jack DeJohnette, whose ideas are as advanced as Kuhn's, and percussionist Sue Evans, a long-



STEVE KUHN: *one of the most innovative pianists on the scene today*

time associate of the pianist. The entire album consists of Kuhn compositions, some of which are at least as interesting as his rendering of them. But more than anything else, this album confirms that Steve Kuhn has now developed a style that is strictly his own: there are influences, of course, but they are omnidirectional and Kuhn has melded them almost beyond recognition. ECM will soon release a solo album by Kuhn. I have heard it, and I feel safe in predicting that it won't be long before Steve Kuhn can turn down the wedding and bar mitzvah engagements currently necessary to his survival. *C.A.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MODERN JAZZ QUARTET: *The Last Concert*. John Lewis (piano); Milt Jackson (vibraphone); Percy Heath (bass); Connie Kay (drums, percussion). *The Cylinder; The Golden Striker; Skating in Central Park; What's New?; Django; Night in Tunisia*; and eight others. ATLANTIC SD 2-909 two discs $11.98, ☐ QD 2-909 two discs $12.98, ⑧ TP 2-909 $13.97, 8 QT 2-909 $14.97, © CS 2-909 $13.97.

Performance: **Eminent exit**
Recording: **Excellent**

Last November, in New York's Avery Fisher Hall, the oldest and classiest jazz act ever, the Modern Jazz Quartet, took its final bow. For those of us who were there, it was an evening well spent. The veteran quartet's musical performance was as distinguished as its appearance, and the repertoire was a delightful summation of twenty-two years. A concert—particularly one of a historic nature, such as this one—can easily veil an observer's objectivity, for the general atmosphere enhances the performance. Then comes the rude awakening when that same performance is heard in the sober surroundings of one's living room. Not so in this case. In fact, the MJQ's last concert is even better on records, as excellent engineering picks up nuances lost in the acoustically imperfect Lincoln Center hall.

I find no need to go into the music in detail, except to say that even though the repertoire is familiar, the renditions are new and often superior to the quartet's previous ones. The concert has also been released in quadraphonic format (CD-4), which is very effective if you like to experience the sensation of being in the middle of the MJQ with each member coming at you from a different speaker. It's not a bad feeling at all. *C.A.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FLIP PHILLIPS: *A Melody from the Sky*. Flip Phillips (tenor saxophone); Neal Hefti (trumpet); Bill Harris (trombone); Aaron Sachs (clarinet); Ralph Burns (piano); Billy Bauer (guitar); Marjorie Hyams (vibraphone); Chubby Jackson (bass); Dave Tough, Shelly Manne (drums); other musicians. *Lover Come Back to Me; More Than You Know; Without Woody; Papilloma*; and eight others. BOB THIELE MUSIC Ⓜ BBM1-1032 $6.98.

Performance: **Delectable**
Recording: **Noisier than necessary**

Joseph Edward Fillipelli was born in Brooklyn sixty years ago, but he had become Flip Phillips by 1944, when he joined Woody Herman's first and most outstanding Herd. Two years with Herman—a period that yielded the band's most memorable recordings—brought Phillips wide recognition, but it was with "Jazz at the Philharmonic" that his fame really spread. From 1946 to the mid-Fifties, Phillips excited JATP audiences throughout the world, invariably bringing them to a frenzy with his rousing versions of *Perdido*, his most popular but by no means his best number.

The Onyx label recently issued some excellent 1963 recordings by Phillips, but these 1944/1945 sessions, originally released on 78's by Signature, are better by far. Four small-band combinations, comprising some of the finest players from the Herman Herd and labeled as the Flip Phillips Fliptet, not only form a suitable frame for the tenor saxophonist's artistry, but present us with mainstream music of the highest order. Phillips could and did battle with the best of them in the JATP years that followed, but, frenzied as his playing often became, he was never a honker. As in the 1963 sessions on Onyx, his tone here is rich and smooth, his style delicately dexterous, and, whether swinging vigorously or subtly, his playing at all times is impeccable. There are also exemplary solos by fellow Hermanites Neal Hefti, Bill Harris, Marjorie Hyams, Billy Bauer, and Ralph Burns, supported throughout by the lithe, rhythmic bounce of Chubby Jackson's bass and further enhanced, in seven selections, by the remarkable drumming of Dave Tough.

Unfortunately, RCA (whose engineering department remastered this album) continues to use outmoded techniques when mastering from 78's, so there could have been less sur-

face noise, but the music in this case transcends such shortcomings. *C.A.*

JEAN-LUC PONTY: ***Upon the Wings of Music*** **(see Best of the Month, page 82)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JOE VENUTI: ***The Joe Venuti Blue Four.*** Joe Venuti (violin); Dill Jones, Dick Hyman (piano); Spencer Clark (bass saxophone); Zoot Sims (tenor saxophone); Bucky Pizzarelli (guitar); Milt Hinton (bass); Cliff Leeman (drums). *Stringing the Blues; Diga Diga Doo; The Blue Room; Remember*; and eight others. CHIAROSCURO CR 134 $6.98.

Performance: ***Vivat* Venuti**
Recording: **Might as well be mono**

Joe Venuti is seventy-one. I suppose that's young compared to the equally active Eubie Blake, who is in his early nineties, but jazz is not a music that usually grants its players longevity. What is even more remarkable, in Venuti's case, is that he has maintained the technique, zest, and vigor of his youth in his playing. Venuti is a veteran of the Paul Whiteman, Jean Goldkette, and Dorsey Brothers bands, and his successful partnership with guitarist Eddie Lang, who died in 1933, is well documented on a two-record Columbia set ("Stringing the Blues," C2L 24). That set contains a number of sides by the original Joe Venuti Blue Four, from which this album derives its title. However, you don't have to dig into the past to hear good Venuti—this album is a joy from beginning to end.

Zoot Sims, who teamed up with Venuti in a previous album ("Joe and Zoot," Chiaroscuro CR 128), shows even better rapport with the violinist on the four tracks that he participates in here, especially *I Got Rhythm*, a real cooker. The nearly extinct bass saxophone is nice to hear again, and Spencer Clark—who replaced Adrian Rollini with the California Ramblers—plays it with as much flexibility as possible. The album information is sloppy—wrong personnel listings, a misspelled title, etc.—and the recording is stereo with virtually no separation, but the music is too good to pass up. *C.A.*

THEATER • FILMS

GEORGE GERSHWIN: ***An American in London. Primrose.*** Original London cast, 1924. *Andante from Rhapsody in Blue; Preludes Nos. 1, 2, and 3; Do-Do-Do; Maybe; Someone to Watch Over Me; Clap Yo' Hands.* George Gershwin (piano). MONMOUTH EVERGREEN MES/7071 $6.98.

Performance: **Valuable**
Recording: **Foggy**

The most interesting and valuable tracks here are the six of George Gershwin at the piano

playing his own work. Gershwin doesn't play much better than any other composer I've ever heard, nor is there much of the romantic brio apparent here that was said to distinguish his playing and that has been commented on so often in memoirs of the period. But Gershwin's stature seems to increase with the passing of the years so that each new bit of material available far transcends nostalgia or memorabilia to become a valuable addendum to a great man's career. Gershwin plays three of his best popular songs (*Maybe, Do-Do-Do,* and *Someone to Watch Over Me*) and one not-so-fine one (*Clap Yo' Hands*) from *Oh, Kay!* in good beat-'em-out style, as well as the Andante from *Rhapsody in Blue* and his three Preludes in flashy, period, concert-hall fashion. Most of the album is taken up with selections from something called *Primrose*, a musical he did in London with Desmond Carter providing the lyrics. It's pretty awful, cut-to-a-pattern West End "light entertainment," but it does serve to retain for history the performance of one Heather Thatcher, a soubrette so arch as to make Gertrude Lawrence at her ripest sound like a Quaker. When she is around, as she is in such things as *I Make Hay When the Moon Shines* or *Boy Wanted*, at least one has the satisfaction of a few mean giggles. Otherwise, it's the kind of show that makes one appreciate just how great a leap Gershwin made in his too-short lifetime. *P.R.*

SPIKE JONES: *Vintage Radio Broadcasts.* Dorothy Shay, Frankie Laine, Spike Jones, Tex Williams, others (vocals); orchestra, Spike Jones arr. and cond. MAR-BREN MBR 743 $5.98 (plus 50¢ handling charge from Mar-Bren Sound Ltd., 420 Pelham Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14610).

Performance: **Classic *Laura***
Recording: **Mastodon mono**

Spike Jones was always my favorite rube. I still damn near bust a gut laffin' when I think of his classic performances of *Chloe, Cocktails for Two*, and *Laura*. This last is the only one of these included here, and it is as hilarious as I remember. Spike Jones was the kind of Dadaist nose-thumber we could use today. He reduced popular songs of the day into antic shambles of hillbilly wit, complete with outrageous sound effects, demented "vocalists," and an appalling lack of "good taste."

This album, however, is pretty much a waste of time for his old fans or for anyone who wants to know what he was all about. It is simply two original broadcast transcriptions made in 1947 from his radio show and transferred to disc. Frankie Laine, then known as "Mr. Rhythm," shows up and caterwauls through *That's My Desire* (something he's still doing in the Seventies); Tex Williams is broadly unamusing in *Smoke, Smoke, Smoke*; and Dorothy Shay ("The Park Avenue Hillbilly") saunters through a few numbers. But the mad glint of anarchy that was Spike Jones and the City Slickers appears only in a few songs—*Toot, Toot, Tootsie, Jungle Town*, both of which are fair, and the superb molestation of *Laura*. And the recorded sound is incredible: a cross between a message from Mars and/or two tin cans and a piece of butcher's string. *P.R.*

A LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC (Stephen Sondheim). Original London-cast recording. Jean Simmons, Hermione Gingold, Joss Ackland, David Kernan, and others (vocals); orchestra, Ray Cook cond. RCA LRLI-5090 $6.98, ⑧ LRS1-5090 $7.98, © LRT1-5090 $7.98.

Performance: **World-weary but winsome**
Recording: **Superb**

In *A Little Night Music*, audiences beset by the harrowing realities of contemporary life were afforded an opportunity to escape to a birch grove in turn-of-the-century Sweden for a midsummer evening of romantic involvement with the leisure class, whose preoccupations onstage add up to nothing weightier than a set of interlocking love affairs. To decorate Hugh Wheeler's stylish book, which was "suggested by" Ingmar Bergman's movie *Smiles of a Summer Night*, Stephen Sondheim fashioned lyrics and a score far dif-

SPIKE JONES AND FRIENDS:
The kind of Dadaist nose-thumbing we need

ferent from the brittle pastiches he had devised for *Company* and *Follies*. The whole thing unfolds from the start as a series of waltzes that bring *A Little Night Music* closer to Viennese operetta than to the musical-comedy idiom of Broadway.

Columbia did more than adequate justice to the score in the attractive album that won a well-deserved Grammy last year. That album came with a text of the lyrics for the conscientious listener, and it was well sung by a cast whose crowning assets were Hermione Gingold as Madame Armfeldt and Glynnis Johns as the actress Desirée. Now RCA has just issued an album from the London production of the show. It rivals the first in some respects, surpasses it in others, and then falls flat at the absolutely crucial moment. Miss Gingold is on hand again to sing *Liaisons*. The singers—Joss Ackland as Fredrik, Veronica Page as his young wife Anne, Diane Langton as the maid Petra—are generally endowed with even better voices than the original Broadway cast. Alas, however, Jean Simmons cannot match the self-mocking, throaty allure of Glynnis Johns in the role of Desirée. Her way with *Send In the Clowns*, which one waits for eagerly until the record is almost over, is on key but unmoving. It lasts only a few minutes, but the damage is done. Unless you're willing to have two records of *A Little Night Music* in your collection, that disappointment tilts the scales in Columbia's favor. *P.K.*

MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS: *The Album of the Soundtrack of the Trailer of the Film of Monty Python and the Holy Grail.* Terry Jones, Eric Idle, Graham Chapman, Terry Gilliam, John Cleese, Michael Palin (performers). ARISTA AL 4050 $6.98, ® 8301-4050 H $7.98, © 5301-4050 H $7.98.

Performance: **"Neek!"**
Recording: **Variable**

Monty Python and the Holy Grail does its best to reduce the tale of King Arthur and his quest to what the probable origins of the legend were in those miserable, superstitious early years before it got prettied up in the telling. The movie is cruel, violent, pornographic, and sacrilegious without being vicious, sadistic, obscene, or blasphemous. It is at all times uproariously funny.

Many of the best moments in the film are visual, and I will not betray them. This "soundtrack" album is made up of dialogue excerpts within a framework of additional, loosely related material having to do with the supposed première of the film. The new material is rather lame, with two exceptions: an Armageddon traffic smash-up of stars' automobiles ("And who's that coming through the windshield—yes, it's Barbra Steisand, wearing a ravishing pink . . .") and the trials of a projectionist named Wong who maims himself while trying to repair a broken reel (". . . his nearly severed arm bound together by an old print of *Top Hat* . . .").

There are several choice moments from the actual film, of which my favorites are the insults hurled at Arthur by contemptuous French soldiers: the efforts of Arthur's band to placate the dread Knights Who Say "Neek!"; the ceremony attendant on the hurling of the Holy Hand Grenade; and the relentless singing of the *Ballad of Brave Sir Robin* before and after Robin meets his enemy. But you will undoubtedly find your own favorites. *J.V.*

CHOOSING SIDES

By IRVING KOLODIN

SAINT-SAËNS: THE HAPPY HEART

THE French lady whose musically precocious ten-year-old son gave rather formidable programs at his public performances was once asked, reprovingly, "If he plays Beethoven at ten, what music will he play at twenty?" Her deliciously prompt reply was: "He will play his own." A prime example of a wise mother who knew her own child, for by 1845 the young Camille Saint-Saëns had already composed waltzes and galops (*à la* Liszt's *Galop Chromatique*) and would go on—until 1921!—to write everything a great composer is expected to write.

But, in addition to operas (a baker's dozen, including the renowned *Samson et Dalila*, and all produced), symphonies, concertos, and chamber music, he also created a lot of music great composers are *not* expected to write. His was a heart that bubbled music, happily and constantly—his sonatas for woodwinds and piano (one each for oboe, clarinet, and bassoon) were written at eighty-six, in the last year of his life. Some of the most engaging and least often heard works have been gathered together (again happily) in two new Vox Boxes (SVBX 5476 and 5477) dubbed "The Complete Works for Piano." This may be politely termed an exaggeration, slight but misleading, for a *Berceuse* and six études are omitted. More to the point, however, is the fact that these two releases contain a trove of musical delights, some well characterized by their titles—*Valse Nonchalante*, *Caprice Arabe*, *Souvenir d'Italie*, *Souvenir d'Ismaïlia*—and others modestly masquerading as minuets, waltzes, mazurkas, etc. And, to be sure, such better-known extended works as the Ten Variations on a Theme by Beethoven (the trio of the *menuetto* of the Op. 31, No. 3 piano sonata) and the *Caprice sur les Airs de Ballet d'Alceste* are also included.

I am much taken with the vision of the well-dressed, well-turned-out Saint-Saëns of 1880 (aged forty-five and not yet carrying that later impressive avoirdupois that testified to decades of good living) returning to his hotel room after a memorable evening on the town and setting about memorializing it properly in music as *Une Nuit à Lisbonne*. Would the process of composition (just long enough, at 3'46", to fit on a 12-inch side of the not-yet-invented 78-rpm record), late at night, have disturbed other guests, however much they might have enjoyed the piano? No problem: in his *Musical Memories*, Saint-Saëns remarks, of his prodigious but non-prodigy childhood, "As has always been the case with me, I was already composing the music directly on paper without working it out on the piano."

Like several other pieces in this bounteous Vox collection, *Une Nuit à Lisbonne* (cast as a barcarolle—there is the possibility that the Lisbon harbor was glowing in the distance as he wrote it) has a tinge of the *Russe* about it, especially the chromaticism of Balakirev. If 1880 seems a bit early for the influx of Russian music into the West (beginning with Paris), it was not at all too early for the outflux of Saint-Saëns into the East. He went to Russia to concertize as early as 1875, returning to France in the following year bearing the famous score of *Boris Godounov* that later found its way into the hands of Debussy. There is, in consequence, a whole line of derivation, through Saint-Saëns, of musical Russianisms that were not to be heard in France in their pure form until a decade or two later.

". . . not yet carrying that later impressive avoirdupois that testified to decades of good living . . ."

(Drawing by P. Renossard)

IF it seems extreme to derive so much in historical reference from a piece less than four minutes in length (and one hardly overburdened with the weighty musical substance attractive to scholarship in any case), I must add that it is by no means unique in this collection for richness of allusion. Another greatly diverting work, cloaked under the simple designation "Scherzo, Op. 87," follows closely in the stylistic train of Chabrier's *España* (written in 1883 or earlier) and goes on to anticipate the main generative idea of Ravel's *La Valse*!

The Scherzo is a work in several sections, it is ten minutes long, and it would make a beautiful orchestral transcription. Saint-Saëns never got around to orchestrating it, but he did the next best thing: he wrote the original for two pianos. As with the *Caprice Héroique* of similar dimensions, doubling the number of instruments does more than merely multiply sonority; it provides opportunity for contrapuntal interplay and for extensions of range that could hardly be accomplished otherwise, even by two players on the same instrument.

Indeed, considering the number of delightful and diverting works for two players (on one or two instruments) in this collection, one cannot escape the conclusion that the com-

poser was motivated by more than purely musical reasons. There is in music so much that is enjoyable, entertaining, and enlivening, why (one can almost hear the composer querying himself) waste it all on one self-centered player? So he turned to framing his thoughts as conversation pieces, musical duologues in which a player (beginning with Saint-Saëns himself, of course) might share the music's pleasures with a kindred soul who is both partner and audience.

In these Vox performances of all this "glitter-and-be-gay," the two pianists might be better described as one and a half. Marylène Dosse, a graduate of the Paris Conservatoire who is now artist-in-residence at Wisconsin State University, Whitewater, has all the solo opportunities (the Album for Piano, Op. 72, the Suite for Piano, Op. 90, and the Etudes for Left Hand Alone, Op. 135), with Paris-born Annie Petit restricted to playing in the ensemble works. Ms. Dosse is businesslike, fingersure, and a little too foursquare to serve Saint-Saëns ideally (she is no Guiomar Novàes in the Caprice on Airs from *Alceste*), but she consistently provides neat, clean, and musical playing. The two pianists together have a playing personality much like Ms. Dosse's alone, which is to say that the same mood tends to prevail throughout.

THERE is yet another Vox Box, however (QSVBX 5134), in which the situation is quite the contrary. In it a superbly enthusiastic, even inflamed Ruggiero Ricci performs all the Saint-Saëns violin literature with orchestra, and the highly qualified Laszlo Vargas is entrusted with the much smaller, less diverse cello literature. Unfortunately, the admirable performers are all too often dealing in these works with music by the "other" Saint-Saëns, the facile maker of fashionable musical garments expected of a master tailor among composers, a "great" composer satisfying his public obligations rather than a prodigious artist fulfilling his private inclinations.

As adroit and inventive as Saint-Saëns was in manipulating the piano to his purposes, he tends in his violin works to borrow mechanics from others: the First Violin Concerto, in A Minor, Op. 20, and the *Morceau de Concert*, Op. 62, from Mendelssohn; the Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso and the B Minor Concerto (No. 3) from Sarasate (both are dedicated to him); and so on. No matter what images of the past are evoked by these works, Ricci—he will have been a flaming fount of violinistic fervor for a full fifty years come 1978—is hand-in-bow with them. Pierre Cao is the excellent conductor of the Radio Luxembourg Orchestra in most of the violin works, with Reinhard Peters and the Philharmonica Hungarica in the *Romance*, Op. 48, the *Morceau*, Op. 62, and the *Caprice Andalous*, Op. 122.

Unquestionably the rough diamond in this assemblage of gems from the Saint-Saëns lode is the Second (D Minor) Cello Concerto. Smaller in scope than its more frequently performed predecessor in A Minor, it also burns rather more intensely, with a flame and a fantasy all its own. Vargas is right with it all the way, ably assisted by the Westphalian Symphony Orchestra of Recklinghausen conducted by Siegfried Landau. The recording quality in all three albums is gratifyingly high, the portions of the piano literature originating in the Elite Recordings studio in New York under the supervision of Marc Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz especially so.

CLASSICAL DISCS AND TAPES

Reviewed by RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH
STODDARD LINCOLN • ERIC SALZMAN

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

C. P. E. BACH: ***Oboe Concerto in E-flat Major; Oboe Concerto in B-flat Major.*** **J. S. BACH:** ***Sinfonia to Cantata, Weinen, Klagen, Sorgen, Zagen, BWV 12; Sinfonia to Cantata, Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis, BWV 21.*** Heinz Holliger (oboe); English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. PHILIPS 6500 830 $7.98.

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

Just about anything Heinz Holliger does is worth having, and this package is really a joy. Not only is his remake of the E-flat Concerto even more enticing than his earlier version (Monitor MCS-2088), but the B-flat, not otherwise available at all, is a real find, rich in ingratiating themes and imaginative color. As if the two concertos were not bounty enough, each is prefaced by a gorgeous performance of a sinfonia with a prominent oboe part from one of Father Bach's cantatas. The air of genuine delight on the part of the performers is most effectively transmitted. The only reservation I might have is that the *ma non troppo* marking for the final Allegro of the E-flat Concerto seems not to have been taken too seriously: the pacing is a brisk *vivace* which threatens in one or two spots to become a bit of a scramble. Everything is carried off with such panache, though, that I can't imagine its being unappealing to any ear, and the B-flat Concerto is simply too attractive to pass up.

R.F.

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*

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

J. S. BACH: ***Complete Lute Music. Suite No. 1, in E Minor (BWV 996); Suite No. 2, in C Minor (BWV 997); Suite No. 3, in G Minor (BWV 995); Suite No. 4, in E Major (BWV 1006A); Prelude, Fugue, and Allegro in E Major (BWV 998); Prelude in C Minor (BWV 999); Fugue in G Minor (BWV 1000).*** John Williams (guitar). COLUMBIA M2 33510 two discs $13.96.

Performance: **First-rate**
Sound: **Excellent**

One of the problems concerning Bach's lute music is the question of whether it was actually written for the lute or for a keyboard instrument designed to sound like a lute, the *Lautenclavicymbel*. It is certainly true that in Bach's time the lute was virtually obsolete, but the composer knew several exponents of the instrument, owned one himself, and, on occasion, taught it. Also, as is attested by the instrumentation of his cantatas, Bach was *fond* of composing for obsolete instruments.

The suites and preludes and fugues John Williams plays in this album are first-rate Bach and command our attention as excellent music. Suites Nos. 1 and 2 seem to be original works, while Nos. 3 and 4 are Bach's own arrangements of the Fifth Suite for Unaccompanied Cello and the Third Partita for Solo Violin, respectively. The arrangements are convincing, and it is interesting to hear how in these versions Bach filled out harmonies and contrapuntal lines that he could only imply in the originals. The Prelude, Fugue, and Allegro, commonly played on the harpsichord, takes on a completely new meaning when performed on a hand-plucked instrument.

The question of performing lute music on the guitar becomes almost academic when the guitarist is John Williams. He possesses a fluent technique and a sure sense of rhythm and style, and the music flows so flawlessly from his instrument that one can only revel in Bach's unflagging inspiration. (The fact that the suites in C Minor and G Minor are played transposed to the key of A Minor is, in my opinion, not the sort of thing that should bother anyone.)

S.L.

BEACH, MRS. H. H. A.: ***Piano Music*** **(see Best of the Month, page 80)**

BEETHOVEN: ***Missa Solemnis in D Major, Op. 123.*** Gundula Janowitz (soprano); Agnes Baltsa (contralto); Peter Schreier (tenor); José Van Dam (bass); Vienna Singverein; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. ANGEL SB-3821 two discs $13.98.

Performance: **Orchestral in concept**
Recording: **Low-level**

BEETHOVEN: ***Missa Solemnis in D Major, Op. 123.*** Margaret Price (soprano); Christa Ludwig (alto); Wieslaw Ochman (tenor); Martti Talvela (bass); Concert Chorus of the Vienna State Opera; Vienna Philharmonic, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 080 two discs $15.96.

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

It is no secret that Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* is the greatest unperformable masterpiece in the literature. This is, in great part, because of the high tessitura of the vocal parts. *My* solution (so far ignored) is to tune the whole thing down; the pitch was probably lower in those days anyway. Herbert von Karajan's solution is nowhere near as clever. He submerges the voices—chorus and even soloists—in some kind of vague, heavenly-background miasma. Every once in a while a dulcet solo tone or a choral cry for help floats on through. Mostly, though, we get a good listen to the mysteries and wonders of Beethoven's orchestration. The *Missa Solemnis* does not make a bad orchestral piece, but it makes a much better vocal work, and it is too bad that Karajan and the Angel engineers did not see fit to exercise their undoubted talents toward that realization.

Released hard on the heels of Angel's Berlin *Missa Solemnis* is DG's Vienna version. Aside from the Austro-Germanic musical chairs implied by all this, there is no way to escape the inevitable confrontation here between the two leading orchestras and conductors of the German-speaking world. Both recordings have outstanding solo quartets,

and, ironically, both use Viennese choruses. Both are big productions complete with annotations and philosophical interpretations.

Deutsche Grammophon goes a step further with an article by a member of the Vienna Philharmonic eulogizing that orchestra and Karl Böhm. The writer takes a gratuitous swipe at American orchestras, who will be astonished to learn that they "have bought the best musicians for hard cash." "Here in Vienna," our writer goes on, "there is something which money cannot buy." In fact, that certain Viennese something seems to imply a very parochial point of view. This elaborate history of the Vienna Philharmonic omits any mention of Herbert von Karajan: indeed, the whole article has an anti-Von Karajan flavor. Böhm, we are assured, is the true heir to the Vienna Philharmonic's great Beethoven tradition. But what exactly is this tradition? It would seem that its most important feature is that the musicians are allowed to play with "almost complete freedom in matters of expression and phrasing"—a tradition that, one can say with conviction, does not go back to Beethoven. Perhaps this is "something which money cannot buy," but it should be pointed out that the Vienna is one of the few orchestras whose personnel hire and fire the conductors. And it is Böhm and not Von Karajan who is in favor in Vienna these days.

Well, musical politics aside, there *is* a difference. DG has made a better recording, and Böhm has a superb set of soloists—Margaret Price is simply out of this world; the choruses are about equal (when you can hear what they're doing). Everything under Böhm's leadership is neater and clearer, and, in general, you hear more. Still, there is really no comparison. Böhm's *Missa Solemnis* is a huge, awkward, flawed work, Karajan's an ecstatic masterpiece. Karajan makes everything sweep along; he phrases, he makes big, dramatic forms. Ironically, it is Karajan, not Böhm, who brings the orchestra to the fore. In fact, too much so; as I mentioned, it is the orchestra and not the singers who carry the ball, and this is the main weakness of his production. The strength of this DG performance is in the solo singing; the chorus is not strong enough, and the orchestra, although perfectly fine in detail, lacks exactly that larger vision it is the conductor's job to supply. The *Missa Solemnis* is not a piece that can work well enough in bits and pieces no matter how well they are managed. Whatever his faults and those of his engineers, Karajan is certainly not a bits-and-pieces man. *E.S.*

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5, in C Minor, Op. 67* **(see Best of the Month, page 79)**

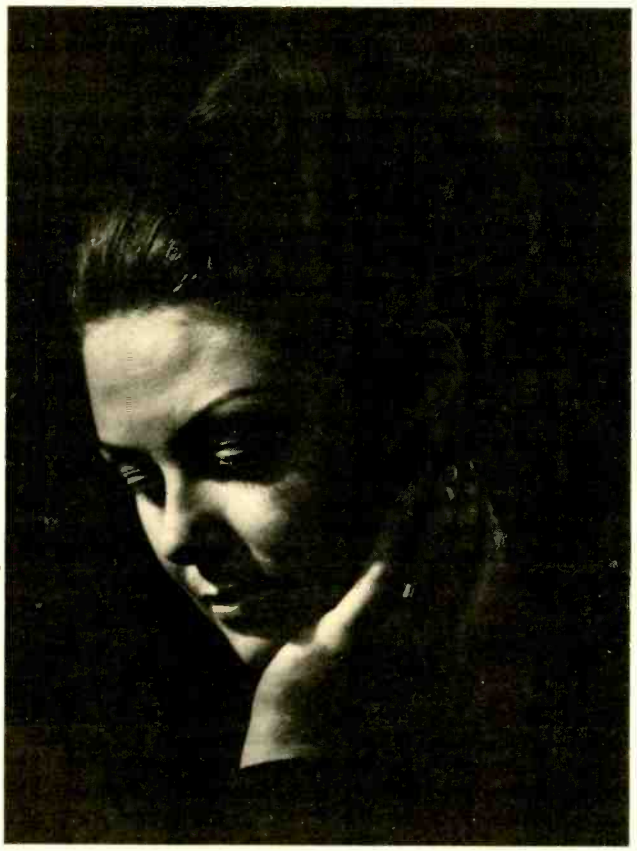
BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 7, in A Major, Op. 92* **(see The Basic Repertoire, page 48)**

BENDA: *Sonata No. 9, in A Minor* **(see DUSSEK)**

BIRTWHISTLE: *Verses for Ensembles*. London Sinfonietta, David Atherton cond. ***Nenia—The Death of Orpheus*.** Jane Manning (soprano); The Matrix, Alan Hacker cond. ***The Fields of Sorrow*.** Jane Manning (soprano); London Sinfonietta, David Atherton cond. HEADLINE HEAD 7 $6.98.

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

Harrison Birtwhistle, born in Lancashire, England, in 1934, is one of the best-known of the after-Benjamin Britten generation in a particularly English branch of international serialism. The two vocal pieces on this recording are settings of classical, otherworldly subjects treated in a remote, coloristic manner. *The Fields of Sorrow*—which uses an unnamed chorus in addition to solo soprano and an instrumental ensemble—is a striking and sensual work, unfortunately buried on the second band of side two. *Nenia*, a setting of a poem by Peter Zinovieff dealing with the Orpheus subject, has a kind of high-tone, arty air of remoteness and incomprehensibility. *Verses*, for spatially arranged wind and percussion ensembles, is dry, difficult, hard-edged music with a few appealing moments—bits of sound and color—that pass quickly and a form that is all but impossible to grasp. All of this music tries hard to surpass; it merely imposes. A friend of mine described it as a sex act between two consenting nuclear power plants—unkind but not too farfetched. Excellent performances carefully recorded. *E.S.*



CAMI

MARGARET PRICE: *simply out of this world*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHOPIN: *Etudes, Opp. 10 and 25*. Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). LONDON CS-6844 $6.98.

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

Ashkenazy's new études for London not only serve to reassure me that my memory had not exaggerated the virtues of his earlier version, but (as one might reasonably expect from a still-young artist after fifteen years' additional growth) go even beyond the earlier achievement in terms of subtlety and what, in his case, is most appropriately described as poetry.

The power so evident in Ashkenazy's recording of the scherzos is here perceived as a vast force held in reserve—though it is of course unleashed for such pieces as Op. 10, No. 12, and Op. 25, No. 11. The sheer dexterity involved in the performance of Op. 10, No. 7, and Op. 25, No. 10, is not allowed to be an end in itself, but carries with it a luminous aura of fantasy. Ashkenazy is comfortable enough to give sentiment its due in Op. 10, No. 3, without risking for a moment the danger of overindulgence, and the middle section of that much-abused piece here achieves an almost totally unsuspected stature. The lyrical sweetness of Op. 10, No. 6, and Op. 25, No. 1, is captured with similar magic, and in the playful Op. 10, No. 5, and Op. 25, No. 9, we are reminded that fastidiousness and effervescence need not be mutually exclusive.

A further cataloguing of the excellences of this disc would be as pointless as comparisons between it and its predecessors: it is thoroughly, sweepingly, and surpassingly wonderful, and not on any account to be missed. The piano sound is gratifyingly realistic. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CRUMB: *Music for a Summer Evening (Makrokosmos III), for Two Amplified Pianos and Percussion*. Gilbert Kalish, James Freeman (pianos); Raymond des Roches, Richard Fitz (percussion). NONESUCH H-71311 $3.98.

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

As one might infer from George Crumb's allusion to a "cosmic drama" in his liner notes for this disc, *Music for a Summer Evening* is a sequence of fantasy-pieces with a vaguely programmatic or "philosophical" nucleus exploring virtually every potentiality of the instruments, both individually and in ensemble, for expressive impact. There are

evocations here of a *gamelan* and echoes there of Ravel's *Laideronnette*, but much more that suggests no parallel of any kind. Much of this—perhaps most of it—is fascinating, though a certain repetitiousness inevitably makes itself felt after twenty-five minutes or so, recalling Roger Dettmer's remark about Crumb's "recomposing resonances." In the main, the work (which, Crumb notes, might be described as "either more or less atonal, or more or less tonal") shows huge originality, imaginativeness, and intellectual vitality; the performance, by the musicians for whom Crumb wrote it, is extraordinarily accomplished and compelling, and the sound quality constitutes a minor (or perhaps not so minor) miracle of transparency and ideal balance. Everyone involved can be proud of this one. *R.F.*

CZERNY: ***Piano Sonata No. 1, Op. 7; Fantaisie et Variations Brillantes sur un Motif Très Favori Chanté par Mme. Malibran dans l'Opéra Inès de Castro de Persiani, Op. 377.*** Hilde Somer (piano). GENESIS GS 1057 $6.98.

Performance: **Uninspired**
Recording: **All there**

Carl Czerny, scourge of generations of piano students, was actually a meek and mild-mannered composer who became Beethoven's favorite pupil and one of his few intimates. He was very prolific, having to his credit a total of 861 opus members, including many large-scale works. The fame of his exercises has overshadowed all the rest, but Czerny seems to have started out as a composer of talent and originality. At least that is the impression given by his first piano sonata, written in 1810 when he was nineteen. It sounds like a combination of late Beethoven, Schumann, Mendelssohn, and Schubert, but it precedes by a number of years most of the music that apparently influenced it. More important, it is a fine work of great beauty, a good deal of genuine drama, and attractive variety, invention, and architecture. It could serve as a landmark of early Romantic sensibility a lot better than some of the works of, say, Weber or Hummel or Spohr. The Op. 377 fantasy is something else again: one of ten thousand works of its kind, pianistically brilliant, but not better or worse than hundreds of others. It sounds like a bid for a certain kind of popularity; if so, it seems to have failed.

Hilde Somer's performance of the fantasy is brilliant, but the sonata could use more insight and more drama. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DELIUS: ***Sonatas Nos. 1, 2, and 3 for Violin and Piano.*** Ralph Holmes (violin); Eric Fenby (piano). UNICORN RHS 310 $7.98.

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

I referred to this disc, recorded in March 1972 and available in England since early 1973, in last January's review of the Connoisseur Society release of these sonatas played by Wanda Wilkomirska and David Garvey (CSQ 2069). As I noted in that review also, the Second Violin Sonata was the last of his works Delius was able to write down himself, and the Third was dictated to his amanuensis Eric Fenby, whose participation as pianist here makes these performances uniquely authoritative. In addition to performing (on Delius' own piano) and providing written annotation, Fenby gives us an intriguing reminiscence in the form of a spoken introduction that precedes the Sonata No. 1. "Delius was not a pianist," he says, "nor am I . . . ." He need not have been so modest, for these are assured and convincing performances, on both his part and Holmes'; together with the documentary enhancements, they make this an altogether worthwhile offering.

In terms of musical pleasure alone, though, Wilkomirska and Garvey are more persuasive: they bring a conspicuously broader range of color to their playing. Now, if someone would give us Delius' unpublished sonata of 1892. . . . *R.F.*

DUSSEK: ***Sonata in F Minor, Op. 77 ("L'Invocation"); La Chasse; La Consolation; Partant pour la Syrie.*** Edward Gold (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 1966 $3.50

RUDOLF FIRKUSNY
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(plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

Performance: **Notey**
Recording: **Brittle**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DUSSEK: ***Sonata in F Minor, Op. 77 ("L'Invocation").*** **BENDA:** ***Sonata No. 9, in A Minor.*** **VOŘÍŠEK:** ***Impromptu No. 4, in A Major, Op. 7.*** **TOMAŠEK:** ***Eglogue No. 2, in F Major, Op. 35.*** Rudolph Firkusny (piano). CANDIDE CE 31086 $4.98.

Performance: **Beautifully molded**
Recording: **Fine**

Although it is now openly acknowledged that eighteenth-century Bohemia boasted a musical culture the equal of any in Europe, we rarely hear the actual music. These two discs, then, come as a welcome sampler of a school of piano writing that had a direct influence on the music of Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, and Brahms. Certainly the most fascinating of this group is Jan Ladislav Dussek, whose music, ranging from rondos and variations on popular tunes to the most grandiose sonatas, is well represented here. The F Minor Sonata, *L'Invocation*, is considered by many to be his finest work. Those who are not familiar with it

(Continued on page 122)

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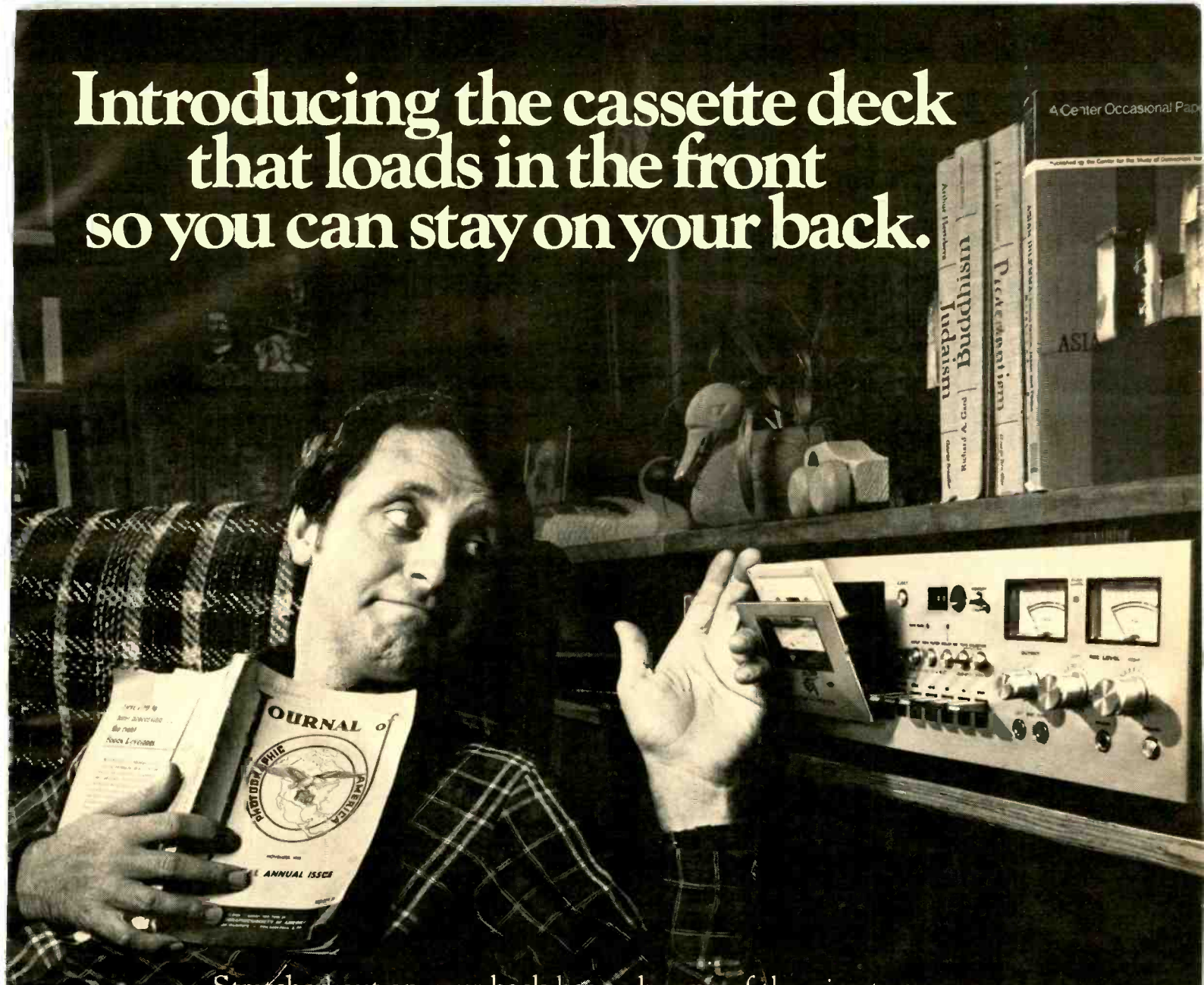

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More Worthy Gottschalk From Angel

When the first volume of Leonard Pennario's Gottschalk piano pieces appeared last year, I noted that the project's newsworthiness was not a matter of repertoire but of the pianist's unembarrassed sympathy for the composer. Angel has recently released the second volume of Pennario's Gottschalk—it is called "Battle Cry of Freedom"—and though the unembarrassed sympathy is still very much in evidence, the news of the release *is* a matter of repertoire.

In addition to seven pieces (including the title piece) that exist in one or more recorded versions elsewhere, this second volume contains two long-published pieces (*Marguerite* and *Columbia*) that nobody but Mr. Pennario has so far recorded, plus three *unpublished* pieces so widely unfamiliar that it is doubtful whether twenty people have read them through since Gottschalk's death.

The little Polka in B-flat (entries 273 and 202 in the Gottschalk Centennial Catalogue) is a charmer. Its manuscript is undated, but it was very likely composed around 1850-1851, possibly during Gottschalk's last and presumably lighthearted fling with various Spanish and French royalties. As a farewell bonbon for his admiring, generous, and extremely well-situated friends, nothing could be more characteristic of the young composer than the gay and jazzily syncopated little polka tune that opens the piece. Its cheeky insouciance as captured by Mr. Pennario couldn't be more amusing, and even if it weren't accompanied in the catalog by a phalanx of other Gottschalk polkas, it would clearly indicate its composer's proper place in the polka pantheon alongside Offenbach and the Strausses.

The manuscript of the *Ballade* (catalog entries 13, 271) is dated 1853, and if this date is to be trusted (Gottschalk was anything but fanatical about chronological accuracy) the piece was composed during the year of the composer's New York concert debut. In any case it is almost certainly the ballade titled *Autrefois* (catalog entry 9) that during Gottschalk's lifetime was listed in print as unpublished and dated 1853, a rueful backward glance at a "really better time," to use Novalis' phrase—a time that never really was, of course, except in memory. And it is a gauge of Mr. Pennario's essential pure-heartedness about his own Gottschalk venture that he is willing to commit his recording reputation to such unpretentious little works as this *Ballade* and the E-flat Polka. How deceptive are these apparent simplicities—and, by comparison, how much handier for wow effects are the intellectually imposing complexities of an Ives—only those know who have tackled both composers. I am no longer particularly impressed when young pianists offer to play me the *Concord* Sonata. Come see me when you know what to do with *The Maiden's Blush* (*vide* Eugene List), *Tournament Galop* (List and Pennario), and the two pieces premiered here.

The third unpublished piece premiered on this disc is a mazurka, noted in the Centennial Catalogue under entry 276 as an untitled and undated piece. However, a sketch for the piece on pages 121-127 of Gottschalk's workbook (catalog entry 298) is titled *Mazurk (sic) fa menor*, and this identification has been applied to it unchanged in a forthcoming set of seven pieces edited by Richard Jackson and Neil Ratliff and published by the New York Public Library/Continuo Music Press, Inc.

LEONARD PENNARIO: *unembarrassed sympathy*

As for its date, its moody harmony and richly fulminating piano textures tempt one to find it late. Among its unpublished companion pieces the latest one dated is an A-flat Polka from 1859. The years 1859-1860 were of course the height of Gottschalk's West Indian *floruit*, when he produced the largest share of his most ambitious, imaginative, and peculiarly personal work, and all those adjectives are to a degree applicable to the F-sharp Minor Mazurka. In some respects it belongs to the same aristocratic family as the wonderfully embroidered nocturne Gottschalk called *La Chute des Feuilles* (1860), and Mr. Pennario does justice to both its subtle musical character and its historic importance in this altogether lovely première performance.

Among the pieces recorded elsewhere, four require special notice. The *Battle Cry of Freedom* is Gottschalk's version of George F. Root's famed Civil War song, which greatly moved him as possessing a strange quality at once heroic and melancholy. Today we can see well enough what his wartime audiences heard in the piece, but we can scarcely share their feverish response to it. It is simply our good luck that Mr. Pennario faces up to its essential defects so manfully.

The *Grand Scherzo* is something else. It was composed in Montevideo—you might almost say at the same sitting with the *Impromptu*—in the last year of Gottschalk's life, and it reveals plainly the new direction his work was taking in anticipation of his long-delayed return to Europe. In both pieces the line is longer, the harmonic hand bolder, the conception bigger and more original. Both pieces exploit a strong confrontation—here given the most effective kind of coloristic contrast by Mr. Pennario—between two dissimilar kinds of material. Icily brilliant (and superbly pianistic) formal beginnings in the European tradition come face to face with warm and grandly sentimental "song" themes in the American style. Today the *Grand Scherzo* is one of Gottschalk's most modern-sounding pieces, with at moments a brittle, nervous, almost jittery quality that was later to become part of Prokofiev's stock in trade, and that relates it to contemporary experience both in and out of the concert hall.

In conclusion, special mention is due three of Mr. Pennario's special successes. *Marguerite*, here given its première recording, is not only one of Gottschalk's best waltzes; it is also, after Chopin and Weber, one of the best midcentury examples extant of the authentic high-fashion concert waltz for piano. Mr. Pennario plays the piece with great elegance as well as conviction, and along with *O Ma Charmante* it demonstrates his great gift for Gottschalkian tempos that seem almost organically determined.

I have saved for the end a Pennario recording first that is alone worth the price of admission. If you happen to think *Columbia* is not The Great American Piano Piece of 1859, you needn't bother to let me know. What's more, if it doesn't make you want a little to laugh and cry at the same time, I take a dim view of your historic sensibilities. The piece starts off with a genially straight-faced and, I am certain, deliberate misquotation of *My Old Kentucky Home*. And although from time to time Gottschalk pointedly wipes away a chromatic tear about it, in no time at all we have forgotten all about Kentucky and are bowling merrily along down Henry Clay's National Turnpike. At this point there enters an absolutely invincible oom-pah bass to sweep us straight into a blazing apotheosis of Columbia herself. I know of nothing half so sublime since Mae West draped herself in Old Glory and brandished a stuffed eagle on a stick in an unforgettable production number called "Queen of Nations." Thank *you*, Mr. Pennario!

—Robert Offergeld

GOTTSCHALK: *Battle Cry of Freedom, Op. 55 (RO 62); Berceuse, Op. 47 (RO 27); Mazurk* (sic) *in F-sharp Minor (RO 276, 298); Grand Scherzo, Op. 57 (RO 114); Polka in B-flat (RO 273, 202); Tournament Galop (RO 264); Columbia, Op. 34 (RO 61); Marguerite (RO 158); La Gallina, Op. 53 (RO 101); Ballade (RO 13, 271); O, Ma Charmante, Épargnez-moi, Op. 44 (RO 182); Suis-moi!, Op. 45 (RO 253).* Leonard Pennario (piano). ANGEL S-36090 $6.98.

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are in for a treat as this long work unfolds a complex network of boldness, mystery, and brooding through its four fully developed movements. *La Chasse* is a typical war horse of its day, fun to play and effective once or twice. *La Consolation* is a sentimental rondo filled with sighs and tears with two contrasting central episodes (unfortunately, Edward Gold has not seen fit to restore it to its original form and omits the lovely introduction). *Partant pour la Syrie* is a pop tune treated to every pianistic trick known in Dussek's day.

Jiri Benda's sonatas are a fascinating lot, even though they are uneven in workmanship. The A Minor one veers from Beethovenian outbursts to the sentimental *Empfindsamkeit* of C. P. E. Bach. The Tomášek is charming, and the Voříšek will blow the listener's mind when he realizes that it *preceded* the Schubert *Moments Musicaux* and Impromptus by as much as five years.

Rudolph Firkusny is a seasoned artist who plays the music of his compatriots lovingly. He knows how to make a melody sing, how to mold it and stretch it. Above all, he can spin the long line that is often needed to hold such a rambling work as *L'Invocation* together. He brings all the care to these works that he would lavish on Chopin or Schumann and thus elevates them to their highest mode of expression.

Listening to Mr. Gold's reading of Dussek leads one to suspect that he is trying to make a name by performing the unusual. His playing is notey in that the accompaniment figures are not sufficiently subdued to allow the melody to sing above them. This is not helped by his dry use of the pedal, a usage particular to the present generation of pianists and one which would have appalled any of the composers they so frequently play. Mr. Gold conceives his dynamics in large blocks, more structurally than expressively. The result is a lack of the detail the music sorely needs. Nonetheless, we must thank him for bringing us this music and only hope that as he plays more of it he will lose his inhibitions about going along with its highly expressive idiom. *S.L.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DUTILLEUX: ***Symphony No. 2 ("Le Double").*** **ROUSSEL:** ***Suite in F, Op. 33.*** Lamoureux Orchestra, Charles Munch cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE Society MHS 3022 $3.50 (plus 75¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., 1991 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023).

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

Three splendid records Charles Munch made with the Lamoureux Orchestra for Erato were circulated here briefly on domestic labels in the late 1960's. The two that were on Epic—the Saint-Saëns and Lalo cello concertos with André Navarra, the Third and Fourth Symphonies of Roussel—were reissued on MHS a few months ago; this one, which was issued as Westminster WST-17112 in 1966, is even more welcome, for both of the titles on it identify works of major importance that are not otherwise available on records. Henri Dutilleux is France's major living symphonist, but his music is virtually unknown in this country. His three-movement Symphony No. 2—whose subtitle refers to both a quasi-programmatic significance and the scoring for chamber orchestra (solo winds, string quartet,

(Continued on page 125)

harpsichord, celesta, timpani) in addition to the full orchestra—could not have a more "definitive" performance: it was Munch who commissioned the work, who conducted the Boston première in 1959, and who conducted nearly all its other performances between that time and his death nine years later. The Roussel suite has had other recorded performances, but none so effective as this one. The sound quality, especially good in the original release, has been handsomely preserved in the new mastering. *R.F.*

FAURÉ: *Thirteen Barcarolles.* Jean-Philippe Collard (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2078 $6.98.

Performance: **To the manner born**
Recording: **Excellent**

Young Jean-Philippe Collard already has graced the current catalog with a superb disc of the Rachmaninoff *Études-Tableaux* as well as the complete Fauré nocturnes. Continuing what seems likely to be a comprehensive survey of the piano music of the French master—who is, for me, a kind of Gallic Schumann with "cool"—he gives us in this latest Connoisseur Society release (from Pathé Marconi tapes) the complete set of thirteen barcarolles. These works span Fauré's creative life from 1883, when he was in the prime of youth, to 1921, when, loved and honored by his colleagues, he had to resign the directorship of the Conservatoire because of deafness.

Somehow the flowing "boat song" idiom seems to suit Fauré's musical language, for in his piano writing especially the melodic lines and harmonic textures flow along, interweaving linear and coloristic elements in much the same way as a stream blends moving currents with varying patterns of reflected light and shadow. There are idyllic pieces, such as the very first of the series; restless ones, such as No. 5, with its recurring tritones; brooding ones, such as No. 10, whose open fifths in the accompaniment echo Rachmaninoff's *Isle of the Dead.* The harmonic textures are extraordinarily varied within the limits of the traditional tonal system, ranging freely in and around the chromatic and the modal; but one senses a diatonic skeleton, however fragile at times, underlying the whole.

Only the 1964 pair of Vox Boxes of Fauré's complete piano music by Evelyne Crochet—like Collard a Conservatoire laureate—offers much competition to Collard's exquisitely molded and richly lyrical readings. A comparison of Collard and Crochet in the last of the series is instructive; Collard's slightly faster pacing makes for a more convincing interweaving of the shifting harmonic patterns. On the other hand, Crochet is able to extract more dramatic emphasis from No. 7 and No. 10. All things considered, including the excellence of the recorded sound, I would give the edge to Collard. But until he completes the entire Fauré series, I'm not about to part with my Vox Boxes. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GERSHWIN: *Cuban Overture; Rhapsody in Blue; An American in Paris.* Ivan Davis (piano); Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel cond. LONDON CS 6946 $6.98.

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

The most amusing thing about this record is the little British flag in the upper left-hand

corner of the cover with the inscription "Record Imported From England." Not that these aren't amusing, ebullient performances of great brilliance. I do wish there was a way to make this music sound like something more than symphonic pops, though. Is this the fault of the music itself or of the innumerable movie scores and elevator-music imitations? My mother had—probably still has—the old 78-rpm of the *Rhapsody* with Gershwin and the Whiteman band, and I always thought that's the way it should go. But I don't suppose there's any way to make *An American in Paris* sound like that; it was undoubtedly the big symphonic sound that excited Gershwin's imagination and gave his talent that seal of legitimacy that eluded so many pop and show musicians. Enough of these ruminations. These recordings are fat and fancy, and they *sound* terrific as well. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GRIEG: *Lyric Pieces.* *Arietta, Op. 12, No. 1; Berceuse, Op. 38, No. 1; Butterfly, Op. 43, No. 1; Solitary Traveller, Op. 43, No. 2; Album Leaf, Op. 47, No. 2; Melody, Op. 47, No. 3; Halling, Op. 47, No. 4; Notturno, Op. 54, No. 1; Scherzo, Op. 54, No. 5; Homesickness, Op. 57, No. 6; Brooklet, Op. 62, No. 4; Homewards, Op. 62, No. 6; Ballad, Op. 65, No. 5; Grandmother's Minuet, Op. 68, No. 2; At Your Feet, Op. 68, No. 3; At the Cradle, Op. 68, No. 5; Puck, Op. 71, No. 3; Gone, Op. 71, No. 6; Remembrances, Op. 71, No. 7.* Emil Gilels (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530476 $7.98.

Performance: **Marvelously poetic**
Recording: **Excellent**

Not since Walter Gieseking's Angel discs of the Grieg Lyric Pieces, issued in the middle Fifties, have I heard such truly poetic and pianistically flawless recorded versions of these little masterpieces of the keyboard literature. Emil Gilels has chosen from all ten books of the Lyric Pieces, which cover more than thirty years of the composer's creative life, and stylistically the music ranges from the most straightforward Schumannesque lyricism, through the militantly Norwegian folkloristic, to purest impressionism. He has also adopted the very sensible course of arranging his recorded sequence of twenty pieces in chronological order. My own favorites among Gilels' renditions include the *Halling*, in which his dissonant accents come off to far better effect than Gieseking's; the *Notturno*, where again he surpasses Gieseking in the immaculate quality of his trills; *Puck*, to which he brings an eerie atmosphere almost like that of Ravel's *Scarbo*; and the wonderfully poignant readings of *Homesickness* and *Gone*.

What with such poetic musicianship, and beautifully recorded too, this is a disc to treasure. I would go so far as to say that it is the finest thing I have heard from Gilels on record, the result—as he himself put it—of discovering beauties in music that in his native Russia had heretofore been relegated to the realm of children's teaching pieces. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GRIEG: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 16.* **SCHUMANN: *Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54.*** Sviatoslav Richter (piano); Monte Carlo National Opera Orchestra, Lovro von Matačić cond. ANGEL ☐ S-36899 $6.98, ⑧ 8XS-36899 $7.98, © 4XS-36899 $7.98.

Performance: **Sheer poetry**
Recording: **Very good**

Sviatoslav Richter has recorded the Schumann Concerto at least twice before; both of his earlier versions (which are still circulating on various labels) show his unique affinity for the music of this composer, but both are more than fifteen years old now and, in terms of either sound quality or orchestral playing, were no great shakes even when they were new. His third time round, Richter benefits from the partnership of conductor Lovro von Matačić (who, like himself, ought to be much more active in the recording studio), and the sound is very good indeed (in Angel's SQ quadraphonic mode, which is truly compatible for two-channel playback). The coupling this time is the now standard one of the Grieg Concerto, a work apparently new to Richter's discography. Both sides show the great pianist at his most characteristic, exemplifying a grand manner which is not merely "Romantic" but specifically "Richter"—for what makes Richter's manner grand is not its thunder but its poetry. That is a term that gets bandied about rather loosely, but it is the one that serves best to describe Richter's way with whatever he happens to be playing. He gives one the reassuring feeling of limitless power held in judicious reserve, and when it *is* unleashed for a climax it is convincing beyond words.

If Richter has had a more fully integrated orchestral complement on any of his other concerto records, I have not heard it. Matačić shows the same full-blooded affection for the two works, finds the same sort of freshness in the orchestral writing that Richter does in the keyboard part, and he is governed by the same subtle restraint. This is heartwarming musical summitry at the service of music that deserves (and by now *requires*) nothing less. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HANDEL: *Solomon.* Justino Diaz (bass), Solomon; Sheila Armstrong (soprano), Pharaoh's Daughter, First Harlot, Queen of Sheba; Robert Tear (tenor), Zadok; Felicity Palmer (soprano), Second Harlot; Michael Rippon (bass), Levite. Amor Artis Chorale; English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary cond. VANGUARD VSD 71204/5/6 three discs $20.94, ☐ VSQ 30041/2/3 three discs $23.94.

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

Of the two versions of *Solomon* previously in the catalog, Seraphim SIB-6039 is generally dismissed by purists for its drastic cuts and rearranged sequences and for conductor Sir Thomas Beecham's bold departures from the original Handel orchestration. There is no denying the scholarly validity of such objections, yet Sir Thomas' romanticized view, supported by a fine cast of singers, is lovingly realized, and it is a model execution of *what it wants to be*. At the very least, it deserves exploration before condemnation.

The more recent and sonically superior RCA set (LSC-6187) also offers good singing. It is, furthermore, nearly complete and respectful enough of Baroque performance practices to please most specialists (never *all*, of course). On the other hand, the Viennese chorus is not entirely at ease with the text, and the conducting of Stephen Simon is competent rather than inspired.

Vanguard's new version is strong where RCA is weakest. Johannes Somary paces the music with clarity, forward drive, and extremely well-judged tempos. The embellish-

(Continued on page 128)

SHEILA ARMSTRONG: *secure and pleasing in her three roles in* Solomon

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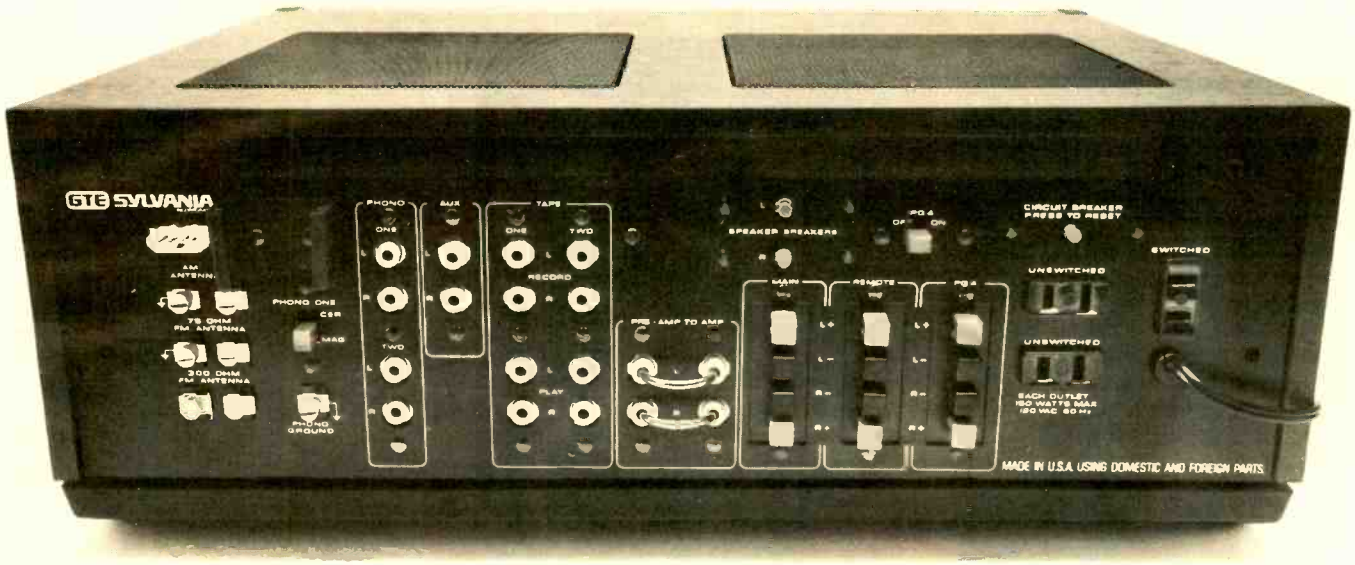

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*Popular Electronics, December 1974 Issue.

GTE SYLVANIA

CIRCLE NO. 27 ON READER SERVICE CARD

ments (appoggiature, passing notes, cadential trills) seem always right, and the harpsichord (Harold Lester) is employed in an audible yet unobtrusive perspective. The Amor Artis Chorale, which has contributed to many previous Vanguard efforts, is again outstanding in its clarity, rhythmic drive, and balances.

The singers are good, but here the new set does not improve on previous standards. Tenor Alexander Young, who sings Zadok in both the Seraphim and RCA sets, is distinctly superior to his current counterpart. Robert Tear is a good stylist, but his unappealing tone is hardly the instrument for Zadok's priestly platitudes, which somehow evoked such inspired melodies from Handel's not particularly pious pen.

The role of Solomon lies a trifle high for Justino Diaz's best range, but he invests his role with dignity, and his sonorous tones manage the ornamental writing quite well. Sheila Armstrong is undoubtedly the strongest element here, particularly admirable in the radiant aria "Blest be the day." There is not much differentiation in her three roles, but she realizes them all securely and pleasingly. The Second Harlot of Felicity Palmer avoids the sharp dramatic accents that would lend her role the nastiness that is implied in it, but this accords with the conductor's view of not overstating the drama of Part II and thereby maintaining a mood of solemn dignity throughout.

The recorded sound is excellent; the wide deployment of the double chorus in the opening scene and the orchestral outburst at the opening of Part II, with its brilliant trumpet writing, are but two of many triumphant effects. The SQ quadraphonic mode offers a tasteful, basically ambiant-type recording, with some spread of choral-orchestral forces toward the sides. Individual placement of the soloists becomes more noticeable in four channels, and the harpsichord, which is properly near the singers during recitatives, seems in the opening orchestral music to be placed differently—rather toward the right rear speaker. The major advantage of the SQ, however, is its greater openness of sound, something which is natural-sounding rather than dramatic and most apparent in direct comparison with two-channel playback.

Vanguard's version is even more nearly complete than RCA's. In any case, it offers far more music than can be found in the published Novello score. Handelians can rejoice here in more than two and one-half hours of *Solomon*, much of it magnificent and most of it remarkably well performed. *G.J.*

MACDOWELL: ***Second Modern Suite, Op. 14. Twelve Etudes, Op. 39: Book II, No. 8—Shadow Dance. Two Fantastic Pieces, Op. 17: No. 2—Witches' Dance. Sea Pieces, Op. 55.*** Andrea Anderson Swem (piano). ORION ORS 75175 $6.98.

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

The music of Edward MacDowell, once hailed as the great hope of American classical composition in the early years of this century, has since suffered such serious reverses that some of us listen to his florid, soaring piano concertos only in secret, pretending, if apprehended, that they are little-known works by some forgotten German. And indeed, what with his years of study in Stuttgart, Wiesbaden, and Frankfurt, MacDowell wrote music that bears more than a passing resemblance to that of the German Romantic school. He himself, however, would point to his Scotch-Irish ancestors and call himself a "Celtic voice." Certainly he was a fine miniaturist, as his *Woodland Sketches* attest, and it is in this guise that he is presented on this recording.

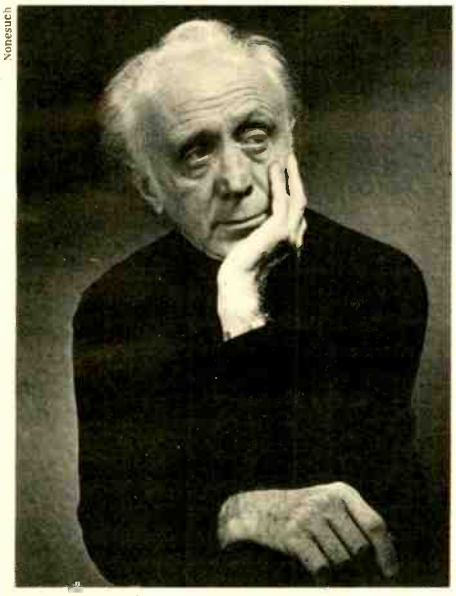
The Second Modern Suite, written when MacDowell was twenty-two, doesn't sound the least bit modern now, a century after it was written, but it does abound in attractive, expertly fashioned short subjects in contrasting tempos—a swift *fugato*, a reflective *rhapsodie*, a graceful *scherzino*, and a sweet little march, culminating in a *phantasie tanz* that gets a little too tangled in its own ambitions. From the twelve Etudes for the Development of Technique and Style the pianist has chosen the tricky *Shadow Dance*, and from Two Fantastic Pieces a *Witches' Dance* that sounds more like a romp for some woodland nymphs than your standard witch on a broomstick (and it turns out nymphs were just what the composer had in mind). The Eight Sea Pieces, however, are stiff and academic compared with what this subject has evoked from the French impressionists; MacDowell's waves are fashioned of heavy cardboard, and, except for a stretch below the surface in *From the Depths*, his conventional harmonies grow wearying long before the suite reaches port. Pianist Andrea Anderson Swem tries hard to keep the cargo afloat, but it sinks of its own somber weight. She fares better with the lighter works, tackling the tuneful material in a clean, uncluttered style. *P.K.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 6, in A Minor ("Tragic").* Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, Jascha Horenstein cond. Plus interview, "Jascha Horenstein Reminisces with Alan Blyth, March 9, 1971." NONESUCH HB-73029 two discs $7.96.

Performance: **Remarkable**
Recording: **Superb location job**

Unicorn Records, the British company that supplied this Horenstein taping of the Mahler Sixth Symphony to Nonesuch, is clearly intent on working up a complete Horenstein Mahler cycle for general release. I understand that a presentable taping of the *Resurrection* Symphony is the only stone missing for the eventual realization of this particular monument, and, to judge from what I have heard



JASCHA HORENSTEIN
A flair for the lyrical essence of Mahler

thus far, the project is well worth the effort of all concerned. Horenstein—in common with Bruno Walter in his prime—had a remarkable flair for communicating the *lyrical* essence of Mahler's musical language without in any way diminishing the dramatic impact of its rhetoric.

I confess a partiality to Leonard Bernstein's savagely urgent reading of the *Tragic* Symphony, but Horenstein's 1966 Stockholm public performance, despite a somewhat tentative beginning, carries an even greater impact with repeated hearing. Like Walter and Furtwängler at their best, Horenstein is able to sustain the essential lyrical impulse of the music over a vast time span. The *Andante* third movement is the most notable instance of that here, but it is evident in the entire performance.

The engineering staff of Sveriges Radio, which did the taping on April 15 and 17 of 1966, deserves special plaudits, for the sound is not only wide-range and of high excellence in its stereo ambiance, but also preserves the essential balances of the performance itself. Certainly at the price of $7.96, this album represents a fine musical and sonic value, further enhanced by a fascinating interview side, in which Horenstein gives us fleeting personal vignettes of such major musical figures as Bartók, Webern, Carl Nielsen, Janáček, and Richard Strauss. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *Flute Quartets: D Major (K. 285); G Major (K. 285a); C Major (K. 285b); A Major (K. 298).* Michel Debost (flute); Trio à Cordes Français. SERAPHIM S-60246 $3.98.

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

Mozart may have disliked the flute, but he nevertheless created the most engaging (if hardly the most profound) chamber music for the instrument in the form of these four quartets, of which there are no fewer than seven current "integral" recordings (in addition to numerous others of individual quartets). This newest one takes a place very near the top of the list: the playing is really elegant, and the sound is and fine and naturally balanced. At the *very* top, I would still place the performance by William Bennett and the Grumiaux Trio on Philips 6500 034. With such high-level pleasure offered by Michel Debost and his stylish players for only $3.98, however, one may well question whether the difference is worth twice that price; the Seraphim issue is a distinguished one by any standards and a bargain in the truest sense. *R.F.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAMEAU: *Les Fêtes d'Hébé, Ballet Music.* Ursula Connors (soprano); Ambrosian Singers; English Chamber Orchestra, Raymond Leppard cond. ANGEL S-37105 $6.98.

Performance: **Elegant**
Recording: **Suave**

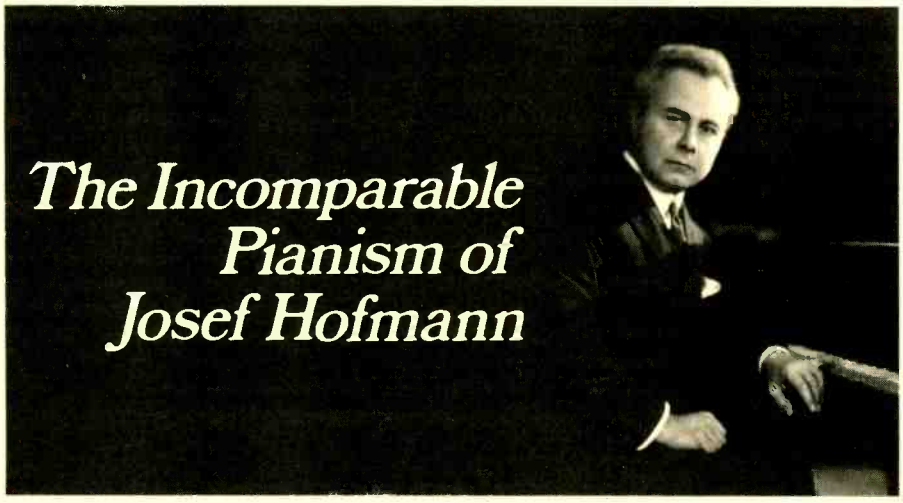
Once released from Lully's classical operatic stranglehold, French audiences sought relief in divertissement and turned to the lighter genres of *ballet-comédie* and *opéra-ballet*, in which nymphs and shepherds, gods and goddesses assembled to dance, sing, and play, troubled only by unrequited love and occasional cataclysms of nature. Thus, when a serious musical dramatist of Jean-Philippe Rameau's genius arrived, his native talents were thwarted by a capricious public who demanded light entertainment. Rameau composed four serious operas, but he had to earn a living and ultimately furnished Parisians with what they wanted. Fortunately he was capable of gallantry and wit. He was also one of the greatest dance composers of all times, being rivaled only by Tchaikovsky.

The plot of *Les Fêtes d'Hébé* is typically slim, but the pastoral characters sing gracious airs and melting choruses, and, above all, they dance a plethora of dances ranging through moods of utmost tenderness to bumptious burlesque. Each dance is a miniature masterpiece upon which Rameau lavished his unique sense of rhythm and delicate orchestral detail.

Raymond Leppard, following Rameau's own example when he published *Les Indes Galantes*, has taken the music out of its dramatic sequence and presented it in a purely musical one that is aimed at the listener who is unable to see the work staged. The results more than justify this arrangement. And Leppard understands dance music: the orchestra plays with a sprightly clarity, the tempos are convincing, and the mood of each dance is caught in its first bar. The choral sound is sumptuous, and the solo work with all of its ornaments is well done. Especially impressive is the use of *notes inégales*, which, instead of adding stiffness to performance as they often

(Continued on page 132)

"If you can't play the Waldstein like that, you shouldn't play it."



International Piano Archives

JOSEF HOFMANN gave his last faculty recital at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia on April 7, 1938, and a recording of that recital is now available from the International Piano Archives. It revived a host of memories for me, memories refreshed by rereading my own review of the recital in the next day's *Evening Bulletin* that Gregor Benko and Terry McNeill have reprinted in the booklet accompanying the IPA two-disc set.

Listening to this music brings back even more vivid memories. Listening, especially, to the willful, stormy, impetuous, impulsive, reckless and yet sensitive, eloquent, endlessly inventive and imaginative, utterly convinced—and, for me, utterly convincing—account of Beethoven's *Waldstein* Sonata, I recall a press conference with Sergei Rachmaninoff backstage at Philadelphia's Academy of Music at about the same time.

"Who," one of us asked Rachmaninoff, "do you reckon to be the great pianists of today?"

Rachmaninoff mulled this over for a minute or two, then said with his characteristic solemnity: "Well, there's Josef Hofmann . . . and me."

He wasn't boasting. Nor was he joking. There were then, as there are now, many fine pianists around, some of them probably Hofmann's and Rachmaninoff's equals even as dazzling technicians. But they lacked something that Hofmann and Rachmaninoff had. Rachmaninoff knew it. So, I suspect, did Hofmann. Call it glamour, personality, charisma . . . machismo? After hearing this recital on these superbly restored and edited discs, I like the last best.

They were their own men, Hofmann and Rachmaninoff, above concern for critical Beckmessers peering over their shoulders to monitor their violations of, or deviations from, this or that injunction in the printed score. They had studied the score. They had reached their own conclusions. And that was that.

Received opinion for the past thirty years or more has been opposed to this sort of vivid, confident, distinctive, assertive individuality, now fashionably held to be something cultivated at the expense of the defenseless composer—an "ego trip," in modern parlance. Subordination of the mere performer's self to the wishes of the hallowed composer as documented in the written notes has been the watchword. There might be something to be said for such a dogma were notation an adequate or reliable means of documenting what a composer heard in his mind's ear. It is not. Notation can tell precisely only *what* should be played. It cannot tell precisely *how*.

But the view of notation as holy writ has prevailed, and so pianists—and other instrumentalists and singers, too—apprehensive of critical fire and brimstone, have tended to narrow rather than widen their view of what may legitimately be inferred from those black dots on five-line staves that constitute a score. The result has been a melancholy conformity. No two pianists will play the same piece in precisely the same way. We can at least thank the inadequacy of notation for that. But they sound a lot *less* different from one another than they did when Hofmann and Rachmaninoff stalked the concert and recital halls, unregenerately revealing to us what those notes revealed to them.

THERE are wonderfully instructive examples of all this here in Hofmann's playing of the *Waldstein* and of six movements of Schumann's *Kreisleriana*—he left out Nos. 3 and 4 because, as he told his manager, Richard Copley, "they are less interesting and the whole becomes too long and tiresome." There is a lot of repetition in both works, and Hofmann's playing is a constant revelation of how much variation, some of it subtle, some not so subtle, the same sequence of printed notes can yield. The accompanying booklet, by the way, includes an excellent analysis by Ezra Rachlin, a Hofmann pupil, of just what he does, measure by measure, throughout the *Waldstein*.

Not everything he did in this recital will be to everyone's taste, any more than it was then. For all the immaculate, delicate tracery of the ornamentation in the Chopin pieces, the eloquence in the shaping of a melodic line in the Chopin and the Schumann, the shrewdly and boldly fashioned contrasts, and the ingenious and daring calculation of rubato and agogics in everything he played that night, some tempos seem self-indulgently headlong, some climactic chords are simply *thwacked*, and in the final group of show pieces there are too many episodes in which Hofmann is just beating the hell out of the piano—or out of the pieces, which is pretty much what they deserved.

Had he played the *Waldstein* on any instrument available to Beethoven when he composed it (1804), he would have been left with nothing but a pitiful heap of kindling wood and piano wire. Still, I'm inclined to agree with harpsichordist Fernando Valenti who, when I played this recording for him, said: "If you can't play the *Waldstein* like that, you shouldn't play it at all."

Hofmann would not have cared whether it was to everyone's taste or not. I heard him often, first as a student at the Curtis Institute under his directorship, later as a fledgling Philadelphia critic, and I sometimes sensed a bit of Peck's Bad Boy about him, a tendency to *épater le bourgeois*. Certainly he relished the gasp of astonishment (inaudible here) that rose from an audience crawling with accomplished pianists when he played the *Minute* Waltz as an encore after the Chopin group—and took the repeat in thirds.

And it was typical of Hofmann that with a doting audience clamoring for encores he should have put an end to matters by slamming into *The Star-Spangled Banner*. (It is not included here.) The audience, taken by surprise, and not knowing quite what was up, shuffled to its feet. Hofmann thereupon broke off, closed the piano with a sly grin, and was gone.

I COULD have wished that the accompanying booklet had dealt more with Hofmann's career as a pianist and less with his and Mary Curtis Bok's administration of the Curtis Institute. But that, too, is a fascinating story, here very well told. It includes snapshots of Mary Bok's fortieth birthday party at the Bok summer home in Camden, Maine, in 1916. The theme of the party was "Mary's Little Lamb," with Edward Bok as the lamb and other guests and members of the household as Mary's Little Children. Among the latter were Hofmann and Leopold Stokowski. The shot of Hofmann as a smirking little brat, his shoulder affectionately encircled by the arm of a Stokowski in drag, is almost worth the price of the set. —*Henry Pleasants*

JOSEF HOFMANN: ***Casimir Hall Recital.*** **Beethoven:** *Piano Sonata No. 21, in C Major, Op. 53 ("Waldstein").* **Schumann:** *Kreisleriana, Op. 16.* **Chopin:** *Polonaise in E-flat Minor, Op. 26, No. 2; Nocturne in B Major, Op. 9, No. 3; Waltz in E-flat Major, Op. 18; Ballade in F Minor, Op. 52; Waltz in D-flat Major, Op. 64, No. 1 ("Minute").* **Schubert-Godowski:** *Moment Musical, Op. 94, No. 3.* **Stojowski:** *Caprice Oriental.* **Hofmann:** *Kaleidaskop; Penguine.* INTERNATIONAL PIANO ARCHIVES Ⓜ IPA 5007/8 two discs $15.00 (from International Piano Archives, 215 West 91st Street, New York, N.Y. 10024).

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do, enhance the typically French lilt and grace of this music. Exquisite. *S.L.*

ROUSSEL: ***Suite in F, Op. 33*** **(see DUTILLEUX)**

SAINT-SAËNS: ***Piano Music; Music for Violin and Orchestra*** **(see Choosing Sides, page 114)**

SCHUBERT: ***Lieder*** **(see Best of the Month, page 81)**

SCHUMANN: ***Frauenliebe und Leben, Op. 42*** **(see Best of the Month, page 81)**

SCHUMANN: ***Piano Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54*** **(see GRIEG)**

SCHUMANN: ***String Quartet No. 3, in A Major, Op. 41, No. 3*** **(see SIBELIUS)**

SIBELIUS: ***String Quartet in D Minor, Op. 56 ("Voces Intimae").*** **SCHUMANN:** ***String Quartet No. 3, in A Major, Op. 41, No. 3.*** Voces Intimae Quartet. Bis LP-10 $7.98.

Performance: **Intensely lyrical**
Recording: **Warm, over-reverberant**

Bis Records, a recently established Swedish-based label, is one of several one-man specialty recording operations in Scandinavia with a well-deserved reputation for high-quality craftsmanship in production and fascinating out-of-the-way repertoire. The "one man" in this instance is Robert von Bahr, thirty-two-year-old ex-lawyer turned flutist, recording engineer, producer, and budding conductor. As the Bis catalog presently stands, contemporary Swedish and Finnish music figures largely in its repertoire.

Helsinki's Voces Intimae Quartet is an outstanding chamber ensemble that has won major competition awards both in Finland and at Liège in 1972. On this disc it is the expansively lyrical reading of the most appealing of the three Schumann string quartets, Op. 41, No. 3, that is the major achievement. It contrasts strikingly with the no less effective but altogether more taut and nervously energetic reading of the same music by the Juilliard Quartet for Columbia.

One would have expected the lone masterpiece for string quartet by Jean Sibelius to be the real prize here, but there have been a number of competitive discs—they are not presently available—that are superior in terms of interpretation and execution. The recently deleted Turnabout recording (34091) by the Copenhagen Quartet is still tops in my book for combined finesse and cohesion, and Columbia's 1957 mono recording by the Budapest Quartet is right alongside it. Although the Voces Intimae's interpretation is excellent, the ensemble does not achieve, in this recording at least, the degree of suppleness and refinement displayed by the Copenhagen and the Budapest. My impression may be colored to some extent by the somewhat over-reverberant acoustic surround of Wik Castle in Sweden where the recording was made a year ago.

Regardless of my reservations concerning this particular disc, I suggest that those interested in out-of-the-way concert repertoire keep an eye on the Bis label in whatever stores it turns up. National distribution has been arranged through HNH Distributors Limited, P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Illinois 60204. *D.H.*

SOWANDE: ***Music from African Suite for String Orchestra*** **(see STILL)**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

STILL: ***Sahdji.*** **SOWANDE:** ***Music from African Suite for String Orchestra.*** **WALKER:** ***Lyric for Strings.*** Morgan State College Choir (in Still); London Symphony Orchestra, Paul Freeman cond. COLUMBIA M 33433 $6.98.

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

What with the attention being granted him in Turnabout's "Contemporary Composer in the U.S.A." project and in Columbia's eight-disc "Black Composer Series" (of which this recording is Volume 7) as well as elsewhere, the "serious" black symphonic writer in this country is finally getting some of the attention he deserves—even though one wishes this music didn't always have to be presented in such segregated form. William Grant Still in particular is at last emerging as something more than a name in music encyclopedias. His *Darker America* and *From the Black Belt* get good treatment from Paul Freeman on Turnabout, and now Mr. Freeman does even better justice to another work by the "Dean of Afro-American Composers" on Columbia. This is the music for a choral ballet called *Sahdji*, which dates back to 1931. After reading the scenario for *Sahdji*—feasting tribesmen, chieftain double-crossed by a faithless wife, and so on—I confess I expected kitsch. But the music transcends the story in every way. There may not be a single note of authentic African music in it, yet this colorful score chants and surges persuasively to its muscular denouement, and it is ravishingly sung and played here.

If Mr. Still's ballet has power even though it lacks authenticity, the African Suite by Fela Sowande has both qualities. Sowande, now seventy, was a Nigerian tribal chief when as a young man he left his post to involve himself in the musical life of London. He wrote the African Suite for String Orchestra in the Thirties for a special broadcast from London to West Africa, and a vivid, scintillating piece it is. Three sections are played here—the wide-awake *Joyful Day*, the evocative *Nostalgia*, and *Akinla*, based on a popular Nigerian tune, on which a series of sprightly changes are rung. I wish the whole suite had been included, but the performance of these excerpts is exemplary.

George Walker, the youngest of the three composers represented (he's fifty-three), started out as a neo-Romantic but later ventured into more dangerous paths such as serialism and pointillism. His Lyric for Strings, written early in his career in memory of his grandmother, is a gentle, moving, elegiac work that mounts to a poignant climax—much in the manner of Barber's Adagio for Strings. The playing, once again, is impeccable. In all, this is an absorbing concert, a record meriting the acclaim already lavished on its predecessors in this fine series. *P.K.*

TOMÁŠEK: ***Eglogue No. 2, in F Major, Op. 35*** **(see DUSSEK)**

VOŘÍŠEK: ***Impromptu No. 4, in A Major*** **(see DUSSEK)**

WAGNER: ***Die Walküre: The Ride of the Valkyries; Wotan's Farewell; Magic Fire Mu-***

sic. Parsifal: Prelude. Die Meistersinger: Overture. Das Rheingold: Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla. Anthony Newman (organ). COLUMBIA M 33268 $6.98.

Performance: **A lollapalooza!**
Recording: **Roof-raising!**

"Organ Orgy—A Wagner Sound Spectacular" is the title of this latest Anthony Newman venture, and whether one rejects the whole enterprise as damnfoolishness or accepts it as a *jeu d'espirit*, the record *is* a brilliant documentation of the genre of organ transcription. Four of the five Wagner transcriptions here were done at the turn of the century by Edwin Henry Lemare (1865-1934), who was renowned first in his native England and from 1900 on throughout the world, especially here in the United States where he finally settled for good. The abridged *Parsifal* Prelude, the only arrangement here that Lemare did *not* do, is the least successful thing on the record. The *Meistersinger* Overture is, on the whole, the best and most convincing piece, almost a tour de force.

With the eight-thousand-plus pipes of the organ of St. John the Divine Cathedral in New York at his disposal, plus three agile and brave assistants, Anthony Newman really has himself a ball. I doubt that the "state trumpets" at the Cathedral's west end have ever before gotten quite the workout they get here. Given the disposition of the seven sections of the organ at St. John's, I'm not quite sure how the microphones were set up, but I would guess that only multi-tracking and mixing afterward could have produced the results achieved here. Every sound and coloration of which the instrument is capable seems to have been brought into play, including the *cymbelstern*, and when Mr. Newman cuts loose with the whole works, as in *The Ride of the Valkyries*, you'd better be sure that your speakers are in good shape, your amplifiers properly fused, and your neighbors tolerant. Whatever else this record is, it's a lease breaker and a sure-fire bet for the hi-fi sound buff.

D.H.

WALKER: *Lyric for Strings* (see **STILL**)

COLLECTION

10 + 2: 12 AMERICAN TEXT SOUND PIECES. Amirkhanian: *Just; Heavy Aspirations.* **Coolidge:** *Preface.* **Cage:** *62 Mesostics Re Merce Cunningham.* **Giorno:** *Give It to Me, Baby.* **Gnazzo:** *The Population Explosion.* **Dodge:** *Speech Songs.* **Ashley:** *In Sara Mencken, Christ and Beethoven There Were Men and Women.* **Anderson:** *Torero Piece.* **Gysin:** *Come to Free the Words.* **O'Gallagher:** *Border Dissolve in Audiospace.* **Saroyan:** *crickets.* 1750 ARCH 1752 $6.98.

Performance: **Signifying nothing**
Recording: **Excellent**

In theory, there is no reason why "music composed from speaking, not singing," should not make for an exciting experimental hour, and I removed this record, along with its copious accompanying notes, from its austere black-and-white wrappings in a spirit of happy anticipation. Alas, came the letdown. The experimenters, as so often happens, have let the trappings of the experiment run away with them. Charles Amirkhanian and his friends have the time of their lives repeating "inini, bullpup and banjo" over and over on superimposed tape loops, but the effect is merely numbing. Clark Coolidge is simply having his revenge electronically on a radio announcer who disparaged the music of John Cage. Mr. Cage, in turn, pays "abstract homage" to dancer Merce Cunningham, consisting mostly of cries and shouts that the composer defines, with misapplied elegance, as "vocal events." John Giorno—to his own mysterious purpose—offers the curious novelty of a fourteen-year-old girl spouting pornography. Charles Dodge cuts up perfectly good lines by the poet Mark Strand and rearranges them into a boring stereophonic collage. Robert Ashley, a first-rate poet, descends to third-rateness as he speaks through a synthesizer a text taken from a book by John Barton Wolgamot made up of heroic names recited in an unheroic progression. Beth Anderson says she is creating the sound equivalent of a "commercial, paint-by-numbers picture of a toreador"; it comes out grunts and stutters. Bryon Gysin reads words aloud as he chalks them on a blackboard to "free" them, but they still sound imprisoned to me. Only Liam O'Gallagher redeems this disc with a virtuoso stretch of superimposed phone calls to information operators all across the border between the U.S. and Canada asking for the telephone numbers of zoos. I don't know what it all means, but at least the sequence is entertaining. The repetition of words like "cricket" and "bang" in the locked-in final grooves of both overwrought sides of this curious disc is not.

P.K.

"... 'Yankee Doodle'—another tune we 'stole' from the British ..."

Granger Collection

"Heroes of '76,' Marching to the Fight"—a Currier & Ives Centennial print

A Parade of American Marches

AMONG the happier events of the current Bicentennial celebrations are the recent releases, by Columbia and University of Michigan Records, of two unique collections that between them present a fascinating historical parade of American marches from the 1770's to the 1930's. Not all of them were originally American, but became so by usage or adoption. The University of Michigan recording, for example, begins with a stirring performance of *The White Cockade*, played by nine fifes with three snare drums and a bass drum. Now, this was an eighteenth-century tune of British origin, but when the Minutemen of Acton, Massachusetts, set out to take part in the battle of Lexington and Concord in April 1775, it was the tune to which they marched. The Americans, after all, hadn't had much time to make up their own music. Yet at least one American composer, William Billings of Boston, was already on the job. When the Revolution came, his hymn-tune *Chester*, set to a suitably defiant text and with its sturdy rhythms reinforced by a martial wind band, became a favorite marching tune of the Continental Army. That too is included in the Michigan recording, along with a 1799 version of *Yankee Doodle*—another tune we Americans "stole" from the British and made our own. Here also is that favorite of the young Republic, *Hail Columbia*, actually a patriotic song set to an earlier tune called *The President's March* in the 1790's.

After *Wood-Up*, a quickstep military march of 1834, we reach the Civil War with an authentic selection from the South: *General Lee's Grand March*, more operatic than military in style, testifying to the increasing influence of Italian opera in our popular music. Another march that salutes the South, though written by a New Englander, is *Gate City* (Atlanta), with its medley of *Old Folks at Home*, *Dixie*, and *Maryland, My Maryland*. By this time the Michigan and the Columbia recordings have merged chronologically, both concentrating on the period from the 1870's to the 1920's when the march (and band music in general) enjoyed its heyday in the U.S.A.

By this time, too, both the bands and the marches had acquired their more-or-less standard characteristics. Typically, as Richard Crawford writes in his excellent notes for the University of Michigan record, "the band presents three basic melodic colors—treble brass (cornets and trumpets), treble woodwinds (clarinets and flutes), and tenor brass (trombones and euphoniums)—supported by a firm bass and rhythm section (tubas and percussion) and a harmonically solid middle register (horns, saxophones)." The marches were usually structured with four themes, or strains, each repeated, but often only three strains were used, perhaps with brief transitional sections, as in Sousa's *The Thunderer* and *Liberty Bell*.

Both of these are included in the Columbia recording, along with four other marches by the great "March King": *The Gallant Seventh*, *Semper Fidelis*, *El Capitan*, and *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. This last, incidentally, is taken at a tempo considerably faster than usual, but one which conductor Gunther Schuller asserts is "authentic." Sousa, he says, "was given to very brisk military tempos"—a tradition, he speculates, "related to the lively French 'quick step' marches of the 19th century."

Schuller, who conducts "The Incredible Columbia All-Star Band" with his usual flair, has given us a generous portion of the best Sousa marches. But we should be grateful to him for going further afield in presenting "A Century of American Marches." For my part, I particularly applaud his initiative in bringing Charles Ives and Scott Joplin onto the scene, as well as Ives' favorite band piece, the *Second Connecticut Regiment March*, composed in 1874 by D. W. Reeves, who had been a band director in the Union Army. Ives said that this was "as good a march as Sousa or Schubert ever wrote, if not better!" Ives himself is represented by two marches written in his early years, *Intercollegiate March* (probably composed in 1892) and *Omega Lambda Chi* (1895). The latter, composed while Ives was at Yale, refers to a fictitious fraternity invented by some sophomores in the 1870's. Although neither work is particularly memorable, as an Ives fan I am glad to find him represented in the kind of musical company he liked.

As for Scott Joplin, it was a brilliant thought to include his *Combination March* (1896), one of two that he wrote (the other is *March Majestic*, 1902). The march was closely related to the dance, particularly the two-step, and many ragtime pieces are designated in their subtitles as "March and Two-Step" (for example, Joplin's *Cleopha* and *Antoinette*). All these pieces were written for piano, and the *Combination March* was arranged for band by Schuller with very happy results. Concerning it, Schuller writes: "It is a perfect march with four contrasting themes, the last two of which are fascinatingly close

to the German/Austrian march style, a fact hard to explain in that Joplin, a black musician, was working at the time in the Midwest. . . ." But I don't find this so surprising; Joplin is said to have had lessons from a German musician, and even though this may not be fully corroborated, the Midwest was the principal stronghold of German music and musicians in the late nineteenth century.

The Columbia album takes its title, "Footlifters," from a march called *The Footlifter*, by Henry Fillmore (1881-1956), one of the most prolific and prominent march composers of his time. I think Schuller is right when he remarks that this march "will be a delightful surprise to most listeners"—but I would say the same for a number of the selections in both albums. Fillmore, by the way, is the only composer besides Sousa who is represented in both the Michigan and the Columbia records. But the extent to which each album complements the other is indicated by the fact that only one selection is duplicated—Sousa's *El Capitan*.

Sousa, Joplin, and Ives (and perhaps Billings) are probably the only names to be readily recognized by those who are not specialists or band-music buffs. But there are marches that are much better known and remembered than their composers. A case in point is Edwin E. Bagley's *National Emblem* (1906), with its first strain bringing in *The Star Spangled Banner* as a counter-melody. Famous or obscure, known or unknown as the composers may be, the marches appear to have an anonymous existence of their own in the sense that they are a living part of America's musical heritage: music for the masses that appeals to all classes. These albums offer performances that are historically authentic, widely representative, and thoroughly enjoyable.

—*Gilbert Chase*

200 YEARS OF AMERICAN MARCHES. Trad.: *The Roving Sailor; The White Cockade; The Rose Tree; Yankee Doodle; The World Turned Upside Down.* **Billings:** *Chester.* **Phile:** *Hail, Columbia.* **Holloway:** *Wood-Up Quick-Step.* **Schreiner:** *General Lee's Grand March.* **Grafulla/Reeves:** *Washington Grays.* **Weldon:** *Gate City.* **Farrar:** *Bombasto.* **Klohr:** *The Billboard.* **Fillmore:** *Americans We.* **Sousa:** *El Capitan.* **Chambers:** *The Boys of the Old Brigade.* **King:** *Hosts of Freedom.* **Huffer:** *Black Jack.* **Panella:** *On the Square.* **Bagley:** *National Emblem.* **Belsterling:** *March of the Steel Men.* University of Michigan School of Music Winds and Percussion, Clifford P. Lillya cond. UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN RECORDS SM 0002 $6.98 (plus 50¢ handling charge from the University of Michigan School of Music, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48105).

FOOTLIFTERS: A CENTURY OF AMERICAN MARCHES. Fillmore: *The Footlifter.* **Sousa:** *Gallant Seventh; Semper Fidelis; The Liberty Bell; The Thunderer; El Capitan; The Stars and Stripes Forever.* **Reeves:** *Second Connecticut Regiment March.* **Ives:** *March Intercollegiate; Omega Lambda Chi.* **Huffine:** *Them Basses.* **Joplin:** *Combination March.* **Alford:** *Purple Carnival.* **Evans:** *Symphonia.* COLUMBIA M 33513 $6.98, ☐MQ 33513 $7.98, © MT 33513 $7.98.

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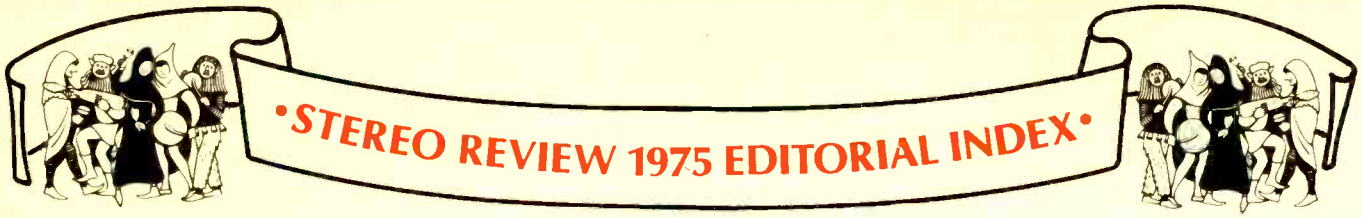

Introducing the Staff...

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.*

Contributing Editor

Martin Bookspan

It all began with a knock at the front door one day when I was about six and home from school with a cold. The man at the door was a salesman peddling music lessons—in those Depression years any job was better than no job. We listened to his pitch, my mother and I, and then I went into mine: "Ma, I want to take violin lessons." "You may not like it. You'll have to work hard. It will mean hours and hours of practicing. . . ." But all of this I dismissed with a play to the gallery: "Don't worry about that. I'll practice so much you'll have to tear the violin from my arms."

I suppose I was something of a prodigy for the next few years. No school assembly or family gathering was complete without a violin solo or two from me. And playing the standard repertoire in the violin section of the Boston Music School symphony orchestra opened up that glorious literature to me. Then, when I was about fourteen, I realized that the life of a performing musician held no particular thrills for me. Back went the violin into its case.

Radio, live and vibrant, was then in its heyday. I hoped that I might one day be able to combine my musical knowledge with radio, but there seemed to be more fantasy than reality in that hope. Then came college (Harvard) and the discovery that there was a superb radio station there, devoted largely to concert music and run totally by undergraduates. I became a candidate for the station's staff at the start of my sophomore year, writing scripts, scheduling music, keeping the coffee hot, and otherwise serving an apprenticeship. The first time I ever faced a live microphone was a one-hour special with Aaron Copland dealing with his life and music. I spent the rest of my college years happily consumed by work at the Crimson Network, as it was called in those days.

Luck was with me when graduation time came. A new concert-music station was then in the planning stages for Boston, and I was engaged as its music director. Hectic years at various Boston radio stations followed, and then WQXR in New York called; would I be interested in discussing the position of director of recorded music there? I was interested, we discussed, and for the next twelve years I was on the WQXR staff. The happiest part of that association was a period of eleven seasons when I served as host, commentator, and producer of the WQXR broadcasts of the Saturday evening concerts of the Boston Symphony.

Since leaving WQXR in the spring of 1968, I have been coordinator of symphonic and concert activities for the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. I have also served for a number of years as a vice president of the American Music Center and as an officer and board member of the National Music Council.

Free-lance writing and broadcasting continue to occupy much of my time. I have been a Contributing Editor ("The Basic Repertoire") to Stereo Review since Volume 1, Number 1, and I am music consultant for *Consumer Reports*. I have also served as tape critic and columnist for the New York *Times*. My book, *101 Masterpieces of Music and Their Composers*, was published by Doubleday in 1968, and an updated paperback edition was published in 1973 by Dolphin Books.

I am one of the three charter panelists on the long-running radio series *First Hearing*. In addition I serve as host on two other syndicated radio series: *Composer's Forum* and *Matinee*. And on television I have served as arts critic and commentator for NBC-TV as well as for Channel 7 in Boston and Channels 7 and 11 in New York.

The newest thing in my life is my assignment as host, commentator, and executive producer of the New York Philharmonic's new series of radio broadcasts. Made possible by a grant from Exxon Corporation, these weekly programs are heard on nearly two hundred stations around the country, and they represent the return (hurrah!) of the Philharmonic to radio after a nine-season hiatus. My enthusiasm for the project knows no bounds, and I hope to be able to communicate some of it to the listening audience. —*Martin Bookspan*

STEREO REVIEW ADVERTISERS' INDEX DECEMBER 1975

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