

Stereo Review

14276

NOVEMBER 1976 • ONE DOLLAR

HOW TO USE
FM WHITE NOISE
TO CHECK SPEAKER
AND TAPE RECORDER
PERFORMANCE

LINDA RONSTADT
LINDA RONSTADT

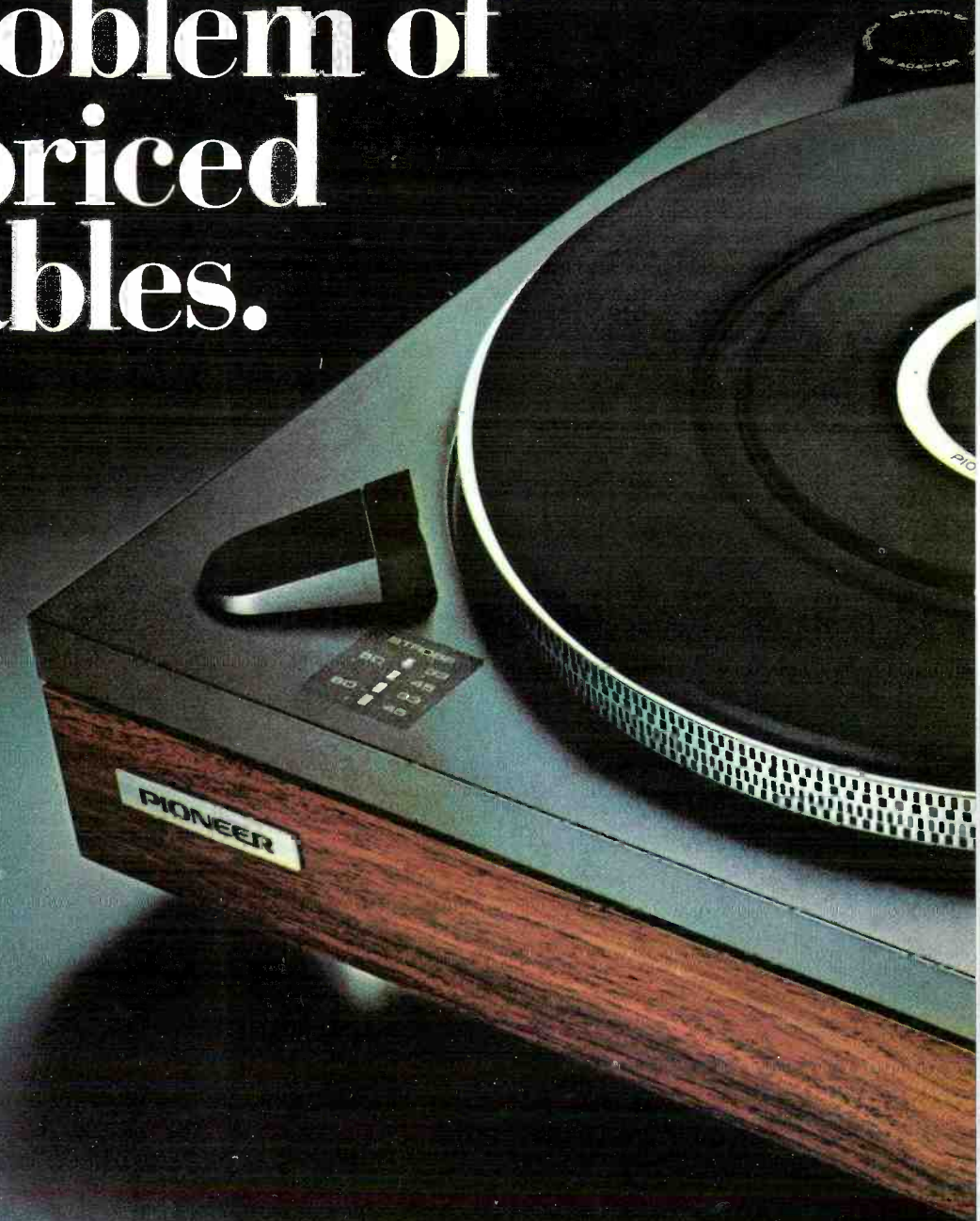
from now on, a talent
to be reckoned with

**JOAN SUTHERLAND &
RICHARD BONYNGE**
at home with bel canto

HIRSCH-HOUCK LABS TEST REPORTS
• Kenwood KA-7300 Integrated Amplifier
• Nakamichi 600 Stereo Cassette Deck
• Pioneer TX-6500 AM/FM Tuner
• Sony PS-4750 Turntable



Pioneer has
conquered the one
big problem of
high-priced
turntables.



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PHENIX CITY AL 36867

FREDERIC MARVIN

The best way to judge the new Pioneer PL-510 turntable is to pretend it costs about \$100 more. Then see for yourself if it's worth that kind of money.

First, note the precision-machined look and feel of the PL-510.

The massive, die-cast, aluminum-alloy platter gives an immediate impression of quality. The strobe marks on the rim tell you that you don't have to worry about perfect accuracy of speed. The tone arm is made like a scientific instrument and seems to have practically no mass when you lift it off the arm rest. The controls are a sensuous delight to touch and are functionally grouped for one-handed operation.

But the most expensive feature of the PL-510 is hidden under the platter. Direct drive. With a brushless DC servo-controlled motor. The same as in the costliest turntables.

That's why the rumble level is down to -60 dB by the JIS standard. (This is considerably more stringent than the more commonly used DIN "B" standard, which would yield an even more impressive figure.) And that's why the wow and flutter remain below 0.03%. You can't get performance like that with idler

drive or even belt drive. The PL-510 is truly the inaudible component a turntable should be.

Vibrations due to external causes, such as heavy footsteps, are completely damped out by the PL-510's double-floating suspension. The base floats on rubber insulators inside the four feet. And the

turntable chassis floats on springs suspended from the top panel of the base. Stylus hopping and tone arm skittering become virtually impossible. (Even the turntable mat is made of a special vibration-absorbing material.)

But if all this won't persuade you to buy a high-priced turntable, even without the high price, Pioneer has three other new models for even less.

The PL-117D for under \$175*. The PL-115D for under \$125*. And the amazing PL-112D for under \$100*.

None of these has a rumble level above -50 dB (JIS). None of them has more wow and flutter than 0.07%.

So it seems that Pioneer has also conquered the one big problem of low-priced turntables.

The low performance.

U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp.,
75 Oxford Drive, Moonachie,
New Jersey 07074.

Turntable:

- Direct drive
- Brushless DC servo-controlled motor
- 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and 45 RPM speeds
- Strobe light
- Strobe-calibrated platter rim
- $\pm 2\%$ fine adjustment of speeds
- Double-floating system of suspension
- Turntable mat of high-internal-loss rubber
- One-handed operation of controls

Tone arm:

- Lightweight S-shaped tubular design
- Static balance
- Ball-bearing pivot with angular contact
- Anti-skating device
- Lateral balancer
- Direct-readout counterweight
- Viscous-damped cueing
- Lightweight plug-in headshell

The high price.

For under \$200*, you can now own the direct-drive PL-510.



PIONEER

Anyone can hear the difference.

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PIONEER ELECTRONIC CORP.

CONTROL SYSTEM

ANTISKATE

SPEED

45

33

18

9

PUSH

ARM-UP/DOWN

OFF

ON-UP

DOWN

DIRECT DRIVE
STEREO TURNTABLE
PL-510

**The turntable
nobody had heard of
two years ago is
now Number One.
The most popular
turntable in America.
It's called a
"bee eye cee."
It's built five ways.
And it's imported.
From Michigan.**



Five ways means five models. And all five are belt drive turntables, with low speed (300 rpm) motor, program system, superior tone arm, and excellent performance characteristics. For more information pick up our "5 Turntables" folder at high-fidelity dealers or write to British Industries Co., Westbury, N.Y. 11590.

Model 920 about \$79 - 940 about \$109 - 960 about \$159 - 980 about \$199 - 1000 about \$279. Model 980 shown. ©1976 British Industries Co. A Division of Avnet Inc.

5 Turntables B I C™

FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW

Stereo Review®

NOVEMBER 1976 • VOLUME 37 • NUMBER 5

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Editorially Speaking

By William Anderson



MUSICAL ROOTS

I HAD a friend a number of years ago, a music lover—no, *fanatic*—who was concerned that his children be able to share what was to him one of life's greatest pleasures. He and his wife were avid concert-goers, and he was not one to pooh-pooh prenatal influence. But he put his real money on post-natal immersion, bathing his first son in Brahms (the symphonies, not the *Lullaby*) and other classical heavies by placing the bassinet where it would be continually washed by waves of sound from the record player.

That baby should be in his middle thirties now, and I don't know how the experiment worked out, but it is evident that his father, talented listener though he may have been himself, put more trust in nurture than in nature, relying on life experience to instill a love of music rather than trusting to the genes. I am (largely) a gene man myself, the result perhaps of having known a few musically gifted people who literally sang in the crib before they had any life experience to sing about and others who grew to contented, tone-deaf

adulthood in households filled with music (quick: how many great composers' children were musicians?).

Gene lightning—in this case, musical talent—strikes pretty much where it will and in varying degrees of severity, capriciously leaving a lucky few—Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner—with a full charge and others without even a trickle. Since nothing can grow in a vacuum, however, nurture is important as the provider of the materials that natural talent needs to work upon. Singer/songwriter Linda Ronstadt, for example, who is interviewed in this issue by Noel Coppage, appears to have been right there when the musicality was being handed out, but she knows that talent alone can go only so far: "I use every root form I can get my hands on . . . the ones I tend to draw on most heavily are the ones I heard and learned and sang from the earliest time, country music and Mexican music and rock-and-roll."

Another musician of talent who "heard, learned, and sang" a lot as a youngster was

composer Charles Ives. His father was a music teacher and band master, his mother an accomplished church soloist, and his formative years were saturated in music of all kinds—religious, patriotic, and popular entertainment. These musical experiences are surely the "roots" of his famous credo: "There can be nothing exclusive about a substantial art. It comes directly out of the heart of experience of life. . . ." Anyone who has ever heard Ives' *Decoration Day* (second of the set called *New England Holidays*), with its echoes of everything from *John Brown's Body* to *Adeste Fideles* and *Taps*, will know just what he meant.

BUT isn't all that simply "eclecticism" (under-thirty types are permitted to read that as "rip-off") or, even—eccch—worse, *nostalgia*? No; what it is is *roots*—and a cool-headed, brave-hearted willingness to stand up and be counted for what we (musically) are: an anthology, a mishmash, a smörgåsbord, a fritto misto, a very bouillabaisse, paella, and gumbo of sources, ingredients, parts, parcels, cross-currents, and influences. We are now, in short, what we have always been, and only the most stubborn of embarrassed academic revisionists would attempt to rationalize away such abundant evidence of our still lively heritage as is described in some of this issue's reviews—those, say, of Joan Morris' and William Bolcom's "Vaudeville," Robert White's "When You and I Were Young Maggie," Frederick Fennell's brass-band concert "Our Musical Past," and, yes, Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band, Clifton Chenier, "Jelly Roll" Morton, Muggsy Spanier, and many, many more.

A recent TV broadcast of the Boston Pops (called "Old Timer's Night"—a misnomer, for many of the performers were definitely *New Timers*) reminded me that one of the most accomplished and unembarrassed celebrants of American musical diversity is the perdurable conductor Arthur Fiedler, "Boston Pops" himself. Don't try any of that "nostalgia" stuff with him; you'll get a sharp rap across the knuckles from that practiced baton and a curt "Roots, man, *roots!*"

Stereo Review

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With the Dual Auto/Reverse Deck, a C-90 cassette will play back for ninety uninterrupted minutes. You don't have to remove and flip the cassette for the second forty-five minutes unless you want to. Any cassette can also be set to play indefinitely until you shut it off. What's more, the Auto/Reverse Deck records in both directions. Mechanics and electronics reverse at the touch of a button. The record/playback head never moves, so there is no problem of misalignment, the bane of previous reversing decks.

Now there are two cassette decks with Dual precision.

With the new Dual C919, you can take an especially creative approach to recording. Tape, disc or radio can be mixed with live material recorded via microphones.

Separate microphone and line-input level controls for each channel let you intermix all four inputs. There are also separate level controls for each headphone channel. Output level controls match the tape deck output to other program sources; there's no need to readjust volume settings when switching programs.

So much for convenience and versatility. What about performance? The C919 is too new for test reports, but it has the same motor, tape-head and electronics as the Auto/Reverse Deck, which has been reviewed, such as in *Audio* magazine:

"...another outstanding example of the great strides in cassette deck technology in recent years. Wow and flutter was indeed extremely low, measuring 0.065% (WRMS)...total harmonic distortion during playback (at 1 kHz) of 1.4%, well below the 2.0% claimed by the manufacturer...The fast-wind mechanism...is about the fastest and smoothest we have encountered...We also checked a couple of C-120 cassettes and found that the Dual deck was able to handle them smoothly...A distinct feeling of quality...seems well worth the price."

That's the caliber of performance you can expect with either Dual deck. All you have to decide is how much convenience and versatility you also want.

The Dual Auto/Reverse.



United Audio Products

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Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual



The Dual C919.



Additional features of the Dual cassette decks: Common to both models: Viscous-damped cassette eject, inter-mode switching, 60 second rewind for C-60 cassette, *Dolby noise reduction system, professional VU-meter ballistics. **Auto/Reverse only:** Automatic bias switching, switchable ALC, Dolby oscillator and calibrators. Less than \$300.

C919 only: Memory stop, FM Dolby, three-way bias and equalization. Less than \$450.

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THE ELECTRONIC TURNTABLE.

An electronic computer controls the speed; electronic circuits control everything else.

Electronic devices are more accurate and more reliable than even the most sophisticated mechanical device.

But you know that. What you may not know is that now the precision of electronics has been put to work in a turntable in ways electronics have never been used before.



The Philips GA 212 Electronic Turntable. More than mechanical. Less than \$170.*

The turntable is the Philips GA 212 Electronic. It gets its go from a low-rpm, servo-controlled d.c. motor, much the way the best (read: expensive) turntables do. But then the GA 212 goes the best one better.

A computer to control the servo-control.

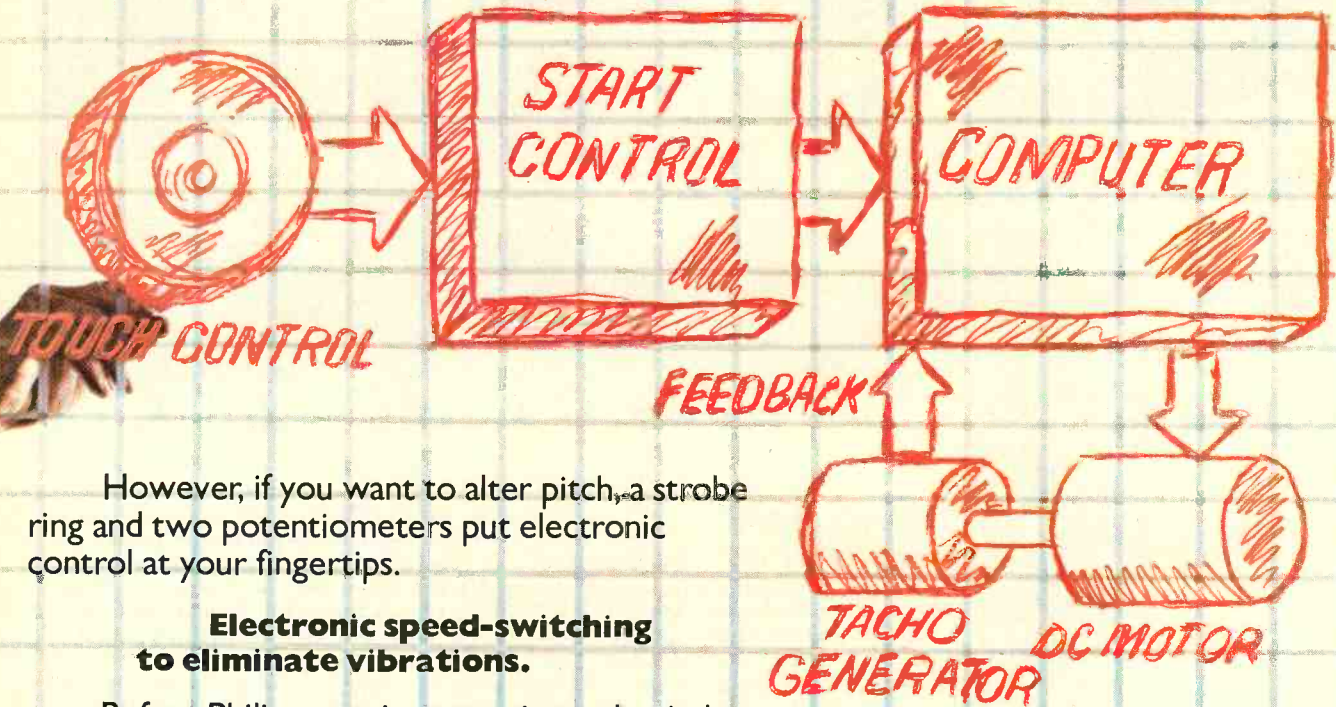
To ensure constant, accurate speed, the GA 212 regulates its motor with a mini-computer. The computer corrects even the slightest variations in speed at the speed of light. Electronically.

Wow, flutter and drift are so low as to be virtually undetectable; cartridge tracking forces, stylus/groove friction, cleaning-brush drag and line-voltage fluctuations leave the GA 212's precise speed unaffected.

*Optional with dealer.



COMPUTER CONSTANTLY MAINTAINS SPEED

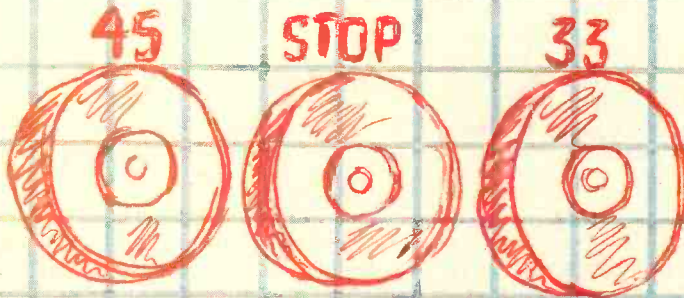


However, if you want to alter pitch, a strobe ring and two potentiometers put electronic control at your fingertips.

Electronic speed-switching to eliminate vibrations.

Before Philips, starting, stopping and switching turntable speed from 33 to 45 rpm, were all done mechanically. The GA 212 controls all three functions electronically.

You don't push the GA 212's buttons (and maybe give the stylus the shakes), you merely touch them, featherlightly. No mechanical pressure, no vibrations.



ELECTRONIC TOUCH CONTROLS ELIMINATE VIBRATIONS

To further immunize this remarkable turntable against mechanical and acoustic feedback, Philips engineers float the platter and tonearm on a cushioned subchassis, while rigidly mounting the motor to the main chassis. Only a shock-absorbing belt connects platter and motor. The precision-ground belt also reduces rumble to inaudibility.

Photoelectronic shut-off stops stutters before they start.

Even to shut off the motor at the end of a record, Philips has replaced mechanics with electronics. Or, rather, with electronics and optics. For the GA 212 shuts itself off—simply and silently—by interrupting a light-beam with a hidden lever that parallels the tonearm.

The tonearm, not so incidentally, is a fitting and flawless companion for the turntable. In engineering the arm, Philips eschewed seductive curves and played it straight. Because straight is the shortest (least mass) distance between two points. And less mass means less resonance.

Of course, the arm's geometry, adjustments and controls are as advanced as the motor's controls. And you know how advanced those are.

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In the 14XP column system, American Monitor Company introduces column design to recording studio monitor quality speakers.

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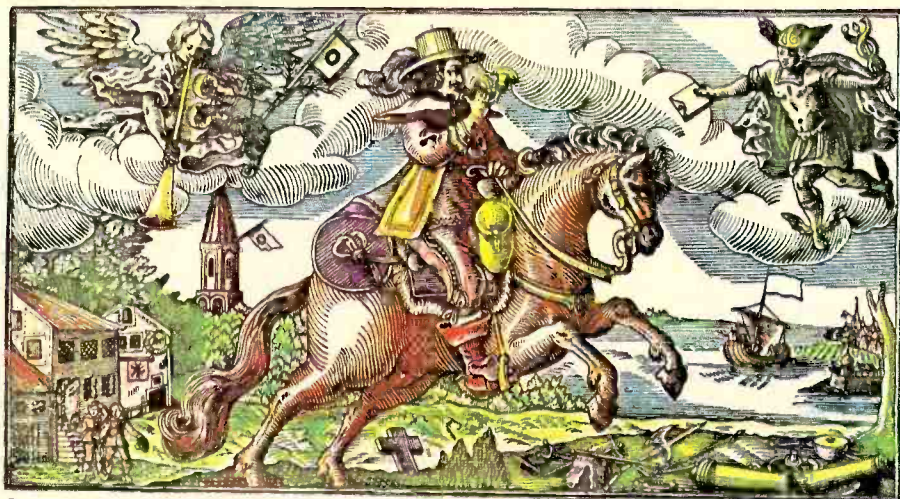
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Tracking Error

There are two errors concerning phono cartridges in the September issue of your magazine. The cover states that "one model weighed in at a mere gram," and on page 68, under the heading "Phono Cartridges," is the statement "A new arrival from England is the Goldring G900 SE that is said to weigh a mere gram."

I have a Goldring G900 SE and the actual cartridge weight is 5 grams, according to the manual that came with the cartridge. The manual also lists "playing weight" at 1 gram, and "playing weight range" as 0.75 to 1.5 grams. The 1-gram figure is therefore *not* the total weight of the cartridge.

RICHARD DAVISON
Milltown, N.J.

Technical Editor Larry Klein replies: Reader Davison is perfectly correct; we dozed, and our faces are red. We accepted uncritically the data provided by British Information Services. We should have known better. We promise that henceforth we will be as critical with data provided in British English (Brittish?) as we are with press-release material translated into exotic Japlish and Germlish.

Nelson Eddy

There are times I wish I might smack a reviewer alongside the head with a board—it being the surest means of getting the attention of a jackass. In this case the beast in question is Paul Kresh for his September review of the Nelson Eddy recording.

It's been chic in recent years for reviewers to write scurrilous, vicious, and cruel words about Eddy and MacDonald recordings. But Nelson and Jeannette gave us lovely dreams in the Thirties . . . when dreams were all we had. It was a different world forty years ago; of course the stars of a prior generation seem funny-strange today. They always do. All that says is that fashions change. Forty years hence Elvis and the Beatles will be treated in a similar manner by another clever fellow, and other transient stars in pop-trash will have been forgotten.

Nowadays it seems any fool kid who can sprout the requisite fur and pick at a guitar

grants himself instant wisdom, grows sententious ("I'm deep, man, real deep"), and starts writing his own songs. *Everyone* now writes his own songs, and that may be one reason pop music's gone to hell. In most cases ineptitude surpasses creativity and that's the end of it. A few get the media hype: covers the same week on major news mags (Springsteen) and they get to hang around a little longer. But if any of today's pop stars were convinced they could sell an album by singing the *very same songs* Eddy did on this latest release, they'd hustle down to the neighborhood sixteen-track and start pickin'. Kresh hopes the "good old days of 'Rose Marie' . . . never return." What makes him so certain today's world is any better? It's only different. If back then we had *Tonight We Love and Fwee Iddy Fiddies*, we also had Gershwin, Kern, Porter, and Berlin. Alice Cooper is just not an adequate replacement for those.

E. D. HOAGLAN
Omaha, Neb.

American Symphonists

Among the outstanding twentieth-century American symphonists mentioned in Eric Salzman's September article "The Great American Symphony" I missed the name of Gordon Binkerd. The Columbia recording (ML-5691/MS-6291) of his *First Symphony* has long been a collector's item, but still available is his masterful *Second* (on CRI 139) performed by the Oslo Philharmonic under George Barati. The style of these works might be described, in Mr. Salzman's phrase, as "relatively conservative, non-folkloric," though Binkerd's music has a distinctive personal flavor which is immediately recognizable. Also available on recent recordings are the sonatas for piano (CRI 201), violin and piano (Desto DC-6439), and cello and piano (CRI SD-289). Like the symphonies, "all that lovely music is still there waiting to be heard."

RUDY SHACKELFORD
Gloucester, Va.

I was quite impressed with Eric Salzman's "Great American Symphony" in the September issue. I learned a great deal about our unusual national heritage of which I was una-

ware before. How is it that we are continually concerned with our European heritage and give our native talent second place in musical importance? I would tend to believe that we are uncertain of ourselves as a creative nation. Mr. Salzman's finely organized account of our musical progress is both enlightening and inspiring. Let's hope more of the past is performed and more of the future develops from the vast wealth of creative artists in America.

DAN JULTY
Yellow Springs, Ohio

Reel-to-reel

● This letter represents myself, my friends, and seven record stores, including three Record Bars and a Sam Goody's. It seems that the most impossible form of recorded music to find is that of prerecorded reel-to-reel tapes. We would all appreciate it immensely if you could supply the address of anyone who distributes prerecorded reel-to-reel tapes.

MICHAEL BENNETT
Goldsboro, N.C.

Barclay-Crocker, 11 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004. Their catalog, kept scrupulously up-to-date, costs \$1.

Bergonzi

● I fully agree with George Jellinek's September review of "Carlo Bergonzi Sings Verdi" (Philips 6747193) concerning the tenor's mastery of dynamics, dramatic rightness, and close adherence to Verdi's markings, but I must take exception when he says other tenors surpass Mr. Bergonzi today in tonal beauty. Presumably Mr. Jellinek is referring to Messrs. Pavarotti and Domingo in this regard. More often than not, Mr. Pavarotti's voice sounds constricted, nasal, and unsupported, while Mr. Domingo's sound is often disjointed and sometimes sounds strangled on top. Mr. Bergonzi remains the *primo tenore*. I hope Philips will soon record him in complete versions of Verdi's *La Battaglia di Legnano* and *Otello*.

JOHN CLIFTON
Edmonds, Wash.

● The lavish praise George Jellinek bestowed on Carlo Bergonzi (September) in his Philips recordings of all of Verdi's arias is fully justified. Mr. Bergonzi proves here that he is truly the finest tenor of the last thirty years and the legitimate successor to such pillars of the Metropolitan Opera as Caruso, Gigli, and Martinelli. I only wish that Bergonzi would now record many of the tenor arias he has thus far not recorded from *Xerxes*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'Elisir d'Amore*, *Turandot*, *Girl of the Golden West*, *L'Arlésienne*, *Mefistofele*, *Marta*, *Faust* and *Carmen*, to name but a few of the most popular.

JOHN LEONE
Lisle, Ill.

Acting Singers

● In his September column, Steve Simels states that "we know that *pop* singers, at least, aren't actors," basing this judgment on Tony Bennett's performance in *The Oscar*, which, I agree, was horrendous. But to say

Four reasons why new Quantum by Memorex is better than these leading tapes.

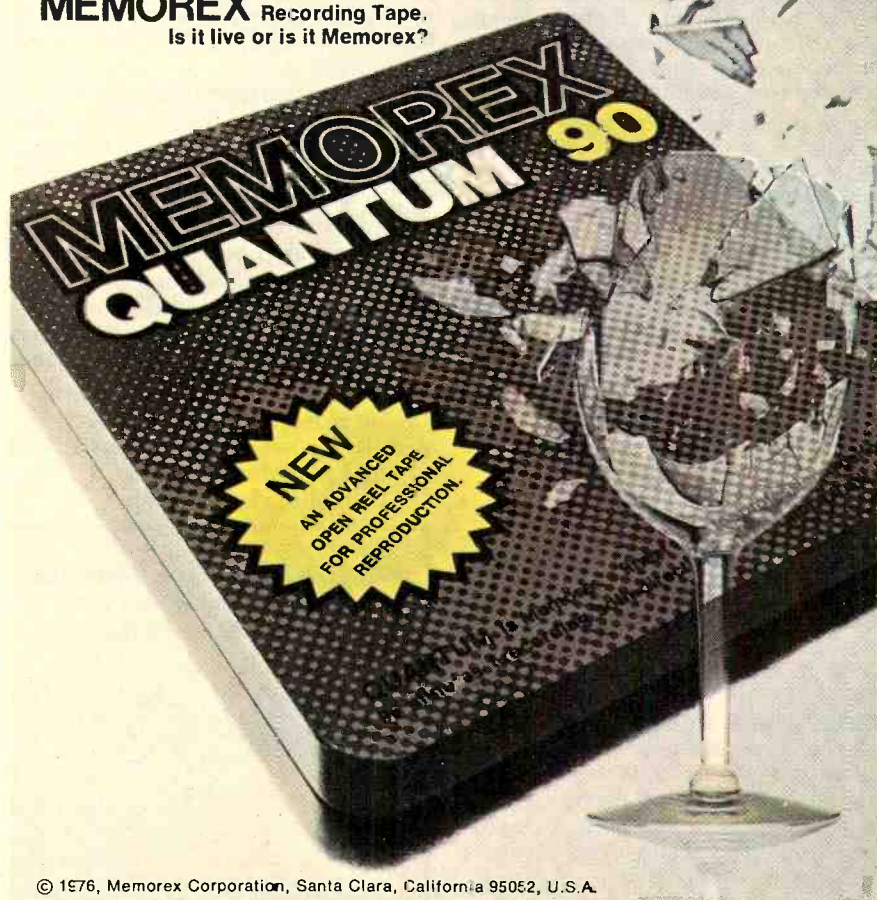


1. Quantum offers lower distortion. You get a truer recording of any type of music and less distortion at any output.
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that pop singers aren't actors is ridiculous and shows Mr. Simels' ignorance on the subject of singers who are marvelous actors. Just to name a few: Frank Sinatra won an Oscar for his supporting role in *From Here to Eternity* and gave a marvelous performance in *The Man with the Golden Arm*; Bing Crosby's roles in *The Country Girl* and *Going My Way* were very well done; Barbra Streisand has given some fine performances in her first few films; Peggy Lee, Ethel Waters, Elvis Presley, Judy Garland, Bobby Darin, and on, and on. Have I made my point?

SCOTT KENYON
Bensenville, Ill.

Mr. Simels replies: Yes, you have; sorry if my tongue-in-cheek blanket denunciation was

misread as gospel. And by the way, we should add another name to your list: Isaac Hayes played a baddy in an episode of *The Rockford Files* this season, and he was superb.

Golden Ears

● I have spent some little time mulling over Julian Hirsch's April column on "Polishing the Golden Ear." I, too, know people endowed with these ornaments, and after pondering the results of conversations I've had with them, I have reached the conclusion that there are two classes of devotees in the world of sound: those with *dogmatic* ears and those with *pragmatic* ears. Those with dogmatic ears (they might be referred to as sound

freaks) are more interested in sound per se than in music, while those with pragmatic ears (of which I am one) love music more than pure sound (we might be referred to as music freaks).

Those of the dogmatic ear assert that there is a *best* sound reproduction, and they will settle for nothing less. Their music may consist of choral works sung by a high-school choir, uninspired rock played by an unknown group, or an inadequate transcription of *Finlandia* only adequately played on an organ; the quality of the performance is not terribly important so long as the recorded sound is simply stupendous. It is not unusual for dogmatists to own a \$4,000 stereo system, but no more than perhaps a hundred or so recordings. And they often display peculiar tastes in the music they do listen to—disliking, for instance, chamber music simply because it does not span the full range of audible sounds.

Those of the pragmatic ear *accept* that no matter how good a sound reproduction system may be, what emanates from it will not be like real live music; it will *always* be, as Deems Taylor once put it, like listening through the wrong end of a telescope. The pragmatist will often have recordings that would drive a sound freak to earplugs (I was once criticized for buying a "bad" recording of Cabanilles' *Batallia*; it was fruitless to point out that it was the *only* recording of that work available). For the music freak, the quality of the performance takes precedence over the quality of the sound. The pragmatist will therefore very often have a much less expensive playback system than the dogmatist while having a much larger collection of recordings. Since the sound reproduction system can never be perfect, the music freak will spend less on equipment in order to have more resources available for the purchase of music.

Obviously this division of stereophiles into two classes is simplistic—there are people who love music and who are also sound freaks. I do not wish at this time, however, to take up the distinction between pragmatic dogmatists and dogmatic pragmatists, to say nothing of that large class of people who just don't care and listen only to Muzak.

STEPHEN LUZADER
Madison, Wisc.

Felix Weingartner

● Serious collectors and other interested music lovers are invited to join in an effort to restore the recorded heritage of Felix Weingartner to circulation through the formation of a society. All correspondence should be directed to the undersigned.

JACK CALDERON
201-A Casuda Canyon Drive
Monterey Park, Calif. 91754

Ian Matthews

● I'd like to thank Noel Coppage for his continuing interest in and support of Ian Matthews, as reflected in his September review of Matthews' latest album "Go for Broke." Some years ago, Coppage first introduced me to Matthews' wonderful voice by giving a very positive review to "Valley-Hi." I bought that album, and I've since ransacked the bargain bins and import racks in search of earlier Matthews releases. Few popular singers I've

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encountered are so *enjoyable*. The only reason I can think of for his failure to make it really big so far is laziness on the part of record-company promoters. And that title of his latest album—"Go for Broke"—well, it makes me a bit uneasy. After all, it may be getting difficult for Matthews to put so much care into each and every song and to get so little recognition in return.

JOHNNY L. HOLDREN
Hampton, Va.

Ethel Waters

● That was a nice little tribute Henry Pleasants paid the great Ethel Waters on her birthday (October issue), but I bet he's mad as a wet hen you didn't let him sign the card.

MICHAEL CARUSO
New York, N.Y.

We apologize to Mr. Pleasants and to our readers for the omission of the byline; he deserves credit for a heart-warming piece, and our readers have a right to know who is addressing them.

Aesthetic Updating

● We were pleased to note your enthusiasm about our forthcoming Micro/CPU 100 FM tuner in your September-issue feature on the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago, but would like to point out that the unit pictured in the article was the early CES model. Since then, the cosmetics have been dramatically enhanced to reflect the state-of-the-art technology of the tuner itself.

THOMAS PICKETT
Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, Inc.
Chicago, Ill.

Ideal Critic

● Concerning Noel Coppage's August review of Genesis' "A Trick of the Tail": upon my first hearing of the album, I recognized it as a stunning achievement. Had Mr. Coppage felt similarly, I should now be extremely worried. Fortunately, however, he does not share my enthusiasm.

KEVIN L. RYAN
Convoy, Ohio

Classical Rip-offs

● James Goodfriend's "Crossing Over" column in August was interesting and, pathetically enough, true. Other examples of classical rip-offs include: (1) In the introduction to the Beatles' *All You Need Is Love* a portion of Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* is heard, and at the end there is a bit of Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Greensleeves*. (2) Another great rip-off is in a song by Procol Harum, *Repent Walpurgis*, which was "written" by their organist, Matthew Fischer—yet during the middle of that song we can enjoy one of J. S. Bach's most famous pieces, the *Prelude and Fugue in C*. We can hear Bach again on (3) Jethro Tull's "Stand Up." And on the Rick Wakeman album "Journey to the Centre of the Earth," Wakeman himself admits at the bottom of the album, "I stole a few bars." So then why wasn't Grieg given credit? (The piece from which Wakeman stole was *In the*

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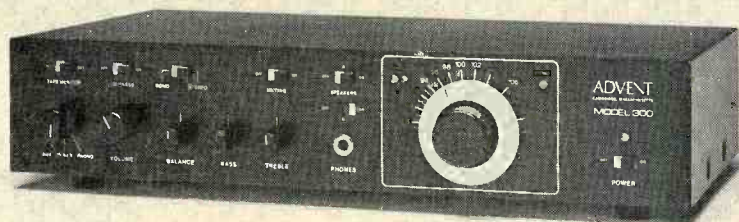
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Hall of the Mountain King). It is indeed a shame that great classical composers sometimes don't get the credit they richly deserve. If some of those greedy rock groups let their listeners know exactly who composed what, then many rock followers might catch on to the beauty of the classics.

ROBERT C. FOTI
Plantation, Fla.

Glière

© I have just read Peter J. Kaufman's letter in the August issue pertaining to the release of Glière's Third Symphony by Columbia/Melodiya and its review in the June issue. The reviewer, David Hall, objected to the "short measure offered in this two-record set." Let me assure him that it is shorter than he realizes! Every movement of the symphony but one has been cut. Only the third movement, the shortest, is preserved in its original form, and even there the tempos are so painfully slow that I cannot recommend this portion over the only complete recording ever made, one released in 1953 and still available on Westminster Gold in mono.

I further cannot divine how the present conductor has seen fit to include a chime (none is used throughout the symphony) in the first and fourth movements, the main objection being that none fits through the constant modulation of the chorale it accompanies. The second movement, in addition to being mortally wounded by omissions, has been reorchestrated in several places (again slow tempos obscure any sense of purpose in the lush texture of the central section), and the important contrabassoon solo has been rewritten for tuba, which, to say the least, changes the mood radically.

For my taste, the older recording with Hermann Scherchen and the Vienna State Opera Orchestra must remain definitive; the "spacious" sonics attributed by Mr. Kaufman to the new release are disturbing rather than clarifying.

I was most irritated to see Columbia proclaiming "First Uncut Stereo Performance" on the plastic wrapper (cleverly, it was not inside too), finding this to be quite untrue. Columbia missed a wonderful opportunity to present this neglected work whole with state-of-the-art techniques.

DAVID R. LIVELY
Denton, Tex.

David Hall replies: Mr. Lively gets an A as a Glière purist. I have gone through the Rakhlin performance with the score (original 1913 Jurgenson edition), all 414 pages of it, and the cuts and alterations are precisely as Mr. Lively describes them. The performance is not echt-complete, despite what Columbia says, and, by those same standards, the single-disc performances of Ormandy and Stokowski would best be described as "highlights."

The one-hour, nineteen-minute, and twenty-second Scherchen recording remains the only complete recorded documentation of the work available in this country. Unfortunately, it is musically no more than adequate. A virtuoso orchestra of the Chicago or Philadelphia caliber, plus a conductor of real temperament (Mehta?) would have to be brought together to achieve a convincing statement of this elephantine work—that is, if any record company would consider such an investment worth its while.

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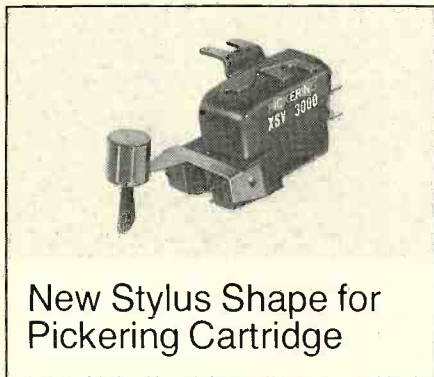
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New Stylus Shape for Pickering Cartridge

□ The Stereohedron stereo-stylus shape, described as a meeting of the technologies for CD-4 and conventional elliptical styli, is being introduced by Pickering in the new XSV/3000 magnetic phono cartridge. The Stereohedron tip is similar in cross section to an elliptical tip, but the contact radii have been somewhat reduced for better tracing and the total groove-contact area somewhat enlarged by shaping the tip to conform more closely to the 90-degree angle formed by the groove walls. The increased contact area correspondingly reduces the tracking pressure per unit area.

The frequency response of the XSV/3000 extends from 10 to 30,000 Hz, reportedly because of superior tracing of the stylus at high frequencies. Output is approximately 1 millivolt per centimeter per second of recorded velocity. The cartridge has a tracking-force range of $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ grams. The XSV/3000 weighs $\frac{1}{2}$ grams. Price: \$99.95.

Circle 115 on reader service card



New Two-way Speaker System from Avid

□ The Model 101, latest of the Avid two-way speaker systems, is a wide-dispersion design achieved with three tweeters radiating to the front and to either side. For low frequencies there is an 8-inch woofer in a ported enclosure

that has been aligned for extended bass response rather than augmented efficiency. The woofer operates up to 2,500 Hz, after which there is a crossover to the front-mounted $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch cone tweeter. The 2-inch side-firing cone tweeters operate above 3,500 Hz.

The floor-standing Model 101 has a nominal 8-ohm impedance (7 ohms minimum). At a distance of one meter a sound-pressure level of 85 dB is achieved for a 1-watt input; the minimum recommended amplifier power is 15 watts per channel. The system's rated acoustic-power response is 30 to 15,000 Hz ± 4 dB. Overall dimensions are approximately 29 x 13 x 13 inches. The top and bottom of the system are finished in walnut-grain vinyl; the sides are black vinyl with brown cloth grille panels (removable) on three sides. Approximate price: \$150.

Circle 116 on reader service card



Hitachi Receiver With Class-G Amplifier

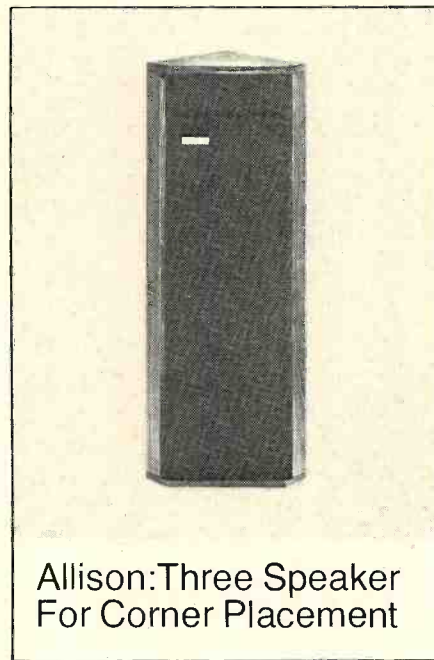
□ The SR/903 introduces Hitachi's "Class G" amplifier configuration to the U.S. market. In Class G, each channel has two separate sets of output transistors, one of which is "on" only during high-level conditions. As a result of this arrangement the amplifier section operates much more efficiently on typical program material, while still retaining considerably enhanced short-term output capability for brief musical peaks.

The rated continuous-power output of the SR/903 receiver is 75 watts per channel into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.3 per cent harmonic distortion. The Class-G circuitry provides an IHF music-power rating of 160 watts per channel. Key FM specifications include a usable sensitivity of 9.3 dBf (1.6 microvolts), a 50-dB quieting sensitivity of 15 dBf (3.1 microvolts), and an ultimate signal-to-noise ratio of 74 dB. The capture ratio is 1 dB, AM suppression is 55 dB, spurious-response rejection is 100 dB, and alternate-channel selectivity is 80 dB. The receiver is equipped with an AFC circuit that is disabled whenever the tuning knob is touched.

The SR/903's tone controls include a mid-range knob with its action centered at about 1,500 Hz. Up to two tape decks and two pairs of speakers are accommodated; front-panel switching permits dubbing from either deck to the other. The volume and tone controls are detented, with the volume control having forty-one positions. The overall dimensions

of the receiver are $19\frac{1}{4}$ x $5\frac{5}{8}$ x $15\frac{3}{4}$ inches. Price: about \$500, which includes a wood-veneer cabinet.

Circle 117 on reader service card



Allison:Three Speaker For Corner Placement

□ The floor-standing Allison:Three is the first speaker system from this manufacturer to be designed for flat acoustic-power response when located in a room corner. Among the special uses envisioned for the Model Three: in back-of-room corners as rear speakers in a four-channel setup and with a Model One or Model Two as part of a front stereo pair when room layout dictates that one speaker be in a corner. And, of course, the Allison:Three can be installed in conventional pairs and quartets in those rooms that invite corner speaker placement.

The Model Three is a three-way acoustic-suspension design with a 10-inch woofer, a $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch mid-range, and a 1-inch tweeter. The mid-range and tweeter both employ the Allison "Convex Diaphragm" construction. Crossover frequencies are 350 and 3,750 Hz, determined by inductance-capacitance networks. Nominal impedance is 4 ohms (3.5 ohms minimum), and the minimum amplifier power recommended is 30 watts per channel for a sound-pressure level of 100 dB in the reverberant field of a typical listening room. A three-position switch adjusts the acoustic-power response from nominally flat to reduced highs and upper mid-range, which is said to simulate the frequency balance heard in a concert-hall setting. The system is capable of an output of 0.5 acoustic watt over the full frequency range when driven with peak amplifier inputs of 70 watts. Low-frequency response is down 3 dB at 35.5 Hz and 6 dB at 29.5 Hz.

The Allison:Three, standing 40 inches high, (Continued on page 17)

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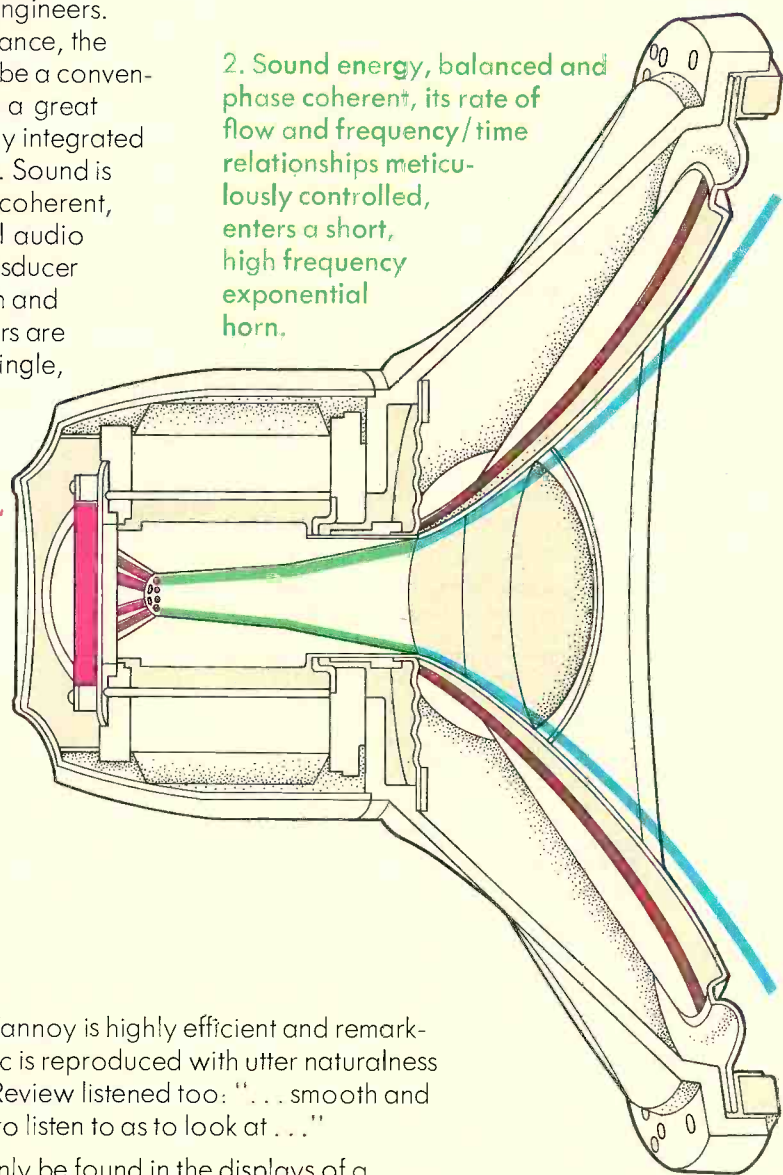
4. The low frequency cone is a rigid piston, operating from the lowest bass range to one thousand Hertz. At this point, there is a smooth crossover into the range of the high frequency horn which extends beyond audibility.

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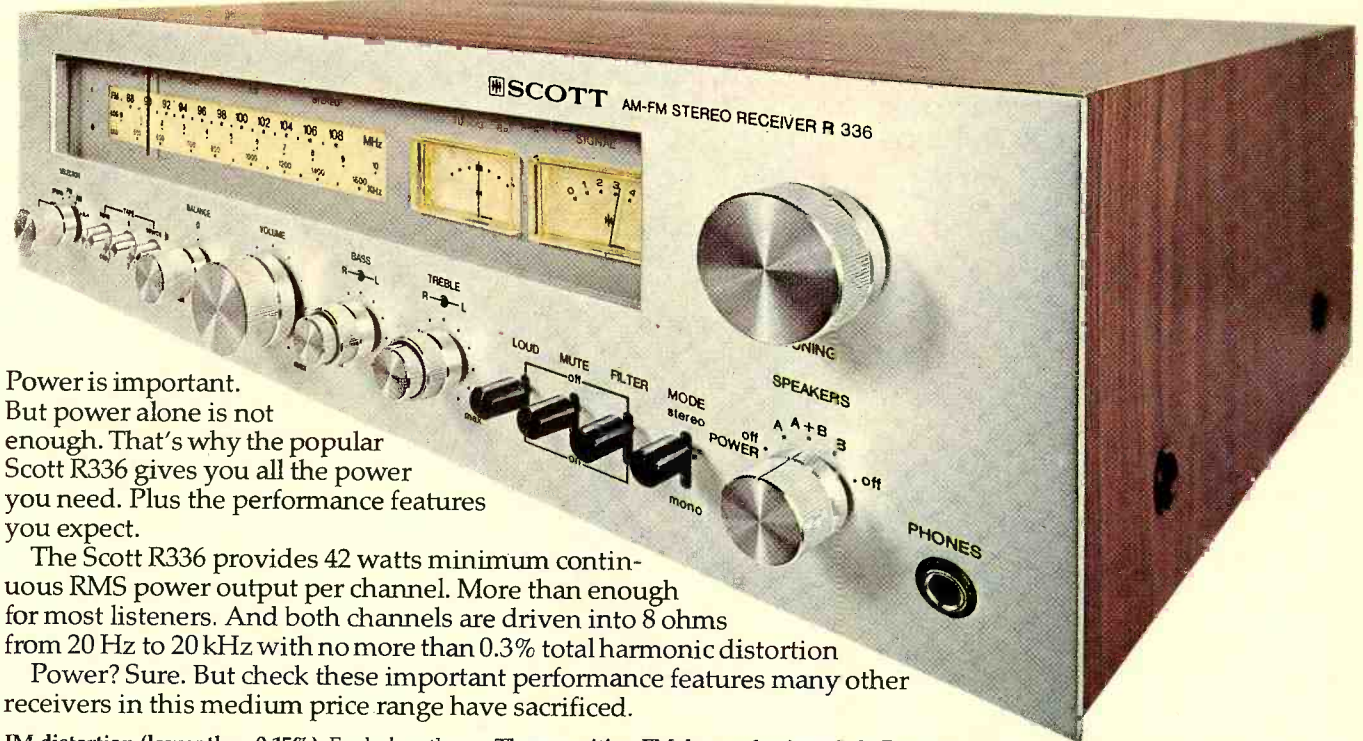


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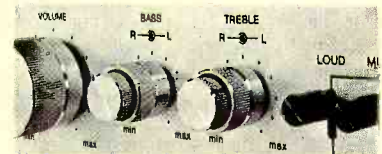
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Signal strength meter circuit. Employs two point sampling for wider dynamic range.

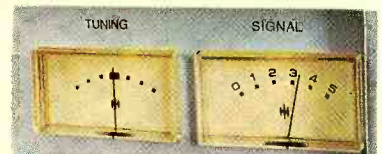
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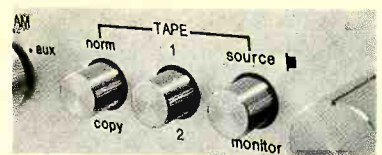
AM section designed around a tuned RF amplifier using J-FET. Improves signal-to-noise ratio.



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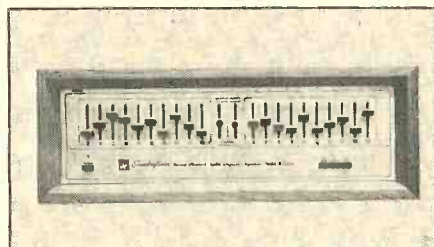


Roadstar's AM/FM Car Radio/Cassette Player

□ Royal Sound announces the RS-2500 combination AM/FM stereo radio and cassette player designed for in-dash installation in automobiles and for other mobile applications. The built-in amplifiers of the unit are rated at 8 watts per channel (distortion not stated) for a load impedance from 4 to 8 ohms. The cassette transport features automatic reverse, eliminating the need to turn the tape over half-way through. It also has fast forward, rewind, and a stop/eject button. The principal controls of the RS-2500 are tuning, volume, balance, and a single tone-control knob. The FM section can be switched from stereo to mono; the AM tuner has a local/distant switch.

In FM, usable sensitivity is better than 2 microvolts, with 50-dB image rejection, 70-dB i.f. rejection, and more than 25 dB of stereo separation. The cassette section has a 55-dB signal-to-noise ratio, less than 0.2 per cent wow and flutter, and under 2 per cent distortion. Approximate dimensions are 7 x 2 x 6¼ inches. Price: \$275.

Circle 119 on reader service card



Soundcraftsmen's New Equalizer Designed For Tape Recording

□ The latest Soundcraftsmen stereo equalizer is specifically referred to as a tape-recording adjunct, and by means of front-panel switch-

ing the signal going to the tape deck to be recorded can be processed by the unit. Ten octave-band slide controls spanning a range of ± 12 dB are provided for each channel, together with level adjustments to eliminate any insertion loss or gain the equalizer may introduce. Intended for installation in the tape-monitor loop of an audio system, the RP2204 duplicates the tape-monitor connections and switching that its installation takes up. Another switch defeats the equalizer for instant A-B comparisons with the unprocessed signal.

The RP2204 has a 96-dB signal-to-noise ratio and harmonic distortion of less than 0.1 per cent at its rated 2-volt output. In its wood cabinet finished in walnut-grain vinyl the unit measures 7¼ x 11¾ x 20 inches. Price: \$329.50.

Circle 120 on reader service card



Koss' First Full-range Electrostatic Speaker

□ Koss' full-range electrostatic loudspeaker design, the Model One, claims several innovations, including multi-diaphragm electrostatic transducers for low and mid frequencies, an "auto-charge" bias supply that derives the d.c. voltage for the diaphragms from the amplifier drive signal instead of an a.c.-fed line-cord power supply, and the use of the signal step-up transformers as key elements in the crossover networks.

The multiple woofer and mid-range diaphragms are arranged in sandwich layers, which has the effect of permitting greater excursions of each individual diaphragm and at the same time maintaining reasonable electroacoustic efficiency. The auto-charge circuit polarizes the diaphragms by means of rectified signal voltage from the amplifier output. A built-in storage battery, which is also charged by the circuit, maintains polarization under low-signal conditions. The crossover networks, utilizing the audio-signal step-up transformers, provide four passbands for the four electrostatic elements: woofer, mid-range, treble, and tweeter transducers. The

dividing frequencies for the four elements are 250, 1,600, and 6,500 Hz.

The -3-dB response points of the Model One's frequency range are 32 and 20,000 Hz. Beyond those frequencies the response is intentionally rolled off. The system's high-frequency dispersion, abetted by the vertical-strip configuration of the high-frequency elements, is approximately 90 degrees in the lateral plane. Minimum impedance is 4 ohms. The manufacturer recommends a minimum amplifier power of 75 watts per channel into 8 ohms for adequately driving the speaker. Maximum recommended amplifier power is 300 watts per channel into 4 ohms. The electrostatic panels of the Model One are surrounded by a frame of walnut-veneer particle board and a brown polyester-knit grille cloth. Above 1,600 Hz the rear radiation of the system is restricted to reduce the influence of the acoustic surroundings on the speaker's sound. The Model One measures 49 x 32 x 10 inches and weighs 150 pounds. Price: \$1,050.

Circle 121 on reader service card



Nakamichi's Class-B Power Amplifier

□ According to its manufacturer, Nakamichi's Model 620 is a pure Class-B design—an unusual mode of operation for a high-fidelity amplifier, and one which provides the dual benefits of high gain and low heat dissipation. The exceptionally low distortion of the 620 is said to result from a new bias-control circuit and from the use of only two high-quality output transistors per channel. At its rated 100 watts per channel continuous output into 8-ohm loads the amplifier has less than 0.01 per cent harmonic distortion from 5 to 20,000 Hz and less than 0.005 per cent up to 10,000 Hz. Intermodulation distortion is less than 0.002 per cent at rated output. The signal-to-noise ratio exceeds 117 dB. In the interest of stability, the use of negative feedback within the amplifier has been kept moderate.

Adapting the wedge shape of some other new Nakamichi components, the Model 620 has its heat sinks mounted on its sloping front panel. Inconspicuously installed within several of the heat-sink fins are peak-indicator lights that can be set to flash green at peak levels of 1, 5, or 25 watts and red at 25 or 50 watts or clipping (8-ohms loads assumed).

(Continued on page 18)

New Products the latest in high-fidelity equipment and accessories

The 620 has an input impedance of 10,000 ohms and a sensitivity of 1 volt. The output transistors and loudspeakers are protected without the use of relays or current-limiting devices. Dimensions are 15¾ x 6¾ x 9¾ inches. Approximate price: \$600.

Circle 122 on reader service card



Three-way
Tuned Ohm Speaker

□ The Ohm C₂ employs a 10-inch woofer and a critically tuned vented enclosure that is said to result in perfectly flat bass response down to 37 Hz. Overall on-axis frequency response of the system is given as 37 to 20,000 Hz ±4 dB. Other drivers are a 2-inch cone high-frequency unit and a 1-inch dome super-tweeter. Crossover frequencies are 1,700 and 5,000 Hz. Minimum recommended amplifier power is 20 watts continuous into the system's 6- to 8-ohm impedance. A three-position switch adjusts the high-frequency output to suit the acoustical environment. The walnut-finish cabinet of the C₂ measures 25 x 14 x 9¾ inches. Price: about \$210.

Circle 123 on reader service card



Top-of-the-line
Scott Receiver

□ H. H. Scott's most powerful stereo receiver, the 75-watt-per-channel R-376, has inputs for two tape decks, phono, auxiliary, and mi-

crophone, together with the built-in AM and FM sources. Rated power refers to continuous output into 8 ohms, available from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.2 per cent harmonic distortion. Intermodulation distortion does not exceed 0.1 per cent from ½ watt to rated output. Signal-to-noise ratios are 75 (phono) and 85 (high-level) dB. The tape-monitoring facilities permit dubbing from either deck to the other.

The R-376 has controls for volume and balance (concentrically mounted), bass, treble, and mid-range. The speaker selector, controlling two pairs of speakers, is combined with the power switch. Pushbuttons operate the low- and high-cut filters, mono/stereo mode, and FM interstation-noise muting. The tuner section has meters for signal strength and channel center.

FM specifications include a usable sensitivity of 1.8 microvolts in mono and 18 microvolts in stereo. Corresponding figures for 50-dB quieting sensitivity are 3.5 microvolts and 70 microvolts. Ultimate signal-to-noise ratios are 68 and 65 dB. Capture ratio is 1.2 dB, AM suppression is 60 dB, spurious-response rejection is 85 dB, and alternate-channel selectivity is 70 dB. The Scott R-376 is about 19½ x 5¾ x 16 inches in size with cabinet included. Price: approximately \$550.

Circle 124 on reader service card



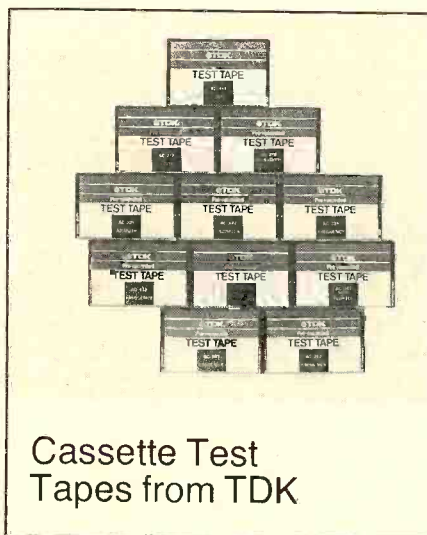
Garrard Turntable
Features New Arm

□ A new articulated tone arm made of a lightweight magnesium alloy is a key feature of Garrard's GT55 automatic turntable, a two-speed (33⅓ and 45 rpm) belt-driven design that is the company's top of the line. The articulated arm, reminiscent of earlier Garrard devices, has a pivoting offset angle that functions to maintain accurate tangency to the groove over the entire disc surface. The magnesium material has reduced the mass of the arm to 14 grams with no loss of rigidity. Stylus force is provided by an adjustable counterweight; anti-skating employs a magnetic system calibrated for elliptical and CD-4

styli. The damped cueing is adjustable in rate.

The 11½-inch, 4-pound platter is driven by an electronically controlled d.c. motor adjustable around its nominal speeds over a range of ±3 per cent. Rumble is rated at -66 dB (DIN B standard), wow and flutter at 0.05 per cent. An illuminated stroboscope indicates correct speed. The changing mechanism takes a maximum of six records and the turntable can be operated automatically or manually (with a single-play spindle that rotates with the platter). The tone arm will cue to disc diameters of 7, 10, or 12 inches according to the position of a selector lever. Without base or dust cover, the GT55's motorboard has approximate dimensions of 15¼ x 14¼ inches. Height above the board is 4¾ inches; depth below is 1¾ inches. Approximate price: \$250. A base (\$16) and a dust cover (\$10) are optional.

Circle 125 on reader service card



Cassette Test
Tapes from TDK

□ An extensive series of test cassette tapes, intended for the professional with test equipment and the well-versed amateur, has been produced by TDK. There are a dozen cassettes in the series, intended for checking such parameters as playback level, Dolby level, playback-head azimuth, frequency response, wow, flutter, tape speed, and crosstalk. In the case of tapes that perform the same tests, there is usually an elaborate version and lesser versions (a frequency-response test tape with eleven spot frequencies vs. three or four frequencies, for example) at correspondingly differing prices. In general, the tapes have tolerances in level of ±0.5 dB and are accurate in azimuth within ±2 minutes of arc. They range in price from \$10 to \$35 available individually or as a set.

Circle 126 on reader service card

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



Phono Accessories
From MetroSound

□ MetroSound has introduced two new products to be marketed by RNS Marketing in the U.S. The M66 Stylus Balance is a precision device for measuring tracking force, consisting of a beam balance supported on a base by knife-edge bearings. A counterweight with a fine-line cursor slides along a scale calibrated in 1/10-gram increments from 0 to 3 grams to indicate the tracking force. The beam incorporates a bubble level for exact balancing.

The M64 Phono Cartridge Kit includes a magnifier with which to examine the stylus for dirt or wear, a vial of stylus-cleaning fluid, a stylus brush, and a screwdriver and tweezers for cartridge installation. Like the balance, the M64 kit is packaged in a styrene snap-shut box. Prices: M66 Stylus Balance, \$13.98; M64 Phono Cartridge Kit, \$11.98.

Circle 127 on reader service card



Pioneer Speaker with
Film Super-tweeter

□ The Model 60 occupies the middle ground in the Pioneer line of bookshelf HPM speaker systems. The letters HPM refer to Pioneer's exclusive high-polymer-film super-tweeter used in the system. This driver consists of a half-roll of the HP film, which serves as the self-driven diaphragm. Other drivers in the four-way system are a 1¾-inch cone tweeter, a 4-inch cone mid-range, and a 10-inch woofer.

The HPM-60 has a nominal impedance of 8 ohms and a frequency range of 35 to 25,000 Hz. Recommended amplifier powers are from 30 to 60 watts per channel. The system's cabinet is finished in walnut-grain vinyl with approximate dimensions of 24 x 13¾ x 12¾ inches. Approximate price: \$225.

Circle 128 on reader service card



Rectilinear®

The Powerful Difference.

As speaker specialists, we at Rectilinear know, better than most, that to play music at realistic volume levels requires speakers of extraordinary dynamic range and power handling capacity.

That's why every Rectilinear speaker is designed to handle enormous amounts of power and do it effortlessly.

Two prime examples are the Rectilinear 2 and 4½. Though moderate in size, they can easily reproduce the ear shattering levels of a rock group in full cry and do it with unmatched clarity and precision.

Both the Rectilinear 2 and 4½ use special high reliability drivers and frequency dividing networks backed up by protective circuitry to prevent mechanical damage and burnt

out voice coils.

In addition, a unique cabinet material with a high density fibrous core dramatically reduces cabinet resonances.

Yet in spite of their high power handling capabilities, both speakers are efficient enough to be used with moderately priced and powered amplifiers and receivers.

If your speakers aren't delivering the kind of punch and power you know is in the music, you owe it to yourself to listen to Rectilinear. You'll be impressed with the powerful difference.

Rectilinear speakers from \$169 to \$449.

For complete information write: Rectilinear Research Corporation, 107 Bruckner Boulevard, Bronx, N.Y. 10454. In Canada: H. Roy Gray Ltd., Ontario.

All other turntables

Introducing the Accutrac 4000.

**Its father was a turntable.
Its mother was a computer.**

The Accutrac 4000 is the most radical new idea in record-playing technology since the introduction of the L.P.

It's a marriage of solid-state integrated circuitry, infra-red electro-optics and the latest in direct-drive engineering. We've replaced hundreds of mechanical parts with efficient, silent electronics: in fact, the functions of nearly 10,000 transistors are being performed by just two logic chips.

The result: The Accutrac 4000 is the most accurate, reliable, noiseless turntable ever invented. And it even lets you re-arrange selections on a record to hear them in the order you want.

The Accutrac 4000 reaches new lows.

Wow and flutter are down to a completely inaudible 0.03% W.R.M.S. Rumble, -70dB (DIN B). Tracking force, a mere 3/4 gram. And tonearm resonance, the ideal 8-10 Hz.

Our direct-drive motor brings the massive die-cast platter to full speed instantly. And keeps it there with the help of electronic sensors which adjust for power fluctuation.

There's no way a turntable can be any more precise.

Now, listen to the selections on a record in the order you want.

Once we developed the electronic control system, it was a logical step to extend its capabilities.

So now, instead of just listening to a record, you can re-arrange the playing order of the selections, repeat them, even skip the ones you don't like.

Just by pushing a button.



Suppose you want to hear selections 5, 3 and 7. Simply press the buttons marked 5, 3 and 7. In fact, you can pre-set the sequence with any combination of up to 24 commands.

And if you don't want to leave your chair to give the orders, beam it in by cordless remote control with the transmitter (lower left) and receiver (above).

The Accutrac 4000 system: it not only plays records as sensitively as possible, it also takes better care of records than is humanly possible.

The arm your fingers never have to touch.

Because the tonearm is electronically driven, not manual, you never risk dropping it accidentally and scratching a record, or damaging the stylus.

The reason for this miracle is the minute infra-red scanning beam in the head that reads the surface of the record and directs the tonearm to follow your instructions.

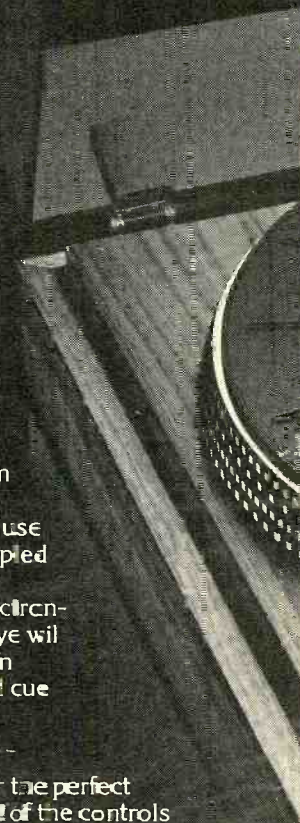
And it does it with absolute freedom because the servo-motor that drives the tonearm is decoupled the instant the stylus goes into play.

You don't have to cue manually, either: electronics takes care of that, too. In fact, the infra-red eye will return the stylus to the same groove it left, within a fraction of a revolution. Even the best damped cue lever can't provide such accuracy or safety.

The Accutrac 4000: the great protector.

Everything about the Accutrac 4000, from the perfect freedom of the tonearm to the logical placement of the controls outside the dustcover has been done for one reason: to extend the life of a record.

Which is why, once you've played the Accutrac 4000, you'll never be able to trust your records to another turntable again.



are now obsolete.



The Accutrac 4000



CIRCLE NO. 6 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein

Technical Editor



LP vs. Video Disc

Q. *The record-wear article by Scott Mas-tricola in the July issue was interesting, but considering the advent of laser-beam video-disc recordings, aren't conventional discs rather obsolete? Surely the smaller amount of recording space required by stereo audio recordings would be ideally suited to the laser system which does not use a stylus and which also eliminates record wear and surface noise. I was wondering if you could tell us when and if this new technology will be applied to stereo records?*

DANIEL M. HART
Boston, Mass.

A. It is worth pointing out that the development of a more technically sophisticated way of doing something seldom causes instant abandonment of previously existing techniques. In most cases you'll find that there are economic, sociological, and even psychological factors that help slow down the potential for "future shock" despite all the rapid advances in technology. It might be enlightening to examine Mr. Hart's question from the perspective of Klein's Law of Social Causation: *The explanation for something being done that shouldn't be—or something not being done that should be—can usually be found by investigating who is or isn't making a buck on it.*

Specifically, is it likely that the record companies will invest in an entirely new recording and playback technology because it is better when they won't even take the (relatively) simple steps necessary to improve their current way of making records? It seems safe to say that the only changes likely to be made in record production are those that will increase profits (or cut losses). If the record companies believed that a better product would generate substantially increased sales, there's no question in my mind that disc quality would improve overnight. Given all this, the companies are not about to rush into an entirely new and expensive recording format—especially one which would also require new consumer playback equipment. Many audiophiles tend to forget that the major hardware and software enterprises that bring us our music seldom do so under the banners of charity or cultural enhancement. This is not meant to imply that there's anything ignoble in their collective attitude; those who provide us with pleasure or

enlightenment are certainly entitled at least to earn a living by so doing.

Which brings us back to the video disc originally discussed in Audio News of June 1975. It's clear that the developers of the various video-disc formats see a multi-million dollar potential in the enterprise. I think this view will ultimately prove to be correct, although developing the video disc into a mass-market product is probably going to be a slow, costly process, not unlike that which troubled color TV in its early years. However, it seems reasonable that video-disc players will ultimately—sometime in the next decade or so—become as ubiquitous as color TVs are now. Once that happens, then my earlier prediction of a dual-purpose video/audio disc player should come to pass. Such a machine would, depending upon the kind of "record" placed on its turntable, play either a 30-minute color program with stereo sound through your TV or (with a speed change) an hour—or two or three—of multi-channel sound through your audio system.

Hearing Loss

Q. *I recently had my hearing tested by a "clinic" at a hi-fi show. They checked my right and left ears and provided me with a graph of the results. I was shocked; not only did the curves look like profiles of the Rocky mountains, but both ears showed a severe high-frequency loss at about 3,000 Hz. I don't claim to have the most golden ears in town, but I know I hear better than that! Any idea what went wrong?*

S. MERCHANT
San Francisco, Calif.

A. Even assuming that the test was done with the proper care (which I doubt), you should not assume that the curves obtained represent your ears' performance at normal listening levels. The point at which sound becomes just audible is called the "threshold," and 0 dB is the average threshold level for the mid-frequencies—at least for the younger portion of the population. During a hearing test, frequencies above and below the 1,000-Hz 0-dB reference are fed to one ear at a time, the threshold for each frequency is noted on a chart, and a curve is drawn. (Incidentally, my expert on such matters tells me that *nobody* in audiology knows how to make reliable—within 10 dB, that is—threshold

measurements in the frequency range above 8,000 Hz.)

At least one common type of hearing impairment (called recruitment) has significant level nonlinearity; in such cases, ears showing severe losses at low levels have a more or less flat response once the sound is 70 dB or so above the threshold level. So, although the hearing test you took showed significant irregularities in your response curve around the 0-dB level, your hearing curve may be relatively flat at the volume level at which you do most of your music listening. Feel better now?

Ham and CB "Broadcasts"

Q. *In your August Q&A reply to a question on radio-frequency interference, you referred several times to "broadcasting" by hams, CB'ers, etc. Mr. Klein, you know that only broadcast stations can broadcast, while we hams and commercial mobile services, etc. transmit as part of two-way conversations. We are not allowed to "broadcast." As a technical editor, why not be technically correct so that this misuse of the word "broadcast" can be held to a minimum?*

WALTER B. MOSES, JR.
New Orleans, La.

A. In regard to the distinction made by Mr. Moses, the problem is that too many amateur and commercial "transmissions" do end up as "broadcasts" received by audiophiles and TV viewers. A year or so ago my mail included perhaps a complaint a month from a reader with an RFI problem. These days I get two or three a week, and most of them deal with interference coming from CB'ers. I look at it this way: when I was hamming as WB2CFJ and I "CQed" the world looking for someone to talk to, I was *broadcasting*. And even a cursory listen to the nitwit chatter cluttering the CB bands will confirm that the vast majority of users are on some sort of Captain Video electronic ego-trip and are "broadcasting" rather than one-to-one communicating. Besides, Mr. Moses, have you forgotten that amateur station W1AW has for years been *broadcasting* code practice sessions and technical info to the ham world at large?

Power Requirements

Q. *Is there a certain amount of power (watts per channel) in a receiver or amplifier that can be considered the minimum necessary to reproduce recorded music without audible distortion? I realize that the preferred listening level, the size and decor of the room, and the efficiency of the speakers all enter into this, but since more power is required to reproduce a full orchestra than a piano sonata (at the same listening level), in what power area should I be shopping?*

STEPHEN GAMMELL
Minneapolis, Minn.

A. Although you have listed the factors that determine the amplifier power needed, the question is much more complex than you realize. Let's state the matter as straightforwardly as possible: we want to be able to play our speakers as loud as required without causing our amplifier to clip because certain passages push it beyond its power capability. (This of course assumes that your speakers can handle the power.) However, a given amount of clipping is *less* audible on complex program material than on some solo instru-

ments. As a matter of fact, all other factors being equal, a piano sonata (to use your example) is *more* likely to sound distorted because of clipping than a full orchestra is—and it is also more likely to drive the amplifier into clipping. If you like your music reproduced at live-concert levels and are using low-efficiency bookshelf speakers, 40 watts per channel is perhaps the minimum you should have. And at times, 200 watts (assuming your speakers can take it) may not be enough.

Musical-instrument Speakers

Q. *What would be wrong with using high-performance musical-instrument speakers in a hi-fi system? Example: a 15-inch woofer, a 10-inch mid-range, and a horn for highs.*

GORDON BURMEISTER
New Michigan, Mich.

A. A speaker that is "high-performance" in musical-instrument applications won't be that in home hi-fi use, simply because different qualities are demanded of it. The primary requirements for a live-performance speaker are high efficiency and the ability to deliver a very high continuous sound-pressure level without coming apart in the middle of a performance. In concert public-address use, where it's desirable that voices be reproduced without excessive nasality or tubbiness or when acoustic instruments are being miked, fidelity is of some importance. But highs much above 10,000 Hz or lows below about 70 Hz are usually sacrificed for greater efficiency and reliability in the drivers.

The speakers that are normally used as part of an electric-guitar system are designed to be music producers, not reproducers. This means that their sonic characteristics are usually adjusted or selected to sound a certain way with a given "head" (amplifier). None of the standard criteria for home high fidelity are really applicable under that circumstance.

Filtering Sonic Irritants

Q. *I attend rock concerts regularly and have frequently been ridiculed by my fellow concert-goers for protecting my hearing by putting little wads of cotton in my ears when the volume becomes too high. I started doing this after I went to a Kiss concert; my ears were ringing for two days afterwards. My friends seem to be able to sit through it all without any trouble. I think their hearing has been impaired by this constant bombardment. I know I'm right in protecting my hearing at concerts, but they won't listen to me—perhaps they will listen to you.*

SCOTT BURGESS
Downsview, Ontario, Can.

A. Perhaps it's not that they won't listen—it's just that they can't hear. Seriously, though, I do exactly the same as you. If cotton isn't available, I'll stuff my ears with moistened Kleenex, or go to the washroom to search out some suitable alternative paper product. In an emergency I've been known to use tips broken off filter cigarettes. If moistened slightly, they help filter out the harsh sonic irritants.

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!

Saving the best for last.

The chances are good that when you first bought a stereo system, it was a "package" that included a receiver, 2 speakers, and a record player with cartridge. But how much time was spent selecting the cartridge? Most probably it was just a minor element of the package. Even if it had a famous name, it probably was not a truly first-rank model.

Yet the cartridge is more important than that. It can limit the ability of the entire hi-fi chain to properly reproduce your records. It can affect how many times you will enjoy your favorite records without noise and distortion. And it can determine whether you can play and enjoy the new four-channel CD-4 records.

Consider the advantages of adding an Audio-Technica AT15Sa to your present system. You start with response from 5 to 45,000 Hz. Ruler flat in the audio range for stereo, with extended response that assures excellent CD-4 playback if desired. Tracking is superb at all frequencies and distortion is extremely low. The sound is balanced, transparent, effortless. Stereo separation is outstanding, even at 10kHz and higher where others fall short. Our Dual Magnet design* assures it.

And the AT15Sa has a genuine nude-mounted Shibata stylus. Which adds a host of advantages. Like longer record life. Better performance from many older, worn records. Exact tracing of high frequencies, especially at crowded inner grooves. And tracking capability—at a reasonable 1-2 grams—that outperforms and outlasts elliptical styli trying to track at less than a gram.

We're so certain that an AT15Sa will improve your present system that we'd like to challenge you. Take several of your favorite records to an Audio-Technica dealer. Have him compare the sound of your present cartridge (or any other) with the AT15Sa. Listen. We think you'll be impressed. And convinced.

*T.M. Audio-Technica Dual Magnet cartridges protected by U.S. Patent Nos. 3,720,796 and 3,761,647.

**The AT15Sa.
Very possibly the
last phono
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THE SPECTRUM^{T.M.} SERIES

Responsive. Sensitive. Bold when they should be. Subtle when they should be. For a living room rock concert...or a tranquil laid-back evening spent with your moods. Eyes closed, ears open. Feet tapping or feet up.

The new Jensen Spectrum Series has achieved a new plane of sound reproduction. Remarkable clarity. Admirable quality. And fullness of sound from the deepest lows to the top-of-the-scale highs.

Beautifully finished natural hardwood walnut veneer cabinets accommodate a family of advanced sound systems and features. Foam woofer suspension for clearer, more accurate bass response. Powerful ceramic magnets for lower distortion, high power handling, greater clarity. And a precise crossover design that sends sharply defined high and low signals to sensitive tweeters and powerful woofers.

On some models, the Spectrum Series features true-to-life mid-range drivers for the subtle in-between frequencies. And specially designed dome tweeters for extra-wide 170° dispersion of brilliant highs.

Behind the grill of each Spectrum speaker system—a continuously adjustable personalizing control (two on the Models 530, 540 and 550) graduated in decibels. It lets you adjust your Spectrum speaker to the room...to personal tastes...to the nuances of a guitar or a violin.

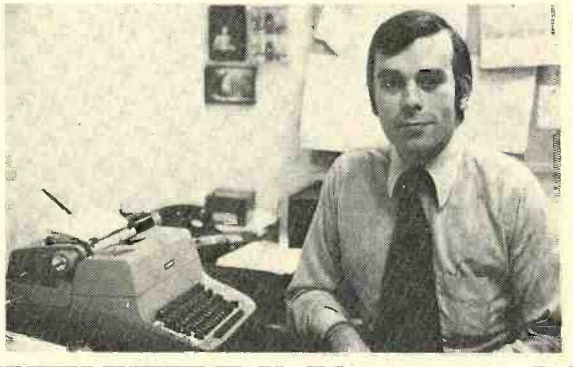
The Jensen Spectrum Series speakers. Models 520, 530, 540 and 550. Perhaps the clearest sound reproduction you have ever encountered.

JENSEN
SOUND LABORATORIES

Division of Pemcor, Inc. Schiller Park, Illinois 60176
CIRCLE NO. 30 ON READER SERVICE CARD



By Ralph
Hodges



GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS—29

● **Print-through** is magnetic tape's equivalent of the *pre-echo* sometimes found on phonograph records. In print-through, the overlying layers of a recorded tape stored on a reel transfer faint verions of their recorded signals to adjacent layers through the process of magnetic printing. Usually this occurs only when the signal that gets transferred has been recorded at a very high level; low-level signals do not exhibit any significant tendency to print through.

The long-standing professional practice of storing tapes in a played ("tails out") rather than a rewind ("tails in") condition can reduce the worst effects of print-through. So can storage in a relatively cool environment and the avoidance of magnetic fields. It is also believed that rewinding a "tails out" tape just before playing gives any print-through that has occurred a chance to fade somewhat before listening commences.

At one time the use of thick tape was the only practical way to keep print-through to a minimum. Fortunately, today's tape oxides are more resistant to print-through, so that the benefits of thinner tapes can be enjoyed without any great risk of the recording's deterioration during storage.

● **Pulse-code modulation (PCM)** is the name for a type of *digital* recording process that has been in use—although on a relatively small scale—for a number of years. Digital recording involves rapid sampling of an audio waveform—perhaps 50,000 or more times per second. At each sampling the instantaneous amplitude of the waveform is determined and assigned a numerical value, so that the waveform is in effect translated into a string of numbers. For recording purposes the numbers take the form of a binary code that is set down on tape (frequently by a video tape recorder) as a series of recorded pulses—hence "pulse-code" modulation. For playback, an electronic device converts the "numbers" back into instantaneous amplitude values, and the waveform is reconstructed.

The advantage of such a recording process is that as long as the correct values of the numbers can be recovered from the tape and "read" by the converter, there will theoretically have been no degradation of the signal from the time it was first digitized. Conventional noise- and distortion-producing mech-

anisms simply play no part in the digital recording process, and in a properly designed digital system wow and flutter can be reduced to unmeasurable values. Digital recording systems currently in use claim dynamic ranges of 96 dB or more with distortion of less than 0.002 per cent. However, their cost and complexity put them beyond the reach of consumers at the present time.

● **Push-pull** describes a type of amplifier circuit in which two—or two groups—of transistors or tubes simultaneously handle the program signal; at the circuit's output the contributions of the two "sides" of the circuit are combined. The distinguishing aspect of a push-pull circuit is that its two sides are operated 180 degrees out of phase. A comparison is sometimes drawn with the action of a two-man lumberjack saw, where the men work "out of phase" but their efforts combine in the saw's "output."

In modern audio applications the principal advantages of push-pull circuitry are its greater signal capability (more than double that of a "single-ended" output circuit) and the configuration's tendency to cancel the waveform asymmetry that constitutes even-order harmonic distortion, which further increases the undistorted output potential of the circuit. Push-pull circuits are almost invariably used in the output stages of power amplifiers, and they may crop up in other places where the designer feels their characteristics will be beneficial. At least one available amplifier is said to employ push-pull circuitry from input to output.

There are also push-pull speaker systems, most of them electrostatic designs. In a push-pull electrostatic there are stationary conductor plates on *both* sides of the diaphragm; one repels the diaphragm while the other attracts it. The benefits parallel those for amplifier circuits: increased output and markedly reduced waveform asymmetry.

● **Quarter-track tapes** are any tapes that carry—or are intended to carry—four parallel tracks of recorded information, each occupying somewhat less than one quarter of the total tape width. They can therefore accommodate (according to the wishes of the recordist) one four-channel program, two stereo programs running side by side, or even four adja-

cent mono programs. When there are two stereo programs they generally run in opposite directions, so that the tape must be reversed for access to the second program. Virtually all cassettes and open-reel prerecorded tapes (as well as most open-reel home tape machines) follow the quarter-track scheme. On an open-reel tape, the pairs of stereo tracks are interleaved, so that adjacent tracks run in opposite directions; on a stereo cassette, the top pair of tracks runs in one direction, the bottom pair in the other.

● **Radio-frequency interference (RFI)** is the unwanted intrusion of any electromagnetic radiation from the radio spectrum into the program you're trying to hear. This can include interference from another broadcasting station (or some other radio source) overlaid upon the station you have tuned in. It can also involve the imposition of radio signals on program sources that have nothing to do with radio. For example, the cables of a record player can serve as an antenna for radio energy, feeding it to the high-gain phono circuit which may rectify (demodulate) and then amplify the signal and pass it on to later stages where it is further amplified and finally heard clearly through the loudspeakers along with the disc program. Speaker cables can also pick up RFI, in which case it may be detected and amplified into audibility by being introduced into the feedback circuit of the amplifier.

The causes and the cures of RFI are varied and sometimes difficult to discover. Interference can come from commercial radio broadcasts, TV stations (in particular the notorious TV "sync buzz"), ham and citizens-band transmitters, radar installations, automobile ignition systems, diathermy machines, electric switches, and many other sources.

● **Receiver** generally describes any device that can pick up, demodulate, and amplify a radio signal. In the U.S. it is also the name for the audio component known elsewhere as the "tuner-amplifier." This amounts to an AM/FM tuner plus an integrated amplifier built onto the same chassis.

A receiver is the central and often the sole electronic component in those audio systems that use one. It accepts inputs from external program sources such as phono and tape as well as from its internal FM and (usually present) AM tuner sections, processes them in its preamplifier/control section, and finally amplifies them sufficiently to drive loudspeakers. In short, the receiver is the practical equivalent of a separate tuner, preamplifier, and power amplifier all in one unit.

● **Recording-level meter** is an indicator on a tape recorder that provides some idea of the signal levels being applied to the tape from moment to moment. It is intended as an aid in setting the recording levels to ensure that the tape is neither overloaded with excessive levels or "under-recorded" with too little signal, allowing hiss and other noise to intrude.

Recording-level meters come in a variety of types, including meters that register the approximate *average* value of the signal (of which the professional VU meter is an example), those designed to show the instantaneous *peak* levels of the signal, and some not readily classifiable into any group. Above all, it is important to remember that a recording-level meter provides an aid, not an edict. Experience with a particular recorder will teach the user how to interpret its meter readings.

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CLEANING UP CARUSO

ONE way of looking at "noise" is to define it simply as anything that accompanies the signal that fails to enhance or facilitate its transmission or reception. I'm using "signal" to mean a transmission that conveys information or produces the desired reaction in the receiver—in short, a "message." A signal, of course, may be a letter, a picture, an oral statement, or a musical performance.

It seems to me that the history of communication can be analyzed from the standpoint of the constant effort to improve the ratio of signal to noise in the production, storage, and transmission of the message, whatever the form it takes, and I find some recent attempts to improve the signal-to-noise ratios of old messages through the use of modern technologies to be particularly fascinating. Sometimes the restoration of the message's original signal-to-noise ratio reveals entirely new aspects of the producer's intention: the cleaning of Rembrandt's "The Night Watch" converted it into what seems to many to be more of a "Day Watch." I don't recall if at the time any critics claimed the treatment had "overbrightened" the painting, but such a complaint would not have been surprising, for in all such restoration projects the problem is how to cut back the "noise" without simultaneously altering the signal.

In electronics, solid-state technology has provided powerful new tools for signal treatment, including digital-computer analysis. A fascinating example of signal processing in an attempt to enhance the S/N of an old "message" is provided by RCA's recent release of a disc containing computer-processed acoustic recordings of Enrico Caruso. The sonic shortcomings of the original acoustic recordings (there were perhaps 150 of them) derived not just from the inadequacies of the playback machines, but from difficulties in the recording studio. Because electronic amplifica-

tion wasn't available, the main problem faced by engineers of the day was one of conversion efficiency—how to derive the maximum mechanical energy out of the available acoustic energy. The musicians and singers really had to move a lot of air since it was the sound waves themselves—funneled through an acoustic horn—that provided the energy for the record-cutting stylus. Judging from the sound of the old acoustic recordings, engineers found they could improve efficiency by reinforcing resonances and by boosting the mid-range—techniques that have persisted, at least in some loudspeaker designs, to this very day.

The first step in separating noise from a signal is to find some characteristic or characteristics that the noise has and the signal doesn't—or vice versa. The clearer the distinctions that can be made, the easier it will be for the engineer to design a circuit that can make similar distinctions electronically and act on them appropriately. Therefore, the logical first step in cleaning up Caruso was to determine precisely where the dirt was. These days, conventional "noise" is a relatively easy problem to solve. In fact, any constant characteristic is easy to deal with; it's the occasional, irregular noise effects that are difficult to weed out. For a digital computer, such a task is simple. All the material—music, noise, resonances, whatever—is converted into numbers and stored in the computer's memory. Once the music is in digital form, the computer can make correlations among hundreds of different recordings if necessary to distinguish between the properties of the original signal and those of the noise. (Remember, we are defining "noise" here as any tonal coloration, distortion, etc. that was not in the live performance.)

Another technique is to compare the average tonal characteristics of an acoustic re-

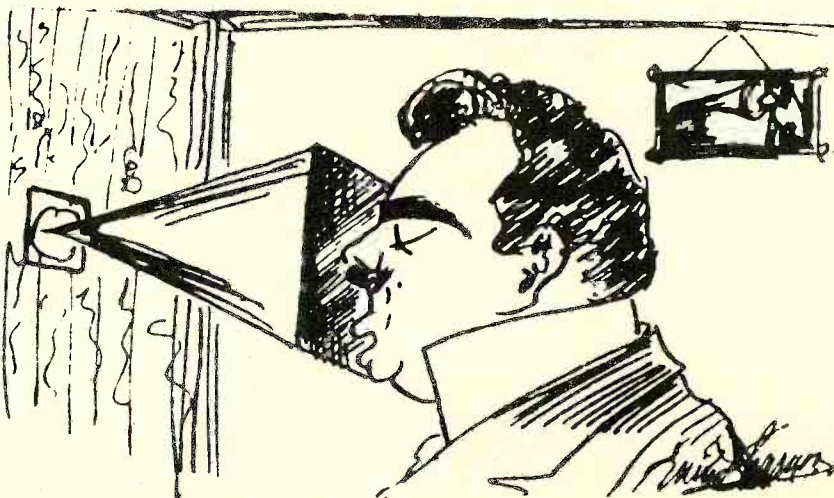
ording against a similar modern effort. The computer can store both recordings in its memory, compare the two, extract the differences (which are assumed to be "noise"), and "correct" the acoustic recording to have the same balance, tone, and other properties as a modern recording.

In the case at hand, of course, the reconstruction process can go only so far, since we do not have a perfect sample of Caruso's voice to work with. A certain amount of the doctoring done for the RCA disc therefore represents educated guesses by the computer (or those who programmed it), and I leave a detailed evaluation of the results to those who are more familiar with Caruso's art than I am: see Music Editor James Goodfriend's "Going on Record" column this month.

My lack of familiarity with Caruso's art certainly didn't prevent me from evaluating the sonic properties of the recording; as a matter of fact, it probably made the task easier. It is evident that the computer was programmed to "repair" the problems in the existing recordings rather than to add missing frequencies. For that reason there seems to be no noise or program on the disc above 3,000 to 4,000 Hz or below about 150 Hz or so. There is also a steady lower-mid-range noise, too low to be called hiss, that adds a slight, but constant, hollow roar to the sound. I reduced it in playback with an octave equalizer, but the sound then became too remote and muted. At several points I could hear sudden pitch fluctuations, probably when the recording turntable went off speed. In addition there were occasional program-level shifts of probably no more than 2 or 3 dB. Overall, except for the mid-range noise, the quality could be described as similar to low-grade AM radio—in character, if not in content—which certainly makes it an improvement over the original acoustic discs.

Is all this playing with computers worthwhile, or simply a technical exercise without aesthetic significance? In regard to refurbishing Caruso, I really can't say, but in the next several years we are going to see a variety of breakthroughs in component design based on computer analysis of long-standing problems and computer-derived solutions for them. I have already been shown prototypes of some startling new products that will be on the market in less than a year. They represent audio's future, a future in which the computer will be playing a large part.

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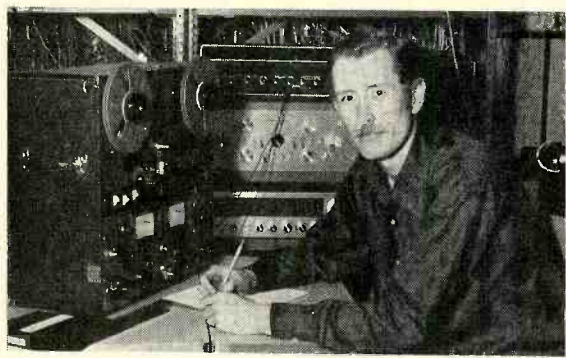
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By Craig Stark



RECORDING EQUALIZATION

In addition to providing an appropriate amount of gain to enable the audio signal to drive the recording head, the recording electronics in your tape deck are called upon to provide a certain amount of treble boost (called recording equalization) to offset anticipated losses in the record-playback processes. Just how much high-frequency boost is required during recording to obtain flat response during playback with standard NAB equalization varies not only with tape speed, but also with the bias current (I'll discuss this in a future column) and with the particular kind of tape used. Therefore, no official or standardized equalization curves for recording are possible. But a bit of digging in the technical literature, some personal measurements, and a quick check with several manufacturers yielded the following as typical "ballpark" figures.

At 15 ips the boost required in the recording amplifier is very slight—only a decibel or two at 10,000 Hz, rising to a mere 3 to 6 dB at 15,000 Hz. At 7½ ips, 6 to 8 dB may be needed at 10 kHz, and 10 to 12 dB at 15 kHz. For 3¾-ips operation these frequencies may require approximately 8 to 10 dB and 13 to 16 dB, respectively. And, for cassettes, a 12-dB boost at 10 kHz, followed by an ultimate peak in excess of 17 dB around 15 kHz, is not uncommon.

From the standpoint of electronic design, what is important here is not so much the amount of treble pre-emphasis needed (a single amplifying stage can easily handle any of the above figures), but the shape of the "loss" curve to be compensated for. The losses that bring about the need for record equalization are not simple "straight-line" functions such as, for example, a 6-dB-per-octave characteristic. Instead, as frequency rises, losses set in, slowly at first but with ever-increasing severity, until a frequency is reached where no amount of treble boost could offset them. To dupli-

cate (in reverse) the shape required, the recording amplifier usually includes a "tuned circuit"—a network comprising a coil, a capacitor, and a resistor (one or two of these elements generally being made adjustable) that combine to create a resonant peak just above the highest frequency of interest. At frequencies above the equalizer's peak, of course, the losses continue to increase, while the record treble boost actually declines, so response falls off extremely sharply.

From the standpoint of the tape, on the other hand, the actual amount of record equalization used is important, regardless of the electronic means used to produce it. The most obvious reflection of this is the fact that, at 15 ips, frequency-response tests can be run at 0 dB on the recording-level meters, while at lower speeds -20-dB (sometimes -30-dB for cassettes) signal levels are used to avoid saturating the tape with the treble-boosted signal. It is generally agreed that the very high harmonics of music and speech (which receive the greatest amount of pre-emphasis) contain much less energy to begin with than their lower-frequency fundamentals most of the time. But spectral analyses of music by Benjamin Bauer and by Jay McKnight, reported in the *Journal of the Audio Engineering Society*, show that, at least some of the time, high-frequency peaks nearly equal in amplitude to the mid frequencies are to be expected. When this happens, application of any very substantial treble boost would drive even a very "hot" tape into distortion. And, as we know, tapes can't take a great deal of high-frequency energy at slow speeds, where most treble boost is used.

I recently had occasion to test some thirty-three cassette tapes, and while all but one could produce an output in excess of 0 dB at less than 3 per cent distortion at 400 Hz, none could produce a 0-dB output at 10 kHz with any input level at any distortion level.



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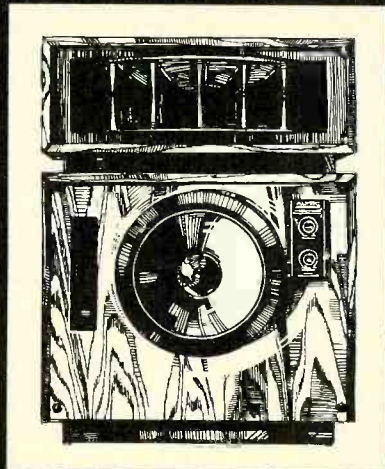
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CIRCLE NO. 7 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



● **PHONO-CARTRIDGE TRACKING FORCE:** Selecting the proper tracking force for a phono cartridge is not quite as simple a procedure as it might seem. True, the manufacturer recommends a range of forces, and one might assume that any force in this range will be satisfactory. As a rule, the *highest* force recommended by a manufacturer is a "safe" choice and will result in the best possible tracking performance from the cartridge. But what about using a *lower* force? Can one also accept the manufacturer's rating for this?

The vertical tracking force is responsible for keeping the stylus in firm contact with the record groove. This means more than merely following the spiral groove as it slowly carries the pickup across the record, for this is the easiest part of the whole tracking process. The real difficulties occur when the *walls* of the groove undergo sudden changes of direction, as they do when the recorded program has substantial amounts of high-frequency content.

In following such abrupt changes in groove-wall contour, the stylus system of the cartridge undergoes high acceleration. The dynamic force exerted on the stylus by the groove wall is equal to the effective mass of the stylus system times the acceleration ($f = ma$). With the acceleration determined by the recorded signal, it is clear that the tracking force and the moving mass (often called "tip mass") are directly related. The modulation on one stereo channel exerts a force against the stylus at a 45-degree angle to the record surface. The component of that force in the vertical direction is 0.7 times the total dynamic force on the stylus. So long as the vertical tracking force is greater than that vertical component, the stylus will remain in contact with the groove and will trace the modulation waveform (ignoring questions of tracing distortion due to stylus geometry).

On the other hand, if the upward component of accelerating force exceeds the

vertical tracking force, the net upward force will accelerate the stylus and cause it to lose contact with the groove. This is called *mistracking*, and the result is the very unpleasant audible distortion sometimes described as "shattering."

Stylus Compliance

At low frequencies, the tracking ability of the stylus assembly is determined by its limitations in regard to its *displacement* from the static or neutral position rather than by its response to accelerating forces. The velocity is proportional to the product of frequency and amplitude ($v = 2\pi fA$), and, with the latter limited to a maximum of a couple thousandths of an inch by practical considerations (disc playing time and other factors), velocity falls off linearly as frequency decreases). If a stylus is to follow a groove path that has large amplitude excursions, it must have a *compliance* or "springiness." Compliance is measured in centimeters per dyne (cm/dyne), so that a typical high-compliance stylus with a rating of 30×10^{-6} cm/dyne will move a distance of 30 millionths of a centimeter with an applied force of 1 dyne. The actual numbers are not particularly important to the consumer, but they are convenient for making compliance comparisons between cartridges—providing the manufacturers have derived the numbers in the same way. A higher compliance means that a

stylus will move a greater distance for a given applied force—or, more to the point, it will require less force to displace it over a given distance.

In order for a stylus to track a heavily modulated low-frequency passage, the vertical tracking force must be at least equal to the largest vertical component of force acting on the stylus when it undergoes the relatively large displacements that occur at low frequencies. If we assume that the maximum displacement is limited by disc-cutting considerations, there is an inverse relationship between tracking force and compliance. A high-compliance stylus will require less vertical force than a "stiffer" stylus for good low-frequency tracking. The result of insufficient vertical force (or of too low a compliance) is mistracking, which at low frequencies may take the spectacular form of the pickup's actually jumping out of the groove.

This treatment of low-frequency and high-frequency tracking criteria is necessarily oversimplified. In fact, the highest velocities are likely to be found at middle frequencies, from about 500 to several thousand hertz, and at those frequencies tracking involves both the stylus compliance and the tip mass, among other significant factors.

To return to our original question, how *low* a tracking force can one use with a given cartridge, the obvious answer is "the lowest force that will provide successful tracking in a given record player of any recorded material one wishes to play." Unfortunately, this is hardly ever the "minimum" force specified by the manufacturer, unless your recorded fare is mild indeed. As most cartridge manufacturers take pains to point out, proper tracking at very low forces depends on the characteristics of the tone arm, a subject we cannot cover in detail at this time. Briefly, however, two of the most important tone-arm parameters are the effective mass (including that of the cartridge) and the bearing friction. The av-

Tested This Month

●
Nakamichi 600 Cassette Deck
Kenwood KA-7300 Stereo Amplifier
Sony PS-4750 Turntable
Pioneer TX-6500 AM/FM Tuner

erage consumer can do little about either even if he knows what they are, for most record-player manufacturers combine the arm with the turntable, and only a few rather expensive combinations of separate turntables and arms are available to the buying public.

One factor that is under the user's control is the anti-skating compensation, and such compensation is vital for operation at or near the *minimum* tracking force of any cartridge. There are different views as to the proper function of anti-skating. For example, should it be set for balanced wear on the stylus, or should it be set for symmetrical distortion characteristics in the two stereo channels—and if so, at what recorded level?

Testing Techniques

In our testing of phono cartridges, we first determine the minimum useful force at which a cartridge can be operated. To us, this is the force at which it will play very high-level test tones at low and middle frequencies using a group of test records that are, unfortunately, long out of print. At the low-frequency end we use a Cook Series 60 disc that was cut using Fletcher-Munson compensation so that the recorded amplitude rises radically at the lowest frequencies. At 32 Hz, for example, the groove modulation can be

seen with the naked eye from a distance of a couple of feet! Mistracking usually shows up as groove jumping, and we increase the force until the lowest band can be tracked (not necessarily without audible distortion).

To set the anti-skating, at least initially, we use a record cut some years ago by Gotham for Fairchild. It has 1,000-Hz tones at a 30-cm/sec velocity, which is probably higher than will ever be encountered at that frequency in commercial music records. Very few cartridges will play this record without visible (and audible) waveform distortion, but we increase the tracking force until no further improvement in the waveform can be seen. Then, looking at the output of both channels on a dual-trace oscilloscope, we adjust the anti-skating compensation until the distortion (usually peak clipping) is symmetrical in both channels.

Another useful record, produced by the German High-Fidelity Institute, has 300-Hz tones recorded at successively higher levels; these are specified in microns (millionths of a meter) of amplitude. At a given tracking force the audible reproduction will be clean up to some level, at which point one will usually hear distortion in the right channel (if the applied anti-skating is insufficient, as it often is). Here the anti-skating can be readjusted for equal distortion in both channels, which may require a slightly

different setting from that used in the setup with the Fairchild record. The maximum level that can be played without unacceptable distortion is one indicator of a cartridge's tracking ability in the lower mid-range (only a couple of cartridges can cope with the 100-micron maximum level). Increasing the stylus force will usually permit tracking a higher-level signal.

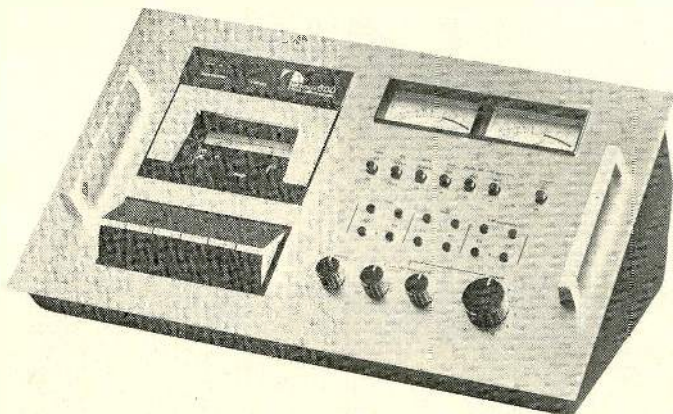
So far as we are concerned, the lowest force (within the cartridge ratings) that will permit a cartridge to track both the Cook and Fairchild records is the one we use for our tests and listening evaluation of a cartridge. Using that force, we note the maximum playable level of the German test disc as a further indication of the cartridge's tracking ability.

Fortunately for the consumer, it is possible to establish the tracking-force requirements of a cartridge, set the anti-skating, and judge overall tracking ability with a single record that requires no test instruments. The Shure TTR-110 "Audio Obstacle Course—Era III" record is a highly satisfactory means of setting up and judging a cartridge—or at least of ensuring that it is operating at its best. Although overall evaluation should be based on extensive listening to a variety of recorded material, we can testify that the TTR-110 is a tough test for any cartridge and will provide a fast, worthwhile overview of performance.

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

Nakamichi 600 Stereo Cassette Deck



● NAKAMICHI's new Model 600 represents a distinct departure from current trends in cassette-deck styling and features, and some of its innovations appear to be quite successful from both aesthetic and functional standpoints. One thing that stands out is the per-

formance of the Model 600, which, it seems safe to say, is representative of the best of the two-head cassette decks. An example is its record-playback frequency response of 40 to 18,000 Hz \pm 3 dB—attributable in large measure to the use of crystal permalloy heads.

The most striking feature of the machine is its styling, which will certainly keep it from being confused with any other on the market.

The satin-aluminum front panel is angled away from the operator at 30 degrees when the recorder is placed on a horizontal surface. It is fitted with two handles that suggest the possibility of rack mounting; although the panel dimensions are not compatible with standard 19-inch racks, the design of the tape-loading area incorporates a cassette-retaining device that permits vertical installation.

The cassette well and transport controls (which are conventional "piano-key" levers matching the panel finish) occupy the left half of the deck. The cassette opening is not covered; the cassette loads onto a horizontal platform that is then pushed down parallel with the sloping panel. Above this opening is the index counter and a MEMORY button that engages an automatic tape-motion stop in rewind when the 000 counter reading is reached. The control keys are mechanically interlocked so that STOP must be pressed before

(Continued on page 40)

9090



How much

Sansui



5050



6060

Sansui has the answer.

Power is, of course, one of the most important characteristics in the quality of a receiver. But it is only one of them. There is also the tuner section which should offer especially high sensitivity and selectivity, and a great stereo separation. And the Sansui 9090 does: sensitivity of 9.8 dBf (1.7 μ V); selectivity of better than 85dB; stereo separation of



better than 40 dB at 1 kHz, and also a wide linear dial for both AM and FM tuning. Equally important are the capabilities and features of the pre-amplifier and control sections. Such as; triple tone controls, extremely accurate RIAA phono pre-amplifier with wide overload capability, many versatile inputs and outputs, microphone mixing control for blending mic signals with any other source, tone defeat switch, capability of handling three speaker systems, a



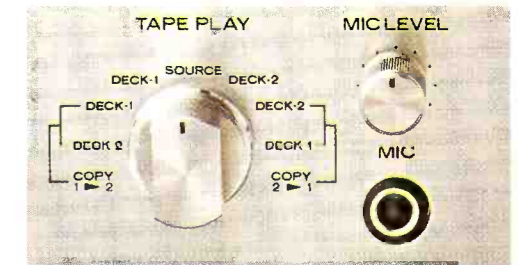
7-position tape copy switch, and a Dolby* 25 μ sec de-emphasis. Of all receivers available today only in the Sansui 9090 and 8080 will you find all of these desirable elements.

*tm, Dolby Labs

And when you select a receiver, look for well-designed protection circuits to protect your amplifier and speakers, and a solidly designed power supply capable of continually delivering the total power, undistorted. With the Sansui 9090, which delivers an ample 110 watts per channel into 8 ohms, min. RMS, from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.2 percent THD, you get both of these. The 9090, 8080 and 7070 also feature twin power meters for monitoring output, which few other manufacturers offer.

The other models in this outstanding new line of stereo receivers share many of the same fine characteristics as the top of the line models.

So remember. Your receiver is the heart of your high fidelity system. If you listen to a 9090 or any one of the fine



receivers in this Sansui series, you will quickly know that you are listening to the best receivers available today.

Go to your nearest franchised Sansui dealer today. He will make certain that you buy the receiver that matches your needs, your likes, and your budget. Sansui has the answer.

*Approximate nationally advertised value. The actual retail price will be set by the individual dealer at his option.



is it worth to you?



7070



8080

The 9090 is a superior value at less than \$750.* If the 9090 is more than you need ask for the 8080 with 80 watts per channel, min RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20 Hz to 20 kHz with no more than 0.2% total harmonic distortion at less than \$650.* Or the 7070 with 60 watts per channel, min RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.3% total harmonic distortion at less than \$520.* Or the 6060 with 40 watts per channel, min RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.4% total harmonic distortion at less than \$420.* Or the 5050 with 30 watts per channel, min RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.5% total harmonic distortion at less than \$320.* 9090 in walnut veneer. All other cabinets in simulated walnut grain.

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CIRCLE NO. 74 ON READER SERVICE CARD



power do you really need?



7070



8080

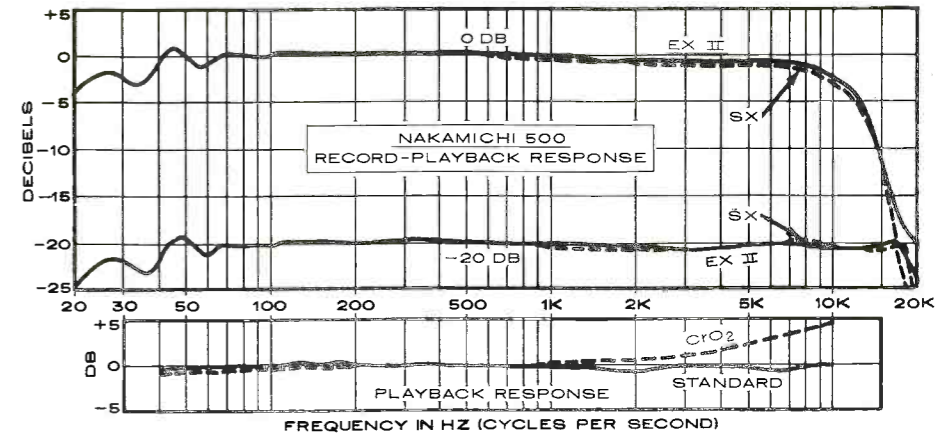
changing from normal to fast speeds or vice versa. Releasing STOP and pressing it again ejects the cassette.

Along the right front of the panel are three small knobs (for adjusting playback output and the left- and right-channel recording-level controls) plus a larger master recording-level knob. At the top of the panel are two large illuminated meters calibrated over the unusually wide range of -40 to +7 dB. The 0-dB marks correspond to the standard Dolby level of 200 nanowebers per meter. The meters, which monitor levels ahead of the recording equalization, are fast-responding peak-reading indicators.

Immediately in front of the meters are seven small black pushbuttons. One is the power switch, and two are tape selectors that change bias and equalization for different tape types. The bias switch is marked EX and SX, referring to tapes marketed by Nakamichi: EX (actually EX II) is a high-performance ferric-oxide tape similar in its magnetic properties to such premium tapes as Maxell UDXL and TDK Audua, while the SX equalization is effective for chromium-dioxide tape (similar to TDK Super Avilyn). Chromium-dioxide tapes can be used with the SX control settings, but Nakamichi recommends SX for best results. The equalization switch has two positions, marked 120 and 70 microseconds, the latter being used with SX and CrO₂ tape.

The next three buttons relate to the Dolby noise-reducing system. One activates the Dolby circuits, another inserts the MPX (multiplex) filter in the recording signal path (to eliminate any 19-kHz pilot carrier from an FM tuner output that might affect the operation of the Dolby system), and the third turns on a 400-Hz Dolby-level test tone for calibrating the machine with other tapes.

The last button is marked "IM Suppressor," and the circuit it inserts into the playback path is unique to Nakamichi. In cassette recording, unforeseen high signal peaks can severely overload the tape. While many machines (including other Nakamichi decks) have peak-limiter circuits that are generally successful in preventing overload distortion (with the possible sacrifice of some dynamic range), the IM suppressor attacks this problem in quite a different way. Magnetic tapes saturate (overload) in a predictable fashion (for any specific tape), so that the waveform recorded on the tape is distorted by saturation in a way that can be anticipated in advance. The IM suppressor applies an equal and opposite playback characteristic, which theoretically "undistorts" the waveform that comes off the tape.



In practical terms, the IM suppressor reduces distortion by 6 to 10 dB over most of the fundamental frequency range (40 to 7,000 Hz) at recorded levels from about -4 dB to the +7-dB maximum shown on the meters. Looked at another way, it adds more than 3 dB to the dynamic range of the machine, measured from the level that produces 3 per cent playback distortion. Since the IM suppressor is in the playback circuit only, it can function on tapes that have been made on other machines with an effectiveness that depends on how closely the particular tape matches the saturation characteristics of the Nakamichi EX II and SX tapes for which the Model 600 has been calibrated. The 600 can, of course, be optimized for use with other types of cassette tape.

Between the control buttons and the recording-level knobs there is an array of twelve small black buttons. Each lifts out easily, revealing a screwdriver-adjustable control. One group of four adjustments sets the recording bias for EX and SX tapes (separately for each channel) and can be used to set the machine up for most other high-quality tapes as well. Another group of controls matches the playback level from the tape to the input requirements of the Dolby system with the aid of the built-in test oscillator. The final group optimizes the IM suppressor for minimum distortion with any tape (an external distortion meter or spectrum analyzer must be used for this).

On the rear of the Nakamichi 600 are the line inputs and outputs (phono jacks plus a DIN socket) and a signal-flow block diagram that shows the function of each control and major circuit element. The Nakamichi 600 has no microphone inputs, that function being re-

served for the company's companion Model 610 control preamplifier (whose size and styling match those of the recorder). The panel dimensions of the Model 600 are 15 3/4 inches wide x 9 1/4 inches deep. The recorder is 9 1/2 inches deep (plus connectors) and stands 7 inches high. A removable clear plastic dust cover is included. Price: \$500.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Our tests of the Nakamichi 600 were made with Nakamichi EX II and SX cassettes, although we also checked its frequency response with other well-known tapes. The playback response, measured with the Nortronics AT-200 tape, was impressively flat with the standard (120-microsecond) equalization setting. It varied less than ±0.5 dB from 40 to 10,000 Hz. The CrO₂ (70-microsecond) equalization was checked with the Teac 116SP tape. The response was flat up to 2,000 or 3,000 Hz, and it rose smoothly at higher frequencies to a maximum of +4.2 dB at 10,000 Hz. This characteristic of the Nakamichi 600 has also been noted by some other reviewers. As we understand it, Nakamichi claims that some commonly used test tapes are made with an artificially enhanced "high end" to compensate for the losses inherent in the record/play heads of most available cassette decks. However, the Nakamichi crystal permalloy head is said to be so efficient at high frequencies that such compensation is not required, and thus a rising high-end response results with commercial test tapes which is not heard on normal material. We are in no position to verify or refute these claims.

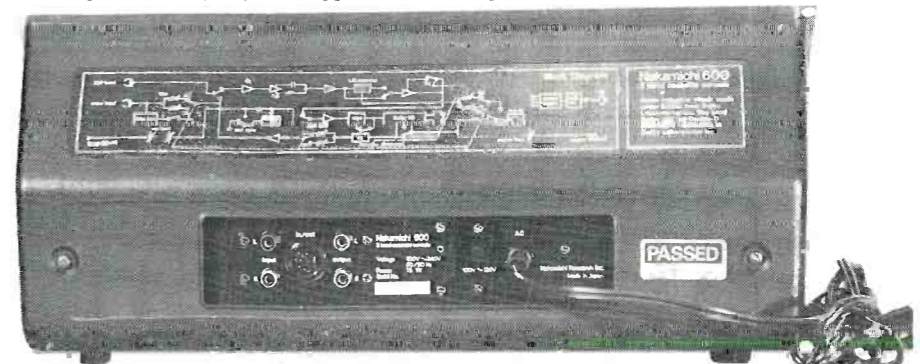
In any case, the record-playback frequency response of the Model 600 proved to be remarkable. Using either type of tape, it was well within ±1.5 dB from 40 to 19,000 Hz for a -20-dB recording level. A check with TDK Audua and chromium-dioxide confirmed that the response was almost identical to that measured with Nakamichi tapes.

Even at a 0-dB recording level, saturation effects were much less than on most other recorders, with a strong response being maintained to well beyond 10,000 Hz. The Dolby circuits tracked very well, with less than 1 dB of difference in frequency response between the Dolby on and off conditions over the full frequency range of the recorder at levels of -20 and -30 dB. The multiplex filter affected the response by less than ±0.5 dB up to 15,000 Hz and cut off very sharply above that frequency.

For a 0-dB meter indication, 66 millivolts was required at the line input. The maximum

(Continued on page 44)

Indicative of Nakamichi's attention to detail is the rear-panel signal-flow diagram that shows the major circuit elements and the functional location of each control. The back includes the line-level input and output jacks supplemented by a parallel-connected input-output DIN socket.



Receiver Savers



These are our least efficient, least powerful speakers—which is to say that they are the most efficient, most powerful you can buy in their price class. The smallest will produce comfortable listening levels with one Watt input, the largest will produce studio listening levels with a 60 Watt receiver—116 dB SPL.

And that's why we at Cerwin-Vega have been the most dedicated proponent of West Coast efficiency for over 25 years—we build our receiver savers to be used and enjoyed with affordable electronics. As a matter of fact, you can often save enough on electronics to pay for our speakers!

But good news for lovers of East Coast linear response over an extended bandwidth. The frequency response of all three receiver savers is 38-20 kHz \pm 4 dB: as good as the best acoustic suspension designs, with lower distortion. But those objective statements don't adequately convey the sense of airy freedom from restriction, the finely etched, almost tactile definition of each instrument, every one.



These are exciting speakers. We don't build them for the remote, dissecting intellect, but for one who can let go into an esthetic experience of music. And the visual appearance reflects that attitude.

The enclosures seem to be carved from a single block of walnut, combining a sense of elegant simplicity with a feeling of massive substance. The speaker appears complete even without a grille cloth, but you can choose to complement it with crisp stretch cloth in three colors.

We've even finished the back of the enclosures with our own specially formulated lacquer.

In an age when McDonald's has replaced Mom's apple pie, it's nice to see something better than it has to be. That's what craftsmanship is—or was—all about.

Let your local Cerwin-Vega retailer show you what we're doing to bring it back. The Receiver Savers will be available in October.

We'll be happy to send you more information, just send us your name and address.

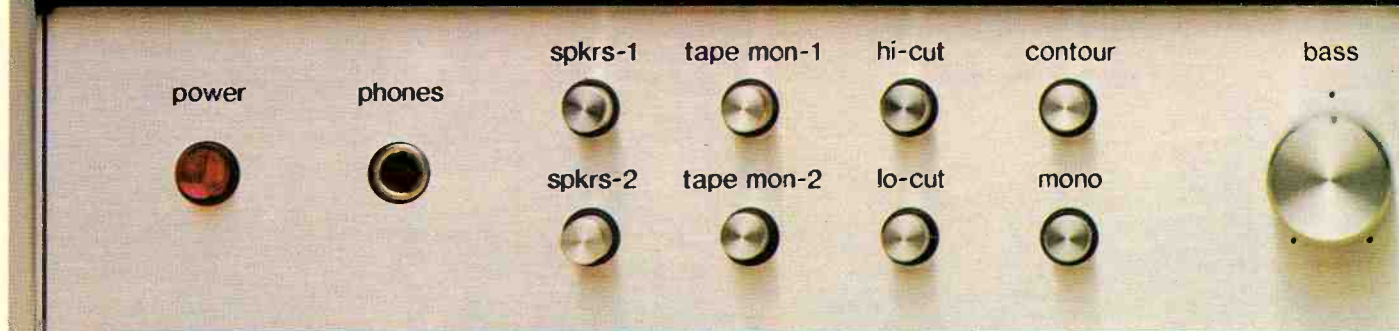
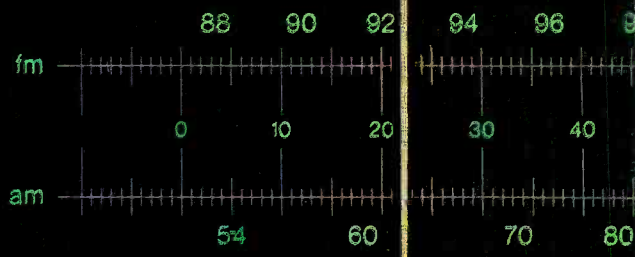


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CIRCLE NO. 14 ON READER SERVICE CARD

harman/kardon 730 twin powered



Beyond specifications.

High fidelity engineering, to justify its name, has one goal: to reproduce music in the listening room with unqualified accuracy. Undistorted. Undiminished.

At Harman Kardon, we explore new technical directions not solely for their inherent challenge, but as methods of predicting and improving music quality.

Specifications are supposed to serve the function of predicting performance. Yet two competitive instruments with exactly the same set of conventional specifications often sound vastly different. Obviously, the reasons for this difference lie elsewhere. Conventional specifications *are* necessary. Necessary, but not sufficient.

Our 730 receiver meets specifications equalling or surpassing those of the finest individual component units. Yet it achieves a

quality of transcendent realism which these specifications alone cannot explain.

To predict musical accuracy, we have found it necessary to go beyond conventional specifications. We test, rigidly, for square wave response. We monitor, strictly, slew rate and rise time. These tests account for the sound quality of the 730—not in place of conventional specifications, but beyond them.

The 730 goes beyond the conventional in other ways. It is driven by two complete, discretely separate power supplies, one for each channel. Even when music is extraordinarily dynamic, the energy drawn by one channel will in no way affect the other. The music surges full. Unconstrained.

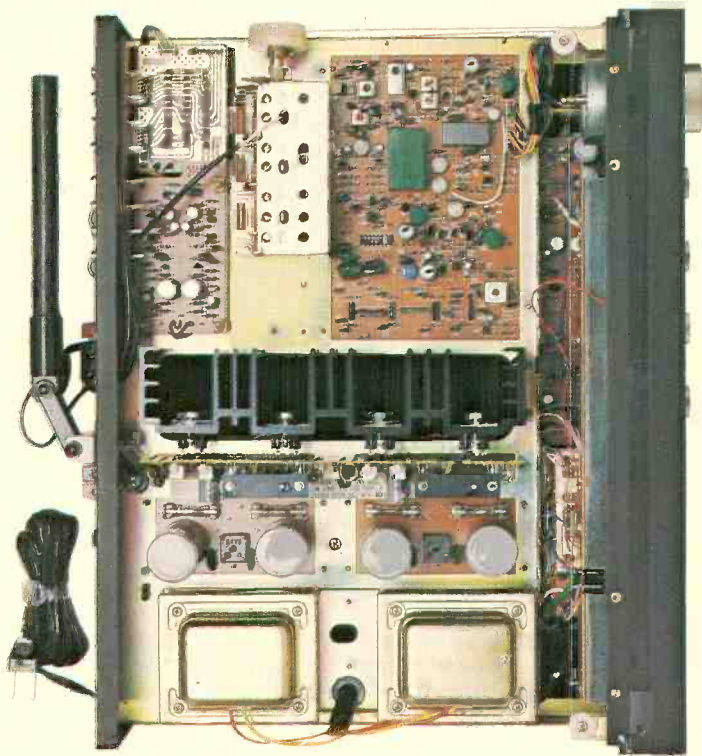
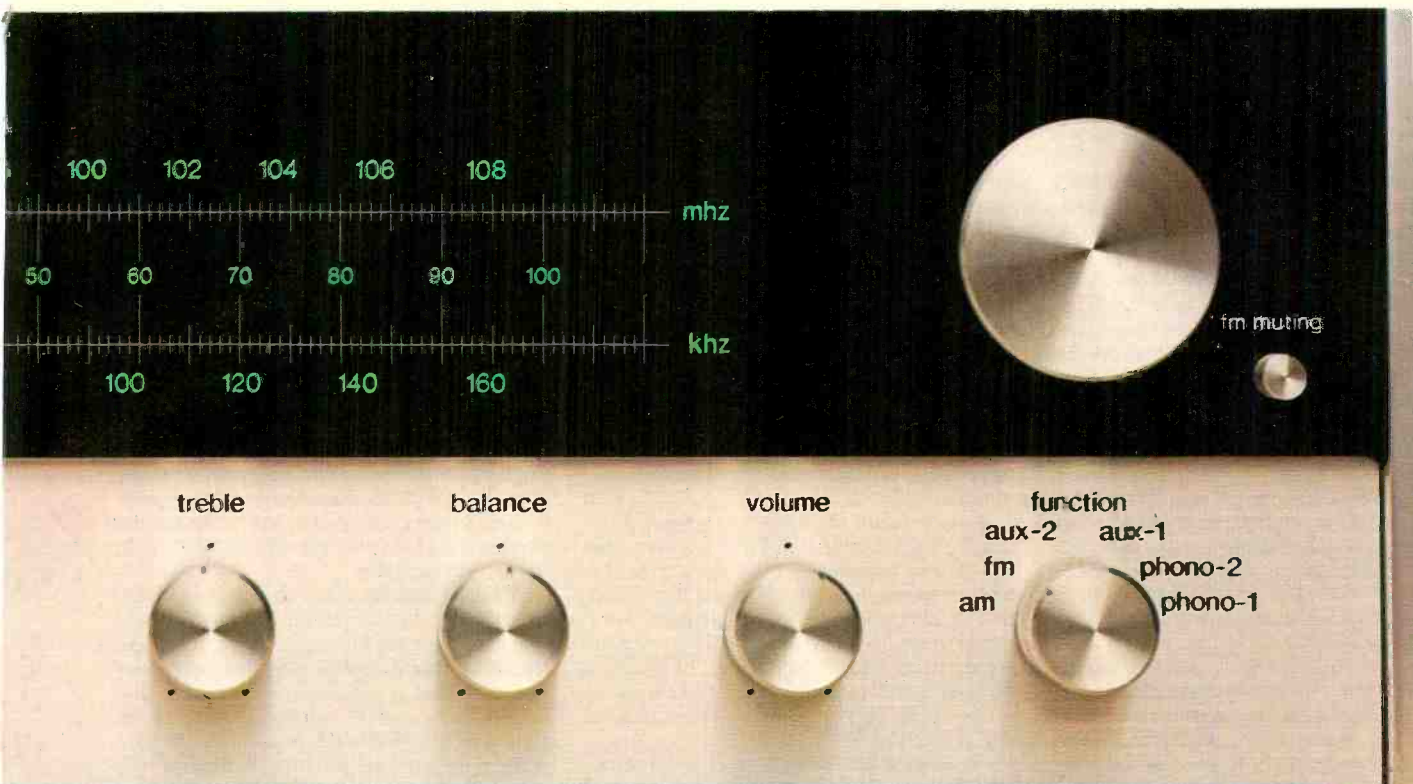
Any fine tuner measures signal strength. The 730 incorporates a

patented system which measures not strength, but signal-to-noise ratio. As a result, it can be tuned to the precise point where the signal is purest for listening or recording.

Equally important, the twin-powered 730 has all the basic design elements that identify it as a Harman Kardon instrument: wide bandwidth, phase linearity, ease of operation and a wide range of input and output elections.

All of this suggests further discussion. If you are interested in such an exploration, please write us (directly, since we imagine you are impatient with coupons and "reader service" cards, and so are we). We'll certainly write back, enclosing a brochure also unconventional in its detail. Just address: The 730 People, Harman Kardon, 55 Ames Court, Plainview, New York 11803.

harman/kardon



SPECIFICATIONS

Power Output	40 Watts Min. RMS per channel both channels driven into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20kHz, with < 0.1% THD	Preamp Output Impedance	600 ohms
Power Bandwidth	From 10Hz to 40kHz at < 0.1% THD into 8 ohms both channels driven simultaneously at 20 watts per channel	Phono Overload	>95 mV
Frequency Response	4Hz-130 kHz \pm 0.5 dB	RIAA Equalization	\pm 1.0 dB
System Rise Time	1.5 μ sec	Tone Control Action	a. 50Hz \pm 12 dB b. 10kHz \pm 12 dB
System Square Wave Tilt	< 5%	Contour Effect (50Hz)	+ 10 dB
Total Harmonic Distortion	< 0.1% from 250 milliwatts to 40 watts RMS, both channels driven simultaneously into 8 ohms, 20Hz to 20kHz	High Cut Filter (10kHz)	- 10 dB
Intermodulation Distortion (40 watts—SMPTE)	< 0.12%	Low Cut Filter (50Hz)	- 6 dB
Intermodulation Distortion (1 watt—SMPTE)	< 0.15%	FM Sensitivity	a. IHF 1.9 μ V b. -50 dB (mono) 3.5 μ V c. -50 dB (stereo) 35 μ V
System Hum and Noise	Better than 60 dB below rated output (unweighted)	Ultimate S/N	- 70 dB
Damping Factor (1kHz @ 1 watt)	> 30	Capture Ratio	2 dB
Power Amplifier Input Sensitivity	< 1.2V	Image Rejection	- 80 dB
Power Amplifier Input Impedance	33 kilohms	Spurious Response Rejection	- 80 dB
Power Amplifier S/N (40 watts)	> 90 dB	IF Rejection	- 90 dB
Power Amplifier Square Wave Rise Time	< 1.5 μ sec	AM Rejection	- 80 dB
Preamp Input Sensitivity	a. Aux < 150 mV b. Tape Mon. < 150 mV c. Phono < 2.5 mV	Alternate Channel Selectivity	80 dB
Preamp Input Impedance	a. Aux 30 kilohms b. Tape Mon. 30 kilohms c. Phono 47 kilohms	Multiplex Separation (1kHz)	40 dB
Preamp Input S/N	a. Aux > - 75 dB b. Tape Mon. > - 75 dB c. Phono > - 67 dB	FM Harmonic Distortion (1kHz)	a. Mono 0.3% b. Stereo 0.4%
Preamp Harmonic Distortion	< 0.15%	Pilot Suppression	- 55 dB
Crosstalk	a. Aux - 47 dB b. Tape Mon. - 47 dB c. Phono - 37 dB	De-Emphasis	75 μ sec
		Mute Level	Variable
		Mute Suppression	- 65 dB
		Stereo Indicator Threshold	a. "off" < 3% b. "on" > 6%
		Audio Output	0.5V
		AM Sensitivity	> 250 μ V/m
		AM Signal for 1 watt Output	< 150 μ V/m
		AM Selectivity	35 dB
		Alternate Channel Selectivity	55 dB
		Image Rejection	- 75 dB
		IF Rejection	- 60 dB
		Hum	- 40 dB

playback output at 0 dB was 0.55 volt. The meters read 100 per cent of their steady-state values on 0.3-second tone bursts (this fulfills one of the requirements for VU meters, although these are fast-responding, slow-decaying peak-reading meters). A 200-nanoweber-per-meter Dolby-level test tape played back at +1 dB on the recorder's meters.

With the aid of our Hewlett-Packard 3580a spectrum analyzer (a "must" for accurate distortion measurements on a tape recorder) we measured the playback distortion from 1,000-Hz test signals recorded at levels between -10 and +10 dB, using both EX II and SX tapes with and without the IM suppressor. Although there were minor differences between the two tapes, the final result was much the same. The IM suppressor increased the maximum recorded level for 3 per cent playback distortion from +7 to +8.5 dB. At levels between 0 and +7 dB, the distortion was reduced by 4 to 8 dB with SX tape. With EX II tape, the effect was limited to levels of +5 dB or higher. As the third-harmonic distortion (which the circuit is designed to reduce) dropped off, the second harmonic rose, but it was always far below the third-harmonic level and could be ignored.

Even though the IM suppressor worked well (though our measurements did not show the 4-dB improvement in dynamic range claimed by Nakamichi), we were frankly more impressed with how low the distortion was *without* the suppressor. At a 0-dB level, the distortion was a mere 0.5 per cent, and at -6 dB it had dropped to about 0.3 per cent. By the time the signal level had dropped to -10 dB, the distortion was well below 0.1 per cent and was no longer measurable in the presence of playback noise, even with the spectrum analyzer.

The unweighted signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) referred to the 3 per cent distortion level was about 50 dB with EX II tape. With IEC "A" weighting it was 56 dB, and it improved to about 64 dB with Dolby. With SX tape, the S/N was typically about 3 to 6 dB greater, reaching about 67 dB with Dolby and "A" weighting. This is already outstanding performance for a cassette recorder, but with the

addition of the IM suppressor (permitting a higher recording level for 3 per cent distortion) the total S/N of the SX tape with Dolby was between 68 and 69 dB!

The combined record-playback flutter (weighted rms) was 0.08 per cent (as rated), and in playback only it was 0.1 per cent. The "fast" speeds were relatively leisurely: it took about 110 seconds to move a C-60 cassette from one end to the other. The mechanical operation of the recorder was smooth and very quiet.

● **Comment.** Aside from styling and human-engineering considerations, the Nakamichi 600 matches or exceeds the highest level of performance we have yet seen in a two-head cassette recorder in respect to frequency response, S/N, and distortion, and in many respects it rivals the much more expensive three-head recorders made by Nakamichi and others.

Many cassette recorders can achieve a frequency response well beyond anything that will ever be required by their users. True, the 600's response is a bit wider and flatter than that of almost any of its competitors, but it seems to us that its most unique characteristic is the extraordinary "headroom" of at least 7 dB over standard Dolby level. Most cassette decks—even very good ones—begin to saturate at levels of +3 or +4 dB.

The sloping panel design gives the Nakamichi 600 some of the installation advantages of both top-loading and front-loading designs. It is very easy to use over a wide range of operating heights, although of course it cannot be stacked with other components like a true front-loading deck. In our judgment, the row of black pushbutton switches could benefit from auxiliary indicator lights to show their status. In a dim light it takes a close examination (or running one's finger along the row of buttons) to find which are depressed.

Nakamichi states (and we confirm) that the audible benefits of the IM suppressor are extremely subtle, and they usually cannot be heard on complex musical material. The simpler the signal waveform, the more apparent are the effects of the suppressor, and with a

sine-wave signal recorded at 0 dB or higher the drop in harmonic distortion is immediately audible when the suppressor is engaged.

When using the Nakamichi 600 as a recorder of musical material and wide-band FM noise, we were unable to detect *any* difference between the input and the output. We also used the machine to play some of the Advent CR/70 CrO₂ prerecorded cassettes to determine their compatibility with the 600's playback equalization. These tapes sounded slightly crisper than we are used to, with a little more "edge" on string sounds. They also gave an impression of better definition, but of course that is the normal result of a slightly accentuated high-end response. Since the Advent cassettes undoubtedly conform to the equalization characteristics of standard CrO₂ test tapes (which Nakamichi takes issue with), the findings were entirely expected. Fortunately for those who might object to the slight high-frequency emphasis, many amplifier treble tone controls can easily correct the playback response of the 600 to "flat" with the Advent cassettes.

Without making any comparative judgments between the Nakamichi 600 and any other machine we have used, we can still say truthfully that it sounds superb in every respect. If there is still someone out there who doubts that cassettes can be high-fidelity, he should be exposed to the Nakamichi 600 for a while. Furthermore, we liked the general styling of the Nakamichi 600 and found its mechanical transport controls as easy to use as any of that genre. Incidentally, the 600 can be set up in advance to make an unattended recording if an external timer is installed in the power line.

All in all, the Nakamichi 600 is one of the best two-head cassette recorders you can buy. Naturally, more than sheer performance is involved, and other recorders may have specific features that appeal to you more than those of the 600. In any event, any other machine we know of that can offer serious competition costs as much or more. Overall, we were greatly impressed with the performance of the Nakamichi 600.

Circle 105 on reader service card

Kenwood KA-7300 Integrated Stereo Amplifier



● THE Kenwood KA-7300 is an unusually powerful integrated amplifier for its price range. It is rated to deliver 65 watts per chan-

nel from 20 to 20,000 Hz into 8-ohm loads with less than 0.1 per cent total harmonic distortion. Each of its channels has an entirely

independent power supply with separate power transformers. The power-amplifier stages are direct-coupled, and the preamplifier uses low-noise FET's in a direct-coupled differential configuration.

The satin-finish aluminum front panel is dominated at its center by a large volume knob with a concentric ring for channel-balance adjustment. The volume control is a step attenuator, changing the level in 1-dB steps from 0 to -10 dB, 2-dB steps from -10 to -42 dB, and 5-dB steps from -50 to -60 dB. Its minimum setting is completely off. The balance ring is detented at its center.

In the upper left portion of the panel are the

(Continued on page 46)

The Best Way To Show You What You'll Get Out Of An Empire Phono Cartridge Is To Show You What Goes Into One

At Empire we make a complete line of phono cartridges. Each one has



slightly different performance characteristics which allow you to choose the cartridge most compatible to your turntable.

There are, however, certain advantages, provided by Empire's unique design, that apply to all our cartridges.

One is less wear on your records. Unlike other magnetic cartridges, Empire's moving iron design allows the diamond stylus to float free of its magnets and coils, imposing much less weight on your record's surface and insuring longer record life.

Another advantage is the better channel separation you get with Empire cartridges. We use a small, hollow iron armature which allows for a tighter fit in its positioning among the poles. So, even the most

minute movement is accurately reproduced to give you the space and depth of the original recording.

Finally, Empire uses 4 coils, 4 poles, and 3 magnets (more than any other cartridge) for better balance and hum rejection.

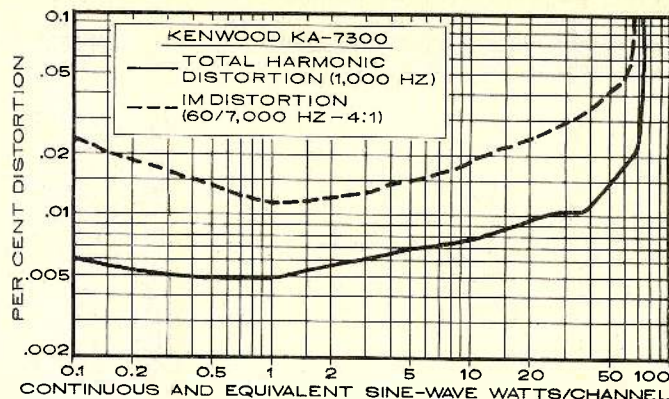
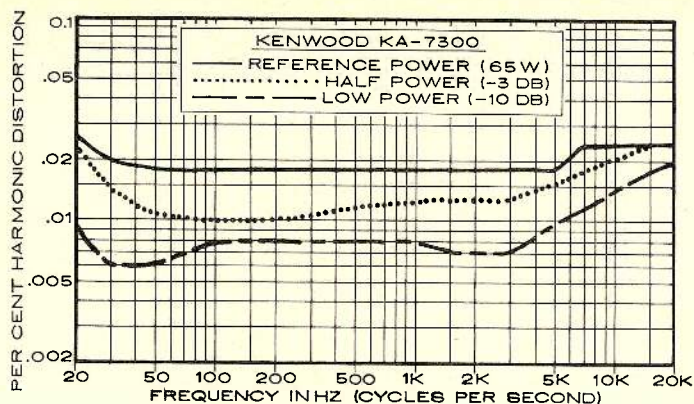
The end result is great listening. Audition one for yourself or write for our free brochure, "How To Get The Most Out Of Your Records". After you compare our performance specifications we think you'll agree that, for the money, you can't do better than Empire.

Empire Scientific Corp.
Garden City, New York
11530

EMPIRE

Already your system sounds better.

MODEL & STYLUS COLOR	4000 D/III	4000 D/II	4000 D/I	2000Z	2000 E/III	2000 E/II	2000 E/I	2000 E	2000
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	10Hz-50KHz ± 3 db	15Hz-50KHz ± 3 db	15Hz-45KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 1 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 2 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 2 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db	20Hz-20KHz ± 3 db
TRACKING FORCE RANGE	¾-1¼ gm	¾-1½ gm	1-1¼ gm	¾-1¼ gm	¾-1½ gm	¾-1½ gm	1-2 gm	1¼-2½ gm	1½-3 gm
SEPARATION: 15Hz to 1KHz 1KHz to 20KHz 20KHz to 50KHz 20 Hz to 500Hz 500Hz to 15KHz 15KHz to 20KHz	28 db 23 db 15 db	26 db 21 db 15 db	24 db 20 db 15 db	20 db 30 db 25 db	20 db 28 db 20 db	20 db 25 db 18 db	18 db 23 db 15 db	18 db 2 db 15 db	16 db 21 db 13 db
I. M. DISTORTION @ 3.54 cm/sec	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.08% 2KHz-20KHz	.1% 2KHz-20KHz	.15% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz	.2% 2KHz-20KHz
STYLUS	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 mil bi-radial	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.2 x .7 mil elliptical	.3 x .7 mil elliptical	.7 mil radius spherical
EFFECTIVE TIP MASS	.4 milligram	.4 milligram	.4 milligram	.2 milligram	.6 milligram	.6 milligram	.6 milligram	.9 milligram	1 milligram
COMPLIANCE	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	30x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	20x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	18x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	17x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	16x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne	14x10 ⁻⁶ cm/dyne
TRACKING ABILITY	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¼ gm	30 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm	38 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ .9 gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1 gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¼ gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1½ gm	28 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 1¾ gm	32 cm/sec @ 1KHz @ 2 gm
CHANNEL BALANCE	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within ¾ db @ 1KHz	within 1 db @ 1KHz	within 1¼ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz	within 1½ db @ 1KHz
INPUT LOAD	100K ohms/channel	100K ohms/channel	100K ohms/channel	47K ohms/channel	47K ohms/channel	47K ohms/channel	47K ohms/channel	47K ohms/channel	47K ohms/channel
TOTAL CAPACITANCE	under 100 pf/channel	under 100 pf/channel	under 100 pf/channel	300 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel	400-500 pf/channel
OUTPUT @ 3.54 cm/sec	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	3 mv/channel	4.5 mv/channel	4.5 mv/channel	7 mv/channel	7 mv/channel	7 mv/channel



speaker selector (with positions for OFF, A, B, C, and A+B) and the bass and treble tone controls. These are eleven-position detented controls with a rated maximum range of ± 7.5 dB at the extremes. Below the tone controls are two lever switches that change their turnover frequencies (150 or 400 Hz for the bass and 3,000 or 6,000 Hz for the treble) and completely bypass the tone-control circuits in their OFF positions. Next to them is a PRESENCE switch that gives a moderate response boost over a broad range centered at either 800 or 3,000 Hz. At the lower left of the panel are a headphone jack and the power switch; nearby is a red pilot light.

Across the upper right of the panel are three small pushbutton switches and two knobs. The buttons engage the filters, all of which have 12-dB-per-octave slopes. The SUBSONIC filter cuts off below 18 Hz, the LOW filter below 40 Hz, and the HIGH filter above 8,000 Hz. The mode switch provides REVERSE, STEREO, and MONO operation, and the input selector has positions for AUX, TUNER, PHONO 1, and PHONO 2.

Below these controls are two tape switches that supply both dubbing and monitor functions for two tape decks. The monitor switch connects the amplifier's main signal path either to the source or to the playback outputs from either tape deck, while the dubbing switch interconnects the two decks for copy-

ing from either one to the other, with monitoring from either machine. It is also possible, by appropriate connections to the rear tape jacks, to listen to one program source while taping another. An attenuator switch drops the audio level 20 dB for temporary interruptions, and a small knob provides three degrees of loudness compensation as well as switching the compensation off entirely.

The rear apron of the Kenwood KA-7300, in addition to all the inputs and outputs, has separate jacks for the preamplifier outputs and power-amplifier inputs, normally joined by an adjacent slide switch. A DIN socket duplicates the functions of the TAPE 2 circuits. Insulated binding posts are used for speaker terminals. One of the three a.c. outlets is switched. Plastic feet extending from the back panel of the amplifier protect its connectors from damage if the amplifier is rested on its rear surface. Optional handles are available for the front panel in a matching finish. The Kenwood KA-7300 measures about 17 inches wide, 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches high, and 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep; it weighs 31 pounds. Price: \$329.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** After the standard conditioning "warm-up" period, the Kenwood KA-7300 delivered 74.4 watts per channel at 1,000 Hz to 8-ohm loads at the clipping point. The 4-ohm output was 103 watts per channel; 16-ohm output was 47.3 watts.

At 1,000 Hz, the total harmonic distortion (THD) was 0.005 to 0.008 per cent from 0.1 watt to 10 watts; it reached 0.01 per cent at 20 watts. The distortion remained at this level with only a slight increase as the power was raised, reaching 0.014 per cent at 50 watts and 0.023 per cent at 70 watts. At the clipping point of about 75 watts, the distortion was still a mere 0.13 per cent. The intermodulation distortion (IM) was less than 0.1 per cent at levels of a few milliwatts, between 0.01 and 0.03 per cent from 65 milliwatts to 30 watts, and 0.047 per cent at 60 watts.

At the rated 65 watts output into 8 ohms, the THD was less than 0.028 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz, measuring 0.018 per cent over most of that range. At lower power levels the distortion was appreciably less. One could fairly say that the distortion of the KA-7300 at any frequency and power output commonly used in the home would not exceed 0.01 to 0.02 per cent.

Through the AUX inputs, 58 millivolts drove the amplifier to a reference output of 10 watts. The signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) was a very good 77 dB. The phono sensitivity was 1 millivolt, with an excellent S/N of 76.4 dB. The phono-overload input of 240 millivolts was exceptional, especially in view of the amplifier's high phono sensitivity.

The tone controls had a limited range, giving a maximum boost or cut of 5 to 8 dB at the frequency extremes. Using the 150- or 6,000-Hz turnover frequencies, it was possible to modify the response at the frequency extremes in a useful manner with virtually no effect on the four central audible octaves from 200 to 3,000 Hz.

The filters have well-chosen cut-off frequencies (measured as 29 and 8,500 Hz at the -3-dB points), and the 12-dB-per-octave slopes are ideal for removing unwanted noise with negligible effect on the audible program. The 18-Hz subsonic filter had no effect within our measurement range, and we would advise using it at all times to remove any subsonic noise from the program.

The two "presence" contours are somewhat unusual features for a modern amplifier. Each covers 3 or 4 octaves with a maximum boost of 3.5 dB. Although they did not give an extreme or strikingly unnatural effect (a problem that has plagued some earlier attempts to add "punch" to the mid-range), we usually preferred to leave them off. Perhaps with some particular speakers or program material they would be beneficial. On the other hand, the loudness compensation of the KA-7300 was much more effective than most we have used. At its maximum setting, the lows are

(Continued on page 50)



A rare way to celebrate Thanksgiving:
the rare taste of J&B.



This is about as simply and as clearly as we can describe this latest achievement by Dual engineers. We could also describe the CS721 as the ultimate expression of the principles that determine the performance of tonearms and drive systems in record playback.

The tonearm is straight-line tubular from pivot to tonearm head, for lowest effective mass and greatest rigidity. It is centered within a true, four-point

The new Dual CS721. It represents everything Dual has learned about turntables.

gimbal in which the tonearm masses pivot at the intersection

of both axes. This ensures dynamic

balance throughout play, and turntable level is not critical.

Every initial tonearm setting has a special touch of precision.

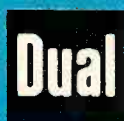
Stylus overhang is adjustable for optimum horizontal tracking angle. Balance is vernier-adjustable. Stylus force is applied around the vertical pivot and remains perpendicular to the record even if the turntable is not level. Anti-skating is calibrated separately for all three stylus types and is self-compensating for groove diameter.

In addition to these refinements, the CS721 tonearm has an innovation to be found on no other integrated tonearm: Vertical Tonearm Control. A vernier height adjustment over an 8mm range allows this tonearm to parallel the record with cartridges of any depth and without the use of spacers. Thus, accurate vertical tracking is assured, and the effective mass of the tonearm is kept at a minimum. Another benefit: changing cartridges is much easier.

The CS721 direct-drive system is the most advanced today for record playback. It features all all-electronic, low speed, brushless, DC motor with Hall-effect feedback control and a regulated power supply. The motor's field coil design is unique. Two overlapping coil layers, each with eight coreless bifilar-wound coils, achieve a gapless rotating magnetic field. This eliminates the successive pulses of magnetic flux typical of all other motor designs.

Although the CS721 is Dual's most expensive model, it is hardly the most expensive turntable available today. When you make comparisons, as we believe you should, you may even consider the CS721 underpriced. Not to mention the even less expensive direct-drive CS704, with the same tonearm and drive system but with semi-automatic start and stop.

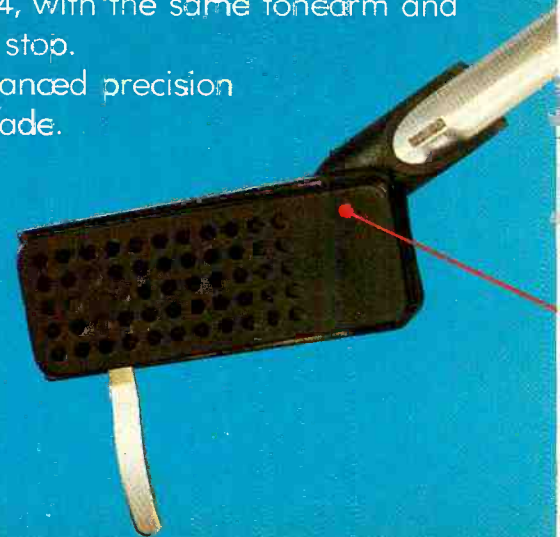
With either model, you will enjoy the advanced precision performance of the quietest turntable ever made.



United Audio Products

120 So. Columbus Ave., Mt. Vernon, N.Y. 10553

Exclusive U.S. Distribution Agency for Dual



True, four-point-gimba centers and pivots the tonearm mass at intersection of horizontal and vertical axes. Tonearm is dynamically balanced in all planes. The four needle-point pivots are first hardened, then honed, a process which produces microscopically smooth surfaces.

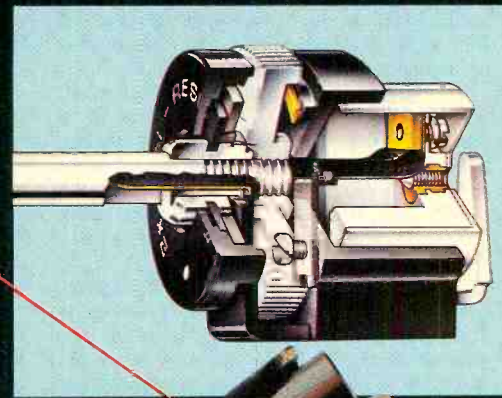
Cueing descent speed can be set from slow to rapid, and tonearm cueing height is adjustable. Result: complete control of stylus setback via cue-control.

Vertical Tonearm Control sets and locks tonearm height at any point over an 3mm range. Tonearm thus exactly parallels the record with any size cartridge. Result: accurate vertical tracking without the added mass of cartridge spacers.

Straight line tubular tonearm provides maximum torsional rigidity and lowest effective mass. With the same effective tonearm length and tangential tracking error any other shape must either sacrifice rigidity or increase mass.

Rigid three-point suspension locks cartridge holder to tonearm head in identical position each time it is removed and replaced. Together with adjustable stylus overhang, this assures that correct vertical and horizontal tracking angle will be maintained.

The unique counterbalance contains two mechanical anti-resonance filters. These are separately tuned to absorb energy in the resonance-frequency ranges of the tonearm/cartridge system and chassis to minimize acoustical feedback.



Stylus pressure is applied via a long coiled spring centered around the vertical pivot. Pressure is always maintained perpendicular to the record even if the turntable is not level.



The Dual CS721: fully automatic, single-play turntable with an electronic, direct-drive motor. Features include: Vertical Tonearm Control; variable cue-control lift height and descent speed; 10% electronic pitch-control for both speeds (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and 45 rpm); illuminated strobe; dynamically-balanced 12" platter; cue-control viscous-damped in both directions; continuous-repeat. Price: less than \$400, including base and dust cover. **Dual CS704:** similar, except semi-automatic. Ingenious mechanical sensor locates lead-in groove of 12" and 7" records; tonearm lifts and motor shuts off automatically at end of play. Less than \$310, including base and dust cover.

Fully-automatic, single-play/multi-play Duals: 1225, less than \$140; 1226, less than \$170; 1228, less than \$200; 249, less than \$280. Semi-automatic, single-play Duals: 502, less than \$160; 510, less than \$200.

CIRCLE NO. 50 ON READER SERVICE CARD

boosted about as much as with most other amplifiers, but the two lower settings give only a very mild low-frequency boost at low volume settings, one we found pleasing and thoroughly listenable. The high frequencies are not affected by the loudness circuit.

The RIAA phono equalization (extended) was flat within +1 to -0.5 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with a slight boost below 100 Hz. When measured through the inductance of a phono cartridge, the response of the preamplifier was modified negligibly above 10,000 Hz, typically changing less than 1 dB.

● **Comment.** By and large, competitively priced stereo amplifiers are fairly similar in their power-output ratings, distortion, and general control features. The new Kenwood KA-7300 is one of the rare exceptions. Depending on how one looks at it, the KA-7300 is either more powerful and versatile than

most amplifiers in its price range, or is considerably cheaper than other amplifiers with matching performance capabilities. Judged by its measured performance as well as by listening, the Kenwood KA-7300 is clearly one of the fine amplifiers of our time.

The "feel" of the Kenwood's controls is a blend of precision and lightness that we found most appealing. It is as enjoyable to use (and to look at) as it is to hear. The stepped volume control, in particular, provides a barely perceptible volume change with each step, and its large knob can be grasped and adjusted without looking at the amplifier with no risk of turning the wrong control.

The principal question in our minds, especially after we had tested the KA-7300, was why it was apparently so much "more" amplifier than some others in its price range. Knowing Kenwood, we doubted that there had been any skimping in its design and con-

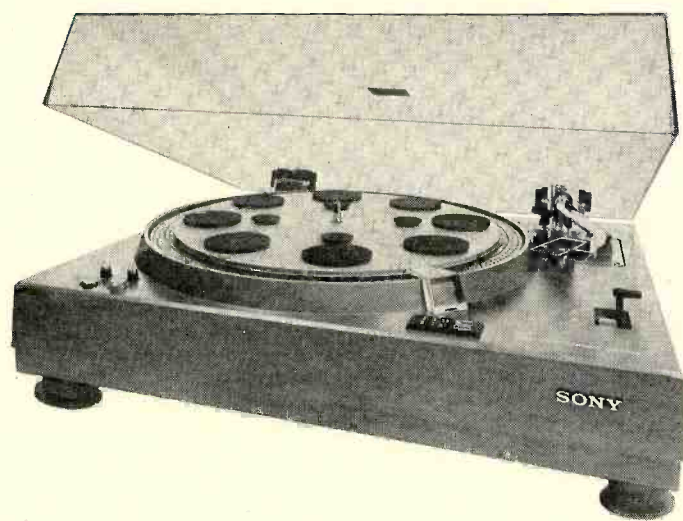
struction, and none came to light. In fact, it is built with notable solidity, and its published ratings proved to be highly conservative.

Opening up the amplifier gave at least a partial answer to our question. Hand wiring has been reduced to a minimum by such techniques as mounting the front-panel controls directly on the associated circuit boards. Each output stage is actually a large hybrid integrated circuit, called by Kenwood a "Darlington Block." The block contains a complete complementary-symmetry power amplifier requiring only a few external transistors and other components.

However it was accomplished, it is evident that the Kenwood KA-7300 indeed offers a rare combination of performance and price. It is an exceptional value—which is no small achievement in the highly competitive audio-component field.

Circle 106 on reader service card

Sony PS-4750 Turntable



● THE Sony PS-4750 is a direct-drive, two-speed (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ and 45 rpm) manual record player furnished complete with base and hinged clear-plastic dust cover. Its tone arm, 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches long from pivot to stylus, has a threaded counterweight carrying an adjustable tracking-force scale. After balancing the tone arm and zeroing the scale, the weight is turned to dial in any desired tracking force from 0 to 3 grams. A small anti-skating adjustment is located next to the arm base.

Pushing one of the two control buttons to the left of the platter selects the operating speed. Next to each button is a small vernier speed-control knob. The only other operating control on the motorboard is a lever on the right side; pulled forward to its middle position, it turns the motor on and raises the arm to its cueing position. The arm is placed over the desired portion of the record by means of its finger lift, and moving the lever to its forward position gently lowers the pickup.

So far, we might have been describing almost any one of the direct-drive players available from several manufacturers. But the Sony PS-4750 is very different, in appearance and construction, from any other we have seen. For one thing, it is constructed almost entirely of plastic! Sony calls this material SBMC (Sony Bulk Molding Compound), and it is claimed to have special acoustic and vibration-absorbing qualities that reduce the noise level of the record player. The entire base is made of SBMC, as is the full-size platter itself. In appearance, it is difficult to distinguish from cast metal because of its smooth grey finish.

The platter is surrounded by a plastic ring carrying stroboscope markings; these are illuminated from below. Instead of the usual rubber mat, a group of eight rubber discs around the periphery of the platter support the record (an inner group of four smaller discs is used for 7-inch records). A plastic

overhang gauge can be inserted in a hole next to the platter for stylus-position adjustment, and it can be left in place if desired. There is a stand near the rear of the motorboard to hold a spare head shell and cartridge, and a peg stores the 45-rpm spindle when it is not in use. The entire record player is mounted on soft rubber feet to help isolate it from external vibration and acoustic feedback.

The d.c. servomotor that drives the platter is controlled by a feedback voltage derived from a tachometer generator. This generator is part of the underside of the platter, taking the form of a ring of magnetic material that resembles the coating of a magnetic tape. A pattern magnetized into the ring is sensed by a magnetic head on the base, into which it induces a voltage proportional to turntable speed.

The overall dimensions of the Sony PS-4750, including the dust cover, are approximately 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide, 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, and 6 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches high. It weighs about 19 pounds. Price: \$300.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** When the tone arm was balanced according to instructions, the calibrations of the stylus-force dial were exact. The tracking error was also as low as is possible with a pivoted arm of this length: less than 0.33 degree per inch of radius over the full surface of a record.

With a high-compliance cartridge installed, the low-frequency arm resonance was at 8 to 9 Hz with an amplitude of 5 dB. This suggests that the effective mass of the arm, despite its greater than average length, is no higher than that of most record-player arms we have tested in the past.

The turntable speeds were totally unaffected by line-voltage changes from 95 to 135 volts. The vernier speed-control range was +3.7 to -7.5 per cent at 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm, and +2.8 to -5.8 per cent at 45 rpm. Wow and flutter

(Continued on page 52)



Design and performance that knows no equal.

Introducing our new "T" series single-play turntables. Their development was based upon one premise; that something can be as beautiful to look at as it is to listen to. You can see by the clean, uncluttered styling and the impressive list of features that we have succeeded. The T-2000 offers the beginning audiophile a taste of excellence without getting bitten. The T-4000 allows the audiophile of intermediate standing to enjoy the kind of performance that he will one day learn to appreciate. The T-6000 fulfills the most discriminating audiophile like he's never been fulfilled before. These new turntables are part of an entire new line of components that can be found at your nearest Lafayette store or dealer. And since we have stores and dealers coast to coast, finding us and the kind of design and performance that knows no equal, becomes rather easy.

Specifications	T-6000	T-4000	T-2000
Drive Mechanism	Direct drive ball bearing 72-pole frequency generator AC servo motor	Belt drive 4-pole DC servo motor	Belt drive 4-pole hysteresis synchronous motor
Speeds	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ & 45 RPM	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ & 45 RPM	33 $\frac{1}{3}$ & 45 RPM
Wow/Flutter	.03%	.08%	.08%
Variable Speed Adjustment	$\pm 4.0\%$	$\pm 2.5\%$	$\pm 1.3\%$
Finish	Black & Chrome	Gray Matte	Woodgrain Vinyl Overlay
Price	\$229.95	\$179.95	\$129.95



Lafayette

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 CIRCLE NO. 35 ON READER SERVICE CARD

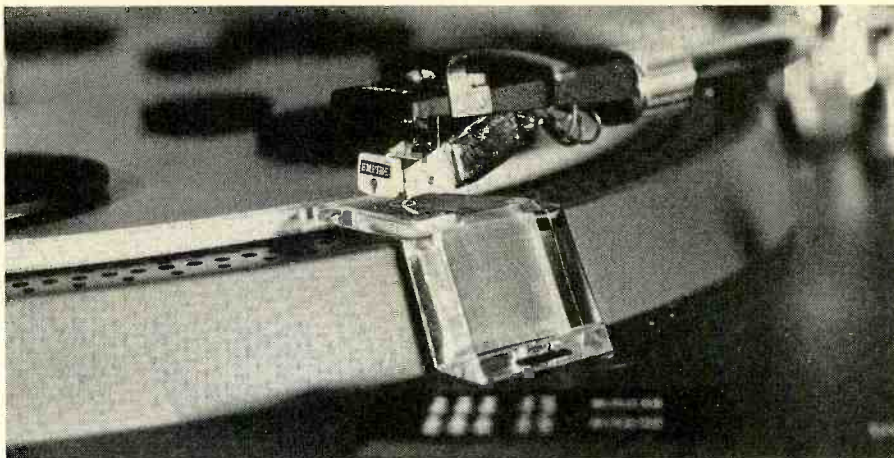
were very low, with a combined reading of 0.045 to 0.05 per cent at either speed. The unweighted rumble (predominantly 10 Hz) was -30 dB including vertical components and -34 dB in the lateral plane. With ARL weighting, the rumble was -60 dB, typical of a good direct-drive turntable.

The single-lever control system worked smoothly without jarring the pickup. The cueing was damped in both directions and, with the anti-skating set as recommended, there was no outward drift of the arm during its descent. However, we found the optimum anti-skating setting to be about 0.75 gram higher than the tracking force, which caused the arm to drift outward slightly when cued, thus repeating a few seconds of the program when lowered to the record again.

The rubber supporting feet were above average in their ability to isolate the player from external vibration. The cable and arm-wiring capacitance of 95 picofarads is well suited to the needs of CD-4 cartridges.

● **Comment.** While nothing in our tests revealed any obvious superiority of the SBMC substance over more conventional materials, it certainly was at least as good as the usual wood-and-metal construction. The rubber discs not only supported the record properly, but actually seemed to behave as suction cups. After playing a record, a definite tug was needed to release it!

Although it does not show up directly in our



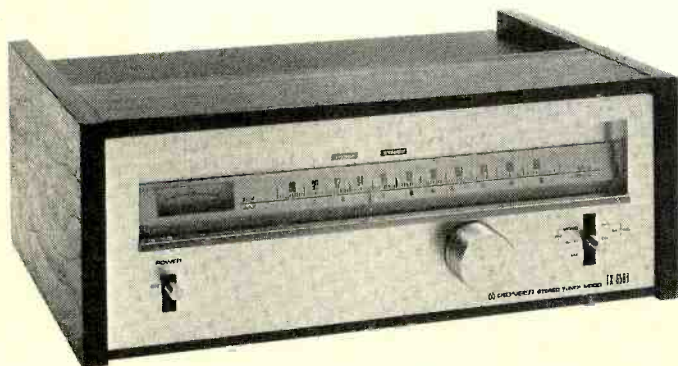
The strobe markings on the turntable's platter edge are illuminated by a plastic device that also doubles as a stylus-overhang adjustment gauge. The servo-controlled direct-drive system provides for a nominal ± 4 per cent variation on either of the selected operating speeds.

test results, we appreciated the ease with which the PS-4750 can be set up. Balancing the arm is a straightforward process, and the accuracy of the tracking-force dial could hardly be improved. This is in contrast to many arms that must be balanced slightly off the horizontal in order to obtain accurate tracking-force readings. Similarly, the overhang gauge is easy to use and resulted in virtu-

ally perfect tangency of the cartridge axis to the record groove. Although the anti-skating required a higher than suggested setting for equal distortion in both channels (our criterion for adjustment), this is also true of the vast majority of such devices we have tested. All in all, the Sony PS-4750 is a fine piece of record-playing machinery.

Circle 107 on reader service card

Pioneer TX-6500 AM/FM Stereo Tuner



● RECENTLY, we have seen a number of "super tuners" offering state-of-the-art performance and prices to match. Simultaneously, there has been an on-going development of specialized integrated circuits (IC's) that promise superior FM performance at a potential price saving. Some of the possibilities this opens up are strikingly illustrated by Pioneer's new TX-6500 AM/FM tuner. More expensive Pioneer tuners have a well-earned reputation for excellence in performance and in the important aspects of smooth handling and attractive styling. Now it seems that they have a less costly rival from within the family in the form of the TX-6500.

The TX-6500 is immediately identifiable as a Pioneer product, with its satin aluminum panel and dial scale and its large tuning knob. Its controls have been reduced to an absolute minimum, with lever switches for power and mode selection being the only switches on the front panel. The single tuning meter, to the left of the dial scales, indicates channel center for FM and signal-strength for AM. Above the dial scales, the word POWER lights up when the tuner is turned on, and the word STEREO lights up when a stereo broadcast is received. The function switch has three positions: AM, FM AUTO (with muting), and FM MONO (which disables the muting). If the rear

of the tuner are antenna inputs for 75- and 300-ohm FM antennas and a wire AM antenna as well as a pivoted AM ferrite-rod antenna. A slide switch changes the de-emphasis from 75 microseconds to the 25 required for use with an external Dolby adapter.

The specifications of the Pioneer TX-6500 are consistent with a product in the upper-middle price class, including an IHF sensitivity of 1.9 microvolts, a 75-dB signal-to-noise ratio in mono (68 dB in stereo), 40-dB mid-range stereo separation, and 60-dB rejection of images and alternate-channel interference.

Other tuners may have very similar specifications, but when we examined the schematic diagram of the TX-6500 we began to appreciate how the unit's low price was achieved. This tuner makes the most effective use of IC technology we have yet seen in a product of its type. A single IC, with the aid of a handful of discrete components, provides all the i.f. amplification, limiting, and FM detection. Another IC is the phase-locked-loop multiplex demodulator, and a third is the entire AM tuner section. By our count, the entire tuner contains about a half-dozen transistors, three IC's, and a modest number of additional components. The Pioneer TX-6500 is 15 inches wide, 5½ inches high, and 12¾ inches deep; it weighs about 12¼ pounds. It is furnished in a black metal enclosure, but an op-

(Continued on page 56)

Introducing a new standard in stereo receivers—Heathkit AR-1515

Heathkit hi-fi components have always been characterized by innovative design, precision engineering and performance that puts them a cut above the others. The new AR-1515 stereo receiver continues that tradition.

The most immediately impressive feature is its digital frequency readout. AM and FM broadcast frequencies are displayed in bright red digits with far greater accuracy than conventional tuning dials. Once you tune the proper frequency, center-channel and signal-strength meters help you "zero in" for optimum reception. And the AR-1515 is the first receiver to offer digital precision and convenience for less than \$1000—far less.

The next thing you'll notice about the AR-1515 is its elegantly simple and functional styling. Unlike conventional receivers (with their sometimes-confusing array of knobs, switches and dials), the AR-1515 puts the controls you use most right up front. Big, firm and positive. Easy to get at. Mistake proof. The secondary controls—balance, tone, speaker switching, filtering, tape dubbing, headphone jacks and others—are cleverly concealed behind a fold-down front panel, so you only need to look at them when you want to use them. The AR-1515, when suitably placed on a shelf or table, has a clean, uncluttered look of real authority and professionalism. Its side

panels are solid-walnut—rich and expensive looking. Its front panel is satin-finished aluminum. Its lighted meters, digital readout and function indicators are subtle reds and blues behind a black-out front "window".

But the best thing about the AR-1515 is its performance. The amplifier delivers 70 watts, minimum RMS, per channel into 8 ohms with less than 0.08% total harmonic distortion from 20-20,000 Hz. That means, quite simply, power enough for almost any speaker system, and you simply can't buy a receiver with lower distortion! FM sensi-

gle. And Heath's careful design, using only the finest solid-state components in the most advanced circuits, assures that that power and that incredibly low distortion will be a part of your AR-1515 for years to come.

Finally, like all Heathkit products, the AR-1515 is an easy and enjoyable kit to build. With a fully illustrated step-by-step instruction manual that you can follow even if you've never built a kit before. The AR-1515 is the best stereo receiver we've ever offered—and, at just \$549.95, we think you'll agree it's



A flip-down front panel reveals the AR-1515's secondary controls.

tivity is a station-pulling 1.8 μ V, too, so you'll get more stations even in fringe areas. Even the AM section, often overlooked by others, is one of the world's finest—designed to bring you real hi-fi quality reception. The phono and aux. inputs have sensitivity and overload characteristics good enough to accept the finest phono cartridges and tape decks with no audible strain or strug-

the standard by which other receivers must be judged. For more information on the AR-1515 and the entire line of Heathkit audio equipment, send for our FREE catalog. Just circle the number below on the reader service card or write Heath Company, Dept. 40-23, Benton Harbor, Michigan 49022.





FRM-3. Because one good listening spot in a room isn't enough.

With all you invest in quality components, why shortchange yourself by confining your listening to a limited area? Unfortunately, no matter how much you spend, that's what conventional speakers force you to do: accommodate your room to your speakers, instead of vice-versa.

Micro-Acoustics' new FRM-3* puts *more* listening room in your listening room. Thanks to its easily-accessible *Vari-Axis™* tweeter control that lets you optimize high-frequency dispersion to maintain precise instrumental definition, tonal balance and stereo separation regardless of speaker placement.

But the *Vari-Axis* high-frequency assembly is only half the story. The other half is an efficient, long-throw woofer operating into a balanced *twin-ducted-port* enclosure, which produces tight, fundamental bass.

The result: 'expensive' sound at a very modest price, even from low-powered receivers, backed by a warranty that's *twice* as long as the industry standard.

The proof is waiting at your Micro-Acoustics dealer... or write for our 8-page brochure, which also includes information on the FRM-1A (\$199) and FRM-2A (\$155).

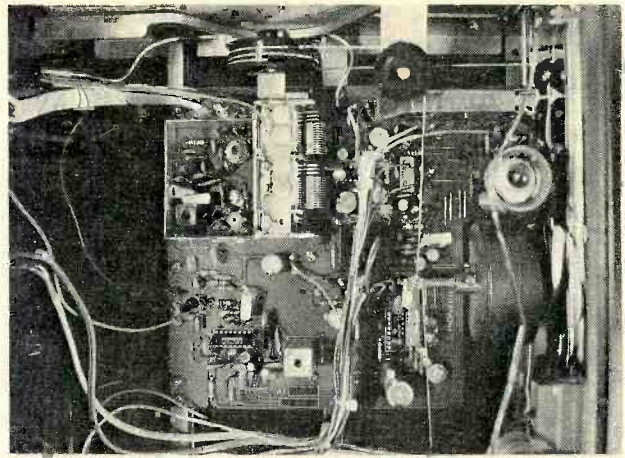
Micro-Acoustics Corporation,
8 Westchester Plaza, Elmsford,
New York 10523.

*\$119. All prices are manufacturer's suggested list. Prices slightly higher in West.

ma
Micro-Acoustics

An internal view of the tuner's chassis reveals the extensive use of the latest integrated circuits rather than discrete components.

This results in a comparatively uncluttered chassis board which nevertheless maintains a high level of performance.



tional wooden cabinet is available (about \$30). Approximate nationally advertised value: \$175.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The FM tuner's usable sensitivity was 1.9 microvolts (μV) or 10.5 dBf in mono, and 17 dBf ($4 \mu\text{V}$) in stereo. The 50-dB quieting sensitivity in mono was 14 dBf ($2.5 \mu\text{V}$) with 0.56 per cent distortion, and in stereo it was 36 dBf ($35 \mu\text{V}$) with 0.32 per cent distortion. The distortion at 65 dBf ($1,000 \mu\text{V}$) was 0.14 per cent in mono and a very low 0.1 per cent in stereo. Stereo distortion with an L - R input signal was only slightly higher, averaging less than 0.2 per cent. The signal-to-noise ratio (S/N) for a 65-dBf input was 74.5 dB in mono and 68 dB in stereo. The frequency response was ± 0.5 dB from 30 to 13,000 Hz, dropping down 1.2 dB at 15,000 Hz. The stereo channel separation was excellent, measuring 40 dB over most of the audio band, 34 dB at 30 Hz, and 29.5 dB at 15,000 Hz.

At 45 dBf ($100 \mu\text{V}$) the capture ratio was 1.1 dB and AM rejection was 68 dB (both figures were not quite as good at higher signal levels, but were still acceptable). The image rejection was 58 dB and alternate-channel selectivity was 61 dB. The adjacent-channel selectivity was 3.8 dB. The muting and stereo switching thresholds had identical values of 10 dBf ($1.7 \mu\text{V}$). The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage was a low -70 dB and hum was -80 dB. The AM section's frequency response was down 6 dB at 150 and 3,800 Hz.

● **Comment.** The Pioneer TX-6500 im-

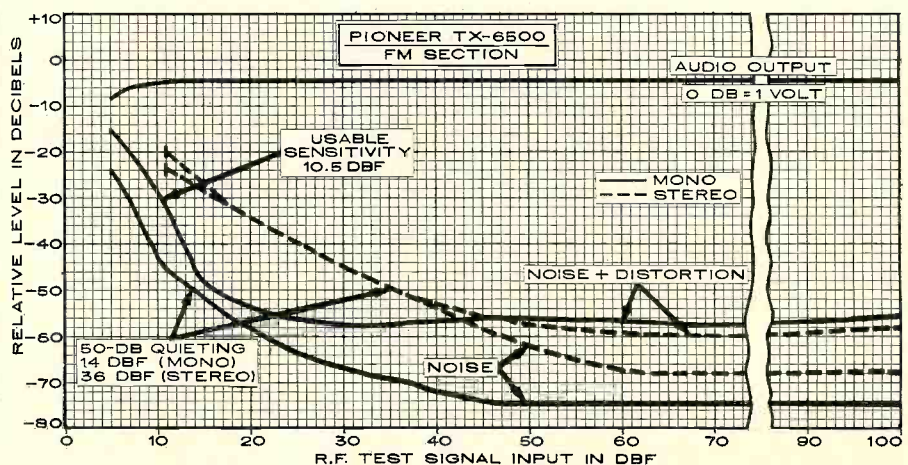
pressed us as being a remarkable tuner, and we use that adjective advisedly. For one thing, its rated performance is, in many respects, typical of much more expensive products. For another, our test sample met all its key specifications within the limits of measurement error. This is not the usual situation, even with some very expensive tuners.

Measurements aside, the tuning "feel" of the TX-6500 was fully equal to that of Pioneer's most expensive tuners—which is to say it was as good as they come. Its linearly marked FM dial was accurately calibrated and easy to read, the muting was positive and noise-free, and it sounded absolutely first-rate. About the only part of it we could criticize was the rear placement of the de-emphasis switch, which is relatively inaccessible.

One might ask why other tuners cost so much more than the TX-6500. Higher-price models of course have additional features that are not always related to their listening quality. They usually have superior front-end selectivity (image rejection) and better adjacent- and alternate-channel selectivity. However, most people will find the performance of the TX-6500 fully adequate for their needs.

For all practical purposes, the frequency response, channel separation, noise level, and distortion of the TX-6500 are the equal of most tuners selling for two or three times its price. We also noted that the tuning of the TX-6500 was quite noncritical, so that in normal use one can reasonably expect to realize its full performance capability. In this and in most other respects, it is a real beauty!

Circle 108 on reader service card





The night belongs to Charger.

If your pulse quickens after dark, Charger is your car. Charger has a look that was shaped for the night. An excitement to match your mood when you've left the day behind.

Close yourself in Charger, and the dark lights up. You're hugged by high-back bucket seats. Before you, a full array of controls for night cruising. A standard 318 V8 links to the TorqueFlite automatic

transmission to let you glide around all those every-day cars.

When the sun goes down and the lights come up, move into Charger time. Some of us were born for the night. Now we have a car that belongs to us... Charger. Get one at your Dodge Dealer's.

'77 Dodge Charger



PRODUCT OF CHRYSLER CORPORATION

the "everything" turntable

Dust cover, Realistic-by-Shure magnetic cartridge included in a low discount price. No extras to buy.

"Everything" starts with a cartridge. Because it's the very heart of your turntable, Radio Shack doesn't think a cartridge should be treated like an accessory. So our Realistic® LAB-300 includes an elliptical-stylus model performance-matched to the tone arm. It's our top-of-the-line cartridge, a \$44.95 value in itself.

A superb manual player. Eliminating the complexity of a changer cuts both cost and noise. But it also lets Realistic concentrate on getting maximum music and life out of your records. The S-shape tone arm, 8½" long from point to stylus, tracks accurately even at ¾ gram. The 11¾", 2.6-lb. flywheel/platter is belt-driven by a powerful synchronous motor at 33⅓ or 45 RPM. Wow and flutter: less than 0.1%. Rumble: better than -60 dB (DIN B).

With automatic arm return. You touch the arm only to start the record. At disc's end, an

independent mechanism engages the arm and shuts off the motor. Damped cueing, direct-reading tracking force adjustment and variable anti-skate.

And a look of luxury. Solid and uncluttered. Walnut grained vinyl veneer base. Steel hinged self-supporting dust cover. Precision aluminum, stainless and chrome arm assembly.

Available near you. With over 4800 Radio Shack locations in the USA and Canada alone, you know Realistic is a famous national brand. With service and original factory parts available through us wherever you live or go. And we're an American company, specializing in electronics for 56 years. Comforting facts when you're looking for fine component hi-fi close to home.

And ends with a Realistic price. The discount came off before the price went on. That's because we are a do-it-yourself company, with 16 of our own factories, which helps us to hold costs down. On average, we are still within 1% of our 1975 prices! Come in and find out what an "everything" turntable sounds like — today. Just 159.95*.

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Realistic LAB-100
Semi-automatic, belt-driven. With cartridge, dust cover, simulated walnut grain base. 99.95*



Realistic/Miracord-46
Fully automatic with umbrella-spindle, cartridge, genuine walnut veneer base. 199.95*



Realistic/Miracord-42
Fully automatic with umbrella-spindle, cartridge, simulated walnut grain finish base. 149.95*



Realistic LAB-50
Fully automatic, belt-driven. With cartridge, walnut grained vinyl veneer base. 99.95*



REJECT

REALISTIC

CIRCLE NO. 56 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



COMPUTERS, GHOSTS, AND OTHER TALENTS

A FUNNY thing happened to me on the way to the turntable. I got waylaid by a digital computer and a player piano. "Hey," said the player piano, "we want to get into the record business." "Ten-four," said the computer. He was tickled pink that normal, adult, human persons were beginning to speak *his* language and he was practicing talking back. "Player piano," I said, "the wives of the record business are not for a nice, square guy like you. Go back home to the parlor and entertain what's left of middle America." "Ten-fower," said the computer, trying a different emphasis. "And you, computer," I said, "you go back to the bank and louse up somebody's credit."

"What you don't seem to understand," said the player piano, "is that I've got *history* inside me. Look at all those composers and pianists who made music on me. Better still, listen to them. The piano rolls are still around, and piano rolls, you know, have undistorted frequency response and are suitable for mono, stereo, and quadrasonic recording." "Hmm," said I, "you have a point there. But what about your plugged-in pal? What's he got to offer?" "Eleven-four," said the computer triumphantly, but hardly to the point. "Him?" said the keyboard. "He's just a translator. He can take music and make numbers out of it and then he can shuffle the numbers and make them into music again." "Big deal," I said. "So what's that got to do with the price of pressings?" "Got any old acoustic records you'd like to hear *through*?" asked the piano. "Jeeez," I said.

As it happened, the way to the turntable led west on Forty-seventh Street. "Look," I said to the computer when we reached Sixth Avenue. "You go downtown four blocks, and across the street you'll see a big building. That's RCA. You go in there and ask for a guy named Pfeiffer. He's a patient man and he'll listen to anything. And you," I said to the player piano, "you turn uptown and go five blocks until you hit Black Rock. That's CBS. You go in *there* and ask for Kazdin. He likes screwy ideas."

"C Major," said the player piano. "No," I said, "see Kazdin." "Ten-five," said the computer, with no fear of contradiction. "And just one more thing," I said. "Don't tell them that I sent you." And that's the way it happened, so help me.

I now have facing me "CARUSO, A Legendary Performer," RCA CRM1-1749 mono, which comprises sixteen acoustically recorded opera arias sung by Enrico Caruso, all of them reprocessed through a digital computer by Thomas G. Stockham, Jr., of Soundstream, Inc.; and Columbia M 34205, which features Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, with the original jazz-band orchestration, the Columbia Jazz Band led by Michael Tilson Thomas, and the ghost of George Gershwin at the player piano.

Now, why feed acoustic recordings through a computer at all? It isn't to remove surface noise, although that turns out to be a side effect of considerable benefit. No, the point is to try to give us Caruso's voice as it was in reality, not as modified by the resonances of acoustic-recording equipment and the whole process of acoustic recording. Technical Editor Larry Klein talks more about the process



elsewhere in this issue, but basically it has been a case of having the computer determine what frequencies and what amplitudes of the initial sound were contributed by the horn as opposed to the voice, and removing or readjusting them, giving us, theoretically, as a product, the unscrambled sound of the real Caruso.

I will tell you that, in terms of freedom from the typical *sound* of acoustic records

when played on modern equipment, it *works*; but I will not promise you that what you hear is "the real Caruso." Caruso, of course, made no electrical recordings, so we do not have those for comparison. What we do have is unmodified LP transfers of the acoustic discs (than which this LP sounds infinitely better), the sound of the acoustic discs themselves as played on modern equipment (than which this sounds better), and the sound of those discs as played on *acoustic equipment* (than which this sounds only different). In brief, what I find here is a marvelous Italian tenor voice that lacks the great dynamic range I remember from acoustic playback and which therefore, while beautiful in quality, sounds smaller than I remember. Its tonal quality is also not as striking as before, leading me to wonder if *all* those resonances removed by the computer originated with the mechanism. Still, it was an experiment that had to be made, and producer John F. Pfeiffer made it. There is margin for error, but we may never have come so close to the great Caruso on records before.

GEORGE GERSHWIN made a Duo Art piano roll of his *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1925 (he also made an abbreviated acoustic recording of it; see the review on page 140 of this issue), a solo piano arrangement incorporating much of what was written for orchestra. It is thought that the roll may even have gone through a second pass on the cutting machine to get in additional notes that were beyond the capabilities of two hands to play at one time. Producer Andrew Kazdin had the roll modified in such a way as to remove everything but the notes of the solo piano part, recorded the result on a grand piano with a Duo Art mechanism, and then recorded over and integrated with it a live performance of Ferde Grofé's original jazz-band orchestration by a group led by Michael Tilson Thomas, resulting in a neat stereo collaboration between a man who died in 1937 and one who was born in 1946.

The result, to put it mildly, is fascinating. Gershwin, of course, was a pop pianist, most at ease at solo improvisations. I am a pop pianist myself, so I know what happens when you play alone rather than with an orchestra or even a rhythm section. What happens is that you expressively pull rhythms out of shape and change tempos all over the place, creating an effect of spontaneous improvisation. And that is what Gershwin does. What the jazz band has to do, then, is to integrate itself with that kind of a performance and fill up spaces that are almost too short to get the necessary notes into them. It is no mean task, and the virtuosity expended here on accomplishing it is mighty impressive.

The result is a *Rhapsody* like no other on records (backed by an *American in Paris* that is very *much* like others on records, but very good). It is a period-piece performance that takes us right back to 1925 and lets us hear how our conceptions of rhythm have changed since that time. It sounds at times like a Broadway-musical overture, but at other times strikingly like Stravinsky, Milhaud, even Ives. Due to the nature of the thing, the performance is idiosyncratic, to be sure, but here is the piece free of the smoothings-out of later tradition, with the pungencies of the original orchestration, and with, also, some bits that got cut out or changed in the later version. We may never have come so close to the great Gershwin on records before. It's a cinch we never have in stereo.



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CIRCLE NO. 32 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Pop Beat

By Steve Simels



WHAT'S PLAYING IN PEORIA?

As you may recall, I had some rather sour things to say in the August issue about the state of rock as currently practiced in New York City. As a result James Wolcott, one of my favorite critics, took a swipe at me in a *Village Voice* review of a John Cale/Patti Smith show. He called me an "unreconstructed Pepperite" (I trust he meant Sgt. and not Dr.), which is rather ironic given the facts that Cale's "Paris 1919" is one of my favorite albums of all time and that I have been touting Patti Smith in these pages for so long and with such fervor that many of my readers are convinced I have no ears at all.

But I still maintain that the Big Boys of the scene, the ones who get all the flatulent hype—the Dolls, Television, Talking Heads, the Ramones—are pretty dreadful. Be that as it may, CBGB (Country, Blue Grass, and Blues), the club on New York's Bowery that launched many of these folks and has for some two years been giving a lot of talented bands a decent showcase, has just independently released a double live album of performances by most of the lesser known but better bands in town. Since Atlantic has just

picked it up for national distribution (meaning that the provinces will be able to buy it through normal channels), it seems like a good time to discuss it. It is, in fact, one of the most entertaining rock records of the year, far more likely to give Big Apple musicians a good name than either of the studio efforts we can expect shortly from Television and the Heads.

THE most remarkable aspect of the whole "progressive movement" is how mainstream most of these bands are, despite the "underground" tag they've been saddled with. There's next to nothing on the CBGB discs that is particularly innovative or avant-garde, just some very good songs that run the gamut from mid-Sixties styles (early San Francisco and Liverpool) to Seventies Stones-ish hard rock and heavy metal. If these bands are indeed "underground" in some way, it's not because they aren't commercial-sounding; most of them are, and a lot of them seem to me to be far better than groups such as Aerosmith, who are raking in the big bucks for doing the same sort of thing. The difference is that they

The Shirts with Annie Golden: simply riveting



haven't been signed up and mass-marketed in the cynical manner that characterizes the pop music business today, no one has persuaded them as yet to reduce what they do to that lowest common denominator the industry calls "product." Whether integrity can be maintained remains to be seen (a nice little record contract is the test); Patti Smith has managed it, so I am guardedly optimistic.

There is some chaff on "Live at CBGB's," of course. Manster's two contributions are (1) a Yardbirds remake that is commendably faithful instrumentally but features a parodistic vocal in the style of Tiny Tim (!) that is downright insulting, and (2) a really horrendous piece of psychedelic flappedoodle. Sun, a power trio that has appalled me in person on several occasions, attempts to invoke the spirit of Jimi Hendrix with what can only be called (charity, Simels!) a lack of success; and Tuff Darts, despite their excellent opening tune (one of the wittiest and most neatly put together odes to rock in recent memory), eventually become wearing in their relentless attempts to project a "baad-ass" image.

But almost everything else is memorable. Mink DeVille does a couple of tunes that are fascinating in their own right even as they eerily evoke the "Let It Bleed"-era Stones; the Miamis, a sort of latter-day Lovin' Spoonful, almost steal the album with a sloppy, joyous, and daffy ditty called *We Deliver*; the Shirts, the most legitimately "progressive" of the local groups and blessed with a tiny girl singer named Annie Golden who has one of the most powerful rock voices you've heard, contribute a simply riveting composition titled *Operetico*; Laughing Dogs' *It Feels Alright Tonight* is the kind of Beatles/Zombies updating, filled with melodic grace and originality, that such revivalists as Eric Carmen, the Raspberries, and Stories aimed for but missed; and Stuart's Hammer adds the regrettably brief *Everybody's Depraved*, at once a hilarious satire on the unlamented Glitter movement of a few years ago and a flat-out, exhilarating piece of rock-and-roll.

DESPITE the overall excellence of most of this stuff, the question remains whether it will have any lasting influence—and that may depend on whether New York is the *unique* hotbed of "creativity" the media hype has made it out to be. I wouldn't be surprised to learn that other cities have music scenes every bit as lively (I've heard a whole pot full of exciting homemade records from groups in Boston, Washington, and points beyond), but of course they are in no position to benefit from the chauvinism of the great number of rock critics, managers, and other professional trendies based in New York.

And so, though "Live at CBGB's" is a welcome indication that the sad state of the rock business may yet be revitalized by new bands in it for love rather than money, wouldn't it be even nicer if we knew this wasn't just a local phenomenon, if we could count on a whole phalanx of feisty little independents from coast to coast who would rise up and simply outflank the mass-market mentalities that gave us such computer-researched horrors as Kiss? For those of us who, given a choice between the latest disco smash and a preposterously mediocre boogie band in a 20,000-seat auditorium, would rather read a book (!), the ray of hope provided by the activity at a dingy little dive on the Bowery is heartening. But I sure would like to know what, if anything, is playing in Peoria.

Lisa Kristal/CBGB

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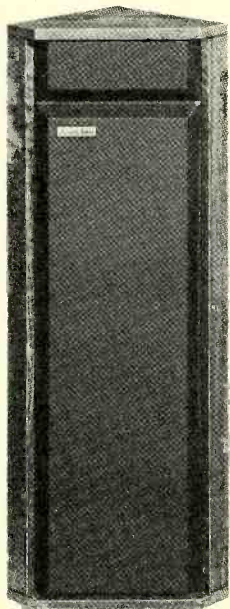
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CIRCLE NO. 2 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Basic Repertoire

By Martin Bookspan



BEETHOVEN'S RASUMOVSKY QUARTETS

"LATE, later, and latest" was the way my colleague Irving Kolodin recently categorized the last five of the remarkable series of sixteen string quartets by Beethoven. Thus Kolodin extended the usual classification, which puts the Beethoven quartets into the convenient pigeonholes of early, middle, and late periods. And yet, perhaps more properly than any other single category of his creative output, Beethoven's string quartets *do* fit the early, middle, and late classifications. He was in his late twenties and a recent settler in Vienna from his native Bonn when he composed the six quartets of his Opus 18. It was a time when he was flexing his creative muscles in a variety of ways. He was in his middle and late thirties when the next five string quartets came into being, the three of Opus 59 and those of Opus 74 and Opus 95. By then his personal style had become well defined. The final five quartets and the *Grosse Fuge* belong to the last three years of Beethoven's life, when he was engrossed with rarefied spiritual ideas.

It was a commission from the Russian ambassador to Vienna, Count Andreas Kyrilovich Rasumovsky, that brought the three string quartets of Beethoven's Opus 59 into being. Rasumovsky was a man of enormous wealth and a passingly fair violinist. In his commission, he specified that each of the quartets have a Russian theme. The last movement of Opus 59, No. 1, and the Trio of Opus 59, No. 2, do indeed contain Russian folk material; that in Opus 59, No. 2, is "Glory to God in Heaven, Glory!", the same theme Moussorgsky later used with such overwhelming effect in the Coronation Scene of *Boris Godunov*. But when it came time for Beethoven to compose the third quartet in the group, he either forgot or ignored the Russian-theme requirement. Rasumovsky made no fuss about the omission, and Beethoven, quite naturally, dedicated the three quartets to the man who had spurred their creation.

The three Opus 59 quartets represent a radical advance over anything that had previously been written for the string-quartet medium, and early audiences and performers were bewildered by them. There is the story of the cellist who, in a pique of frustration and incomprehension, seized the music off his stand, threw it to the floor and trampled on it; a British organist considered the works

"patchwork by a madman." And when the leader of the famous Schuppanzigh Quartet complained to Beethoven about the F Major work (No. 3), the composer is reported to have answered: "Do you think I care about your wretched fiddle when the spirit speaks to me?" But time and familiarity have gained for the *Rasumovsky* Quartets their proper perspective in history. They are infused with drama and power, with lofty and probing thought. It is now generally acknowledged that they are, quite simply, among the greatest glories of music in Western civilization.

Most of the great string-quartet ensembles of the past and present have recorded the *Rasumovsky* Quartets, either as single entities or as part of an integral recording of all the Beethoven string quartets. The packaging of such performances in albums of early, middle, and late quartets, while handy in one sense, imposes a financial burden on the collector who wants only a given quartet in the series. All things considered, perhaps the best combination of performance excellence and freedom of choice is to be had in the two-disc Quartet-to-Italiano set of the three *Rasumovsky* Quartets (Philips 6747139). The playing and recording of all three works is finely polished and sensitively phrased and shaded. The recorded sound is well balanced and suitably resonant.

Also among my favorite performances of all those in the current catalog are the ones by the Guarneri Quartet—full of vibrant life and pulse. They are now available both in a four-disc album (RCA VCS 6415) at a special low price and individually (RCA LSC 3286, 3287, and 3288) at the regular price. The purchaser of the single disc of Op. 59, No. 3, will also receive the *Harp* Quartet (Op. 74) as a coupling, but purchasers of the four-disc set get both the *Harp* and the *Serioso* (Op. 95) with the *Rasumovskys*. In my view the set is well worth it.

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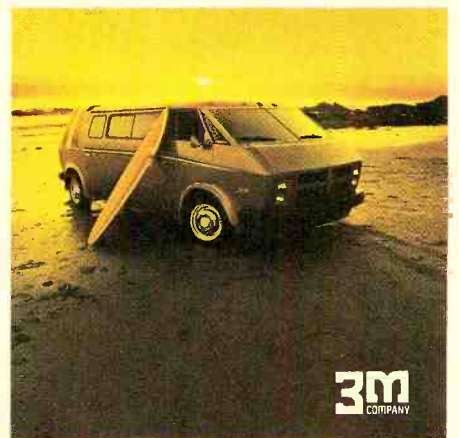
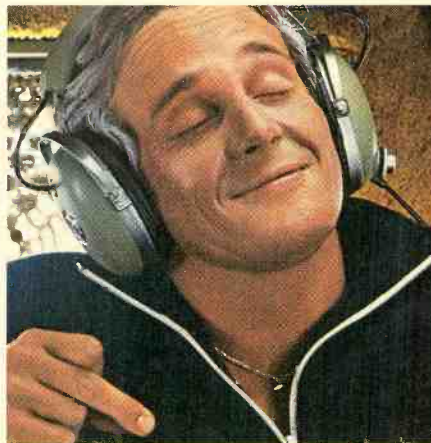
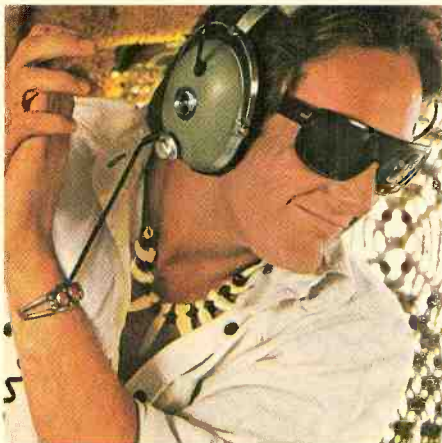
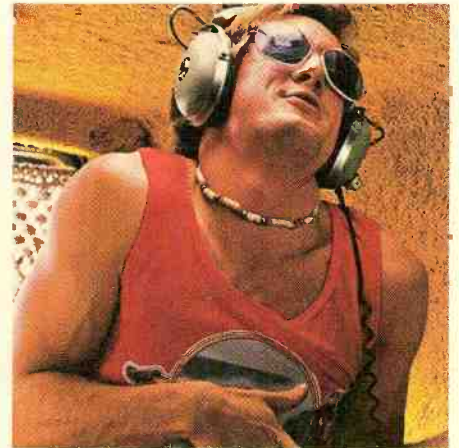
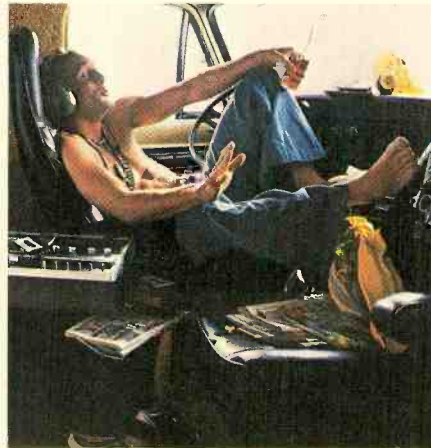


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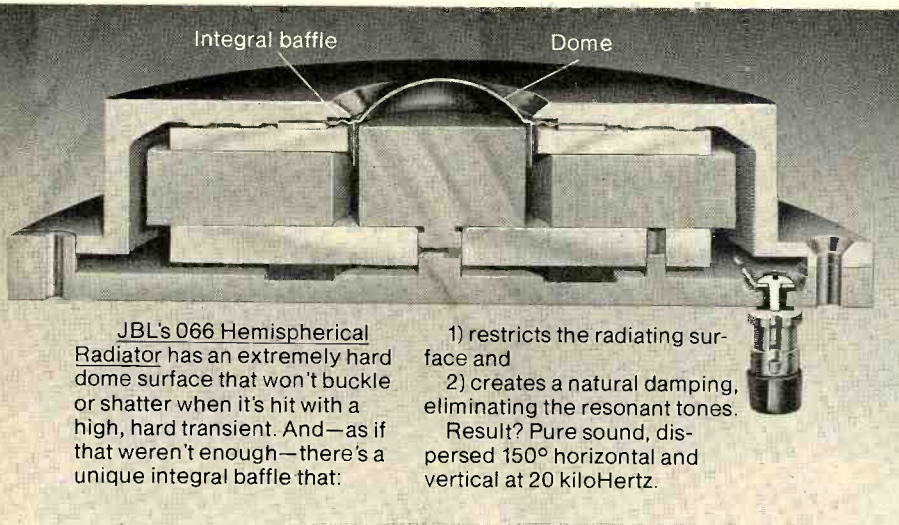
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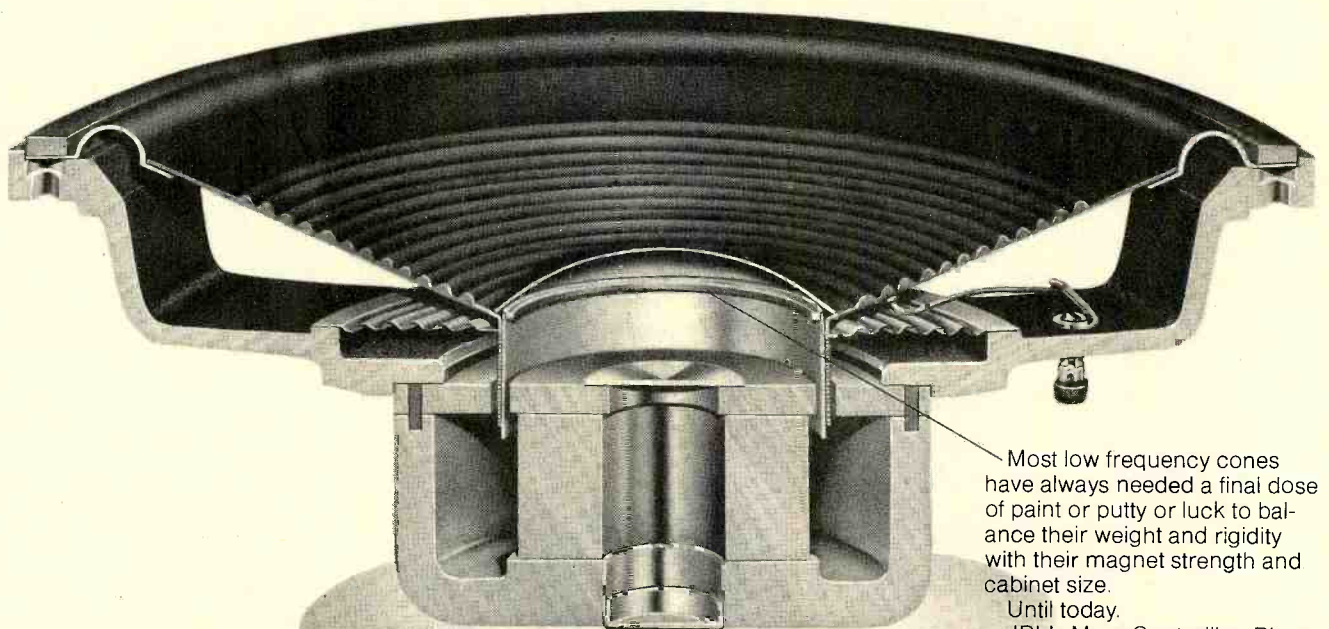
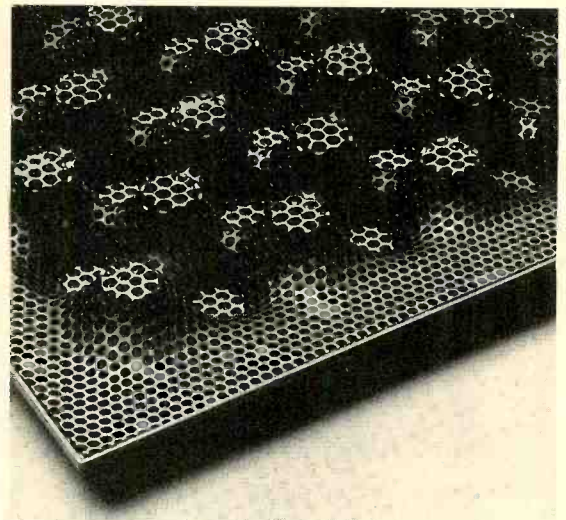
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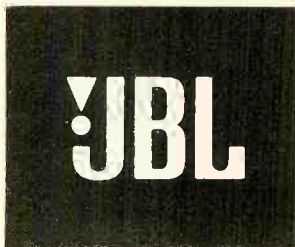
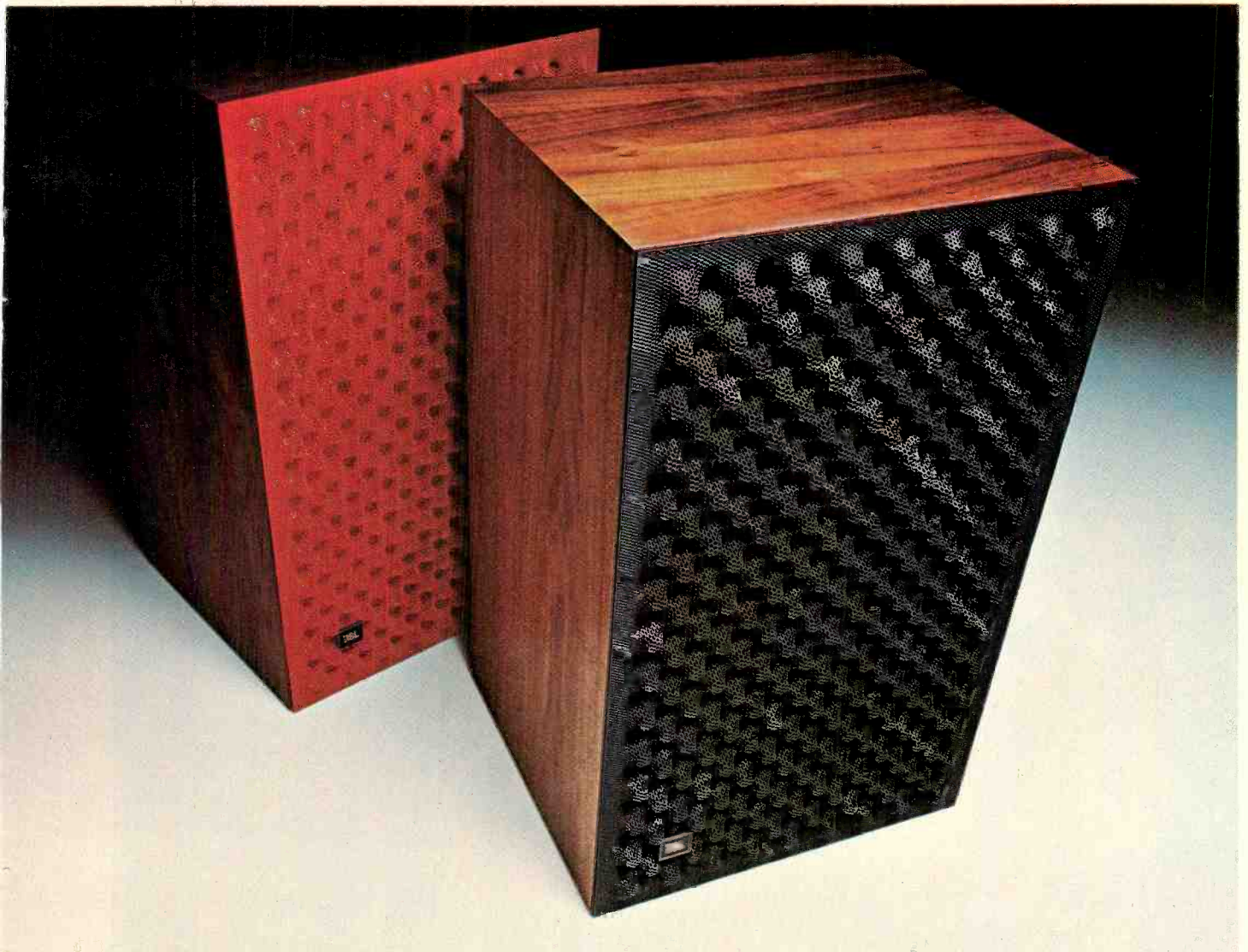
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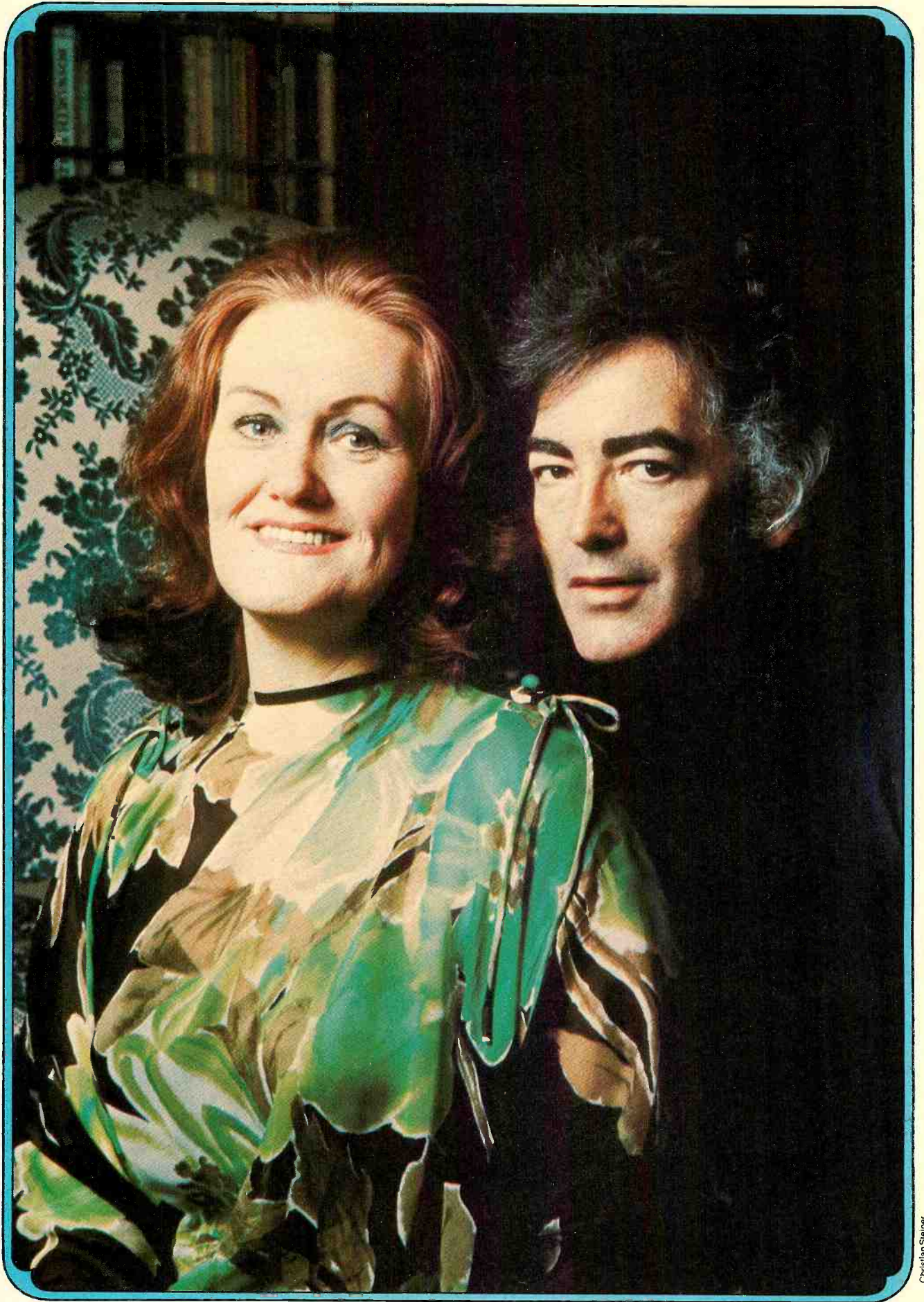
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Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonynges

Mr. and Mrs.
Bel Canto

By William Livingstone

WHEN the truly thunderous ovation died down at the Met after the new Australian soprano had finished the Mad Scene in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the young friend I was with turned to me, her eyes sparkling, and said, "What a tiresome old crone I'm going to be years from now when I'm in an old ladies' home and some young person tries to tell me about a rising coloratura soprano. I'm going to rap on the floor with my cane and say, 'Yes, my dear, but I heard Sutherland!'"

That was in the old Metropolitan Opera House back in 1961, and I think everyone who attended one of Joan Sutherland's performances of *Lucia* that first year sensed that he was witnessing a historic event. After her Met debut on November 26, Miss Sutherland told reporters she had never heard a sound like the tumult that greeted her when she came out for her curtain calls. And those in the audience had never heard anything quite like the sounds she had produced on the stage. Voices of that range, beauty, clarity, and flexibility were not supposed to come in that size. Neither her impressive early records nor hearing her in recital in a high-school gymnasium in Englewood, New Jersey, had prepared me for the effect of hearing her voice fill an auditorium the size of the Met.

In the two and a half years before her triumphant Met debut Sutherland had had similar successes in *Lucia* and other bel canto operas all across the United States and in the great European opera houses in London, Paris, Vienna, and Milan. These triumphs were not hers alone, however, but were also the results of ten years of hard work by her compatriot, the pianist Richard Bonynges, who was her teacher, her coach, her accompanist, and her husband. He had trained her voice and led her into the bel canto repertoire in which she was conquering the operatic world.

Since then he has also become a leading conductor and an administrator of opera companies in Canada and Australia. They are not, by the way, "the Sutherlands." They are Miss Sutherland and Maestro Bonynges, the Bonynges, or, to their friends, Joan and Ricky. Because they have been so

important in the continuing bel canto revival and because it has been so influential in their brilliant joint career, they might seem to many fans to be Mr. and Mrs. Bel Canto.

The Bonynges have returned to the Met frequently, and they will be back again in the current season in a new production of Massenet's *Esclarmonde*, giving the first performances of that opera in the history of the company. The premiere is scheduled for November 19. Since that will be just a week short of Miss Sutherland's fifteenth anniversary at the Met and just twelve days past her fiftieth birthday, this seemed an appropriate time to talk with the Bonynges about their past and their future, and I spent a pleasant afternoon chatting with them in the press room at the Metropolitan.

THEY wear their years of hard work and success well. There are a few laugh lines around Miss Sutherland's eyes and mouth, but they do not mar her sweetness of expression, and Bonynges, still slender, is just beginning to go grey at the temples, which makes him look more distinguished. They talked with the ease of a couple of affluent but down-to-earth Australian tourists who have just had a marvelous trip around the world and are enjoying telling everyone about it.

They both got their early training in Sydney and then went to London, Bonynges in 1950, Miss Sutherland in 1951. The following year she was accepted as a resident member of the opera company at Covent Garden, and they credit much of their success and the durability of Miss Sutherland's voice to the seven years spent there polishing her craft.

"Those were great days," Bonynges said. "Sydney was not then the cultural center it is now, so when we went to London, it was quite extraordinary for us, and we would go seven or eight times a week to the operas and ballets, queuing up and going to the very cheapest seats, and we drank it in as though we'd been starved for it all our lives. That was the beginning of Joan's learning."

"We were like sponges," she added. "Oh, goodness, how we used to watch

"I didn't do badly with Aida either."

"No, you were a very good Aida, and in the third and fourth acts you were a very, very good Aida indeed."

Mr. and Mrs. Bel Canto

from up there in the gods, where there was no room for long legs and the benches were hard and with no backs to them so you always had someone else's knees in your back. But there's nothing like the excitement of seeing a performance that way from above where the sound is so much diffused and blended and somehow sort of marvelous. I think one enjoyed the opera more in those days than when one went to a better seat."

Bonyngé continued: "Then in the opera house she did a variety of roles—very small and very large right from the beginning. In her first year she sang the Countess in *Figaro* and Amelia in *The Masked Ball* as well as the Overseer in *Elektra* and the First Lady in *The Magic Flute*."

"And I was understudying the Marschallin at the same time," Miss Sutherland said. "Those years were terribly important to both of us. Covent Garden was building a basic resident company, trying to use all British people because their government grant necessitated that. At first they had a very good dramatic soprano in Sylvia Fisher, who was also Australian, and Blanche Turner, who was a lyric soprano, and Adele Leigh, who was sort of the soubrette, and they had *me*. We covered everything and had the possibility of doing performances of most things. Even if I wasn't in an opera, I had the opportunity to watch rehearsals, to observe the stage directors and to listen to all the singers."

Her early roles included Clotilde in *Norma* (with Maria Callas), Agathe in *Der Freischütz*, the Woodbird and a Rhinemaiden in Wagner's *Ring*, Gilda in *Rigoletto*, Eva in *Die Meistersinger*, and numerous roles in modern operas. She worked constantly with Bonyngé, who led her to vocalize higher and higher and to acquire the coloratura technique necessary for the florid passages in the operas of Bellini, Donizetti, and Rossini, which he loved and thought she should sing.

"In 1955 we were in the middle of big rows with the management of Covent Garden as to the direction Joan's career should take," he said. "They wanted to push her into the big dramatic roles, and we were very much against it. And in one week—I always say they did it to shut us up once and for all—they gave her the title role in

Aida on Monday and *Olympia* in *The Tales of Hoffmann* on Wednesday. After the Doll Song in *Hoffmann* she had a five-minute ovation."

"And I didn't do badly with the *Aida* either," Miss Sutherland quipped.

"No, you were a very good *Aida*, and in the third and fourth acts you were a very, very good *Aida* indeed," he said.

Her success with the difficult coloratura role in *The Tales of Hoffmann* confirmed Bonyngé's claims about his wife's voice and determined the direction they would take. In 1959, Covent Garden brought *Lucia* back into the repertoire. For most of her roles at the opera house Miss Sutherland was not in the first cast, but was a second or third replacement. ("I was in the first cast for a new *Carmen*—as Frasquita. I was about seventh cast for Micaëla.") But she was in the first cast of that *Lucia*, an expensive new production mounted especially for her. At the premiere all the Bonyngés' work paid off in such a dazzling success that she was instantly in demand all over the world.

"It was a funny sort of overnight success," she said. "I had been singing there for seven years, and you know the voice didn't suddenly change. Many young singers are too eager to

But when it came, they were ready and they continued to work like demons, building what has become one of the greatest performing careers in musical history. Jet air travel had just been introduced to take them quickly wherever they wished to go, and the stereo record had just been introduced to document their repertoire. It has included operas by Mozart, Meyerbeer, Handel, Haydn, Gounod, Delibes, and Verdi, but many of their supreme achievements have been in the bel canto operas—Rossini's *Semiramide*, Donizetti's *La Fille du Régiment*, *Maria Stuarda*, and *Lucrezia Borgia*, and Bellini's *I Puritani*, *Beatrice di Tenda*, *La Sonnambula*, and *Norma*.

THEY have kept both *Lucia* and *Puritani* in their active repertoire and have recorded both of them twice. Last season they had great success with *Lucia* in Chicago and *Puritani* at the Met. Miss Sutherland says she never gets bored with them. "They're always interesting. You always find something new that you hadn't quite noticed before, and they always come back fresh." And Bonyngé added, "What is so marvelous is that there's a whole new audience for them out there, a whole new crop coming in."

"We are entertainers. And unless we entertain the public, the purpose of our work is defeated."

Left to right: Joan Sutherland as Stella in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, as Marie in *The Daughter of the Regiment*, as Amina in *La Sonnambula*, and as Esclarmonde in *Esclarmonde*.



get out there and do things they aren't ready for physically. I'm not talking about the mind. Today there are people who at twenty are more sophisticated than I am at my age. It's a purely physical thing. I don't think the voice itself matures before thirty. For me everything just sort of jelled at that stage."

And Bonyngé added, "We always thank God that the Big Moment didn't come any earlier because she mightn't have been ready."

It was not always easy. Partly from overwork in the late Fifties and early Sixties, Miss Sutherland was prey to debilitating infections, and she stoically endured extensive dental work, a hazardous sinus operation, and a painful back condition. Today she dismisses those health problems as "much exaggerated."

Maria Callas, Sutherland's great predecessor in the bel canto revival, was known as *La Divina*. Italian audiences

quickly dubbed Sutherland La Stupenda. Callas always encouraged her younger colleague and applauded her successes. "Callas was absolutely marvelous. I adored her," Miss Sutherland said, still beaming with admiration. "I sang with her in 1952, Clotilde to her Norma. It's quite a role, Norma. Many people underestimate it. Maria said to me, 'One of these days you can sing it,' but the operative phrase was 'one of these days.' We looked at it then, and I knew the voice was not yet ready for it, not capable of sustaining the power needed over those long acts and have anything left for that colossal last act."

I asked whether it was true that she, in turn, had encouraged Montserrat Caballé to attempt *Norma*, and she laughed merrily. "She's just great! I was singing *Norma* with Bernabé [Caballé's husband, the tenor Bernabé Martí] in Philadelphia, and she came down because she wanted to hear me sing it. She was going to sing this opera, she was going to sing it! Yes, yes, I mean why *not*? She has fantastic ability. She floors me! The way she can spin those phrases, I could kill her! It's obviously a very Spanish thing. She does it and Berganza can do it and De los Angeles could do it. It's something to do with the flamenco, something that

when I recorded *Turandot*," Miss Sutherland said, "but I found it pure bel canto. And such a lovely short role. Only nineteen minutes."

I ASKED Bonynges how he explained the continuing drawing power of the bel canto operas, and he answered, "The public that comes to a bel canto opera is coming to a vocal circus—the critics have said that against us, I'll say it for us. The singers are treading the high wires, they're doing vocal gymnastics, and if they're big singers and they bring it off well, it's very exciting."

"And there's always that element of doubt," his wife interjected, "whether they will make it. A singer just may crack on that high E-flat and fall on her face."

"And if opera is to stay alive," he continued, "and there's every evidence that it's going to stay alive because of the young people coming along who are really passionately interested in it, we have to bring back the great operas of the past until someone comes up with new things that are comparable." He sees only a few signs that composers are beginning to write melodically and risk being called old-fashioned for trying to please the public. "It's no good putting on operas only a

something they can enjoy or else it's criminal."

In selecting operas to perform now, the Bonynges look for something that interests Miss Sutherland dramatically. ("Turandot is just another cardboard character, and I've discarded *La Sonnambula* for the same reason.") Bonynges thinks weak librettos get in the way no matter how great the music is. "*Linda di Chamounix* is a beautiful opera, perfect for Joan vocally, but the libretto is so stupid—about a girl protecting her virtue. The public won't swallow that Victorian nonsense today." He thinks they stand a better chance with the ultra-Romantic or with fantasy, such as *Esclarmonde*, which is set in Babylon and has a lot of magic and spells. They opened the season with *Esclarmonde* in San Francisco two years ago, and it went very well. "I think *Esclarmonde* succeeds today with all its priests, and priestesses," Miss Sutherland said, "because of the current interest in the occult and everybody reading their zodiac signs. And of course the music is beautiful—the more you hear it the better it gets." Their recording of *Esclarmonde* is scheduled for fall release by London to coincide with the Met premiere.

In the theater and on records the



Spanish pupils get from Spanish teachers. It's a technical matter, and if I understood it completely, I could do it myself, but with me it doesn't work the same way."

The Bonynges define bel canto technique simply as "the true art of singing well," and they maintain that a singer well grounded in the technique required to sing the bel canto operas can go on to Verdi, Wagner, verismo, or anything. "Some people were shocked

very few people want to see. We want pieces that will mean full houses every night."

"The public *must* be pleased," Miss Sutherland exclaimed. "We are entertainers. And unless we *entertain* the public, the purpose of our work is defeated. They're not all musicologists sitting out there; most of them don't even read music. We're the ones who are paid to do that, and they pay to listen, and they should bloody well get

Bonynges have been in the forefront of the revival of French opera now gathering strength. They have recorded *Faust*, *The Tales of Hoffmann* (in Bonynges's own performing edition), and *Lakmé*, which they have performed in several opera houses, and he has recorded Massenet's *Thérèse* without her. "I love French music, and I love the sound of Joan's voice in French. I'm particularly interested in the French music of the second half of the

Mr. and Mrs. Bel Canto

nineteenth century. Massenet is my favorite, but I'd like to do some of the Debussy choral works, and I like Saint-Saëns, d'Indy, Gounod—and Bizet was a great composer. I'm doing *Carmen* for the first time now, and I'll be doing *Pearl Fishers* and *Djamileh* next year. We're preparing *Le Roi de Lahore* for Vancouver. It's early Massenet, a lovely old-fashioned opera that's filled with inspiration, and I think the public will like it."

Bonyng is artistic director of the opera company in Vancouver and managing director in Sydney, where he spends five months of the year. He enjoys working in these younger operatic centers because he finds the public less biased and more open to unfamiliar works. In both cities he supervises casting, repertoire, and artistic standards as well as conducting some of the operas. "I thrive on hard work, and at the moment I'm learning an immense number of new operas, many more per year than I'm used to." He also continues to record ballet scores, though he never has time to conduct for the many ballet companies that have approached him.

IN their long and fruitful association with London Records (British Decca) the Bonynges have recorded almost their entire operatic repertoire together—plus a few operas, such as Donizetti's *L'Elisir d'Amore*, which they have not yet performed in the theater, as well as many recitals of arias, songs, and operetta excerpts. Verdi's *Il Trovatore* (with Luciano Pavarotti, Marilyn Horne, and Ingvar Wixell) was this summer's recording project. And as yet unreleased is their recording of Leoni's *L'Oracolo*, which Bonyng describes as a marvelous piece of theater, very like Puccini. ("Oh, no, Joan could never perform it on stage. The role she sings is that of a seventeen-year-old Chinese virgin!")

Bonyng's complete *Swan Lake* was released recently, and awaiting release still are more ballet albums as well as Donizetti's *La Favorita* with Pavarotti and Fiorenza Cossotto. They talk enthusiastically of the fun they've had with operettas such as *Fledermaus* and *The Merry Widow*, and their desire to record more light music such as albums of Victor Herbert, Ivor Novello, and film music from the Twenties and Thir-

ties for which they have collected material. But they have no idea when they will find the time.

The subject of time comes into their conversation frequently—the pressure of learning new music and scheduling rehearsals, performances, and travel. "We have a son [Adam, now twenty] and one doesn't see nearly enough of him," Miss Sutherland said. "And we have a lovely home in Switzerland where I very much enjoy being at home



David H. Fishman

SAMPLING SUTHERLAND

Although it is almost inconceivable that there could be an audiophile who has yet to experience the voice of Joan Sutherland, I would suggest, if you are one, that you sample either "The Art of the Prima Donna" (London OSA 1214) or the album of high-lights from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (with—see photo above—Luciano Pavarotti on London OS 26332) and top them off (seasonally) with one of the most brilliant Christmas albums ever made, "The Joy of Christmas" (London OS 25943). I believe I can guarantee that neither your sound system nor your ears will ever be the same again. —W.L.

and just being Mrs. Bonyng." But these are mild complaints that convey no sense of time running out or preoccupation with age.

"One worries more about aging when one is twenty-six or twenty-

eight," Bonyng said. "One suddenly thinks, 'I'm getting old.' But later it doesn't matter so much." And the approach of fifty does not bother Miss Sutherland at all. "For me the fortieth birthday was the hard one. It gave me the shudders for three days. Now I don't think about it."

Miss Sutherland has been compared so often to the famous Australian singer Dame Nellie Melba (1861-1931) that I asked her whether she would like to continue singing into old age, as Melba did, and still be making farewell tours at seventy. "No," she answered flatly. "Some singers should stop long before they do, and I don't want to be one of those, I really don't."

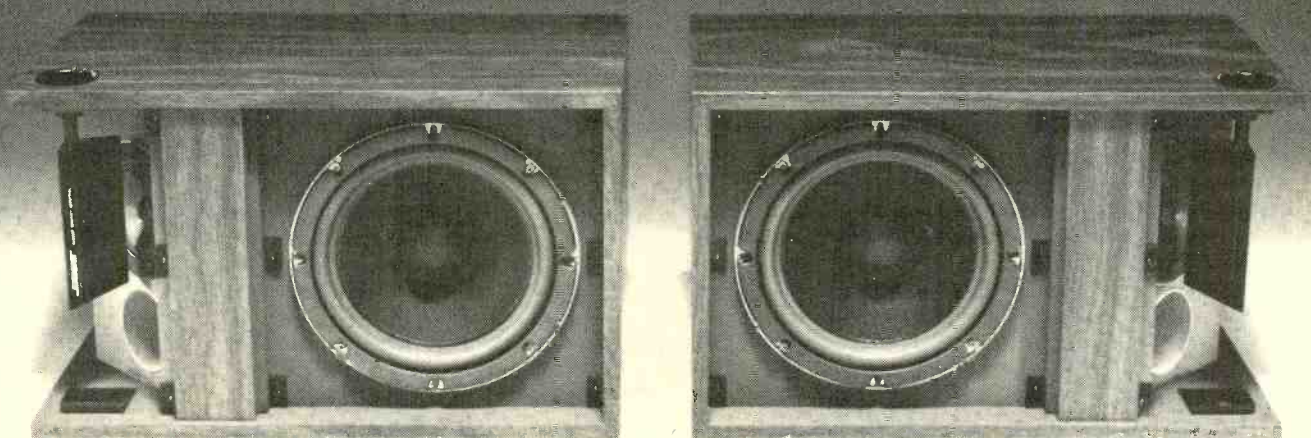
Bonyng reassured her affectionately, "Darling, I'll be the first to tell you when you start going off."

"I have been singing a long time," she continued. "Would you believe thirty years? I'd like to think I'll have some years when I can sit back and enjoy watching other people do it. Now, I would like to sing less. It doesn't look like it this year, but after that it gets better."

SHE may wish to sing a bit less frequently, but Miss Sutherland still has some new roles in store for us. "We still do a lot of the coloratura repertoire and there's no need to drop it," Bonyng said. "But there are some dramatic roles I think it would be nice for her to play. One gets a little bored with roles that offer no opportunity to create dramatically, which is what interests Joan now. *Aida* is not on the list. We've had *Aida*. But we think very much of *Adriana Lecouvreur*, and I think she'll do it. We even toy with *Gioconda* and *Macbeth* because of the dramatic challenges they offer."

Although two biographies of Joan Sutherland have already been published, one by Russell Braddon (1962) and one by Edward Greenfield (1973), it is clear that the Bonynges still have more chapters of operatic history to write, whether in the French repertoire, Italian dramatic roles, or both. At the end of the interview I had a moment alone with Miss Sutherland and asked if she ever speculated on what might have happened had she gone into the Wagnerian repertoire, which she considered at the beginning of her career. "We talk about it," she said, "and wonder whether the voice would have lasted. I still have an incredible hankering for some of the Wagnerian roles. I adore Isolde's music in *Tristan*. It just *does* things to me." If she ever decides to take on that challenge, well, I, for one, hope I'm around and can manage to totter in from the old folks' home to hear it. □

Odd Couple.

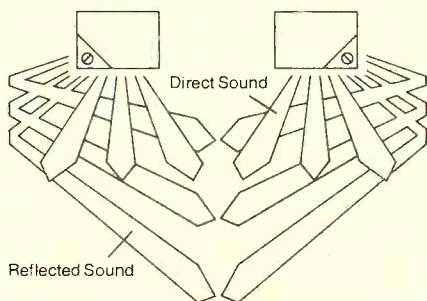


This is a pair of Bose Model 301 Direct/Reflecting® bookshelf speakers with their grilles removed.

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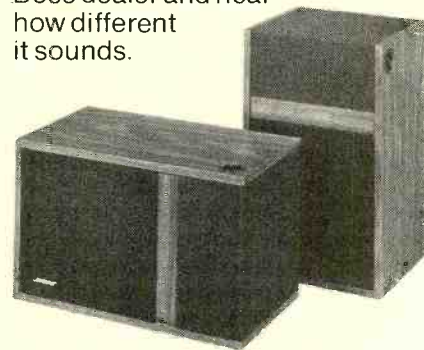
design. As a result, a pair of Model 301s has woofers pointing straight ahead and tweeters angled outward. A large proportion of the high frequency energy is reflected off the side walls and then into the center of the listening room, rather than being aimed directly at the listener. As in a live performance, the listener is surrounded with a balance of reflected and direct sound. This is the same principle used in the Bose 501 and in the legendary Bose 901® Direct/Reflecting speaker system. The result is extraordinarily open, natural, and spacious sound.

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Using FM interstation hiss to test recorders and speakers



It is not generally appreciated, but the hiss heard between FM stations can be an exceedingly helpful tool in evaluating audio performance. The hiss, which is actually random noise, can serve to check tape-recorder performance at the input end of your system and loudspeaker performance at the output end. Anyone owning a receiver or FM tuner can therefore perform several simple and effective checks to determine if adjustment, cleaning, or repair is needed.

It has been known for a number of years that random-noise input could provide a very exacting method of testing loudspeakers if sufficient rigor were used in setting up a "live-vs.-reproduced" white-noise test. Random noise, when used for such A-B comparisons, has special properties that are lacking in ordinary music. Music is constantly fluctuating in amplitude and frequency content, and these fluctuations can make detailed listening evaluations quite difficult. Random noise, however, has a texture that the ear or-

dinarily interprets as uniform. Although FM interstation noise, or hiss, lacks the consistency of true, balanced "white" noise as produced by a signal generator, it is more than adequate for making a number of recorder and speaker tests.

Tape Tests

Before you engage in an important recording session, it is very good practice to make some quick preliminary checks to see if your recorder is operating properly. After cleaning the heads and demagnetizing the tape path, recordists quite often assume that their tape unit, provided it is fairly new or has been recently serviced, is in good working order. However, the heads may not be spotlessly clean and the tape may not, for one reason or another, be making good contact with them.

Before your recording session, then, set the machine up to record with the tape you plan to use. Turn on your FM

unit, switch the muting off, and tune *between* a pair of stations. Pick a part of the dial that provides the most uniform "hiss," free of extraneous buzzes and other noises. Using a Y connector (see illustration above), plug the male end into *one* (right or left) tape-output jack and feed the other two outputs to the right and left line (aux) inputs on your recorder (This will insure that the *same* signal is going to both recorder channels.) With some amplifiers it may be possible to achieve the same thing simply by switching to mono. In that case, the normal tape-output jacks can be used without a Y connector.

During the following series of tests it is important that you not overdrive your speakers with the hiss test signal. Keep the levels moderate, for a constant very high input of such energy can burn out your tweeters. Now *record* the FM hiss, keeping the level well below 0 VU on the recorder's meters to avoid saturating the tape with excessive high-frequency energy. (A level of -10 dB on an open-reel ma-



There's a no-cost random-noise test generator built into your FM tuner that can perform some useful checks on your system

By Howard Ferstler

chine will probably be about right.) As you record, use the "monitor" switch on the recorder or preamplifier to compare the "source" FM hiss signal with the "recorded" signal. The match won't be exact, but it should be very close. You will find it easier to do one channel at a time, so use the recorder's input-level controls to drive first one channel and then the other. Adjust the output control of the tape recorder (if one is present) to get a close level match—the closer the better.

If the heads are dirty or if the tape path suffers from some kind of misalignment, the recorded signal will sound very different from the direct "original" signal. It may be muffled or very much lower in volume. During this test, use whatever tape-type or bias/equalization controls are available on the recorder to get as close a match as possible between the channels. If you can get both channels to sound fairly similar to each other *and* the original noise in sound quality, but each channel's controls need to be set quite

differently, there may or may not be a problem. A simple solution is just to take note of the discrepancy in control settings and make the proper compensation when making your recording.

If low recording levels are used, most good open-reel machines operating at $7\frac{1}{2}$ and $3\frac{3}{4}$ ips should be able to record and reproduce the FM interstation hiss quite well. If both channels of the unit sound the same but the sound is still muffled or lacking in extreme highs in the "tape" position of the monitor switch, you may not be using the tape preferred for your recorder—that is to say, the tape may be perfectly good in itself, but lacking in the specific characteristics required by your particular machine.

Most cassette recorders do not have three heads and therefore lack monitoring capability. Nonetheless, the procedure described above can still be used with slight modifications. All the cassette recordist need do is record the hiss, rewind the recorded section

(making certain, in the meantime, *not* to alter the FM tuner controls), and then play the tape back while switching back and forth between the FM and tape inputs on the amplifier. It should be pointed out that the permissible recording level for the hiss signal on a cassette unit is lower than that of a reel-to-reel deck of similar quality. (Incidentally, if your system also includes Dolby noise reduction, these tests can be used to determine if everything is working properly to give the flattest output in addition to noise reduction.)

Although everything may seem to be in good shape and the tape well matched to the machine, you may find that you still can't duplicate the sound of the FM hiss signal exactly. This is likely to be the case if you are working with the lower tape speeds on low-cost open-reel units or with low-cost cassette decks. The sound of FM hiss is not easy to record perfectly, and it is not unusual to find some "dulling" of the highs—or, on the other hand, even a slight brightening. These deficiencies

Using FM interstation hiss to test recorders and speakers

may not be terribly evident when one is dubbing most recorded music, as a quick switch to an FM radio station and a source-monitor check will demonstrate. However, they may be very audible in dubbing from high-quality sources or making a live recording.

There are two ways to correct this high-frequency fault, and both require extreme care. One is simply to boost the amplifier's treble to achieve a better balance in playback. You can determine the amount of correction to be applied by using the noise signal, later applying the same amount during music reproduction. The problem with this method is that the background tape hiss will also be increased. The other solution is to record at a lower input level (assuming that tape saturation is causing the loss), but this too may result in increased tape hiss. If you try a lower recording level and it doesn't help, it means that you were already operating below the point at which the tape suffers high-frequency saturation.

Speaker Systems

Using FM interstation noise for evaluating speaker systems does not provide as exact a check as it does for tape recorders and tape, but it is still very useful in determining speaker placement, tonal balance, and the condition of the drivers in the systems.

When the speakers involved are of the same make and model (most stereo pairs are), each system can be used as a reference against which to evaluate the other. First set your amplifier "mode" switch to mono or L + R (you can be sure of a properly mixed signal at the speaker terminals without using a Y connector). Now switch on the FM interstation hiss. With the volume set at a moderate level, switch from one speaker to another and compare overall tonal balances. The chances are very good that they will *not* sound as much alike as you thought they would. One reason is that each is in a different location and the room's acoustic modes are affecting their tonal balances differently. If possible, move the two speakers to the center of the room, preferably off the floor, close to each other, and facing in

the same direction so that both are working into the same acoustic environment. (If your speakers are designed to operate in a specific spatial relationship to the walls, these test results may be inconclusive).

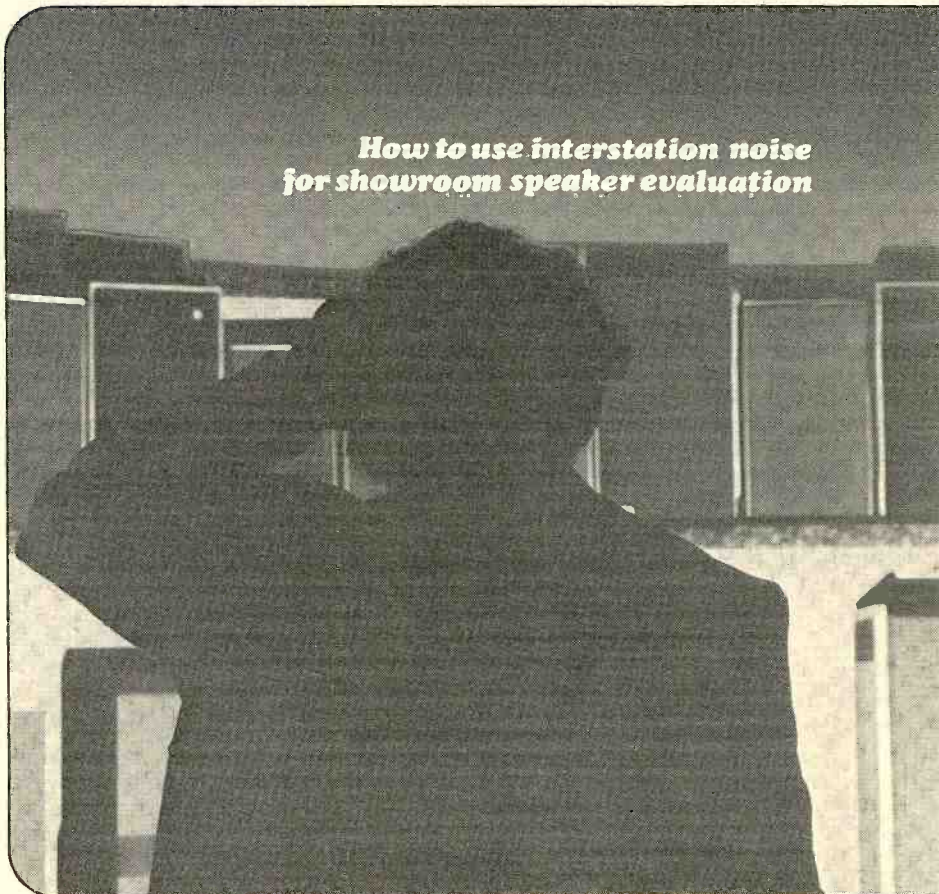
Now repeat the above test. Stand back 10 feet or more so that the integrated reverberant sound field predominates and the correct balance is heard (if you listen from a position too close to the speakers your physical relationship to each driver, though only slightly different, may alter the perceived tonal balance). Your speakers should now sound very much more alike. One system may emphasize the highs or the mid-range a bit more than the other, but the shift should be subtle and perhaps can be corrected by adjusting a tweeter or mid-range control.

There are two ways to determine what legitimate differences can be expected between two good speakers. One is to visit a dealer or a friend who has similar speakers and perform the random-noise tests there to establish a reference standard. The other is to note how the hiss' tonal balance seems to shift as you turn your head during the test. The tonal shift heard will be similar in magnitude to the difference between two good speakers.

If there is a *gross* difference between the sound of the two speakers, it is possible that one or more of their level controls is miscalibrated—particularly if they are of the continuous rather than the switchable type—so that though the knob settings are the same, the audible results differ. You may find that a simple repositioning of a knob on one of the systems will correct things. As a last resort, you may have to check out a third system's controls (same make and model number, of course) to determine what the "normal" control range is. Then again, it is possible that one of the controls is simply dirty; this condition can usually be corrected by rapidly rotating the control from one extreme to the other to remove accumulated oxide deposits. And, finally, the control itself may be defective.

MISCALIBRATED amplifier tone or balance controls may also be at fault. Their zero or "flat" settings may not actually be exactly that. To determine if the difference in sound character is caused by the speaker systems, misaligned amplifier tone controls, or whatever, make a mental note of the relative tonal differences (still using interstation hiss, naturally) between the speaker systems and then switch the speaker

How to use interstation noise for showroom speaker evaluation



leads (shut off the amplifier first to avoid shorting the outputs). Listen again. If each speaker maintains its sonic character without change when fed from the opposite channel, the problem is with the speakers and not with the other equipment. If, on the other hand, the apparent sonic difference shifts along with the channel change, the source of the difficulty is *not* the speakers but somewhere else in your setup.

It is obvious that maladjusted or faulty tone controls could be that source, but most of us would not think of the balance control as being capable of altering tonal balance. Our ears' sensitivity to different frequencies varies at different volume levels, however, so that if one channel is slightly louder than the other the two speakers may *seem* to have different tonal balances on random noise. Make certain, therefore, that the balance control is electrically centered when performing the tests.

If both speaker systems sound very much alike, then both are probably working properly—unless you have blown out the tweeters in both! This is not too unlikely a possibility in these days of super-power amplifiers and discs that embody a healthy amount of

high-frequency energy. Do not, however, expect your speakers to sound *exactly* alike in this test, since it is not uncommon for high-quality speakers even of the same make and model to differ by as much as 3 to 5 dB in various areas of their frequency ranges (two speakers may both be within 2.5 dB of "flat," but in opposite directions).

If you are still not quite sure of your results, you can make use of the boost-cut capability of your speakers' mid-range and/or tweeter-level controls. You can then evaluate the separate drivers in each speaker system fairly accurately. Some systems have tweeter and mid-range controls that allow you to turn those particular drivers completely off. Thus, by using a combination of amplifier tone controls and individual speaker-level controls, it is possible to do a very good job of systematically comparing tweeters, mid-range drivers, and woofers in separate A-B tests. However, if the systems sound very much alike in the earlier test, such rigor would be unnecessary—unless, as mentioned before, you have blown out the tweeters and/or mid-range drivers in *both* systems. You can check for blown voice coils by feeding in the random-noise signal, turning down the amplifier's bass con-

trols), and placing your ear as close to the tweeter as possible. If you hear *anything* coming out of the tweeter (and it won't be very loud), it's probably okay. You can do the same with the mid-range drivers as well. They will of course be much louder and probably have a sort of hollow sound quality (as opposed to the sizzle of the tweeters).

ASIDE from its role in troubleshooting, FM random noise can be used as the test signal in two very helpful speaker-evaluation techniques which are described by Larry Klein in the accompanying box. All of which makes it perfectly clear that everything, even noise, has its uses. It is a happy paradox that the same FM interstation noise that tuner manufacturers have spent so much time and money learning how to mute provides such a useful multipurpose test signal. For a change, hiss is not the villain but rather a handy tool for checking the performance of two important elements of our high-fidelity systems. □

Howard Ferstler, a free-lance writer whose interests include photography and philosophy as well as audio technology, is currently doing research for a book on high fidelity.

ONE quality essential to any good speaker system is wide dispersion, the ability to spread the high frequencies in a broad arc across a listening room. Without it, the sound will be confined—closed in and located at the speaker; with it, there will be superior stereo imaging as well as a sense of openness and airiness.

Interstation noise can be used to provide a fast check on whether a given speaker has adequate high-frequency dispersion: stand directly in front of one speaker (the second of the pair should be off) and then, concentrating on the hissy quality in the sound, walk off to one side; at some point you will find that the hissy quality disappears. You will hear the same effect when you walk to the other side of the speaker, and (depending on where the speaker is installed) the hiss will probably diminish if you duck your head toward the floor as well. What you are looking for is breadth of dispersion: the wider the area covered by the very high-frequency hiss, the better the high-frequency dispersion of the system and the more open and natural its sound. It goes without saying that a wide dispersion also protects you from loss of the highs if you are sitting down or listening from an off-center position. This test

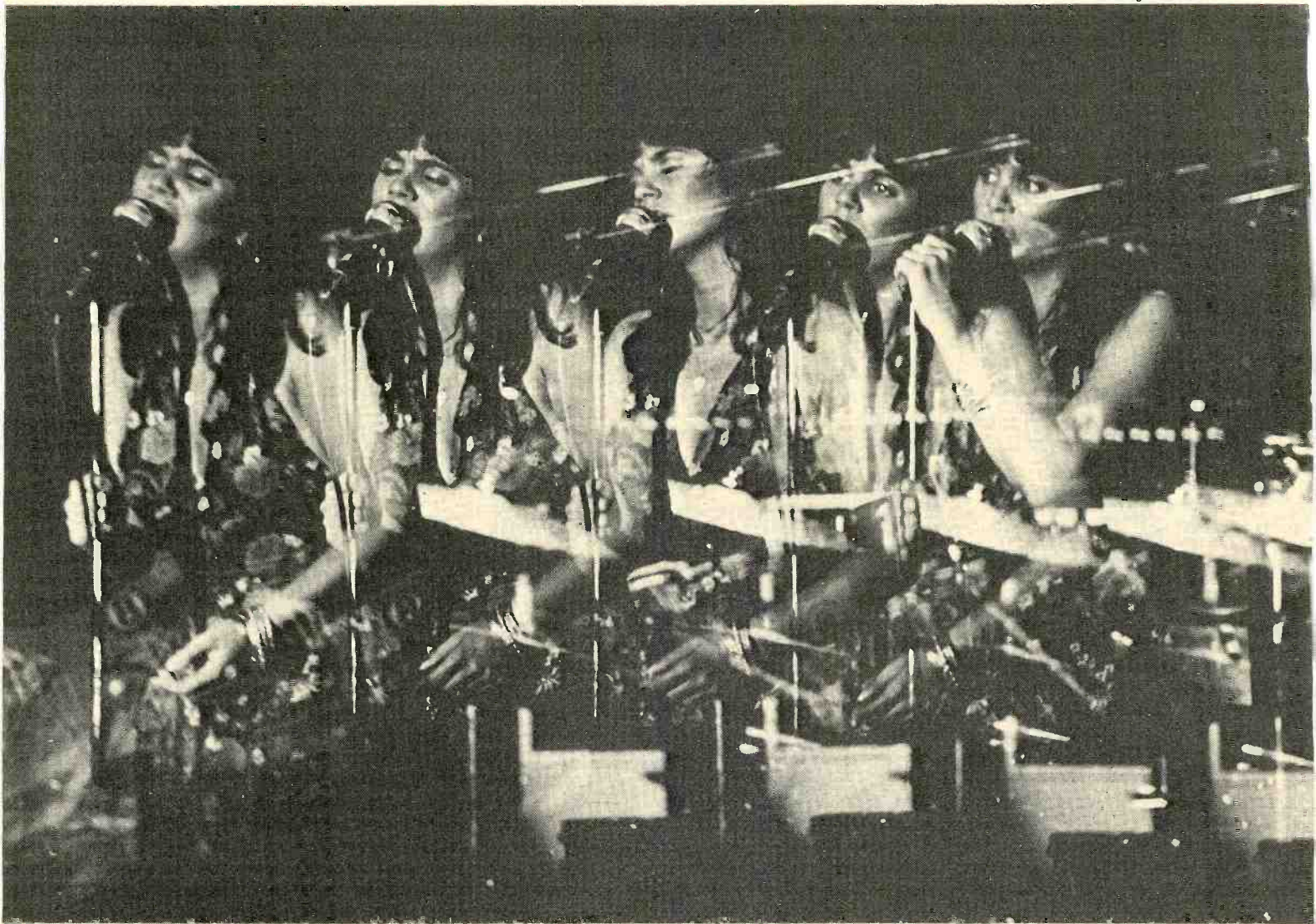
should be made only after you have already established that the speaker's on-axis high-frequency response is everything it should be—you may not notice any off-axis fall-off of high frequencies if they are already in short supply up front.

In many speaker systems, the mid-range is still a problem area. In years past, a number of manufacturers (they are fewer each year) deliberately designed speaker systems with a 5- to 15-dB boost in the middle frequencies. On certain musical material this boost imparts a sense of projection, a "front-row-center" quality. But this so-called "presence" peak is a hindrance, not an aid, to accurate reproduction. The overly bright and "forward" quality that comes from a boosted mid-range may be impressive on first listening, but it comes with some unfortunate side effects such as harshness and emphasis of high-frequency noise and distortion in the program material. But the worst side effect—for me, it can make the speaker unlistenable—is a kind of nasality or "honkiness" that accompanies and discolors everything the speaker is reproducing.

I've devised a simulated "live-vs.-reproduced" technique that makes it

possible for anyone to imitate—and to detect—this objectionable type of coloration. First set up the FM tuner as you did for the high-frequency dispersion test. Then cup your hands over your mouth (as though you were trying to warm them with your breath) and make a loud "shhh" sound. Now remove your hands and make the same sound. Repeat this several times until you *hear* the difference clearly. The hollow, rather nasal quality you get with your hands in front of your mouth is a good approximation of the nasal or honky quality associated with mid-range emphasis in a speaker reproducing random noise.

If you are in a hi-fi showroom, have the salesman switch among a number of speakers while you are listening to FM interstation noise. You will be able to pick out the speakers with the nasal quality rather quickly. With practice you should be able to detect this same quality in reproduced music and voice when a speaker is particularly afflicted in this range. Remember that if a system is suffering from a honky mid-range, the effects will pervade *everything* coming through it; it is therefore relatively easy to determine whether the fault lies with the speaker or with the program material. —Larry Klein



LINDA RONSTADT LINDA RONSTADT

By Noel Coppage

THE Great Smokies Hilton sounded like CB radio talk for a haven for state cops, but it turned out to be a place where some of my assumptions about Linda Ronstadt were quietly dismantled. It was a fairly painless process—I'd do it again tomorrow—with two swimming pools and a golf course accenting the foreground of it and the Smoky Mountains serving as a backdrop. I caught up with her there, in Asheville, North Carolina, the town Thomas Wolfe couldn't go home again to, in the middle of a tour she and her band were making in their country-and-western-type Silver Eagle bus (but hers doesn't have a star's bedroom).

I had listened to her records and seen her in concert a few times, most recently at Tanglewood where I had the exhilarating but scary sensation that everyone in the whole damned crowd had goosebumps, and I'd been exposed to the usual image-forming information and misinformation about her life style, bare feet, blue jeans, mussed-up hair, no fixed address, and that sort of thing. She was *casual*, was the impression this gave me, and the easy time she seemed to have when she sang reinforced it. The way she let her hips glide about when she slapped a tambourine during the instrumental break, the way she seemed to come out of left field to ornament a song with high notes, singing a bent line a fifth or even an octave above the score—it seemed so free and easy. So I assumed she ran mostly on her instincts and emotions and wasn't an easy prey for doubt and intellect and the way they circle one another. I remembered what a friend had said following the Tanglewood experience: "Boy, she can do it, and she *knows* she can do it." But here she was, approximately seven minutes after I'd met her and ten minutes before she had to go out there and do it, looking over the embroidery project she'd brought to the dressing room and telling me: "Spontaneity doesn't come easy for me. I have such terrible stage fright. I'm a slug, as far as my metabolism goes, a depressed person given to sitting around and worrying."

People change, of course. Linda Ronstadt recently turned thirty, recently bought a house and fixed herself a Malibu Beach address, nowadays has a young woman travel with her as secretary and companion when she used to spend her off hours playing poker with the boys in the band, and nowadays

wears a dress (and shoes) when she performs. She is even learning to cook. But the trouble about being spontaneous, she says, is nothing new.

"You know the stuff they're finding out about the hemispheres of the brain, and the different kinds of control they exert?" she said. "Well, the intellectual side of mine gets the animal side by the throat and I have to fight to let it come out at all . . . This is about the most fun I've had on a tour. I have to psych myself up for this kind of life, get manic and stay manic to get through it. It's like walking a tightrope over some kind of void—I'm out there and it's scary to be there, but I have to keep going or fall off."

This probably reads more dramatic than it sounded when she said it. She is not afraid to talk about what she is afraid of, and does it calmly; it seems to fit the same pattern that has her performances seeming easy to us but not to her.

SHE considers herself a late bloomer, "very late—I think of myself as still in the bud. I think it goes with being scared to death and with being a conservative person. I always had a basic intelligence I knew I could rely on. After that, I grew up so far from town, so far from civilization—my only friend was two years older than I was—that it gave me the world's most enormous inferiority complex. I went to a Catholic grade school which had the most ignorant, backward, intimidating order of nuns who shouldn't have been involved with anything except a mental hospital that they should have been patients of.

"Turning thirty, I must say, is a relief. It feels wonderful. I would not go through my twenties again for anything."

They screwed me up real good. And then I left home early because I was just burning up to sing. I wanted to do music and I jumped into it when I was eighteen years old. I was a scared kid with an inferiority complex.

"I knew I had good values and I knew I had a fairly keen judgment of human nature. My parents gave me that; they gave me a standard of what

human beings should be. I never hung out with losers—I wasn't a groupie, never chased after success people, I never wanted to hang out with people who were self-destructive. I wanted to be with people who basically respected themselves. And my friends pulled me through. It was the only thing that enabled me to survive. Otherwise, I was comatose with depression most of the time. I was a chronically depressed child and I'm a depressed person."

What she does about that, besides talk—which, understand, I think is a pretty good thing to do about it—is exercise. On the road, staying at places like the Great Smokies Hilton, she swims. "Get a change of chemistry in those cardiovascular passages," she said. "A lot of it probably is simply physiological."

Another thing she is doing about it is, literally, growing up, "Turning thirty, I must say, is a relief," she said. "What a relief. It feels wonderful. I would not go through my twenties again for anything. I was miserable, confused, didn't know what was going on. This has been my big year of growing up. I fought it *so hard* because, remaining a child, I wouldn't have to accept any responsibility. I *hated* responsibility. I finally decided just to make the big commitment and grow up, and I love it. I'm finding I deal with things now on a much more honest basis. I'm more assertive, people don't take advantage of me as much as they used to—and people will always take advantage of you if you let them—and I have a much better sense of what I'm worth now. I mean as a person, not musically or success-wise, just what I'm worth as a person—which is bound to eventually reflect itself in the music, because music is only an extension of your soul, your psyche.

"I spent most of my twenties getting in my own way," she said. "All that weird confusion and all that fecklessness and all that, 'Oh, my, we're such drowning victims. Aren't we tragic and romantic?' That's such a turn-off. Who wants a drowning victim? Much better to be a strong person and pull your own weight, be somebody who can help out if someone needs you, or be able to *be* helped."

LINDA spent her twenties more or less headquartered in Los Angeles and her first eighteen years at home, outside Tucson, Arizona, where her father still has what she calls "one of the

LINDA...

world's great hardware stores." "He should have been a singer," she says. "He's got a great hardware store, but he's a greater singer." As a little tad, she was going into Mexican bars with her father, who'd often wind up singing with the local mariachi band.

"And my sister was in love with Hank Williams when I was six and she was twelve," Linda said. "She had it so bad she would just moon over him continually, and we shared a room and I loved him too. I got him by osmosis. I was a radio freak when I was three. We lived so far away from town there was nothing to do except listen to the radio. It was 115 degrees outside and we didn't have much air conditioning. We had a cement floor in the living room and it was sort of cool and I remember I would spend all day with nothing on, lying on the floor with my head pressed up against the radio. I loved rock-and-roll, when that came along, just loved it."

SHE doesn't consider herself a country singer—"I'm a pop singer"—although the town of Nashville sometimes seems to, perhaps because she sings more country songs than do most of her peers. One of the performers she currently admires most, and says she is learning a lot from, is Dolly Parton.

"I use every root form I can get my hands on," she said, "or every one I can understand. Some root music is less accessible to me than others. Jazz is not very accessible to me, although there is some that I love and will listen to. Classical music obviously is not accessible to me to use much because it is technically out of bounds, but I *listen* to an enormous amount of classical music. The simpler root forms *are* available, like country and blues and gospel and Mexican music, especially. And the ones I tend to draw on most heavily are the ones I heard and

learned and sang from the earliest time, country music and Mexican music and rock-and-roll. Jamaican music—now we had to really sit down and *work* at that."

Jamaican music—particularly the political implications she sees in it—is one of her current passions. "Our whole band is reggae crazy," she said. "Musicians are always twenty-five, thirty years ahead of politicians, because musicians are the voices of the street. And the Third World is starting to happen. They're shambling along; their machinery is rusty. The language thing—no common language, all those African languages, dialects, Spanish and Portuguese—that's their biggest handicap. They've got nothing but music to unite them. And it'll happen. It will be a terrifyingly strong force, and it will be as bad as it is good, in a political sense, because it will draw in a lot of people who want an excuse for violence. The root core of the Rastas is peaceful; it says, 'I shot the sheriff but I swear it was in self-defense'—'I'm not going to hurt you until you are *killing* me.' But, as it spreads to weaker individuals who have less of a commitment, they'll say, 'I shot you because *maybe* you were going to kill me.' I see them struggling with the beginnings of their material success. They're still singing for Shantytown, but the Wailers—well, Bob Marley's got a BMW now, and he's going on ahead and saying, 'Okay, now I've got this, and now what am I?' Try-

ing immediately to put what happens in perspective."

At the other pole from Jamaican music and its political implications is disco music and *its* political implications. Ronstadt has an analytical mind if I ever encountered one, and I sat back and enjoyed the workings of it as this thesis emerged:

The Fifties, she said, amounted to a politically repressed era. Conservative times like that tend to bring out unnatural colors and exaggerated styles. "Even in ancient times," she said, "the Greeks and Romans, who were highly evolved politically, wore loose, flowing clothes and dressed naturally while the Elizabethans, who were repressed politically, dressed in those starched ruffles." The Sixties, she feels, were much more exciting, thanks largely to the Kennedys: "Whatever we find out later, upon re-examination, that they were worth, a new thing was happening." Styles got more natural.

Exit the ducktail and the beehive, enter hair that was simply allowed to grow and hang down, among other things. "Now," she said, "we are in a politically repressed time and the styles reflect it. I mean, people are running around in outrageous-looking platform shoes and dying their hair green [enter David Bowie], and it's like Berlin before World War II. And the disco craze is right there. Disco music is horrible. It's like commercials, advertising, it's jingles. I like to see people dancing, but this is like subliminal, no-contact sex, anything to prevent making a commitment, anything to prevent getting really intimate with anybody, just keep it on that weird sort of surface, green-slime level."

The media of course fasten on this and feed it as well as they feed on it, and Ronstadt doesn't seem to trust any media these days beyond some of the printed kind—she tries to read the *Wall Street Journal* every day—and says the heroes of the movies she and I grew up with, the strong, silent types, "all turned out to be defensive fools."

"The movies have done it to us," she said. "The movies and TV have
(to page 82)



Russell Enoch Peil

"I use every root form I can get my hands on... or every one I can understand. Some root music is less accessible to me than others."

her latest ...
**HASTEN
DOWN
THE WIND**

"HASTEN DOWN THE WIND" is not the easiest Linda Ronstadt album to "get" the first time one hears it, but it may be the classiest and longest-lived one she has done so far. It seems beyond time; it is not a prisoner of the conventions of this or any era, it does not do something new or novel or "completely different" to catch your ear. What it does that makes it different from most albums is attend lovingly to every last detail in such a smooth, natural-seeming way that the workings of songwriters, singer, band, and producer are thoroughly integrated and become one—that and, of course, the fact that it features a better singer than most albums are able to. If one aspect of the recording does stand out, it's the growth Linda Ronstadt is showing as a vocalist. Her phrasing is slowly but surely becoming exquisite, and the ornamentation she uses is less and less likely to be overdone—here it is continually surprising but always appropriate, like a Doc Watson guitar run or a piece of E. B. White prose.

The effect the whole album has is utterly emotional, which is the effect music is supposed to have. The most moving part of all for me is the extraordinary way Ronstadt sings Tracy Nelson's *Down So Low*, a primal wail of a blues-like song that is bolted together weirdly—it modulates, as it is cast here, from the key of A to C to E-flat. It modulates in that pattern; the performers don't have a choice. Usually, of course, they do, and usually they take it up either one step or a fifth. It takes good range and a subtle ear just to get through this one, and Ronstadt does a lot more than just get through it. She wrings it out. She has, as has become her habit, uncovered a new songwriter the rest of us hadn't heard about yet, Karla Bonoff, who contributed three of the songs. The best of those, *Someone to Lay Down Beside Me*, is good enough to do a respectable job of following *Down So Low* in the sequence (the sequencing being one of the little details they handled so well here), and that, for me, speaks well of it. Ronstadt goes up against the memory of Patsy Cline's recording of Willie



Russell Eliot Reif

Nelson's *Crazy*, and now I'm afraid the version I'm going to be remembering is Ronstadt's.

She's even done a bit of songwriting herself, with a little help from her friends, turning out *Lo Siento Mi Vida*, the prettier one, and *Try Me Again*, which is more of an *experience* because of the inspired way it is performed. What happens is this: the melodic figure constituting what one might call an instrumental break is played first by strings in which a cello is prominent, and then the thing is taken up by the pedal steel guitar with an off-the-wall, surreal kind of lyricism. That gives way to Andrew Gold's electric guitar, which is also lyrical but sounds like it's been strung with human nerve ganglia. The figure becomes increasingly insistent, desperate to parallel what's happening in the words and the vocal.

At first, I had an advance proof of the album with no jacket credits and I thought the steel player, here anyway, must be Sneaky Pete Kleinow; I knew of no other steel player in the world with that kind of taste. Not so; it's the work of Ronstadt's regular road-band steel player (who also works out nicely on regular electric), Dan Dugmore. In a dozen ways not quite so dramatic, the

album demonstrates what an excellent band Ronstadt has assembled, as her road band had little outside help throughout. Gold's work and the way he operates so well with producer Peter Asher have been remarked upon before; we ought also to notice the subtly spectacular bass licks of Kenny Edwards, the drumming of Michael Botts (no small factor in how nicely *Down So Low* turned out), the versatility and purity of Waddy Wachtel's guitar playing. This is not just another band from L.A. These boys don't use electric instruments primarily to make more noise; they play *notes* and they know how to listen.

My only (small) objection to the program is the inclusion of Buddy Holly's *That'll Be the Day*, as I can't stop listening to the words and wondering what kind of *jerk* would say that to someone he claimed to be really involved with, but my objection is not as strong now as it was at first; Ronstadt included it, I suspect, in part because she grew up on Holly tunes down there in the Southwest and in part because she wanted to give the band something up-tempo to smoke—which the band surely does.

It's the kind of album I don't listen to one cut at a time anyway—it's the kind I listen to a whole lot. The thing has hardly been off the turntable since it got here. It's there now, and I'm anxious to get back to it for what must be the hundredth time in the last few days. That's the kind of judgment about an album I trust most. —N.C.

LINDA RONSTADT: *Hasten Down the Wind*. Linda Ronstadt (vocals); Andrew Gold (guitar, piano, synthesizer, percussion); Dan Dugmore (steel guitar, guitar); Michael Botts (drums); Kenny Edwards (bass, mandolin); Waddy Wachtel (guitar); other musicians. *Lose Again; The Tattler; If He's Ever Near; That'll Be the Day; Lo Siento Mi Vida; Hasten Down the Wind; Rivers of Babylon; Give One Heart; Try Me Again; Crazy; Down So Low; Someone to Lay Down Beside Me.* ASYLUM 7E-1072 \$6.98, © ET-1072 \$7.97, © TC-1072 \$7.97.

LINDA...

brainwashed us, made us believe all this stuff that was complete lies so they could take our money. I don't watch TV . . . don't even know what channels they have in L.A. I just can't turn that knob. I'm too impressionable to subject myself to that."

She will, however, look up a movie that's supposed to deal authentically with Japanese culture, another of her strong interests now. She was (as I was) much impressed with *Woman of the Dunes*. She's been reading the novels and stories of the late Yukio Mishima—and (as I did) she avoided on principle the Anglicized butchery of the movie version of his *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea*. The non-Japanese books that have impressed her lately have included *Dune*, Frank Herbert's science fiction tale that has had what they called in the Sixties "great underground success."

"'Fear is the mind killer' from *Dune*—that's one of my litanies," she said.

"When I started to come of age musically, when my taste started to develop," she said, "hanging around Cambridge with the Kweskin Jug Band, I first became aware of that filter process, where you filter out all bad influences and you only listen to the best of the best of the best. It scared me so bad—I think it has to do with Puritanism somehow. It all started back there somewhere, I think, around Harvard, that double-think, that double-check, 'Is it hip, is it hip?' And, God, it squashed a lot of people's music. It's necessary to keep your standards up, but it's like the intellectual against the animal part of you; you've got to watch it or it can paralyze you. I kept saying in those days I didn't want to be a single, I wanted to be in a group. My confidence was devastated and redevastated When I first got to L.A., I could play C, G, and F on the guitar and there were all those hot guitar players and I just put the guitar away. Literally did not touch the guitar for eight years Fear is the enemy of us all."

FEAR may have served her, though, in a lefthanded way in that it kept her from being able to rush into fame and fortune too fast. She seems to have few illusions today about what those things mean, in part because she was able to get a good look at them before they enveloped her.

"I was fortunate to arrive so

slowly," she said. "I move like a little crab; I go sideways one step at a time and I cling to one rock until I'm almost drowning and then I move on to the next one. That's how I learned music, and I think my progress in my career was like that too. I was around the music business for ten years before I really made it big, and I knew exactly what it meant. I could not be fooled by it.

"Mostly it means you get bothered a lot when you are out in public. It also means you've sort of priced yourself out of range for a relationship with most anybody, except for other people who are as famous as you are and are equally neurotic, and you don't want to have anything to do with them. That part can be impossible. It means you have to isolate yourself more and more. The more famous I get, the more I have to isolate myself. Everybody's got his hand out, everybody is intimidated by it, threatened by it, feels resentful. You get the worst out of people that way.

"Try falling in love with a guitar player who isn't as famous as you are and see what happens. See how long he wants to stand up to that. And I'm out on the road all the time and they know what life on the road is like, and they aren't going to trust me for a minute. Or try falling in love with someone who's *not* involved in music and try to share it with him. Forget it. They just get jealous. I was going out with an actor for a while and I couldn't share what he was doing, and I got jealous."

There's no, well, no *whining* in the way Ronstadt says something like this; she says it straight-on, the way she talks about fear. She has learned something I think a lot of people need to learn about not being afraid of words. Beyond that, I had the impression that she deemed it wise to keep chipping away at her public image from the in-

side while welcoming whatever I could do in the way of knocking out chunks of it from the outside. She is one of the least guarded, least defensive persons, celebrated or not, I've talked with lately. Yet she knows as well as I do that the real her, if we could ever fairly represent it and give the people an unfettered look at it, would be misinterpreted, distorted, turned in effect into another image, for the eye of the beholder is never without prejudice. She also knows how slippery and subjective a concept "real" is, as in the "real Linda Ronstadt" or the real anything else—"reality," she says, "usually extends in all directions for about four feet"—but, my impression continues, she likes the Linda Ronstadt she knows well enough to try to help people see through the image. She *doesn't mind* your finding out she's scared up there on stage in spite of how confident she appears and how smoothly the show seems to go.

AND the metaphor she supplies for this is good enough for me: "You know how at Disneyland they have people wearing those Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck body masks? The kids go up to them and kick them, because the kids don't realize there's a person under there. That's what happens with people like me. The image is unreal, it goes out in pictures and on TV as just an image with no flesh and blood to it, and when people see me in so-called real life, they just see that. They're conditioned to think I'm not a real person."

She's real, all right. The image I had of her was pleasant enough—nothing Mickey Mouse about it—but the real person under it is someone I'd like to introduce to my best friends. Thank you, Asheville. Sorry you were born too soon, Thomas Wolfe. □

"I move like a little crab;
I go sideways one step at
a time and I cling to one
rock until I'm almost
drowning and then I move
on to the next one."



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ALTHOUGH composer Neil Sedaka claims to need "two or three vodka martinis to feel courageous enough to write lyrics," he didn't need that kind of inspiration to provide the words for *Standing on the Inside*. The song is about "the hard climb from rock and roll," being shunted aside by changing tastes, and finally crashing back through to pop stardom. It's done with a forgivable touch of bitterness ("all the back slappers know my name this time") and straight from the heart, for in 1975, the year of the musical comeback, no one came back more solidly or from further away than Sedaka.

Neil was writing popular songs in 1952 in Brooklyn when he was only thirteen years old. He hit the big time three years later with *Stupid Cupid* (for Connie Francis), and more than 25 million records of his compositions were sold between 1959 and 1963. Then he was unceremoniously pushed aside by the Beatles-led British rock invasion. For the next seven years the only gigs he could get were at the two-thousand-seat League clubs in Australia, where he was forced to do such tacky vaudeville turns as an Eddy Cantor medley and *Danny Boy*. Four years ago he began a performing return in England. "They're a more faithful audience than in the United States," he says, "and they were grateful for the early years." And last year, under the auspices of none other than Elton John, Sedaka made his triumphant American comeback. He had two number-one singles himself (*Laughter in the Rain* and *Bad Blood*, on which Elton sang back-up), two gold albums ("Sedaka's Back" and "The Hungry Years"), and a slew of hits he wrote for others, including the Carpenters' *Solitaire* and the best-selling record of 1975, the Captain and Tenille's *Love Will Keep Us Together* with lyrics by Howard Greenfield, Neil's collaborator for twenty-four years.

THE son of a middle-class family of Spanish Jewish descent in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, Sedaka chose music, and at first the classics, early in life. (His close neighbors included another very musical Neil—Neil Diamond—and Carole King when she was still Carol Klein.) He became accomplished enough at the piano to be chosen by Arthur Rubinstein as the best high school pianist in New York City and to attend the Juilliard School of Music. But the early Fifties were an age of conformity, and Neil says that he was not a social success in Brooklyn. "I was very little, wore braces, and did not play baseball. I thought the way to get invited to parties would be to write and sing

pop music." So, to the horror of his teachers and very serious classical classmates at Juilliard prep school, Neil started a rock group called the Tokens, which had an early hit (one Sedaka didn't write) called *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*. Having grown up loving rhythm-and-blues, Sedaka made his first sales as a composer to such r-&b acts as the Clovers, Lavern Baker, Clyde McPhatter, and Dinah Washington. "But I'd listen to Patti Page and Rosemary Clooney on Martin Bloch's *Make Believe Ballroom* on radio," he recalls, "and wonder could it ever be that a song of mine would be on Martin Bloch?"

The first to make it, when Neil was just sixteen, was the aforementioned *Stupid Cupid* with lyrics by Greenfield. Then when *Oh, Carol*, which Neil had written to Miss Klein-King, reached number three on the Hit Parade, Neil says, "I became the king of King's Highway, riding up and down in my convertible picking up girls, with *Oh, Carol* blasting on the radio."

Calendar Girl, *Breaking Up Is Hard to Do*, *Happy Birthday Sweet Sixteen*, and other uncomplicated hits followed until the Sedaka style—then the prevailing one in pop music—became passé. "We'd overdone a good thing," Neil says now. "It was cute but too repetitious. Besides, I had made enough money not to have to work again."

WHEN he was nineteen, a band Neil had formed was booked into a hostelry called Esther Manor in the Catskill Mountains. But when the group—all Sedaka's contemporaries—arrived to play, Esther herself, from behind the front desk, asked, "Who are these children?" Neil persuaded Esther to let his little band play, and he stayed around long enough to marry her daughter Leba, when he was twenty-three and she was twenty. By the time his first career as a performer was over in 1963, they had a daughter Dara, now thirteen, who is also a musician. (She wrote *Hey, Mr. Sunshine*, the B side of Daddy's sappy paean to John Lennon, *The Immigrant*.) The Sedakas also have a son, Marc, who is ten.

Esther to this day sometimes clashes with Neil musically; she picked *Love Will Keep Us Together* from his first comeback album to be a hit for somebody. "I didn't see it," admits Neil, "and I still don't quite understand it." He should have listened to his mother-in-law. So far, for the Captain and Tenille, *Love Will Keep Us Together* has sold 3½ million copies, including a Spanish-language version, and it won a Grammy award as Record of the Year.

"Leba is everything I'm not," says

Neil, "a business head and a beautiful, gracious hostess. She deals with agents, managers, record companies, lawyers and accountants, and musicians. She's ready to be a show-biz lawyer or accountant, she's had so much experience in handling my affairs. But she's not musical—thank God. For years we envied friends of ours who wrote together, Carole King and Jerry Goffin, for example, but look what happened to them." Leba travels with Neil on long out-of-country tours and manages to be with him for engagements in places like Las Vegas, "or Paris or Los Angeles or London—but Squeedunk, no." The two children vis-

NEIL SEDAKA COMES BACK

"... the nicest part about it all is that there are no theatrics. I sit at the piano and play my songs."

By Robert Windeler

it the last weekend of any domestic gig but travel out of the country with Daddy only during school vacations.

One man's "Hungry Years" are another man's gold mine, and during the seven or so years Sedaka wasn't performing—except at the League Clubs—he was as active as he had ever been as a writer. He wrote hits for others (Peggy Lee, the Fifth Dimension, Tom Jones, Johnny Mathis, the Friends of Distinction). *Workin' on a*

Groovy Thing, *Puppet Man*, and *One Day of Your Life* were the biggest royalty-payers in those days. The assault on England in 1972 was deliberate, carefully planned, and with the condition that Neil didn't have to sing only his early hits when he appeared on the BBC, in night clubs, and at Albert Hall.

"I'd become frustrated hiding behind a piano in my living room," Neil recalls. Besides, back in Brighton Beach the neighbors couldn't help but notice that Neil Diamond's star was blazing, and they'd ask Mrs. Sedaka if her son Neil was still in the business—"and you know how mothers are." In Britain, at least, Sedaka was back, en-

played everything else for two hours. Marc, who was then seven, was wide-eyed at the knowledge that his father knew his idol. Elton and I became friends, and I asked him if he would distribute my new work in the United States. I offered him all the royalties off the first album. He said, 'You've got to be kidding.' He couldn't believe there was no U.S. record deal. He said it was like handing him gold bricks."

ACCORDINGLY, Neil Sedaka came home on Elton's own Rocket label, distributed by MCA, with "Sedaka's Back," a compilation of the best of the four British albums. Six hit singles

was one of those rare chart toppers that didn't also go gold, selling only 960,000 copies as a single. But *Bad Blood* rocketed to the top, as it were, and Elton couldn't have been prouder. "You might say we're the Mary Tyler Moore and Rhoda of the music business," says Neil, laughing.

Sedaka opened for the Carpenters in the hottest pop concert package of the summer of 1975, but by September, when the package landed at the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, Neil was getting both the crowds and the notices, and Richard Carpenter fired him after one week. But by then "this second coming," as Neil calls it, was so secure that the hotel turned right around and hired him as a headliner.

In his solo act Sedaka does a relatively brief medley of "the oldies but goodies" but otherwise concentrates on his newer material (his encore is both: a new, slow arrangement of *Breaking Up Is Hard to Do*). The man who as a teenager had ten Top Ten hits in a row is determined to keep up with or even ahead of the times in this reincarnation ("I would not like to come back a third time"). He looks for the sounds "that jump out of the radio at you." He writes approximately fifty songs a year, usually doing the melody first, then giving it to Greenfield for lyrics or to Phil Cody, another long-time collaborator. "The most difficult thing is to top yourself," says Neil, "to grow and change with the times. I try to keep at least one foot always in reality."

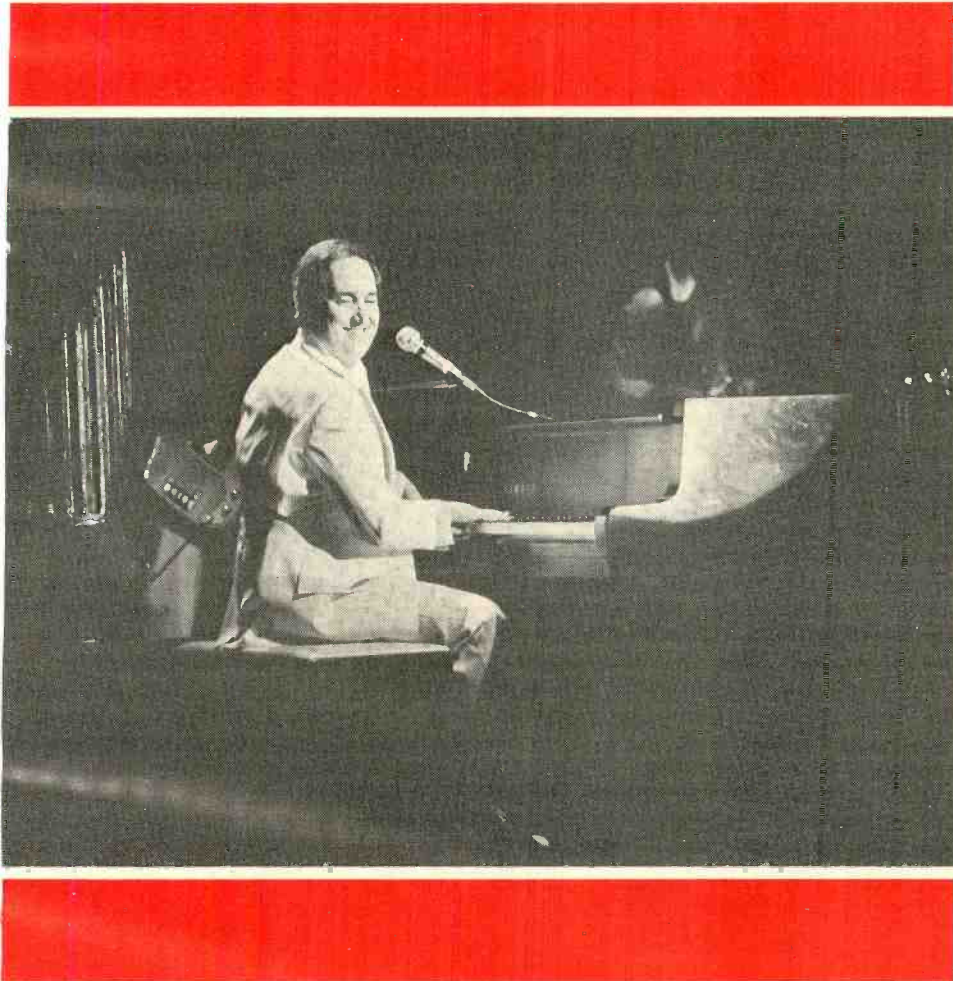
HE still practices piano four hours a day on one of his four pianos—"it would be sacrilege to play anything but classical on the Baldwin grand." He devotes three months a year to writing and recording and spends perhaps another three on the road, leaving plenty of time for his family at their Manhattan apartment or their home in the Catskills. He did lose twenty-five pounds on doctor's orders before going back onto American stages, but Neil notes that otherwise "the nicest part about it all is that there are no theatrics. I sit at the piano and play my songs. This is what I am. I'd like a few more years of this and then to retire to a quiet life of writing and going back to the classical piano—and maybe doing one album a year.

"People do come just to hear my music," he marvels, "and I've been accused of having a good time with it. I've even been accused of being very nice. 'What is he doing in this business?' people ask. 'He looks like your friendly banker.' Well, perhaps there are others who write, or play, or sing better than I do, but I have it all together. And it's fun." □

tirely on his own terms. Soon he had four albums of all new, original material in Britain's Top Twenty and five hit singles in a row.

Elton John, like Neil a classically trained pianist and the first to admit that his *Crocodile Rock* was inspired by *Oh, Carol*, came to visit Sedaka's London flat one evening as a fan. "He had one Scotch, and he's not a drinker, and then sat down to play *Candle in the Wind*," Neil says. "And then he

have come off it already, two for Neil himself, and the royalties on *Love Will Keep Us Together* alone have netted him in the area of half a million dollars. After they collaborated on *Bad Blood* on the second album, Elton started calling MCA every day for the sales figures on his protégé, something you get to do when you have an eight-million-dollar contract. It had taken *Laughter in the Rain* an agonizing sixteen weeks to hit number one, and it



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



Joan Morris' and William Bolcom's "Vaudeville": The Effect Is Altogether Sublime

JOAN MORRIS, the mezzo with the wicked lilt in her supple voice, and William Bolcom, the clever composer and agile pianist, pooled their considerable talents a couple of years ago to give us the Nonesuch album "After the Ball," a delightfully memorable treasury of turn-of-the-century popular songs. They are at it again in the new "Vaudeville," and this time they enter the "tinsel world dedicated to the sentiment that variety is indeed the spice of life," bringing us songs made famous by such great ladies of the musical stage as Eva Tanguay, Nora Bayes, Anna Held, Bessie McCoy (the "Yama-Yama" girl), May Erwin, and Elsie Janis. The program, which comes complete with texts of all the songs and marvelous notes by Miss Morris, is hard—nay, impossible—to get out of your head.

Vaudeville, which started as "variety" (hence the name of the theatrical

publication), a rather lubricious entertainment in the "concert saloon" that was the forerunner of the modern night club, went respectable at Tony Pastor's place on New York's Bowery, graduated to uptown favor at the Palace Theater and other "class" houses from coast to coast, and ended up finally and rather tiredly as the filler between showings of movie features. In the process it nurtured most of the great entertainers (Bob Hope, Jack Benny, and George Burns among them) of this century's middle decades. It is now apparently quite dead, but after hearing these performances by Morris and Bolcom it's rather hard to understand why, for the TV variety show that seems to be trying to take its place is only a feeble echo of what vaudeville was in its heyday.

Judy Garland herself never did better by *I Don't Care* (first brought to the boards in 1905 by Eva Tanguay, the "I

Don't Care" girl) than Joan Morris does here, and what she does for *Shine On, Harvest Moon*, introduced by Nora Bayes during World War I, should keep it alive for at least another hundred years. The saucy innuendos and devilish double-entendres of *The Bird on Nellie's Hat* (about the love life of the woman who wears it) were no doubt communicated with gusto by Janet Allen, the singer (and wife of New York's notorious mayor Jimmy Walker) who introduced it, but one wonders whether it could have been any better than Miss Morris' version.

There is sentiment as well as comedy here, especially evident in *I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now*, *When You Were Sweet Sixteen*, and *Smiles*, a song that used to drive the doughboys bananas when it was delivered to them in Paris by Elsie Janis, the Sweetheart of the A.E.F. There's even a ghastly little ballad called *In the Baggage Coach*

Ahead, about a child weeping on a train amid the complaints of passengers unaware that the little tyke's dear mother lies lifeless in her coffin "in the baggage coach ahead." Its composer, Gussie L. Davis, learned all he needed to know to write this once-popular favorite while sweeping up the halls of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. It's the same ditty categorized by the hero of Eugene O'Neill's *A Moon for the Misbegotten* as "a lousy tear-jerker song I'd heard when I was a kid." So it is, but the way Joan Morris and William Bolcom put it over, without a trace of patronage, you won't be sorry to make its acquaintance. Miss Morris' singing is, as I have suggested, perfection itself, and Mr. Bolcom's accompaniments flutter flatteringly around her like moths around a flame. The effect is altogether sublime.

Paul Kresh

VAUDEVILLE: Songs of the Great Ladies of the Musical Stage. Joan Morris (mezzo-soprano); William Bolcom (piano). *I Don't Care; I Just Can't Make My Eyes Behave; Shine On, Harvest Moon; The Bird on Nellie's Hat; When You Were Sweet Sixteen; The Yama-Yama Man; Yip-I-Addy-I-Ay!; My Castle on the Nile; May Irwin's "Frog" Song; Let the Rest of the World Go By; In the Baggage Coach Ahead; Poor John; I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now; Pine Apple Rag; Smiles.* NONESUCH H-71330 \$3.96.

Montserrat Caballé: *La Primorosa* In an Album of Zarzuela Favorites

THE Spanish soprano Montserrat Caballé can be absolutely maddening to her fans. She cancels performances, she endangers her health by not losing weight, she threatens to retire while still in her prime, and she goes around telling interviewers she is not a great artist—"just a good singer with a pretty voice." But if that's all she is, it's quite enough for me: when she raises that meltingly beautiful voice in song, I can forgive her anything.

Most Spanish opera singers have shown great affection for zarzuela, the immensely popular lyric theater of their native country. For three centuries zarzuela composers have produced great quantities of theater music in varying styles with no other goal than to entertain, to move and amuse the public. They borrowed freely the tech-



CAMI

"*Me llaman la primorosa*" ("They call me the *primorosa*"). My Spanish dictionary offers several translations for the word *primorosa*: "neat, elegant, beautiful, excellent, graceful, dexterous, exquisite, fine." Take your pick; they all apply to this singer and to this album.

The accompaniment provided by the Orquesta Sinfónica de Barcelona conducted by Eugenio Marco is sympathetic and idiomatic. There are informative liner notes by Gerald Fitzgerald, but no texts. If there is no zarzuela in your life, here's the place to start.

—William Livingstone

MONTSERRAT CABALLÉ: *Musíc of Spain, Zarzuela Arias.* Barbieri: *El Barberillo de Lavapiés: Canción de Paloma. Jugar con Fuego: Romanza de la Duquesa. Caballero: Chateau Margaux: Romanza de Angelita. Gigantes y Cabezudos: Romanza de Pilar. El Señor Joaquín: Balada y Alborada. Chapi: Las Hijas del Zebedeo: Carceleras. La Patria Chica: Canción de Pastora. Giménez: El Barbero de Sevilla: Me llaman la primorosa. Luna: El Niño Judío: De España vengo. Serrano: El Carro del Sol: Canción Veneciana.* Montserrat Caballé (soprano); Orquesta Sinfónica de Barcelona, Eugenio Marco cond. LONDON OS 26435 \$6.98, © OS 5-26435 \$7.98.

niques that worked in the operetta theaters in Paris and Vienna and stirred in dashes of Italian opera and quantities of Spanish folk music, the best of them writing very gratefully for the voice. Just how gratefully can be discovered in a new London recital of zarzuela arias by Mme. Caballé, a splendid showcase for her beauty of tone, her vocal technique, and the sense of pleasure she seems to derive from the physical act of singing.

The ten arias Caballé has chosen for this recital reflect the variety of mood and the variety of styles of the zarzuela. The waltzy drinking song from *Chateau Margaux* might fit very well into an Offenbach operetta, and the elegant Venetian song from *El Carro del Sol* suggests Lehár. But others such as Pastora's high-spirited song from *La Patria Chica* and the *Carceleras* from *Las Hijas del Zebedeo* are pure Spanish. The album opens with "*De España vengo*" ("I come from Spain") from *El Niño Judío*, an aria so closely associated with Caballé that it is an obligatory encore at her recitals. It is the only item duplicated on her RCA zarzuela recital recorded about ten years ago and long out of print. In the present recording she seems less concerned with producing a big, luscious tone and concentrates more on the words and accuracy in the trills and other ornaments.

The selections are all melodious and beautifully sung, and the big climactic numbers such as the *Balada y Alborada* from *El Señor Joaquín* give Caballé abundant opportunities to show her stuff in passionate outbursts and those high, floated pianissimos she is famous for. The showiest aria is the Polonaise from *El Barbero de Sevilla*, a very funny zarzuela not about Figaro, but about a young soprano who is making her operatic debut in the Rossini opera by that name. The title of this excerpt is

The Laser-beam Eye And Rifle-mike Ear Of the Engaging Carly Simon

CARLY SIMON's back, smarter, more ironically perceptive, and more engaging than ever. Her new Elektra release "Another Passenger" (there is a dynamite, Thirties-flashback cheesecake shot of her on the jacket, looking like some glamorous siren of the tabloids waiting for the *Ile de France* or some other *chic paquebot* to sail) is another totally classy job from a foxy lady who not only knows where it's all at, but doesn't mind letting you know, in an offhand way, that her pearls of wisdom have cost her a pretty penny or two in the purchase. *Half a Chance*, for instance ("You can't pretend it's Camelot/Then start to run when things get hot/When Love explodes there's always heat/There's always bitter with the sweet . . ."), isn't exactly Forever After Time. Nor is *In Times When My Head* precisely about staying cool at all costs: "Now

every look you get/Seems like another threat/I pick your pockets almost hoping to find/Something to hurt about, to prove you unkind" is as good a description of self-destructive jealousy as one would really care to hear about. This ability to deal honestly and directly with emotional life has always been one of Carly's major strengths, and it permeates all her songs here.

Her gift for being jauntily, bitchily amusing is also shown delightfully in such things as *Cow Town*, the saga of a Texas millionaire who finds a wife in France. "He loved her French accent/And her knowledge of the arts/And she, for one, had always fancied/Havin' a millionaire sweetheart." He brings her back home, a trophy of the hunt, and there we leave her, wilting in the sunset and "starin' at the drilling rigs" (who was it said "the Lord preserve us from getting what we want"?).

Closer to the music biz we all know and love, and dangerously close to the jugular as well, is *Dishonest Modesty*, a portrait of one of those great-humanitarian ladies who is "over thirty and underweight." She is, above all, *honest* and therefore must confess, at the drop of each interview, that "She can understudy/All the other parts/She can write a song that'll make us cry/That touches all our hearts/And she can *House & Garden/Vogue* and *Glamour, Mademoiselle . . .*" and, adds Carly, ". . . I know you can *Bitch* and *Screw/And Penthouse* just as well. . . ." The catalog runs finally into the exasperated tag line, "I don't expect humility/But what about some good old dishonest modesty?" Hmm. Now I wonder whom *that* one could be about?

Carly Simon, *chansons à clef* and all, is a grown-up joy to have around. Over the past couple of years she's been recording observed scenes from her life,

and this latest collection is as filled with insight, humor, truthfulness, and, yes, modesty as was the early literary work of Mary McCarthy. The nicest thing about her is that her laser-beam eye and rifle-mike ear are both softened by a civilized disinclination to judge. But oh my, what a witness! *Peter Reilly*

CARLY SIMON: *Another Passenger*. Carly Simon (vocals); other musicians. *Half a Chance; Cow Town; It Keeps You Runnin'; Fairweather Father; He Likes to Roil; In Times When My Head; One Love Stand; Riverboat Gambler; Darkness 'Til Dawn; Dishonest Modesty; Libby; Be with Me.* ELEKTRA 7E-1064 \$6.98, © ET8-1064 \$7.97, © TC5-1064 \$7.97.

Margaret Price: A Mozart Soprano For the Vocal Connoisseur

THE Welsh-born soprano Margaret Price has gathered outstanding critical notices from her appearances in Vienna, Munich, and at the Salzburg and Glyndebourne Festivals. If she is not yet familiar to American connoisseurs of the voice, she soon will be: her debut recital of Mozart arias for RCA is certain to bring her brilliantly to their attention.

To put it succinctly, she is quite simply a superb Mozart singer with few equals on the current scene now that Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Lisa della Casa, and Teresa Stich-Randall are no longer active. Warm tone, true intonation, and tastefully musical phrasing are the cornerstones of her singing, as is a legato command that allows her to encompass extended phrases in an unbroken line. In the arias that require florid singing, she discloses a dependable technique that may be slightly short of the Sutherland-Moser brand of daredevil brilliance (nor does she match the dashing abandon Janet Baker brings to "*Parto, parto*"), but there is an impressive assurance in her singing as well as accurately observed trills, *appoggiature*, and a welcome measure of dramatic thrust in Donna Anna's and Konstanze's music. She is also a dramatically aware singer who pays attention to verbal accents and nuances.

Miss Price's outstanding vocalism is matched by meticulous orchestral performances under James Lockhart and



PRICE

fine obbligato contributions, especially by Thea King (clarinet) and José-Luis Garcia (violin). *George Jellinek*

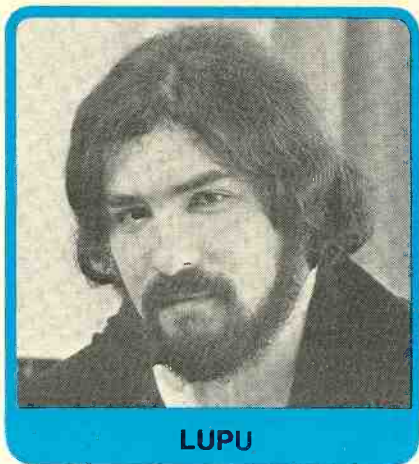
MOZART: *La Clemenza di Tito: Parto, parto. Le Nozze di Figaro: Deh vieni, non tardar; Dove sono; Voi che sapete. Die Entführung aus dem Serail: Martern aller Arten. Il Re Pastore: L'amerò, sarò costante. Don Giovanni: Mi tradi; Non mi dir. Idomeneo: Idol mio.* Margaret Price (soprano); English Chamber Orchestra, James Lockhart cond. RCA AGL1-1532 \$4.98.

Radu Lupu and Szymon Goldberg Collaborate in Mozart's Violin/Piano Sonatas

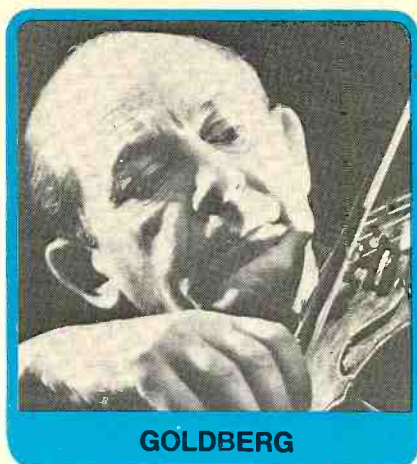
RADU LUPU's recent recording of two Mozart piano concertos (K. 414 and K. 467, London CS-6894) showed him to be an exceptional Mozart player. Violinist Szymon Goldberg, however, first known to American collectors for his Mozart sonatas with Lili Kraus on Parlophone imports more than three decades ago, has been heard from far too little in recent years. Someone at London/Decca had the happy thought of getting the young pianist together with the veteran violinist to record all the Mozart sonatas for the two instruments, and, judging by the initial two-disc installment (the complete series will run to six records), the idea was a genuine inspiration. I don't know whether the two musicians had ever collaborated before meeting in the recording studio, or even whether



SIMON



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GOLDBERG

Lupu had played all or any of these duo sonatas before, but there is nothing casual-sounding about their partnership: the sonatas have never been presented with greater freshness, style, and overall communicativeness.

The buoyant opening of the D Major Sonata, K. 303, on side one is the brightest of auguries for what is to follow. The wit and sparkle of the outer movements of the respective works are matched by the tenderness and poetry of the inner ones. Nothing is contrived, nothing is labored: both the playful movements and the more serious ones have a marvelous flow, a momentum sustained without any shifting of the rhythmic gears. The phrasing everywhere is exquisitely pointed, but with no hint of self-conscious exquisiteness. There is, as well, plenty of good humor, plenty of warmth of heart, but no overdrawn gestures, and the balance between the two instruments is invariably splendid. Goldberg's tone is eminently smooth, with a crisp sort of sweetness beautifully suited to this material, and it is big enough to enable Lupu to scale his playing without apologies for his big modern grand. The sound is fairly close-up, but it is as clean as it is rich, and there is a fine annotative insert by the distinguished Dutch composer and Mozart scholar Marius Flothuis.

Integrity radiates from these performances, as it does also from those of Ingrid Haebler and Henryk Szeryng in their similar series for Philips, which includes some of the variation works as well as the sonatas. Only three of their six discs have been issued here so far, and their contents for the most part duplicate those of the new London set. If the Philips team is a shade more suave in the later sonatas, the London duo counters with just a bit more animation and brightness and is abetted by more vivid sound. But neither pair is less than elegant, and neither is deficient sonically. No one can possibly be unhappy with either the Philips or the

London, and no one who invests in both is likely to feel the money was spent foolishly. *Richard Freed*

MOZART: Sonatas for Piano and Violin, Volume I: Sonata in C Major (K. 303); Sonata in D Major (K. 306); Sonata in F Major (K. 376); Sonata in B-flat Major (K. 454); Sonata in E-flat Major (K. 481). Radu Lupu (piano); Szymon Goldberg (violin). LONDON CSA-2242 two discs \$13.96.

Fresh Chestnuts: Doc Watson, The Boys, and the Frosty Morn Band

"DOC AND THE BOYS" is the title of Doc Watson's new United Artists album, and "the boys" include (on side one) some familiar studio musicians and (on side two) the Frosty Morn Band. Doc and son Merle travel with these days. Side two was recorded live at a place called the Hub Pub in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and the boys do as tasty a job behind Doc there as the other boys do in the studio. It figures: if a fellow can sing selections from the Goodlettsville telephone book and still keep you enthralled, then he ought to be able to inspire his back-up musicians.

Among the inspirees here is Johnny Gimble, a fine old pro of a fiddler who gets a lot of studio and TV work in Nashville—so much of it that I thought he'd slipped into a rut of expediency, but he's *playful* here, inventive and exciting. The Frosty Morn Band on the live side is, in a way, even more satisfying; the group includes a couple of guys who can sing lead (Bob Hill and Joe Smothers—Hill being especially

stylish), and that allows Doc to sing bass, which of course he does with great warmth and humor.

There's not a lot of flashy flat-picking here, nor is the full-band sound cluttered. Watson has a good feel for balance . . . a good feel, in fact, for just about everything related to music. But there's *some* hot flat-picking, of course, and when it comes I wish his guitar were miked louder. There are also some old chestnuts he manages to make sound fresh, some of those slightly off-center songs nobody else seems to dig up (such as *Love Please Come Home*), some more good slide guitar from Merle, and one more version of *Tennessee Stud*. Well, that's all right. If I'm willing to listen to the Goodlettsville phone book, I guess I can stand to hear *Tennessee Stud* again. More, please. *Noel Coppage*

DOC WATSON: Doc and the Boys. Doc Watson (vocals, guitar); Merle Watson (guitar, banjo); Chuck Cochran (piano); Johnny Gimble (fiddle); Bob Hill (vocals, guitar, piano); Michael Coleman (bass, vocals); Joe Smothers (vocals, guitar); other musicians. *Darlin' Cory; Cypress Grove Blues; I Can't Help but Wonder; The Girl I Love; Natural Born Gambler; Little Maggie; Love Please Come Home; Spikedriver Blues; Southbound Passenger Train; Southern Lady; Tennessee Stud.* UNITED ARTISTS UA-LA601-G \$6.98, © EA601-H \$7.98.



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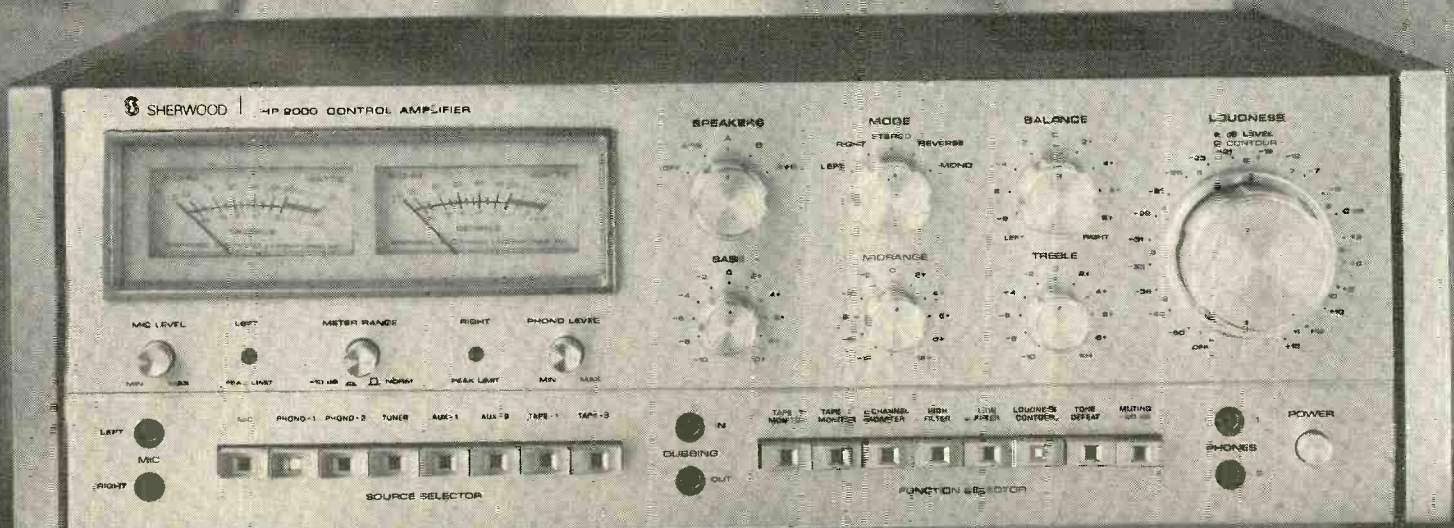
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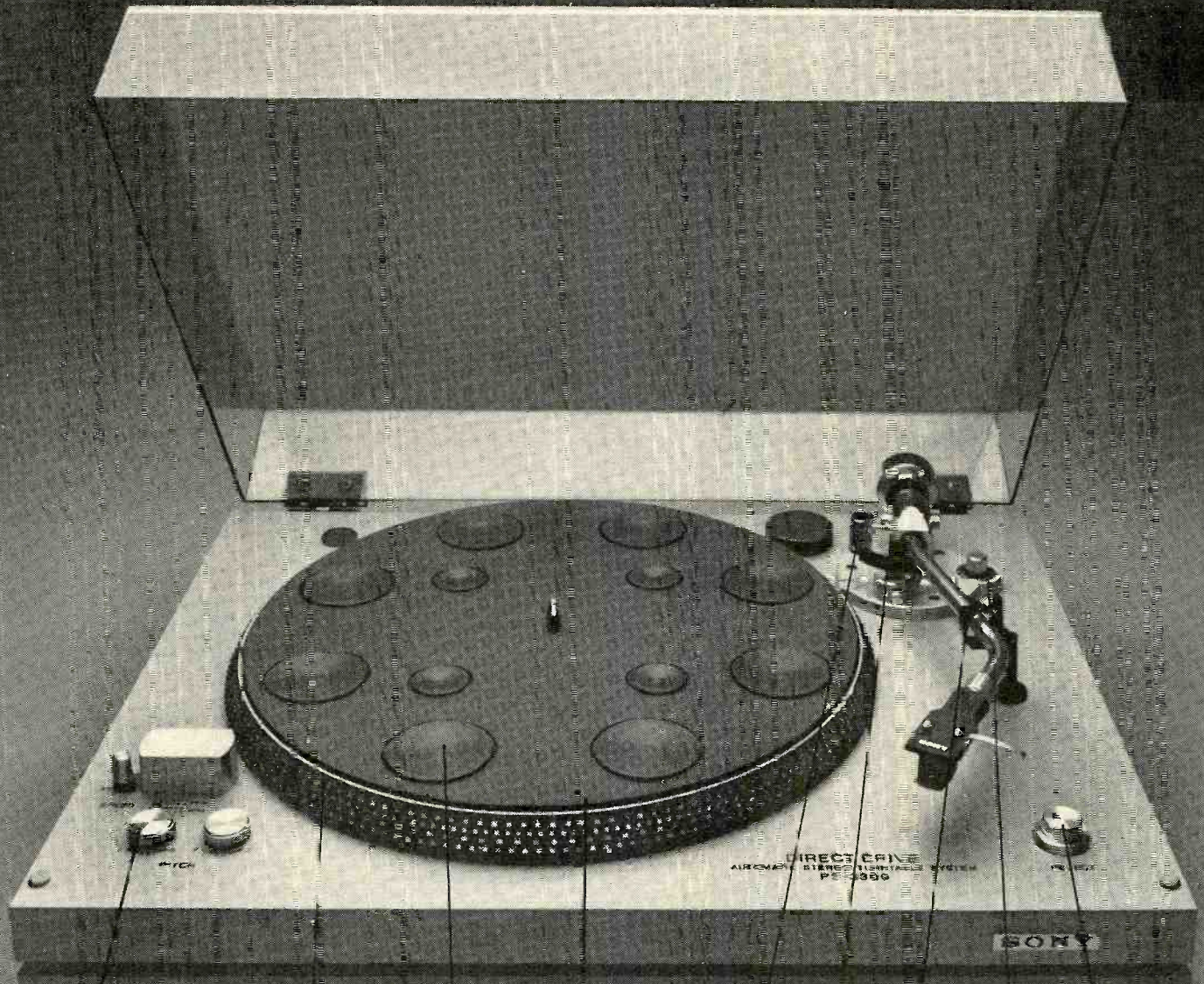
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POPULAR DISCS AND TAPES

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

AEROSMITH: *Rocks*. Aerosmith (vocals and instrumentals). *Back in the Saddle*; *Last Child*; *Rats in the Cellar*; *Combination*; *Sick As a Dog*; and four others. COLUMBIA PC 34165 \$6.98, © PCA 34165 \$7.98, © PCT 34165 \$7.98.

Performance: **Noisy**
Recording: **Variable**

When I consider that the nation's youth, Worshipping radio's instant gratification, Delight to munch with puberty's sweet tooth On red-hot hits played o'er the local station, I find it no surprise that Aerosmith Should be the current heroes of the young: Guitar played not by hand, but by the fist; Great thumping drums and vocals howled, not sung;

So it has been before, will be again, Loud mediocrity enforced by luck. But what of Aerosmith when childhood ends? I greatly fear they'll be a bird to pluck Souvenir feathers from, when they've hit the ground.

And meantime youth will hunt another sound. *L'envoi!!*

My friends, hear what I say. This album is No more substantial than the hiss of fizz Atop a gin and tonic. Listen to it; You'll agree that Aerosmith have blew it.

J. (Milton) V.

ALICE COOPER: *Alice Cooper Goes to Hell*. Alice Cooper (vocals); other musicians. *Wish You Were Here*; *Wake Me Gently*; *Going Home*; *I Never Cry*; *Guilty*; and six others.

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓜ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
- ⓑ = eight-track stereo cartridge
- Ⓒ = stereo cassette
- Ⓚ = quadrasonic disc
- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel quadrasonic tape
- Ⓢ = eight-track quadrasonic tape

Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

WARNER BROS. BS 2896 \$6.98, Ⓜ M8 2896 \$7.97, © M5 2896 \$7.97.

Performance: **The usual**
Recording: **Good**

It's strange to realize now that a few years ago Alice Cooper gave a lot of people the creeps as a harbinger of the New Decadence that was about to descend on us all. Nowadays he seems about as threatening as George Burns doing one of his old vaudeville numbers. Alice is still up to his old tricks, trying to *épater le bourgeois* with control-room effects and attempting to disguise the fact that he has practically no voice and a performing manner that seems to come straight out of a Saturday morning TV kiddie show. The high point here would have to be Alice's rendition of that fifty-eight-year-old schmaltz classic *I'm Always Chasing Rainbows*, in which he has engineered himself into sounding like a not-so-heavenly chorus broadcasting from the Reverberation Room of the downtown Hotel Styx. There's nothing much here for you unless you dig one-note showmanship and a threadbare idea.

P.R.

HERB ALPERT: *Just You and Me*. Herb Alpert (trumpet and vocals); orchestra. *Spanish Nights*; *The Day Will Come*; *Musique*; *One Night Lover*; and six others. A&M SP-4591 \$6.98, Ⓜ 8T 4591 \$7.98, © CS 4591 \$7.98.

Performance: **Surprise, surprise**
Recording: **Excellent**

After making several fortunes by giving an eager public exactly what it demanded each and every time out, wouldn't you think that Herb Alpert would be content to stick to his formula to the last? No way. His new album has largely abandoned the massed brass effects for a more varied approach. His arrangements now skitter all over the place, glossy and plush to be sure, but hardly instantly identifiable as was his work in the old "Tijuana" days. As usual his production work is superb, but even that can't save such things as *Spanish Nights* (he also wrote all of the material here) from sounding like updated Percy Faith instead of good ol' reliable Herb Alpert. On several occasions he is wont to burst into song himself—a really serious mistake.

It's an album that chips away at the very foundations of American belief and trust. I mean, how would you feel if Colonel Sanders suddenly started dishing up *poulet en porto*, or if Betty Crocker got it into her head to go into the perfume business?

P.R.

JON ANDERSON: *Olias of Sunhillow*. Jon Anderson (vocals and instrumentals). *Ocean Song*; *Meeting (Garden of Geda)*; *Sound Out the Galleon*; *Dance of Ranyart*; *Olias (To Build the Moorglade)*; *Naon*; and eight others. ATLANTIC SD 18180 \$6.98, Ⓜ TP 18180 \$7.97, © CS 18180 \$7.97.

Performance: **Like cosmic, man**
Recording: **Like cosmic, man**

This is one of those one-man shows, via overdubbing, in which all sorts of mythic figures mess around a lot and finally lie down and become one with the universe. I don't know whether to blame Herman Hesse or Stanley Kubrick for influencing these young men—most of whom seem to be associated with the rock group Yes—to do things like this, but there are two groups you can't blame: musicians and English teachers. Language, whether one means words or musical notation, is used here not to communicate but to obfuscate. It is possible, of course, to be mystified by somebody who knows what he is talking about and is simply that much smarter than you are, but this is more like the way you are mystified by the jargon spouted by social scientists trying to disguise the fact that everyone already knows the "answers" they found by spending a big wad of grant money. The kind of lyrics you get here, for example, are on the order of "To move we delight/Call his name, his name/We chase as we run/The motion decide," and there are chord progressions and sound effects to match—if you can imagine that. I suppose Anderson deserves some credit for playing a lot of instruments and making a lot of sound, not all of it noise, just most of it. Give the lad a grant, I say, and let him study the effect that lying down in the grass and becoming one with the universe has on syntax.

N.C.

CHARLES AZNAVOUR: *I Sing for . . . You*. Charles Aznavour (vocals); orchestra. *Take*

Me Away; Ciao Always Ciao; Slowly; Between Us; They Fell; and six others. RCA LPL1-5115 \$6.98, © LPK1-5115 \$7.95.

Performance: **Restrained**
Recording: **Flossy**

Here's another flossily recorded collection of songs by Charles Aznavour, who modestly confides, "The romantic Frenchman image is a problem for me if that's what people really expect. I am not a heart-throb. I am the man next door." Well, *vraiment*, Sharl, I never did have much interior struggle about your image; I always thought you wrote very good high-key love songs and exciting, if a bit melodramatic, show-biz slice-of-life songs. You still do. *How Sad Venice Can Be* and *Women of Today*, included here, are sterling examples. But I also thought your most remarkable characteristic was a boundless, tough, performing energy. This last isn't very much in evidence here. Instead, there's a rather alarming falsetto trill in some of the quieter songs that takes one all the way back to the days of Tino Rossi. *Non, non, Sharl! Ees not romantique—ees très hokee!* But I can see how it happened, *mon ami*. I've had zees image problems myself. . . . P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TONY BENNETT: *Ten Rodgers & Hart Songs*. Tony Bennett (vocals); Ruby Braff/George Barnes Quartet. *Blue Moon; The Lady Is a Tramp; Spring Is Here; Isn't It Romantic?*; and six others. IMPROV 7113 \$6.98.

Performance: **Fine**
Recording: **Intimate**

The glorious collaboration of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart resulted in some of the finest, most wryly intelligent, lyrical popular songs ever written. Any proof needed as to how very good their work was, how fresh and undated it still is, is readily available, for their songs have never stopped being sung and performed. Today, probably only Stephen Sondheim comes at all close to matching Hart's brittle, graceful, yet often heartbreakingly perceptive way with a lyric (*Send In the Clowns* is surely a direct descendant of such Hart classics as *Little Girl Blue* and *My Funny Valentine*), and only Michel Legrand seems to have any feeling at all for the broad, romantic line in popular music.

Tony Bennett's expertly nonchalant recital here, beautifully produced and recorded, full of the ease and the assurance and the audible pleasure of an Old Pro reveling in his kind of material, is a fine tribute to two of the authentic immortals of the American theater. Bennett's voice sounds in much sturdier shape than it has for some time, and his support, particularly from Ruby Braff on cornet and George Barnes on guitar, is stunningly effective. It's the best album Tony Bennett has made in many years—warm, intimate, and gorgeously executed. P.R.

DAVID BOWIE: *Changesonebowie*. David Bowie (vocals); orchestra. *Space Oddity; Changes; Ziggy Stardust; Rebel Rebel; Diamond Dogs*; and six others. RCA APL1-1732 \$6.98, © APS1-1732 \$7.98, © APK1-1732 \$7.98.

Performance: **For fans**
Recording: **Good**

With his robot-like performance in the title role of *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, David Bo-

“...have I got a girl for you...”



Columbia Records

Introducing Jane Olivor

YES, she does sound like Edith Piaf in places—and not necessarily in the French song here from the pen of Gilbert Bécaud. And there are certain notes that have come, as if by teleportation, straight out of Streisand's mouth and mind. Streisand's influence is obvious, and she's inevitably going to be compared with her. There's more than a little trace of Garland too. And I listened to the opening few lines of *My First Night Alone Without You* over and over again until I could place in my memory that peculiar little bite in her pronunciation: Eartha Kitt, by gum. But Piaf, Garland, Kitt, Streisand—that's pretty good company to be in. And besides the big voice, the nifty technique, and the mother lode of emotion she can draw on, this girl is so obviously thrilled to be singing that that alone gives you goose pimples. Frankly, she can sing the paint off the walls—in addition to the Toledo telephone directory, *TV Guide*, your laundry list. Who's the girl? Why, Jane Olivor, of course. Never heard of

her? Well, neither had I before I saw the Columbia record with the Godawful picture of her on the front cover and one nearly as bad on the back. But oh, have I got a girl for you.

Jane Olivor comes from Brooklyn and used to be a secretary. She is now what I suppose one has to call a "club singer," clubs like New York's Reno Sweeney, Gypsy's, and the Ballroom being where she appears. I haven't seen her at any of them. My first exposure to her was *Some Enchanted Evening* as it is on this record, and as it is on this record it is a very, very interesting performance (of a song I never liked) that grabs you by the arm at the beginning and sends you off into space by the end. Miss Olivor completely distorts the rhythm of the melody in the opening lines, making it clash with the accompaniment. It is kind of crude, but it has one effect, the same effect as spelling that stage name of hers as peculiarly as she does: it gets your attention, and quickly. You may start to wonder why in the name of God she did it, but by that time you've become aware that the girl is singing her tail off. So you listen.

There are some gorgeous performances on this record, and no real duds, and what the performances reveal is that she isn't limited to one kind of song or one kind of singing. She is quietly touching on Don McLean's *Vincent*, cute—and multitracked—on *Morning, Noon and Nighttime* (and sounding like she wanted to do six more choruses), exhilarated on *Better Days*, sophisticated on *L'Important c'est la rose*, and full of wonderfully innocent emotion in *Some Enchanted Evening*. It's more than just good saloon singing, because the appeal is much, much broader. A lot of the arrangements—a lot of them by Lee Holdridge—are good if sometimes overblown, indicating that she is not, apparently, completely in charge yet. And that brings us to the one real problem with the album.

It's hard enough to break a new artist, no matter how talented she may be, and in the horse race of the pop market this album is carrying a lot of extra weight on its back. The album's producer, Jason Darrow, has three of his own lyrics on the disc. Olivor's musical director, Jeremy Stone, has two of his own songs. Richard Rome, who arranged the first and last songs, has dropped into them long, straight instrumental passages that sound as if they were cut from a film track. But a new singer needs single-minded support, and such things are inevitably distracting. And then there are those cover photos. Still, with any breaks and any push at all, Jane Olivor should make it. It would be a crime if she didn't; she's just too good. —James Goodfriend

JANE OLIVOR: *First Night*. Jane Olivor (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *My First Night Alone Without You; Come Softly to Me; Morning, Noon and Nighttime; Better Days; L'Important c'est la rose; Carousel of Love; Vincent; One More Ride on the Merry-Go-Round; Some Enchanted Evening; Turn Away*. COLUMBIA PC 34274 \$6.98, © PCA 34274 \$7.98.

wie proved that his plasticized, deliberately bizarre theatrical persona could, properly cast, be quite interesting in visual terms. Unfortunately, whenever he was called upon to act, or react, or indeed be anything more than director's clay, his star presence slid away from him like a peeling false fingernail. His recordings, obviously lacking the visual, have always been spotty. He sings well enough; his songs, particularly such things here as *John*, *I'm Only Dancing* and *Young Americans*, are fashionably good; and his surrounding production is always carefully cosmetic and flattering. But there is always something missing from the recordings: the strange sight of Bowie himself. Twentieth-Century Man, Androgyne *Extraordinaire*, or whatever, he's unique in his spacey, manikin way. The world of cinema seems to have discovered in him the male equivalent of Hedy Lamarr, a glamorous sleepwalker, but Bowie on records is too often only a figment of some producer-promotor's overwrought imagination. P.R.

CHICAGO: Chicago X. Chicago (vocals and instrumentals). *Mama Mama*; *Scrapbook*; *You Get It Up*; *Hope for Love*; *Gently I'll Wake You*; and six others. COLUMBIA PC 34200 \$6.98, © PCA 34200 \$7.98, © PCT 34200 \$7.98.

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

This collection of torpid songs and performances sounds almost precisely like Chicago's last album—which, in turn, sounded dismayingly like all of their albums before that. Just how long the public intends to keep on buying the same mild-mannered Muzak rock, release after release, is even more a puzzle than why Chicago keeps on recording it. Chicago has found the boredom immensely profitable. What's the public's excuse? P.R.

COMMANDER CODY: We've Got a Live One Here! Commander Cody and His Lost Planet

Airmen (vocals and instrumentals). *Big Mam-mau*; *Don't Let Go*; *Too Much Fun*; *Hot Rod Lincoln*; *Rock That Boogie*; and fourteen others. WARNER BROS. 2LS 2939 two discs \$11.98, © L8 2939 \$9.97, © L5 2939 \$9.97.

Performance: **Clumsy and outdated**
Recording: **Variable**

The recordings put together here were drawn from three different in-person appearances, and they didn't happen here, they happened in England. It's difficult to know if the audiences in London, Aylebury, and Oxford were simply stunned into motor-response applause by the overwhelming mediocrity of the Commander and his motley crew, or if they actually enjoyed this phony, worn-out kind of clowning around. The lowest point, down there among many, is *It Should've Been Me*, a clumsy attempt at milking a few laughs from a supposed duel between two very bad bands. Since the two mythical bands don't sound very much different from Cody's at its cranking best, the joke tends to lose something in performance. Very poor stuff indeed. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

COUNTRY GAZETTE: Live. Byron Berline (vocals, fiddle, mandolin); Roger Bush (vocals, bass); Alan Munde (vocals, banjo); Roland White (vocals, guitar). *Black Mountain Rag*; *Roses for a Sunday Morning*; *Blue, Blue Day*; *To Prove My Love to You*; *Sally Goodin*; *My Baby's Gone*; *Laughing Guitar*; *Holland Holiday*; and six others. ANTILLES AN-7014 \$4.98.

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

This is a West Coast bluegrass band looking for that ever-lovin' Wider Audience but doing so without compromising the bluegrass style. Members of the Gazette have been in and out of the Dillards, the Burritos, and various other "contemporary" groups, as well as some

hard-core ones: Byron Berline (out of the Gazette by the time this was released) has played with Bill Monroe, and Roland White, brother of the late Clarence of the Byrds, was with Monroe and then played mandolin for Lester Flatt. These are not the hottest soloists you can find in old-time music—Berline fiddling is no Kenny Baker, White flat-picking is no Doc Watson, and so on—but they were playing off one another well when these tapes were made, and the song selection is just goofy enough to work. The trouble, as usual, is that bluegrass bands' personnel tend to wander off in all directions just when the various outfits are starting to sound like ensembles. The musicians are always forming bands instead of staying put long enough to advance the form. Ah, well. Here you have the sound of one group that still has a good nucleus, at least, and had, when this was recorded, some good nights. N.C.

RICK DERRINGER: Derringer. Rick Derringer (guitar, vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *Let Me In*; *You Can Have Me*; *Loosen Up Your Grip*; *Envy*; and four others. BLUE SKY PZ 34181 \$6.98, © PZA 34181 \$7.98, © PZT 34181 \$7.98.

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

It's been a decade since Rick Derringer was a member of the McCoys (*Hang On Sloopy*). He's gained experience and technique as a guitarist since then, and he has had success as the producer of many of Edgar Winter's records. But after ten years, and now fronting his own group, he still sounds as though he's leading a teen band.

Derringer's present effort is noticeable for his flirtations with jazz chording and structure and for the material on which he collaborates with Cynthia Weil, a lyricist of long experience and success. But the resulting music doesn't jell. It is hesitantly ambitious. The band sounds as though it doesn't want to alienate sock-hop bookings for concert-hall dates that may never come through. Derringer plays as if he were trying to be Jeff Beck with Johnny Winter looking over his shoulder. Who knows? Maybe he was. J.V.

DION: Streetheart. Dion (vocals); instrumental and vocal accompaniment. *The Way You Do the Things You Do*; *Runaway Man*; *Queen of '59*; *If I Can Just Get Through Tonight*; *Hey My Love*; *Lover Boy Supreme*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BS 2954 \$6.98, © M8 2954 \$7.98, © M5 2954 \$7.98.

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

Dion Dimucci, former lead singer of Dion and the Belmonts, has spent most of the last ten years trying to put as much distance as possible between his last style and his current one. His desire not to be type-cast as a Fifties rock-and-roll teen star, condemned forever to sing *I Wonder Why* and *Teenager in Love* and *Runaround Sue*, is understandable. Johnny Maestro of the Crests, a far better vocalist, has never been able to escape *Sixteen Candles*. Between his departure from the Belmonts and his re-emergence as an adult blues/jazz/anything soloist, however, Dion has not changed all that much. He still has a dangerous tendency to go flat. His singing with the Belmonts was robot-like; it has been amended only slightly today by a sleepy, laconic, cau-

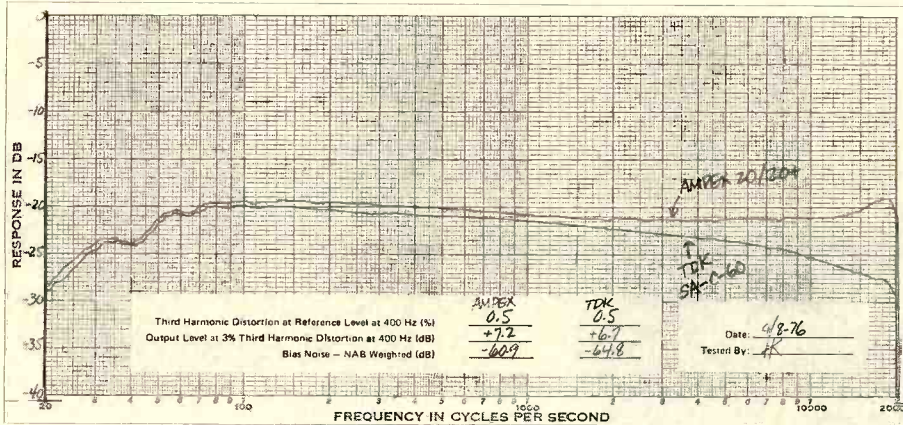
(Continued on page 98)

COUNTRY GAZETTE:
reaching for that
ever-lovin'
Wider Audience without
compromising bluegrass



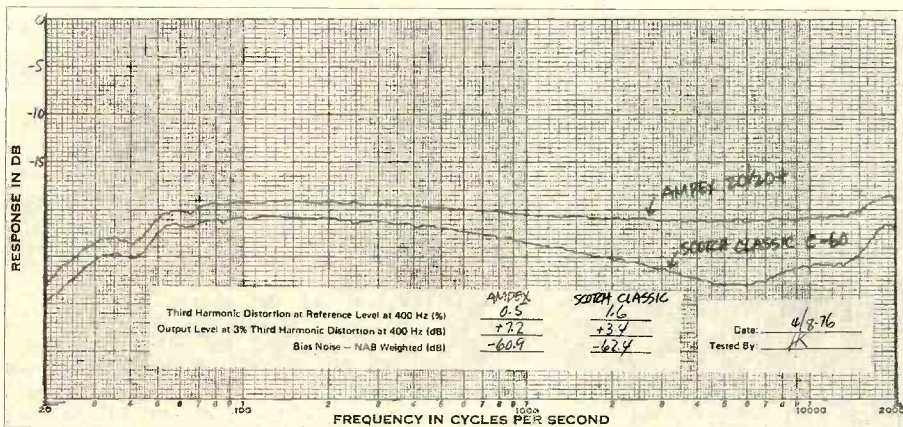
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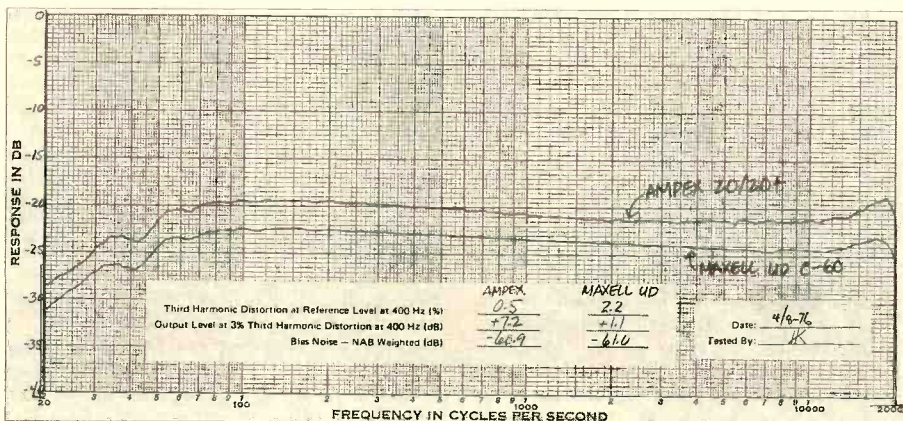
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Play-offs were held April 8, 1976 in the Ampex Magnetic Tape Research Laboratory at Redwood City, California, using a Nakamichi-1000 cassette deck at standard factory bias setting and following each tape manufacturer's playback instructions. We measured frequency response at a record level 20 dB below 200 nwb/m, third harmonic distortion at zero dB (200 nwb/m, 400 Hz), output at 3% third harmonic distortion (400 Hz), and N.A.B. weighted noise. C60 cassettes were used. The photos are unretouched chart recorder output. You can see why Ampex 20/20+ is the best quality cassette you can buy.



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tious delivery. He has also acquired the trait of swallowing words, an artistically presumptuous affectation much admired by amateur white blues singers.

The two best tracks here are the blues-ish *Lover Boy Supreme*, which Dion co-wrote, and Smokey Robinson's charming and witty catalog of womanly attributes, *The Way You Do the Things You Do*. The rest of the material is a gelatinous mass of cliché arrangements, hack songwriting, and California pop ennui. It would take a more committed and adventurous singer than Dion to make it pass muster, much less make it work. For all his efforts to escape his past and establish his own identity, Dion has not done anything impressive with his independence on "Streethart." J.V.

NICK DRAKE: *Five Leaves Left*. Nick Drake (vocals, guitar); orchestra. *Time Has Told*

FLAMIN' GROOVIES:
conjuring up
a simpler time
when rock had a
thrilling future



Sire Records

Me; River Man; Three Hours; Day Is Done; Way to Blue; and five others. ANTILLES AN-7010 \$4.98.

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

Nick Drake, twenty-six, died in 1974. This album, released in Britain a few years ago, is supposed to have inspired John Cale's "Paris 1919," which may give you some idea of what it sounds like. Vague is one word that occurs to me; formal is another. Moods and inflections seem to be ends in themselves: it is quite melodic but in a detached sort of way, and, though the words seem to want to be literary, they are presented as a not particularly important supporting element of the whole. Drake sang very softly, with one foot seemingly in folk music and one in jazz. Here it amounts to a mix that doesn't do much for me; I can't seem to find the atmosphere—time of day, proportion of light to shade, whatever—in which to drift with it. And I don't know what else you'd do with it. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

FLAMIN' GROOVIES: *Shake Some Action*. Flamin' Groovies (vocals and instrumentals). *Shake Some Action; St. Louis Blues; You Tore Me Down; Let the Boy Rock 'n' Roll; Don't You Lie to Me;* and nine others. SIRE SASD-7521 \$6.98.

Performance: **Delightful**
Recording: **Evocative**

The Flamin' Groovies are a straight-ahead rock band from California with a long history of frustration. Between 1968 and 1971 they released one album on Epic and two on Kama Sutra, none of which made much impression. They also suffered at the hands of New York cultists who attempted to tout them as a Dadaistic punk-rock band of social import, when in fact they have always been a sturdy, reli-

able, and exciting group whose strength was in their simplicity.

The present group includes only two of the original Groovies, George Alexander and Cyril Jordan, and this current recording was made during their recent residence in England. The reconstituted group dresses à la mode 1964, in sedate suits, and their music reflects the same period. Much of their original material is a montage of sentiments, chord patterns, and vocal deliveries reminiscent of early Kinks, Moody Blues, Searchers, and almost every other British band from that era. A lot of bands have attempted this approach, but few have done it so unselfconsciously and entertainingly. Much credit for this must go to the Groovies' producer, Dave Edmunds, who on his own has specialized in this kind of period re-creation.

The Groovies' performances conjure up a simpler time when rock was a popular music with a thrilling future before it instead of the masturbatory ideology it became. Nice going, Groovies. J.V.

FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS: *Airborne*. The Flying Burrito Brothers (vocals and instrumentals). *Waitin' for Love to Begin; In of Control; Toe Tappin' Music; Linda Lu; Walk on the Water;* and five others. COLUMBIA PC 34222 \$6.98, © PCA 34222 \$7.98, © PCT-34222 \$7.98.

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

The Burritos are about as good as country-rock gets from a technical standpoint; the band's playing is polished to a high glow, and the members' efforts are as smoothly integrated as ball-bearings in a . . . well, in a ball-bearing manufacturing machine. But country-rock (a form of popular music played by urban musicians with an urban outlook and/or background, in which the musicians attempt to emulate or adopt the musical forms, emotions, and outlooks prevalent among the rural dwellers) has about shot its bolt emotionally. Country-rock musicians are mostly actors, and any actor who plays the same role too many times tends to give technically correct but dry performances.

The reconstituted Burritos sorely miss country-rock's best actor, the late Gram Parsons, whose performances so distinguished the band during a large part of its history. Although the Burritos are still a good group, the initial Sixties excitement of country-rock is far gone. To maintain the fiction of country-rock it is necessary for bands to acquire or write superior material, as the Ozark Mountain Daredevils do. The present-day Burritos haven't got that kind of material. They try to sound like a corn-likker outfit, but they wind up sounding like a nice cup of tea sweetened with sugar substitute. J.V.

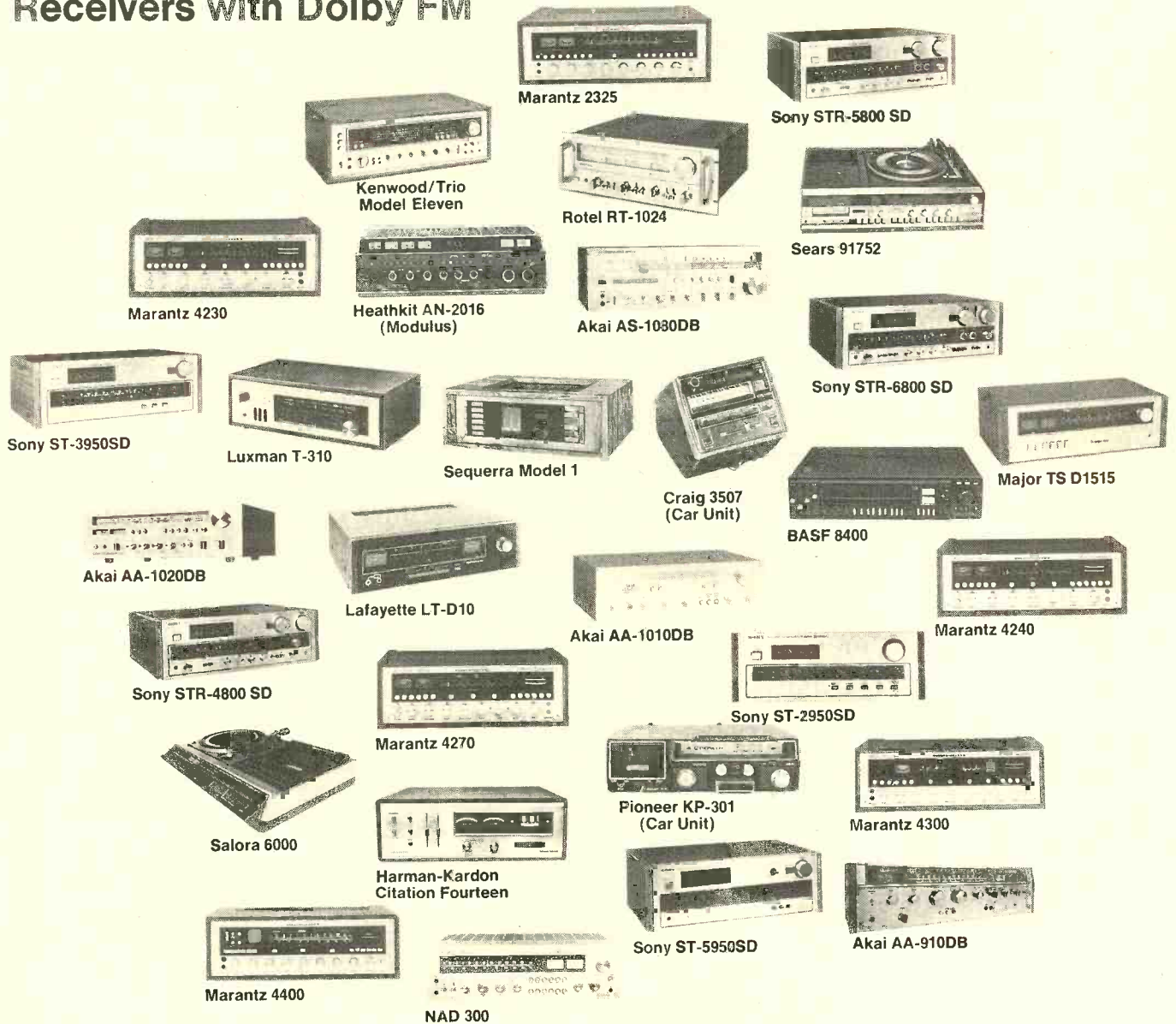
THE RICHIE FURAY BAND: *I've Got a Reason*. Richie Furay (vocals, guitar); Tom Stipe (keyboards, vocals); John Mehler (drums); Jay Truax (bass, vocals). *Look at the Sun; We'll See; Starlight; Gettin' Through; I've Got a Reason;* and four others. ASYLUM 7E-1067 \$6.98, © ET8-1067 \$7.98, © TC5-1067 \$7.98.

Performance: **Yes, well . . .**
Recording: **Good but dry**

Let me put it this way: if Richie Furay were an unknown kid in, oh, Dubuque and sent these songs in to a publisher, I don't think we'd now have to contend with this record. He's not the only one in the category, of course, but his songwriting is getting to be enough to make you wish you had Tin Pan Alley back. There's not an idea anywhere in this batch that hasn't already been overworked in *True Confessions* and several comic books; nor is there any style in the lyrics, just eternally reshuffled clichés; nor are there any tunes, just a few tricks Furay has learned about zigzagging intervals. Singing is his strong suit, and his judgment in that area doesn't fail him; his is a hard and definite voice that could get on your nerves—like an overplayed harmonica or pedal steel—and he is smart enough to soften that by programming harmonies (with Tom Stipe and Jay Truax) generously. The band he's put together is capable, I think, given some actual melodies instead of these segmented things. I don't know what would be so terrible about being the lead singer in a band that gets its songs from somewhere else (as a practical matter, a little bit of that wouldn't bring back Tin Pan Alley . . . about which I was kidding be-

(Continued on page 100)

They're here Receivers with Dolby FM



Dolby FM was a classic chicken and egg situation. In 1973-74 we first had to convince broadcast engineers of the technical merits of our system. That got the first stations on the air. (And this without any available receivers, only a few enthusiasts with add-on Dolby decoders.) Then our licensees put new receiver designs into the pipeline. Eventually, in 1975, a trickle of receivers with built-in Dolby FM circuits began to appear. And the station list began to lengthen. Now, with the receivers pictured here, and with more than 140 broadcasters equipped with Dolby encoder units, it's no longer chicken and egg. Dolby FM is on its way.

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Stone County, Inc.

HICKORY WIND:
a sound that
seeped in from
the mountains

fore; I really wouldn't want to see that nest of hacks back in business), but apparently the peer pressure to be Rilly Creative and write your own stuff is still pretty fierce. N.C.

GRATEFUL DEAD: *Steal Your Face*. Grateful Dead (vocals and instrumentals). *The Promised Land; Cold Rain & Snow; Around and Around; Stella Blue; Ship of Fools; Big River; Black-Throated Wind;* and seven others. GRATEFUL DEAD GD-LA two discs 620-J2 \$9.98, © EA 620-J \$9.98, © CA 620-J \$9.98.

Performance: **Mostly good**
Recording: **Dead-room sound**

Well, it's the *band* that's supposed to be "the Dead"—not the room they play in. This was recorded back in 1974 at Winterland in San Francisco, and it has a big-space sound I find unreal. The mix, including the re-creation of stereo image (do you realize you don't usually get stereo at an amplified concert?), is good enough, but the setting seems to absorb the sound without bouncing much of it back. In a way, the recording does what I've been accusing the Dead's performances of doing: it dries everything out too much. Here, ironically, the live audience apparently influences the musicians to *play* the music rather than meander about refining it and generally being esoteric. Jerry Garcia's guitar, while it is seldom overplayed in studio albums, seems more basic, more with-it, and that may be the key thing.

The instant and continuous audience feedback and the band's gauging of that can be good for discipline. On the other hand, the Dead aren't as versatile as they think they are; outside their realm (the rock culture), in, say, Marty Robbins territory (*El Paso*) or Johnny Cash country (*Big River*), they don't really seem to understand what they're doing. They play the notes but don't convey the feel of it. Their instincts clearly serve them better in such stuff as *Ship of Fools* or *U.S. Blues*. So it comes down to whether you want to hear that sort of thing *again* . . . unless this is to

be your first brush with the Dead. In that case, it's a pretty good sampler, the sound's unmet need for walls being just about offset by the positive influence of the audience. N.C.

TIM HARDIN: *Nine*. Tim Hardin (vocals, guitar); John Mealing (piano); Bob Cohen (guitar); Andy Bown (bass); other musicians. *Shiloh Town; Never Too Far; Rags and Old Iron; Look Our Love Over; Person to Person; Darling Girl;* and four others. ANTILLES AN-7023 \$4.98.

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

Tim Hardin, in his first recording since 1973, seems to be saying interpretation is everything—interpretation of Tim Hardin, that is, beyond whatever song he may be singing at the moment. The voice uncoils, bobs like a cork on water, ricochets off the surface of things it just hints are scary, and this added to what one hears of Hardin's personal life (he is said to have undergone a "sleep cure" for addiction, among other things, during this hiatus) makes for a curious but not altogether musical listening experience. It isn't just a matter of "jazz inflections" or refusing to sing a melody straight, in which case it would work at least as well as his unusual *Bird on a Wire* antics did; here Hardin's power seems to be turned inward, words and music being sucked in, an implosion abounding.

It's a matter of degree, of course, as one's self is always among the things being explained. But I think songs are supposed to be a little more escapist in nature than Hardin allows here, and some of these lose more than they gain through this kind of personalization—*Blues on My Ceiling*, for example (which, by the way, it says here Hardin wrote and which appears elsewhere as *Blues on THE Ceiling*, credited to Fred Neil), has more charm if the singer comes to it. If Hardin had come back writing more and throttled-back a bit on the singing, I'd be more comfortable with it. As much as I like his voice and what

there is to admire of *Shiloh Town* (an excellent one-third or so of a song), I don't think I'll play this very often. I need all that kind of energy I can muster to worry about my own welfare. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HICKORY WIND: *Fresh Produce*. Mark Walbridge (vocals, guitar, flute); Bob Shank (vocals, banjo, guitar, hammered dulcimer, drums); Sam Morgan (vocals, guitar, steel guitar, fiddle, mandolin, harp); Pete Tenney (mandolin, guitar, fiddle); Glen McCarthy (bass, harmony vocals). *Everybody Loves My Baby; Cracklin' Down; Shaking Down the Acorns; Red Rocking Chair; Ragtime Annie; Turkey in the Straw;* and six others. FLYING FISH FF 018 \$6.98.

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

We may be, at least I may be, in an era in which the most impressive bands are regional; I've run across some terrific ones you never heard of—Stony Creek in Upstate New York, Clean Living in Massachusetts, the Arwen Mountain String Band in Vermont—and you could say the same to me. It's probably a combination of the roll-your-own trend producing more good musicians and the economic recession discouraging ambitious travels.

Hickory Wind, an impressive regional band now apparently attempting to go national, is from West (by God) Virginia and plays a lot around Washington, D.C. It's all right with me if they go national, and it won't hurt the nation, although I think this album could've been even better than it is. The instrumentals are just fine; the boys don't play like Chet Atkins, but neither do they play as if they learned it from books and records—they play as if it seeped in from the mountains. And I'm a sucker for the hammered dulcimer anyway, as long as I don't have to play it or (worse yet) tune it. The vocals, though, seem a little forced, a bit self-conscious and cute, down-home nasality exaggerated, coming from people so young in such a media-infested country. This bottoms out in some countrified scat singing that, along with the kazoo, should be jettisoned from the act. It undermines the dignity and naturalness that are so impressive in the picking . . . but not enough to prevent my recommending it. I recommend it. N.C.

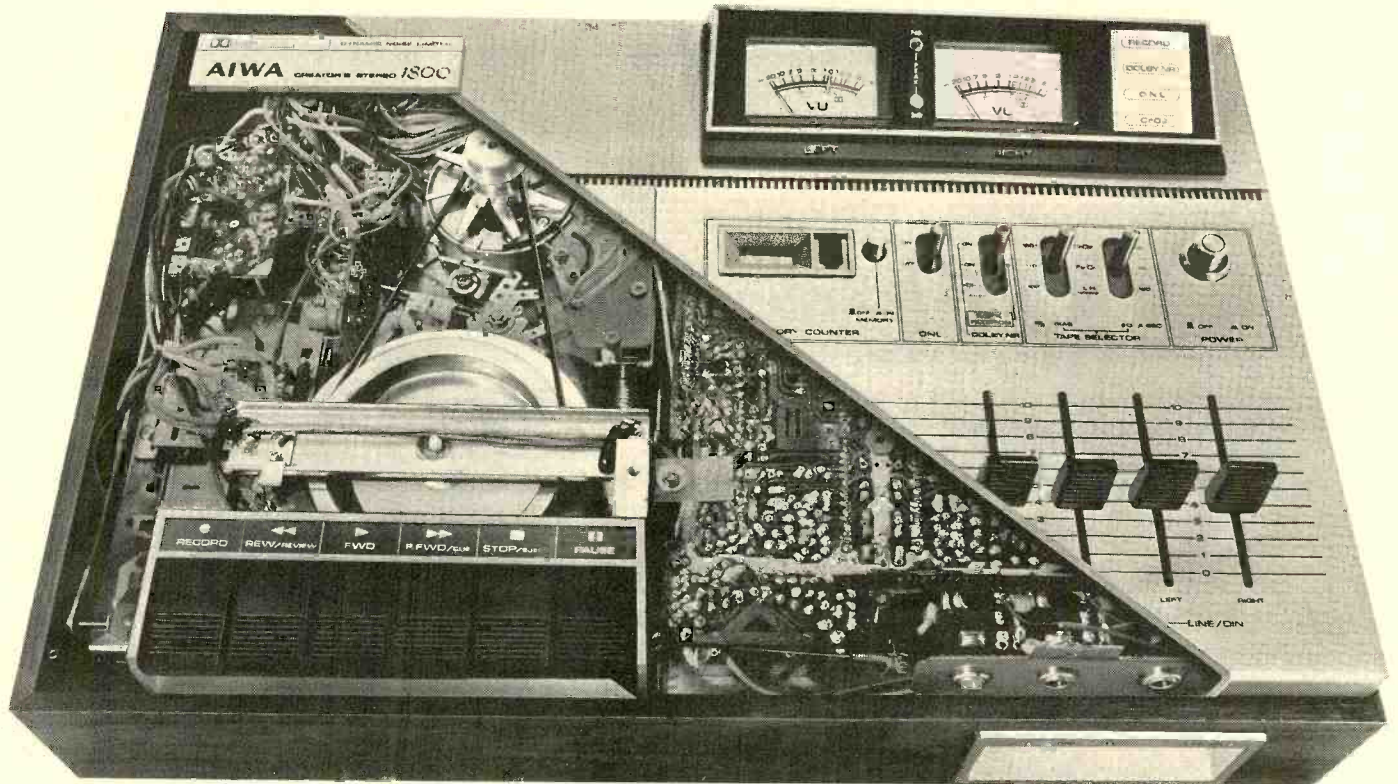
THE KINKS: *The Kinks' Greatest Celluloid Heroes*. The Kinks (vocals and instrumentals). *Sitting in My Hotel; Muswell Hillbilly; Alcohol; Skin and Bone; Holiday;* and seven others. RCA APL1-1743 \$6.98, © APS1-1743 \$7.98, © APK1-1743 \$7.98.

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

The Kinks and their mainspring, Raymond Douglas Davies, are presented here in a ragtag collection of material dating as far back as 1972. Davies, who writes, produces, and arranges the group's material, seems to be making a lifelong career out of cheeky irreverence. Sometimes it works, as it does in *Muswell Hillbilly*, and sometimes it is woefully inappropriate, as it is in *Alcohol*—there's nothing really funny about that subject if you've read any of the new statistics on teenage (or any-age) alcoholism. But most of the time, as in *Everybody's a Star* and *Celluloid Heroes*, it comes across as a creaky bore.

(Continued on page 104)

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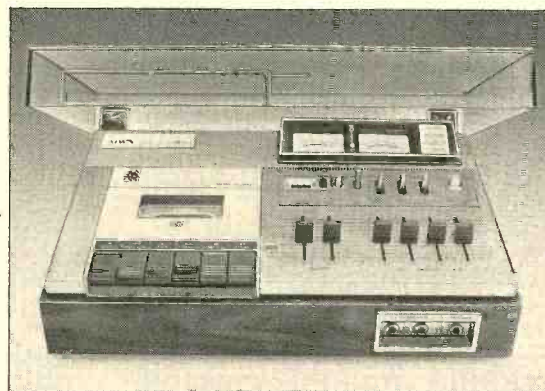
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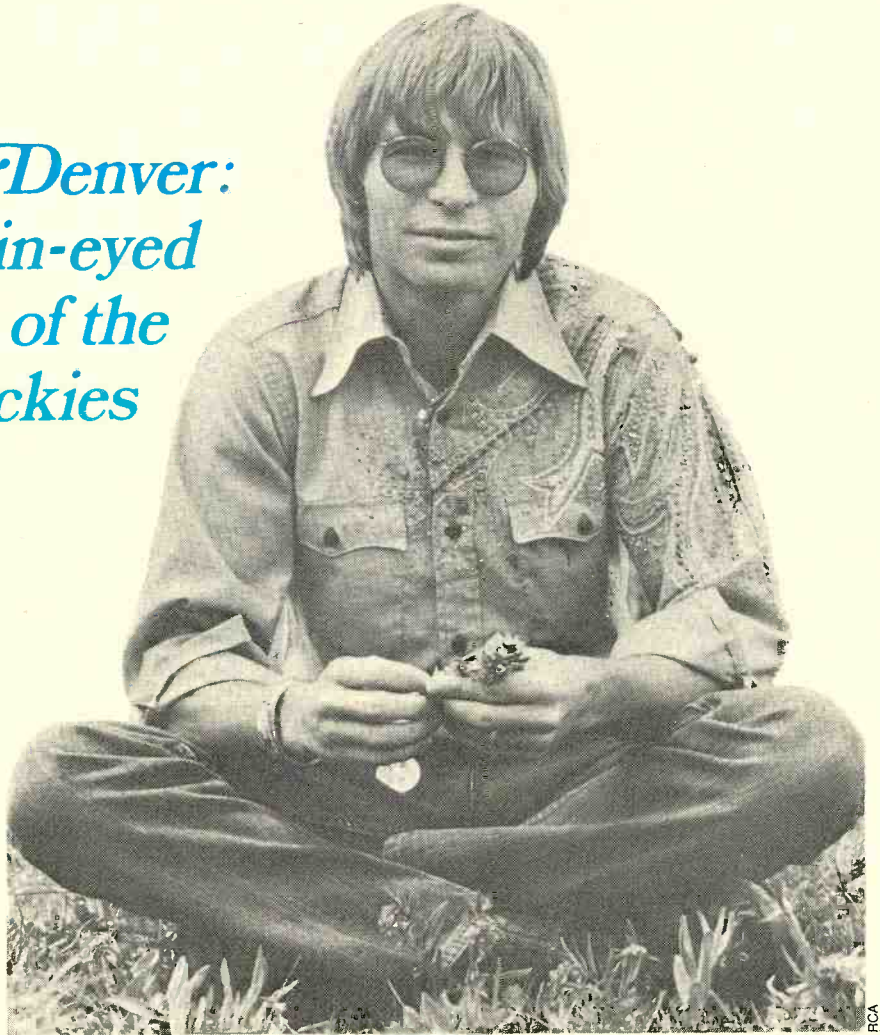
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CIRCLE NO. 71 ON READER SERVICE CARD

“...one of the best vocal techniques now practicing in pop music”

John Denver: Welkin-eyed Sweetheart of the Rockies



THE world, everyone knows, is divided into two kinds of people: those who like John Denver and those who do not. For the one, he is simply the Sweetheart of the Rockies, the welkin-eyed optimist who can do no wrong; for the other he is the missing Osmond brother, squeaky-clean cousin to the Carpenters, the man who has, as Harry Nilsson once put it to me, “written the same song fifty-seven times.” Well, yes . . . but then so has Harry Nilsson, except for those he farms out to Randy Newman. I don’t, certainly, mean that to be in any way insulting—in my book Harry, Randy, and John all wear white hats. But if it is true that a John Denver song sounds like John Denver, it is also true that a Harry Nilsson song sounds like Harry Nilsson (except when it sounds like Randy), Schubert sounds like Schubert, Brahms like Brahms, and Wolf like Wolf. And that is not, it is perhaps necessary to add, necessarily to *compare* these composers.

What we are talking about here, obviously, is personality as it is reflected in a composer’s work, and the public “image” that results. John Denver’s image is that of a man seem-

ingly without reticence; he is not so much outspoken as he is lacking that excess of self-consciousness we call the faculty of embarrassment. The whole substance of his songs, in fact, is concerned with just those things most men find it difficult to talk about *without* embarrassment: how much they love their wives, their children, their country, animals, even scenery—the kind of *private* things one ought not to hang on the line in public.

BAD as all that is, it might be forgiven if Denver were not so unfashionably middle-class, so bandbox wholesome, such a stranger to *grottness*, so without redeeming *cool*. “Cool” is a relatively new addition to the wardrobe of American attitudes, an elaborate set of defensive social tactics designed to prevent embarrassment, to keep the world from discovering that we are as sensitive, vulnerable, clumsy, frightened, human, as uneasily close to the brink of hysteria as often as the next guy. The Rule of Cool is very simple—*Thou shalt not be moved, delighted, shocked, surprised, or, above all, enthusiastic, and if thou art thou shalt not show it*—but John

Denver behaves (far out!) as if he had never even *heard* of it.

Well, maybe that’s the way it is—the world divided into the cool and the uncool, the complicated and the simple, the reticent and the ingenuous, the Harrys and the Johns, and never the one will understand the other. Public performer John, for example, tells us that he loves his wife Annie (he keeps writing songs about her), that he thanks *God* (right out *loud!*) he’s a country boy, is fond of West Virginia, fonder of Colorado, and just plain nuts about his son Zachary. Studio denizen Harry has been married (separated now, I believe), but he has not (at least in my hearing) addressed a single song to a specific light o’ love; neither has he gone public about his feelings for *his* son (interesting coincidence) Zachary. John Denver has: in his new RCA album “Spirit” there is a thoroughly delightful little tune called *It Makes Me Giggle* (“Every time I see my little boy child”) that is as embarrassingly proud-papa as you can get (how many songwriters do you know who’d dare admit to *giggling?*). Oddly enough, it is a song just made to be crooned by Harry Nils-

son; not that John doesn't do it well, but its affectionate, slightly dated jangle, barroom piano and all, would profit more from Harry's unerring feel for the subtleties and ironies of period Americana than it does from John's artlessly energetic sincerity.

Fans won't need to be told to buy "Spirit." Detractors will doubtless remain immune to its charms even when I tell them that John Denver not only has one of the best voices but one of the best vocal techniques now practicing in the pop-music field. Their loss. But perhaps they might give it a chance for the sake of the songs here that are not Denver's. A surprise for me was Bob Wills' *San Antonio Rose*, for which, unaccountably, my heart has a warm spot; it is a bonus that the performance is without blemish. Even more surprising was *Polka Dots and Moonbeams*, an old Johnny Burke/Jimmy Van Heusen chestnut (Billy Rose's *Aquacade*, 1940—are you listening, Harry?) I had always thought properly belonged in the *Spike Jones Songbook*. Never mind; Denver manages to make it all rather endearing, even that incredible line "Suddenly I saw polka dots and moonbeams/All around a pug-nosed dream." "Pug-nosed"!? That missing faculty of embarrassment again.

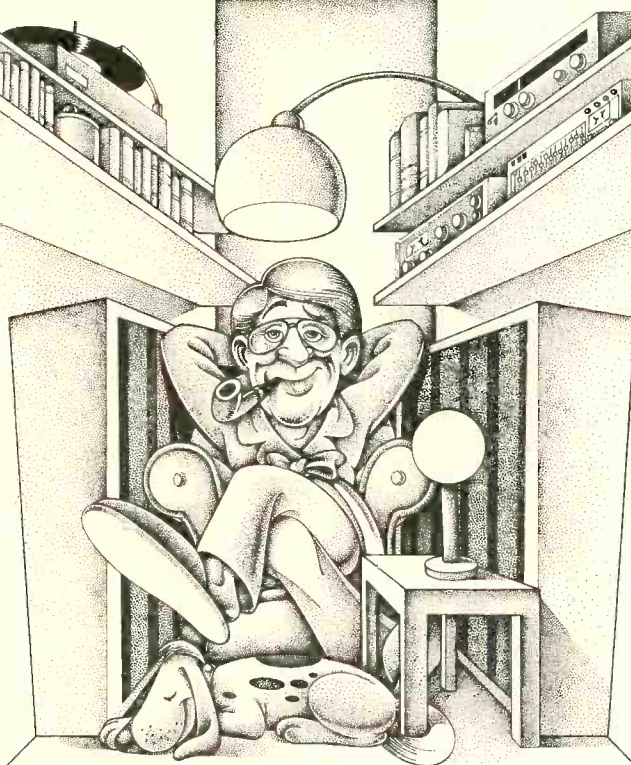
THE album "theme" stretches no farther than the cover type (kachina-doll bold caps tastefully ornamented with turquoise), the inspirational *The Wings That Fly Us Home* (Denver's music, Joe Henry's words) with its epigrammatic capsulization of the Amerindian world-view ("[The spirit] lives within each part and is the whole"), and Denver's costume. Now that last is not, as you might think, irrelevant to the matter, for it is a functioning part of his image. He's seated cross-legged in a mountain meadow with some bluebells in his weather-lined horseman's hands, wearing blue jeans and a crisp blue chambray work-shirt. And on that shirt, starting at the left shoulder and flowing across chest and back, is a perfect explosion of uninhibited embroidery, a Shoshone sunset of stitchery, applique, and beadwork that very likely will have at least as much to do with the success of this album as the disc sleeve's telling us that Lee Holdridge conducted the orchestra, that Steve Weisberg and others did the arrangements, that the Starland Vocal Band furnished backgrounds, and even that Acy Lehman directed the art. So what I want to know is, who does John's shirts?

Note for critical ears: the disc sound has greater clarity and openness than the cassette, but the cassette doesn't have the (audible) warp that marred the disc copy I heard.

—William Anderson

JOHN DENVER: *Spirit*. John Denver (vocals, guitar); orchestra, Lee Holdridge arr. and cond.; Starland Vocal Band (background vocals on *Baby, You Look Good to Me Tonight* and *Polka Dots and Moonbeams*); children's choir, St. Mel's School, Woodland Hills, Calif. (on *Pegasus*). *Come and Let Me Look in Your Eyes*; *Eli's Song*; *Wrangle Mountain Song*; *Hitchhiker*; *In the Grand Way*; *Polka Dots and Moonbeams*; *It Makes Me Giggle*; *Baby, You Look Good to Me Tonight*; *Like a Sad Song*; *San Antonio Rose*; *Pegasus*; *The Wings That Fly Us Home*. RCA APL1-1694 \$6.98, © APK1-1694 \$7.98, © APS1-1694 \$7.98.

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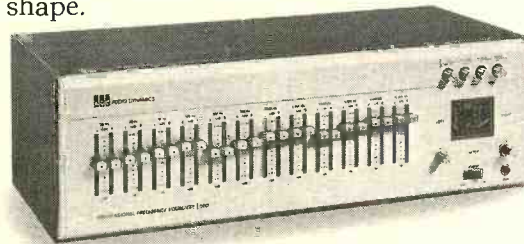
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CIRCLE NO. 48 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Somehow the Seventies have made a lot of pop irreverence seem more like sour brattiness than healthy fun. P.R.

DICKEY LEE: Angels, Roses and Rain. Dickey Lee (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. 9,999,999 Tears; I Never Will Get Over You; Angels, Roses, and Rain; Smile As You Go By; Danna; and five others. RCA APL1-1725 \$6.98, © APS1-1725 \$7.95, © APK1-1725 \$7.95.

Performance: **By the numbers**

Recording: **Fair to good**

Dicky Lee is an example of the kind of performer that really bugs me (B. J. Thomas is another, Bobby Goldsboro is another, and Lew Christie, if he's still around, is another), the kind I actually resent. It has to do with what you get if you combine almost no talent and absolutely no style; it is possible for a person to come reasonably close to hitting the notes and still not be singing, and that's what happens here. Lee puts nothing of himself into it that I can hear; getting an album recorded seems to be just that, getting a product out for someone—presumably turned on by visuals or Star Presence or hype of some kind—to buy. To this cold-blooded mouthing of the words, and to this shakiness with pitch, they've added the old-line, pre-Waylon Jennings Nashville Sound with its hedging about style. There's no name for the result, I suppose, but we Americans are up to our armpits in "products" ground out in precisely the same way. How about Golden Arches Muzak?

N.C.

LIVE AT CBGB's (see The Pop Beat, page 62)

STEVE MILLER BAND: Fly Like an Eagle. Steve Miller (vocals, guitar, sitar); Gary Mal-laber (drums); Lonnie Turner (bass); other musicians. Space Intro; Fly Like an Eagle; Wild Mountain Honey; Rock'n Me; You Send Me; Blue Odyssey; and six others. CAPITOL ST-11497 \$6.98, © 8XT-11497 \$7.98, © 4XT-11497 \$7.98.

Performance: **Sllick**

Recording: **Good**

The thing about Steve Miller is, his hits drive me up the wall. Some of the other stuff here, say K. C. Douglas' Mercury Blues, I don't mind so much, but those hits are so cool and calculated: Take the Money and Run has me tearing hair I can't afford to lose and Rock'n Me sent me on a run to the Yellow Pages to look for a product to decontaminate one's entire auditory system. There doesn't seem to be any. I guess it's actually the FM programmers I'm annoyed with; if these things would stay on AM (Throwaway) radio, it wouldn't be so bad. But you can't get away from them. They'll be in elevators next. They are as concentrated and grabby as commercials, and they seem to be based on the same kind of market research. If you're still exposed to real life some of the time, you get the feeling they ought to come delivered with a large wink, as that Playtex commercial urging Modern Gals to "look natural, not naked" ought to. Salesmen. I never could be comfortable with them.

N.C.

THE MONKEES: Greatest Hits. The Monkees (vocals and instrumentals). Monkee's [sic] Theme; Last Train to Clarksville; She; Day-dream Believer; Listen to the Band; A Little Bit Me, a Little Bit You; and five others.

ARISTA 4089 \$6.98, © 8301-4089 \$7.95, © 5301-4089 \$7.95.

Performance: **God help us**

Recording: **Tinny**

Two of the four Monkees have regrouped and are actually getting on television and billings in similarly dreary places (probably Las Vegas), which should tell you something about the state of pop music in the Seventies. So should releases like this. The original Monkee I miss in the current revival, of course, is Michael Nesmith, the only one who ever struck me as wanting to do anything besides Get Rich By Being Cute and the one whose project, Listen to the Band, was the only Monkees single I ever could stand.

I suppose this reissue will sell—so many other things similarly pathetic and embarrassing are selling, such as Elizabeth Ray's IQ or Harold Robbins' way with words. But it would be thematically more satisfying if this album were on cardboard and came to us as one of the pages of Hustler magazine. Or People. It sounds as if it's already on cardboard; they apparently cranked the treble up when they recorded these things (maybe they will again), or maybe they speeded the whole thing up to get the boys approximately in tune. Anyway, you can use this record to make your hi-fi set sound like a little transistor radio. Or you can use it to strike matches on, as I'm doing.

N.C.

MAX MORATH: Jonah Man. Max Morath (vocals and piano); orchestra. Constantly; Jonah Man; Unlucky Blues; Nobody; Ain't That a Shame?; and five others. VANGUARD VSD79378 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Good**

Bert Williams was one of the first great black stars, and by the time of his death in 1922 he had gotten about as far—his own spot in the Ziegfeld Follies, topliner in a two-a-day vaudeville—as a black entertainer could go in those days. His most famous song was Nobody, a sad, ironic little shuffle of a number that somehow never lapses into bitterness or bathos. Max Morath performs it here, along with nine other songs associated with Williams, with the same warmth, ease, and wit that characterize all of his re-creative work in American pop music from around the turn of the century. He doesn't miss a "flashy" nuance or a "clever" turn of phrase, but he never, never condescends to "period charm." His best effort here is Willie the Weeper, one of those picaresque sagas that can stand alongside Frankie and Johnnie as a unique bit of Americana that is hugely entertaining without being in the least quaint.

P.R.

THE MOVIES. Michael Morgan, Peter Barnes, Ted Medbury (vocals and instrumentals). Would You Believe; Sugarloo; Rainy Weather; Dancin' on Ice; Empty Room; and five others. ARISTA AL 4085 \$6.98, © 8301-4085 H \$7.98, © 5301-4085 H \$7.98.

Performance: **Ho-hum**

Recording: **Good**

As you know, there is a remake in the works of the classic film King Kong—this time he scales the World Trade Center. Over at Arista there seems to be some delusion that what we've all been waiting for is a remake of the Monkees. Just how wrong they are can be

(Continued on page 106)

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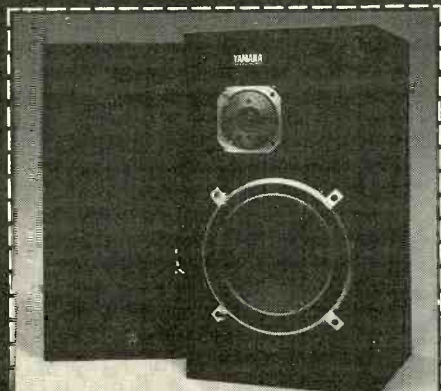
Which brings us to something else.

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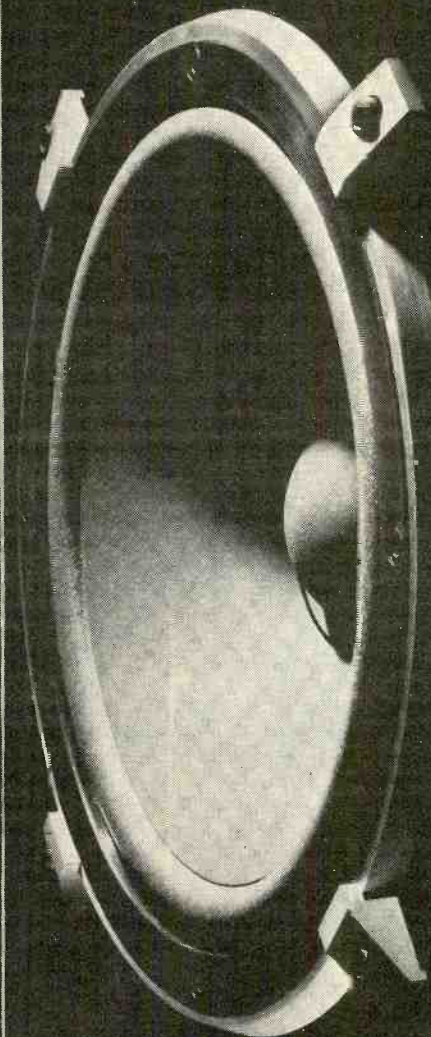
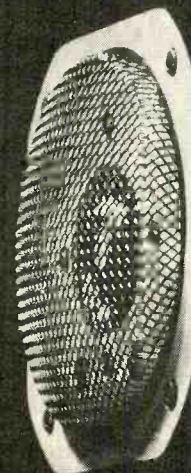
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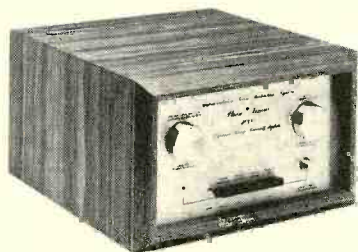
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NATURAL GAS

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proved by listening to this album of thrice-told tales set to Muzak-rock. Teenyboppers of the world, unite! They're trying to insult your intelligence (or whatever) again! P.R.

MOTT: *Shouting and Pointing.* Mott (vocals and instrumentals). *Shouting and Pointing; Collision Course; Storm; Career (No Such Thing as Rock 'n' Roll); Hold On, You're Crazy;* and four others. COLUMBIA PC 34236 \$6.98, © PCA 34236 \$7.98, © PCT 34236 \$7.98.

Performance: **Aw, shaddup**
Recording: **Cluttered**

Mott is yet another British band of scant imagination playing whacka-thompa rock, which is supposedly a cross between dance-beat and social commentary. All such bands imitate the Who in form—that is, the songs are four-chord affairs, and one chord will do as well as another—without being able to match Pete Townshend's quirky writing style. The result is a lot of noisy howling about Armageddon, sex, and the futility of life. (Townshend, on the other hand, has said publicly that, having passed thirty, he remembers quite well that in his twenties he was a silly kid and now feels foolish and a trifle perturbed at being required to go on stage and prance about in order to make teen females scream for him.)

As is usually the case when imitators appropriate the style but not the content of those they are imitating, Mott is nagging and ponderous where their appropriated mentors were astute and challenging. Ten years ago the Who meant to shock by the sheer volume of their sound for very practical reasons: there were so many English bands that they had to draw attention to themselves in some way or they wouldn't get bookings. Today, British and American bands yell as if it were an art; what the Who considered vaudeville is now regarded as a demonstration of proletarian musical vigor. The bands that followed the Who learned nothing from them but the obvious, and they misinterpreted even that. Mott attempts to make up for what they lack in content with loud posturings. Their efforts amount to a molehill of blah. J.V.

NATURAL GAS. Natural Gas (vocals and instrumentals). *Little Darlin'; Once Again, a Love Song; You Can Do It; I've Been Waitin'; I Believe It's Love; The Right Time;* and four others. PRIVATE STOCK PS 2011 \$6.98, © 8300-2011 H \$7.98, © 5300-2011 H \$7.98.

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

Joey Molland, guitarist and singer of the defunct Badfinger, assumes the same duties with Natural Gas. The group is produced by Felix Pappalardi, bassist and former member of Mountain, a Cream-inspired American group and very unlike Badfinger, who were always very close to the Beatles' sound without directly imitating it (their producer then was the late Mal Evans, once the Beatles' road manager).

While Natural Gas is professional and smooth, the bones of their music are thin and there's little meat on them. They seem to be confused about whether to try for a hit pop sound or hope for something more artistically ambitious and satisfying. They would probably like to be like Ace (*How Long; No Future in Your Eyes; Tongue Tied*), but they lack the subtlety. With Natural Gas it's all charge ahead and hope for the best. How much of this lies with the band's limitations and how much with Pappalardi is open to question. But there is little in this present effort to maintain the promise of Molland's Badfinger work, and not much, on the evidence here, to look forward to. J.V.

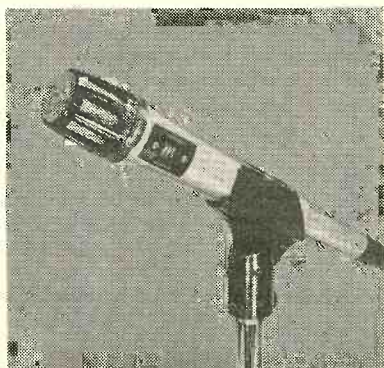
TRACY NELSON: *Time Is on My Side.* Tracy Nelson (vocals); Jim Gordon (drums); Jim Hughart (bass); David Foster (piano); Larry Carlton (guitar); other musicians. *Anything You Want; Time Is on My Side; I've Never Loved You More; Let the Memory Fade; An Arm and a Leg; Sudden Changes;* and four others. MCA MCA-2203 \$6.98, © MCA-2203 \$7.98.

Performance: **Type-cast**
Recording: **Good**

There's a discrepancy between the way Tracy Nelson's voice has matured and the way her
(Continued on page 108)



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interest in using it has stayed the same, or something. I can't pin it down, but some light might be shed on this if she'd get off this repertoire of Rita Coolidge Songs, at least occasionally. Actually, these aren't that bad, taken separately, but together they define Nelson too narrowly as a singer. How do you manufacture something to take advantage of an old-time gospel vibrato and a white-kid-in-the-blues consciousness *nowadays*? Nelson might profit by ignoring that question; I'd like to hear her get outside herself, stop singing her image. Aesthetically, she is kept in the lower part of her range too much here, but the real problem—even though the production is sensible and unobtrusive—is that it all sounds so canned. *Couldn't Do Nothin' Right* is one of the few songs I could imagine happening in real time. Even there, it's the type of song and the way one relates to it that's threatening to become a science. As if we needed more science in our lives.

N.C.

ORLEANS: *Waking and Dreaming.* Orleans (vocals and instrumentals). *Reach; What I Need; If I Don't Have You; Waking and Dreaming; Sails; Still the One*; and four others. ASYLUM 7E 1070 \$6.98, © ET 1070 \$7.97, © TC 1070 \$7.97.

Performance: **Oddly mechanical**
Recording: **Good**

I remember seeing this band somewhere and being somewhat more impressed than I am with this album. Voices are raised here, and sudden moves are made, and competence abounds, but it seems canned. Although it has a different sound entirely (much less pretentious, actually), "Waking and Dreaming" reminds me of every Chicago album I ever heard; lurking around somewhere is the notion that playing music is the same kind of job as running a typewriter. Having done a little bit of both, I can assure you that is not the case, even if you have a beat-up, soulful-looking old manual like I do. The songs here, mostly by John and Johanna Hall, are pretty good as pop songs go these days, and there are no serious technical flaws in the vocals or

instrumentals, but juices are missing somewhere. You shouldn't be able to hear *planning* like this.

N.C.

GRAHAM PARKER: *Howlin' Wind.* Graham Parker (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *White Honey; Lady Doctor; Howlin' Wind; Back to Schooldays; Gypsy Blood; You've Got to Be Kidding*; and six others. MERCURY SRM-1095 \$6.98, © MC8-1-1095 \$7.98, © MCR4-1-1095 \$7.98.

Performance: **Overdone**
Recording: **Cloudy**

Graham Parker sounds a bit like Mike D'Abo (vocalist in the old Manfred Mann group), a bit like mid-period honking Dylan, and a bit like every white British blues singer of the last decade. He tends to try to crowd too much into his vocals—phrasing, hollering, and *Angst* get all jumbled up. Parker is so busy being a bluesman (even down to the dark glasses) that the fine musicians behind him almost have to sneak in their licks where they can—whenever he leaves room.

The album contains twelve selections; nine or ten would have been more than sufficient, and the title should have been "Graham Parker Sings, and Sings and Sings . . ."

J.V.

ANDY PRATT: *Resolution.* Andy Pratt (vocals, piano); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Resolution; Constant Heat; Karen's Song; Can't Stop My Love; That's When Miracles Occur; Treasure That Canary*; and five others. NEMPEROR NE 438 \$6.98, © TP 438 \$7.97, © CS 438 \$7.97.

Performance: **Pratt-fall**
Recording: **Good**

The photo on the front cover of "Resolution" shows Pratt sitting at the piano. His fingers are almost touching the keys. His brow is furrowed with intense concentration, and his mouth is half open. He appears to be in pain (apparently the piano—a noble instrument—has defended its honor and bitten his hands). He is wearing a blue suit and dirty tennis shoes. Among the titles of the selections (all

Pratt originals, you may be sure) is something called *Treasure That Canary*.

Have you been warned away yet? No? Then riddle me this: what pressing need does the world have for another Van Morrison/early Elton John sound-alike with the sensibilities of a high-school poet? A butterfly our Pratt may be, but he has been let out of the cocoon too soon. So remember folks, the next time you meet a terribly sensitive young man who thinks he has original ideas when he truly has none, try the following course of action: (1) say your life has been enriched by the chance encounter, (2) slip him a paperback edition of the Oxford Anthology of Hackneyed Poets, (3) see that he ships out in the Merchant Marine for at least five years.

J.V.

CLIFF RICHARD: *I'm Nearly Famous.* Cliff Richard (vocals); orchestra. *Devil Woman; Such Is the Mystery; It's Alright Now; Junior Cowboy; Miss You Nights*; and seven others. ROCKET PIG 2210 \$6.98, © PIGT 2210 \$7.98.

Performance: **Mum will be so pleased**
Recording: **Good**

Cliff Richard, a pop idol in England long before the Beatles, has made an album that finds him sounding pretty much the same as he always did—like a careful, well-rehearsed performer working "in the rock style." Richard was always well managed and merchandised. His image was kept considerably less threatening and much more Mum-pleasing than those of his contemporaries, Elvis in America and Johnny Hallyday in France. His films and recordings did consistently well in the home market without making much of a dent anywhere else in the world. But the British have a penchant for loving their stars well into senility, and Richard's new album is probably causing many a moist eye in Mums who are now Grannies and dolly girls who are now matrons. He hasn't changed the act at all—still the cheerful, wholesome kid 'oos-ever-so-darling-when-'e-sings-that-rock-and-roll. On this side of the Atlantic it will probably all seem pretty much of a mystery. But then try to explain Mickey Rooney to an Englishman.

P.R.

ROXY MUSIC: *Viva!* Roxy Music (vocals and instrumentals). *Both Ends Burning; Do the Strand; Pyjamarama; The Bogus Man*; and four others. ATCO SD 36-139 \$6.98, © TP 36-139 \$7.97, © CS 36-139 \$7.97.

Performance: **Relentlessly avant-garde**
Recording: **Good**

If Roxy Music and its mainspring Bryan Ferry get any more avant-garde their only hope will be that American audiences will catch up with them on their second lap around—if you get what I mean. If you don't, then you are pretty much in my position as far as this album is concerned. I know they are good, Ferry's work at the piano in particular, and I know that buried somewhere beneath all that persiflage in conception and execution there are some really fine and original musical ideas. But how am I supposed to get past all the chaff in a number such as *Pyjamarama*? The thing seems to spin with unfocused energy while it's playing, but it leaves me with almost no memory of it at all. The audiences, obviously adoring every bit of the complicated tracery that Roxy delights in, roar their approval. As for me, it was like trying to do the

(Continued on page 110)

CLIFF RICHARD:
"ever so darling
when 'e sings that
rock and roll"



Rocket Records

Some thoughts on whether to simply upgrade your receiver or step up to separates.

As receivers become more powerful and versatile—approaching the performance of separate components—the original virtues of the one-chassis format diminish. Space-saving and convenience no longer exist when the chassis is too large for any normal shelf. All-in-one construction can now be considered an inherent *disadvantage*. No single element—tuner, preamplifier or amplifier—can be individually upgraded. And if any of these elements needs servicing, the entire receiver must be packed, shipped and done without.

These conditions are likely to worsen as the power race among receivers continues. With existing technology, higher power means physically larger (and heavier) power supplies and more massive heat sinks, leading to even more unmanageable proportions.

Control flexibility functions and facilities are other considerations. If you want filters with selectable cut-off points, turnover frequencies for each tone control, and if special refinements, such as a linear equalizer for phono, are preferred over basic controls, you're probably ready to consider separates. Which brings us to LUX.

Although our published specifications of LUX amplifiers and tuners are typically state of the art, independent test reports have found them very conservative. For example, Hirsch-Houck labs, after testing the L-100 integrated amplifier, reported the following in *Stereo Review*: "The harmonic distortion (THD) at 1,000 Hz and 10 watts output was 0.0087%, and it remained at that figure up to the rated 110 watts." (Note that at 110 watts,

the rated distortion from 20 to 20,000 Hz is 0.08%.)

Audio magazine had a similar experience with the T-310 tuner: "...most of our results were far superior to those claimed...distortion in mono and stereo was the lowest we have ever read for any tuner at any price...LUX's conservatism extends to some of the 'lesser' FM specs as well. We measured a capture ratio of 1.2 dB (1.5 claimed) and alternate channel selectivity turned out to be 76 dB (70 dB claimed.)..."

However, we regard measured specifications as no more than a partial indication of a component's ultimate performance. LUX's audiophile/engineers consider accuracy of music reproduction the most important goal in new product development and modify circuit parameters in pursuit of sonic excellence long after measurable goals have been reached.

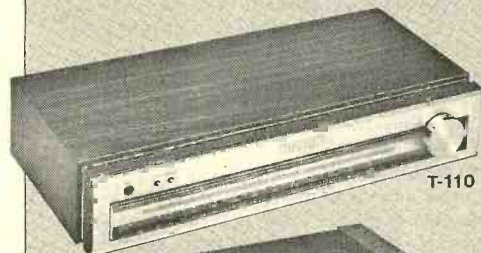
Thus, we consider one of our finest tributes to date to be *Radio-Electronics'* overall evaluation of the L-100: "We heard a clarity and effortless power capability that is hard to describe in words but definitely is audible...LUX seems to have found some of the answers...about what makes one amplifier sound better than another."

Whether you simply trade in your present receiver for a better one, or move up to separates, it's likely to be expensive. We suggest therefore that you carefully examine *all* the relevant factors—size, weight, flexibility, specifications, performance, and expected reliability—in addition to the initial cost. The more care you take, the more likely it will work out to your ultimate advantage. And, we suspect, to ours also.

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At the moment, this is as close as you can get to a LUX "receiver."



T-110

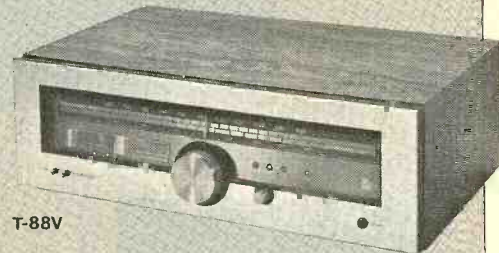
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T-88V

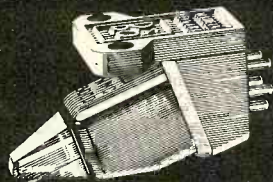


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London *Times* crossword puzzle—just about next to impossible. P.R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BOBBY SHORT: *My Personal Property*. Bobby Short (vocals and piano); Beverly Peer (bass); Gene Gammage, Dick Sheridan (drums); Valdo Ramirez, Willie Rodriguez (percussion). *Hey Look Me Over; Witchcraft; It Amazes Me; Here's Hoping*; and eight others. ATLANTIC SD 1689 \$6.98, Ⓣ TP 1689 \$7.98, Ⓢ CS 1689 \$7.98.

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

This Bobby Short recital was recorded in 1963 but only just now released. All the songs are by Cy Coleman, all—except the title song—have lyrics by Carolyn Leigh, and all have the high sheen, airy casualness, and technical adeptness that should (but so often don't) characterize good Broadway show music. Coleman and Leigh may not be Rodgers and Hart (or Rodgers and Hammerstein, or Rodgers and Sondheim, or Rodgers and etc.), but such efforts as *Witchcraft, The Best Is Yet to Come*, and *It Amazes Me* hold up as surprisingly fresh, sturdy pieces of material after almost a decade and a half. This repertoire—indeed, any American show music of the twentieth century—is, of course, right up Bobby Short's plush, banquette-lined alley. He sings everything here with his customary perfect diction, his usual chic-beyond-chic phrasing, and his own obvious rapture at doing what he does so very, very well. Lots of fun. P.R.

CARLY SIMON: *Another Passenger* (see *Best of the Month*, page 88)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE STILLS-YOUNG BAND. Steve Stills (vocals, guitar, piano); Neil Young (vocals, guitar, harmonica); instrumental accompaniment. *Long May You Run; Make Love to You; Midnight on the Bay; Black Coral; Ocean Girl*; and four others. REPRISE MS 2253 \$6.98, Ⓣ M8 2253 \$7.97, Ⓢ M5 2253 \$7.97.

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

Steve Stills and Neil Young were the ones who had the juices, the soul, in that sentimental favorite of all the erstwhile supergroups, and they still do—which you can readily confirm by comparing this album with the latest well-intended but essentially machine-like thing from Crosby and Nash—and all promises to be well if Stills and Young really can get along in the ego-testing job of co-fronting a band. They've aged and wised up some, of course, and they project such different personalities that you wonder if they won't turn out to be complementary. Their work habits, so far, seem complementary. In this album, when one lets down the other is perked up—only thing is, it's pretty consistently Stills who's let down and Young who's perked up. Well, next time it may be the other way around, if there is a next time.

Getting fancy is what Stills seems to be up to here, but usually it sounds more like academic: his *Make Love to You* has that disco sound and that disco way of having nothing to say, and the most interesting thing about it turns out to be the way Stills apparently walks around in circles, now close to the mike, now

away from it, while he sings. *Black Coral* seems to combine a surrealist flow of imagery with a hard-sell pro-ecology tagline. But Stills' *12/8 Blues*, while it does go on too long for a riffed-together tune, makes some interesting demands on the rhythm section. Of course, the simple syncopation of Young's *Let It Shine*—speaking of beats—I flat guarantee will make your foot move. The words before "let it shine" are "There's a light on over my head." That kind of thing and the extraordinary insight in *Fontainebleu*, specifically into why Young thinks he doesn't like the place, indicate he is in pretty good form. Oh, *Midnight on the Bay* isn't so hot, but the contrast between Young's straight-ahead approach and Stills' fussiness is a good thing and the band plays well—except for how Young continues to butcher the harmonica—and you'll have fun figuring out whether Stills or Young is on guitar at a given moment. And what if they *do* hold it together? Mmmm. N.C.

BILLY SWAN. Billy Swan (vocals, organ); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I Just Want to Taste Your Wine*; *Ms. Misery*; *Vanessa*; *Love You Baby—to the Bone*; *You're the One*; and five others. MONUMENT PZ 34183 \$6.98, © PZA 34183 \$7.98.

Performance: **Refreshing**
Recording: **Clean**

When Billy Swan, a back-up musician in Kris Kristofferson's band, got married a few years ago, Kristofferson gave him a portable electric organ as a wedding present. Swan fooled around on it and came up with a tune called *I Can Help*, which turned into a *numero uno* single.

Swan's eager vocals, mixed with his recreation of the casual, happy atmosphere of late-Fifties/early-Sixties Southern rock and the superb performances of the Nashville musicians behind him, made his first album delicious. Unfortunately I missed his second, but the third, though it doesn't hang together as well as the first, has some fine moments. They include the rollicking *Vanessa*; a version of Buddy Holly's *You're the One* which serves as a general Holly pastiche; Swan's own *Love You Baby—to the Bone*, with a clever and delightful break at the end of the bridge; and a witty seduction song written by Bobby Emons, ("Don't want to burn your vineyards") *I Just Want to Taste Your Wine*.

Carl Perkins appears as sideman in his classic *Blue Suede Shoes* and *Your True Love*. Guitarist Scotty Moore, Elvis Presley's first and best accompanist, is on *I Got It for You*, and the Jordanaires, the vocal quartet who often supported Presley, add their mellow craftsmanship to many of the tracks. Swan gathered these elder statesmen of country-rock together, I suspect, not only for their specific contributions here but also for their inspirational presence. His music is simple, direct, good-timey, and most welcome. Blessed be the uncluttered. J.V.

BIG MAMA THORNTON: *Jail*. Willie Mae "Big Mama" Thornton (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Hound Dog*; *Ball 'n' Chain*; *Oh Happy Day*; and four others. VANGUARD VSD 79351 \$6.98.

Performance: **Soulful**
Recording: **Good remote**

They call her "Big Mama," but Willie Mae Thornton would be considered a misfit at any



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Weight Watchers meeting. Now fifty, Ms. Thornton began her recording career with a 1951 Houston session for the Peacock label. The following year, while a member of the Johnny Otis troupe, she recorded *Hound Dog*, the awful song Elvis Presley made his own four years later. Presley's success with *Hound Dog* boosted Mama Thornton's career—though modestly—and she became a featured r-&-b attraction. She continued to record, often making the r-&-b charts, but what little success she had ebbed by the late Fifties. The Sixties' folk fad brought her renewed attention, but, although she has continued making records, touring, and appearing at festivals, Big Mama Thornton remains a minor act in the show-business scheme.

From a technical standpoint, Ms. Thornton doesn't have much of a voice, but she knows how to use what she has, and one of her main assets is something called feeling. This album was recorded before enthusiastic audiences at two northwestern correctional institutions, presumably last year. If you are familiar with Big Mama, you will also be familiar with half of the program: *Little Red Rooster* (her own, not the one sung by Sam Cooke), the perennial *Hound Dog*, and *Ball 'n' Chain*, which she wrote and saw turned into a hit by the late Janis Joplin. The six-piece band is appropriately funky, but not particularly outstanding. Big Mama Thornton has never been one of my favorites, but a lot of worse things have been committed to vinyl. C.A.

TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS: *Reggae Got Soul*. Toots and the Maytals (vocals and instrumentals). *Rasta Man; Six and Seven Books; Living in the Ghetto; Premature; So Bad*; and five others. ISLAND ILPS 9374 \$6.98.

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

Toots Hibbert's attempt to fuse soul and reggae meets with only moderate success, perhaps because, in its own ironic, allusive, West Indian way, reggae actually is soul music. The addition of "American" soul to this already heady brew is like dropping a slug of muscatel into a rum and coke—it's a potent mixture all right, but. . . . The best effort here is *I Shall Sing*, in which Hibbert's strong performance and the beautifully meshed playing of his group evoke a mood that truly is a synthesis. The rest, however, drifts along in a series of fits and starts that only seem to illustrate the point that a good idea remains only that if the execution of it is cloudy. P.R.

PETER TOSH: *Legalize It*. Peter Tosh (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Legalize It; Burial; Watcha Gonna Do; No Sympathy*; and five others. COLUMBIA PC 34253 \$6.98, © PCA 34253 \$7.98.

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

Peter Tosh is a founding member of the Wailers, currently the most prestigious and popular reggae band in Jamaica and in this country. He has now embarked on a solo career. Although he has a warm, ingratiating voice and a cozy delivery, this album suffers from the same defects as those by the Wailers—monotonous, plodding tempos coupled with lyrics overloaded with debatable socio-political opinions. Tosh's main complaint here is that the repressive Jamaican government will not legalize marijuana.



TOOTS HIBBERT
A slug of muscatel in a rum and coke

I agree with Mr. Tosh that the Jamaican government is repressive—most "Third World" governments are. I am less affected by his umbrage at the prohibition of marijuana. The photographic evidence on the album cover and sleeve shows he has already grown quite a crop of it. An extended amount of time would be needed for Mr. Tosh to smoke it all himself, even with the greatest diligence, so I can only assume he wants to take it to market and not get juggled for same, or that he wants to give it away to kindred souls of the Rastafarian persuasion, the quasi-religious Jamaican sect who believe that the late emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie, was/is God.

Music that is subservient to such narrow socio-political purposes is no more "music" than are advertising ditties for margarine, automobiles, or toothpaste. It is the "Third World" and "youth" sanctimonies that allow Tosh's music to be touted as quality stuff. Can you imagine as much fuss being made over a bunch of turpentine-swilling drunks singing endless variations on *Buffalo Gals*, *Won't You Come Out Tonight* and calling themselves "Arthurians" because they believe in the divinity of Chester A. Arthur? I don't like to see any music co-opted by politics, and in this case it is especially disturbing since reggae is so humanistic, so volatile, so funny, so fine. Better to listen to Toots and the Maytals, who represent the yea-saying, crotch-and-vine roots of reggae, roots that have for years sent up greener musical shoots than Tosh's weed-patch. J.V.

ROBIN TROWER: *Live!* Robin Trower (guitar); James Dewar (vocals, bass); Bill Lordan

(drums). *Too Rolling Stoned; Daydream; Rock Me Baby; Lady Love*; and three others. CHRYSALIS CHR 1089 \$6.98, © M8C-1089 \$7.98, © MSC-1089 \$7.98.

Performance: **Machine-made**
Recording: **Thick**

Robin Trower here, as usual, has that studied, pat, artificial sound of rock based on the study of rock records. Ought to have one of those new directors, the "film-school" graduates who learn to make movies by studying old movies, make a documentary of this. They could call it "The Endless Solo." Think of the jump-cutting possibilities, what with those facial contortions lead guitarists are specializing in these days. You can't see that here, of course, and everything here is okay, neither remarkably good nor bad, just so slavishly routine. The sound of it all seems to have some vague membrane enclosing it, although, as live recording goes, that is not remarkable one way or the other either. I'd arrange to be out when this one came in. N.C.

VAUDEVILLE: *Songs of Great Ladies of the Musical Stage* (see *Best of the Month*, page 87)

JERRY JEFF WALKER: *It's a Good Night for Singing*. Jerry Jeff Walker (vocals, guitar); Lost Gonzo Band (instrumentals); Weldon Myrick (steel guitar); Ken Buttrey (drums); David Briggs (keyboards); other musicians. (*Lookin' for The Heart of Saturday Night; Standin' at a Big Hotel; Couldn't Do Nothin' Right; Won't You Give Me One More Chance; Head Full of Nothin'; Dear John Letter Lounge; Leroy*; and five others. MCA MCA-2202 \$6.98.

Performance: **Good and bad**
Recording: **Good**

Guess I'd better face facts: someone is going to have to stand over Jerry Jeff Walker with a bullwhip and a lot of strong, black coffee if Jerry Jeff is to repeat the kind of work he did on "Viva Terlingua" through a whole other album. Here he is very good when he is good, which is to say when he's paying attention to what he's doing. His reading of *Couldn't Do Nothin' Right*, by his buddies Karen Brooks and Gary P. Nunn, renders the version by so talented a singer as Tracy Nelson irrelevant by comparison. But then, the very next track, on a decent song by Lee Clayton, he turns some member of the Lost Gonzo Band loose with the kind of squeaky, corny harmonica playing (the Dylan kind, the Neil Young kind) that has kept that instrument down all these years and distracts and interferes the way something scraping your spine usually distracts and interferes. A little later, he offhandedly does something to the beat of Billy Joe Shaver's *Old Five and Dimers* (extraordinary, actually; you can play along with it in either three-four or two-four time—extraordinary but pointless) and speeds it up just enough to ruin the lyric. And so it goes.

Walker's spontaneity is a blessing, but a lot more discipline could be activated without jeopardizing that. He seems to sense this; he keeps adding Nashville studio musicians to the Gonzos when he records, and they do tend to keep it tighter—and the instrumentals here are excellent when Walker is leading them somewhere instead of just sorta wobbling along ahead of them. *Stoney*, the only song he has written for this, is perhaps a little too close to being another version of *My Old* (Continued on page 114)



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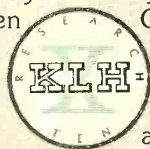
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Man, but he does seem to pay attention there and it works. I think he needs more time in which to record albums. With enough stuff to choose from, he could present (another) edited version in which his concentration is sharp throughout. We already know that can be something good. N.C.

DOC WATSON: *Doc and the Boys* (see Best of the Month, page 90)

JOHNNY AND EDGAR WINTER: *Together*. Johnny Winter (vocals, guitar); Edgar Winter (vocals, saxophone); Rick Derringer (guitar); Randy Jo Hobbs (bass); other musicians, *Harlem Shuffle*; *Soul Man*; *You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling*; *Jailhouse Rock*; *Tutti Frutti*; *Blue Suede Shoes*; *Let the Good Times Roll*;

I'm Ready; and seven others. BLUE SKY PZ 34033 \$6.98, © PZA 34033 \$7.98, © PZT 34033 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Fair to good**

You have to make allowances for the tendency of live albums to deal with familiar material, but still this reinforces what other Johnny and Edgar Winter recordings suggest—that there is no body of music identified with the Winters, unless it is the music of someone else's past. Old rock-and-roll tunes or old blues tunes safely assimilated by the, well, the bourgeoisie—such as Jimmy Reed's *Baby, Watcha Want Me to Do*, stretched out interminably here—that's what the casual or uncommitted listener, the kind with the

“show me” attitude, catches of what they're doing. They do it well enough, but it comes off as an exercise, and it doesn't give them room in which to do something unique. Listening to this, I feel I'm being kept somewhere rather than taken somewhere. N.C.



COUNTRY FIDDLE BAND. New England Conservatory Country Fiddle Band, Gunther Schuller cond. *Larry O'Gaff*; *Miller's Reel*; *Steamboat Waltz*; *Devil's Dream*; *Fischer's Hornpipe*; *Flop-Eared Mule*; and five others. COLUMBIA M 33981 \$6.98.

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

Gunther Schuller keeps bringing us up short by telling us how something or other we thought was merely entertainment is actually Art. He has done this with orchestral ragtime, with the marches you used to overhear being played in a park, even with Paul Whiteman. Now it's country fiddle music, the kind they've been grinding out at square dances for generations, nobody realizing all that hillbilly stuff was really *serious*. Well, so be it. At least it is presented to us here as close to the original as Schuller's students at the New England Conservatory could manage by leaving their fiddles out of tune and bringing in washboards and spoons along with flutes, guitars, an accordion, and a xylophone. The program includes *On the Road to Boston*, a fife tune that goes all the way back to the Revolutionary War; a piece called *Over the Waves* written in 1891 by a full-blooded Mexican Indian; a hornpipe by an oboist named Fischer admired by Mozart—all lively, colorful, carefree stuff. It adds up to a great recording. Indeed, if there is anything wrong with “Country Fiddle Band” it is simply that despite their untuned fiddles the students at the conservatory who played the program couldn't quite abandon their fastidious musicianship. They sound a little too good to be true, not half as rough and ready as Mr. Schuller seems to think. But lots of fun anyhow. P.K.

JACK ELLIOTT: *The Essential Ramblin' Jack Elliott*. Jack Elliott (vocals); guitar accompaniment. *Roving Gambler*; *Will the Circle Be Unbroken?*; *Diamond Joe*; *Guabi Guabi*; *Sowing on the Mountain*; *Roll On Buddy*; *San Francisco Bay Blues*; *Buffalo Skinners*; *Sadie Brown*; *Don't Think Twice, It's All Right*; and thirteen others. VANGUARD VSD 89/90 two discs \$6.98.

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

Ramblin' Jack Elliott is a survivor of the folk-singing tradition brought to its zenith in this country by Woody Guthrie, Burl Ives, Huddy Ledbetter, and their disciples. With a strong,

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true baritone, overflowing energy, and good humor in the face of even the grimmest material, Elliott carries on a worthy tradition, adding to the folk-song compilations of John and Alan Lomax the latter-day contributions of Bob Dylan, for example, and projecting everything he does with a zest and forthrightness that are enormously appealing. The records in this Vanguard reissue of its "twofer" series are each very different. The first is a well-made studio job, offering songs as disparate as *Rovin' Gambler*, Elliott's own *Guabi Guabi*, and an exceptionally moving treatment of *House of the Rising Sun*. On the political side, there's Woody Guthrie's *1913 Massacre*, a ballad about a fire at a Christmas ball in Calumet, Michigan, that cost the lives of seventy-three copper-miners' children.

The second record, recorded live at Town Hall in New York during a 1965 appearance, gives the listener a chance to come closer to Elliott's personality as he does a splendid imitation of Leadbelly's impenetrable way of talking, recalls how Guthrie was commissioned to write a practically patriotic ballad in *Talkin' Columbia*, delivers, among other treasures, a haunting treatment of a night-herding cowboy's lullaby, and affects a Scotch burr for *I Belong to Glasgow*. A bargain album well worth acquiring—despite the absolute absence of any notes at all. P.K.

SONGS OF REBELS AND REDCOATS.

Michael Lenier, Jonathan Eberhart, Kevin Roth, Oscar Brand, Gil Robbins, John Townley, Erik Frandsen (vocals); choral and instrumental accompaniment; Oscar Brand, musical director. *Fife and Drum Medley; Fish and Tea; In Good Old Colony Days; Fare Thee Well, You Sweethearts; The Yankee Privateer*; and fifteen others. NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY 07788 \$6.95 (from National Geographic Society, Dept. 100, Washington, D.C. 20036).

Performance: **Lusty and lively**
Recording: **Excellent**

National Geographic continues its American Adventure series with one more gaudily illustrated booklet and, this time around, a gorgeously recorded recital of the songs they used to sing in the days of the American Revolution. (Only a small footnote indicates that most of the ballads have been furnished with "new music" by Oscar Brand.) The texts and annotations by James A. Cox do their best to bring the days of Lexington and Concord to life again in red-blooded, present-tense prose, but it may well be that we have had all too much of it by now. As for the songs, they are hearty enough—ballads of brave Colonial soldiers departing for battle or yearning for (to quote Mr. Cox) "bright summery days when the guns would speak no more"; jouncing old favorites like *The Girl I Left Behind Me*; songs that jeer at the cowardice of British troops on land and sea; the valor of Vermont mountaineers; the inevitable *Barbara Allen*; and a bang-up *Yankee Doodle*. There's a song about an English deserter's narrow escape from the firing squad and a chance at a new life as a soldier in "far Ameriky." There's even an anti-war song, *The Ballad of Donald Monroe*, about a British father who goes to America, joins the rebels, and unwittingly shoots dead his own two sons in battle. Everything is lustily presented by Mr. Brand and his cohorts with snappy choral support and accompaniment by every sort of instrument

(Continued on page 118)

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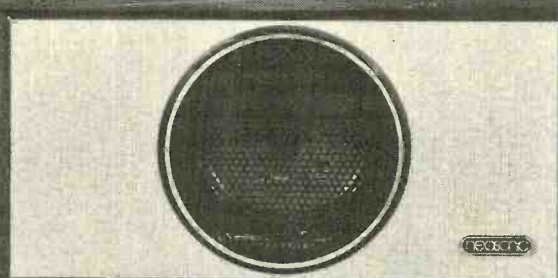
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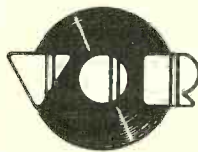
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Ten-four and All That Jazz

CITIZENS BAND radios had been available and selling in a modest way for decades. Suddenly, the CB market exploded. Buying the things and talking the language became a fad, a craze. The ordinary citizen and the President's wife (First Mama) had to have one. Why? Well, the only new factor introduced was that they were endorsed, under romantic circumstances, by America's new folk hero, the trucker.

You could ask any executive of the Gillette Safety Razor Company (or any ballplayer who, in these modern times, shaves) what endorsements by folk heroes can do for the sales of products—or you could ask someone at Radio Shack, which has caused to be struck a specially priced sampler album of trucking songs for the utterly transparent purpose of promoting the sales of CB units, a hot item now on Radio Shack shelves. This particular endorsement and these romantic circumstances do amount to a special case (in effect dropping a high-powered advertising campaign into the laps of those making and marketing CB's), and the question of whether the trucker would have become such a hero *without* the CB radio is a valid one but not quite as basic as the question of why the trucker became a hero at all. He used to be admired, perhaps even feared, but now he is *influential*.

Let's recall those circumstances in which the trucker and the CB unit helped each other so much. Return with me now to those thrill-

ing days of fuel rationing and speed-limit cutting. The independent truckers—and *they* are the ones we mean, the heroes; those identified with large companies or the even larger Teamsters' Union aren't the ones we like to think about—tried striking against slowing down to 55. As strikes go, it was no great shakes. That's understandable, as it takes concerted action to buck such organization-happy outfits as the oil industry, the federal government, and the Teamsters, and independent truckers are by definition loners, not organization men. But they did manage to make a statement: "We'll break your damned speed limit every chance we get." *That's* where the CB radio came into the picture, as the chosen weapon of a declared outlaw.

IF you knew a few truck-driving songs, though—including some of the older ones included in Radio Shack's Realistic (it used to be a brand name, but now it's apparently a *label* as well) sampler, "Put the Hammer Down!"—you knew that declaring himself an outlaw was not that radical a step for the trucker to take. Like other loners and other constant travelers, he never identified too strongly with the concerns of those who stay in one area and/or run in packs. The trucker has been involved mainly with his rig, country music, speed (both kinds), coffee, and waitresses—and now, of course, CB radios—perhaps not necessarily in that order. "Now

ahead of your children and ahead of your wife on a list of the ten best things in life, the CB's gotta rate just about number four." Cledus Maggard says here in a song called *The White Knight*. Maggard, who named his group the (what else?) Citizens Band, continues, "Of course, beavers, hot biscuits, and Merle Haggard come one, two, three." But truckers used to look and sound like rednecks and to be misjudged accordingly—they tended to be Southern boys, like the stock-car drivers, and the Southern idiom still is the backbone of their language, and of the CB jargon.

The trucker's image changed in part because of his expert and romantic use of CB radio, and the times changed. A lot of us, apparently, felt as the trucker did that there was something arbitrary and capricious about the figures denoting both fuel prices and speed limits, and a lot of us apparently admired the trucker for venting his and our frustrations, for hitting back at *them*.

PEOPLE already admired the trucker in the way they admire those with exotic or unusual life styles—especially in this case the trucker's "freedom," which is what transiency and movement look like from the outside. And—about those waitresses—if the automobile is fairly well recognized as a sex symbol, what of the ten-wheel tractor-trailer truck? Mercy, as the Rubber Duck would say, Lordy me. These things, like the coffee in a Union 76

Truck Stop, don't change much, but the economy does; the recession caught some people out of a job and others afraid to leave jobs they didn't like—as they could have done back in the affluent late Sixties—and both these conditions tend to make people fantasize about running, or driving, away. Just to get on the road and go, looking at the world, as the song (not included here) says, through a windshield. That's what it appears the trucker is able to do.

"PUT the Hammer Down!" is edited not so much to get that feeling across as to get "CB" mentioned a lot. Naturally you find C. W. McCall's *Convoy* here instead of his earlier (and I think funnier) *Wolf Creek Pass*. No mention of a CB in the truck in that one. The sampler also is edited to a degree according to what was easiest for Capitol, whose Special Markets division put it together. The incongruous appearance of Glen Campbell singing *A Place in the Sun* (much too slick for the context here even if the song is about the philosophical imperatives of moving) probably traces back to how much easier it was for Capitol to pluck that from its own catalog than it would be to go fishing for a good version of *Willin'* or *Six Days on the Road*. *Six Days* is the most durable truck song of all, and a truck-driving album without Dave Dudley singing that—indeed, without Dave Dudley singing *anything*—just can't be serious.

Still, it gives you at least part of an idea of what moves the truckers. Merle Haggard, remember, is number three, and he's here twice, with the theme song he did for the TV series *Movin' On*, and his older and classier *White Line Fever*. Red Sovine's *Phantom 309*, adapting the "ghost ship" myth to "ghost rig," and Dick Curless' *Tombstone Every Mile*, about potato hauling up in Maine, are old favorites among the truckers themselves. These people, along with converted disc-jockey McCall and Red Simpson, also represented here, are annointed spokesmen for the truckers. Not as annointed as Dave Dudley is, of course; Tom T. Hall told me that, during the speed-limit strike, the ringleaders wanted him to write a song explaining their position to the world, "only they didn't want me to sing it—they wanted Dave Dudley for that."

WELL, you can't have everything. Now, me, I have no intention of buying a CB radio—in fact, I'd be happier if my local Radio Shack store had sold at least one fewer of those, the one that keeps broadcasting through my stereo equipment—but, Dave Dudley or no Dave Dudley, *Six Days* or no *Six Days*, I've been having a good time listening to this and imagining speed limits being broken and Smokey Bears worn to a frazzle all over the place . . . and, of course, myself out there, indulging the white-line fever in my soul.
—Noel Coppage

PUT THE HAMMER DOWN! Merle Haggard: *Movin' On*; *White Line Fever*. Dick Curless: *Long, Lonesome Highway*; *Tombstone Every Mile*. Red Simpson: *I'm a Truck*; *Nitro Express*. Red Sovine: *Phantom 309*. C. W. McCall: *Convoy*. Cledus Maggard & the Citizens Band: *The White Knight*. Glen Campbell: *A Place in the Sun*. REALISTIC SL-8017 \$2.99, © SL-8017 \$3.39.

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from fifes and drums to spoons and bassoons. It's just that I think maybe we've had enough already. How about a one-year moratorium on fife and drum? P.K.



GEORGE BENSON: *Breezin'*. George Benson (guitar, vocals); orchestra, Claus Ogerman arr. and cond. *Breezin'*; *This Masquerade*; *Six to Four*; *Affirmation*; *So This Is Love?*; *Lady*. WARNER BROS. BS 2919 \$6.98, © M8 2919 \$7.98, © M5 2919 \$7.98.

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

Guitarist George Benson has appeared in the past with Miles Davis, Benny Goodman, Jack McDuff, Stanley Turrentine, Hank Crawford, and Freddie Hubbard. He has a light touch and an airy, delicate way of playing that would be considerably more impressive, I suspect, if it weren't compromised by the "pop-jazz" settings of this album.

Major and semi-major labels have been spending more time on jazz recordings for the last few years, either releasing albums of the most avant-garde nature or, as in this case, surrounding a soloist with r-&-b, rock, disco, or sighing-strings backgrounds. But "pop-jazz" seldom works as either pop or jazz; it winds up being mood music. The players on such sessions are usually highly competent but seldom inspired, the commercial atmosphere in which they operate preventing them from being so. Thus it is on this album that the usually lively bassist Phil Upchurch sounds merely pedantic.

Benson himself relies on a facile technique and Wes Montgomery-type octave chording, and he never seems determined to make his improvisations resolve the tune he is playing, but this is not his fault. The "pop-jazz" session demands that the soloist just play; whether it means anything or not, he just has to sound busy. Benson takes a vocal solo on *This Masquerade*; he has a warm, high tenor voice and good control, sustaining well and taking some of his phrasing ideas from Stevie Wonder. I'd like to hear more of him, both as guitarist and vocalist, but in settings that are more conducive to his using his talents. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ANTHONY BRAXTON: *Creative Orchestra Music 1976*. Anthony Braxton (flute, clarinet, saxophones); various large orchestral combinations. ARISTA AL 4080 \$6.98.

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

As regular readers of STEREO REVIEW will have noted, I am a great admirer of Anthony Braxton, both as a performer and as a composer. This album—a departure in that it fea-

tures sixteen- to twenty-piece orchestras—only confirms my belief that Anthony Braxton is one of the most important creators on the American music scene today.

The six compositions heard here each have their own highly individual character, and—as before—they are identified by inexplicable diagrams rather than by titles. While that can be a bit awkward for a reviewer, it really matters little, because the music is of the highest excellence. Braxton describes each piece, often in cryptic terms. "The elements in this composition," he writes of the opening cut, "would have to do with linear gravalic weight and/or a motif germ factor." Well, you figure that one out—I hear shades of Lennie Tristano in it. The third cut of side one is—at first, at least—startlingly traditional. In fact, were one to play it at a Veteran's Day parade, Legionnaires would feel quite at home with it. But wait; the barroomphs eventually become ever so Braxtonian, and there's only a feeling of Sousa left by the time Braxton's clarinet and Jon Faddis' piccolo trumpet join the march.

And while I'm dropping names, let me say that the cast here is star-studded: Kenny Wheeler, Dave Holland, Seldon Powell, Cecil Bridgewater, and Barry Altschul, to name a few. There are some good solos, but the interplay's the thing. This is a must if your ears have been keeping up with the times. C.A.

JOHN BUNCH PLAYS KURT WEILL. John Bunch (piano). *The Alabama Song*; *Surabaya Johnny*; *My Ship*; *September Song*; *Oh Heart of Love*; *This Is New*; and six others. CHIAROSCURO CR 144 \$6.98.

Performance: **Wrong-headed**
Recording: **Good**

The thought of a record given over to keyboard interpretations of Kurt Weill's most ravishing tunes is exciting; the execution in this case is something else again. Bunch's arrangements of a dozen top-drawer Weill penennials are so overlaid with runs, tricky harmonies, and fatuous, willful tempos (he plays *Speak Low*, for example, as if out to break some sort of speed record on the piano) that the whole project defeats itself. Through the lacework of elaborate effects it becomes well-nigh impossible to discern the melodies of *My Ship*, *This Is New*, *Westwind*, or even *September Song* (and what melodies they are!). Only *Lost in the Stars* is faintly recognizable amid the mists, and even there the mood gets smothered under an avalanche of trills and capricious *rallentandos*. Bunch claims to have had the counsel of Weill specialist George Avakian in preparing this album, but the results are hopelessly misguided. P.K.

HADLEY CALIMAN: *Projecting*. Hadley Caliman (tenor saxophone); Hotep Cecil Barnard (piano); Kenny Jenkins (bass); Brent Rampono (drums). *Her*; *I Love You*; *Little One*; *Smearzo*; and three others. CATALYST CAT-7604 \$6.98.

Performance: **Well Trained**
Recording: **Very good**

Catalyst is a new label that boasts the slogan "New Directions in Jazz," but there is nothing new about the direction taken here by tenor saxophonist Hadley Caliman. Perhaps that's all for the good; some of the new directions I've heard lately have led nowhere. Caliman, who has worked with Gerald Wilson and
(Continued on page 120)

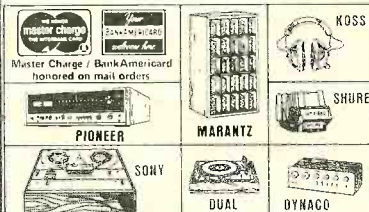
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Don Ellis, among others, and recorded two Mainstream albums as a leader, gets his inspiration from John Coltrane, but his musical thinking does not seem to go anywhere beyond the point at which Coltrane left us. Nevertheless, this is good, straight-ahead jazz; Caliman is good, if lacking in individuality, and the rhythm section cooks up a storm.
C.A.

CONTE CANDOLI & FRANK ROSOLINO:
Conversation. Conte Candoli (trumpet and vocals); Frank Rosolino (trombone and vocals); Italian rhythm section. *Star Eyes; Let's Burn; Attention;* and three others. RCA TPL1-1509 \$6.98.

Performance: **Smooth as spaghetti**
Recording: **Very good**

Trumpeter Conte Candoli and trombonist Frank Rosolino have more than their Italian ancestry in common: both are alumni of the Stan Kenton orchestra; both were part of the West Coast Jazz movement that centered around a Hermosa Beach club called the Lighthouse in the Fifties; both worked the Steve Allen TV show as part of the Donn Trenner house band; and both are skillful, inventive musicians.

This album was recorded in Milan in 1973 with a local rhythm section that gives the two Americans a good run for their money, especially on *Let's Burn*, which is a tour de force for bassist Giovanni Tommaso and contains the album's finest performances by the two leaders. I don't particularly care for *Conversation*, which has the visiting Americans scattling and is a throwback to the old Gene Krupa days when Frank Rosolino scatted his way into the limelight with *Lemon Drop*, but the rest of the album contains a good deal that has not been said before.
C.A.

CLIFTON CHENIER: Bogalusa Boogie. Clifton Chenier (vocals, accordion, harmonica); Cleveland Chenier (rubboard); John Hart (tenor saxophone); Paul Senegal (guitar); Joe Brouchet (bass); Robert Peter (drums). *One Step at a Time; Sa M'Appel Fou (They Call Me Crazy); Ride 'Em Cowboy; Je Suis en Re-colteur (I'm a Farmer); Allons à Grand Co-teau; Bogalusa Boogie;* and five others. AR-HOOLIE 1076 \$6.98.

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

Somewhere in *Huckleberry Finn*, Huck describes a stew made of unlikely condiments "where the juices all swap together and go good." Over three centuries the cultural juices have swapped in Louisiana, especially in the Mississippi River and Gulf Coast towns, creating a mixture that includes French, English, Spanish, Italian, American, Irish, Canadian, American Indian, pirate, high-born and low-down white, and a black element which itself has absorbed and utilized many of the tongues, temperaments, and traits of all the others. The musical results of all this swapping are sometimes quite remarkable. Louisiana jazz was exported in 1917, but much of the rich and steamy music of the state remains localized and is seldom heard beyond its regional confines.

Clifton Chenier's "Zydeco music" is a case in point. Chenier sings and plays black blues and "sukey jump" country dance tunes on the accordion, and he often sings in polyglot French. His band supports him with riffs and figures frequently heard in recordings made

twenty years ago in Chicago by Elmore James and Jimmy Reed (Chenier also plays harmonica and is much indebted to Reed for his tone and phrasing).

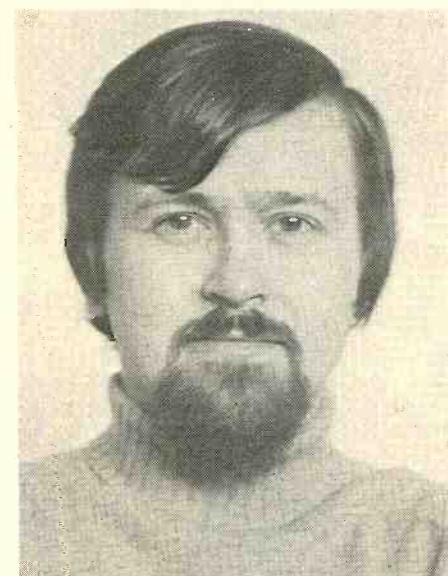
Chenier's group tours the dance-hall circuit around small to fair-sized towns, so his music is necessarily simple for the ear and tailored for the feet. It is unadventurous, but man, oh man, can you shuffle and bump to it!
J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JAMES DAPOGNY: Piano Music of Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton. James Dapogny (piano). *The Pearls; The Crane; Hyena Stomp; Frances; Frog-I-More Rag;* and seven others. SMITHSONIAN COLLECTION N 003 \$6.50 (from the Smithsonian Collection, P.O. Box 23345, Washington, D.C. 20024).

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

Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton did not invent jazz, as he would have had us believe, but he



David Dapogny/Univ. of Michigan

JAMES DAPOGNY
Playing with the composer's zest for texture

was unquestionably one of its most creative forces, and he was the first of the great jazz composers. "Music just poured out of him," Lil Armstrong once told me. "I had never heard such rhythms and such melodies—no one could touch him, and he knew it." Lil was speaking of her first encounter with Morton, almost sixty years ago. Morton died in 1941, but his music and colorful personality are still fascinating, and the recent renewed interest in ragtime composer Scott Joplin has focused more than casual attention on Morton.

Throughout the years, Morton's compositions have remained a part of the jazz repertoire, receiving a variety of treatments ranging from Gil Evans' excellent arrangement of *King Porter Stomp* to absolutely horrendous vocal versions by the Ward Swingle group (see review in this issue). There have also been attempts at re-creating the music of Jelly Roll Morton: pianist Dick Hyman butchered it on a 1974 Columbia album; Bob Green recorded a sincere but somewhat fumbling tribute for RCA that same year.

Now the Smithsonian Institution—whose jazz-program director, Martin Williams, is a long-time Morton scholar—has released a col-

lection of Morton's piano music performed by James Dapogny, assistant professor of music at the University of Michigan. I had not heard of Mr. Dapogny before, but not only is he obviously well versed in Morton's music, he also has the technical facility to render it; where the music calls for improvisation, Dapogny becomes creative without ever stepping out of character, and he has the composer's zest and flair for textures. The only area of weakness is the rhythm, which tends to be a trifle rigid. Rhythm is an important ingredient, of course, but these are *interpretations*, after all, and if it's Morton himself you want to hear, he recorded solo versions of all but one of the pieces in this album.

An outrageous braggart—whose claims, however, were often justified—Ferdinand Morton was the subject of the very first oral jazz history project when, in 1938, he spent weeks performing at the piano and reminiscing into a Library of Congress microphone. This historic event took place in the Library's Coolidge Auditorium where, by no coincidence, Dapogny also recorded his album. There is, of course, nothing like the real thing, but this comes closer than any previous attempt; Dapogny's notes contain a scholarly analysis of each composition and a well-written biographical sketch that includes an evaluation of Morton's music. All in all, this album maintains the high standard set by previous releases in the Smithsonian Collection series.

C.A.

THE ELEVENTH HOUSE: *Aspects*. Larry Coryell (electric and acoustic guitars); Dave Sanborn and Mike Brecker (saxophones); other musicians. *Titus; Yin-Yang; Pyramids*; and five others. ARISTA AL 4077 \$6.98.

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

The Eleventh House emerged on the Vanguard label a couple of years ago, switched to Arista, and tumbled into that morass of meaningless Moogery from which there seems to be neither return nor relief. With this album they have hit rock bottom, as it were. When good musicians make an awful album it somehow seems more painful—this one is simply excruciating.

C.A.

ELLINGTON: *Black, Brown and Beige*. The Alan Cohen Band, Alan Cohen trans. and cond. MONMOUTH EVERGREEN MES/7077 \$6.98.

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

Duke Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige* suite was premiered at Carnegie Hall in New York on January 23, 1943, and performed again the following night in Boston. "Recorded for the first time in its entirety" boasts the jacket of this album by the Alan Cohen Band, but both the Carnegie Hall and Boston performances by the Ellington orchestra were recorded—though not for commercial release—and each segment of the suite received numerous performances by Ellington during the four years that followed. Thus the material for a complete assembly of this work as performed by Duke Ellington himself is available, and the money spent on this pale recreation could have been put to better use acquiring the rights to the real thing.

The Ellington orchestra and the individual voices that gave it its strong character simply cannot be duplicated faithfully, and Ellington

himself was constantly reshaping and chipping away at his own works, so that his concept of *Black, Brown and Beige* in 1972—when this recording was made—would unquestionably have been altogether different from the recorded material that served as Cohen's source. I was not in attendance when Dick Hyman conducted the New York Jazz Repertory Orchestra in a performance of Cohen's *Black, Brown and Beige* transcription during the 1976 Newport in New York Jazz Festival, but I have been told that that experience was a traumatic one. I can believe it—this album has the detachment of a Beethoven sonata performed on the concertina. C.A.

CHICO HAMILTON: *Chico Hamilton and the Players*. Chico Hamilton (drums and percus-

sion); others. *Sex Is a Cymbal; Abdullah's Delight; First Light*; and five others. BLUE NOTE BN-LA622-G \$6.98.

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

Chico Hamilton's last Blue Note album ("Peregrinations," BN-LA520-G) was an overproduced mess in which such assets as saxophonist Arthur Blythe were barely audible. There have been some changes made: gone are the damned synthesizer, the vocal group, and other "special effects" that cover boasted. Producer Keg Johnson has been replaced by Michael Cuscuna, who isn't exactly my favorite a-&-r man but who seems to have brought Chico Hamilton back to his senses (or should that be his *music*?). The accent is on



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percussion—which is, after all, Hamilton's forte—and there is more good work by Arthur Blythe, this time more suitably framed. I can actually recommend this one. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

EARL HINES: *Live at Buffalo*. Earl "Fatha" Hines (piano); Marva Josie (vocals); Harley White (bass); Rudy Rutherford (reeds); Eddie Graham (drums). *Second Balcony Jump; Black and Tan Fantasy; The Man I Love; Melodica Blues; (They Long to Be) Close to You;* and three others. IMPROV 7114 \$5.98, © 8337-7114H \$7.98, © 5337-7114 H \$7.98.

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

With all due affection and respect for the many glorious names of the jazz keyboard—Morton, Johnson, Waller, Monk, Tatum, Joe Sullivan, Jess Stacy, Cliff Jackson—I hold Earl Hines the greatest of them all. His grandeur, fire, boldness, imagination, and complete technical command of his instrument amount to perfection. He has always been an amazing musician, and not the least of the remarkable things about him is that he is as capable now as he was nearly fifty years ago. To retain one's powers and talents for that length of time implies a pact with the devil or the continuing favor of heaven.

Quite a number of Hines albums have been released in the past few years, most of them for small or fledgling labels; each has been greeted with enthusiasm by musicologists, critics, and fans. This latest one contains new causes for rejoicing. My particular favorite

here is the showpiece treatment of *St. Louis Blues*, running nearly eight minutes, for most of which Hines maintains a tremolo with his right hand while letting the left play the variations as well as interpolations of other melodies. His performance of *Black and Tan Fantasy*, one of Duke Ellington's masterworks, is awesome. Hines has also long been noted for the way he contributes to ensemble playing or in support of soloists; conclusive evidence of his taste and experience in those roles is given in *The Man I Love*, featuring reedist Rudy Rutherford, and in *Sunday Kind of Love*, with vocalist Marva Josie.

The only complaint to be made about this album is a physical one: there is a nasty surface noise. Improv Records should keep a closer watch on its quality control. But the live sound is otherwise excellently reproduced, and Hines' solid combo is especially distinguished by string bassist Harley White, who uses the bow to marvelous effect. Like all Hines recordings, this album is an Event.

J.V.

AHMAD JAMAL: *Live at Oil Can Harry's*. Ahmad Jamal (piano); Calvin Keys (guitar); John Heard (bass); Frank Gant (drums); Sel-don Newton (conga). *Effendi; Poinciana; Folklore; Bellows*. CATALYST CAT-7606 \$6.98.

Performance: **A surprise**
Recording: **Very good remote**

One wonders how many times Ahmad Jamal must have played *Poinciana* over the past twenty years—far too many times, judging by his ten-and-a-half-minute version here, but

that comes as no surprise. What is surprising about this album—to me, at least—is the fact that Jamal also plays some very exciting piano. Judging from his past cocktail tinkles, I really didn't think he had it in him. His work on *Effendi* is particularly good, a fiery, swinging display of technique and invention. The supporting players deserve a great deal of the credit for making this the best Jamal album I have ever heard, particularly guitarist Calvin Keys, whose work on *Effendi* and *Bellows* is spectacular. The album was done on location in a Vancouver club called Oil Can Harry's—the joint must have excellent vibes. C.A.

RAMSEY LEWIS: *Salongo*. Ramsey Lewis (keyboards); others. *Slick; Aufu Oodu; Brazilica;* and four others. COLUMBIA PC 34173 \$6.98, © PCA 34173 \$7.98, © PCT 34173 \$7.98.

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

Ramsey Lewis formed his own trio when he was twenty-one years old; that was twenty years ago, and, though he has appeared as a sideman on various recording dates, he has managed to hold his own all these years. The trio, which had several sizable hits, has become a septet, augmented for this recording by a nineteen-piece orchestra, and critics who previously accused Lewis of being "commercial" (an unforgivable sin) have more reason to do so now. Sure, Ramsey Lewis has a commercial—that is, salable—sound, but it's a good one, and he still plays dynamic, funky piano. The influences here range from Sly Stone to Weather Report. This is by no means

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music that will live forever, but neither is it stillborn, which is more than can be said for much of what we hear today. C.A.

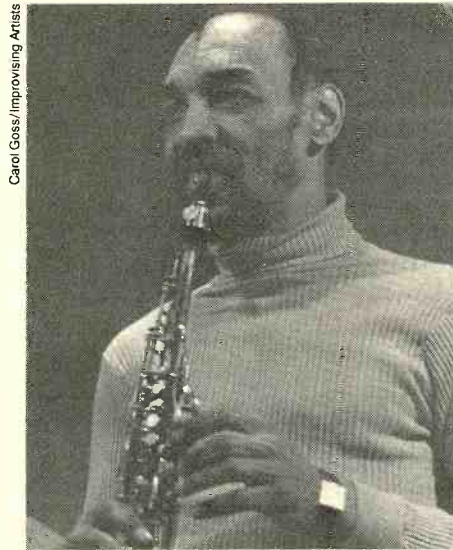
QUIRE. Quire (vocals); rhythm accompaniment. *Blue Rondo à la Turk*; *Honky Tonk Train*; *Waltz for Debby*; *Django*; *Misty*; and six others. RCA BGL1-1700 \$6.98.

Performance: **LHR-cum-Swingle**
Recording: **Excellent**

Quire is a vocal quartet under the direction of Christiane Legrand. Its members are all former Swingle Singers, and its sound is that same wordless vocal sound with lots of badam ba-dams and ba-ba-dos. We are told that tapes were neither speeded up nor slowed down, but the producers admit to employing reverb and a great deal of overdubbing. The result is more satisfying technically than artistically, but the album will undoubtedly conquer the ears of the Supersax enthusiast, which means it will get played by disc jockeys who derive their knowledge of jazz from liner notes and think of themselves as "hip." All the selections are note-for-note badam badam ba-doo re-creations of recordings as originally played instrumentally by such artists as Erroll Garner and Fats Waller. Lambert, Hendricks and Ross used to do this sort of thing with much more finesse. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SAM RIVERS/DAVE HOLLAND. Sam Rivers (soprano and tenor saxophones); Dave Holland (bass). *Waterfall*; *Cascade*. IMPROVISING ARTISTS 373843 \$6.98 (from Improvis-



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SAM RIVERS
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ing Artists, Inc., 26 Jane Street, New York, N.Y. 10014).

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

At this writing, the Improvising Artists, Inc. label, operated by pianist Paul Bley, has but four albums in its catalog, but the degree of excellence exhibited so far bodes well for the future of this musician-owned label.

IAI's latest addition consists of two extend-

ed free-form duets performed by saxophonist Sam Rivers and bassist Dave Holland, who enjoy high reputations in that relatively small circle of connoisseurs that embraces the so-called "new music." Holland played with Miles Davis from the "Filles de Kilimanjaro" period until well beyond "Bitches Brew," he has recorded extensively with leaders ranging from John Simon and Carlos Santana to Joe Henderson and Anthony Braxton, he participated in the celebrated Circle Paris concert, and he has led groups on ECM recordings. Sam Rivers, who has several recordings as a leader on the Blue Note and Impulse labels, is co-owner (with his wife) of Studio Rivbea, a gathering place for New York musicians and fans who come there to hear such artists as Anthony Braxton, the Human Arts Ensemble, and, of course, Rivers himself. A serious, introspective musician, Sam Rivers does not have the aggressiveness of Archie Shepp, nor is his playing as bizarre as that of the late Albert Ayler. Consequently, though he is often likened to Shepp and Ayler, he is not as well known. I would place him above the two, and I think it is only a matter of time before he gets the recognition his artistry deserves. This album, being on a small label, probably will not get as wide a distribution as Rivers' previous releases, but it is his best work to date: two masterly pieces of impressionistic playing by two uncompromising musicians. I don't mean to shortchange Dave Holland; his importance to the success of these dialogues is equal to Rivers'. My preference is *Waterfall*, which takes up all of side one and on which Rivers plays the soprano, (Continued on page 126)

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Left to right: “Sugar-coated”
Andy Hernandez, Mr. Limelight,
Stony Browder Jr., Cory Daye,
Mickey Sevilla, and August Darnell.



MY burning fear that the end of the world may be at hand has lately been fanned into conviction by numerous holocausts, including earthquakes, erupting volcanoes, tidal waves, and swarms of killer bees. The Hispanic gentleman who daily patrols the IRT branch of Manhattan's subway system with his Bible and an enormous sign urging repentance offers little encouragement. Well, sez I, if this is the end, I'm going out *dancing*, and what I'll be dancing to is the bright beat of “Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band” as conveyed on a recent RCA disc.

Within the context of the disco sound, a sound consciously crafted to inspire movement, Savannah has a polished sophistication that shines above the average “thumpa-thumpa-let's-get-it-on-baby” level of pop dance recording. Yes, the same required bass line supported by percussion runs throughout, and the characteristic repeated protestations of undying love and even an exhortation to “keep on dancin'” are prominent, but these bare bones of the disco form have been fleshed out with delightful musical references to the Thirties and Forties, surprising lyrics, and special electronic effects guaranteed to propel stoned dancers into a lathered ecstasy.

The arrangements by Stony Browder Jr. (who also wrote the music, sings, and plays guitar and piano) are not only intricate and imaginative, but often downright witty. *I'll Play the Fool*, for instance, sets up the driving dance tempo with a naked drum, eases into a bit of orchestration with a male voice intoning the phrase “zoot suit city,” and suddenly for a few bars the Glenn Miller band with its distinctive sound is faithfully re-created over the dependable disco beat. Gaily tossed in further on is a tattoo of musical hoofbeats à la *Donkey Serenade*, more Miller, an electronically distorted horn that sails crazily from left to right channels like an inebriated fly, and a delicious finale built upon seven Lionel Hampton-esque vibe notes. Ty-

ing all together are some strong, funky vocal solos and harmonies. It sounds complicated, I know, but does this 4¾-minute pop compendium ever *work!* Such creative borrowing of musical styles for flavor is a welcome contrast to the common practice of merely grafting a disco beat onto a classic melody.

Professionalism simply crackles throughout this disc, from the excellent production by Sandy Linzer, to August Darnell's unusual lyrics, through the easy, swooping vocals of Cory Daye. After several listenings, I experienced the heady feeling of having been on the receiving end of a major effort to knock my socks off, launched by a conglomerate of talented, intelligent, and purposefully directed individuals. Despite all the energy lavished on it, Savannah's work is still essentially the musical equivalent of—and this is not a put-down—cheap champagne: lots of sparkle and a touch of elegance provide a solid high at no real emotional or mental expense. Considering that the average disco recording is rather more on the level of Ripple wine, that's not bad at all.

I suspect a typical discomaniac, drunk with rhythm and uninhibitedly hustling his or her little heart out, will at first be quite unconscious of the group's more complex material. Nonetheless, Savannah has perhaps taken a step toward developing whatever longevity, if any, this musical form will acquire, making it possible for dancers to discover substance in favorite cuts with repeated exposure.

To test Weiss' Theory of Expansive Funk, I carted my reviewer's copy to a small weekend resort in the Catskills owned by some friends. Habitues there are avid dancers—not vastly talented, but enthusiastic and unflinchingly receptive to good boogie music. It took but a few spins to establish this recording high on the inn's charts. As I suspected, 'twas the beat that held the beauty. There were scattered glimmers of recognition in the eyes of fortyish folk hustling to *Cherchez la Femme*

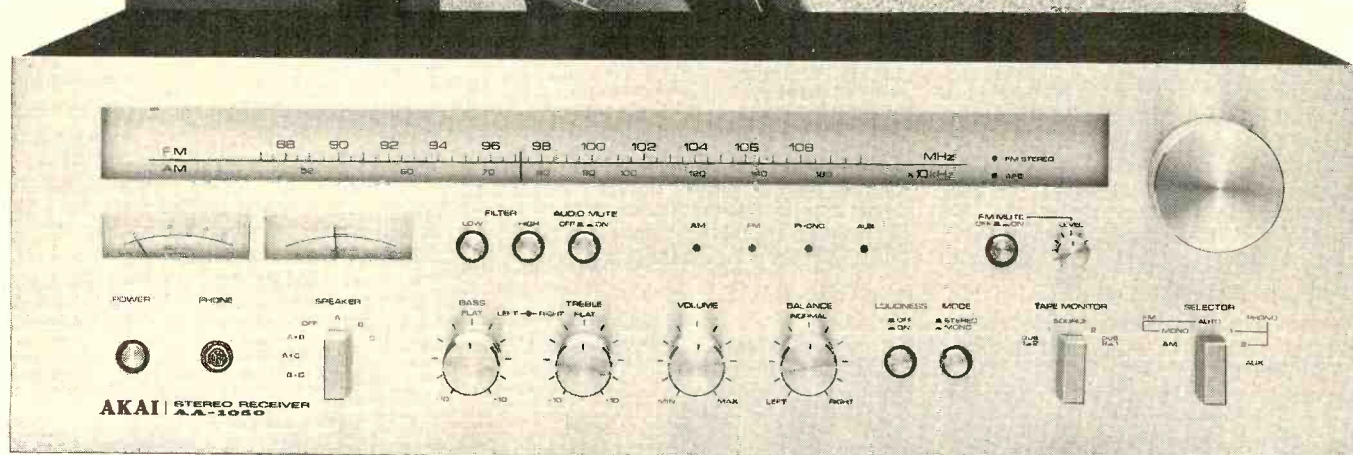
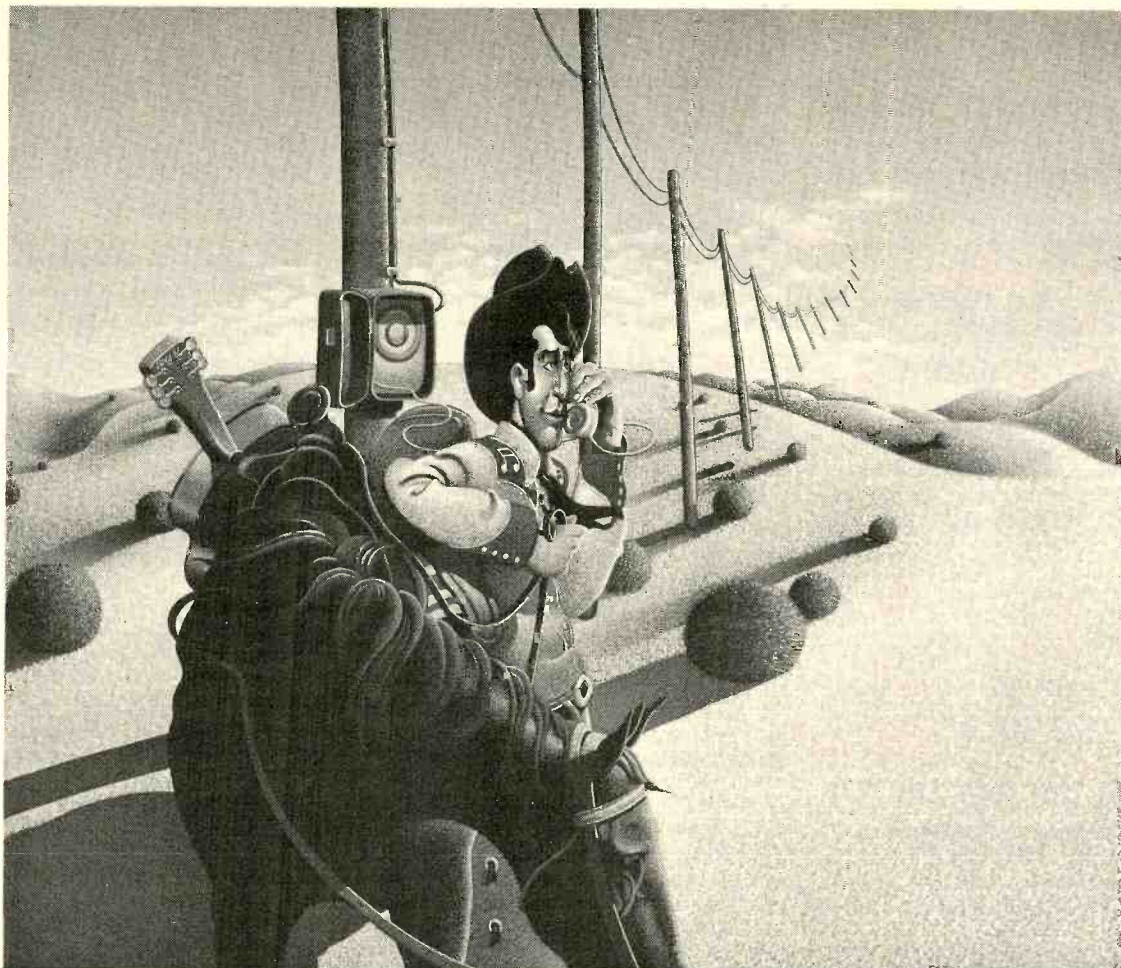
as a piece of the oldie *Whispering* blended into a Carmen Miranda conga-line-type break, but no visible reaction to the lyrics. Here was a flock of people in gowns and jeans, Guccis and sneakers, whirling, bobbing, and smiling to the tale of *Miggie Bonija* pouring forth from the speakers, a lady who is “. . . tired of roaches, tired of rats.” When her man takes on two jobs to please her, she complains about his absence and “. . . goes next door playing the whore . . . They're all the same—the sluts and the saints!/For misery, *cherchez la femme*.” Whew. Yet the dancers, oblivious, continued their smiling and their strutting.

At this point, the pose of objective observer I had assumed began to crumble as my own toes began popping in my wedgies. The strains of *We Got It Made* with its clever big-band sound morsel of Porter's *Night and Day*, the irresistible *Sour and Sweet*, and the hypnotic *Sunshower* complete with a piping duo of kids obviously weaned on soul music quickly eroded that posture. Arms flailing and hips bumping, I plunged mindlessly into the throng and gave myself up to—DISCO!

My feet and I agree: “Dr. Buzzard's Original Savannah Band” is by far the most satisfying disco album we've heard yet. It may even acquire Best-Ever status if the world does indeed end shortly—and I'm still pretty sure it will. At least I won't go out with a whimper, but with a boom-chicka-boom.

—Paulette Weiss

DR. BUZZARD'S ORIGINAL SAVANNAH BAND. Cory Daye (vocals); Stony Browder Jr. (vocals, guitar, piano); August Darnell (vocals, bass); other musicians. *I'll Play the Fool*; *Hard Times*; *Cherchez la Femme/C'est Si Bon*; *Sunshower*; *We Got It Made*; *You Got Somethin'/Betcha the Love Bug Bitcha*; *Sour and Sweet/Lemon in the Honey*. RCA APL1-1504 \$6.98, © APK1-1504 \$7.98.



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but I wouldn't exactly kick side two off my turntable. C.A.

ESTHER SATTERFIELD: *The Need to Be.* Esther Satterfield (vocals); orchestra. *Sarah; He's Gone; Bird of Beauty; The Need to Be; New World Comin'*; and four others. A&M SP-3411 \$6.98.

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

Although still quite young, Esther Satterfield has one of those rugged, deeply feeling voices that can wring the last drop of emotion out of any kind of blues. This natural gift, along with her ability to belt out a lyric, shows up to great, flamboyantly commercial advantage in such things as *Sarah* and *He's Gone*. Problem is, like most young performers she pushes too hard and too long at the dramatically effective. The showy and overly accented arrangements by Chuck Mangione unfortunately don't offer much help in calming things down. When Ms. Satterfield does take a pause from the breast beating, as she does in *Chase the Clouds Away*, the result is often lovely, with her voice taking on a creamy, plush quality and her delivery softening so that the listener feels more like the participant in a dialogue, not just the object of a harangue. P.R.

NINA SIMONE: *Songs of the Poets: Dylan, Harrison and Simone.* Nina Simone (piano and vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *To Be Young, Gifted and Black; Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues; Here Comes the Sun*; and five others. RCA APL1-1788 \$6.98, © APS1-1788 \$7.98, © APK1-1788 \$7.98.

Performance: **Beware the poet**
Recording: **Very good**

When Nina Simone graduated from a gay bar in Atlantic City to some of the country's top jazz clubs by way of her soulful Bethlehem hit *I Love You Porgy*, Thomas and Rex were the Dylan and Harrison we knew; middle America bought Glenn Miller reissues and watched Domenico Mudugno sing *Nel Blu Dipinto di Blu* on the Ed Sullivan show; teenage America went to the hop with Danny

and the Juniors; and ivy league America was bopping its crew cuts and Toni perms to "far out" Brubeck rhythms. The urbane New York set was discussing *Under Milkwood* over martinis, and had anyone suggested considering pop lyrics as poetry, he would have been laughed out of the place.

"Songs of the Poets" consists of recordings previously released in other albums. Okay, so four of the eight selections are by Bob Dylan, whose work is in the main poetic, but George Harrison—represented here by *Here Comes the Sun*—is no more a poet than Nina Simone herself, who gets credited with the remaining three selections. One of these is *The Backlash Blues*, whose lyric is a poem, but by Langston Hughes (a name excluded from the album title); another is *I Want a Little Sugar in My Bowl*, for which Ms. Simone gets sole credit, but which—as *I Need a Little Sugar in My Bowl*—was in fact written by Clarence Williams and recorded by Bessie Smith two years before Eunice Waymon (a.k.a. Nina Simone) was born. Curious, I checked and found out that the lady even collects royalties on a reissue of the 1931 Bessie Smith recording, which somehow invalidates all her rhetoric about the "man" ripping off the "brothers" and "sisters," a concert routine that was beginning to bore even the brothers and sisters.

All this detracts, unfortunately, from my enjoyment of Nina Simone's artistry, though to be perfectly objective about it, this is a fine, characteristic set of Nina Simone performances. However, if you really want to hear Nina Simone play the piano (something she is capable of doing very well), listen to her newly reissued Bethlehem recordings ("The Finest of Nina Simone," Bethlehem BCP-6003); they were made in 1957, long before she bit the hand that fed her, and they are as fresh today as they ever were. C.A.

MUGGSY SPANIER: *A Muggsy Spanier Memorial.* Muggsy Spanier (cornet); Pee Wee Russell, Peanuts Hucko, Hank d'Amico (clarinet); Lou McGarity, Vernon Brown, Tommy Dorsey (trombone); Jess Stacy, Gene Schroeder, Dave Bowman (piano); Bud Free-

man, Boomie Richmond, Ernie Caceres (saxophone); Hy White (guitar); Bob Haggart, Trigger Alpert, Bob Casey, Sid Weiss (bass); George Wettling, Charlie Carroll (drums). *Jazz Me Blues; Pat's Blues; Squeeze Me; Pee Wee Speaks; That's a Plenty; Tin Roof Blues; Cherry; You're Lucky to Me; Relaxin' at the Touro; At the Jazz Band Ball.* SAGA 6917 \$6.98.

Performance: **Fine moments**
Recording: **Fair**

Muggsy Spanier was a driving, punching cornettist especially adept at muted blues solos. He made his first recordings in 1924, when he was eighteen years old, with a small pickup band playing hot tunes of the day (they were used on the dubbed soundtrack for a recent reissue of Buster Keaton's silent film comedy *Sherlock, Jr.*). Spanier never lost his preference for the small-band format and Dixieland standards, which he described as "righteous jazz." Though he was associated with the "Austin High Gang" of young white Chicago musicians in the Twenties, he differed from nearly all of them in that his primary inspirations continued to be Louis Armstrong and King Oliver.

Spanier derived his firm, full tone straight from Louis, but he disliked high notes. At the end of *There'll Be Some Changes Made* (1927), cut with the Chicagoans (he was filling in for Jimmy McPartland), he began an ascending modulation in the boiling-hot ensemble ride-out chorus but missed the last note of the sequence, playing a weak squawk which was covered over by Frank Teschemacher's hysterical clarinet. The legend is that the disgusted Spanier threw his horn out the window and then tried to throw himself out after it. Years later, while playing in a big band to earn a living, the bandleader insisted that Spanier play high notes in an arrangement. After Muggsy demurred several times and the bandleader made the notes a direct order, Spanier barked: "Aw, get yourself a piccolo player!"

Spanier was a musician of limited musical ambition; he believed until his death that what he had discovered when he was eighteen was the kind of music he wanted to play forever, and he devoted as much of his time as he could to assembling small bands and playing a repertoire that seldom varied. He must have played *Jazz Me Blues* close to 5,000 times, and he was happy about each time. He was a syncopator; he played hardest on the weak beat of a melody to create surprise and excitement. He was predictable in that his choice of accents was always the same because he believed it produced "righteous jazz."

The selections in this English import album were recorded here in 1944 and 1945. The aural quality is variable, sometimes blunt and dull (especially with the rhythm sections) and sometimes overbalanced in favor of the lead instruments. Spanier's open-horn and muted tunes are clear, at least. *Relaxin' at the Touro* and *At the Jazz Band Ball* are broadcast airchecks, probably from Eddie Condon's Town Hall concert programs of the Forties. Pee Wee Russell, a clarinetist with a Bix-like drive and a rasping, burry tone, could be and usually was an exciting and subtle musician, but some of his performances here show him slow to the mark; apparently he was having a bad day. The lyrical Jess Stacy, however, is consistently excellent, especially on Fats Waller's *Squeeze Me*, where he shows his considerable taste for what is a tender and shy melo-

(Continued on page 130)

ESTHER SATTERFIELD:
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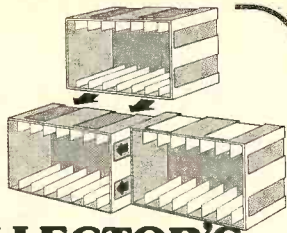
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CIRCLE NO. 57 ON READER SERVICE CARD

dy, as many of Waller's compositions are. Although these performances are not among Spanier's best, they do present the basic features of his style and ideas, and there are moments when the proceedings get "righteous" indeed. Recommended. J.V.

SONNY STITT: *Stomp Off Let's Go.* Sonny Stitt (alto and tenor saxophones); Jon Faddis and Lew Soloff (trumpets); Frank Owens (piano); Bucky Pizzarelli (guitar); Richard Davis (bass); Louis Bellson (drums); Leopoldo Fleming (percussion). *Little Suede Shoes; Perdido; Samba de Orpheo; Duke's Place.* FLYING DUTCHMAN BDL1-1538 \$6.98.

Performance: **Sloppy**
Recording: **Bad mix**

Sonny Stitt was once thought to be Charlie Parker's heir apparent, but, although he remains an excellent player, he has been in a rut for the past twenty years, often creating excitement but never paving the way for anything more than the next pay check. During the Fifties and Sixties, Stitt recorded countless "blowing sessions," studio dates on which musicians routinely play unrehearsed, unplanned versions of standard jazz fare with a good amount of blues thrown in, then sign their W-2 forms, go to the favorite hangout for a drink, and forget about it. The ill-conceived albums bearing Stitt's name have undoubtedly helped keep his career alive, but they have not furthered it, and they have made me greet the arrival of a new Sonny Stitt album with no more enthusiasm than I would afford "The Best of Bobbi Humphrey."

"Stomp Off Let's Go" gets its title from a 1926 Erskine Tate recording that has long since become a classic, but, unlike its namesake, this one will soon be forgotten. Trumpeters Jon Faddis and Lew Soloff compete for high notes and loudness, pianist Frank Owens pounds away on a piano that has the sound Crazy Otto so dearly loved, and the mix puts Richard Davis' electric bass so far up front that you think you are listening to a Music Minus One recording. Sonny Stitt still manages to get some good, swinging sax in there, but overall it is really a sorry, sloppy mess—an unforfeitable waste of splendid talent.

Incidentally, *Duke's Place* is really Duke Ellington's old *C Jam Blues*, which somewhere along the line acquired three additional composers, including the producer of this album, Bob Thiele. Hmmm. C.A.

SWINGLE II: *Rags and All That Jazz.* Swingle II (vocals); Ward Swingle arr. and cond. *Grandpa's Spells; Chicago Breakdown; In a Mist;* and seven others. COLUMBIA PC 34194 \$6.98.

Performance: **To err is human, but . . . !**
Recording: **Good**

Remember the Swingle Singers ba-ba-ba-ing Bach to death in the early Sixties? Well, now it's called Swingle II and the cast has probably changed, but the chief perpetrator is still one Ward Swingle. The cover of this album has Swingle and his seven nauseatingly wholesome-looking singers posing—by way of graphic trickery—with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, and, you guessed it, the man who used to assault the classics has turned his vocal guns on ragtime and jazz. The result beggars description.

The music—eight compositions by Scott Joplin and Jelly Roll Morton, and one each by Bix Beiderbecke and Fats Waller—has no re-

lation to the cover photo of the Oliver band other than the fact that both have suffered similar desecration. Morton's wonderful *Kansas City Stomps* has been renamed *Movie Star*, and its lyrics seem to have something to do with Danny Kaye and Mickey Rooney; Joplin's *Elite Syncopations*, renamed *Mr. Superman*, sounds like a jingle for the Charles Atlas body-building school; and Waller's *Alligator Crawl* inexplicably deals with a "CIA investigator, Al Capone exterminator." You figure it out, but try to do it without subjecting yourself to this album—not since Rachmaninoff "wrote" *Full Moon and Empty Arms* have I heard such nugatory nonsense. C.A.

MICHAL URBANIAK: *Body English.* Michal Urbaniak (violin, violin synthesizer, lyricon, Farfisa organ, polymoog); Urszula Dudziak (voice, percussion, synthesizer); others. *Zad; Lyricon; Afterglow; Sevenish;* and five others. ARISTA AL 4086 \$6.98, © 8301 4086H \$7.98.

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

MICHAL URBANIAK AND URSZULA DUDZIAK: *Tribute to Komeda.* Michal Urbaniak (violins, soprano and tenor saxophones); Urszula Dudziak (vocals, miscellaneous percussion); Tomasz Stanko (piano, trumpet); Attila Zoller (guitar); others. *Rosemary's Baby; Kattorna;* and five others. MPS/BASF MC 21657 \$6.98.

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

These are two very different albums by the husband and wife team of Urbaniak and Dudziak. The Arista album, like their previous Columbia efforts, is some sort of bad Polish joke not worth the electricity it took to make it. I assume the MPS/BASF album, recorded in Europe, is from an earlier date. If that is so, it's too bad, because it is infinitely better. Sure, Urszula does her usual screaming act with reverb from here to kingdom come, but there are also musical moments provided by Tomasz Stanko (particularly on trumpet), bassist Roman Dylag, and Urbaniak himself on tenor sax. The album is dedicated to Krzysztof Komeda, who wrote all but one of the selections and—judging by the cover endorsements of the Urbaniaks, Don Cherry, and Roman Polanski—was some sort of spiritual leader of Polish jazz. One wonders what Mr. Komeda would have to say about the nonsense Michal and Urszula have been recording in this country. C.A.

TEDDY WILSON: *Striding After Fats.* Teddy Wilson (piano). *Zonky; Ain't Misbehavin'; Black and Blue; Squeeze Me;* and seven others. BLACK LION BL-308 \$6.98.

Performance: **Impeccable**
Recording: **Peccant**

What can anybody say about Teddy Wilson that hasn't been said before? His style is elegant and very much his own, he swings hard but effortlessly, and he imbues everything he does with exquisite taste. Here he pays tribute to the late Thomas "Fats" Waller, whose rollicking stride piano style bore its own very special mark. The result is not exactly a stride album, as the title would suggest, but it is good Wilson, and since average Wilson is better than most, good Wilson is pretty good. Someone at Black Lion, however, needs to learn how to record a piano. C.A.

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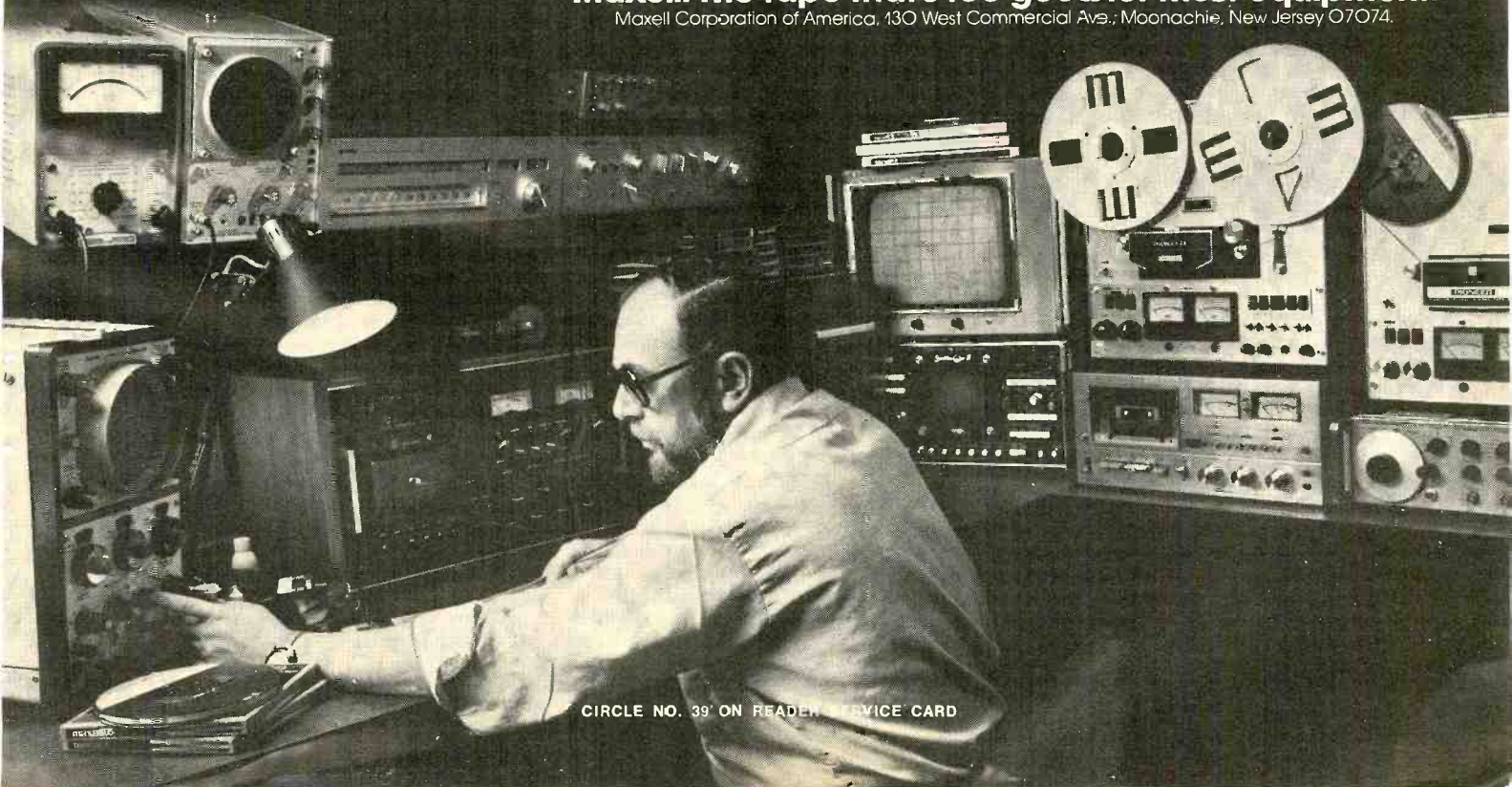
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The Parker recordings alone assure Savoy a place in jazz history.

WHEN James C. Petrillo and his American Federation of Musicians declared war on the recording industry in August 1942, studio activities of the major labels all but came to a halt: Decca, the first to sign the union agreement, waited a year to do so; Columbia and Victor didn't give in until late 1944. There were feeble attempts to get around the recording ban—Columbia recorded Frank Sinatra with all-vocal accompaniment, for instance—but they just sounded phony; without instruments, pop music just wasn't popping, and jazz—well, you could forget that. We don't

music was often of the highest caliber, but Lubinsky's albums were nearly always packaging disasters with their cheap covers and disc-jockey-mentality liner notes. Now Savoy has been absorbed by Arista, and for the first time its thirty-two-year-old catalog is being made available in covers that measure up to the content.

Arista's initial Savoy release consists of eight double albums, four of which contain recordings from the pre-LP period: Charlie Parker, Lester Young, and Erroll Garner sets, and a star-studded anthology of 1944-1945

well as consumer a disservice. Young's solos here are, with one or two exceptions, simply too brief and too similar to warrant your sitting through all of them. For instance, there are three consecutive takes of *Circus in Rhythm*, each of which lasts three minutes and contains but fifteen seconds of Young, and two takes of the previously unissued (for good reasons) *Poor Little Plaything*, which highlights an eminently forgettable Earl Warren vocal. There is no dearth of Lester Young recordings on today's market: Columbia may see fit to release its set of five double albums



PARKER



YOUNG



ADDERLEY

Arista to Reissue Three Decades of Savoy Jazz

know what pop horrors we were spared by the ban, but we do know that it put a dent in the documentation of an important transitional period in jazz: the dawn of the bop era.

With the headstrong majors in a state of suspension that seemed likely to last a while, the ban provided an opportunity for new, independent labels to step in. Thus it was that Aladdin, Musicraft, Guild, Comet, Dial, Savoy and other ants of this giant industry appeared, signed the agreement that had inspired their birth, and proceeded to restore—in part, at least—a lost chapter in the history of recorded jazz. By the Fifties, as '78's became a thing of the past, so did most of the small jazz labels, but Savoy survived, shifting much of its focus to black gospel music, flirting with r-&-b, and maintaining sufficient jazz activity to satisfy the personal taste of its owner, Herman Lubinsky. As the proprietor of a small race record shop in Newark, New Jersey, Lubinsky witnessed firsthand the record famine brought on by the ban and was keenly aware of the need for new product, particularly in the chameleon field of jazz. His Charlie Parker recordings alone would have been enough to secure for the Savoy label a place in jazz history, but Lubinsky recorded so much more, venturing as far—in terms of style—as the avant-garde of the Sixties. The

sessions. The rest are 1956-1957 sessions led by Yusef Lateef and Milt Jackson, an album of Cannonball Adderley's early recordings as leader and sideman to Kenny Clarke, and a Wilbur Harden session regrettably packaged to capitalize on the presence of sideman John Coltrane.

SUBTITLED "Master Takes," the Charlie Parker album contains no alternative versions, though many exist; but frankly, listening to take after take of the same selection is quite boring unless one happens to be making a scholarly study. Collectors—the dyed-in-the-wool kind—tend to want every scrap of a session, even though they might never actually listen to it, but these reissues seem to be aimed at neither collector nor scholar (Coltrane's exaggerated billing substantiates that). I wonder why, then, since the Parker album is programmed with sensible disregard for the collector/scholar minority, producer Bob Porter has chosen to stretch the fifteen selections Lester Young recorded for Savoy into thirty-five tracks of often tedious repetition instead of giving us one good single disc. Like Parker, Young was a musician of extraordinary improvisational skill whose rejected solos often deserve to be heard, but indiscriminately filling an album with them does artist a

(production on which was completed in September 1974!), the Commodore sessions are out on Atlantic, the reactivation of Verve opens up a storehouse of the saxophonist's work, and his recordings are a favorite target of bootleggers. Although the Savoy's are welcome too, two discs are just too much.

THE Parker set contains the master takes of nearly all the material Bird recorded for Savoy between 1945 and 1948, plus the Tiny Grimes and Miles Davis sessions in which he participated. Parker's debut recordings with the Jay McShann Orchestra have long been available on Decca; the famous Dial recordings, which roughly coincide with the Savoy sessions, have been reissued in toto on six Spotlite albums; and the Verve sessions, which pick up the chronology where Savoy leaves off, have recently begun to come out in sensible form. It adds up to the happy fact that virtually all the commercial recordings of Charlie Parker are now either available or imminent. Parker's Savoy recordings are important both historically and musically; they include his first recordings with only a rhythm section (the 1944 Grimes date), his recording debut as a leader, and some of his most inspired playing. Future releases of the alternates and snatches of these sessions (all of

which have appeared on earlier Savoy albums that were a study in haphazard programming) would be justified and are, I hope, planned, but no representative collection of modern jazz should be without the sides included in this album. In my opinion, double the price would have to be called a steal if the album contained nothing more than the session with Miles Davis and Max Roach that yielded *Ko Ko* and *Donna Lee*.

THE Erroll Garner set—twenty-eight standards recorded in 1945 and 1949 with bass and drums—evokes fond memories of the post-war years when the Garner style was about the best thing the piano had going for it. Garner had made numerous private recordings for the late Baron Timme Rosenkrantz during



GARNER

Kenny Clarke date on which we also hear a spirited newcomer named Donald Byrd. Since the Clarke sides take up about half of the album and Cannonball is missing altogether from one selection, the packaging here is just slightly dishonest, but the music is good. Ditto to the John Coltrane album, which should have been labeled the Wilbur Harden Quintet. Recorded in 1958, when Coltrane was a member of the Miles Davis Quintet, it contains two takes of *Count Down*, issued here for the first time, and previously unissued takes of two other selections, *Wells Fargo* and *Rhodomagnetics*. Again, a single album would have sufficed, with a follow-up of alternative takes for those who indulge in analyses.

The Yusef Lateef album consists of his first two sessions as a leader in 1957, when he was



COLTRANE

and twenty-seven others. SAVOY ® SJL 2201 two discs \$7.98, © SJ8 2201 \$8.98.

LESTER YOUNG: *The Complete Savoy Recordings*. Lester Young (tenor saxophone); with the Count Basie Orchestra (minus Basie) and various groups including Billy Butterfield (trumpet); Hank D'Amico (clarinet); Junior Mance, Count Basie (piano). *Circus in Rhythm* (three takes); *Blue Lester*; *Crazy Over J-Z* (three takes); *Exercise in Swing* (four takes); and twenty-four others. SAVOY ® SJL 2202 two discs \$7.98, © SJ8 2202 \$8.98.

ERROLL GARNER: *The Elf*. Erroll Garner (piano); John Levy, John Simmons (bass); George de Hart, Alvin Stoller (drums). *Laura*; *Stardust*; *Body and Soul*; *Moonglow*; and twenty-four others. SAVOY ® SJL 2207 two discs \$7.98, © SJ8 2207 \$8.98.

THE CHANGING FACE OF HARLEM. **Buck Ram All-Stars:** *Twilight in Teheran*; *Morning Mist*; *Swing Street*; *Ram Session*. **Pete Brown Quintet:** *Ooh-Wee*; *Bellevue for You*; *Pete Brown's Boogie*; *Moppin' the Blues*. **Hot Lips Page and His Hot Seven:** *Dance of the Tambourine*; *Uncle Sam's Blues*; *Pagin' Mr. Page*; *I Keep Rollin' On*. **Hot Lips Page Band:** *I Got What It Takes*; *Good for Stompin'*; *Lip's Blues*; *Blooley*. **Ben Webster:** *Honeysuckle Rose*; *I Surrender Dear*; *Blue Skies*. **Herbie Fields:** *Run Down*; *Nuts to Notes*. **Tiny Grimes:** *Groovin' with Grimes*. **Charlie Parker:** *I'll Always Love You Just the Same*; *Romance Without Finance*. **Miss Rhapsody:** *Bye Bye*; *My Lucky Day*; *Hey Lawdy Mama*; *Groovin' the Blues*. **Benny Harris:** *Smack That Mess*; *Dee Dee's Dance*; *Little Benny*; *Shoot the Arrow to Me Cupid*. SAVOY ® SJL 2208 two discs \$7.98, © SJ8 2208 \$8.98.

CANNONBALL ADDERLEY: *Spontaneous Combustion*. Cannonball Adderley (alto saxophone); Donald Byrd (trumpet); Nat Adderley (cornet); Jerome Richardson (flute, tenor saxophone); Horace Silver, Hank Jones (piano); Paul Chambers (bass); Kenny Clarke (drums). *Bohemia After Dark*; *Chasm*; *Late Entry*; and nine others. SAVOY ® SJL 2206 two discs \$7.98, © SJ8 2206 \$8.98.

JOHN COLTRANE/WILBUR HARDEN: *Countdown*. John Coltrane (tenor saxophone); Wilbur Harden (flugelhorn); Tommy Flanagan (piano); Doug Watkins (bass); Louis Hayes (drums). *Wells Fargo* (two takes); *Count Down* (two takes); *Rhodomagnetics* (two takes); and three others. SAVOY ® SJL 2203 two discs \$7.98, © SJ8 2203 \$8.98.

YUSEF LATEEF: *Morning*. Yusef Lateef (tenor saxophone, flute, argol, scraper); Curtis Fuller (trombone, tambourine); Hugh Lawson (piano); rhythm section. *O'Blues*; *Space*; *Beauregard*; and ten others. SAVOY ® SJL 2205 two discs \$7.98, © SJ8 2205 \$8.98.

MILT JACKSON: *Second Nature*. Milt Jackson (vibraphone); Lucky Thompson (tenor saxophone); Hank Jones, Wade Legge (piano); Wendell Marshall (bass); Kenny Clarke (drums). *Now's the Time*; *Ellington Medley—In a Sentimental Mood/Mood Indigo/Azure*; and fourteen others. SAVOY ® SJL 2204 two discs \$7.98, © SJ8 2204 \$8.98.

By Chris Albertson

the last two months of 1944, and those recordings have appeared on a variety of labels. But the 1945 Savoy recordings were among his first for a commercial company, and they sound as fresh now as they did then.

The anthology "The Changing Face of Harlem" contains alternative takes of two Tiny Grimes sides that also appear on the Charlie Parker set. It's Parker in a swing setting, giving us the only hint of things to come in a wonderful collection of mid-Forties recordings that otherwise reflect the very music Parker and his co-boppers were about to push into history. It's a slice of wartime Harlem, clubs like the Gee Haw, Reuben's, and Monroe's with the original cast. And what a cast! Foots Thomas, Pete Brown, Teddy Wilson, Don Byas, Oscar Pettiford, Ben Webster, and many, many more. An entire side is taken up by a couple of bands led by trumpeter/singer Oran "Hot Lips" Page, a man often shamefully overlooked when the subject turns to jazz giants. Page did not record much more for Savoy, but let us hope future releases include what's left.

SPACE limitations preclude a detailed review of these recordings—though all merit it—but I can heartily recommend the Cannonball Adderley set, which includes his debut session, a

thirty-seven. The sessions bore memorable fruit, displaying a talent not apparent in Mr. Lateef's more recent Atlantic recordings. The Milt Jackson set proves that some things—or, rather, musicians—never change; Jackson plays characteristically soothing music in a program that is for the most part made up of standards. What really makes "Second Nature" interesting is the work of drummer Kenny Clarke—Jackson's colleague in the original MJQ—and the robust tenor sax of Lucky Thompson.

All in all, this is a good set of releases containing some exceptionally fine performances. The mastering of the Forties material could have been better, and more thought could have gone into the planning. With the material at hand, every one of these albums could have been superb. As it is, they are all certainly worth your attention.

CHARLIE PARKER: *Bird/The Savoy Recordings*. Charlie Parker (alto and tenor saxophones); with various groups including Miles Davis (trumpet); Bud Powell, John Lewis, Dizzy Gillespie (piano); Curley Russell, Tommy Potter (bass); Max Roach (drums). *Ko Ko*; *Donna Lee*; *Romance Without Finance*;

Choosing Sides

By Irving
Kolodin



STRAUSS ON STRAUSS

There are those, doubtless, who will argue that Richard Strauss was not a "great" composer. But hardly anyone, I think, who exposes himself to the contents of a new Vanguard release (SRV 325/9, comprising Strauss' own performances, with the 1944 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, of his *Don Juan*, *Tod und Verklärung*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, the *Symphonia Domestica*, and several shorter works) would maintain that he was not a great conductor. In fact, with all due regard for self-conducted versions of their own works by Stravinsky, Rachmaninoff, Copland, Prokofiev, and others, this may be the most compelling effort ever recorded by a composer in his own behalf.

Why 1944? Certainly the circumstances were not what might be called propitious. The German forces in the west were under severe pressure. The Russian forces in the east were advancing steadily. Saturation bombing was the order of the day (and the night) in the cities of the Reich. But it was also the year in which Strauss attained his eightieth birthday on June 11, and that was not an event to be overlooked within the German community, however frantic life was otherwise.

The Vanguard package is not merely chary but actually barren of information about the circumstances of these recordings. Questioning and collateral research have established that the anniversary month of June was, indeed, the time of the recording: *Till* on the day after the birthday, followed by *Zarathustra* on the thirteenth and excerpts from *Burger als Edelmann* on the fifteenth. In his biography of Strauss (of which the English version appeared in 1969), Ernest Krause says: "He was also able to record almost all his orchestra works on tape with the Vienna Philharmonic, although only the recording of the *Symphonia Domestica* survived the war." Perhaps Krause was guided by the appearance on Vox PL 7220 as long ago as 1951 of what was then described as a "Recorded Concert Performance, 1944." The other tracks were issued some time later by the Bruno Walter Society,

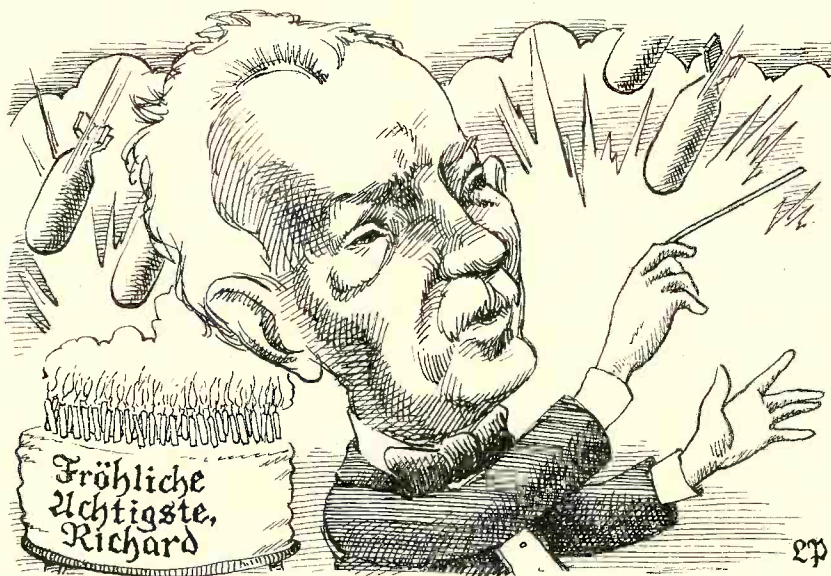
although with hardly the painstaking attention to balance and equalization of registers that Vanguard has lavished on its mastering of the original, early tapes whose source is VED in East Germany.

Despite the time and the circumstances, the recorded evidence is clear that this was a Vienna Philharmonic ensemble of prime quality, although some solo details (such as the horn playing in *Till* and *Don Juan*) are blurred. As was their custom—whether in performance on the Ringstrasse, in Salzburg, or in a recording studio—the Vienna players responded enthusiastically to their great "colleague" (as Strauss preferred to style him-

performed by the unidentified concertmaster with a lilt and a life-giving lift not to be heard in any other recorded performance (save Strauss' own previous one available at one time on Decca DL 9576). The longer exposition of Strauss' conductorial greatness is contained in every linked measure of a glowing performance of *Zarathustra*.

Both performances, moreover, are made up of the same components: sharply edged rhythmic patterns, craftily underlined dynamic values, and an energizing evocation of a sound spectrum Strauss all but invented himself. He is unique among recent practitioners of his craft in having been not only a composer-conductor, but a composer-conductor who wrote with insight, wit, and down-to-earth realism about the relationship of man to men in the arcane world of orchestra performance. The remarks (gathered in a small but far from slight volume titled *Recollections and Reflections*) extend from a player's sly comment, as Strauss was hefting batons before a concert, "Not that one, Doctor—it's got no rhythm"; to a reminder from his famous father (for forty-five years a great horn player in the Munich Opera pit), "When a new man faces the orchestra—from the way he walks up the steps to the rostrum and opens his score—before he even picks up the baton we know whether he is the master or we."

As Strauss began his conducting career in the mid-1880's, he had sixty years of experience when these performances were recorded, and they form both an apotheosis and a leave-taking of his art as an interpreter. (He might have but didn't do any recording when he visited London for the last time in 1947.) Perhaps the most endearing thing about this epochal issue is the impulse and enthusiasm



self). The proof of the composer's greatness as a conductor can be judged in brief or at length, according to personal preference. The short, concise demonstration is in the *Tanz der Schneider* (*Dance of the Tailor*) in the *Burger als Edelmann* music. The violin solo is

with which the interpreter of eighty applies himself to the fantastic concentration of early works—*Don Juan*, *Tod und Verklärung*, *Till Eulenspiegel*—with which he had made a world-wide reputation more than half a century before.

"invocation of a sound spectrum he all but invented himself"

There is nothing in the least jaded, routine, or patronizing in his treatment of scores he must have conducted a hundred times prior to 1944. It is all newborn and fresh: a *Don Juan* with surge, sparkle, and dash; a *Tod und Verklärung* with a mystical kind of sonorous suspense which leads eventually to a resolution in which the combined elements are clarified and crystalized in a way rarely achieved by even his best interpreters; and a *Till Eulenspiegel* which is a distillation of pure rascality, pungent with gallows humor and neither rushed nor held back. In every instance, the absolute clarity and precision of statement are directed to maintaining Strauss' sense of classical proportion. "Conduct *Salome* and *Elektra* as if they were by Mendelssohn: Fairy Music" was a Strauss apothegm which only the inner circle of his chosen disciples—Kleiber, Busch, Reiner, Szell, and Krauss—completely comprehended.

The larger, later works are absorbing for the refinement, the propulsive, irrefutable logic and purpose with which Strauss the conductor argues the case for Strauss the composer. Is it an accepted, inescapable certainty that *Ein Heldenleben* is a blowsy, overblown caricature of a self-portrait? Not when Strauss draws the lines with a firm, nonflattering hand, eschewing sentimentality in constant pursuit of a forward surge, putting every overlapping reference to a work of his own (in "The Hero's Works of Peace") in a chiseled, even lapidary isolation. Is *Also Sprach Zarathustra* pseudo-philosophy? Perhaps. But it is also eminently genuine music, the most mature, in its controlled, self-critical content, of all his tone poems. As for the *Symphonia Domestica*, it emerges as a truly sensual celebration of love and affection, an early expression of the familial feeling of which *Die Frau ohne Schatten* is a later, greater exposition.

One senses, too, from Strauss' unfailingly lively response to the extremes of high drama and low comedy in these orchestral works, that he was a creator constantly in search of a new, more dramatic métier. In his earliest opera, *Feuersnot*, he was not yet wholly sure of his own identity, perhaps still a little too close to the Wagnerian example to be completely himself. But a decade later, when he had extended his skills to sustain the structural complexities of *Zarathustra* and the *Symphonia Domestica*, he had developed that uniquely dramatic orchestral style that gives his operas a place of high prominence in the repertoire.

IF Vanguard's documentation of its monumental issue is silent on the circumstances of the actual recordings, it leaves nothing else to be desired in the inclusive commentary by Joseph Braunstein who, alone of all possible annotators, can draw on a background of performing experience under Strauss himself. The recording of the Vienna Philharmonic is admirably expressive of the ensemble's perpetual, unchanging character, especially in Strauss. Tonally, the reproduction has something of the metallic sheen typical of early tape recording, and a stepped-up output has to be utilized to achieve the volume now considered normal. But the quality of the end product could hardly have been matched from any other material then available. Above all, there is a clear and strong feeling of *performances* rather than of multiple takes joined together. The result is the rarest kind of musical experience: an outpouring of pure artistic essence unmarred by mannerism, ego, or intrusive, counterproductive "personality."

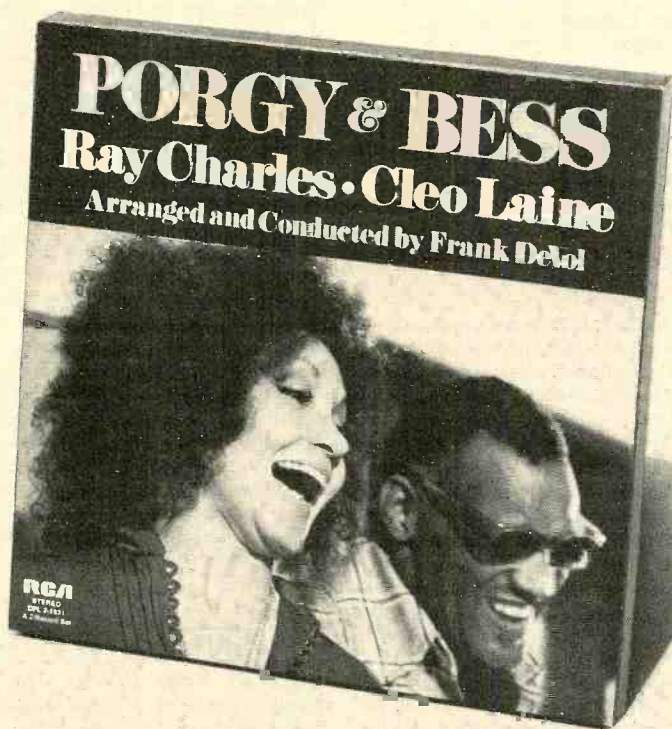
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J. S. BACH: *The Six Sonatas and Partitas for Unaccompanied Violin* (BWV 1001-1006). Yehudi Menuhin (violin). ANGEL SC 3817 three discs \$20.94.

Performance: **Labored**
Recording: **Hard**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

J. S. BACH: *Partita No. 2, in D Minor, for Unaccompanied Violin* (BWV 1004); *Sonata No. 3, in C Major, for Unaccompanied Violin* (BWV 1005). Kyung-Wha Chung (violin). LONDON CS 6940 \$6.98.

Performance: **Gracious**
Recording: **Right there**

Perhaps one of the greatest challenges to a violinist is to bring off, both musically and technically, the Bach solo sonatas and partitas. To master this magnificent music is the work of a lifetime, and many of the rewards are known only to the artist himself. Yehudi Menuhin has studied these works over and over again; he has constantly reworked them and rethought their problems, and he presents them in this recording with awe and humility. But, although there are many wonderful moments in his performances (the exuberant opening of the E Major Partita and the smoldering adagio of the G Minor Sonata), the general impression I get is that of *too* much thought and not enough straightforward playing. Trying to achieve a full orchestral *coup d'archet* on the difficult multiple stops, Menuhin almost

brings the music to a halt in places. This is especially noticeable in such dance pieces as the gavotte of the E Major Partita, where this approach turns a light dance into heavy-handed grotesquerie. In attempting to hold the improvisational movements together, Menuhin is apt to enforce a somewhat rigid tempo and beat, which destroys the rhapsodic qualities of the opening movements. I feel that the music would come across more if the artist, instead of worrying about every note and doing something with it, would throw some notes away and work more toward the overall line and shape of a movement.

In complete contrast is the approach of Kyung-Wha Chung. Armed with superb technique, she employs a smaller tone which, in the long run, is more supple and flexible than Menuhin's. This, coupled with a sensitive feeling for Bach's convoluted figuration, enables her to shape the phrases into long, elegant lines. There is a general feeling of easiness and transparency in her playing which brings the dances to life and affords a clarity of texture in the contrapuntal movements. In short, her Bach is much more in keeping with Baroque performance practice despite the fact that she, like Menuhin, uses a modern instrument. S.L.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BARBER: *String Quartet, Op. 11*. IVES: *String Quartet No. 2; Scherzo for String Quartet*. Cleveland Quartet. RCA ARL1-1599 \$6.98.

Performance: **Gorgeous**
Recording: **First-rate**

This Barber string quartet is just the sort of Nice Nelly chamber music that Ives hated and, in fact, wrote his Second Quartet to satirize! Nevertheless, in some odd way, the two works harmonize in these excellent back-to-back Cleveland Quartet performances.

The Barber quartet is the one from which the famous Adagio for Strings was taken. This movement is not merely a lyric slow movement; it is a full-half of the work and its musical heart. In spite of the new-Romantic and quasi-Baroque character of much of this

music, there is a kind of modal hymn background that gives the quartet an underlying solidity Barber's work sometimes lacks.

In his Second Quartet, Ives named the second violin Rollo Fink, and when he marks Rollo's music as *Andante emasculata* or *Largo sweetota* or *Largo soblato* he might be writing a parody of Barber twenty years in advance. But the acid "Discussions" and "Arguments" of the first two movements are resolved in Ives' finest fashion by "The Call of the Mountains," one of his most powerful creations. Indeed, it is so powerful that I wish the parody scherzo—more string squabbling ending with "Oh they don't wear pants in the southern part of France"—had been omitted or put somewhere else than immediately afterwards. The scherzo is amusing, typical Ives, but it is a decided anticlimax after this quartet. E.S.

BEETHOVEN: "Rasumovsky" String Quartets, Op. 59, Nos. 1, 2, and 3 (see *The Basic Repertoire*, page 64)

BLITZSTEIN: *The Airborne Symphony*. Orson Welles (narrator); Andrea Velis (tenor); David Watson (baritone); Choral Art Society; New York Philharmonic Symphony, Leonard Bernstein cond. COLUMBIA M 34136 \$6.98.

Performance: **Never takes off**
Recording: **Superb**

Marc Blitzstein's hard-hitting Federal Theatre Project musical *The Cradle Will Rock* of 1937 was already well behind him when, in 1943, as a sergeant in the Eighth Air Force stationed in England, he went to Tex McCrary, the public relations officer of the group, and told him he was working on a big piece for symphony orchestra, soloists, and chorus tracing the history of human flight. McCrary saw the public-relations value of such a project, and the Air Corps promptly provided a commission. The composer was called back to America when the symphony was almost finished and forgot to bring the score along. Perhaps it would have been better all around if he had let it go at that. As it was, he rewrote the whole thing and it was introduced in 1946 by Leonard Bernstein and the New York City Symphony.

Explanation of symbols:

- Ⓡ = reel-to-reel stereo tape
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- Ⓚ = quadraphonic disc
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Monophonic recordings are indicated by the symbol Ⓜ

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

Mr. Bernstein's decision to revive this one on records makes for an interesting lesson in the history of commissioned works but is of dubious musical importance. There are felicitous, ingratiating, even clever passages scattered through its pages, but the music all too often is facile and banal, while the text teeters on the edge of the preposterous until it tumbles straight down into the abyss in the agitated chorale, "Open up that second front." Throughout, the text is pockmarked with slangy phrases that combine the inflated prose of a Norman Corwin radio documentary of the period with unassimilated research references ("Phaethon had wings on the brain"). Touching moments, as in the Night Music devoted to a love-letter being written by a lonely bombardier, hint at the composer's ability to move us—as he would later in the opera *Regina*—but for the most part *The Airborne Symphony* reflects the most dismal and dated qualities of a World War II movie at its worst—text, music, the whole thing. Mr. Bernstein,

surrounded by marvelous singers and the New York Philharmonic, gives the resurrection of the work his all, but the most heroic efforts on the part of players, singers, and conductor simply fail to budge this heavier-than-air relic off the ground. How could Len-ny send his men up in a crate like that? P.K.

BOLCOM: *Open House; Commedia.* Paul Sperry (tenor); Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Dennis Russell Davies cond. NONESUCH H-71324 \$3.96.

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

Bill Bolcom has become Nonesuch's favorite performer-composer, and he is indeed a man of many parts. Here he is represented as a composer with two large works: *Open House*, a thirty-three-minute setting of seven Theodore Roethke poems that was written in 1975 for Paul Sperry and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra under Dennis Davies—the excel-

lent interpreters here—and *Commedia* "for (almost) Eighteenth-Century Orchestra," composed in 1971 for the same orchestra under its previous conductor Sidney Hodkinson.

Open House is not only a mixture of styles—to which I have no objection—but also of the ingenious and the overextended. Where Bolcom's imagination parallels and interprets that of the poet the results are moving, amusing, and beautiful. Elsewhere, however, it seems that he was constrained to follow the poetry around, annotating it without inner conviction.

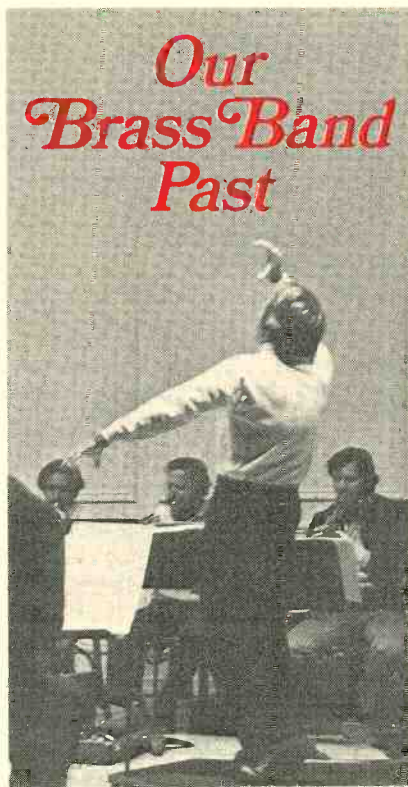
Commedia, although it never reaches the heights of its successor, is a more unified and engaging work. It is, in effect, a compendium of antique orchestral clichés handled with consummate wit and deftness. Unlike some of his contemporaries, Bolcom does not rely much on literal quotations but rather on his own skill at evocation. In some indefinable way it all hangs together and even, in the midst of its *commedia dell'arte* exterior, suc-

The Bicentennial Corner

THE Bicentennial has brought with it a splendid embarrassment of American musical riches, and, for me, one of the special pleasures of the celebration has been listening to the new recordings of the music that was part of life throughout this country in the days before mass entertainment and mass communication. We now have two more collections of this music from different sources of performance and production, but with some of the same scholarly hands involved: Jon Newsom of the Library of Congress Music Division, which supplied the musical sources for both collections, wrote the notes for both albums.

The Columbia collection, taken from the *American Brass Band Journal* published by Firth Pond and Co. of New York (Stephen Foster's publisher) in 1853, is a record I would rate with Nonesuch's "Nineteenth Century American Ballroom Music" as a fine gift for all well-deserving friends. G. W. E. Friederich's arrangements are superb—literally made to order for the smallish brass-band groups of the day—and the tunes delightful. What happens to some of Stephen Foster's sentimental favorites, especially *Old Dog Tray*, may give some hearers quite a pleasurable turn. The performances, on present-day instruments by players largely from the Boston Symphony, have tremendous zip, and the recording quality just couldn't be better.

The Library of Congress has come forth with a beautifully packaged re-creation of a nineteenth-century concert of brass-band music, solo songs, and piano pieces, and, as a bonus, there is also a superb historical essay by Jon Newsom. Here, as in the Nonesuch "Ballroom Music" collection, authentic instruments are the order of the day. The production grew out of a special concert given in the Library's Coolidge Auditorium under the auspices of the Norman P. Scala fund (established in memory of the first leader of the United States Marine Band, Francis Scala, ca. 1820-1903).



Frederick Fennell in action

Among the band pieces, the Claudio Grafulla quicksteps are real gems, especially the *Captain Finch* piece, with its clearly Spanish flavor. The *Door Latch Quickstep* by George H. Goodwin of the Manchester, New Hampshire, Cornet Band has an almost Ivesian iconoclastic originality. Highlights among the song selections are some of the lesser-known Stephen Foster items, particularly the wryly bitter *Why, No One to Love?* The Adolf Fred-

rik Lindblad songs add a lovely Jenny Lind touch to the whole and are done in the original Swedish by soprano Merja Sargon, who likewise does the Foster and Balfe numbers with fitting simplicity and sentiment. The piano pieces by Wallace and Lysberg fall upon my ears as more quaint than truly charming, though pianist Bernard Rose copes valiantly with the limitations of the old Chickering piano action and voicing. The band, under Frederick Fennell, performs with plenty of spirit, and there is some stunning solo work by Adel Sanchez on the E-flat soprano saxhorn. Regrettably, the rather dead acoustic of the Coolidge Auditorium takes some of the brightness out of the band tracks. Also, side three of my review set was woefully off-center, imparting thereby some rather odd sounds to General Taylor's Irish-flavored storming of Monterey. The recorded sound is generally good, however, and the music itself is certainly worth hearing. —David Hall

THE AMERICAN BRASS BAND JOURNAL: Works Composed or Arranged by G. W. E. Friederich. *Massa's in the Cold Ground; My Old Kentucky Home; Old Dog Tray; Lilly Bell Quickstep; Signal March; Hail Columbia; Yankee Doodle; Pelham Schottische; The Star Spangled Banner;* and twelve others. The Empire Brass Quintet and Friends. COLUMBIA M 34192 \$6.98.

OUR MUSICAL PAST: A Concert for Brass Band, Voice, and Piano. *Grafulla: Captain Shepherd's Quickstep. Jaeger: Indiana Polka. Knaeble: General Taylor Storming Monterey. Friederich (arr.): Lilly Bell Quickstep. Foster: Ah! May the Red Rose Live Away. Lindblad: Upon a Summer's Day. Wallace: Variations on Scots Wha Hae.* And twelve others. Merja Sargon (soprano); Bernard Rose (piano); brass band, Frederick Fennell dir. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS OMP 101/102 two discs \$10 (from Library of Congress, Music Division, Washington, D.C. 20540).

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BRAHMS: Piano Concerto No. 1, in D Minor, Op. 15. Radu Lupu (piano); London Philharmonic Orchestra, Edo de Waart cond. LONDON CS 6947 \$6.98.

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

BRAHMS: Piano Concerto No. 1, in D Minor, Op. 15. Bruno-Leonardo Gelber (piano); Munich Philharmonic Orchestra, Franz Paul Decker cond. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2102 \$6.98.

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

All of Radu Lupu's recordings so far have been unusually impressive; this one, I think, is the first disappointment. He has taken a reflective approach rather than a dramatic one, and he has weakened its validity by overdoing it. The extremely reticent statement of the work's opening—with none of the thunder left—is an accurate key to what follows; the momentum never picks up, and, for all the really beautiful playing, the work never springs to life. Even the finale is thoroughly devitalized, and De Waart seems all too content to go along with this dispiriting approach. The fine sound can hardly make such a performance persuasive.

Gelber's reading is more conventional and surely more exciting. This was his debut recording, made nearly ten years ago when he was only twenty-five; the sound does not show its age, and the depth of Gelber's interpretation belies his youth (Brahms himself, after all, was only twenty-five when he first played the concerto). There are fire and drama to spare in the outer movements, and real warmth of heart in the expansive treatment of the middle one. Decker is a fine partner all the way. Yet, satisfying as this version is in its own right, there are others more satisfying still; the Gilels/Jochum version on Deutsche Grammophon (2530.258) remains the most remarkable of all. R.F.

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHOPIN: Piano Concerto No. 1, in E Minor, Op. 11; Krakowiak, Grand Concert Rondo,

Op. 14. Garrick Ohlsson (piano); Polish National Radio Orchestra, Jerzy Maksymiuk cond. ANGEL □ S-37179 \$6.98.

CHOPIN: Piano Concerto No. 2, in F Minor, Op. 21; Fantasy on Polish National Airs, Op. 13. Garrick Ohlsson (piano); Polish National Radio Orchestra, Jerzy Maksymiuk cond. ANGEL □ S-37180 \$6.98.

Performances: **First-rate**
Recordings: **Excellent**

Garrick Ohlsson's readings of these youthful Chopin works, recorded in Poland, hold their own excellently in the face of very substantial competition. The slow movements of the two concertos are played with melting loveliness and finely gauged tonal gradation, while the end movements—the finales especially—abound in sparkle and rhythmic vitality. However, it is in the Fantasy that Ohlsson's amalgam of elegance and brilliance manifests itself most tellingly. Except for a somewhat saxophone-like solo horn fanfare toward the end of the F Minor Concerto, the orchestral accompaniments are just right, and the sound—particularly when enhanced by a touch of ambient quadraphonics from the rear speakers—is most pleasing to the ear in its proportion, body, and balance. D.H.

DELIUS: A Late Lark (see Collections—A Musical Garland of the Seasons)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DUFAY: Gloria ad modum tubae; Se la face ay pale (chanson, two keyboard versions from the *Buxheimer Organ Book*, and four-part instrumental version); *Missa "Se la face ay pale."* Early Music Consort of London, David Munrow cond. SERAPHIM S-60267 \$3.98.

Performance: **Exquisite**
Recording: **Superb**

Wearing the English guise with utmost grace, Guillaume Dufay wove a luminous Mass around the tenor of his chanson *Se la face ay pale*. This performance, typical of David Munrow's work, clearly reveals the complex *cantus firmus* structure embodied in the cycle without being pedantic. Munrow employs a small body of singers reinforced by a consort of ancient instruments to produce full sec-
(Continued on page 140)

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tions that are wonderfully resonant models of articulated clarity. Each of Dufay's beautifully contoured lines is lovingly woven into a breathtaking web that takes the listener through the very special world of Burgundian polyphony. Particularly remarkable are the performances of the sinuous duets which offer relief from the rigidly wrought *cantus firmus* sections. Here countertenors James Bowman and Charles Brett sing with instrumental precision as they pursue the intricate tracery with charming ease. Enough said! Both the music and performance are of the highest quality. What a pity that Munrow, who died this year, still a young man, will not be around to make more such wonderful records!

S.L.

GASTOLDI: *Balletti per Cantare, Sonare e Ballare.* Lyon Vocal Ensemble; Early Music Ensemble, Lyon, François Castet cond. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 3310 \$3.50 (plus 95¢ handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, Inc., Oakhurst, N.J. 07755).

Performance: **Lively**
Recording: **All right**

Giovanni Giacomo Gastoldi was a northern Italian who was active in Mantua at about the same time as Monteverdi. His fame rests mainly on his *Balletti*, particularly the first set published in 1593. These are possibly the original fa-la-la madrigals. Thomas Morley's falas were called *Balletti* in imitation of Gastoldi's.



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DAVID MUNROE
(1942-1976): a
breathtaking web of
Dufay's polyphony

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DVOŘÁK: *String Quartet in G Major, Op. 106.* Alban Berg Quartet. TELEFUNKEN 6.41933 \$6.98, © 441933 \$7.98.

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

The Alban Berg Quartet's recordings of Haydn's *Horseman* and *Emperor* quartets (Telefunken 6.41302) and the pair of works by the group's namesake (Telefunken 6.43101) were among the most distinguished releases of a year in which there was no scarcity of outstanding string quartet records—one of them being the Prague Quartet's magnificent one of this same Dvořák work (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 480). The Alban Berg Quartet's version, fully up to the group's previous standard, is also a splendid one, and will appeal especially to listeners who may have found the Prague Quartet's way with the music too idiosyncratic. A work as great as Dvořák's Op. 106 can sustain, and perhaps even benefit from, a variety of approaches, and, though I consider the Prague Quartet's version indispensable, I would certainly choose this newer one for alternate listening. Both recordings are excellent, DG's sonics being a bit more transparent, Telefunken's more "roomy."

R.F.

although Morley seems to have intended no dancing. The original idea, however, did include dancing; indeed, this rather sophisticated, harmonic music has a definite theatrical flavor in the prancing and sighing of its shepherds and shepherdesses. Opera was just around the corner.

These are highly arranged performances for a rather large group of singers and heterogeneous instrumental combinations. They are short on both intimacy and theatricality, qualities we have a right to expect from this music. The readings are lively enough, but they lack that lightness and elegance that should make them, in the late Renaissance manner, danceable as well as playable and singable—*per ballare* as well as *per cantare e sonare*.

E.S.

GERSHWIN: *Rhapsody in Blue.* George Gershwin (piano); Paul Whiteman and His Concert Orchestra. ***An American in Paris.*** George Gershwin (piano); RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra, Nathaniel Shilkret cond. ***Three Preludes; Selections from "Oh, Kay" and "Tip-Toes."*** George Gershwin (piano). RCA VICTROLA Ⓞ AVMI-1740 \$3.98.

Performance: **The real thing**
Recording: **Admirably restored**

The most remarkable things keep turning up

in RCA's vaults, making its Victrola America series something of an adventure to experience and a collector's boon. Few of us who grew up with the Victor version of the *Rhapsody in Blue* with George Gershwin at the piano and Paul Whiteman conducting "his" orchestra realized that it already had been recorded by the same team shortly after it woke up its première audience at Aeolian Hall on February 12, 1924, as the twenty-second item on Mr. Whiteman's "jazz concert." That recording on Victor's "Blue Label" was an acoustical one, played into a huge horn, yet it holds up remarkably well, with a strong, lean sound, a startling opening clarinet glissando, Gershwin at his jauntiest, and only the radical cuts made to get it all on two sides of a 78 providing any reason for regret. As restored by engineer Bernard Keville, the sound, in fact, is almost better than that of the 1929 electrical recording with which Nathaniel Shilkret introduced *An American in Paris* on records, humoring Gershwin by allowing him to play the celesta (Mr. Shilkret had forgotten to hire a celesta player) after kicking the thirty-year-old composer out of a rehearsal for getting in the way. There have been a number of more gratifyingly alive recordings of *An American in Paris* since—Toscanini's, Fiedler's—but none more exactly right in tone and idiom. On this generous program, you also get Gershwin in a 1926 London recording of his *Three Preludes*, plus brightly ornamented (although rigidly restricted to dance tempos) piano treatments of tunes from the scores of *Oh, Kay!* and *Tip-Toes*. An extra dividend is provided by Edward Jablonski's beautifully researched and brightly written liner notes.

P.K.

GERSHWIN: *Rhapsody in Blue; American in Paris* (see *Going on Record*, page 60)

GERSHWIN: *Rhapsody in Blue; Three Preludes; Thirteen Songs from the Gershwin Song Book.* André Watts (piano). COLUMBIA M 34221 \$6.98.

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

André Watts had no trouble at all filling Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center when it was announced that the second half of his program in the "Great Performer" series would be devoted to Gershwin. Here he gives over the whole of his latest Columbia album to that composer with results that are interesting but at the same time a little disappointing. What Watts brings to Gershwin is the same immaculateness of tone and integrity of intent that are his hallmarks in the conventional Romantic repertoire. The *Rhapsody in Blue* has seldom been so cleanly delineated on the keyboard with a touch so light or with so aristocratic an avoidance of sentimentality. But it doesn't exactly come over as a rhapsody, either, especially with the orchestral parts so painfully missing. If Gershwin had wanted to write a "Sonata in Blue," which is what the piece sounds like here, he might have done so, but even when the composer himself tried to handle this particular work as a solo it never quite came off. In the preludes the scrupulous Watts approach is more satisfactory; the second of the three, with its bluesy, dreamy mood, is particularly effective. Side two is given over to thirteen songs from Gershwin's Song Book, transcribed by the composer in 1932. Here Watts is full of spirit—slow and thoughtful in 'S *Wonderful*, headlong in *Sweet*

(Continued on page 142)

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and Low-down, sparkling in *I Got Rhythm*—but never sparkling or low-down enough. I still prefer William Bolcom's gutsier, more idiomatic, and more exciting version for Nonesuch. The Watts touch is a little too feathery, too precise, too elegant for this particular sphere. P.K.

GIBBONS: Madrigals and Motets 1612. *The Silver Swan; O that the learned poets; I weigh not Fortune's frown; I tremble not at noise of war; I see Ambition never pleased; I feign not friendship; How art thou thrall'd?; Dainty fine bird; Fair ladies that to Love; 'Mongst thousands good; Now each flowery bank of May; Lais now old; What is our life? Ah dear heart; Fair is the Rose; Nay let me weep; Ne'er let the Sun; Yet if that age; Trust not too much fair youth.* Consort of Musicke, Anthony Rooley cond. L'OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 512 \$6.98.

Performance: **Pure**
Recording: **Reedy**

GIBBONS: Keyboard Music. *Fantasia (MB 10); A Fancy (MB 3); Fantasia (MB 8); The Queen's Command (MB 28); Pavan (MB 17); Galliard (MB 23); Ground (MB 26); Alman (MB 33); Coranto (MB 40); The Italian Ground (MB 27); Verse (MB 4); Fantasia of Four Parts (MB 12); Prelude (MB 1); Pavan, Lord Salisbury (MB 18); Galliard (MB 19); Alman, The King's Jewel (MB 36); Alman (MB 37); Pavan (MB 16); Galliard (MB 21); Galliard (MB 22); Lincoln's Inn Masque (MB 44).* Christopher Hogwood (harpsichord, virginals, organ). L'OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 515 \$6.98.

Performance: **Contemplative**
Recording: **Clear**

Although Orlando Gibbons' oeuvre is small, it is exquisite and marks the end of the Elizabethan style of music with dignity. In the 1612 collection of motets and madrigals, Gibbons' only extant secular vocal works, his seriousness of purpose is set forth in the choice of texts; not a single nymph or shepherd darts forth from these exquisitely wrought settings of thoughts concerning nature, love, and the present state of man. Sobriety, contrapuntal artifice, and sonorous choral spacing take the day.

Taking the title-page phrase "apt for Viols and Voyces" to heart, the Consort of Musicke offers a variety of combinations. Their

performance is as pure as the music is rarefied. The pitch is impeccable, the rhythm precise, and never is this placid landscape marred by even the suggestion of a vibrato. The result is one of homogenized beauty.

Sobriety and craftsmanship also characterize Gibbons' keyboard music. Rarely brilliant, it idealizes bygone dances and revels in the complexities of counterpoint. Christopher Hogwood plays three marvelous-sounding instruments of the period, a chamber organ, a pair of virginals, and a two-manual harpsichord. His contemplative playing is beautifully molded and makes use of subtle temporal expression without ever distorting the rhythmic fabric of the music. I would have liked a more lusty approach for such spirited works as *Lincoln's Inn Masque* and *The King's Jewel*; nonetheless, this is well-thought-out playing which is sensitive to the possibilities and limitations of the instruments. S.L.

GILBERT & SULLIVAN: Iolanthe. John Reed (baritone), Lord Chancellor; John Aylton (bass), Lord Mountararat; Malcolm Williams (tenor), Lord Tolloller; Kenneth Sandford (bass), Private Willis; Michael Rayner (baritone), Strephon; Lyndsie Holland (contralto), Queen of the Fairies; Judi Merri (mezzo-soprano), Iolanthe; Pamela Field (soprano), Phyllis; Marjorie William (soprano), Celia; Patricia Leonard (mezzo-soprano), Leila; Rosalind Griffiths (soprano), Fleta; D'Oyly Carte Chorus; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royston Nash cond. LONDON OSA 12104 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: **Everything that's excellent**
Recording: **Likewise**

The famous Savoy Theatre in London, the first in the world to boast electric lighting, was scarcely more than a year old when *Iolanthe* opened there on November 5, 1882. The comic opera about the peers of England and the peris of Fairyland enchanted audiences. Sullivan had lavished particular care on the score and composed his most ambitious overture for it. One charming melody, beguilingly orchestrated by Sullivan, followed another. Surprise after surprise in Gilbert's wit, Sullivan's way with this orchestral or that choral passage, and *trompe-l'oeil* staging delighted eye and ear, culminating in that tour de force of all patter pieces, the Lord Chamberlain's Nightmare Song in the second act. Even the

CONSORT OF MUSICKE: a beautiful, dignified Elizabethan landscape



Decca

politicians of England seemed to accept with good grace (or at least with admirable reserve) the portrayal of the House of Lords as a brainless bunch of ninnies.

Iolanthe has been particularly fortunate on records over the years, and this newest version from the D'Oyly Carte brings to three the number of albums of the score still available—two of them complete with dialogue—all supervised by Bridget D'Oyly Carte herself. The Richmond mono version boasts Martyn Green as the Lord Chancellor, but the recorded sound is thin and dated. The 1960's version on London offers a strong cast in a seamless performance in excellent stereo, with John Reed as the Lord Chancellor and the redoubtable Isidore Godfrey at the helm. There really was no need for another, especially as we are yet to obtain from the D'Oyly Carte an album of *The Mikado*, for example, with dialogue. But it is here, and it must be admitted that the newest version under Royston Nash stands up well in comparison with its predecessors. The Royal Philharmonic is somewhat more sensitive to the nuances of the graceful score than was the New Symphony Orchestra on London. Mr. Reed has improved like well-aged wine—even though he now takes the Nightmare Song at too fast a clip to make out half the words; the chorus re-sounds exhilaratingly; and the dialogue, although still too faintly recorded to make out except at an exaggerated volume, is done with slightly more verve. Kenneth Sandford is once again as sturdy and stolid a Private Willis as one could ask for, and Judi Merri is an affecting *Iolanthe*.

Throughout the production there are little extra touches—the sound of Private Willis pacing up and down in front of Westminster Hall, chuckles from the Lord Chancellor, titters from the peers, subtle sound effects. And the choral work is again spectacular. On the other hand, Lyndsie Holland's Queen of the Fairies sounds a little too much at times like a parody of England's present Elizabeth, Michael Raynor's baritone is a bit too churchy for Strepson, the Phyllis of Pamela Field a mite less winsome than Mary Sansom's. Nor will those who like their Gilbert and Sullivan more urgently operatic find the sort of voices here that Angel rounded up for its series some decades ago. What they will find is the inimitable sense of style, the pacing, the exuberance, the precision, the fealty to period and to the original intent of the work that are hallmarks of the D'Oyly Carte approach. We may not exactly have needed this new *Iolanthe*, but it is an excellent one. P.K.

HANDEL/CASADESUS: *Viola Concerto in B Minor* (see TELEMANN)

HAYDN: *The Complete Solo Keyboard Music, Volume I: Sonatas Nos. 1-19 (Wiener Urtext Ausgabe); Variations in A Major (Hob. XVII/2); Variations in D Major (Hob. XVII/7).* Zsuzsa Pertis (harpsichord); János Sebestyén (harpsichord). HUNGAROTON SPLX 11614-17 four discs \$27.92.

Performance: **Pedestrian**
Recording: **Brittle**

HAYDN: *Piano Sonatas, Volume I: No. 6, in C Major; No. 10, in C Major; No. 18, in E-flat Major; No. 33, in C Minor; No. 38, in F Major; No. 39, in D Major; No. 47, in B Minor; No. 50, in D Major; No. 52, in G Major; No. 60, in C Major (all numbers Wiener Urtext Ausgabe); Variations in F Minor (Hob. XVII/6); Fantasia*

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in *C Major* (*Hob. XVII/4*). John McCabe (piano). LONDON STS1543-5 three discs \$20.94.

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

London Records and Hungarofon present in these two albums wildly different solutions to the problem of recording "complete works" series. Hungaroton's approach is strictly *echt*: the sonatas are presented in chronological order, the harpsichord has been chosen as the instrument, and the use of several artists lends a scholarly air of anonymity to the project. London, on the other hand, has taken a more humane approach: the sonatas have been ordered to give the listener more musical variety on each record, the modern piano has been thought adequate to support the works,

and a single artist with a distinct personality of his own offers us his individual reading of the works. Both approaches are valid and both have their pitfalls.

As for the instrument, the early Haydn sonatas require two instruments: the harpsichord and the clavichord. All of the sonatas sound fine on the latter, but those written for the clavichord sound all wrong when fed into the impersonal mechanism of the harpsichord. Although the modern piano is, of course, historically inaccurate for them all, musically they can be brought off effectively on that instrument by a sensitive performer. Thus we must chalk one up for London as far as the instrument goes.

As for the ordering of the sonatas: Haydn took longer to come to grips with keyboard

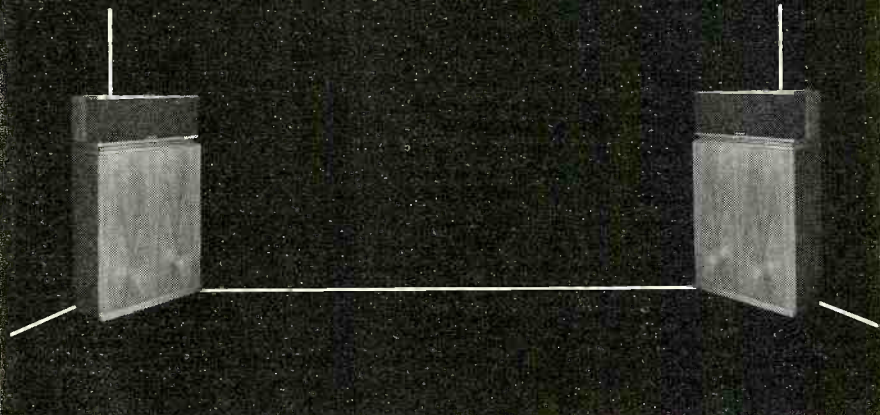
music than with any other type. The earliest symphonies and quartets, for example, are all fine works despite various weaknesses found in an immature composer. The early sonatas, on the other hand, are simply wretched. Thus presenting them chronologically puts the listener through a test of aridity and dullness that he may not pass; if he flunks it, he will never want to hear another Haydn sonata as long as he lives. This is the way one is apt to feel after several sides of the Hungaroton album. A judicious juxtaposition of an early sonata followed by a mature one, on the other hand, displays the composer's dramatic growth in the genre and offers variety as well. Thus another point must be given the London side.

As for the performances presented here, we are faced with a mixed bag and a frustrating one. Ms. Pertis is accurate and clean; her tempos are well chosen, but she has no sense of rubato. On the harpsichord this is fatal, and the results are mechanical. Add to this measured trills, all of which begin on the principal note and rarely indulge in the caprice of an afterbeat, and one realizes that one is in for a deadly session. Mr. Sebestyén is more daring in his approach toward rubato, but not enough to bring the music off. His ornaments too suffer from lack of freedom and frequent misreadings. They both play on a Bach model Sperrhake harpsichord, which would have been more alien to Haydn than the modern piano, and register to a fare-thee-well, a factor that never really compensates for basic good musicianship.

Mr. McCabe, on London, is a sensitive pianist. His delicate touch tames the modern sound into a truly Classical one, he turns a phrase exquisitely, and he is master of the pedal (a quality rarely found in pianists today). This approach is perfect for Haydn's lyrically conceived movements—I cannot recall more beautiful readings of the first two movements of the great *C Minor Sonata* or the slow movements of the *G Major* (No. 52) and the *C Major* (No. 60). Unfortunately, this is Mr. McCabe's *only* approach. Thus such spirited works as the first movement of the aforementioned *C Major* and the *D Major* (No. 39) lose all their drive and drama. The same prevailing super-sensitivity completely emasculates and renders humorless the *Fantasia in C Major*. McCabe favors repeating not only the exposition of a sonata (in this he is spot on) but also repeating the development and recapitulation, a convention that must needs be questioned—and Haydn was the first to ask such questions. However beautiful this artist's performance may be of the *C Minor*, such a final repeat quite kills it. An extremely slow tempo (*adagio* rather than *andante*) for the *F Minor Variations* coupled with all of the repeats extends the work to just under eighteen minutes. Despite the beauty and sensitivity of the performance, the effect is stultifying—too much painstaking beauty undoes itself. Rather than a single approach applied to every movement, Mr. McCabe would do better to fit his approach to the needs of the varied moods of the many movements involved.

Frankly, I do not believe that it is possible to record all of the Haydn sonatas in a musically satisfying album. Such an album may be desirable for the student and historian, but for the musician the repertoire will not bear it the same way that the symphonies or quartets will. A Haydn sonata, then, is still best appreciated in a single shot surrounded by other kinds of works. S.L.

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HERRMANN: *The Fantasticks; For the Fallen* (see Collections—A Musical Garland of the Seasons)

IBERT: *Ouverture de Fête; Escales; Tropismes pour des Amours Imaginaires.* Orchestre National de l'ORTF. Jean Martinon cond. ANGEL □ S-37194 \$6.98.

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

The late Jean Martinon's stunning recording of the *Divertissement* (London STS-15093) suggested an exceptional affinity for Ibert, and the three performances engraved here brim over with the same blend of brilliance and commitment; what keeps me from labeling this a "recording of special merit" is the thinness of the music itself. We are always being told that *Escales* is not a very good piece, but it remains persistently charming and is far and away the most attractive thing in this collection. The *Ouverture de Fête*, composed in 1940 in honor of the twenty-six-hundredth year of the Japanese Empire (Strauss wrote a *Festmusik* for the same occasion), has an admirable fugal theme and an impressively harmonized second subject for the brass, but its rambling middle section fails to sustain interest; it might have been twice as strong at half its length.

Tropisms for Imaginary Loves, Ibert's last completed work for orchestra, was written in 1957 and discovered only two years ago, a dozen years after his death. Despite the intriguing title, the work carries no program; it is in nine interlinked sections of contrasting moods and styles—American jazz, German cabaret song, barcarolle, waltz, etc. In spirit it is rather like Ravel's *Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*, but, despite the variety of forms represented in Ibert's sequence, there is much less in the way of memorable themes or beautiful texture to hold one's attention.

Martinon went all out for both previously unrecorded works, and the orchestra responded splendidly. Their *Escales* is as satisfying as any now available, and the sound is very good played back in four channels (SQ) or in two. R.F.

IVES: *String Quartet No. 2; Scherzo for String Quartet* (see BARBER)

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsodies Nos. 1-16, 19.* Gyorgy Cziffra (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2297/8/9 three discs \$20.94.

Performance: **Good to dazzling**
Recording: **Very good**

Until fairly recently, the "complete" Hungarian Rhapsodies meant the fifteen works of 1846-1853. As I noted in my March 1974 review of Roberto Szidon's three-disc Deutsche Grammophon set, there is much more variety and substance in these pieces than indicated by the languishing *lassu* (slow) and demonic *friss* (fast) formula so familiar to us from No. 2 of the series. There are, however, an additional four late, surprisingly "modern" rhapsodies, dating from the early 1880's. Szidon performs these on his set (along with the Spanish Rhapsody), while Cziffra gives us only the first and last of them in his own altered versions.

As compared to Szidon's readings, Cziffra adopts a freer lyrical approach, very closely akin to that recommended by Louis Kentner in his essay, "The Interpretation of Liszt's Piano Music," which appears as part of the il-

luminating 1970 symposium *Franz Liszt: The Man and His Music* (Taplinger, New York). The celebrated Second Rhapsody fares notably well under Cziffra's fingers, as does No. 6, which is marked by truly dazzling passage-work, and No. 8, to which he brings a fierce rhythmic thrust. Other high points include the magical cymbalom imitation in No. 11 and the coruscating *friss* episode of No. 13. The piano sound, from Pathé-Marconi tapes made in Paris, is altogether excellent.


The dyed-in-the-wool Liszt buff probably will want to add these discs to the complete versions of the rhapsodies done by Szidon or Louis Kentner (Vox). For the more casual buyer seeking a combination of both the most popular and the best of the rhapsodies without having to go into a multidisc investment, I

would consider going somewhat afield and getting Alfred Brendel's fine Vanguard disc, which offers Nos. 2, 3, 8, 13, 15, and 17, although Cziffra's discs are available singly as Nos. 1-6, 7-12, and 13-16 plus 19. D.H.

LISZT: *Sonata in B Minor. Un Sospiro; Sonetto del Petrarca No. 123; Consolation No. 5; Mephisto Waltz No. 1.* Van Cliburn (piano). RCA ARL1-1173 \$6.98. © ARS1-1173 \$7.95, © ARK1-1173 \$7.95.

Performance: **Shallow**
Recording: **Very Good**

LISZT: *Années de Pèlerinage, Seconde Année: Spozalizio; Il Pensieroso; Canzonetta del Salvatore Rosa; Sonetti del Petrarca Nos. 47, 104, and* (Continued on page 148)



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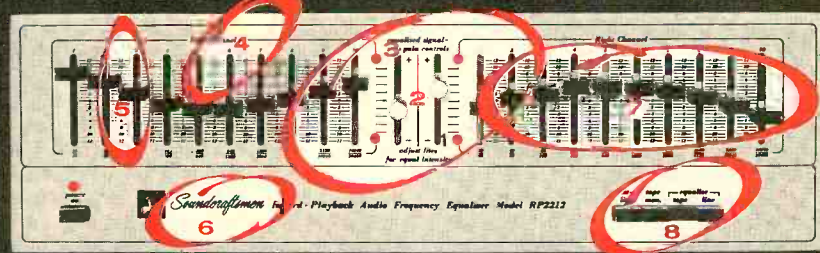
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When You and I Were Young, Maggie...and Other Indoor Sports



Culver Pictures

BACK in the dear, dead days beyond recall—well, not exactly, since I do recall them—a family’s musical entertainment, unless it was rich enough to command the services of an in-house string quartet, rested on two possibilities: stay home and entertain yourself or go to a theater for the real thing. Even as late as the Twenties, media saturation had yet to catch up with our evidently under-employed eyes and ears: TV didn’t exist, both radio and the movies were infants, and even the phonograph was still something of a novelty.

There were, to be sure, genteel musicales, palm-court trios, opera, and symphony concerts to be enjoyed in many urban centers, but for the most part it was either sing-alongs around the parlor piano on the one hand or traveling vaudeville troupes on the other. One interesting thing about both these sources of music was the slenderness, in contemporary terms, of their repertoires. A vaudeville star could build a whole career upon a song or two, for the simple reasons that they did not suffer from the kind of overexposure that would wear them out and they were really all the fans wanted to hear. At home it was much the same: a group of old favorites that simply refused to age but continued to yield their sentimental, entertaining substance across years and even across generations. The modern thirst for novelty, the often cruel rejection of “last year’s repertoire”—together with the artists who performed it—is quite new, a nice example of appetite sickened with surfeit.

It is therefore both refreshing and instructive to be afforded just now two privileged views—privileged because they are so well done—of just what this music was *ideally* (not

all vaudeville was great, nor all parlor tenors undiscovered McCormacks) supposed to sound like. They are Nonesuch’s “Vaudeville, Songs of the Great Ladies of the Musical Stage” (reviewed by Paul Kresh on page 87), and RCA’s “When You and I Were Young Maggie” (which I will get to in a moment). Neither belongs in the conventional “good old days” nostalgia bag; they are rather a combination of fascinating recent history and excellent contemporary entertainment—proof, if proof were needed, that our forebears knew a good tune when they heard one.

My grandmother certainly did; her favorite at family songfests was the title song of the RCA album. It gave me a start to learn from the notes that the lyric was written for one Maggie Clark, born in Glanford, Ontario, for my grandmother was another Maggie Clark (*née* Corbett) of Canadian origin. The songs in this program are all, roughly, late-nineteenth-century American products, though some of the composers and lyricists were born elsewhere. They are all so much a part of my own background that it is difficult for me to imagine that they may not be familiar to many younger listeners. If they are not familiar to you, take my word for it: they are splendid songs worth every minute you can spend with them. True, they are just a little on the melancholy side—about parting, homesickness, growing old, and even dying—but if you listen sympathetically you will find that they are also very human, very real, that the growing old is on the sensible “last of life, for which the first was made” level, the dying is seen as a grateful rest after a full life. Carrie Jacobs Bond’s *A Perfect Day* is perfectly placed at the end of this program, a metaphor for the

whole and as fine an expression as any I know of in the whole of music. These subjects are unfashionable, even taboo, in the largely youth-oriented popular music of today, and it is easy to understand why: telling it like it is does not include, for the young, such subjects as aging and dying. Time, of course, will take care of that.

Since John McCormack is no longer with us, I can imagine no better contemporary interpreter of this repertoire than the gifted Robert White (at one time a member of the fine Pro Musica Antiqua ensemble and more recently heard as Apollo in the ABC/Command recording of Gagliano’s *La Dafne*). He obviously has both love and respect for the music, and his bright, fresh tenor reminds me that there was a time not so long ago when we were able to take it for granted that our entertainers would come before us with, at the very least, a *voce*. Pianist Samuel Sanders’ contribution fits singer and songs like a coat of paint (ah, how we strove to do half as well at the parlor upright!), and Philip Miller’s notes could not be improved upon.

—William Anderson

WHEN YOU AND I WERE YOUNG MAGGIE: American Sentimental Songs of the Nineteenth Century. *When You And I Were Young, Maggie; Beautiful Dreamer; An Irish Folk Song; Mother o’ Mine; May-Day Carol; Sylvia; Little Boy Blue; Smilin’ Through; The Vacant Chair; The Rosary; I Love You Truly; Duna; By the Bend of the River; Silver Threads Among the Gold; I’ll Take You Home Again, Kathleen; A Perfect Day.* Robert White (tenor); Samuel Sanders (piano). RCA ARL1-1698 \$6.98, © ARS1-1698 \$7.98.

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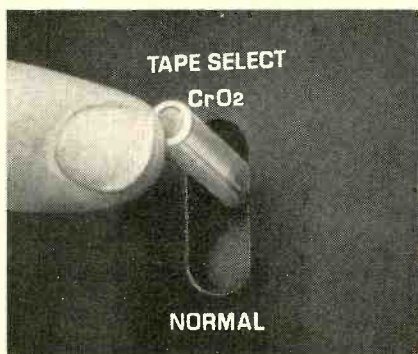
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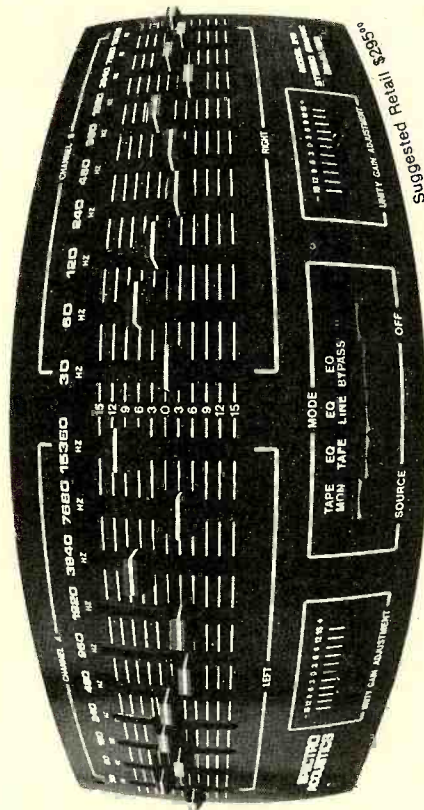
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Irresistible Milhaud from (left to right) Ivaldi, Collard, Lee, and Béroff

Philippe Coqueux/Connoisseur Society

123. Venezia e Napoli: Gondoliera. Deux Légendes: St. Francis of Assisi Preaching to the Birds; St. Francis of Paola Walking on the Water. Wilhelm Kempff (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530.560 \$7.98.

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

Van Cliburn, abetted by very good piano sound from RCA, plays his Liszt program with great fluency and facility but not much sense of involvement; it is all rather disappointingly shallow. Wilhelm Kempff is an altogether different sort of Liszt player and has been, of course, for longer than Cliburn has been alive. He is a "philosophical" interpreter, approaching Liszt in much the way he approaches Beethoven, probing beyond the surface glitter for the depth, substance, and unparalleled imaginativeness that a few of the keyboard elite (most of them also celebrated Beethoven interpreters) have always found in this material. If Kempff is also somewhat disappointing here, it is because his own earlier recording of an almost identical program (with three sections of the first book of *Années* substituted for *Sposalizio*, reissued on Turnabout TV-S 34385) is every bit as noble as the DG remake and is also illumined by greater vitality, a subtle sense of momentum missing from the newer version, and an even greater feeling for color.

R.F.

MENDELSSOHN: Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64 (see PAGANINI)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MILHAUD: Scaramouche; Le Bal Martiniquais. Christian Ivaldi, Noël Lee (pianos). *L'Automne.* Noël Lee (piano). *Paris.* Christian Ivaldi, Michel Béroff, Jean-Philippe Collard, Noël Lee (pianos). *Le Printemps.* Christian Ivaldi (piano). CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2101 \$6.98.

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

There has never been a disappointing performance of *Scaramouche* on records, but some, of course, have been more appealing than others; this latest one strikes me as the most appealing yet. And—if that were not enough—it is the prelude to a discful of less-familiar Milhaud anyone would be happy to discover. David Hall, in his exceptionally

comprehensive notes, refers to the "Gottschalkian sass" of the *Biguine* which concludes *Le Bal Martiniquais*, and, to be sure, one hears virtual echoes of *The Banjo*. Most of the material collected here is lighthearted but not necessarily lightweight, and the impression given by the stylish performances is that the pianists were drawn together by their mutual affection for these works and the sheer joy of playing them. The sound, even in the four-piano *Paris*, is remarkably clean. Aside from *Scaramouche*, the only component of the disc that seems to be available in a rival version now is *Le Printemps*, which is also part of William Bolcom's indispensable collection of Milhaud's solo piano works (Nonesuch H-71316); it is a duplication one bears ungrudgingly.

R.F.

MOZART: Opera Arias (see Best of the Month, page 89)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: Requiem in D Minor (K. 626). Hans Buchhierl (soprano); Mario Krämer (alto); Werner Krenn (tenor); Barry McDaniel (baritone); Tölzer Boys' Choir; Collegium Aureum, Gerhard Schmidt-Gaden cond. HARMONIA MUNDI KHB 22006 \$7.98.

Performance: **Revisionist; anti-Süssmayr**
Recording: **Crystalline**

MOZART: Requiem in D Minor (K. 626). Carole Bogard (soprano); Ann Murray (mezzo-soprano); Richard Lewis (tenor); Michael Rippon (bass); Amor Artis Chorale; English Chamber Orchestra, Johannes Somary cond. VANGUARD VSD 71211 \$6.98.

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

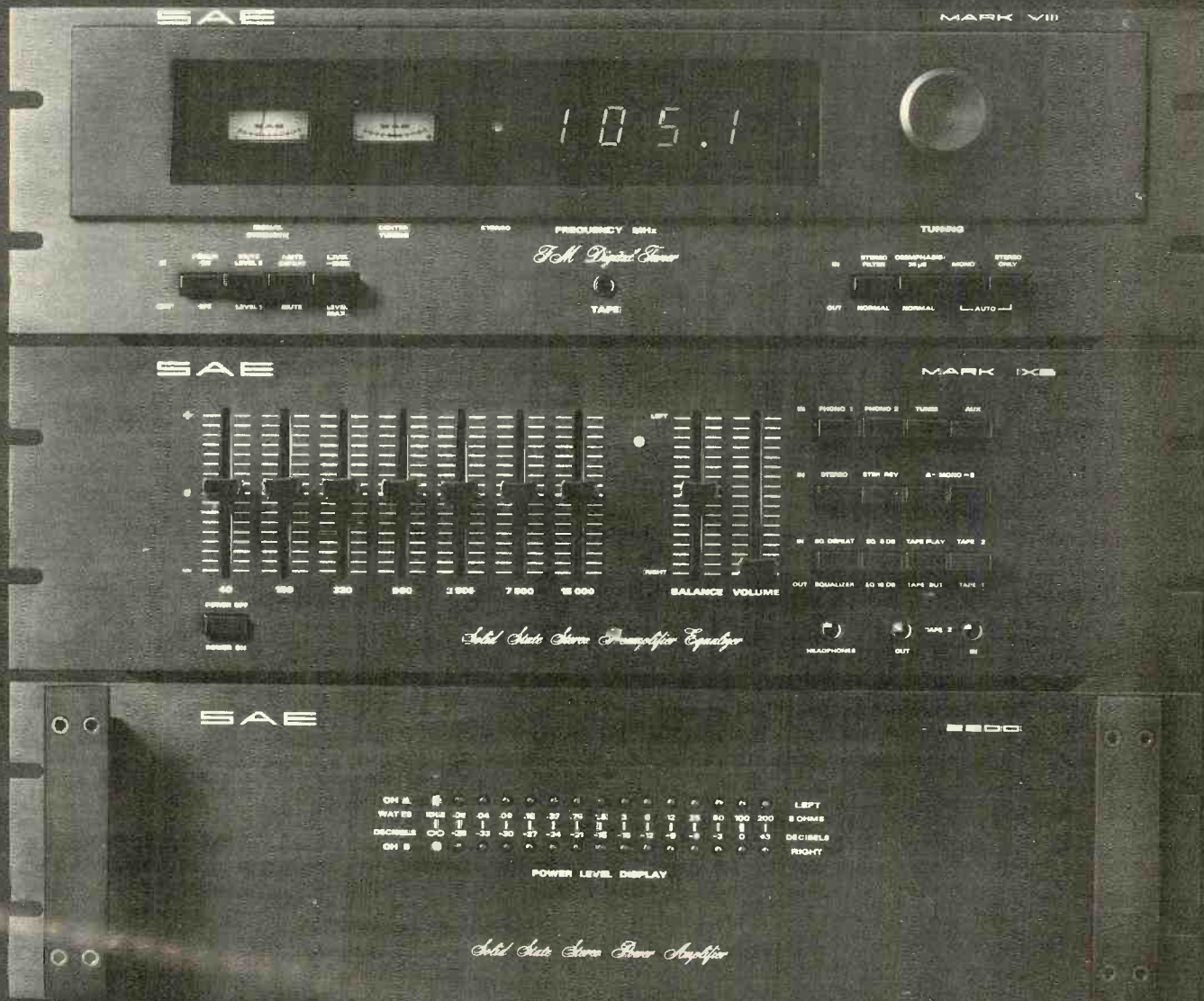
MOZART: Requiem in D Minor (K. 626). Elly Ameling (soprano); Barbara Scherler (alto); Louis Devos (tenor); Roger Soyer (bass); Symphonic Chorus and Orchestra of the Gulbenkian Foundation of Lisbon, Michel Corboz cond. RCA AGL1-1533 \$4.98.

Performance: **Heavy**
Recording: **Cathedral acoustics**

Easily the most unusual and noteworthy of these three recordings of the Mozart Requiem is that from Harmonia Mundi. As is well known, the Requiem was finished by Mo-

(Continued on page 151)

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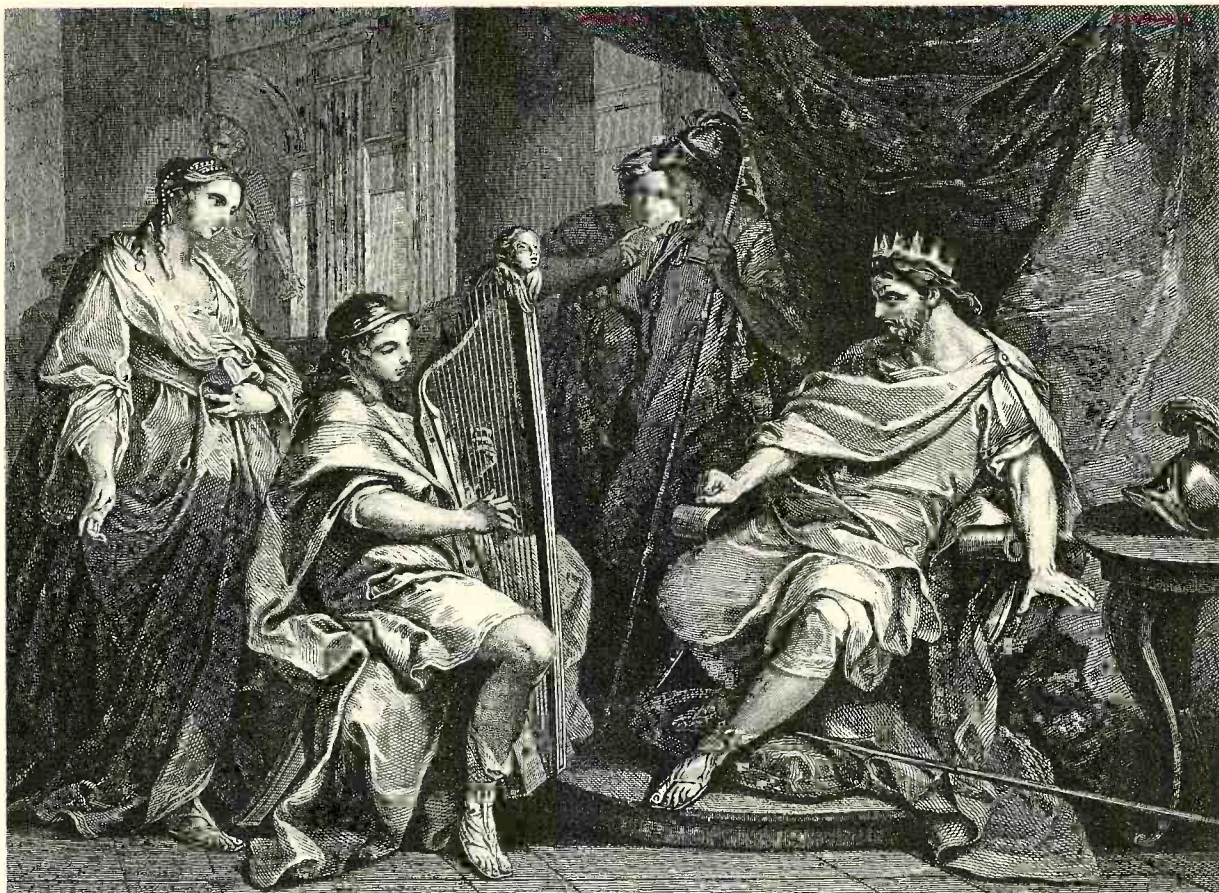
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“... an opera of tableaux, reminiscent of *Samson et Dalila*...”



Culver Pictures

“David took a harp and played with his hand.”

Carl Nielsen's "Saul and David"

WHEN his first opera, *Saul and David*, was introduced in 1902, Carl Nielsen was not yet a “symphonist” to the virtual exclusion of everything else. He was, however, already a confirmed individualist, influenced neither by Wagner nor by any “schools” of Italy or France. *Saul and David* is, above everything else, a well-written opera, abundant in good ensembles, orchestral preludes that are expertly atmospheric, martial scenes, and devotional choruses. And yet I cannot call it a really successful opera. Some of its episodes come off to good effect, but the slowly unfolding action lacks urgency and the vocal writing is quite unmemorable. I suppose that the Biblical subject is partly to blame: this is an opera of tableaux, reminiscent of *Samson et Dalila* but lacking the sensuous appeal of Saint-Saëns’ melodies.

The performance just released on the Unicorn label, however, is extremely good. It comes from a 1972 Copenhagen radio broadcast (with some *post facto* corrections under the leadership of Joel Lazar, associate to Jascha Horenstein, whose untimely death followed shortly after the broadcast). An inter-

national cast of outstanding singers is heard in an English-language performance.

From the libretto, which is generally faithful to the Old Testament source, King Saul emerges as a mighty ruler and a proud warrior of noble instincts. He suffers the wrath of an unforgiving God uncomprehendingly, enlisting our full sympathy, for we too find his punishment excessive. Boris Christoff invests the role with majestic dignity and a Godounov-like royal rage. He was never a mellifluous singer, but his dark grainy tones still ring out powerfully, and though English is not an easy language for him, he manages to remain understandable throughout.

Alexander Young sings the music of David—all of it lyrical and much of it harp-accompanied—with a sweet tone. His English diction is excellent, as is that of bass Michael Langdon, sonorous and dignified in the role of the prophet Samuel. Elisabeth Söderström is just about perfect in the difficult but effective part of Michal, Saul’s daughter and David’s wife, and the Danish tenor Willy Hartmann recalls the late Aksel Schjøtz with his mellow and musical singing.

Since the recording was not produced under fully controlled studio conditions, balances are not ideal. The solo singers are invariably favored, and the chorus and orchestra are sometimes slighted, but the total results are more than acceptable, the surfaces are silent, and the album presentation deserves the highest praise. *Saul and David* is a major achievement in Danish culture. Its complete recording is amply merited, and it is fortunate that the project was accomplished by the late Jascha Horenstein and his dedicated associates with so much distinction.

—George Jellinek

NIELSEN: *Saul and David*. Boris Christoff (bass), King Saul; Willy Hartmann (tenor), Jonathan; Elisabeth Söderström (soprano), Michal; Alexander Young (tenor), David; Michael Langdon (bass), Samuel; Kim Borg (bass), Abner; Bodil Gøbel (soprano), Abishai; Sylvia Fisher (soprano), Witch of Endor; others. John Alldis Choir; Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Jascha Horenstein cond. UNICORN RHS 343/5 three discs \$23.94.

zart's pupil Süssmayr, and critics have argued endlessly about his contributions. Süssmayr had a hand—literally, since his handwriting is the basic evidence—in everything after the opening Introitus. It will never be known exactly how much help he had from Mozart himself (verbal communications, now-lost sketches), but, for better or for worse, it is Süssmayr's version that the world knows. Now, however, it has been re-edited by one Franz Beyer, and it is this new version that has been recorded on Harmonia Mundi.

Beyer's work was mainly re-instrumentation; it is most obvious in the *Tuba mirum* (where he does not keep the trombone sounding the Last Trump all the way through), but in fact he has blue-penciled Süssmayr throughout, constantly simplifying the scoring and reducing the importance of the orchestra. He has also made a few compositional changes, notably extending the sudden end of the *Osanna* with cadence formulas. In addition, this performance uses boy sopranos and altos—solo as well as choral—and a small orchestra of eighteenth-century instruments. Authentic? No more than Süssmayr, perhaps, but there are arguments in favor of simplicity and purity. The orchestra is possibly now too weak, and there is overall a delicate, soft quality to the performance which is a far cry from the somber, dramatic character often associated with this music. But, as if to compensate, Gerhard Schmidt-Gaden directs a tremendously intense, crackling performance which, in its impeccable choral articulation and extraordinary clarity, provides a dynamic that is light years away from the traditional funereal heaviness of, say, the RCA Corboz recording.

It is ironic that Johannes Somary, in the liner notes to his recording, comments on the "brilliance and somber solemnity" of the orchestration that Beyer rejects as an aberration of Süssmayr! Somary also notes his use of a small chorus and orchestra with the avowed aim of achieving "choral clarity and a kind of lightness . . . while not robbing the Requiem of its solemnity. . . ." The goal is admirable and partly achieved in Somary's recording, but it is actually much more completely realized on the remarkable Harmonia Mundi disc. E.S.

MOZART: Sonatas for Piano and Violin (see Best of the Month, page 89)

PAGANINI: Violin Concerto No. 1, in D Major, Op. 6. MENDELSSOHN: Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64. Eugene Fodor (violin); New Philharmonia Orchestra, Peter Maag cond. RCA ARL1-1565 \$6.98, © ARS1-1565 \$7.98, © ARK1-1565 \$7.98.

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

Eugene Fodor's second concerto release substantially enhances the young virtuoso's stature. He has just about everything going for him, above all a technique of sure-fire brilliance and a tone of finespun smoothness energized by a Heifetz-like intensity. All this plus an innately bold and flashy virtuosity bring about a very exciting statement of the Mendelssohn concerto, one that holds up well in any company.

Excitement abounds on the reverse side also, though here Fodor's impetuosity leads him into clipped and curt phrasing, diminishing the melodic charm Paganini's music badly needs if it is to be more than mere technical

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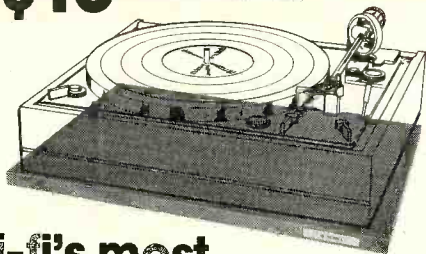


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exercise. Still, Fodor's multiple stops and harmonics are quite spectacular.

To get all of the Paganini concerto onto one side of the disc, the third movement had to be abbreviated. It is an unkind sort of cut, for it deprives the movement of a certain variety, but it is fairly standard. (Competitive versions by Itzhak Perlman and Erick Friedman, however, are more nearly complete.) Fodor benefits from excellent orchestral accompaniments, which deserve more sonic prominence than they are given. G.J.

PENDERECKI: *Magnificat*. Peter Lagger (bass): Polish Radio Chorus of Krakow; soloists and Boys' Chorus from the Krakow Philharmonic Chorus; Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra, Krzysztof Penderecki cond. ANGEL S-37141 \$6.98.

Performance: **Composer's own**

Recording: **Impressive-sounding**

This is another in the series of large-scale religious-choral works by the best known of the contemporary Polish composers. Like its predecessors, it employs mass choral effects in a simple, striking way. As a *Magnificat*—which is, after all, a song of praise—it is a little less anguished and psychotic than its predecessors, though I would not agree with the sleeve annotator who calls it "conservatively-oriented." The presence of tonal elements is hardly evidence one way or another for conservatism or avant-gardism these days. If, however, he means that it is slightly more bearable than its predecessors, he may have a point. Personally, I never equated avant-gardism with unbearability, but that is, I suppose, what it comes down to these days.

I have always thought that Penderecki was a very skillful composer with little to say and I still think so. His earlier works are only marginally "avant-garde," and the *Magnificat* is not "conservative" in any significant way. It is, however, pleasanter (a bit) than many of his other works, and, as always, it is effective in detail, extremely thin in content, and very large in form. Good performances from Polish Radio-TV.

PLANQUETTE: *The Chimes of Normandy (Les Cloches de Corneville)*. Mady Mesplé (soprano), Germaine; Christiane Stutzmann (soprano), Serpolette; Bernard Sinclair (tenor), Henri de Corneville; Charles Burles (tenor), Grenicieux; Jean Giraudeau (tenor), the Bailiff; Jean-Christophe Benoit (baritone), Gaspard; others. Chorus and Orchestra of the Théâtre National de l'Opéra-Comique, Jean Doussard cond. CONNOISSEUR SOCIETY CS 2-2107 two discs \$13.96.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Not consistently good**

There was a time—before operetta fell victim to humanity's endless search for inferior entertainment—when *The Chimes of Normandy* enjoyed a certain popularity in America, and it is good to have this authentic-sounding recording to remind us of its enduring values. This is a lilting and tuneful score—at least three of its numbers are of top-caliber Strauss-Offenbach quality. The plot is in keeping with the operetta tradition that stresses complications at the expense of believability. It resembles Flotow's *Martha* to a degree, with some ramifications à la Gilbert and Sullivan thrown in to make sure it stays complicated right to the very end. In this re-

(Continued on page 155)

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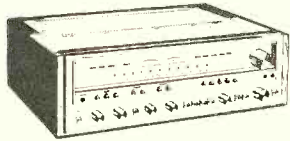
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ording we seem to find all of the musical numbers and a considerable amount of the spoken dialogue on four densely grooved sides—two full hours in all.

In the role of Germaine, a maiden of innate elegance and high breeding whose aristocratic origins are clear to us at the outset even though they are not suspected by those on stage until the end, Mady Mesplé performs with all the charm and vocal agility that have characterized her previous recordings. Bernard Sinclair, her aristocratic suitor, is quite good, but Charles Burles in the second tenor role is even better, a French *tenore di grazia* in the old tradition (he may also be heard opposite Mesplé in the Seraphim recording of *Lakmé*).

Conductor Doussard appears to be another veteran—he leads a lively, idiomatic performance. The recorded sound, however, is disappointing. The overall perspective lacks immediacy, balances are odd, and there are frequent instances of distortion, possibly because of the excessive lengths of the record sides and the resulting overmodulation. *G.J.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PROKOFIEV: Piano Sonata No. 2, in D Minor, Op. 14; Piano Sonata No. 8, in B-flat Major, Op. 84. Tedd Joselson (piano). RCA ARL1-1570 \$6.98.

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

Young Tedd Joselson is up against the stiffest possible competition from the Soviet section in Sonata No. 8, what with the recordings of Gilels (who gave the world premiere), Ashkenazy, and Berman currently available, and the dazzling but out-of-print 1963 Richter DG disc which I have still in my own collection. But in the Second Sonata, his only current competitor is Gyorgy Sandor in the Vox Box issue of the complete Prokofiev piano works.

Heard against the Sandor and Richter discs, which I had on hand, Joselson makes a first-rate showing. Where Sandor stresses the crisply rhythmic aspects of Op. 14, Joselson favors the lyrical, and to especially lovely effect in the nocturne-like slow movement. Nevertheless, he brings ample fireworks as well to the coruscating finale.

The neo-Schubertian elements of the Sonata No. 8 are likewise made to order for Joselson's lyrical style of playing; and if he does not quite match the breathtaking tonal gradations and butterfly-light *agilità* of Richter, that is in no way to his discredit. As in the Second Sonata, the high point of Joselson's performance is in the hauntingly beautiful slow movement, which he plays with most winning simplicity and melting beauty of tone. The recorded piano sound is of superior quality throughout. *D.H.*

A. SCARLATTI: Madrigals (complete). *Sdegno la fiamma estinse; Intenerite voi, lagrime mie; O selce, o tigre, o ninfa; O morte, agl'altri fosca; Or che da te, mio bene; Mori, mi dici; Cor mio, deh non languire; Arsi un tempo.* Monteverdi Chorus of Hamburg, Jurgen Jurgens cond. DG ARCHIV 2533 300 \$7.98.

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

A. SCARLATTI: Sinfonias: No. 2, in D Major; No. 12, in C Minor; No. 1, in F Major; No. 5, in D Minor; No. 8, in G Major; No. 4, in E Minor. (Continued on page 157)

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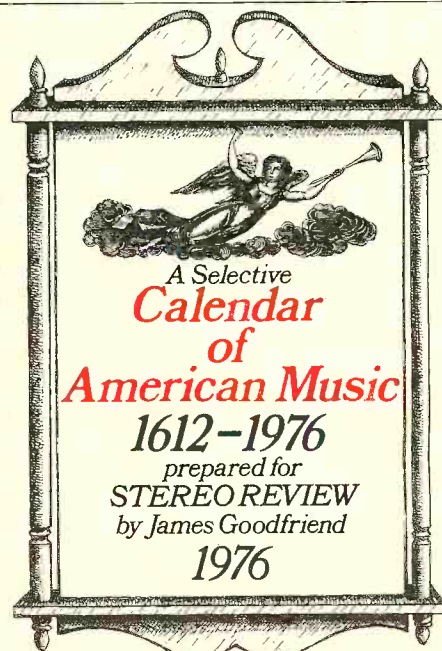
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nor. Paris Instrumental Ensemble, Charles Ravier cond. ORYX 3C 313 \$6.98.

Performance: **A bit scruffy**
Recording: **Muddy**

Harpichordists have long championed the wonderful sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti, but nobody has really ever rescued his father, Alessandro, from the dusty oblivion of the textbook. Far more prolific than his son, Alessandro produced a really staggering number of operas, Masses, oratorios, madrigals, sinfonias, concertos, and cantatas. Judging from what few works I have been lucky enough to hear—an opera, a dozen or so cantatas, and a handful of chamber music—I am convinced that his once awesome reputation is amply justified and that if his music were seriously revived he would take a place of honor among the greatest Baroque composers. We are fortunate, then, to have these two new discs.

The eight madrigals are, in many respects, a throwback to the Renaissance. Each verse of the several texts is set as one musical image of its underlying emotional content, and the music is full of contrapuntal artifice. On the Baroque side of the coin, however, functional harmony and tonal architecture prevail, and, within this framework, striking dissonances and sequences create the strong idiom so familiar to us from the language of Bach and Handel. Also the vocal writing is more oriented to the energetic Baroque instrumental idiom than it is to the smooth vocal lines of the Renaissance.

Although the performance by the Monteverdi Choir of Hamburg is sufficient to reveal the beauties of the music, a more articulated instrumental approach would better bring out its basic virility. The choir's tone is lovely, and the performances are well thought-out, but the approach is rather too Renaissance-minded to live up to the rhythmic and harmonic strength that distinguishes these Baroque works from their ancestors.

The six sinfonias, selected from a group of twelve, again reveal Scarlatti's formal conservatism. Although there are concertante elements featuring solo flutes and, in one example, a solo trumpet, they are, with their almost canzona-like formats of four and five movements, neither concertos or sinfonias. The idiom, however, is truly Baroque in its nervous string writing, harmonically poignant adagios, and ubiquitous fugues.

Again, the performance is sufficiently good to maintain one's interest in the excellent music, but there are some serious ensemble problems, especially in the integration of the solo sections. Also, the strings have some technical difficulties with brilliant passage work, and the result is a bit on the scruffy side. This is a fine sample of the elder Scarlatti, but such performances of more familiar works would meet with adverse criticism. Still, we need the pioneers and must not be ungrateful to them. S.L.

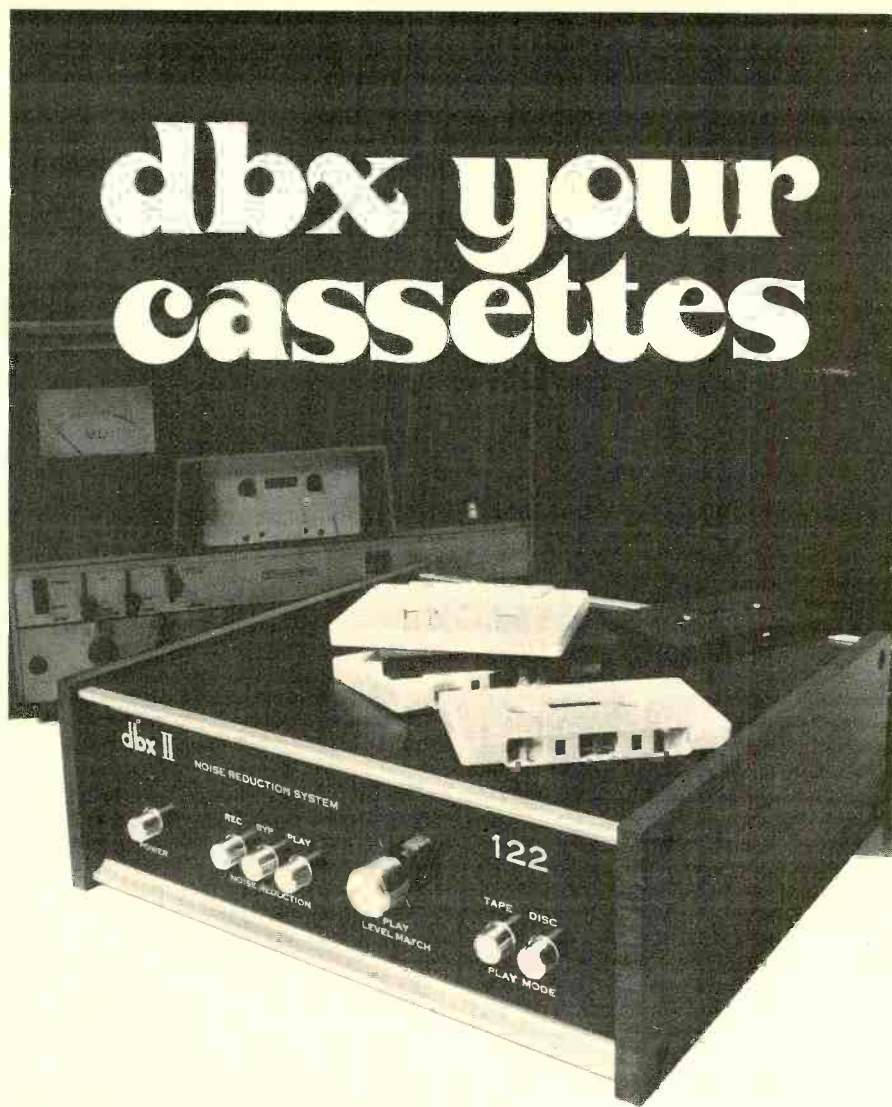
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SCHUBERT: *String Quartet No. 13, in A Minor, Op. 29, No. 1 (D. 804); String Quartet No. 9, in G Minor, Op. Posth. (D. 173).* Alban Berg Quartet. TELEFUNKEN 6.41882 AW \$6.98, © 441882 \$7.98.

Performance: **Quintessentially Viennese**
Recording: **Excellent**

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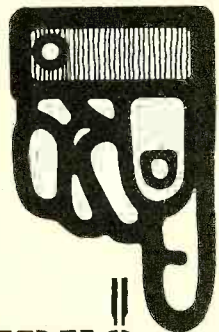
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E.S.

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SCHUMANN: Piano Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44; Piano Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 47. Thomas Rajna (piano); Albern Quartet. CRD 1024 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Fine**

Recording: **Fine**

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SCRIABIN: Piano Sonatas: No. 3, in F-sharp Minor, Op. 23; No. 4, in F-sharp Major, Op. 30; No. 5, in F-sharp Major, Op. 53; No. 9, in F Major, Op. 68. Vladimir Ashkenazy (piano). LONDON CS-6920 \$6.98.

Performance: **Superb**

Recording: **Very good**

As one would expect, Vladimir Ashkenazy has the measure of this music and he brings it to life with plenty of fantasy and excitement, yet he never yields to what must be a strong temptation to let it heave and churn by way of projecting its "ecstatic" (and/or diabolical) content. How expressive, and yet how controlled and elegant his playing is in Nos. 4 and 5 especially! Some very high standards have been set in recordings of this material, not only in the several complete Scriabin cycles (among which I find Ruth Laredo's on Connoisseur Society most fetching), but even more strikingly in individual recordings of some of the respective sonatas. In the inner movements of No. 3, Vladimir Horowitz (RCA Ⓜ LM-2005) shows a rapt quality which Ashkenazy doesn't suggest and may not have aimed for, while the first of Horowitz's two recordings of the so-called "Black Mass" Sonata, No. 9 (RCA Ⓜ LM-6014), is fantastically and uniquely alive, despite its faded sonics. I confess to an even stronger liking for Glenn Gould's expansive and otherworldly version of No. 3 (Columbia MS 7173), one of his most commanding interpretations. These are personal reactions, of course, and I would think Scriabin's sonatas are music one listens to especially subjectively. By any standards, Ashkenazy's approach is extremely sympathetic and his playing itself is superb; in the context of an all-Scriabin package, this realistically recorded disc certainly rates the "special merit" encomium, even if it is not what might be called a clean sweep.

R.F.

STAMITZ: Viola Concerto in D Major (see TELEMANN)

R. STRAUSS: Alpine Symphony, Op. 64. Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta cond. LONDON CS 6981 \$6.98.

Performance: **Atmospheric**

Recording: **Good**

Considering the scoring for augmented orchestra with wind machine, cowbells, organ,



Christian Steiner/London Records

VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY:
*expressive, controlled,
elegant Scriabin sonatas*

count of the Schubert cello quintet (CRD 1018). Now, with another Hungarian colleague, the young English foursome moves into another area populated with formidable predecessors, and this Schumann package too is a very attractive proposition, if less spectacularly successful than the Schubert. Thomas Rajna's name is virtually unknown in this country; he is evidently in his late forties and, from the evidence here, not only a superb pianist but one especially attuned to the Schumann idiom. The collaboration between him and the strings is remarkably complete, with the nervousness and lyricism of Schumann's particular brand of romanticism ideally balanced. The fast movements of both works have not only briskness but a sense of *lift* that does not always make itself so exhilaratingly apparent, while the pacing of the slow movements sustains the air of spontaneity in being resolute without dawdling. The recording itself is well balanced and unfussily realistic. There are some equally distinguished versions of the quintet available, but the CRD version of the quartet strikes me as the most persuasive of all, and, on the whole, I don't think any other current pairing of these two works is quite so pleasing as this new one.

R.F.

and twelve off-stage horns, and given Zubin Mehta's rather brash past recorded performances of some of the Richard Strauss repertoire, one might have expected a real Cecil B. de Mille special in this reading of "a day in the life of a mountain," otherwise known as the *Alpine Symphony*. Except for some really ingenious scoring and fine post-Rosenkavalier-style lyrical writing just before the storm episode, this particular Strauss score is pretty thin stuff. But instead, by avoiding the Cecil B. de Mille manner and choosing to concentrate on lyrical and coloristic elements, Mehta has managed to make much of the music sound better than it is. The London recording team has not attempted to give us room-shattering climaxes but has aimed for a sound of almost Stokowski-Philadelphian richness. The end result may be musically insubstantial, but it is eminently listenable. Unless the 1973 Dresden recording by the late Rudolf Kempe is released in this country, it's not too likely that this London disc will encounter serious competition in the near future. D.H.

R. STRAUSS: *Don Juan; Tod und Verklärung; Till Eulenspiegel; Also Sprach Zarathustra; Symphonia Domestica; Burger als Edelmann (excerpts); Ein Heldenleben* (see Choosing Sides, page 134)

R. STRAUSS: *Songs* (see Collections—Judith Blegen)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

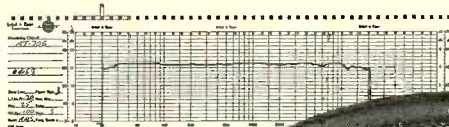
STRAVINSKY: *L'Histoire du Soldat*. John Gielgud, narrator; Tom Courtenay, Soldier; Ron Moody, Devil; Boston Symphony Chamber Players. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2530 609 \$7.98, © 3300 609 \$7.98.

Performance: **Generally distinguished**
Recording: **Excellent**

Has anyone analyzed *L'Histoire du Soldat* as an allegory of Stravinsky's exile? Like the soldier, Stravinsky could not go home again—not without falling into the clutches of . . . well, the devil. This beautifully performed and produced version of that oddly touching, sophisticated, non-folk folk tale has many virtues. Above all, there is superb playing by the Boston musicians. Perhaps the cutting edge that one used to associate with this music—and its earlier performances and recordings—is gone. But that is an inevitability of history. Certainly this performance has wit, brightness, and style.

The text is a clever translation of the Ramuz text by Michael Flanders and Kitty Black performed by three English actors (presumably DG has also prepared simultaneous French and German versions for the Continent). The result, for an American listener, is a bit elegant for the folk quality of the story. Gielgud is impossibly aristocratic, and Tom Courtenay is rather stiff and blah as the soldier. However, Ron Moody is a knockout as the devil; this is the fun part, of course, and Moody is the best devil I can recall. Altogether, then, in spite of my reservations about some of the narrative/dramatic end of it, this is a very fine recording of the complete work. E.S.

TELEMANN: *Viola Concerto in G Major*. STAMITZ: *Viola Concerto in D Major*. HANDEL-CASADESUS: *Viola Concerto in B Minor*. WEBER: *Andante e Rondo Ungarese*. (Continued on page 162)



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Pinchas Zukerman (viola); English Chamber Orchestra, Pinchas Zukerman cond. COLUMBIA M33979 \$6.98.

Performance: **Warm**
Recording: **Thick**

However acoustically awkward the viola may be because of the relationship of its proportion to pitch, it is a pleasure to hear it in the hands (and under the chin) of Pinchas Zukerman. Both the Telemann and Stamitz pieces on this disc are well-known little gems. The Weber work brings a delightful vulgarity to the album, and the vastly over-arranged Handel (which is spurious and was probably composed by the ostensible arranger, Henri, not Robert, Casadesu) sticks out like a sore thumb. Mr. Zukerman's sound is warm, his interpretations are straightforward, and he is stylistically idiomatic in the, shall we say, three and a half periods represented on this disc—a virtue not easily come by these days.

S.L.

VANTOURA: La Musique de la Bible Révélée. Psaume 23; Bénédiction Sacerdotale; Psaume 24; Cantique des Cantiques; Psaume 6; Les Lamentations; Psaume 133; Écoute Israël; Psaume 150; Élégie de David; Psaume 122; Psaume 123; Esther; Le Buisson Ardent. Adolphe Attia (tenor); Michel Scherb (baritone); Émile Kaçmann (bass); Martine Geliot (Celtic harp); Raymond Couste (lute); Gérard Perrotin (percussion); Pierre Pollin (trumpet); chorus, Maurice Benhamou cond. HARMONIA MUNDI HMU 989 \$7.98 (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Well-meaning**
Recording: **Echoey**

The cantillation markings that accompany the Old Testament have been a mystery to scholars from time immemorial. To Suzanne Haik Vantoura, however, they are crystal clear; she interprets the entire Hebrew Bible as an immense vocal score. According to the extravagant jacket notes, "After trying out many hypotheses, deductions, and experiments, she discovered the key to that ancient notation, she revealed the significance of the musical signs, and finally revived and transcribed in modern notation the music which was revealed to her following methodical deciphering and irrefutable verification. . . ."

With bated breath this reviewer put the record on his turntable. How remarkable it was that the first sounds that greeted his ears were based on a scale that developed in Europe during the end of the Renaissance. Even more remarkable was the concept of harmony. Triadic sonorities, we are told in histories of Western music, came from England to the Continent during the late fourteenth century and formed the basis of the Burgundian School. Yet here they are in full-blown splendor in the time of King David. And even more miraculous is the sound of a functional harmony—tonic, subdominant, and dominant relationships that Western composers did not conceive until the seventeenth century. Admittedly, this reviewer is not a scholar of ancient Hebrew music and therefore he modestly refers you, gentle listener, to Ms. Vantoura's "extremely dense book" in which she "took the pains to leave no point (historical, technical or musical) in doubt."

S.L.

WAGNER: Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg. Jaro Prohaska (baritone), Hans Sachs; Josef

Greindl (bass), Pogner; Eugen Fuchs (baritone), Beckmesser; Fritz Krenn (bass), Kothner; Maria Müller (soprano), Eva; Max Lorenz (tenor), Walther von Stolzing; Erich Zimmermann (tenor), David; Camilla Kallab (mezzo-soprano), Magdalene; Erich Pina (bass), Night Watchman; others. Bayreuth Festival Orchestra and Chorus, Wilhelm Furtwängler cond. EMI-DA-CAP0 C181 01797/801 five discs \$39.90.

Performance: **Of historical interest**
Recording: **1943 vintage**

The Bayreuth Festival continued in operation throughout World War II, but for the last two seasons (1943 and 1944) its repertoire was restricted to a single work, *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. This set is a souvenir from those dark and dangerous times, a recording of *Die Meistersinger* under Wilhelm Furtwängler.



Deutsche Grammophon

WILHELM FURTWÄNGLER
Conducting on a grand scale

gler, who alternated with Hermann Abendroth in leading those performances. The notes do not disclose how the masters were preserved, and the recording is not entirely complete. Two extended portions are missing: the entire first scene involving Eva, Walther, and Magdalene following the opening chorale, and the touching scene of David's elevation to journeyman, followed by the famous Quintet. Still, there is enough left for ten full sides and a major document to enrich the recorded legacy of Wilhelm Furtwängler, who was indeed a towering Wagnerian.

Without a doubt, Furtwängler is the primary attraction here, and this *Meistersinger* again attests to his unique gift of imbuing an obviously well-rehearsed performance with a sense of spontaneity and even improvisation. The opera gets off with a vigorous, propulsive reading of the Prelude, its contrapuntal strands emerging clearly with surprisingly strong bass definition for the age of the recording. Many will also like Furtwängler's profoundly meditative approach to the Prelude to Act III, but it is a shade too slow for my taste. In all, however, this is conducting on a grand scale, deserving of more enjoyable sound and—this, alas, must be faced—far better singing.

It is a pity that the opening scene involving Eva's first appearance is missing because

(Continued on page 164)

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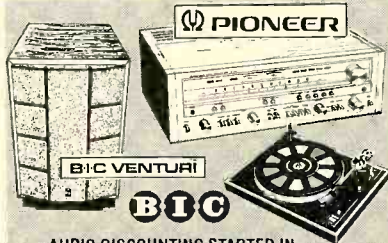
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Maria Müller is simply enchanting in the role. Such an Eva surely deserves something better than the graceless Walther of Max Lorenz. He is a musically singer, to be sure, responsive to Furtwängler's unique plasticity, and he makes several attempts to produce a lyric sound, but his efforts are defeated by the ungainly combination of a beefy tone and aggressive style. Jaro Prohaska is lighter in timbre than the Schorr-Frantz-Schöffler kind of bass-baritone we usually, and properly, associate with the role of Sachs. He too succeeds in meeting Furtwängler's demands in his scenes with Eva and Walther and in a malleable *Fliedermanolog*, but his resources are spent and he has no reserves left for the big scenes of Act III.

Eugen Fuchs (Beckmesser) and Erich Zimmermann (David) are seasoned performers with nondescript voices; Josef Greindl, then at the beginning of his long career, is an expressive and sturdy-voiced Pogner, but the others are just about adequate. The overall sound is good enough considering the age of the recording. There are some annoying audience noises, and, of course, the stage doings also intrude on occasion. At times, though, we get some welcome realistic touches, like the footsteps of the Night Watchman as he passes through, making his rounds. I only wish his singing were more memorable.

I cannot recommend the set as anyone's only *Meistersinger*, but it is an interesting document and in Furtwängler and Müller it does have substantial attractions. G.J.

WARLOCK: *Motets* (see Collections—A Musical Garland of the Seasons)

WEBER: *Andante e Rondo Ungarese* (see TELEMANN)

WOLF: *Songs* (see Collections—Judith Blegen)

COLLECTIONS

JANET BAKER: *An Anthology of English Song*. Vaughan Williams: *The Call*; *Youth and Love*. Ireland: *A Thanksgiving*; *Her Song*. Head: *A Piper*. Gibbs: *This is a sacred city*; *Love is a sickness*. Dunhill: *The Cloths of heaven*; *To the Queen of Heaven*. Warlock: *Balulalow*; *Youth*. Howells: *King David*; *Come sing and dance*. Gurney: *Sleep*; *I will go with my father a-ploughing*. Finzi: *Come away, come away, death*; *It was a lover and his lass*. Janet Baker (contralto); Martin Isepp (piano). SAGA 5213 \$6.98.

Performance: **Sumptuously sung**
 Recording: **Good**

Judging by certain annotated references, this recording dates back to the 1960's. That, of course, matters little, for Janet Baker was already an accomplished artist on her first recordings and I do not recall ever hearing an unsatisfactory performance from her.

She is excellent in this "anthology" of seventeen songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) and his younger contemporaries. The program is sure to please the English song specialist; others may find it too much of one thing, though *The Call* (Vaughan Williams), *Her Song* (Ireland), and *Balulalow* (Warlock) would be outstanding in any league. Miss Baker sings them all with her customary warmth, plush tone, and unaffected artistry, creating a haunting effect. Martin Isepp is an admirable accompanist, but his instrument has a boxy sound on this record.



JUDITH BLEGEN

Charm in almost unreasonable abundance

The notes are helpful, but song texts would have been even better—rare is the song recital where words emerge with total clarity. G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JUDITH BLEGEN: *Songs of Strauss and Wolf*. Wolf: *Nun wandre*, *Maria*; *Schlafendes Jesuskind*; *Die ihr schwebet*; *Ach, des Knaben Augen*; *Zum neuen Jahr*; *Epiphanias*; *Die Spröde*; *Die Bekehrte*; *Verschwiegene Liebe*; *Waldmädchen*. Strauss: *Ich schwebe*; *Heimkehr*; *Schlagende Herzen*; *Einkehr*; *Säusle, liebe Myrte*; *Der Stern*; *Ich wollt ein Straußlein binden*; *Amor*. Judith Blegen (soprano); Martin Katz (piano). RCA ARL1-1571 \$6.98.

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

There is an interesting contrast here: Hugo Wolf, the dedicated and often self-effacing musical servant of poetic texts, and Richard Strauss, who generally regarded poetry as the servant of his music. The sides, however, are unevenly matched in this instance, for some of Wolf's best songs are pitted against some of Strauss' weakest. Musically, then, the program is uneven, but it is also a showcase for soprano Judith Blegen's exceptional gifts, and on that level it makes eminent sense.

Miss Blegen is a major theatrical personality, that deceptively demure and petite appearance of hers notwithstanding. The charm she radiates on stage in an almost unreasonable abundance is generously apparent, without excessive coyness, in Wolf's *Die Spröde* and *Die Bekehrte*. On the other hand, she captures the devotional sincerity of the first three Wolf songs with understated naturalness. Vocally everything is neat and secure, even *Zum neuen Jahr*, with its taxing high tessitura. Only *Verschwiegene Liebe* lacks the body of a more substantial voice to capture its true intensity.

If I enjoyed the Strauss side less, the fault must be mine. *Heimkehr* is a soaringly beautiful song, and *Ich schwebe* and *Der Stern*, though not first-rate Strauss, surely deserve to be heard. The six Brentano songs of Op. 68 (of which we are treated to three) seem to be favorites of many high sopranos, and Judith Blegen sings them as well as anyone around, including *Amor*, a downright silly song, with every pointless curlicue neatly in place. The disc is an impressive testimony to her art, and

(Continued on page 166)

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it is mightily enhanced by a lovely picture of Miss Blegen on the cover and a smaller one on the back, right under Philip L. Miller's excellent notes. Martin Katz also demonstrates here why he is one of the most sought-after accompanists around. Sound and balances are ideal. G.J.

MONSERRAT CABALLÉ: *Music of Spain, Zarzuela Arias* (see Best of the Month, page 88)

ENRICO CARUSO: *Aria Recital* (see Going on Record, page 60, and Audio News, page 30)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT
A MUSICAL GARLAND OF THE SEASONS.
Herrmann: *The Fantasticks; For the Fallen.*

Delius: *A Late Lark.* Gillian Humphreys (soprano); Meriel Dickinson (contralto); John Amis (tenor); Michael Rippon (bass); Thames Chamber Choir; National Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Herrmann cond. **Warlock:** *Motets.* Stephen Hicks (organ); Thames Chamber Choir, Louis Halsey cond. **UNICORN RHS 340 \$7.98** (from HNH Distributors Ltd., P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Excellent**
 Recording: **First-rate**

The title "Musical Garland" and the colorful jacket illustration suggest something festive, but nearly all the music in this collection is more or less sweetly elegiac and the liner notes identify the release as a memorial tribute to Bernard Herrmann, who died last

Christmas Eve after taping his last film score. *For the Fallen*, the sole item here without voices, is explicitly elegiac, a memorial piece written at the end of World War II. *The Fantasticks*, written several years earlier, has nothing to do with the recent cabaret revue; instead, it is the title of a collection of poems by Nicolas Breton (1545-1626), from which Herrmann took verses about the months January through May and set them, respectively, for bass, alto, tenor, soprano, and chorus, all with orchestra. The work is quite at home with those of Delius and Warlock, for Herrmann's style seems utterly English, his treatment of the strings in particular recalling Britten's. *A Late Lark* is Delius' setting for tenor and orchestra of a melancholy poem by William Ernest Henley. Evidently at this point Unicorn used up all the Herrmann tapes it had and had to complete the disc with other material. The first two of Warlock's four motets—settings of John Webster's *All the Flowers of the Spring* (1623) and the old English *Corpus Christi Carole*—are sung *a cappella*; the organ enters tentatively in the setting of Hilaire Belloc's *Carillon*. *Carilla* and asserts itself in the church-hymn treatment of the medieval verse *What Cheer? Good Cheer!* Altogether, this is a lovely package; all the performances, both with and without Herrmann's participation, are eloquently accomplished, making the strongest case for these little-known works. The recording itself is first-rate, the pressings are exemplary, and full texts are printed on the liner. R.F.

CLAS PEHRSSON: *Recorder Recital. Tele-*
männ: *Concerto in F Major for Recorder and Strings; Concerto in B Minor for Two Recorders and Strings.* A. Scarlatti: *Concerto in A Minor for Recorder and Strings.* **Heinichen:** *Concerto for Four Recorders and Strings.* **Boismortier:** *Concerto in D Minor for Five Recorders Without Bass.* Clas Pehrsson (recorder); Musica Dolce; Drottingholm Baroque Ensemble. **Bis LP-8** (from HNH Distributors, P.O. Box 222, Evanston, Ill. 60204).

Performance: **Elegant**
 Recording: **Exquisite**

Here are two Swedish Baroque ensembles to be on the lookout for: the Musica Dolce, a group of five recorder players; and the Drottingholm Baroque Ensemble, a group of five string players from the Royal Opera in Stockholm. On this captivating record we hear them separately and together as they present us with a group of handsome concertos that feature the brilliant artistry of Clas Pehrsson. Playing authentic Baroque instruments at old pitch (a half-step lower than today's norm), the group produces a beautiful amber tone that is immediately striking. They use no vibrato and make extensive use of the detailed articulation so dear to the Baroque. Many groups do play exactly this way today, but few afford the vivacity and sparkle produced by this ensemble. On top of this, Mr. Pehrsson is a first-class technician, a superb musician, and a master of intricate but tasteful ornamentation.

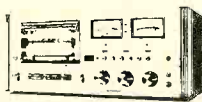
Then too, all of the music is first-rate, offers a wide range of sonorities, and does not fit into the usual Baroque clichés of formula. This record, then, is an eye (or ear) opener; let us hope we will hear more from Sweden. S.L.

MARGARET PRICE: *Mozart Arias* (see Best of the Month, page 89)

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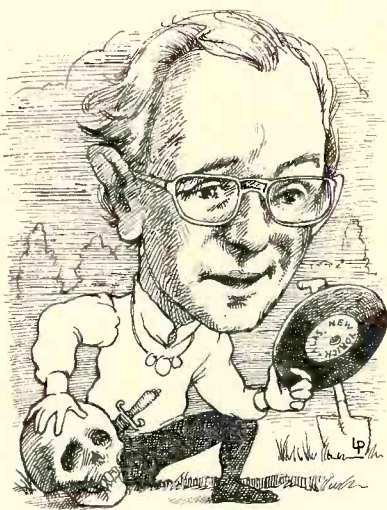
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Editor

William Anderson

I AGREE with Hamlet: "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will." Given enough hindsight in life, it is easy to see that all the big decisions we once thought we'd arrived at through the exercise of athletic wit and stern moral fortitude were only small details in a foreordained design we may admire but never control. A design in point is the one that has placed me in this catbird seat known as the Editor's Chair, situated at what I am pleased to refer to as the Crossroads of the American Record Industry. Looking back, it is clear that the shape of this particular end was there from the beginning.

First, I had the good fortune to be born into what would now probably be called "a musical family," though it was common enough then. We were five children, and my father, who had a good singing voice and an often wicked humor, taught us to sing by rote a repertoire of Swedish folk songs whose burdens, judging from the reactions of the "relation" for whom these parlor tricks were performed, were not always of a strictly pastoral simplicity. My mother sang too, was our self-taught

accompanist on banjo, ukulele, and piano, and introduced us to quite another tradition—such songs as *Juanita*, *Love's Old Sweet Song*, *Santa Lucia*, and *O Susanna*.

I grew up in Minneapolis at a time when the excellent public school system thought nothing of teaching youngsters to read music as early as the fourth grade. This never fails to astonish sophisticated New Yorkers and others who have never been so lucky, but it very likely had its roots in the fact that Minnesota's first settlers were largely of German and Scandinavian origin, and both peoples had strong traditions of congregational singing they expected their children to keep up in the new world. In any case, the net result for me was that I taught myself to play the piano and have since sung in whatever choir, glee club, chorus, or madrigal group would have me.

In grade school we were regularly hauled off in buses to hear the Minneapolis Symphony (then under conductor Eugene Ormandy, and almost always playing, it seemed, Dvořák's *New World*), but it was not until Elmer Drage's high-school physics lecture on the nature of sound (illustrated in part by a recording of *Finlandia*) that I discovered classical music with, so to speak, a bang.

It was also at about this time that my advisor Edith Gillies persuaded me to join the reportorial staff of the school newspaper; I quickly became hooked on printer's ink and have been a slave to its heady perfume ever since. The school was named in honor of the Wizard of Menlo Park, so the paper was quite naturally called—are you ready for Destiny?—the *Edison Record*.

ALTHOUGH the war at first seemed destined to interrupt my education, the Army decreed otherwise: after basic training I accepted (big decision) their offer to return to school in something called the ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) for an electrical engineering course at the State University of Iowa. This quasi-military sojourn was in turn interrupted by the Battle of the Bulge, and school was out. Rather than see the best minds of the Seventh Corps Area shipped overseas as mere cannon fodder, the commanding general (bless his foxy heart) engineered the transfer of his students to other service schools. I chose the Army Air Corps, and after a year or so in radio, electronics, and radar tech schools found myself mothering a blind-landing radar system on an airstrip in Tacloban, Leyte, the very Philippine island on which General MacArthur had only a short time before redeemed his famous pledge "I shall return." Eighteen months of perfect landing weather later I was back in school (humanities major) at Columbia College in New York.

After graduation, I plunged into the New York publishing world, working successively for magazines in the sugar, petroleum, chemical engineering, and electronics industries. Then, musical, electronic, and publishing backgrounds all well ripened, the grand design was completed by my move fourteen short years ago to STEREO REVIEW. Quite enough to teach us a little respect for Destiny, right?

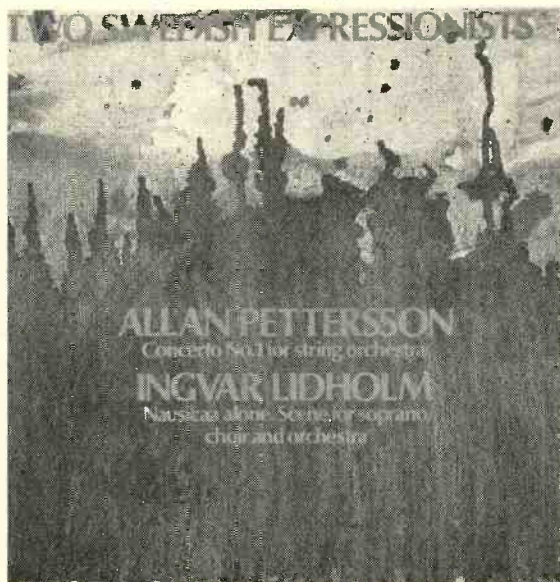
—William Anderson

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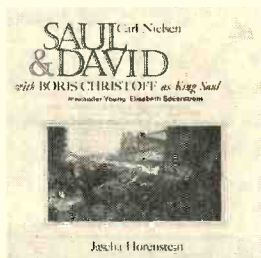
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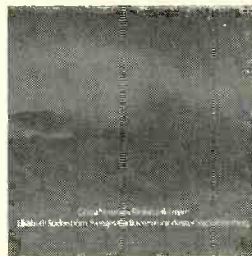
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"Or if you use the mic feature, like in a live recording, and you're playing your string guitar and you want that nice ring you hear in recordings. You just put the tone controls in the four kiloHertz position and run the treble control up and you've got it."



"It's just one of the most versatile preamps in the world. Not only does it include a full-process Dolby** Noise Reduction System, but also the tone controls can be used for tape equalizing."

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"They call it a staggered finger heat dissipator. It was originally developed for the computer industry where they really have heat problems. What it does is break up the air flow. It's aero-dynamically designed to eliminate stratification and create vortices."

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"It's got gain controls — two of them. Meter range switches with the advantage of not being part of the limiting circuit. And peak/overload indicators that are really sensitive to the fluctuations of line voltage!"



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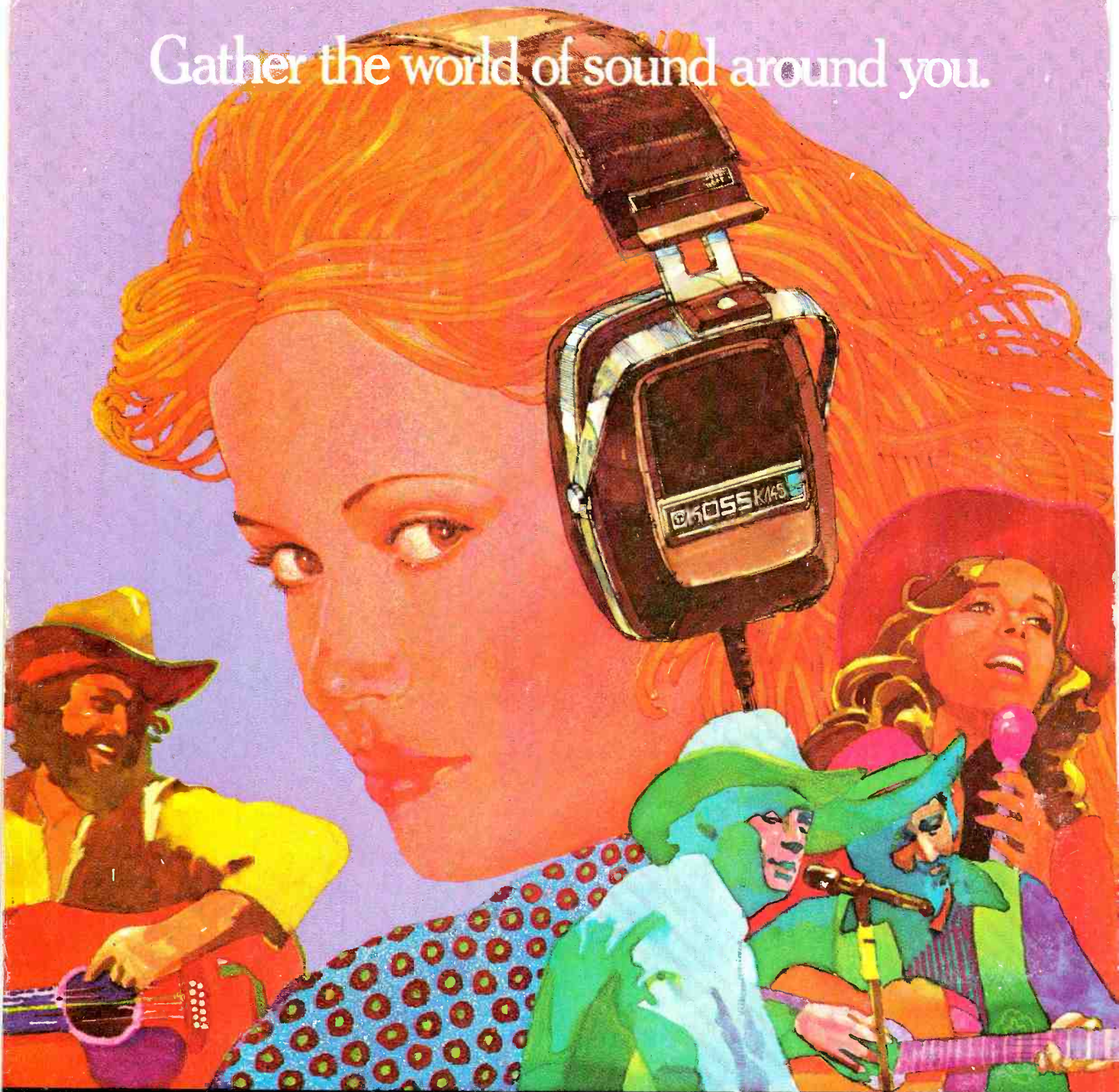
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