

NOVEMBER 1981 • \$1.25

Stereo Review®

WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN TURNTABLE SHOPPING

The case for **MULTIPLE MIKING**

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS

- Concord CMC 100 Phono Cartridge
- Design Acoustics DA-30 Speaker System
- JVC DD-9 Cassette Deck
- Rotel RT-1010 AM/FM Stereo Tuner
- Sherwood S-9200CP Stereo Receiver

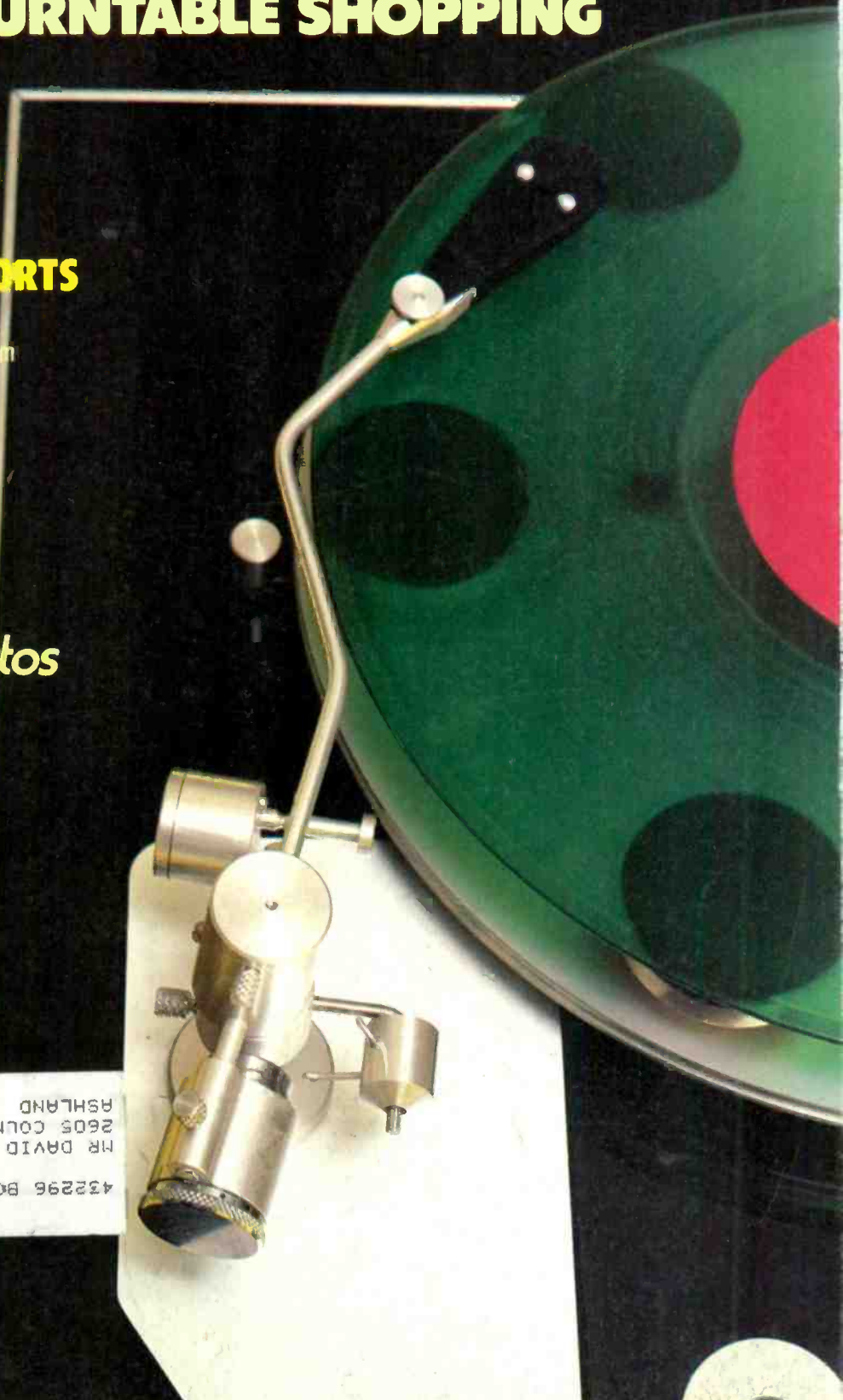
INTERVIEW

William Finn and *March of the Falsettos*

DISC SPECIALS

Rolling Stones • Carly Simon
Pat Benatar • Roberto Carlos

Bartók Piano Music
Very Early Mozart
Michelangeli's Brahms and Schubert
A New Bartered Bride



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And to give the CT-9R an incredible signal-to-noise ratio with extended high frequency response, Pioneer's engineers developed RIB-BON SENDUST tape heads with laminations 4 to 5 times thinner than conventional Sendust heads. And only Pioneer has them. Our new Quartz Synthesized F-9 Tuner has a Multipath Indicator that goes so far as to tell you when a signal is being reflected off nearby objects or buildings. So you can adjust

your antenna for the best reception. It can also memorize six of your favorite FM and six AM stations and retrieve them instantly. And to make sure every one always sounds its best, our engineers combined two of our exclusive ID MOSFET transistors in a Push-Pull Front End circuit. When you tune in a weak station there's no worry about stronger stations causing distortion

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due to front end overload. And Quartz-PLL Synthesized tuning makes drift impossible.

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views the entire band and eight FM and eight AM Memory Presets recall the stations you prefer instantly. What's more, Pioneer's patented Non-Switching amp does away with one of the most troublesome and audible forms of distortion—the noise generated when output transistors switch on and off thousands of times a second.

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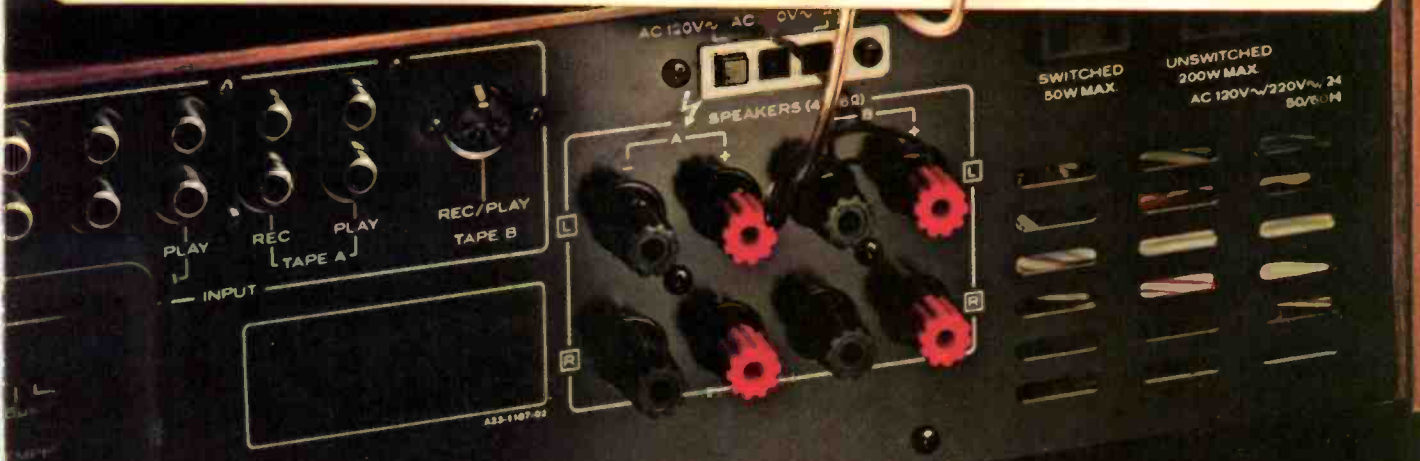
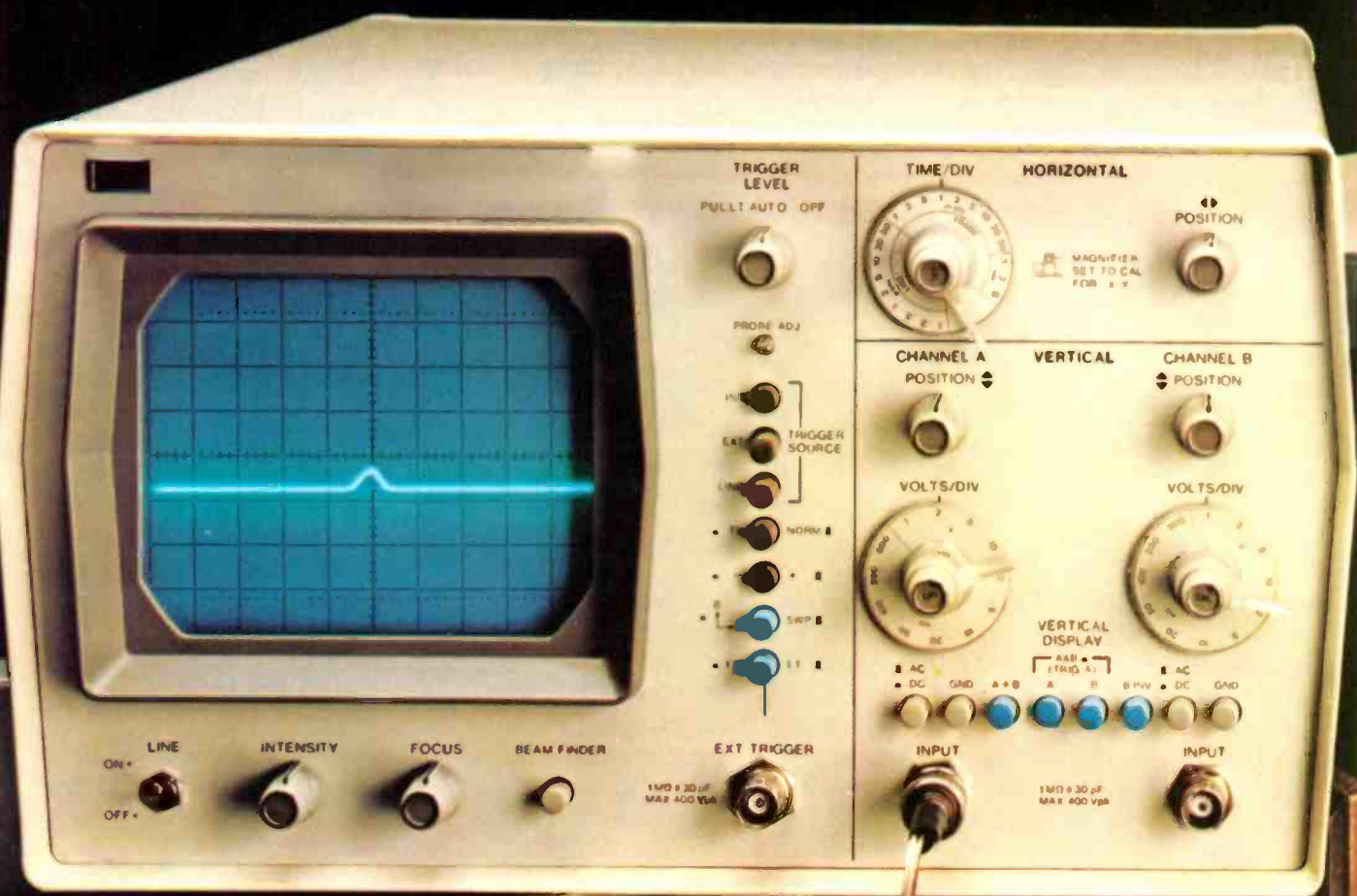
And all this is just the beginning. While the Pioneer concept of human engineering makes our components a pleasure to live with, Pioneer's innovative electronics and technology make them a pleasure to listen to. If you'd like to hear more, visit your nearby Pioneer dealer. You'll see and hear why Pioneer components are #1 with humans who care about music.

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Stereo Review®

NOVEMBER 1981 • VOLUME 46 • NUMBER 11

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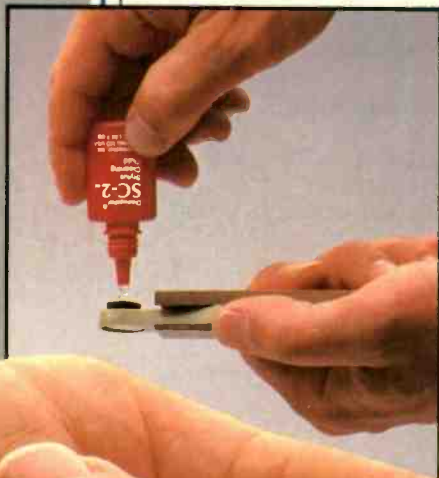
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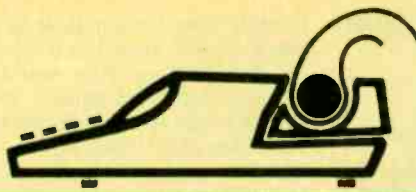


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CIRCLE NO. 22 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Edited by William Livingstone

- **DIGITAL AUDIO** is brought closer by Sony's sixteen-bit digital-to-analog converter integrated on one chip. The total harmonic distortion and noise produced by the unit are said to be less than 0.002 per cent at full output. Also from Sony, a sixteen-bit analog-to-digital converter will be useful in home digital recording. The company will make these two chips available to all licensees of the Sony Compact Disc digital-audio system, along with the error-correcting and decoding ICs and the scanning laser diode needed for the CD system. A company spokesman says that the price at introduction in late 1982 should be between \$500 and \$750, but by 1990, when production is expected to reach 10 million units per year, it should drop to between \$200 and \$250.
- **SUPERSTAR FLUTIST JEAN-PIERRE RAMPAL** has just signed an exclusive contract with CBS Masterworks. His work has previously appeared on the Erato label in France and on RCA and Angel as well as on CBS in the United States. Other exclusive CBS artists include composer Philip Glass, conductors Andrew Davis and Michael Tilson Thomas, the New York Philharmonic, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, guitarist John Williams, and pianists Glenn Gould and Murray Perahia.
- **AWARDS:** Recordings singled out for the Franz Liszt International Grand Prix awarded in Budapest on October 22, the composer's birthday, include a disc of Liszt's organ music performed by Hans Fagius on Bis 170 and a recital of piano music played by Oxana Yablonskaya on Connoisseur Society cassette 4037. ...John Denver has received the first RCA Records Premier Artist Award for the album "John Denver's Greatest Hits," which has sold more than ten million copies worldwide. It is the first time in RCA's eighty-year history that an artist has reached this sales level with a single album...Northwood Institute and the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Theatre Arts have presented the Achievement in the Arts Award to the Broadway conductor and composer Lehman Engel.
- **RCA IS IMPORTING NEW ERATO ALBUMS** from France beginning with releases in September and October. These include works by Brahms, Chopin, Mozart, and Purcell, as well as first recordings of the operas Ercole Amante by Cavalli, Pénélope by Fauré, and Dardanus by Rameau. RCA introduced the Erato line in the U.S. with a release of imported recordings by such artists as Maurice André (trumpet), Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute), and conductor Jean-François Paillard in January 1974. Since then occasional Erato recordings have been issued here in domestic pressings. By January 1982, RCA expects to have eighty-five Erato catalog items in its warehouses and to release a minimum of eighteen others next year. All will be in imported French pressings.
- **GIVE THE GIFT OF MUSIC FOR CHRISTMAS!** In addition to the Christmas albums mentioned here last month, there will be new ones by Slim Whitman and Mickey Gilley (separately) on Epic, and John Schneider will have "White Christmas" on Scotti Bros. Records. John Williams and the Boston Pops will follow their big hit "Pops on Broadway" with "We Wish You a Merry Christmas," a digital recording on Philips. On Deutsche Grammophon there will be "Music for the Joyous Season" by the brasses of the Berlin Philharmonic and an album of fourteen Advent and Christmas cantatas by Bach conducted by Karl Richter with such soloists as Edith Mathis, Peter Schreier, and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. All are nominally October releases and should be in stores this month so that you can start your shopping early.
- **A NEW "ELVIS PRESLEY'S GREATEST HITS"** series begins with Volume 1, released by RCA in October. The series includes some previously unreleased alternate takes or live versions of Presley hits. Meanwhile, RCA International in England has released what may be the ultimate Presley album--one on which Presley himself does not appear. Titled "The Elvis Connection" (INTS 5078), it collects tributes, novelty tunes, and original versions of songs Presley later recorded.

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



NAME THAT TUNE

An enterprising researcher doing a study of mental acuity among the elderly recently unearthed an interesting piece of information: those who regularly tune in to TV game shows are markedly more spry in their intellectuals than those who do not. Though it may occur to the suspicious mind that the study must have been underwritten by some far from disinterested TV producer, it does have a ring of reasonableness, confirming that ancient bit of folk wisdom that says *rest leads to rust*.

Professional curiosity rather than concern with fading faculties leads me to monitor at least one of these game shows from time to time, and I can recommend it, for those who think they need one, as a very chastening experience. *Name That Tune* is precisely what it sounds like, and it's very hard to do. I have nothing but admiration for contestants who can not only recognize an impres-

sively broad catalog of popular tunes given only a brief snatch of melody, but can yank the silly titles out of their memories in a trice right there before the unblinking eye of the TV camera. Although the split-second responses do demonstrate an impressive degree of mental alertness, it seems to me that a special gift is involved as well. I don't have it. Oh, I can deal well enough with such mnemonic hacks as Mendelssohn's *Italian*, Schubert's *Unfinished*, or Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, but there are Brahms symphonies, Chopin preludes, and Strauss waltzes without end that I cannot, to my shame, give either name or number to though I've heard them a hundred times or more. The same goes for popular music. I can hum, whistle, even sing (wordlessly) yards of the stuff, but the memory bank containing the music seems to be on the far side of town from that containing the titles.

I suspect that I'm not alone in this, otherwise I wouldn't receive so much mail asking for the name of radio and TV musical themes, broadcast-station switchboards wouldn't light up all the time with calls asking "What did you just play?"—and *Name That Tune* wouldn't be giving away \$100,000 prizes for the fastest ears in the West.

I think it is just possible too that these open circuits at the synapses are keeping some people from hearing the music they want to hear—if you don't know the title, how can you ask for it? CBS Masterworks producer R. Peter Munves evidently thought so too, and he has put together the "Theme Finder," a two-disc audio catalog (M2X 36929) containing the signature themes of 222 standard classical works starting with the Grand March from *Aida* and ending with the overture to Hérold's *Zampa*. (You say you never heard of it? Maybe not, but I bet you'll recognize the tune.) All the listings are available on the CBS label, since one of the reasons for releasing the set is to persuade record retailers to keep this "basic repertoire," the backbone of the classical market, in stock (100 of the titles, interestingly enough, are included in STEREO REVIEW's own yearly Basic Repertoire listing—see page 116).

The catalog should inspire some classical listeners to fill a few holes in their disc libraries, and others (once they have mastered the whole thing in the privacy of their listening rooms) will enjoy using it to challenge their friends. (When you do, be kind.) I would hate to think, however, that some lazy academic will use it to turn his music appreciation course into *Name That Tune*. This is not, after all, *music*, any more than a reading list is literature. It is a tool for finding out where the music is, an unconventionally arranged (mostly alphabetical by composer) thematic index as blameless as one to the concertos of Vivaldi—and a good deal more interesting. □

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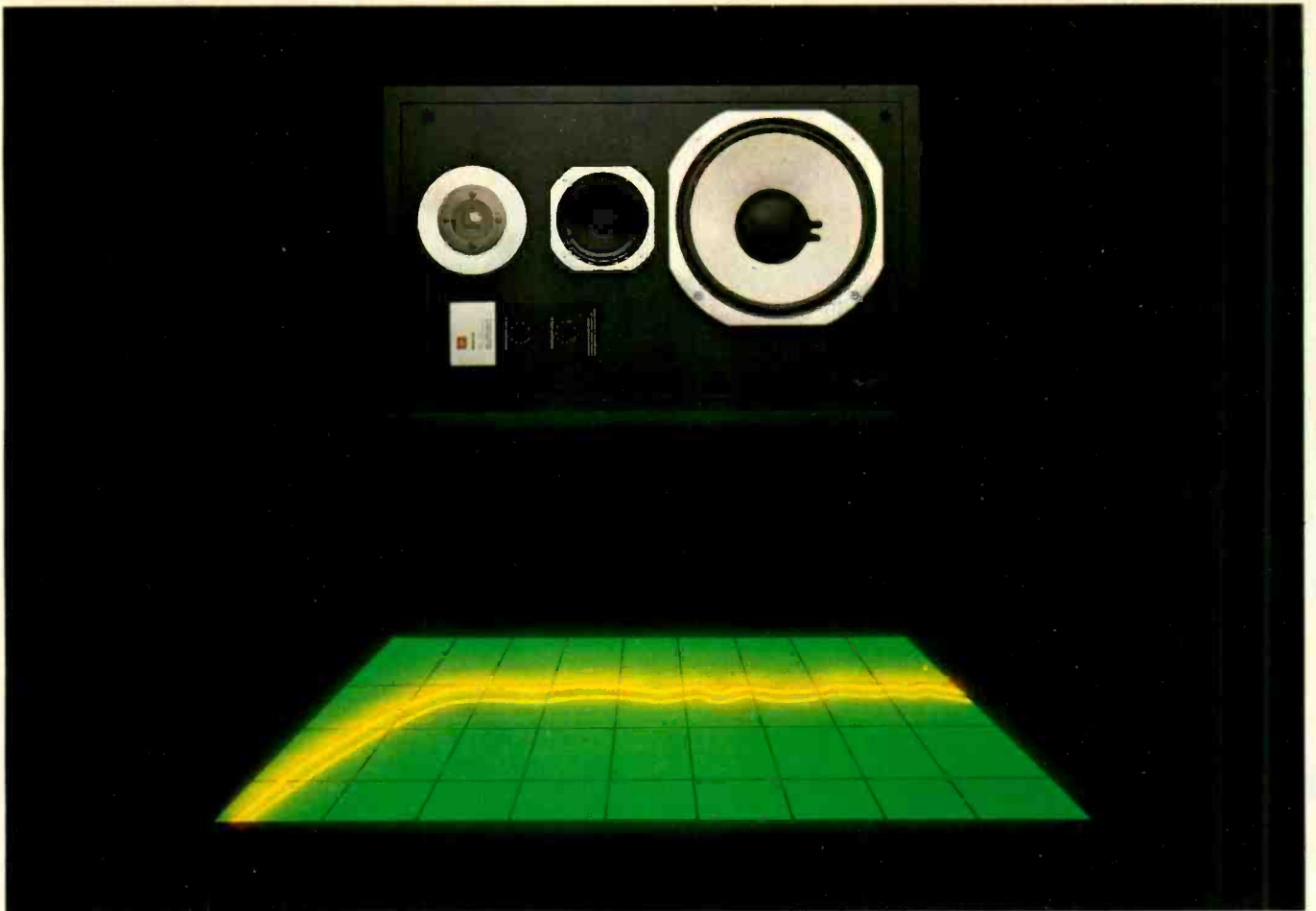
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Larry Klein, Technical Director of Stereo Review: "... it brings the listener substantially closer to that elusive sonic illusion of being in the presence of a live performance."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ivo Pogorelich

● Thank you for James Goodfriend's perceptive review of the "mystical" pianist Ivo Pogorelich (September). Out-of-the-ordinary pianists do appear from time to time with their own crosses to bear, gospels to teach, or whatever, but their unusual approach is almost always covering up some inherent technical or musical problem that they can't solve. Fortunately, the judges of the 1980 Chopin Competition were not completely blinded by Pogorelich's imposing "platform," for his is a polished artistry based on undisciplined foundations and improper grooming.

Despite the "clean performances and beautiful phrases" that Mr. Goodfriend found in Pogorelich's Deutsche Grammophon recording, I find him to be quite inhibited technically. His tone is monochromatic, and there is an overall tightness of execution in most of his lines, with none of the relaxed sense of yielding that turns Chopin into "Chopin" for most of us. This is due to an improper approach and inadequate knowledge. And he doesn't really listen to himself—if he did, we wouldn't get the schizoid effect of a few beautifully turned phrases thrown in at random with some musically flat playing. Five minutes into the B-flat Minor Sonata and I felt that I had heard all Pogorelich was capable of doing. This is not a "new way to Chopin," as some people are putting it, but a glorified put-on that's hardly worth \$9.98.

JORGE MENTICE
Gainesville, Ga.

accumulate the purchase price of \$8.99. A few months later I was able to save enough to get Leontyne Price's *Aida* (RCA LSC-6158) at another "50 per cent off list" sale. Today, the best price I can find for these same albums is \$20.97—an increase of 233 per cent!

PAUL M. ROSE
San Francisco, Calif.

The Editor replies: As far as I know, the record industry strangely has not used my argument in their "propaganda," so I am shameless. It is, of course, quite impossible to make price comparisons between records on any basis other than list prices because selling prices vary so widely with both time and geography from full list (where the traffic will bear it) to less than cost (record dealers use the "loss-leader" gimmick almost as a selling principle). Reader Rose's 1961 coup in picking up the three-disc RCA Aida at "50 per cent off list" was clearly an instance of the second kind, and it is a little . . . um . . . disingenuous to compare a stroke of good luck twenty years ago with the market reality of today. It may be that such pecuniary imperspicuity has a great deal to do with the uproar over prices these days.

There are two Leontyne Price Aidas now in the catalog: the first (with Jon Vickers), originally on RCA LSC-6158, is now on London reissue 1393; the second (with Placido Domingo) is RCA LSC-6198, reviewed here in August 1971 at a price of \$17.94. If reader Rose can get either of them for only \$20.97, in the latter case only a 17 per cent increase in ten years, it's obviously a good buy.

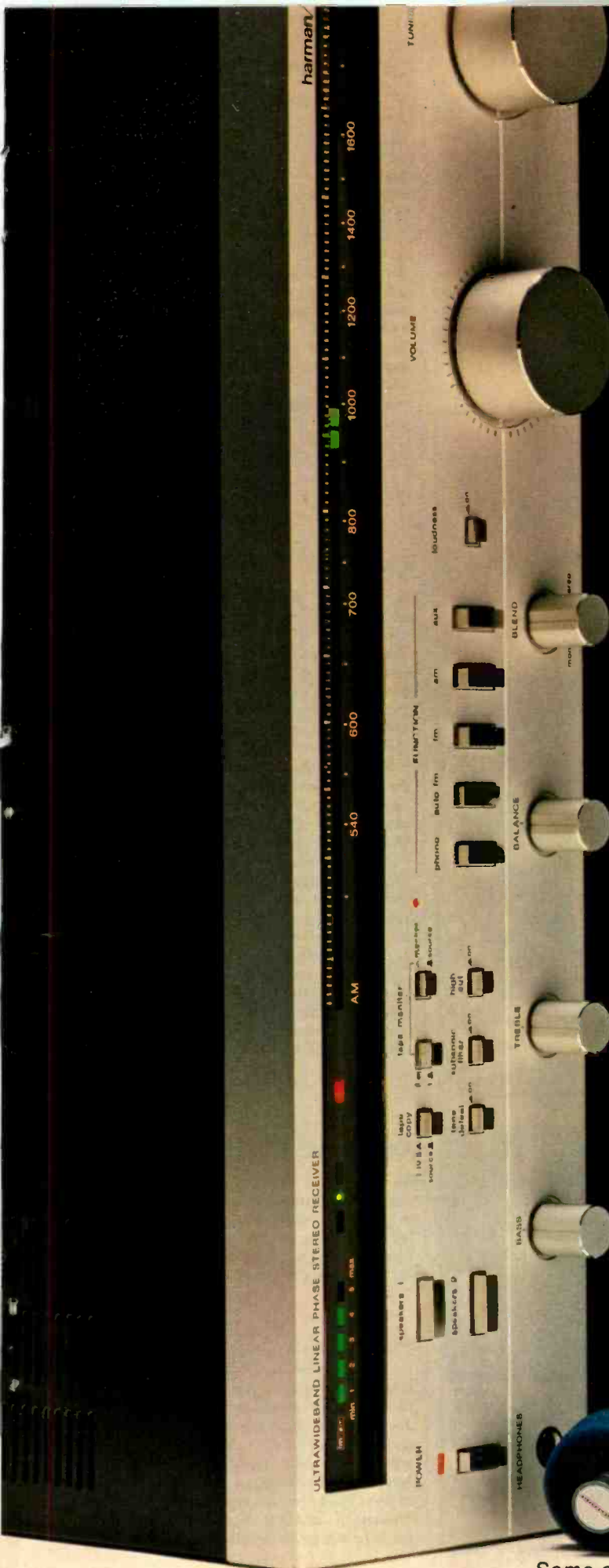
Records and Inflation

● Shame on Editor William Anderson for his unquestioning acceptance of industry propaganda that the price of records has increased only 43 per cent in the last twenty years (September "Letters"). This misinformation is based on the false notion that a "suggested list price" had any meaning back then or has any now. I bought my first full-length opera, Joan Sutherland's recording of *Lucia* (London OSA 1327), as a teenager in the fall of 1961. I can remember saving my dimes and quarters for weeks to

Car Stereo

● Not being into auto sound in any big way, I normally pass over material on car-stereo equipment with little more than a brief glance. However, Ivan Berger's new column managed to get my attention and hold it. So far, it appears to be devoted either to single topics or to the introduction of new gear. This is something I've missed in previous writing on the subject. "Installing

(Continued on page 10)



When a \$400 FM receiver gives you 1.9uV FM sensitivity and .4 dB capture ratio with a frequency response of 30-15,000 Hz \pm 1 dB, it's well worth the price.

When you get the same phenomenal performance and sound quality from a 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce FM receiver priced at \$120, you know there's genius at work.

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 Call 800-854-2003 ext. 851,
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PROTON 100
 Expect to be astonished.



Some of us must have the very finest. Or nothing.

It Yourself" in August was short enough to be easily grasped and remembered, yet sufficiently exhaustive about basic problems and options to be a handy reference. I look forward to future columns on such topics as fighting poltergeist resonances in car doors, choices in quick-removal equipment mounts, and antenna positioning. You see, I have this ancient Volvo . . .

CHRISTOPHER M. GREENLEAF
Brooklyn Heights, N.Y.

experts doing the listening tests was a woman. What a shame to be so compulsive in presenting the sonic material objectively when selection of the human participants was so clearly biased. Audio perception varies greatly between the sexes, and yet STEREO REVIEW apparently feels that only men can be called on for expert testing.

MICHAEL G. MANDEL
Santa Monica, Calif.

The Editor replies: No bias was operating, but perhaps it should have been, for women are reputed to be more sensitive to high frequencies than men, which would make their responses atypical for our readers, 95 per cent of whom are male.

Bette Davis Ears

● As I read the August feature on \$100 speakers, I noted that not one of the eight

Soundcraftsmen . . .

presents the SP4002, World's Most Versatile Stereo Component. On one Beautiful Chassis is the Ultimate Octave Equalizer; plus an Incredibly Flexible Preamp-Control Center.



THE EQUALIZER:

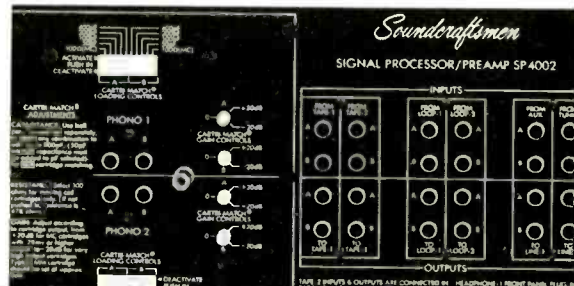
- Dual 10-band $\pm 22/16$ dB per Octave
- Zero-gain/LED balancing to 0.1dB
- Frequency Analyzer Test Record
- EQ-Memory with Computone Charts
- Zero-detent Slide Potentiometers
- 19" Rack-mount Brushed Aluminum Black and Silver Panel, Walnut Side Panels

THE EQUALIZER is identical to Soundcraftsmen's model RP2215, considered by experts to be the FINEST GRAPHIC OCTAVE-EQUALIZER available. It uses costly WIRE-WOUND INDUCTORS instead of conventional IC's in each of its octave filters, in combination with Soundcraftsmen's PATENT-PENDING DIFFERENTIAL-COMPARATOR circuit, to provide precise 0.1dB ACCURACY and exceptional gain (OVER 32dB), with almost unmeasurable distortion and an unheard-of 114dB signal-to-noise ratio! Here is THE ONLY EQUALIZER that gives you total control with no unwanted side effects.

THE PREAMPLIFIER:

- Adjustable Cartridge Loading, 50 to 800 pf.
- Selectable 47K/100 Ohm Phono Impedance
- Adjustable Phono Levels, ± 20 dB Range
- Front Panel Tape Inputs and Outputs
- FOUR Mono Phono Preamps-(2 stereo)
- Two Amplified Headphone Outputs
- Inputs for Most Moving Coil Cartridges
- Phono Preamps Signal-to-Noise - 97dB
- Three-Way Tape Dubbing
- Two External Processing Loops
- Sub-Sonic Filtering - 15Hz
- 32-stepped Precision Level Control

THE PREAMPLIFIER's flexibility with its PUSH-BUTTON PATCHING capabilities are endless. The preamp was designed for those audiophiles who take a "HANDS-ON" approach to their equipment. For the Tape enthusiast, it is capable of handling up to three encoders with THREE-WAY dubbing control. Along with this are TWO SIGNAL PROCESSOR LOOPS for added accessories, a Sub-Sonic filter and Stereo/Mono mode switching. Our unique CARTRI-MATCH phono-preamp design allows the use of two moving-coil cartridges without head amplifiers and ADJUSTABLE CARTRIDGE LOADING on both phono 1 and phono 2 from 50 to 800 picofarads. An OUTSTANDING VALUE at only \$699.00. Other Soundcraftsmen preamps start at ONLY \$399.00.



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Includes TEST REPORTS, complete specifications, Class "H" amplifier ENGINEERING REPORT, EQ COMPARISON CHART, and the "WHY'S & HOW'S" of equalization—an easy-to-understand explanation of the relationship of acoustics to your environment. Also contains many unique IDEAS on "How the Soundcraftsmen Equalizer can measurably enhance your listening pleasures"; "How typical room problems can be eliminated by Equalization"; and a 10-POINT "DO-IT-YOURSELF" EQ evaluation checklist so you can FIND OUT FOR YOURSELF WHAT EQ CAN DO FOR YOU!

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CIRCLE NO. 55 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Outgrowing Rock

● Editor William Anderson's comments in August's editorial, "Geriatric Rock," were right on the money. I am over thirty and my tastes in music have changed: increasingly I find myself turned off by the blandness and stupidity of rock. I now listen to many other things, classical music for instance.

The closing comment ("no, jazz is not coming back") irked me, however. I can't get enough of jazz! When I listen to Benny Carter, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, and Earl Hines, not to mention the greatness of Duke Ellington, I begin to wonder; hearing songs recorded thirty to forty years ago I begin to appreciate music, not just one boring egocentric type of sound (rock). I am moving on, leaving behind the things of youth—but I still get a kick out of going to Grateful Dead concerts and telling younger people what it was like back in, say, 1967.

ROGER WARNER
Portland, Ore.

Delius

● Howard Wayne's September letter about Delius needs some correction and clarification. Delius' Jacksonville, Florida, tract was originally called "Solana Grove" after Matthew Solana, who owned the land before the Civil War, and this spelling of the place now called "Solano Grove" was used at least until 1912 when Delius sold the property.

Since Delius only began to learn the rudiments of harmony in Jacksonville in 1884-1885, from one Thomas Ward, it is inaccurate to say that he wrote "most of his 'American' music" there. Just a few sketches for some early part songs and the Piano Concerto were done in Solana Grove, and no music was composed during Delius' second brief stay for a few months during his 1897 business trip.

The Philadelphia branch of the Delius Society will celebrate the composer's one hundred twentieth anniversary in 1982 with meetings and concerts. Details may be had from the Membership Chairman, 5249 Oleander Road, Drexel Hill, Pa. 19026.

WILLIAM W. MARSH JR.
Newton, Pa.

Kool Jazz Festival

● The July "Bulletin" included an item about the Newport Jazz Festival being renamed the Kool Jazz Festival—New York. Is this to be its identification from now on? What address should I write in order to get next year's schedule, participants, etc.?

WAYNE P. SAGE
Bossier City, La.

The festival will continue to be known by the new name (until further notice, at least), and requests for information about future events should be addressed to Kool Jazz Festival, P.O. Box 1169, Ansonia Station, New York, N.Y. 10023. George Wein, producer of the festival during its years in Newport, Rhode Island, and since its move to New York, retains the right to the name "Newport Jazz Festival" and may use it for jazz events he produces anywhere.

Improve your video image

Does what looked good on two-hour look not-so-good on six? Or what looked great on your original videotape end up hard-to-look-at when you dub a copy? Maybe the picture's a little soft; or smeary; lacks contrast; or the color's a little off. You may not even be sure what it is — it's just not up to snuff.

But you live with it. Because six-hour is more economical and more convenient than two-hour. Because a mediocre copy is better than no copy at all.

All the same, wouldn't it be nice if you could somehow improve the quality?

At Vidicraft, improving video quality is our business. Our video processing components are to video what graphic equalizers and metal tape are to audio. They help you get the most out of your system.

Take the Detailer II image enhancer, for instance. By amplifying high frequency picture information, the Detailer II can actually increase apparent resolution. Translated, that means improved sharpness and greater picture detail. A crisper, more lifelike image. Better dubs. Better original recordings. Even better playback of programs you already own.

Basic features include individual controls for detail and sharpness, plus Vidicraft's exclusive VNX™ control for enhancement noise reduction. For convenience, we've also included three switchable inputs and a four-output distribution amplifier — for interconnecting multiple VCRs, as well as other video components. And for making multiple copies.

The Proc Amp is another example. It gives you the ability -electronically- to regulate chroma level and phase, and overall luminance level. This means you can correct color saturation and hue for greater color accuracy. And adjust overall video signal level for optimum contrast and brightness. Not simply upon playback - where it may be too late - but in making the recording itself.

That's not to mention some of the small things you can do with our Proc Amp. Like eliminate color all together - to rid a black and white program of color fringing, for example. Or create fade outs and fade ins - to make nice, smooth, professional looking transitions.

Features include center-detent controls, a luminance level meter, and a four-output distribution amplifier.

A bypass feature is also provided - both on the Proc Amp and Detailer II - to give you instant picture-before and picture-after comparisons. So you can accurately judge the results.

Even a small touch like that can be an important consideration in getting the best image.

For a close look at what we mean, visit your Vidicraft dealer. Where you can see our complete line of video components. For the location nearest you, dial toll free: 1-800-547-1491.



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SA-X. HIGH BIAS IS RICHER FOR IT.

The greatest honor a cassette can receive is to be held in higher esteem than the one now setting the high bias standard. SA-X has already gone beyond SA in frequency response, sensitivity, and resolution. It was intended to. With its ultra refined dual layer of Super Avilyn and the Laboratory Standard Mechanism, nothing less was possible. TDK believes sound reproduction should have no set barrier. No limit. For us, high bias was a limit to be surpassed. SA-X has won three international audio awards to date. It will no doubt win others. But we take awards philosophically. They represent our continuing effort to create the machine for your machine. In that, we could not be happier with SA-X.

 **TDK**
The Machine For Your Machine

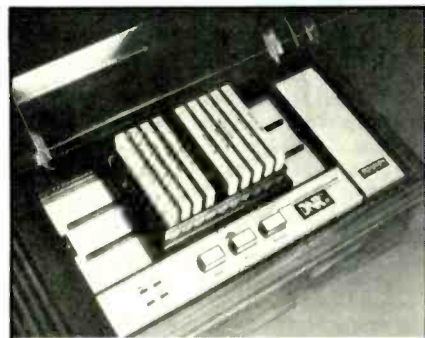




**Three-way SIARE
Speaker System**

□ The SIARE Delta 400 speaker is a three-way, vented, phase-aligned system utilizing a 9-inch long-exursion woofer, a cresolfomaldehyde-coated fiberglass mid-range driver, and a polyamide-dome tweeter. Frequency response is given as 45 to 25,000 Hz ± 2 dB. Power-handling capacity is 100 watts rms; system impedance is 8 ohms. Crossover frequencies are 500 and 4,000 Hz, and crossover slopes are 12 dB per octave. Finish is hand-rubbed oiled walnut. Dimensions are 30 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches; weight is 66 pounds. Price: \$400. SIARE Corp., Dept. SR, 80 13th Avenue, Ronkonkoma, N.Y. 11779.

Circle 120 on reader service card

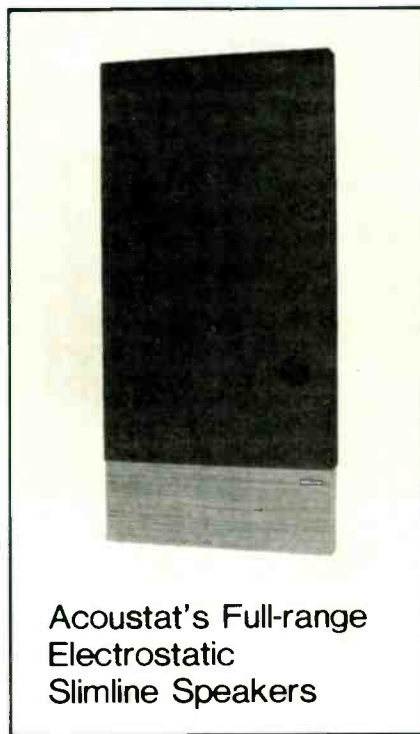


**Noise Reduction
In New Benjamin
Cassette Changer**

□ Benjamin Electroproducts' RAC10 MK II DNR cassette changer incorporates the Dynamic Noise Reduction system developed by National Semiconductor for single-ended noise reduction (without signal encoding). The DNR system reduces hiss and noise by varying the audio bandwidth as a function of the high-frequency content of the input signal. As the program's sound

level increases, it masks hiss and noise, so when the program's high-frequency content is high enough to mask background noise totally, the DNR system expands to full bandwidth (30,000 Hz). Frequency response is 25 to 14,000 Hz ± 3 dB. Wow and flutter is 0.3 per cent; signal-to-noise ratio is greater than 50 dB, and DNR increases this to 60 dB. Size is 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10 x 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; weight is 22 pounds. The RAC-10 MK II DNR can change up to ten cassettes. Price: \$900. Benjamin Electroproducts, Inc., Dept. SR, 180 Miller Place, Hicksville, N.Y. 11801.

Circle 121 on reader service card



**Acoustat's Full-range
Electrostatic
Slimline Speakers**

□ The Acoustat Slimline Series Models Two, Three (shown), and Four all utilize full-range electrostatic panels. Each speaker contains two, three, or four panels, respectively, angled for best horizontal dispersion. The drive system for the speakers includes two transformers overlapping in frequency coverage and permitting the use of most 50- to 100-watt amplifiers. Specifications for the Model Three include a frequency response of 30 to 20,000 Hz ± 2 dB and a nominal impedance of 4 ohms. The unit will produce a 110-dB sound-pressure level on program-material peaks in an 18 x 14 x 22-foot room. The drive system runs off 120 volts a.c., 50/60 Hz, and consumes 5 watts of power. Dimensions are 59 x 28 x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches; weight is 75 pounds. Price: Model Three, \$1,595 per pair. Acoustat Corp., Dept. SR, 3101 Southwest First Terrace, Fort Lauderdale, Fla. 33311.

Circle 122 on reader service card



**Grace's First
Moving-coil Cartridge**

□ The F-11L is the first moving-coil cartridge from Grace to be released by Sumiko in the U.S. It has a cantilever made of an ultra-thin boron alloy with an effective moving mass of less than 0.3 milligram. An "Advanced Luminal Trace" stylus traces out a playback path said to be almost identical to that of a cutting stylus. Cartridge output is given as 0.75 millivolt, impedance as 23 ohms. Compliance is rated at 20 $\times 10^{-6}$ centimeters per dyne. Channel balance is specified to be better than 0.5 dB. Overall cartridge weight is 8.6 grams. Price: \$595. Sumiko, Dept. SR, P.O. Box 5046, Berkeley, Calif. 94705.

Circle 123 on reader service card



**BRB Systems
Amplifier Has
High Slew Rate**

□ The BRB Model 200 Reference Amplifier operates in "quasi-Class A" mode and is rated at 100 watts per channel into 8-ohm loads and 200 watts per channel into 4 ohms. Utilizing ring-emitter transistors for output devices, the amp also uses a dynamic-biasing network to maintain the output devices in their linear regions. No gain stage in the Model 200 is permitted to be driven into slew-rate limiting, and the slew-rate specification for the amplifier is 250 volts per microsecond.

Other specifications include a frequency response of 10 to 100,000 Hz ± 0.5 dB, a dynamic-power capability of 150 watts into

THE DL-300 SERIES



DL-300 This may well be one of the most significant cartridges in Denon's history, because it brings the price of Denon Moving Coils under \$100. Yet, it offers all of Denon's significant moving coil technological developments; such as a two piece cantilever and dual-damping rings for optimum resonance control, and no pole pieces for lower mass and more efficient manufacturing.
(Shown with stylus guard removed)



DL-301 To control resonances, the cantilever fulcrum of all Denon MC cartridges is independent of the damping rings. The DL-301 uses two damping rings, each optimized for its portion of the frequency range.

In addition a special magnetic structure eliminates pole pieces, reducing both weight and cost for the best sonic value in MC cartridges.
(Shown with stylus guard)



DL-303 The first of the DL-300 Series, the DL-303 has repeatedly been judged "best of its class." It features Denon's cross-shaped coil and dual cantilever design and a special tensioning device that maintains ultra-high performance for extended periods.

DENON

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what we'll
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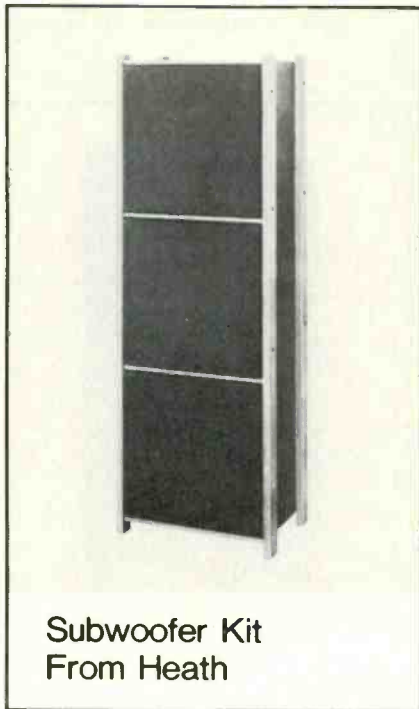
CIRCLE NO. 19 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories

8 ohms, damping factor greater than 250 from 20 to 20,000 Hz with 8-ohm loads, signal-to-noise ratio of greater than 100 dB below rated output, and input sensitivity of 1 volt for full-power output. Price: \$899 (\$909 east of Denver). BRB Systems, Dept. SR, P.O. Box 2235, Sunnyvale, Calif. 94087.

Circle 124 on reader service card



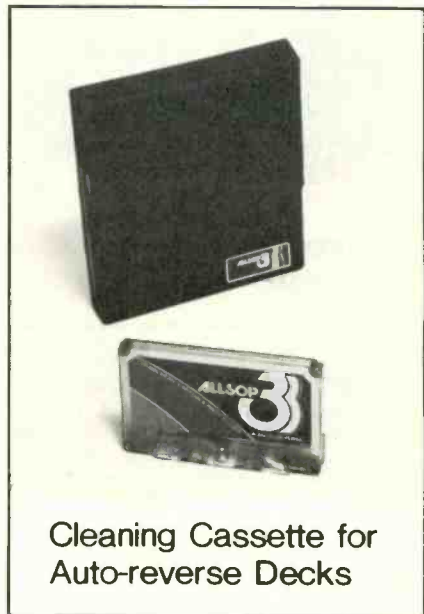
Subwoofer Kit
From Heath

□ The new Heath AS-1320 subwoofer is intended primarily to supplement small speaker systems, but it is said to be able also to enhance the bass response even of systems with 10- or 12-inch woofers. It features an 8-ohm, 15-inch long-throw driver with a 2-inch, four-layer voice coil in a ported cabinet measuring 64½ x 21½ x 17 inches. The 6-inch tuned vent is loaded into the floor for better response, and the driver is also mounted near the floor so that the first boundary cancellation is above the subwoofer's frequency limits (15 to 750 Hz). The unit's frequency response is given as 22 to 500 Hz ± 3 dB.

The AS-1320 requires an amplifier with at least 30 watts output capability to insure adequate listening levels without clipping, and it must be used with either the ASA-1320-1 passive crossover or AD-1702 electronic crossover (the latter requires a separate amplifier for the subwoofer). The cabinet of the AS-1320 is finished in black with walnut-stained solid-ash accent rails. A removable panel allows for future expansion into a full-range system. The kit can be put together in an evening. Prices: AS-1320,

\$299.95; ASA-1320-1, \$44.95; AD-1702, \$194.95.

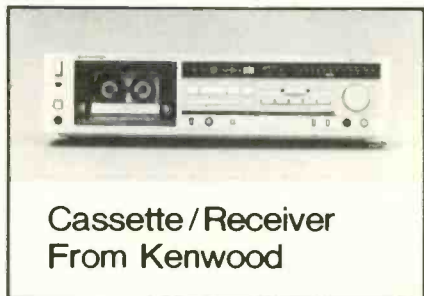
Circle 125 on reader service card



Cleaning Cassette for
Auto-reverse Decks

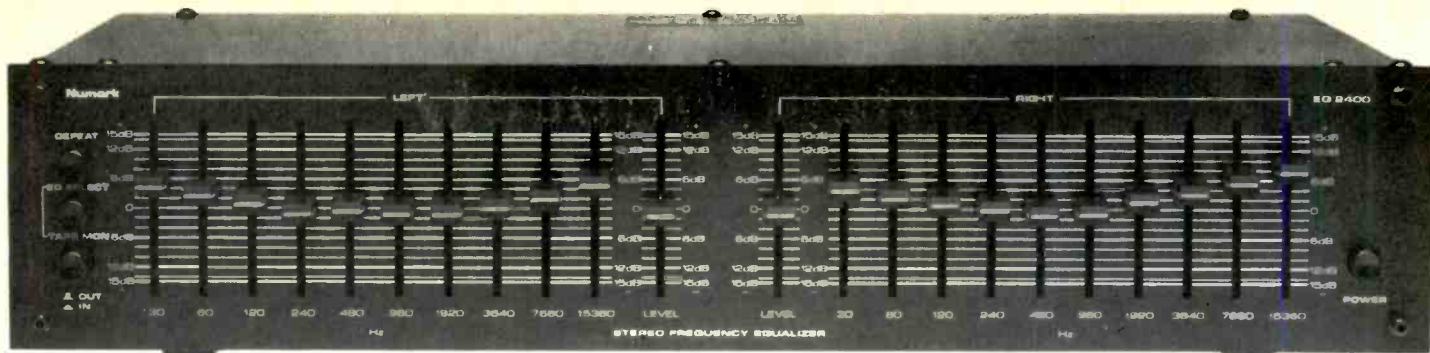
□ The Allsop 3 Ultraline cassette-deck cleaner comes with dual cleaning pads to clean the separate capstans and pinch-rollers on auto-reverse cassette decks. When used with non-auto-reverse decks, the dual pads are said to last twice as long as those in single-pad cleaners. Allsop 3 is a wet cleaning system. When the cleaning cassette is inserted into a deck like a standard cassette, a virgin-wool felt pad attached to a cam cleans the heads while the other pads clean the capstan(s) and pinch-roller(s). The Ultraline cleaning kit comes with replacement pads, a bottle of Allsop 3 cleaning solution (containing isopropyl alcohol and Freon TF), and a storage case. Price: \$14.95.

Circle 126 on reader service card



Cassette / Receiver
From Kenwood

□ Kenwood's KRX-5 casceiver combines the functions of amplifier, tuner, and tape deck in a single 17¼ x 4½ x 14½-inch com-
(Continued on page 16)



Make It Live

We guarantee a 30 to 50% improvement in your stereo system sound, or your money back. Plus it's on sale for only \$129.

It's like day and night. Crashing cymbals, clean tight bass, more trumpets or more vocal; you're in complete command.

This professional 10 band stereo equalizer is on sale due to a very large cash purchase by DAK from Numark, the professional studio disco people.

CAN YOUR STEREO SOUND BETTER?

Incredibly better. Equalizers are very different from bass and treble controls.

Bass controls turn up the entire low end, making the sound muddy and heavy, but with an equalizer, you simply pick the control that sounds best to you.

You can boost the sound at 30hz, 60hz, 120hz, or 240hz to improve specific areas of the bass. And best of all when you boost bass you don't disturb the mid-range frequencies and make your favorite singer sound like he has a sore throat.

The high frequencies really determine the clarity of your stereo sound. When you turn up the treble control, you get a boost of the entire high end: voice, tape hiss, cymbals and distortion.

With an equalizer, you can cut tape hiss at about 8000hz, but still boost the cymbals and overall clarity of the sound by boosting the 15,360hz control. You can also boost or cut specific frequency areas to add or subtract vocal, trumpets, etc.

WE TESTED

First, we hooked the equalizer up to our president's stereo, (about \$20,000) and experimented with the equalizer and compared it with several already in the system. No difference in quality was heard between the SAE, the ADC and the Numark, they all are great units.

The Numark frequency response is flat from 10hz to 100,000hz and the hum and noise is an incredible -96db, so we determined that the quality was excellent.

THE WORST SPEAKER

The second test. Realizing that not all of you may be insane enough to have \$20,000 stereo systems with professional Altec Lansing Speakers, we selected an awful set of speakers. While they were walnut cased and 3 way, they sounded like a cheap AM radio. They had 12" woofers, a 5" midrange, (from a portable AM radio I think) and a tweeter that appeared not to be connected. Certainly well below any system you may have.

THE RESULTS

For a scientific test, we used a pink noise record and sound pressure meter to see

what exact improvement we could make. First we found that we could forget the 7680hz and 15,360hz controls on the equalizer, they simply didn't have any effect because the speakers just didn't reproduce sound at those levels, even with the full 15db boost of the equalizer.

But wait. When we dropped the mid-range controls at 480hz, 960hz and 1920 down the full 15 db and raised the 15360 by 10db, suddenly we were able to flatten out the sound to about 15,000hz.

Well we did it. To be honest, the speakers really didn't sound all that bad. Not great, but really quite acceptable...In short, even with those rotten speakers, by using the equalizer we improved them to about the \$300 a pair level. Think what you can do with your own speakers.

The truth of the matter is that the better your speakers, the more you will appreciate the improvement of the equalizer.

EASY TO HOOK UP

Use your tape monitor circuit, but don't lose it. Yes, you simply plug the 'tape out' from the receiver or preamp to the 'input' of the Numark and the 'output' on the Numark to the 'tape-in' jack on your receiver or preamp.

Any time you push the tape monitor switch, you will hear the day and night difference in the sound.

YOU STILL HAVE A TAPE MONITOR PLUS MORE

Did you think you lost your tape monitor? Not so -The Numark people designed this unit with a tape monitor switch and tape in and out jacks on the equalizer.

The output from your receiver is fed direct to your tape deck, and with the touch of a button, you can choose flat or equalized signal to your recorder.

With the touch of another button you can choose to listen to your recorder either flat or equalized.

EASY TO USE

Your ears, your head. Simply boost or cut any of the 10 different frequency areas to suit your own taste. You also have master gain or cut controls for each channel so that you can 'O' level or alter right or left total levels.

Nobody but you and your own ears can tell you what is best. The real proof is when you switch in and out the equalizer with the tape monitor switch, you'll wonder how you ever enjoyed your stereo without the equalizer.

THE FACTS

There are 20 slide controls, each capable of boosting or cutting up to 15db from the signal wherever you desire. 10 controls for the left channel and 10 for the right, so you can compensate for one speaker being near a sound absorbing couch or any other environmental problems with your room.

Frequency controls for each channel are at 30hz, 60hz, 120hz, 240hz, 480hz, 960hz, 1920hz, 3840hz, 7680hz and 15,360hz. Each control can add or subtract up to 15db. In addition, the master level controls for each channel can add or subtract up to 15db for total control.

The frequency response is 10hz to 100000hz, harmonic distortion only .01% and shorted hum and noise a low -96db.

You get an equalizer defeat button and two main outputs on the back panel in addition to the tape out. You also get an AC accessory plug and system ground. It's backed by Numark's warranty.

ORDER THE EQUALIZER RISK FREE

Try the Numark professional 10 band equalizer in your own system for 30 days. Prepare for a shock when you turn on this unit. Your system will come alive as it never has before. An equalizer like this professional Numark can increase the quality of your sound 30 to 50%. And that's guaranteed.

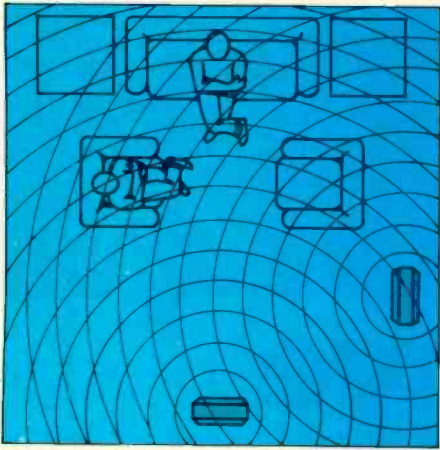
If you aren't 100% satisfied for any reason simply return it in its original box within 30 days for a courteous refund.

To order your new deluxe 10 band Numark full sized EQ2400 risk free with your credit card, simply call the DAK toll free hotline, or send your check for only \$129 (\$6 P&H) Order Number 9182. (CA residents please add 6% sales tax).

Wake up the sound in your stereo. Your ears will be glad you did, and we guarantee the improvement will be dramatic. No matter how good your system sounds now, it will sound 30 to 50% better or we'll give you your money back. And, that's a real guarantee.



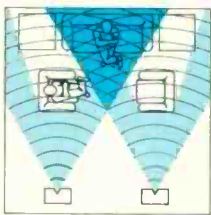
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Other speakers

stereo virtually everywhere. That's because the heart of a BES Speaker is not a cone, but a diaphragm

that vibrates much like a guitar string, projecting sound in every direction simultaneously. You get 360-degree sound. True omnidirectional sound. Sound as close to live as you can get.

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BES SPEAKERS

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CIRCLE NO. 9 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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latest audio equipment and accessories

ponent. The amplifier section has slide controls for volume, bass, and treble; a selection switch for two speaker systems; a loudness switch; and a headphone jack. Output power is given as 30 watts per channel into 8 ohms from 40 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.09 per cent total harmonic distortion. Phono signal-to-noise ratio is 72 dB with a 2.5-millivolt input level.

The AM/FM tuner section uses a phase-locked-loop multiplex decoder and a quadrature FM detector. It has a LED signal-level display, a slide-rule tuning dial with a LED pointer, a muting-defeat/mono switch, and a LED stereo indicator. Usable sensitivity is given as 11.2 dBf, alternate-channel selectivity as 50 dB, and stereo distortion as 0.4 per cent at 1,000 Hz. The metal-compatible cassette deck has feather-touch controls, two motors, Dolby-B noise reduction, timer activation switches, and a microphone jack. Frequency response is 25 to 17,000 Hz with metal tape; signal-to-noise ratio is 65 dB (Dolby-B on, chrome or metal tape). Price: \$499.

Circle 127 on reader service card

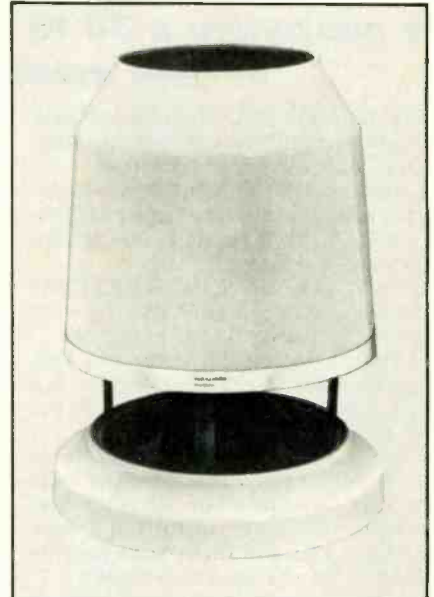


Cizek "SoundWindow"
Satellite System

□ Cizek Audio Systems' Sound Window system features two Sound Window speakers and a specially designed complementary subwoofer. The Sound Windows are suitable for wall or shelf mounting, and each has a 6½-inch air-suspension woofer and a cone tweeter. The subwoofer has a 10-inch active radiator with a dual high-temperature voice coil as well as a 10-inch passive radiator. Included is a full stereo passive crossover allowing the use of the subwoofer

singly or in pairs. The system is available in oak or walnut finishes. Price: \$450. Cizek Audio Systems, Dept. SR, 300 Canal Street, Lawrence, Mass. 01840.

Circle 128 on reader service card



Indoor / Outdoor
Speaker from
Radio Shack

□ Radio Shack's Realistic MC-900 speaker system (catalog number 40-1258) is said to work equally well indoors or out. Recommended for poolside, lawn, or patio use, the MC-900 employs an 8-inch full-range speaker with a whizzer-cone element housed in a weather-resistant polypropylene enclosure. A dual-port design is used for high efficiency and improved bass response. The speaker is mounted to fire downward for omnidirectional dispersion, making placement less critical. Rated impedance is 8 ohms; power-handling capacity is 50 watts. The enclosure is 13 inches in diameter and 17½ inches high. Price: \$69.95.

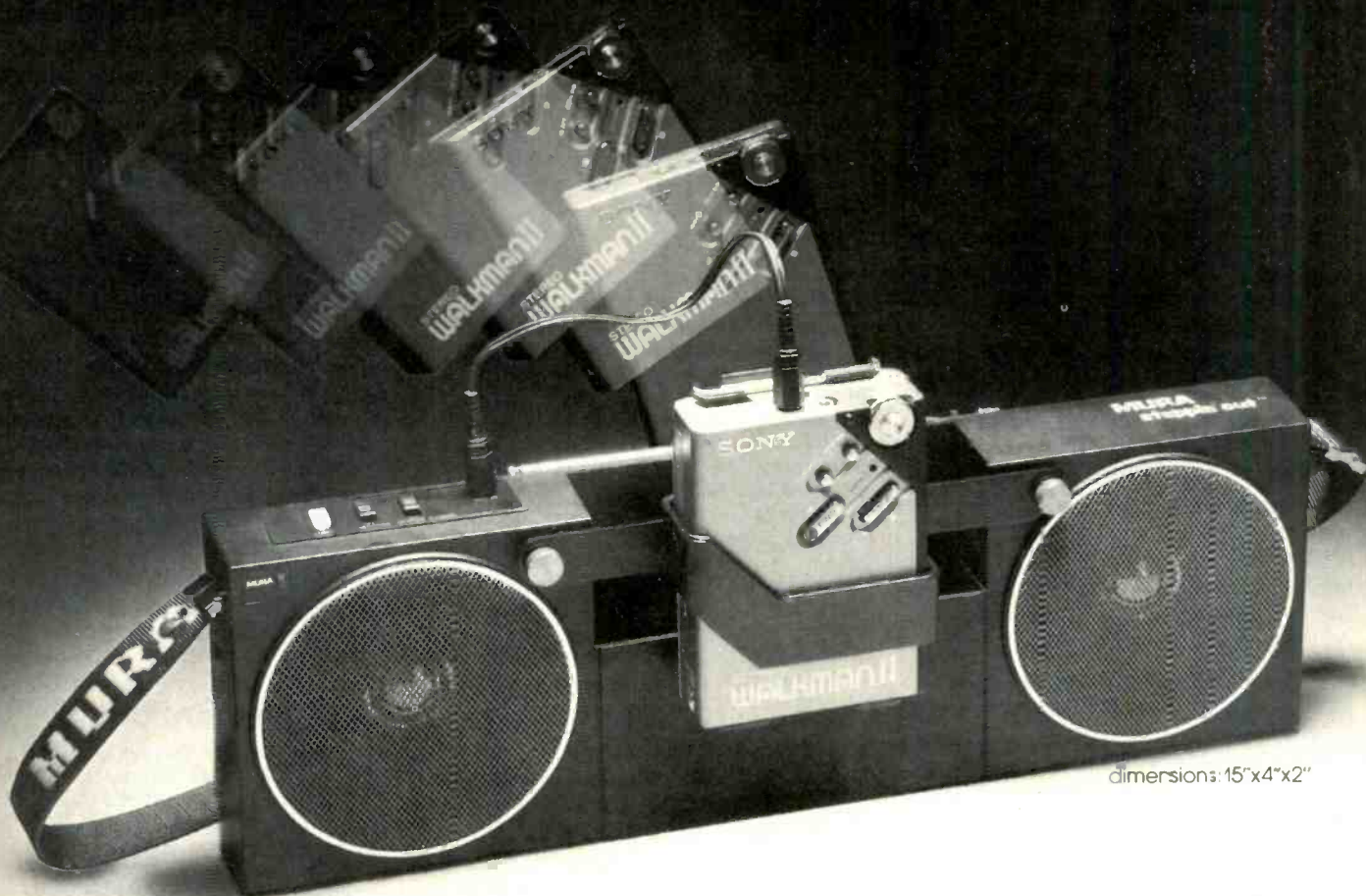
Circle 129 on reader service card

NOTE: All product descriptions and specifications quoted in these columns are based on materials supplied by the manufacturers, who will respond directly to reader requests for further information.

Domestic inflation and fluctuations in the value of the dollar overseas affect the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that prices quoted in this issue are therefore subject to change.

HOW 23 PEOPLE SHARE A WALKMAN.

WITH MURA'S STEPPIN' OUT.™



dimensions: 15"x4"x2"

Sony's, Aiwa's and Mura's mini-portable cassette players and FM radios are great when you go solo. But not so great to share with friends.

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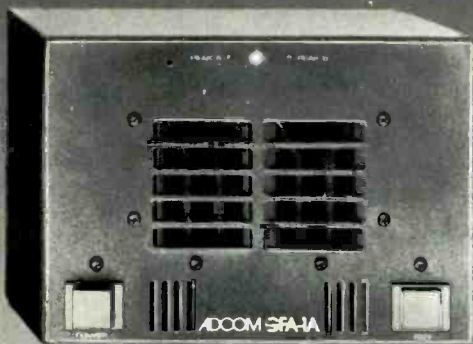
Just plug your Walkman (or any brand) into Mura's Steppin' Out and the sounds step right out. Through two 4 inch center domed speakers driven by a quality stereo amp.

Steppin' Out has a "presence" switch and a "stereo expander" switch which does to sound what 3D does to movies. Steppin' Out is also lightweight and portable. And the price is in step with your budget. Now you have a choice: solo or sharin' with Steppin' Out.

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To be honest, it wasn't easy.

The original Adcom GFA-1 effortlessly delivered 200 watts per channel RMS into 8 ohms with less than 0.05% THD from 20 to 20,000 Hz. It was a prodigious performer. It still is.

Now, with the new Adcom GFA-1A, we've "improved on the unimprovable" by incorporating a mini analog computer in the protective circuitry.

Consequently, the GFA-1A comes as close to "fail-safe" operation as the state of the art permits.

As to price/performance, Stereo Review's assessment of the original GFA-1 more than holds true for the improved version i.e. "One could pay two or three times as much and get no better audible performance."

And while on the subject of price/performance, if you're in the market for a companion preamplifier or if you want to upgrade an existing stereo system, it would be difficult to improve on the new Adcom GFP-1.

To quote Stereo Review once again, "...this (the Adcom GFP-1) is as quiet as any preamplifier we have seen... (and) for all practical purposes, distortionless.... At its modest price, this is one of the better preamplifier values on today's market."

For additional information on how Adcom can help improve your listening pleasure, write: Adcom, 9 Jules Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.



Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein

Designer Bob Carver shows Technical Director Klein that if he listens with both ears he will (sometimes) hear stereo.



Ellen M. Klein

Repair Costs

Q I was recently charged \$55 for repairs on a receiver that cost me about \$300 when new. I find that outrageous. What can be done about it?

CHARLES WINSTON
Boston, Mass.

A Repair costs are high, and the reasons are not difficult to discover. Almost everything electronic one buys today is produced on an automated, mass-production line. However, when we look at the repair and servicing process, we find that it is usually all hand labor—and highly skilled hand labor at that. As a matter of fact, it is not uncommon for a repair on a small electronic device (such as a transistor radio) to take longer than it originally took to build the unit on an efficient assembly line. For that reason it is frequently less expensive to buy a new unit than to have the old one repaired. I really don't know any way of reducing the relatively high cost of repairs when equipment is built by twentieth-century automated technology but is serviced by the equivalent of eighteenth-century handicraft techniques.

Rated-power Bandwidth

Q What is the difference between the rated-power bandwidth and the frequency response of an amplifier? Also, would there be any audible loss in an amplifier rated for 40 Hz to 20 kHz instead of the usual 20 Hz to 20 kHz?

JOHN POTTER
Oakdale, N.Y.

A Rated-power bandwidth was defined as the frequency range (say, 20 to 20,000 Hz) over which an amplifier could stay within -3 dB of its specified output power without going above a specified distortion level. There was a small kicker in such ratings in that -3 dB is the equivalent of a 50 per cent power loss! I say "was" because the power-bandwidth rating has been effectively superseded by the FTC-mandated power-specification style: for example, "50 watts per channel minimum into 8 ohms from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no

more than 0.05 per cent distortion." (Note that it is no longer permissible to define an amplifier's frequency limits as the 3-dB-down points.)

The rated frequency response of an amplifier is usually measured at some low power level that will not stress the frequency limits of the circuit. It is only when an amplifier is pushed close to its maximum power that significant frequency limitation appears.

In respect to your question about the audible significance of a 40-Hz as opposed to a 20-Hz limit on low-frequency response, it is necessary to examine both the program material (there is really very little musical sound below 40 Hz) and the performance of the speakers driven by the amplifier (very few speakers can deliver any substantial energy much below 40 Hz). In short, if an amplifier provides a clean signal down to 40 Hz, you would have difficulty finding program material that could demonstrate its inferiority to one going down to 20 Hz.

FM Decoder Switching

Q I have a Marantz receiver that will take a Dolby FM decoder module that I never bought. I have noticed that if I press the 25- μ sec switch, the high frequencies of the program I'm listening to are enhanced, thus improving the overall frequency response. Why should this be, since there is no decoder in the circuit to be activated by the 25- μ sec switch?

GEORGE C. DIERKENS
Andrews A.F.B., Md.

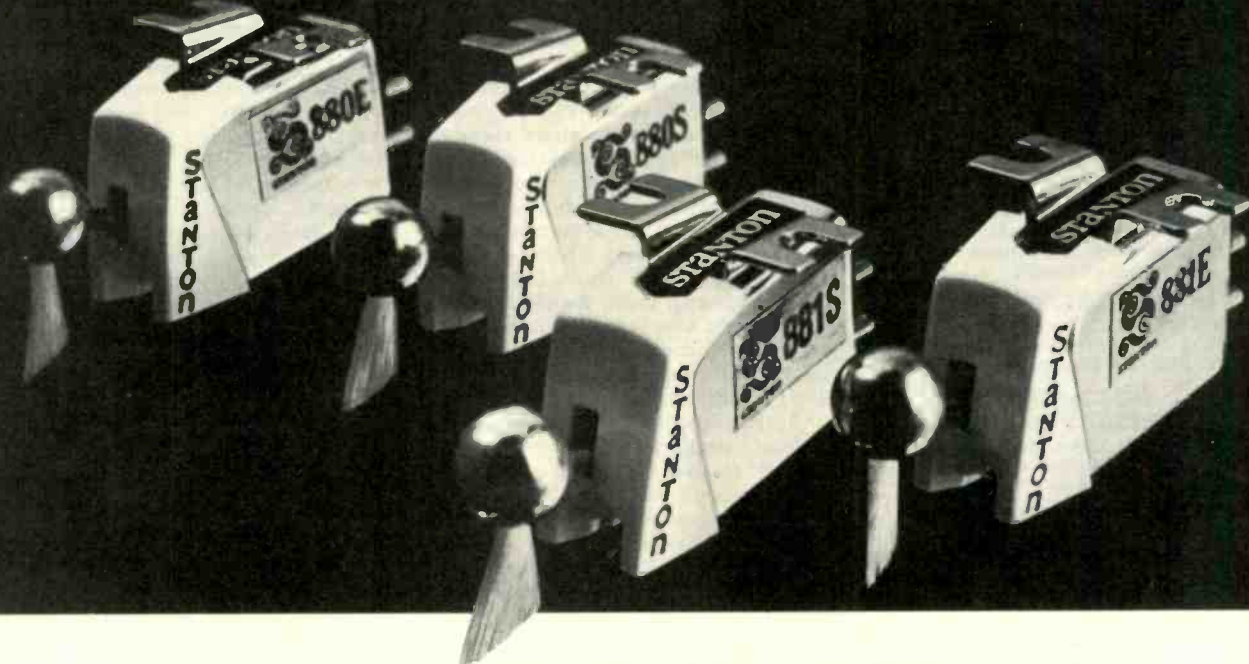
A All FM broadcasts in the U.S. are transmitted with a standard FCC-mandated high-frequency boost (pre-emphasis) that starts at about 1,000 Hz and reaches about +20 dB at 20 kHz. In the tuner, there's a complementary "de-emphasis" network whose purpose is to restore the audio signal to its original "flat" state by applying an equivalent high-frequency cut.

Now, the reason for this pre-emphasis in transmitting and de-emphasis in receiving is to cut back on the high-frequency noise that inevitably intrudes during the broadcast/reception process. (The amount of

(Continued on page 20)



The Professionals



A complete, new line of cartridges built to the exacting standards of professional requirements

The famous Stanton 881S set a new standard in audio performance that quickly won world acclaim among professionals, reviewers and audiophiles alike. In fact, it became a new standard by which the industry measures and still maintains that reputation.

Now built to the same careful standards, Stanton introduces three new cartridges — 881E, 880S and 880E. The 881E includes the calibrated perfection of the 881S but with an elliptical stylus. The 880S and 880E include the famous Stanton Stereohedron stylus or elliptical stylus respectively in applications where calibration is not of prime importance.

All four cartridges use lightweight, super powerful samarium cobalt magnets to produce strong output

signals with extremely low dynamic tip mass. The entire series provides tracking performance equal to or better than cartridges costing far more. In fact, every cartridge in the series performs superbly with the most demanding of current test records.

"The Professionals", a series of four cartridges giving a choice of price and standard requirements, all with the prestige and quality reputation of the Stanton 881S. The cartridge that leads a line used in more professional applications across the world than any cartridge ever made.

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off mfg. suggested list... special catalog features hundreds of titles and artists.

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boost and cut is described technically as "75 microseconds" after the electrical characteristics of the circuits that achieve them.)

This FM pre-emphasis/de-emphasis scheme works, but not wondrously well. The major problem is that the large high-frequency audio pre-emphasis boost can cause overload of the transmitter when the musical program has a large amount of high-frequency energy. There are two solutions to the overload problem: a reduction in the overall audio modulation or a reduction of just the high frequencies fed to the transmitter. Most FM broadcasters take the second option since they believe that a loud, heavily modulated signal attracts listeners while a high-frequency rolloff is either not noticed or accepted as normal.

Several years ago, Dolby sought (with the FCC's permission) to rectify the situation by making available to broadcasters the means to reduce the high-frequency audio pre-emphasis (from 75 to 25 μ sec) when broadcasting Dolby-B-encoded material. The thinking was that the broadcasters could thus transmit a reasonably noise-free signal with a normal high-frequency level without fear of over-modulation. For a number of technical, economic, and psychological reasons, the Dolby FM technique never achieved the success that was hoped for. Hi-fi tuner manufacturers therefore chose to hedge their bets by installing a switch that changed the tuner's de-emphasis (at the cost of only a slide switch and a couple of resistors) rather than building in the Dolby FM decoding circuits at a substantial extra expense. One could then use either an external Dolby decoder (perhaps one built into a cassette deck) or buy the plug-in Dolby decoder module later when (and if) an increase in the number of Dolbyized broadcasts justified it.

All this explains why there is a de-emphasis modification switch on Mr. Dierkens' receiver (and other units), even though it has no Dolby decoder. In regard to the "enhancement of the highs" that occurs with the switch in the 25- μ sec position: there will be a greater proportion of highs heard if the material has been broadcast with a 75- μ sec boost and played through a tuner with only a 25- μ sec de-emphasis cut. Whether the highs are really "enhanced" or simply unnaturally bright depends on many variables, including the quality of the broadcast signal and the high-frequency performance of the listener's tuner, speakers, and ears.

Question Reruns

Q Sometimes there is a notice at the end of your column stating that only questions selected for use will be answered. How do you select questions for use?

NEIL LARSON
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

A I'm glad you asked the question. The Qs that may or may not produce an A in this column fall into several different categories:

There are a number of regularly occurring questions that require an annual answer for new readers and those who were not paying attention the last time (as a matter of fact, you are reading one of them

right now!). One type of question regularly finding its way to our "in" box (if not this column) asks about some new hi-fi technology featured in a product advertisement. I usually have no ready answer, because in many cases only time will reveal whether the new approach is a true breakthrough, merely an alternate way of doing something, or a very sophisticated solution to a nonexistent problem. (If readers sometimes have difficulty determining whether a given product represents the bluebird of hi-fi happiness or merely some manufacturer's technical wild-goose chase, so do we.)

Questions of the "Which is best?" variety never get column space. In general we confine remarks on product quality to our test reports. It would be manifestly unfair, given the market clout of STEREO REVIEW, to express opinions based on hearsay, manufacturers' literature, or anything other than laboratory tests and/or careful listening sessions. Readers who want to know how we feel about a piece of equipment will have to get that information through a test report; if there wasn't any report, it is likely we know nothing more about the product than anyone can discover from its manufacturer's literature. (A complete index to all the products we have tested since 1973 is available for \$1 plus a stamped, self-addressed long envelope sent to STEREO REVIEW, Dept. TR1, One Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.)

Another category of questions can be boiled down to "I have a hi-fi something that doesn't work right. How do I fix it? ... or modify it? ... or match it properly to some other hi-fi something?" These questions get a form reply that says, in part:

"Unfortunately, the best we can do is suggest you write directly to the manufacturer of your unit. Because of his familiarity with his own products, he is in a far better position to advise you on the specifics of your particular question or problem than we could possibly be."

It's a mystery to me (though flattering) why so many component owners write to us first when they have troubles. Anyone having any familiarity with electronics knows that most products are likely to have characteristic "failure modes," and the factory repair people are the first to know what those are and what to do about them.

Then there are those optimistic souls whose five-page, single-spaced, typewritten letters detail their personal hi-fi histories (apparently from the moment they learned to hear) as a preface to their asking me to choose several optimally matched setups from an included list of thirty or so component models. I guess I could go into detail here as to why we can't oblige any of our more than a million readers in this regard and still put out a monthly magazine—but is that really necessary?

In any case, all mail is at least read, and some of it is answered directly with a form reply or marginal note. Obviously, those readers who enclose a stamped, self-addressed return envelope stand a far better chance of getting a response than those who don't. It seems appropriate to end with another quote from one of our forms:

"We appreciate the confidence you have expressed by writing to us and regret that we cannot be of more specific help." □

SOUND SO GOOD IT KEEPS THE BAD AWAY.



FUJI AUDIO CASSETTES.

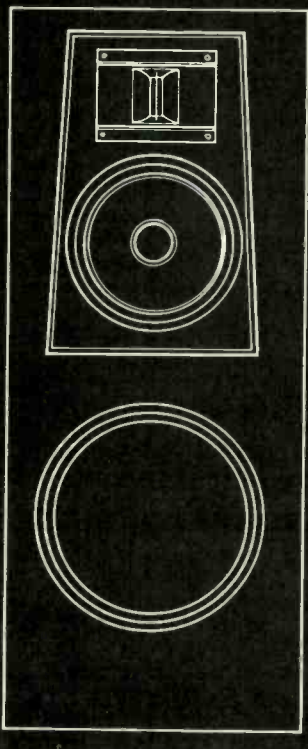
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Car Stereo

By Ivan Berger



HOW I LOST MY STEREO

A THIEF in New York City's Union Square heard the Clarion call one afternoon last spring, and now I'm out one Clarion. Its loss is not so much a sign of the thief's cleverness as of my own stupidity and that of a friend.

The tale actually begins a year or two earlier. I had built a Heathkit car alarm but got sidetracked halfway through its installation and never got it going. I also had a Radio Shack wireless-page alarm, but I hadn't installed that either since I'd intended to tie it in with the Heath. I did do a fairly intelligent job of installing my car-stereo system itself, however. The amplifiers and CB radio were both well concealed and strongly bolted down—so I still have them. The central unit of the stereo was in an inconspicuous location, partly concealed by an overhanging ashtray (which I sometimes remembered to pull out for further concealment when I parked the car). It also had an inconspicuous black trim plate, and the speakers had—and have—equally inconspicuous black grilles.

Now comes the big stupidity (not mine, I'm a bit relieved to say). A friend using my car parked it, alas, in an open, metered parking lot. Such lots have neither the security of a private parking lot with an attendant nor that of curbside metered parking with a constant stream of passersby. My friend also left a large parcel sitting in plain view in the car, instead of hiding it in the trunk. That was an exceptionally bad move, since it made apparent to even the most casual glance that this was a car worth breaking into.

Consequently, within less than an hour I was out one car stereo, one left-hand window, a good deal of underdash wiring (thieves take no pride in neatness), and the dashboard panel that the radio was attached to, not to mention the time and money I've had to spend repairing the mess. I'm also out of music, of course, unless I want to sing as I drive.

I'm finally getting a new installation next month, and I'm already making plans to lower the odds on losing it. This time I will connect my alarms. I'll also protect the main unit with a concealing Burbank Audio Safe, which locks over the front. While it

doesn't make the stereo impossible to steal (you can still rip out the dash panel, Audio Safe and all), it adheres tightly enough to make the stereo all but impossible to sell thereafter, a factor likely to deter a professional thief who's been Burbanked before, if not the amateur who doesn't know the mess he's getting into. And since a thief is likely to abandon a set that he can't sell, I'll engrave my phone number, car license number, and social-security number, all of which I've registered with the police as part of Operation Identification, on at least two sides of the set. I'll also keep a record of the stereo's serial number at home, where I can find it in a hurry. At the time of the theft, I couldn't find that information, which was no help at all to the police in trying to track down my stereo.

Whoever has my stereo now probably got a bargain. The thief himself probably got less than I paid even to repair the broken window—that is, if he "fenced" it and the "owner" bought it from an ostensibly legitimate source. But a lot of "hot" equipment is sold person to person to buyers who know there's something fishy going on. If someone in a bar offers you a great deal on a color TV (with a choice of several models) or a tatterdemalion kid on a street corner offers you a turntable with hastily ripped-off plugs, you should get suspicious. Even if it seems to be an irresistible bargain, you should probably call the cops, certainly not buy. If no one ever bought obviously stolen goods, that fact would surely serve as a deterrent for those contemplating a ripoff of one kind or another.

If this appeal to morality over greed isn't enough, let me tell you about a con man I once met who had the perfect scam. He'd buy cheap, off-brand electronics at a discount, then peddle the stuff in bars as "hot"—at a good 25 per cent or so above list price. The more secretive he acted, the higher the price his junk would command. Except for sales-tax evasion, he was probably guilty of no crime at all, not even false advertising, since he never came right out and said his stuff was hot. And his victims cheerfully paid through the nose for the illusion of illicit bargains. □

Why every record sounds better with Dual's exclusive ULM tonearm system.

The moment the ULM tonearm tracks your favorite record, you will hear a purity of tone that has never before emerged from its grooves.

ULM is Dual's exclusive Ultra Low Mass tonearm system with total effective mass of 8 grams. That's less than half the mass of conventional tonearm and cartridge combinations.



Dual 1258

There's no mistaking the difference ULM makes in what you hear. Especially with records that are warped, as so many are today.

Here's what the independent test labs reported about ULM after testing it with warped records as "real-life" test instruments:

"...tracked the most severely warped records in our collection, usually so well that we heard nothing wrong."

—*Stereo Review*

"Navigating the worst warps we could find, the Dual/Ortofon combination proved very agile indeed, with nary a mistrack?"

—*High Fidelity*

"Even a severe warp that would normally throw the pickup into the air will usually give no more than a slight 'thump'...and most warps are undetectable by ear."

—*Popular Electronics*

"The Dual takes dead aim at the fiend of disc reproduction—the warped record—and response to record warps practically is eliminated at the source."

—*Stereo*

One lab also listened to a favorite *unwarped* record played by the same ULM tonearm and cartridge system. Its reaction:

"There is no way measurements, or mere words, can describe the acoustic presence... highs are crystalline, with a purity we haven't heard before. The bass is so clean that one can hear new sounds from records,

such as the harmonic vibration of unplayed strings on the double bass...overall definition and transient response were outstanding."

—*HiFi/Stereo Buyers' Guide*

In short, ULM is not just desirable, it's essential—with all records.

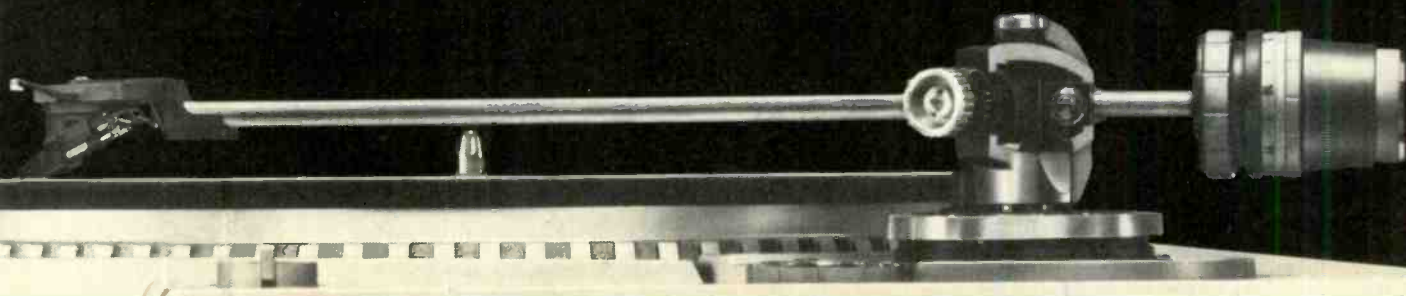
If you'd like to hear the difference ULM can make, visit your audio specialist. (Bring your favorite record, especially if it's badly warped.)

You'll also be pleased to hear that the new Dual ULM turntables are priced lower than you may think. For example, the single-play/multiple-play Dual 1258 with Vario-belt drive is less than \$150.

For complete information, write to United Audio, 120 So. Columbus Ave., Dept. S, Mt. Vernon, NY 10553.

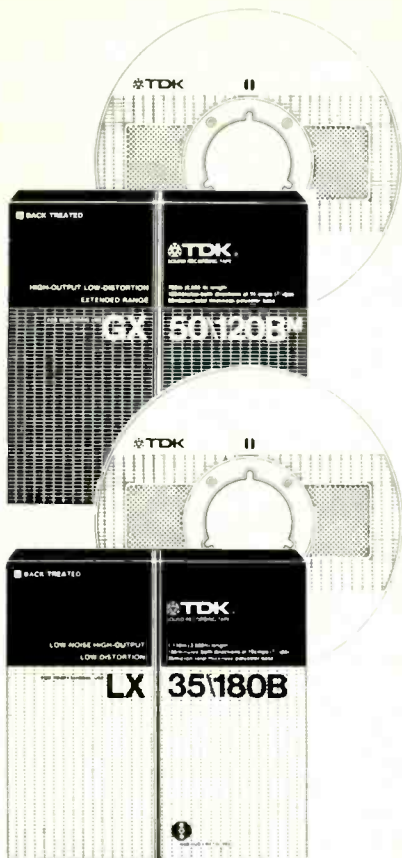


Exclusive U.S. distribution agency for Dual.



Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



TDK brings two new standards to open reel.

TDK now announces two breakthroughs in open reel. TDK GX Studio Mastering tape: an ultra refined particle lets it handle the critical demands of live music mastering. And TDK LX Professional Studio tape, with a super refined particle that gives it a performance ideal for professional and audiophile use.

A unique polishing and binding process makes dropouts practically a thing of the past. A special graphite and carbon backcoating on all GX and some LX reduces friction for smooth winding while preventing static and diminishing wow and flutter. At last your music is heard the way you intended to hear it.

Listen to TDK GX and LX. They could open up a whole new standard of recording excellence.



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CIRCLE NO. 60 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Bias and Equalization

Q. Can you give me a simple explanation of the terms "bias" and "equalization" that even a newcomer to hi-fi can understand? My local dealer tried, but either he didn't really know or I'm awfully dense!

PETER ABELSON
Boston, Mass.

A. In tape recording, the term *bias* denotes an ultrasonic current, generally about 100 kHz in frequency (this is at least five times as high as most human ears can hear), that is fed to the tape deck's record head *simultaneously* with the audio signal you want to record. The use of bias during recording (it is not used in playback) reduces distortion and increases the amount of audio signal that can be captured on a tape. The specific *amount* of record bias needed to achieve these goals varies widely with the *type* of tape being used (ferric oxide, chromium dioxide, or metal) and, to a minor degree, from brand to brand within the same tape type.

Equalization (EQ) is a process designed to make a tape deck's response as flat (equal) as possible at all frequencies. If you were able to listen to a recorded tape with *no* playback equalization there would be, for a variety of complex technical reasons, very little bass response. Thus, playback EQ consists of a large amount of bass boost, the precise amount of which is standardized so that a recorded tape can be played back properly on any deck. Ferric-oxide cassettes boost all frequencies below about 1,325 Hz (which is also called "120 microseconds" for engineering reasons), while metal and CrO₂ types begin boosting bass at about 2,270 Hz ("70 microseconds").

Equalization is also used in the recording process, this time principally to counteract treble losses, which become very severe at the highest audio frequencies when the tape speed is slow. Unlike playback equalization, recording EQ is not standardized: it consists of whatever treble boost is necessary (with a given machine's tape head) to produce a flat extended treble response when the recorded tape is played back on a deck with the standardized playback EQ. Just how much treble boost this requires depends on

the characteristics of the tape and also on the amount of record bias being used. In general, lower-than-normal amounts of bias increase distortion, but they also lower the amount of treble EQ applied with the audio signal. Contrariwise, higher-than-normal bias causes loss of highs and increased need for recording equalization.

No Pressure Pads?

Q. I recently read a test report in *STEREO REVIEW* on a cassette deck that automatically pushes the pressure pads of cassettes out of the way during record and playback. My own deck is also a dual-capstan model but lacks this feature. Could I physically remove the pressure pads from my cassettes to achieve the same result as the deck you reviewed, or would this cause problems?

DAVID YOUNG
San Francisco, Calif.

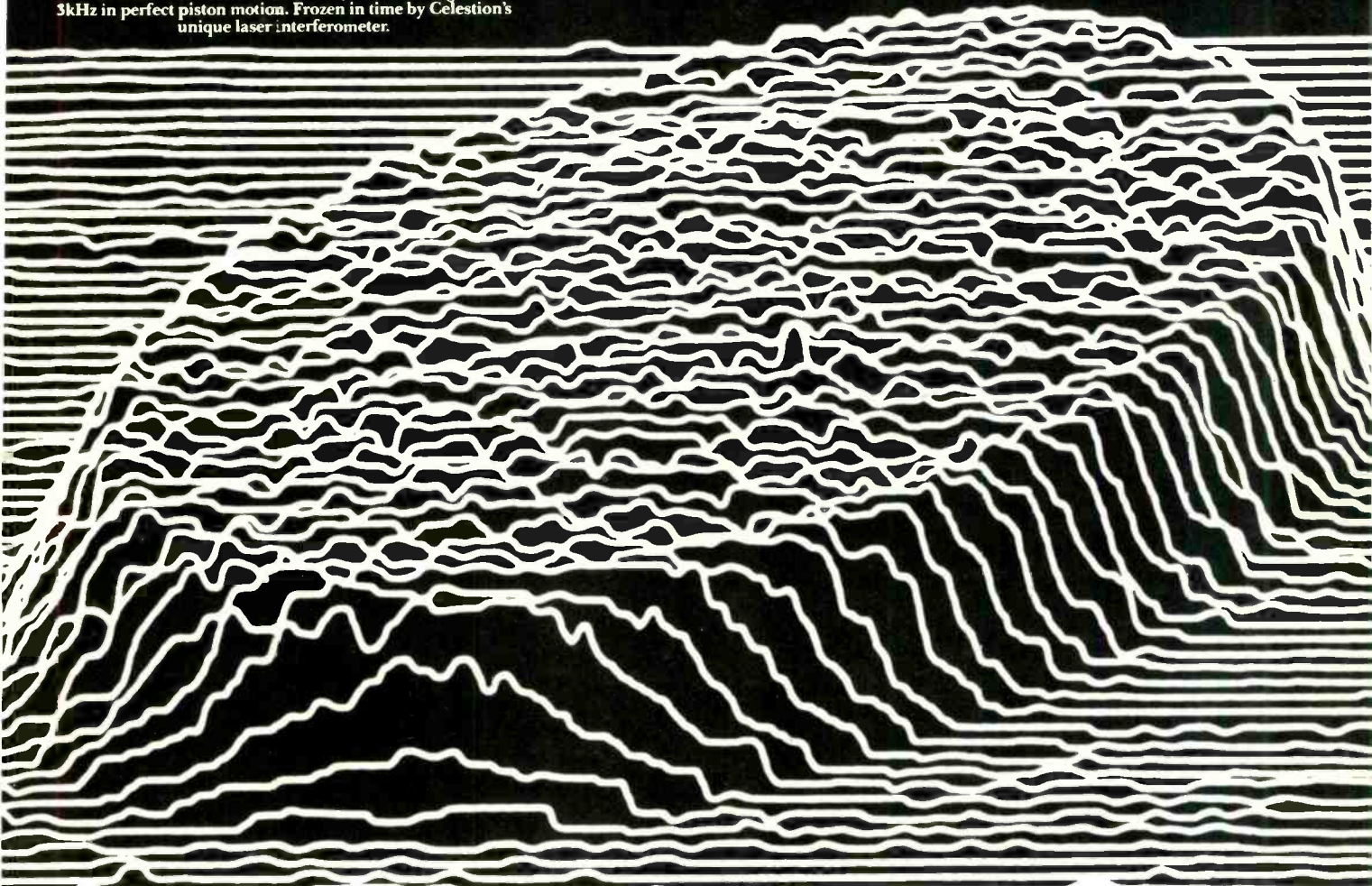
A. From a theoretical point of view, the best pressure pad is no pressure pad: it was incorporated into the design of the Philips cassette as a necessary evil to overcome the tape-to-head contact limitations imposed by the rather primitive tape transports in early cassette machines.

Since pressure pads *are* included in every manufactured cassette, however, even makers of highly sophisticated contemporary decks design their drive mechanisms in the knowledge that, in addition to maintaining tape-to-head contact, the pressure pad will add a certain amount of "drag" to the tape as it flows from the supply to the take-up hub. By snipping out the pressure pads on your cassettes, then, you would eliminate a friction component on which the maker of your deck was counting. You *might* get away with it with *some* dual-capstan transports, but with single-capstan tape drives the problem would be far more difficult. Given the wide quality variations among decks on which cassettes must operate, built-in pressure pads must remain part of the cassette itself.

So far, only one company has chosen to design its transport to ensure proper head contact and holdback tensions with the
(Continued on page 26)

YOU'VE NEVER HEARD LOUDSPEAKERS LIKE THIS BEFORE.

The new Celestion ULTRA™ Tweeter, vibrating at 3kHz in perfect piston motion. Frozen in time by Celestion's unique laser interferometer.



In accuracy. Response. Power-handling capability. And efficiency that makes even the most modestly-powered receivers and amplifiers sound dazzling.

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QUALITY FM STEREO FROM PERSONAL HEADSET RECEIVERS.

The Mura Hi Stepper™ receivers have become the industry standard for personal FM stereo. Of course Mura already had the headset technology from its Red Set™ line. To the Red Set Mura added a high sensitivity (3 μ V for 30dB of Quieting), low current drain (30 ma from AA batteries) stereo receiver. Each channel of the audio section is a 3 stage amplifier with a push-pull output stage—all to drive a headset speaker with 98dB/mW sensitivity! Overkill for only a few milliwatts? Not for the Mura Hi Stepper. Even the Hi Stepper HI-3 (with AM) uses dual can IFT's to squeeze the best frequency response possible out of the AM band.

Whether you choose the FM Stereo Hi Stepper (HI-6) or the AM/FM Stereo Hi Stepper (HI-3) you get audiophile quality in a portable, personal stereo sound system.



MURA

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CIRCLE NO. 37 ON READER SERVICE CARD

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pressure pad pushed out of the way, though that is clearly the "best" way to go theoretically. The cost of the "pad pusher" itself can't be more than a dime, however, and I hope other manufacturers of quality decks will follow this excellent example.

Cassette Malfunctions

Q. *Is there any way to prevent cassette tapes from jamming up in the recorder or getting too tightly wound?*

TERRY VEY
West Bend, Wis.

A. Yes. Use high-quality cassettes and a high-quality recorder. Also, avoid C-120 cassettes. If you're already doing these things and you're still having trouble your deck needs servicing.

Wow and Flutter

Q. *Would you please explain what "wow" and "flutter" mean pertaining to recording and playing a tape?*

RICK O'BRIEN
Warwick, R.I.

A. "Wow" and "flutter" are terms that refer to irregularities in the flow of tape as it passes across the tape heads either during record or during playback. Ideally, the tape flow should be absolutely smooth and at a constant rate. Practically, this is impossible: capstan shafts and rubber pinch-rollers are not *perfectly* round, motors and drive belts don't run *perfectly* smoothly, and bearings have to have a certain amount of "play" in them if shafts are to rotate in them. These imperfections ensure at least some momentary fluctuations in tape speed—wow and flutter—that affect the quality of music reproduction.

Some momentary variations in tape speed are random in nature, though many are repetitive, or "periodic." For example, identification of the specific recorder that created the famous "gap" in the Nixon tapes was based on a careful analysis of the recurrent wow/flutter patterns of the White House tape decks. When the speed variations occur at a rather slow rate—conventionally, less than six times a second—they are often called "wow," since the wavering pitch changes created are heard as a wow-wow-wow sound. More rapidly recurring speed variations are called "flutter."

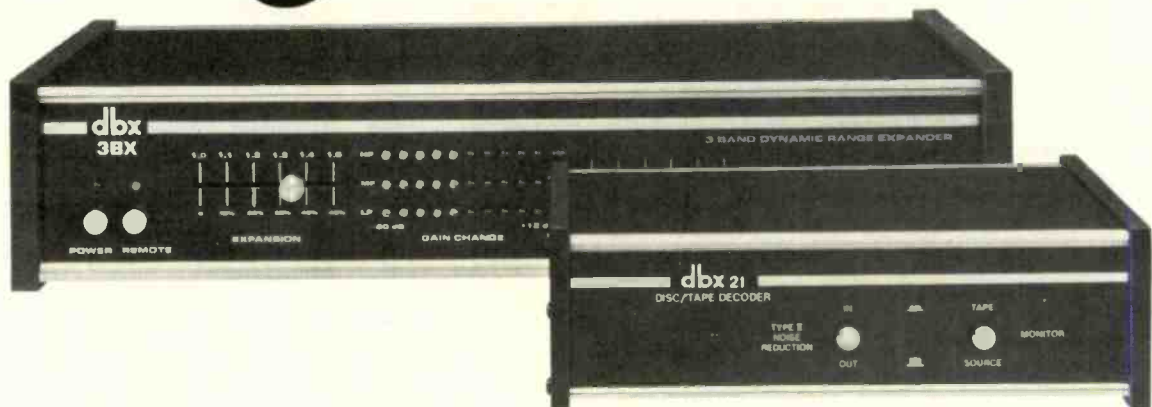
Home and Away Choice

Q. *I'm interested in getting a recorder I can use either at home or, with batteries, as a portable. Should I get an eight-track or a cassette?*

R. A. SHUGART
Caryville, Fla.

A. While large numbers of eight-track cartridge machines remain in use, at this point—for either battery-operated or home-based operation—I unequivocally recommend that you buy a cassette unit. The eight-track format is steadily declining in popularity and in not many years will be obsolete. □

Add truth to your system.



A live performance has 90 or more decibels of dynamic range.

But you don't hear anywhere near that from your stereo. Because your records and tapes don't have it in the first place. In fact, you're lucky if you hear 40 or 50 decibels. Which means you're losing half the impact of your music.

The only answer is to add a dbx Dynamic Range Expander. It works on the same principle as the dbx noise reduction technology now built into 1981 tape decks. Only it takes your existing records and tapes, and increases the dynamic range by up to 50%.

It also gets rid of surface noise, so all you hear is the music.

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Offer void where prohibited by law. Valid only at participating dbx U.S. authorized consumer products retailers. Quantities may be limited.

Buy a 3BX Dynamic Range Expander and get a dbx Disc Decoder free.

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The Model 21 decodes the revolutionary dbx Discs and Digital dbx Discs, the world's first Full Dynamic Range Recordings. And soon, we'll be introducing dbx cassettes. More than 150 titles are now available to choose from. Including

new releases by Joan Baez, The Police, Neil Diamond, J. Geils, Moody Blues, Styx, Pablo Cruise, Rita Coolidge, and Eric Clapton.

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CIRCLE NO. 17 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



• Subjective Testing •

OVER the years, there has been a constant need to update our laboratory test equipment to keep pace with the continuing technical improvements in consumer hi-fi components. This despite the fact that many people (myself included) feel that measurements of the electrical or acoustical properties of most components, and certainly speakers, usually do not tell us all we need to know about how they will *sound* in our home music systems. On the other hand, I find few, if any, audible differences between electronic components that are not explainable by frequency response, gain, or noise-level differences. Many people would agree with me, but others disagree, often strongly. In any case, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to conduct purely subjective evaluations in what I would consider a scientifically valid manner.

I feel that a statistical approach to subjective evaluation, using a number of listeners (one or two at a time, since interactions within larger groups can invalidate the results) in a double-blind test (in which neither the listeners nor the people conducting the test know which component is being heard at any given time), is the best way to accomplish this end. It is still better if no one involved in the test even knows which components are being evaluated, or even what is being switched (for example, amplifier, cartridge, speaker, etc). That is a desirable but extremely difficult type of test to run, so it is rarely, if ever, done.

Most of us have opinions about what we hear that are, to some degree, arrived at

without objective or scientific validation. Furthermore, for many of us such opinions outweigh all the "expert" advice offered by others who hear different things. I would not argue with anyone who takes that position, except to point out that he is not qualified to advise others because his listening reactions are probably idiosyncratic.

That is why I do not make recommendations or judgments ranking equipment according to quality solely on the basis of what I hear. When I encounter a product whose sound impresses me as outstanding, I usually mention the fact, but I would not make a blanket recommendation to others that they buy it on my say-so. I have no such reservations about the *measurements* I make; within certain tolerances, they are accurate and perfectly valid for comparisons between products or as a check on the manufacturer's ratings. The heart of the subjective testing problem for me (and, I am sure, for most other reviewers) is that there is no easy way for me *not* to know what I am listening to or what equipment is being evaluated.

IT would be very nice if I were so "objective" that I could make my listening judgments uninfluenced by the appearance and cost of the product, and even by what I know of the previous history of the people who produced it. Well, I am not *that* unbiased, nor do I believe anyone else is. I have some very strong prejudices that must inevitably affect my final appraisal of a product—and they're not all in the area of sound. Regular readers will be aware that I

am a "nut" on reliability and ruggedness. The most elegantly designed and sophisticated product in the world is useless if it doesn't work. The most advanced hi-fi component is an intolerable annoyance if it "goes up in smoke" during my tests, wasting my time and unavoidably coloring my final opinion of its merits.

I am also strongly influenced by the ease of operation and general "human-engineering" aspects of product design. If I have to refer to the instructions every time I wish to avail myself of some of the unusual capabilities of a sophisticated or unconventional component, I question its utility for the average audiophile. If I find myself always reaching for the wrong knob when I want to change the volume, or if I have to turn something in a different direction from what I would ordinarily have expected, I am human enough to suspect that the designer slipped up somewhere.

I mention these things to show that when I evaluate a hi-fi component I am looking for something more than merely a subtle (and frequently arguable) sonic character that will set it apart from its competition. If I find such a quality, fine; it will be duly noted, but I certainly would not give it any great weight. After all, *you* might not hear it, or you might hear it and not like it.

It seems to me that the assumption of omniscience on the part of an equipment reviewer is a serious flaw in many subjective reports that have appeared in the various "underground" publications. After reading such accounts I rarely know any more than
(Continued on page 30)

Tested This Month

Design Acoustics DA-30 Speaker System • Sherwood S-9200CP Stereo Receiver
JVC DD-9 Cassette Deck • Rotel RT-1010 AM/FM Stereo Tuner
Concord CMC 100 Phono Cartridge

CAPTURE THE BEAUTY THAT IS MCS

Feel it. The allure of pure sound. See it. Harnessed with technological precision. Now, capture it. The compelling beauty of our MCS cassette decks. Shown here (top to bottom), model 3555 cassette deck with Dolby® and fluorescent record level meters, 219⁹⁵. Model 3554 cassette deck with Dolby and soft touch transport buttons, 189⁹⁵. Model 3575 computer controlled cassette deck with electronic touch controls, preset playback and random search programming, 299⁹⁵.



MCS
STEREO
FOR THE SENSES

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MCS® Series Audio Components sold exclusively at JCPenney.
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I did before about how well the product really works and whether it would suit my needs. Every once in a while their conclusions—positive or negative—will agree with mine, but I think this is purely coincidence since there are usually no similarities in the processes by which we arrived at our particular judgments.

Much as I would like to employ double-blind testing in my work and thereby supplement measurements with a *valid* subjective appraisal, I am prevented from doing this by the simple fact that I am usually working alone. Although a double-blind comparator (such as the ABX system described in this column in July 1980) does make this possible for purely electronic components (amplifiers and tuners), it re-

quires considerable setup time. I understand that separate switching units of this kind will soon be available for judging the comparative worth of such components as cartridges and speakers.

There is another form of subjective evaluation that is felt by some to be more valid than an A-B comparison. I refer to extended listening over a period of weeks or months. Many people feel that subtle sonic irritations, not immediately apparent in an A-B comparison, can cause a feeling of dissatisfaction over a long period of listening. I suspect that this is most often a case of getting tired of the "same old thing" and succumbing to the lure of the latest and most intriguing product developments. Be that as it may, on a tight test schedule there is rare-

ly an opportunity to listen to most items for more than a few weeks.

Regretfully, I must conclude that scientifically valid subjective testing, admittedly the best and perhaps the only meaningful test of hi-fi equipment, is simply not practical under most circumstances. We will just have to do the best we can with measurements made more effective, as time goes on, by the addition of some more sophisticated and advanced laboratory instruments. And, after all, all the data obtained are ultimately filtered through a long-standing analysis system (me) employing a combination of engineering training, over thirty years of audio experience, and (I hope) a measure of common sense. We have not, so far, found anything better. □

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



Photos by Roy Schneider

Design Acoustics DA-30 Speaker System

THE Design Acoustics DA-30 speaker system is the first new product to come from that company since its recent acquisition by Audio-Technica U.S., Inc. The DA-30 is a three-piece system (a format that is currently enjoying some popularity) consisting of two small DA-10 "satellite" speakers and a single DA-20LF bass module that operates below 160 Hz. The DA-20LF can be located almost anywhere in the room, although in most cases best re-

sults will be obtained if it is in the same general area as the satellites.

The DA-10 satellites, each of which is 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches high, 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches wide, and 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, are attractive wooden units with an oiled walnut finish, beveled front edges, and a black grille. Each is a miniature two-way system, with a 5-inch acoustic-suspension "woofer" and a 1-inch dome tweeter, crossing over at 2,500 Hz. The DA-10 can operate as low as 80 Hz and,

like the DA-20LF, is available separately as well as part of the DA-30 system. Switches in the rear of the DA-10 can be set to increase its midrange and treble output by about 3 dB. A bracket on the back simplifies a wall-mounting installation, but their size and appearance gives the user a wide latitude in locating the DA-10's.

The DA-20LF bass module is 16 inches square and 20 inches high, with a walnut-
(Continued on page 34)



Marlboro



Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined
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16 mg "tar," 1.1 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Mar:81

PIONEER LASERDISC. FIRST THE BEST PICTURE.



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The first time you see Pioneer LaserDisc™ in action, you'll know it's different.

It actually puts a picture on your TV with 40% more video resolution than home video tape. (Viewed side by side with tape, the difference is staggering.)

The first time you hear Pioneer LaserDisc, you'll have a tough time believing your ears as well. Instead of hearing mono with that picture, you'll hear honest-to-

goodness stereo. This combination of sight and sound creates a sensation you've simply never experienced at home before.

A reality of performance, a sense of "being there" that makes watching a movie or concert at home finally worth staying home for.

Having created all this picture and sound fidelity, it seemed only logical to offer pictures and sounds worth seeing and hearing.

Software that would live up to the hardware. And that's precisely what we've done.

Academy Award winning movies like Ordinary People, The Godfather, Tess, Coal Miner's Daughter.

Comedies like Airplane, Animal House, Cheech and Chong.

When you have the ability to play back in stereo, it makes sense that you offer music. So there are movie musicals like Grease, Saturday Night Fever, All That Jazz. There are Broadway shows like "Pippin." And there are concerts with Paul Simon, Liza Minnelli, Neil Sedaka, even the Opera.

The sight and sound experience of Pioneer LaserDisc is so remarkable, it seemed to demand a larger scale. Which led us to introduce the Pioneer 50" Projection TV.

The experience is more like being at the movies than like being at home. In fact, for the first time seeing a concert at home offers a



Attached to your stereo, it's more than a great picture, it's great sound.



Ordinary People¹



The Muppet Movie²



King Kong¹



Urban Cowboy¹



The Elephant Man¹



The Rose²



Popeye¹



The French Connection²



The China Syndrome³



Alien²



Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid²



Tess³

THEN THE BEST PICTURES.

picture that's every bit as large as the sound. As for the picture quality, well, just look at the picture of Liza below. Hard to believe, it's an actual picture taken right off the screen.

But with Pioneer LaserDisc you don't just sit back and watch. For example, with the "How to Watch Pro Football" disc, you can go backwards, forwards, in fast motion, slow motion, stop motion, study it one frame at a time.

There are discs that teach you golf, tennis, cooking, step-by-step. Then there's The First National Kidisc. For the first time, children learn at their own rate. Unlike television, the disc responds to them. Your kids will love it so much they won't even know they're learning.

The only way to believe all this new tech-

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nology is to see it. And we've arranged it. Just call us at 800-621-5199,* for the store nearest you. *(In Illinois, 800-972-5855.)

 **PIONEER**
We bring it back alive.

Liza in Concert⁴



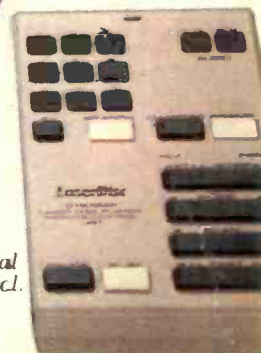
The Pioneer 50" Projection TV.

The Pioneer LaserDisc Player.



LaserVision
*This LaserVision mark certifies compatibility with other Laser optical products bearing the mark.

Optional Remote Control.



finish wooden top and black grilles on its four visible sides. However, its surfaces are solid behind the grilles, since the single 12-inch woofer is located in the bottom, facing downward. Short legs support the DA-20LF 1 1/4 inches from the floor, allowing the bass to radiate through a 1 1/4-inch slot around the periphery of the cabinet. This is called "Constant/Variable Proximity Loading (C/VPL)" by the manufacturer. One of the advantages claimed for it over conventional bass speaker designs is that the woofer loading is determined primarily by the design of the system, with minimal influence by the immediate room surroundings. Of course, placing the DA-20LF against a wall or in a corner will enhance its bass output—as it would that of any speaker. However, because of the low crossover frequency, midrange output will not be affected by the DA-20LF placement. In addition, the beveled front edges of the DA-10 satellites are designed to minimize diffraction effects that could interfere with their imaging qualities.

The DA-20LF, like the DA-10, is an acoustic-suspension design. It contains a single 12-inch dual-voice-coil driver whose left- and right-channel voice coils are wound concentrically on a single 2-inch-diameter form. Little stereo information is contained in the lowest octaves, so that mixing the lows causes no sacrifice of directionality (there is some disagreement on this point, but our own experience tends to support it).

Since the DA-20LF contains the system crossover network, both amplifier outputs are connected to input terminals under the bass module, and wires are run from there to the DA-10 satellites. A second set of input connections and a toggle switch permit the crossover network to be bypassed for biamplified operation. The Design Acous-

tics DA-30 has a nominal impedance of 4 ohms and is rated for use with amplifiers having outputs from 35 to 250 watts per channel. Price of the complete DA-30 system: \$595.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The total power-vs.-frequency response of the DA-30 system, measured in the rear of the room, was impressively smooth and flat. After correcting for room absorption, the response of the DA-10 satellites was flat within ± 2.5 dB from 300 to 20,000 Hz. The dome tweeter of the DA-10 had excellent dispersion, with the left and right speaker curves beginning to diverge slightly above 7,000 Hz but with no more than 5 dB of difference between them up to 20,000 Hz.

The close-miked woofer response was measured at the radiating "slot" between the DA-20LF and the floor (a check at the cone showed that the response was identical at both places). In the "bi-amp" mode, which bypasses the crossover network, the woofer response was flat from 80 to 200 Hz, rising to +3 dB in the 55- to 70-Hz range and dropping at 12 dB per octave below 50 Hz. In a biamplified system, the bass crossover should be set no higher than 200 Hz, although one might safely go lower than the 160 Hz used in the DA-30 system.

Through the DA-20LF crossover network, the response was flat to about 150 Hz and fell off at 18 dB per octave above that frequency. Splicing the bass and mid/high curves was relatively unambiguous, and the combined response was within ± 3.5 dB from 45 to 20,000 Hz. There was an output dip of about 5 dB centered at 150 Hz, perhaps due to the physical configuration of the speakers for our measurements. The DA-10 units were supported in the clear, about 3 feet from the wall and 4 feet off the floor. In that configuration the small woof-

ers would receive the least reinforcement from the room boundaries.

The switches on the back of the DA-10 modified its output beginning at about 1,000 Hz, boosting it about 1 dB at 3,000 Hz and a maximum of +5 dB above 5,000 Hz. The bass distortion, measured at the same place we used for the response measurement, was between 0.5 and 1 per cent from 100 Hz to below 50 Hz at a 1 watt input. It rose to 1.8 per cent at 40 Hz and 7 per cent at 30 Hz. Increasing the power to 10 watts yielded distortion readings of about 2 per cent down to 50 Hz, 5 per cent at 40 Hz, and 12.6 per cent at 30 Hz. The system impedance was about 4 ohms from 60 to 6,000 Hz, rising to about 10 ohms in the 20- to 40-Hz range. At high frequencies (above 1,500 Hz) the impedance was 10 to 16 ohms. The DA-30 system had unusually high sensitivity for an acoustic-suspension design. Driving it with 2.83 volts of pink noise in an octave band centered at 1,000 Hz, we measured a sound-pressure level of 90 dB at a 1-meter distance from the grille of the DA-10.

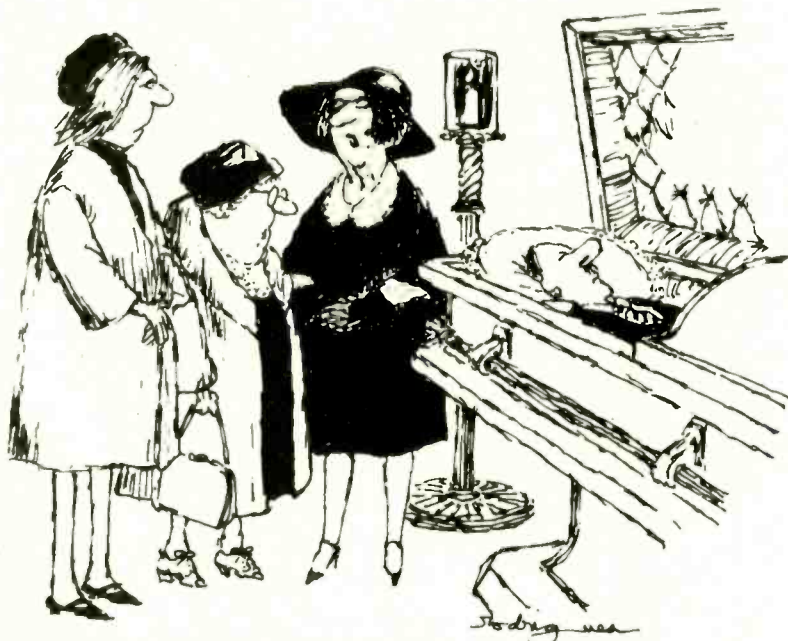
The response of the DA-30 was also measured under quasi-anechoic conditions with our Indac FFT analyzer at distances up to 15 feet and at various angles to the axis of the speakers. Since this measurement does not smooth or average the narrow-band response fluctuations of the speaker, its contour did not match that of the averaged power-response curve. Even so, the overall variation was typically within ± 6 dB from the lowest frequency displayed by our analyzer (180 Hz) to the 17,000-Hz upper limit imposed by the internal low-pass filter of the analyzer. When we turned the DA-10 unit through 45 degrees to check its dispersion with this technique, the principal change was a drop of output above 12,000 Hz or so compared to the 17,000 Hz achieved by a head-on measurement.

● **Comment.** The Design Acoustics DA-30 delivered a strikingly balanced, uncolored sound in our listening room. It may seem strange to describe a *lack* of color or emphasis as "striking," but compared to most speakers that is the way we reacted to it.

We have used three-piece speakers before, with results that have ranged from fair to excellent, but the blending of the DA-20LF with the DA-10 satellites was exceptionally effective. In fact, no one could suspect from the sound that a common-bass module was present at all (it was usually hidden behind other speakers or furniture in the room). On the other hand, one could not imagine how the tiny DA-10 units could generate the room-filling bass that was present when the program called for it. Quite an effect!

Our favorite speaker configuration was with the DA-10s on their backs on a narrow shelf along the front wall of the room about 30 inches from the floor and facing upward. In this position, which gives very nearly an omnidirectional response horizontally, we preferred to use the "+3-dB" switch setting to compensate for high-frequency absorption in the acoustic-tile ceiling. This arrangement makes possible what we think of as an "invisible speaker system," which

(Continued on page 36)



"It was just as well. Only last week he found out that they've discontinued making replacement tubes for his old monophonic amplifier."

Sansui.

The story of high fidelity.

High fidelity was born just a generation ago. So was Sansui. In 1947, when the transistor was invented, we began as a manufacturer of high-quality audio transformers. Since then, Sansui's dedication to the sound of music and our extensive R & D have led to countless technological breakthroughs and products that have continually advanced the art and science of high fidelity. Some highlights:

1958: The year of the first stereo recordings also brings the release of our first stereo amplifier.

1965: As hi-fi widens its appeal, we introduce our first stereo receiver, the TR 707A.

1966: Sansui's U.S. subsidiary, destined to be outgrown in little more than a decade by our new headquarters in Lyndhurst, N.J., begins operation.

1970: QS, Sansui's patented 4-channel system, gains worldwide recognition.

1976: No less a leader in broadcast than in consumer audio technology, Sansui introduces two stereo AM systems at the Audio Engineering Society convention.

1978: Psychoacoustic research into the subtle but very real deficiencies in bass and in transient response in music reproduction results in Sansui's introduction of DC amplifiers, the renowned G-series receivers, and our patented DD/DC circuitry. These advanced technologies reduce distortions whose very existence had been questioned until we developed a straightforward measurement technique to verify on a meter what listeners' ears had long told them.

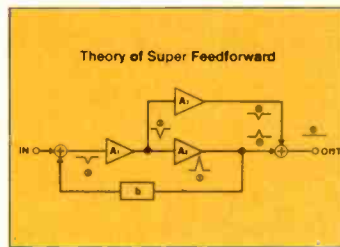


7900Z RECEIVER

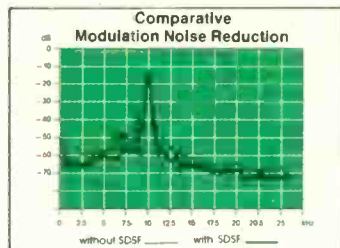
1979: Sansui's patent-pending D-O-B (Dynaoptimum Balanced) method of optimally locating the pivot point results in significantly lower tonearm susceptibility to unwanted vibrations. The same year Sansui introduces the first member of our trend-setting system approach to hi-fi componentry, the Super Compo series.

1980: Developing a theory first suggested in 1928, Sansui presents

the first Super Feedforward amplifiers, the realization of a design that eliminates even the last vestiges of distortion that not even negative feedback could combat. This development inaugurates a new era in the reduction of amplifier distortion and firmly establishes Sansui as a world leader in this important work. Eager to maintain its technological leadership, now also in video, in the same year Sansui develops an ultra-compact gas laser-optical pickup, some 40 times smaller than conventional detector systems, that promises to play a vital role in future compact digital audio disc players.



1981: Modulation noise, long a problem in cassette recorders, is reduced to virtual inaudibility by Sansui's patent-pending Dyna-Scrape Filter. Equalization that's simple enough for practical home use is realized with Sansui's computerized SE-9 equalizer, which not only achieves professional results in record or playback, but also permits storing up to four instantly-selectable equalization curves.



At the 1981 NY AES, we presented four major papers outlining breakthroughs in both audio and video engineering, each of which will lead to products to enrich all our lives.

Sansui's story and the story of high fidelity. They are really one ongoing story, and the future is bright for both.

TU-S9 TUNER



AU-D11 AMPLIFIER

1982
NEW
TECHNOLOGIES
TO COME.

1981
DYNA-SCRAPE
FILTER.
DIGITAL
EQUALIZER.

1980
SUPER
FEEDFORWARD.
LASERDISC
PICK-UP.

1979
D-O-B TONEARMS.
SUPER COMPO.

1978
G-RECEIVERS.
DD/DC AMPLIFIERS.

1976
AM STEREO.

1970
QS 4-CHANNEL.

1966
U.S. OPERATION
BEGINS.

1965
STEREO RECEIVER.

1958
STEREO AMPLIFIER.

1947
SANSUI FOUNDED

Sansui

**SANSUI ELECTRONICS
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Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071, Gardena, CA 90248
Sansui Electric Co., Ltd., Tokyo, Japan

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happens to be the preferred format in our home. To achieve invisibility without some sacrifice of sound quality is a noteworthy achievement, and we were impressed with how well the Design Acoustics DA-30 coped with the challenge. In another room, we heard the system in a more conventional configuration, with the DA-10s on pedestals, well in the clear, and facing the listeners. This gives the sound an appealing airiness, as well as the kind of imaging that many people seem to prefer (our taste runs

toward a somewhat more diffuse sound field). The high sensitivity of the DA-30 also sets it somewhat apart from most comparably priced high-quality systems, since it can develop wall-shaking sound levels at any audio frequency when driven by a good 30-watt-per-channel amplifier. In fact, we were never tempted to push it to its limits with a 200-watt amplifier, not because of fear for the speaker's survival, but rather because of concern about overload of our auditory sensibilities.

It is easy to understand the growing popularity of the three-piece speaker system, which provides an optimum blend of quality and flexibility to say nothing of value for the money. In addition, the DA-30 happens to be a most attractive system (if its components are set up to be visible) as well as sounding at least as good as a pair of very fine conventional "box-type" speakers in the same price range.

Circle 140 on reader service card



Sherwood S-9200CP Stereo Receiver

THE complete redesign Sherwood's product line has undergone this year is well illustrated by their receiver lineup. It consists of five models offering a wide range of power outputs and control features at various price levels. This report covers the next-to-the-lowest-price Sherwood receiver, the S-9200CP, which is rated to deliver 20 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.08 per cent total harmonic distortion.

The silver-satin finish on the exterior of the S-9200CP presents an uncluttered, almost starkly functional appearance. The receiver's most prominent front-panel feature is a large tuning knob, with an indentation for rapidly scanning the band with a finger tip. The words TOUCH LOCK SENSOR above the knob are a clue to one of the receiver's features; the AFC system is automatically turned off when the knob is touched. This simplifies tuning a signal close in frequency to a much stronger signal. When the knob is released, a LOCKED light comes on to show that the tuning is locked to the station frequency. The other front-panel knobs are smaller and include BASS and TREBLE controls (with eleven detented settings each), BALANCE, and VOLUME (also detented).

A row of slender pushbuttons below the knobs select the inputs (PHONO, AUX, FM, AM), LOUDNESS compensation, TAPE MONITOR, SPEAKER A and SPEAKER B outputs, POWER, and the operating mode of the FM-tuner section. The last button, marked FM MUTE and OFF/MONO, performs several

functions that are somewhat ambiguously described in the manual. When it is out, the touch-lock system is operative and mono or stereo operation is determined automatically by the presence of a pilot carrier in the received signal (which also must be above a threshold level). Pressing this button in disables the multiplex section and the interstation muting as well as the AFC lock circuit. This mode is useful for receiving weak signals in mono in cases where stereo reception would be too noisy even if possible.

The dial window, which is all black when the receiver is off, contains a number of lighted displays. The tuner frequency for FM and AM bands is shown digitally by bright blue numerals at the right of the window. The frequency is shown to the nearest 100 kHz for FM and to the nearest 10 kHz for AM. (Note that the S-9200CP is not a digitally tuned receiver; the display is driven from a frequency counter that operates from the conventionally tuned local oscillator.)

To the left of the frequency readout are two horizontal bars (red and green) with a green dot between them. The dot, marked FINE, is a critical-tuning indicator for FM and lights only when the receiver is set very close to the station frequency. To its left is a red STEREO light, and the green light to its right is marked LOCK. Normally, the LOCK light is off while the receiver is being tuned. When the knob is released, the tuner locks to the station frequency and the LOCK light comes on. If the FM MUTE button is pressed

in (its OFF/MONO position), the LOCK and STEREO lights do not operate but the tuning dot still functions as a tuning indicator.

Signal strength is shown by a five-segment green line to the left of the tuning display; its length is proportional to signal strength for both AM and FM. To the left of the line are LEDs that show when the AUX, PHONO, or TAPE buttons have been selected. There is a small red pilot light above the power switch and a headphone jack at the lower right of the panel.

In the rear of the S-9200CP there is a hinged ferrite-rod antenna for AM, binding-post terminals for 300- and 75-ohm FM antennas and an AM wire antenna, plus the signal-input and -output jacks. Insulated spring connectors are used for the two sets of speaker outputs. One of the two a.c. convenience outlets is switched. The receiver is protected by a line fuse, and the speaker outputs are individually fused. The Sherwood S-9200CP is 16½ inches wide, 11¾ inches deep, and 4 inches high. It weighs 17 pounds. Price: \$259.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The one-hour preconditioning period left the top of the cabinet (over the output-transistor heat sink) quite warm to the touch. In normal operation the receiver remained quite cool. With both channels driven at 1,000 Hz into 8-ohm loads, the waveform clipped at 33.6 watts per channel. The 4- and 2-ohm clipping power levels were 42.3 and 38.7 watts

(Continued on page 38)

...and then came Super Feedforward.

Not many years ago a "high fidelity" amplifier delivered 5 watts with 5% harmonic distortion. Today, distortion levels of 0.05% — or even 0.005% — in amplifiers with hundreds of watts and a much wider frequency range are almost routine.

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To reduce TIM and other forms of residual distortion, Sansui developed its DD/DC (Diamond Differential/

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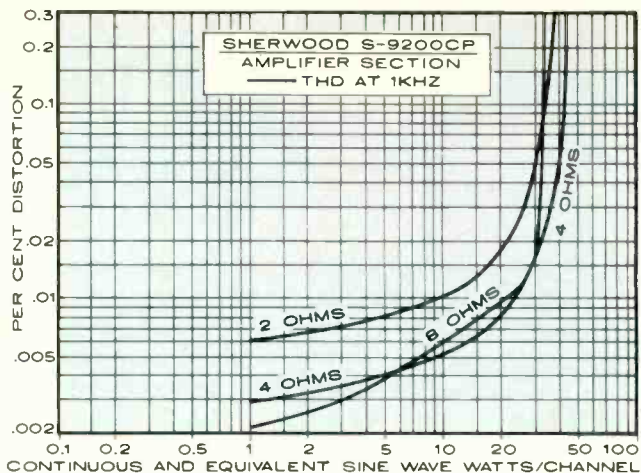
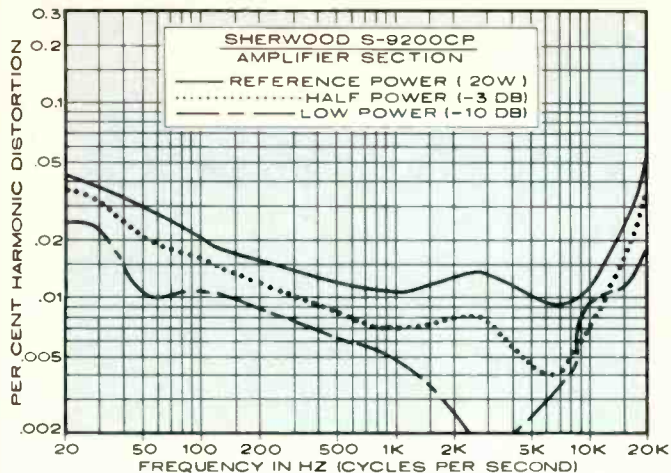
While Super Feedforward circuitry puts Sansui's AU-D 11 and AU-D 9 amplifiers in a class by themselves, all our amplifiers are renowned for their musicality, versatility, and respect for human engineering. Add a matching TU tuner to any of Sansui's AU amplifiers and you'll appreciate the difference 35 years of Sansui dedication to sound purity can produce.

For the name of the nearest audio specialist who carries the AU-D 11 and AU-D 9 or other fine components in Sansui's extensive line of high fidelity products, write: Sansui Electronics Corp., 1250 Valley Brook Avenue, Lyndhurst, NJ 07071.



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Sansui



per channel, respectively. The IHF clipping headroom (8 ohm) was 2.25 dB. With the tone-burst signals of the IHF dynamic-power measurement the maximum power output was 39 watts (8 ohms), 61.7 watts (4 ohms), and 59.3 watts (2 ohms), corresponding to an 8-ohm dynamic headroom of 2.9 dB.

The 1,000-Hz harmonic distortion into 8-ohm loads was 0.0022 per cent at 1 watt (it was below the noise level at lower outputs) and increased smoothly to 0.01 per cent at the rated 20 watts and 0.017 per cent at 30 watts output. When driving 4-ohm loads the distortion characteristic of the amplifier was almost identical, rising from 0.003 per cent at 1 watt to 0.06 per cent at 40 watts. Even into 2 ohms (which often results in high distortion with amplifiers not specifically designed to drive very low impedances) the distortion ranged from only 0.006 per cent at 1 watt to 0.055 per cent at 30 watts.

The amplifier slew factor was greater than 20, and it was stable with complex simulated reactive speaker loads. The IHF intermodulation (IM) distortion with 19- and 20-kHz input frequencies was -65 dB for the third-order product at 18,000 Hz and -76 dB for the second-order (1,000-Hz) distortion, both referred to an equivalent sine-wave output of 20 watts.

The distortion at rated power into 8 ohms was less than 0.05 per cent from 20 to 20,000 Hz and typically between 0.01 and 0.02 per cent over the range of 100 to 15,000 Hz. At reduced power levels the characteristic was similar, but with distortion of less than half the full-power readings down to 2 watts output (-10 dB).

The amplifier sensitivity for a 1-watt reference output was 34 millivolts (mV) at the AUX inputs and 0.55 mV at the PHONO inputs. The respective A-weighted signal-to-noise ratios (S/N) were 86.4 and 80.7 dB. The phono-preamplifier input overloaded at 165 mV at 1,000 Hz, and at 20 and 20,000 Hz the overload limits (converted to equivalent 1,000-Hz values) were 157 and 230 mV, respectively. The phono-input impedance was 47,000 ohms in parallel with 300 picofarads.

The amplifier tone controls did not affect the midrange (300 to 5,000 Hz) significantly even at full boost or cut. The bass-turn-

over frequency varied from under 100 Hz to over 300 Hz throughout the control range, and the treble curves were hinged at 5,000 Hz. The loudness compensation was very moderate (a maximum bass boost of 7 dB) and did not affect the high frequencies.

The RIAA phono equalization was as accurate as we could measure (better than ± 0.25 dB) from 50 to 20,000 Hz, with no detectable departure from flatness over that range. The phono preamplifier has a built-in infrasonic rolloff in lieu of the usual switchable "rumble filter." Its response was down about 1 dB at 30 Hz and 4 dB at 20 Hz. The phono response showed a gentle high-frequency rise when it was measured through the inductance of a phono cartridge, beginning at about 4,000 Hz and reaching +2 dB at 20,000 Hz.

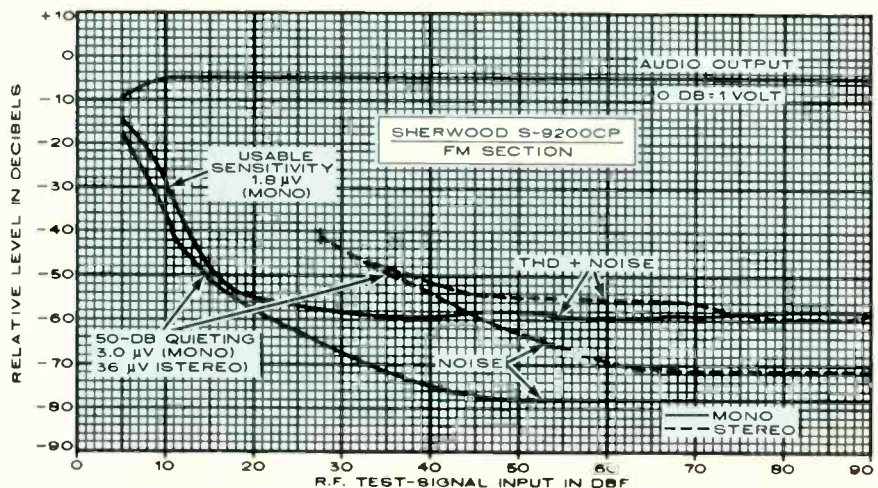
The FM-tuner section had a mono IHF usable sensitivity of 10.3 dBf (1.8 microvolts, or μ V), exactly as rated. The stereo sensitivity was established by the switching threshold at 26.8 dBf (12 μ V), where the distortion was just under 1 per cent. The 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 15 dBf (3 μ V) in mono, with 0.4 per cent total harmonic distortion plus noise, and in stereo it was 36.3 dBf (36 μ V), also with 0.4 per cent distortion and noise. The distortion at a 65-dBf (1,000- μ V) input was 0.11 per cent in mono and 0.18 per cent in stereo, and the respec-

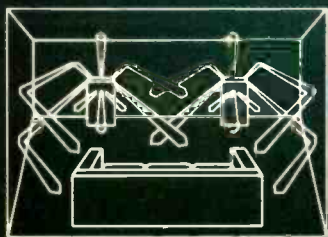
tive S/N readings at that input were 78 and 71.5 dB.

The stereo FM frequency response was flat within ± 0.5 dB from 30 to 15,000 Hz. The channel separation was about 44 dB in the midrange and exceeded 36 dB from 70 to 15,000 Hz (it was 29 dB at 30 Hz). The IHF IM distortion of the tuner section, using 14- and 15-kHz modulation for the signal generator, was -64 dB for second-order (1,000-Hz) and -48 dB for third-order (13 kHz) components in mono. The 1,000-Hz component is referred to 100 per cent modulation at that frequency, and the third-order distortion components are referred to the amplitudes of the modulating tones as they appeared at the de-emphasized tuner output (their combined peak value was equivalent to 100 per cent modulation). In stereo the distortion components were nearly the same (-60 and -47 dB), but as with most stereo tuners there were a number of additional responses in the audio range at levels of -60 to -70 dB.

The capture ratio was 1.15 dB, and the AM rejection was a good 62 dB. The image rejection was 60 dB, and the alternate and adjacent-channel selectivity measurements were 48.5 and 5.8 dB, respectively. The muting and stereo thresholds were identical at 26.8 dBf (12 μ V). Stereo pilot-carrier

(Continued on page 40)





When you remove the grille of the 601™ speaker, a configuration never before seen in a loudspeaker is revealed. Carefully positioned drivers placed in a unique Free Space™ array above the confines of the cabinet reflect sound at precise angles off the back and side walls. This recreates, in your home, a lifelike stereo image that cannot be matched by any conventional speaker. The room seems bigger. The sound is open and unconfined, yet every instrument is crisp and clean. You hear balanced stereo almost everywhere in the room. Experience the full effect of 601 Direct/Reflecting® speakers with Free Space™ array at your authorized Bose dealer. It can only be compared to a live performance. Bose, Dept. SR, The Mountain, Framingham, MA 01701.

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leakage was -76 dB, and the tuner hum was a very low -77 dB (all 120 Hz). The frequency response of the AM-tuner section was down 6 dB at 95 and 4,200 Hz.

● **Comment.** Our tests of most low-price receivers have shown them to be competent performers but generally lacking in meaningful features or performance that would set them apart from most of their competitors. This is to be expected in such a highly competitive marketplace. The Sherwood S-9200CP is a refreshing exception to that rule. Not only did it comfortably surpass many of its key performance ratings, but some of those ratings are well above the norm for receivers in its price class. For example, the FM S/N we measured on the S-9200CP was among the best we have yet found in a receiver at any price. The receiver's ratings of 80 and 75 dB for mono and stereo S/N are most unusual for this class of equipment, and our readings of 78 and 71.5 dB are also well above average (the latter, in particular, is close to the residual noise in our signal generator). The only significant difference between our measurements and the tuner specifications was in the FM selectivity, which, although adequate, did not reach the rated 65 dB.

In every other respect, both the audio and tuner sections of this receiver were outstanding. Aside from sheer power, the S-9200CP could more than hold its own against most receivers selling for several times its price. The IHF dynamic- and clipping-headroom measurements for the amplifier show that under practical listening conditions it can deliver far more power than its very conservative ratings would suggest. Even with 2-ohm loads (which many supposedly powerful amplifiers cannot drive with a useful power output) the S-9200CP performs very well.

Instead of including the usual worthless "rumble filter," the Sherwood designers have built an effective infrasonic filter into the S-9200CP's phono preamplifier. The "Touch Lock" tuning works so easily it is easy to forget that it is there. It is impossible to get less than the best performance from the FM tuner. And its AM section, while not "hi-fi" by any means, is one of the best-sounding (and quietest) we have heard in years. In all, we are most impressed with Sherwood's "new look." It is as different in performance as it is in appearance, and the difference is all to the good.

Circle 141 on reader service card

Circle 141 on reader service card



JVC DD-9 Cassette Deck

THE JVC Model DD-9 is a two-motor, three-head cassette deck that includes, among its many advanced features, the new Dolby-C noise-reduction system. Through virtually doubling the amount of noise reduction provided by the normal Dolby-B system (or its JVC equivalent, ANRS), C-type Dolby is designed to meet the needs of today's wider-dynamic-range recordings without losing compatibility with existing Dolby-B-encoded tapes. The DD-9 thus provides switches for selecting either no noise reduction, ANRS/Dolby-B, or Dolby-C.

The capstan of the DD-9 is direct-driven by a quartz-locked servomotor, and a separate d.c. motor is used to turn the reels. The record- and playback-head elements, both housed in a single casing, are made from Sen-Alloy and have tapered ("X-cut") pole pieces to reduce variations in low-frequency response.

Transport functions are electrically operated under IC-logic control with light-touch pushbuttons, and LED indicators are provided to show the current mode of operation. We found these indicators useful more than once, since even during high-speed rewind and fast-forward the DD-9 made so little mechanical noise it was hard to know that it was running. Cassettes are loaded,

tape openings downward, into slides behind the cassette well door, whose large, transparent surface provides ample visibility for the cassette inside. The door is also easily removable for routine head cleaning.

Recording level is set by separate UP and DOWN pushbuttons that control internal motor-driven potentiometers. A red indicator needle shows the actual position of the record-level control. Although this motorized level-control system worked smoothly and is unquestionably elegant, we found it slightly less convenient to use than more conventional rotary or slide controls. An additional, center-detented INPUT BALANCE slider is provided to adjust left/right channel balance. A similar horizontal slider (without the detent) controls the deck's output level at the rear-panel jacks and at the front-panel headphone jack.

An eighteen-segment fluorescent display, calibrated from -20 to $+9$ dB, indicates signal levels. A pushbutton switch allows selection of either VU or peak-reading characteristics, and in the latter mode the segment corresponding to the highest level of a transient remains illuminated for a second or two after the signal has dropped. Indications above 0 dB are shown in red, those below in blue.

Three pushbuttons select the appropriate

bias and equalization for ferric, CrO₂, and metal-tape formulations. To use the factory-determined settings a PRESET pushbutton is pressed. Or, alternatively, one can compensate for brand-to-brand variations among tapes of the same type by using JVC's microprocessor-controlled optimization system. Called B.E.S.T. (Bias, Equalization, Sensitivity of Tape), this automated calibration procedure successively tests various bias levels, mid- and high-frequency record-equalization settings, and sensitivity levels, and selects the optimum settings for the cassette in use. It then rewinds the tape to the starting point. The whole operation is initiated with a START pushbutton and takes only about 30 seconds to complete.

The tape counter uses a four-digit electronic readout and can be switched to indicate either the number of hub revolutions or, if the STOPWATCH button is pressed, the actual running time. Complete memory and auto rewind/replay facilities are provided, as are a momentary-contact RECORD MUTE switch and an external-timer switch. A SOURCE/TAPE monitor pushbutton, with LED indicators, permits instant comparison between the input signal and the recording made of it. Two front-panel microphone jacks override the high-level inputs, so

(Continued on page 44)

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Another unique Loran feature is the Safety Tab™ (patent pending). A ½ turn of the Safety Tab™ makes it virtually impossible to erase a recording. However, unlike all other cassettes, you can restore its erase and record capability by simply turning the Safety Tab™ back to its original position.

Loran's unique tape formulations offer performance that matches the advanced technology of the Loran shell and tape guide systems.

Our Chrome equivalent high bias tape is coated with separate layers of two different oxides. It offers extremely low residual noise levels (- 56 dB, A weighted, relative 0 VU) and an MOL of +6 dB relative of 0 VU for 3 percent distortion. This tape provides magnificent low-end response, in addition to the high-end response normally found in other Chrome equivalent formulations.

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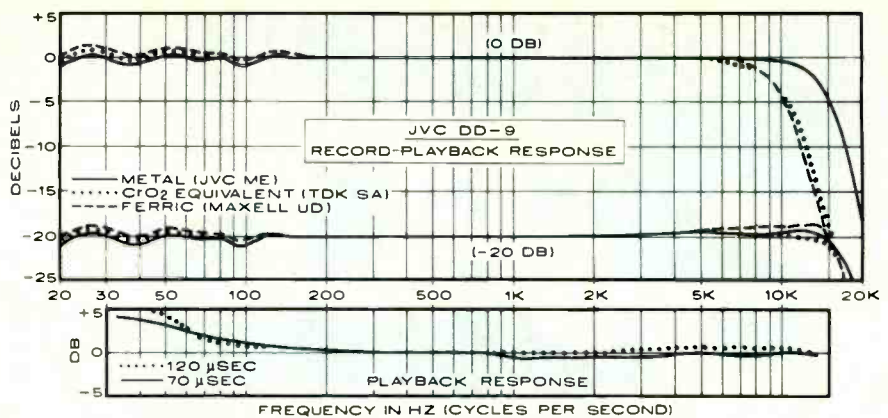
mike/line mixing is impossible without an external mixer.

The rear panel of the DD-9 contains the usual input and output jacks, an FM MPX switch (to eliminate possible interference from the stereo subcarrier signal when recording FM broadcasts), and a DIN-type connector that accepts a remote-control accessory. The overall dimensions of the JVC DD-9 are approximately 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 12 $\frac{7}{8}$. Price: \$900.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** JVC supplied the specific tapes used for the factory setup of our sample of the DD-9 and we used them as the primary reference for our measurements. As the manual indicates, these tapes are JVC-ME (metal), TDK-SA (CrO₂), and Maxell UD (ferric). Other premium tapes from BASF, 3M, Memorex, and Fuji produced substantially identical results with the factory settings, however, and by using the B.E.S.T. system we were able to bring even tapes with a known rising high-end or midrange droop into line.

Playback-only response was checked using Teac MTT-216 and MTT-217 test tapes (120- and 70-microsecond equalization, respectively) and, as the accompanying graph shows, response from the 315-Hz reference to the 14-kHz limit of the tapes was exceptionally flat—within ± 0.5 dB. The rising bass response indicated is largely a result of using full-track test tapes with quarter-track heads, as the flatter record-playback curves suggest.

Using the JVC-ME, TDK-SA, and Maxell UD tapes supplied, the overall response at the usual -20-dB measurement level was also extremely flat—within ± 1.5 dB from 20 Hz to about 16 kHz. Bass undula-



tions ("head bumps") were particularly well controlled. Above 16 kHz, response fell rather rapidly, with the -3-dB point at 17 kHz for SA and UD and at 17.5 kHz for the JVC metal. The ferric and CrO₂-type tapes reached -6 dB at about 18 kHz, the metal extending to about 19 kHz. This is clearly the result of a conscious engineering decision by JVC, for their narrow-gap (1-micrometer) playback head could provide "flat-line" response to 20 kHz. The trade-off, however, would be that much more recording equalization would have had to be used at the extreme high frequencies, inviting noise and possible distortion in an area where there is little musical content.

With a 0-dB input, the difference in high-frequency capacity between metal tape and ferric or CrO₂-equivalent formulations is clearly shown in the graph. Response from TDK-SA and Maxell UD fell to -3 dB at

approximately 9.5 kHz, while JVC-ME held up all the way to 14 kHz.

Using a 1,000-Hz tone recorded at a 0-dB level, we measured third-harmonic distortion of 0.54, 0.46, and 0.42 per cent for JVC-ME, TDK-SA, and Maxell UD, respectively. All three tapes reached the 3 per cent distortion point at +5 dB. Referred to this level, and on an unweighted basis with no noise reduction, their signal-to-noise ratios were 53.5, 53.8, and 51.6 dB, respectively. Adding ANRS/Dolby-B and CCIR weighting increased these figures to 63.5, 63.8, and 59 dB. With the same weighting and using Dolby-C, the respective signal-to-noise ratios rose to 72.2, 72.4, and 68.5 dB, truly extraordinary figures.

JVC specifies a wow/flutter rating of 0.055 per cent (DIN, peak-weighted) or 0.019 per cent (weighted rms)—the latter of which is the lowest specification we have ever seen for a cassette deck. In the lab the DD-9 more than met its DIN specification, measuring 0.036 per cent, one of the lowest numbers we have encountered. On a wrms basis, our test-equipment limitations prevented us from measuring better than 0.028 per cent. Suffice it to say that the DD-9 was about as free of wow and flutter as any deck we can recall testing.

There was no Dolby-level marking on the level display of the DD-9, but when we checked ANRS/Dolby-B tracking at a -20-dB level we found it to be essentially perfect (within ± 0.5 dB) out to the upper limit of the deck's response. Dolby-C tracking, at least in our early test sample, introduced a gradual rise in response between 2 and 15 kHz. The maximum discrepancy was about 3 dB at 15 kHz. However, since it appeared at levels of -20 and below, the audible effect was not significant.

At the line inputs a signal level of 83 millivolts (mV) was required to produce a 0-dB indication, and the output at this point was 400 mV. Microphone sensitivity was 0.2 mV. Fast-forward and rewind times for a C-60 cassette were 78 and 77 seconds.

● **Comment.** The JVC DD-9 gave us one of our first opportunities to use the new Dolby-C noise-reduction system. When Dolby-B was introduced about a decade ago it lowered the audible tape hiss so dramatically that for many it seemed to do all that needed to be done in this respect. But

(Continued on page 48)



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switching in the C-type Dolby, which not only lowers high-frequency hiss still further but also extends the noise-reduction processing down to the mid-low frequencies, instantly reveals how much remaining noise we had unconsciously learned to live with over the years.

Recordings from FM and most discs were audibly flawless; only on material with an extremely wide frequency range could a very slight dulling of the highs be perceived, and then only by an instantaneous comparison between the source and monitor switch positions.

All controls and features worked perfectly, and mechanical noise was so low as to be, practically speaking, inaudible. In sum, we found the JVC DD-9 to be a truly outstanding performer.

Circle 142 on reader service card



THE Rotel RT-1010 AM/FM stereo tuner features digital-synthesis tuning with a choice of auto or manual scan modes, memories for seven FM and seven AM stations, and a segmented LED signal-strength indicator that also serves as a multipath-distortion indicator. The all-black RT-1010 has a large "dial window" with a centered frequency-readout section containing bright yellow 1/2-inch-high numerals and identifiers for FM/AM and MHz/kHz. Below the digital display are scanning buttons marked UP and DOWN. A line on the panel indicates their functional relationship to an AUTO/MANUAL pushbutton. In its AUTO (out) setting, the tuner frequency steps in one-channel increments at the touch of a scanning button until the tuner acquires a signal strong enough to overcome its muting threshold. At that point it stops scanning and unmutes (the tuner's audio outputs are silenced while it is tuning).

When the AUTO/MANUAL button is pressed in to MANUAL, the tuner frequency changes in 200-kHz increments for FM, or 10-kHz increments for AM, each time it is pressed and released. If it is held in, after a few seconds the tuner scans rapidly in the selected direction, stopping only when the button is released. Other buttons include MOMENT HOLD (which function is not clearly explained anywhere in the instruction manual), MODE (STEREO or MONO), HI BLEND for stereo-noise reduction, MUTE, and MULTIPATH (which converts the signal-strength readout to a multipath indicator).

A row of buttons controls access to the station memories. They include a MEMORY PROGRAM button and seven numbered buttons. Pressing MEMORY PROGRAM lights a LED on the dial face for about 5 seconds, and a touch on any of the numbered buttons while it is lit stores the received frequency

for later recall by a touch on the same button. The selected memory is indicated by a row of LEDs above the buttons. The only other front-panel controls are the power button and the FM and AM band-selector buttons.

The rear of the RT-1010 contains the antenna binding posts, a ferrite-rod AM antenna, and the audio-output jacks. The Rotel RT-1010 tuner is 17 inches wide, 11 3/8 inches deep, and 3 7/8 inches high. It weighs 9 1/2 pounds. Price: \$325.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The measured performance of the Rotel RT-1010 generally agreed with its ratings (within the limits of normal measurement error). Its IHF usable sensitivity was 13.2 dBf (2.5 microvolts, or μV) in mono, and the stereo sensitivity was set by the switching threshold of 31.2 dBf (20 μV). The 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 15 dBf (3.3 μV) in mono, with 0.7 per cent total harmonic distortion (THD). In stereo it was 37.2 dBf (40 μV) with 0.5 per cent THD.

At a 65-dBf (1,000- μV) input, the signal-to-noise ratio was 73.5 dB in mono and 68.5 dB in stereo. The distortion at 65 dBf input was 0.18 per cent in mono and 0.17 per cent in stereo. The capture ratio was 1.25 dB at 45 dBf (100 μV), and the AM rejection was 60 dB at 65 dBf; each of these figures is a "worst-case" measurement in accordance with IHF (now EIA) standards. At the other signal level (either 45 or 65 dBf) each was slightly better.

The image rejection was a good 76 dB. Selectivity was average at 58 dB for alternate-channel spacing and 5.7 dB for adjacent channels. The stereo and muting thresholds were identical at 31.2 dBf (20 μV). The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage in our sample was unusually high (-39 dB

relative to 100 per cent modulation at 1,000 Hz), but the 38-kHz component was down 70 dB. While it is possible that the high pilot-carrier level could interfere with the operation of Dolby systems or cause "birdies" with a recorder's bias oscillator, this is less likely to happen with recent recorder models, which are well filtered. The hum was 67 dB below 100 per cent modulation and was mostly at 60 Hz.

We measured the IHF intermodulation distortion with equal-amplitude modulating signals, at 14,000 and 15,000 Hz, whose combined peak amplitude was equivalent to 100 per cent modulation of the signal generator. In mono, the third-order distortion at 13,000 Hz was -45 dB (referred to the modulating tone at 14,000 Hz) and the second-order distortion at 1,000 Hz was -55 dB (relative to 100 per cent modulation at 1,000 Hz). In stereo, the respective distortion levels were -46 and -50 dB, but there were a large number of additional spurious products at levels between -60 and -70 dB. This characteristic is typical, in greater or lesser degree, of all FM stereo tuners.

The FM-tuner frequency response was flat within 0.5 dB overall from 60 to 13,000 Hz and down about 1.5 dB at 30 and 15,000 Hz. The channel separation was about 50 dB at 1,000 Hz, falling to 35 dB at 30 Hz and 31.5 dB at 15,000 Hz. The AM-tuner frequency response was down 6 dB at 40 and 3,500 Hz.

● **Comment.** The Rotel RT-1010 functioned smoothly and quietly, delivering an audible quality that was essentially limited by the FM stations and their programs. The SCANNING tuning mode worked well and was easy to use whether one stepped in sin-

(Continued on page 52)

IF 75 WATTS ISN'T ENOUGH, TRY 45.

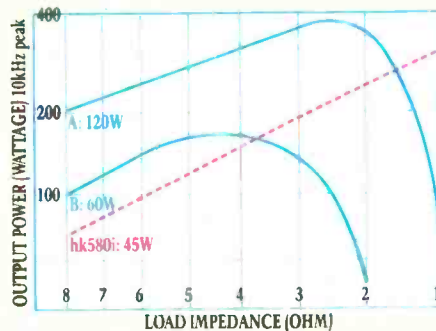


At first glance, you'd think a 75 watt receiver could outperform a 45 watt receiver easily. But FTC power ratings only tell you half the story—how a receiver will react under a continuous speaker impedance of 8 ohms.

Under realistic conditions, though, musical signals can actually cause speaker impedance to drop dramatically, demanding far more current than most 75 watt receivers can deliver. The receiver clips, robbing you of the true dynamics and excitement of your music.

That's why all Harman Kardon receivers have been designed with an enormous power reserve we call High Current Capability, or HCC. The use of special output devices is part of the HCC design. Our output transistors and power supplies, for example, will produce as much power as your speakers demand. Right up to the point at which the receiver shuts down to protect your speakers.

How much power they'll deliver depends on which receiver you choose. The hk580i shown above is rated at 45 watts per channel.* But it will deliver a full 200 watts or more



When you need power most—at low speaker impedances—conventional receivers simply can't deliver. But Harman Kardon receivers with HCC will deliver instantaneous power on demand until the receiver shuts down to protect your speakers.

of instantaneous power on demand, with absolutely no threat of clipping.

Of course power alone doesn't make a receiver great. There's distortion to conquer.

In most receivers, THD is reduced with a heavy application of negative feedback. But negative feedback causes a far more serious distortion called TIM or Transient Intermodulation Distortion. So we use less than 25 dB (compared to a more typical figure of 60-80 dB) to keep TIM inaudible to even the most critical ear.

But even a receiver that sounds great isn't perfect until it's got just the features you want. So we build

six receivers to let you pick and choose. From our modest hk350i, with analog tuner and 20 watts per channel, to our top of the line hk680i with digital tuner, 60 watts per channel and every convenience feature an audiophile might want. Accommodations for two sets of speakers and two tape decks. Tape monitor and two-way dubbing. High and subsonic filters. Tone defeat and loudness contour. And more.

So now that you know how committed we are to sonic accuracy, perhaps you should audition one of our High Current Receivers.

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*Harman Kardon power ratings: RMS, both channels driven into 8 ohms, 20Hz-20kHz with 0.05% THD.

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FILTER: 9 mg. "tar", 0.8 mg. nicotine, av. per cigarette by FTC method.

4mg



9mg



VANTAGE

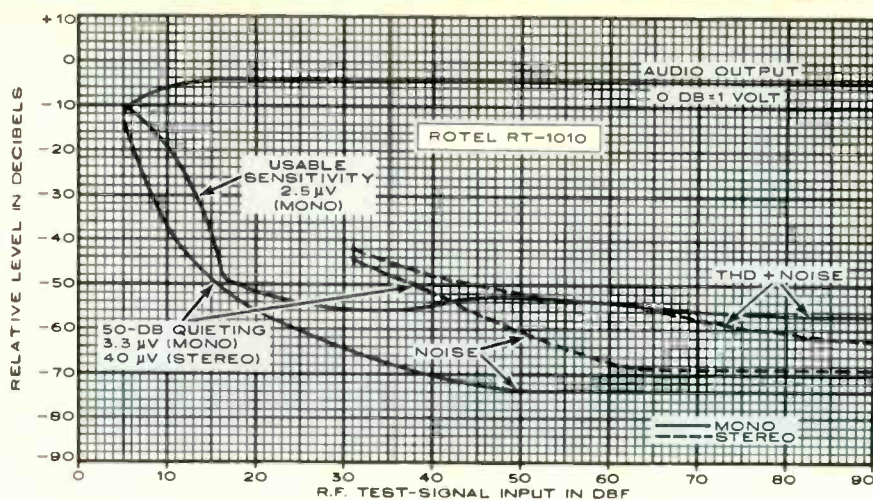
you want good taste and low tar, too.

gle-channel increments or scanned rapidly across the band (this took about 11 seconds for either FM or AM). There were never any modulation bursts to interfere with the silent scanning. In AUTO, the muting is always active, but in MANUAL it can be disabled for detecting weak signals.

The multipath indicator seemed to do its job better than many we have used. We normally experience considerable multipath distortion on some stations in our area, and they caused the LED display to fluctuate unmistakably.

The button marked MOMENT HOLD puzzled us. Even with the help of the instruction manual (which is written in seven languages and is profusely illustrated), we were never able to make the MOMENT HOLD button have the slightest effect on the tuner's operation.

The AM tuner, whose tested frequency response was at least average for the genre, nevertheless sounded much better than most AM tuners we have used. It was notably free of the buzzes and noises that plague AM reception in our particular locality. Since very few of the AM tuners we have tested have provided even marginally listenable quality, the RT-1010 stands apart in



this respect. Although this tuner lacks an audio-level adjustment, its output is about 0.6 volt for 100 per cent modulation, which is compatible with practically any amplifier we know of. All in all, the Rotel RT-1010 is an attractive, easy-to-use, and fine-sound-

ing tuner. Though not featuring any unique modes of operation or advancing the state of the art for tuners, it impresses us as a competently designed product.

Circle 143 on reader service card

Concord CMC 100 Phono Cartridge



THE Concord CMC 100 high-output moving-coil cartridge is compatible with the input impedance and gain of any standard magnetic-phono preamplifier. It differs from most moving-coil cartridges in several respects in addition to its rated output of 2 millivolts. The CMC 100 weighs a mere 2.3 grams, about one-third the mass of most cartridges, either moving-coil or moving-magnet types.

The high output of the Concord CMC 100 is obtained by using coils wound with many turns of fine wire, which results in a winding resistance of 110 ohms (low-output moving-coil cartridges often have resistances as low as a few ohms). The rated load for the CMC is between 30,000 and 100,000 ohms, and no capacitance requirement is specified.

The generating system of the CMC 100 features a novel "tri-pole" design. A single

samarium-cobalt magnet, resembling a miniature truncated horseshoe magnet, supplies a fixed flux to a tri-polar armature whose legs are perpendicular to each other. Two of them, at right angles to the cantilever, are the right- and left-channel coils. The third, a piece of magnetic material, is concentric with the cantilever and extends toward the stylus tip from the junction of the poles, which is located at the pivot point of the cantilever.

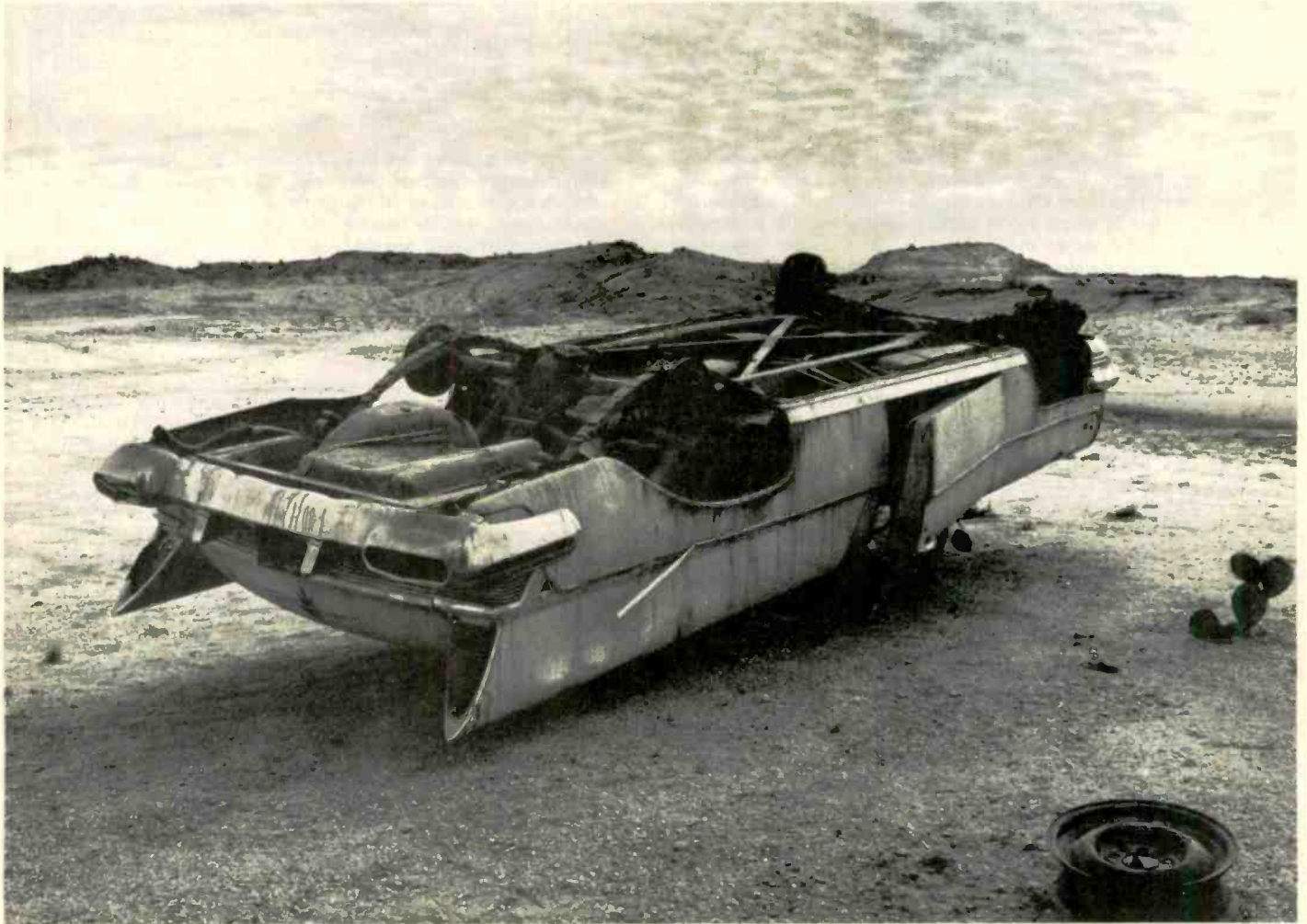
Cantilever motion moves the coils in the essentially constant flux field around the rear of the magnet, generating signal voltages in them. The pivot is a damping washer, and a tension wire extends to the rear of the pivot to position the stylus system correctly with relation to the magnet. The stylus is a 0.5-mil spherical diamond with a rated tip mass of 1 milligram. It is titanium-bonded to the aluminum cantilever. The

rated vertical tracking angle is 20 degrees, and the recommended tracking-force range is from 1.2 to 1.7 grams.

The Concord CMC cartridges (there are three others in the series) are claimed to have user-replaceable styli which are available as separate items from the manufacturer. Examination of the cartridge shows that its entire body must be replaced if the stylus is worn or damaged. The body plugs into a fixed mount having standard 1/2-inch mounting centers, so the generating system is replaced along with the stylus. The Concord CMC 100 is \$99.95. The SR 100 replacement "stylus" is \$59.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Concord CMC 100 was tested in the tone arm of an Onkyo CP-1130F record player. The total effective mass of the arm and car-
(Continued on page 54)

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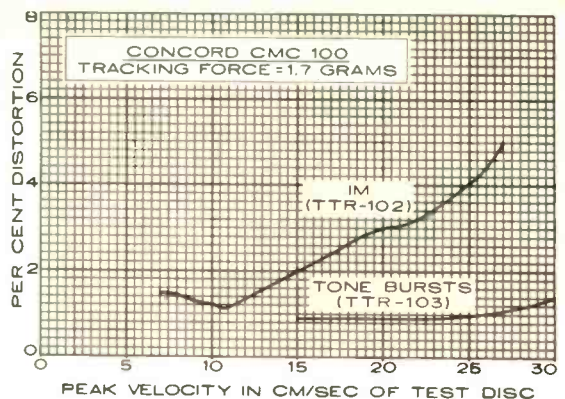
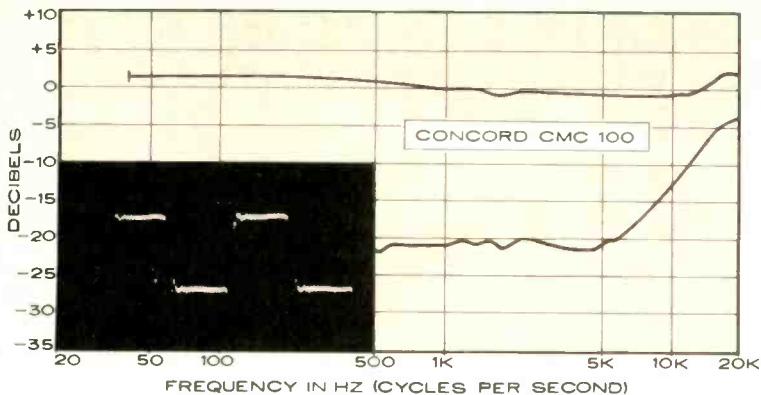
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In the graph at left, the upper curve represents the frequency response of the cartridge. The distance (measured in decibels) between it and the lower curve represents the separation between the two channels (anything above 15 dB is adequate). The inset oscilloscope photo shows the cartridge's response to a recorded 1,000-Hz square wave, which indicates resonances and overall frequency response (see text). At right is the cartridge's response to the intermodulation-distortion (IM) and 10.8-kHz tone-burst test bands of the TTR-102 and TTR-103 test records. These high veloc-

ities provide a severe test of a phono cartridge's performance. The intermodulation-distortion (IM) readings for any given cartridge can vary widely, depending on the particular IM test record used. The actual distortion figure measured is not as important as the maximum recorded-signal groove velocity that the phono cartridge is able to track before a sudden and radical increase in distortion takes place. There are very few commercial phonograph discs that embody musical audio signals whose average recorded groove velocities are much higher than about 15 centimeters per second.

tridge was about 14 grams, and the bass resonance was at about 10 Hz. We used a cartridge load of 47,000 ohms in parallel with 185 picofarads (pF), and measurements were also made with different loads to check their effect on the response.

With the CBS STR 100 test record, the left-channel response of the CMC 100 was flat up to 6,000 Hz, rising to +5 dB at 16,000 Hz and falling slightly between that frequency and 20,000 Hz. The right-channel response was similar, with a slightly smaller peak. The channel separation was about 22 dB in the midrange, 11 to 15 dB at 10,000 Hz, and 5 to 15 dB at 20,000 Hz.

With a capacitance of 420 pF loading the cartridge, the amplitude of the high-frequency peak was reduced by about 2 dB but the response was otherwise unaffected. A lower load resistance than the standard 47,000 ohms could be used to compensate for the effect of high load capacitance if that were desired. The square-wave re-

sponse with the CBS STR 112 test record was very good. There was a single overshoot and ringing cycle at about 15,000 Hz.

The CMC 100 tracked most of our high-level test records at 1.2 to 1.5 grams, including the 60-micrometer level of the German Hi Fi Number 2 record (1.2 grams). Since an increase to 1.7 grams improved the tracking ability to 80 micrometers (which is excellent cartridge performance), we used the 1.7-gram force during our other tests.

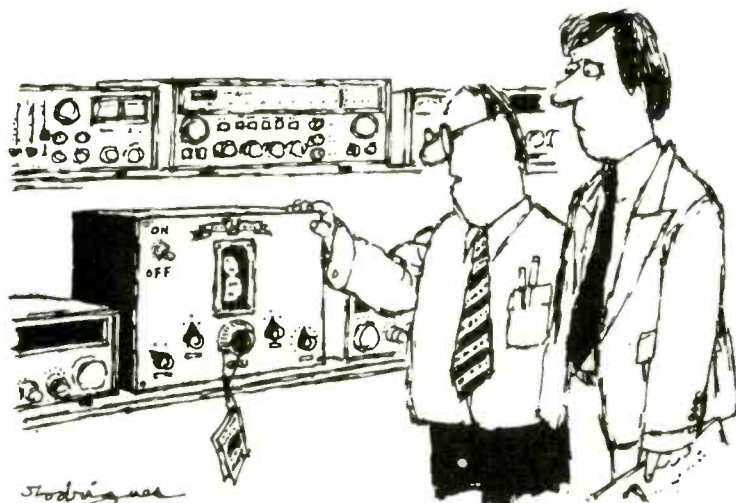
The measured vertical-tracking angle was 28 degrees, and the cartridge output was just under 2 millivolts from the 3.54-cm/sec standard level bands on the STR 100 record. The channel levels were matched within 0.3 dB. Tracking distortions, measured with the Shure TTR-102 intermodulation test record, were close to the record's residual levels (1 to 1.5 per cent) at velocities up to 12 cm/sec and increased to only 5 per cent at 27 cm/sec. There was no obvious mistracking even at

that level. The high-frequency tracing of the tone bursts on the Shure TTR-103 test record was also very good, with the distortion readings varying between 0.85 and 1.15 per cent as the velocity increased from 15 to 30 cm/sec.

● *Comment.* Except for some mistracking on the highest levels of the bells and combined harp/flute sections on Shure's "Audio Obstacle Course—ERA IV" record, the Concord CMC 100 had no difficulty with the high-level music recordings on this and the earlier ERA III record.

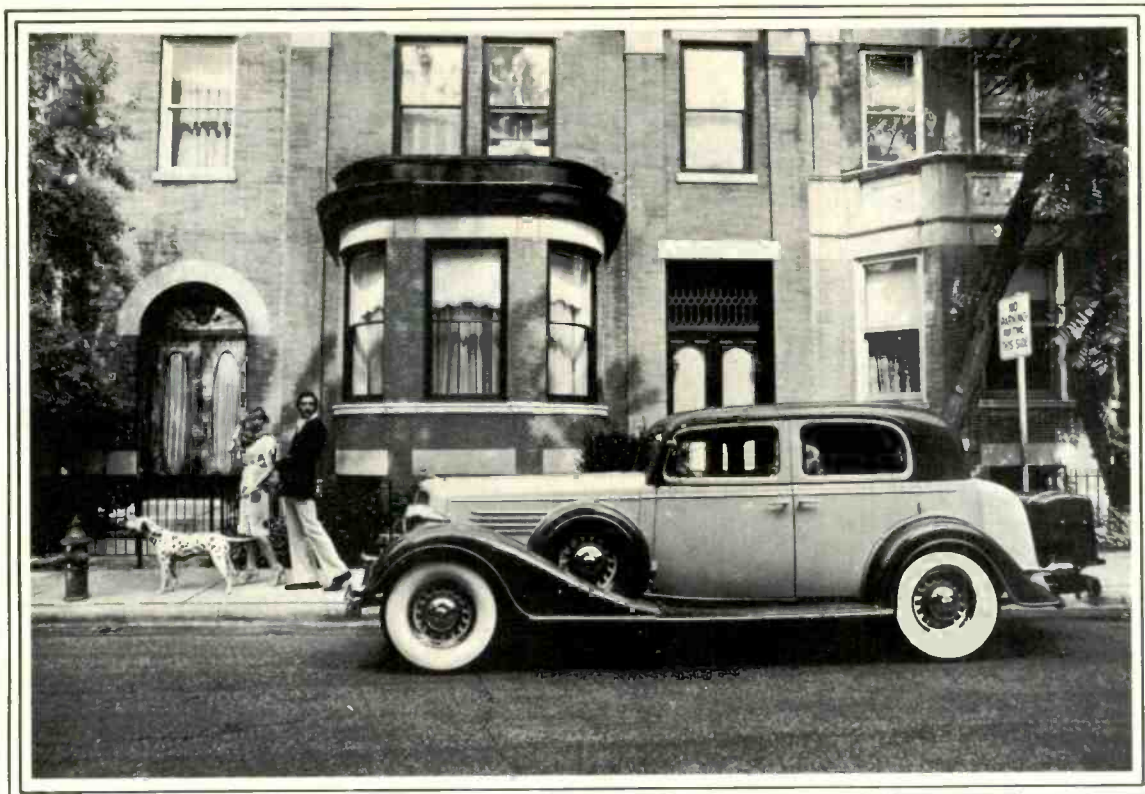
We listened to the CMC 100 playing a variety of records through an amplifier whose phono inputs could be switched from MM to MC modes (which changed the input resistance from 47,000 to 100 ohms and altered the gain but otherwise had no effect on the phono performance of the amplifier). Other than the level change, we found no difference whatever in the sound of the CMC 100 between the two modes of operation. This suggests that it could be used quite well with practically any preamplifier phono input regardless of input resistance, capacitance, or gain.

The sound of the Concord CMC 100 was always clean and highly musical, but there was a definite brightness, sometimes heard as a "sizzle" quality with records having a strong high-end content, especially if the speakers also emphasized the extreme high frequencies. With speakers having a smooth, uncolored high-frequency response the CMC 100 sounded just fine. Its low resistance shunting the preamplifier input tends to minimize amplifier noise, and its output is great enough that the volume control should never have to be set too high (yet not so great as to present an overload problem with any preamplifier). And as a bonus, the unusually low mass of the Concord cartridge should also result in an ideally placed low-frequency resonance (about 10 Hz) with most popular tone arms.



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Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



THE NONCOMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY

THIS is a column about the natural trumpet, the trumpet music of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and two trumpet players. If that statement and the title of this column do not jibe in your mind, I urge you to read on, for there are enough connections here to make a network.

Don Smithers and Edward Tarr are two of the finest trumpet players in the world today, with a proficiency in the incredibly difficult clarino trumpet music of the Baroque that would have been almost unthinkable a couple of decades ago. They each have a new album on the market. Tarr's on Eurodisc (87 815 MK), with music of Vivaldi, Torelli, Domenico Gabrielli, Spenger, and Michael Haydn, and Smithers' on Philips (6769 056), a two-record set of music by Zelenka, Schmelzer, Heinrich and Carl Biber, Altenburg, Vejvanovsky, Mozart, and not-Mozart. If the purpose of these albums is to entertain and edify an audience, both trumpeters have problems.

Smithers' is the more serious—problem, that is. Revivals of forgotten music (the trumpet music of the Baroque was forgotten by 1800) involve two different things: repertoire and instrument. The repertoire part of the Baroque trumpet revival started about twenty years ago. The instrument had to be a later study because of its difficulty.

The Baroque natural trumpet has no valves or keys. This means that it is incapable of playing a normal diatonic scale except in its high register. Playing up there demands immense stamina and lip control. Furthermore, even in that register there are two notes that are naturally out of tune and have to be modified by some means. Some recent players of the natural trumpet have apparently added a pitch-correcting finger-hole to their instruments to combat this problem. Not Smithers.

Smithers, on this album at least, is a purist. He plays all but one selection "with an original mouthpiece and on a reconstructed instrument restored according to verifiable historical principles." He is a great trumpeter, but I have to tell you that there are more fluffed and half-fluffed notes here than I have heard anywhere since the Teleman Society recording of Handel's *Fireworks Music*. As musicological "work-in-

progress," the album is impressive and interesting. As an album to be listened to for enjoyment by an unsuspecting music lover, it is a disaster.

Some warning is offered in Smithers' written notes, but they are sealed away inside the double fold. Also sealed away (maybe somewhere in Philips' basement) is the information about who or what is playing on this record. What, for example, is the "Clarion Consort," listed as the accompanying group? Strings? Winds? Smithers refers to the "unusually scored music of Mozart" here, but nowhere is that scoring given. The Altenburg concerto, Smithers says, is "now thought to have been composed by someone else." Really? And so on.

EDWARD TARR's album does not suffer from insufficient notes; it *has* no notes, at least none on the music. Three brief paragraphs identify the performers and one of them is signed "L.H."; there is no one listed on the album whose initials are L.H. Trumpeter Tarr is described as "the only one who performs . . . not only on the usual modern trumpets, but also . . . on the valveless Baroque trumpet." This is obviously incorrect: how about Smithers? And what does Tarr perform on here? (He performs very well but straight into the mike.) One record label says "hohe Trompete" (high trumpet); the other says "Barocktrompete" (with or without fingerholes?). The album cover says nothing. It might be nice to know a bit about the composers too; who, for example, is Johann Spenger?

The accompanying group is the Festival Strings of Lucerne, but who plays the woodwinds in the Spenger concerto? A credit is given to Heinrich Huber for playing the "Barockposaune," but there is no work listed here that calls for a Baroque trombone. Even the recording is a partial mystery. Preceding the album number is the word "Quadro," but only on the disc label is it made clear that this is an SQ quadraphonic recording.

It has always struck me as funny that the United States government considers phonograph records to be part of the communications industry. Here, certainly, is proof positive of the contrary. □

The level of conventional specifications is now
so uniformly high that you have to look for
subtler differences when you go out

TURNTABLE SHOPPING

By Peter Mitchell



LET'S take the bull by the horns right away: Does it really make sense to invest in a new turntable now, when all-digital records played by lasers appear to be on the verge of making conventional discs and turntables obsolete? The answer is an unequivocal yes. Digital technology is not going to displace the LP record overnight. Furthermore, present estimates are that the Sony/Philips digital-disc players won't reach the U.S. market until sometime in late 1982, and when they do they will probably cost \$500 or more and be accompanied by an available music repertoire of only 100 to 150 discs costing about \$15 each. After that it will take years to accumulate a large selection of all kinds of music in the pure-digital format—and remember, the present Schwann catalogs list over 50,000 LP discs.

During the transition period—it ought to last at least five years—record companies will have to issue most new digitally mastered releases in both pure digital and analog formats (perhaps with CX or dbx encoding on the latter). And unless it is your custom to play only new releases, you'll probably con-

tinue to need an analog turntable to play all your old favorites even after you buy a digital player—at least until those old favorites are rereleased in digital form. And so you can safely invest in a new turntable now, secure in the knowledge that you'll get many years of use out of it before it starts to suffer from technological unemployment.

NOT many years ago a turntable was a simple product. Typically, its electrical part consisted only of an a.c. power cord, a motor, and a switch to turn the motor on and off. The rest was mechanical: bearings, pulleys, a rubber belt or idler wheel to rotate the platter by friction, and an assortment of springs, levers, and gears providing whatever automatic tone-arm operation was desired.

A few turntables—including some of the highest-performance models—still fit this description. But in recent years the majority of turntables have been transformed by a massive infusion of new technology. In today's record players you can expect to encounter such solid-state exotica as Hall-effect magnetic sensors, phase-locked-loop feedback control, quartz-crystal oscilla-

tors, optical servos, CMOS logic ICs, and in some cases as much electronic circuitry as is contained in a typical FM tuner. And in the packaging aspects—the materials used to contain all this electronic hardware—you will find increasing use of the latest space-age plastics and resins.

Nevertheless, a turntable still has just three essential functions to perform under real-life (as opposed to test-bench) conditions. It must

- rotate the record at the correct speed
- support the pickup cartridge so that its stylus can trace the groove accurately, and
- isolate the record and stylus from unwanted vibrations.

All of the considerable technical jargon about turntables and tone arms is related to how these functions are performed and—more important—to how *well* they are performed.

As you shop for a new turntable you will find many choices presented to you: belt drive vs. direct drive, a pivoted tone arm vs. a radial-tracking one, extensive vs. no automation, and so on. This article will survey these design alternatives and try to evaluate their significance.

Belt or Direct Drive?

While many means of making the record-bearing platter rotate can be imagined and built, only two are common today. In one, a motor spinning at several hundred revolutions per minute is mounted in the turntable's base and coupled to the platter by a pulley and a thin rubber belt, the latter also serving as a mechanical filter to prevent motor vibrations from reaching the platter. In the second, the "direct"-drive method, the platter rests directly on the slowly turning motor shaft, an extension of which serves as the turntable spindle. Since there is no physical isolation between the motor and the platter, sophisticated engineering is required to minimize motor vibrations that could reach the record and be picked up as "rumble" by the stylus. Therefore, direct-drive machines tend to cost more than belt-drive units having the same features. On the other hand, since it has none of the frictional losses contributed by a slipping belt, a direct-drive machine can get up to exact speed almost instantly when switched on (a particu-

lar advantage for radio stations) and can offer slightly more accurate speed and possibly greater longevity.

The decade-long advertising battle is finally over between adherents of these two techniques for making the platter rotate. It is now clear that neither is inherently superior to the other in actual sonic performance; excellent and mediocre turntables can be produced employing either drive system. The belt drive has the advantage of simplicity: in the lower portion of the price range (under \$150) it is easier to build a belt-drive unit of good performance, relying on the constant 60-Hz frequency of the a.c. power line for speed control. In the middle-price range (\$200 to \$400), where most turntable models fall, the advantage shifts to direct drive. Once a designer has provided the electronic circuits needed to regulate the speed of a direct-drive system, it is easy to add further refinements such as a quartz-crystal oscillator for really exact speed or a feedback servo to detect and correct variations in speed during play.

In the past, some direct-drive motors tended to "cog"—that is, to deliver

their torque in a series of pulses rather than in a smooth flow of power. In current models, except perhaps some of the cheapest, these disturbances have generally been reduced to insignificant levels. Since both belt- and direct-drive turntables can be counted on to rotate the platter at the correct speed with inaudible rumble, rational choice of a new turntable must be based on its features, on the performance of its tone arm, and on its suppression of a variety of unwanted vibrations.

Pivoted or Radial Tone Arm?

It used to be that the radial-tracking tone arm, which rides on a straight rail across the radius of a record rather than pivoting in an arc from a base at one corner of the turntable, was a complex and delicate mechanical arrangement of bearings, cams, motors, and leaf switches to sense any deviation of the arm from perpendicularity. It was costly, unreliable, and of interest only to the most finicky audiophiles. But lately the resources of contemporary electronics have been focused on the

TURNTABLE SHOPPING...

"... the underside of some new players is almost completely occupied by printed-circuit boards."

idea, and the result is a new generation of radials that are relatively inexpensive to manufacture and don't need a brain surgeon to operate. The modern radial arm is usually a short, straight tube driven by miniature d.c. motors along a polished straight track, frequently in response to commands from digital logic circuits controlled by feedback signals that are supplied by optical sensors.

The principal problem that is solved by the design of radial arms is that of tangency error. The reason radial arms were developed in the first place is that they mimic the motion of the cutting lathe, holding the phono cartridge precisely tangent to the groove while moving it along a radius from the edge of the record toward its center. In reality, most radial arms (also described as "linear-tracking" or as "straight-line-tracking") themselves continually depart slightly from perfect tangency; the arm-controlling circuits use these slight departures to generate the control signals for the motor which drives the arm along its track.

The performance of a pivoted tone arm has traditionally depended on simple geometric factors (getting the angles and alignments just right) and exact mechanical design. A few manufacturers are now using microprocessors and miniature servomotors in the design of pivoted arms, substituting electronic parameters for mechanical ones. (When these arm-controlling circuits are added to the elaborate speed-regulating circuitry of a direct-drive motor, the underside of some new players is almost completely occupied by printed-circuit boards.)

Even if radial arms always maintained perfect tangency, this would give them only a slight advantage over pivoted arms, for in a well-designed pivoted arm the tangency error (or "lateral tracking error") is quite small anyway, usually less than one degree in the inner grooves where tangency is most important, and very small errors in cartridge installation can more than wipe out any tangency advantage in a specific design.

Does this mean that tangency error can be ignored? Unfortunately, no, for not all cartridge-installation instructions nor all tone arms have been correctly designed to eliminate it. When reading reports or ads containing tone-arm specs, therefore, look for evidence of concern with correct arm geometry. And be cautious in installing your unit, for even if the designer has done his job well, you can undo his best efforts by mounting the cartridge at a slight angle or a bit too far to the front or rear of the headshell. The practical solution is to invest \$20 or so in a phono-alignment gauge (such as those made by Mobile Fidelity, DB Systems, and others). With it you can usually correct any errors in arm geometry or cartridge installation, reducing lateral tracking er-

does the consumer; no bearing design has proved to be intrinsically superior to the others; the skill and precision brought to bear on the manufacturing process is by far the most important factor.

Arm Mass and Resonance

In an ideal world, the tone arm would always support the cartridge at a fixed distance above the record surface and exert a constant downward force on the stylus. But the arm and cartridge have mass, and they are resting on the cartridge's springy cantilever suspension, which is a compliance. When such a mass/compliance system is disturbed, it naturally vibrates. The largest vibrations occur when the stimulus coincides

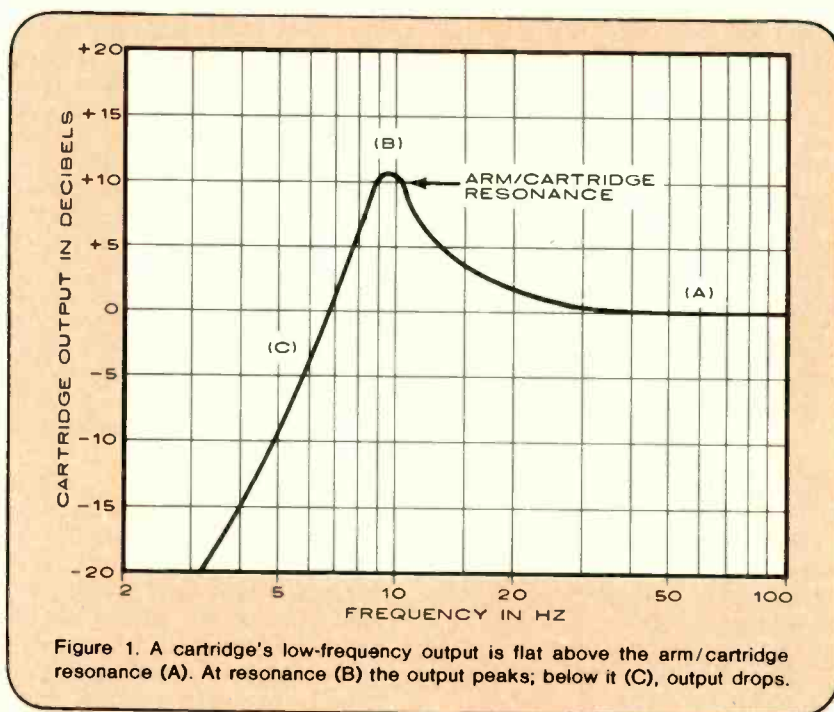


Figure 1. A cartridge's low-frequency output is flat above the arm/cartridge resonance (A). At resonance (B) the output peaks; below it (C), output drops.

ror to its theoretical minimum, which for a 9-inch arm should be very low.

What about tone-arm shape? Should a pivoted arm be S-shaped (with a double bend), J-shaped (straight except for a single bend just behind the head shell), or completely straight (the arm entering the headshell at an angle)? There is no easy answer, though the trend lately is toward straight and J-shaped arms; all else being equal (seldom the case), an S-shaped arm tends to be a bit heavier and more costly to make. Similarly, the choice of pivot bearings (knife edge, ball-race, cone bearings, etc.) is a matter that concerns the manufacturer much more than it

with the arm/cartridge system's frequency of resonance—determined by its specific mass and compliance. The greater the mass and the higher the compliance, the lower the resonance frequency.

If that frequency is substantially lower than about 8 to 10 Hz, the resonant system may be stimulated into oscillation by motor rumble and record warps—not just the obvious undulations, but also the smaller ripples present on virtually every disc. Moreover, in the real world, the shelf or other surface on which the turntable rests is not motionless; it has its own vibrations and resonances, stimulated by the infra-

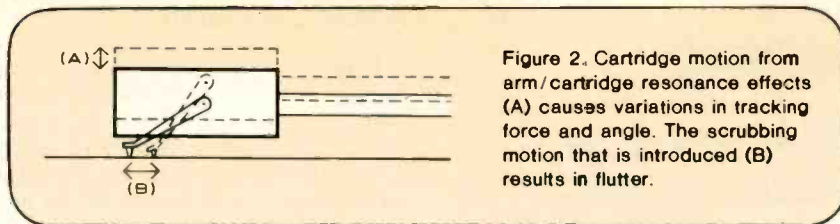


Figure 2. Cartridge motion from arm/cartridge resonance effects (A) causes variations in tracking force and angle. The scrubbing motion that is introduced (B) results in flutter.

sonic vibrations of street traffic, footfalls, refrigerator compressors, furnace blowers, and, of course, the sonic product of your loudspeakers. And since the isolating effect of most turntable suspension systems becomes progressively poorer with decreasing frequency, the lower-frequency perturbations are readily transmitted to the record and the stylus. By keeping the arm/cartridge resonance at a higher frequency (somewhere above that of most record ripples and below the audio band), the influence of these vibrations on stylus motion can be reduced (see Figure 1).

Resonant vibration of the tone arm has several deleterious effects:

- As the height of the cartridge above the disc surface varies, the vertical-tracking angle and stylus-rake angle also vary (see Figure 2). Note that the effect is more significant with short arms than with long ones.

- The up-and-down motion of the tone arm relative to the record surface produces a small back-and-forth "scrubbing" motion of the stylus along the groove, and this causes the music to be frequency-modulated. What results is a form of flutter, and it tends to occur at rates of a few cycles per second—unfortunately, rates at which the ear is most sensitive to flutter. In fact, experiments in the U.S. and Europe have repeatedly demonstrated that, under typical operating conditions, turntables often exhibit higher amounts of wow and flutter than their test-bench-derived specifications indicate, and this flutter can be closely correlated with the frequency and severity of the arm/cartridge resonance. Taming the resonance reduces the flutter.

- As the tone arm vibrates the cartridge, its tracking force varies, the stylus alternately pressing down with excessive force and then floating nearly free with insufficient force for undistorted tracking. Experiments have indicated that, under typical playing conditions, the tracking force may be continually varying by 20 to 50 per cent or more of its preset value (Figure 3).

- An underdamped resonance, by its very nature, can have an amplitude of vibration that is larger (typically three times larger in phono cartridges) than its stimulus. Since every motion of the stylus generates an electrical output from the cartridge, these large resonant motions tend to produce strong cartridge signals that can overload phono-preamp circuits, intermodulate with the music to produce muddy sound, and cause large woofer-cone motions that use up your speaker's linear voice-coil range—and, of course, also "waste" amplifier power.

For all these reasons, one of the most important goals in modern tone-arm design is to keep the frequency of the resonance above 8 Hz or so, where statistically there will be fewer perturbations to stimulate it. This can be accomplished to some extent by reducing the cartridge's compliance, but since the low-frequency tracking ability of a cartridge is proportional to its compliance, it cannot be reduced too far. In general, the best way to raise the resonant frequency to the desired range is to reduce the combined mass of the cartridge and arm.

What counts in determining the resonance is not the total mass of the arm but its "effective" mass, which consists

mainly of the mass of that portion of the arm closest to the stylus—which is to say the mass of the headshell and the weight of the cartridge itself. (Surprisingly, the mass of the counterweight contributes less to the arm's effective mass because the counterweight is located close to the tone-arm pivots.) Thus the "heaviest" arms tend to be those equipped with a solid aluminum headshell and a sturdy plug-in socket. Lighter arms employ plastic or carbon-fiber headshells and slimmed-down fittings. Or they may have their plug-in sockets moved to the rear of the arm, close to the pivots.

Another desirable goal is reduction of the *strength* (the "Q") of the resonance. One almost universal technique is to use a compliantly mounted counterweight that is roughly tuned to resonate in the same range as the cartridge/tone-arm mass at the other end of the arm. The out-of-phase resonance of the counterweight splits the main arm/cartridge resonance into a pair of smaller-amplitude resonances at different frequencies. Dual has a double compliance in some of their counterweights designed to broaden the "Q" so that it will match the tone-arm/cartridge resonance characteristics better; the counterweight can be "tuned" to the specific frequency of the arm/cartridge combination. Viscous damping is also quite effective in suppressing the resonance; it can take the form of silicone in the pivots, an accessory damping device mounted on the end of the arm with the cartridge, or even a brush built into the cartridge itself.

The Vibration Problem

A phono cartridge can respond to groove-wall modulations that are difficult for even the finest optical microscopes to resolve, and an amplifier typically boosts the pickup's output voltage

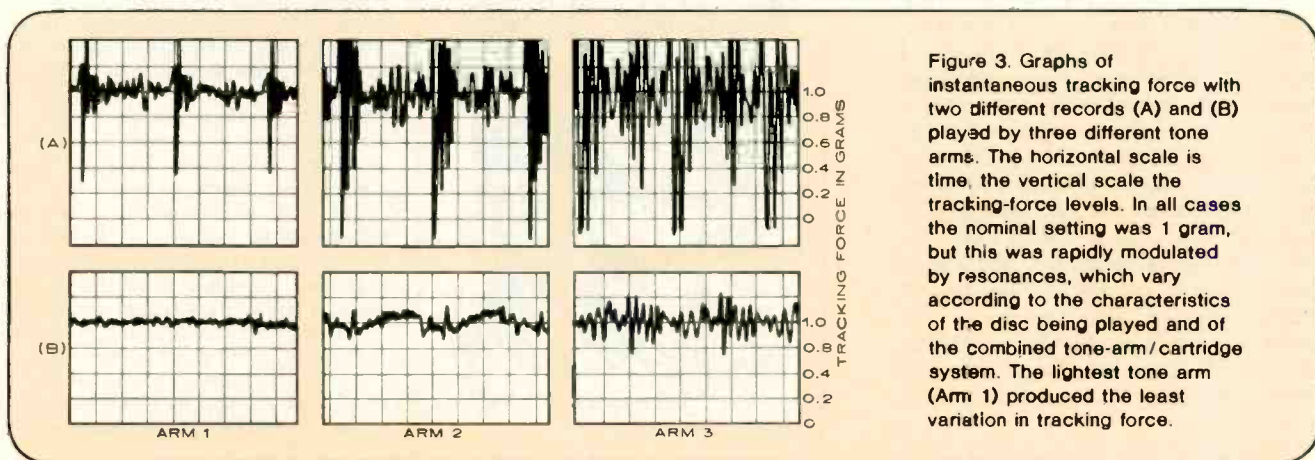


Figure 3. Graphs of instantaneous tracking force with two different records (A) and (B) played by three different tone arms. The horizontal scale is time, the vertical scale the tracking-force levels. In all cases the nominal setting was 1 gram, but this was rapidly modulated by resonances, which vary according to the characteristics of the disc being played and of the combined tone-arm/cartridge system. The lightest tone arm (Arm 1) produced the least variation in tracking force.

TURNTABLE SHOPPING===

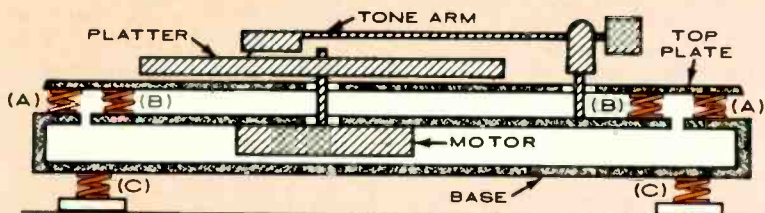


Figure 4. Many turntables use springs (A) to isolate the top plate on which the moving parts are mounted. A better system is to suspend a motor/ tone-arm subchassis (B) from a fixed top plate. Compliant feet (C) can also improve structural isolation.

by a factor of ten thousand or more at low-bass frequencies. The conventional record-playing system, therefore, is a rather sensitive seismic detector, reacting not only to local earthquakes but also to the multitude of floor and wall vibrations common to home environments. One of the most important functions of a turntable is to minimize the influence of these environmental vibrations on record playback.

It is very difficult, however, to make any easy generalizations about this aspect of turntable performance. For example, one popular and effective method of reducing a turntable's vibration sensitivity is to make it very heavy. But that doesn't mean that lightweight models are necessarily inferior. An ideal way to isolate a turntable from vibrations is to suspend it (or just its platter and tone arm) from very soft springs—as AR did with its turntable almost twenty years ago. But that can make it somewhat wobbly, leading to groove jumping if you have a springy floor. The now-usual method of fastening the turntable assembly to a base with or without springs between and then supporting the system on compliant feet is generally less effective, yet it does the job for some designs (see Figure 4).

So instead of relying on generalizations, you will have to read the test reports or conduct your own tests of the specific models you are considering. One test you can do in the showroom is to place the stylus in a record groove, shut off the turntable to stop the rotation of the record (in some turntables this can be done only by unplugging its line cord), and lightly tap the shelf that the turntable is resting on (the amplifier's volume control should be set slightly higher than normal). The weaker and briefer the resulting thump from the speakers, the better the turntable's isolation from structure-borne vibration.

One flaw in this test is that its result

is influenced by the arm/cartridge resonance, so for the most valid comparison you ought ideally to use the same cartridge in each turntable being compared. In any case, you should repeat this test when you get your turntable installed at home. If you get a substantial boom from the speaker (or, worse yet, a sustained roar), then you need more compliant feet or an isolating sub-base beneath the turntable. A crude but effective vibration filter can be made by placing the turntable on a piece of plywood that rests on a foam-rubber cushion or several soft kitchen sponges.

Acoustic Sensitivity

Every record player inadvertently acts as a microphone, responding to the sound in the room as well as to the signal in the groove. You can easily demonstrate this for yourself. Place the stylus in the groove, switch off the motor (or unplug the line cord) to stop the record from rotating, and record the output from the turntable on a tape deck just as if you were copying the record. Play some music in the room, using a second stereo system or radio, and then play back the tape. You may find that you have a weak but recognizable recording of the sound, picked up because the record acts as a large microphone diaphragm and conducts the resulting vibration to the stylus.

This purely acoustic pickup is very bassy because of the preamp's RIAA equalization, which boosts the bass by 20 dB and rolls off the treble an additional 20 dB. A record player's acoustic sensitivity can therefore make the stereo system's reproduction of legitimate bass signals somewhat boomy and muddy, since low-frequency sounds produced by your loudspeakers are picked up by the turntable and recirculated at a lower level. Generally speaking, this is not a dramatic flaw in a record-playing system, but it is one of many minor

WHY THOSE SPECIFICATIONS AREN'T MUCH HELP



CONVENTIONAL specifications for turntables are not of significant help to the buyer wishing to make meaningful comparisons among competing products. In truth, they provide as little guidance as, say, the total-harmonic-distortion specification for amplifiers, and for some of the same reasons.

1. The usual turntable specifications cover rumble, wow and flutter, and speed accuracy. Twenty years ago there were plainly audible differences among turntables in these performance areas, and it made sense to base a buying decision on the specs. But today the overall level of performance has reached the point where *audible* rumble or flutter just isn't a problem any more. If you hear flutter in a new turntable, you can assume either that the unit is defective (in which case the advertised specs don't apply anyway) or there is some other problem, such as an undamped resonance, which needs attention.

The areas where significant, audible differences occur in turntables today—such as tone-arm geometry and pivot damping, vibration sensitivity and acoustic sensitivity—are not covered by standardized specifications because manufacturers have not agreed on uniform ways to measure them. So you're pretty much on your own. One exception is the tone arm's effective mass, which

sources of coloration whose elimination can provide cleaner reproduction.

A related problem source is the plastic dust cover, especially if records are played when it is in the raised position. The acoustic sensitivity of most turntables is worst with the dust cover up, less severe with it down—and least severe with the dust cover completely removed. The problem is that the cover can act as another large, lightweight microphone diaphragm, picking up sonic vibration from the air and conducting it into the turntable. If you don't want to go to the trouble of removing the dust cover completely when you play records, at least you should check to be sure that you can play records with the cover down.

A soft rubber platter mat with a surface that is in intimate contact with the under surface of the record will efficiently damp the record's vibrations and thus suppress its microphone-like acoustic sensitivity. To illustrate this, simply repeat the acoustic-sensitivity test with the record lying on a bare metal platter that absorbs none of the disc's vibration and observe how much stronger its recorded output is.

Another role played by the platter mat is the suppression of resonant vibrations in the metal platter itself. The mat's effectiveness at this task is easily

tested: remove the mat, tap the platter, and listen to it ring like a bell; then replace the mat and tap the edge of the platter again—if the mat is a good one you will hear only a mild "thunk."

If the mat supplied with the turntable is more decorative than functional, there are numerous accessory replacement mats available, some of them remarkably efficient at absorbing record and platter vibration. If you contemplate using such a mat, first check to be sure that the turntable's original mat is removable. In some turntables the platter area contains features (a record-size sensor, for example) that preclude the use of a different mat.

Among the replacement platter mats on the market you will find samples made of soft rubber compounds, cork, felt, and spongy plastic foam. You'll also find harder materials such as ceramic and even glass used by a few audiophiles who apparently *prefer* extraneous vibrations.

Whatever mat you use, it will do its job best if it is in intimate contact with both the record and the platter. Weights and clamps that press down on the record in its label area can be helpful in a subtle way, but weights heavy enough to be effective may also be heavy enough to cause accelerated wear of the turntable's bearings, so a light-

weight clamp that fastens on the center spindle is a wiser choice if you want to experiment with this refinement.

IN addition to platter mats, there has been an explosion of other turntable accessories in recent years. Perhaps the final decade of the analog turntable will turn out to be its Baroque Era, the basic mechanism being increasingly festooned with elaborate refinements and miscellaneous gewgaws of uncertain sonic relevance. Many of these accessories are quite costly considering what's in them. They resemble special speaker cables in that the technical explanations of their presumed benefits are often unclear or just plain wrong and the benefits themselves are often vanishingly subtle if not completely illusory. But in view of the delicacy of the signals with which the turntable must deal and the complexity of the vibration environment in which it must operate, modifications of a "plain" turntable can sometimes yield unexpectedly gratifying results. So open your mind, feel free to experiment, trust your ears—and always get a money-back guarantee. □

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can be measured without difficulty. It is specified by a few manufacturers and ought to be specified by all. Generally speaking, an effective mass of less than about 10 grams (excluding the cartridge) is considered low, from 10 to about 16 grams is medium, and over 16 grams is high. A high-mass arm should be used only with cartridges known to have relatively low compliance.

2. Even if the standard specifications for rumble and flutter were an important part of your buying choice, you really couldn't make trustworthy comparisons among units specifying them. Studies made at the European laboratories of B&K Instruments and confirmed in experiments by the Boston Audio Society and other organizations have shown that measurements of rumble and of wow and flutter are strongly influenced by the frequency and severity of the arm/cartridge resonance and by well-known imperfections in the available test records. Thus, the ratings reflect the circumstances of the test as much as they do the performance of the product.

If a manufacturer uses the same cartridge and the same test disc to test all of the turntables in his line, then you may be able to rank the relative performance of those models according to their specs. But if the flutter of a Brand A turntable is rated at 0.04 per cent and that of a

Brand B is rated at 0.06 per cent, you have no assurance that one is really any better than the other. The measured difference may simply reflect the use of different brands of cartridges for the tests by the two companies. If you buy one of these turntables and manage to achieve optimal damping of the arm/cartridge resonance, you may obtain a flutter figure even lower than the one in the maker's specs. And if you install a high-compliance cartridge in an undamped high-mass arm, you may be constantly annoyed by plainly audible flutter, one far worse than the specification had led you to expect.

Still, how good should the rated values be? Here is a general guide.

Speed accuracy. Plus or minus 1 per cent is okay and 0.5 per cent is as good as most people will ever need. However, if you have perfect pitch or want to accompany records with a musical instrument of your own, you probably ought to get a turntable with a variable-pitch control so you can fine-tune its speed yourself—especially since some records are *cut* at the wrong pitch.

Rumble. The "unweighted" rumble of a good turntable usually measures around -35 dB, more or less. The more commonly specified "weighted" rumble, adjusted to reflect the ear's relative insensitivity to very low frequencies,

usually measures in the vicinity of -60 dB with ARLL weighting and even lower (-70 dB or better) with DIN B weighting. As with flutter, differences of a few decibels among competing products are unimportant since they may reflect measuring conditions rather than genuine differences in performance.

Wow and flutter. Usually expressed as a "weighted" flutter reading, reflecting the ear's greater sensitivity to pitch wobbles that occur a few times per second. If the value is "DIN peak weighted," as commonly specified by European and American designers, a value of less than 0.15 per cent is good and less than 0.1 per cent is excellent. If an averaged measurement is used ("wrms," favored by most Japanese manufacturers), then the values should be lower: below 0.08 per cent is good; below 0.05 per cent is excellent.

These aren't the only specs published for turntables, of course. Cable capacitance should be specified, since it influences the unit's potential compatibility with your pickup cartridge. A specification of lateral tracking error for a pivoted arm (in degrees/inch), when supplied, is encouraging evidence of a manufacturer's awareness of the importance of correct arm geometry, but the rated value may represent the designer's intent rather than his achievement.



The case for MULTIPLE MIKING IN RECORDING

By Andrew Kazdin

THERE is a simple password that will allow a practitioner in the field of sound reproduction to authenticate his professional credentials immediately: a sworn allegiance to the principle of *fidelity*. If high fidelity is the principal and consistent goal in the reproduction of music, then only Good and Truth ought to follow. But it is important to ask a key question: "Faithful to what?" For a recording of a musical performance to be truly faithful, what must it sound like? To what original presentation must it correspond? Most people, I think, would say that it must sound just the way the live performance sounded in the concert hall, and to that I would have to reply—nonsense!

If a number of serious, informed record listeners were asked to supply a list of recordings of orchestral music they felt were good examples of the "natural reproduction of concert-hall sound," we would discover an interesting fact: no matter how strongly endorsed these recordings were, *none* of them would in truth sound like "the real thing." How, given the devotion of record producers

to the principle of high fidelity, could this be? Because there are certain *necessary* distortions that must be incorporated in all recordings that would have disqualified even these superior examples out of hand for nomination in such a sweepstakes.

A recording producer's first encounter with this purposeful "distortion" is on the question of string balance. How loudly is the string section to be presented to the record listener in relation to the other choirs of the orchestra? I would say that, in every case, the strings will be more prominent than they were in the "live" performance. The reason for this is simple: they sound better that way. That should not be taken as a flip answer; it is, rather, an elementary truth: the major difference between orchestras of various sizes is the number of strings. (What top-flight symphony orchestra wouldn't sound even better if it boasted two dozen *more* string players?) However, due to the action of the inverse square law in acoustics, a big, glamorous, string-drenched sound is not just an engineering fabrication but is actually heard by

a number of people during a live orchestral performance.

First and foremost of these people is, of course, the conductor, and because of his regular exposure to this unique sonic perspective his opinion is quite naturally affected by it when he evaluates the proper balance of a recording. Needless to say, he would not be satisfied with the balances heard by someone sitting in, say, the balcony. Why dwell on this point? Because its pivotal importance cannot be overstated in the whole discussion of orchestral reproduction, particularly with regard to the number of microphones it takes to do the job properly.

It is not at all difficult to achieve a rich, gutsy string sound in recording: just put your microphones near the strings. It is important to note that there are really no philosophical differences regarding this: multi-mikers and minimal mikers do the same thing. It is what happens next that separates the two camps. But before we go into that, I would like to restate the significance of the string-balance question. In a nutshell, it has over the years created a norm for orchestral reproduction that is, at the outset, significantly different from the sound of the real world. Moreover, listeners to recordings have generally accepted this norm as realistic, concert-hall-like, and "hi-fi." As I stated earlier, this is not necessarily a bad thing, *because it really sounds good*. In other words, the purest of all recordings starts off by being impure.

WHAT happens next? The minimal mikers would say "nothing." They would claim that if the recording is to be made from this sonic "vantage point," and if the hall is right and the placement of these two or three mikes is right, then an orchestral sound of basically good quality will result. But, as in all things, the piper must eventually be paid: this string-rich picture of the orchestra will, sooner or later, display certain shortcomings in balance. It is exciting and satisfying to hear an abundance of strings *most* of the time, but there comes a moment when the strings are too loud for some other element in the orchestral texture—a moment when, say, an oboe solo is overshadowed by its string accompaniment.

Multi-mikers know that the solution to the "oboe problem" lies in the simple expedient of installing an extra microphone for the woodwinds. I can't speak directly for the minimalists, but the response I have generally encountered runs that they are charged with repro-

ducing the Real World, and if God and the Conductor have together decided to present a given balance on stage, then the producer's mission is to reproduce it that way on tape. My answer to that is, as I remarked above, that the moment they placed their microphones in a string-favoring position they left the real world far behind.

It seems to me quite clear that additional microphones placed within the ensemble are occasionally necessary, and I can give a very interesting corroborating example. Telarc, a company known for its "purist" recording philosophy and three-microphone technique, recently released a recording of Orff's *Carmina Burana*. But they freely admit that at least nine mikes were used: three on the orchestra and several on the chorus and soloists. Why was it necessary to employ the extra chorus mikes? We can only assume the reason was that if the chorus were allowed to remain in its usual position behind the orchestra, it would be picked up by the front rank of microphones with insufficient clarity. I agree: I used eight chorus mikes plus two boys' chorus mikes when I produced a recording of *Carmina* some years ago.

The point I wish to make is, I believe, very important and very telling. Telarc must have decided that the chorus was

"A recorded performance is an entity unto itself, entitled to be as unlike a live concert performance as a painting might be unlike its original subject."

not clear enough. Okay. Why, then, if I or any other multi-miker decides that the celeste needs its own mike because it isn't clear enough, am I tampering with God's intentions? Why was a pair of microphones placed near the piano in Telarc's recent recording of the "Emperor" Concerto? (A witness tells me that they were "just cracked open" or "just touched in," phrases designed to recognize their presence while minimizing their importance—like being "a little bit pregnant," I suppose!) To what realistic situation is *this* microphone technique faithful? To none. It just

sounds better, musically as well as sonically. For myself, I consider it axiomatic not to try to reproduce a piano concerto without assigning one or two microphones to the soloist, but the minimal mikers seem to be making up their rules as they go along. They can use as many mikes as they like, it seems. If the certification of *fidelity* were to be bestowed when microphone signals are used only minimally, I wish an ivory-tower "audiophile" would ask *me* which of *my* mikes were "just touched in." But perhaps there is no difference in our approaches at all—merely in our public relations.

Remember that "multi-miking" and "close-miking" are not exactly the same thing. No producer sensitive to the sonic requirements of a symphony orchestra would be satisfied with the dry, close-up sound that comes from microphones placed close to the instrumental forces. Very often there are two or three microphones devoted to a more distant, blended, naturally reverberant pickup of the entire orchestra. This pair (or trio) of mikes will sometimes form the basic sonic picture of the orchestra and all the others will be "just cracked open." This yields the best of both worlds—the grandeur of the large blended picture plus the control (when needed) of individual elements. Anyone who believes that close placement of microphones must *sound* close is listening with his eyes!

To get back to that original question, faithful to what?, I believe that a recorded performance is an entity unto itself, that it is entitled to be as *unlike* a live concert performance as a painting might be unlike its original subject. This parallelism can be extended. A pair of microphones configured in some approved pattern and placed in a position corresponding to the best seat in the house can be said to be akin to taking a "snapshot" of an orchestral performance. In motion-picture or television terms, it is like positioning a single camera to frame the entire stage exactly and then letting it run for 45 minutes. But is that the best way to cover the video aspect? Evidently not, for we seem to accept readily the TV director's creative use of his medium—a close-up of the bassoonist's fingers, the trombone section filling the entire screen, the look of concentration on the conductor's face. Surely, none of these pictures can be seen by the audience during the performance, so they are certainly not faithful to the observed "reality" of the concert. But somehow they

MULTIPLE MIKING...

have their own validity. They create their own world and, it is to be hoped, expand and enhance our understanding of the score and of the performance.

I, for one, can no more bear to listen to a static "snapshot" of an orchestral performance than I can watch a fixed-camera television production of the same experience. I hasten to add that I recognize there are reasonable limits to this kind of thing, and I am not advocating a surrealist painting or an avant-garde film as models for an equivalently "creative" phonographic tour de force. The keys to the whole process are taste and musical judgment. Can the orchestral texture be clarified? Is proper instrumental balance maintained at all times? Do the dramatic high points of the score make the same impact when the listener is deprived of the use of his eyes as they did when those same moments were accompanied by equally dramatic visual cues during the live performance? I feel that, as a record producer, I am responsible for all these facets of the recorded performance, and the only way I know of to control these elements is through the use of more than two microphones.

I HAVE often had to defend this recording philosophy from the charge that I am guilty of simple egotism or am anxious to play God. What most of those bent on protecting the public from multi-mike immorality do not seem to realize, however, is that the final results in any recording of an orchestra must be approved by the conductor. No conductor worth his salt would approve a tape in which it was clear that questions of balance had been taken out of his hands in a way that was destructive to his concept of orchestral balance. Beyond that, it should come as no surprise that today's conductors realize full well the values inherent in skillful mixing and will often make their own suggestions as to where the producer might place some electronic emphasis for best musical effect. I get weary of being characterized as some sort of maniacal villain manipulating the dastardly mixer controls. I am guided by only one principle during the production of a record, and that is *service to the composition*. If the internal working of a piece of music can be clarified by multi-mike techniques, then this goal becomes a mandate—provided, I repeat, that it is done with taste. And that, of course, is the secret of the producer's craft: using every artifice available to give the im-

pression that none at all has been employed. Naturally, there will be some cases where the unskilled use of good tools will yield misshapen and tasteless results, but blame the carpenter, not the tools. A good analogy might be rating an Instamatic camera as being superior to a Leica because an unskilled photographer can always "get something" with the Instamatic while the Leica has so many adjustable parameters that it is easy to end up with hideous results. Placing a pair of microphones in front of an orchestra is equivalent to making an Instamatic snapshot; it will never be really bad. But the skilled and tasteful use of a multi-mike setup—a Leica—can yield far better,

"... today's conductors realize full well the values inherent in skillful mixing and will often make suggestions as to where the producer might place some electronic emphasis for best musical effect."

more detailed results or, with an unskilled operator, grossly distorted, unmusical ones.

Again, faithful to what? In my case it is faithfulness to a vivid mental image of how an orchestra *should* sound on recordings. I feel that a misapplied eagerness to bring in elements found in the concert hall often undermines the clarity of a recording, that the listener can only profit from anything that will lead him by the hand through the complexities of the music. This should not be interpreted as an insult to the listener's musical abilities, but as a sensitive producer's natural response to the strictures imposed on the sound field when it is squeezed into the two channels of a stereo disc.

We are all familiar with that moment in a concert when the conductor turns dramatically toward the cellos to signal the entrance of some thematic material we haven't heard before. If at first we hear nothing arresting from the cellos, we naturally ask: "What is he doing? What is it he wants me to hear?" We concentrate, and we then realize the importance of the cello line. In a recorded performance, the visual cue that

would direct us to concentrate on the cellos is obviously not present. A careful record producer will try to make up for that by taking the trouble to draw the listener's attention to that line by audio means alone.

I hesitate to predict the minimalists' response to this procedure, but I would guess that the more enlightened of them would permit us to do it *as long as there are no overt clues that we've done it*. There seems, in fact, to be something of the "what you don't know won't hurt you" in all this. Minimalist critics of multi-mike products will often point to two or three instances of evil tampering ("Aha! That celeste would never have been heard that prominently in the hall!"), but I can only beam with pride, knowing that the literally *hundreds* of other level corrections made during the flow of the composition sounded natural and caused the piece to be reproduced in a satisfying way. Would the inverse of the situation be true? If there had been *no* level adjustments in the course of the recording, would the critic have admired the inaudible entrance of the celeste but deplored the hundreds of other instances where one instrument or group of instruments was insufficiently prominent? Are critics sensitive only to crimes of commission and not to crimes of omission?

THAT there are minimalists and multi-mikers is a fact. That the recordings they produce can sound either similar or different is also a fact—and not a particularly surprising one when we realize that the two camps occasionally espouse dissimilar guiding principles. But there is no war between the producers in these two camps. We have plenty of problems to solve in the daily process of doing our jobs without creating new ones. It appears, however, that some audiophiles have seized on these sonic issues to stir up an emotional squabble with the aim of convincing the public that "purity" is next to Godliness, even though the practical matters of supervising a recording session have already eroded that purity in favor of sonic and musical worthiness. It would be fairer to all concerned if these audiophile-critics would stop making *a priori* judgments about the results that will "surely" be obtained by using one technique or the other. □

Andrew Kazdin has produced many records for CBS and Louisville First Edition. He was recently audio producer for Unitel's Bayreuth videotaping of Wagner's Ring, and current work includes being audio consultant to the New York Philharmonic plus additional assignments for CBS.



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STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH



• Stratas Sings Weill: An Instant Classic •

SOME records are classics the minute they come out: Dennis Brain playing the Mozart horn concertos, Schwarzkopf and Ackermann doing Strauss' Four Last Songs, Richter playing Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Yepes and Argenta doing Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Be the repertoire standard or obscure, the artist well or little known, the elements have come together to produce something new and unique, inherently valuable, immediately communicative, and wearing an aura that assures us it could not have been done better. Such records form a very small, elite group, but they are the artistic justification for the whole record business.

How gratifying it is, then, to apprehend another! A new Nonesuch release, "The Unknown Kurt Weill," sung by Teresa Stratas, accompanied by Richard Weitach, produced by Eric Salzman, with complete texts and translation, and with extensive notes by Kim Kowalke, is in every way worthy of the most elevated musical company. Frankly, I don't see how it could have been done better.

You may have noticed that Weill has been getting a big play recently. We've had productions of *Mahagonny* at the Met, *Silverlake* at the New York City Opera (and in another Nonesuch recording), and the *Three Penny Opera* is always playing somewhere. His early concerto and symphonies have been recorded along with most of his other German theatrical works; *September Song* is part of the American national

heritage; *Down in the Valley* is still remembered, as are *One Touch of Venus*, *Lady in the Dark*, and *Street Scene*. What is there "unknown" about Kurt Weill? Well, maybe not a lot, but the odds are that you've probably never before heard any of the songs on *this* record. More important, the songs, with one or two exceptions, are marvelous. Rather than scraping the bottom of the barrel, Nonesuch has presented us with buried treasure.

Weill was a chameleon among modern composers. He studied with Busoni

stopped off for a time in Paris and London, and then came to the United States, where he wrote Broadway music as American as any by native-born composers and began to develop another semi-operatic style based on American folk roots. One of the things this record proves is that he also had a distinctive French style. The other thing it proves is that he was able to move from one style to another at will and without regard to time or place. *Nannas Lied*, in *Three Penny Opera* style, was composed in 1939, the year after *Knickerbocker Holiday*; *Und Was Bekam des Soldaten Weib?* dates from the years 1942-1943.

The majority of these songs do not come from shows; the songs that were in shows were in ephemeral ones. They have to stand up, then, completely on their own—and boy, do they stand up! *Nannas Lied* begins in typical tough-girl style ("Gentlemen, I was only seventeen when I landed on the love market . . .") and absolutely melts at the end of each Villon-derived refrain. *Complainte de la Seine* (words by Maurice Magre) is a French café song caught somewhere between Francis Poulenc and Edith Piaf. *Klops-Lied* is modern Hugo Wolf to a punning nonsense text. *Und Was Bekam des Soldaten Weib?* is a typically ironic Brecht antiwar lyric set to a pretty, at times ravishing, tune. It was used by (and possibly written for) the Office of War Information for broadcast behind enemy lines during World War II, which may account for its passing and certain-

THE UNKNOWN KURT WEILL. *Nannas Lied; Complainte de la Seine; Klops-Lied; Berlin im Licht-Song; Und Was Bekam des Soldaten Weib?; Die Muschel von Margate—The Petroleum Song; Wie Lange Noch?; Youkali—Tango Habanera; Der Abschiedsbrief; Es Regnet; Buddy on the Nightshift; Schickelgruber; Je Ne T'Aime Pas; Das Lied von den Braunen Inseln.* Teresa Stratas (soprano); Richard Weitach (piano). NONESUCH ① D-79019 \$11.98.

and, in the early Twenties, wrote "modern music." He developed an original and effective German—one might even say Berlin—theatrical style in conjunction with Bertolt Brecht. Forced to leave Germany in the Thirties, he

"Stratas has an inflection for everything, a vocal coloration for everything. . . ."



Teresa Stratas

(Photo by James Heffernan/Metropolitan Opera Assn.)

ly purposeful resemblance to *Lili Marlene*. The combination of Brecht's idiomatic and often shocking bluntness with Weill's tenderness and pity is irresistible. Also for propaganda purposes was *Wie Lange Noch* (1944), a calculated setting of new words to an older tune. It is ostensibly a kind of reverse torch song ("When will I be able to tell you: It's over . . ."), but its context reveals its true meaning: it is a song of political betrayal.

American lyricists come into it too: Oscar Hammerstein with a typically folksy *Buddy on the Nightshift*, which would be hard to take today but for Weill's catchy (and totally American) music; and Howard Dietz in a really awful song called *Schickelgruber*. Datedness is a problem with both. But in one of fate's odd twists, the two "petroleum" songs, *Die Muschel von Margate* and *Das Lied von den Braunen Inseln* (lyrics by Lion Feuchtwanger, of all people), have been rescued from datedness and are wildly topical. The former is prototypical Berlin Weill in the *Pirate Jenny* mode; the latter is set as a kind of hammy vaudeville duet (for one voice) that is remarkably effective and unexpected for the subject.

And that brings up a particular trait of Weill that goes through many of these songs (and many others as well): his ability to create aesthetic distance, aesthetic objectivity, through the use of simple but unexpected devices. We get pretty music for harsh words, and the reverse; minor keys where the words make us expect major, and the reverse; declamation instead of song, and the reverse; the unusual where we anticipate only the ordinary—and the reverse. Weill was never a composer in the abstract, but always a man of the theater; each song creates its own theatrical scene.

BUT all the interest and quality of these songs would be pure, dead ancient history without the spectacular performances of them by soprano Teresa Stratas. If Weill's aesthetic placed dramatic acting far above beautiful singing, here we nonetheless get both. Stratas has an inflection for everything, a vocal coloration for everything. She goes from the tough to the tender in *Nannas Lied* and from the tender to the tough in *Der Abschiedsbrief*. Her cries of "Shell! Shell! Shell!" in *The Mussel of Margate* move from gentle hucksterism to positive paranoia. She can be cute, hard, sensual, demented, ironic, abstracted, funny, vulgar, aloof, touching, crushing—and through it all sing marvelously. Hearing what she can do with a microphone and a piano, one wonders why she drains herself night

after night in an opera house. Richard Woitach, who plays the piano here, deserves no little share of the credit; he is as sensitive to mood and meaning as Stratas is. The recording (digital) could not be bettered. The production could not be bettered. The presentation could not be bettered. A classic.

—James Goodfriend

Schubert's Swan Song: A Remarkably Well Done Live Performance by Baritone Hermann Prey

WAY back around 1964, early in his career, Hermann Prey gave us an admirable recording of Schubert's *Schwanengesang* (London OS 25797, long since deleted). He has now given us a new one, recorded live at a 1978 concert, that is in many ways even better. Comparison of the two versions reveals some interesting, if rather subtle, differences. The singer's vocal quality is as beautiful as ever, even if it no longer rings with its former youthful abandon. Where in the earlier version the listener was mindful of a certain charged passion, this time it is a pervasive melancholy that leaves the most lasting impression. It lends a poignant mellowness to the opening *Liebesbot-*

schaft, which is made even more attractive by the artist's adherence to Schubert's piano markings and to the overall designation of "ziemlich langsam" ("rather slowly"). The seven Rellstab songs that make up this semicycle are remarkably well done: the difficult *Kriegers Ahnung* full of thoughtful nuances, the familiar *Ständchen* all dreamy magic yet quite spontaneous-sounding. Prey's *Aufenthalt* may be a bit controversial: the loner he depicts is perhaps too good-natured to be capable of true anger or despair. It is, nonetheless, beautifully sung.

The brooding second half of the cycle, the Heine songs, offers similar rewards: gentle melancholy in *Ihr Bild*, bemused charm in *Das Fischermädchen*, almost tangible pain in *Die Stadt*, and an anguished *Der Doppelgänger* with a searing climax on the words "meine eigne Gestalt." Only *Der Atlas* falls marginally below the previous standard: the singer's vibrato clouds his intonation at some points.

The recital ends with *Die Taubenpost*, which is tossed off with an elegant, truly Schubertian lilt. There are only a few delicate coughs from the audience to suggest a live performance. Deutsche Grammophon's thoughtful engineering has even spared us the applause that this outstanding baritone and his rather discreet but very capable pianist partner richly deserve.

—George Jellinek

SCHUBERT: *Schwanengesang* (D. 957). Hermann Prey (baritone); Leonard Hokanson (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 325 \$10.98.

HERMANN PREY: poignant, thoughtful, and elegant



Lacy J. Dalton: A Spine-tingling Reminder of Why We Sing in the First Place

LACY J. DALTON can sing the chrome off a trailer hitch, and that—rather than her songwriting, which so far has also been excellent—is what her new Columbia album, “Takin’ It Easy,” is about. She and various collaborators wrote four songs for it, but some care (and probably some diligence as well, since only Neil Young’s *Comes a Time* has had much previous exposure) obviously went into finding the others. The way Dalton sings the chorus of the Young song, incidentally, is not just a matter of note-hitting and phrasing but some kind of understated primal reminder of why we sing in the first place.

If you want the same sort of thing without the understatement, there’s a plethora of spine-tingling dynamics in *Somebody Killed Dewey Jones’ Daughter* (just don’t let its lyrics confuse you: the killing supposedly happened in a cottonfield “six miles south of Louisville,” and there are no cottonfields anywhere near the Kentucky Derby Louisville people will think it means). Elsewhere, Dalton tenderly cuddles the lyrics of H. M. Cornelius’ lovely, soft *Come to Me*, rocks smartly with a thing called *Wild Turkey*, and gets closer to the honky-tonk sounds some people expect of her in *Golden*

Memories and *Let Me in the Fast Lane*, both flashing that almost defiant sexuality she occasionally puts into a song—the latter, indeed, being made up of playful double-entendres.

Billy Sherrill’s production shows signs of incipient slickness, and of course I do want Dalton to get back to writing, but there’s some extraordinary singing going on here. So do as I do: live in the present and enjoy it.

—Noel Coppage

LACY J. DALTON: *Takin’ It Easy*. Lacy J. Dalton (vocals); Pig Robbins (keyboards); Jerry Carrington (drums); Reggie Young (guitar); Joe Osborn (bass); other musicians. *Takin’ It Easy; Everybody Makes Mistakes; Comes a Time; Come to Me; Wild Turkey; Golden Memories; Let Me in the Fast Lane; Feedin’ the Five; Somebody Killed Dewey Jones’ Daughter*. COLUMBIA FC 37327, © FCT 37327, © FCA 37327, no list price.

The Magic Is Back: Peter Dean (and Friends) Recall the Old Days With Some Solid Swing

THE new “Where Did the Magic Go?” is singer Peter Dean’s best album to date, in terms of both performance and choice of material, and it

has another big plus in the exceptional playing of the back-up musicians. The very versatile and accomplished Dick Hyman is on piano for all but two songs; bassist George Duvivier (my God, does he play on every New York jazz date?) provides his highly individual “fluid drone” style; guitarist Marty Grosz, playing in the Carl Kress/Dick McDonough style, is crisp and frisky; and cornetists Ed Polcer (a new name to me, but a very good man to hear) and Dick Sudhalter are in for the hot and mellow horn work.

With few exceptions, the material comes from the late Twenties, a musical period in which Dean, no spring chicken, has always felt at home since he lived through it. The songs chosen are absolute wowsers. Some of them, like *Breezin’ Along with the Breeze* and *Please Don’t Talk About Me When I’m Gone*, are familiar, but there are also some long-forgotten dandies such as *T’Ain’t No Sin* (“to dance around in your bones”), a Walter Donaldson novelty, and two Depression-era items with lyrics that play on concerns about Wall Street—*Got the Jitters* and *I’m in the Market for You*. Dean contributes a delightful original, *I Like It Slow*, and revives Victor Young’s wistful *Can’t We Talk It Over?*, which Bing Crosby recorded in 1931.

Dean has a limited vocal range these days, but within it he finds his own very cozy space—he’s as convincing a singer as you’ll hear today. The only time he doesn’t sound comfortable here is on *At Least I Tried*, which was dropped from the score of the Broadway musical *Bar-*

LACY J. DALTON: singing the chrome off a trailer hitch



PETER DEAN: as convincing a singer as you'll ever hear





Warner Bros. Records



ICM Artists/John Garner

CHICK COREA: extraordinary acoustic piano

SIR CHARLES MACKERRAS: inspiring authority and enthusiasm

num—deservedly so, I should think, for it's another of those victory-in-defeat things (such as *My Way*) that borders on aggressive self-pity and is constructed for stage bravura rather than the intimacy of the studio microphone. It's simply not Dean's kind of song.

That one small lapse aside, you can't hear this album without appreciating its delights, among which are not only Dean's vocals but the pixie intricacies of the musicians. Sudhalter plays beautiful fills on *I'm in the Market for You*, and Hyman picks up Sudhalter's last phrase as he goes into his own solo. Veteran bassist Bob Haggert splits a chorus with guitarist Mike Peters on *Keepin' Out of Mischief Now*, with Peters cueing him in with a harmonic chord. Polcer's cornet solos recall the loose but juicy horn of Herman Autrey with Fats Waller's combo. Sudhalter, usually thought of as a neo-Bixian, growls like Bubber Miley on *Got the Jitters*. Hyman plays in half a dozen piano styles, depending on what a given tune needs, and he is full of fun and *bona fides*. Put a little—no, put a lot of solid swing into your life; go get this album quick.

—Joel Vance

PETER DEAN: *Where Did the Magic Go?*

Peter Dean (vocals); Dick Hyman, Buddy Weed (piano); Bob Haggert, George Duvivier (bass); Marty Grosz, Mike Peters, Hy White (guitar); Ed Polcer, Dick Sudhalter (cornet); Ronnie Traxler, Bobby Rosen-garden, Ron Zito (drums). *T'Ain't No Sin; I Like It Slow; Please Don't Talk About*

Me When I'm Gone; I'm in the Market for You; Breezin' Along with the Breeze; Got the Jitters; I Haven't Time to Be a Millionaire; Can't We Talk It Over?; Where Did the Magic Go?; I May Be Wrong; Keepin' Out of Mischief Now; At Least I Tried. MONMOUTH/EVERGREEN MES/7092 \$7.98 (from Monmouth/Evergreen Records, 1697 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10019).

**Chick Corea:
His Quartets Prove
Quality Music Is Not
A Losing Proposition**

ONE tends to speak of Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock in the same breath. Both, after all, are jazz pianists who skipped, with great commercial success, down the electric road to Fusionville; both have, as a result, been much criticized by those who felt they had in the process betrayed the music that launched their careers; and they have frequently worked as a team as well.

I count myself among the severest critics of the Corea/Hancock quest for greener (in the pecuniary sense) pastures, but I always felt that Corea was the more conscientious of the two, and "Three Quartets," a new and marvel-

ous Chick Corea release from Warner Bros., supports that feeling. It comes at a time when the Disco Dog is thumping down the road to nowhere with Hancock hanging onto its tail. Of course, Corea is not saddled with producers who have chart fixations, nor is he the gadget addict Hancock is. Here, in fact, he is his own producer, and his instruments are two old-fashioned Bösendorfers. Sound good? You bet it does.

Completing the quartet are two versatile studio men, saxophonist Michael Brecker and drummer Steve Gadd, plus bassist Eddie Gomez, one of the finest and most dedicated jazz musicians around. All play with the skill and artistic sensitivity on which they have built their reputations, and the mutual rapport comes through in passages where Corea—whose compositions these are—gives them room for improvisation. I never cease to be impressed with the work of Eddie Gomez, and the interplay between him and Corea, especially on the first and third quartets, is simply extraordinary.

Another delight worthy of note here is the performance of Steve Gadd on these tracks; while he plays his role in such groups as Stuff quite competently, this is the milieu in which he really shines. Corea himself is masterly throughout; his acoustic playing does not seem to have suffered from the bout with Fenderitis as Hancock's has. Michael Brecker is at his best on *Quartet No. 2*; he approaches each of its two parts—dedicated to Duke Ellington

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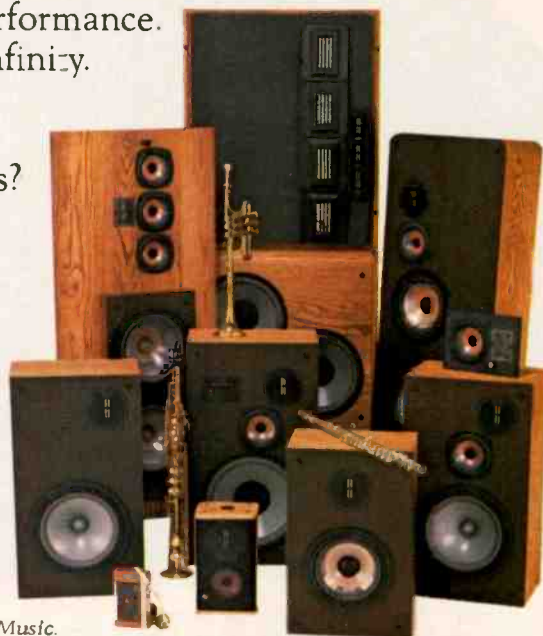
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and John Coltrane, respectively—from a different angle, the first being the more conventional.

This outing certainly represents a pleasant departure for a major pop commercial label such as Warner Bros., and it ought to be encouraged. Let's show them—and Chick Corea too—that making quality music is not a losing proposition. —Chris Albertson

CHICK COREA: *Three Quartets*. Chick Corea (piano); Michael Brecker (tenor saxophone); Eddie Gomez (bass); Steve Gadd (drums). WARNER BROS. BSK 3552 \$8.95, © M5 3552 \$8.98, © M8 3552 \$8.98.

Orchestral Janáček in Revelatory Performances By Mackerras and the Vienna Philharmonic

SIR Charles Mackerras, an Australian who happened to be born in Schenectady, New York, had the good fortune to be introduced to the music of Leoš Janáček by the great Czech conductor Václav Talich, with whom he studied in Prague shortly after World War II. So stimulating was that encounter that Mackerras himself became one of the most respected interpreters of Janáček's music; he has been recording all of that composer's operas in Vienna for London/Decca, and now, with three of them splendidly accounted for, he has given us an absolutely stunning digitally recorded disc of Janáček's two most popular orchestral works, the magnificent *Sinfonietta* and the earlier three-part "rhapsody" on Gogol's *Taras Bulba*.

These two titles have become a more or less standard coupling over the years, and there are two other quite distinguished precedents in the current catalog: one with the Czech Philharmonic under Karel Ančerl (now on Quintessence PMC-7184, having been on two or three other labels in the last twenty years), the other, more vividly recorded, a pair of remakes by Rafael Kubelik with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra (Deutsche Grammophon 2530 075). Mackerras, like Kubelik, had recorded the *Sinfonietta* before (with the Pro Arte Orchestra in London for Pye, available here on Vanguard in the Sixties), but neither as a performance nor as a recording did that version, estimable though it was in its own right,

hint at the revelatory quality of his new one with the Vienna Philharmonic (the orchestra, by the way, with which Kubelik made the second of his three recordings of the work, on a fondly remembered London mono ten-incher).

There has been no recording of either work to compare with the new London in terms of spacious realism, and none quite so faithful to details of the score. The earlier digital coupling of these titles, with Zdeněk Košler and the Czech Philharmonic (Denon OX-7110-ND), is not in this class either sonically or interpretively. I mention sonic considerations first because they are especially important for the deceptively titled *Sinfonietta*: it is no lightweight charmer, but a fiercely impassioned statement for which the seventy-two-year-old Janáček augmented his large orchestra with nine extra trumpets (for a total of twelve) and numerous other additional brass instruments which together with the timpani function independently of the orchestra proper. This unusual instrumentation reflects the origin of the work, which grew out of a series of fanfares Janáček composed for a *Sokol* meet (or *Slet*, a national gymnastic festival) and which represents an expression of his own joy in the actuality of a free and independent Czechoslovakia. There is no other work quite like it. It has a good share of fine tunes, but most striking are the distinctive rhythms and colors and the almost primitive exultation of the opening and closing sections. Mackerras, who gives the drums more prominence than I've heard before in the fanfare sections, based his performance on the autograph score: the use of the viola d'amore in the third movement and some other points of difference from general practice are cited in the brief annotation; these all make their respective points, but they would count for little without the inspiring force of authority and enthusiasm Mackerras brings to his performance.

Taras Bulba is a less remarkable work, but a substantial and moving one nonetheless, and never has its case been more eloquently argued than here. Mackerras has persuaded the Vienna Philharmonic to make nothing short of the fullest interpretive commitment, as if this work were as much a part of the great orchestra's own tradition as the symphonies of Brahms and Bruckner. On both sides, this is great conducting, great orchestral playing, and outstandingly successful use of the digital process in the service of music.

—Richard Freed

JANÁČEK: *Sinfonietta, Op. 60; Taras Bulba*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Charles Mackerras cond. LONDON ● LDR-71021 \$10.98.



BEST OF THE MONTH: RECENT SELECTIONS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

CLASSICAL

- Bartók: *Piano Concertos Nos. 2 and 3*. LONDON CS 7167. "The partnership of Vladimir Ashkenazy and Sir Georg Solti is complete and electrifying." (July)
- Franck: *Organ Music*. L'OISEAU-LYRE D16503. "A three-way triumph for repertoire, performer, and instrument." (October)
- Gidon and Elena Kremer: *Music for Violin and Piano*. PHILIPS 9500 904, 9500 912. "Exceptional music making." (September)
- Mussorgsky: *Night on Bald Mountain (original version); Four Chorus; other works*. RCA ARL 1-3988. "Stunning performances in one of the most stimulating releases of the year." (October)
- Rossini: *L'Italiana in Algeri*. RCA ARL3-3855. "A delightful comic totality springs to triumphant life." (July)
- Sibelius: *Symphony No 4; Luonnotar; Finlandia*. LONDON LDR 71019. "Mystical Sibelius in superb digital sound." (October)
- Sutherland/Horne/Pavarotti: *Live from Lincoln Center*. LONDON LDR 72009. "Dazzling vocal virtuosity." (September)
- Wagner: *Parsifal*. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2741 002. "Outstanding singers and the grand line in a luminous, transparent recording." (August)

POPULAR

- Stanley Clarke and George Duke: *The Clarke/Duke Project*. EPIC FE 36918. "A wonderful musical splash in some deep pop waters." (July)
- Ellen Foley: *Spirit of St. Louis*. EPIC/CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL JE 36984. "A most impressive album in the difficult cabaret genre." (July)
- Kid Creole and the Coconuts: *Fresh Fruit in Foreign Places*. SIRE SRK 3534. "Devilish musical satire served up with style." (October)
- Kitty and the Haywoods: *Excuse Me, I've Got a Life to Catch*. CAPITOL ST-12149. "Sweet, old-fashioned, get-down soul singing." (September)
- Johnny Mathis: *The First 25 Years*. COLUMBIA C2X 37440. "Sheer bliss for legions of long-time fans." (October)
- Carole Bayer Sager: *Sometimes Late at Night*. BOARDWALK FW 37069. "... amounts to a summation of the attitudes of the women of her generation." (August)
- Steeleye Span: *Sails of Silver*. TAKOMA TAK 7097. "Words worth hearing mounted on shockingly pretty melodies." (October)
- Woman of the Year*. ARISTA AL 8303. "Brisk, bright, and beautifully recorded." (September)

Classical Music Briefs



Renata Scotto as Trittico heroines Giorgetta, Angelica, and Lauretta

IMPORTANT operatic performances will be presented from both coasts this month on the Public Broadcasting Service. Puccini's *Il Trittico* will be televised from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House on November 14 in Texaco's Live from the Met series. A bill of three one-act operas, *Il Trittico* is made up of *Il Tabarro*, *Suor Angelica*, and *Gianni Schicchi*. **Renata Scotto**, who has recorded the first two for CBS Masterworks, will sing the leading so-

prano roles in all *three* of the operas in the televised performance. She is the only singer in Met history to bring off this tour de force, which she performed for the first time at the Metropolitan on January 20, 1976. Others in the cast will be mezzo-soprano Bianca Berini, contralto Jocelyne Taillon, tenor Vasile Moldoveanu, and baritones Cornell MacNeil and Gabriel Bacquier. James Levine will conduct.

On November 23 on PBS, Exxon's Great Performances series

will include Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* live (on tape) from the San Francisco Opera. **Plácido Domingo**, who has recorded this opera for Deutsche Grammophon, will sing Samson, and **Shirley Verrett** will sing Dalila. Wolfgang Brendel is the High Priest, and Arnold Voketaitis is Abimelech. Julius Rudel will conduct. These performances will be the first of *Il Trittico* and *Samson et Dalila* ever presented on national television in the United States. Check PBS stations for time. □

PETER Shaffer's hit play *Amadeus*, now running in New York, London, and elsewhere, has raised again the question of whether Mozart was poisoned by his rival Antonio Salieri. A brouhaha is also currently brewing about the death of **Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky** in 1893. Although his family's account of his death from cholera has generally been accepted by Tchaikovsky's biographers, there have been rumors that he committed suicide, perhaps for

reasons in some way connected with his homosexuality.

Alexandra Orlova, a Soviet émigrée now living in the United States and working on a biography of Tchaikovsky, has told a fascinating suicide story. She maintains that in order to avoid the scandal that would result from public disclosure of details of his sex life, Tchaikovsky was ordered to take poison by a court of honor made up of his classmates from the law school where he had studied thirty



J. Heffernan/Metropolitan Opera Association

years earlier. No evidence that has been made public so far conclusively disproves the official version of Tchaikovsky's death, but Mrs. Orlova has supporters as well as attackers in both England and the United States. Full evaluation of her account must await publication of her book, due from Oxford University Press in the fall of 1982.

In the meantime, *Tchaikovsky's Letters to His Family: An Autobiography* (577 pages, \$25) has just been published in New York by Stein and Day. The letters were selected and translated by Galina von Meck with additional annotations by Percy M. Young. The granddaughter of Tchaikovsky's patroness Nadezhda von Meck, the translator is not a disinterested scholar but has certain axes to grind in the interest of her family, and the book presents a carefully laundered view of Tchaikovsky's life. All references to homosexuality have been deleted from the composer's letters to his brother Modest, who was also homosexual, and throughout the book the subject is only hinted at by Von Meck's veiled references to "emotional problems." This lack of frankness leaves the reader to wonder just what is meant by such an equivocal note as: "Among Tchaikovsky's worries at this time [1880] was the calling-up for military service of his servant Alexei, and the distressful tone of communications to and about him suggest a closer relationship than is usual between employer and employee."

The intensity of Tchaikovsky's emotional attachment to

his nephew Bob Davidov (paral- leling Beethoven's love for his nephew Karl) is made clear in Letter 654: "If you do not want to write, at least spit on a piece of paper, put it in an envelope, and send it to me" and Letter 685: "I am writing to you with a voluptuous pleasure. The thought that this paper is going to be in your hands fills me with joy and brings tears to my eyes."

Although one must turn to other biographers for the full story of Tchaikovsky's life, *Letters to His Family* contains many interesting details about his views on music and musicians. He had high hopes for his opera *The Queen of Spades*, greatly admired Bizet's *Carmen*, and disliked Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelung* ("There are, of course, beautiful parts, but the whole thing together bores me to death"). Among other composers he found Grieg "charming" and Brahms "a terrific drunkard" but "kind." He described Dvořák and his Czech contemporaries as "great chaps." —W.L.

JAMES CAMNER, who has com- piled several picture books on music, has just published *How to Enjoy Opera* (Doubleday, 212 pages, \$12.95). A compendium of friendly advice to beginners, it includes chapters on what opera is, how to

choose your first one, where to see opera and how to order tickets, opera on TV, and so forth. Like almost all opera fans, Camner is fiercely partisan, and his biases are most apparent in his recommendations for a basic library of opera recordings. He tends to favor older performances by such artists as tenor Beniamino Gigli, soprano Maria Callas, and conductor Arturo Toscanini, but he sometimes suggests alternate recordings that have more up-to-date sound.

Camner discusses some operatic myths, such as the common belief that before the present day all opera singers were fat and lacking in acting ability. He dismisses the notion that in the past American singers could not succeed without first studying in Europe and triumphing there. As evidence he cites the careers of Clara Louise Kellogg (1842-1916), Rosa Ponselle (1897-1981), and Helen Traubel (1899-1972), among others.

The opera singer Camner describes as America's greatest is Lillian Nordica (1857-1914), who recorded very little. In his list of recommended historic performances, Camner includes an album that contains transfers to LP of the surviving fifteen arias and songs Nordica recorded between 1906 and 1911. Despite the limitations of the acoustic recording system

and a sonic haze of needle scratch, ticks, and pops, the album provides a fascinating aural glimpse of a great artist with a phenomenal voice. It is available by mail for a \$10 donation to the Nordica Homestead and Museum, Holly Road, Farmington, Maine 04938. —W.L.



Turkish twin Pekinels

MMUSICAL phenomena have often come in pairs—Bach and Handel, Mozart and Haydn, Verdi and Wagner, Callas and Tebaldi. Now the *pairs* seem to be coming in pairs. In June, Philips issued a two-piano recording of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Concerto in F, the first American release by Katia and Marielle Labèque, two attractive young sisters from France. Hot on their heels in August came the recording debut on Deutsche Grammophon of Güher and Süher Pekinel, twenty-seven-year-old twin-sister

pianists from Turkey. Their first recording was of Rachmaninoff's Suites No. 1 and No. 2 for two pianos (see review on page 92).

After receiving their first musical training in Turkey, the Pekinel sisters studied in Frankfurt, Germany, at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, and at the Juilliard School in New York. Their teachers have included such noted performers as Rudolf Serkin, Leon Fleisher, and Claudio Arrau. Now launched on an international career, the Pekinel sisters have performed with such leading orchestras as the Berlin Philharmonic, the Israel Philharmonic, and L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande. And they have just made their second recording for DG, the two Mendelssohn concertos for two pianos with the Junge Deutsche Philharmonie conducted by Riccardo Chailly. It will be released in 1982.

At present they are making their headquarters in Munich, and most of their engagements are in Europe, but they are returning to the United States for performances in Chicago on December 13 and in Scottsdale, Arizona, on December 19. Like the Labèque sisters, the Pekinel sisters are unusually pretty. When they performed in Paris, where the Labèques currently house their matched Hamburg Steinways, the critic for *Le Figaro* described the Pekinels as "one harmonious personality, distributed over two ravishing persons." We won't try to improve on that. —W.L.

Disc and Tape Reviews

By RICHARD FREED • DAVID HALL • GEORGE JELLINEK • PAUL KRESH
STODDARD LINCOLN • ERIC SALZMAN

Ⓢ = stereo cassette

① = digital-master recording

□ = quadraphonic disc

Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge

Ⓛ = direct-to-disc

Ⓜ = monophonic recording

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

J. S. BACH: Toccata and Fugue in D Minor (BWV 565); Pastoral in F Major (BWV 590); Fantasy in G Major (BWV 571); Fugue in G Minor (BWV 578); Nun Freut Euch, Lieben Christen G'mein (BWV 734); Herzlich Tut Mich Verlangen (BWV 727); Valet Will Ich Dir Geben (BWV 736). Bernard Lagacé (organ). TITANIC Ti-14 \$9.

Performance: **Austere**
Recording: **Bright**

J. S. BACH: Toccata and Fugue in D Minor (BWV 565); Fantasy in C Minor (BWV 562); Fantasy in G Minor (BWV 572); Chorale Partita on "O Gott, Du Frommer Gott" (BWV 767); Prelude and Fugue in C Minor (BWV 546); Valet Will Ich Dir Geben (BWV 736); Allein Gott in Der Höh' Sei Ehr (BWV

663); O Lamm Gottes, Unschuldig (BWV 618); Jesus Christus, Unser Heiland (BWV 665 and 666); Wir Christenleut' Hab'n Jezund Freud' (BWV 710); Chorale Partita on "Christ, Der Du Bist der Helle Tag" (BWV 766). Gustav Leonhardt (organ). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 824335 two discs \$15.50 (plus \$1.60 postage and handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

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

Both these albums of organ music by J. S. Bach are excellent, so one's choice between them may depend simply on the selections each includes and on how much of Bach's organ music one wants at the moment. Gus-

tav Leonhardt plays the organ at the Waalse Kerk, Amsterdam; it was built originally in 1680 by Nicholas Langlez, rebuilt in 1733-1734 by Christiaan Müller, and restored in 1963-1965 by Ahrend and Brunzema. The sound is on the subdued side, but clear and mellow. Bernard Lagacé plays an organ built in the North German tradition by Karl Wilhelm and housed in the St. Matthias Church, Montreal. The bright and crisp sound is rather more brilliant than that of the Müller organ.

Both artists play in an authentic manner with a straightforward approach to the music and clear articulation that brings out its structure with a minimum of registration changes. Leonhardt's articulation is more
(Continued on page 80)



Shaw Concerts, Inc.

Zoltán Kocsis in concert

Bartók for the Piano

UNLIKE most of the other innovators of twentieth-century music, Béla Bartók was an active pianist and wrote reams of solo pieces for the instrument. These fall into basically two categories: big-scale works, often quite difficult, meant for public concert performance by professionals, and small-scale pieces, usually rooted in folk music, meant for amateurs and students. The tradition of writing music for study, education, and recreation was and is very strong in Hungary, and Bartók wholeheartedly embraced and contributed to it; it was a natural outgrowth of his early work in collecting folk songs and a major formative influence on all his music.

Four recent releases on Hungaroton, Denon, and Deutsche Grammophon add to Bartók's discography in this area, including two recordings, one complete and one of excerpts, of his best-known pedagogical work, the set of graded piano pieces called *Mikrokosmos*. These were written mostly between 1926 and 1937, but Bartók composed such piano miniatures throughout his career, gathering them up into various sets or collections. One such set, curiously little known, dates from 1908-1909 and is called *For Children*. It contains no less than eighty-nine short works, virtually all of them folk-song arrangements of great charm. In some ways, these pieces are even more appealing than *Mikrokosmos*—and not just to children either. Part of their appeal lies in their simplicity. The young Bartók, the spell of the originals in his mind, did not feel compelled to be clever or to modernize; he simply let the melodies take the music where it needed to go.

It would be fun to play through this set, but listening to Zoltán Kocsis' excellent performances on a complete, two-disc Hungaroton album is a pleasure too. He is a

young Hungarian pianist with flair who is not put off by simplicity. Quite the contrary, he knows just how to make the singing-and-dancing directness of the music count. Several other folk-based works from the same period are superbly played in a vigorous, sensitive manner by another outstanding young Hungarian pianist, András Schiff, on a digitally mastered Denon recording. The most highly elaborated piece here is the *Dance Suite*. The Roumanian Folk Dances, Folk-Tune Rondos, and Hungarian Peasant Songs stay even closer than *For Children* to a simple, popular style. The music comes alive, and the marvelous Japanese recording contributes quite a lot to the vivid impression it makes. (I can't resist noting, however, that in the liner notes the Leeds piano contest is referred to as the Reeds Competition.)

Although various twists of fate have made *Mikrokosmos* better known than the other works discussed here, the set is actually a bit more problematic for listening. The early pieces are, of necessity, restricted to the five-finger range and are really not much superior to their equivalents in any baby piano book. Listenable, musically worthwhile pieces hardly begin to appear much before Book 3 (of six), and ingenious, full-fledged piano works not until Book 4. But from there to the end of the series there are plenty of riches, some pieces simple and folksy in the earlier style, many others quirky and modernistic in Bartók's best middle manner.

THE name Homero Francesch was not previously known to me, and the notes for his three-disc Deutsche Grammophon recording of the complete *Mikrokosmos* say nothing about him (I guess that he is Roumanian). His playing is cool, modernistic, ab-

stract, and essentially unlistenable. If you want to hear how the *Mikrokosmos* pieces *should* go, and without being bored, listen instead to the classic performances of excerpts from Books 4, 5, and 6 recorded in 1956 by Ditta Pásztor-Bartók, the composer's widow, and now released on Hungaroton. The sound is dated, but the feeling is there. Side two of the album contains several two-piano works—including Tibor Serly's arrangement of six Bulgarian dances—played by Mrs. Bartók and Mária Comensoli. These were recorded in 1980 and have better sound, and Ms. Comensoli's playing is also good. But it is the records by the two young Hungarians, Kocsis and Schiff, that celebrate the Bartók centenary in prime style.

—Eric Salzman

BARTÓK: *For Children*. Zoltán Kocsis (piano). HUNGAROTON SLPX 12304-05 two discs \$19.96 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

BARTÓK: *Dance Suite; Roumanian Folk Dances; Three Rondos on Folk Tunes; Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs*. András Schiff (piano). DENON OX-7215-ND \$15.

BARTÓK: *Mikrokosmos*. Homero Francesch (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 239 three discs \$32.94.

BARTÓK: *Mikrokosmos (excerpts)*. Ditta Pásztor-Bartók (piano). *Seven Pieces for Two Pianos; Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm for Two Pianos*. Ditta Pásztor-Bartók, Mária Comensoli (pianos). HUNGAROTON SLPX 12283 \$9.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

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pronounced than Lagacé's, and he pushes through the climaxes with a relentless drive that is quite effective. Lagacé, on the other hand, uses less articulation and often pulls back the tempo at a climax in a rather frustrating manner. Leonhardt's careful use of rubato lends a nobility to his interpretations, while Lagacé's stricter approach puts him on the austere side. You choose. S.L.

BEETHOVEN: *Leonore Overtures Nos. 1, 2, and 3, Op. 138, 72, and 72a; Fidelio Overture, Op. 72b; Leonore Prohaska, Funeral March (WoO 96); King Stephen Overture, Op. 117; Coriolan Overture, Op. 62; Egmont Overture, Op. 84; The Creatures of Prometheus Overture, Op. 43; Namensfeier Overture, Op. 115; Minuet of Congratulations (WoO 3); Cantata, Meerestille und Glückliche Fahrt, Op. 112; Tarpeja, Triumphal March (WoO 2). The Ruins of Athens: Overture, Op. 113; Turkish March, Op. 113, No. 4; March and Chorus. The Consecration of the House: Overture; Chorus with Soprano Solo, "Wo sich die Pulse" (WoO 98). Phyllis Bryn-Julson (soprano, in WoO 98); Bach Society of Minnesota (chorus, in Op. 112, Op. 113, WoO 98); Minnesota Orchestra, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski cond. Vox SVBX 5156 three discs \$14.98.*

Performance: **Vivid**

Recording: **Beautiful**

Before 1800 Beethoven was known mostly as a fashionable society pianist. Later, when his reputation as a composer had grown and he had a public, professional career, commissions began to come his way. In those days, writing music for theatrical use—opera, dance, and incidental music for drama—was about the best professional work going for a composer, and Beethoven did a fair bit, much of it little known today. He wrote eleven overtures, four of them for his one opera, six for other theatrical productions, and only one, the *Namensfeier* Overture, purely as a concert piece. All are included in this collection, as well as a few pieces from the incidental scores and a couple of works that belong rather in the category of occasional music.

Except for the excellent and little-performed *Namensfeier*, there are no rousing rediscoveries here; the good stuff is great, most of the rest minor. The performances are exceedingly vivid and, if not always polished to a high gloss, always engaging. The sound is by and large excellent, though there are some noticeable differences between recordings made at different times by two different engineering/producing teams. I think that the beautiful clarity and simplicity of the sonics show modern American analog recording at its best, just as the performances show the non-slick, musical/expressive side of music making in this country at its lively best. No texts or translations are included. E.S.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 5, in C Minor, Op. 67; Egmont Overture, Op. 84.* Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. TELARC Ⓢ DG-10060 \$17.98.

Performance: **Lightweight**

Recording: **Top-drawer**

Surprising as it may seem, this is the first digitally mastered Beethoven Fifth to come (Continued on page 82)

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Very Early Mozart

The young Mozart:
supposed portrait
attributed to
Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1766)



YES, the Symphony in F Major, K. 19a, now available here on the Musica Bavaria label (a German import), is the recently rediscovered symphony that Mozart composed at the age of nine. Contrary to popular supposition, though, it is not the *only* symphony he composed at the age of nine. If one were to ask what it tells us about Mozart that we didn't know before, the answer would be probably nothing. Answers, however, are not the reason we listen to Mozart's juvenilia, nor do we listen to it to hear how well the boy genius, aided by his father Leopold to an unknown degree, could handle the conventional forms and gestures of the time. No, what is interesting is the raw material the young Mozart invented for such more-or-less academic exercises. The K. 19a symphony is not a disappointment in that respect; the five-minute *andante* movement is as adorable a tune as you will find in the eighteenth century. If someone could construct the proper film over it, it could become as popular as the "Elvira Madigan" Concerto.

The remainder of the symphony is modestly admirable. The remainder of the record is mostly musicology (all three works

receive their first recording here), Karl Joseph Toeschi being a minor Mannheimer and Rochus Dedler an obscure teacher and composer in the village of Oberammergau where he composed the music for the Passion Play. It's all reasonably competent stuff, but none of it can hold a candle to the nine-year-old's. Toeschi's Symphony in D Major (1773) does show certain resemblances to Mozart's *Paris* Symphony composed five years after it. It may have been something "in the air" or Mozart may actually have picked up on Toeschi's idea (the Toeschi symphony was published in Paris), but great composers have a way of making *any* idea completely their own.

This, then, nicely performed and recorded, is a record you buy really for five minutes of its contents. Odd as it may seem, it's well worth it. —James Goodfriend

MOZART: Symphony in F Major (K. 19a).
TOESCHI: Symphony in D Major.
DEDLER: Symphony in D Major. Convivium Musicum, Munich, Erich Keller cond. MUSICA BAVARICA MB 70 702 \$11.98 (from German News Co., 220 East 86th Street, New York, N.Y. 10028).

Carlos Kleiber cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2532 003 \$12.98, 3302 003 \$12.98.

Performance: **Full, heavy**
Recording: **Excellent**

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. LONDON CS 7201 \$9.98.

Performance: **Grand, bardic**
Recording: **Good**

Leave it to Deutsche Grammophon to come up with the latest technical advance in the record business: the illegible trilingual liner note. The back cover of the Carlos Kleiber disc features notes in German, French, and English printed in tiny black type on a brilliantly shiny silver background. Of course, the more significant technological advance featured here is the digital recording pro-

cess, and it lives up to its billing with extraordinarily wide-ranging sound, from the merest breath to terrific Brahmsian *fortes*. The wide dynamic range and multiple miking permit a closeness and clarity of sound (except for the horribly muddy timpani) together with the more reverberant hall acoustic that Europeans prefer. It's a little unnatural but not ineffective, and the perfect pressing helps. Actually, there is more clarity in the recorded sound than Kleiber and the Viennese musicians offer in performance. Theirs is a big, fat, old-fashioned performance that galumphs along with good humor and high artistic intentions that are not always realized.

The reissued Solti/Chicago recording is just the reverse. The analog recording was done a few steps further back in the hall to get the whole orchestra in a blended acoustic. The dynamic range is rather restricted compared with the digital recording, but the clarity and sweep are there because the conductor—and the musicians—put it there. Except for a slightly too-slow slow movement, this is a performance with impulse and grandeur. The right word is *bardic*; it tells a great old tragic story. *E.S.*

BRITTEN: Lacrymae, Op. 48 (see EC-CLES)

CLARKE: Viola Sonata (see ECCLES)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DEL TREDICI: Final Alice. Barbara Hendricks (soprano); Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Sir Georg Solti cond. LONDON LDR 71018 \$13.96.

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

Since 1968 David Del Tredici has written a half-dozen major works based on Lewis Carroll, and they have enjoyed extraordinary success. *Final Alice* presents the final scene of *Through the Looking-Glass* in a form that Del Tredici describes as "Opera written in Concert Form" but that might be more aptly called recitation and aria. The soprano reads to us from Lewis Carroll with orchestral underscoring and comment in the manner that used to be called "melodrama" (see Strauss' *Enoch Arden*). In between are the arias—really songs set to reflective or word-play texts not always part of the action, not always from the right place in the book, and not always even by Carroll. The work's scope is not small. The scoring includes an amplified soprano-narrator, a solo instrumental group consisting of mandolin, banjo, accordion, and soprano saxophones, and a large standard orchestra. As recorded here, with one scene and one aria cut, the piece lasts almost an hour.

Final Alice and its earlier companions are quite extraordinary pieces, but don't ask me to explain them. The musical style is pretty much right out of Richard Strauss with a touch or two of Humperdinck and, perhaps, Elgar. Frankly, I find it a bit odd to hear Lewis Carroll set to the kind of music Elektra uses to call for the murder of her father. Moreover, Del Tredici seems to want to turn *Alice* into an illicit love story about an aging schoolmaster and a nymphet Alice. Or something like that.

(Continued on page 84)

onto the American market. Sonically it is a splendid achievement, the greatest gain (as usual with digital) being in textural detail in the quieter episodes. Seiji Ozawa takes the opening movement at a rather breathless clip, making it seem almost a flight from fate rather than a stern facing-up. The slow movement has a wonderful sonic immediacy, but again I am not comfortable with Ozawa's interpretation: why such a fast lead-in to the coda? By and large, the *Egmont* Overture performance is the more successful here, even with the exaggerated fermatas at the opening. Digital mastering or no, if what you want is the musical substance of the Beethoven Fifth in all its elemental power, a better choice is Carlos Kleiber on Deutsche Grammophon—at a substantially lower price too. *D.H.*

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 4, in E Minor, Op. 98. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra,



Disappears rather quickly, doesn't it.

Best not to inquire too closely. Del Tredici is an absolute master of his post-Straussian style, and his dissolves into the liquid, sweet, neo-Victorian songs and arias—as sweetly tonal as could be wished—are brilliant. Barbara Hendricks, a little awkward with the Victorian prose, is superb in the neo-Victorian singing. Of course Solti and the Chicagoans, past masters of German late-Romanticism, happily ramble through this revival. It's all definitely retrogressive but most enjoyable. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DVOŘÁK: *Symphony No. 6, in D Major, Op. 60.* London Philharmonic Orchestra,

Mstislav Rostropovich cond. ANGEL SZ-37716 \$9.98.

Performance: **Affectionate**
Recording: **Warm and spacious**

DVOŘÁK: *Symphony No. 8, in G Major, Op. 88; Scherzo Capriccioso, Op. 66.* London Philharmonic Orchestra, Mstislav Rostropovich cond. ANGEL SZ-37718 \$9.98.

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

Dvořák's Sixth Symphony has long been a special favorite of mine, going back to the days of the Václav Talich/Czech Philharmonic 78s. Mstislav Rostropovich's new recording of it seems to me much the best

thing I have heard in his continuing Dvořák cycle with the London Philharmonic. He makes a good case for a lyrical rather than a hard-hitting rhythmic approach to the opening movement and gives us an adagio of the greatest delicacy and tenderness. His pacing of the *Furiant* scherzo is sure and wonderfully light, and he brings ample bounce and vigor to the finale.

In the G Major Symphony Rostropovich goes overboard somewhat, for my taste, in terms of lyrical sentiment—too many *ritards*, *fermatas*, and the like—but the performance has many distinguished and distinctive elements nonetheless, especially the variety of fine dynamic gradations in the early thematic statements in the slow movement. However, the *Scherzo Capriccioso* is the real treat on this disc, for Rostropovich and his players have caught just the right dance flavor that the piece needs; their handling of the coda is delectably imaginative and poetic. Special kudos to the London woodwinds, both solo and ensemble.

The EMI recordings are warm and spacious throughout, though my copy of the D Major Symphony was marred by execrable pressing, which made it necessary for me to weight my cartridge headshell to get through the first inch of each side. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ECCLES: *Viola Sonata in G Minor.* **BRITTEN: *Lacrymae, Op. 48.*** **CLARKE: *Viola Sonata.*** Josef Kodousek (viola); Květa Novotná (piano). SUPRAPHON 1111 2694 G \$9.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Eloquent**
Recording: **First-rate**

This very substantial Czech recording of English music for viola is a reminder that it is as shortsighted to regard the Czechs as purveyors only of their own composers' music as it is to bury the music of as worthy a composer as Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979) in collections devoted only to women composers. Her large-scaled sonata, very much the major work here, is not blessed with particularly memorable themes but succeeds in evoking a highly charged romantic atmosphere, quite in line with the phrase from Alfred de Musset cited in the score: "Poet, take up your lute; tonight the wine of youth is fermenting in the veins of God." Both this 1919 work and the nobly severe little sonata composed by Henry Eccles some two hundred years earlier (performed here in a realization by Paul Klengel) are virtually unknown to most of us, and even Britten's *Lacrymae* (designated not as variations but as "reflections" on Dowland's song *Flow, My Tears*) has had far less exposure than it merits. All this music is eminently worth knowing, and it could not have a more eloquent advocate than Josef Kodousek, the longtime violist of the Vlach Quartet. His young keyboard associate, Květa Novotná, provides splendidly sympathetic support, and the recording itself is first-rate. *R.F.*

FRANCK: *Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano* (see SZYMANOWSKI)

(Continued on page 88)

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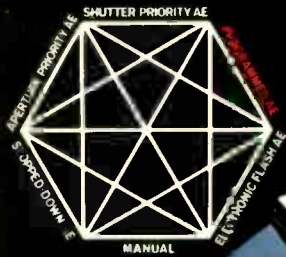
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Mozart: Three New Views



View of the Salzburg suburb of Mülln in the eighteenth century by Louis Vallet.

ALTHOUGH 1981 is not a Mozart year (no more, anyway, than every year is a Mozart year), it has brought us many new recordings of Mozart's music and also several new views of it—views resulting from the application of musicological theories about historically authentic performance practices and the use of original instruments, theories that have heretofore been directed only to music of an earlier time than Mozart's. The three new releases under consideration here involve individuals and ensembles associated in different ways and to different degrees with the "authentic performance" movement, and they offer the discerning listener a rare opportunity to compare not only performances on modern and early instruments, but the differing attitudes of the performers as well.

The most important of these albums, not only for its scope but also for its superb performance quality, is the latest installment, Volume 5, in the Academy of Ancient Music's ongoing survey of all of Mozart's symphonic output. This set is devoted to the works written in Salzburg between 1775 and 1783. The repertoire is a rich one, including such well-known favorites as the *Haffner* and *Linz* Symphonies and symphonic versions of several serenades and overtures.

Far from being a mere gathering of players experimenting with early instruments, the Academy of Ancient Music, founded by Christopher Hogwood, is a full-blown orchestra of about forty players who have mastered their instruments and perform on them with authority and conviction. The orchestral language of the late eighteenth century was created for these instruments, and their skillful use gives the sudden accents, contrasts of dynamics and timbres, crescendos, and delicate melodic articulations of the music the clarity and ease, the balance of power and grace that are so typical of the period. There is a dramatic contrast between the "white" strings, the militant brass, and the reedy woodwinds, and yet they somehow manage to

blend, creating a tremendous sonority in which every instrument is still heard individually. This is, in fact, the most important advantage of an orchestra of old instruments, that everything can be heard clearly, thus shedding new light on the music. Hearing a Classical symphony played by a modern orchestra, one is not usually aware of the orchestration per se; listening to the same work played on old instruments can point up the skillful orchestration, giving a new dimension to familiar music.

Obviously, merely assembling an orchestra of old instruments does not automatically insure good performances; strong and musically sensitive leadership is also necessary. Fortunately, the Academy of Ancient Music has this leadership in Christopher Hogwood, who conducts from the harpsichord, and concertmaster Jaap Schröder. Their readings here are solid and rhythmically sturdy, with well-chosen tempos, a feeling of pride in the minuets, and a controlled lyricism in the slow movements.

It is particularly revealing to compare these performances with those of two of the same symphonies by the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt (also a pioneer in the use of early instruments and authentic performance practices) on the Telefunken release. Harnoncourt's effort to transfer his knowledge to a modern orchestra is praiseworthy, but the results are somewhat frustrating. What comes naturally to the old instruments is done with painstaking labor by the modern ones. There is none of the natural joy and exultation, the festive quality, of the Academy's performances. The intricate motivic work in the first movement of the *Haffner* Symphony, so important to the effect of the piece, is crystal clear in the Academy's reading but is obscured by the heavy bowing and high-pressure playing of the Concertgebouw Orchestra. The loud passages of the finale become a blur of noise, and the delightful secondary themes lack presence. Mozart's music is a casualty

of the thick sound—acoustic overkill, so to speak.

Turning to the realm of chamber music, the Denon release offers Eduard Melkus, who also has authentic-performance credentials, and the Vienna Capella Academica playing *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* and the *Divertimento* No. 10 with one player per part. The sound is just right, especially in the divertimento with its two natural horns, but the performances unfortunately leave much to be desired. Though Melkus is armed with a "period" violin, he frequently smears the articulation, and he indulges in some slurs that are out of place in the Classical style. The ensemble playing is scruffy, and tempo fluctuations mar the rhythmic unity of some of the movements. Historically authentic sonorities cannot make up for sloppy playing.

—Stoddard Lincoln

MOZART: Symphony No. 32, in G Major (K. 318); Symphony in D Major (Serenade No. 7, K. 250, "Haffner"); Symphony No. 33, in B-flat Major (K. 319); Symphony in D Major (Serenade No. 9, K. 320, "Posthorn"); Symphony No. 34, in C Major (K. 338); March (K. 385a); Symphony No. 35, in D Major (K. 385, "Haffner"); Symphony No. 36, in C Major (K. 425, "Linz"); Symphony in C Major (K. 208, "Il Re Pastore"). Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood and Jaap Schröder cond. L'OISEAU-LYRE D171D4 four discs \$39.92.

MOZART: Symphony No. 34, in C Major (K. 338); Symphony No. 35, in D Major (K. 385, "Haffner"). Concertgebouw Orchestra, Amsterdam, Nikolaus Harnoncourt cond. TELEFUNKEN ☉ 6.42703 AZ \$11.98, ☉ 4.42703 CX \$11.98.

MOZART: Serenade No. 13, in G Major (K. 525, "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik"); Divertimento No. 10, in D Major (K. 247). Capella Academica, Vienna; Eduard Melkus, violin and cond. DENON ☉ OX-7211-ND \$15.

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D'INDY: *Istar*, Op. 42; *Wallenstein*, Op. 12; *Jour d'Été à la Montagne*, Op. 61; *La Forêt Enchantée*, Op. 8; *Tableaux de Voyage*, Op. 36. Orchestre Philharmonique des Pays de la Loire, Pierre Dervaux cond. ARABESQUE 8097-2 two discs \$13.96, © 9097-2 \$15.96.

Performance: **Eloquent**
Recording: **Sumptuous**

While the continued neglect of Vincent d'Indy's gorgeous Second Symphony grows ever more baffling, here is an unexpected bonanza for admirers of his music, a package of five sizable orchestral works. None is as ambitious or as nobly accomplished as the symphony, perhaps, but all are more than appealing in their individual coloring and textures. Even *Istar*, the famous "variations in reverse" by which D'Indy used to be represented with some frequency, has not been in our catalog for years. Here it shares the first disc with the early and elaborate *Wallenstein* triptych (*Wallenstein's Camp*, *Max and Thecla*, *Wallenstein's Death*) and is preceded by a very brief spoken comment by the composer that originally accompanied his own recording of *Wallenstein's Camp*. The much later *Jour d'Été à la Montagne* hasn't been available since Ernest Bour's Ducretet-Thomson mono recording disappeared more than twenty years ago. It is one of D'Indy's finest works, its tripartite layout (*Dawn*, *Day*, *Evening*) suggesting a sort of inland counterpart to Debussy's contemporaneous *La Mer*. *La Forêt Enchantée*, the earliest music in this set, reflects the direct influence of Liszt but might be regarded nonetheless as a sort of study for the nature painting in *Jour d'Été*. *Tableaux de Voyage* as presented here comprises D'Indy's orchestral settings of six of the thirteen pieces in his similarly titled piano suite.

While this collection would be worthwhile for *Istar* and *Jour d'Été* alone, the three other works are easy to like. All the music is presented with an eloquence born of real conviction, and the recording is suitably sumptuous. The first of the two discs (minus D'Indy's little speech, which was added by Arabesque) has circulated here as a French EMI import for a few years. Since it was issued Pierre Dervaux and his orchestra, based in Angers, have been recording similarly little-known works by other French composers (Raubaud and Pierné so far), and I hope Arabesque will make those available here too. **R.F.**

JANÁČEK: *Jenufa*. Anna Barová (mezzo-soprano), Grandmother Buryja; Vilém Přibyl (tenor), Laca Klemeň; Vladimír Krejčík (tenor), Števa Buryja; Naděžda Kniplová (soprano), Kostelníčka; Gabriela Beňačková (soprano), Jenufa; Karel Berman (bass), the Miller; Václav Halíř (bass), the Mayor; others. Brno Janáček Opera Chorus and Orchestra, František Jílek cond. SUPRAPHON 1116 2751/2 two discs \$19.96 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Uneven**
Recording: **Fair**

Despite the violence of much of its action, *Jenufa* is probably Janáček's most lyrical

opera. Its score abounds in the characteristic earmarks of the composer's style—short-breathed melodic phrases, pungent ostinatos, sudden bursts of instrumental solos, etc.—but every once in a while a hauntingly beautiful lyric passage emerges as if to emphasize Janáček's compassion for his suffering characters.

Both vocally and orchestrally, *Jenufa* is a demanding work. If I am not as convinced of its greatness as are some of my colleagues, it may be because I have never heard it in an outstanding performance. This 1977-1978 recording by the Czechoslovak Radio falls even shorter of that goal than did its predecessor, a 1970 effort on Angel (SBL-3756, recently deleted but probably still carried by some stores). Two principals of the Angel set repeat their roles here: Vilém Přibyl delineates the complex character of Laca with the same intense commitment as before, though with a shade less vocal security. In the crucial role of Kostelníčka, however, Naděžda Kniplová shows obvious signs of vocal decline; a splendidly authoritative portrayal is defeated by tattered tones.

The new set's greatest asset is Gabriela Beňačková, whose convincingly poignant *Jenufa* is laudable in all respects even though the music clearly strains her vocal resources. As her faithless lover, tenor Vladimír Krejčík is entirely acceptable. In smaller roles, the two basses are quite good, the others adequate or weaker. The dim and remote orchestral reproduction is entirely below current standards. Details are too obscured for an overall judgment of the leadership of conductor František Jílek (a native of Janáček's Moravia and possessor of topnotch credentials), but he is clearly responsive to the music's underlying lyric character. **G.J.**

JANÁČEK: *Sinfonietta*, Op. 60; *Taras Bulba* (see Best of the Month, page 75)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MENDELSSOHN: *Trio No. 1, in D Minor*, Op. 49; *Trio No. 2, in C Minor*, Op. 66. Istomin-Stern-Rose Trio. CBS M 35835, no list price.

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

It was a nice idea to recouple the Istomin-Stern-Rose Trio's fine performance of the Mendelssohn D Minor Trio (already available in two other packages) yet again, this time with an apparently new (at least heretofore unreleased) recording of its later companion work in C Minor. This pairing has been well served by the Beaux Arts Trio, whose performance of the famous scherzo in the D Minor is a special joy (Philips 6580 211), but it must be acknowledged that Eugene Istomin, Isaac Stern, and Leonard Rose, both individually and collectively, give stronger accounts of both works. They vivify the impassioned opening movements as few other teams have done (the markings are, after all, "*Molto allegro ed agitato*" in Op. 49 and "*Allegro energico e con fuoco*" in Op. 66) and succeed in transforming the supposedly characterless slow movement of Op. 66 into such a lovely interlude that one stops making apologies (Continued on page 90)



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Smetana's Ebullient "Bartered Bride"

Soprano
Teresa Stratas
as Marie



Beth Bergman

BEDŘICH SMETANA'S *The Bartered Bride*, with its high spirits and unaffected charm, can be an unalloyed delight—as long as it is kept out of the hands of misguided stage directors. Teresa Stratas, who was the saving grace of the Metropolitan Opera's recent production of the work, is the excellent Marie in a new Eurodisc set derived from a 1975 Munich television production that captures the opera's warmth and spontaneity with obvious affection.

Of course, a strong case can be made against presenting such a folksy opera as *The Bartered Bride* in any language but the original, and there is available, in fact, an imported Supraphon recording of *Prodaná Nevěsta*. It's a decent enough performance, but its leading singers cannot quite match the principals of the Eurodisc Munich production. In any case, this opera captivated audiences in Austria and Germany virtually from the outset, and it has sustained itself in their stage repertoires ever since.

For a number of years we had a very fine EMI German version of *The Bartered Bride* in the catalog (Angel S-3642, Kempe conducting, with Lorengar, Wunderlich, and Frick as principals). It may still be available from import sources, but the Eurodisc set currently enjoys wider distribution, and I recommend it almost without reservation. The authentic Bohemian spirit is guaranteed by the leadership of Jaroslav Krombholc, one of the most eminent and experienced Czech conductors. He gives us all the ebullience the music needs and often makes one want to join in the dances. At times, though, as in the Act I love duet and the priceless Hans/Kecal duet in Act II, I would have preferred a more flexible, less drill-masterish approach.

Teresa Stratas not only sings her music with consistent tonal beauty, but she manages to convey her character's rapidly changing moods with total conviction. René Kollo will not make us forget Fritz Wun-

derlich, but even without matching his predecessor's natural charm and technical polish, he makes a perfectly satisfactory Hans. Even more fortunately cast is Walter Berry, though his is not the deep bass voice one usually associates with the role of Kecal. The extended range presents no difficulties for Berry, who is far too skillful a singer not to get around a few *profondo* notes. Even more important, he brings to this marvelous part all the oily cunning, gregarious spirit, and greedy opportunism the character calls for. Heinz Zednik creates a likable, unexaggerated Wenzel, the veteran Karl Dönch is a good enough Springer, and the various villagers and comedians are all well cast.

THE recorded sound is above reproach, with the voices sensibly placed for a convincing stereo effect. There are attractive photographs with the album, but the notes are in German only, and there is no libretto at all. This is quite inexcusable nowadays, especially considering that the more modern translation used frequently departs from the previous standard German text (by Max Kalbeck) with which listeners may be familiar. Furthermore, "Germanization" is surely carried to a comically insensitive extreme when the composer is identified as "Friedrich" Smetana.

—George Jellinek

SMETANA: *The Bartered Bride*. Teresa Stratas (soprano), Marie; René Kollo (tenor), Hans; Jörn W. Wilsing (baritone), Krušina; Margarethe Bence (soprano), Ludmila; Alexander Malta (bass), Micha; Heinz Zednik (tenor), Wenzel; Walter Berry (bass), Kecal; Karl Dönch (tenor), Springer; Janet Perry (soprano), Esmeralda; others. Bavarian Radio Chorus; Munich Radio Orchestra, Jaroslav Krombholc cond. EURODISC 89 036 three discs \$29.94.

for Mendelssohn's failure to reach again the level of the earlier trio and simply enjoys.

Istomin's superb piano playing reminds us that Mendelssohn, one of the most brilliant pianists of his time, wrote the piano part for himself, but it is never allowed to swamp the sound of the strings, which are in fact agreeably forward in the scherzo and finale of Op. 66. Throughout both works, the lines are extremely well defined, momentum is alive but never overdriven, and for all the apparent urgency and spontaneity of the performances the playing is impeccably shaped and balanced. The sound is rich and well balanced. *R.F.*

MUSSORGSKY: *In the Village; In the Crimea—Capriccio; Scherzo; The Capricious Woman; Intermezzo; Impressions of a Voyage in the Crimea; Impromptu Passionné.* Kun Woo Paik (piano). ARABESQUE 8093 \$6.98, © 9093 \$7.98.

Performance: **Elegant**

Recording: **A clunk and a squish**

One does not tend to think of Mussorgsky as a piano composer, but, of course, *Pictures at an Exhibition* was written for piano, and when Mussorgsky was a young man the piano—on which he loved to improvise (Borodin called him an "elegant piano-playing dilettante")—was his entry into music. His piano music is like all his other work: quirky, colorful, original, intense. The big piece in this collection ("Complete Piano Music, Volume 2") is an intermezzo carrying the relatively early date of 1861 (later it was turned into an orchestral work). The other early works—an *Impromptu Passionné*, a scherzo, and *La Capricieuse*—are closer to the tradition of salon music, and to the style of Borodin, but with plenty of individual touches. The rest of the pieces were written within a year of Mussorgsky's death in early 1881 and reflect the spare and original folk *melos* of his late work.

This is a strange recording, however. Kun Woo Paik plays with simple elegance in a very straightforward manner; none of your mad, drunken Russian outbursts here. The recorded sound is strange too—soft, squishy, with an almost clunky attack to the tone, none of it quite right for the music. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ORFF: *Carmina Burana*. Lucia Popp (soprano); John Van Kesteren (tenor); Hermann Prey (baritone); Karl Kreile, Anton Rosner, Heinrich Weber (tenor); Paul Hansen, Günter Häussler (bass); Chorus of the Bavarian Radio; Tölzer Knabenchor; Munich Radio Orchestra, Kurt Eichhorn cond. EURODISC □ 86827 MK \$9.98.

Performance: **Another blockbuster**

Recording: **Sensational**

In the September issue David Ranada reviewed no fewer than four recent *Carmina Burana* recordings, aptly describing the work as a "perennial audio demonstration piece." Then came a fifth, with Riccardo Muti whipping the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus to a bacchanalian frenzy, and now we have a sixth new one, from Eurodisc. If this latest cannot match the sonic impact of Mata's on RCA or Muti's on

Angel, it does have a few advantages of its own.

These "*cantiones profanae*," taken from the texts of a thirteenth-century manuscript discovered six hundred years later, provided Carl Orff an opportunity not only to use all the resources of a large chorus and orchestra in pagan praise of wine and love but also to write dazzlingly virtuosic passages for three vocal soloists. It is in this area that some otherwise viscerally effective performances fall short. In this case conductor Kurt Eichhorn has been fortunate in having the services of soprano Lucia Popp. Her approach might seem to some a little too operatic and not quite sensuous enough at times, but she makes up in musicianship and vocal purity what she might be holding back in sex appeal. Tenor John van Kesteren can also be heard in the Muti recording, but his singing, if never as uninhibited as it could be, is particularly persuasive here. Most thrilling of all is Hermann Prey. Nobody else has yet matched the rich earthiness he brings to the baritone's lusty passages. And though it takes a while before Eichhorn's ensemble forces really warm up, once they do, watch out!

The album is no slouch in the technical department either. Play it with an SQ quadraphonic decoder, if your set has the capability, and you'll find the effect pretty hair-raising. One gripe, though: no text and insufficient notes, poorly Englished. **P.K.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RACHMANINOFF: *Piano Concerto No. 3, in D Minor, Op. 30.* Alexis Weissenberg (piano); Orchestre National de France, Leonard Bernstein cond. ANGEL SZ-37722 \$9.98.

Performance: **Coruscating**
Recording: **Very fine**

At least two other current recordings of Rachmaninoff's enormously sophisticated and demanding Third Piano Concerto do full justice to its musical and virtuosic content, those by Ashkenazy and Ormandy on RCA and by Gavrillov and Lazarev on CBS. This latest one does the job in quite a different way; moreover, unlike the others, it uses the shorter, and in many ways more effective, first-movement cadenza. It is clear from the outset that the greatest care was taken to make this recorded performance a true collaboration of equals. The piano is not spotlighted in the usual way, but is at one with the orchestral fabric, at times emerging front and center by virtue of the performance rather than the microphone placement.

Alexis Weissenberg gives a typically cool, glittery, absolutely flawless reading of the solo part, the highlight of which is his dazzling performance of the first-movement cadenza—its opening phrase simply grabs the listener by the scruff of the neck. "Cool" Rachmaninoff may sound like a contradiction in terms, but it works here, probably because Leonard Bernstein contributes enough heartfelt lyrical warmth in the orchestral part. He elicits great beauty of tone from the French string players in the opening pages of the wonderful intermezzo movement, and the expressive downward *portamento* that precedes the soloist's entry is startling. Not surprisingly, the famous



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waltz episode is a spine-tingler, and the finale comes off in a dashing, wholly suitable style.

The recording balance is more even than on the usual run of piano-concerto releases, and it is a pleasure to hear the piano and orchestra in the same acoustic perspective. The sound is on the distant side, but I find it appropriate for this music. *D.H.*

RACHMANINOFF: Suites for Two Pianos: No. 1, Op. 5 ("Fantasy"); No. 2, Op. 17. Güher and Süher Pekinel (pianos). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 345 \$10.98.

Performance: **Neat**

Recording: **Nice**

If you are allergic to figural repetition, the Rachmaninoff suites, particularly the first one, are likely to drive you insane. If your tolerance is higher you may well get considerable pleasure from these performances, because there *are* a lot of good tunes and some marvelous writing for two pianos.

The Pekinel sisters were born in Turkey and got their training at Juilliard and in West Germany. They sound rather more German than anything else, which is to say that they bring to this sometimes excited Slavic music a clear and crisp approach, a musicianly sense of phrase, an attractive sound, and a good feel for the melodic lines, but nothing in the way of Russian passion. One misses this most where the music is weakest—in the First Suite. In the Second, which is all-around stronger music, their somewhat stand-offish playing still provides a viable performance and the music itself has enough charm to carry the day. Technically the Pekinels seem impeccable, and Deutsche Grammophon has provided them with very pleasing recorded sound.

—James Goodfriend

ROCHBERG: Quintet for Piano and Strings. Alan Marks (piano); Concord String Quartet. NONESUCH N-78011 \$8.98.

Performance: **Authoritative**

Recording: **Atmospheric**

George Rochberg's Piano Quintet, composed in 1975, is laid out symmetrically, as were the Third String Quartet and the Violin Concerto that he completed in 1972 and 1974, respectively. It is in seven movements—two more than in either of those other works—but it strikes me as being both more concise and a bit richer in contrasts, though without achieving quite the level of urgency one finds in the quartet and the concerto. The work's symmetry and its mix of tonal and atonal elements reflect what Rochberg describes as "an overall emotional scenario" with "a progression from dark to light, to dark again" in which "mournful, troubled, and haunted states alternate with serene and exuberant ones." The Introduction and the Epilogue are both atonal, the second and sixth movements combine tonal and atonal elements, and the third and fifth are not only tonal but closer to orthodox structure. In the center, as a sort of intermezzo separating the first half of the work (Introduction, Fantasia, Fugue-Scherzo) from the second (Little Variations, *Molto Allegro con Spirito*, Epilogue), there is a brief *Sfumato* for piano alone in

(Continued on page 94)

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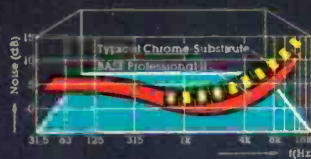
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which the threads of the entire structure are more or less drawn together in a "misty, dark, murky atmosphere." As in so much of the Third Quartet, the spirit of Mahler seems to hover over the Little Variations (specifically the Mahler of the Fifth Symphony's famous *Adagio*), and the succeeding *Molto Allegro* is almost Ivesian in its rhythmic shifts and juxtaposition of tonal and atonal passages.

This is a provocative work that draws the listener in, sometimes comfortably, sometimes challengingly. Rochberg wrote it for the Concord Quartet (the group for which he composed his Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Quartets) and pianist Jerome Lowenthal, who together introduced it in New York in March 1976. The performance re-

ages to speak and sing at the same time. She can build up quite a lot of strength and intensity, but there is none of the old anguish; the agony and neuroticism of Old Vienna are not here. I must say that something is lost in the process.

Similarly, the instrumental performance and overall direction are superbly accomplished—glittering, strong, musical—but have virtually no trace of that mad psychological climate we have come to associate with the work. Good riddance, some may say. But not I. For me *Pierrot* is a dark night of the soul, and that is an essential part of its genius. What we have here is an excellent, regular, brilliant performance of the utmost clarity—clean, cool, classical, crystalline, dignified, laid-back, orderly, ro-

parison was thoroughly illuminating. The frequency range has very clearly been extended, particularly in the lower reaches of the audio spectrum, and there is also an audible extension of dynamic range, which enables hitherto unheard details of scoring and performance to emerge clearly. The disc was cut at a lower *average* volume level, and while the use of top-grade vinyl keeps noise down, one had better have a wholly rumble-free turntable.

The Mobile Fidelity release uses the same cover art and liner notes as the RCA original, but there is a heavy-duty inner jacket. With all due respect for this excellent remastering job, I suspect that it will be largely Reiner buffs (there are many of them) who will pay the high price for the Mobile Fidelity disc. Angel's digital recording by Eugene Ormandy (DS-37744) offers a comparably fine performance and even better sound at \$10.98 list. *D.H.*

SZYMANOWSKI: Piano Sonata No. 3, Op. 36; Etude in Modo d'una Canzona, Op. 4, No. 3; Masques, Op. 34; Valse Romantique. Donn-Alexandre Feder (piano). PRO-TONE PR-149 \$7.98.

Performance: **Authoritative**
Recording: **Poor**

SZYMANOWSKI: Mythes, Op. 30; Pieśń Roksany; Pieśń Kurpiowska. **FRANCK: Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano.** Kaja Danczowska (violin); Krystian Zimerman (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 330 \$10.98, © 3301 330 \$10.98.

Performance: **Serious, deliberate**
Recording: **Good**

The Polish composer Karol Szymanowski was born in 1882 and lived until 1937. He started out working in the late-Romantic vein and ended up as a nationalist/modernist. In between, he was strongly influenced by French Impressionism, and it is this period that is mainly represented on these two discs. The colorful *Mythes* (*The Fountain of Arethusa, Narcissus, Pan and the Dryads*), the witty *Masques* (*Scheherazade, Tantris the Buffoon, Don Juan*), and the ambitious Third Piano Sonata all have their charms, but all are played here in the most serious and reticent manner. Something more in the way of impassioned advocacy is needed to make the case for this unfamiliar music.

Kaja Danczowska—like Krystian Zimerman a Pole—is a very capable violinist, and both piano and violin are nicely recorded on the Deutsche Grammophon release. But the overly careful, deliberate nature of the playing becomes obvious in the César Franck sonata, which is logy and unexciting. The American pianist Donn-Alexandre Feder works up a bit more steam, and he is certainly authoritative (he has spent a good part of his life studying and specializing in Szymanowski's music and, incidentally, has prepared his own versions—with what authenticity I cannot say—of the works here). But the recorded piano sound of the Protone disc is dull and dishwatery. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TCHAIKOVSKY: Trio in A Minor, Op. 50 ("To the Memory of a Great Artist"). Mik-
(Continued on page 96)



corded here, taped last fall under the composer's supervision, must be regarded as authoritative; it is obviously totally committed and benefits from an acoustic frame that makes the most of the atmospheric qualities alluded to in the composer's comments on the work. *R.F.*

SCHOENBERG: Pierrot Lunaire, Op. 21. Maureen McNalley (reciter); Orchestra of Our Time, Joel Thome cond. MOSS MUSIC GROUP ● D-MMG 111 \$10.98.

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

Here is a *Pierrot Lunaire* with all the expressionism taken out. I don't mean that the performance is without expression; quite the contrary, it is very expressive, but in the traditional classical way.

Maureen McNalley is a remarkable *Sprechstimme* performer. She knows every note, by which I mean that she has obviously learned the pitches indicated by Schoenberg, and she departs from them with great ease in a highly naturalistic voice that man-

bust, virtuosic. Quite remarkable, really, but not the *Pierrot* we used to know and love. *E.S.*

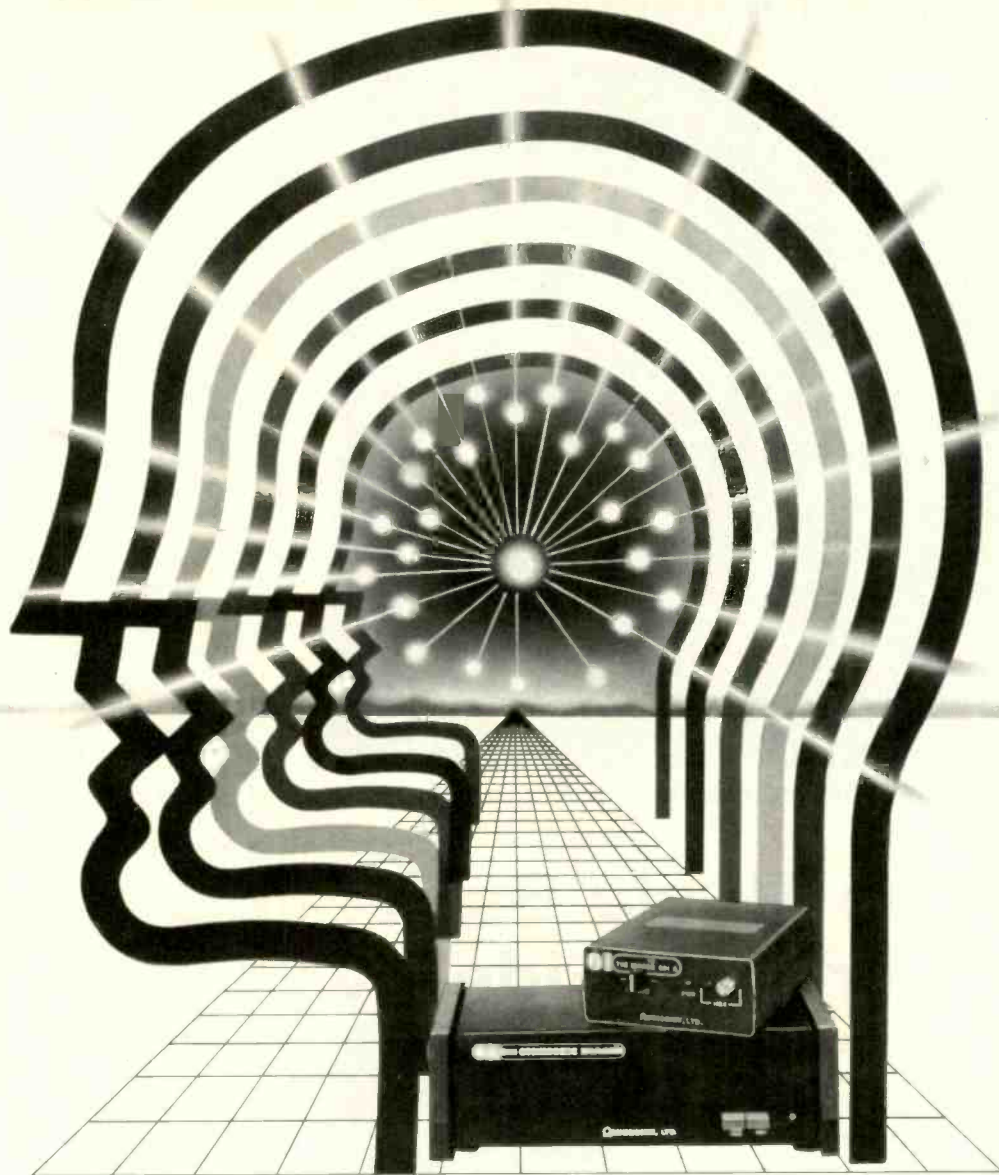
SCHUBERT: Schwanengesang (see Best of the Month, page 70)

R. STRAUSS: Also Sprach Zarathustra, Op. 30. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner cond. MOBILE FIDELITY SOUND LAB MFSL 1-522 \$16.99.

Performance: **A classic**
Recording: **Handsome update**

This disc is my first encounter with the Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab Original Master Recording series, which draws on major-label tape masters of audiophile interest and seeks to get out of them—through half-speed transfer/cutting, tender loving care in plating and pressing, and top-quality vinyl—what cannot be realized under the usual mass-production conditions. Luckily, I had on hand an original 1962 RCA pressing of the Fritz Reiner/Chicago Symphony *Also Sprach Zarathustra*; the aural com-

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CIRCLE NO. 1 ON READER SERVICE CARD

hail Pletnyov (piano); Elmar Oliveira (violin); Nathaniel Rosen (cello). CBS M 35855, © MT 35855, no list price.

Performance: **White-hot**
Recording: **Splendid**

TCHAIKOVSKY: Trio in A Minor, Op. 50 ("To the Memory of a Great Artist"). Eastman Trio. TURNABOUT TVC 37017 \$5.98, © CT 37017 \$5.98.

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

I never thought the day would come that an uncut performance of Tchaikovsky's trio in memory of Nicholas Rubinstein would keep me on the edge of my chair, enthralled by every note. Well, that day came when I heard the new CBS release featuring three 1978 gold-medal winners in the International Tchaikovsky Competition. I was disappointed, however, that the trilingual jacket notes say not a word about the performers or how the recording came about. In fact, it was taped two weeks after Mikhail Pletnyov, Elmar Oliveira, and Nathaniel Rosen played the trio at the 1979 Newport Music Festival, following which Pletnyov said farewell to his American colleagues and returned to Russia. So this altogether remarkable collaboration appears to have been a one-shot affair.

Aside from the immense conviction and spirit these artists bring to the music, the recording is unusually impressive. The stereo stage is deep and wide, as is essential if this music, with its near-orchestral sonority, is not to sound congested. The reading of the first movement verges on the feverish, but it is in character with the music. The genre variations in the first half of the second movement come as welcome relaxation and are played here with the greatest brilliance. The usually omitted fugue is treated with tremendous urgency and momentum. Everything works all the way through the finale and coda, the defiant, life-asserting opening of which assumes in this performance a kinship with the final pages of Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony.

Excellent musicians that the members of the Eastman Trio are, they cannot, for all their conscientiousness, match the CBS performance, nor do they command quite the same measure of lyrical impulse as Angel's team. Their performance is also uncut, by the way, and the sound has good depth illusion, but not quite the breadth of that on CBS. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

VERDI: *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Katia Ricciarelli (soprano), Amelia; Plácido Domingo (tenor), Riccardo; Renato Bruson (baritone), Renato; Edita Gruberova (soprano), Oscar; Elena Obraztsova (mezzo-soprano), Ulrica; Ruggero Raimondi (bass), Samuel; Giovanni Foiani (bass), Tom; others. Orchestra and Chorus of La Scala, Milan, Claudio Abbado cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 251 three discs \$32.94, © 3378 111 \$32.94.

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

Before this release, there were five stereo recordings of *Un Ballo in Maschera* in the catalog. However, only one of them, Angel

STEREO REVIEW

SCLX-3762, is a strong contender with this new Deutsche Grammophon set. Both recordings are fortunate enough to share the same tenor lead—Placido Domingo, possibly the best Riccardo in the world today—and both are conducted by Italians with impressive symphonic credentials. Riccardo Muti on Angel and Claudio Abbado are both strong-willed disciplinarians of the modern school with a certain literal-mindedness in their approach to opera. In a general sense, Muti generates more excitement, but his tempo choices are at times erratic. DG's Abbado is less given to eccentricities, though some of his tempos are also arguable (Amelia's "*Ma dall'arido stelo*" too slow, the dance passages in the ball scene too hard-driven). Both conductors share a methodical drive for forward motion, seldom allowing the singers to phrase expansively. In this case, though, it must be said that Abbado draws a rich and vital sound from the orchestra, his textures are clear, and he paces certain sections of the opera with masterly control (Act III, Scene 1, is a good example).

Placido Domingo is all a Riccardo ought to be: elegant, manly, and always tasteful and musical in phrasing. He gets a little more latitude from Abbado than from Muti, and he interpolates a few restrained chuckles into his "*E scherzo od è follia*" and delivers both his arias in an exemplary fashion. Abbado's pacing of the Love Duet cannot be faulted, and both Domingo and Katia Ricciarelli respond to his direction with excellent results. Ricciarelli also contributes an exquisitely sung "*Morrò, ma prima in grazia*" (Act III), though she sounds rather tentative in the earlier scene in Ulrica's den.

The entire performance on the DG set seems to gather strength as it progresses. The very fine baritone, Renato Bruson, has little real *presence* in the first two acts. Still, it is a pleasure to hear such a perfectly focused, pure baritone sound, used with such control and refinement, rising to effortless high Gs. Ruggero Raimondi and Giovanni Foiani make a pair of impressive conspirators, and Edita Gruberova endows the music of Oscar with more tonal body than most other interpreters do. Elena Obraztsova's Ulrica is long on character projection, short on tonal refinement.

The score is presented uncut, and Bruson sticks to Verdi's own cadenza in "*Ala vita che t'arride*." The recorded sound is extremely good except when the DG engineers indulge in barely audible pianissimos. If you own Seraphim 6026 (Gigli, Caniglia, and Bechi) or Seraphim 6087 (Callas, Di Stefano, and Gobbi), do not give it up, but if you're looking for a stereo version, this is the one to get. *G.J.*

WEILL: *Songs* (see Best of the Month, page 68)

COLLECTIONS

DON SMITHERS: *Baroque Trumpet Music* (see Going on Record, page 56)

TERESA STRATAS: *The Unknown Kurt Weill* (see Best of the Month, page 68)

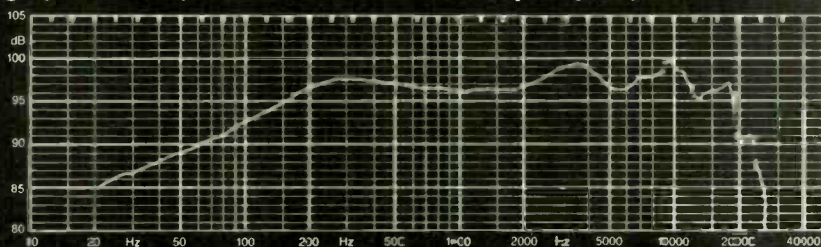
EDWARD TARR: *Baroque Trumpet Music* (see Going on Record, page 56)

NOVEMBER 1981

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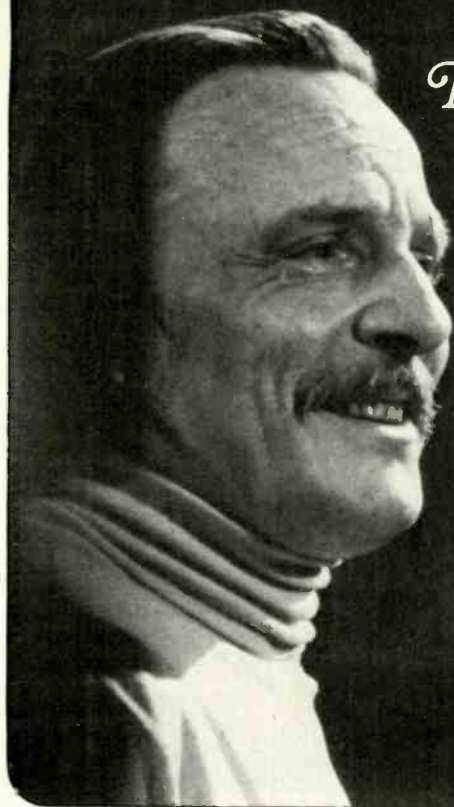
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CIRCLE NO. 38 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Predictably Unpredictable: Arturo Benedetti Michelangelo

Polydor/Leader



ARTURO BENEDETTI MICHELANGELO is one of the great musical oddballs of our time. Stories about him are legion: his disappearing acts, his cancellations, his aloofness, his indifference to recording, his attraction to bad editions, his incommunicativeness with the press, his very repertoire. He must be the only major pianist today to have in his repertoire pieces by Galuppi and Marescotti as well as a couple of *Haydn* piano concertos.

New records from Michelangelo, though more common than they once were, are still rare enough for their release to constitute some sort of musical phenomenon. Comes now a new disc from Deutsche Grammophon that presents him in works by Schubert and Brahms. To the best of my knowledge, Michelangelo has never before recorded any music by Schubert. Of Brahms, he recorded an incredible *Paganini Variations* many years ago (it was originally on 78s) and nothing, so far as I know, since. One could say, then, that his choice of composers here is unexpected and, given the composers, that the particular repertoire—the earliest and least-known of Schubert's three sonatas in A Minor and Brahms' Four

Ballades, Op. 10—is also unexpected. One could, that is, except that Michelangelo is so unpredictable that virtually everything he does (or nothing he does) is unexpected.

Apart from being consistently unpredictable, Michelangelo is consistent in another way: in his mastery of the technique of playing the piano. There is not another pianist in the world today who has his control of the keyboard, who plays everything with such technical perfection that no passage sounds any more difficult than any other passage and with no sense of strain evident in any of them. He seems never to play a note, a chord, a figuration, a phrase in any way other than exactly the way he wants it to go. There are no accidents. That does not mean that what he does is always *musically* pleasing. But when it is *not* you know that it is one hell of a pianist lousing up the music that way, and when it *is* you have the best of all musical worlds. Michelangelo's recordings of the Ravel G Major Concerto, the Bach/Busoni *Chaconne*, and the Debussy *Images* have probably never been surpassed, and someone is going to have to go a long way to surpass this new release. For me it is the piano record of the year.

Once you get over the opening of the Schubert sonata (whether you know the work or not it will seem both brisk and brusque), you cannot be less than impressed by the way Michelangelo lays out the structure and content of the movement. It is unexpectedly short-tempered Schubert, but it works, and retrospectively the opening seems right and inevitable, even if it's not the way you ever thought this sonata should go. Then you look at Schubert's tempo indication (*Allegro ma non troppo*) and wonder if perhaps this isn't the way Schubert wanted the sonata played in the first place, the *Allegro* dominating the *non troppo*.

The second movement (*Allegretto quasi andantino*) is simply amazing. Michelangelo's hands seem to belong to two completely independent creatures—in perfect union, but independent. The melody, in right-hand octaves, emerges in a singing legato without sounding like it is pedaled at all. The evenness and articulation are incredible. Technically, this is tightrope walking of the first class; musically, it is a dream. The finale does not pose the same kind of problems, but the performance is splendid. All in all, a very different view of Schubert—lyrical, yes, but more abrupt and hotheaded, mercurial even, rather than massive—but, above all, one that accepts the technical difficulties as problems to be surmounted, not as evidence of the composer's insufficient grasp of "proper" piano technique.

MICHELANGELO is a temperamentally cool pianist. There is a coolness in the Schubert, and there is coolness in the Brahms Ballades too, but that seems to detract not one whit from the music's expressiveness here. Brahms in 1854 (the year of Op. 10) was not yet a great composer, but, hearing this disc, there is a great temptation to say that it is at this point that he became one. The grim but beautiful atmosphere of the "Edward" (after the Scottish ballad) Ballade is conveyed to perfection. The slightly lesser succeeding pieces sustain interest more than in any other performance I've heard. Through them all, the musical mind at work and the fingers that do its bidding seem never to drop below the level of perfection. The rubato, the rallentandos, the phrasing are elegantly expressive. I can imagine a different performance, but I cannot imagine a better or more affecting one.

The recording has been digitally mastered. The tone of the piano is clear and pleasant at low and medium levels; at high levels it seems to me a bit coarse. But, if nothing else, the recording allows us to hear Michelangelo's full dynamic range. For a pianist who was never thought to have a particularly large one, he shows an ability to build quite a crescendo.

—James Goodfriend

SCHUBERT: Piano Sonata No. 4, in A Minor, Op. 164 (D. 537). BRAHMS: Four Ballades, Op. 10. Arturo Benedetti Michelangelo (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON © 2532 017 \$12.98, © 3302 017 \$12.98.

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Popular Music Briefs



Alfa Records

LULU, the Scottish songstress who topped U.S. pop charts with *To Sir with Love* in the mid-Sixties, is Top-40 again with her Alfa single *I Could Never Miss You*. After recording enough other songs to make the single into an album, Lulu set about establishing an American home for herself and her husband, hairdresser John Frieda, in Los Angeles. In London, Frieda arranges the hair on such heads as those of Bianca Jagger and Princess Feryal of Jordan, and

he and Lulu hang out with such with-it folks as royal-wedding-dress designers David and Elizabeth Emanuel. There are fewer royal heads and royal dress designers in L.A. than in London, but for a lot of California show-folks it will be good news that Lulu is back in town. She has been a friendly colleague to many American musicians visiting London, and the guests on her various British TV series have included such American stars as Stevie Wonder. □

COMPOSER, pianist, and singer **David Frishberg** has been called "an original beyond category" by critic John S. Wilson, a "marvelous maverick" by critic Leonard Feather, and "more than adequate" by Mrs. David Frishberg. What with performances with Blossom Dearie at Michael's Pub in New York in August, an album ("The David Frishberg Songbook, Vol. 1") released by Omnisound in October, and an appearance in Washington on November 1 in

the Corcoran Gallery's Great American Songwriters series, Frishberg is finally getting the kind of exposure his talents deserve.

"A lot of disc jockeys have threatened to play my music," he said in the back room at Michael's Pub after a recent performance. "Things seem to be going in a very vocal direction for me these days. That's where I'm getting the most recognition." Long respected as a jazz pianist, Frishberg has

played with such artists as Ben Webster and Zoot Sims, and two earlier albums still available on Concord display his pianistic skills. But it's his songs and his performances of them that are putting him in the limelight now. His lyrics are witty, inventive, and poignant, and so are the tunes to match. Such songs as *I'm Hip* (written with Bob Dorough) and *Z's* always make audiences laugh, and *Do You Miss New York?* and *Van Lingle Mungo* (the latter with lyrics consisting solely of baseball players' names) are touching love songs of a very special kind.

"I like to find new things to say about love, to use new images to talk about it," Frishberg said. He also talks about other things in unexpected ways. In *Another Song About Paris*, for instance, he discovers a whole new perspective on the City of Light: "Remember Notre Dame where we chatted with the hunchback/The dim café where we had to send the lunch back?"

For *Do You Miss New York?* he drew on his own experience to write of New Yorkers transplanted to L.A.: "Do you miss the scene, the frenzy, the faces/Did you trade the whole

parade for a pair of parking places?" That kind of respect for language (and the people who listen to it) has been hard to come by in pop music for some time. Frishberg just may find himself entering a seller's market. —P.W.

OLDIES shows, as you may already have discovered, tend to be disappointing, if not downright pathetic. For the price of an expensive concert ticket you get to see some once-exciting stars of the Fifties or Sixties strutting their arthritic stuff without conviction, a sense of fun, or even much rehearsal, generally cheapening our fond memories of their music and leaving an unpleasant aftertaste. Two recent shows in New York provided a fascinating contrast in that regard.

The first seemed—at first—really promising. Billed as "The Second Coming of the Soul Clan," it reunited Sixties r-&-b giants **Wilson Pickett, Joe Tex, Don Covay, Solomon Burke, and Ben E. King** for what amounted to the first Soul Supergroup (along with the late Otis Redding, the five once recorded a single and had planned to perform together until Redding's 1967 death intervened). It was supposed to be a reaffirmation of the virtues of old-style r-&-b in the wake of the declining disco steamroller; instead, it was an appalling display of meanness, petty egomania, and one-upmanship.

Audience anticipation at the posh Savoy was running high, but you knew there was going to be trouble almost from the beginning. The show started more than an hour late, and an



anachronistic (that is, 1981-style) rapping DJ didn't help the crowd's mood. After a disappointingly lackluster set by Wilson Pickett's band, on came Joe Tex. Halfway through his set he was abruptly asked to leave by one of Pickett's minions; the rest of the evening was a true all-star disaster. Solomon Burke struggled gamely (his voice was still thrilling), but the boys in Pickett's band couldn't negotiate the simplest gospel changes (the audience knew the material far better than they did). Don Covay was merely grotesque, and got booed off the stage for his trouble. Ben E. King was his usual elegant self despite the raggedy band, but he concentrated on his more contemporary Seventies hits, which was not, of course, the nostalgic idea. By the time Wilson Pickett finally hit the stage, most of the audience had fled. The concluding portion of the show, in which all five stars were supposed to work out together, was so poorly planned that there weren't even enough microphones to go around. A thoroughly depressing evening.

A week later, with no expectations at all, we chanced upon the refurbished **Frankie Ly-**

mon's Teenagers at the Bottom Line. The Teenagers, of course, were the Jackson Five of the Fifties, perhaps the greatest of the doo-wop groups. Lymon himself died, in obscurity, of an overdose in the mid-Sixties; more recently so did two of the other originals. (The Teenagers' story, a classic example of how the music business in the Fifties ate its young, is one of the most tragic in all of rock-and-roll.) But founding members Jimmy Merchant and Herman Santiago recently regrouped after recruiting ex-Kodak lead singer Pearl McKinnon. Merchant is apparently obsessed with his past, a man with a mission, and his dedication paid off. The new Teenagers ran through a set that raised more goosebumps than anything I have heard all year. They were slick, committed, obviously relishing the spotlight again, and Ms McKinnon not only sounds eerily like the thirteen-year-old Lymon, but can belt like the very greatest of the r-&b shouters when she is of a mind to. A magic night. Not the music of the future, of course, but the mere fact that they didn't dishonor the past was moving enough. —S.S.



Warner Bros. / Eilex

GRACENOTES The once very shocking **Alice Cooper** debuted his new act in New York while decked out in *Apocalypse Now* Vietnam-era military drag, leading some to speculate that maybe he cribbed the idea from local punk favorites Shrapnel (profiled in these pages in April 1980). But our spies tell us it was a good show, the python getting the biggest ovation (great camouflage). The Chu-Bops people, who make those miniature album covers to wrap their bubblegum in, are readying eight new **Elvis Presley** packages: disc-shaped gold bubblegum (to signify million-seller status) with reproductions of such Elvis albums as "Blue Hawaii" and "G.I. Blues." One hundred million

Chu-Bops will have been sold worldwide by the end of the year. **Stephen Sondheim** is doing the score for Warren Beatty's long-delayed film epic *Reds*; it is only Sondheim's second for the movies (the first was *Stavisky*, in 1974). **Robert Gordon** has been dropped without ceremony by RCA—perhaps as a belt-tightening move after their twelve-million deal with Diana Ross? The English rockabillys known as the **Stray Cats** are recording a second album in the company of longtime Rolling Stones pianist Ian Stewart (their first Arista album, produced by Dave Edmunds, remains unreleased here). Fantasy Records has released *Medley U.S.A.*, an ungainly aural montage of seven **Creedence Clearwater Revival** oldies that appears to be an attempt to duplicate the success of the Beatles-soundalike *Stars on 45* Meanwhile, Creedence's *Bad Moon Rising* figures prominently in John Landis' cinematic ode to lycanthropy, *An American Werewolf in London* and legendary Lovin' Spoonful guitarist **Zal Yanovsky** is one of the voices in the animated (in the Disney sense) *Heavy Metal* film. —S.S.

Disc and Tape Reviews

By CHRIS ALBERTSON • NOEL COPPAGE • PHYL GARLAND • PAUL KRESH
MARK PEEL • PÉTER REILLY • STEVE SIMELS • JOEL VANCE

Ⓢ = stereo cassette Ⓣ = digital-master recording □ = quadraphonic disc
Ⓜ = eight-track stereo cartridge ⊕ = direct-to-disc ⊕ = monophonic recording

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

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THE BROTHERS JOHNSON: Winners. The Brothers Johnson (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *The Real Thing; Dancin' Free; Sunlight; Caught Up; In the Way*; and four others. A&M SP-3724 \$8.98, Ⓢ CS-3724 \$8.98, ⊕ 8T-3724 \$8.98.

Performance: **Full of vitality**
Recording: **Very good**

Whether or not the Brothers Johnson rank among your favorite music makers, you have to respect their craft; technical precision and crispness characterize everything they release. Their recent albums have been crowd pleasers with high sales, but in them originality has sometimes been sacrificed to slickness; the Brothers have tended to rely on licks and changes that worked in the past. "Winners," however, should find favor even with their detractors. This time around

the Johnsons have recaptured the fresh, imaginative quality of their earliest outings while reaching new heights in fusing spirited, cleverly harmonized vocals with bristlingly sharp instrumentals. Every track here is permeated with a rare vitality, and the arrangements venture far enough from the beaten track to intrigue the ear without being disconcertingly strange.

As usual, George Johnson handles the lead vocals and doubles on guitar, and brother Louis Johnson sets the rhythm line on bass, pairs on guitar, and shares most of the composing credits. The horn arrangements are sassy and neatly woven into the musical fabric. Special credit is due fusion keyboardist Jeff Lorber, who sits in on several tracks, and David Paich, who plays a mean acoustic piano on *Hot Mama*—truly a hot track. The album photos portray the Brothers Johnson as an athletic duo winning at every sport from track and soccer to cycling and karate, but it's clear that

music is the "sport" in which they're really winners. P.G.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TIM CURRY: Simplicity. Tim Curry (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Working on My Tan; On a Roll; Take Me, I'm Yours; Out of Pawn; I Put a Spell on You; She's Not There*; and four others. A&M SP-4830 \$7.98, Ⓢ CS-4830 \$7.98.

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

Tim Curry, recently on Broadway in the role of the young Mozart in *Amadeus* and star of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, doesn't make albums so much as he does anti-albums. There's a broad streak of Dadaism in his recordings (he played Tristan Tzara on Broadway too, in Tom Stoppard's

(Continued on page 103)



Lynn Goldsmith Inc.

Rolling Stones: "Tattoo You"

I HAVE a problem with "Tattoo You," the new Rolling Stones album, and I don't know if I should burden you with it. But, what the heck . . . we're all friends here, right? The thing is, the first time I heard *Start Me Up*, the single released a few weeks ahead of the LP, I became convinced that the hook line of the chorus was "Mr. Greenblatt died." Since then, of course, I have deciphered the actual lyrics (not entirely, though; any reader who accomplishes that feat is invited to share his knowledge with me), and I know now that what Mick is singing is "You make a grown man cry." But when the damn thing comes on the radio, I still hear *my* version, and it's kind of unsettling—the idea of the Rolling Stones lamenting the death of some executive in the garment district is so off the wall that it's not even in the room.

Which is a roundabout way of telling you that there's something about "Tattoo You" that strikes me as peculiar, and I can't quite put my finger on what it is. Oh, it's a very good record, no doubt about that—swaggering, sexy, insinuating stuff for the most part, and if it doesn't put the Stones-as-Boring-Old-Farts stories to rest once and for all, then nothing will. At its best, it simply wipes the floor with recent efforts by New Wave faves like the Pretenders or the Ramones. But, as I said, something about it is peculiar.

The particulars stack up like this. The band has rarely sounded better; they've opted for a sound that combines the metallic directness of "Some Girls" with the first-take rockabilly sloppiness of "Emotional Rescue." It's very much a guitar record, the typical one-two punch of the Stones of the early Seventies; if you can imagine "Sticky Fingers" gone punk, you've got the idea. The hired hands are deliberately de-empha-

sized. Pete Townshend and Sonny Rollins (!) are rumored to be on it somewhere (no musician credits this time), but if they are I can't hear them. There is some occasional sax that sounds like longtime collaborator Bobby Keys, and the keyboards, which are very discreet, are likely the usual combo of Ian Stewart and Maclagan.

THEY'VE divided it up into a rocking side and a midtempo ballad side, which works very nicely; side one is for parties, and side two is for making out in the basement or drifting off to sleep. The songs are almost uniformly strong, some considerably better than that. *Black Limousine* impresses me the most. It's a Jimmy Reed-derived blues with a brutally casual lyric, and it's also one of the most intense performances the Stones have ever recorded. It has a stylistic authority (the rhythm section approaches the supernatural) and an emotional impact that simply takes the breath away; there isn't an r-&-b band, white or black, anywhere in the world that could come within miles of it. Also impressive is *Little T & A*, an extension of the nouveau-James Burton approach they began to work out on the last album. The interplay here between the guitars and the ensemble as a whole is really a joy. One tends to forget that these guys are honest-to-God musicians, and on this one you can hear them working together with the almost telepathic unity of, say, a good jazz group.

Start Me Up, of course, you know. At first it struck me as just reliable old Stones riffing, but in fact it's a lot better than that, the kind of song that makes you realize, belatedly, just how much music can be squeezed out of three dopey chords. And as often as people try to appropriate this sound—bluesy, raucous barrelhouse guitars—there's simply nobody else who can

do it with such offhand ease. It's a very funny song, too; Mick has been singing about sex for so long now that it's hilarious to hear him admit he can't perform as he did when he was a kid (maybe that's why he mumbles a lot of it).

The rest of the rockers all have good things about them (especially *Neighbors*, with one of the most ear-filling trashcan-lid drum sounds ever committed to vinyl), and the ballads (with the exception of *Heaven*, a meandering Bee Gees-like bit of mood mongering) are never less than interesting. *Worried About You* and *No Use in Crying* are vintage Sixties soul-derived things that give Mick the opportunity to perfect his Solomon Burke impression. The former strikes me as a stage vehicle whose depths the Stones haven't plumbed yet, and the latter is simply lovely, a song that could start the Soul Revival all by itself. The album's closer is perhaps the best of the bunch. *Waiting on a Friend*, which recalls Lou Reed and even Bruce Springsteen, is a stunning bit of city music. Sneakily understated, with a surprisingly gentle, confessional lyric and vocal (Jagger is refreshingly unmanly throughout the album, by the way, which is yet another bit of good news), it will, I think, get under your skin in very short order.

THERE'S been a lot of loose talk lately about whether rock-and-roll is moribund as a form, and, while I am not myself of that opinion (this kid doesn't bite the hand that feeds!), it is probably true that a music whose commercial and avant-garde extremes are represented by Styx and Public Image Ltd. is in a bit of trouble. That being the case, it's hard to know where "Tattoo You" fits in the larger scheme of things. It's not, after all, going to change anybody's life in any fundamental way, and it certainly isn't the music of the future. It's not even, on balance, the Great Rolling Stones Album, although it is one of the more intelligent things to have crossed my desk in 1981. What it is, simply, is the work of a great rock-and-roll band still operating in the vicinity of their peak form, and that, when you get down to it, is probably why it still strikes me as peculiar. The death of Mr. Greenblatt notwithstanding, it's almost unbelievable that five guys can make consistently excellent music like this for nearly twenty years, that against almost insurmountable odds (the vagaries of public taste, their own aging) they can concoct a record as audacious and surprising and spooky as this one without ever really straying from their original roots in rhythm-and-blues. I guess what I mean is that it's not so much peculiar as it is wonderful.

—Steve Simels

THE ROLLING STONES: *Tattoo You*. The Rolling Stones (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Start Me Up*; *Hang Fire*; *Slave*; *Little T & A*; *Black Limousine*; *Neighbors*; *Worried About You*; *Tops*; *Heaven*; *No Use in Crying*; *Waiting on a Friend*. ROLLING STONES COC 16052 \$8.98, © CS 16052 \$8.98, © TP 16052 \$8.98.

Travesties) that reminds me of Zal Yanovsky's forgotten solo album, "Alive and Well in Argentina," which was a real poke in the ear.

Curry's deliberately boorish vocals are well used for comedic effect on *She's Not There* (always a dopey tune), *Betty Jean* ("She's the toughest girl for seven blocks/ Yellow sweater and fluorescent socks"), and *On a Roll*, which has a reference to Curry's having to be out of the studio quickly to make a matinee performance. Curry sings it straight, though, on the title ballad, *Take Me, I'm Yours, Out of Pawn*, and—most surprising—the old Screamin' Jay Hawkins signature tune, *I Put a Spell on You*. Two rock standards, *Dancing in the Streets* and *Summer in the City*, are done as throwaways, but the opening cut, *Working on My Tan*, for which Curry uses a Jamaican accent, is wonderful timfoolery. Like Rick Springfield, Curry has an actor's precise diction and a sophisticated sense of the ridiculous. If he and Springfield represent a trend toward actor-singers with smarts, I'm all in favor of it. J.V.

LACY J. DALTON: *Takin' It Easy* (see Best of the Month, page 71)

MICK FLEETWOOD: *The Visitor*. Mick Fleetwood (drums, percussion); George Hawkins (vocals, bass, piano, guitar); George Harrison, Todd Sharp (guitar); the Adjo Group (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Rattlesnake Shake, You Weren't in Love, O' Niamali, Super Brains, Walk a Thin Line, Not Fade Away*; and four others. RCA AFL1-4080 \$8.98, © AFK1-4080 \$8.98, © AFS1-4080 \$8.98.

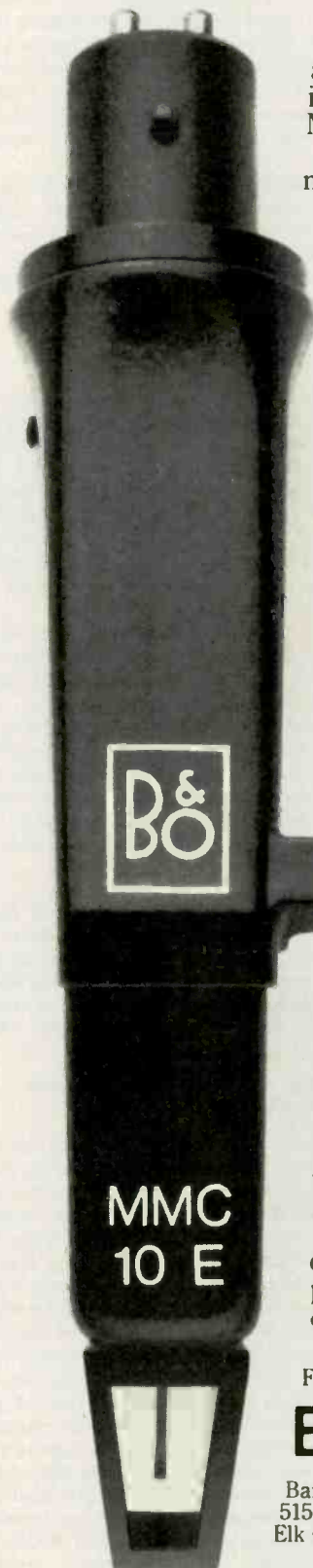
Performance: **Good**
Recording: **Good**

Several musicians lately seem to have been trying for something a little different in their albums, which I take to be a healthy sign. "The Visitor" is the result of Mick Fleetwood's trip to Accra, in Ghana, West Africa, to record with some friends of his and with some native groups. The programming is a mix of Fleetwood Mack-type rockers and other soft rockers not too different in style, plus three local African pieces—the title song, by C. K. Ganyo, and two appealingly folk-like, waifish things by Nii Amartey.

A drummer, of course, has rhythms on his mind when he goes to Africa, and Fleetwood's tapes captured a ton of them (those on *O' Niamali* are especially infectious) as played by the Adjo group, the children's drum ensemble Ebaali Gbiko, the Ghana Folkloric Group, and even, in one instance, by something called Dicky Dash and the Clapettes. There's also a bit (literally) of twelve-string and slide guitar (I guess they overdub in Ghana too) from George Harrison. It isn't an album I'd want to hear every day, but it does have a certain appeal. Perhaps the best things about it are the clues you get that a lot of care went into making it. The production is more loving than slick, an approach that commands respect. N.C.

FOGHAT: *Girls to Chat and Boys to Bounce*. Foghat (vocals and instrumentals). *Second Childhood, Wide Boy, Delayed Reaction, Live Now—Pay Later, Sing About Love*; and three others. BEARSVILLE

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

My newly discovered affection for Foghat continues. I enjoy hearing a British group doing all those late-Sixties English rock turns; the chord progressions, vocals, and song topics are all so familiar that it's like taking a walk down Penny—I mean Memory—Lane. Leaving aside the standard boy-girl numbers, the most interesting cuts here are *Wide Boy*, about the doings of a juvenile delinquent, *Live Now—Pay Later*, which kids the credit-card life, and *Sing About Love*, a corny salute to rock-and-roll that works, corn and all. Carry on, mates. *J.V.*

FOREIGNER: 4. Foreigner (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Night Life; Juke Box Hero; Urgent; I'm Gonna Win; Woman in Black*; and five others. ATLANTIC SD 16999 \$8.98, © CS 16999 \$8.98, © TP 16999 \$8.98.

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

From the moment *Urgent* broke on the airwaves, it was clear that Foreigner's fourth album would be moving out of the bins and up the charts fast. The song is a killer, a perfect meshing of agitated synthesizer undercurrents, Lou Gramm's feverish vocal, and a restless, kinetic conversation between Mick Jones' machine-age lead guitar and the steamy saxophones of Junior Walker and Mark Rivera.

Aside from the brilliant tension of *Urgent*, the album powerfully evokes a particular milieu, the pre-New Wave rock club, with its blistering guitar solos, hungry, come-on vocals, and atmospheric synthesizer effects. If you like the get-on-with-it kind of rock that was Bad Company's turf five years ago, you'll feel right at home with Foreigner "4." Those who rock to a different rhythm may find it a little, well, foreign to their taste. *M.P.*

HOLLY AND THE ITALIANS: The Right to Be Italian. Holly and the Italians (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *I Wanna Go Home; Rock Against Romance; Youth Coup; Just Young; Miles Away*; and five others. VIRGIN/EPIC NFE 37359, © NET 37359, no list price.

Performance: **Occasional fun**
Recording: **Good enough**

First things first: no, they're *not* Italian. What they are is one of those tough-chick-fronting-power-pop ensembles that glut the market these days, what with Blondie and Pat Benatar and the Pretenders and about a zillion bar bands in New Jersey. But they're not bad at all. Lead singer Holly Vincent is a winsome little American girl with a winsome little voice, a sense of humor, and something of a flair for Sixties pop rewrites. Her English band, when you can hear it through a rather undistinguished production job by Richard Gottelher, seems to enjoy what it does. Earlier versions of a couple of the songs here have been hits in Britain, and it would be nice to have that happen here, though I won't hold my breath given the stranglehold big-budget MOR has on American radio. Especially noteworthy:

Tell That Girl to Shut Up, an amusing bit of cautionary wisdom; the dreamy *Miles Away*; and the obscure oldie *Just for Tonight*, on which the great Ellie Greenwich lends the appropriate Senior Prom ambience to the background vocals. A cute record. *S.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PHYLLIS HYMAN: Can't We Fall in Love Again. Phyllis Hyman (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Can't We Fall in Love Again; Don't Tell Me, Tell Her; Tonight You and Me; I Ain't Asking*; and four others. ARISTA AL 9544 \$8.98, © ATC-9544 \$8.98, © AT8-9544 \$8.98.

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

Phyllis Hyman is one of the stars of *Sophisticated Ladies*, the current Broadway hit based on Duke Ellington's music, and while that association may have brought her to the attention of many people, she is a class act in her own right. For her latest release, "Can't We Fall in Love Again" (which takes its title from the hit single, a duet with Michael Henderson), producers Norman Connors and Chuck Jackson have provided a variety of settings that show off Hyman's talent and are diverse enough to maintain the listener's attention. Too often these days producers fall into the singles trap, which makes for very tedious listening when eight or so segments designed as hit singles are linked for an album release. Connors and Jackson are not riding on the success of any one hit, however; in their choice of material as well as musical setting, they clearly had the interest of their star performer in mind. Phyllis Hyman has made a good number of very good records, and this set is yet another. But I'm sure she has yet to make her best—which is the way it ought to be. *C.A.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RICKIE LEE JONES: Pirates. Rickie Lee Jones (vocals, keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *We Belong Together; Living It Up; Skeletons; Woody and Dutch on the Slow Train to Peking; Pirates (So Long Lonely Avenue)*; and three others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3432 \$8.98, © M5 3432 \$8.98, © M8 3432 \$8.98.

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

If you liked Rickie Lee Jones' widely acclaimed first album, you may be a bit taken aback by this long-delayed second release. "Pirates" is much less pop oriented, offering instead an impressive display of seamless, ethereal, and hypnotic jazz singing. Jones wrote the material during a time of great emotional stress (while she was breaking up with Tom Waits), and it suggests a lingering state of shock. She sings with an enforced calm that manifests barely suppressed emotions in sudden percussive yips, moans, and wails and a tendency to swallow—or choke on—the lyrics.

Like Tom Waits, Jones writes about drifters and losers, and she often uses jazz-world slang or lower-depths code words. The effect is of a romantically proud des- (Continued on page 107)

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BRAZIL, which gave the world the samba and bossa nova, has long been a fertile breeding ground of popular music. Back in the Forties Zequinha Abreu's *Tico-Tico* and Ary Barroso's *Brazil* became international hits, and more recently the world has sung or danced to the songs of Luiz Bonfá and Antonio Carlos Jobim. Brazilian performers have ranged from Carmen Miranda to Astrud Gilberto, better known as the girl from Ipanema. The most recent Brazil-

totally unknown to the average American record buyer. With such a valuable property to launch, CBS merchandisers might have spent a fortune on some blockbuster marketing campaign to introduce this superstar to the American public. They have not. But no effort has been spared to provide the best possible setting for Carlos where it counts—on the record itself. The album is beautifully produced. The songs are well chosen, and though some critics

Hollywood and about half the songs are American. *Niagara* by Hamlisch and Sager is very pretty and Carlos sings it well, but he seems more at home in the lighthearted *Come to Me Tonight* by Gary Portnoy. Billy Falcon's *Sail Away* is so lushly arranged that it sounds like the title song for a wide-screen, 3-D, Technicolor-spectacular travel film, but Carlos handles its romantic lyrics effectively. Paul Williams' *Loneliness* is leaner and provides welcome contrast.

ROBERTO CARLOS is a very engaging performer, his most winning trait being his ability to create an atmosphere of intimacy with the listener. On this album that intimacy is best expressed in some of his own songs written with Erasmo Carlos (a longtime collaborator, not a relative). These are usually narrative songs about the remembered details of pleasant love affairs. *Breakfast*, for example, is about morning coffee for two lovers. Although *Buttons on Your Blouse* suggests that complete communication between lovers is impossible, Carlos generally approaches love in a warmly positive way. In the jaunty *At Peace in Your Smile* he states it simply: "I love the way you give yourself to me."

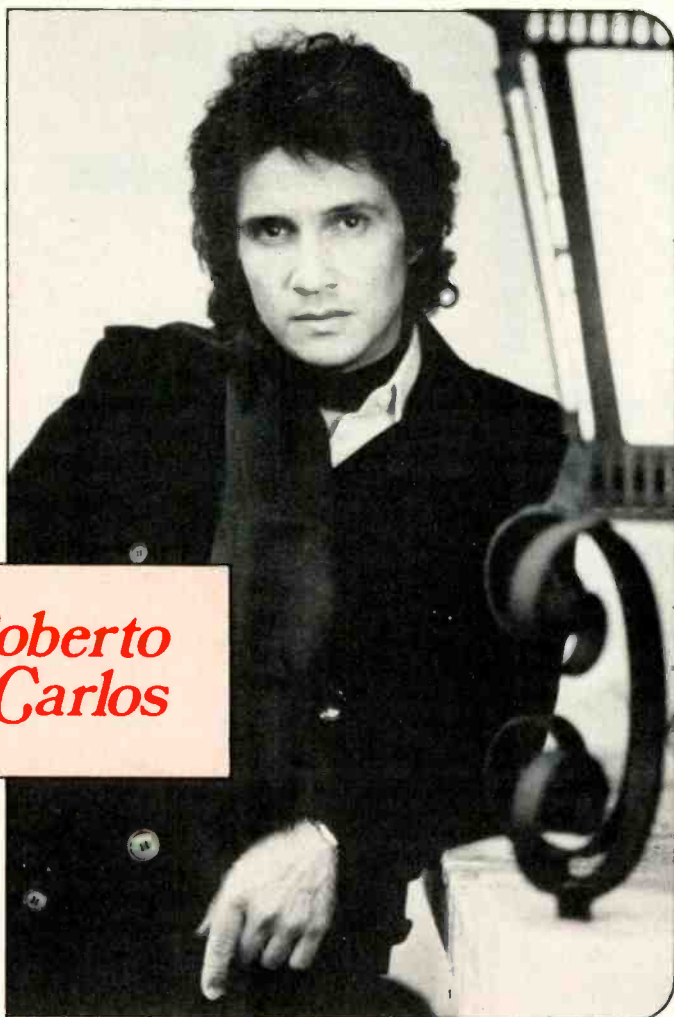
My favorite on the album is *You Will Remember Me*, a song addressed by a self-confident lover to a woman who has gone on to another man. The lyrics translate into English surprisingly well. But then I am delighted to find that Roberto Carlos himself translates into English so well. He seems at home in the language, which he sings with only a slight accent, and his real personality comes through with no discernible attempt at Americanization.

A PUERTO RICAN acquaintance once scolded me for not liking salsa much. "You say you like Latin music," he said, "but you only go for the pretty stuff." He's right. This is a beautiful album, and I like it a lot. It's the kind of music you'd expect to hear in a luxurious Caribbean hotel, on the beach at Copacabana, or in a sleek high-tech apartment in Paris or Rome where a young Alain Delon is setting up an existential love affair with Brigitte Bardot or Monica Vitti—or both. Whether it will seem equally right in living rooms in Bangor, Indianapolis, and Tucson remains to be seen. I hope it will because I've enjoyed Roberto Carlos a great deal in Spanish, and I'd like to have more of him in English.

The album is among the first to benefit from Columbia's CX noise-reduction system. Without the CX decoder the sound was extraordinarily good and the surfaces unusually quiet. The sound was so good, in fact, that switching in the CX decoder made little difference.

—William Livingstone

ROBERTO CARLOS. Roberto Carlos (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Honestly; At Peace in Your Smile; Loneliness; Sail Away; Niagara; Buttons on Your Blouse; Breakfast; Come to Me Tonight; You Will Remember Me; It's Me Again.* COLUMBIA CX ARC 37450, no list price.



*Roberto
Carlos*

ian arrival in North America is singer/songwriter Roberto Carlos, who is now making his U.S. English-language debut with an album on Columbia.

Carlos has been an international favorite since the late Sixties. In 1968 he became the first non-Italian ever to win first prize at the San Remo song festival. By 1974 he had reached the top of CBS' list of international recording artists, and he regularly ties with Julio Iglesias of Spain for the position of CBS' best-selling artist outside the United States. Each of Carlos' albums can be counted on to sell two million copies.

Many of these records have been released here in Spanish and Portuguese, and Carlos has performed for Latin audiences in the United States, but until now he has been

might describe the elaborate arrangements as slick, I prefer to think of them as well crafted.

Carlos has an individual voice of instantly recognizable timbre, and he can vary its color for expressive effect. Possessed of a greater emotional range than most Latin singers, he can hold his own in the passionate love songs (the Latin artist's stock in trade), but he also swings, and he has a sense of humor. It's hard to find someone to compare him to. He reminds me a bit of Jacques Brel without the bitterness, a more optimistic Charles Aznavour, or a more sophisticated Jimmy Buffet who has traveled beyond the Gulf of Mexico.

This album has a decidedly European flavor despite the facts that it was produced in

pair, which she has admitted was to some extent deliberately cultivated—an emotional narcotic that she and Waits ultimately found to be self-destructive. "Pirates" was recorded piece by piece over a two-year period in which she realized what she was doing to herself and managed to get over it. There's no question that this album is an exorcism, and it may strike some as self-indulgent, but there's also no question that it has an eerie beauty. J.V.

EDDIE KENDRICKS: *Love Keys*. Eddie Kendricks (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*Oh I Need Your Lovin'*; *Old Home Town*; *Bernadette*; and seven others. ATLANTIC SD 19294 \$8.98, © CS 19294 \$8.98, © TP 19294 \$8.98.

Performance: **Mellow but predictable**
Recording: **Good**

After twenty years in the business, as lead singer of the Temptations and as a single act, Eddie Kendricks is as comfortable to the taste as home-made peach brandy. He is a known commodity who can be depended on to arouse familiar warm sensations without being startling. He is unlikely to inspire headiness, but he's also unlikely to plunge you into a blue mood in which all sorts of weird thoughts start knocking around in your head. You can just sit back and listen to his long, lean tenor vocals, enjoying the intimacy of his sound. "Love Keys" is no exception, just more of Kendricks' sweet style from back in the Sixties. Why change a good thing? P.G.

EVELYN KING: *I'm in Love*. Evelyn King (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*Don't Hide Our Love*; *The Best Is Yet to Come*; *I Can't Take It*; and five others. RCA AFL1-3962 \$8.98, © AFK1-3962 \$8.98, © AFS1-3962 \$8.98.

Performance: **No bubbles**
Recording: **Good**

She was billed as Evelyn "Champagne" King when she first appeared on the disco scene a few years back, a teenager who rode the crest of a fad singing catchy, ephemeral material in a voice that promised to outlast the genre that introduced it. But two things happened on the way to "I'm in Love," King's latest album: she dropped the "Champagne" from her name, which was a good idea (it never was appropriate), and she changed producers—a very bad idea, as it turns out. Now, in the collective hands of Morrie Brown, Willie Lester, and Rodney Brown, King has been relegated to a role that could be filled by any competent backup singer, and she has been given material that is trite beyond belief. Sure, the rhythm on some of these tracks will set your body in motion, but this does purport to be Evelyn King's album. It is not. C.A.

CHERYL LYNN: *In the Night*. Cheryl Lynn (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. (*Show You How*; *With Love on Our Side*; *Shake It Up Tonight*; and six others. COLUMBIA FC 37034, © FCT 37034, © FCA 37034, no list price.

Performance: **Maybe next time . . .**
Recording: **Good**

When Cheryl Lynn appeared as a contestant on *The Gong Show*, it was her singing



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of *You Are So Beautiful to Me* that attracted the attention of Columbia Records. At the party that introduced Lynn to the New York press, we were treated to a videotape of her TV appearance, and that was segued into *Got to Be Real*, the opening track of her first album. It was meant to illustrate dramatically how Cheryl Lynn had stepped into the big time, but it turned out to be a startling demonstration of how a producer—in that case two of them, David and Marty Paich—can shroud real talent in overproduced clichés. The record was a hit anyway, and three years later Lynn is still recording for Columbia.

"In the Night" is her third release, a set produced, engineered, and mixed by Ray

Parker Jr., who also had a hand in writing most of the material. I wish I could be as enthusiastic about the frame Parker has built for Lynn as I am about the settings he designs for himself, but I'm afraid the representative Cheryl Lynn album still cries out to be made. Her wonderful range and control on *Hurry Home*, for example, give us a glimpse of what she *can* do. Although Cheryl Lynn has indeed climbed the charts, she has yet to make it on the strength of her vocal ability. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CAROLYNE MAS: *Modern Dreams*. Carlyne Mas (vocals); instrumental accom-

paniment. *Little Baby of Mine*; *Dirty Ly-ing*; *Laurielle*; *Easy Love*; and six others. MERCURY SRM-1-4022 \$8.98, © MCR4-1-4022 \$8.98, © MC8-1-4022 \$8.98.

Performance: **Dynamic**
Recording: **Likewise**

If you can play well and if you can play mainstream rock with a sort of Hemingwayesque naïveté, you can still find an album or two left in it, as Carlyne Mas and her backers have done here. You'd swear that these people didn't know much of this has been done before, and the utter absence of boredom among them is catching. The key thing, though, is that Carlyne Mas wrote them a pretty good script. Some of her tunes range over much more melody than you'd expect, some rock straight ahead, but all but *Love Like Stone* are impressive—and so is the cover of *Signal for Help*, written by Pat Robinson and Moon Martin. Mas has a relatively quirk-free voice, meaning she isn't instantly recognizable, but this album, her best one yet, establishes her as quite a savvy *rock* singer as well as a potential "pure" singer. She may be an even better bandleader, if this is any indication. N.C.

NICK MASON: *Nick Mason's Fictitious Sports*. Nick Mason (drums, percussion); Robert Wyatt (vocals); Carla Bley (keyboards); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Can't Get My Motor to Start*; *I Was Wrong*; *Siam*; and five others. COLUMBIA FC 37307, © FCT 37307, no list price.

Performance: **Mannered**
Recording: **Fine**

A caveat to fans of Pink Floyd: if you're expecting from this album a percussive tour de force of the kind promised by the jacket for "Umma Gumma," you'll be disappointed. Avant-garde jazz artist Carla Bley composed all the music and lyrics for "Fictitious Sports," and the dead-pan Midlands vocals belong to Robert Wyatt. Ostensible star Nick Mason does share production credit with Bley and handles the drums, but since he doesn't even get to solo, it's really Bley who's sporting here.

This album occupies a lonely place at the comic end of the avant-garde spectrum, sounding like an absurdist vaudeville pit band playing abstract-expressionist burlesque. Bley's lyrics are playful, nonsensical, sometimes overwrought; unless you share her intense delight in word play and free association à la Gertrude Stein, you're likely to find them either precious or obscure. Musically, her compositions are either plodding or frenetic. The back-up musicians, however, are first-rate. Guitarist Chris Spedding provides some briefly electrifying moments, Gary Valente on trombone and crack bassist Steve Swallow deliver well-timed punch lines for Bley's musical jokes, and Gary Windo offers several outstanding tenor breaks that exalt their often trivial surroundings. But these are rare highlights on an album that tries too hard; its quirkiness is dogged rather than funny or thought-provoking. M.P.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MAZE: *Live in New Orleans*. Maze (vocals and instrumentals). *You*; *Changing Times*;

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Joy and Pain; Happy Feelin's; Southern Girl; Look at California; Feel That You're Feelin'; and five others. CAPITOL SKBK-12156 two discs \$9.98, © 4XKK-12156 \$9.98, © 8XKK-12156 \$9.98.

Performance: **Their best**
Recording: **Very good**

This two-record set is an excellent retrospective of the work of Maze, a progressive r-&-b octet that features the multitalented Frankie Beverly as lead vocalist, pianist, composer, and man in charge. Mostly recorded live at the Saenger Theatre in New Orleans, the album presents the group in peak form, working over many of their previous hits and spurred on by a responsive but polite and unobtrusive audience.

Maze has an appealingly buoyant yet lean sound. Beverly is usually featured singing solo to the group's instrumental accompaniment, in contrast to the ensemble vocal of most groups of this type. Maze takes an open, airy, laid-back approach that often recalls War, that wonderful California hybrid of the early Seventies. Their music glows with a sun-touched golden haze, a special West Coast ambience.

The renditions here of *Changing Times*, *Joy and Pain*, *Southern Girl*, and *Look at California* surpass the originals; the interplay with the audience lends a vibrancy to these live performances that cannot be duplicated in a studio. Indeed, that interplay is so essential to this set that the studio-recorded side four is a letdown. Though Beverly sings well, the spell is broken; a certain sterility sets in that made me go rushing back to hear the first three sides again. But at least three quarters of this album is thoroughly enjoyable. P.G.

MAX MORATH AND HIS RAGTIME STOMPERS. Max Morath (piano, kazoo); Eric Weissberg (guitar); Bill Keith (banjo); Ken Losek (fiddle); Don Brooks (harmonica); Ron Traxler (washboard, drums); Dave Barger (tuba). *Kansas City Rag; Somebody Stole My Gal; Sleepy Hollow; Mississippi Rag; I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover;* and five others. VANGUARD VAN-79440 \$7.98.

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

Max Morath describes his latest foray into our popular musical past as an attempt to produce the sound of a "jug band without the jug" (he uses a tuba instead) and suggests that the album be filed "under hodgepodge." A hodgepodge it is, but happy in its contents, with the rag idiom applied to every sort of popular music from the merely ancient *I Wish I Was in Peoria* to the time-hallowed *Somebody Stole My Gal*. What works best with the ragtime beat, as Morath must know perfectly well, is ragtime itself, so it's no surprise that the best cuts here are the *Kansas City Rag*, the *Mississippi Rag*, and the *Dill Pickles Rag*. Even in these, Morath veers dangerously close to cuteness; everything is slightly over-arranged, yet invariably entertaining. It's a merry mishmash—er, hodgepodge. P.K.

THE NEVILLE BROTHERS: *Fiyo on the Bayou.* The Neville Brothers (vocals and instrumentals). *Hey Pocky Way; Brother John/Iko Iko; Sitting in Limbo; Mona Lisa;*

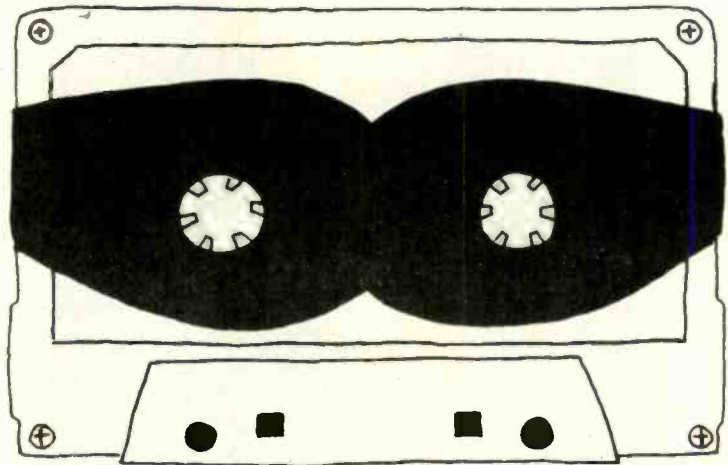
Run Joe; and three others. A&M SP-4866 \$7.98.

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

The Neville Brothers are a New Orleans group who made their recorded debut in 1978 with a fine pop/soul album produced by Jack Nitzsche, though brother Art had earlier founded and recorded with the Meters, an instrumental quartet similar to Booker T. and the MG's, and Aaron had a hit single (*Tell It Like It Is*) back in 1966. That first group album had some standout tunes and singing, especially *Washable Ink* and *Audience for My Pain*, but it was sadly overlooked in the marketplace, which

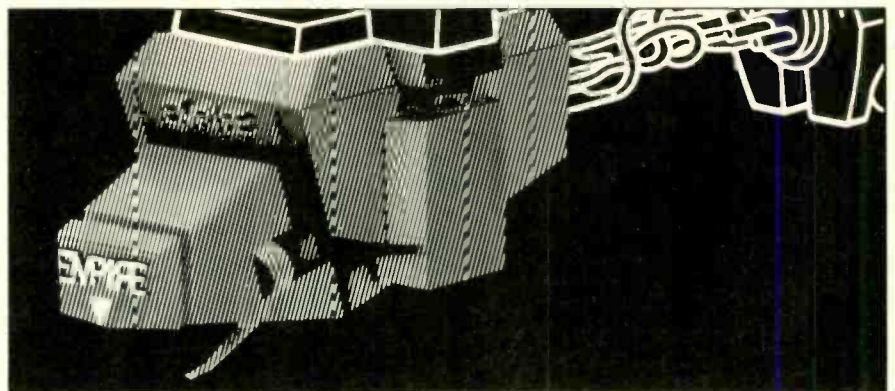
makes it even sadder that this second album, produced by Joel Dorn, is a yawn.

The problem with "Fiyo on the Bayou" is scattershot material. *Hey Pocky Way* and the title track (*Fire on the Bayou*) are New Orleans funk at its tastiest, but both tunes are leftovers from the old days when Art was with the Meters. The coupling of Cyril Neville's *Brother John* with the Creole folk song *Iko Iko* is only so-so, and Art's *Sweet Honey Dripper* is just an average soul ballad. The Nevilles' treatment of Jimmy Cliff's *Sitting in Limbo* is so close to the original that you may as well just go listen to Cliff. I can't imagine why they decided to record *The Ten Commandments of Love*, a
(Continued on page 111)



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Carly Simon's "Torch"

TORCH," Carly Simon's newest album, is one of those landmark recordings that happen only rarely in a performing lifetime. It is not so much a remarkable change of pace for a remarkable popular singer as it is a quantum leap of the kind only true artists find necessary. Listening to Simon glide beautifully and effortlessly through some of the finest of American popular songs (and a couple of her own that sound like instant standards) is like watching that frizzy-haired, blue-jeaned young rock enthusiast you knew at college suddenly reappear in your life lithe and lovely in a Givenchy gown and looking, for the first time, somewhat mysterious.

When Simon wraps herself in a great song like Rodgers and Hart's *Spring Is Here* (with a melting solo violin played by David Nadien) or slithers through a pulsing, sequined *Body and Soul*, you begin to sense that the change in her is more than a matter of repertoire. This is a woman singing, and singing in the manner of High Romance—a style we all thought was going to disappear when such contenders as Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee at long last got around to hanging up their gloves. (That hasn't happened quite yet, of course; Frank Sinatra is packing Carnegie Hall even as I write this.)

Perhaps the biggest, pleasantest shock of "Torch" is that, freed from the up-tight

confines of the rock matrix, Carly Simon's voice simply soars, bright and clear in focus, firm and assured in pitch. Her phrasing is almost magical in the sad-sweet *I Get Along Without You Very Well*, and her ability to carat in that little time-stopping conversational pause between the lines (Peggy Lee probably holds the patent on that) gives everything freshness, vividness, and immediacy—as if it were being sung for the first time. (Come to think of it, this album may be an Introduction to Romance for many of Simon's younger fans. She told me recently that Sinatra's album "In the Wee Small Hours" was her introduction to recorded romance: "It was about the time I first made out. I was in my teens, and from that record I learned a lot about love—and, for the first time, love lost.") Also present is the sexual voltage Simon has always projected, but here it has a confident edge that carries her triumphantly through a song that needs it: *I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good*, the quintessential "torch" song.

THERE are several new songs here, including Simon's own lovely *From the Heart*, the almost heartbreaking *What Shall We Do with the Child* (a recent collaboration of Nick Holmes and Kate Horsey that Carly heard, fell in love with, and added her own poignant lyrics to), and the disc première of a new song by Stephen Sondheim from his

coming Broadway show *Merrily We Roll Along* (still in the writing).

"I called Stephen last winter when I was putting the album together," Carly says, "and asked him if he had anything I might do. He played *Not a Day Goes By* for me, and I knew I had to do it. He even came to the recording session."

Not a Day Goes By may not be Sondheim's best song since *Send In the Clowns*, but it certainly sounds that way in the performance that brings this album to a magnificent close. Carly brings it to such surging, intense life that the turntable fairly smokes. This is a woman who knows good material when she hears it ("When I was growing up Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein, and Arthur Schwartz all used to come to my parents' house to play their new songs for them. Gershwin too, but of course that was before I got there."). And she can give good material the absolute best in the way of performance.

As fine as "Torch" is in every aspect—it may be the finest thing Simon has yet done—it has already given rise to considerable controversy in executive precincts. Simon's record company advised her to shelve the project because they're afraid it might ruin her career by turning off her old rock-and-roll constituency before she turns up a new one. Accustomed to marketing music almost solely on the trusty Principle of the Gimmick, they seem to be frightened of anything as unmeasurable as artistic progression. Industry "experts" today are so entwined in their own rock-and-roll roots that they cannot trust their response to any music that isn't saying to them exactly what it's been saying for the last two decades.

Carly Simon sees it differently. "Actually, the idea for 'Torch' came to me as I was singing Cole Porter for a few friends my own age right in my own house. They all said they'd never heard me sound like that before. At first I wanted to make what I called 'The Living Room Album,' recorded right in my living room. But I realized that the songs deserved a bigger, studio treatment. And I really do believe that the gap between what the parents like and what the kids like has been narrowing ever since the Beatles. I think 'Torch' will be a new sound for teenagers, and probably for a lot of older people too. It'll be the first time they hear a voice way out front, with human emotion instead of drums in the foreground. I think they'll like it."

Like it? They'll love it! If "Torch" ever becomes a chartbuster (which it fully deserves to be), it will be around and be listened to long after the "experts" are back pumping gas and telling each other there has been no music since rock-and-roll.

—Peter Reilly

CARLY SIMON: Torch. Carly Simon (vocals); orchestral accompaniment. *Blue of Blue; I'll Be Around; Spring Is Here; Body and Soul; Hurt; Not a Day Goes By; I Get Along Without You Very Well; I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good; What Shall We Do with the Child; From the Heart; Pretty Strange.* WARNER BROS. BSK 3592 \$8.98.

Fifties doo-wop ballad whose period charm quickly fades, or *Mona Lisa*, which is dedicated to Bette Midler, arranged with a gushing string section, and sung in a trembly vibrato suggesting early Johnny Mathis and late Nat King Cole. Well, maybe I can imagine why: Dorn has also produced albums for Midler. He lets the Nevilles alone here for the New Orleans numbers, but I suspect he's responsible for the more grandiose and unfortunate aspects of this album. Both Dorn and the Nevilles have talent, but they're mismatched. The Nevilles don't seem to know quite what to do with what they've got, but I hope they keep trying until they find out. J.V.

PABLO CRUISE: *Reflector*. Pablo Cruise (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *This Time; Cool Love; Don't Let the Magic Disappear; One More Night; Drums in the Night*; and five others. A&M SP-3726 \$8.98, © CS-3726 \$8.98, © 8T-3726 \$8.98.

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

I guess this release is a safe bet, since at any given time there are bound to be a lot of people suffering torments of the heart—especially in the under-thirty part of the population. Well, lovelorn, before you cheer up, listen up: Pablo Cruise is making music for you to mope to.

This band's style is really no one style at all, segueing from mellow West Coast acoustic to echoes of Earth, Wind & Fire to Pete Townshend and Steely Dan, then back to the Sunset Strip and on to Fender Rhodes cocktail jazz. But everything happens to one lovesick man and one "unforgettable" woman. There's plenty of sad talk here, plenty of opportunities for remorseful staring into half-empty wine glasses, and now and then, a faint glimmer of hope: the quick double-take from across a crowded room, the fast song with dance possibilities. . . . But the real message seems to be, "What's the use? It'll just end badly." Your move. M.P.

JIM PHOTOGLO: *Fool in Love with You*. Jim Photoglo (vocals, piano); orchestra. *Fool in Love with You; Tonight Will Last Forever; More to Love; Run to Me; Try It Again; Ruled by My Heart*; and four others. 20TH CENTURY-FOX T-621 \$8.98, © C-621 \$8.98, © 8-621 \$8.98.

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

The taut, assured professionalism of the production, by Brian Francis Neary, that surrounds Jim Photoglo allows him to relax expansively and do what he does best: perform his own songs, many written with Neary, in a direct, involving style. His best work—the title song, *Tonight Will Last Forever*, and *Angelina*—have softly persuasive lyrics set against emotionally charged music. As yet he's still a long way down the line from someone like Billy Joel, but he does have that touch for flashing pop directness. He's more entertainer than pundit, pop or otherwise, and isn't that a relief?! P.R.

THE PRETENDERS: *Pretenders II*. The Pretenders (vocals and instrumentals); oth-



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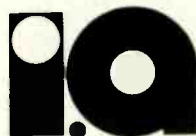
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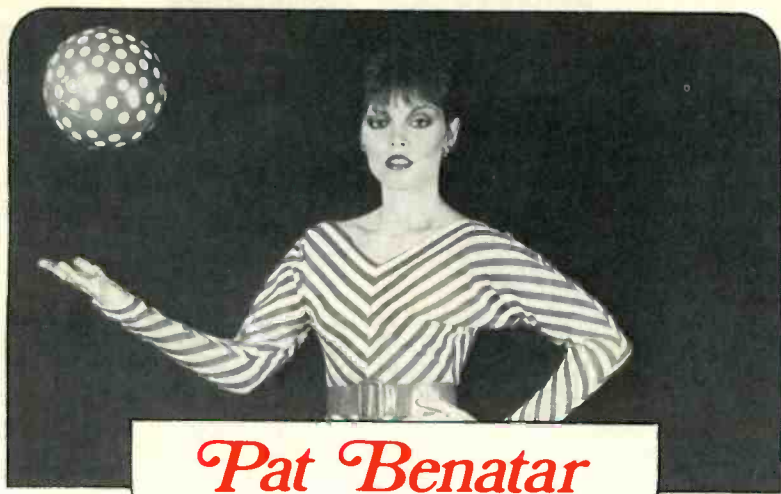
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Pat Benatar

IT'S hard not to gush over Pat Benatar, although I suspect that nothing could be less effective than flattery with this no-nonsense woman. Her new Chrysalis album, "Precious Time," shows that she has reached artistic maturity. Though it's impossible to forget she's still the object of a million adolescent fantasies, her heavily merchandised sexuality is almost beside the point here. When Benatar sings about love, desire, or anger, she does it with an authority that derives from both insight and experience, not from some imagined erotic power. On song after song, "Precious Time" does what rock does best—cut through the pale skin of convention to expose the raw nerve endings of emotion.

The album distinctly benefits from the contributions of Benatar's guitarist, songwriter, and producer Neil Geraldo. He has nearly infallible instincts for writing the kind of sharp, smart, gutsy material that works best for Benatar—*Promises in the Dark*, *Take It Any Way You Want It*, and *It's a Tuff Life* here are all great vehicles

for her—and he knows just where to go for additional material. This time he's included *Helter Skelter*, and Benatar's crackling performance may wrestle the tune away from its current leaseholder, Charles Manson. Throughout the album, Geraldo's arrangements give Benatar plenty of freedom while providing a disciplined, highly charged underpinning.

Although it breaks no new musical ground, "Precious Time" is a breakthrough album for Pat Benatar, revealing her as a mainstream rocker with focused energy and vision—plus absolute authenticity. This is an album by a singer who knows how to rock. Period.

—Mark Peel

PAT BENATAR: *Precious Time*. Pat Benatar (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Promises in the Dark*; *Fire and Ice*; *Just Like Me*; *Precious Time*; *It's a Tuff Life*; *Take It Any Way You Want It*; *Evil Genius*; *Hard to Believe*; *Helter Skelter*. CHRYSALIS CHR 1346 \$8.98, © ECH 1346 \$8.98, © 8CE 1346 \$8.98.

er musicians. *The Adultriss*; *Bad Boys Get Spanked*; *Message of Love*; *I Go to Sleep*; *Birds of Paradise*; *Talk of the Town*; and six others. SIRE SRK 3572 \$8.98, © MSS 3572 \$8.98.

Performance: **The morning after**
Recording: **Mushy**

Well, it's not as bad as you may have heard, but it is about the biggest rock-and-roll let-down in recent memory. "It," of course, is the eagerly awaited second effort from the Pretenders. While I'm not quite ready to write the band off, the album's failings are so glaring, so obvious, that reassessing their earlier stuff is almost unavoidable; suddenly those brilliant singles and the near-great debut record seem like inspired accidents.

For starters, this is the muddiest, most poorly produced album by a major group that I've heard lately. Now, the first one was not a production triumph either, but at the time I attributed that to a rush job, especially since Chris Thomas, who helmed it, has gotten spectacular sounds out of people as stylistically varied as Paul McCartney and the Sex Pistols. But this new one is the work of a very rich band that can putter in the studio as long as it takes to get things right. If it sounds this bad, maybe they simply don't play as well as I thought (lead guitarist James Honeyman-Scott sounds particularly sloppy and characterless). We shall see.

Worse, Chrissie Hynde's songwriting has taken a formula turn, and an unpleasant one at that. Suddenly, inexplicably, she's dealing in the rankest kind of teenage sexual posturing, and coming from somebody of her demonstrated sensitivity and intelligence this is appalling. Songs like *The Adultriss* and *Bad Boys Get Spanked* may cement her reputation as a tough cookie out in stadium-rock land, but they're no more than heavy-metal slush performed with all the subtlety and depth of feeling you'd expect from the Visigoths.

As for the rest, there's not much to say. The expected Ray Davies tune, a waltz lament called *I Go to Sleep*, is nice enough but should have been a B-side. There's a quite lovely (and thoroughly out of place)

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twelve-string ballad called *Birds of Paradise*, and *Pack It Up* has the definitive anti-Los Angeles lyric but is no great shakes musically. Then there are *Message of Love* and *Talk of the Town*, which are absolutely great. Unfortunately, they were also absolutely great on the band's recent EP, which means that "Pretenders II," among its other sins, is also something of a rip-off, if you'll pardon the Sixties cant.

I am not happy about having said all this. I still think Chrissie is the greatest white girl singer in rock history and (when she's on) the first really world-class female rock songwriter. Having just listened to the Nick Lowe-produced single version of *The Wait* again, I also think the Pretenders are still, potentially, the most exciting hard-rock band in the world. But there's no getting around it: "Pretenders II" is the work of a band with nothing to say or else it's a cynical commercial calculation. Either way, it leaves a bad taste. It is, of course, my profound hope that these folks redeem themselves, and in a hurry. S.S.

KENNY ROGERS: *Share Your Love*. Kenny Rogers (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Blaze of Glory*; *I Don't Need You*; *The Good Life*; *Through the Years*; *So in Love with You*; *Grey Beard*; and four others. LIBERTY LOO-1108 \$7.98, © 4LOO-1108 \$7.98, © 8LOO-1108 \$7.98.

Performance: **Standard KR**
Recording: **Good**

This is the album in which Kenny Rogers dips, ever so gingerly, into r-&-b (well, a lot of the guys are doing it), with help from guests Michael Jackson and Gladys Knight and the Pips. Actually, there's not much rhythm and/or blues to it, mostly just some more Kenny Rogers stuff: a couple of nice ballads and another yarn about an unlikely character, this one a handicapped gunfighter. It's inoffensive, and Rogers does have ingratiating textures in his voice, but it's one of those albums that treat music, first and foremost, as a business. N.C.

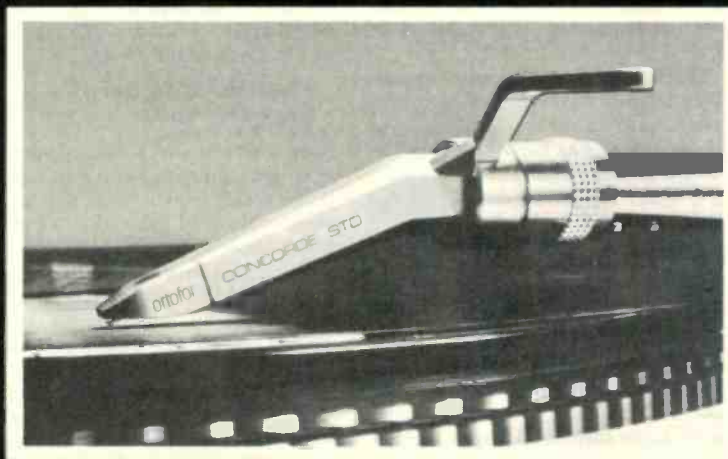
MAX ROMEO: *Holding Out My Love to You*. Max Romeo (vocals); other musicians. *Wishing for Love*; *Vow of a Nazarene*; *Holding Out My Love to You*; *Truth Is Truth*; *No Loafin'*; and five others. SHANACHIE 43002 \$8.98.

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

Max Romeo is another of the Rolling Stones'—in this case Keith Richards'—cultural-exchange projects. Richards co-produced this album and plays lead guitar, albeit a lead so unassuming it virtually disappears for two and three songs at a time. With such reggae heavyweights as Sly Dunbar, Robbie Shakespeare, and Augustus Pablo backing him, Max Romeo would seem to have been given every advantage. So why does this album turn out to be such an underachievement?

"Holding Out My Love to You" goes astray for reasons not entirely Romeo's fault. He wrote only three of the songs, and two of those—*Vow of a Nazarene* and *Bell the Cat*—are the album's strongest (as well as the only ones to address Rastafarian themes). The rest of the material, written

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by members of the band, is a tepid mix of reggae and Philly soul—well-meaning but bloodless love songs that need a more powerful vocalist (Teddy Pendergrass, perhaps) to bring them to life. Unfortunately, Romeo's pleasant, guileless voice isn't the strong tonic called for, and whatever potential excitement is buried in these songs never comes out. The message of "Holding Out My Love" is that Max Romeo is a capable songwriter and a convincing performer of his own material. He might do better next time with less help from his friends. *M.P.*

JOEY SCARBURY: *America's Greatest Hero*. Joey Scarbury (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Believe It or Not* (Theme from "The Greatest American Hero"); *Love Me Like the Last Time*; *Stolen Night*; *There Is a River*; *Everything but Love*; and five others. ELEKTRA SE-537 \$8.98, © SC5-537 \$8.98, © 5T8-537 \$8.98.

Performance: **Hard to tell**
Recording: **Good**

The Greatest American Hero is a pretty funny television series about a young man with superhuman powers who never quite manages to make them work right. The tie-in with this album is that Joey Scarbury wrote the theme song for the show ("Believe it or not, I'm walking on air . . ."), and he mouths that here along with other material featuring mindless lyrics set to instantly forgettable melodies. He gets so bogged down in his own banalities that it's hard to

tell if he can actually *sing*, though on one track—a catalog of clichés called *Down the Backstairs of My Life*—there's some indication that he might be able to. But by then I was so anxious for the record to end that he could have warbled "*Vesti la giubba*" like Caruso and left me unmoved. *P.K.*

NEIL SEDAKA: *Now*. Neil Sedaka (vocals, piano); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Losing You*; *Pictures from the Past*; *On the Road Again*; *Summertime Madness*; and six others. ELEKTRA 6E-348 \$8.98, © TC6-348 \$8.98.

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

Somewhere on the far side of forty, Neil Sedaka goes bubbling on like an inexhaustible bottle of seltzer. His voice and his performances still sound like those of someone who has to shave only twice a week, and, happily, his enthusiasm and vitality seem to erupt as a genuinely natural result. At times it can be faintly ludicrous; in *What Have They Done to My Town*, for example, he tries to moan low about dreadful change in high Dylanesque dudgeon but actually sounds more like a Mel Brooks parody. But when he's on, really on, in the upper levels of amusing trash such as *Losing You*, a song he wrote with his daughter Dara (who also sings on this album), he's merely terrific. And when he illuminates the acne culture with such bits of insight as *Bring Me Down Slow* or *Summertime Madness* he serves as a living, successful illustration of

Jimmy Buffett's declaration about *Growing Older but Not Up*. His sparkle comes from his ability to renew himself constantly plus a genuine delight in the way the public has responded over the years to his performances. Wisely ignoring the greybeards of the industry, who told him he was washed up years ago, Sedaka has gone on doing what comes naturally to him. Not the best, not the worst of his era, he's still sailing along—a genial survivor. *P.R.*

SILVER CONDOR. Silver Condor (vocals and instrumentals). *For the Sake of Survival*; *Angel Eyes*; *Sayin' Goodbye*; *We're in Love*; *It's Over*; and five others. COLUMBIA NFC 37163, © NCT 37163, no list price.

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

Here's something novel: a new mainstream rock band that doesn't try to pry the kiddies away from Toto and Foreigner and Supertramp. Not that it's particularly sophisticated (if it were it would've named itself after something other than a buzzard), but it does aim at someone with more than minimal experience at either listening to music or living. At a time when it is widely believed that nobody wants to hear a sad song, possibly because there are so many discouraging words everywhere else, the songs here actually try to deal with both sides of a relationship (they don't deal with much *but* relationships). The music generally avoids the TV-commercial-style cuteness that's so pervasive nowadays.

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Earl Slick, a studio guitarist who played on John and Yoko's "Double Fantasy," among other things, got the group together, but lead vocalist Joe Cerisano's songwriting has a lot to do with how the album came out. The tunes are adequate or better, and the instrumental textures—which tend toward the hard, trebly side—give the band a sound of its own without being radically different from much that we've heard before. If the boys grow as writers, this band could be around for a while. *N.C.*

STARS ON: Stars on Long Play. Stars On, Long Tall Ernie and the Shakers (vocals and instrumentals). *Stars on 45; Do You Remember; Golden Years of Rock & Roll.* RADIO RR 16044 \$8.98, © CS 16044 \$8.98, © TP 16044 \$8.98.

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

All right, this is a dumb album. And it's a rip-off. But so long as the royalties are paid, why should we care? Truth is, "Stars on Long Play" will make your next party a hit.

In case you've managed to avoid hearing it, the album is a medley to end all medleys. Side one strings together twenty-nine Beatles classics, mimicked with uncanny accuracy, into fifteen minutes of nostalgia-injected disco. Side two is neither as infuriating nor as much fun, juxtaposing such modern djscio hits as *Boogie Nights* and *Funky Town* with American Bandstand standards such as *Cathy's Clown* and a *Golden Years of Rock & Roll* medley that even Sha-Na-

Na would hesitate to perpetrate. Naturally, rock purists will be offended, and the album may confuse those it doesn't enrage (*Nut Rocker* and *At the Hop* are exceedingly strange discfellows). But as dumb as it is, it will disengage all but the most sanctimonious partygoers from idle banter and get them up on the dance floor. And there's nothing wrong with that at all. *M.P.*

THE STATLER BROTHERS: Years Ago. The Statler Brothers (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Don't Wait on Me; Today I Went Back; In the Garden; Chet Atkins' Hand; Years Ago; Dad;* and four others. MERCURY SRM-1-6002 \$8.98, © MCR4-1-6002 \$8.98, © MC8-1-6002 \$8.98.

Performance: **Formula won**
Recording: **Good**

Even though this is their 10th album, the Statlers are only in the young part of their middle ages, and they remain old-fashioned in their basic premise that a hillbilly musician should appear to be less sophisticated than he really is. Tom T. Hall and others have exposed that premise as not so much false as irrelevant, but the Statlers have based a formula on it and it has worked for them. So, among other things, their songs (they wrote the overwhelming majority of these) make sure everyone gets the pun, and refer a lot to simpler and "better" times. The Statlers make a pleasant, nasal quartet sound, have both energy and control, and know how to balance an album and just how daring to be—such as, in this case, "rock-

ing" the old hymn *In the Garden* eight to the bar. You may wonder just how many naïve hillbillies there are left in the audience who could possibly be shocked by such a thing, or even titillated, but what the heck. You grin in spite of yourself at these corny one-liners, and surely there's something to be said for using a formula well. *N.C.*

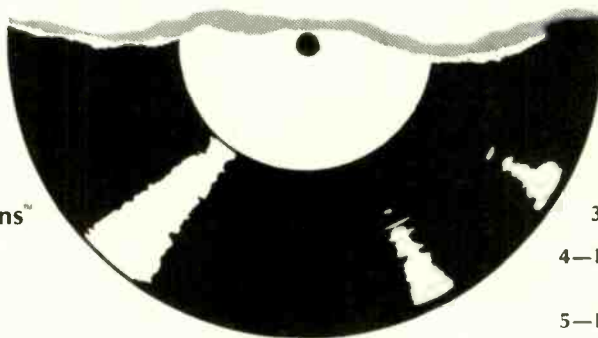
THIRD WORLD: Rock the World. Third World (vocals and instrumentals). *Rock the World; Spiritual Revolution; Who Gave You (Jah Rastafari); Dubb Music; Shine Like a Blazing Fire; Peace and Love;* and four others. COLUMBIA FC 37402, © FCT 37402, © FCA 37402, no list price.

Performance: **Soul-reggae fusion**
Recording: **Very good**

Reggae purists have criticized Third World for leaning too heavily toward the cadences and stylings of popular North American music. Now that this sextet of dreadlocked Jamaican singing instrumentalists has signed with Columbia Records, there are bound to be shouts that the sell-out is complete. No need for alarm. "Rock the World" is chock full of lilting island rhythms and Rastafarian themes. Indeed, there is nothing to distinguish this album from Third World's six earlier releases—except, perhaps, that it lacks any track as stunning as *African Woman*, which first attracted a lot of fans to their brand of Caribbean-soul fusion. *Dubb Music* comes the closest, and *Dancing on the Floor (Hooked*

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on Love) might be called calypso funk. The breezes blow a bit mildly here, but they still carry the scent of mangoes and the more pungent odors associated with the Rastas.
P.G.

20/20: Look Out! 20/20 (vocals and instrumentals). *Nuclear Boy; Alien; A Girl Like You; Life in the U.S.A.; Beat City;* and five others. PORTRAIT NFR 37050. © NRT 37050, no list price.

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

This band formed in Oklahoma, moved to Los Angeles, and in 1979 cut its first album, consisting mostly of love songs with a Sixties British influence. "Look Out!" is 20/20's second album, and it's full of sudden discoveries that life is not always sweet or comfortable. Surprise, surprise. But the tone is not self-pitying, and the guys don't seem to feel that the world owes them any special consideration. And what they do, they do well. The guitar licks here are standard but not excessive, some of the lyrics are literate and show real promise, and the group sound is solid. 20/20 could use some improvement, but it's off to a good start.
J.V.

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VOLUNTEER JAM VII. The Charlie Daniels Band: *Sweet Home Alabama.* Delbert McClinton: *Standing on Shakey Ground.* Crystal Gayle and the Charlie Daniels Band: *Falling in Love for the Night.* Bobby Bare: *Marie Laveau.* Molly Hatchet and Ted Nugent: *Mississippi Queen.* And four others. Epic FE 37178, © FET 37178, © FEA 37178, no list price.

Performance: **Mostly pretty good**
Recording: **Good remote**

The Volunteer Jam is the name that has evolved for the Charlie Daniels Band's annual homecoming concert in Nashville, with guest musicians galore. This one, last January at the Municipal Auditorium, had Ted Nugent and Roy Acuff appearing on the same show and such other extremes as Billy Joel on the one hand and the Cajun band of Jimmy C. Newman on the other. The record favors the Southern rock part of the program—understandably, since that's the CDB's specialty—and the most impressive performances on it are turned in by the host band itself. Of the others, Dobie Gray gets the best marks. Nugent, I suppose, had to be seen: he doesn't sing very well and his guitar playing, for me, still uglifies everything it touches. Bobby Bare is caught doing a crowd-involvement novelty song, and Crystal Gayle, singing a duet with Daniels, seems to be in his key and not hers. But it's recorded well and the performances, by and large, are far less sloppy than one expects of live albums of this sort. It would have been more varied and interesting if Acuff, Joel, and Papa John Creach had been included, but as it is it's a pretty good sampler of what's happening to the Old South's musical tastes. Daniels has proved, if nothing else, that a good old boy can get a lot of heretofore unlikely things done and accepted. More power to him.
N.C.

(Continued on page 119)

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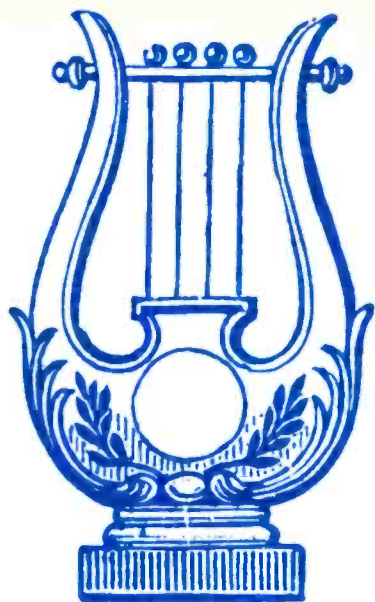
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LOREZ ALEXANDRIA: Sings the Songs of Johnny Mercer. Lorez Alexandria (vocals); Mike Wofford Quartet (instrumentals). *Early Autumn; I Remember You; Travelin' Light; When a Woman Loves a Man; Dear Beloved;* and four others. **Discovery DS-826 \$8.98.**

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

Lorez Alexandria was regularly featured on FM jazz stations twenty years ago, but not much has been heard from her recently. On this new album, her third for the small Discovery label, the now fifty-two-year-old singer eases her way effortlessly through nine Johnny Mercer tunes in a style that is still very reminiscent of Sarah Vaughan. The accompaniment by pianist Mike Wofford's quartet is appropriately laid-back and tasteful, and the production is professional. It's an eloquent album that does not deserve the amateurish, downright embarrassing liner notes that disgrace it. **C.A.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

RAN BLAKE: Film Noir. Ran Blake (piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Touch of Evil; Spiral Staircase; Key Largo; Blue Gardenia; Streetcar Named Desire; The Pawnbroker;* and five others. **ARISTA/NOVUS AN 3019 \$8.98.**

Performance: **For the mind**
 Recording: **Good**

Pianist Ran Blake's milieu is the third-stream department of the New England Conservatory, but his music flows into all streams. Perhaps for budgetary reasons, Blake's recordings are usually solo efforts, collections of exquisite sound pictures boldly and authoritatively splashed across the keyboard. "Film Noir," his most recent release, is not a solo effort, but it is decidedly Blakian; it is as if the pianist's often introspective, sometimes wonderfully witty keyboard wanderings had simply been scored for other instruments. With trumpeter Ted Curson and members of the conservatory's third-stream department on hand, Blake presents his music in settings ranging from two solo tracks (*Le Boucher* and *Eve*) to a duet with Curson (*Garden of Delight*) and a couple of arrangements for eight pieces (*The Pawnbroker* and *Touch of Evil*). Although six of the compositions are not his own, it is not at all inappropriate to refer to everything in this album as Blake's music, for every measure bears his distinct stamp.

"Film Noir" has a running theme: movie music (who but Blake would include an impression of *Doktor Mabuse*?). It is not exactly Percy Faith, though it is quite accessi-

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Lynn Goldsmith/LGI

Blue Öyster Cult

IN every popular-music genre, no matter how dismal a dead end it may be, there are always one or two bands that manage to extend or exceed the limitations of the form. If any one band has consistently been able to pull itself up by its studded bootstraps and rise above heavy metal, it is Blue Öyster Cult. Combining a chilling, ironic intelligence with gallows humor and unassailable musicianship, the Cult easily outperforms its colleagues in rock's heavy-metal foundry.

"Fire of Unknown Origin" is classic Blue Öyster Cult—playfully menacing, demonic, and tight as an iron maiden. The Cult is one of the few bands that can work me into a sweat without ever going faster than medium tempo, and that's just what the title track and the whole second side of this album do. The set reaches its climax with the apocalyptic *Joan Crawford*, in which Mom-

my Dearest rises from the grave, tires squeal, phones ring off the hook, alarms sound in desperation, nice girls throw away their mascara and chain themselves to the axles of Mack trucks, and Buck Dharma cuts through it all with an electrifying solo. If this sounds like your idea of fun, forget what you've heard about heavy metal and surrender to a "Fire of Unknown Origin."

—Mark Peel

BLUE ÖYSTER CULT: *Fire of Unknown Origin*. Blue Öyster Cult (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Vengeance (The Pact)*; *After Dark*; *Joan Crawford*; *Don't Turn Your Back*; *Burnin' for You*; *Fire of Unknown Origin*; *Veteran of the Psychic Wars*; *Sole Survivor*; *Heavy Metal—The Black and Silver*. COLUMBIA FC 37389, © FCT 37389, © FCA 37389, no list price.

ble considering its complexity. Ran Blake is a very talented music maker—I have said that before, and I repeat it with emphasis after hearing this album. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

ANN BURTON: *New York State of Mind*. Ann Burton (vocals); Mike Renzi (piano); Buster Williams (bass); Grady Tate (drums). *You Started Something; I Can Dream, Can't I?*; *All Too Soon*; and eight others. INNER CITY IC 1094 \$7.98.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Good**

Ann Burton, who is from Amsterdam, was brought to this country to record by Helen Merrill, who produced this album. Burton is quite a stylish lady, with no discernible accent, a smoky, worldly-wise voice and performing manner, and an ability to wrench every last bit of nuance from lyrics. For instance, she takes *All or Nothing at All*, a song that by now should be collecting Social Security, and puts it right back in the work force with her intelligent and suspenseful phrasing. Billy Joel's *New York State of Mind*, a relatively new song, is gentled by Burton's subtle, sophisticated performance. The main problem I have with the album is memory—not Ann Burton's but mine. She sounds so much like so many of our own classy lady singers of twenty or so years ago that an irritating game sets itself up in my head as to what other singer she sounds like. She sounds like Ann Burton, of course, but it's hard to separate her from a great tradition, even if she was never a part of it. Perhaps Miss Burton ought to investigate some new or unfamiliar material. P.R.

CHICK COREA: *Three Quartets* (see Best of the Month, page 72)

PETER DEAN: *Where Did the Magic Go?* (see Best of the Month, page 71)

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JACK DEJOHNETTE'S SPECIAL EDITION: *Tin Can Alley*. Jack DeJohnette

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(drums, keyboards, timpani, vocal); Chico Freeman (flute, bass clarinet, tenor saxophone); John Purcell (flute, alto and baritone saxophones); Peter Warren (bass, cello). *Pastel Rhapsody: I Know; Riff Raff*; and two others. ECM ECM-1-1189 \$8.98, © M5E-1189 \$8.98.

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

This is the latest album by Jack DeJohnette's Special Edition, and never has the drummer had a more special recording. The leader occasionally strays to other instruments, reed men Chico Freeman and John Purcell add bold splashes and measured strokes to four of the five intriguing canvases, and bassist/cellist Peter Warren surges and glides over, under, and through their skillful soundscapes. Everything has the quality for which ECM has become known, but its temperature exceeds by far the label's norm, even becoming torrid at times.

"Tin Can Alley" offers something to all but the most closed-minded jazz fan. There are moments on *Pastel Rhapsody* that might appeal even to so-called "moldy figs," and I can't imagine anyone not being engrossed by DeJohnette's solo track, *The Gri Gri Man*. It's not a lengthy drum solo, but rather a five-minute tone poem for organ, congas, timpani, and drums that makes a good case for multitracking. There is one oddity here, a mock r-&-b track entitled *I Know*, which features a deliberately unintelligible spoken vocal by DeJohnette and an enthusiastic "response" from a Wilisau Jazz Festival audience that had been recorded the previous month. Oddly enough, *I Know* is the weakest track here, but the thirty-seven minutes that precede it are rich indeed. **C.A.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

PAQUITO D'RIVERA: *Paquito Blowin'*. Paquito D'Rivera (flugelhorn, flutes, saxophones, percussion); instrumental accompaniment. *Basstronaut; Monga; On Green Dolphin Street; Al Fin Amor*; and four others. COLUMBIA FC 37374, © FCT 37374, © FCA 37374, no list price.

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

When Columbia Records brought the Cuban band Irakere to the U.S. in 1978, the hype was often better than the music. But one player, Paquito D'Rivera, was consistently interesting. Now Paquito has defected to this country—mostly for professional reasons, he says—and, not surprisingly, he has signed with Columbia Records.

His first album, "Paquito Blowin'," is a series of brilliant displays of virtuosity: fresh, vigorous jazz blossoming beautifully from Latin roots. Bassist Russell Blake is not Latin, but otherwise Paquito has surrounded himself with men of similar heritage, among them Argentinian pianist Jorge Dalto, Puerto Rican pianist Hilton Ruiz, and the superb bassist Eddie Gomez. A stunning debut. **C.A.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HELEN HUMES: *Helen*. Helen Humes (vocals); Joe Wilder (trumpet); Buddy Tate

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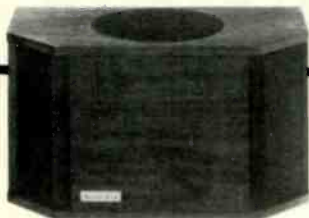
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(tenor saxophone); Norman Simmons (piano); Billy Butler (guitar); George Duvivier (bass); Butch Miles (drums). *There'll Be Some Changes Made*; *Easy Living*; *You Brought a New Kind of Love to Me*; and three others. MUSE MR 5233 \$7.98.

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

If Helen Humes' last two albums, "Let the Good Times Roll" (Classic Jazz CJ 120) and "Helen Humes" (Audiophile AP 107), were rare treats, this new one is a feast. Each of the six selections on "Helen" is given enough space that the lady can stretch out and do it justice.

You Brought a New Kind of Love to Me is a dandy tune that was cut by Bing Crosby in the Twenties and by Frank Sinatra in the Fifties but has seldom been heard since. Humes' essay solves the mystery of why it has not been done more often: the lyrics are masculine, but the sentiments are feminine. *Easy Living* is usually thought of as belonging to Billie Holiday, but Humes here stakes a compelling claim to shared ownership. *Evil Gal Blues* is polite rough-house and is done for fun. For *There'll Be Some Changes Made*, also from the Twenties, Humes has supplied new lyrics and the combo tries to sound like a disco back-up; it may warm up the audience in a club, but it doesn't translate well to vinyl. *Why Try to Change Me Now* is Cy Coleman's portrait of a delightfully zany urban character, and the album closes with a truly obscure gem, *Draggin' My Heart Around*, an early torch song that Fats Waller recorded in 1931 in his only solo date for Columbia. I've always liked it, but Humes' treatment makes me love it.

The wowser combo includes the terrific saxophonist Buddy Tate and bassist George Duvivier, whose use of minor tones gives dramatic urgency to the material. Trumpeter Joe Wilder and guitarist Billy Butler have both spent a lot of time playing commercial sessions; they seem to enjoy their holiday here, sounding free and spry. Pianist Norman Simmons, who works with Humes on club dates, plays with a forceful delicacy, and drummer Butch Miles knows when to lay back and when to come on.

You'll have a bit of a search before you find another album of jazz singing as good as this one, so stop looking and just listen.

J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BARBARA LEA: *A Woman in Love*. Barbara Lea (vocals); Johnny Windhurst (trumpet); Billy Taylor (piano); Jimmy Shirley (guitar); Earl May (bass); Percy Brice (drums). *Love Me*; *Thinking of You*; *Too Late Now*; *As Long As I Live*; *Come Rain or Come Shine*; *I See Your Face Before Me*; and six others. AUDIOPHILE AP-86 \$7.98.

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

Eight of the tracks here are in mono and were recorded in 1955 for a 10-inch Riverside album, now a collector's item, also called "A Woman in Love." In 1978 Barbara Lea was persuaded to return to the studio, along with pianist Billy Taylor from the original back-up combo, to record four new

tracks in stereo: *I'm Old Fashioned*, *Too Late Now*, *I See Your Face Before Me*, and *What Is There to Say*. Perhaps it's because I'm so fond of Lea's voice and style, but the mono and stereo tracks don't sound all that different to me. Both feature the same lovely tones, the same from-the-gut projection of lyrics, and the same elegant taste. After all, when you're as much a master of your craft as Barbara Lea was and is, how much difference can a mere twenty-five years or so make?

P.R.

PAT METHENY AND LYLE MAYS: *As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls*. Lyle Mays (keyboards, autoharp); Pat Metheny (electric and acoustic guitars, bass); Nana Vasconcelos (drums, percussion, vocals). *As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls*; *Ozark*; *September Fifteenth*; *It's for You*; *Estupenda Graça*. ECM ECM-1-1190 \$9.98, © MSE-1190 \$9.98.

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

Guitarist Pat Metheny and pianist Lyle Mays play in a grab-bag of styles that amount to some very free-form jazz. The title cut here, which runs twenty minutes, owes something to Ravel in its harmonic development of figures. *Ozark* uses folk form, "It's for You" is based on Brazilian rhythms, and *Estupenda Graça* is a variation on *Amazing Grace* with vocals by percussionist Nana Vasconcelos, who sounds like Airtro Moreira did a decade ago. The best cut is *September Fifteenth*, dedicated to the memory of jazz pianist Bill Evans. Though there's a lot of air in these performances, they do make you dream, and the album is quite pleasant to hear when you're in a float-away mood.

J.V.

MAX ROACH: *Chattahoochie Red*. Max Roach (drums, percussion); Calvin Hill (bass violin); Cecil Bridgewater (trumpet, flugelhorn); Odean Pope (tenor saxophone, alto flute, oboe); Walter Bishop Jr. (piano). *The Dream/It's Time*; *I Remember Clifford*; *Six Bits Blues*; *Round Midnight*; *Giant Steps*; and five others. COLUMBIA FC 37376, © FCT 37376, no list price.

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

Max Roach has some outstanding musicians in his group, especially trumpeter Cecil Bridgewater, whose tone is beautiful and whose ideas are individual (given that nearly every jazz trumpeter is somewhat overwhelmed by the eminence of Miles Davis). Saxophonist Odean Pope has a burly tone and aggressive ideas on *I Remember Clifford*, but he also contributes his own delicate *Red River Road*.

Roach, who's the star, overplays on some cuts, but he has given a lot of leeway to his group. Bassist Calvin Hill is in complete control of *Round Midnight* and wrote *Reach for It*. Bridgewater composed *Wefé* and the title track. My own favorite is Roach's gentle and charming *Lonesome Lover*, with Pope doubling on flute to present the melody. The group also likes a joke, as on Roach's *Six Bits Blues* where Bridgewater mocks corny trumpet solos and tricky embouchures and takes the tune to a deliberately trite conclusion.

The two duds here are Roach's indulgent

eight-minute drum solo on *The Dream/It's Time*, interspersed with excerpts from the famous speech by Martin Luther King, and the chaos-is-beauty ensemble playing of Coltrane's *Giant Steps*. The lines between dignity and pomposity, between experimentation and atavistic blah, have always been thin in jazz. Roach and his group are best when they avoid the clouds of "art" for the terra firma of the bandstand. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

WARREN VACHÉ: *Iridescence*. Warren Vaché (cornet, flugelhorn); Hank Jones (piano); George Duvivier (bass); Alan Dawson (drums). *Sweet and Slow; No Regrets; Autumn in New York; The More I See You*; and four others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ 153 \$7.98.

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

If you have liked Warren Vaché's work so far, you will love his new album, "Iridescence," which represents the young trumpeter's finest playing to date. Like tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton, Vaché does not have an identifying tone or style; the way both Hamilton and Vaché play is instantly recognizable, however, reflecting an amalgam of influences leaning toward the robust swing style of forty years ago. Vaché—who also has traces of bop in his playing—has often recorded with Hamilton, who I felt had the edge on him. With this release I see the scale balanced. Perhaps it is Hank Jones who brings out the best in Vaché; the two are wonderful together, whether dipping through a fat rendition of *Sweet and Slow* (a number that Fats Waller all but made his own) or pulling all stops out and tearing through *The Song Is You*. Bassist George Duvivier and drummer Alan Dawson are also splendid throughout this fine, tasteful album. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MIKE WOFFORD TRIO: *Plays Jerome Kern—Vol. 3*. Mike Wofford (piano); Andrew Simpkins (bass); Jim Plank (drums). *Long Ago and Far Away; I Dream Too Much; Pick Yourself Up; Go Little Boat; I Won't Dance*; and four others. DISCOVERY DS-827 \$8.98.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Slightly unbalanced**

This is the sixth album pianist Mike Wofford has made for Discovery under his own name, his third in a series devoted to the music of Jerome Kern. Despite a slightly lopsided mix (the drums dominate), a flaw that can be remedied on the listener's end, the whole set is a joy to hear. Wofford has an obvious love for Kern's music and the ability to extract from each tune its most interesting quality. He is wonderful when he goes it alone on a most unusual version of *Lovely to Look At*, but the teamwork with drummer Jim Plank and bassist Andrew Simpkins makes fine listening too. It won't shake the rafters of jazz, nor will it make the charts it ought to appear on, but keyboard jazz lovers should make sure this album makes it to their collections. C.A.

(Continued on page 126)

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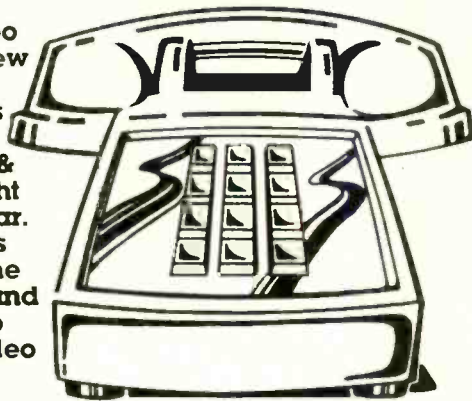


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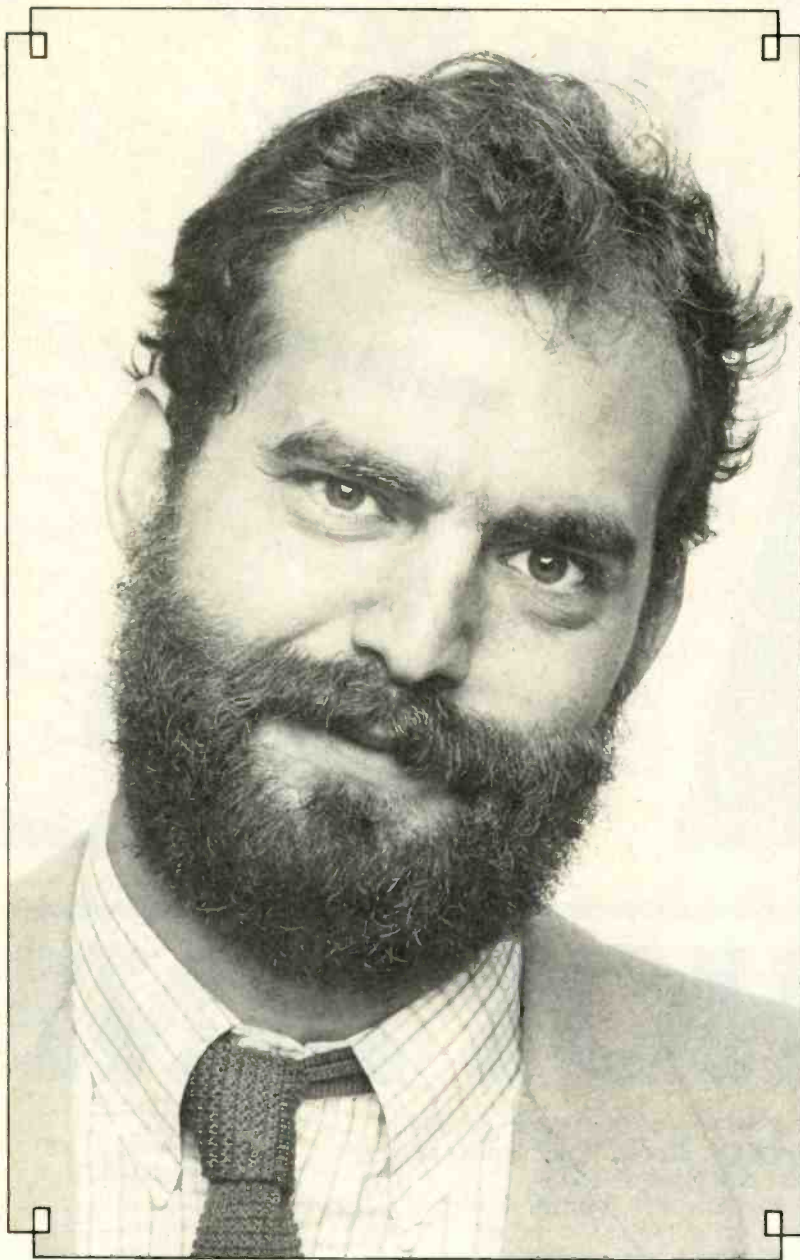


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Jack Mitchell

William Finn

"I feel I deserve a bigger orchestra"

How would you like to be William Finn? How, at twenty-nine, would you like to have written and composed *March of the Falsettos*, a barely hour-long musical comedy of sexual manners that turned New York on its jaded ear when it opened at an Off-Broadway theater last spring? How, with only one previous Off-Off-Broadway show (*In Trousers*, which was greeted with an almost unanimous critical shrug) under your belt, would you like to find yourself suddenly being called "among the most exciting

(never mind most promising) composers in the musical theater" by the fervently serious *Soho News*, proclaimed "The Hottest New Talent in Musical Comedy" in a banner headline across the front of trendy *New York* magazine, and, finally, saluted as "a genius" by a reviewer for the *New York Times*?

Well, *you* might like it, but it all seems vaguely oppressive to Mr. Finn, a large, instantly likable man with a Stern's Miracle-Gro beard and deep-set, piercingly inquisi-

tive eyes. "I'm enjoying the success, I guess. Of course, it isn't like what I thought it would be. It's much easier being liked than being actively disliked; I prefer it any day. But it's peculiar. I can go to doctors now that I haven't been to before and they'll treat me very well. Or I can go into a clothing store and not be intimidated by the salesman. Things like that."

FINN's shyness came as something of a surprise, altering the impression I'd built up at recording and mixing sessions for *Falsettos*, where he had worn a definite aura of touchiness. Even silent, he gives off a room-filling, bristling energy that his colleagues obviously respect and defer to with caution. "Don't bug me," had been the message. "I've got enough troubles as it is." Obviously sensitive and obviously bright, he had to be coaxed to talk, almost nagged to speak of his work. And so I probably got what I deserved when I asked, dumb but desperate, "But what is *Falsettos* really about?" Replied Finn, with airy exasperation, "Oh, I don't know. It's probably about making me famous."

March of the Falsettos is subtitled "A new Marvin musical." Marvin is the name of the leading character in both *Falsettos* and its earlier, companion work *In Trousers*. He is a married man with a preadolescent son. *In Trousers* chronicled Marvin's leave-taking of the women in his life upon his realization that he is homosexual. *Falsettos* now finds Marvin living with a male lover, but his firmly middle-class values (he likes *A Tight-Knit Family*) drive him to insist that everyone—wife, son, and lover—be *happy* about the situation. When the wife feels some reservations about this, she naturally (natural, that is, if you come from the thoroughly modern milieu in which Mr. Finn has placed his characters) rushes off to Marvin's psychiatrist, Mendel. Mendel, who watches out for number one with the cool aplomb of a storefront "Reader & Adviser," courts and marries her. Finding a few emotions still unemployed, Marvin and ex-wife get to fretting about the effect all this is having on their son and decide that he too must pay Mendel a few visits. At the drama's close Marvin and his lover have gone their separate ways, Mendel and his new wife have settled down to a life of gruesome suburban bliss, and the son, who had been worried about his chromosomes, has discovered that he much prefers girls to his previous love, chess.

BELIEVE it or not, all of the above is the *least* newsworthy aspect of *Falsettos*. "I really resented it when *March of the Falsettos* got to be such a big thing and people said to me, 'Well, half of its success is because it's so shocking.' I couldn't understand that because, all things considered, it's a *family* show. It's very bourgeois. I don't particularly like to think of myself as bourgeois, but there's a lot of me in there and I can't understand what's so shocking about it."

The real dazzle of the show is the nearly

sixty minutes of glittering words and music (there is no spoken dialogue) that Finn has clothed his plot in. The thematic opening song, *Four Jews in a Room Bitching*, is a mordant, privileged criticism of ethnic self-absorption, a daring foray into Roth country. ("In one interview I said that I'd always wanted to write a musical version of *Portnoy's Complaint*. The interviewer pointed out that with *Falsettos* I already had.") From that startling opening to the title song, which appears midway in the show, to *The Games I Play* (a strikingly original and powerful variant on the formula "goodbye" song), to the touching finale in which Marvin tries to explain himself to his son, Finn's score sizzles with wit and word-play.

The music—bright, continuously inventive, and laced with affecting melody—reinforces the supercharged emotions of the book. Finn's work has both economy and precision; nothing is wasted, nothing is done for cheap theatrical effect. Most striking is his ability to enlarge and expand the meaning of the words by musical means. When Mendel introduces himself with the line, "My name is Mendel," the musical phrase accompanying it is so juicily and fatuously self-congratulatory that we need no further clue to tell us that we are in the presence of a charlatan. The restless, sadly angry music of *The Games I Play* is a kind of counterpoint, the other half of a story that is too painful for the narrator to put into words. And when Marvin insists that he likes *A Tight-Knit Family*, the dreamy warmth of the melody lets us know that Marvin has never actually experienced such bliss, only heard about it.






March of the Falsettos is a brilliant start for William Finn, an album that belongs in any collection exhaustive enough to include such rarities as Sondheim's *Anyone Can Whistle*, Al Carmines' *Promenade*, or John La Touche's *The Golden Apple*. So what's next? "I'm working on a new show about a soup kitchen. It won't be conventional at all. I don't know whether I want to do it on Broadway or not. Broadway is scary: you're catering to the lowest common denominator, people who have no sense of history about what you're trying to do. But you have to make a choice. There are certain things you can do *only* on Broadway. Off-Broadway you're limited to a cast of twelve and there are restrictions on the size of the orchestra. I feel I deserve a bigger orchestra. But who knows? You do what you can do."

I think William Finn has proved that what he does he does better than any other young talent in the American musical theater. I say give him a bigger orchestra.

—Peter Reilly

MARCH OF THE FALSETTOS (William Finn). Original-cast recording. Michael Rupert, Alison Fraser, James Kushner, Stephen Bogardus, Chip Zien (vocals); orchestra, Michael Starobin arr. and cond. DRG SXL 18811, © SXL 18811 (with libretto), no list price.

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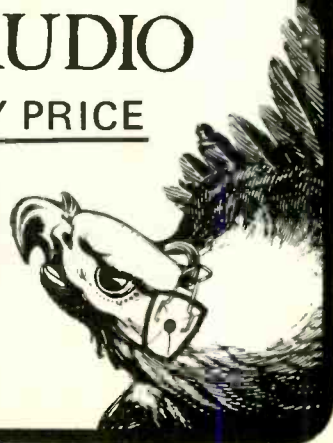
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ATLANTIC CITY (Michel Legrand). Original-soundtrack recording. DRG 6104 \$8.98, © 6104 \$8.98.

Performance: **Splendid souvenir**
Recording: **Excellent**

Many of the ironies in Louis Malle's wry film tribute to a wonderful world of losers in *Atlantic City* are put over by Michel Legrand's score. While Susan Sarandon, as a waitress who aspires to be a croupier, tries to improve her mind, we hear "Casta diva" from *Norma* (sung by Elizabeth Harwood) on her little cassette player, and Burt Lancaster's performance of his career as a retired numbers runner is accompanied by music by Legrand that says as much about the sagging city around him as do the tacky buildings and forlorn interiors captured by the camera. The dreary bedroom of his character's mistress (played by Kate Reid) has its Twenties feeling reinforced when we hear a 78-rpm record of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Song of India* in an arrangement right out of the heyday of Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra. And so on. It all works beautifully, from the *Bellini Rock* parody of the aria from *Norma* to the excruciatingly corny Paul Anka title song sung by Robert Goulet.

Legrand has never put together an apter score—or one less soggy with sentimentality. How it comes across on the record may depend on whether you've seen the movie. But if you can remember how the music worked together with the action on screen, this soundtrack recording is a pleasure to listen to. See the film first, then buy the album. **P.K.**

ENDLESS LOVE. Original-soundtrack recording. Diana Ross, Lionel Ritchie, Kiss, Cliff Richard (vocals); orchestra. MERCURY SRM-1-2001 \$9.98, © MCR4-1-2001 \$9.98, © MC8-1-2001 \$9.98.

Performance: **Lush gush**
Recording: **Good**

Brooke isn't the first member of the Shields family to have a go at Hollywood. Back in the Thirties her grandfather, the famous tennis player Frank Shields, was briefly under contract to Sam Goldwyn. Given no immediate assignment, he spent most of his time on the courts playing with the *gratin* of Hollywood when one day he suddenly received an urgent call from Goldwyn. Shields rushed to the mogul's office, tennis racket still in hand, and was ushered into the Presence. Goldwyn eyed him disdainfully and finally pronounced, "Tennis you know. Practice acting!" All these years later something of the same kind might be said

to Brooke. I won't go into the dreary circumstances that found me actually sitting in a theater watching this film, but I can tell you that Brooke Shields is a superb model who really ought to give acting a try. The film itself, and the kind of lush gush that passes for its score, can perhaps best be characterized by some of the titles for the tracks on side two: *Dreaming of You*, *Heart Song*, *David Goes to Jade's House*, *David at the Institution*, and, finally, *Endless Love (Reprise)*. Most of the above is the syrupy work of Jonathan Tunick. Side one features Diana Ross and Lionel Ritchie wailing away at the chart-hit title song, written by Ritchie, as is their other number, *Dreaming of You*. Kiss and Cliff Richard are also heard in *I Was Made for Loving You* and *Dreamin'*, respectively. In short, no commercial stone has been left unturned in the hope of luring customers who haven't bought a record since *Love Story*. **P.R.**

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (John Williams). Original-soundtrack recording. London Symphony Orchestra, John Williams cond. COLUMBIA JS 37373, © JT 37373, no list price.

Performance: **Authoritative**
Recording: **Quite good**

Just in case you've returned from a two-year field trip to New Guinea and hadn't heard, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* is George Lucas and Stephen Spielberg's attempt to do for *Tim Tyler's Luck* what *Star Wars* did for space opera. It's a Thirties adventure cliffhanger but with the kind of wit and glorious style that the originals never had. Certain critics have taken potshots at it because it doesn't have a subtext (and thus, supposedly, subverts the John Ford/Howard Hawks tradition of the action film), but while this is true it misses the point. *Raiders* is a movie head over heels in love with the sheer craft of movie making, and anybody who doesn't like it is just being cranky. John Williams' score is his usual thoroughly professional job: colorful, exotic when called for, occasionally tuneful, and gorgeously orchestrated. You've heard it all before, of course, and it doesn't work half as well on record as it does in the theater, but in small doses it's entertaining home listening. Me, I'm waiting for the videodisc. **S.S.**

COLLECTIONS

BROADWAY OPENING NIGHTS: Volume 1—The Sixties. Zero Mostel: *If I Were a Rich Man (Fiddler on the Roof)*. Lucille Ball and Paula Stewart: *Hey Look Me Over (Wildcat)*. John Callum: *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*. Liza Minnelli: *Dear Love (Flora, the Red Menace)*. Robert Morse: *I Believe in You (How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying)*. William Warfield and Chorus: *Ol' Man River (Showboat)*. And eight others. RCA ARL1-4049 \$9.98, © ARK1-4049 \$9.98.

BROADWAY OPENING NIGHTS: Volume 2—The Seventies. Laurence Guizard: *Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin' (Oklahoma)*. Millicent Martin and David Kernan: *We're Gonna Be All Right (Side by Side by Sondheim)*. Hermione Gingold: *Liaisons (A Little Night Music)*. Joel Grey: *Good-*
(Continued on page 130)

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NOVEMBER 1981



PERHAPS because the beat is basic and the technique primitive, "punk" or New Wave rock is supposed to be "more honest" than disco, the manipulative artifice of which can seem almost Baroque in comparison. Well, I don't buy it. Those who complained, when disco was dominant, that its beat was tyrannical and the music unexpressive just weren't listening—and they still aren't.

Compare, for example, the punk and disco selections on the new two-record dance-music sampler, "Prime Cuts" on Importe/12. There are nine productions separately recorded by nine different groups, and the two punk-flavored items are decidedly the least danceable or listenable. Elton Motello's slam-hard *Jet Boy*. *Jet Girl* is rife with implied sex and violence, but it quickly becomes tedious. Mino's *Kama Sutra*, with some tricky engineering and a little electro-pop sheen, is more fun, but that one-two-hop beat can drive you nuts.

The other three sides of the album offer some splendid reminders of how varied and interesting disco can be. *Dance, It's My Life* is an uptempo, up-mood instrumental by a big Japanese orchestra called Midnight Powers. The cut runs more than nine min-

utes and never loses its energy or joyfulness. *Show Me Yours* by Corruption features the trippy kind of electronic effects favored by such disco giants as Gino Soccio. The best track is Loi's *Body Contact*: this charming blend of soft-core funk and Forties rhythms makes me want to hear more by this group.

THE rest of the cuts are a little less than prime—unoriginal but nicely crafted dance selections that are more than serviceable—but in every case the sound is extraordinary. The masters were plated and the records pressed, on imported Teldec vinyl, in New York City by Europadisc. The surfaces are absolutely silent, each track is balanced and clean-sounding, and the dynamic range is stunningly wide. Wonderful. —Irv Cohn

PRIME CUTS 1—THE DOUBLE DANCE ALBUM. Elton Motello: *Jet Boy*, *Jet Girl*. Mino: *Kama Sutra (Come and Play with Me)*. Midnight Powers: *Dance, It's My Life*. Hot Posse: *Ride It*. Corruption: *Show Me Yours*. Sunbelt: *Spin It*. Loi: *Body Contact*. Ice T: *From New York to L.A.* The Red Point Orchestra: *Blue Light*. IMPORTE/12 MP 313 two discs, no list price.

time Charley. Angela Lansbury: *Some People (Gypsy)*. And seven others. RCA ARL1-4050 \$9.98. © ARK1-4050 \$9.98.

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Was RCA to sit idly by while Columbia issued five albums of highlights from musicals in its "Broadway Magic" series? Would Macy's let Gimbel's put one over on it? Perish the thought! So researchers ransacked the vaults, engineer Paul Goodman turned on his machines, Didier C. Deutsch, who produced the "Broadway Magic" albums, was packed off to produce yet again, and before you could say "original-cast recording" two whole volumes of "Broadway Opening Nights" were packaged in bright colors and ready to go.

And what are the results? In the case of Volume 1, which covers the Sixties, there are few surprises, but the goods are there, one showstopper after another: the inimitable Zero Mostel in *If I Were a Rich Man*,

Ethel Merman doin' what comes more naturally to her than to anybody else, Liza Minnelli at the start of her vaulting career singing *Dear Love* from *Flora, the Red Menace*, and so on and on—not a lemon in the lot, even when, as with *How Are Things in Glocca Morra?* from *Finian's Rainbow*, it's a revival cast you're hearing rather than the original. Volume 2, devoted to the Seventies, is more offbeat and intriguing, featuring moments from *Sweeney Todd*, *Ain't Misbehavin'*, and *Pacific Overtures* that have not yet quite frozen into museum pieces, fillips from flops such as *Rex and Goodtime Charley*, and Angela Lansbury for once playing the stage mother in *Gypsy*, which she does in her own uniquely authentic way. The packages are topped off with Deutsch's wide-eyed, information-packed notes—just like the ones he wrote for Columbia. Still, it's too bad these outfits don't pool resources for a series that would really represent the best of Broadway instead of just the best of what's on hand. P.K.



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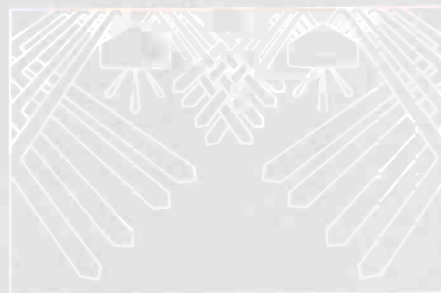
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