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Stereo Review®

The Audiophile's Christmas Guide to

- **PERSONAL CASSETTE PORTABLES**
- **SINGLE-BRAND "RACK" SYSTEMS**

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- Mura Red Set III Headphones
- Sony TC-FX6C Cassette Deck

INTERVIEWS

- **BERNADETTE PETERS**
- **ANDRÉ-MICHEL SCHUB**

DISC SPECIALS

Aretha Franklin ● Bob Dylan
Al Jarreau ● James P. Johnson
Jaco Pastorius

BACH: *Wedding Cantata*
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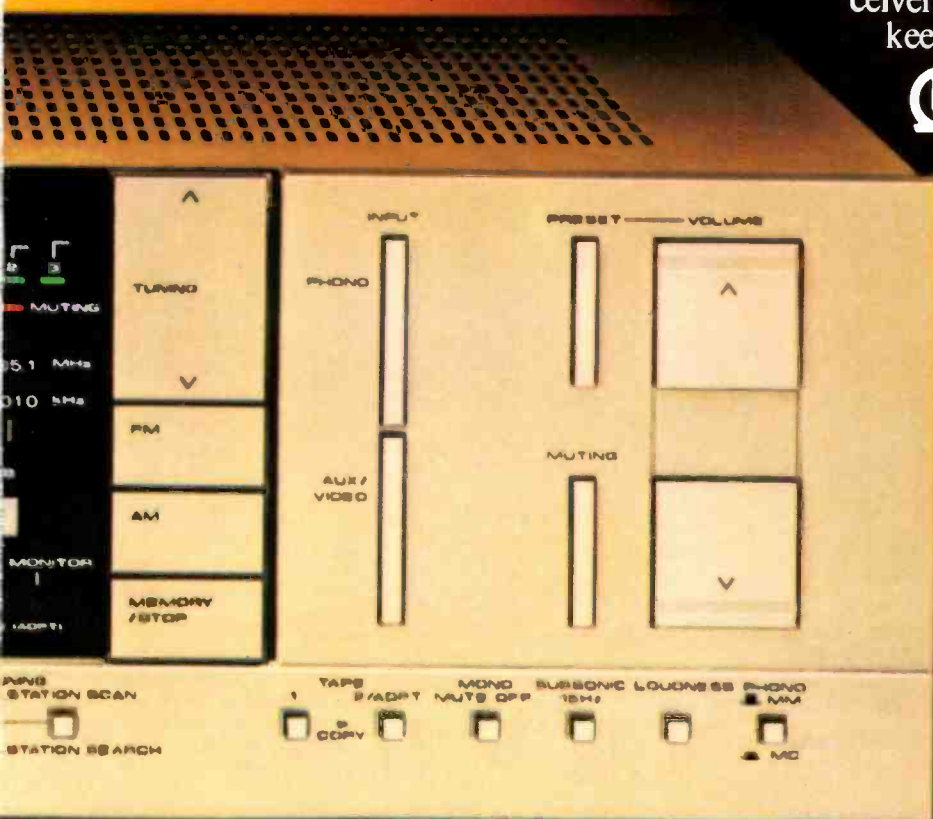
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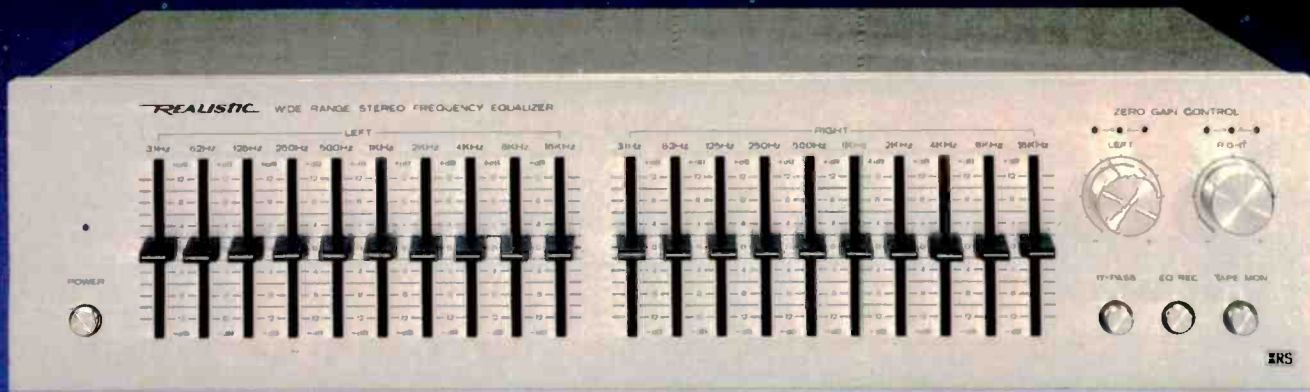
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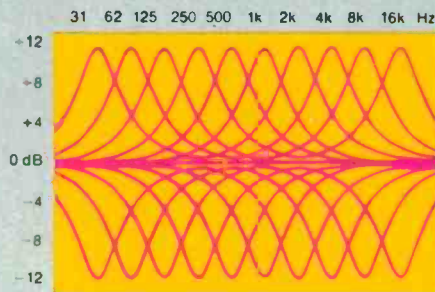
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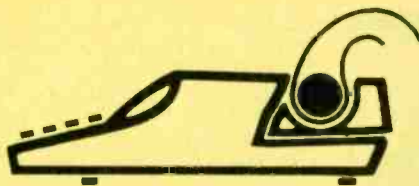
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BULLETIN

Edited by William Livingstone

- SONADISC, THE DISC THAT DOESN'T SPIN, is the trade name of a newly patented sound-reproducing system invented by Robert Lester, president of Static Systems in New York. The solid-state player reproduces sound stored in plastic discs about the size of U.S. 50¢ pieces, each of which may contain up to one million bits of information. Since digital information is stored in the discs in nonvolatile bubble memory and there are no moving parts, the discs should last forever. Adaptable for many audiovisual uses, the system can also reproduce music at hi-fi levels of quality. The amount of music that can be stored in each disc depends on its complexity, but Lester hopes that within two years a whole opera can be contained in a single coin-size disc.
- THE ORCHESTRE NATIONAL DE FRANCE is touring North America led by not one but two American-born conductors, Leonard Bernstein and Lorin Maazel. After November concerts with Bernstein in Eastern U.S. cities, the orchestra will play under Maazel in large cities in Canada and across the U.S. and back in December. The orchestra's most recent recordings are the Saint-Saëns and Lalo cello concertos with Yo-Yo Ma as soloist and Maazel conducting (on Columbia Mastersound) and the Piano Concerto No. 3 by Rachmaninoff with Alexis Weissenberg as soloist and Bernstein conducting (on Angel).
- IGOR STRAVINSKY'S RECORDED LEGACY will be issued in a thirty-one-record de luxe set by CBS Masterworks before the end of the year. Commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the composer's birth, the set documents the twenty-five-year recording history of Stravinsky with CBS Masterworks. It will include ninety-eight works conducted by Stravinsky or by his collaborator Robert Craft. Soloists include pianists Charles Rosen, Samuel Barber, Philippe Entremont, Lukas Foss, and Aaron Copland, violinists Isaac Stern and Joseph Szigeti, and singers Jennie Tourel, Shirley Verrett, Donald Gramm, and George Shirley.
- COUNT BASIE AND RUDOLF SERKIN are the musicians selected to receive the Kennedy Center Honors this year. The other artists being honored are film star Cary Grant, actress Helen Hayes, and choreographer Jerome Robbins. The presentation ceremonies will take place at Kennedy Center on December 5 and will be taped for telecast at a later date by CBS.
- AWARDS: The Benson and Hedges Gold Award for concert singers (\$4,500 plus engagements in Europe and the United States) was won by American soprano Jo-Ann Pickens (31) at Snape, England. In the Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards, given this year for composition of chamber music, first prize (\$5,000) was won by Joseph Schwantner (38), who teaches composition at the Eastman School of Music and was the winner of the 1979 Pulitzer Prize in Music.
- THE FIRST AUDIO/VIDEOPHILE COMPONENT is available from Kenwood. Resembling an integrated amplifier, the \$400 KVA-502 has all the normal hi-fi inputs and controls plus extensive audio and video dubbing facilities, mono-to-stereo simulation circuits, noise reduction, and a low-distortion 100-watt amplifier. Other facilities include video antenna and input switching and a video amplifier with enhancement circuitry.
- THE METROPOLITAN OPERA'S SATURDAY afternoon radio broadcasts will begin this season with Puccini's Tosca on December 5 sung by Carol Neblett, José Carreras, and Sherrill Milnes, with Giuseppe Patané conducting. This is Texaco's forty-second consecutive season of sponsoring the broadcasts. Other operas scheduled this month are Puccini's Trittico on December 12, Verdi's Rigoletto on December 19, and Puccini's Madama Butterfly on December 26. Rigoletto will also be seen on television on December 16 in Texaco's Live from the Met series on PBS. The cast for both radio and TV broadcasts includes Christiane Eda-Pierre, Isola Jones, Sherrill Milnes, and Luciano Pavarotti. James Levine conducts.

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



THE RETURN OF CHRISTMAS

ODD, but it's beginning to sound a lot like Christmas around here, and it hasn't for years. I stopped doing an annual roundup of Christmas discs in this space way back in 1970 for the very sufficient reason that the record companies were fielding fewer and fewer serious players. It appears, however, that 1981 is going to be a banner year for Christmas music, and those old standbys who have been called back each year for a decade and more are going to have some fresh competition.

□ John Williams and his Boston Pops, the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, and Philips Records got together to bring us "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" (6302 125), a rousing program of carols ancient and modern digitally recorded to make the most of jingling bells, sonorous horns, and a silken magnificence of strings. Ray Wright's *Boléro*-inspired arrangement of Katherine

K. Davis' *Little Drummer Boy* is positively regimental, and a clever "instruments of the orchestra" rewrite of the *Twelve Days of Christmas* will make you sorry you said all those mean things about it.

□ The traditional carol program presented in "Christmas with the Canadian Brass" (RCA ARL1-4232) was recorded in the splendidly echoing distances of New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral in a way that may make your new signal-delay unit superfluous. The richly resonant acoustic and the felicitous punctuation contributed by John Grady at the deep-throated organ may even cause it to displace the old Philadelphia Brass Ensemble program (Columbia MS 7033) in my affections.

□ CBS' "Elly Ameling Christmas Album" (M 36677) offers some music you are not likely to encounter anywhere else. It includes not only Alessandro Scarlatti's mov-

ing *Cantata Pastorale per la Nativita di Nostro Signore Gesu Christo* but a selection of songs by Richard Strauss, Max Regner, Hugo Wolf, and Alphons Diepenbrock, six of Peter Cornelius' *Weihnachtslieder*, and two *villancicos* by Joaquin Nin.

□ Also from CBS is "Christmas with Placido Domingo" (FM 37245), digitally recorded with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. It offers a number of traditional carols and a few surprises—Irvig Berlin's *White Christmas*, for example, plus a particularly welcome Spanish carol, *La Virgen Lava Pañales*. We should have more of these to avoid a possible surfeit of *Silent Night*.

□ Meanwhile, back at St. Patrick's, they recorded Renata Scotto ("Christmas with Renata Scotto," RCA ARL1-4136) with orchestra, choir, organ (John Grady again)—and bagpipe. That last goes with *Tu Scendi dalle Stelle*, a popular Italian carol with lyrics (and maybe music) by Pope Pius IX (pipers from the Abruzzi serenade in Rome and Naples at Christmas). Scotto sings radiantly in five languages, and it's all simply delicious—meaning, as Webster puts it, "affording exquisite pleasure."

□ "Carols of Christmas" by the Dale Warland Singers (23-1317, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis) is another unusual program. It is practically a *cappella* except when a strategic solo harp, guitar, oboe, flute, tambour, or tambourine is used to call attention to the recording quality (digital, by Sound 80), and the music is arranged almost out of sight to call attention to Warland's astonishing instrument: a whole chorus as pitch-perfect as Anne Murray, as responsive as litmus. Don't miss William Billings' remarkable *Shepherd's Carol*; it's unidiomatically chrome-plated, but stunning nonetheless.

□ And for the kids there's "A Chipmunk Christmas" (RCA AQL1-4041), a theme album with a story line we might call Hollywood Dickens. It was not recorded at St. Patrick's. □

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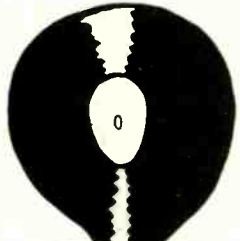
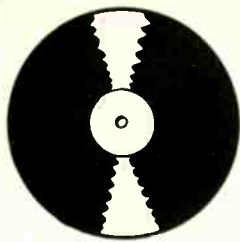
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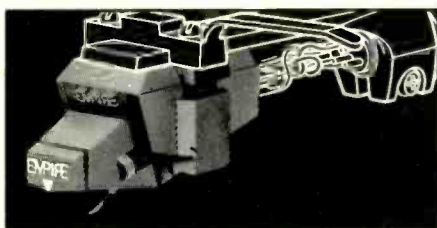
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mathias Première

● In October's "Classical Music Briefs" it was reported that the first public performance in the U.S. of William Mathias' setting of Psalm 67, composed for the wedding of England's Prince Charles and Lady Diana, would be on September 13 in Minnesota. The anthem was, however, performed publicly in Riverside, California, on Friday, August 7, just nine days after the royal wedding. The occasion was a choral Evening service at Loma Linda University under the direction of Sir David Willcocks, who also conducted the wedding performance. All participants in the one-week seminar conducted by Sir David received copies of the Oxford University Press edition of the anthem signed by the composer.

DAVID R. HUNSBERGER
Santa Barbara, Calif.

Oxford University Press replies: There are known difficulties in trying to "preserve" an American première for new music when all the necessities can be bought. The Choir of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis was pre-empted. But who more appropriate to introduce the Royal Anthem into the United States than Sir David Willcocks?

Recorded Applause

● I listened to the Sutherland/Horne/Pavarotti operatic gala at Lincoln Center when it was broadcast live on PBS last March 23, and I enjoyed it very much but had the same reservation noted by George Jellinek in his September review of the recording: the outbursts of applause before the ends of the selections. In September 1980 I listened to the Stern/Perlman/Zukerman concert with the New York Philharmonic, Mehta conducting, and later purchased the record. It has the same problem of early applause even with the best efforts of the CBS engineers to remove it. That little burst of applause (a sound like someone saying "shush") does detract, and I will never again purchase a record where this occurs.

Why cannot audiences wait just a bit un-

til an aria or symphony or violin solo ends before applauding? It would only take a moment, and it would mean so much. Personally, I think applauding before the music ends is loutish.

J. A. MALSI
Chadron, Neb.

Fiedler's Founding

● Correction, please: September "Classical Music Briefs" reported that the late Arthur Fiedler founded the San Francisco Pops in 1931; the correct date is 1951. But San Franciscans are indeed honored and delighted by the appointment of Erich Kunzel as conductor of the Pops and continuer of the festive Fiedler tradition.

ROBERT E. MARTIN
San Francisco, Calif.

The Jazz Tinge

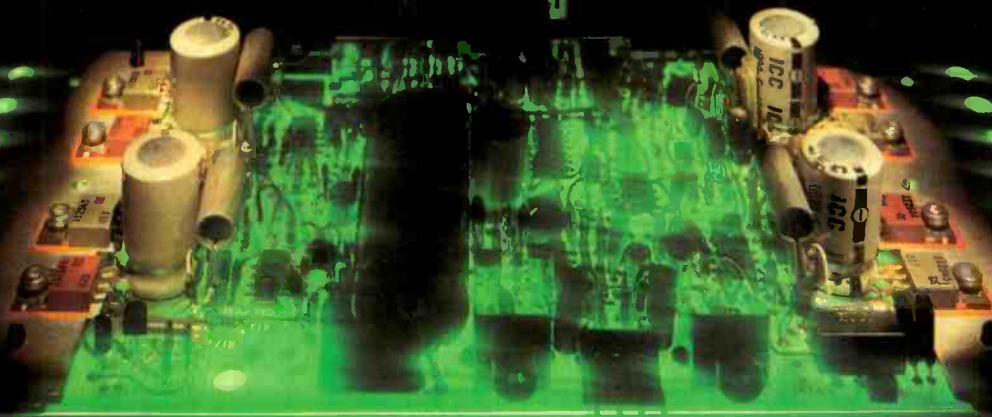
● What's all this nonsense about Darius Milhaud's *La Création du Monde* being "the first important and successful classical work based on jazz"? James Goodfriend's brash statement to that effect in his September "Going on Record" column short-changes several American composers who were spicing their classical music with exotic infusions of jazz before either Milhaud or Gershwin saw the light.

In January 1922, for example, the ballet *Krazy Kat*, a musical portrait of George Herriman's cartoon characters subtitled "A Jazz Pantomime" and composed by John Alden Carpenter, was produced at New York City's Town Hall. It had been performed as an orchestral piece the previous year in Chicago, and the critic John Tasker Howard called it "an interesting experiment in transferring the jazz idiom to respectable company."

The undeservedly neglected Eastwood Lane wrote classical music that often showed a felicitous affinity with jazz and, incidentally, exercised a profound influence on the inimitable jazz cornetist Bix Beiderbecke. Two of Lane's compositions exuberantly laced with jazz elements are *The*

(Continued on page 10)

4 The Fourth Fundamental Difference



Four Power Amplifiers in the Bose® Car Stereo System.

The 100-watt Bose Car Stereo System is fundamentally different from conventional car stereo components. It is designed as an integrated system. It is tested to survive in the automotive environment. And it is engineered to include innovations like Spatial Control™ circuitry and four power amplifiers.

This is the fourth in a series examining each of the fundamental differences more closely.

Most four-speaker car stereos have two power amplifiers, one to drive the left speakers and one for the right speakers. But the Bose Car



Stereo System contains *four* independent 25-watt power amplifiers, one for each full-range speaker. This design makes it possible to accurately control the spatial distribution pattern between the front and rear pairs of speakers.

The four power amplifiers

and Spatial Control™ circuitry in the 14C1™ Booster/Equalizer let you adjust the dynamic balance of your music without the power loss and coloration caused by conventional passive faders. They work together with Bose's Active Electronic Equalization to give you sound so natural and clear, it can only be compared to a live performance.

Ask your authorized Bose dealer for a live demonstration of the Bose Direct/Reflecting® Car Stereo System. Compare it to any other car stereo. The difference is fundamental.

For more information and the name of your local dealer, write Bose Corporation, Department SR, The Mountain, Framingham, Massachusetts 01701.

Crap-Shooters, from his *Five American Dances* of 1919, and *Lumber-jack Dance*, from the *Adirondack Sketches* of 1922.

R. Nathaniel Dett's *Juba Dance*, from his piano suite *In the Bottoms*, was published in 1913 and in 1934 recorded by, appropriately, a jazz ensemble: Frank Trumbauer and His Orchestra. And as long ago as 1896, Edward MacDowell wrote a sprightly piece for piano that anticipated with its hints of riff-like patterns the similar phrases that the Fletcher Henderson band was to exploit so effectively in the Twenties. It is called *From Uncle Remus* and is the seventh of the *Woodland Sketches*.

Other examples could be cited as well. The point I want to make is that Darius

Milhaud was actually a Johnny-come-lately in the classical-cum-jazz department.

NORMAN P. GENTIEU
Philadelphia, Pa.

James Goodfriend replies: Mr. Gentieu's letter brings up a peculiar conundrum, which might be expressed as "jazz is where you hear it." Granted, contemporary critics wrote of the jazz in Carpenter's Crazy Kat, but I wonder how many people would hear it that way today. For many people in the Twenties, anything with a saxophone in it was "jazz." I don't know Eastwood Lane's music, but the same sort of thing obtains with Dett's Juba Dance. I have not heard Trumbauer's recording of it, but I have

heard the piano original, and I hear no more jazz in it than I hear Indian music in Cadman's From the Land of the Sky-Blue Water (maybe less). So far as MacDowell is concerned, I think we are dealing with coincidence, if anything. The year 1896 is a little early for a jazz influence to be felt by anybody, least of all a composer of such European academic tendencies. If you insist on looking for precedents, look in Bach. Everything's there.

Dubbing Solution

● I have what I think is a solution to the home-taping problem. Why don't record companies talk their artists into producing longer albums? For example, if more albums were the length of Santana's latest, "Zebop!," which clocks in at almost 50 minutes, people would have to buy 60-minute tapes to record them. The price of a decent-quality tape in that length is close to the cost of the record. As an additional benefit, people like me who have a three-album-per-week habit would get our money's worth for a change.

DAVID NORWOOD
Moulton, Ala.

Landmark Musicals

● It is hard to figure out how the usually discerning Paul Kresh, in his August review of the record of the London production of *Camelot*, could deem the show "a landmark in the history of the American musical theater." If memory serves, the original production was damned by faint praise from all of the critics. Although the opulent sets and costumes scored heavily and the splendid cast was applauded, the play was generally considered to be a mishmash that didn't quite jell. As for the score, except for one gorgeous mating of words and music (*If Ever I Would Leave You*), there is little that is memorable or that seems more than just serviceable.

When we speak of "landmarks" we mean *Show Boat* and *Oklahoma* and *Carousel* and, yes, even *Rose Marie*, which was an important bridge between operetta and American-style musical comedy. *Camelot*, I'm afraid, pretty as it was, doesn't quite measure up. There was something hollow at the core.

JAMES H. GREEN
Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

Paul Kresh replies: I agree with Reader Green that Camelot did not boast the most thrilling of scores; neither, as far as I am concerned, did My Fair Lady, which has nevertheless been widely praised as one of the most wonderful musicals ever staged. Yet any musical that ran 873 performances on Broadway and 518 in Great Britain, as Camelot did, that attracted so much attention for its pageantry, and that was successfully revived before adoring audiences a decade later can surely be forgivably referred to as a "landmark" in the popular sense of the term. Mr. Green mentions the memorably lovely ballad If Ever I Would Leave You—how many more highly regarded musicals have harbored even one song to match it?

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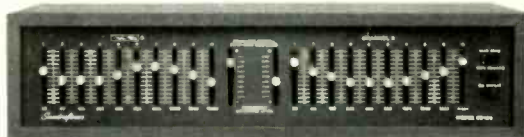
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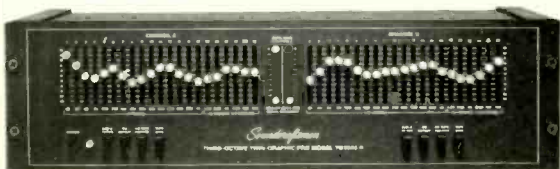
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CIRCLE NO. 58 ON READER SERVICE CARD

IF 75 WATTS ISN'T ENOUGH, TRY 45.

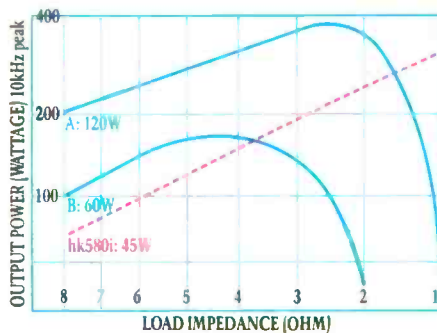


At first glance, you'd think a 75 watt receiver could outperform a 45 watt receiver easily. But FTC power ratings only tell you half the story—how a receiver will react under a continuous speaker impedance of 8 ohms.

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.

But only compare us to receivers with at least twice the power. After all, you do want to make it a fair comparison.

For the Harman Kardon dealer nearest you, call toll-free 1-800-528-6050, extension 870. Or write Harman Kardon, 240 Crossways Park West, Woodbury, N.Y. 11797. In Canada, Gould Marketing, Montreal H4T 1E5.

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

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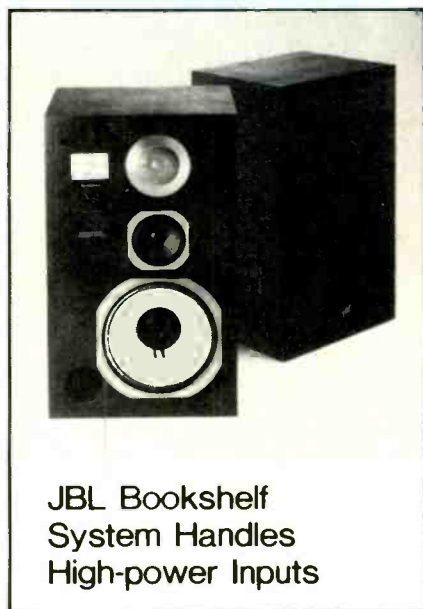
New Products latest audio equipment and accessories



**From Audio-Technica:
Moving Coils with
Replaceable Styli**

□ Audio-Technica's AT30HE (shown), AT31E, and AT35E moving-coil phono cartridges all feature user-replaceable styli. The AT30HE is a high-output model which can be used without a transformer or preamp. The AT31E has a tapered, low-mass alloy cantilever, and the AT35E's cantilever is made of beryllium. Frequency response of the AT30HE is 15 to 30,000 Hz, that of the AT31E and AT35E from 15 to 50,000 Hz. Output with a 5-cm/sec groove velocity is 2 millivolts for the AT30HE, 0.4 millivolt for the other models. Tracking-force range is 1.4 to 1.8 grams for the AT30HE, 1.2 to 1.8 grams for the AT31E and AT35E. Prices: AT30HE, \$135; AT31E, \$175; AT35E, \$250.

Circle 120 on reader service card



**JBL Bookshelf
System Handles
High-power Inputs**

□ The JBL L96 speaker is a three-way design said to offer the accuracy, dynamic range, and imaging characteristics of JBL's L112 and L150A models in a moderate-size bookshelf unit. The speaker uses the same tweeter and midrange drivers as the larger models plus a new 10-inch woofer. The 1-

inch tweeter is made of a phenolic material coated with aluminum. The woofer has a 3-inch copper voice coil and a "Symmetrical Field Geometry" magnet structure for reduced distortion. The enclosure is built to provide maximum strength and vibration resistance. Finish is American black-walnut veneer with a brown cloth grille.

Recommended amplifier power ranges from 10 to 250 watts per channel. Nominal system impedance is 8 ohms. Sensitivity is 89-dB sound-pressure level with a 1-watt input measured at 1 meter. Crossover frequencies are 1,100 and 3,700 Hz. Dimensions are 23½ x 14¼ x 11¾ inches; weight is 52 pounds. Price: \$395.

Circle 121 on reader service card



**Ambience-recovery
System from
Benchmark Acoustics**

□ Benchmark Acoustics' Model ARU "Ambience Access System" is designed to recover the ambience present in recordings through signal-processing techniques and time delay. Use of the system requires two additional stereo amplifiers and four additional speakers placed to the sides and rear of the listening positions. The original signal is fed to the front speakers without modification and to the two side speakers with a delay of 30 milliseconds. The rear speaker pair receives an uncorrelated signal consisting of the difference between the left and right front-channel signals, and this too is delayed by 30 milliseconds. There is no "recirculation" or reverberation.

Frequency responses for the side and rear channels are contoured to simulate concert-hall reflections. To compensate for the lack of difference information at low frequencies, a mono signal is mixed with the signals to the rear speakers for frequencies below 60 Hz. A remote-control unit, connected by cable, permits adjustment of the sound levels for the front, side, and rear speakers from up to 25 feet away. Frequency response of the side and rear channels extends from 10 to 11,000 Hz and is given as within 1 dB of concert-hall contours. Distortion is 0.3 per cent at 1,000 Hz with a 1-volt output. A-weighted noise in the side channels is less than -79 dB, and in the rear channels it is less than -78 dB. The main unit measures 13¼ x 8 x 2 inches; the remote-control unit is 5¾ x 7¾ x 2 inches. Both are fin-

ished in black anodized aluminum with maple end blocks. Price: \$829. Benchmark Acoustics, Inc., Dept. SR, 201 West 89th Street, New York, N.Y. 10024.

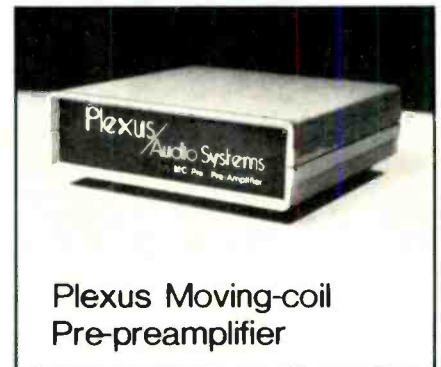
Circle 122 on reader service card



**Linear-tracking
Tone Arm from
Southern Engineering**

□ As with conventional pivoted tone arms, the linear-tracking SLA-1 from Southern Engineering Products moves under forces from the stylus assembly traversing the grooves; no other motors or drive systems are involved. The arm is said to fit most turntables and cartridges and to give zero tracking error. The cartridge is mounted on a ultralightweight (1.1-gram) carriage which in turn rides with ultra-low-friction bearings on two pure-quartz rods. The arm pivots vertically on sapphire V-bearings on a stainless-steel axle and horizontally on stainless-steel ball bearings. There are provisions for cueing and an end-of-record lift. Price: \$500 (cartridge not included). Southern Engineering Products, Dept. SR, 429 York Street, Canton, Mass. 02021.

Circle 123 on reader service card



**Plexus Moving-coil
Pre-preamplifier**

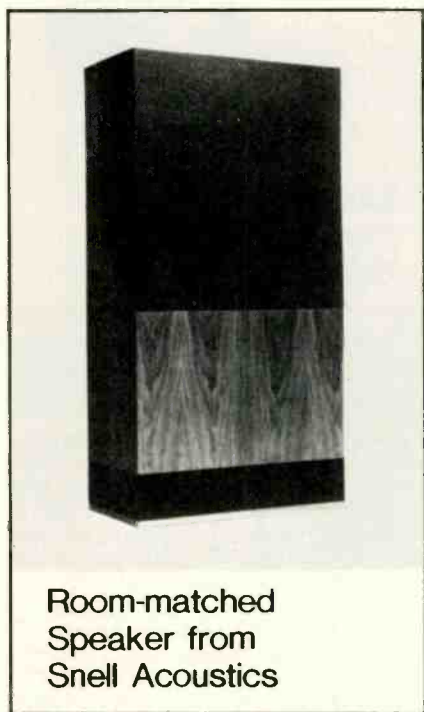
□ The Plexus Audio Systems JP-1 moving-coil pre-preamp provides four user-selectable standard input-impedance set-

(Continued overleaf)

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

tings—100, 50, 30, or 10 ohms—as well as one that can be adjusted for any desired impedance between 0 and 100 ohms. Gain of the device is 28.5 dB. Channel balance is ± 0.2 dB. Input-overload level is greater than 45 millivolts peak. Harmonic distortion at 1,000 Hz is less than 0.02 per cent. Hum and noise, referred to a 10-millivolt input, is less than -94 dB (A-weighted). Price: \$119.95. Plexus Audio Systems, Dept. SR, P.O. Box 174, Blawenburg, N.J. 08504.

Circle 124 on reader service card



Room-matched Speaker from Snell Acoustics

□ Snell Acoustics' Type A/II loudspeaker is a floor-standing system designed for an optimal acoustical match with any listening environment. A downward-firing woofer is loaded by the wall/floor intersection to provide flat low-frequency response down to 30 Hz. A large horizontally and vertically curved baffle contains the upper-frequency drivers. The shape of the baffle minimizes diffraction effects and is said to produce broad dispersion and flatter frequency response. A thirty-one-element crossover is individually matched to each system's drivers with a claimed unit-to-unit efficiency variation of less than ± 0.25 dB.

System frequency response on axis and up to 25 degrees off axis is ± 1.25 dB from 36 to 18,000 Hz (± 3 dB from 30 to 28,000 Hz). Nominal impedance is 4 ohms. Minimum amplifier power required is 80 watts per channel; maximum is 1,000 watts. The speakers come in matched pairs with a choice of walnut, oak, or rosewood veneers. Dimensions are $46\frac{1}{2} \times 23\frac{3}{4} \times 13$ inches; weight is 90 pounds per speaker. Price per

pair depends on the finish: walnut, \$2,160; oak, \$2,260; rosewood, \$2,600. Snell Acoustics, Inc., Dept. SR, 10 Prince Place, Newburyport, Mass. 01950.

Circle 125 on reader service card



AKG's Open-air Headphones

□ The transducers in AKG's K-130 headphones are derived from microphone technology and use "markrofol" diaphragms driven by moving coils. Using over-the-ear mounting and an open-air operating principle, the transducers, earcushions, and housing of the K-130 are said to be bioacoustically designed to work with the listener's ear to replicate "natural listening conditions." Headphone impedance is given as 200 ohms, frequency response as 20 to 20,000 Hz. Power-handling capacity is 200 milliwatts. Overall weight is 8 ounces. Price: \$49.

Circle 126 on reader service card

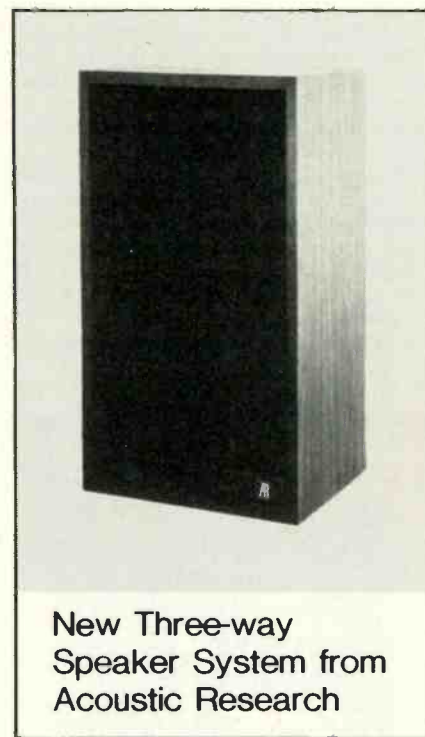


New Housing for Memorex Cassettes

□ Memorex's Metal IV, High Bias II (chrome-equivalent), and MRX I (ferric)

tape formulations now have improved cassette shells and mechanisms. The new shell features large rollers for improved tracking and quieter cassette operation, a one-piece polyolefin wafer to guide the tape for even winding without shedding debris the way some conventional coated wafers do, and an asymmetrical design that avoids parts along the tape path and stationary parts in contact with the tape surface. A "bathtub" shield surrounds the tape head on five sides to help eliminate stray magnetic fields. The cassettes are ultrasonically welded for superior dust resistance, higher strength, and better dimensional stability. Prices for C-90s: Metal IV, \$9.99; High Bias II, \$5.99; MRX I, \$4.99.

Circle 127 on reader service card



New Three-way Speaker System from Acoustic Research

□ The AR48s from Acoustic Research can be used either on the floor or on a bookshelf. It contains a 10-inch acoustic-suspension woofer, a 4-inch acoustic-suspension mid-range driver, and a 1-inch dome tweeter. Minimum amplifier power required is 15 watts per channel; maximum is 100 watts. Frequency response is 45 to 24,000 Hz, nominal impedance is 6 ohms (4.8 ohms minimum), and sensitivity is 87-dB sound-pressure level at 1 meter with a 1-watt input. Crossover frequencies are 400 and 2,500 Hz. Dimensions are $25 \times 14 \times 10\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The speaker is finished in a walnut-grain vinyl veneer and weighs 38 pounds. Price: \$200 each.

Circle 128 on reader service card

(Continued on page 16)

illegitimate child

Rip-off or spin-off, you've never heard sound like you'll hear from the headphones you can get for only \$5 pictured below. But there's a catch.



It was spawned by Sony. And, it's an entirely new technology. No more cheap paper speakers and heavy magnets. Sound is reproduced with such clarity and power that it will send shivers up and down your spine.

Sony's MDR-3 headphones sell for about \$50, and they've been worth it. Now you can have DAK's for only \$5. We challenge you to take them to your favorite Hi Fi store and compare them to Sony's. But there are 2 things you ought to know.

Thing One. If you can hear a difference, any difference at all, not only can you return them and get your money back, but we'll also give you a free gift for your trouble.

YOU'VE BEEN THERE BEFORE

You may already be familiar with the sound produced by these headphones. If you've ever sat in the very front row during a symphony concert, or right in the middle of a live jazz band, you know the spine tingling thrill of the full rich sound that envelops you.

If you sit even 10 rows back, you lose the feeling. You still listen to the music, but you can't touch or taste the sound.

It's only when you sit right up front that the sound is alive with electricity. It's the same sound you get with Sony's MDR-3s and DAK's \$5 stereophones.

ILLEGITIMATE CHILD

Not recognized by law as a lawful offspring.

The technology is new. Up until the Sony featherweight headphones were introduced, most headphones were simply uncomfortable miniature speaker systems that you wore on your ears.

The Sony breakthrough was made possible by changing the cheap paper speaker cones to mylar diaphragms, and by using the powerful rare earth magnet Samarium to move the diaphragms.

The mylar diaphragms are much more accurate than paper and have a drastically improved dynamic range. The result is a headphone that weighs less than 2 ounces and yet produces 20-20,000hz

sounds better than a theater sized loud speaker system.

Sony fathered the technology for these headphones and obviously has no connection to DAK, but the technological heritage will become vividly apparent when you compare the sound of these marvelous headphones side by side. DAK's come with a full one year limited warranty.

THE CATCH

Thing two. Frankly we are losing our shirts on the headphones, but we're taking a gamble because we want you to try our audio cassettes.

In order to get the \$50 value pair of featherweight headphones for only \$5, we want you to try 10 DAK High Energy, Normal Bias 90 minute cassettes for only \$2.19 each.

DAK's price is less than half the price of the competition, and each cassette comes with a deluxe index insert card, a box and a one year guarantee.

You're very valuable to us in the form of future business. DAK has excited over 80,000 of you valuable customers with special bonuses like the headphones. We find most of you keep buying once you try our cassettes and our prices; and that's a gamble worth taking.

NOT A BAD CATCH

DAK manufactures a cassette that you can really forget about. Great sound, and no problems.

We make mostly industrial cassettes for high speed duplication. We've developed a special jam proof cassette. It uses a spring tension liner within the cassette that guides the tape as it winds.

We coat these liners with a new chemical called Moly sulfide which drastically reduces friction within the cassette.

Hi Frequency Protection! As tape moves within the cassette friction causes the build up of static electricity. Static electricity is drastically reduced by the low friction of the Moly sulfide and so is its tendency to erase very high frequencies. A very important consider-

ation for often played tapes.

MAXELL 'TAPE' IS BETTER

Yes, honestly, if you own a \$1000 cassette deck like a Nakamichi, the frequency responses of Maxell UDXL or TDK SA are slightly superior and you just might be able to hear a difference.

DAK ML has a frequency response that is flat from 40-14,500hz ± 3 db. Virtually all cassette recorders priced under \$600 are flat ± 3 db from 40hz to about 12,500hz, so we have over 2000hz to spare, and you'll probably never notice the difference.

No apology. We feel that we have equaled or exceeded the mechanical reliability of virtually all cassettes and offer one of the best frequency responses in the industry.

TRY DAK ML90 CASSETTES RISK FREE

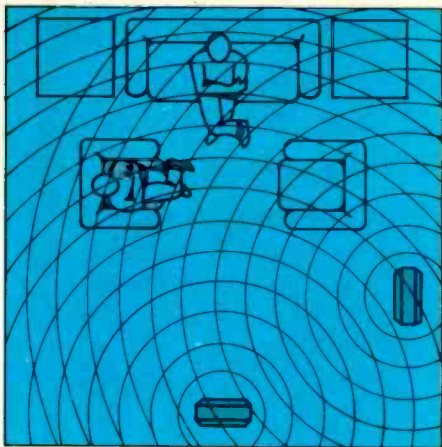
Try these high energy cassettes and the featherweight headphones in your own home for 30 days. If you aren't 100% satisfied for any reason, return only 9 of the 10 cassettes and the headphones for a courteous refund. The 10th cassette is a gift from DAK for your time.

To order your 10 DAK ML 90 minute high energy cassettes at \$2.19 each and get the headphones for only \$5 with your credit card, call the DAK toll free number below, or send your check for only \$21.90 for the tapes, plus \$5 for the headphones, and \$3 for postage and handling for each group. Order No 9268 (CA residents please add 6% sales tax).

Why not order an extra group of 10 DAK ML90 cassettes. We will add one free ML90 cassette to each additional group you buy and of course you can get a headphone for \$5 with each group.

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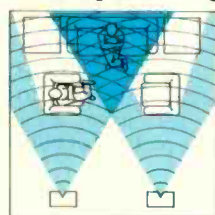
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BES Speakers

AT LAST A DIFFERENCE IN SOUND YOU CAN SEE.

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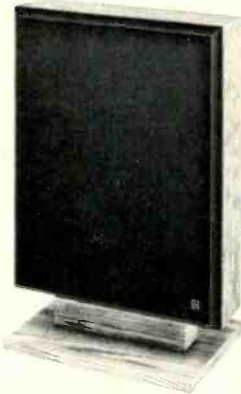


Other speakers

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. 7 ON READER SERVICE CARD

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories



"Littlite" for
Pinpoint Lighting

□ Custom Audio Electronics has introduced its "Littlite," a small gooseneck lamp that can provide just a bit of light where it may be needed in a hi-fi system or elsewhere. The Littlite uses 14-volt bulbs and is available with 6-, 12-, or 18-inch arm lengths and a variety of mounting devices for different applications. The accessory WXF power supply is a plug-in wall unit that can be kept away from hum-sensitive equipment and will run up to four Littlites. Prices for Littlites vary with arm length and hardware; the L-2 kit—consisting of a 12-inch lamp, bulb, base with dimmer (with off position), power supply, and mounting hardware—is \$34.95. Custom Audio Electronics, Inc., Dept. SR, 2828 Stommel Road, Ypsilanti, Mich. 48197.

Circle 129 on reader service card

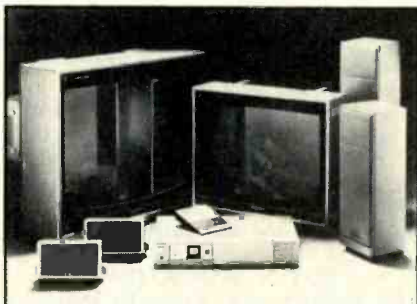
porate a "Dynamic Picture" system that automatically adjusts contrast levels for increased definition, "Dynamic Color" circuitry for whiter whites and natural flesh tones, a "Colorpure" filter for improved picture detail, and, in the 25-inch model, a velocity-modulation scanning system for increased picture sharpness and resolution. The monitors have separate red, green, and blue inputs and are capable of an eighty-character computer-graphics display. Horizontal resolution for the 19-inch KX-1901 is better than 340 lines; for the 25-inch KX-2501 it is better than 350 lines.

The VTX-1000R tuner is a frequency-synthesis model with a ten-key touch pad that can select any VHF, UHF, mid-band, or super-band cable TV channel. The tuner has special inputs and outputs for cable converters of encoded broadcasts and auxiliary audio and video inputs that can accept signals from VCRs, home computers, video games, videodiscs, and so on. Audio outputs are available for connection to a stereo system. The infrared remote control (RM-705) can change stations and select auxiliary video inputs. Two-way speakers are also available, as are various cables and a rack to hold the system. Prices: KX-2501 monitor, \$1,500; KX-1901 monitor, \$850; VTX-1000R tuner, \$520; RM-705 remote control, \$65; SU-153 rack, \$170.

Circle 130 on reader service card

Car-stereo Installation Booklet From Pioneer

□ For car owners wishing to install their own car-stereo systems, Pioneer has published a forty-four-page booklet titled "How to Install Car Stereo." Starting with information on the necessary tools, the booklet covers different types of installations, power sources, installing speakers, electrical-noise problems, etc. and includes a form for requesting special information or help from Pioneer. For a free copy write to Customer Service, Dept. SR, Pioneer Electronics of America, 1925 East Dominguez Street, Long Beach, Calif. 90810.



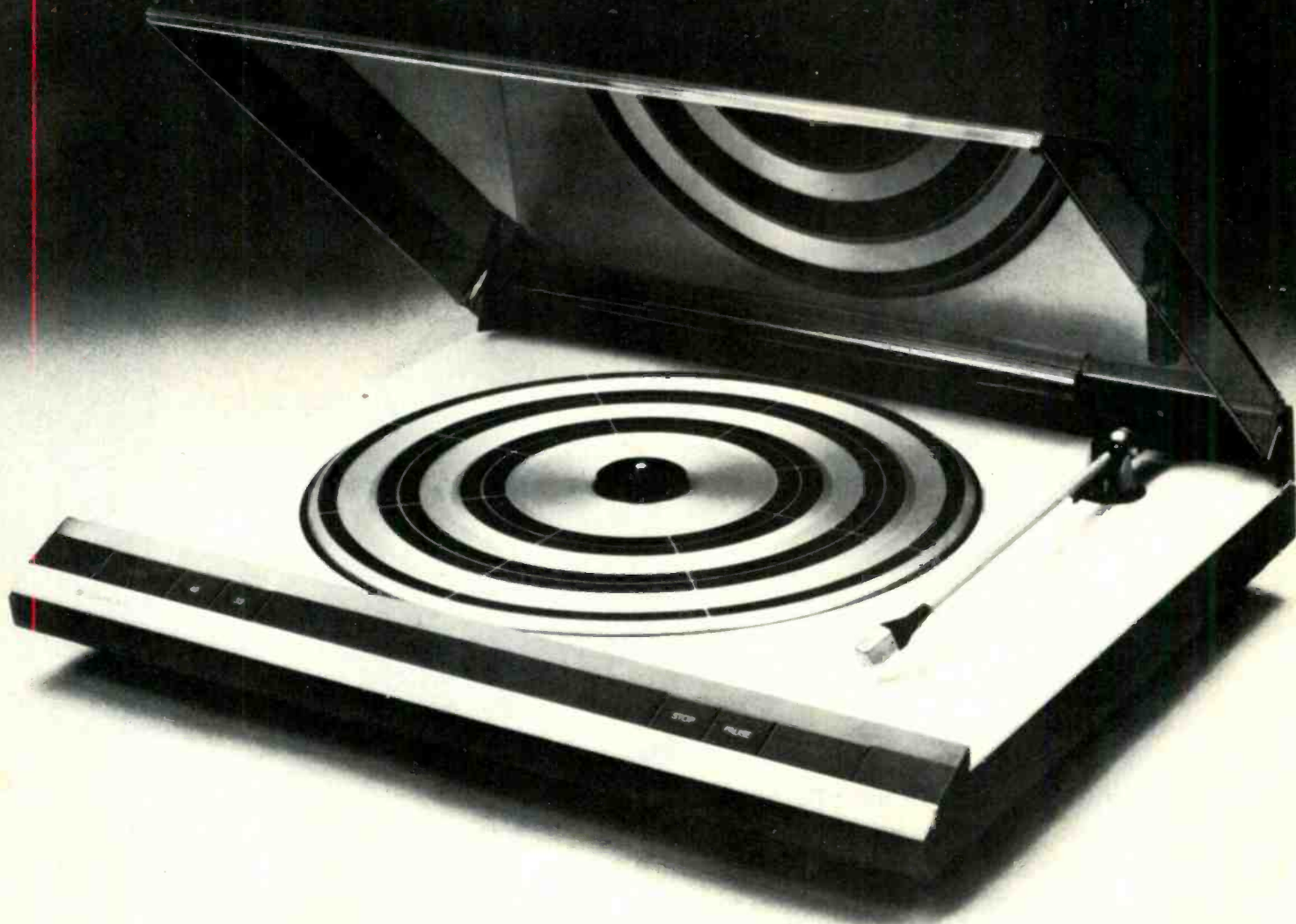
Component Video
From Sony

□ Sony's "Profeel" Trinitron component television system consists of separate monitor, tuner, speakers, and remote control. The system separates the various television functions (picture, tuning, audio) into individual components that are said to have vastly increased versatility and performance capabilities.

The 19- or 25-inch-screen monitors incor-

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.



ITS BEAUTY IS MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Meet the Beogram® 3404... an intelligent, thoughtful and very well spoken turntable.

Like all Bang & Olufsen turntables, the 3404 effectively combines superior sound reproduction with simplified—not complicated—operation. That's the real beauty of the 3404.

That's why the controls are outside of the dust cover where they're easily accessible.

And that's why just a light touch of the START button does everything. It determines if a record is on the platter, and if so, quickly sets the correct speed and lowers the stylus to the record.

Slam! Pound the shelf next to the 3404. Not a skip, not a jump... thanks to the rock-steady patented suspension system. Audible acoustic feedback disappears as a result.

A low inertia tonearm with a knife-edge bearing system eliminates audible distortion. The Bang & Olufsen MMC cartridge works in flawless harmony with the tonearm. The unique self-correcting electronic servo-drive is so precise that the need for a conventional strobe device is eliminated.

The Beogram 3404 even responds to remote control commands when used with the Beomaster 2400 receiver.

At Bang & Olufsen, good looks and brains run in the family. So discover the inner beauty of our full line of fine turntables at your local Bang & Olufsen dealer or write us for complete informative literature.

Bang & Olufsen

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Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007
Attention: Sandy Reinquist

CIRCLE NO. 5 ON READER SERVICE CARD



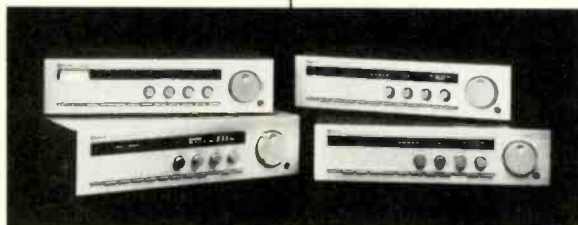
There is a truism in the marketplace that few of us ever question. It says, you get what you pay for. What it really implies is that more is better, but it will cost you, brother.

In the area of high fidelity stereo equipment, that point of view has been raised to dizzying new heights. And somewhere between the state-of-the-art technology and the state-of-shock prices a sense of value seems to be slipping away.

We're not playing that game at Sherwood.

Our design engineers employ proven advances in technology to produce superb sound.

Our marketing department helps keep them on planet earth. It's a philosophy that works. Sherwood equipment has been quietly snapped up by critical listeners for more than twenty-five years.



Changes are not welcome. Improvements are.

Early this year a panel of scrupulously honest reviewers examined fifteen mid-priced stereo receivers. The results were published in America's leading consumer research magazine. Sherwood was rated #1, ahead of names that are probably more familiar to you. We tell you that reluctantly, because a short time later we discontinued that superb model. And replaced it with the S-9600CP. It's better. It's more

Sherwood: For fuss

powerful, more flexible, and has more finesse. And thankfully the price has barely budged.

The new S-9600CP offers 60 watts RMS per channel with no more than 0.05% total harmonic distortion. Its clean power you can monitor with an eight segment logarithmic LED power output display for each channel.

The pre-amplifier has a discrete FET phono section for better cartridge performance, three position tape monitor and copy switching for two decks, and filters and treble squelch to weed out the undesirable little glitches that pop up in even the best of records.

The FM section is remarkable for its clarity and convenience: 1.6uV usable

Certified Performance Series



We certify our specs.

sensitivity, 75dB stereo signal-to-noise ratio. There is

Touch Lock Tuning that senses your touch and automatically fine tunes and locks in your station selection. And a digital display shows the frequencies in 0.1 MHz increments.

The S-9600CP is a statistician's dream. But more importantly, it's for music lovers. Whether your choice is Polonaises or the Pretenders.

We don't brag. We swear.

Most manufacturers spot check a few

receivers along the assembly line.

Sherwood is different. We test each and every one. Then we fine tune it and check it again. And again. Until with the final tweaking we know that every receiver not only meets our published specifications, but in most cases exceeds them. You can tell, because the key test results are recorded on a certificate and affixed to that unit's shipping carton. That's Certified Performance — our guarantee that what you see is what you get.

Now more than ever.

Careful production means limited production. But this year

we do offer a greater variety of Sherwood than we have in the past.

In addition to our receivers and separates, there are two superb tuners, three semi-automatic turntables, and three metal capable cassette decks. We also have three new speaker systems, from a two-way bookshelf to a three-way time compensated floor system.

Our apologies in advance.

Sherwood just isn't as easy to find as you might like. Well engineered stereo equipment that draws critical praise and remains reasonably priced doesn't hang around on shelves gathering dust.

For the moment, we don't have an acceptable solution. So hurry.



In Canada: The Pringle Group, Don Mills, Ont.

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CIRCLE NO. 21 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein

Technical Director Klein wonders if he can afford a twenty-four-track studio recorder.



Ellen M. Klein

Infra vs. Sub

Q. I notice that *STEREO REVIEW* uses the term "infrasonic" instead of "subsonic" to refer to the very low frequencies. Are you being fancy—or what?

NANCY LEFFLER
Paterson, N.J.

A. Not fancy, just correct and in accord with modern usage. You might also notice that we use "ultrasonic" instead of "supersonic" to describe events at the other end of the spectrum. We take a *supersonic* flight, but we get our teeth or jewelry cleaned by an *ultrasonic* device, and we have long had infrared and ultraviolet at the outer limits of the visible spectrum.

Tone-control Bypass

Q. When I have my receiver's tone controls at the "zero" or "flat" position and flick the tone-control-bypass switch in and out, I don't hear any difference. Why is that?

KEITH BORENSTEIN
Garden Grove, Calif.

A. The reason is mostly historical. In the early, primitive days of hi-fi—the Fifties, when I was doing service work—tone-control circuits were not very good. Bass boost was applied at too high a frequency, treble boost too low, and the "zero" or "flat" setting was usually ambiguous (sometimes it couldn't be found at all). In addition, the tone circuits all too often added noise and distortion. Tone controlling

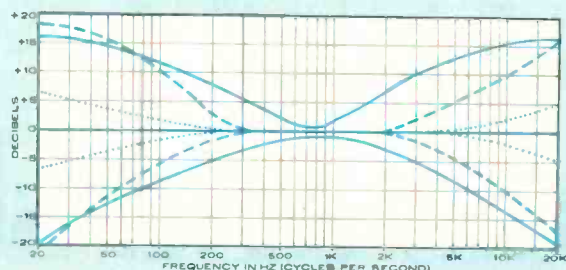
took a turn for the better, so to speak, in 1952 when P. J. Baxandall, a British designer, published details on the tone-control configuration that bears his name. It took several years before the technical and economic advantages of the Baxandall circuit led to its widespread adoption, but with some modifications it has been in practically universal use in somewhat modified form since the Sixties.

The economic virtue of the Baxandall circuit was that it used somewhat fewer parts than most configurations; as evidence of its popularity, several parts manufacturers made available encapsulated modules incorporating all its passive components. The major technical advantages were the availability of large amounts of control, the broad "flat" zero-center setting, and the better (and varying) placement of the boost/cut "turnover" frequencies.

Given the history of tone controlling, you can see why some designers might believe that signal purity is preserved by removing tone-control stages from the signal path. And, in fact, this view is exemplified by some preamplifiers designed without tone controls of any kind. In *my* view, such purists are ignoring several facts: tone controls have been essentially noise- and distortion-free for many years; astonishing amounts of equalization (tone controlling on the "professional" level) are applied during almost all stages of the recording process; and even in the no-tone-control super-audiophile preamps, the RIAA-equalized magnetic phono stage is manipulating the signal to the tune of almost +20 dB in the bass and -20 dB in the treble.

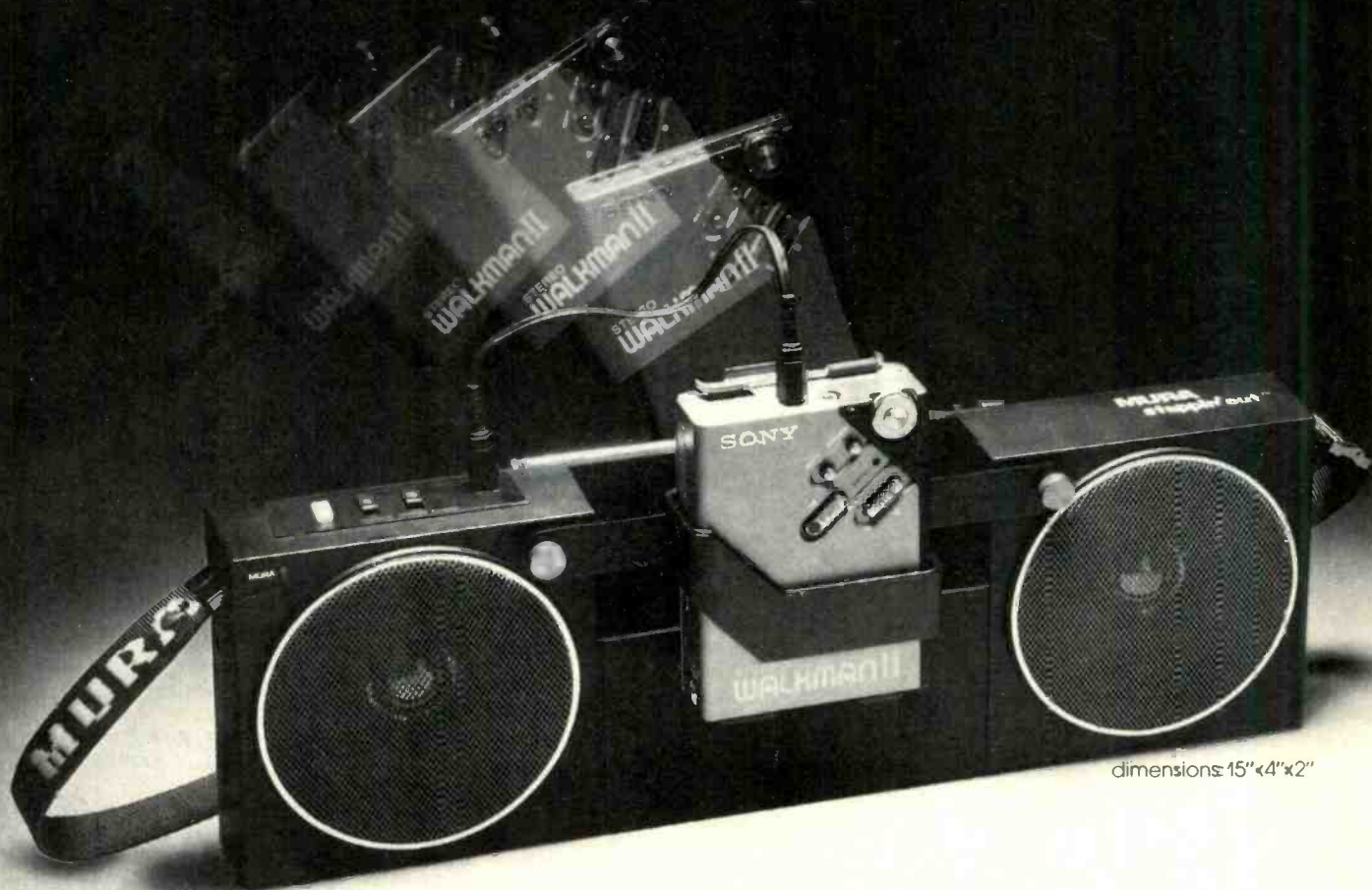
(Continued on page 22)

Frequency-response curves produced by a typical early Baxandall tone-control circuit. Note shifts in turnover frequencies as the bass and treble controls are varied from maximum boost to less extreme settings.



HOW 23 PEOPLE SHARE A WALKMAN.

WITH MURA'S STEPPIN' OUT.™



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.

Now Mura helps you make sound-for-one sound-for-all.

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.

MURA

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THERE'S A CROWD
IN YOUR
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As more FM stations crowd into your listening room, your music enjoyment may be spoiled by confusing combinations of signals caused by RF intermodulation.

The Crown FM TWO has a new cascode J-FET front-end that keeps every signal at its assigned frequency, for clear, undisturbed listening no matter how many FM stations may be on your antenna.

The FM TWO puts more of the latest tuner technology into an attractive, slim-line package. Automatic alignment, pulse-count digital detection, touch-button tuning and six-station memory will all enhance the sonic quality of your system.

THD lower than .05% for bright, bril-

liant reproduction S/N 75dB for clean output. Stereo separation 60dB @ 1 KHz for listening excitement.

But specs are only the beginning. The Crown FM TWO really "listens" better. You can experience that for yourself at your Crown dealer, or ask for a home trial (available at most dealers). Judge carefully how much more real each station sounds with the FM TWO.

Complete information on the FM TWO, on Crown and on other Crown components for home audio systems is in the *Crown Information Package*. Send us the coupon and \$5 and we'll send you the complete package of colorful, fact-filled brochures, reprints of reviews, technical articles by Crown people, price and dealer listings.

Understanding all this, I can nevertheless see two reasons for omitting tone controls or having the option of switching them out. (1) Even the smallest five-band equalizer provides more flexible tone adjustment than most bass and treble controls, so there's risk of redundancy if you intend to use an equalizer. (2) With some of the adjustable-turn-over tone controls you might sometimes want to check their exact audible contribution by switching them in and out. (Incidentally, purist audiophiles offended by the tone of this reply should control their feelings and feel free to bypass it.)

Record Equalization

Q I have been told by a recording engineer that none of the major recording studios adheres to the RIAA equalization curve. Does this herald a return to the Fifties when every record label had its own equalization and you never knew whether the NAB, NARTB, LP, AES, or ORTHO compensation was required?

GERALD WARREN
East Peoria, Ill.

A Although your information is, in a sense, correct, your fears are unjustified. The departure from RIAA equalization during the original recording or during transfer from the master tape to the disc-cutting lathe is not intended to establish some new playback equalization standard. Rather, records are equalized to produce, when played through an RIAA-equalized preamplifier, the frequency balance that the recording engineers want to come out of the speakers and/or to compensate in advance for various inadequacies in the disc-cutting process.

Hot, Ground, Common

Q I have seen the words "hot," "ground," and "common" used in connection with audio cables and speaker leads. Can you explain exactly what these terms signify?

ROBERT GRILIER
Toronto, Ont.

A In audio, the term "hot" usually refers to the conductor or terminal that puts out or carries a signal voltage. For example, the center conductor of a shielded audio cable is "hot," and the braided metallic shield surrounding it is the "grounded" conductor. "Ground" refers to the unit's chassis, which serves as the "common" return path for the signal. In phono cartridges two of the four terminal pins are "hot," perhaps marked L and R, and the other two pins are marked LG (Left Ground) and RG. The G terminals ultimately connect to the shielding in the phono leads.

Some recent amplifiers have injected a confusing element by having the "common" speaker terminal of one channel *not* grounded. In such a case, the normal amplifier-to-speaker hookup polarities are observed according to the amplifier's instructions, but caution must be used when connecting headphone adapters or speaker-switching boxes.



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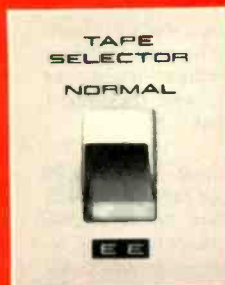
STEREO REVIEW

SR-12/81

THE ONLY THING MORE REVOLUTIONARY THAN AKAI'S NEW GX-77 IS THE TAPE IT PLAYS.



The new GX-77 is the world's first open-reel machine with a special setting for the new ultra-high-density "EE" tapes.



For the uninitiated, "EE" simply stands for extra efficiency. And the innovators at both Maxwell and TDK are committed to it.

For some very sound reasons. **Numbers don't lie.**

And what the numbers are saying is this. You don't have to sacrifice performance for economy. Not with a GX-77 and "EE" tape. Because at an efficient 3¼ ips, you'll still get the same frequency response, S/N ratio and dynamic range of conventional tape played at 7½ ips.

But see for yourself, below. The specs are spectacular at any speed.

There's sound engineering, too.

The GX-77 also features quick-reverse playback/record, 3 motors, 4 AKAI GX heads and



an optional dustcover that's the ultimate cover-up.

Plus a unique, motorized tape-gating mechanism that guarantees virtually perfect tape-to-head alignment. All at the touch of a button.

And all for a relatively modest \$775, suggested retail price.

Or, if you prefer the benefits of "EE" tape on a grander scale (including 10½" reels), consider the new AKAI GX-747.

Better yet, audition both at your AKAI dealer's soon. Or write: AKAI, P.O. Box 6010, Compton, CA 90224.

We'd hate to start the revolution without you.

AKAI GX-77 with:	Dynamic Range	Frequency Response	S/N Ratio
EE Tape (3¼ ips)	70 dB	25-25000 Hz	63 dB
Conventional Tape (7½ ips)	70 dB	25-25000 Hz	63 dB
EE Tape (7½ ips)	75 dB	25-33000 Hz	66 dB

AKAI

YOU NEVER HEARD IT SO GOOD

By Ivan Berger



ACCESSORIES FOR CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS is a good time to think about stereo accessories, because they're affordable enough to use as presents—for yourself, if no one else. There are fewer accessories to choose from for car-stereo systems than for home ones . . . so far. But there's still an interesting range of choice.

The most popular auto-sound accessories are equalizers and equalizer-booster combinations. I already have a five-band Alpine equalizer in my system, but while it makes a great tone control, it's nowhere near flexible enough to compensate fully for my car's acoustics. Therefore, I think I'd also like to have a more elaborate equalizer such as Zapco's nine-bander and Jensen's EQ400 "15-band variable-parameter" units, both of which have the added advantage of folding out of sight when not in use so my passengers won't fiddle with the settings.

More and more car-stereo systems are equipped to play back Dolby-B-encoded tapes, but no basic units I know of can play dbx-encoded tapes, which are unlistenable without decoding. If you have a dbx system at home but hesitate to record tapes with it that you won't be able to play back in your car, there are solutions: dbx, Rockford/Fosgate, and Gemini have all announced dbx decoders or equalizers with built-in dbx circuits. Decoder boxes for Dolby-C tapes may become available too, but none have been announced so far.

Time-delay systems can make your car stereo sound more spacious. Sound Concepts and Fujitsu Ten make independent delay devices for cars, Blaupunkt and Craig make equalizers with delay circuits built in, and Alpine has an accessory delay device that plugs into its equalizers. Another way to enhance car-stereo ambiance is with an Omnisonix Model 801a imaging device.

SPEAKERS are hardly "accessories," to be sure, but maybe now is the time to think about upgrading. Better speakers make a good gift for your car system, perhaps the one that will most improve the sound. (Just what represents a "better" speaker depends on what you have now, of course, and what kind you can use depends on the sizes, shapes, and positions of the speaker mounting spots or holes available in your car.)

More speakers can improve sound too. If you have speakers only in the front, put some in back; not only will you get more bass (the trunk makes a very good enclosure), but you'll be able to adjust front and rear sound levels so that both sets of passengers will be comfortable. If you have speakers only in the back, put some in front too, both to balance the sound levels and for a more natural sonic perspective.

You can also add limited-range speakers at the sonic extremes. For better very low bass, subwoofer systems are available from Altec, Sony, ADS, and Ohm. For better treble, add-on tweeters or midrange/tweeter modules are available from Pioneer, Philips, Mitsubishi, Jensen, Roadstar, Alpine, and Sound Barrier. These tweeters don't so much extend a system's overall response as ensure that the high frequencies have a clear shot at your ears—in many cars, the



only places you can cut holes for coaxial speakers direct the highs at your socks, your kneecaps, or the car's upholstery.

More speakers may mean you need more power (subwoofers certainly do), and even if you don't add speakers you may need more power anyway. I consider 6 to 10 watts per channel a reasonable minimum for in-car listening, but you can get amplifiers that deliver up to 150 watts per channel if you so wish. (Those figures are for wide-band power at less than 1 per cent total distortion, not the unidentified "watts" so prevalent on car-stereo spec sheets.)

"Boosters" aren't quite the same as amplifiers. Amps work from preamp-level signals, boosters from the speaker-level ones

put out by a low-power in-dash unit's built-in amplifier. Since amplifier output circuits tend to have more noise and distortion than preamplifier outputs, boosters start with a disadvantage: the signals they're amplifying aren't as clean. If your current system has only amplifier outputs but you plan to buy a better one some day, you're not necessarily stuck with using boosters. Several companies (Sony comes quickest to mind) make amplifiers with both types of input so you can use them either as boosters with an in-dash system or as amplifiers with a component system. And accessories such as Sony's XA-33 and Pioneer's AD/GM can turn most component amplifiers into interim boosters too.

You can also buy boosters for a car antenna if the FM signals being received are too weak for the tuner's sensitivity (or vice versa). Antenna boosters are made by Audiovox, Antennacraft, Radio Shack, Winegard, and others. Pioneer's ATR-75 connects into a car's antenna circuit just as FM boosters do, but it does just the opposite: it's used to attenuate overly strong signals where that's a problem. Extra-band converters connect up the same way. Audiovox has a very compact one for weather-band reception, and Kraco has one that picks up weather broadcasts and TV sound; both convert broadcasts on these bands to AM signals, so you can use them with any car radio except an FM-only model.

If your car antenna is broken, take off the wire-hanger "replacement shaft" you put in temporarily and do the job right. Replacing a non-powered antenna doesn't cost that much, and if your antenna gets broken often, it may be cheaper in the long run to put in a powered one that retracts when you turn the radio off (most stereos today have built-in switching for that). If you're using a combination CB/FM/AM antenna, it's worth replacing it with two separate ones. Such combo antennas can have less gain on the FM band than the average wire hanger (I measured both once), and they don't work too well for CB either.

THERE are lots of little things you can add too. For instance, filters to reduce ignition and other electrical noises are available from many well-known companies such as Pioneer (one of the larger selections), Alpine, Kraco, Sony, and Mitsubishi, as well as from such less-familiar names as Adapta-Sound and Rebel. To balance sound levels between front and rear speakers, there are faders (which work at the amplifier's output) and dual-amplifier balancers (which work at the amplifier inputs and hence require separate front and rear amps) from Clarion, Sony, Pioneer, Kenwood, Alpine, and many others. You should also get head cleaners and demagnetizers for your car's cassette system. Nortronics, Robins, and TDK are among those offering them, and you'll find other brands at your dealer.

If you want something more off-beat and expensive, Alpine's Model 3005 (\$350) is a 13-watt-per-channel amplifier with microphone and guitar inputs, an electronic rhythm generator, and a public-address switch. Sony's GB-40 booster amplifier (12 watts per channel) has a microphone input too. There are some accessories I'd like to see that no one makes yet. We'll leave those for some future column. □

WE PUT EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT ELECTRONICS ON TAPE.

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Sony is one of the pioneers in tape recording. It was Sony who introduced the first recording tape in Japan. Sony who introduced the first dual-coated ferrichrome tape. Sony who developed the exclusive SP mechanism, that transports the tape with incredible smoothness and precision, use after use.

No wonder more than one billion Sony tapes have been sold in over 140 countries. (Now, that's *real* proof of quality and dependability!)

If you want to hear history, listen to any Sony audio tape. Each one has a heritage of breakthrough technology. Each one will produce the finest sound you've ever heard. And in the future, Sony will still be creating breakthrough, state-of-the-art tapes. But that's only to be expected. After all, each and every one is named Sony.

SONY

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Don't just listen to the audio experts, listen to the speakers they prefer.



When people work with sound reproduction day in and day out, they quickly learn to appreciate the difference in the equipment they use.

That's why Stereo Review Magazine brought together a panel of professionals—sound technicians, recording engineers, audio practitioners — to evaluate 15 comparably-priced speaker systems and to determine which speakers sound best to them.

The results? Of all the speakers tested, the one preferred most was the Jensen System 200.

And it's not just the System 200 that has been receiving such rave reviews. It's the entire line of Jensen System Series Speakers.

"Rich, warm tonal balance" and "deep, stereo imaging" is how High Fidelity Magazine describes the System B.

Stereo/HiFi Equipment agrees "The System B has solid, honest bass, smooth transition between drivers, good dynamics, and an impressive lack of coloration. In all we'd have to say that Jensen has done an admirable job."

About the System 500, High Fidelity Magazine says its "handling of a wide variety of musical material won unanimous plaudits."

Read the magazines. Listen to the audio experts. Then listen to the Jensen System Series Speakers for yourself.

For additional information, complete test results and for your nearest Jensen Dealer write to Jensen Home Audio, 4136 North United Parkway, Schiller Park, Illinois, 60176. Or better yet, call 800-323-0707.

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TDK SUPER AVILYN NOW MAKES OPEN REEL GO TWICE AS FAR.



Remarkable Super Avilyn, the formulation found in TDK SA audio and video cassettes, has been applied to open reel. And the results are spectacular.

New TDK SA EE is especially developed for use with the new open reel decks with the Extra Efficiency EQ/bias setting.

On these decks, this brand new formulation lets you record and play back at half the normal speed. And keep all the full, rich sound. So you can get twice as much from open reel. You'd expect nothing less from TDK.



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CIRCLE NO. 64 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Battery Demagnetizers

Q. How good are the battery-powered cassette-head demagnetizers (such as those sold by TDK and others) in comparison with the normal hand-held models you plug into the a.c. wall outlet?

MARK JASKA
Waco, Texas

A. Very few companies (R. B. Annis is an exception) publish field-strength figures for their head demagnetizers, but all of those I have tested (admittedly informally) have seemed to do an adequate job of removing residual magnetism built up on playback heads. Part of the explanation for this is probably that since the permeability of head materials is very high, they're relatively easy to demagnetize compared, say, with a screwdriver or—more important—a steel capstan or tape guide. For those you do need a fairly hefty unit.

The significance of the unwanted magnetic field often measurable at the surface of a capstan is not easy to separate from another effect that tends to erase high frequencies from recorded tapes—namely, *magnetostriction*. When tapes are squeezed between a small-diameter capstan and a rubber pinch-roller, they tend to lose high frequencies (technically, short wavelengths), presumably because the slight elasticity of the tape coating allows it to be slightly compressed, momentarily bringing magnetic particles closer together than normally. This, in turn, causes a certain amount of self-erasure, especially at the highest frequencies.

Different tapes and tape decks seem to vary in their sensitivity to capstan-related high-frequency losses, and just how much is induced by pressure and how much by the hard-to-remove capstan magnetism is uncertain. I prefer to stay on the safe side by doing what I can to remove capstan (and head-guide) magnetism periodically with a powerful a.c.-operated degausser.

Bias and EQ Revisited

Q. I have recently been recording tapes designed for "chrome" bias and equalization on the "ferric" switch position

for playback on my car stereo. The extra treble seems necessary to pierce through road noise. While you have recently written that it is okay to play chrome-equivalent tapes using the wrong equalization, what about recording them with the wrong bias? Can the tapes, tape heads, or deck be harmed doing that?

ARNOLD MORRISON
Delano, Calif.

A. No. You are not dealing with the kind of situation in which you might possibly plug a 120-volt electric razor into a 220-volt outlet. No tape, whether ferric, chrome-equivalent, ferrichrome, or metal, is going to be harmed by either recording it or playing it back using the "wrong" switch position(s) on your deck. And no deck can be hurt by switching to any bias and equalization setting while using the "wrong" type of cassette.

The only possible harm is to the quality of the sound on the recording you make. When you record a chrome-type tape with ferric bias and equalization you ensure some distortion as well as treble overemphasis, and evidently you're willing to put up with the former to get enough of the latter. If the sound satisfies you, okay, but a better solution might be to add "hotter" tweeters or an equalizer to your car stereo system, which would boost the highs but allow you to record with the bias recommended for the tape you use. You might also try ferrichrome tape, which many car-stereo owners have found fine for auto applications.

How High the Fi?

Q. I understand that normal hearing extends to approximately 22,000 Hz; my speakers are rated to 30 kHz. Many recorders are considered excellent, however, even if their high-frequency response rolls off above 17,000 or 18,000 Hz. This is "high" fidelity?

JOSEPH CANNA
New York, N.Y.

A. Many young people (if they haven't had their ears overexposed to discs or air hammers) have the ability to detect
(Continued on page 30)

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ALPINE
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Computer Wedding.

The new Kenwood computerized AM/FM receiver and cassette deck.

We've married two of our most sophisticated audio components into one space-saving unit that makes beautiful music a lot easier to make. And even easier to afford.

The KRX-7 Computerized Cassette Receiver.

With all its computer controlled functions, the KRX-7 can do remarkable things with cassette tapes. Like automatically fast forward or rewind to any cut you tell it. Play the same cut over again. Or even the same side. As many times as you want. It even handles metal tape.

With its computerized receiver, the KRX-7 also has the intelligence to make AM/FM listening easier. It can automatically find the next station on the dial, and lock it in perfectly. It's even smart enough to locate your 10 favorite stations at the push of a button.

For great performance without a great deal of complications, see the new KRX-7 computerized cassette receiver at your Kenwood dealer. And ask about its matching Kenwood turntable, 3-way speakers and system rack. The easy way to put a stereo system together. And keep it all in the same great sounding family.



For the Kenwood dealer nearest you, write Kenwood, P.O. Box 6213, Carson, CA 90749.

CIRCLE 35 ON READER SERVICE CARD



frequencies up to or slightly above 20 kHz. Age takes a "normal" toll, however, particularly among men, and recent tests indicate that very few professional recording engineers hear much above 15,000 Hz. Nevertheless, orchestra conductors usually achieve their greatest results when they are in their fifties to seventies, when it is beyond belief that their hearing of the highest audio frequencies is as acute as it was when they were adolescent music students. Now, whose high-frequency hearing response do you want to establish as the standard for "normal"?

In fact, even the very rare cassette deck whose frequency response is flat as a ruler out to 20 kHz, when measured at the usual -20-dB level, will generally roll off sharply above about 10 kHz at a 0-dB level. It is true that some open-reel recorders have measurably useful response to 50,000 Hz, but high-frequency information in this range is not of much audible consequence unless you are playing to cats or bats.

I don't mean to deprecate a frequency response out to 20,000 Hz or so, but I suspect that you may be overestimating its audible importance somewhat. From 10,000 to 20,000 Hz is one musical octave, and it is inhabited entirely by overtones or "harmonics." The highest fundamental note on a standard eighty-eight-key grand piano (C_4) is 4,186 Hz. The overtones of this note go well above what anyone can hear, of course, and they *are* important up to the point that we can hear them, but on an equal-tempered musical scale (such as the piano uses), the range from 16,744 Hz (C_{10}) to 21,096 Hz (E_{10}) represents the harmonics of only three whole steps, harmonics that few "normal" people can hear in any case. That's why—at least in a general way—cassette decks can often "get away" with cheating just a little on the traditional 20- to 20,000-Hz audio spectrum.

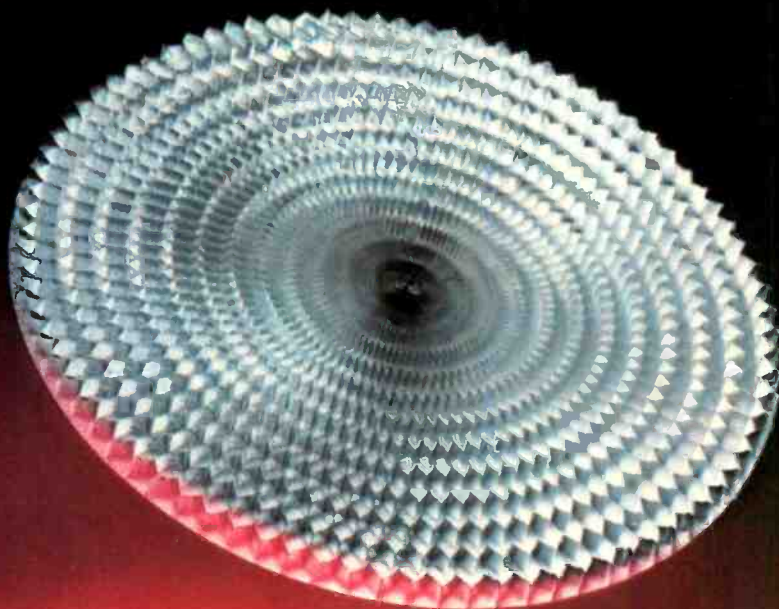
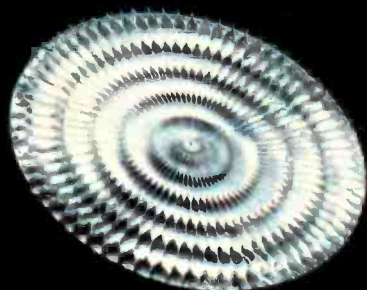
Oral Feedback

Q I recently dubbed a copy of Dvořák's *New World Symphony* from disc to tape and was so moved that at the conclusion I shouted "Bravo!" Lo and behold, faintly but audibly, I can now hear that "bravo!" on the tape! No microphone was connected to my system, so how could that possibly happen?

DAVID N. KLEIN
Danvers, Mass.

A Your record player is somehow "microphonic," so the vibrations generated by your voice got transmitted to the cartridge stylus and turned into a "signal" that was recorded. While it's possible that you have such a stentorian voice that you could earn a living calling cattle home across the Sands of Dee, the likelihood is that your turntable or record mat needs some enhancement of its acoustic-isolation properties. □

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



The anatomy of a breakthrough in sound reproduction. Technics Honeycomb Disc speaker system.

You're looking at the heart of a revolutionary new speaker system—the flat honeycomb drivers of Technics new Honeycomb Disc speakers. A new shape that takes sound beyond the range of traditional cone-shaped speakers to capture the full energy and dynamic range of today's new recording technologies. It's the essence of a true sonic breakthrough.

All conventional cone-shaped drivers have inherent distortion problems due to uneven sound dispersion in the cone cavity. But Technics new axially symmetric Honeycomb Disc drivers are flat. So "cavity effect" is automatically eliminated. And just as important, phase linearity occurs naturally in Honeycomb Disc speakers because the acoustic centers are

now perfectly aligned across the flat driver surfaces.

Technics also added a unique nodal drive system designed to vibrate the speakers in more accurate piston-like motion to reduce distortion even further. The result is an incredibly wide, flat frequency response, broad dynamic range, and amazingly low distortion.

To complete the system, Technics Honeycomb Disc tweeter with special front-mounted acoustic equalizer extends frequency response to a remarkable 35 kHz.

Technics offers a complete new line of Honeycomb Disc speakers, all enclosed in a rich rosewood-grain cabinet.

Now that you've seen what a sonic breakthrough looks like, listen to Technics—and hear what one sounds like.

Technics
The science of sound

CIRCLE NO. 65 ON READER SERVICE CARD



Once again, in the interest of science and for the betterment of mankind, the services of *Mus albus rodendus*, or the white mouse, have been called upon. This time to demonstrate the sheer brilliance of the new Sony STR-VX5 receiver.

When the little chap so much as touches the VX5's "Memory Scan," you'll automatically hear four seconds of up to eight of your favorite AM or FM stations, without having to tune them in separately.

If he chooses our exclusive "Auto Sweep," you'll hear a four-second sample of every available station on the dial. Find a station you like and another feather-touch control instantly locks onto that frequency. There's no drift. No fade. A computer insures crisp, clear, perfect sound.

But that's merely proof that the VX5 possesses the world's most advanced tuning section. Here's proof that it possesses the

HOW A COMMON LABORATORY SUBJECT PROVES THE CLEAR SUPERIORITY OF A SONY.

world's most advanced amplifier section.

Statistically, the VX5 puts out 55 watts per channel with no more than 0.007% total harmonic distortion.* Even your dog can't hear that.

Part of the reason is Sony's unique "Legato Linear" amplifier. This circuitry prevents "switching distortion" from ever intruding on your music. Another part is an incredibly advanced, Sony-developed "Pulse Power" supply. Its transformer alone is but 1/50 the size of conventional transformers and is as quiet as a church mouse.

Of course, there are other outstanding features, from a subsonic filter to moving coil-cartridge capability. And it's all at a price that won't require you to get a second mortgage to purchase it.

The Sony VX5. We used a mouse to prove its genius. But all you really need are a good pair of ears.

SONY. We are music.

CIRCLE NO. 56 ON READER SERVICE CARD

*FEATURES AND SPECIFICATIONS: 55 watts per channel, continuous power output, both channels driven into 8 Ohms from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, at no more than 0.007% THD/Quartz frequency synthesis/5-way tuning/Direct Comparator/IC logic function controls/Hi-Fi transistors. ©1981 Sony Corp. of America, 9 W. 57th St., N.Y., NY 10019. Sony is a registered trademark of the Sony Corp.

Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



• The Inconsistent Reviewer •

A COUPLE of readers' letters have brought me face to face with some seeming inconsistencies in test reports over a period of time. Although I was aware of the cases cited, and many more besides, I did not think them important enough to dwell upon. Apparently I was wrong, so I will now try to set the record straight.

One correspondent wonders why I do not always present the same type of data for similar products. He observes that for some amplifiers I give rise-time and slew-factor information, while for others only one is given and in some cases neither. Some FM-tuner tests include IHF IM (intermodulation-distortion) data; others do not. And some measurements are conspicuous by their absence from all my reports. These include TIM, SID, damping factor, power bandwidth, and perhaps a few others.

Let me say first that I do *many* more tests than are even mentioned, let alone reported on in detail, in these pages. For a variety of editorial reasons, not all the graphical data I supply can be published, which is why I give some of the test results verbally in the body of the report when graphs might be more informative (though probably not to the typical nontechnical reader, which is one good reason not to include them).

There are also a large number of other measurements, including those my correspondent mentions, which I do not perform at all for various reasons. Many, in my opinion, are *useless as indicators of product quality for consumer applications*. This includes, specifically, the so-called TIM and SID-related distortions. I have yet to *hear*

the effects of any of them, and their measurement is quite cumbersome and time consuming. I *could* make them, but why waste the time? One simple measurement that covers the same ground is the IHF slew-factor rating, since a reading of, say, 5 or more indicates a very low probability of any transient-intermodulation effects. Without exception, all the amplifiers I have tested in recent years have met that criterion, usually by a wide margin.

But why haven't I mentioned the slew factor in each report? One reason is that the report may have been done before I started making the comparatively new slew-factor tests. Published reports do not always appear in the chronological sequence of the products' arrival at my laboratory, and test procedures are constantly being modified and updated as new standards or new test instruments come into use. The second reason is that I might simply have forgotten to mention that bit of data—and I hasten to reassure my readers that I would not forget to mention *any* test result that was peculiar or out of the ordinary, if only because so few such surprises are encountered these days.

In the past I used to measure rise time. I no longer do so, since it is merely another way of specifying the high-frequency limit of the amplifier's response ($0.35/t = f$, where t is the rise time in microseconds and f is the upper limit, or -3 -dB point, of frequency response in megahertz). I do not measure slew *rate* any more either, because there is no standardized measurement method, it is often destructive to the ampli-

fier, and it tells us nothing that cannot be inferred from the measured slew factor.

Sometimes instrumentation limitations prevent us from making a certain measurement. An example is the IHF IM (intermodulation-distortion) measurement on an amplifier using equal-amplitude 19- and 20-kHz signals. Some amplifiers require more signal voltage than is available with our test setup. If I cannot drive the amplifier to rated output, the measurement cannot be made. Since it is considered a secondary disclosure in the IHF (now EIA) amplifier test standard, its omission does not impair the usefulness of the report, especially since the slew-factor measurement already helps establish the real high-frequency power capability of the amplifier.

A similar situation exists with regard to noise-level measurements. My meter, which is an excellent, stable, and highly accurate instrument, cannot read below 100 microvolts. That is not low enough to verify the ultimate noise output of a number of high-quality amplifiers, but—and this is important—it *is* adequate to confirm that the noise will be inaudible under any realistic conditions. Arguments to the contrary are usually based on a bizarre procedure—connecting the amplifier to a highly efficient speaker (horn-loaded) and placing one's ear against the speaker in a quiet room. To me that is ridiculous; I cannot justify the expenditure of perhaps \$1,000 or more for a super-sensitive noise meter merely to verify how much lower than *inaudible* the noise really is.

Yet, paradoxically, that is just what we

Tested This Month

AKG P25MD Phono Cartridge • BES SM300 Speaker System
Mura Red Set III Headphones • Sony TC-FX6C Cassette Deck
Hafler DH-500 Power Amplifier

do in the case of distortion measurements (after all, a distortion reading of 0.0003 per cent is totally meaningless as a *hearable* phenomenon, even if a number of amplifiers do reach that level). I do this measurement only because our test equipment is capable of making it and because I also dislike making a bare statement to the effect that an amplifier's distortion is "less than 1 per cent," even though that imprecision is much more realistic from the standpoint of actual audibility.

I have not reported on damping factor in years, nor will I in the future, for it is utterly meaningless. It is my opinion, quite without meaning to be facetious, that knowing the torque required to turn a control knob is far more important than knowing an amplifier's damping factor in respect to utility to the user.

Another correspondent did, however, catch me in a seeming inconsistency. Noting that I am very concerned with value per dollar in judging equipment (quite true), he finds it strange that I waxed enthusiastic over a small but very expensive loudspeaker (the KEF 103.2) and stated that I thought it was worth its substantial price compared

to other good speakers with which I was familiar. Since I have long felt that the minute differences in sound that often exist between competitive products are insignificant as a basis for product rating and do not merit much consideration, he questions my subjective judgment in this instance, feeling that I must have been impressed by the reputation of the manufacturer or some other factor not necessarily related to the sound of the speaker.

Well, perhaps he is right. None of us is completely consistent, and, moreover, I don't think it desirable to have a totally rigid framework of ideals and standards to guide one's thoughts and actions throughout life. Flexibility and change are inevitable and desirable. Yes, I was undoubtedly influenced by what I knew of KEF's philosophy of operation and from prior experience with their loudspeakers. Yes, the speakers sounded superb, but so do many others I review. Maybe I was unduly influenced by the speaker's foolproof protection system. I have damaged so many products in the course of twenty-five years or so of testing that anything that promises to be indestructible (and lives up to that promise) without

sacrifice of performance tends to rate very high with me. I don't know how many other far less expensive speakers might appeal to me, in a blind listening test, more than the KEF 103.2—there are probably a number of them. But not many, I think, could survive the clipped output of a 200- to 300-watt amplifier without damage or even distress, and I doubt that any of those would be as small or even as inexpensive as these (if it is reasonable to use the adjective "inexpensive" when referring to a tiny bookshelf speaker with a \$450 price tag!).

I do not own the speakers in question, and I don't know if I would spend the money for them over something less expensive but still capable of satisfying my sonic tastes. The key to the matter is that I was impressed, on both the objective and subjective levels, and I said so. The fact that I do not respond identically to many other worthy products is no reflection on them. Not everything is equal in this world, and I am merely trying to identify some of the inequalities in my evaluations. So, if I seem to be inconsistent occasionally, bear in mind that *most* of the time I'm not. Those of us who are not perfect can only continue to try! □

Equipment Test Reports

By Hirsch-Houck Laboratories

AKG P25MD Phono Cartridge



Photos by Roy Schneider

THE three phono cartridges making up the new AKG line, though similar in principle to their predecessors, boast numerous improvements, and the top-ranking P25MD we tested is an example of the Austrian manufacturer's current design philosophy. As before, the cartridges employ this company's version of the induced-magnet principle and feature the "TS-System" ("transverse suspension") knife-edge cantilever pivot. The moving armature, an extension to the rear of the cantilever, is clamped in a flexible damping disc which is in turn firmly bonded to a thin metal disc. This suspension is said to prevent the cantilever's effective pivot point from shifting along its length during large stylus excursions (AKG considers pivot shift to be a common weak-

ness of most conventional pivot systems).

Surrounding the tubular soft-iron armature are four nickel-iron-alloy pole pieces, each of them being the core of a coil winding. A cylindrical samarium-cobalt magnet encloses the pole pieces and armature, immersing them in a stationary, uniform magnetic field. As the armature moves in response to the stylus motion, it changes the distribution of the flux among the pole pieces, causing voltages to be induced in the fixed coils (which are connected in pairs to generate the outputs of the two channels).

The diamond stylus of the AKG P25MD is cut in what is termed the "Analog-6" shape. This is AKG's version of the extended-line-contact stylus shape used in one form or another in the top cartridges of

most manufacturers. It is designed to give accurate tracing of the very-high-frequency modulations (short wavelengths) in a record groove with low record wear. The effective tip mass is minimized by AKG's use of a diamond with a very short shank, nude-mounted to the aluminum-magnesium-silicon-alloy cantilever tube.

Finally, the body of the cartridge is molded of conductive plastic for low mass, damping of internal resonances, and prevention of static-charge accumulation on the cartridge during play. The effectiveness of the overall weight-reduction program involved in this cartridge design shows in its low mass of 3.5 grams, roughly half that of most popular magnetic cartridges.

(Continued on page 36)



How to go straight without losing your balance.

Pure engineering logic tells you a straight tonearm has lower effective mass than a curved one. But a straight arm isn't necessarily a better arm. Nor is a turntable better just because it has one.

When JVC engineers design a turntable like the L-A31 shown here, they design every part with care and imagination. That's why JVC's tonearm has the extra advantage of Tracing Hold.

Tracing Hold places the arm's pivot point above its center of gravity. Now, gravity is an ally. It maintains equilibrium constantly as the stylus tracks your record. This means better tracking and longer stylus life.

Our engineers didn't stop there. Recognizing that a straight arm needs protection against resonance, they fashioned a rigid, low-mass carbon fiber headshell that's resistant to vibration. So your stylus responds to signals in the groove and nothing else.

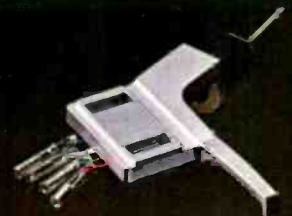
An arm like this needs a great turntable to go with it. And the L-A31 measures up: wow and flutter 0.03% WRMS. Rumble -75 dB DIN B or better. Plus a non-cogging DC direct-drive motor that applies torque in a smooth, linear transfer of power. There's also front-

panel controls, $\pm 6\%$ pitch control, strobe and tonearm lift-off and return.

So before you jump at just any straight-armed turntable, check out a JVC. Because there's more to turntable performance than the shape of the arm.



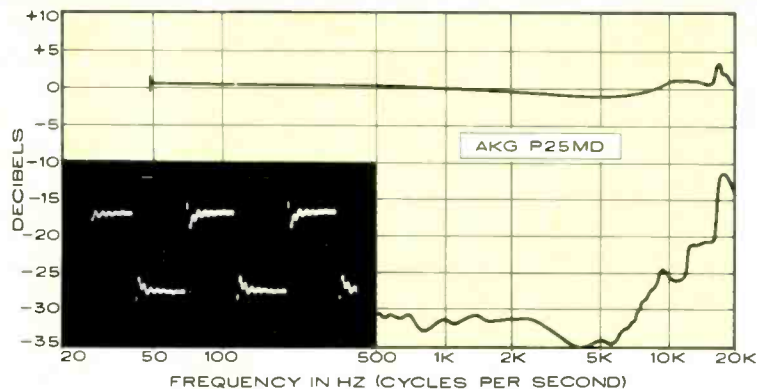
Front-panel controls for convenience.



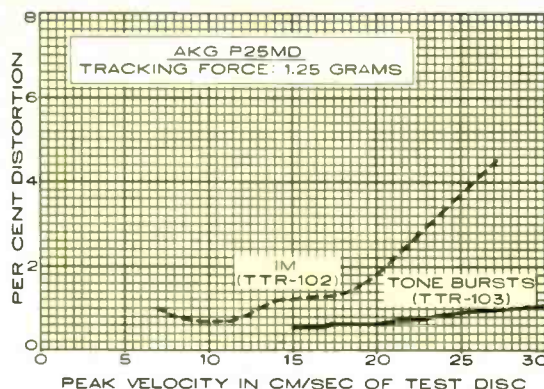
Low-mass, non-resonant headshell.

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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.

The detailed specifications of the AKG P25MD are listed, with slight differences, in the product brochure and in the instruction manual that accompanies the cartridge. The compliance is listed as 35×10^{-6} cm/dyne (vertical) in the former and as 24×10^{-6} cm/dyne (static) in the latter, although the two measurements are not directly comparable. The recommended range of tracking force is stated as 1 to 1.5 grams in the brochure and as 0.75 to 1.25 grams in the instructions, with respective optimum forces of 1.25 and 1 gram.

The AKG P25MD is furnished in an attractive black vinyl case (a miniature of those in which AKG microphones are packaged) together with an individually run frequency-response and crosstalk curve, a small screwdriver, a stylus-cleaning brush, mounting hardware, an additional weight for use in a tone arm that will not balance a 3.5-gram cartridge, damping material to be inserted between the cartridge and the headshell, and a unique installation fixture which is used to assist in mounting the cartridge in the headshell, connecting the wire leads to the cartridge pins, and setting the overhang, the vertical tracking angle, and the azimuth (the angle of the cartridge relative to the record surface when viewed from the front). To aid in these setup adjustments, a small magnifier is also included. After the cartridge has been mounted and positioned, the setup gauge serves as a balance that reads stylus force from 0.75 to 1.5 grams. Price: \$250.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** For testing we mounted the P25MD in a typical medium-mass tone arm (about 18 grams, not including the cartridge). The recommended cartridge load is 47,000 ohms and 470 picofarads (pF); we used about 400 pF for most of our measurements but also checked the frequency response with a 170-pF termination. There was little difference in the frequency response with the high- and low-capacitance values (only about 1-dB maximum change at any frequency). The re-

sponse was measured with CBS, JVC, and Denon test records and was within ± 1 dB from 20 to 16,000 Hz. There was a small but definite response peak of 2 to 3 dB at 17 kHz, evidently due to the resonance of the stylus-tip mass with the compliance of the vinyl record. On the square-wave response, this resonance showed up as a moderate overshoot followed by low-level ringing at 17 kHz.

The channel separation, which differed slightly with the various test records, was about 28 dB in the midrange, 20 dB at 10 kHz, and 15 dB at 20 kHz. The cartridge output was about 2.6 millivolts per channel at a 3.54-cm/sec velocity, with a channel unbalance of about 1.5 dB. The vertical stylus angle was 24 degrees. The low-frequency arm/cartridge resonance was at 8 Hz, near the low end of the acceptable range for tracking warped records (a high-compliance cartridge like the P25MD is normally at its best in a low-mass arm, but the low cartridge mass helps to compensate for an arm mass that is higher than optimum).

We used a 1.25-gram tracking force for all tests and listening. Intermodulation distortion, measured with the Shure TTR-102 test record, was exceptionally low, under 0.6 per cent at typical recorded velocities, which probably represents the residual distortion in the record. The high-frequency tracking of the 10.8-kHz tone bursts on the Shure TTR-103 test record was also very good, with no evidence of mistracking even at the record's 30-cm/sec maximum level.

With some of our other high-level test records, we found that the low frequencies (32 Hz) could be tracked at a 0.9-gram force, and the 30-cm/sec, 1,000-Hz tones on another disc were playable with only 0.75 gram. The German Hi-Fi Institute #2 record (which has 300-Hz tones at a number of levels) could be played at its 60-micrometer amplitude with a 0.75-gram force and at the 90-micrometer level with 1.25 grams (AKG rates the cartridge at 80 micrometers in this test).

Subjective tracking tests were made with

Shure's "Audio Obstacle Course" records. The AKG P25MD joined the very select (and limited) group of cartridges we have found that could track everything on both the ERA III and ERA IV versions of this difficult record. Although we heard a slight "hardness" at the highest level of the orchestral bells on ERA IV, indicating that the cartridge was operating at its limits, there was none of the unmistakable shattering sound that signifies mistracking.

● **Comment.** When we listened to the AKG P25MD briefly before beginning our tests, we felt that it was a very "easy"-sounding cartridge, with no strain or obvious coloration. The tests confirmed this preliminary judgment, in general, since the low measured distortion and outstanding tracking ability of the cartridge were consistent with what we had heard.

Once we were aware of the small high-frequency response peak, we listened with special attention to that part of the frequency range. This is not necessarily a good way to evaluate a cartridge (or most other components), since knowledge of what the test instruments have shown can make it all too easy to "hear" an effect whether or not it is really audible. At any rate, we can say that although the peak was never audible as a coloration, any departure of the cartridge's sound from total neutrality was in the direction of brightness. Under some conditions (with over-bright records and speakers) it might show a tendency to "sizzle," but with the flat, relatively uncolored speakers we prefer to use it sounded excellent indeed.

In this case, we must say that our initial impression was correct, that the AKG P25MD ranks with the best cartridges we have used (and there are quite a few that we have found to be absolutely first-rate). We used the plastic AKG setup gauge to install the cartridge and make the necessary adjustments on it. By and large, it did help in that never-enjoyable process, although we often found the indications difficult to see

(Continued on page 40)

Come to Marlboro Country.



Marlboro Red or Longhorn 100's—
you get a lot to like.



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

16 mg "tar," 1.1 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Mar '81

THE HIGH FIDELITY SYSTEM MOST QUALIFIED



Introducing Pioneer Syscom: A totally new kind of high fidelity component system.

If you're in the market for true high fidelity sound, a pre-matched system is a good way to get it. Because it offers the sound quality of separate components and saves you the trouble of having to buy them piece by piece.

But not every pre-matched system is a good one

to buy. Many are made by companies known for only one thing. Like speakers. Or turntables.

Syscom, on the other hand, is the high fidelity system built by the people who are famous for every thing that goes into one. Pioneer. In fact, today Pioneer is the leading maker of virtually every kind of high fidelity component.

What's more, Syscom's components aren't merely

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matched. They're built for each other by Pioneer audio engineers. This maximizes the system's performance and results in sound quality often not even found in systems costing twice as much.

There's a wide variety of Pioneer Syscom groups available in vertical and horizontal arrangements. One of them is perfectly suited to the way you live.

So why would you even consider buying a high

fidelity system from a manufacturer who knows how to build *some* of the components, now that you can buy one from the people who've perfected them all. Pioneer.

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We bring it back alive.

equalizer, headphone, microphone optional. ©1981 U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corp., 85 Oxford Drive, Moorachie, N.J. 07074.

CIRCLE NO. 48 ON READER SERVICE CARD

test reports

even with the aid of the magnifying lens supplied. We found the tracking-force indication slightly in error: it read 1 gram at an actual force of 1.25 grams. This error is not serious, especially since it favors a higher force, which is the "safe" direction for any

tracking-force error. A typical user, lacking the separate cartridge-installation aids we normally use, would probably find AKG's gauge extremely useful.

The various differences between previous AKG cartridges and the AKG P25MD are

all in the latter's favor, and the total result is a very fine cartridge for today's hi-fi world, complementing the current state of the art in other components.

Circle 140 on reader service card



BES SM300
Speaker
System

BERTAGNI ELECTROACOUSTIC SYSTEMS (BES) has been manufacturing speaker systems for some years under that name, although a recent reorganization of the company, together with extensive product-design modifications, makes it reasonable to consider them as a new arrival on the hi-fi scene. BES speakers are based on the designs of an Argentine, Dr. José Bertagni, and company headquarters are in Costa Mesa, California, where the speakers are manufactured. They are quite different in concept and appearance from other speakers offered for home hi-fi system use, since they do not employ a group of cone or dome radiators enclosed in a box.

The BES speakers (currently there are

four models in different size and price classes) are dipole radiators which emit sound equally to the front and to the rear. The "drivers" are large, nearly flat plastic panels clamped at their edges—unlike the usual speaker cone, which has a flexible edge suspension.

The voice-coil and magnet structure of the BES drivers are fairly conventional in appearance, with ferrite magnets surrounding a moving voice coil. The magnet structures also have five holes passing through them, and these provide forced-air cooling as the diaphragm moves. The voice coil is coupled to the vibrating diaphragm through a ring of compliant silicone material which functions as a low-pass filter. Since the dia-

phragms are not symmetrical, they are not driven at their "centers," and apparently the specific location at which the voice coil couples to the diaphragm was determined empirically during the design of the speaker system.

The entire structure—diaphragm and drivers—is supported by a massive cast-aluminum frame. The edges of the diaphragm are specially formed and treated to terminate transverse vibration modes and absorb their energy, so the radiation pattern (according to Bertagni) is more nearly omnidirectional than would otherwise be the case.

The Bertagni literature indicates that in
(Continued on page 42)

INTRODUCING LORAN.[™] THE MOST ADVANCED AND REVOLUTIONARY AUDIO CASSETTE IN THE WORLD.



Neither the heat of the desert, nor the cold of Alaska, nor the oven temperature of a closed car in the sun, nor falling on the floor can stop Loran from delivering incredibly clear, accurate and beautiful sound.

The Loran cassette has the only shell in the world made of Lexan[®] resin, the incredibly tough space age material used for bullet proof vests and bank teller windows. Unlike other cassettes it can stand up to extremes of heat and cold. It will not warp at 250° Fahrenheit or shatter at 60° below zero. That means you can leave Loran on an exposed dashboard all day long and still have trouble free performance.

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.

Loran's Metal, Ferric Oxide and Ferrichrome tapes also deliver improved and outstanding performance associated with these formulations.

Loran... the most advanced audio cassette in the world. Destined to become a leader. Share the excitement. Listen to Loran.

LORAN[™]

The Great American Sound CIRCLE NO. 37 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Loran[™] is manufactured exclusively by Loranger Entertainment. Lexan[®] is a registered trademark of the General Electric Company.

Loran[™] Audio Cassettes have been selected by the Consumer Electronic Show Design and Engineering Exhibition as "one of the most innovative consumer electronics products of 1981."

test reports

some of their models more than one voice coil drives different parts of a single diaphragm, making it effectively a multiway radiator. The unit we tested, the Model SM300, heads the company's line and appears to be a true multiway system with physically separate diaphragms as well as driving elements. It is a large, flat panel structure standing 53½ inches high, 22 inches wide, and 6¾ inches deep. The removable wooden base is 19¾ inches wide and 13 inches deep, and it provides a very stable support for the nearly 70-pound speaker system.

Both the front and rear of the SM300 are covered by an acoustically transparent brown cloth (the grilles are nonremovable), and the sides and top are framed in wood to match the base finish. The grilles are visually divided about two-thirds of the way up, defining the bass-radiator area at the bottom and the middle/high-frequency area at the top. The only visual difference between the front and rear of the speaker is the presence of the input binding posts, mid- and high-frequency level controls (continuously variable), and overload circuit-breaker reset buttons on the rear of the base—a distinct aesthetic advantage.

According to the specifications furnished for the SM300, it is a four-way system with crossover frequencies of 500, 5,000, and 10,000 Hz. There are three voice-coil-type drivers, plus a fourth small piezoelectric driver coupled to the upper left corner of the bass diaphragm. The SM300 is suitable for bi-amplified operation, with 500 Hz as the recommended crossover frequency, and separate binding posts in the rear provide access to the low-frequency driver and the combined group of mid- and high-frequency drivers. The SM300 can handle considerable power, with a rating of 100 watts for 8 hours (we doubt that any human listener could endure exposure to the acoustic output of that test!). It is recommended for use with amplifiers rated between 15 and 150 watts per channel. Price of the BES SM300 is \$640 each.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Like all dipolar radiators, the BES SM300 should be installed at least several feet from any room wall. Since it radiates in all directions, it can be used as part of a room divider, serving listeners on both sides. We placed the two speakers in the recommended positions in our listening room about 9 feet apart.

The reverberant-field response curve, which corresponds roughly to the total acoustic-output curve of the speaker, was spliced to a close-miked woofer-response curve taken with the microphone close to the grille and at its approximate center. The inevitable reflections from the wall behind the speaker and from other surfaces yielded some midrange variations, but the output was still within ± 3.5 dB from 100 to 10,000 Hz. It rose somewhat at higher frequencies with exceptional smoothness.

The woofer's maximum output was between 30 and 50 Hz, falling off rapidly at lower frequencies and gradually from 50 to more than 500 Hz, where the output was about 10 dB below the maximum level. When we spliced this curve to the reverberant curve, the resulting composite frequency response was within ± 6.5 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with an elevated output below 90 Hz and above 10,000 Hz compared to the broad and relatively uniform midrange level.

The midrange-level control on the speaker affected the entire band above 300 Hz, with an overall adjustment range of about +4, -6 dB. The high-frequency control influenced only the output above about 11,000 Hz (it apparently controls only the "super tweeter") with a control range of +9, -2 dB. The BES claims for omnidirectionality, at least in the horizontal plane, were completely confirmed by our tests. There was only a very slight difference between the high-frequency response from the right and left speakers, with the latter being measured on axis and the former about 30 degrees off the axis. Subjectively, we noticed that walking around the speakers caused no significant change of sound qual-

ity or apparent frequency response. Although the highs were stronger when one bent over to position an ear on the axis of one of the tweeters, the "beaming" of the speaker system as a whole was far less than we have heard from most.

The quasi-anechoic frequency response of the BES SM300 was measured at a 1-meter distance and on the level of the grille division between the lower and upper sections using our INDAC FFT analysis system (see August "Technical Talk"). A speaker with such a multiplicity of drivers and unorthodox diaphragm structures could be expected to show a ragged response in such a measurement, and it did. There was a deep null at 12,500 Hz, which was a function of the microphone position. After a rather flat response from about 200 to 2,000 Hz, there were sizable peaks at about 3,000, 6,000, 10,000, and 16,000 Hz. The output fell off above that frequency owing at least in part to the test system's 17,000-Hz upper limit.

With 1 watt of pink-noise excitation, either in the octave band centered at 1,000 Hz or over the full range of 20 to 20,000 Hz, the output's sound-pressure level at 1 meter was 87 dB. Although 6 dB lower than rated, this figure is perfectly satisfactory, corresponding to the more efficient acoustic suspension systems or the least efficient vented systems that we have tested. The impedance of the SM300 was among the most uniform we have measured, averaging about 10 ohms from 25 to 20,000 Hz and a minimum of 6 ohms at 20 Hz. The bass resonance was barely visible in the impedance curve as a peak of 16 ohms at 33 Hz.

The bass distortion was very low, probably due to the very large radiating surface of the woofer and the correspondingly small physical excursions required of it. At a 1-watt input the distortion varied almost randomly between 1 and 2 per cent from 100 to 20 Hz. At 10 watts input it was not very different down to 40 Hz (between 1.2 and 3.2 per cent) and increased to 4.5 per cent at 25 Hz and 9 per cent at 20 Hz.

● **Comment.** The measurements of the BES SM300 show it to be a "different" and rather interesting system compared with most others we have used and heard. First of all, these are good speakers, as smooth, pleasant, and balanced as any we can think of. We had viewed Bertagni's claims for omnidirectionality with skepticism, since dipoles are inherently very directional (to their sides). However, we were soon convinced that these speakers did just what was claimed for them. The sound had the open, airy quality that we have always associated with a good "omni" system, and there was a near-total lack of localization of the sound source even when one was quite close to one of the speaker panels. They sounded just as good off to the sides as to the front or rear. The warmth and power of the deep bass was a pleasure to experience because it was completely unmarred by any heaviness or muddiness. The greatest bass output of this speaker is in a range rarely excited by music (and not at all by voices), so that coloration on vocal material was negligible. On the other hand, deep-bass program material was reproduced with telling effect.

(Continued on page 44)



... And then one day, just fantasizing,
I aimed it at her and pressed 'Audio Mute'...."

YOU ALREADY OWN HALF OF THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED HOME ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM.

You're already halfway to Magnavision® right now. Because all you have to do is plug it into your present color TV set.

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You can put as many different kinds of programs on your television screen with Magnavision as you can imagine. Choose from over 120 videodisc albums now. They range from classic movies to new releases. From sports instruction to art gallery tours. From cartoons to concerts. And new programs are continually being developed exclusively for videodiscs.



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The brightest ideas in the world are here today.

test reports

In addition to their powerful bass performance, the SM300s have a crisp, well-defined top end. It is perhaps misleading to call attention to the speaker performance in specific regions of the audio-frequency band, for the most appealing quality of these speakers is their balance: it is possible to listen to them for hours on end and hardly realize that one is hearing a speaker at all. Although we experimented with the

midrange and high-frequency level adjustments on the speaker, we preferred the center or "flat" settings.

The size and general qualities of the BES SM300 would seem to favor its use in a larger-than-normal listening room. Nevertheless, we never felt overpowered by the system—acoustically, that is; the units are not easy to ignore visually. If one can physically accommodate a pair of large panel ra-

diators in one's listening room, we suspect that the sound of these speakers would be much appreciated. We can think of few speakers we have tested over the years that were as easy to live with as the BES SM300, and we felt genuine regret when the time came for them to be returned to the manufacturer.

Circle 141 on reader service card

Mura Red Set III Headphones



SINCE its introduction a little over a year ago, the Sony Walkman has been joined by a number of personal portable cassette players, FM radios, or combinations of the two from most other major Japanese manufacturers. All of them have in common the use of very lightweight, comfortable headphones that are sensitive enough to give an adequate listening level with the milliwatts of drive power available from the associated amplifiers.

The wearing comfort and the pleasing sound of these featherweight phones make them equally attractive for home listening, where they can be driven by standard hi-fi system components. The Mura Red Set III stereophones are similar in concept to the headphones furnished with most personal cassette players, but they are sold separate-

ly as an accessory item. They are rated to deliver a 98-dB sound-pressure level (SPL) at 1,000 Hz with only 1 milliwatt of driving power and will match the outputs of amplifiers rated for load impedances between 4 and 25 ohms.

The Mura Red Set III phones weigh only 1½ ounces (less the lightweight parallel-conductor rubber-covered cord, which is 6½ feet long and fitted with a molded full-size stereophone plug). The headband is a narrow plastic strip with sliding aluminum side pieces that hold the ear pieces and can be adjusted to suit the wearer's head size.

The tiny ear pieces, which are only 1¼ inches in diameter and 5/8 inch thick (including a 3/16-inch-thick foam-plastic cushion) contain samarium-cobalt magnets and low-mass Mylar diaphragms. Resting light-

ly on the ear, the Mura phones do not isolate the wearer from surrounding sounds, and their light weight makes it possible to wear them for long periods without discomfort. The price of the Mura Red Set III is \$29.95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The Mura Red Set III was tested on a standard headphone coupler with a sine-wave signal sweeping from 20 to 20,000 Hz in 15 seconds. A half-octave "warble" was applied to smooth out some of the sharp high-frequency irregularities caused by interaction of the headphone and the coupler. The drive level was 0.3 volt.

Like that of almost all supra-aural (non-sealing) phones, the bass response of the

(Continued on page 46)

Break tradition.

Drink Ronrico Rum instead.

Face it, you already know what your usual rum, gin and vodka have to offer.

Just try one drink mixed with Ronrico, and you'll realize what you've been missing.

Ronrico is superbly smooth and light. With a surprisingly distinctive flavor that's bound to win you over.

Isn't it time you broke tradition with Ronrico Rum?

RONRICO RUM & ORANGE JUICE

2 ozs of Ronrico Rum in a highball glass; ice cubes; fill with orange juice, add a slice of orange.



RONRICO RUM

test reports

Red Set III fell at a rate of about 6 dB per octave below 200 Hz. Throughout the mid-range the output was very smooth, varying only ± 2 dB from 130 to 3,500 Hz (excellent performance for a headphone). At higher frequencies, the usual irregularities appeared in the response curve, but to a smaller degree than we have measured on many higher-price phones. The output remained strong up to and beyond the 15,000-Hz calibration limit of the microphone we used for this measurement.

The impedance of the Mura phones was considerably lower than most (typical stereo phones have an impedance between 100 and 600 ohms). The Red Set III had an almost constant impedance of 18 ohms, with a minor rise to 25 ohms at 250 Hz. They were even more sensitive than claimed, delivering a SPL of 110 dB at 1,000 Hz when driven by 0.3 volt (corresponding to 5 milliwatts input). A 1-milliwatt input would have produced a 103-dB SPL, well above the 98-dB nominal rating.

The harmonic distortion in the acoustic output of the phones was low in the middle frequency range, measuring only 0.32 per cent at 1,000 Hz with a 0.3-volt drive. It increased rapidly at higher inputs, to 6.3 per cent at 1 volt, but the resulting SPL would be very uncomfortable for most people. At low frequencies the distortion

was much higher, in the range of 4 to 10 per cent for inputs up to 0.3 volt at frequencies of 50 and 100 Hz.

● **Comment.** As might be expected, the Mura Red Set III phones were exceptionally comfortable to wear. Only the trailing lightweight cord reminded us of their presence. There was no perceptible attenuation of the ambient sounds reaching our ears; it was simply present in the background of the program we were listening to (and normally completely masked by it). This sensation will be familiar to anyone who has ever used a personal portable cassette or FM player.

Our listening was done with a variety of regular home receivers and amplifiers as program sources, including at least one preamplifier having a separate headphone output stage. All were able to develop more sound volume than we could comfortably endure. We soon discovered that, unlike many supra-aural phones, the Mura Red Set III does *not* radiate a significant part of its acoustic output into the room. Someone sitting next to the wearer of the phones would probably hear the program (faintly) if it were being played quite loud and the room was quiet; at a greater distance or in the presence of normal household sound levels, the wearer of the phones would be the only one aware of the sound.

That sound was good, by any reasonable standard. The low-frequency rolloff, as with most other supra-aural phones, does not translate into a subjective "thinness" or lack of bass. On the contrary, there is an illusion of bass that maintains a good sound balance after processing by the listener's brain. The middles and highs are "all there" and on a par with those produced by most phones selling for far higher prices.

Choosing a headphone is a very personal and subjective process, combining as it does most of the problems of speaker selection with the added (and undefinable) factor of wearing comfort. We think that these phones, like others of the same genre, have solved the question of comfort very nicely. Whether they would meet the sonic requirements of any individual is something only that person could say. For us, they would be completely satisfactory. They do not cause an unnatural modification of the program, they have the "airiness" typical of supra-aural phones, they do not block out external sounds (for us, this is a necessity; for others, it might be a drawback), and they do not disturb others nearby. All of this comes at a bargain price, and it adds up to making the Mura Red Set III headphones a first-rate value.

Circle 142 on reader service card



Sony TC-FX6C Cassette Deck

THE Sony Model TC-FX6C is a front-loading, two-head, two-motor cassette deck and the first generally available recorder to include, in addition to the usual Dolby-B circuits, the recently developed Dolby-C noise-reduction system. The inclusion of Dolby-C permits virtual doubling of the high-frequency hiss rejection while extending the benefits of noise reduction down to the middle frequencies.

The capstan of the TC-FX6C is belt-driven by a brushless, slotless d.c. motor; a second d.c. motor drives the cassette hubs through a Delrin gear system. The record/playback head employs a sandust facing (for wear resistance) over a ferrite core that handles the high recording currents neces-

sary for recording on metal-particle tape. The transport is controlled by light-touch pushbuttons and a microprocessor. Cassettes are inserted, tape openings downward, into slots on the rear of the cassette-well door. Rear illumination facilitates viewing the tape remaining on a side, and the door itself can be easily removed for routine head cleaning and demagnetizing. To the left of the cassette well, in addition to the power switch, are a timer switch to permit unattended recording or playback and a headphone jack with its own level control. (No control is provided for overall playback level, which must be set with one's receiver or amplifier volume control.)

A pair of long-travel slider controls are

used to set recording level. Four pushbuttons select proper bias and equalization for ferric, CrO₂-type, ferrichrome, and metal tape formulations. A pair of similar pushbuttons select either Dolby-B, Dolby-C, or no noise reduction. The recording-level indicator is a peak-reading LED display with sixteen elements per channel calibrated from -30 to +8 dB. To assist the recordist, the highest-level LED remains illuminated for about 2½ seconds after a drop in the signal level.

The TC-FX6C is equipped with a digital indicator that, unlike the customary mechanical tape counters, reads out in minutes and seconds and can be used to determine

(Continued on page 48)

BASF Chrome. The world's quietest tape is like no tape at all.

Today only one high bias tape is able to combine outstanding sensitivity in the critical high frequency range with the lowest background noise of any oxide tape in the world.

That tape is BASF's Professional II.

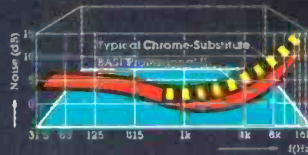
Professional II is like no other tape because it's made like no other tape. While ordinary high bias tapes are made from modi-

fied particles of ferric oxide, Professional II is made of pure chromium dioxide. These perfectly shaped and uniformly sized particles provide a magnetic medium that not only delivers an absolute minimum of background noise, but outstanding high frequencies as well.

Like all BASF tapes, Professional II comes encased in the new ultra-precision cassette shell for perfect alignment, smooth, even

movement and consistent high fidelity reproduction.

With Professional II, you'll hear all of the music and none of the tape. And isn't that what you want in a tape?



The difference in noise level between PRO II and ordinary high bias tape is greatest where the human ear is most sensitive (2-6 kHz).

GUARANTEE OF A LIFETIME

All BASF tape cassettes come with a lifetime guarantee. Should any BASF cassette ever fail—except for abuse or mishandling—simply return it to BASF for a free replacement.

Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab

BASF Professional II is so superior it was chosen by Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab for their Original Master Recording™ High Fidelity Cassettes. These state-of-the-art prerecorded cassettes are duplicated in real time (1:1) from the original recording studio master tapes of some of the most prominent recording artists of our time.



CHROME



BASF

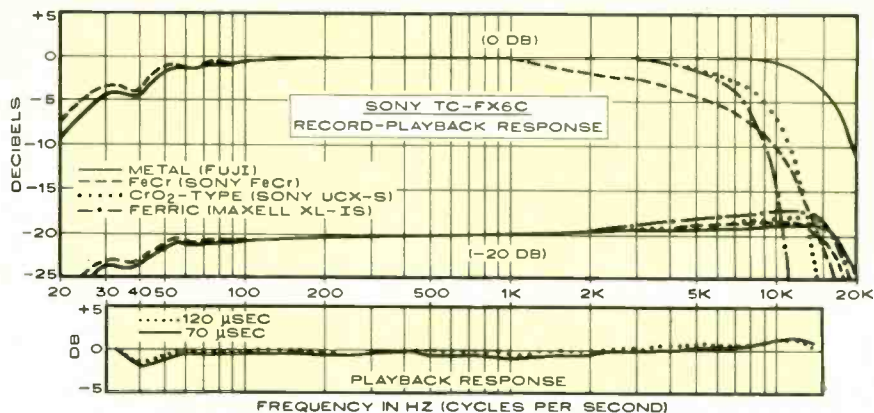
For the best recordings you'll ever make.

test reports

the amount of recording time left on a side. Additional front-panel buttons utilizing the microprocessor logic that controls the transport functions permit memory rewind-replay and provide for an Automatic Music Sensor (AMS) function that permits the user to "program" the deck to skip or replay certain taped selections. The necessary blank interval between selections is inserted by the MUTE pushbutton when they are recorded. (A tap on the button provides a 4-second mute before the machine goes into pause.) There are a pair of front-panel microphone jacks, but mixing facilities are not provided.

The rear panel of the TC-FX6C contains the usual phono-jack inputs and outputs, plus a multipin jack for a remote-control accessory (three different models—wired, wireless, and Sony-turntable controlled—are available from the manufacturer for \$25 to \$125) and an FM-multiplex switch which may be used to prevent interference with the Dolby circuits when taping stereo FM broadcasts. Overall, the unit measures approximately 16 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches wide, 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches high, and 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches deep; it weighs a little less than 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. Retail price: \$420.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Our sample of the TC-FX6C was not supplied with individual performance test data, so we tried a number of different tape formulations to find those with which it performed "best." Fuji Metal tape seemed to suit the bias setting for Type IV tape marginally better than Memorex IV or Sony Metallic, though the difference was slight. Sony FeCr did a bit better than either BASF Professional III or 3M Master III in the ferrichrome position. For a high-bias tape we used Sony's newly developed UCX-S formulation rather than TDK SA or BASF Professional II, and we obtained slightly better ferric results from Maxell XL-IS than from Sony HFX or 3M Master I. In none of these cases, however, were the differences very large at



The upper curves indicate overall record-playback response at the manufacturer's indicated 0-dB recording level using the tapes designated on the graph. In the center are the same measurements recorded at -20 dB relative to the upper curves, a level conventionally used for tape-deck frequency-response measurements. Bottom curves show playback response from standardized test tapes—a measurement important for playing prerecorded tapes.

normal (-20-dB) playing levels. In other words, the deck will perform well with them all.

Playback response was measured with Teac 216 and 316 test tapes for the 120- and 70-microsecond positions, and there was a commendably flat response between the 31.5- and 14,000-Hz limits of the tapes. Overall record-playback frequency response at the normal -20-dB record level gave -3-dB points of approximately 30 Hz and 19 kHz for the ferric, metal, and ferrichrome tapes, 18 kHz for the CrO₂ type.

The record-level display (and the instruction manual) suggest somewhat different "0-dB" recording levels for different tape types, and this was initially confusing. There are, in fact, two different "0-dB" markings on the display, one corresponding to the original Philips level of 165 nanowebers/meter, the other (more prominent) corresponding to 250 nWb/m. This latter,

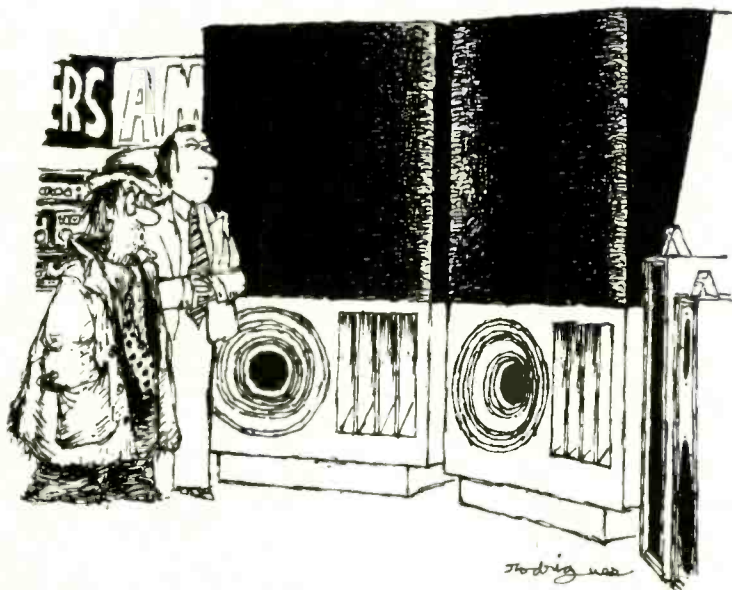
which we used in measuring distortion at a 0-dB recording level, is somewhat higher than that used by most other decks, so the distortion percentages and "overload margins" are respectively higher and lower than for most other decks we have reported on. This does not reflect on the excellent signal-to-noise ratios we obtained, but it should serve as a caution to the user not to record "into the red" quite as much as he might normally feel safe in doing.

Specifically, using the Fuji Metal tape, a 0-dB record level at 1,000 Hz resulted in 2.4 per cent third-harmonic distortion, and the 3 per cent distortion level was reached with a +1-dB input. Signal-to-noise ratio was 49 dB unweighted and without noise reduction, but it increased to 61.2 and 69.5 dB using CCIR weighting with Dolby-B and Dolby-C noise reduction, respectively. The Sony UCX-S high-bias and FeCr tapes showed 2.5 and 2.3 per cent distortion at 0 dB, with 0.5- and 1-dB overload margins (indicating maximum permissible recording level at 0 on the indicator). Unweighted signal-to-noise ratios without noise reduction were between 50 and 50.5 dB, rising to a little over 63 dB with Dolby-B and CCIR and to just over 71 dB with Dolby-C and the same weighting. The ferric-oxide formulation, Maxell XL-IS, had only 0.5 per cent distortion at 0-dB input and did not reach the 3 per cent point until there was a +4-dB input, producing a 63.3-dB Dolby-B and 71.4-dB Dolby-C signal-to-noise ratio using CCIR weighting.

Wow and flutter for the TC-FX6C measured 0.036 per cent on a weighted-rms basis and 0.05 per cent using the DIN peak-weighted measuring technique. To achieve a 0-dB record level required an input of 0.085 volt at the line-input terminals; 0.35 millivolt was required at the microphone jacks, which accepted up to 240 mV before overload. Headphone volume was adequate when listening with either 600- or 8-ohm (nominal) headphones.

The Dolby-level marking on the display of the TC-FX6C was accurate, and the frequency response, measured at -20- and -30-dB levels (using Fuji Metal tape) was

(Continued on page 52)



"Whew! That's more like it! I thought you meant \$11,999 apiece!"

SEE THE BEAUTY THAT IS MCS

MCS. The beautiful power of pure sound. Shown here, our hi-tech receivers, equipped with a full range of features. (From top to bottom) Model 3226 with phase locked loop FM multiplex detector, 249⁹⁵. Model 3236 with LED frequency readout, 329⁹⁵. Model 3260, 60-watt*receiver with precision synthesized quartz lock tuning, digital frequency readout, 6 memory presets and 2 recording tape monitors, 479⁹⁵. (Right) Model 3249 with quartz lock auto-scan tuning with station presets and digital frequency readout, 379⁹⁵

CIRCLE NO. 76 ON READER SERVICE CARD



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 STEREO
 FOR THE SENSES
 Sold only at JCPenney

*60 Watts min. per ch. 2 ch. into 8 ohms.
 20-20,000 Hz with not more than 0.02% THD.
 Prices higher in Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.
 MCS Series Audio Components sold exclusively at JCPenney.
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There's only one way



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

to play it...



Wherever the music is hot,
the taste is Kool. Because there's
only one sensation this refreshing.



15 mg. "tar", 1.2 mg. nicotine av.
per cigarette, FTC Report May '81.

test reports

exceptionally accurate—within 1 dB using either Dolby-B or Dolby-C within the frequency-response limits of the deck.

● **Comment.** Throughout its test period in our lab the TC-FX6C performed well, both

in reproducing prerecorded tapes and in dubbing from a number of demanding sources, including some master tapes. Unquestionably, Dolby-C is a significant factor in our analysis, for the reduction in noise over Dolby-B is astonishing and no side ef-

fects were detected, probably because of the exceptional accuracy of the encode/decode circuitry. Certainly, at its price, the Sony TC-FX6C is a fine value and then some.

Circle 143 on reader service card



Hafler DH-500 Power Amplifier

THE Hafler DH-500 power amplifier is a "big brother" to the company's widely acclaimed DH-200, embodying many of the same design concepts with a thorough re-engineering to deliver high-power performance with high reliability. It is rated to deliver 255 watts per channel to 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.025 per cent total harmonic distortion.

Like the DH-200, the new DH-500 has no electronic current limiting to protect its output devices (such circuits can often introduce unpleasant distortion "spikes" into the output when they operate). Its output stages use complementary-symmetry power MOSFETs, which are inherently self-protecting against thermal runaway. The low-level stages are also symmetrical, complementary designs using bipolar transistors. The amplifier is completely direct-coupled except for an input-blocking capacitor to exclude any d.c. component that might be present in the incoming signal.

Other design features of the Hafler DH-500 include a low dynamic-output impedance to minimize "interface" distortion resulting from the back-emf generated by speaker voice coils, a wide power bandwidth combined with an input low-pass filter that effectively prevents TIM distortions under any practical operating condition, and inherently low distortion so that large amounts of overall negative feedback are not required to achieve the amplifier's exceptionally low distortion rating.

The DH-500 is a large, heavy amplifier suitable for rack mounting. It is 19 inches

wide, 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches high, and 13 inches deep (including the front-panel handles) and weighs 48 pounds. It is entirely finished in flat black, and its only front-panel feature (besides the identifying logo) is a rocker-type power switch that lights in red to show that the amplifier is on. On the rear apron are heavy-duty five-way binding posts for speaker outputs (on $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch centers to accept dual banana plugs), the input phono jacks, and holders for the speaker-protection fuses. As supplied, these have a 2-ampere rating, which is suitable for protecting most speakers from excessive drive levels without inhibiting the high-power short-term peaks that might be required from the amplifier. Hafler also supplies 5-ampere fuses for use when high-power operation is required or if the speaker impedance is much lower than 8 ohms. Since the amplifier has no internal current limiting and is highly resistant to damage from overloads or improper terminations, 10-ampere fuses can be substituted safely for high-power testing. These fuses are only for speaker protection—Hafler states that the DH-500 can drive 20 amperes into a short circuit without damage, although its internal thermal protection will soon shut it off. A d.c.-sensing circuit operates a relay to disconnect the speaker outputs instantly if more than 1.8 volts of d.c. offset is present in the output. This also protects the speakers against high-level transients from input switching, dropped phono pickups, and similar potentially catastrophic events. The relay also provides a 3-second turn-on delay.

In addition to the speaker fuses, an internal 15-ampere line fuse, and four internal 10-ampere d.c. power-supply fuses, the DH-500 is protected against damage by thermal circuit breakers. If the output transistors become too hot, the amplifier shuts down and the red light in the power switch blinks at a 3-Hz rate. Recovery is automatic when the temperature falls to a safe value. The DH-500 is cooled by a three-speed fan that normally runs at a very low speed and is audible only if you are close to it in a quiet room. Higher continuous-power operation will eventually cause the fan to shift to its intermediate speed, and in extreme cases (such as testing under high-power conditions) it will operate at high speed. In such cases, the fan sound is likely to be masked by the volume of the music.

Like other Hafler products, the DH-500 is available either in kit form or factory-wired and tested. The kit assembly is largely mechanical, since the active amplifier circuits are supplied as a pre-assembled and tested module. This roughly cubical cast-metal assembly carries the circuit boards on its sides, with the fan at one open end and heat-dissipating fins extending into the hollow center. The fan pulls air into the DH-500 from the sides, passing it over the fins and exhausting it at the rear of the amplifier. Most of the interior of the DH-500 is devoted to its power-supply components (a massive power transformer and a pair of 20,000-microfarad filter capacitors) and to a modest amount of power-supply and output-circuit wiring. (Continued on page 54)

A LASER MONITOR FOR THE PRIVILEGED FEW.

The new Celestion SL-6 has two drivers, a crossover network and an enclosure.

None of them like any other in the world.

Designed with a laser, a computer and a blank sheet of paper by a new generation of engineering talent, it achieves a level of performance that limits ownership to a select group of music lovers with the sensory and, yes, the financial resources to appreciate it.

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What this revealed—in even the best conventional speakers—was distressing. Cone breakup, bell modes and other types of vibrational distortions.

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So we started at the beginning—with two radically different transducers. For high frequencies, a self-cooling treble unit whose precision-formed dome actually functions as the voice coil's core. Directly transforming electrical energy into perfect-piston motion, while acting as a heat sink for the voice coil. Held in place by an ultra-thin suspen-

sion, for accurate response to beyond audibility. The low-frequency driver is no less unique. A unified cone and neck, made more rigid by replacing the dust-cap with a molded center terminator. Molecularily bonded at its rim to a long-throw surround made of chemically related material.

Resulting in a moving structure that is

essentially one piece, from center to edge, for accurate, perfect-piston response throughout the driver's range.

There is more. And it is less.

Less crossover network, because the drivers are so perfectly matched in response and efficiency. Less damping, because the drivers are so accurate. And least of all, size. The SL-6 is the first compact loudspeaker of studio-monitor quality. Smaller than many "bookshelf" units, yet effortlessly handling up to 200 watts per channel. There is much more to tell. But the most eloquent way to hear it is musically, from the loudspeaker itself, at one of a select group of audiophile dealers.

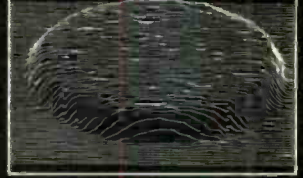
But before you do, a word of caution: only a limited number are planned for production.

Which will limit its pleasures to a privileged few.

If the idea of being among them intrigues you, write or call for more information.

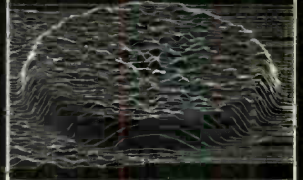
*Ultra-accurate Laser Topographic Response Analysis

Perfect-piston motion. The new SL-6 tweeter vibrating at 15kHz.



SL-6 drivers

Perfect-piston motion. The new SL-6 woofer operating at 100Hz.



ULTRA scan of bell mode cone behavior; long theorized but never before seen.

Conventional Drivers



ULTRA scan of distortion-producing cone break-up.



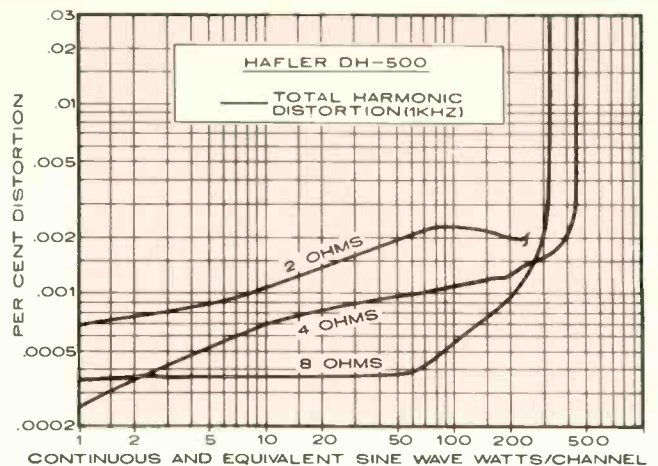
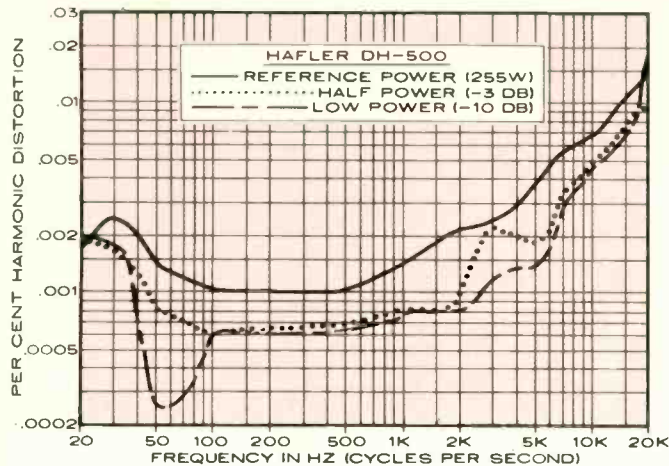
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The DH-500 is available for \$749.95 (factory-wired) or \$599.95 (in kit form) from stereo dealers. David Hafler Company, Dept. SR, 5910 Crescent Boulevard, Pennsauken, N.J. 08109.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The test sample of the DH-500 was constructed from a kit by a STEREO REVIEW staff member. He reports that it took an unhurried eight hours to assemble, no problems were experienced, and it worked perfectly from the start.

As expected, during the preconditioning period of one hour at one-third power the fan operated at its high speed. However, the exterior of the amplifier remained surprisingly cool, barely warm to the touch during this and all subsequent testing. Even the exhaust air was only mildly warm under these worst-case test conditions. During normal operation, with the fan operating at its low speed, the acoustic noise level, measured 1 meter in front of the panel, was 35 dBA—about as quiet as one can expect for a fan-cooled amplifier.

With both channels driving 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz, the outputs clipped at 325 watts per channel, corresponding to an IHF clipping-headroom rating of 1.05 dB. The DH-500 does not have a 4-ohm power rating, but we measured 452 watts per channel into 4 ohms and 392 watts into 2 ohms at the clipping point. The dynamic-power out-

put with a 20-millisecond tone burst of 1,000 Hz was impressive, as might have been expected from the DH-500's kinship to the DH-200, an amplifier noted for its short-term power capability. Into 8 ohms, the output clipped at 434 watts for an IHF dynamic-headroom rating of 2.31 dB. The dynamic output into 4 and 2 ohms was 792 and 653 watts per channel, respectively. An input signal of 0.145 volt drove the amplifier to a reference output of 1 watt (corresponding to 2.35 volts for rated power). The A-weighted output noise was 89 dB below 1 watt, essentially as rated.

The distortion ratings of the Hafler DH-500 proved to be as conservative as every other aspect of its design and performance. At 1,000 Hz (8-ohm loads) the distortion was less than 0.0004 per cent from 1 watt to 10 watts output, increasing gradually to 0.0009 per cent at 200 watts and 0.00135 per cent at rated power. With 4-ohm loads, the behavior was much the same, with the distortion rising from 0.00025 per cent at 1 watt to 0.0015 per cent at 250 watts and 0.0021 per cent at 400 watts. Even driving 2-ohm loads did not degrade the amplifier's performance, with the distortion being in the vicinity of 0.002 per cent up to 200 watts. However, the amplifier heated up so rapidly when driving 2 ohms at high power levels (this was near the end of a long series of high-power tests) that the thermal cutoff shut it down after a few seconds of opera-

tion at outputs exceeding 200 watts, preventing us from measuring the distortion under these conditions.

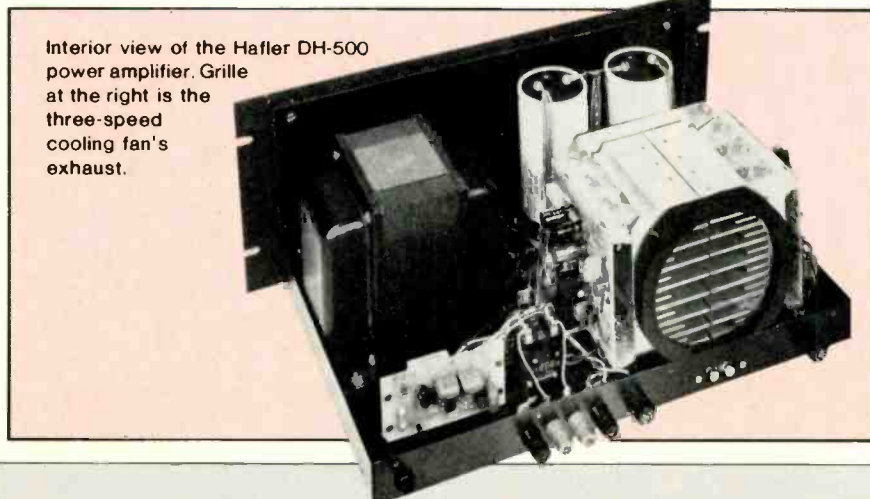
With both channels driving 8-ohm loads, the distortion at rated power was between 0.001 and 0.0025 per cent from 20 to 4,000 Hz, reaching 0.017 per cent at 20,000 Hz. The distortion characteristic at half power and at one-tenth power (the latter being more than adequate for most home listening) was roughly similar except for readings well below 0.001 per cent in the midrange.

The measured IHF slew factor was 5, due to the appearance of waveform distortion at 100 kHz when we drove the amplifier with a "rated-power" input signal. It was stable with a complex reactive load, simulating a loudspeaker impedance characteristic. The frequency response at 1 watt was flat from 10 to 10,000 Hz, dropping to -0.1 dB at 20 kHz and -2.5 dB at 100 kHz.

● **Comment.** Our experience with testing the Hafler DH-500 confirmed that it is truly a "bulletproof" amplifier hardly likely to be damaged by anything that might be applied to its input or connected across its output. It withstood the most brutal treatment we could apply without damage (or even a blown fuse), and it was perhaps the coolest amplifier we have had the pleasure of using. Amplifiers of this power rating usually become rather hot, especially under test conditions, but one would be hard put to tell that the DH-500 had been running merely by touching its exterior.

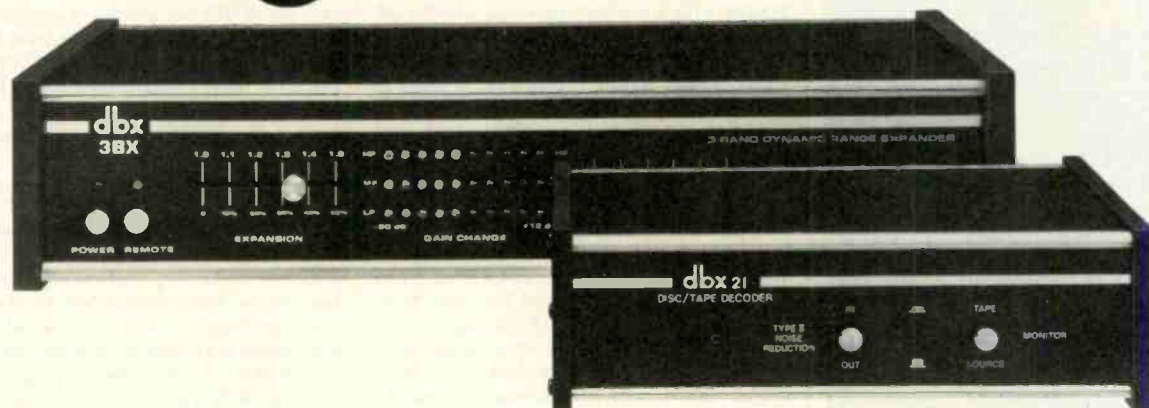
As for its sound, if it had any special sound quality we did not detect it. This is as it should be, of course. We recalled our testing of the DH-200, which was one of the first amplifiers to reach our measurement "floor" of 0.0003 per cent harmonic distortion. The DH-500 matched that and even surpassed it by a small amount.

The David Hafler Company seems to be following in its own footsteps, so to speak, with yet another truly state-of-the-art product that is easy to build and offers an exceptional value for the money. As a bonus to a tester, it is even light enough to lift and move around, a much-appreciated characteristic that is not shared by many amplifiers of its power rating.



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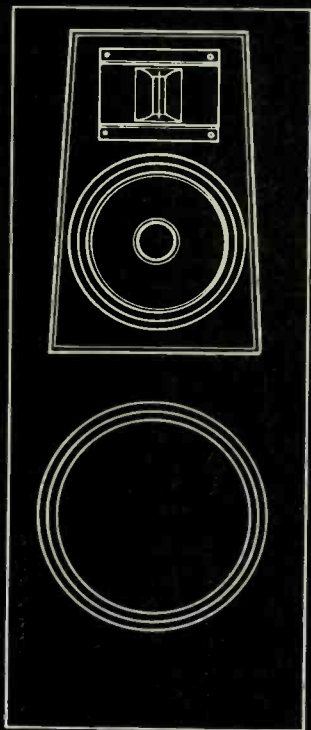
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Going on Record

By James Goodfriend



ENTROPY IN MUSIC

A FEW months ago (July), some thoughts on contemporary music appeared in this space under the title "Closing the Copyright Office," and they provoked a certain amount of verbal flailing of arms by several readers. Sometime after the fuss had died down, a reasoned and reasonable response to my thoughts arrived from Leroy W. Southers, Jr., chairman of the department of music at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. I owe thanks to Mr. Southers for a worthy argument, and, at the risk of irritating some readers anew (and boring others), I would like to raise the whole matter again, incorporating some of his thoughts and some of his words.

We start with the proposition that at a time when the world boasts more composers of serious music than ever before, most of the good music seems to have been written already, and the contemporary products, for the most part, come across as either derivative or ugly. Mr. Southers writes: "The thesis that most good music has been written already may neither be proved nor disproved But one may at least point to the origins of the misperceptions which might lead to such a conclusion, a conclusion which in my view is incorrect.

"The first of these is simply that there are no truly great composers writing at the present time, 'great' in the sense of having mastered a contemporary musical vocabulary and having ideas of sufficient emotional-philosophical force and universality to make that vocabulary live. There are some very good composers, such as Michael Tippett, some very effective composers, such as George Crumb, some very thoughtful composers, such as Charles Wuorinen, etc., but none having the combination of qualities sufficient to make one a contemporary Brahms, let us say. However, there is little reason to imagine that this will always be the case. . . . It may take twenty-five years or more before we have our Monteverdi, but there's no reason to imagine that we won't have one."

Mr. Southers goes right to the crux of the matter, where it can be seen that neither of us can be *proved* right. But the irony of the situation should not be missed: he defends contemporary music by denigrating its

composers; I attack it by praising them. I have known many composers, and there are quite a few of whose intelligence, talent, learned skill, and sheer musicality I stand in awe. Although I can admit that there may not be in the world today a genius of the caliber of Mozart, Bach, Schubert, or Debussy (or even Brahms), I cannot bring myself to believe that there are not at least a handful whose gifts are equal to those of, say, Rimsky-Korsakov, Elgar, Saint-Saëns, or Vivaldi. If I am correct, why, then, do we not have a raft of pieces on at least *that* level? My answer is that the task itself has become far more difficult than it was for those men, for the old vocabularies have been all but used up and the new ones are of insufficient richness.

Mr. Southers writes: "Another of these misperceptions is the equating of musical vocabulary and syntactical usage with ideational content. Though Mr. Goodfriend does not make this explicit assumption, he has, in his way, succumbed to the notion that vocabularies can be exhausted as vehicles rather than seeing them as reflective of the times and conditions which gave rise to them. If he is not incorrect in this, then the future must be a grim one, for the operational possibilities in any verbal language are similarly finite and he will be compelled to believe that most great literature has already been written, perhaps even most good columns in magazines. I prefer to believe that there still are great songs to be sung, great books to be written."

I PREFER to believe it too, but it's *proportions* we're talking about, and music has by far the smaller share. Notes are notes, and the relationships between and among them are relationships and no more. Words are words, but they are also meanings; one worries only secondarily about the originality or quality of the sound. The parallel doesn't hold. As for the future being grim, I face it. We live in a time when men are discovering that many resources they had considered unending are indeed finite and even close to exhaustion. We may live in the hope of a miracle, but we would be fools to count on it. I would welcome a musical miracle, but I'm not holding my breath. □

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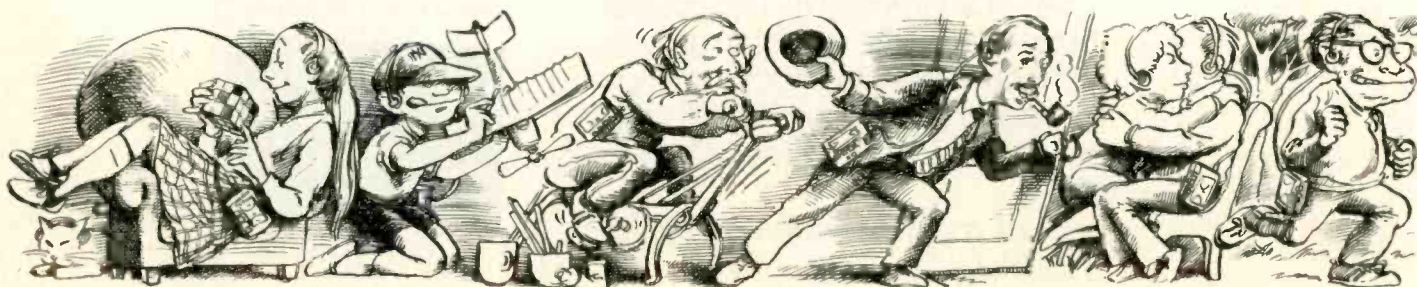
So if you can't tell your brass from your oboe, try using our tape.



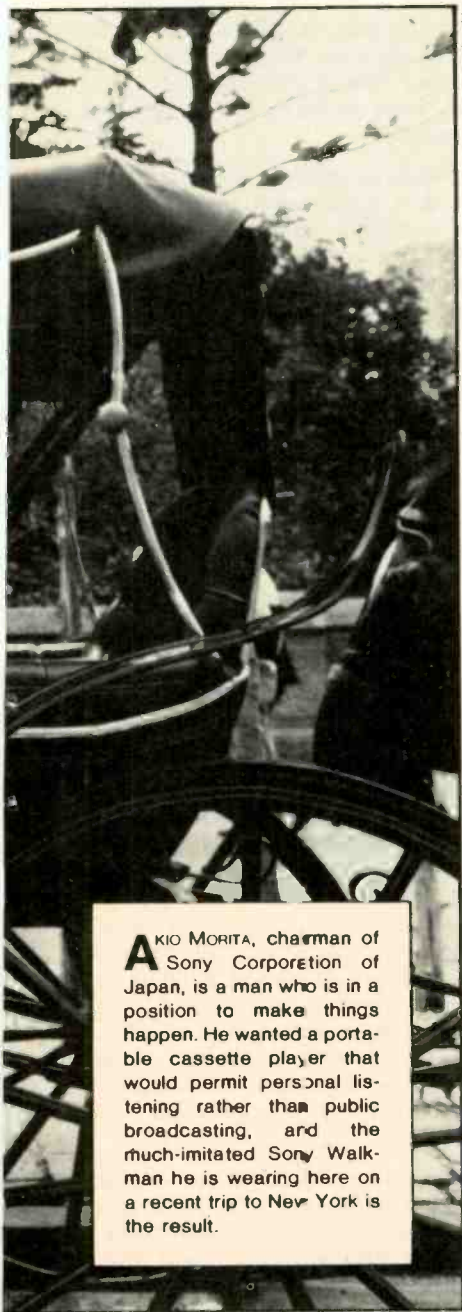
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Tape expert Craig Stark takes a look at those



PERSONAL CASSETTE PORTABLES



Maddy Miller/People Weekly

AKIO MORITA, chairman of Sony Corporation of Japan, is a man who is in a position to make things happen. He wanted a portable cassette player that would permit personal listening rather than public broadcasting, and the much-imitated Sony Walkman he is wearing here on a recent trip to New York is the result.

If you happen to see a middle-aged, respectably mustached man walking down the street, pipe in mouth, rhythmically waving his arms sometime this January, it might be wise to check under his hat brim for a pair of miniature headphones before calling a cop. Chances are that what you will have encountered is merely this harmless technical writer using his Christmas present to assist Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony Orchestra through the final bars of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Meanwhile, back at the split-level ranch, my teenage daughter, similarly 'phoned in, will be running through Rubik's cube with ridiculous ease while listening to Blue Öyster Cult, my eleven-year-old son will be engrossed in Styx as he glues together a model airplane, and Grandpa may well be pedaling to Prokofiev on his Exercycle.

Personal portable stereo cassette players, first introduced to the audio market in the form of the Sony "Walkman" and now generally selling in the \$80 to \$200 range, have become the most-likely-to-be-appreciated audiophile gift of the season. Some two million of these miniature battery-operated units, which play back through ultra-lightweight headphones, are expected to be sold in this country alone this year, and the number of available models (more than fifty at last count) seems to rise with each day's press releases. Many weigh less than a pound, and relatively few are much larger than a paperback book, but there's nothing miniature about the volume (and quality) of the sound they deliver.

Ironically, the spectacular stereo these portables produce can present at least one real hazard. While the headphones themselves are invariably of the "open-air" or "hear-through" design, supposedly permitting you to stay in contact with the outside world while listening, the temptation is almost irresis-

tible to raise the volume level to a point where you are in a musical world of your own. This is wonderful if you're flying, shoveling snow, or walking down a street. Moreover, except in the quietest of surroundings, you know that you are not inflicting the music on others. (Urbanites know only too well those 20-pound, chrome-plated "boom-box" radios lugged about by young men whose principal enjoyment seems to lie not in the "music," but in making themselves audibly obnoxious to everyone within a two-block radius.) The danger with these personal portables lies in their use by automobile drivers, bicyclists, or joggers who may need to hear horns, sirens, and squealing brakes. The peculiar nature of headphone listening, where the sound seems to originate within (or possibly slightly above) the head itself is so insidiously seductive that there are bills now pending in some localities to ban the use of Walkman-type units by those on the road. This may be an overzealous response, but caution is definitely advised.

BECAUSE there are so many models on the market, before you start shopping it would be well to consider the various features you think most important. Any of these machines will play back previously recorded ferric-oxide cassettes, and most of the better ones have a switch to readjust playback frequency balance for chrome-type or metal-tape cassettes. Very few incorporate Dolby-B noise-reduction circuits, however, which are almost universally used in making commercially recorded cassettes. Depending on your ears' sensitivity to high-frequency balance and hiss, you may therefore find that you get a better sonic result playing back a prerecorded ferric tape with the switch position set at "CrO₂/Metal." Or you can cut back with the treble tone control if there is one. (Overleaf)



PERSONAL...

"... these little cassette portables are now available with stereo FM (and even AM/FM) facilities."

Many of today's personal portables have a built-in microphone, which suggests that they are capable of recording as well as tape playback. Don't be misled by this, however, for in most cases the built-in microphone is intended *only* to provide a "talk-through" or "sing-along" feature. To use it you depress a "talk-line" button that lowers the audible level of the music and allows your comments (or your crooning) to be heard both on your own headphone and on a second pair that can be plugged into the same portable. (Most decks have plugs for two pairs of stereo headphones; the limited length of the cords ensures that the couple that plays together stays together.) In checking a number of models I found that the sensitivity of the built-in microphones varied widely. However, those that had a talk-along switch that could be latched in rather than having to be held in were often able to pick up external sounds. This made them safer to use while jogging or driving. And a number of portables that are without microphones also have a muting button that allows the listener to communicate with the outside world while he is still wearing the headphones.

Recording capability is provided by a few personal portables, either using a built-in stereo microphone or one or two external mikes. For those who want to dictate or make notes on the run, this is obviously an essential feature. (Pocket-size cassette recorders with built-in microphones for voice-only use have been a business staple for years, but these don't provide the spectacular stereo sound of today's personal portables.) As an additional consideration, a portable with provision for *stereo* microphones is

often useful at business conferences. It's not that you need to know that Tom sat to the left of Dick at the roundtable, but when Tom and Dick try to talk at the same time, a single microphone will jumble their voices together, while a stereo mike will make each voice intelligible on stereo-headphone playback. In any case, check to see if an external microphone eliminates pick-up of the recorder's internal motor noise, which is sometimes a problem with the built-in variety.

NOT everyone wants to listen exclusively to cassettes, of course, and these little cassette portables are now available with stereo FM (and even AM/FM) facilities. In these units the FM tuner is actually housed in a plug-in "cassette," so you can listen to either with as much ease as changing the cassettes themselves. The headphone cord doubles ingeniously as an antenna.

A carrying case, belt-clip, and shoulder strap are all "standard" features, and most units have a "hi/lo" tone switch that basically mutes the treble a bit. For those whose hearing acuity differs from ear to ear, a unit with separate left- and right-channel playback-volume controls is an important factor. Cue and review facilities, which permit you to hear the tape even during fast-forward and rewind, are useful in finding desired selections (or spots in dictation), for most of these portables don't have a tape counter. Most use four "AA" ("penlight") size batteries (but one I checked used three, another two), and practically all will accept an accessory a.c. adaptor for home use. To prevent excessive battery drain, a number of portables have an automatic shut-off feature, but when this is included it normally operates only in the play and not in the fast-winding mode. In any case, it's a good idea to turn off the machine when you take off the headphones.

While the above considerations will obviously narrow your field of choice, there are some practical things you can do to help ensure that you choose a winner. Quite a number of personal portables come packed with short "demo"

tapes that, predictably, show them off to their best advantage. It's a better idea to take with you a cassette you've recorded yourself (or obtained commercially) whose sound is familiar. Preferably, it should contain a number of sustained piano or acoustic-guitar chords—as well, of course, as musical material covering the high- and low-frequency ends of the audio spectrum. Here's what to listen for, using your test cassette:

1. While listening to the long piano (or flute or organ) tones, shake the machine somewhat vigorously—in all directions and at all angles—to determine its sensitivity to movement-provoked wow and flutter. You'll be able to hear *some* wavering of the pitch with all of the portables, but in some it will be markedly worse, especially when you hold the machine tilted at one angle or another. Obviously, the less waver you hear, the better the unit.

2. Organ pedal notes (the Saint-Saëns *Organ* Symphony is good for plenty of deep bass) will cover the low-frequency end, but you should probably be even more concerned about whether the treble is not so much "brilliant" as "strident." Headphone listening is nothing if not intimate, and a raucous, peaky high-frequency response will not be satisfactory for long-term listening. While the headphones on the personal portables I checked out were remarkably good as a class, there were *definite* differences that might incline you to favor one machine over another.

3. If you want a unit with a plug-in FM section, listen to it in the store. Chances are you'll have fluorescent lights and a steel-framed building to contend with, not to speak of multipath distortion generated by signal reflections from nearby buildings, so the sound will be at its worst—which is the best way to tell one tuning section from another.

These quick checks—a two-minute drill, as it were—will help you pick a model you can live with. And if your experience parallels mine, you'll want to live with it for a long time. Merry Christmas! □



SOUND UNLEASHED



You may not realize it, but you've only been listening to music in two dimensions. In fact, owners of the most sophisticated systems utilizing the latest enhancement techniques are also only hearing two-dimensional sound, totally lacking the missing third dimension, Omnisonic Imagery™. Even owners of the most modest stereo systems will recognize the 801 Omnisonic Imager™ as one of the most significant improvements in music reproduction in years. This advance, available after extensive research by Omnisonix in the field of psychoacoustics, is intended to provide the enjoyment and feeling of live musical performance. To vastly upgrade the performance of your stereo system, simply connect the 801 to the tape or preamp input/output jacks and listen to clear, distinct sound images that seem to surround you, even while moving about. In fact, the impact is so great that the sound seems to come from outside the

speaker plane, often overhead and to the rear. Your home virtually becomes a concert hall.

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To experience the dramatic presence and detail that have been missing from your records, digitally recorded discs, and pre-recorded tapes, take a few of your favorites to an Omnisonix dealer for a demonstration; you are in for a musical delight. And amazingly enough, any tape you record through an Omnisonic Imager will retain the Omnisonic quality when it is played back on a conventional stereo system. The 801 Omnisonic Imager also adds a dimension to FM, monophonic AM and TV sound, with a simple adjustment.

Highway imagery

The new Imager 801-A™ does for your car stereo what the 801 does for your home music system. It raises the sound from the floor level to the ear level. The variable

imager control allows you to vary the image to any auto environment.

Hear what you've been missing

Join the growing thousands of music listeners who have found it completely affordable to enjoy the delight of Omnisonic Imagery and discover what they had been missing with conventional stereo.

Since all Omnisonic Imagers are designed and built for lasting performance under strict quality control conditions, Omnisonix offers a lifetime warranty on the active proprietary circuitry.

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OMNISONIX, LTD.
Setting Sound Free

CIRCLE NO. 45 ON READER SERVICE CARD



The hall of the Paris Grand Opéra as it appeared at the time of the Ader experiment.

This contemporary drawing of the Opéra stage shows the placement of the microphones on either side of the prompter's box and behind the footlights.

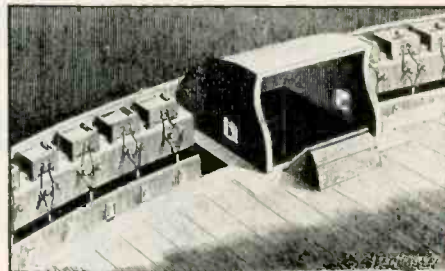
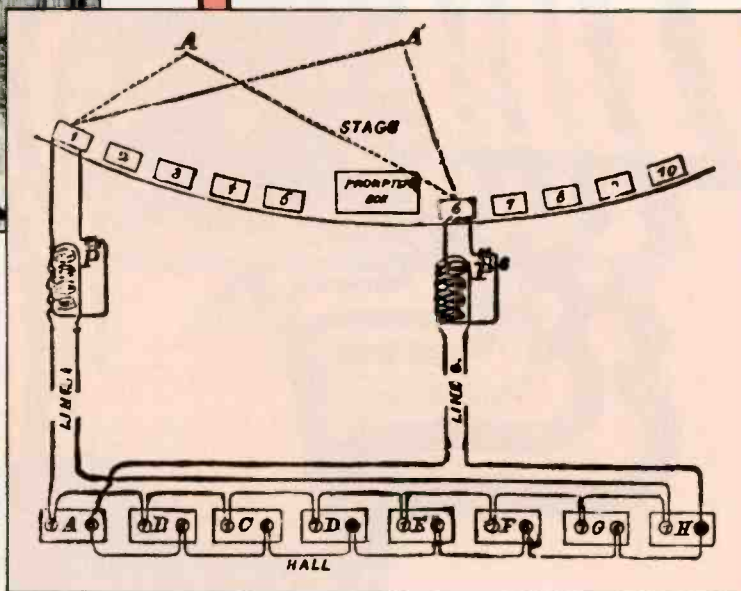


Diagram of the Opéra stage showing the positions of the ten paired microphones. The points marked A and A' indicate how the same microphones would receive different sound patterns as the source changed its relative position.



THE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

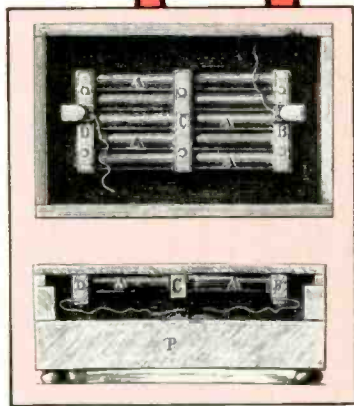
STEREOPHONIC sound reproduction, as most audiophiles know, has been available for some twenty-five years. Not many of them know, however, that the first live stereo transmission took place an amazing one hundred years ago. It was at the Paris Electrical Exhibition in August of 1881 that Clement Ader, inventor of a then well-known telephone earpiece, demonstrated the first known stereo system. The Ader experiment consisted of ten transmitters (microphones) set at the foot of the Paris Opéra stage and linked by wire—in stereo pairs—to the Palais

de l'Industrie, site of the Electrical Exhibition. There, visitors could pick up two telephone receivers and hear a live opera performance in "stereo."

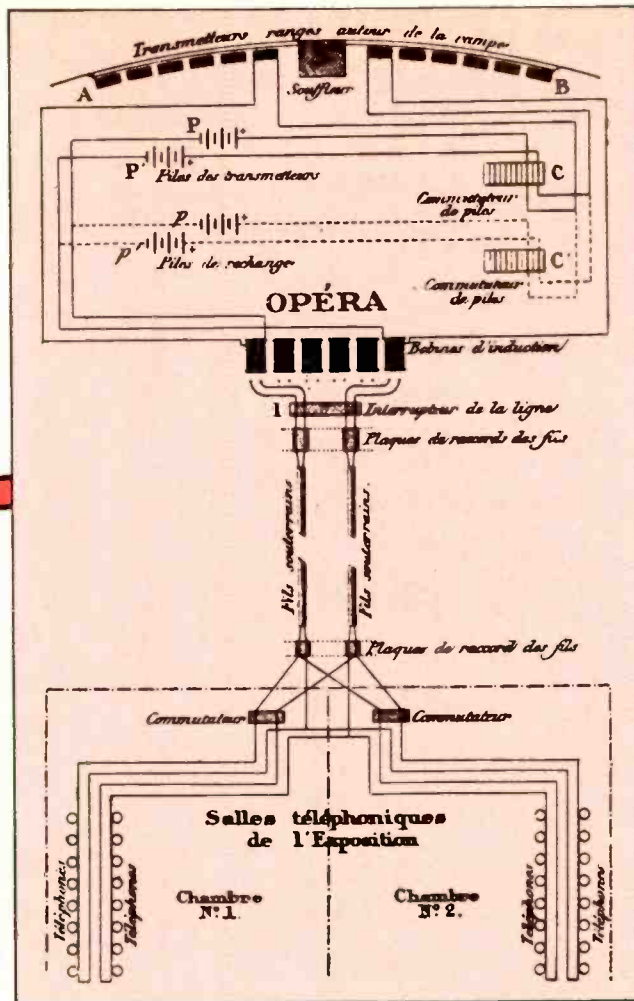
A wonderful description of the demonstration was written by a Monsieur Hospitaller for the French publication *L'Electricien* and translated in the December 3, 1881, issue of *Scientific American*. "Everyone who has been fortunate enough," began Hospitaller, "to hear the telephones at the Palais de l'Industrie has remarked that, in listening with both ears at the two telephones, the sound takes on a special

character of relief and localization which a single receiver cannot produce. It is a common experience that, in listening at a telephone, it is practically impossible to have even a vague idea of the distance at which the person at the other end of the line appears to be. . . . In this case there is nothing of the kind. As soon as the experiment commences the singers place themselves, in the mind of the listener, at a fixed distance, some to the right and others to the left. It is easy to follow their movements, and to indicate exactly, each time that they change their po-

Below, two views of the Ader microphone. In the top drawing, A indicates the carbon rods that acted as transducers and B, C, and D the strips that held the rods in place. Vibrations of the wooden board to which the rods were attached caused variations in the current flowing through the rods and thereby an electrical analog of the sound waves. The lower drawing

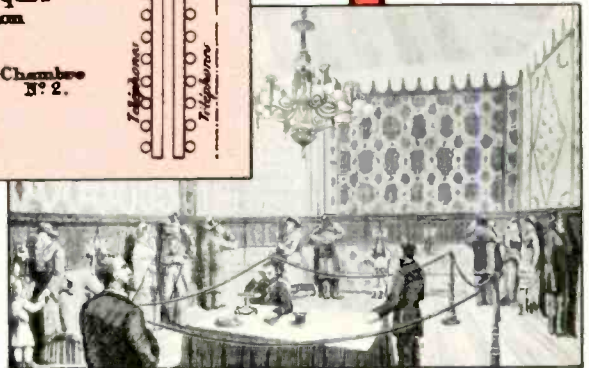


shows the rods and strips together with the lead box, marked P, that held the device; it was supported by four pieces of soft rubber to dampen vibrations from the stage floor.



A detailed diagram of the wiring of the Ader system shows the configuration both at the Opéra end and at the receiving stations in the Exhibition hall.

One of the two receiving rooms at the Exhibition showing the "stereo" telephone receivers along the walls. Note that several people are holding only one receiver (probably monophonic diaphragms).



OF STEREO - SORT OF

By Myron Berger

sition, the imaginary distance at which they appear to be. This phenomenon is very curious, it approximates to the theory of binaural audition [*sic*], and has never been applied, we believe, before to produce this remarkable illusion to which may almost be given the name of auditory perspective. . . . Interestingly enough, when Bell Laboratories began their experiments in stereo fifty years later, they called the effect "auditory perspective."

A German publication, *Das Telephon*, several years later cited additional benefits of this new technology: "The

performances at the Opéra, the Opéra Comique and the Théâtre Français were transmitted [by wire] to the exhibition building every evening, and one heard not only the voices of the men and women singers, the arias, the chorus, and the orchestra, but also the incidentals of a performance—the cheers and laughter of the audience and, in a few instances, *horribile dictu*, the voice of the prompter."

The microphones used by Ader consisted of a wooden diaphragm and ten carbon rods, like pencil leads, which acted as the transducers. Bent F. Hertz

of Danish Broadcasting has recently reconstructed a set of Ader microphones and gave a demonstration of their performance at the 1981 Audio Engineering Society convention in Hamburg, Germany.

The next well-publicized experiments with stereo sound reproduction were not to take place until the demonstrations of "auditory perspective" by Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra in conjunction with scientists, engineers, and technicians at Bell Laboratories. And we all know what those led to! □

Last year we gave our competition a lesson in geometry. This year it's physics.

For years, we've patiently explained why curved tonearms contribute nothing to record playback except higher mass and instability.

Finally, this simple lesson in tonearm geometry began to sink in. And as you've seen, more and more turntable manufacturers are now going straight.



While that's a step in the right direction, they still have a lot to learn before they can match the performance of a Dual.

Which brings us to Ultra Low Mass and the *physics* of tracking records.

Simply stated, the lower the mass of the tonearm, the better it will track. Especially on warped records.

So when we introduced ULM with total effective mass under 8 grams, it was quickly recognized as a major breakthrough in record playback technology. (Conventional tonearm and cartridge combinations typically have 18 grams total effective mass.)

All the independent test labs quickly appreciated the benefits of ULM. Julian Hirsch reported in *Stereo Review*: "... tracked the most severely warped records in our collection, usually so well that we heard nothing wrong."

And when you consider that most records manufactured today are warped, ULM is not just desirable—it's *essential*.

No surprise that our competitors are beginning to lower the mass of their tonearms.

But that doesn't make their turntables perform like a Dual any more than straightening their tonearms did.

Which brings us to the most important lesson of all: You can't equal a Dual by simply imitating one part of it. Or even two.

Because what makes a Dual a Dual is much more than its straight-line tubular design or Ultra Low Mass.

It's also the four-point gyroscopic gimbal. The new XM300

alloy (the most rigid and resonance-free material ever used for a tonearm.) The tunable anti-resonance filter that matches the tonearm to the mass and compliance of all available cartridges. And the unique tracking force and anti-skating systems that don't disturb the tonearm's perfect dynamic balance or increase its effective mass.

Beyond all this, there's the matchless craftsmanship long synonymous with Dual and West Germany.

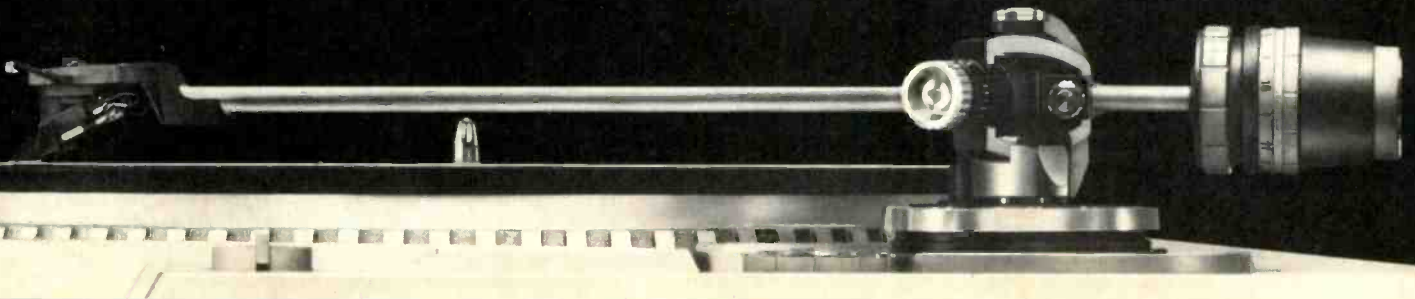
Fortunately, you don't have to wait until other manufacturers have learned all their lessons. Because we did our homework a long time ago.

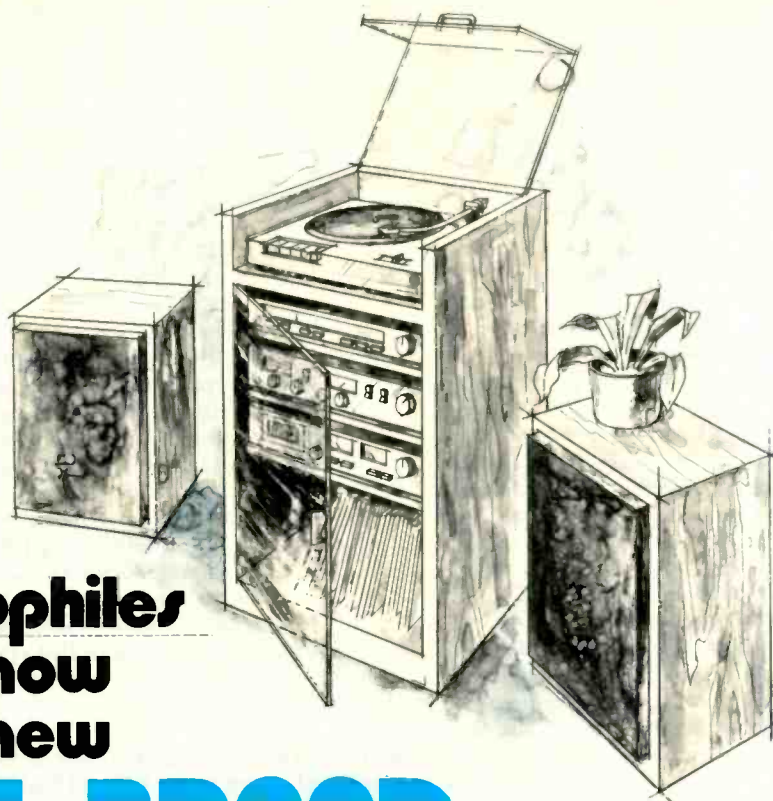
Nor have we overlooked the subject of value. For example, the single-play, semi-automatic Dual 508 with Vario-belt drive is less than \$160.

For the complete curriculum covering all ten new ULM turntables, write to United Audio, 120 So. Columbus Ave., Dept. S, Mt. Vernon, NY 10553.



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CIRCLE NO. 72 ON READER SERVICE CARD





What audiophiles ought to know about the new **SINGLE-BRAND "RACK" SYSTEMS**

By Eugene P. Bradley

IF you are a typical reader of this magazine, you are a male between the ages of eighteen and thirty-four, you have a fair amount of discretionary income, and you display a strong curiosity about technical matters. You and your group form the backbone of the audio industry, but there is a much larger group—perhaps 85 per cent of the population—who aren't fascinated by sound equipment the way you are. You know some of them—your doctor, your brother-in-law, your girl friend—and you've given them advice when they asked you to help them select an audio system. Most of them are by now aware that the best sound and the best value are to be found in components, but they come to you because they are not sure they can choose wisely from the huge selection of equipment available.

To appeal to this group of buyers, manufacturers have now begun to market single-brand systems, packaging them in tall, narrow cabinets that bear a superficial resemblance to professional 19-inch racks and promoting them in a wide variety of publications. These "rack systems" are sold in many department stores and discount houses that have never carried audio components before, and they can also be found in the larger audio chain stores. What do these systems have to offer the audiophile, and what do they offer the people who come to audiophile friends for advice? A quick survey of the field provides quite a few answers.

The Systems

The various manufacturers of rack systems have committed themselves to

this new concept in varying degrees, and their individual approaches present several important options for prospective buyers. Some, such as Yamaha and SAE, provide a cabinet designed to hold their components, but they don't, as of now, assemble "systems" and give them single model numbers. A second group, including Sansui, H. H. Scott, and Rotel, have assembled rack systems from their regular catalogs, allowing the customer to substitute other components (theirs) as desired. A third group (Hitachi, Kenwood, Optonica, Fisher, KLS, BSR, and Quasar) offers some systems with component choice and others that come only as a complete package. And the package systems of a fourth group (Akai, Sony, Sanyo, Pioneer, and Marantz) are sold exclusively as units, with no substitutions possible. The degree of flexibility in each of the

SYSTEMS...

"... the manufacturers apparently see the rack-system customer as being especially feature-conscious. . . ."

systems will obviously be important to an audiophile, for whom frequent equipment updating is a good part of the joy of the game.

A typical rack system in the upper-middle price range costs between \$1,350 and \$1,500. It comes in three pieces: two loudspeakers and the equipment cabinet, which is about 4 feet tall and holds equipment in its top half and records in the bottom. The turntable, which sits on top, is usually a direct-drive unit with automatic return. The electronics, whether receiver or separate tuner and integrated amplifier, will have quartz-synthesized digital FM tuning with automatic scanning and seven or more station presets. The power amp has a rated output of about 50 W/ch (watts per channel). A two-motor, solenoid-operated cassette deck with full-logic controls, Dolby-B noise reduction, and metal-tape capability, plus a pair of three-way loudspeakers with 10- or 12-inch woofers complete the picture. (Among the systems that fit this description are the Akai PRO-1055, H. H. Scott's Slimcom 450SL, Sansui's Supercompo 7100, and JVC's G-303.)

Pioneer's Syscom 4400 (\$1,470) resembles the above system, but there is a digital clock/timer included. The Pioneer has another feature which is becoming increasingly common in rack systems: a headphone jack on the front of the cabinet itself. The Hitachi Systematics 5001 (\$1,500) has two headphone jacks at the bottom of a front panel; at the top is a row of buttons corresponding to the various input sources. These are connected to a microprocessor control unit that powers the appropriate component when an input source is chosen. The tape deck, when selected, will go into play; the turntable will determine the size of the record, set the speed accordingly, and begin playing.

The Panasonic Soundscape P9 (\$1,500) includes a five-band graphic equalizer and a straight-line-tracking turntable with microprocessor control that can be programmed to play individual cuts on a record in any order. At a somewhat higher price (\$1,650), the H. H. Scott Slimcom 375SL offers a 65-W/ch power amp, a moving-coil phono preamp stage, and a cassette

deck with Dolby-C noise reduction.

Kenwood has two groups of rack systems that are being sold through separately franchised dealers. One, the Spectrum series, is meant primarily for mass merchandisers; Spectrum systems are sold only as complete units. The Series 81, on the other hand, is made up of regular Kenwood separates. The 8150 R-1 has a wireless remote-control unit that can turn the system on and off, select the input, operate the tape deck or tuner in all modes, and control the automatic turntable as well.

Remote control is increasingly popular in the more expensive rack systems. For example, Hitachi's Systematics 3500 Wireless Remote (\$1,700) and Sony's FR-5000 (\$1,850 with optional cassette deck) have three-way speakers; the Sony uses flat-membrane "ribbon" tweeters and 13-inch woofers. The FR-5000 has an optional accessory unit that allows a second remote control to be used from another room. One of the least expensive remotely controlled systems is the Sherwood System 4000 (\$925).

FISHER makes four remote systems, the fanciest of which is the 9500 (\$2,600). The control center for the 9500 contains a digital clock and a seven-day timer with a capacity of twenty programs. The preamp in the 9500 has lots of pushbuttons, no knobs, and only two sliders (the tone controls); it contains a moving-coil cartridge preamp, two tape-monitor loops with dubbing in both directions, and twin LED level meters. Any of Sansui's Supercompo systems can be remotely operated with an optional control center. The Series 900 Supercompo systems allow the user to cross-fade between any two inputs manually; the top two systems will perform this trick automatically.

BSR has a family of mix-and-match systems, offering the buyer a choice among two receivers, three turntables, two cassette decks (one with both Dolby-B and dbx noise reduction and disc decoding), and three different speaker systems. Also available as options are an octave-band equalizer, a spectrum analyzer with pink-noise source and microphone, and a programmable timer/controller which will operate BSR's X-10 lighting and appliance modules.

Optonica offers racks in which any of their components can be placed, as well as two complete systems, both using two-way loudspeakers with 8-inch woofers. The systems use 20- and 30-W/ch receivers and cost \$650 and \$800, respectively. Marantz, having discovered that customers associate their name with gold faceplates (remember the old Model Seven



KLH System 500



H. H. Scott Slimcom 450SL



Onkyo Soundstage SR-500



Marantz
Golden Renaissance



Optonica System 3300



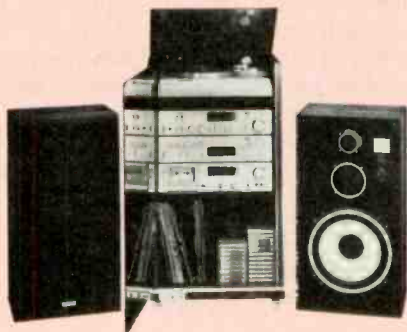
Sansui Supercompo 9100



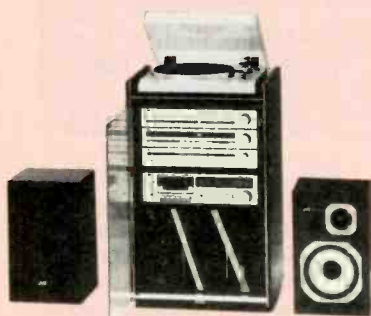
BSR Rack Component System



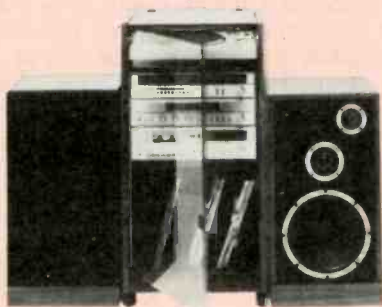
Kenwood Spectrum Model 70



Akai Pro-1055



JVC Model G-1C Mk II



Sanyo System 2003



Sherwood System 4000 Remote

preamp?), has a series of rack systems called Golden Renaissance which have, of course, gold-plated connectors in all the electronics. Prices range from \$900 to \$2,555. The fancier systems have slimline cassette decks with sliding-drawer cassette insertion as well as ten-band equalizers and walnut-veneer cabinets. The German firm of Saba imports mix-and-match systems ranging in price from \$1,265 to \$2,130; their cabinets are extremely attractive and are available in light oak, walnut, dark oak, rosewood, and black ash veneers. Saba's cassette decks employ the High-com noise-reduction system but are also equipped with Dolby-B circuits.

Among the most elaborate and expensive rack systems is the Rotel 1010, which offers a 100-W/ch power amp, a full-feature preamp, a ten-band real-time analyzer and separate octave equalizer, a quartz-synthesized digital FM tuner, a direct-drive turntable, and a three-head cassette deck. The list price is \$2,982 without speakers.

And if you want to go all out, you can assemble a complete rack system from individual components made by SAE. Their MC-10 rack, which is built to the standard 19-inch width and will hold any brand of professional gear, is 5 feet tall. With their most basic preamp, a digital FM tuner, a dual four-band parametric equalizer, a 400-W/ch power amp for the front channels, a time-delay ambiance system, a 150-W/ch power amp for the rear channels, a tick-and-pop suppressor, a forced-air cooling system, and a pair of headphones (but still no turntable or speakers), the package will weigh close to 200 pounds and will set you back just over \$5,700.

Who Should Buy One?

Whether or not a seasoned audiophile should buy a rack system is a complicated question. The first, and most important, issue is flexibility. If you like to try different components and you need to be able to change your system around at will, you should choose from the group of brands that allows for easy substitution. This is especially true at both ends of the playback chain—the cartridge and the speakers. These are the components that most strongly affect sound quality, and if experience is any guide, you are probably better off buying these components from the specialist companies you already know and love.

The second issue is the "rack" itself. Except for the rare cases in which wood veneers are used, most of the "rack" cabinets will be very similar—glass doors on the front, sometimes a separate glass top over the turntable,

SYSTEMS...

"For those who are short of both money and space, rack systems are not the best bet."

hooded casters, and front-panel headphone jacks, the side panels covered with vinyl in black or a wood-grain pattern. The appearance of these systems will please you if you like the high-tech look, but they will never be inconspicuous. On the other hand, it *can* be very handy to be able to roll your equipment out from the wall to a position near your listening chair; many an audiophile has worn a footpath in his carpet trekking back and forth between chair and amplifier controls. And even if you never roll it from place to place, an equipment cabinet of this type is better than an open stack of components for other reasons: it offers protection from dust, it looks neater, and it keeps the connecting cables out of sight and away from children and pets.

Japanese manufacturers apparently see the rack-system customer as being especially feature-conscious, and some interesting ideas have gone into these package systems recently. Remote control, for example, turns out to be very handy. The turntables and the electronics in the more expensive rack systems use advanced technology such as straight-line tracking, d.c. servo power-amplifier circuitry with variable-bias "quasi-class-A" output stages, Dolby-C or dbx noise reduction, pre-preamplification for moving-coil pickups, flexible recorder switching, sophisticated FM circuitry, and so on. There are additional features, such as microphone mixers with built-in verb or automatic cross-fading between inputs, that add complexity without bringing any vital benefit to most serious listeners.

Recommending One

A market-wise audiophile can probably make his way through this technical tangle without much advice from anyone. He'll know whether any individual system offers what he wants, and if he already has preferences in loudspeakers and cartridges, or special needs in the area of tuner sensitivity or high power, he won't be buying an entire rack system anyway. But what about friends? Should he tell them to buy a rack system? For starters, you should suggest that they observe the same caution the experts do: choose the speakers *most*

carefully. Many of the speakers that come with these systems have a 70-Hz hump together with a high-frequency or midrange peak which combine to make them stand out on the discount-house or department-store floor on a noisy Saturday afternoon but which can produce instant headache once you get them home. Helping your advisee steer clear of the speaker-system pitfall is one of the most important things you can do no matter what kind of system—rack or otherwise—he or she wants. (The phono cartridge has its own set of caveats, and a poor choice can end up damaging an entire record collection.)

Anyone who is contemplating spending what one of the better rack systems costs is at least *fairly* likely to want to upgrade the system later. This is another reason for recommending systems

BEYOND THE RACK: THE CASCEIVER



Sansui's Model CR-M7 casceiver with turntable, cabinet, and matching speakers.

with built-in flexibility. If the system is assembled using the manufacturers' regular component line, so much the better; some of the pieces may end up on the used market eventually and they will fetch better prices if they are well-known models.

If you give advice about hi-fi, you have the same obligation that a salesman has to find out what your "customer" really wants and needs. You can be fairly confident that the electronics in the rack systems will sound decent and perform dependably, assuming you stick to the name brands seen in ads in the pages of hi-fi magazines. An equalizer is always a benefit for those who take an interest in good sound; it can help compensate for faulty source material—and it's a wonderful teaching tool for critical listening, whether or not it is used for that purpose deliberately! And timer operation and remote control are surely just as useful to the tyro as to the advanced hobbyist.

It may be that what your advisee wants is a fancy-looking toy with lots of features and imposing appearance. He doesn't, in other words, want to be involved with audio beyond simply turning the system on and playing it. For such a buyer, the rack system offers a considerable degree of what is condescendingly known as "idiot-proofing." Digital-synthesis tuners that can't be mistuned, full-logic cassette decks with jam-proof controls, turntables and tape recorders that cue themselves at the start of selections without outside assistance, and tape decks that start and stop automatically when music is fed to them all help prevent damage to both your friend's system and your reputation as adviser. (All but the last of these features are also available in separate components, however.)

For the style-conscious customer who wants good performance and lots of automatic features but who doesn't want a large and gaudy piece of furniture, there is always the Bang & Olufsen Beocenter 7000. It contains a turntable, cassette deck, and a receiver with complete remote-control facilities, all housed in a low, wide Danish-modern case for \$2,100, speakers extra.

For those who are short of both money and space, rack systems are *not* the best bet. The most economical route to decent sound always involves the combination of electronic components into a single chassis to avoid the duplication of expensive cases and power supplies. The logical extension of this principle is the rather new "component" known as a cassette-deck/receiver or casceiver. Described in detail in our September issue, this unit combines everything but turntable and speakers into a single cabinet the size of a moderately powered receiver of three years ago, and it is the logical choice for dormitory rooms or summer cottages.

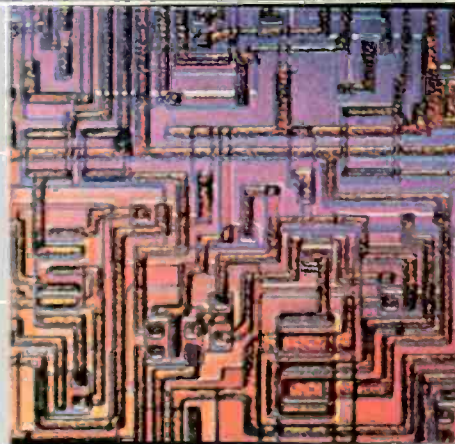
In sum, the type of cabinet that houses single-brand rack systems can be the answer for those audiophiles and non-hobbyists who like its appearance and convenience. The components housed in the racks offer useful design features and good, if not state-of-the-art, performance. The best of the turntables sold with these systems are likely to be very good indeed, although most are only adequate. The loudspeakers are a probable weak point: they are extremely variable and should be auditioned very carefully before buying. As a class, these new systems seem to be selling fairly well, but it is far too early to say with certainty what their eventual role in the market place will be. For now, they offer an interesting new alternative for some buyers. □

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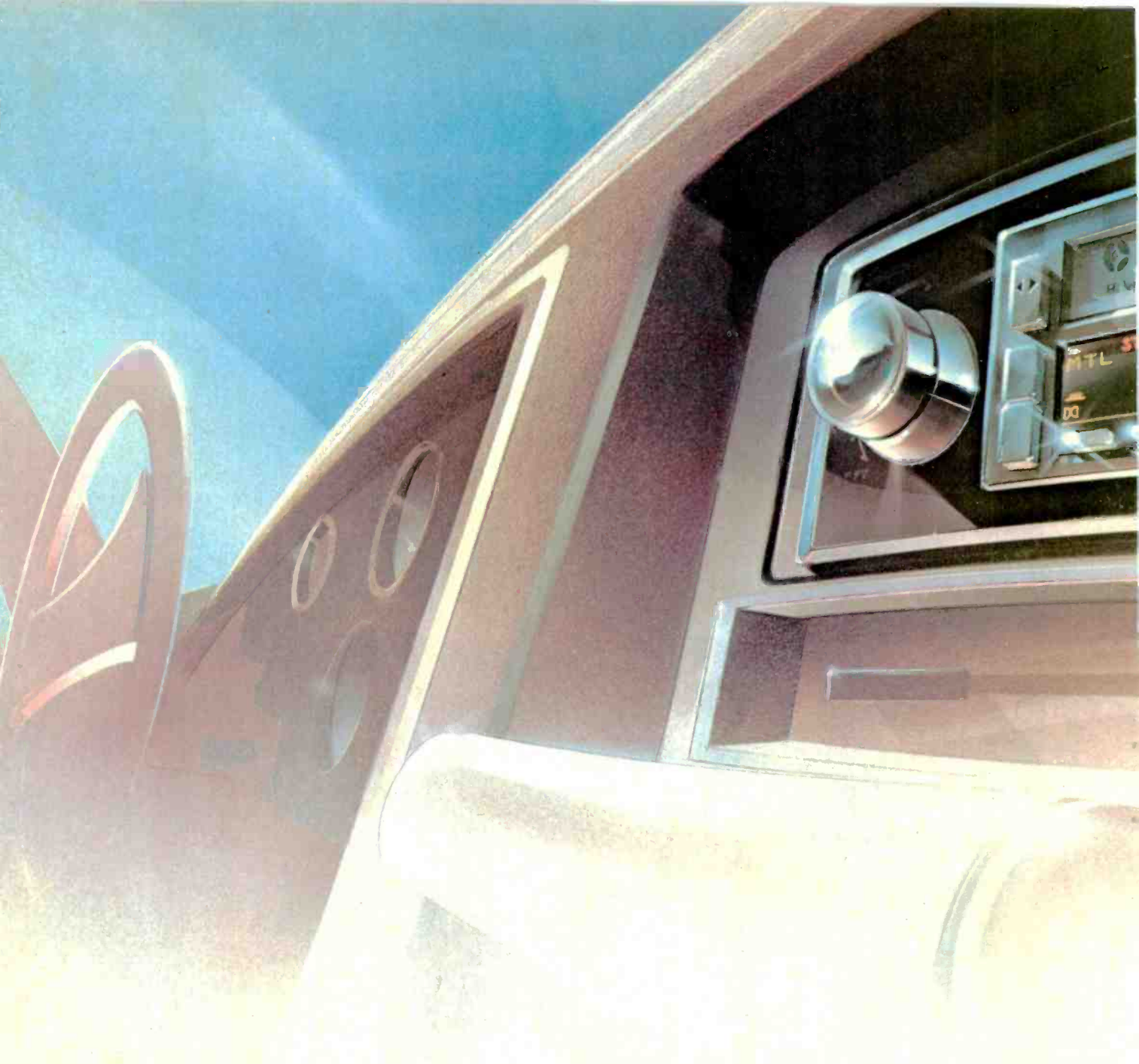
5. 15,000 DEALERS IN THE U.S. AND CANADA.
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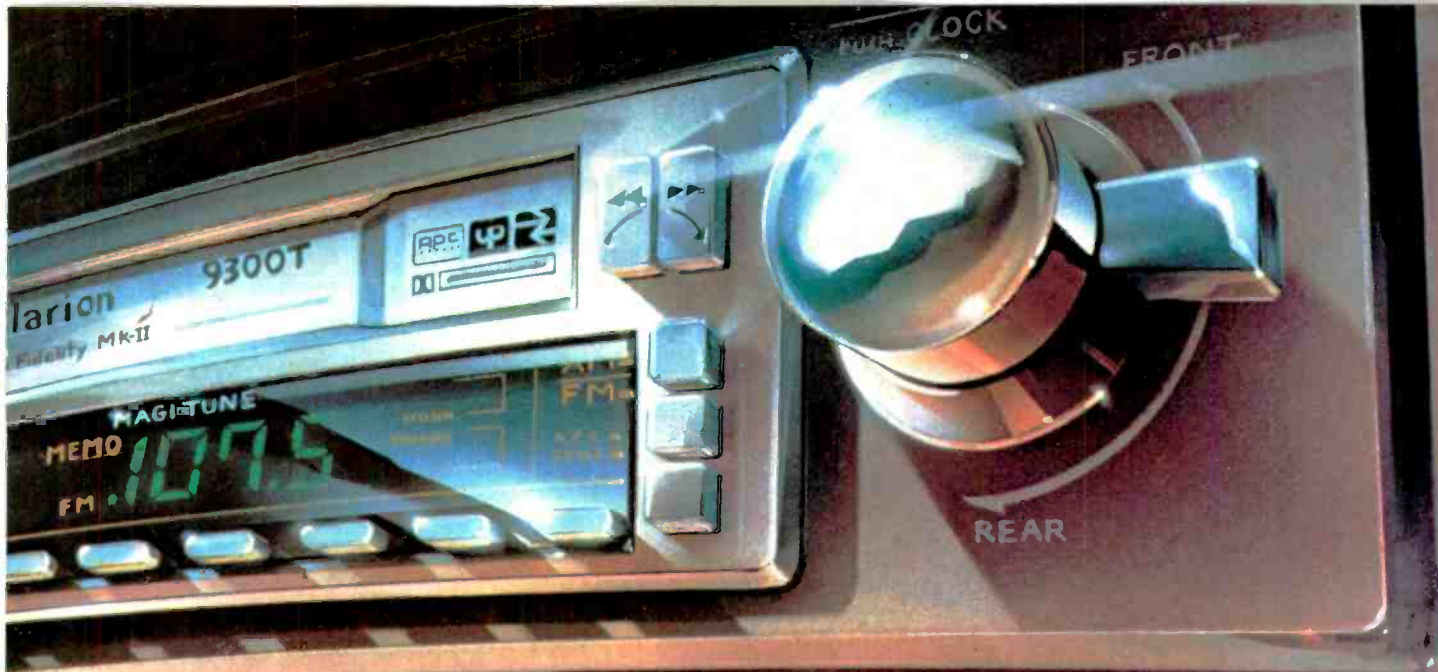
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Aretha Franklin
(Photo: David Redfern/Retna)

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH



• Aretha Franklin's Sensational "Love All the Hurt Away" •

IT was almost twenty-two years ago that I became an Aretha Franklin fan. She had made her debut album on Columbia with pianist Ray Bryant, and I was on the air in Philadelphia with a morning jazz show. They were trying to pour Aretha into a jazz mold back then; we had just lost Billie Holiday, and Columbia's John Hammond, who had had a hand in launching Billie's recording career, seemed to be saying "here's another one." But jazz was not the genre Aretha was most comfortable with, and while she sounded great singing such songs as *Today I Sing the Blues*, her church background clearly demanded that she bend the notes in a different direction.

The opportunity to do that came in 1967, when Aretha defected to the Atlantic label where she was, as her producer Jerry Wexler once described it, "put back in church." It must have been painful for Columbia to see how simply Atlantic was able to transform their "discovery" (Aretha actually made her first commercially released recordings in her father's Detroit church in the late Fifties) into a chart-topping success. Her Columbia recordings had yet to break even, according to Hammond, when Atlantic almost overnight taught church-rock to a youthful market through the vocal calisthenics of the "Queen of Soul." The rest, as they say, is history. But the story continues, for when the wheel of Aretha's fortune at Atlantic slowed down, Arista, a label not even in existence when she last reigned supreme, gave that

wheel another push and set it to spinning rewardingly again.

"Love All the Hurt Away" is Aretha's second Arista album, and like her first ("Aretha," AL-9538) it is already turning out (and on) a new generation of Aretha Franklin fans. The lady has simply never been in better form; her very *breath* has more feeling, more substance, and more honesty than you'll get from any of the ninety-nine singers she might have to share a chart with, and producer/arranger Arif Mardin (with whom she also worked at Atlantic) knows precisely how best to mix that combination of pure ingredients. The varied program displays many fac-

ARETHA FRANKLIN: *Love All the Hurt Away*. Aretha Franklin (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Hold On I'm Comin'*; *It's My Turn*; *There's a Star for Everyone*; *Search On*; *Truth and Honesty*; *You Can't Always Get What You Want*; *Kind of Man*; *Living in the Streets*; *Love All the Hurt Away*; *Whole Lot of Me*. ARISTA AL 9552 \$7.98, © ATC 9552 \$7.98, © ATC 9552 \$7.98.

ets of Aretha's singing talent, ranging from such older items as *Hold On I'm Comin'*, the 1966 Sam and Dave hit, through a fine collection of her own originals (Aretha the songwriter is not

to be taken lightly) to, surprisingly, *It's My Turn* (from the film of the same name), a song that was a hit only recently for Diana Ross. Aretha can sing rings around Miss Ross, so it should surprise no one that her rendering makes the latter's soundtrack version seem rather bland. A comparison of these two approaches to the same song points up the naturalness of Aretha's style; it's as if she were saying, "Move over, Barbie doll, it's *my* turn."

Among the Franklin originals is the title song, co-written with George Benson, who also joins in vocally, and here for once he does not sound like Stevie Wonder. It is one of the prettier tracks on an album that weaves in and out of the bad and the beautiful—"bad" in the complimentary slang sense, of course. *Hold On I'm Comin'* belongs in the "bad" category. Arranged to perfection by Mardin and Larry Williams, it is a joyous celebration of Aretha's early Atlantic years, a high-energy romp of the *Respect* and *Chain of Fools* school.

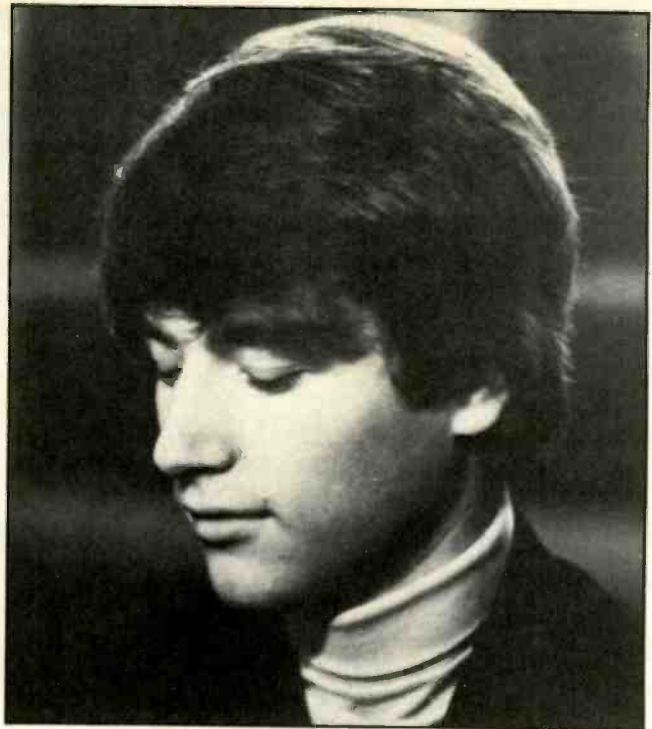
In 1970 Aretha transformed the Beatles' *Eleanor Rigby* into a highly personal statement, and here she lends the inimitable Franklin touch to a 1973 Rolling Stones hit, *You Can't Always Get What You Want*, turning it (with a little help from a choir directed by the Reverend James Cleveland) into a number that can only give encouragement to what some see as a return to disco dancing; there's much more to Aretha's disco than mere shouts and thumps. *(Continued overleaf)*

“. . . Aretha is still one of the most original and stunning singers we have. . . .”



Lifesong Records

NINA KAHLE: a lot of good influences



Shaw Attractions, Inc.

DEZSŐ RÁNKI: solid, mature musicianship

I hope you are beginning to get my drift: this is a *sensational* album. After all these years, Aretha is still one of the most original and stunning singers we have, and if there is anything dated about even her earliest Columbia recordings it is not her performances—they remain a superb constant. The term “artist” is loosely used these days, but Aretha Franklin is one in the truest sense of the word: when she sings, it is from deep within, and no listener can doubt it.

—Chris Albertson

Singer Nina Kahle: Working the Interface Between Folk Song And Art Song

YOU may have first seen and heard Nina Kahle in some TV commercial. I know I did: a brief glimpse of her face and a snippet of *Deep, Down and Real*, which turns out to be the title song of her new Lifesong album. Generally speaking, TV is a trivializing environment and I don't expect much from it (ballgames aside), but this album is something special. Kahle sounds at times like Judy Collins and at times like Joni Mitchell, and she indicates in

a couple of numbers here that she could do a crackerjack imitation of Linda Ronstadt too, if that were any part of her plan.

She also sounds like Mitchell and Collins in the writing as well as in the singing, working, as they do, at the interface between folk song and art song. Indeed, her *Love Man* has so many Joni Mitchell traits—even including Joni-style dulcimer accompaniment—that it would work as a parody if she had given it funny lyrics. Ditto Judy Collins and either *Caroline* or *Women at Sea*. Kahle's adventurous, unfettered approach to assembling chord progressions and putting weird bends in a melody also reminds me somewhat of the McGarrigle sisters.

She has, in short, synthesized a lot of what I consider good influences, but she has also put her own stamp on everything. There is a certain richness in her voice that is hers alone, and, unless this little songwriting outburst is some kind of fluke, there is more songwriting talent there than most of us have encountered so far in the Eighties. In fact, I think her writing is a little further developed than her singing; she should, in time, accentuate her own unique vocal qualities and tone down those echoes of other people, as other great imitators (George Jones was a notorious example) have learned to do. She will also have to deal with the question of Whether to Falsetto a little more gracefully than she does here—in, say, *Reach for the Sky*. But then the writing

that went into *Usual Case of the Blues* and *Caroline* is further developed than most people's singing is. The one non-original song here, Holland-Dozier-Holland's pretty good *This Old Heart of Mine*, seems trite and simple-minded when it is put up against most of her own songs.

You can almost hear producers Terry Cashman and Tommy West salivating in the background; they haven't had this much talent to work with since Jim Croce died. They have keyed the instrumentation to the piano and kept clangorous electric guitars out of most of it (the attempt to get a more or less conventional rock-band sound in *Two Souls on the Rebound* brings on most of the album's lesser moments), and the sound is as hard to fit into a category as the songs are. In *Red Dress*, Kahle is backed only by an electric bass. I'm not sure it was the best way of doing it, but you've got to admire the spirit with which it was done.

A toast, then, to the rare kid who comes along and puts the old elements of music together in new ways and restores a measure of faith in the pop-folk process. Here's looking at you, Nina Kahle!

—Noel Coppage

NINA KAHLE: *Deep, Down and Real*. Nina Kahle (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Usual Case of the Blues*; *Deep, Down and Real*; *This Old Heart of Mine*; *Love a Man*; *Tahiti, So Can I*; *Caroline*; *Two Souls on the Rebound*; *Women at Sea*; *Red Dress*; *Reach for the Sky*. LIFESONG LS 8132 \$7.98, © LSX 8132 \$7.98.



THE BACH ENSEMBLE:
conductor Joshua Rifkin
at right, soprano
Judith Nelson third
from left

Brahms' F Minor Quintet: A Youthfully Exultant, Self-assertive Work Compellingly Performed

THERE are three young pianists in Budapest right now who have been drawing more and more attention to themselves with their solid, mature musicianship. András Schiff and Zoltán Kocsis have this year presented new recordings of the piano music of their great compatriot Béla Bartók, and Dezső Ránki, at thirty the senior member of this young triumvirate, can be heard in a not quite brand-new recording, in collaboration with the eponymous Bartók Quartet, of a youthful masterwork by that most illustrious of "honorary Hungarians," Johannes Brahms. Although the jacket on the Hungaroton disc of the Piano Quintet carries the notation "© 1980," I would take this to be a remastering of the recording issued four or five years ago in a multidisc set with Brahms' Clarinet Quintet and his three piano quartets (each with a different pianist, none of the above). Since I missed that set I'm especially glad to have this version of the Piano Quintet come around again on its own, for I'd be hard put to think of another that has given me so much pleasure.

Ránki, who must have been about twenty-five when the recording was

made, is not only a marvelous pianist but a superb musician (in contravention of the oft-quoted Leschetizky dictum), and the Bartók Quartet, by now one of Hungary's senior chamber-music ensembles (founded 1957), is a splendid team we ought to be hearing more regularly. The meshing of these two elements in the Brahms is utterly complete and utterly joyous: all five musicians seem to be in love with the work and to love performing it with each other. While there is great rhythmic solidity throughout the four movements, there is nothing anywhere resembling heaviness, nothing at all earthbound: this is the young Brahms in exultant self-assertion, after all, and the music flows with a freshness and spontaneity which in this case might well remind one of the composer's own affection for Hungarian music and musicians. The first-movement repeat is not taken, and indeed it would have been a gratuitous bit of baggage restraining the sublime momentum built up here. The slow movement flows with weightless delicacy rather than sobriety, the scherzo is incredibly exciting, and the finale seems to show Brahms affirming his love for Schubert in a glowing, exuberant language uniquely his own.

Both the vitality and the luster of the performance are well served by the rich and vivid recording, with excellent balance between piano and strings and within the string group, and the surfaces on my copy are exemplary. An altogether compelling, altogether delight-

ful release, and a not unreasonable first choice among all current recordings of the work. —Richard Freed

BRAHMS: *Quintet in F Minor for Piano and Strings, Op. 34.* Dezső Ránki (piano); Bartók Quartet. HUNGAROTON SLPX 12280 \$9.98 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

The Bach Ensemble: Joy and Tenderness Delicately Balanced in Bach's *Wedding Cantata*

PERHAPS one of Bach's most exquisite works for soprano, the Cantata No. 210 (*The Wedding Cantata*) discusses the place of music in conjugal life while capturing a delicate balance of joy and tenderness that is a special part of Bach's genius. In a just-released Nonesuch album, Judith Nelson and the Bach Ensemble, conducted from the harpsichord by Joshua Rifkin, recreate that spirit perfectly in a gracious performance characterized by ease and charm.

Miss Nelson's light soprano voice is beautifully focused. She tosses off



BEST OF THE MONTH: RECENT SELECTIONS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

CLASSICAL

- Franck: *Organ Music*. L'OISEAU-LYRE D16503. "A three-way triumph for repertoire, performer, and instrument." (October)
- Janáček: *Sinfonietta; Taras Bulba*. LONDON LDR 71021. "Revelatory performances . . . outstandingly successful digital recording." (November)
- 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 Choruses; other works*. RCA ARL1-3988. "Stunning performances in one of the most stimulating releases of the year." (October)
- Schubert: *Schwanengesang*. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 325. "Remarkably well done live performance and recording." (November)
- 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)
- *The Unknown Kurt Weill*. NONESUCH D-79019. "An instant classic . . . could not have been done better." (November)

POPULAR

- Chick Corea: *Three Quartets*. WARNER BROS. BSK 3552. "Extraordinary acoustic piano." (November)
- Kid Creole and the Coconuts: *Fresh Fruit In Foreign Places*. SIRE SRK 3534. "Devilish musical satire served up with style." (October)
- Lacy J. Dalton: *Takin' It Easy*. COLUMBIA FC 37327. "A spine-tingling reminder of why we sing in the first place." (November)
- Peter Dinklage: *Where Did the Magic Go?* MONMOUTH/EVERGREEN MES/7092. "The best album yet by as convincing a singer as you'll ever hear." (November)
- 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)
- 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)

Bach's sinuous lines effortlessly with a sense of articulation and feeling for phrase that transform even the most difficult coloratura into natural, heartfelt expression. The ensemble of authentic instruments offers just the right support, and the obbligato playing by oboe d'amore, flute, and violin matches her style and volume to the letter. Certainly, of all the Bach cantatas recorded on early instruments, this is musically the most rewarding, for it is no mere stylistic document, but rather a celebration of music and musicians. Let us hope that Mr. Rifkin will expand the horizons of the Bach Ensemble and give us some of the choral cantatas.

—Stoddard Lincoln

J. S. BACH: *Cantata No. 210, "O! holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit."* Judith Nelson (soprano); Bach Ensemble, Joshua Rifkin cond. NONESUCH D-79013 \$11.98.

best known for his rare ability to imitate the melodic nuances and rhythmic textures of instruments, his albums stand out from the vinyl crowd in several other respects.

The songs he sings and frequently composes (often in collaboration with others, for he is a musician without formal training) are not always readily hummable—they are full of unexpected twists and changes, challenging the ear to follow. Though his lyrics tend to be simple paeans of love, this does not rule out regular approaches to other universal themes. Then there is the exceptional quality of his vocal instrument. Though neither the unforgettably resonant baritone of a Johnny Hartman nor the startlingly high tenor of many run-of-the-mill r-&-b singers, it is memorably fluid, flexible, and sweet, beautifully designed to accomplish the unique musical goals Jarreau sets for himself.

On his new album, "Breakin' Away," all of these special qualities are found in abundance. He lavishes all his artistry on *Easy*, a bright-hued Brazilian selection whose materials might have been borrowed from Milton Nascimento's palette but have been used to paint a picture that is completely Jarreau's own. *My Old Friend* finds him in his best popular mood, bounding through a lyric and a melody that are as warmly appealing as any he has produced so far. Every Jarreau album contains one real show-stopper, and here it is Dave Brubeck's all but unsingable jazz evergreen *Blue Rondo à la Turk* transformed into a vocal tour de force, rest-

Al Jarreau: A Voice Beautifully Designed To Accomplish Some Unique Musical Goals

THE high level of craftsmanship and musical sensitivity that Al Jarreau brings to his vocal art makes each of his recordings an adventure. While he is

AL JARREAU: craftsmanship and sensitivity



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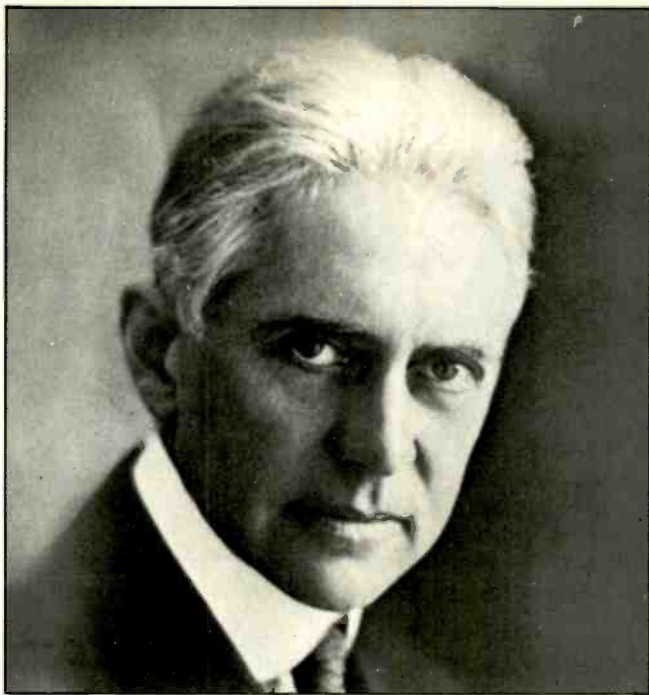
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Brice Farwell



ARTHUR FARWELL: *an accomplished American original*

The Granger Collection



CHARLES WAKEFIELD CADMAN: *the elusive "indigenous" style*

less, breathless, and irresistible. He caps it all off with an oldie, *Teach Me Tonight*, made brand new with a kind of sophisticated crooning that turns out to be just what the song needed.

Jarreau's unflagging willingness to stretch his artistic reach to new heights marks him as a vocalist of uncommon distinction. It also ensures that each of his albums, including this one, can be listened to many times without exhausting its many possibilities.

—Phyl Garland

AL JARREAU: *Breakin' Away*. Al Jarreau (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Closer to Your Love; My Old Friend; We're in This Love Together; Easy; Our Love; Breakin' Away; Roof Garden; Blue Rondo à la Turk; Teach Me Tonight*. WARNER BROS. BSK 3576 \$7.98, © M5 3576 \$7.98, © M8 3576 \$7.98.

Superb Performances of Cello and Piano Works by Two All-but-forgotten American Composers

ARTHUR FARWELL was a Minnesota-born composer (1872-1952) who started out in life wanting to be an engineer (he actually attended M.I.T.) but later turned to music instead. He

also got hung up on American Indian culture, founding a publishing house called the Wa-Wan Press and dedicating it to "seriously progressive American music," much of it related to American Indian culture. He turned out piano pieces like the *Navajo War Dance* and *Impressions of the Wa-Wan Ceremony of the Omahas*, and for a time he was chief critic for *Musical America*.

Happily for American music, Farwell was also intrigued by things French and wrote some lovely chamber works strongly influenced by César Franck. One of these is his Piano Quintet (available on Musical Heritage Society MHS 3827); another is a richly textured cello sonata, his last numbered opus (No. 116), composed in 1950 and just released on the Musical Heritage Society label. It is a work that abounds in intriguing twists despite its traditional harmonic structure. It is also artfully constructed and sunnily songful, though in the final movement the weather darkens and there is some stormy going. The second Farwell piece on this new disc is *Land of Luthany*, composed in 1931 and inspired by a stanza in Francis Thompson's ballad *The Mistress of Vision*. It's a dreamy-eyed, dark-hued work.

Charles Wakefield Cadman, whose music fills out the record, was born in Pennsylvania in 1881 and died in Los Angeles in 1946. He was best known for his American Indian-inspired concert ballad *From the Land of the Sky-Blue Water*, which they used to make

us sing when I was going to public school more years ago than I like to think. I have no idea whether it's still required fare for the glee club, but it made Cadman rich and enabled him, like Farwell, to pursue his exploration of American Indian harmonies in search of an "indigenous" style. But he too abandoned that route eventually and turned to more rewarding themes in compositions such as his *Huckleberry Finn Goes Fishing* of 1945. A year earlier he had written *A Mad Empress Remembers*, a tone poem about Carlota, the widow of Mexico's Maximilian. Carlota suffered a breakdown in Italy in 1866—a year before the execution of her husband—and spent the rest of her days, until 1927, in a Belgian castle, dreaming her life away in a world of shadows. (This curious music, which deals with the moods and madness of the empress, also exists in a version for cello and orchestra.)

Both composers are sensitively interpreted in these performances by cellist Douglas Moore, who also wrote the superbly informative notes for the album, and pianist Paula Ennis-Dwyer. An unusual, and unusually satisfying, disc of unjustly neglected Americana.

—Paul Kresh

FARWELL: *Sonata for Cello and Piano; Land of Luthany*. **CADMAN:** *A Mad Empress Remembers*. Douglas Moore (cello); Paula Ennis-Dwyer (piano). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4348 \$7.75 (plus \$1.60 postage and handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Popular Music Briefs



Spada Publications / Greg Gorman



The Legendary Barbra



The Divine Sarah

Culver Pictures, Inc.

DESPITE the way press agents use the word "legendary" to mean "very famous" in describing their clients, dictionaries generally define a legend as an unverifiable story from the distant past. In the latter sense there is nothing legendary about the phenomenal career of singing actress **Barbra Streisand**. Since it has all taken place in the last twenty years, many of the people who helped her make it happen are still around, and James Spada and Christopher Nickens have consulted a lot of them to verify details included in their new biography *Streisand: the Woman and the Legend* (Doubleday, 250 pp., \$24.95 hardbound, \$10.95 paperback).

Particularly interesting is the account of her early years and the speed with which Streisand became a star. She had a small role in her first Broadway show, *I Can Get It for You Wholesale*, which opened March 22, 1962. Her first solo recording, "The Barbra Streisand Album" on Columbia, was released in February 1963, and within two weeks it had made her the best-selling female vocalist in the United States. Later that

year President John F. Kennedy invited her to perform at the White House. By the time she went to London with the show *Funny Girl* in 1966, she was said to be the highest-paid singer in the world.

A critic reviewing *I Can Get It for You Wholesale* described Streisand as looking like "an amiable anteater," and a female member of the staff of this magazine once commented, "When I was a girl, if you looked like Barbra Streisand, you *did* something about it." Instead of changing herself, what Streisand did was to make the public revise its standards of beauty and glamour.

Among the first to recognize Streisand's tremendous potential were a number of the most successful performers. Barbra got her first Las Vegas engagement because Liberace insisted that she be hired as the opening act for his show at the Riviera Hotel. What he admired about her most, he said, was her perfectionism. Judy Garland invited Streisand to make a guest appearance on her TV series and described Barbra as "thrilling." Streisand herself is quoted as saying: "I am a cross

between a washerwoman and a princess. I am a bit coarse, a bit low, a bit vulgar and a bit ignorant. But I am also part princess—sophisticated, elegant, and controlled. I can appeal to everyone."

The book recounts Streisand's accomplishments on stage, in movies, and on records and comes right up to her plans to direct a movie this fall. Although one of the authors (Nickens) is the editor of *Barbra*, a quarterly fan magazine devoted to Streisand's career, the tone of the prose here is admiring but not gushy. The pictures—many of them never before published—are excellent. In the early Sixties, when Streisand was on the cover of *Time* and *Newsweek*, her talent was compared to that of Sarah Bernhardt. The last photo in the book is a portrait that makes her look like Bernhardt, and she

may yet play the Divine Sarah. Interesting for the general reader, the book is undoubtedly indispensable for Streisand fans. Their number is legion—or does that sound too much like "legendary"? —W.L.

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS. Three previously available works on major rock figures have just been reissued in expanded, updated form, one in hardcover, the other two as paperbacks. The hardcover is *Song and Dance Man: The Art of Bob Dylan* by Michael Gray (St. Martin's Press, \$14.95), a critical study of the Hibbing Bard's work that originally appeared in 1972. This is fairly scholarly stuff, Gray takes Dylan very, very seriously, and the general tone is that of a doctoral thesis. But there are some provocative insights, especially in the chapter



Gary Gerlach

THE eyes have it. That's the all but ubiquitous **Kim Carnes** (of *Bette Davis Eyes* fame) backstage after a recent gig at Manhattan night spot the Savoy. Ms. Carnes, whose ode to the great film star's peepers has turned into either the best

slice of commercial pop or the biggest AM annoyance of 1981 (depending on your politics), is seen here hobnobbing with **Lionel Richie** of the Commodores (right) and a beardless, all-but-unrecognizable **Peter Wolf** of the J. Geils Band. □

placing Dylan in the context of rock history. Gray understands, for instance, that there is a connective link between Chuck Berry's *Too Much Monkey Business*, Dylan's own *Subterranean Homesick Blues*, and Elvis Costello's more recent *Pump It Up*. As a bonus, there are some absolutely astounding photos of the mid-Sixties Dylan (many in color) that you probably haven't seen before.

Somewhat less esoteric is *'Scuse Me While I Kiss the Sky: The Life of Jimi Hendrix* by David Henderson (Bantam, \$8.95), which first appeared in 1978 under a different title and has now been reissued in a not very subtle attempt to cash in on the huge success of the recent bio of Jim Morrison. This is an odd, odd book. Henderson seems to be one of those people for whom the Sixties remain the mother lode of prose invention, and his style is so trippy and like, oh wow, man, that it's, ya know, terminally off-putting. Frankly, I had forgotten how much dopey rhetoric we learned to tolerate during the decade. However, Henderson sincerely loves Hendrix's music, knows it cold, and makes a convincing case for Jimi as the Charlie Parker of the electric guitar. An interesting, if eccentric, read.

Finally, the book that started it all, Dave Marsh's *Born to Run: The Bruce Springsteen Story*, is

now available in a small format (Dell, \$2.95), updated to include "The River" and the 1980-1981 tour. As a Springsteen enthusiast whose conversion predates Marsh's (the author conveniently neglects to mention his jokey, disdainful pan of Bruce's first album in *Creem*), I feel constrained to mention that I am somewhat less than enthusiastic about the book, heartfelt and well-researched though it is. No reflection on Marsh's critical judgments (though the essay on "Darkness on the Edge of Town" is written with such slack-jawed awe that it becomes ludicrous—Springsteen is not, after all, Beethoven), but his working-class snobbery is a major pain. He may really believe that if you didn't grow up on the wrong side of the tracks you can't love rock-and-roll, but most of us know better. Still, his central thesis—that Springsteen is the only truly great American rock hero since Presley—is well argued, and the early biographical stuff is nicely handled. In Marsh's own words, a fan's book. —S.S.

EVERY now and then a record comes along that reminds you of just how much fun rock-and-roll used to be. These days, more often than not, such records are small-label releases. Case in point: *Smokin'*



GRACENOTES: Fantasy Records, in its seemingly open-ended campaign to repackage the whole Creedence Clearwater Revival catalog, has just staked out "Creedence Country," a cleverly trendy compilation of the group's more down-home material. . . . Yes, that's Katharine Hepburn chatting up Michael Jackson (actress Katharine Houghton and Jackie Jackson at right) after a recent Jacksons concert in Manhattan; seems Michael and Kate have been pals since they were introduced (by Jane Fonda) during the filming of the

soon-to-be-released *On Golden Pond*. . . . Pioneering independent label Bomp Records, the brainchild of former rock critic Greg Shaw, has entered into a loose association with giant Polydor Records in a deal similar to the one I.R.S. has with A&M (who says New Wave is dead?). . . . And you'll want to know that Arista Records (U.K. division) is pitching the new Barry Manilow LP to dealers with the line "In Britain, somebody buys a Barry Manilow album every fifteen seconds." I say find that person and stop him immediately! —S.S.

in Bed by the **Noise** (Break Records BRK 001). A lyrically clever, melodically memorable slice of pop rock holed up somewhere between Badfinger and Bad Company, it's the kind of single that would be an ob-

vious hit if only most FM radio stations weren't programmed by market-research computers. This delight is available from Cut Corners, 430 Falmouth Road, North Babylon, N.Y. 11703. —S.S.

Disc and Tape Reviews

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

Ⓢ = stereo cassette

Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge

Ⓛ = digital-master recording

Ⓛ = direct-to-disc

Ⓛ = quadrasonic disc

Ⓛ = monophonic recording

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

ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND: *Brothers of the Road*. Allman Brothers Band (vocals and instrumentals). *Brothers of the Road; Leavin'; Straight from the Heart; The Heat Is On; The Judgment*; and five others. ARISTA AL 9564 \$8.98, © ACT 9564 \$8.98, Ⓢ A8T 9564 \$8.98.

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

The Allman Brothers Band has gone through some more personnel changes, but the problem here is that the tunes simply have no juice in them. Most sound better than they have any right to sound—Dickey Betts and Dan Toler get the old slide-lead guitar interplay working now and then—but few really get the lifelessness flogged

out of them. The band sounds ready to play, though, and Gregg Allman sounds ready to sing, if he and Betts and the other so-called writers here ever come up with something. For my nine bucks, they'll have to come up with more than this. N.C.

HERB ALPERT: *Magic Man*. Herb Alpert (trumpet, flugelhorn, vocals); orchestra. *Besame Mucho; Magic Man; Fantasy Island; Secret Garden; Manhattan Melody*; and three others. A&M SP-3728 \$8.98, © CS-3728 \$8.98, Ⓢ 8T-3728 \$8.98.

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

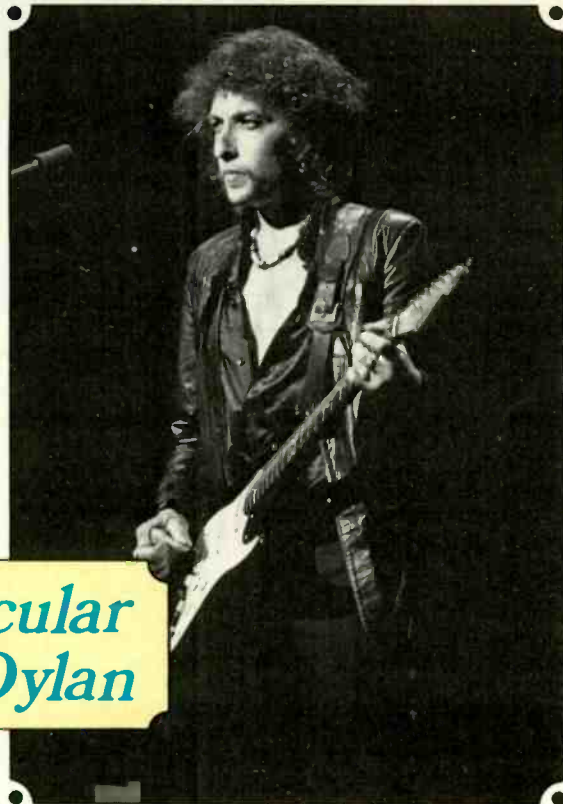
The famous Herb Alpert instrumental sound is still very much intact, and if you

are a fan of his you won't be disappointed by such lush (and gorgeously engineered) confections as *Besame Mucho*, *Manhattan Melody*, and *Magic Man*. I think even fans, however, will find Alpert's vocals on *I Get It from You* and other tracks here a strain on their affection. That breathy, reedy little quaver set amidst an almost tropically dense arrangement—surely that's not Herb Alpert? Unfortunately, it is. P.R.

HARRY BELAFONTE: *Loving You Is Where I Belong*. Harry Belafonte (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Something to Hold On To; Mary Makes Magic; The Rose; I Told You; Streets of London*; and five others. COLUMBIA FC

(Continued on page 84)

Semisecular Dylan



James Shive

PETER DEVRIES once said, in that way of his, "Surrealism may be the last of the mayonnaise of Romanticism oozing through the disintegrating club sandwich of the Western psyche." We have here an album from a fellow who used to practice surrealism by the pop-culture definition of the word but who has eliminated so much ambiguity from his message lately that the people who flip the pages of *People* magazine can get the point without blinking the customary glaze from their eyes. I'm talking about Bob Dylan, of course, whose new Columbia album, "Shot of Love," is semisecular but might as well be shelved with "Slow Train Coming" and "Saved," his fundamentalist born-again tract albums.

Dylan seems to have lost, or abandoned, his way with words. Why? I think in part it has to do with his being the chief victim of a precipitous decline in the public's appetite for the kind of folk romanticism he used to purvey. Dylan's original orientation is romantic. He not only came along emulating Woody Guthrie's music and lifestyle, but for the cover of "The Times They Are A-Changing," he even copied one of Woody's poses right down to the raised left eyebrow. Taking sanctuary in one of the militantly know-nothing houses of Christianity does not seem farfetched under the circumstances. Romantic philosophers such as Rousseau held, after all, that faith is stronger than reason, and cultural prinitivism—the view that salvation lies in a return to the simple life—was a central idea of historical Romanticism.

The circumstances in show biz have become such that romantics have been dropping like flies all about Dylan. The modern

troubadour and his idealistic songs have all but disappeared. Tom Rush is up in New Hampshire, trying to chart some sort of comeback. Jonathan Edwards is doing some similar head-scratching in Massachusetts. Eric Andersen is out of the picture. Tim Hardin, Phil Ochs, Tim Buckley, and Harry Chapin are dead. Joan Baez is out of sight and out of mind for long periods. Joni Mitchell has cooled her lyrics and taken sanctuary in jazz. Although punk rock is a reaction to this decline in romanticism, it's too childish to attract troubadours, who tend to be too imbued with ideals of craftsmanship and too set in their ways to unlearn how to play their instruments.

The troubadour's problem is not that all the trappings of romanticism have disappeared—people are *dressing* as if they were romantics, and in pop music now the melodies are often as voluptuous as Rubens nudes—but the old reverence for the Word has dropped off sharply. It's as if the new silent majority is saying to itself, "Words had their chance to save us and they failed." So we've had a rebirth of the Tin Pan Alley-bred words-as-filler approach, coincidental (?) with the notion that things are so bad it's better to dance than to think. ("Dance" in this sense includes playing with video games.) Dylan, who has always gotten a rise out of people, is still around and still getting a rise out of people—even if he has to savage the Word itself to do it. Well, irony is no stranger to an old troubadour.

I'm pretty sure the number of closet cheerleaders pulling for him to snap out of it is legion. The new album does not, unfortunately, show him snapping out of it; it has him applying the same simplistic funda-

mentalist approach (not very different from the *average* 1981 songwriter's approach) to a few secular songs. But at the same time, with *In the Summertime* and *Every Grain of Sand*, he has slightly upgraded the eloquence of his songs of faith. The title song, *Heart of Mine*, and *Watered-Down Love* are all mindless enough to make today's pop charts, and *Trouble* has almost nothing going on in it except a muscular beat. *Lenny Bruce*, a fallen-hero song, is a cut above the others, truly Dylanesque in the aside ("I rode with him/In a taxi once/Only went four miles and a half/Seemed like it took us a couple of months"), but *Watered-Down Love* is minimalist and prosaic doggerel and is hurting even more for a tune than it is for words.

Like Dylan's last two albums, this one is humorless. Humor is a good sign of identification with words, and it used to be fundamental in Dylan's work. Here he says—in *Property of Jesus*, a dark rejoinder to those who "laugh at him" and "talk behind his back" about his born-again stance—that we "say he's got no style/Because he doesn't tell you jokes or fairy tales." But those were *good* jokes and *necessary* fairy tales he used to tell.

Words aside, "Shot of Love" does have some pleasing stuff in it. The backing is almost the same as that of "Saved," yet it has a little more of the freewheeling clangor and jaunty interplay of reedy organ and lead instrument of "Highway 61 Revisited." Clydie King does nice work as a more prominent second voice. Dylan still suggests notes he doesn't hit and seems potentially as expressive as ever. And he still knows how to *construct* a song. The mating of structural elements here—verses to bridges, refrains to choruses, and so forth—shows a fine craftsmanship, especially in *Heart of Mine* and *Deadman, Deadman*. He has constructed nice melodies for *In the Summertime* and *Every Grain of Sand* and a beautiful, haunting, sinuous, Elizabethan one for *Lenny Bruce*.

NOT a great album, then, but not a bad one either in this time of lowered expectations. So where do we go from here? Whenever the times take us, I suppose, but keep in mind that in pop culture the times always take us to one extreme and then swing back toward the other. The swing time could outlast Dylan, not to mention you and me, but what was once important about Dylan will probably be important again. Keep the faith. The sandwich may be a mess, but I wouldn't count on never again encountering mayonnaise. —Noel Coppage

BOB DYLAN: *Shot of Love*. Bob Dylan (vocals, guitar, piano, harmonica); Jim Keltner (drums); Tim Drummond (bass); Fred Tackett (guitar); Clydie King, Regina McCrary, Carolyn Dennis, Madelyn Quebec (backing vocals); other musicians. *Shot of Love*; *Heart of Mine*; *Property of Jesus*; *Lenny Bruce*; *Watered-Down Love*; *Deadman, Deadman*; *In the Summertime*; *Trouble*; *Every Grain of Sand*. COLUMBIA TC 37496, © TCT 37496, ® TCA 37496, no list price.

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CARL CARLTON. Carl Carlton (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Sexy Lady*; *Let Me Love You 'Til the Morning Comes*; *Don't You Wanna Make Love*; *This Feeling's Rated X-tra*; *I've Got That Boogie Fever*; and three others. 20TH CENTURY-FOX T-628 \$8.98, © C-628 \$8.98, © 8-628 \$8.98.

Performance: **Rambunctious**
Recording: **Satisfactory**

Carl Carlton gets off to one of the worst starts here I've ever heard on an album with *Sexy Lady*, which has banal lyrics and a melody so clumsy it seems someone must be playing the wrong notes. But it's all up from there as he romps through such rambunctious upbeat dance numbers as *Don't You Wanna Make Love*, *I've Got That Boogie Fever*, and an especially sassy ditty called *She's a Bad Mama Jama (She's Built, She's Stacked)*. Carlton has a lively, get-down style with a touch of a shout in it. His weird knife-edged voice sounds at times like a police siren, but it works well for him. This isn't exactly the sort of record you'd want to cuddle up with, but it's super-charged funfare that could bring some bounce to a party. P.G.

COMMODORES: *In the Pocket*. Commodores (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *Lady (You Bring Me Up)*; *Saturday Night*; *Keep On Taking Me Higher*; *Oh No*; *Why You Wanna Try Me*; and three others. MOTOWN M8-955M1 \$8.98, © M8-955KC \$8.98, © M8-955KT \$8.98.

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

The Commodores strut their stuff here with all the confidence and aplomb you'd expect from today's most popular r-&-b ensemble. If "In the Pocket" doesn't quite reach the level of their best previous releases, the reason is the lack of that one spectacularly good song we usually get from them each time out (remember *One, Two, Three Times a Lady?*). Still, their polished professionalism and energetic style are instantly appealing. The opening cut here, *Lady (You*

37489, © FCT 37489, © FCA 37489, no list price.

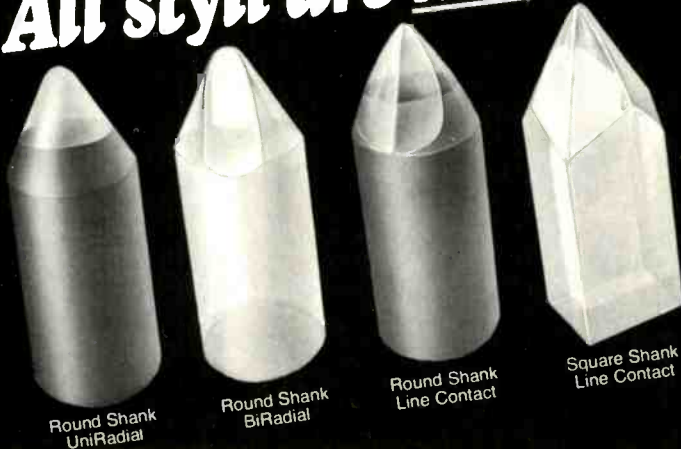
Performance: **Dignified**
Recording: **Good**

Harry Belafonte has become the Alan King of the music business. Just as King gives off the aura of having stopped by for a few seconds to blow Cuban cigar smoke at you and tell a few mother-in-law jokes while on his way to chair a board meeting where he might just sell New Jersey to Texas if he feels like it, so Belafonte's albums for the last decade seem to be solemn little chalk-talks that he feels duty bound to deliver while resting up from his higher calling as World's Greatest Humanitarian. Although both leave no doubt that they feel they've outgrown their original profession, King at least can still be amusing.

Belafonte, unfortunately, has calcified into something very close to a pompous

bore. He's okay, but not much more, in lighter material such as *Mary Makes Magic* or *Loving You Is Where I Belong*, where his natural dignity, precise diction, and rhythmic style blunt some of the mindlessness of the lyrics. When, however, he intones such melodrama as *Streets of London* or a medley of Dylan's *Forever Young* and his own *Jabulani* (written with Caiphus Semenya), the results are as pretentiously leaden and self-congratulatory as a Jerry Lewis Telethon appeal. One has the feeling that if he ran into his famously trashy old calypso girl friend *Matilda* these days (she "who took me money/And run Venezuela") the buttoned-up Rev. Belafonte would see to it that she never reached the outskirts of Kingston, much less Venezuela. Pinned down in the church choir and worrying about Poverty, Pestilence, and Piety, poor *Matilda* just wouldn't have any energy left to rip off anyone. P.R.

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Bring Me Up), is as rousing as they come and already a certified hit; *Saturday Night* has an engaging, haunting quality; and there are three of Lionel Richie's sensitive, country-flavored ballads (the best is *Lucy*). This may satisfy most Commodores fans, but I was hoping for more. P.G.

ELO: *Time*. ELO (vocals and instrumentals). *Twilight*; *Yours Truly 2095*; *Ticket to the Moon*; *The Way Life's Meant to Be*; *Another Heart Breaks*; *Rain Is Falling*; *21st Century Man*; *Hold On Tight*; and five others. JET FZ 37371, © FZT 37371, © FZA 37371, no list price.

Performance: **Grand/wimpy**
Recording: **Very good**

ELO, née the Electric Light Orchestra, has slimmed down some and grown out of its twin-electric-cello phase, but it can still give you a case of the grandiosities. You'll find great sweeps of melody and plenty of high and low and loud and soft sounds for your expensive hi-fi equipment to chew on. Not to mention a Major Theme: this is a concept album about a guy who somehow—apparently through mental machinations—manages to get himself transported to and stuck in the year 2095. Ironically, all he does the whole time is whine about how he misses good old 1981 and the girl he left back there. You want to shake him by the shoulders and say, "Man, have you no sense of adventure?" Beyond mentioning a little standard science-fictional furniture, he never tells us much about what 2095 is like. He does briefly flash a sense of humor, but mostly he lives in the past.

Of course, Jeff Lynne, who wrote the whole thing, is no dummy. Several of the songs—notably *The Way Life's Meant to Be* and *Hold On Tight*—can be pulled out of the album and will stand on their own in the Top-40 wars. Lynne knows that while a wimp may not go over so well as the protagonist of a science-fiction yarn, a wimp is just what a lot of people want these days as the protagonist of a rock song. Still, I think Lynne knows his way around musically better than he does lyrically. On the one hand, the prosaic nature of what he has to say undermines his big theme; on the other, there is such nonverbal savvy as the surprising and effective use of rockabilly techniques in the climactic *Hold On Tight*. To sum up: a furshlugginer sound spectacular with a wimp in the middle of it. N.C.

ARETHA FRANKLIN: *Love All the Hurt Away* (see Best of the Month, page 72)

LARRY GRAHAM: *Just Be My Lady*. Larry Graham (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Guess Who*; *No Place Like Home*; *I Just Love You*; *Remember When*; *Feels Like Love*; and five others. WARNER BROS. BSK 3554 \$8.98, © M5 3554 \$8.98, © M8 3554 \$8.98.

Performance: **Repetitious**
Recording: **Quite good**

Larry Graham, late of the Family Stone and Graham Central Station, has changed his image—gone straight, you might say. No longer do the stage lights dance on his spangles and beads, and gone too are the frilly clothes that always seemed to part from the navel on up. "Just Be My Lady,"

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EVERY once in a while an album comes along that is delightful, charming, and brilliantly entertaining and yet is exceedingly difficult to review because it is so hard to describe exactly what it is and what about it is so delightful, charming, and entertaining. "Get to the Heart" is one. From the cover picture, where Jane Voss and Hoyle Osborne look out at us guilelessly, like a couple of Romanian anarchists on holiday in Pogosa Springs, to the final song on the record, a Voss creation in country-and-western style on the subject of lost love as remembered on a long-haul bus, there is always, somewhere in the scene, a little invisible sign that says, "Watch out. You may be missing it." Voss and Osborne are true deadpan performers, and the line of satire

Musically, the roots of Voss and Osborne are in the Thirties, a time neither of them could possibly have seen. But they do Larry Clinton's *The Devil with the Devil* and Leslie and Warren's *Wasting My Love on You* with great sympathy and impeccable swing. In Irving Berlin's classic *Lazy* they come close to a peak of perfection, playing it quite straight with only Voss' vacillating verbal inflections underlining the choice bits here and there (don't even try to talk about great American *lyricists* if you don't know this song).

I suppose it's a pity that a record like this, recorded in Alameda, California, and released by a small label in New Canaan, Connecticut, comes onto the market with no fanfare, no advance warning, and little in



Meet Voss & Osborne

they walk, occasionally straying from one side to the other, is an exceedingly fine one.

At the root of it is the ability to write a believable song in a given genre and perform it believably, just as at the root of being able to do comic routines on ice skates is the ability to skate to perfection. Voss has created here a perfectly believable blues, Mexican *canción*, Motown number, hillbilly hymn (with shape-note harmonies), and country ballad, and she renders each with heartwarming believability in a voice reminiscent at times of Fanny Brice and in an accent that plays games with the Mason-Dixon Line, roams from the mountains to the shores, and even changes color. She is not doing impressions; she sings with great seriousness of purpose, and if things go a little wrong in inflection or the lyrics build to some exquisite point of triteness or nonsense ("my love for you is a rolling stream"), well, that's just the way life is. Osborne is the perfect accompanist, vocally and pianistically, shifting styles with perfect grace, and he contributes his own solo ragtime number. Jim Rothermel plays obligatos on five different instruments, managing to find each time the exact sound and style to be—again—believable.

the way of explanation. It is, in its way, the essence of entertainment—without the claptrap—being simultaneously obvious and subtle, sympathetic and wicked, old-fashioned and right up to the minute, depending upon who you are and how you want to hear it. I really look forward to more, and if I were a booking agent I would contact Evenin' Star, P.O. Box 506, Sonoma, Calif. 95476. And if I weren't a booking agent I would simply go down to my local record store and nag them to get me this record, even if they had to write specially to Green Linnet Records, 70 Turner Hill Road, New Canaan, Conn. 06840.

—James Goodfriend

JANE VOSS AND HOYLE OSBORNE: *Get to the Heart.* Jane Voss (vocals, guitar); Hoyle Osborne (piano, vocals); Jim Rothermel (alto and tenor saxophones, clarinet, flute, harmonica); Jan Martinelli (electric bass); Bob Scott (drums). *Gateway Blues; Salamander Shuffle; Lazy; The Devil with the Devil; Song to a Shrinking Violet; Get to the Heart; Some Days You Just Can't Win; Don't Let a Good Friend Go Down; (Wasting My Time) Wasting My Love on You; Still (My Thoughts Go Back to You).* GREEN LINNET SIF 1031 \$7.98.

Graham's third album since going it alone, is a set of slow ballads oozed out in Lou Rawls-like low gear. Graham, however, has problems with his voice; he seems to lose control in the low register, and since that is where he stays for much of this set, the result is a listening experience that is often more painful than his somber lyrics alone would make it.

Speaking of the lyrics, they are also trite and somniferously repetitive. The late Jesse Belvin's *Guess Who* comes as a relief in the middle of side one, and Graham sings it not unpleasantly, but again there are those sudden, fatal drops to the nether regions below his natural range. The arrangements, Graham's own, are cut and dried, calculated and dull. You can pass this one by. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BUDDY GUY: *Stone Crazy!* Buddy Guy (vocals, guitar); Phil Guy (guitar); J. W. Williams (bass); Ray Allison (drums). *I Smell a Rat; Are You Losing Your Mind?; You've Been Gone Too Long; She's Out There Somewhere;* and two others. ALLIGATOR AL 4723 \$7.98.

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Good**

Bluesman Buddy Guy has spent most of his career in Chicago, with occasional tours of Europe and Japan. His stage presence is lively; he delights in tearing into a number and virtually ransacking it. The six long cuts on this album, recorded in France in 1979, give him all the space he needs. He sings in a high, cool tenor, sometimes almost whispering, and the intensity of his vocals is echoed by his aggressive guitar runs. Guy's playing is an amalgam of various blues styles and stylists—with plenty of his own ideas thrown in—but he pays special tribute here to Elmore James by using James' open-E tuning riff on *She's Out There Somewhere*.

If you've not heard Buddy Guy before, I recommend that you make his acquaintance with this record. Guy and the blues are a hot combination. J.V.

JOURNEY: *Escape.* Journey (vocals and instrumentals). *Don't Stop Believin'; Stone in Love; Who's Crying Now; Keep On Runnin'; Still They Ride;* and five others. COLUMBIA TC 37408, © TCT 37408, © TCA 37408, no list price.

Performance: **Professional**

Recording: **Excellent**

Journey is a good example of rock's youth fetish. Solid musicians with plenty of technique, not nearly as bad as their reviews indicate, they've nevertheless let themselves settle comfortably into playing for kids. The lightning guitar scales and throaty vocals (the delivery reminds me of the puffy threats of a punk who's been beaten in a fist fight but who goes on blustering at his adversary while in the secure grip of his buddies) are shopworn clichés. The album is decent enough as kid stuff, but rock should reach higher. M.P.

NINA KAHLE: *Deep, Down and Real* (see **Best of the Month**, page 74)

(Continued on page 88)

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CIRCLE NO. 46 ON READER SERVICE CARD

LITTLE RIVER BAND: *Time Exposure*. Little River Band (vocals and instrumentals). *The Night Owls; Man on Your Mind; Take It Easy on Me; Ballerina; Love Will Survive; Full Circle; Orbit Zero*; and four others. CAPITOL ST-12163 \$7.98, © 4XT-12163 \$7.98, © 8XT-12163 \$7.98.

Performance: **Dull tunes well played**
Recording: **Good**

It's probably just that the rest of the stuff on the radio is getting worse—or maybe it's a vitamin deficiency—but I've been thinking lately that if the Little River Band had come along ten years earlier, it would have been considered a fairly sharp outfit. Their songs are superficial, but that never stopped Three Dog Night or Gary Puckett and the Union Gap. It's just that the formula is so old, and some of us listeners are so old we've heard it invoked too many times. In my new generous mood, I'm glad there are bands like this that can actually sing and play for my kids to listen to. When such things as AC-DC and the Plasmatics are rampant, we should be grateful for any slightly aesthetic approach we can get.

I'm not especially grateful for this particular album, however. The tunes are so dull and grinding and predictable that I kept hoping I'd be interrupted by an encyclopedia salesman or an Avon lady or something. Anything. But if this sort of stuff *has* to be done, I'd rather have the LRB do it than approximately fifty other bands I could name. N.C.

THE MANHATTANS: *Black Tie*. The Manhattans (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Just One Moment Away; You Stand Out; Let Your Love Come Down; When You See Me Laughing; I Wanta Thank You; Deep Water*; and four others. COLUMBIA FC 37156, © FZT 37156, © FZA 37156, no list price.

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

Here's forty minutes of sweet soul singing burnished to a high sheen by twenty years of practice. As one of the more consistently excellent male r-&-b groups, the Manhattans make no attempt to be hip, cute, or heavy; they concentrate instead on producing silkenly harmonious vocal tones. An easygoing pace prevails here in one skillfully blended ballad after another. Yet there's enough strut and vitality mixed in on such numbers as *Let Your Love Come Down* to set the vital juices flowing. *Just One Moment Away*, the opener, has the most staying quality, though a smooth musicality abounds throughout. P.G.

RONNIE MILSAP: *There's No Gettin' Over Me*. Ronnie Milsap (vocals, piano); instrumental accompaniment. *Everywhere I Turn (There's Your Memory); It's All I Can Do; Two Hearts Don't Make a Pair; Too Big for Words; I Live My Whole Life at Night*; and five others. RCA AHL1-4060 \$7.98, © AKH1-4060 \$7.98, © AHS1-4060 \$7.98.

Performance: **MOR-bid**
Recording: **Good**

Seems you never get a surprise, unfortunately, in a Ronnie Milsap record, and
(Continued on page 90)



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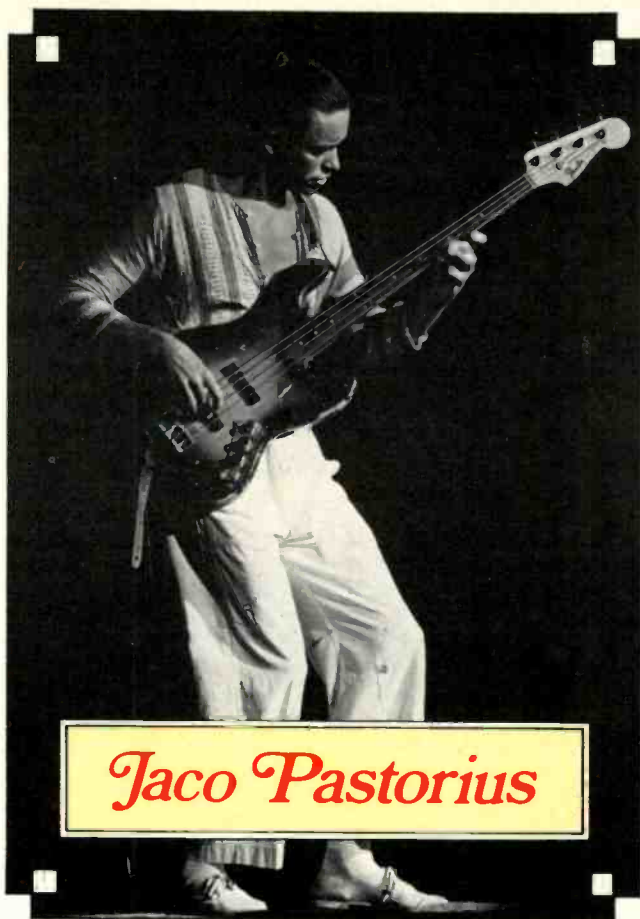
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America's Storyteller



Jaco Pastorius

ANYONE who has seen Jaco Pastorius perform with Weather Report will tell you that his stage personality is much like his highly original bass style and intelligent compositions—bubbling with barely contained energy one minute, exploding into a hyperkinetic frenzy the next. Pastorius gave his style a name in a song he wrote for Weather Report's "Mr. Gone" album: punk jazz.

"Word of Mouth," Pastorius' new solo album, is punk jazz extending its reach to embrace Euro-African band arrangements, free improvisation, and some deeply emotional feelings, particularly *3 Views of a Secret*, a beautiful ballad in the tradition of John Lewis' late-Fifties "Third Stream" orchestral compositions. *3 Views of a Secret* is the centerpiece of a remarkable first side that begins with *Crisis*, a breakneck exercise in improvisational brinkmanship, and ends with *Liberty City*, a strutting, free-spirited piece for big band.

The second side of the album is less successful. It begins with an ill-focused rendering of Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy*, and the title track short-circuits itself in a jangle of noise. But even when Pastorius fails, he does so because he's not afraid to take risks. The side finishes strongly with the eleven-minute *John and Mary*, a jazz suite that

gives both the soprano saxophone and the piano lots of room to stretch out and explore the soundscape.

Much of "Word of Mouth" isn't too different from Weather Report at its best, which isn't surprising considering that group members Wayne Shorter, Peter Erskine, and Robert Thomas Jr. all appear on it. (What *is* surprising is that these and the other fine musicians who assist Pastorius are nowhere credited on the album, a gross oversight.) But for all the similarities between Pastorius more or less solo and Pastorius as part of Weather Report, "Word of Mouth" reveals an artist with a distinctive style, a personal voice that is exuberant yet disciplined, intellectual yet emotionally charged. It's an important release from an increasingly influential jazz innovator.

—Mark Peel

JACO PASTORIUS: *Word of Mouth*. Jaco Pastorius (bass); Herbie Hancock (keyboards); Wayne Shorter, Michael Brecker (saxophone); Toots Thielemans (harmonica); Tom Scott (saxophone, lyricon); Jack DeJohnette, Peter Erskine (drums); Hubert Laws (flute); Robert Thomas Jr., Don Alias (percussion); Howard Johnson (tuba); John Clark (French horn); Charles Findley (trumpet, flugelhorn). *Crisis*; *3 Views of a Secret*; *Liberty City*; *Chromatic Fantasy*; *Blackbird*; *Word of Mouth*; *John and Mary*. WARNER BROS. BSK 3535 \$8.98, © M5 3535 \$8.98.

there aren't any here. More strings, more choruses, more Tin Pan Alley assembly-line songs. Of course, half the people in Nashville are still making this kind of record, which sounds more like middle-of-the-road pop, circa 1951, than anything else. Milsap has enough of a voice to handle a lot more, but he keeps opting for MOR. And he keeps proving that MOR is less. N.C.

LEE OSKAR: *My Road Our Road*. Lee Oskar (harmonica, vocals); Airto Moreira (percussion, vocals); Flora Purim (vocals); Lonnie Jordan (keyboards); other musicians. *My Road*; *Our Road (Suite)*; *All Night*; *Song for My Son*; and two others. ELEKTRA SE-526 \$8.98, © TCS-526 \$8.98, © ET8-526 \$8.98.

Performance: **Sincere**

Recording: **Very good**

"My Road Our Road" is a predominantly instrumental album that shows what can go wrong when a street musician, in this case War's Lee Oskar, tries to transplant a street instrument, in this case the harmonica, into an alien environment, in this case a big studio full of back-up musicians. What we get here is what we nearly always get when rock collides with a string section: mush.

Not that the album doesn't have its moments—in fact, it has a lot more than one would expect given the limitations of the lead instrument. The bright spots come when Oskar sticks to doing what he does best, when he plays the loping funk that is War's signature or joins in the blistering percussion jams with Airto's peculiar chanting soaring over the rhythm. These passages and the rousing gospel choruses have a joyful abandon, but in between there's a lot of material of the sort used to jerk tears in TV movies about dying football players. M.P.

EDDIE RABBIT: *Step by Step*. Eddie Rabbit (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Early in the Mornin'*; *Bring Back the Sunshine*; *Skip-a-Beat*; *Dim Dim the Lights*; and six others. ELEKTRA SE-532 \$8.98, © 5C5-532 \$8.98, © 5T8-532 \$8.98.

Performance: **Friendly, but . . .**

Recording: **Very good**

Eddie Rabbit? I'm not quite sure what I expected, after all the publicity he's received, but "Step by Step" certainly was a letdown. Mr. Rabbit writes his own songs, abetted by such collaborators as Even Stevens, and puts them over in a swinging, countryish style that's easy to take and not too difficult to leave alone. The songs tend to be simple Valentine's Day ditties with such lyrics as "My only wish if it comes true/Would be to spend my life with you." If you like his beer commercials, don't miss this album. P.K.

RED RIDER: *As Far As Siam*. Red Rider (vocals and instruments). *Lunatic Fringe*; *Cowboys in Hong Kong (As Far As Siam)*; *Ships*; *Laughing Man*; and five others. CAPITOL ST-12145 \$8.98, © 4XT-12145 \$8.98, © 8XT-12145 \$8.98.

Performance: **Good**

Recording: **Good**

That Red Rider has a sense of the bizarre is made quite clear in the title cut here. The (Continued on page 92)



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Jazz Giant James Johnson

Culver Pictures

JAMES P. JOHNSON, the latest artist to have his career documented in Time-Life's "Giants of Jazz" series, was the preeminent figure of the Harlem "stride" piano school. Johnson did not invent stride, which derived from ragtime, but he developed and perfected it. Only two other stride pianists approached his stature, Willie "The Lion" Smith and Fats Waller, the latter Johnson's star pupil and protégé. Johnson's overall achievement and talent rank him as one of the three most important classic jazz pianists, the others being Earl "Fatha" Hines and Jelly Roll Morton.

Johnson recorded prodigally in the Twenties as soloist, bandleader, sideman, and accompanist to such vocal luminaries as Bessie Smith and Ethel Waters. A careful man, he saved his money and was able to go into semi-retirement in 1930 to raise his family and devote himself to composing symphonies, operettas, and concertos. He lived off his show-tune royalties, especially from *Charleston*, which he had written for the 1923 musical *Runnin' Wild* and which became the anthem of the decade.

John Hammond lured Johnson back to public performance in 1938 for the "Spirituals to Swing" group concert at Carnegie Hall, and in 1939 the French jazz enthusiast Hughes Panassié came to New York and engaged Johnson for a series of small-band sessions. Hammond later took Johnson and a hand-picked group to Columbia for combo and solo dates. From then until 1951, when he suffered a paralyzing stroke, Johnson made more than two hundred recordings for various labels. He died in 1955, having never really slowed down since 1938 except for the three days in December 1943 when, devastated by Waller's early death, he was unable to touch a piano. (In many

ways Johnson's playing is hard to distinguish from Waller's, except that whereas Waller tended to sound whimsical and frisky, Johnson always played with an authoritative dignity.) In his later years, Johnson signed his letters "Dean of Jazz Pianists." And he was.

Most of the Time-Life collection consists of solos recorded from 1921 to 1945. They are all remarkable, but two are especially revealing. Johnson, very much a gentleman, liked to keep his emotions in control, yet he plays with a nearly sexual swagger and drama on *What Is This Thing Called Love* (1930) and with an equally candid, and exquisite, delicacy on *Blueberry Rhyme* (1939). Two other solos are particularly important historically. *Carolina Shout* (1921), Johnson's personal showpiece, was the first stride recording ever made, and it set a new standard of excellence for jazz pianists. *Snowy Morning Blues* (1927), perhaps Johnson's finest composition, has a wistful melodic line that signals a private yearning.

The small-band dates from 1927 to 1945 feature many of the outstanding jazzmen of the period. Among the trumpeters from the first decade are Cootie Williams, Ward Pinkett, Johnny Dunn, and Louis Metcalf. Williams, later an Ellington star, made his first recording at age eighteen with *Chicago Blues* (1928), in which he shares exuberant muted choruses with Pinkett, a Jelly Roll Morton favorite. Morton also had high regard for Johnny Dunn, one of the many horns blown away by the arrival of Louis Armstrong. Dunn has the lead on *What's the Use of Being Alone*, also from 1928. Both these sessions are especially notable because they feature Johnson and Waller playing duo pianos—two hearts and twenty

fingers in tune. Louis Metcalf had his own style on *Lucy Long* (1927; the version here has never been released on LP before), but two years later on *Fare Thee Honey Blues* he was much under the powerful Armstrong spell.

Lead horns in the second decade of the Johnson dates here are Max Kaminsky on *Dinah* (1938) and Sterling Bose on two quartet items, *Make Me a Pallet on the Floor* and *I Know That You Know* (1944). Frankie Newton, primarily a blues horn, sounds a bit uncomfortable on *Rosetta* and *Who?* from 1939, but he is considerably more at ease on *Hot Harlem* (1944). Two other sessions from the latter year, *At the Ball* and *After You've Gone*, have Sidney de Paris in command.

I have saved the first-rate trumpeter Henry "Red" Allen for last because the group he belonged to was the best ever assembled around Johnson. *Hungry Blues*, *After Tonight*, and *Old Fashioned Love* were recorded at the dates produced by John Hammond, who brought in the assertive trombonist J. C. Higgenbotham, saxophonist Eugene "Honey Bear" Sedric and guitarist Al Casey from Fats Waller's combo, and drummer Sidney "Big Sid" Catlett. The ensemble sound is both loose and tight, and the solos, while highly individual, fit in harmoniously. The effect can only be described as "relaxed fervor."

While no other Johnson sidemen were as effective as that group, Johnson was also well served by many individuals in other lineups. On clarinet there was Pee Wee Russell on *Dinah* and *Everybody Loves My Baby* (1938), Rod Cless on the 1944 quartet dates with Sterling Bose, Edmond Hall on *At the Ball*, and Omer Simeon—yet another Morton favorite—on *Harlem Hotcha*. Tenor saxophonist Ben Webster, one of the few black reed players whose model was *not* Coleman Hawkins (it was Bud Freeman instead), is terrific on *After You've Gone*. Drummers Catlett, Zutty Singleton, and Cozy Cole were three of the best in jazz.

THE cleaned-up mono sound on this collection is excellent, as are the notes on the performances by Willa Rounder and Dick Wellstood (a worthy stride pianist himself) and the biographical profile by Frank Kappler. Congratulations and thanks to all concerned for this valuable and extremely pleasurable memorial of the work of a great American musician. —Joel Vance

GIANTS OF JAZZ: James P. Johnson. James P. Johnson (piano), solo and with Bessie Smith, the Original Jazz Hounds, Ethel Waters, Pee Wee Russell, Zutty Singleton, and others. *Keep Off the Grass; Carolina Shout; Snowy Morning Blues; Riffs; What Is This Thing Called Love?; Arkansas Blues; If I Could Be with You; Liza; Preachin' the Blues; Lucy Long; Chicago Blues; My Handy Man; How Could I Be Blue?; Dinah; Everybody Loves My Baby; After You've Gone*; and twenty-four others. TIME-LIFE © STL-J18 three discs \$19.95 (plus \$2 postage and handling charge from Time-Life Records, 541 North Fairbanks Court, Chicago, Ill. 60611).

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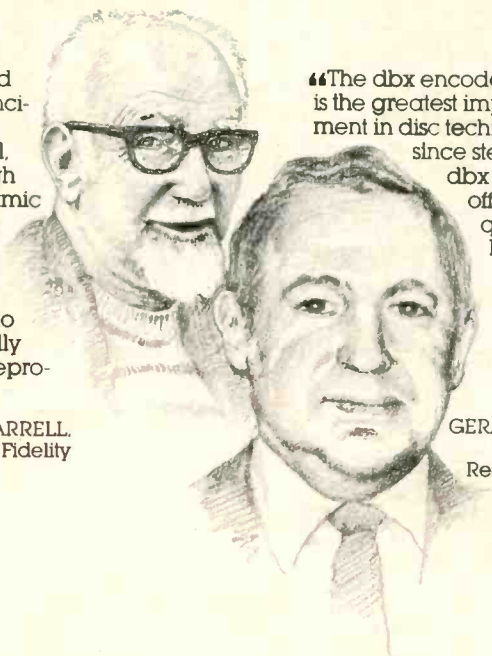
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what obscure lyrics but who seems to construct melodies from chord patterns instead of finding chords to fit melodies. The ditties are otherwise well crafted and clever, and they're delivered in the squeaky-clean British pop manner that's easy to listen to and just as easy to forget. J.V.

STEVE YOUNG: *Seven Bridges Road*. Steve Young (vocals, guitar); instrumental accompaniment. *Seven Bridges Road; Montgomery in the Rain; Ragtime Blue Guitar; Long Way to Hollywood; Down in the Flood; Lonesome, On'ry and Mean;* and five others. **ROUNDER 3058 \$7.98.**

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

Rounder Records, which has demonstrated that even a record company can have some semblance of taste, has started its association with Steve Young by giving some of his best stuff another shot at being heard. I wish the effort well, for Young deserves to be heard more than he has been. The only thing newly recorded here is the title song, made famous most recently by the Eagles but more electrifyingly arranged, years ago, by Ian Matthews. Bob Dylan's *Down in the Flood* and *Days of 49, Ballad of William Sycamore* (tune by Young, words by Stephen Vincent Benet), and the venerable *Wild Goose*, the very same that Frankie Laine sang, were taped during the sessions for the earlier "Seven Bridges Road" for Reprise but never before released. The other five cuts are from that album. Despite his serviceable, adequate voice, Young has not always been his own best interpreter. *Seven Bridges Road* cries out for harmonies he doesn't supply; Hank Williams Jr. was more poignant with *Montgomery in the Rain*; Waylon Jennings got excitement out of *Lonesome, On'ry and Mean* you'd never have suspected was there, partly by changing the time signature. But it's no disgrace—and not very rare—to have Waylon Jennings improve upon one's work, and there still aren't many troubadours who do what Young does as well as he does it. I do hope he's still writing songs and that stalling wasn't a factor in this. In any case, you owe it to yourself to hear him. N.C.

Z Z TOP: *El Loco*. Z Z Top (vocals and instrumentals). *Tube Snake Boogie; Leila; Don't Tease Me; It's So Hard;* and six others. **WARNER BROS. BSK 3593 \$7.98, © M5 3593 \$7.98, © M8 3593 \$7.98.**

Performance: **El Stompo**
Recording: **Good**

I have a vague, uneasy feeling that I may turn out to be the only one who doesn't either love this album or hate it. It's well done, if you're sure this is the sort of stuff you want done. For me, much of it sounds more like sound effects than music, and some of it sounds like a good bar band running roughshod over nuance, which is neither necessary nor desirable in the quiet of a studio recording. Of course, there is *some* of the good old blues-based stuff this band is noted for, such as *It's So Hard*. But a lot of the tracks use highly mannered singing and playing to bring off novelties and goofs, and that's fun only once or twice. N.C.

(Continued on page 98)

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Paul Van Riel/Muse Records

Jackson & Freeman

THERE is a ten-year age difference between tenor saxophonists Willis Jackson and Von Freeman, and they also have disparate approaches to the music they choose to play. Ironically, it is Freeman, the older, who travels the more outré route, but—as we hear on a set of 1978 recordings recently released on Muse—he is also quite capable of playing ballads in a more conventional mode. Jackson is really the group leader on this outing, with Freeman replacing him on the first two tracks of side two, then joining him for the final track, so the title “Lockin’ Horns” is misleading. But that is a minor fault in an album that is filled to the very edge of the disc with the glorious sounds of spirited jazz.

Willis Jackson’s r-&-b background—which includes work with Dinah Washington’s back-up band and with the Ravens, a group that pioneered a style of vocal r-&-b in the latter half of the Forties—has given him a belting, booting style eminently suited for such romps as *Pow!*, the set’s opener, which also features fine work by guitarist Joe Jones. But it is on ballads, such as *The Man I Love*, that he really proves his mastery of jazz improvisation’s subtler side. I have long admired Jackson’s earthy, robust style, but I was never impressed with the playing of Earl Lavon Freeman until I heard his work on this album’s flip side.

Yes, there are some tenor theatrics, if you will, but they don’t convey that strained, let’s-be-different-at-any-cost feeling I recall from Freeman’s last Nessa release. As he alternately breezes and gallops here through *Summertime* and *The Shadow of Your Smile*, Von Freeman is in fine form, giving performances that at last induce me to join the apparently large band of enthusiasts who wonder why this man remains more or less a local Chicago-area player. The geographical restriction partly reflects Freeman’s own preference, but if the producers of the Laren Festival (where this recording was made) succeeded in getting him to Europe, surely he might be persuaded to travel as far as New York, Los Angeles, or Atlanta.

Enough said. This album is thoroughly delightful from Jackson’s hard-hitting *Pow!* all the way to *Willis and Von*, the two-tenor romp that brings it to an end.

—Chris Albertson

WILLIS JACKSON/VON FREEMAN: *Lockin’ Horns*. Willis Jackson, Von Freeman (tenor saxophones); Carl Wilson (organ); Joe Jones (guitar); Yusef Ali (drums). *Pow!*; *The Man I Love*; *Troubled Times*; *Summertime*; *The Shadow of Your Smile*; *Willis and Von*. MUSE MR 5200 \$8.98.

JAZZ



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LAURINDO ALMEIDA AND CHARLIE BYRD: *Brazilian Soul*. Laurindo Almeida and Charlie Byrd (guitars); Milt Holland (percussion); Bob Magnusson (bass). *Carrioca*; *Famoso*; *Stone Flower*; *Brazilian Soul*; and six others. CONCORD JAZZ PICANTE CJP-150 \$8.98, © CJP-150 \$8.98.

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

Laurindo Almeida and Charlie Byrd, two of the best guitarists around, play together with the silky beauty and ease of two monarch butterflies circling the same flower. Almeida might have the slight edge in ravishing tone, but Byrd’s steely glitter is the perfect counterpoint. All of the material, with the exception of Byrd’s *For Jeff* and *Don’t Cry for Me Argentina* (in a superb performance), is authentically Brazilian and is played with an enormous amount of depth and feeling. The recorded sound is almost as gorgeous as the repertoire. P.R.

CLARKE-BOLAND BIG BAND: *Sax No End*. The Clarke-Boland Big Band (instrumentals). *New Box*; *Griff’s Groove*; *Milkshake*; *Griff’n’Jaw*; and four others. PAUSA 7097 \$7.98.

Performance: **Short but swinging**
Recording: **Good**

The problem with the Clarke-Boland Big Band’s “Sax No End” is that there is an end, and it comes all too soon. I don’t mean that this is such divine music that it should go on forever, but it is very fine music, and for \$7.98 plus tax it ought to go on longer than thirty-five minutes. I suppose the quality of the music from this 1967 session only makes the brevity of the album more apparent; it offers skillfully executed, swinging arrangements (all by Francy Boland), with a generous sprinkling of solo work by such forces as Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis, Benny Bailey, Sahib Shihab, and Johnny Griffin. If you could get it for, say, \$4, I’d say you ought to get it. C.A.

DARDANELLE: *Echoes—Singing Ladies*. Dardanelle (vocals, piano, vibes); George Duvivier (bass); John Basile (guitar). *Taking a Chance on Love*; *Look at Me*; *Over the Rainbow*; *The Wine of May*; and five others. AUDIOPHILE AP-145 \$7.98 (from Audiophile Records, 3008 Wadsworth Mill Place, Atlanta, Ga. 30032).

Performance: **Fine on piano**
Recording: **Good**

Dardanelle performs tributes to such “singing ladies” as Judy Garland, Ethel Waters, (Continued on page 100)



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Dinah Washington, and Billie Holiday. Unfortunately, her vocals don't suggest much of anything except the competent club singer that she is. Her piano playing is, as usual, excellent; her unique ability to build elegant phrase upon phrase gives a rhapsodic quality to her interpretations. The echoes of singing ladies are murmuringly faint here, but the piano playing comes in loud and clear and fine.

P. R.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

TAL FARLOW: *Chromatic Palette*. Tal Farlow (guitar); Tommy Flanagan (piano); Gary Mazzaroppi (bass). *All Alone; Nuages; I Hear a Rhapsody; If I Were a*

Bell; St. Thomas; and three others. CONCORD JAZZ CJ-154 \$8.98.

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Very good**

Tal Farlow's one of the most frisky, amiable, and mellow guitarists you're likely to hear these days, with single-string runs as fluid and percussive as raindrops in a thunderstorm and chord patterns as tasty and refreshing as chilled white wine. Bassist Gary Mazzaroppi uses the same kind of "fluid moan" approach as George Duvivier does, but he lets more air in between the notes for greater agility. Pianist Tommy Flanagan has worked with most of the notable jazz guitarists of the era—Wes Mont-

gomery, Kenny Burrell, and Jim Hall—but he is far from a deferential and plodding sideman. There is joy in his musical attack, and he hits his notes like a percussionist, always sure of how much weight to put behind each.

The trio romps through a program of juicy tunes here, and the good feeling between them is contagious. This is sassy and classy jazz of the first order.

J. V.

AL JARREAU: *Breakin' Away* (see Best of the Month, page 76)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MANHATTAN RHYTHM KINGS. Manhattan Rhythm Kings (vocals, instrumentals, tap dancing); instrumental accompaniment. *Happy Feet; Louisiana Dream; Killin' Jive; Change Partners; Smoke Rings; The Grizzly Bear;* and six others. INNER CITY IC 1124 \$7.98.

Performance: **Lots of fun**

Recording: **Very good**

This zippy trio used to be a street act, but now the Manhattan Rhythm Kings have moved up to the club circuit. Dressed in period outfits, they cheerfully reprise rags, novelty numbers, and ballads of the Twenties and Thirties drawn from the recordings of Paul Whiteman (*Changes*), the Boswell Sisters (*Happy Feet*), and the early Irving Berlin catalog (*The Grizzly Bear, Change Partners*). There are some originals here too. The peppy *Rhythm King*, for instance, was written by the trio's vocalist/saxophonist/tap dancer Michael Reeder. David Lisker, who sings and plays guitar, co-wrote *Stay a Little Longer*, a funny variation on such period pieces as Mack Gordon and Harry Revel's *It's the Animal in Me*.

The Kings' declared aim is to present jazz as vaudeville. They certainly sound like they're having a good time doing it, and the listener is likely to be caught up in their frolicsome spirit. On the uptempo numbers, they sound very much like the Rhythm Boys, Whiteman's vocal trio featuring Bing Crosby, complete with the percussive vocal effects meant to imitate cymbals. They also deliver effective unison croons on the sentimental numbers (*Smoke Rings, Louisiana Dream*).

The trio's enthusiasm for jazz and vaudeville comes from the third member, Brian Nalepka, who studied string bass and tuba with Joe Tarto, a veteran who played with the Boswell Sisters, the Dorsey brothers, and various of Red Nichols' groups in the Twenties and Thirties. Thanks, Mr. Tarto, for providing the inspiration. I'm all in favor of happy jazz like this.

J. V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

THELONIOUS MONK: *April in Paris/Live*. Thelonious Monk (piano); Charlie Rouse (tenor saxophone); John Ore (bass); Frankie Dunlop (drums). *Epistrophy; Just a Gigolo; Off Minor; Well, You Needn't; I Mean You;* and five others. MILESTONE M-47060 two discs \$8.98.

Performance: **Classic Monk**

Recording: **Good remote**

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STEREO REVIEW

Live," I find it hard to believe that Monk's music was once considered somewhat inaccessible. Now, of course, Monk himself is inaccessible, not having touched a piano in public (nor, it is said, in private) for about four years. Annotator Orrin Keepnews, who often recorded Monk for Riverside, seems to think that we have heard the last of this eccentric innovator, but don't be surprised if he is proved wrong. Of course, Monk might have made a wise decision to retire from playing, for he did seem to have been abandoned by his muse in his later active years.

Twenty years ago, when the Paris concert that makes up this Milestone reissue (the original was on Riverside) took place, jazz was the intellectual's answer to three-note teenage rock-'n'-roll, and Monk was at the height of his popularity. The eccentric personal behavior that made him stare at the ceiling of Barron's in Harlem until he had the whole crowd looking up, or stand in line at the Five Spot, presumably to hear himself perform, carried over into his music—it was his way of telling a joke. I had several opportunities to observe Monk the prankster firsthand, both when I worked at Riverside in 1960 and later when I spent time with him backstage in Copenhagen during the tour that produced this album; no one can convince me that the unique Monk style is not an extension of the unique Monk wit. These sides are full of that style and wit, and the result is serious, exciting music that is as vital today as it was then—and as it will be long after the LP format itself has been relegated to historical status. C.A.

JAMES MOODY: *In the Beginning*. James Moody (tenor saxophone); Kenny Dorham (trumpet); Al Haig (piano); Tommy Potter (bass); Max Roach (drums); other musicians. *Ham and Haig; Just Moody; Lover Man; Hot House; Star Dust; Maximum*; and six others. INNER CITY © IC 7020 \$7.98, © TIC 7020 \$8.98.

Performance: **Nascent boppers**
Recording: **Brused mono**

Saxophonist James Moody and drummer Max Roach were young and relatively unknown in the spring of 1949 when they recorded—in Switzerland and France—the sides assembled for "In the Beginning." The title is appropriate enough, but since Moody does not appear on two of the five tracks that Roach leads, it would have been more fitting to issue the album under both their names. However, if neither musician is a constant thread in this tapestry, good enduring music is, at least through the first side and a half of the album.

The Roach tracks are the album's strongest, and part of that is due to the work of Kenny Dorham, who had not yet come into full bloom either but poured out tantalizing torrents of ideas in emulation of that day's models, Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis. Everyone here was to step up to a higher level in the next decade, but what they had to say on the threshold of fame is still worth hearing. I only wish that these Vogue recordings had been better preserved, or at least transferred from the source material with greater care. C.A.

DAN PETERSON: *New Life Suite*. Dan Peterson (guitar, bass, piano, synthesizers);

Tom Vandaele (drums); Dave Rieker (bass); Harry Heath (piano, synthesizer); Jan Kendrick (flugelhorn); Christ Andronis (bass). *Living in the Right Direction; Tomorrow; Triumph of Light; Forever; Open Your Heart*; and five others. RADEX DP-8010 \$6.98 (plus \$1.25 postage and handling charge from Radex Records, 802 South Chicago Avenue, Freeport, Ill. 61032).

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

Dan Peterson is a skilled guitarist who's pleasing to hear, but to call this collection of riffs a "suite" is a misnomer at best. Nor does he serve himself well by giving porten-

tous titles to music that is generally cheerful; the mismatches got in my way as I listened and blunted some of my pleasure. I can't imagine, for example, enjoying a performance of *When the Saints Go Marching In* if it were called *The Saints in Solemn Procession Enter the Kingdom with All Protocol Scrupulously Observed*. Nonetheless, I'm in favor of younger jazz musicians having access to small labels where they can try out ideas. If you ignore the titles here and just listen you'll do yourself and the artist a service. The listening's not bad. J.V.

OSCAR PETERSON: *A Royal Wedding Suite*. Oscar Peterson (piano); orchestra. *London Gets Ready; It's On; Heraldry*;



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Lady Di's Waltz; The Empty Cathedral; and five others. PABLO TODAY 2312 129 \$8.98, © K12 129 \$8.98.

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

The wryly witty liner notes by Benny Green almost eclipse, in entertainment value, Oscar Peterson's performance of his *Suite* to commemorate the recent royal nuptials. The music itself is pretty thin stuff, but Peterson's playing is as inventive, intelligent, and smooth as the music is not. *Lady Di's Waltz*, for instance, is almost slumberous, and *Royal Honeymoon*, with Peterson on electric piano, has all the vivacity of the Tower of London. The one bright exception here is *Heraldry*, Peterson's sly jazz joke about the general public's perception of "royal" music. It's an expert and funny

piece. Too bad Peterson didn't use his gift for satire throughout the album. **P.R.**

WILLIE "THE LION" SMITH. Willie "The Lion" Smith (piano, vocals); Buck Clayton (trumpet); Claude Luter (clarinet); Wallace Bishop (drums). *Echo of Spring; Portrait of the Duke; Madelon; Carolina Shout; Contrary Motion; Conversation on Park Avenue; Pretty Baby; Ain't Misbehavin'; I'm Gonna Ride the Rest of the Way;* and seven others. INNER CITY © IC 7015 \$7.98.

Performance: **Master at work**
Recording: **Fair to good**

Only a few months ago Commodore Records reissued the definitive 1939 solo sessions by Willie "The Lion" Smith, one of the three wise men of the Harlem "stride"

piano style (see review in the September issue). Now Inner City has released a potpourri collection of Paris recordings made while Smith was on a European tour in 1949-1950. The best of these are valuable additions to the Commodore sides.

Smith, like Fats Waller and James P. Johnson, was a gifted composer, and he continually drew his inspiration from New York City life. *Conversation on Park Avenue* (1946), *I'm Gonna Ride the Rest of the Way* (1948), and *Contrary Motion* (1949) are all sophisticated, whimsical, yet thoughtful. The other solos include tributes to Johnson (*Carolina Shout, Charleston*), Duke Ellington (*Portrait of the Duke*), and the near-mythical Tony Jackson (*Pretty Baby*). A Smith original, *Late Hours*, is a paraphrase and harmonic variation on Waller's *Squeeze Me* (1924). The combo tracks are less successful. Buck Clayton, a fine trumpeter, is thrown off-balance by Smith's unfortunate vocals, and the persistent but unpersuasive drummer Wallace Bishop and the emulative clarinetist Claude Luter (trying very hard to sound like Barney Bigard) both play as if they've been on the road too long.

As a personality and a musician, Smith was fastidious, cantankerous, idealistic, and iconoclastic. These recordings show all those facets as well as testifying to the mature creativity of an important artist. **J.V.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SPYRO GYRA: *Freetime.* Spyro Gyra (instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *Freetime; Telluride; Summer Strut; Elegy for Trane;* and three others. MCA MCA-5238 \$8.98, © MCAC-5238 \$8.98, © MCAT-5238 \$8.98.

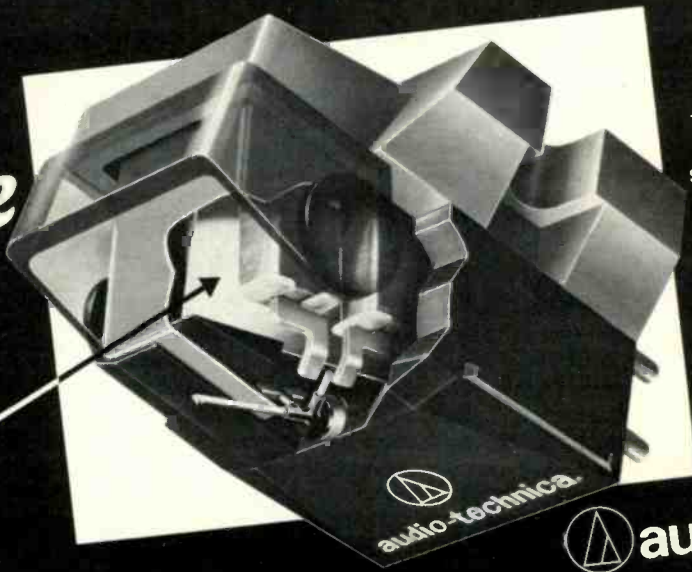
Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Excellent**

"Freetime" is progressive jazz with the playfulness one finds in Chick Corea's acoustic sets and the perfectionism of the Bob James/Tappan Zee school. The selections have a finely crafted, note-perfect architecture that's seamlessly executed and
(Continued on page 104)

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almost classical in its muted expressiveness, and the album moves from cock-of-the-walk funk to quiet reverie as naturally as one steps through an open doorway.

"Freetime" is almost prodigal with its riches. Clever melodies, deft solos, and surprising flourishes seem to spring up like wild flowers. Much of this richness may result from the collaborative nature of the album: each of Spyro Gyra's core members has contributed at least one tune. But, more important, the musicians are clearly in sympathy with the music and with one another. Jay Beckenstein's alternately lyrical, prankish, and bluesy soprano sax, John Tropea's agile guitar, and the paired keyboards of Tom Schuman and Jeremy Wall (who know how to make a synthesizer sound like a musical instrument instead of a device from outer space) create a well-mannered but animated conversation that manages to develop the possibilities of each song.

There's some sacrifice of excitement and emotion to achieve this refinement. The music never explores the outer reaches of the musicians' capabilities, never takes the listener far from the center of things. But "Freetime" covers a varied terrain with assurance, polish, a few surprises, and irresistible charm. Highly recommended. *M.P.*

THE WIDESPREAD DEPRESSION ORCHESTRA: *Time to Jump and Shout*. The Widespread Depression Orchestra (vocals and instrumentals). *Captain Kangaroo; A Flat Minor; Night Hop; Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby; All That Rhythm;* and seven others. STASH ST212 \$8.98.

Performance: **Reflections plus**
 Recording: **Good**

There are only nine musicians in the Widespread Depression Orchestra, but the group sounds like a big band. "Time to Jump and Shout" represents a change of direction from the band's two previous Stash releases. No longer is the WDO merely mirroring the big black bands of previous eras with transcriptions of the original arrangements; in its latest evolutionary stage, the WDO blends the old and the new. The former category includes Eddie Durham's Lunceford number *It's Time to Jump and Shout* and Benny Carter's *Night Hop*, both in their original 1940 dress, and a wonderfully frantic transcription of Horace Henderson's arrangement of *Happy Feet*; in the latter category is a new arrangement (by pianist Michael Le Donne) of Henry Mancini's *The Days of Wine and Roses*. But the really good news is that the Widespread Depression Orchestra has begun to include original material in its recordings. *All That Rhythm*, by tenor saxophonist Dean Nicypier (who also sings it here), and *Captain Kangaroo*, by Ted Sturgis (the bassist, who is not a regular member of WDO), are the kind of originals I wouldn't mind seeing a whole album devoted to.

A big-band sound need not be anachronistic, but it invariably seems to be when old material is used verbatim. The strength of the Widespread Depression Orchestra lies in the spirit and skill of its members, not in its ability to induce nostalgia (though it does that too, and very well). I look forward to the WDO's next step. *C.A.*

(Continued on page 107)

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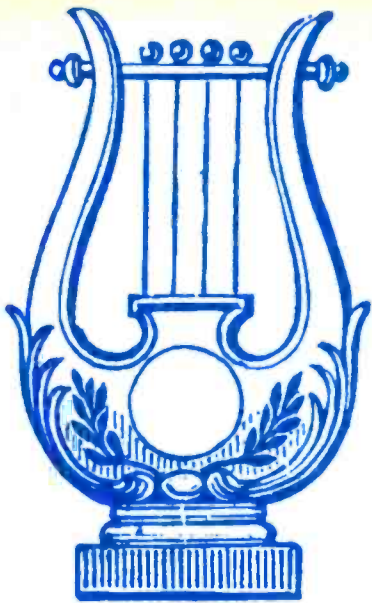
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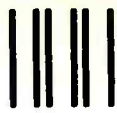
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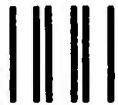
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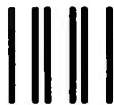
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FOLK



RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MARY McCASLIN: *A Life and Time*. Mary McCaslin (vocals, guitar, banjo); instrumental accompaniment. *Northfield; Tender Love and Care; Fair and Tender Ladies; Pinto Pony; Santana Song*; and five others. FLYING FISH FF 203 \$7.98.

Performance: **Daisy fresh**
Recording: **Good**

Mary McCaslin has one of those echoes-of-Jean Ritchie, falsetto-is-part-of-the-game folkie voices, and she shows good judgment in matching it up with songs that this modern world will put up with. On "A Life and Time" she has backed herself with a nice, open-air country-folkie band. It sounds pretty fresh and innocent here in the Eighties. McCaslin and Holland/Dozier/Holland's *You Keep Me Hangin' On* don't do much for one another, but she takes a beautiful swan dive into her own element with a casual bluegrass slant on *Fair and Tender Ladies* that's a joy to hear.

McCaslin also wrote three better-than-average pieces for the album—one of them is actually getting airplay up in my neck of the cosmopolis. I'm pleased about that, and with most of this record. N.C.

JEAN RITCHIE: *Sweet Rivers*. Jean Ritchie (vocals, dulcimer); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Poor Pilgrim of Sorrow; Mother in Bright Glory; Evergreen Shore; Resignation; Stream of Time*; and ten others. JUNE APPAL JA 037 \$7.98 (from June Appal Recordings, P.O. Box 743, Whitesburg, Ky. 41858).

Performance: **Devoted but down**
Recording: **Very good**

Jean Ritchie, having brought the dulcimer to unprecedented popularity but having more or less failed in her attempt to reconcile folk with rock, is back in the Cumberland Mountains of Kentucky these days recording for the nonprofit June Appal label. "Sweet Rivers" presents Ritchie and various friends and relatives in the area playing their dulcimers and autoharps, strumming guitars, and joining in on the choruses of Baptist hymns she learned in childhood from her parents Balis and Abigail. The material is of considerable historical musical interest, hewing as it does to the traditional style of the Kentucky mountaineers, with their sometime restrictions against the use of harmony and unseemly ornamentation. Moreover, the lyrics and the singer's liner annotations provide insights into the lives of the people whose music this was and still is. A valuable album. P.K.

(Continued on page 110)

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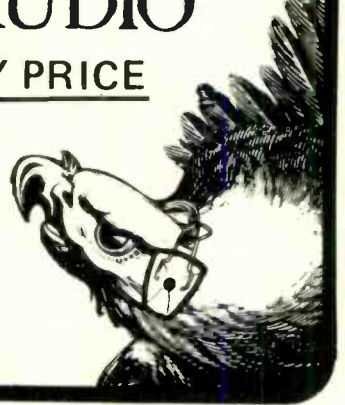
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Interview

BEING around Bernadette Peters can be a grueling exercise in self-control. As she came toward me through the sepulchral elegance of New York's Sherry-Netherland lobby, encased in a brilliantly red dress with a neckline of cut-outs that gave shifting glimpses of a 10+ body and trailing a wake of appreciative bell-boy stares, I had to repress my impulse to touch, stroke, fondle. I settled for a handshake. Upstairs in her suite (slightly smaller but no less ornate than the Winter Palace), I trailed after her into an immense, tall-windowed salon overlooking Central Park. Perching her just over five feet of contours on a sofa large enough to seat the Supreme Court, she crossed her legs, glanced at the marble fireplace half a block away, then at me, and said, "You have very interesting eyes."

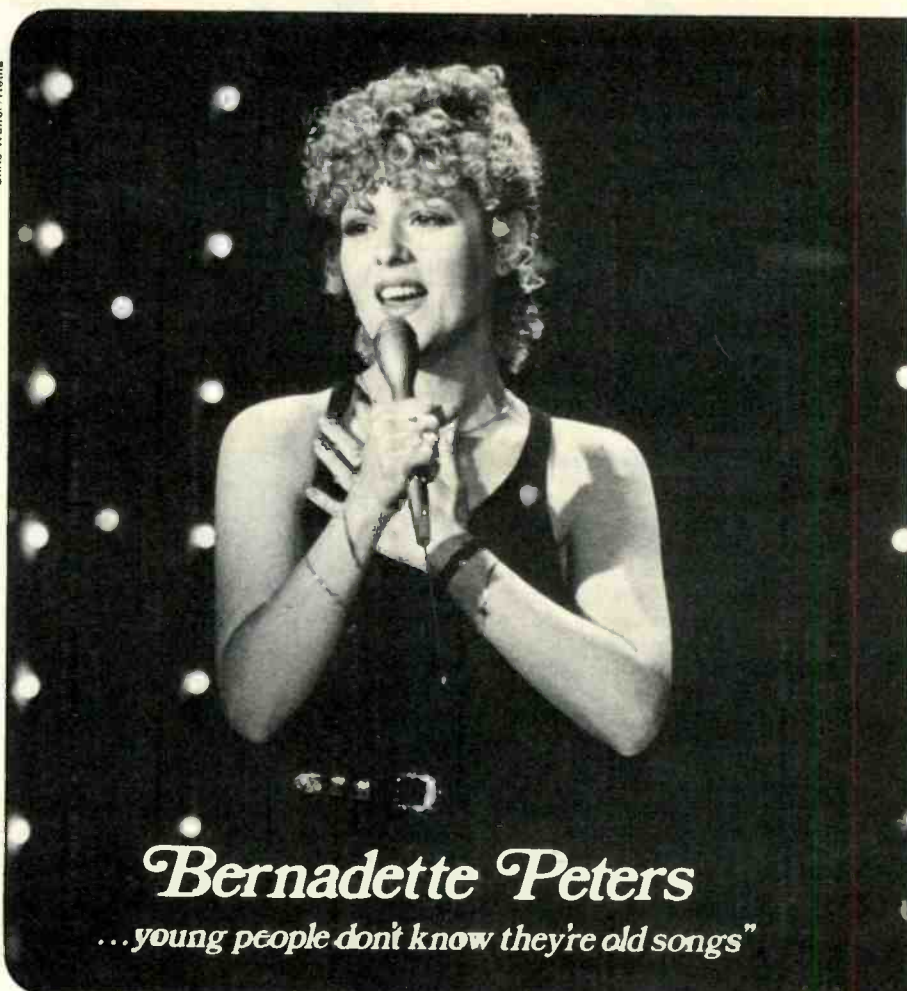
"Va-va-vooom!" as Ed Norton used to say on *The Honeymooners*. If Edward VII, Diamond Jim Brady, Flo Ziegfeld, or Auguste Renoir had walked into the room at that moment and swept her away, I wouldn't have been the least surprised. As it turned out, it was only her press agent, who appeared to take orders for refreshments (coffee for her, Tab for me). Sitting in the harshly bright north light of an early autumn afternoon, Peters looked, with only a little eye shadow and lipstick, as invitingly touchable as she does in the Varga portrait on the cover of her new MCA release, "Now Playing." She really *does* have that Dresden-porcelain skin, those dimples, those big brown eyes, that pouty little mouth. I told her how well I thought the artist had caught her.

"Isn't he great?" she said. "He's eighty-four years old. I dedicated this album to him. I like putting myself in another era; I enjoy it. And I enjoy doing the old songs. The funny thing is that the young people don't know that they're old songs. Like *Mean to Me* on this album—I sing it in Las Vegas and a lot of young people come up and say, 'Gee, where did you find that song?' Or *Don't*. I thought everybody associated it with Elvis, but you'd be surprised how few do. But I don't sing old songs just because they're old. What I tried to do in both my albums was to be true to me. I love to sing ballads, something I can relate to. You know I really don't think of myself as a comedienne. I'm an actress. I have to find a reason to say those words."

NOT basically a comedienne? How about her subtle send-up of late-Fifties pop in *Dedicated to the One I Love*? Or the outright hilarity of *The Weekend of a Private Secretary*, a Thirties gem about a girl who "went to Havana/On one of those cruises/For forty-nine fifty/To spend a few days," had a few Bacardis with a Cuban gent, tried her damndest to miss the return boat, but is now back in the office punching the time clock and plotting how she can meet another Cuban? Listening to both of these later I realized that Peters does always stay completely in character, with no campy Midlerian asides or superimposed cuteness.

"I used to get home from high school in

Chris Walter/Reina



Bernadette Peters

...young people don't know they're old songs"

time for the 4:30 movie, and I got to see all those great old pictures. I developed a real love for Ruby Keeler and Rita Hayworth and Mary Martin, just the way they'd stand or look at people or dance. I have a photographic mind, and I remember exactly how they were sometimes when I sing."

On the ballads here there is absolutely no question that Peters is perhaps the finest singing actress since Streisand. The wonderfully touching break she makes on the word "coldly" in *Mean to Me* ("You treat me coldly each day of the year") and her sensitive, yet completely contemporary, reading of *Sweet Alibis* are the work of an accomplished performing artist. She feels that her long experience in television has helped her in recording. "I was used to the legitimate theater where you sing out. In TV you have to be specific; you have to pay attention to every detail."

Who did she listen to when she was growing up? "Oh, everybody . . . the Shirelles. I went to high school with one of the Crystals. We had a lot of Frances Faye records around the house. I was crazy about her voice and the way she performed, things like *Miss Otis Regrets* and *Love for Sale*. And Martha Davis and Spouse, Garland's 'Live at Carnegie Hall,' and Sinatra's 'In

the Wee Small Hours.' And Andy Williams—I used to like some of his ballads. But, you know, I had a small record career of my own around then. I recorded a song called *Wait Johnny, for Me*. That's where I first met Brooks Arthur, who produced both my albums; he played piano on that session. The song was about a girl asking her boy friend to wait for her even though he was graduating. I sort of sang-talked it against a background of the *Pomp and Circumstance* March. Oh, it was so awful. I didn't even tell any of the kids in my class that I'd recorded it, but it was kind of a hit on WMCA here in New York, and it did well in Boston, and I think it topped the charts in Johnstown, Pennsylvania—where they had the flood. I did another one, but that didn't do anything. Then some producers brought me in because they wanted someone who could sound like Cher, the hot act at the moment. Trouble was that I ended up sounding more like Sonny. So that was the end of that."

But hardly the end of the Peters career. She went on to star on and off Broadway in *Dames at Sea*, *La Strada*, *On the Town*, and *Mack and Mabel*, then on to Hollywood, where she made four feature films before she hit it big in Mel Brooks' *Silent*

Movie. Next was *The Jerk* with Steve Martin. Three more films are scheduled for release at this writing, *Tulips*, *Heartbeeps*, and the big-screen version of the BBC's memorable gothic TV musical *Pennies from Heaven*, in which Peters again co-stars with Steve Martin.

"It was tough when I first went to Hollywood, like starting all over again. It was really Carol Burnett, a woman I admire enormously, who kept me out of the unemployment line. We had just finished working together in the film version of *Annie*, and she told me that Lucille Ball had done the same thing for her when she first went out there."

What does she think of present-day Hollywood? "It's different from what they tell me it was like in the old days. Then the studios really promoted you from picture to picture. But, of course, if they didn't want you any more, it was over. Nowadays you're more or less in control of your own career. It's better that way. It's scary to have someone else in control."

Does she study singing? "Years ago I went to a wonderful man in New York named Jim Gregory. He taught me how to *think* while I was singing. But I've always liked songs that tell stories. They have to be 'I' songs with a hook, something that relates to the heart." She giggled, reminiscing. "Of course there was the time I was scheduled to sing *The Star Spangled Banner*. I studied it and studied it. I was going to be the first person to *interpret* it! By the time I got up to sing it, some other voice came out; I don't know who it was, but it wasn't me. There's no way to 'interpret' that song. But every once in a while I hear what I'm trying to do from another performer. I just saw Lena Horne in her new show, and when she came out and sang *The Lady Is a Tramp*, it was as if I'd never heard it—the words seemed brand new. She's wonderful!"

YOU'RE not so bad yourself, I mused as she trekked with me to the elevator in a cloud of high-Renta perfume. I had come expecting to meet a pocket-size Monroe-like kewpie-doll. Instead, I'd just spent an hour with a straight-on, no-b.s. lady. One of the more surprising things about Peters is that she is one of those very few beautiful women who have a sense of humor about themselves and the effect they have on others. But surely the most surprising thing about her was her response to my asking what she would really like most to have in the future. She paused for several seconds and then said, gravely, "Well, someday I'd like to own my own house."
—Peter Reilly

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Performance: **Headbanger's delight**
Recording: **Good**

As descriptive terms go, the phrase "heavy metal" is one of the better ones in rock-and-roll. Though some valid music has come out of the genre, mostly in the Sixties, these days HM is perhaps the most rigidly formulaic rock-and-roll being made, with a set of stylistic conventions and attitudes so atrophied and frozen that it has all but replaced disco as the music rock critics love to hate, which may in part explain why America's teenagers have clasped it to their bosoms.

This soundtrack album, from an animated film that is one of the odder curiosities of the current season, is pretty much what you'd expect: a lot of high-tech synthesizer stuff, endless ersatz-Creem guitar histrionics, yowling high-tenor front men, cartoon-macho lyrics, and adolescent outer-space fantasies. The only respite from all this high-decibel torture is provided by a characteristically moody jazz-inflected bit by Donald Fagen, a forgettable piece of fluff from Stevie Nicks, and a quite funny Devo version of Lee Dorsey's old r-&-b hit *Working in a Coal Mine*.

The rest of the set? Well, a friend once told me that when a Doobie Brothers record came on the radio, he could actually hear their beards; with this stuff you can hear the shag haircuts. Personally, I think they should have called the album "Poodle Rock," and I would not shed a tear if the members of, say, Journey, were crushed under a stack of Marshall amplifiers. Then again, I'm several years past eighteen, so this music isn't really designed for me. File "Heavy Metal" under *Gebrauchsmusik* for the Clearasil set. S.S.

THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT IN GEORGIA. Original-soundtrack recording. Tanya Tucker, Glen Campbell, George Jones, Tammy Wynette, Dennis Quaid, Kristy McNichol, Billy Preston, Syreeta (vocals); instrumental accompaniment, Gene Armond, musical coordinator. **MIRAGE WTG 16051** \$8.98, © CS 16051 \$8.98, © TP 16051 \$8.98.

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

This movie is based upon the song of the same name written several years ago by Bobby Russell. It's about local color and

mayhem. The soundtrack album, as it happens, places all the real singers—except Billy Preston and Syreeta in a duet—on side one. Dennis Quaid and Kristy McNichol, who dominate side two, aren't as lame as some of the actors who "sang" country music in *Nashville*, but if shaky singing bothers your nerves, they might send you screaming into the night, especially Kristy. (I'd like to thank Mark Hamill for sticking to acting in this movie and not singing at all.)

Even side one is kind of blah except for Joe Rainey's song *I Love My Truck*, performed by Glen Campbell. Unlike the others, that one gets something put into words that you don't see put into words every day, even if its theme—that a pick-up truck can be more faithful and more dependable than a companion of the opposite sex—is as old as *Paper Doll* and the heyday of the Mills Brothers. Overall, though, if the movie is as lackluster as the album, I'll wait and catch it free on the tube. Everything lackluster shows up there eventually. N.C.

COLLECTION

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

AMERICAN MUSICALS: Lerner & Loewe. *Brigadoon*; *Camelot*; *My Fair Lady*. Original-cast recordings. **TIME/LIFE STL-AM04** three discs \$24.95 (plus \$2.81 shipping and handling from Time-Life Records, 541 North Fairbanks Court, Chicago, Ill. 60611).

Performance: **Trio of winners**
Recording: **Excellent**

Time-Life Records' latest ambitious mail-order venture, "American Musicals," is off to a sensational start with this set of three legendary hits from the pens of Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe. If you already have the original Columbia albums, of course you won't need these new pressings of the same recordings. But if you don't, this release is a wonderful opportunity to acquire three superbly produced original-cast records with clean surfaces, flawless pressings, attractive packaging, and one of those lavish Time-Life booklets, which in this case provides the lyrics of all the songs, plot summaries, photos of scenes from the original productions, color plates of the *Camelot* costume designs, and an essay on Lerner and Loewe.

By this time it will come as a surprise to few that *Brigadoon*, starring Shirley Jones and Jack Cassidy under that best of all possible musical-comedy conductors, Lehman Engel, is as fresh and pungent as a sprig of Scottish heather; that *Camelot*, with Richard Burton, Julie Andrews, and Robert Goulet, is full of unforgettable pageantry; and that Rex Harrison and Co. helped turn George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* into what some consider the best musical ever staged. Time-Life has wisely kept *Brigadoon* and *My Fair Lady* in ungimmicked mono (if you *must* have the latter in stereo, Columbia has a first-rate album of the 1976 twentieth-anniversary production). *Camelot* is in stereo, and excellent stereo it is. If "American Musicals" keeps it up on this level, these record sets just might turn out to be collectors' items some day, "landmarks" like the musicals they celebrate. P.K.

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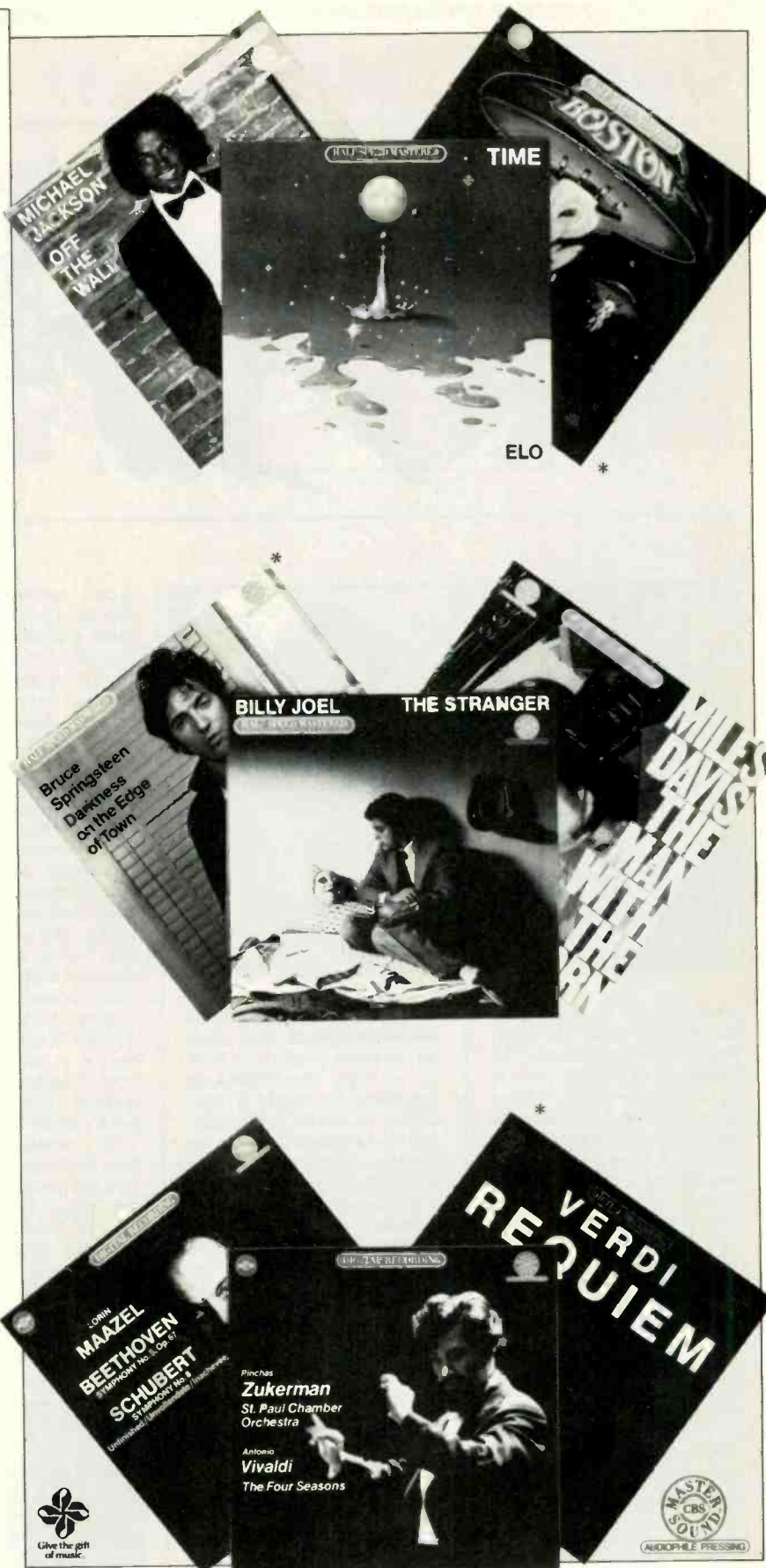
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Classical Music Briefs



Martha Holmes

CELEBRATIONS of the eighty-fifth birthday of composer **Virgil Thomson** included the November 13 performance of his opera *Four Saints in Three Acts* (with a libretto by Gertrude Stein) presented by the Orchestra of Our Time conducted by **Joel Thome**. A digital recording of the performance, scheduled for 1982 release on Nonesuch, will be the first complete recording of the work. In addition to mezzo-soprano **Betty Allen** (shown above rehearsing with Thomson and Thome), the cast of *Four Saints* includes soloists Gwendolyn Bradley, William Brown, Clamma Dale, Benjamin Matthews, Florence Quivar, and Arthur Thompson.

As the year winds down, the celebrations of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Hungarian composer **Béla Bartók** have almost completely overshadowed the hundredth of the birth of Bartók's Romanian contemporary **Georges Enesco**, who is still well represented on records. Celebrating

sixty years in music is clarinetist **Benny Goodman**, who made his professional debut in Chicago in 1921. The Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary, and the New Mexico Symphony in Albuquerque is celebrating its fiftieth. Coincidentally, the two share music director **Yoshimi Takeda**. The **Julliard String Quartet**, which claims that its 217 recordings is the largest total ever reached by a quartet, is celebrating its thirty-fifth anniversary. Italian tenor **Carlo Bergonzi** will be honored with a gala performance at the Metropolitan Opera House on December 4 to celebrate his twenty-fifth anniversary with the company. His younger compatriot and colleague **Luciano Pavarotti** will also sing that evening to honor Bergonzi. Tenth anniversaries are being celebrated by Heinz Hall, the home of the Pittsburgh Symphony, and (already!) by the Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. □

LONG before the Reagan administration cut government subsidies to culture, arts institutions in the United States were doing whatever they could to raise money from private sources, including raffles, bake sales, and radio marathons. In many cities symphony-orchestra auxiliary groups or opera guilds have gone into the business of selling gifts to help support local artistic endeavors. In the weeks before Christmas these organizations are especially busy selling posters, art books, and records as well as ties, T-shirts, and tote bags emblazoned with the logo of a particular orchestra, ballet troupe, or opera company. Sometimes it's hard to see the musical connection in some of the what-nots, knickknacks, furbelows, and bric-a-brac sold in this way, but it's all for a good cause.

For starters, you can get a free thirty-six-page catalog of gifts you can order by mail from the Lincoln Center Gift Collection, 140 West 65th Street, New York, N.Y. 10023 (profits go to Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York).

From now until Christmas, gifts developed as premiums in the Philadelphia Orchestra's radiothons are on sale to benefit

the orchestra. These include Bach's Mug (a coffee mug) for \$5, two decks of Academy of Music playing cards for \$10, a butcher's apron (blue with white type) for \$12, and the official Philadelphia Orchestra necktie (navy silk rep with woven white musical motifs) for \$25. The orchestra's music director Riccardo Muti is honored on a Tutti per Muti sweatshirt (adult sizes only) for \$15, and for \$25 you can have a two-disc recording of the performance of the Verdi Requiem telecast on PBS on April 22, when Muti conducted the orchestra and soloists Katia Ricciarelli, Florence Quivar, Veriano Luchetti, and Simon Estes. Call (215) 893-1900 or write Academy House Shop, 1420 Locust Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19102.

The Metropolitan Opera Guild sells jewelry, opera glasses, umbrellas, scarves, cocktail napkins, and dinner mints as well as books, librettos, and records. For fans who live in cities not well served by classical record stores, the Guild is a useful mail-order source of commercial operatic recordings. In addition, the Guild has also produced some exclusive records of its own. A favorite has been "Met Stars on Broadway," an album of show tunes sung by such stars as Eileen Farrell, Dorothy Kirsten, Birgit Nilsson, and Cesare Siepi. Almost all have been issued before, but the album contains Renata Scott's touching rendition of *Send In the Clowns*, which is available nowhere else. Another favorite is "Met Stars at Christmas," a collection of carols and other seasonal music sung by Luciano Pavarotti,



Leontyne Price, Joan Sutherland, and Renata Tebaldi. And just now released is "Met Stars in Hollywood," which contains such reissues as Eleanor Steber's *Out of My Dreams*, Lily Pons' *April in Paris*, and Ezio Pinza's *Yesterdays*. Recorded exclusively for this album are Marilyn Horne's performance of *The Boy Next Door* and Sherrill Milnes singing *My Funny Valentine*. Each of these albums sells for \$9.98 plus shipping costs. For a free catalog and ordering information write The Met by Mail, 1865 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023. □



ICM Artists/Sophie Baker

Eduardo Mata, conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, is one of the fortunate few today to tend and enjoy both his own orchestra and a continuing program of recording with it. Obviously, Mata considers himself fortunate, for, while he has no lack of talent and ability and projects an aura of self-confidence, there is in his affable and gracious manner the feeling of a man who has received a couple of lucky breaks and is grateful for them.

But having an orchestra and a recording contract (with RCA) is not necessarily a comfortable plateau. For Mata, who works hard, it is much more in the nature of a peak to be climbed—or perhaps two peaks. The orchestra first. "It's a fine orchestra," says Mata, "and the winds especially have an individual sound. And we will make it better. But we do not have a good hall. We play in a great barn (seating 3,400) which we share with theatrical productions, opera, and all sorts of other events. We have twenty-two weeks and we don't even have the first choice of which weeks. But in four years we'll have a new hall, donated by Borden, the milk company. We'll try to keep it small, 2,300, 2,400, maybe even 2,000 seats. The architect is I. M. Pei. We also never had, until recently, a constituency I never understood it. People would buy subscriptions and not come to the concerts. But now it's much better—and we have about 9,000 subscribers." Clearly, the way is still up, but progress is being made.

As for recordings, the heart of the matter is repertoire. "I choose some of the repertoire," says Mata, "and RCA suggests some. Of course, I have to work those suggestions into my concert repertoire. And there are certain restrictions. I consider myself a mainstream conductor—Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler, etc. But Mahler, of course, RCA is recording with James Levine, so there is no room for anyone else. We have a Richard Strauss recording in the can and a George Gershwin record ready to come out—Robert Russell Bennett's arrangement of *Porgy and Bess*, the *Cuban Overture*, and *American in Paris*."

Mata is very happy with these newest digital recordings. "The number of microphones has come down to three or four. And the takes are much longer. The balance is set at the beginning, and control has come back to the conductor. The dynamic changes are once again the dynamic changes of the orchestra. It's a much better way to make records." —J.G.

CHRISTMAS BOOKS. Among the many new music books are several which should make excellent Christmas gifts. *The Lives of the Piano*, edited by James R. Gaines (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 215 pp., \$29.95 until December 31 and \$35.00 thereafter) is a collection of readable essays by novelist (*Earthly Powers*) Anthony Burgess, critic Annalyn Swan, composer Ned Rorem, pianists William Bolcom and Samuel Lipman, and others. It is especially well illustrated. The third and final volume of Julian Budden's authoritative *The Operas of Verdi* (Oxford University Press, 546 pp., \$39.95) is a must for the serious opera lover. It covers the composer's mature works from *Don Carlos* (1867)

to *Falstaff* (1893). Margaret Campbell's *The Great Violinists* (Doubleday, 366 pp., \$19.95) is a survey of virtuosos from the time of Arcangelo Corelli and Antonio Vivaldi to the Eugene Fodors, Vladimir Spivakovs, and Mayumi Fujikawas of our

day. An especially valuable reference work is Edward Jablonski's *Encyclopedia of American Music* (Doubleday, 629 pp., \$24.95), which covers all kinds of music from jazz to rock and from folk songs to symphony and opera. It has a

useful appendix on recordings. Handy for quick reference is *The Dictionary of Composers*, edited by Charles Osborne; it contains 178 biographies of classical composers and has been issued in paperback (Tapplinger, 380 pp., \$8.95). —W.L.

Disc and Tape Reviews

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

Ⓢ = stereo cassette

Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge

Ⓛ = digital-master recording

Ⓛ = direct-to-disc

Ⓛ = quadrasonic disc

Ⓛ = monophonic recording

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

J. S. BACH: Cantata No. 210, "O! holder Tag, erwünschte Zeit" (see Best of the Month, page 75)

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BARTÓK: Music for Violin and Piano: Sonatas Nos. 1 and 2; Rhapsodies Nos. 1 and 2; Andante; Hungarian Folk Songs. György Pauk (violin); Péter Frankl (piano). HUNGAROTON SLPX 12318/9 two discs \$19.96 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Very good**

BARTÓK: Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs. Sviatoslav Richter (piano). *Sonata*

No. 1 for Violin and Piano. David Oistrakh (violin); Sviatoslav Richter (piano). CBS M 36712, © MT 36712, no list price.

Performance: **Outstanding**

Recording: **Good live takes**

György Pauk and Péter Frankl, both known in the U.S. primarily through their Vox recordings over the last twenty years or so, have both lived in London for some time, perform and record together frequently, and since 1973 have returned to their native Hungary regularly as visiting artists. Their Hungaroton set of virtually everything Bartók composed for violin and piano is one of the happiest and most valuable consequences of those visits. They have not included the little-known sonata Bartók com-

posed in 1903 and withheld from publication (there was a Supraphon recording of that work in the Sixties, played by André Gertler and Diane Andersen, but there is none at present), but they do offer the premiere recording of a brief Andante composed in 1902 for Adila d'Arányi (known later as Adila Fachiri), the elder sister of the famous Jelly d'Arányi for whom Bartók's two mature sonatas were written some twenty years later. Also included is the set of Hungarian Folk Songs that Bartók himself, together with violinist Tivadar Országh, arranged from nine of the pieces in his piano cycle *For Children*. (In his authoritative album notes, László Somfai, director of the Bartók Archive in Budapest and editor of the Andante for its belated publi-

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cation, points out that these folk songs are the only ones of the several violin transcriptions of his various piano works in which Bartók himself had a hand, in this case actually recomposing portions of the music.) All the works here are played with consummate skill and understanding, and the recording shows that Hungaroton is now catching up with Western standards in sonics and pressing.

The only reservation I have about the Hungaroton set concerns the performance of the First Sonata, which strikes me as perhaps a little too leisurely and tidy. The Oistrakh/Richter performance on CBS exhibits just the qualities I miss in the Pauk/Frankl: it is more driving, more vital, more electrifying altogether, with no trace of "prettiness" and yet without a hint of coarseness or crudity in tone. I had never heard David Oistrakh play Bartók's music before, and now I am only sorry he did not record more of it. There can be no question about his and Sviatoslav Richter's full response to the idiom, and none, either, regarding their all-out commitment to the music. Both this performance and Richter's solo in the Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs were taped in public performance (by Melodiya) during or before 1972. Both are alive with the sort of compelling intensity and momentum that are hard to achieve in studio situations. The sound is quite good in the sonata; the upper half of the keyboard tends to thin out a bit in the solo work, but not enough to be damaging. This release is a distinguished contribution to the Bartók centenary year and to the composer's permanent discography. *R.F.*

BRAHMS: *Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34* (see Best of the Month, page 75)

CADMAN: *A Mad Empress Remembers* (see Best of the Month, page 79)

CHOPIN: *Piano Concerto No. 1, in E Minor, Op. 11; Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise Brillante in E-flat Major, Op. 22.* Bella Davidovich (piano); London Symphony Orchestra, Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 9500 889 \$9.98.

Performance: **Lyrical pianism**
Recording: **Attractive**

Unless your entire interest in keyboard playing is acrobatics, I don't see how you could fail to like Bella Davidovich's Chopin. She does, it is true, quite de-emphasize the purely virtuosic aspect of the music (even in the *Polonaise Brillante*, which is quite a trick). Not that she lacks the requisite technical equipment; on the contrary, she is so at home technically that there is a sense of ease and even playfulness in the more highly elaborated passages. But it is clearly the lyricism of this music that interests her. The first and last movements of the concerto are taken at a relatively easy, relaxed, and lyrical pace. The second movement is, in contrast, impassioned and not at all held back. The *Andante Spianato* is gorgeous: pearly and gently sung. The polonaise is firm, aristocratic, held back until the last possible moment, when the flow simply overtakes you. The orchestral playing is just routine; the recorded sound is attractive. *E.S.*

(Continued on page 116)

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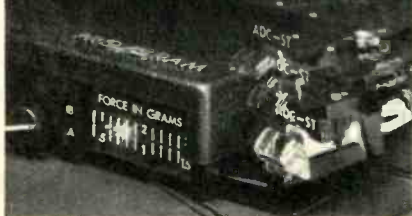
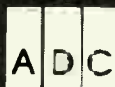
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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

DOWLAND: *A Pilgrimes Solace.* The Consort of Musick, Anthony Rooley cond. L'OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 585-6 two discs \$19.96.

Performance: **Gorgeous**
Recording: **Close, vlvld**

John Dowland's fourth book of songs was published in 1612 under the title *A Pilgrimes Solace*. Of the twenty-one songs in this collection, the first eight are metaphysical love lyrics in the style and taste of the period—but very serious. Three philosophical songs follow: reflective, misanthropic. Next are six devotional songs: intense, full of world-weariness and pain. The journey ends, somewhat incongruously, with four love songs in a modern style.

Most of these songs are in a style that was already going out of favor when they appeared, and in modern times their hybrid form has never had the popularity of the earlier out-and-out madrigals and simpler lute songs for which Dowland was famous. But this collection represents the golden twilight of a great Golden Age, in which Dowland, the perfect Elizabethan lyric singer, turns serious and introspective and, in so doing, achieves a remarkable autumnal greatness. It is, without a doubt, one of the great musical documents of any age.

The recording offers exceptionally fine performances in the "I faint, I fall" school of early music. Vigor, energy, extrovert Elizabethan antics are not to be expected here. The texts are elegantly and carefully mumbled (words, even Elizabethan ones, are, after all, a bit vulgar); fortunately, most of them are supplied. It is Olde Musicke performing but at its very best, gorgeously sung, played, and recorded. *E.S.*

FARWELL: *Cello Sonata; Land of Luthany* (see Best of the Month, page 79)

HARBISON: *Piano Concerto.* STOCK: *Inner Space.* American Composers Orchestra, Gunther Schuller cond. COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC. CRI SD 440 \$7.95.

Performance: **Well played**
Recording: **Decent**

John Harbison's Piano Concerto is a strong work with a wide-ranging vocabulary. Its question-and-answer format—the piano questions rather archly, the orchestra responds sweetly, the orchestra breaks out in an angry sweat, the piano replies in soothing tones—is distinctive but quite in the symphonic mainstream. Unfortunately, there are probably too many traditional elements for the modernists, just a little too much modernistic edge to some of the comments and not quite enough flash for the virtuosos and virtuoso-loving public. In fact, this is a challenging work, and it is brilliantly performed here by Robert Miller and the excellent New York-based American Composers Orchestra.

David Stock's *Inner Space* is a somewhat different interpretation of the same tradition. It harks back to the Schoenberg and Webern Orchestral Pieces—those bibles of coloristic/expressionist music—with more modern touches à la Varèse and Penderecki. It is deftly written and effectively scored and, like its companion, well played

and recorded. No revelations, but decent music making. *E.S.*

HOLST: *The Planets, Op. 32.* Berlin Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ● 2532 019 \$10.98, © 3302 019 \$10.98.

Performance: **Not Karajan's best**
Recording: **Very bright**

HOLST: *The Planets, Op. 32.* New England Conservatory Chorus; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. PHILIPS 9500 782 \$9.98, © 7300 856 \$9.98.

Performance: **Sonic showcase**
Recording: **Mostly very good**

There are now more than twice as many recordings of *The Planets* in Schwann than there are planets in the solar system, and this raises the question of what these two new recordings have that the best of their predecessors do not. A near-terrifying sonic immediacy seems to be the answer for both. For me, neither matches the musical and poetic qualities of such previous recordings as those by Sir Adrian Boult on Angel and Bernard Haitink on Philips, nor offers the kind of impressive amalgam of superb digital sound and fine interpretation of the Chandos disc with Sir Alexander Gibson and the Scottish National Orchestra.

Herbert von Karajan's reading is notable for its careful dynamic gradations and very wide dynamic range, and Seiji Ozawa seems to have chosen a "sonic showcase" approach to the music. The real tests, musically, are in the climax to *Saturn* and the whole of *Neptune*, and both fall short. The Berlin performance is marred by poor trombone intonation at the start of *Mars* and midway through *Saturn* and by a sloppy brass attack at the start of *Uranus*. The mystical offstage female chorus at the end of *Neptune* simply stops instead of vanishing into infinity. The best thing in Ozawa's performance is a wonderfully slithery *Mercury*. His *Neptune* comes a cropper because of too-close proximity of the chorus and an all too obvious electronic fade at the end. On the whole, I prefer the rich and solid Boston sound to the rather overbright sonorities of the Deutsche Grammophon recording. But the Chandos disc is still much the best sonically, and Gibson's performance is first-rate as well. *D.H.*

LASSUS: *Madrigals and Motets. Al Dolce Suon'; Ben Convenne; Ove d'Altra Montagna; Spent' è d'Amor; Lucescit Jam o Socii; Voir Est Beaucoup; Domine, Quando Veneris; Beati Pauperes; Da Pacem Domine; Gloria Patri et Filio; Praesidium Sara; Bestia Curvafia Pulices.* Alsfelder Vokalensemble, Wolfgang Helbich cond. TELEFUNKEN ● 6.42632 AZ \$11.98, © 4.42632 CX \$11.98.

Performance: **Sensuous**
Recording: **Opulent**

The present vogue of performing Renaissance vocal music with small forces of voices and early instruments makes an a cappella performance by a chorus of fifty seem almost anachronistic. But what is lacking here in linear clarity is made up for by opulence of sound, and what is lacking in
(Continued on page 118)

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rhythmic vitality is made up for by carefully graded dynamics and contrasts. While one can argue against the authenticity of such a performance, one cannot deny the effectiveness and beauty of what emerges from this record.

The repertoire is of particular interest. Wolfgang Boetticher, an authority on Lassus, has assembled and edited these works from many far-flung sources, and they should be new even to the most devoted Lassus enthusiast. The music is stunning. It's a shame, though, that the texts are translated only into German. S.L.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

LEKEU: *Sonata in G Major for Violin and Piano.* **WUORINEN:** *Six Pieces for Violin and Piano.* John Ferrell (violin); James Avery (piano). ORION ORS 80381 \$8.98.

Performance: **Admirable**

Recording: **Serviceable**

If you have a passion for the Franck Violin Sonata and the Fauré Sonata No. 1 and are looking for where to go from there, I suggest the Sonata in G Major by the talented but short-lived Guillaume Lekeu (1870-1894). Lekeu studied with both Franck and D'Indy and spoke their musical language with grace and fluency and more than a trace of individual accent. A pity he didn't live to write more, but this sonata, though of necessity a youthful piece, is a strong and solid musical accomplishment that belongs in the regular repertoire and would probably have been there long ago if its composer had lived long enough to make his name more familiar.

Charles Wuorinen's Six Pieces (an odd pairing, this) are, despite the name, a single, unified work rather freely employing serial techniques. But Wuorinen, whose music is almost always interesting, has chosen to pay careful attention to such things as tone color, rhythm, consonant and dissonant harmony, and lyrical melody, and thus presents us, once again, with a real piece of music rather than an admirable but arid intellectual exercise. It is not the most *immediately* attractive piece, but it draws you in and is, in the end, rewarding.

John Ferrell is a professor of violin and artist in residence at the University of Arizona in Tucson. I would not venture to make general comments on his abilities on the basis of this single record, but certainly his playing here is deeply satisfying, technically secure, musically communicative. The Lekeu Sonata has had its champions in the past (Menuhin made a famous recording of it on 78s), but no one should view Ferrell's recording as a mere stopgap. Wuorinen, I think, should be quite pleased with the performance of *his* work. Pianist James Avery, who is better known to me than Ferrell, supports, abets, and partners admirably.

—James Goodfriend

LUENING: *Short Sonatas for Piano, Nos. 1-3, 5-7.* Dwight Pelzer (piano). SERENUS SRS 12091 \$6.98.

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Good**

Otto Luening, whose autobiography, *The Odyssey of an American Composer*, was (Continued on page 120)

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published last year by Scribner's, is not a composer who is very well known to the general public, but he has been influential. Born in Milwaukee in 1900, brought up and educated in Germany and Switzerland from age twelve (he studied with Philip Jarnach and Busoni), he founded the opera department at the Eastman School, conducted opera and symphony for WOR Radio in New York, wrote a musical comedy as well as an opera based on Longfellow's *Evangeline*, ran the theory and composition department at the University of Tucson, Arizona, started the music department at Bennington College, was deeply involved with the Yaddo and Vermont Composers' Conferences, became Professor of Music at Co-

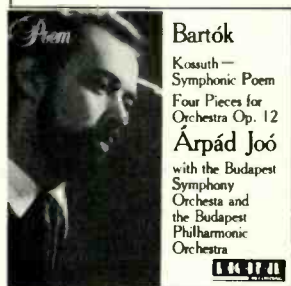
lumbia University—where he conducted the premieres of Menotti's *The Medium* and Virgil Thomson's *The Mother of Us All*, among others—taught many budding young composers (including the undersigned), and has been a key figure on just about every panel, jury, foundation, or fund that gives grants for new music. He also wrote lots and lots of music and became a pioneer of electronic music in America.

It is in the last role that Luening is best known today, which is a bit ironic since his outlook on life and art would seem quite alien to electronics (even if he does like to point out that his teacher Busoni anticipated at least the *idea* of electronic music). Luening's basic stylistic orientation was al-

ways neo-Classical and oriented towards *Gebrauchsmusik* or "music for use" à la Hindemith. This orientation is very clear in the Short Piano Sonatas. The earlier ones, from 1940 and 1958, are explicitly in a jolly neo-Classical vein; only with No. 3, written in 1963, do real modern touches show themselves. The last three (so far), written in the Seventies, are groups of inventions or fantasias that clearly try to synthesize traditional and contemporary elements. Sonata No. 7 in particular, a two-movement work of some dimensions and seriousness, has major aspirations. The performances here are good and serious—maybe even a little too long-faced. Luening is a man of some considerable wit, and one should, I think, be permitted to hear that in his music. *E.S.*

Bartók... Perfected.

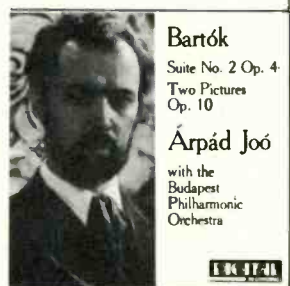
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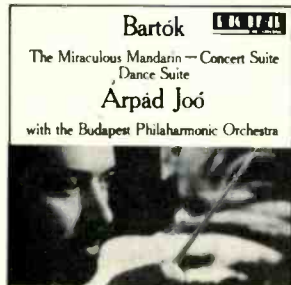
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RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

MENDELSSOHN: *Octet for Strings in E-flat Major, Op. 20*. Smetana and Panocha Quartets. DENON OX-7219-ND \$15.

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

MENDELSSOHN: *String Quartet No. 2, in A Minor, Op. 13; String Quartet No. 3, in D Major, Op. 44, No. 1*. Composers String Quartet. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4272 \$7.75 (plus \$1.60 postage and handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

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

The Panocha Quartet's debut record, a collection of works by Haydn, Schubert, and Dvořák issued by Supraphon nearly two years ago (1111683, reviewed here in May 1980) and shortly thereafter brought out in a domestic pressing by Quintessence (PMC-7183), raised two obvious questions: (1) Why was so splendid a record, taped in 1974, held back for nearly six years? (2) Why weren't we hearing more from this fine young ensemble? Both questions remain unanswered, and it is only now that we are getting a second record from this group. It is an unexpectedly significant release, which certifies the young foursome's status, one might say, by presenting it in partnership with its country's pre-eminent senior quartet. The Smetana Quartet's two earlier recordings of the Mendelssohn Octet, both with the Janáček Quartet, were probably the most admired versions of this marvelous work to date, but neither has been available—at least not on a U.S. label—for some time. The new digital recording with the Panocha, taped live in Tokyo in October 1980, is in every way a worthy successor, similarly stylish, polished, and zesty, and superbly recorded. The applause at the end seems less off-putting than it so often does, and the audience is absolutely silent throughout the music itself. The luscious performance by I Musici fits on a single side (Philips 6580 103), as do some others, but in all other respects the new Denon goes straight to the top of the current list.

While the Octet is far less likely to be encountered "live" than one of Mendelssohn's string quartets, it is far more abundantly represented on records. Among the dozen current recordings there is even another

(Continued on page 122)



Bob Carver explains (briefly) how the Magnetic Field Amplifier works. (Others tell how it sounds.)

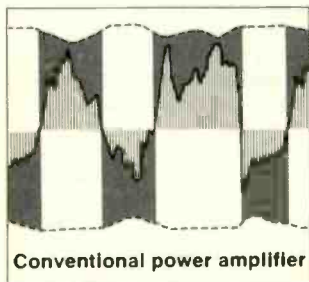
Q. How is it possible for an amplifier as small and as light as the M-400 to deliver so much power and to cost so little?

A. The M-400's size (less than 7 inches) and weight (less than 10 pounds) reflect the advanced technology and the new patented designs used in both its power supply and amplifying stages—and the innovative relationship between them. (Not to mention the incredibly low price that resulted: \$399.)

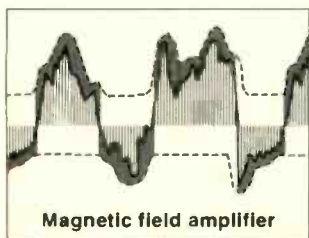
Q. What is different about the M-400's power supply and amplifying stages?

A. In any amplifier, the power supply produces and stores energy for use by the amplifying circuits.

Conventional amplifier power supplies are very inefficient because they produce a constant high voltage level at all times—irrespective of the demands of the ever-changing audio signal—and even when there's no audio in the circuit at all!



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Broken line: power supply voltage
Shaded area: wasted power
Vertical lines: power to speakers



Magnetic field amplifier

This inefficient approach demands large and expensive power transformers and electrolytic capacitors. Large heat sinks are also needed to get rid of the heat associated with the constant high voltage of conventional power supplies.

In sharp contrast, the M-400's "smart" power supply produces only the power that the amplifier section needs from moment to moment to handle the signal accurately. In effect, the M-400's power supply is *signal-responsive*. As a result, overall efficiency is extraordinarily high.

Q. Do I really need 200 watts per channel?

A. Yes! If you want to hear music reproduced with full realistic impact and dynamic range, the musical peaks must be handled without compression, clipping or overload.

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Q. Now I understand why the M-400's power capability will improve my system, but can my speakers take it?

A. Speakers with a power rating of 50 watts or so will have no problem with the M-400. That's because speakers are not generally blown out by high, clean power, but rather by low-powered amplifiers pushed beyond their overload points. These low-powered amplifiers

"clip", generating speaker-damaging transients.

In addition to providing better sound and sufficient power, the M-400 has special protective circuits that guard both itself *and* your loudspeakers from almost any conceivable damaging circumstance. These include long and short-term overload, sudden overdrive signals (such as from dropped styli), shorted speaker leads, etc.



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Q. Aside from the technical innovations in its design, how does the M-400 sound when it comes to music?

A. My design goal was to make it sound musically accurate, and I'm proud to

say that it does. More convincing perhaps, others confirm this. Leonard Feldman in *Audio* reported: "Music reproduction was superb and completely free of any false bass coloration or muddiness. The amplifier handled the toughest transients we were able to feed to it with ease... there was none of the brittle quality that one often detects from amplifiers that are beginning to strain."

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Q. Is the M-400 limited to systems with separate amplifiers?

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this recording than in the others known to me. This is a distinct plus so far as continuity is concerned, but that advantage is unfortunately negated by the absence of an English text. (Eurodisc really must provide more suitable textual presentations for American listeners.) Following an established, if not entirely welcome, tradition, the dialogues are delivered by actors. They are all good—the Osmin is really meaningful—but their vocal timbres rarely resemble those of their singing counterparts. The interpreter of Selim is fiercer and generally more involved than most. The recorded sound is fine. *G.J.*

RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: *String Quartet No. 22, in B-flat Major (K. 589); String Quartet No. 23, in F Major (K. 590).* Melos Quartet. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 320 \$10.98, © 3301 320 \$10.98.

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

MOZART: *String Quartets: No. 20, in D Major (K. 499); No. 21, in D Major (K. 575); No. 22, in B-flat Major (K. 589); No. 23, in F Major (K. 590).* Prague String Quartet. SUPRAPHON 1111 2601/s G two discs \$19.96 (from Qualiton Records, Ltd., 39-28 Crescent Street, Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

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

The Melos Quartet, having already given us outstanding recordings of the six quartets Mozart dedicated to Haydn, now offers the final pair of his ten mature quartets and will no doubt complete their cycle with K. 499 and K. 575 shortly. As in the earlier recordings, the Stuttgarters here show an uncommonly persuasive blend of intensity and poise. Both the individual playing (particularly that of Peter Buck in the regal cello material Mozart wrote for the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm II) and the ensemble are as polished as could be, and yet that polish is never achieved at the expense of vitality or flow: a marvelous sense of spontaneity informs both performances, and the tempo in the sometimes problematic slow movement of K. 590 is especially convincing. A seldom-taken repeat is played in that work's finale, by the way. It's hardly essential, but who could object to hearing the material come around again in so handsome and eloquent a performance? Excellent sound, impeccable pressing.

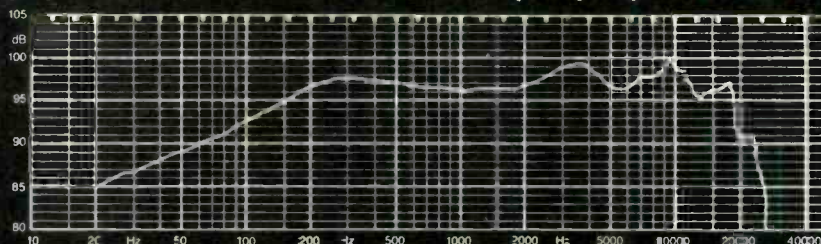
Reference is made on the Supraphon jacket to the Prague Quartet's recordings of the six "Haydn" quartets; I have never come across them, but after enjoying this set of the final four I'd certainly be interested in hearing them. The Czech players manage to combine most of the virtues of the Melos performances with a more sinewy, driving quality that brings out undercurrents of nervous tension to make these works sound especially vivid—without, however, allowing this factor to run rampant or to distort the sense of proportion that underpins the music. Accents are a bit sharper, dynamic contrasts more marked, inner voices brought out more dramatically, and at the same time sheer richness of tone

(Continued on page 126)

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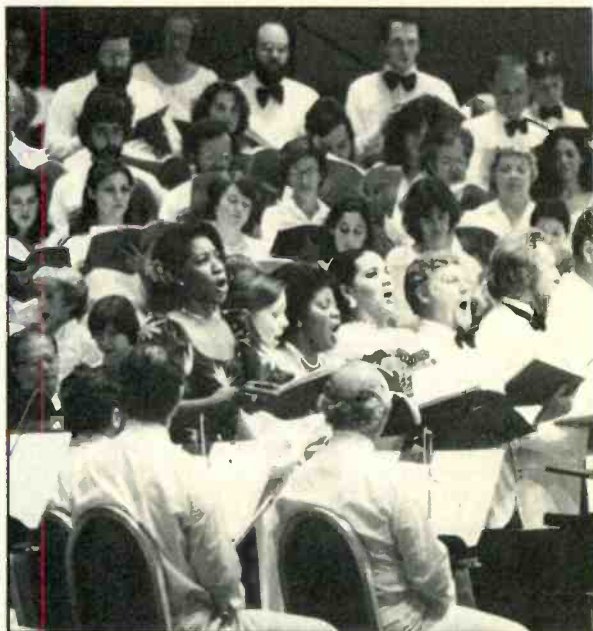
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A Radiant Mahler Eighth to Mark the Boston's Centenary



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THE Boston Symphony Orchestra gave its first concert on October 22, 1881, and, without labeling it a centenary issue, Philips timed the release of the BSO's new digital recording of Mahler's Eighth Symphony to coincide with the anniversary observance. The so-called "Symphony of a Thousand" is of course eminently suited to so festive an occasion, and the performance under Seiji Ozawa—taped (using the Soundstream system), not by a thousand performers but by nearly four hundred, early in the orchestra's hundredth season (October 1980)—is an outstanding one that would be most welcome in any context. While the Mahler Eighth is a vast work about which many pages might be written, and while there are further recordings just around the corner (from both James Levine on RCA and Klaus Tennstedt on Angel), it can be said briefly and assuredly that the musical and sonic assets of Ozawa's version add up to the most satisfying account of the work on discs so far.

Back in 1965 John Wummer, who was then retiring as the New York Philharmonic's principal flutist, cited Ozawa as a conductor he especially liked "because he's so much like Bruno Walter." Ozawa was just turning thirty then, and Wummer was really talking about his efficient use of rehearsal time rather than a likeness of interpretive approach, but it is the latter that suggests itself throughout this performance. Not that Ozawa is in any sense copying Walter (who never recorded the Eighth and, unless I'm mistaken, never had an opportunity to perform it during his American years), but simply because this performance seems so pervasively *Mahlerish* in the same unlabored way Walter's authoritative performances do in the works he did record. How to define such a term? (Fats Waller is reported to have told a woman who asked him to define jazz: "Lady, if you have to ask, you'll never know!") There are elements that might be cited—one feels the ur-

gency of Ozawa's response, the sense of spontaneity in the music's unfolding, the buttery yet crystal-clear textures (even the mandolin in the second movement makes its charming point with utterly natural clarity here)—but what it comes down to, and what perhaps makes the occasional echoes and pre-echoes of Mahler's other works so telling here, is simply total-immersion Mahlerism.

Bernstein (CBS), Kubelik (Deutsche Grammophon), and Wyn Morris (in his short-lived RCA issue) showed every bit as much conviction, with the same great sweep and beautiful detail, and Solti (London) made of this symphony the apex of his Mahler cycle (his first such cycle, one must say, for he has embarked on a second now), but none of them surpasses Ozawa interpretively. None has a more glorious-sounding orchestra, only Solti can boast a comparable line-up of soloists, and neither theirs nor any other prior recording approaches the radiant richness and clarity of the new Philips—and this is a more critical factor in the Eighth than in any of Mahler's other works.

THE opening proclamation of "*Veni, Creator Spiritus*" is exultant and impetuous, as Mahler asked, rather than ceremonial, and the momentum established in that phrase never flags. The superb scene-setting in the orchestral introduction to the second of the two movements, the music for the final scene of Goethe's *Faust* (with the omission of Pater Seraphicus and some other emendations on Mahler's part), is similarly assured, and there is nothing but deepening satisfaction through the entire sequence with its transfiguring "*Chorus mysticus*" at the end. And how the spaciousness of the sound enhances the vividness of the scene! Some of the soloists may not be familiar to all listeners, but not one is less than superb. Gwynne Howell, the excellent Pater Profundis, was also in the foremen-



Writer H. Scott Phillips

tioned Wyn Morris recording, and there is no finer Mahler tenor anywhere right now than Kenneth Riegel, but all their colleagues here also have a long identification with this work, and all have the youthful power to make Mahler's demands seem almost comfortable. For the choruses, no amount of praise could be enough. Both the adults and the boys sound like "amateurs" in the best sense—that is, "lovers" of their joyous task—so that every phrase rings with conviction, in the subdued passages as well as the animated ones.

THERE were perhaps two miscalculations. One is the balancing of the soloists. In the concert performances they were placed with the main chorus, behind the orchestra instead of up front, but in the recording they seem just a bit closer in focus than might be ideal. The other concerns the two side breaks in the long second movement, both of which occur rather abruptly at points less well chosen than in some other sets. While these two items are worth mentioning, they don't at all diminish this new set's commanding lead over all other recordings of the Mahler Eighth. And it boasts yet another asset, both substantial and unique, in the form of the exhaustive, imaginative, and altogether magnificent essay (one simply can't call this mere "annotation") by Michael Steinberg, reprinted from the program of the San Francisco Symphony (whose "Artistic Adviser" he is) for the Boston concerts. —Richard Freed

MAHLER: Symphony No. 8, in E-flat Major. Faye Robinson, Judith Blegen, Deborah Sasson (sopranos); Florence Quivar, Lorna Myers (altos); Kenneth Riegel (tenor); Benjamin Luxon (baritone); Gwynne Howell (bass); Tanglewood Festival Chorus; Boston Boys' Choir; James Christie (organ); Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa cond. PHILIPS Ⓞ 6769 069 two discs \$25.96.



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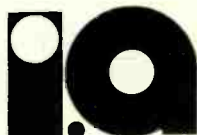
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is more assiduously cultivated than in any other performances of these four works I can recall, but none of these elements is allowed to override the grand design either. One little touch that especially intrigues me is the clarity of the drone effect beneath the scampering figure at the end of the exposition in the finale of K. 590: it does not call attention to itself unnaturally, but it makes itself heard as one telling example of all that goes into making these performances so stunning and stimulating.

Both the Melos and the Prague performances are on the very highest level. Personally, I find the greater freshness of the latter drawing me back to the Supraphon set again and again, and the recording is every bit as good as DG's. **R.F.**

SAINT-SAËNS: *Symphony No. 3, in C Minor, Op. 78 ("Organ")*. Berj Zamkochian (organ); Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch cond. RCA ATLL1-4039 \$9.98, © ATK1-4039 \$9.98.

Performance: **Restrained**
Recording: **A triumph**

SAINT-SAËNS: *Symphony No. 3, in C Minor, Op. 78 ("Organ")*. Noel Rawsthorne (organ); Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Loris Tjeknavorian cond. CHALFONT ● SDG 312 \$15.

Performance: **All stops out**
Recording: **State of the art**

Some musical works of the past might have been composed as much to challenge the

technical capabilities of recording engineers as for enjoyment in the concert hall. Camille Saint-Saëns wrote his mammoth *Organ* Symphony in 1886, less than a decade after Thomas A. Edison built the first phonograph, and the medium wasn't yet equal to the message; it still wasn't in 1921, when the composer died at the age of eighty-six. But in recent years that symphony, with its enormous dynamic range and dazzling passages for organ and orchestra, has provided a handy yardstick for judging the state of the recording art. What can be done even retroactively is brilliantly demonstrated in the reissued 1959 RCA recording by Charles Munch. Remastered at half speed, the disc's dynamic range has been markedly increased, the sound enriched, and the performance clarified, and the surfaces are remarkably quiet. Munch did not exploit the more sensational aspects of this score, however, but conducted it with more stress on its graces and charms than on its glitter; all the remastering in the world cannot alter the basically subdued impression Munch seems to have deliberately sought to convey. Those who like the Saint-Saëns Third to blast them out of their seats might find themselves feeling a little impatient with this elegant reading.

No such disappointments for audiophiles are in store on the new digital Chalfont recording. Noel Rawsthorne has a high old time with the mighty organ in Liverpool Cathedral, a structure so vast that in the cover photograph the orchestra appears to be all but lost in it. Here we get all the titil-

lation of music performed in a vaulting space, and the last movement in particular, with its splendiferous passages for organ and orchestra, is in better sonic focus than ever before on discs. At the other end of the range, there is absolutely nothing to mar the hushed passages of the contemplative adagio either. A fine job. **P.K.**

SCHUBERT: *Lieder. Der Wanderer; Meeressstille; Wanderers Nachtlied; Gesänge des Harfners; Geheimes; An die Musik; Pilgerweise; Atys; Abschied; Orest auf Tauris; Liedesend; Alinde; Die Liebe Hat Gelogen; Der Wanderer (D. 649); Greisengesang, Das Zügelglöcklein; Orpheus; Des Sängers Habe; An den Tod; Tiefes Leid; Todtengräbers Heimweh; Der Kreuzzug; Der Schäfer und der Reiter; Schiffers Scheidelied.* Hans Hotter (bass-baritone); Michael Raucheisen (piano). DISCOCORP® IGI-386 two discs \$17.96 (from Discocorp, P.O. Box 771, Berkeley, Calif. 94701).

Performance: **Authoritative but uneven**
Recording: **Clean but dated**

The various widely circulated commercial recordings of the veteran German bass-baritone Hans Hotter show him to be a darkly powerful Dutchman, a dignified, deeply human Wotan, and a moving interpreter of Schubert's *Die Winterreise* and *Schwanengesang* as well as of certain songs of Brahms and Hugo Wolf. But, impressive as these recordings are, they all present the artist in the autumnal years of his career (Hotter

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was born in 1909 and had already attained prominence before World War II); vocal unsteadiness frequently compromises the intellectual and interpretive values.

Now comes a two-disc set, from German radio archives, of Schubert songs that Hotter recorded in 1944, six years before his impressive Metropolitan Opera debut. Even then his voice was more comfortable in the lower half of its range, but it was quite steady tonally, with an attractive mellow resonance. It was, apparently, never an agile instrument—rather a cumbersome one, in fact—but it was redeemed from dullness by a caressing quality and a certain innate dignity.

The many fans of this major artist will welcome this set, but I can recommend it to general listeners only with some rather serious reservations. The first of these concerns the program itself. Granted that Hotter's gifts are most evident in music calling for a certain solemnity and weightiness of utterance, this set has rather too much of that, and some songs are included that are far from first-rate. (Some of the unfamiliar songs here, on the other hand—the "other" *Wanderer*, *Zügelglöcklein*, *Der Schäfer und der Reiter*—do deserve to be better known.)

I must also register some disappointment with the performances. Although his tone is steady, Hotter's intonation is not always on the mark, and Michael Raucheisen is not an ideal accompanist—though the lack of rhythmic definition may be in part due to a faulty recording balance, which at times results in all voice and virtually no piano. Texts in German and English are provided with the set. *G.J.*

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RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SHEPPARD: *Mass, "Cantate"; Responsory, "Spiritus Sanctus."* The Clerkes of Oxenford, David Wulstan cond. NONESUCH H-71396 \$5.98.

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

Although very little is known about the early sixteenth-century English composer John Sheppard, his music is gradually taking its place alongside that of his distinguished contemporaries Tallis, Tye, and Taverner. Judging from the music on this Nonesuch record, that place is a very high one indeed. The sonority of sixteenth-century English choral music seems, as a contemporary Venetian ambassador wrote, "more divine than human." This effect was achieved by the use of a wide pitch range and the division of the chorus into six parts: divided trebles and altos, tenors, and basses. Dwelling on full triadic sonorities, the music is spiced with frequent cross-relations and achieves its inner life by means of intricate contrapuntal tracery.

The Clerkes of Oxenford under the direction of David Wulstan do full justice to this exquisite music. Employing women, countertenors, tenors, and basses, the Clerkes produce a sound that is remarkably pure without being a flat white. The sinuous detail of each line is sharply etched with no loss of full, resonant sound. The timbre of each register is brought out so that one is aware of Sheppard's brilliant "choral orchestration." Lovers of English choral art



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will certainly revel in this disc and undoubtedly hope that the Clerkes will give us more Sheppard. S.L.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

SORABJI: *In the Hothouse; Fantaisie Espagnole; Toccata; Pastiche on "Habanera" from Bizet's "Carmen"; Fragment; Introito and Preludio-Corale from "Opus Clavicembalisticum."* Michael Haberman (piano). MUSICMASTERS MM 20015 \$8.98.

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

The music of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji, born in England in 1892 to a Parsi father

and a mother of Spanish-Sicilian background, was more talked about than played in the Twenties when he moved in the company of Peter Warlock and Bernard van Dieren and wrote scathing essays denouncing the British musical establishment of the day. Its obscurity became more pronounced after 1936 when he forbade all public performances though he had by then completed the monumental (248-page) and legendary *Opus Clavicembalisticum* for solo piano. I have long had in my library, alongside Van Dieren's musical essays, Sorabji's equally choice collection, *Mi Contra Fa—The Immoralisings of a Machiavellian Musician*. But until I received this album I had never heard a note of his music, though

Sorabji relented in 1976 and allowed pianists Yonty Soloman and Michael Haberman to perform and record his works.

What I hear in the sampling on this disc from Musicmasters—the over-the-counter arm of the Musical Heritage Society—is by turns absorbing and vastly entertaining. A flippant way to convey an impression of it might be: take some Liszt, Busoni, Scriabin, Satie, and Ives; shake well before using. The Busoni influence seems profound in the opening of the *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, and I find that I want to hear more—the whole thing, in fact. *In the Hothouse* amounts to an early (1918) post-Impressionist essay but with a fascinating end combining augmented fourths with pandiatonic elements. The 1920 toccata is a kind of *moto perpetuo* study with whole-tone aspects and fleeting bits of jazz that's almost Ivesian in ambience. *Fragment* (1926, revised 1937) is somewhat on the cryptic side—an essay in fanciful polyphony. *Fantaisie Espagnole* (1919) has certain Satie-like aspects with a touch of music-hall style here and there and wonderful use of consecutive fourths and fifths. The pastiche on the *Habanera* from *Carmen* is a truly hilarious takeoff, the famous piece as it might be heard in a hashish smoker's fantasies.

Much of this music is difficult and highly virtuosic, pianistic extravaganzas that would make even a Leopold Godowsky green with envy. Along with this, however, is total command of musical craft. Whether one cares aesthetically for the manner in which Sorabji employs his craft is a matter of taste. Personally, I found this first sampling both pleasingly varied and absorbing, Michael Haberman's performance fully up to its exacting demands, and the recording job altogether first-rate. And I do want to hear more!
D.H.

STOCK: *Inner Space* (see HARBISON)

SZYMANOWSKI: *Symphony No. 2, in B-flat Major, Op. 19.* Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati cond. *Symphony No. 3, Op. 27 ("Song of the Night").* Ryszard Karczykowski (tenor); Kenneth Jewell Chorale; Detroit Symphony Orchestra. Antal Dorati cond. LONDON ● LDR 71026 \$10.98.

Performance: **Very fine**
Recording: **Excellent**

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) was the Polish counterpart of Hungary's Béla Bartók and Spain's Manuel de Falla, achieving in his last works a true amalgam of Polish national style and mainstream European music. (Granted that Chopin could be said to have done the same thing three generations earlier, Szymanowski accomplished it in the more complex twentieth-century context.) Unhappily, he found his own voice late, in such works as the ballet *Harnasie*, the *Stabat Mater*, the *Kurpian Songs*, and the mazurkas of Opp. 50 and 64. Szymanowski's earlier major works, such as the two symphonies offered on this release, reflect stylistic influences from all over the musical map, excepting only the Schoenberg and Stravinsky territories. Despite their derivative character, however, they display an absolutely dazzling command of musical material and instrumental color.

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richly textured opening movement through a set of five variations and culminates in a dramatic introduction to a highly elaborate final fugue. Both the handling of orchestral sonorities and the predominantly chromatic texture are reminiscent of Richard Strauss. The gorgeously sensuous Third Symphony shows contemporary French influences (Debussy) as well as the effects of the composer's travels in North Africa and Sicily, where he encountered Islamic culture. The text for chorus and tenor solo (excellently sung here by Ryszard Karczykowski) is based on a Persian poem in the mystical Sufi tradition. A Scriabinesque element is also very evident in the music, and I sense a kinship with Delius in the work's harmonic richness. For my own taste, however, it is all a bit too much.

This album is one of a number of formidable and enterprising ventures that Antal Dorati has undertaken lately for London, and in terms of musical execution and sound quality it must be judged a complete success. I have owned Polish recordings of both these symphonies, and the present realizations leave them wholly in the shade on both counts. The digitally mastered recording is superb, and Dorati has provided the kind of disciplined readings that this prodigal music needs. The disc is certainly a must for anyone interested in Szymanowski or modern Polish music. *D.H.*

WIENIAWSKI: *Polonaise in D Major; Obertass Mazurka; Scherzo Tarantelle; Kuyawiak; Capriccio Valse; Légende; Polonaise in A Major; Souvenir de Moscow; Variations on an Original Theme.* Ruggiero Ricci (violin); Joanna Gruenberg (piano). UNICORN-KANCHANA Ⓞ DKP 9003 \$10.98 (from Euroclass Record Distributors, Ltd., 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013).

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

The two violin concertos of Henri Wieniawski (1835-1880) are well represented in the catalog, and many of this eminent violinist-composer's shorter bravura pieces appear in recorded recitals by Perlman, Zukerman, Rabin, *et al.*, but this is the only currently available disc devoted solely to his music. It was digitally taped last year in London, in commemoration of the centenary of the composer's death. The disc's contents have been well chosen. The two polonaises, the *Scherzo Tarantelle*, and the *Légende* are quite familiar. The Variations on an Original Theme, characteristically ingenious in its combination of songfulness and virtuosity, is a rarity. As for *Souvenir de Moscow*, it is known to every violinist, yet, inexplicably, I don't recall encountering it on records for the last thirty years.

Ruggiero Ricci, a true bravura fiddler, usually thrives on music of this kind. Considering the difficulty of the pieces, I can appreciate the claim printed on the jacket that "every item has been recorded in complete individual takes, without edits." More noted for blazing technique than for the finish and elegance of his playing, Ricci never disappoints when fireworks are called for, as they nearly always are here. He also displays a considerable amount of charm in the *Kuyawiak* (a rhapsodic mazurka) and *Capriccio Valse* and plays the melancholy *Lé-*

gende with poignancy and a rich singing tone. This record is certain to delight fiddle fanciers. *G.J.*

WUORINEN: *Six Pieces for Violin and Piano* (see LEKEU)

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JOHN HOLMQUIST: *Las Folias de España.* **L. Couperin:** *Tombeau de M. Blancrochet.* **McGuire:** *Suite No. 2 in Popular Style.* **Biberian:** *Monogram.* **Ponce:** *Variations and Fugue on "Las Folias de España."* John Holmquist (guitar). CAVATA

CV 5001 \$8.98 (plus \$1 postage and handling charge from Cavata Music Publishers, 941 Delaware Avenue, Mendota Heights, Minn. 55118).

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

Listeners whose only acquaintance with Manuel Ponce is through his *Estrellita* will be amazed to hear his twenty variations and fugue based on the song *Las Folias de España*. A major work for the guitar, this set of variations in a brooding, post-Debussy style is full of drama and beauty. James McGuire's Suite in Popular Style is charming and easy to listen to. Gilbert Biberian's
(Continued on page 132)

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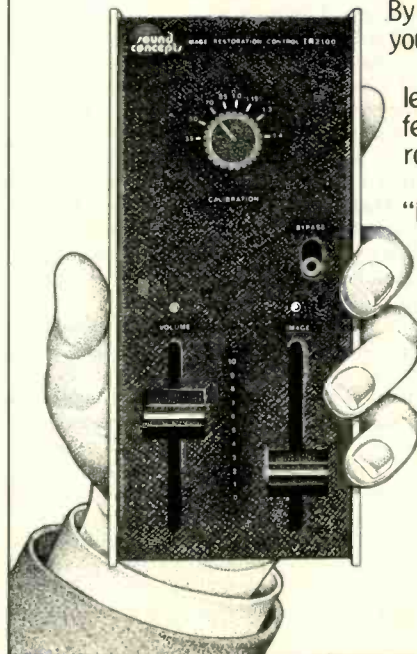
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Interview



André-Michel Schub

An unusually large number of people know that André-Michel Schub was the winner of the 1981 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. The contest received exceptional press coverage (Harold Schonberg, acting "foreign correspondent" for the *New York Times*, sent back a series of superlatively done reports), and it was the subject of a TV on-the-scene spectacular which, unfortunately, took the view that most people would rather hear the contestants speak than hear them play. Still, the message that this was *important* (the way the U.S. Open tennis tournament is important) got across; Schub's name became something of a household word and he began to be recognized on sight.

Such renown brings a certain warmth to any artist's heart. And yet, Schub was known to almost everyone who really mattered in the music business well before the competition. In fact, he was so much better known than any of the other contestants, so obviously more experienced and established, that he was the odds-on-favorite to win. One wondered, then, why he entered it at all, for in his position he seemed to have the least to gain by winning and the most to lose by somehow *not* winning.

"Yes," says Schub, "I was reasonably

well known. I was invited all over—to play chamber music or a Mozart concerto. That's fine, but it's not a career, and it's not all there is to playing the piano. You want to impress people with your musicianship in a Beethoven sonata, yes, but then you also want to blow them away with the octaves in the Tchaikovsky concerto."

Schub, like many artists, has had trouble with typecasting: cool, low-profile, musicianly. It usually goes the other way: the flaming but superficial virtuoso who wants to be taken seriously as a profound interpreter of music. In either case, though, one gets to be associated with a certain repertoire and gets invited, again and again, to play only that repertoire. "I want to play a lot of different concertos," says Schub, "a lot of *warhorse* concertos." Given the circumstances, it's a perfectly understandable ambition, and one that Schub, having *won* the Cliburn Competition, should now be able to satisfy.

Playing warhorse repertoire, though, presents a particular problem: how do you differentiate yourself from the dozens of other talented pianists who play that repertoire? How do you define yourself? "To begin with," says Schub, "technique in itself is irrelevant to me. There's always going to be

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concerts by most of these men while I was growing up. Records are another matter. I don't make a point of listening—or not listening—to other people's records."

Thanks to the Cliburn Competition, Schub now has a record of his own. (It had to have been a major frustration of his earlier career that he had no recording contract.) It came, actually, as part of the prize, but it will obviously lead to more. Schub considers the large-scale German Romantic or Classic work his particular métier, and so the repertoire of his first disc is at least half expected. The side devoted to Liszt may surprise some of his earlier fans but could hardly be unexpected after the Cliburn Competition.

To say that he plays well on the record would be very much understating the case. He plays, for the most part, brilliantly, and his Brahms Handel Variations is an interpretation to be ranked with the best of them. As a matter of fact, I had the opportunity to compare it, variation by variation, with what I personally consider "the best of them," the 78-rpm recording by Solomon, thought of by many as one of the great keyboard recordings of all time. Well, yes, I think the Solomon is better—but only in certain ways and not by much. So far as fingers go, Schub quite matches him. The difference comes from the fact that Solomon was a more mature pianist, more willing to take chances, ready to submerge detail to the expressing of a *big* musical point. But Schub, although he is more careful, more conscious of the detail, more likely to take a slower tempo, is by no means small-scale. He tears through the stormier variations with real excitement and offers plenty of contrast in the more lyrical ones. And, best of all, he holds the piece together admirably. It is a young man's performance, but on the highest level; it is no mere demonstration of future potential, but a first-rate musical accomplishment right now.

WITH the Liszt pieces, Schub is obviously determined to show not only that he has the necessary technique (he does), but the temperament as well. I find his *Dante* striking, brilliantly colored, and quite expressive. But then it's a piece with some substance. I am somewhat less impressed by the two Paganini Études, which are concerned not with substance but with flair. It may simply be that it takes a kind of empty-headedness to play these pieces to perfection—and Schub has too much upstairs.

The digital recording is extremely good, the piano sound, a combination of the recording technique and the instrument itself, rich and impressive. A record to own, and a pianist to hear.

—James Goodfriend

BRAHMS: Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24. LISZT: Après une Lecture de Dante, Fantasia Quasi Sonata; Grandes Études de Paganini, No. 2, in E-flat Major, and No. 6, in A Minor. André-Michel Schub (piano). Vox CUM LAUDE • D VCL 9009 \$10.98, © VCS 9009 \$10.98.

someone who can play faster and louder than you do. Musically, you might classify me as something of a literalist. I don't consciously try to do anything different. I try to bring as much integrity to the performance as possible. But I like to think that I have a certain kind of color palette, a certain temperament that's different from anyone else's. Mastering a piece means to me that I can play it the way I feel it has to be at this time."

ANDRÉ-MICHEL SCHUB, despite the name and despite the fact that he was born in Paris, considers himself an American pianist. He grew up in Brooklyn, is a sports aficionado (particularly of baseball), goes to museums and the theater. He studied with Rudolf Serkin and names among his influences—besides Serkin—Vladimir Horowitz, Arthur Rubinstein, and Sviatoslav Richter. He also admires violinists Nathan Milstein and Jascha Heifetz and cellist Pablo Casals. With a single exception, that is very much the list of an American musician, though, one would think, of one at least a decade older than Schub, who is twenty-nine. "For me to say that someone has had influence on my playing I have to have heard him play in concert. I went to

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Monogram is rougher going but uses the guitar imaginatively in its passionate outbursts. Louis Couperin's *Tombeau* is almost a misfit in this recital, but it is effective in a transcription by Michael Lorimer.

John Holmquist is a serious young musician who plays with great integrity. He is a master of color, and his playing ranges from the gruffly powerful to a barely audible delicacy. This record is a fine contribution to the growing musical stature of the guitar. S.L.

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Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Very good**

Siegfried Jerusalem is a German tenor with a smooth, Italianate sound and a good legato—a rare kind of singer nowadays. His style is better suited to the lyric requirements of Nicolai, Flotow, and Korngold or the classic lines of Gluck's "*Unis dès la plus tendre enfance*" (to quote the aria's French original) than to the heavier demands of Weber, Wagner, and D'Albert. Yet, even without the vocal heft and the solid foundation of a strong midrange, he delivers all the arias here admirably, at times quite remarkably. His voice is light in timbre, agreeable in tone, and skillfully managed. Declamatory passages are handled with clarity and precision, and even when he must battle the orchestra (*Parsifal*), he refrains from choosing unmusical solutions. There are no sensational effects here, but this is a consistently fine and eminently musical recital, orchestrally well supported and very well recorded. G.J.

MUSIC FOR VOICE AND FLUTE. Ibert: *Deux Stèles Orientées; Aria (Vocalise).* Roussel: *Deux Poèmes de Ronsard.* Caplet: *Écoute.* Roland-Manuel: *Charmant Rossignol; Chanson.* Rodrigo: *Verde, Verderol; Pajaro del Agua.* Mortari: *Canzone.* Berliniski: *Psalm 23.* Draganski: *The Bestiary.* Yolanda Marcoulescu (soprano); Robert Goodberg (flute). ORION ORS 80371 \$8.98.

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Very good**

After any number of predictable song recitals it is refreshing to find one conceived entirely for flute and voice and containing not a single song previously familiar to me. I found the variety of songs on this album almost disconcerting. Side one, all sophisticated post-Debussy French songs, hangs together beautifully. On side two, Joaquin Rodrigo's neo-primitive folksiness is in

(Continued on page 138)

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Granger Collection

Frank Martin: Piano Music

OPUS ONE—a small label based in Greenville, Maine—has a winner in the first volume of a projected survey of the piano works of the eminent Swiss composer Frank Martin (1890-1974). Not only is the repertoire substantial and interesting, but Rebecca la Brecque, a specialist in twentieth-century music, is a pianist I hope to be hearing a lot more from in years to come.

The works performed so brilliantly here by Ms. La Brecque all show how Martin totally assimilated various modern musical languages, from Debussy and Ravel to Falla and Schoenberg, and used them as vehicles for wholly personal yet very disciplined poetic expression. *Clair de Lune* is a kind of highly chromatic modern counterpart of a Chopin nocturne. *Esquisse* was designed as a sight-reading study for a musical competition in Munich; it's a very canny piece, beginning in a somewhat dry fashion but moving toward a menacing, near-martial climax. *Étude Rythmique*, a kind of homage to Dalcroze, is a fascinating essay pitting 9/8 meter against 3/4. *Guitare* was written originally for guitar and dedicated to Segovia. Its four short movements—*Prélude*, *Air*, *Plainte*, and *Comme une Gigue*—partake of elements of classical guitar figuration and fleetingly evoke Iberia. *Plainte* in particular is a powerful piece that has a kinship to certain works by Béla Bartók.

The most exciting work on the disc is the flamenco fantasy in four connected movements. (One might wonder how a Swiss

composer came to write on Iberian-Andalusian material; the excellent album notes explain that Martin's daughter is a flamenco dancer and he wrote the piece for her.) While the opening *Rumba Lente* and *Rumba Rapide* are very brilliant, it is in the *cante jondo* episodes, *Soleares* and *Peteneras*, that Martin got to the heart of the matter with music of great poignancy and intensity, capturing to the full the tragic import of these peculiarly Andalusian modes of gypsy dance.

The performances here are nothing less than breathtaking. Besides showing great rhythmic vitality and a finely honed sense of line, La Brecque has a near-Horowitzian control over her instrument in dynamics and precision of attack and release. She has also had the benefit of generally excellent recording, although, oddly enough, the sound is more effective—richer and better balanced—in the pieces played on a Steinway and recorded in the SUNY/Stony Brook recital hall than in *Guitare*, for which she used a Bösendorfer Imperial in the somewhat overly bright and hard surround of a church. All told, this is a most stimulating album and the disc debut of a remarkable pianist.

—David Hall

MARTIN: *Clair de Lune; Esquisse; Étude Rythmique; Fantaisie sur des Rythmes Flamenco; Guitare (Quatre Pièces Brèves pour Piano)*. Rebecca la Brecque (piano). OPUS ONE 686 \$5.98.

sharp contrast with Herman Berlinski's dead-earnest lyrical twelve-tone psalm and the contemporary American composer Donald Draganski's strange mini-cycle.

As always, Yolanda Marcoulescu is a sensitive and stimulating singer. The tenderness and charm with which she invests the Ibert/Roussel/Caplet sequence are matched by her expertise in the Rodrigo

miniatures. The two vocalises (by Ibert and Mortari) attest to the soundness of her vocal equipment, and she makes a persuasive case for *The Bestiary* (which was dedicated to her) even though the music does not always perfectly fit the words. Miss Marcoulescu and her excellent flutist partner are captured in well-balanced sound with real presence. Full texts are given.

G.J.

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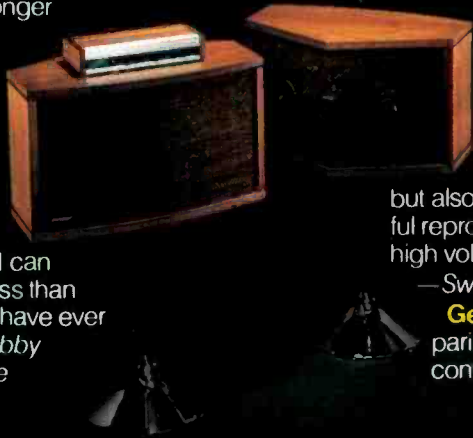
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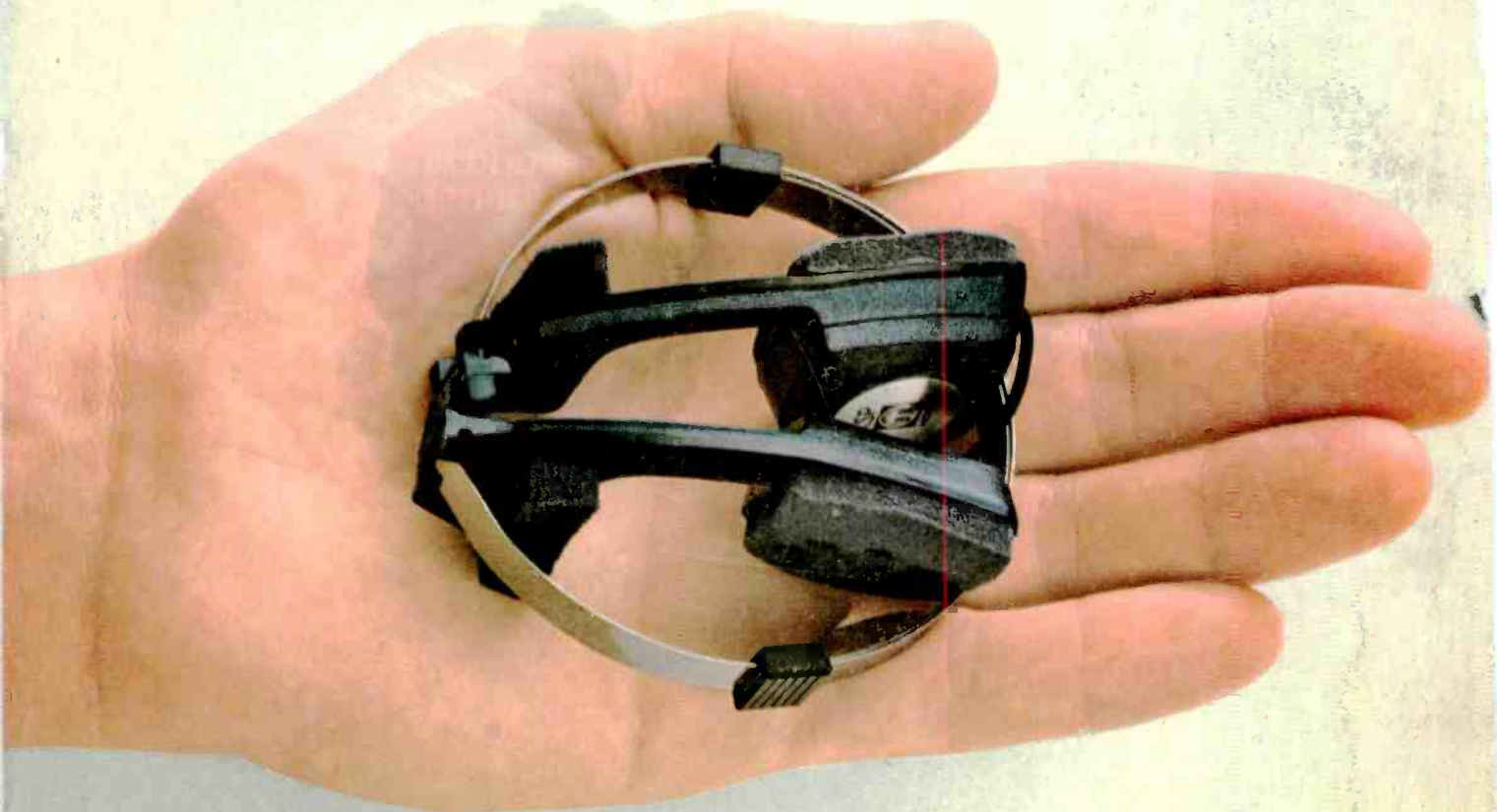
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