

JUNE 1982 • \$1.25

Stereo Review[®]

CAR STEREO: What are minicassette and stereo-AM prospects?

NEW AUDIO PRODUCTS: Turntables, headphones, accessories

INTERVIEW: Songwriter Karla Bonoff

EQUIPMENT TEST REPORTS:

- Aiwa AD-3800U Cassette Deck
- McIntosh MC 2255 Power Amplifier
- Ohm Walsh 2 Speaker System
- J.C. Penney Model 3260 AM/FM Stereo Receiver
- Shure V15 Type V Phono Cartridge

DISC SPECIALS:

Gordon Lightfoot • Paul McCartney
Marshall Crenshaw • Bunny Berigan
Lou Reed • Wynton Marsalis

ALKAN & GRIFFES: Piano Roundups

BACH: All-star *Brandenburgs*

RODRIGO: Two Concertos



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raw critical praise, shock the non value for the money.

one else in the business is doing it.

Common sense and uncommon engineering have been a hallmark of our company since its beginning.

We still do things a little differently than most. The result is high performance, exceptional value and very often a limited supply.

You won't find Sherwood everywhere. It might be smart to start looking now.

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How Sherwood receivers manage to do better than the competition and still provide uncommon value

While the creation of music is an art, the re-creation of music is a science. But it's not a pure science. For better or worse (typically worse) a delicate balance has to be struck between the passionate desire for sonic purity, and the reality of a paycheck. A little too much in one direction and phenomenal statistics are exceeded only by phenomenal price. Too much in the other direction and the price is right but the sound is wrong.

Tricky business making choices. But something we've been doing with quiet success for more than 25 years. When in doubt, we opt for performance.

And the critics seem to think we do it right. We're Sherwood.

GOOD ENOUGH ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH.

A little over a year ago, America's leading consumer research magazine rated a Sherwood stereo receiver first in a field of fifteen better known pieces of equipment.

Our competition was probably shocked.

We were obviously pleased. Because it seemed to prove that we'd been going about our business the right way after all. And because favorable reviews are good for sales.

Despite that, we phased out the winning receiver almost immediately and replaced it with something better.

The continuing evolution of Sherwood receivers brings us now to the 9000 series. Our best to date.

THE BALANCE OF POWER.

Stereo manufacturers typically promote the receiver in their line that offers the biggest power rating, theory being bigger is better. Here's what the November 1981 Stereo Review Equipment Test said about one of the smallest receivers in our line:

"Not only did it comfortably surpass many of its key performance ratings, but some of those ratings are well above the norm for receivers in its price class. For example the FM S/N we measured on the S-9200 CP was among the best we have yet found in a receiver at any price.

"Under practical listening conditions it can deliver far more power than its very conservative ratings would suggest.

"Aside from sheer power, the S-9200 CP could more than hold its own against receivers selling for several times its price."

However, our 20 watt receiver does face stiff competition. From our 30 or 40 or 60 watt receivers.

In each case the additional power is accompanied by additional features, additional finesse and improved pleasure.

The S-9600 CP, for example, is rated 60 watts RMS per channel with no more than .05% THD into 8 ohms. An eight-stage discrete phono pre-amp section filters out subsonics and prevents transient distortion. The discrete DC power amp section is stable into 2 ohm and reactive loads. The tuner section has 1.6 uV usable sensitivity, 75 dB stereo signal to noise ratio, and Touch Lock Tuning.

About the S-9600 CP, High Fidelity reports

in their January 1982 issue:

"Noise and distortion are extremely low, frequency response is extremely flat, and there are no disappointments elsewhere to spoil the listening experience."

Beyond that, Sherwood virtually guarantees its performance.

EVERY SHERWOOD YOU BUY, IS USED.

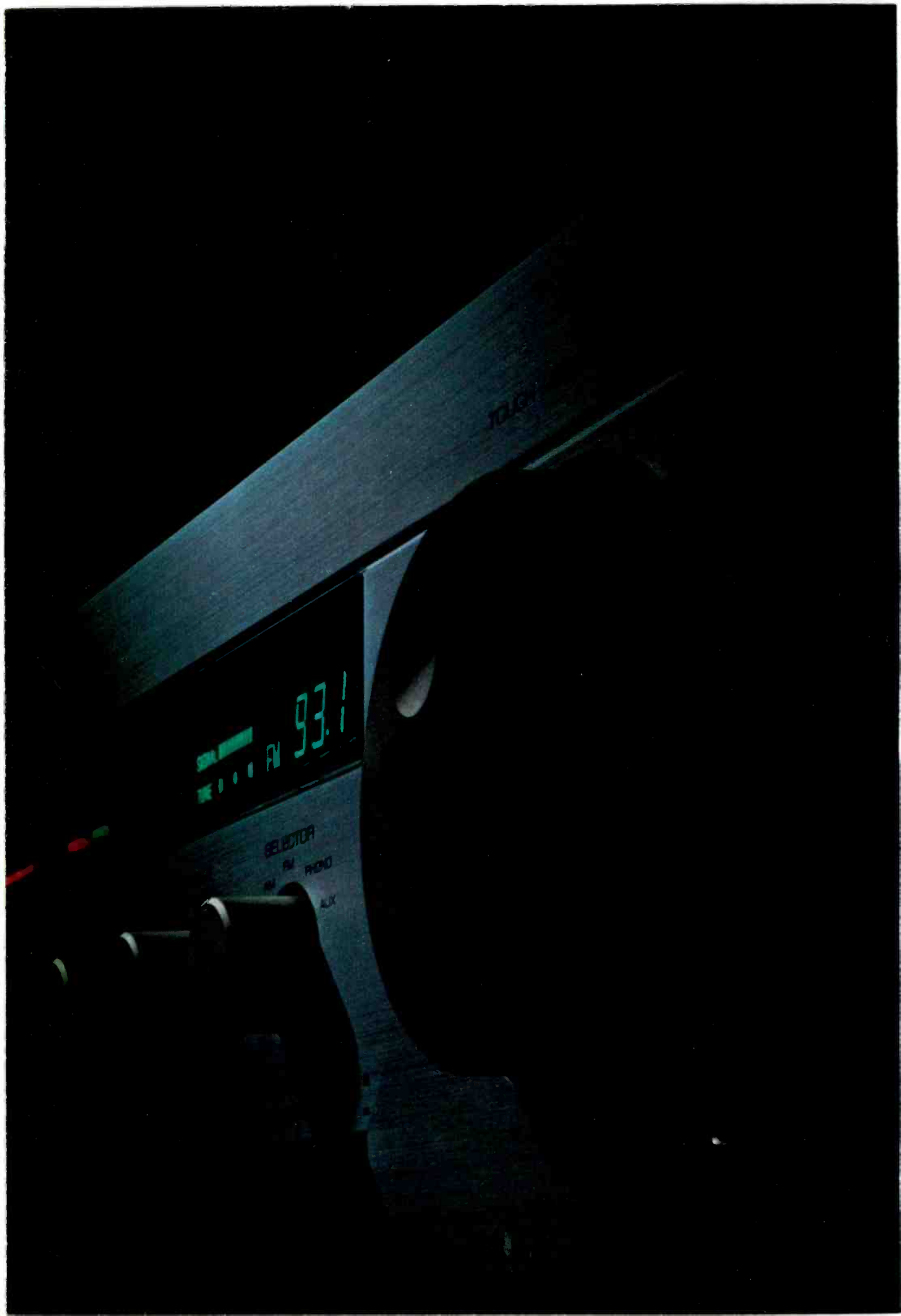
Before you open the carton on a Sherwood receiver, you'll know the exact performance characteristics for that unit. We call that Certified Performance. It's the result of testing each piece, one at a time, then adjusting, and testing again. That seems to be the only reasonable approach to testing, but no



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FORMERLY HI FI/STEREO REVIEW (ISSN 0039-1220)

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JUNE 1982 • VOLUME 47 • NUMBER 6

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Introducing TDK AD-X. The normal bias tape with Super Avilyn technology.

New TDK AD-X is the first normal bias audio cassette to use TDK's Avilyn magnetic particle—based on the renowned Super Avilyn formulation that has kept TDK the leader in audio and videotape technology.

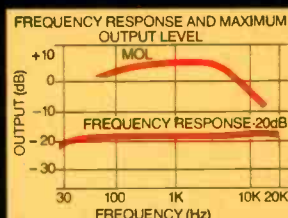
The Avilyn advantage offered in AD-X is demonstrably clear. You now can record and play back—in the normal bias/EQ position with complete compatibility for any cassette deck over a wider dynamic range and with far less distortion. Even at higher recording levels, the increased headroom in

new AD-X can easily handle strong signal input without over-saturation.

When you hear the brilliant playback resulting from the higher

MOL and lower bias noise you won't believe that your deck can "improve" so much.

The new AD-X has truly versatile applications. Its higher sensitivity makes it ideal for all-round home entertainment use and also suitable for any cassette player.



Avilyn magnetic particle achieves higher saturation and lower noise.



Record at higher levels with far less distortion.

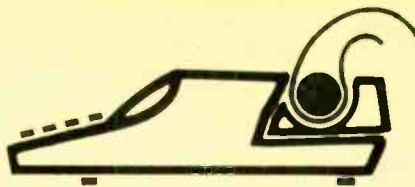
To ensure years of reliable use, AD-X is housed in TDK's Laboratory Standard Mechanism, and protected by TDK's lifetime warranty. With its distinctive packaging, you won't miss it.

So for high quality recordings in the normal bias/EQ position, snap in the new TDK AD-X. You'll discover that the Avilyn advantage means superior overall performance for you.

TDK
THE MACHINE FOR YOUR MACHINE

CIRCLE NO. 49 ON READER SERVICE CARD





Edited by William Livingstone

● OVER \$2.85 BILLION WORTH OF MUSIC and other entertainment was taped at home in the United States in 1980, according to a consumer survey made by Warner Communications Inc. The survey indicates that more than \$600 million worth of blank tape was used for this purpose by home tapers, most of whom are adults (20-34 years old) from upper socio-economic levels. Copies of the fifty-two-page report, "A Consumer Survey: Home Taping," are available free from Information Dept., Warner Communications Inc., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019 or from Warner Special Products, 4000 Warner Boulevard, Producers Bldg. #4, Burbank, Calif. 91522.

● AN OPERA GALA SALUTING GEORGE LONDON will be seen on Kennedy Center Tonight on most PBS stations on June 16 from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. A bass-baritone who sang with major opera companies in Europe and America, London has been incapacitated by illness for several years. The TV show is derived from a benefit staged to raise money for his medical care. Beverly Sills will be host to such artists as Nicolai Gedda, Marilyn Horne, James McCracken, and Joan Sutherland. RCA is planning an album of excerpts from the show with proceeds going to the benefit fund.

● EARTH WIND & FIRE, touring France, England, Germany, and Holland in the spring, broke a number of attendance records previously held by Fleetwood Mac, ABBA, and Elton John. Although they played six sold-out concerts in Wembley Stadium in England, more than 200,000 requests for tickets had to be returned unfilled. After this great success, the group agreed to another, even more extensive, European tour starting in July. Earth, Wind & Fire records for Columbia, and their current album "Raise!" has been certified platinum by the RIAA.

● THIS YEAR'S PULITZER PRIZE IN MUSIC has been awarded to Roger Sessions, 85, for his Concerto for Orchestra. Sessions, who received a special Pulitzer Prize eight years ago, is on

the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music in New York, where his opera Montezuma was produced this year.

● CAUTION IN INTRODUCING STEREO AM has been called for by the Electronic Industries Association. Following the Federal Communications Commission's decision to permit several stereo AM formats, the EIA voiced its fear that this would cause consumer confusion. Jack Wayman, senior vice president of the EIA's Consumer Electronics Group, said, "The successful history of U.S. broadcasting is due in no small part to the adoption of standardized technical formats." Wayman pointed out that in the past multiple formats have had "a negative impact" on such promising technologies as four-channel sound. For more information on stereo AM see page 58.

● CONDUCTORS: Lorin Maazel takes up his position as general director of the Vienna State Opera in September of this year. The position of music director of the Cleveland Orchestra, which Maazel is vacating, will go to Christoph von Dohnányi, who assumes office in the season of 1984-1985.... Pinchas Zukerman has just extended his contract as music director of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra into 1986.... Starting next year horn player Barry Tuckwell will be music director of the newly organized Maryland Symphony in Hagerstown. Back home, Tuckwell leads the Tasmania Symphony Orchestra, which is Australia's third largest.

● MIKE OLDFIELD, whose "Tubular Bells" sold more than twelve million copies worldwide, has been given the Freedom of the City of London by the Lord Chancellor. The privileges that go with this award include the right to drive his sheep across London Bridge. The only hitch is that London Bridge has been taken apart, shipped to the United States, and reassembled in Lake Havasu City, Arizona. Oldfield, who owns a country home near London, said, "My sheep will be delighted." His new album, "Five Miles Out," has just been released by Virgin Records.

Speaking of Music...

By William Anderson



VIDEO SPRING

SPRING, it appears, will be a little late this year, but I did see the season's first robin in mid-April getting high on fermented bitersweet while waiting for a thaw to wake up its usual diet of earthworms. There may be a metaphor in that relating to the long-awaited business recovery: progress will be made, for a while at least, in peripheral market areas rather than in the main ones. Take, for example, TV. According to Electronic Industries Association statistics, the first two months of this year saw a decline in shipments of TV sets to retailers and a marked increase over last year in shipments of video cameras, videocassette recorders, and projection TVs; the numbers are small, but the percentage increases are not.

But since practically everybody in this country already owns at least one TV set, what the TV industry needs to spark some real forward movement is an infusion of

new technology. Such a technology is, in fact, waiting in the wings: stereo sound. Japan has been enjoying stereo-sound TV for over three years now while the FCC (with help from the EIA) has been mulling over the matter with its usual ponderosity. Three possible systems for broadcasting stereo TV in the U.S. have been proposed, and an early decision has become imperative because it is increasingly evident that we are being offered a golden opportunity to establish, with one neat stroke of technology, the *common foundation of high-quality audio that discriminating ears will soon be demanding from all home-entertainment media.*

The advent of stereo-TV broadcasting will mean not only two-channel sound but hi-fi sound as well, encouraging fuller use of the frequency range and improvement in the signal-to-noise ratio. Metropolitan-area audiophiles who have been tuning in to FM

simulcasts of some TV specials are already familiar with the extra dimension of pleasure that quality sound gives them. They are more than ready to add improved TV sound to their present lineup of broadcast, tape, and disc program sources, so they will be the first to see the advantages of picking up TV, FM, or AM broadcasts with a universal tuner, the first to want a simple "monitor" TV screen to complete the picture.

As long as TV sets remained mono, there was little incentive for most manufacturers of videocassette machines to "go stereo." There will be such an incentive once stereo-TV broadcasts start: time-shifters and video-camera buffs alike will want stereo, and even more passive types know that many prerecorded "old" movies once had stereo soundtracks.

The promising videodisc now sits dead in the water thanks to the public's sensible refusal to gamble on incompatibility and recycled software, but stereo TV could be the catalyst to break down these problems as well. The Philips/MCA laser-read disc is a stereo system already and might well experience a sales boost if there were playback-ready stereo-TV sets on the market. The RCA stylus-read system has apparently suffered from two market miscalculations: it plays in mono only (stereo not available as of this writing) and its sales message was addressed to an unsophisticated and apparently apathetic audience; stereo TV might just sink it. With the bugaboo of incompatibility gone, a reawakened interest in the format might inspire the production of more exciting software, a must for the success of the videodisc. The division of labor between videotape and videodisc in fact parallels that of audio tape and audio disc: tape for dubbing, disc for original programming. The claim that the videodisc is inferior to videotape because it doesn't record is a red herring for the naïve. More to the point: videodiscs and digital audio discs may one day share the same turntable. □

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Because Sony redesigned the car stereo, the auto makers don't have to redesign the car.

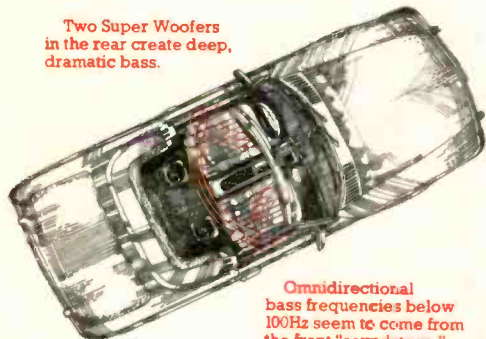
The interior of an automobile is designed with a lot of purposes in mind. Unfortunately, great stereo sound reproduction isn't one of them.

Fortunately, Sony did more than just tackle this problem. They actually solved it. By designing a stereo system that meets the acoustical challenges inherent in a car.

INTRODUCING THE SONY SOUNDFIELD™ SYSTEM.

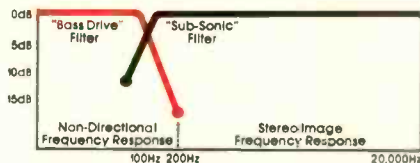
As the very name of our system indicates, we started with the acoustical sound field itself by treating the entire front of the car as a stage. The very directional high-end and mid-range frequencies emanate from this stage in an accurate stereo image.

Two Super Woofers in the rear create deep, dramatic bass.



Omnidirectional bass frequencies below 100Hz seem to come from the front "soundstage."

So the highs come across clear and soaring. The midrange, natural and accurate.



The bass frequencies below 100Hz actually are directed from the rear of the car, where the Super Woofers are placed. However, since these frequencies are omnidirectional, they seem to be coming from the proper "stage" location.

The result is richer, fuller, and more dramatic bass.

CONVERT WITH COMPONENTS.

The optimum SoundField System consists of a powerful amplifier (XM-120) driving a pair of 8" Super Woofers (XS-L20), along with a medium-powered amplifier driving the front speakers. This means full-range speakers can be used without risk of modulation distortion.

But you can begin to enjoy the

SoundField System simply by adding one of our lower powered amplifiers and the Super Woofers to the car stereo you already have. Then you can slowly build up your system, adding a higher powered amplifier, more speakers, and an equalizer.

A SOUND THAT TAKES A BACKSEAT TO NONE.

Although the technology of the Sony SoundField System is complex, the reason for it is simple.

It will give you high dB levels with very low distortion, extremely precise stereo imaging, and an amazingly broad frequency response. In addition, you'll be pleasantly surprised at just how easily a SoundField System can be installed in your car.

So come into your local Sony dealer and ask to hear the next generation in autostereo systems.

One listen and you'll know why the auto makers don't have to redesign the car.

SONY
THE ONE AND ONLY



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CIRCLE NO. 44 ON READER SERVICE CARD

THE NEW WORLD, RENEWED

These classical albums are now available on dbx discs:

DVORAK: "New World" Symphony. Batiz, London Phil. Orch. (Varese Sarabande). PS-1037

TCHAIKOVSKY: "Pathétique" Symphony. Batiz, London Phil. Orch. (Varese Sarabande). PS-1038

SAINT-SAENS: "Organ" Symphony. Tjeknavorian, Royal Liverpool Phil. Orch. (Chalfont). PS-1033

THE FOX TOUCH: Organ Showpieces by Bach and Jongs. Virgil Fox (Ultragroove). PS-1020

MIKLOS ROZSA: Symphonic Suites From Epic Films - Ben Hur, King of Kings and El Cid. (Varese Sarabande). GS-2025

ROSSINI/BERLIOZ: Overtures and Marches. Rozsnyai, Philharmonic Hungarica (Real Time). PS-1005

MORTON GOULD: Latin American Symphonette; Festive Music; Philharmonic Waltzes; Gould, LSO (Varese Sarabande). PS-1009

DANZAS FANTASTICAS: Spanish Music of Turina, Albeniz, De Falla, Granados. Gould, LSO (Chalfont). PS-1028

HOLST: The Planets. Susskind, St. Louis Symphony (Vox). SS-3002

MOZART: Eine Kleine Nachtmusik and other Mozart Serenades. Winschermann, German Bach Soloists (Arabesque). SS-3024

DIGITAL HITS OF 1740: Pachelbel's Canon and Famous Works by Albinoni, Bach, others. Smedvig, Cambridge Chamber (Digitech). PS-1017

dbx discs give you the full dynamic range of a live performance with none of the surface noise of conventional records.

The result is clarity, impact, and sonic realism like you've never heard before—even on digital "audiophile" records.

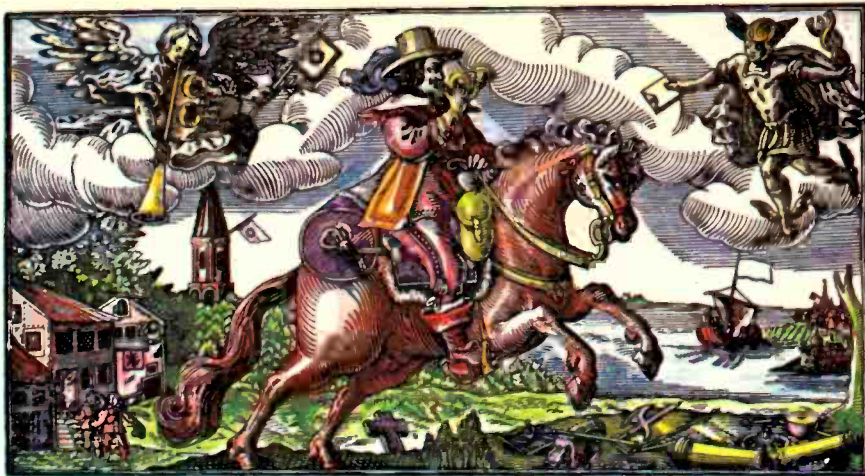
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CIRCLE NO. 11 ON READER SERVICE CARD



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Barbra Streisand

● Thanks to Peter Reilly for his continued efforts to promote what some of us still feel is wonderful music. His full-page treatment of Barbra Streisand's *Memory* in April brought tears! I know right where I was when I first heard it—I was so struck by it that I pulled off the busy street and stopped to listen. I'm proud to say that I guessed it was by Andrew Lloyd Webber, but I couldn't explain the wonderful old Art Nouveau feeling of the lyrics until I saw T. S. Eliot's credit on the label.

OAKLEY DAVIDSON
Clarendon Hills, Ill.

(trombone), Steve Brown (string bass), and Bill Challis (arranger)—was just four years in the future.

NORMAN P. GENTIEU
Philadelphia, Pa.

George Jones

● I was pleased to read Noel Coppage's review of the album "Same Ole Me" by "the great George Jones" in the March issue. I'd sell my Phase Linear equipment, Grado G-2+, and ADS 910s to help keep singers like George Jones and critics like Mr. Coppage around for a long, long time. Keep up the good work. I highly recommend "Same Ole Me" for listening and Mr. Coppage's reviews for reading.

A. D. GRITTON
Hoopston, Ill.

Jazz at Carnegie Hall

● In April "Letters," Ken Darby mentions that "the first jazz concert in Carnegie Hall was given by Paul Whiteman in 1925." According to the Carnegie Hall program I have, the date was November 15, 1924. Subtitled "An Entertainment in Modern American Music," the concert included several numbers in which it is reasonable to assume that jazz was prominently displayed: (1) "An early discordant jazz tune" followed by "A similar tune with modern score," (2) Eastwood Lane's *Persimmon Pucker*, "An Afro-American elaboration of the Major Triad," (3) Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, (4) Ferdie [sic] Grofé's "Flavoring a Selection with Borrowed Themes" and *Broadway at Night*, and (5) such "Popular Compositions with Modern Score" as Gershwin's *Somebody Loves Me*, H. Tierney's *Adoring You*, J. Spitalny's *Dreamy Eyes*, and Vincent Rose's *Maytime* and *Linger Awhile*.

At the time Whiteman made his Carnegie Hall debut, his band included several excellent musicians, among them Harry Perrella (piano), Henry Busse (trumpet), Wilbur Hall (trombone), Kurt Dieterle (violin), Mike Pingitore (banjo), Chester Hazlett and Charles Strickfadden (reeds), and Ferde Grofé (piano and arranger). Whiteman's greatest jazz ensemble—with Bix Beiderbecke (cornet), Frank Trumbauer (C-melody saxophone), Bill Rank

Videodisc Software

● The reason audiophiles are not opting for the laser-videodisc medium is the *material* being shoved onto the public, not the hardware or its cost. What we desire on videodiscs is the same kind of recordings we purchase for our stereo systems, but enhanced by the addition of video. Conversely, what we *don't* want is hashed-over movies we can see anytime at the theater or on cable TV. After all, audiophiles are quality-minded (some are perfectionists), and digital reproduction of a movie can be no better than the film print and soundtrack from which the videodisc or tape is copied. Too often that leaves much to be desired.

The way to go is to utilize digital technology to its fullest: record live musical performances both visually and sonically *directly* into a master digital recorder to be reproduced (for the *first* time) unaltered for home use. Imagine sitting at home watching, on your widescreen projection television, and hearing, from quality speakers on each side fed by a quality sound system, a world-class symphony orchestra playing your favorite classical works, the camera's vantage point being the best seat in the

(Continued on page 10)



The next step in turntable technology: Technics linear-tracking with plug-in cartridge capability made affordable.

Utilizing the same linear-tracking concept featured in the renowned Technics SL-10 and SL-15, Technics now introduces both the album-sized SL-5 and the compact SL-DL5. Each of these two new models offers you the same incredible performance and uncanny accuracy of Technics linear-tracking at prices equal to many of today's conventional turntables.

Both feature Technics plug-in cartridge system, so installation is always easy, exact, and precise. Best of all, the music won't be distorted by improper mounting. Each model also offers Technics direct-drive motor.

Dynamically balanced linear-tracking tonearm with gimbal suspension. Aluminum die-cast platter. Tonearm position indicator LED and scale to show the precise location of the tonearm on the record. A built-in muting circuit to eliminate "clicks" and "pops" when the stylus makes contact with the record surface. Plus convenient front panel controls.

Technics new linear-tracking SL-5 and SL-DL5. Just place the record on the platter, close the cover and press START. Everything else is automatic. Including the pleasure.

Technics
The science of sound.

CIRCLE NO. 36 ON READER SERVICE CARD

house. Then imagine on the flip side of the disc the very same sound recording, but this time the camera is zeroing in on the instruments and the conductor—the best of both viewing worlds on one disc at virtually no extra production cost.

To satisfy audiophiles, videodisc players should have high-level output jacks for feeding an outboard digital-to-analog converter. Audio manufacturers can then compete in providing the best equipment for converting the signal to feed our analog stereo systems. If digital audio/video is intended to be a meaningful alternative to the existing media, then let's get on with it!

R. BRUCE ERWIN
Evansville, Ind.

Associate Technical Editor David Ranada replies: Reader Erwin needs to do a little more technical homework. In the present state of the videodisc art it is impossible to put a digital-audio soundtrack and a moving picture on the same disc without tremendous sacrifices in playing time, reliability, and picture or sound quality. Attempting this without an extension of a videodisc's available bandwidth would be like cramming two movies onto a single set of videodisc "tracks." But CX-encoded soundtracks on both laser- and stylus-read videodiscs may provide much of the sound quality that Mr. Erwin is looking (and listening) for.

However, Mr. Erwin's proposals also

raise some aesthetic issues. Although the addition of video would undoubtedly benefit recordings of Broadway shows and opera, the videodisc seems to me better approached as a new medium ripe for artistic innovation and creativity. The videodisc can function merely as an illustrated music recording, as Mr. Erwin wishes, but why should it?

Classy Cover

● As an audio enthusiast, amateur photographer, and avionics technician, I suggest a "Special Merit" tag for Art Director Borys Patchowsky and photographer Bruce Pendleton's impressive and outstanding March STEREO REVIEW cover. I admire a "class act" such as yours. Please keep up the excellent work.

SAL DE VICTORIA
New Orleans, La.

Jussi Bjoerling

● The Jussi Bjoerling Memorial Archive is a non-profit educational organization that was founded in 1974 by several professional men and women interested in preserving the heritage of a great artist. The Archive has just published a limited-edition two-hundred-page *Jussi Bjoerling Discography*. Copies are \$15 each, plus \$2.50 for shipping and handling. To order, or for more information about the Archive, write to: Jussi Bjoerling Memorial Archive, Inc., P.O. Box 2638, Indianapolis, Ind. 46206.

JACK W. PORTER
Executive Director
Jussi Bjoerling Memorial Archive

Home Music Store

● I concur with Music Editor James Goodfriend's reservations concerning the "Home Music Store" in his January column. The "Home Music Store" aspires to become part of the American media all of us know and love, the same media that give us *The Dukes of Hazzard* and take away any and all ventures that cater to civilized human beings. Studies that show average reading skill in the U.S. to be at the sixth-grade level and average mental acuity to be that of a ten-year-old are used to set the tone and temperament of programming on "the vast wasteland." But it does Americans a terrible disservice to pull all down to the lowest common denominator and force mediocrity on those who want something better. People have come to expect mediocrity and to pay for nothing else, as most advertisers can attest.

DREW DANIELS
Los Angeles, Calif.

Credit Correction

● The April review by George Jellinek of a disc of Schumann vocal and chamber music on the Musicmasters label (page 97) inadvertently failed to identify the artists involved as members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. We regret this omission.

Three Incredible, Affordable New Speaker Systems From Polk Audio

Are you looking for the best sound but afraid you can't afford it? Read On...

Polk Audio loudspeakers have earned a worldwide reputation for delivering the best sound for the money. The new Polk 4, RTA 11 and SubSat 4/14 systems continue and expand on this tradition. The 4 (*\$99.95 ea) brings Polk quality to a new low price and is already achieving a reputation as the best value in hifi today. The amazing SubSat 4/14 system (*\$500 total) offers superb sound in a three piece package that allows easy, unobtrusive and optimum placement in any room. The mirror imaged RTA 11 (*\$399.95 ea) offers most of the features and performance of the Grand Prix Award winning, top of the line RTA 12 at an even lower price. All of these systems utilize Polk trilaminate-polymer drivers and isophase crossover networks for the most highly defined, lifelike, musical reproduction. And best of all, you can easily afford them.



Polk Monitor 4 — *\$99.95 each



Polk RTA 11 — *\$399.95 each

Polk speakers are affordably priced from \$100 to \$500 each. Use the free reader service card to receive detailed information and the location nearest you for auditioning the Incredible, Affordable Polks. Polk Audio, Inc. 1915 Annapolis Rd., Baltimore, MD 21230.



Polk 4/14 System — *\$500 total

*may vary with dealer

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EXTRAORDINARY**
No other cartridge, at
any price, offers so
many benefits.

FEATURING **MICROWALL/Be** TECHNOLOGY



MASAR™-POLISHED HYPERELLIPTICAL STYLUS TIP

Assures accurate, distortion-free
tracking—plus reduced record and
stylus tip wear.

BERYLLIUM MICROWALL/Be™ STYLUS SHANK

Unprecedented high frequency
trackability due to this revolutionary
new high stiffness, low mass
stylus shank.

SIDE-GUARD PROTECTION SYSTEM

Protects stylus from
accidental breakage
by withdrawing shank
assembly into
stylus housing.

DYNAMIC STABILIZER/ DESTATICIZER

Exclusive! Functions like a miniature shock
absorber to eliminate warp-related problems
such as signal wow, groove skipping, and
cartridge bottoming. Simultaneously
discharges surface static electricity and
sweeps away microdust.



PLUS!

As an extra bonus,
you get a certificate
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—a \$15 value—FREE!
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SHURE

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YAMAHA NATURAL SOUND AM/FM STEREO TUNER T-70 Computer Servo Lock System



YAMAHA NATURAL SOUND STEREO CONTROL AMPLIFIER C-70



YAMAHA NATURAL SOUND STEREO POWER AMPLIFIER M-70

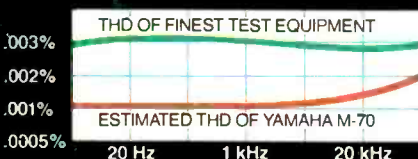
PROTECTION

POWER



IMMEASURABLE.

Introducing Yamaha's newest separates—the T-70 tuner, the C-70 control amplifier, and the M-70 X-power amplifier featuring our unique Zero Distortion Rule. Zero Distortion



Sophisticated test equipment is incapable of measuring the M-70's THD.

Rule for distortion so low, it can't be measured. Here, in a nutshell, is how the Zero Distortion Rule circuitry works: Sophisticated circuitry measures any difference between the output signal and the input signal, and feeds back only this difference 180 degrees out of phase. This, in effect, completely cancels distortion.

How completely? Laboratory research has found that the only distortion test instruments can detect in the M-70 is the distortion generated by the instruments themselves. Which is why we have to estimate the M-70's Total Harmonic Distortion (arrived at by computer extrapolation) at no more than 0.002% at 200 Watts RMS per channel, both channels driven into 8 ohms, from 20 Hz to 20 kHz.

But the only test instruments you'll be using to measure the M-70's sound are your ears. So you'll hear only the most breathtakingly clear, accurate music reproduction possible.

To complement the phenomenal M-70 amplifier, we created the equally phenomenal T-70 computer servo-locked synthesizer tuner, and the C-70 control amplifier complete with two-band parametric equalization and

full-logic function switching. Nothing less would measure up.

Yamaha's new separates. Immeasurable in performance, beauty, versatility, and musical listening pleasure. Visit your



The most critical test equipment of all.

Yamaha dealer now and measure for yourself.

For more information, write to Yamaha Electronics Corporation, USA, P.O. Box 6660, Buena Park, CA 90622.

For the music in you.

YAMAHA

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories



**Quad's FM Tuner
Has Microprocessor**

□ Designed primarily for use with the Model 44 preamplifier (bottom in photo), Quad's new FM4 tuner (top) has no controls except station-preset buttons, a power switch, and a tuning knob. The unit's built-in microprocessor automatically performs all other tuner functions, including preset tuning, muting, and AFC. The FM4 unit will memorize up to seven station frequencies and hold them in memory for up to five years even if disconnected from a power source. A combination signal-strength/channel-center meter is adjacent to the station-frequency readout.

Specifications include an IHF sensitivity of 1 microvolt (μV) and a stereo 50-dB quieting sensitivity of 25 μV . Signal-to-noise ratio with a 1-millivolt antenna signal is 70 dB in stereo. Selectivity is 53 dB, capture ratio 2.5 dB, AM suppression 60 dB, and image rejection 80 dB. Frequency response is 20 to 15,000 Hz $\pm 0, -1$ dB. The antenna input is for a 75-ohm unbalanced line. Dimensions are 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 3 x 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Weight is about 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. Price: \$625. Quad, Dept. SR, 425 Sherman Avenue, Palo Alto, Calif. 94306.

Circle 120 on reader service card



**Phoenix Systems'
CX-decoder Kit**

□ Phoenix Systems' Model P-82 CX decoder provides the necessary 1:2 playback expansion for decoding CX-encoded records. As a result of the expansion, preamplifier and record-surface noise are reduced by as much as 20 dB while dynamic range is increased by 26 dB. High-speed circuitry along with a low-distortion variable-gain element is said to deliver uncolored repro-

duction with almost 90 dB of dynamic range. A two-color LED indicates the CX reference level in the necessary calibration procedure. A calibration record is supplied with the unit.

Distortion at 1,000 Hz is less than 0.01 per cent measured at 20 dB below the CX reference level. Separation is greater than 60 dB. Maximum output level is 20 dB above the CX reference level. Input impedance is greater than 8,000 ohms, and output impedance is 300 ohms. Dimensions are 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 4 inches. Price: kit, \$69; assembled, \$109. Phoenix Systems, Dept. SR, 91 Elm Street, Manchester, Conn. 06040.

Circle 121 on reader service card



**Bang & Olufsen's
Computer-optimized
Cassette Deck**

□ The automatic tape-matching feature of the B&O Beocord 9000 compensates for variations in tape sensitivity and adjusts bias (separately for each channel), equalization, and meter sensitivity. For the meter adjustment the deck measures the third-harmonic distortion of a 333-Hz tone, thereby defining the recording level for 5 per cent third-harmonic distortion. The peak-reading meters' sensitivity is then set to give a 0-dB indication at about 2 per cent distortion at 333 Hz; the +5-dB indicator will then light when distortion exceeds 5 per cent. Calibrated setting for the four standard cassette-tape categories can be stored in the Beocord 9000's memories, where the information is protected from loss for up to five years by a battery.

The record and play heads in this three-head deck have a single housing with an azimuth-alignment deviation between the two sections of less than 0.06 degree. Besides Dolby-B and Dolby-C noise-reduction circuitry, the deck is equipped with the Dolby/B&O HX Professional system, which dynamically adjusts bias levels for maximum high-frequency capability with minimum low-frequency distortion. The real-time tape timer can be used not only to display elapsed time but also to indicate time remaining on a cassette and as a built-in 24-hour recording or playback timer control.

Specifications include a frequency response of 20 to 20,000 Hz ± 1.5 dB (metal

tape, -20-dB recording level), wow and flutter of less than 0.045 per cent wrms, and signal-to-noise ratio of more than 80 dB (chrome tape, Dolby-C). Dimensions are 20 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 11 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches. Weight is 17 pounds. Price: \$1,800.

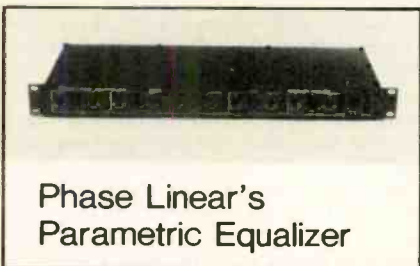
Circle 122 on reader service card



**3D Acoustics'
Cube-shape Speaker**

□ Measuring 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches on an edge, 3D Acoustics' "Cube" loudspeaker has a cloth grille on three sides and walnut caps on top and bottom. The Cube is a two-way system with a 6-inch woofer and a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch polycarbonate-dome tweeter. Crossover frequency is 3,000 Hz. For maximum power-handling ability, the tweeter is damped with ferrofluid. Minimum amplifier power is 15 watts and nominal impedance is 8 ohms. Frequency response is given as 70 to 20,000 Hz ± 3 dB. Price: \$195 per pair. 3D Acoustics, Dept. SR, 175 Heritage Avenue, Portsmouth, N.H. 03801.

Circle 123 on reader service card



**Phase Linear's
Parametric Equalizer**

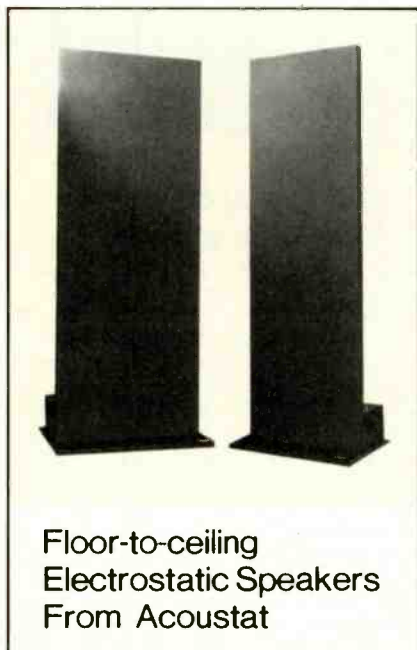
□ Said to be the first five-band parametric equalizer in a 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch-high rack-mounting chassis, the single-channel Phase Linear E51 is intended mainly for professional use. The unit has five filters, each adjustable in degree of attenuation or boost (± 12 dB), in bandwidth (0.14 to 1.5 octaves), and in cen-

New Products latest audio equipment and accessories

ter frequency. The filters cover ranges of 21 to 190 Hz, 83 to 750 Hz, 330 to 3,000 Hz, 1,300 to 12,000 Hz, and 2,500 to 22,000 Hz. The highest and lowest filters can be switched to peak, dip, or shelving responses.

Other features include automatic matching of balanced and unbalanced inputs with outputs, a +20-dB gain system for low-level inputs, an overall level control, and a bypass switch. LEDs indicate bypass operation, signal presence, power on, and system overload. Specifications include total harmonic distortion and noise at a 1-volt output level of less than 0.009 per cent, frequency response of 20 to 20,000 Hz +0, -1 dB, and a signal-to-noise ratio of 111 dB below maximum output. Dimensions are 19 x 1 3/4 x 7 1/2 inches. Weight is 5 pounds. Price: \$549.

Circle 124 on reader service card



**Floor-to-ceiling
Electrostatic Speakers
From Acoustat**

□ Acoustat's Professional Series Models Six (right) and Eight (left) stand 7 feet, 10 inches tall and incorporate the same full-range electrostatic elements used in the firm's Slimline Series speakers. The new models are said to offer improved vertical dispersion, increased maximum output level, and extended low-bass performance. Both have a nominal impedance of 6 ohms. Frequency response is given as 26 to 20,000 Hz ± 2 dB for the Model Six, 24 to 20,000 Hz ± 2 dB for the Model Eight. The Model Six is 28 inches wide, the Model Eight 36 inches; the panels are both about 4 inches thick. Both models are available in a choice of base finishes and with either a black or off-white grille cloth. Prices per pair: Model Six, \$3,750; Model Eight, \$4,750. Acoustat Corp., Dept. SR, 3101 Southwest First Terrace, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 33315.

Circle 125 on reader service card



**Fidelity Research's
Moving-coil Cartridge**

□ Fidelity Research's new MC-202 "Gold" moving-coil cartridge incorporates a nude-diamond tip whose shape increases the contact area with the record-groove walls without riding deep in the groove. Specifications include an output voltage of 0.17 millivolt with a 5-cm/sec groove velocity. Cartridge impedance is 8.5 ohms, recommended load impedance 9 ohms or more. Tracking force is 1 to 1.3 grams. Price: \$350. Fidelity Research, Dept. SR, P.O. Box 5242, Ventura, Calif. 93003.

Circle 126 on reader service card



**Floor-standing
Speaker from
Snell Acoustics**

□ Snell Acoustics' Type E speaker is a floor-standing design with an adjustable-height base. The system uses an 8-inch woofer with a polymer-treated cone in a "precision-tuned" 2-cubic-foot enclosure. A 1-inch soft-dome tweeter handles frequen-

cies above 2,300 Hz. The drivers are positioned at the upper portion of the enclosure for superior imaging characteristics. The ten-element crossover is individually adjusted to the drivers for unit-to-unit consistency. Specifications include a frequency response of 39 to 22,000 Hz ± 2 dB (measured in a home environment), nominal impedance of 8 ohms, and sensitivity of 90 dB sound-pressure level measured at a 1-meter distance with a 1-watt input. Minimum recommended amplifier power is 15 watts per channel; maximum is 150 watts. Dimensions are 33 x 14 1/2 x 11 inches and weight is 48 pounds. Finishes include oak with dark brown grille or walnut with black grille. Price: \$749 per pair.

Circle 127 on reader service card

Loran's New High-bias Cassettes

□ Featuring heavy-duty Lexan cassette shells, Loran's High Bias Type II cassette tapes are said to offer extremely flat frequency response (with a -3 dB point of 21,500 Hz). Other specifications include a sensitivity of -0.45 dB at 330 Hz (referred to a reference tape), signal-to-noise ratio of 64.5 dB with Dolby-B, and high-frequency headroom of -3 dB at 10,000 Hz. The tapes are available in C-60 and C-90 lengths. Prices: LHB-60, \$5.75; LHB-90, \$7.95.

Circle 128 on reader service card



**Record Cleaner
From Stanton**

□ Stanton's RC5 Plus all-in-one record-cleaner kit contains a special fluid that is said to dissolve oily films, microscopic dust, and other debris safely while leaving no residue. The fluid has antistatic ingredients for removing static charges during record cleaning. A "polarized" brush with a conductive handle is included in the kit's

(Continued on page 16)

MAXELL IS PLEASED TO PRESENT AN EVEN HIGHER PERFORMANCE TAPE.



If you're familiar with Maxell UD-XL tapes you probably find it hard to believe that any tape could give you higher performance.

But hearing is believing. And while we can't play our newest tape for you right here on this page, we can replay the comments of Audio Video Magazine.

"Those who thought it was impossible to improve on Maxell's UD-XL II were mistaken. The 1981 tape of the year award goes to Maxell XL II-S."

How does high bias XL II-S and our normal bias equivalent XL I-S give you such high performance? By engineering smaller and more uniformly shaped epitaxial oxide particles we were able to pack more into a given area of tape. Resulting in a higher maximum output level, improved signal-to-noise ratio and better frequency response.

To keep the particles from rubbing off on your recording heads Maxell XL-S also has an improved binder system. And to eliminate tape deformation, XL-S comes with our unique Quin-Lok Clamp/Hub Assembly to hold the leader firmly in place.

Of course, Maxell XL II-S and XL I-S carry a little higher price tag than lesser cassettes.

We think you'll find it a small price to pay for higher performance.



IT'S WORTH IT.

Maxell Corporation of America, 60 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, N.J. 07074

CIRCLE NO. 33 ON READER SERVICE CARD

**LEAR JET
STEREO**

Lear Invented the 8-Track

**BUT
LEAR IS
CASSETTE**



A-15 High Power AM & FM, MPX Cassette featuring: full electronic tuning, seek, scan, 12 pre-set stations, digital frequency display, digital quartz clock, Lo/Lx, switchable DNR, fader, F.F., metal tape, separate bass/treble *and more!*



A-25 Pushbutton AM & FM, MPX Cassette with auto reverse, 15 watts RMS per channel, locking F.F./rewind, Lo/Dx, switchable DNR, loudness switch, fader *and more!*



A-31 FM & AM MPX, Cassette/5 Band Graphic Equalizer, features 25 watts RMS per channel, mute, stereo / mono, Lo/Dx, locking F.F., *and more!*

AND

26 more models to choose from. Designed to meet your needs, whether you want a CENTERPIECE of a \$1,000 system or your first experience with fine auto sound for under \$100.

All units, including our graphic equalizer/amplifiers, are protected by our 2+2 Protection Plan.

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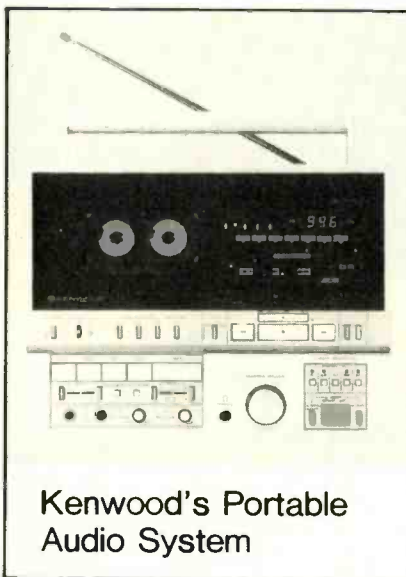
Circle No. 28 for information on Lear Jet products.

New Products

latest audio equipment and accessories

box. The brush is directional to allow for maximum debris removal, and the conductive handle aids in drawing static charges from the disc. Price: \$16.95.

Circle 129 on reader service card



Kenwood's Portable Audio System

□ Designed "specifically for the hi-fi fan," the Kenwood DC-20 XP is said to be the only complete audio system with a cassette/amplifier/tuner section that can be separated from its main amplifier and speakers and used as a high-quality, self-contained portable recording or playback unit. The system consists of the DC-20P power amplifier and the portable DC-20X cassette/amplifier/tuner (shown). The DC-20S vertical loudspeaker system with 4-inch woofer/midrange drivers and 1-inch dome tweeters can be purchased separately. The full system can operate on house current or, with the aid of an optional adaptor (AD-15), from a car or recreational-vehicle battery. Output power of the DC-20P power amplifier is 20 watts per channel into 8 ohms with no more than 0.1 per cent total harmonic distortion from 40 to 20,000 Hz. Two speaker systems may be connected, selectable by a front-panel switch.

The tuner section of the DC-20X has digital-synthesis tuning and up to five FM and five AM station presets. Usable sensitivity is 2.5 microvolts; alternate-channel selectivity is 55 dB. Stereo separation is given as 36 dB at 1,000 Hz. The cassette transport is controlled by light-touch microprocessor-activated switches. A Direct Program Search System automatically locates the beginning of chosen selections and starts playback. The cassette section also has three-position tape-type switches, timer standby switching, a head "specially designed for use with metal tape," Dolby-B

noise-reduction circuits, and a muting switch. Wow-and-flutter is given as 0.05 per cent (wrms), and signal-to-noise ratio is 61 dB (CrO₂ and metal tape).

The portable section of the DC-20 XP contains phono and auxiliary inputs, bass and treble tone controls, a loudness switch, and an "Accusonic" control said to improve stereo imaging when one is listening to the built-in 3 x 5-inch speakers at close range. Dimensions are 11³/₈ x 9³/₁₆ x 5⁷/₈ inches. Prices: DC-20 XP, \$700; DC-20S speakers, \$250 per pair.

Circle 130 on reader service card



Denon Headphones Fold into a Cassette-size Case

□ The folding-design Denon AH-P5 "Pocket" mini headphones come in a cassette-size box. The case provides attachments to hold the headphones, cord, and connecting plugs. When removed from the case, the AH-P5s are entirely flat. A 90-degree turn of the earpieces brings them down from their tucked-in storage position, and another 90-degree turn moves the ear pieces parallel to the ears.

The headphones use high-flux-density samarium-cobalt magnets and low-mass diaphragms. They are supplied with a 3-foot mini-phone-plug/phone-plug adaptor cord in addition to the attached 3-foot mini-phone-plug cord. Rated impedance is 32 ohms. Sensitivity is 100 dB sound-pressure level with a 1-milliwatt input. Frequency range is given as 20 to 22,000 Hz. Weight is 1 ounce. Price: \$39.95.

Circle 131 on reader service card

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

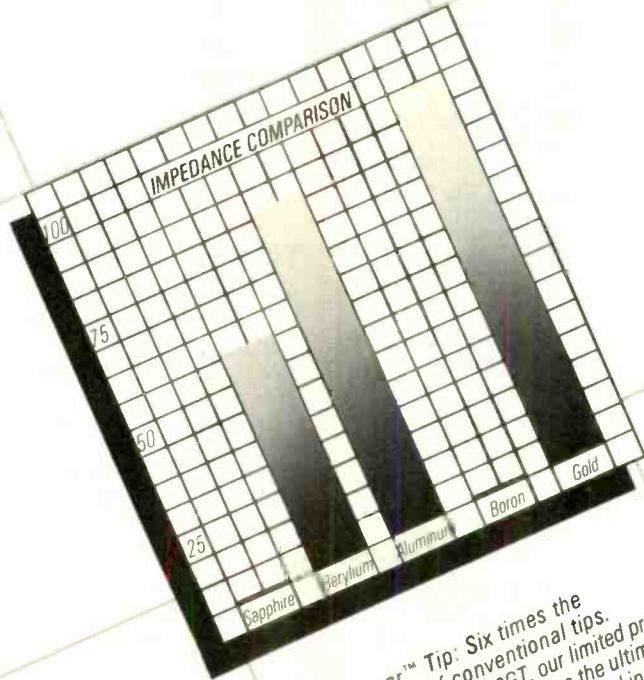
Domestic inflation and fluctuations in the value of the dollar overseas affect the price of merchandise imported into this country. Please be aware that prices quoted in this issue are therefore subject to change.

empire introduces an improvement so dramatic you can not only measure it, you can hear it.

THE NEW EMPIRE GOLDEN TOUCH SERIES.

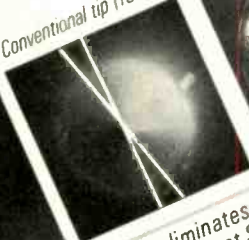
Exclusive Anti-Static Stylii eliminates static build-up without the added mass of brushes. Using an exclusive Empire process, each cantilever and diamond tip in both our new 1000GT and 900GT Golden Touch cartridges are micro-plated with one of the most conductive materials known to man...

Our exclusive Anti-Static Stylii act almost like miniature lightning rods, attracting static electricity then discharging it through our Micron Neutralizer™ before any build up can cause annoying "pops" and "clicks." Amazing? You're right, but what's even more impressive is the fact that, unlike competitive solutions incorporating brush devices, both the 1000GT and 900GT achieve this incredible feat while simultaneously reducing mass by a stunning 20%. An improvement particularly noticeable on warped and uneven records.



Para-Linear™ Tip: Six times the contact area of conventional tips. The Golden Touch 1000GT, our limited production model, offers listeners the ultimate in Empire tip technology—our Para-Linear™ tip. Capable of tracking musical signals way beyond the limits of audibility (6Hz to 50kHz!), this superb diamond also boasts the lowest tip mass (and that means the lowest record wear) presently available...an astonishing 0.18mg!

Conventional tip (100X)



Zero Error Alignment tip (100X)



Empire eliminates distortion with Zero Error Alignment System. A lateral alignment error as little as 2° can be more than double cartridge distortion! That's why Empire developed the Zero Error Alignment System for elliptical and parabolic stylii. A unique manufacturing system that allows Empire to precision cut and polish the diamond tip after it has been mounted in the cantilever. Look at the comparison. The Zero Error Alignment System's accuracy reduces distortion, caused by lateral alignment error, to immeasurable levels. The Empire Golden Touch cartridges. A totally new concept for a totally new sound...awesome!



Empire Scientific 1055 Stewart Avenue, Garden City, New York 11530

EMPIRE SCIENTIFIC EMPIRE SCIENTIFIC

CIRCLE NO. 17 ON READER SERVICE CARD

FREE

details... A DIFFERENT KIND OF RECORD CLUB

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Now you can stop price increases that leave you with less music for your record and tape budget. You can guarantee yourself more music for less money through membership in Discount Music Club.

Look at these benefits:

TREMENDOUS SAVINGS

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DISCOUNTS OF 43% TO 73% off mfg. suggested list... special catalog features hundreds of titles and artists.

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NEWSLETTERS

happenings in the world of music; concerts, critiques, new releases... special super-sale listings at discounts of up to 73%.

DISCOUNT ACCESSORY GUIDE

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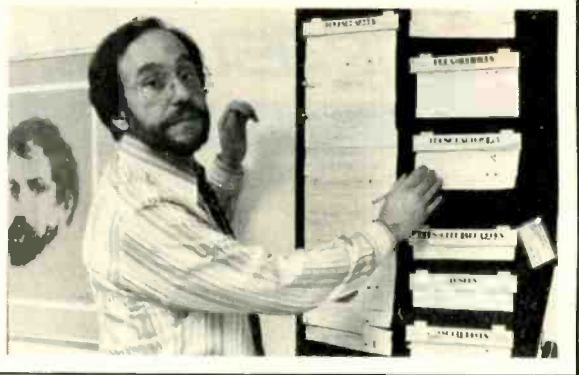
STATE

ZIP

CIRCLE NO. 15 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Audio Q. and A.

By Larry Klein



Technical Director Klein works out the schedule of STEREO REVIEW's equipment test reports.

Two Types of CX?

Q. I have heard that the CX encoding system that CBS and others have been using on some new LPs is also being used for videodiscs. A dealer told me that there are actually two different kinds of CX encoding and that the decoders available are only set up for phonograph records. Will these decoders also work with videodiscs, and, if not, what are the technical differences?

JOEL CUBERS
Boston, Mass.

A. The CBS-designed CX noise-reduction system adds 20 dB to the dynamic range of records by compressing the top 40 dB of the dynamic range (the loudest parts of the recording) by 20 dB in the encoding process and then expanding it back to 40 dB in the decoding process. Unlike Dolby noise reduction, which compresses only the high frequencies, the CX system affects the entire audio band.

When Pioneer and others investigated the CX system for encoding the audio signal on videodiscs, they decided that somewhat different parameters would best serve the specific needs of videodisc audio. The videodisc CX standard calls for 14 dB of compression/expansion versus 20 dB for phonograph records. Specifically, the top 28 dB of the dynamic range is compressed to 14 dB during encoding and expanded back to 28 dB in decoding. In addition, the low-frequency threshold of operation of the system's control circuitry is raised to 500 Hz from 100 Hz.

If a normal CX decoder is used with videodiscs, there will be up to 12 dB of excessive expansion overall plus an additional overexpansion of the frequencies between 100 and 500 Hz. The result is likely to be "pumping" (erratic volume changes) and some boominess. An additional problem is that, for proper operation, CX disc decoders must be set for a 0-VU reference level at the output of the phono preamplifier. The equivalent 0-VU level from a videodisc player will usually be 3 to 4 dB higher.

One manufacturer, Sound Concepts (P.O. Box 135, Brookline, Mass. 02146), produces a CX decoder specifically for videodiscs. Their model VDX-80 (\$149) has

inputs for a second video sound source that also makes it useful as a connector/switch box between video and audio systems.

Incidentally, in Japan recently I heard (and saw) some CX-encoded videodiscs played through the latest laser-disc machines which had CX decoders built in. The overall fidelity was close to excellent!

Weak Link

Q. I understand that any stereo system is only as good as its poorest component. Is there an easy method of determining the "weak link" of a given system without expensive testing equipment? This would be extremely helpful when the time came to upgrade.

DAVID BAHN
Cheyenne, Wyo.

A. Wouldn't the "weak link" in your system depend on what you were experiencing as a deficiency? If your speakers can't be driven to the volume you desire without rattling or blowing their drivers, or if your amplifier can't supply all the power your speakers need to play as loud as you would like, or if your tape deck won't make a (to your ears) satisfactory copy of a record, or if your prerecorded tapes sound better to you than your records, or if your FM tuner won't deliver noise-free reception of your preferred stations, then you have located a problem or two in your system—if not a "weak link."

Not everyone has the same hi-fi needs and therefore not everyone would focus on the same inadequacies in a given system. If, say, you have a taste for flute solos played at low level, then a low- to medium-power (12- to 30-watt) amplifier is more than likely to be adequate, and upgrading to a higher-power unit will not serve your purposes. But other listeners with other musical tastes, low-efficiency speakers, and large rooms may find 200 watts per channel barely adequate.

In general, the very best way to determine which, if any, component in your system is not doing the kind of job you would like it to do is to substitute another component with better or higher ratings and listen

(Continued on page 20)



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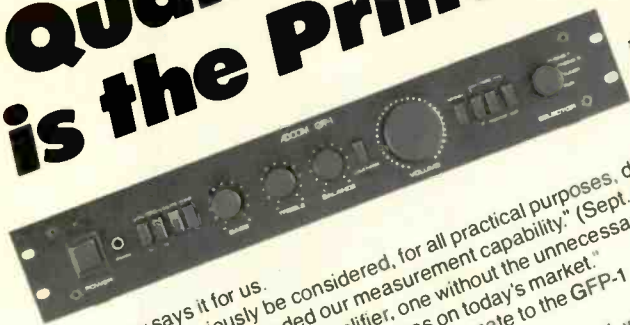
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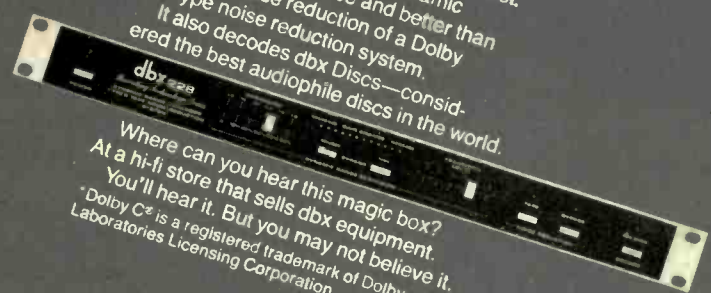


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for an improvement either overall or in the area of the suspected weakness. However, don't misinterpret small differences in frequency response or a greater loudness at a given volume-control setting as evidence of superiority.

Amp Sandwich

Q. Some of my friends have told me that it is beneficial to the sound of an amplifier to weight it down with bricks or other heavy objects. Is this true?

GERALD MOSER
 Brooklyn, N.Y.

A. One of the unfortunate side effects of advanced audiophilia is a tendency to develop auditory hallucinations. Various subjective acoustic effects are perceived and reported as having an objective existence despite conflicts with the laws of electronics, physics, and psychoacoustics—or even logic and common sense. But although advanced audiophilia may lead to behavior suggesting a mental disease, it more closely resembles a primitive, magic-based religion. Through the ritual application of any of several totem objects (special braided wires, mysterious liquids, massive weights, or even vacuum tubes) to their sound systems, true believers are able to experience wonderful acoustic effects not always audible to those without equal faith.

For reasons unknown to me, but probably related to the philosophical roots of their culture, the Japanese have become the source or inspiration for many of the magical totem devices found in the U.S. hi-fi marketplace. For example, during my last visit to Japan I encountered several instances of high-end amplifying equipment being operated atop concrete building blocks. I was told that this mounting provided a considerable improvement in tonal quality. Another company I visited went one better and provided expensive magnetic-suspension feet between the concrete blocks and the amplification equipment for further improvement. And the very latest step, as reader Moser was told, is to put concrete blocks on top of the amplifier—making a sort of amp sandwich—for even greater tonal enhancement.

Countering all this are those who are, if not atheists, at least agnostics on the question of the wondrous improvements wrought by the magical whatevers. Unfortunately, it is in the nature of the game that those who claim to hear some positive effect ascribable to the totem objects have far more credibility in the eyes of true believers than do the skeptics, who are obviously too insensitive, dull, or deaf to perceive the magical differences. In short, the question of audible improvement is very much subject to the ENC Effect: ENC can stand for Excellent New Component or Emperor's New Clothes, depending on which way you prefer to look at it. □

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!

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With BASF Chrome, you hear only what you want to hear—because we “kissed the hiss goodbye.”

In fact, among all high bias tapes on the market today, only PRO II combines the world's lowest background noise with outstanding sensitivity in the critical high frequency range for superior dynamic range (signal-to-noise ratio).

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So when you want to hear all of the music and none of the tape, turn on to BASF Chrome. It's the one tape that kissed the hiss goodbye.



Tape Talk

By Craig Stark



Mike Placement

Q. *I am interested in doing live recording and want to know whether microphones should be placed as close to the performers as is practical or farther away, where they will pick up more background noise. Also, are there any benefits from locating the mikes as close to the recorder as possible?*

DOUGLAS BROEHL
Madison, Wis.

A. Proper microphone technique is really as much an art as it is a science, for mikes "hear" differently than ears do. Their job, however, is to help fool us into thinking that we are actually present at a live performance.

The first practical rule of microphone technique is that the fewer you have to use, the better your results are likely to be. Years ago, before stereo, Mercury Records used a single omnidirectional microphone to cover an entire orchestra, and the clarity of those recordings is impressive even by today's standards. The principal reason for the proliferation of microphones (I've heard of seven being used on a single drum set!) is the view held by some recording engineers that anything can be "fixed in the mix."

Stereo, of course, *requires* at least two microphones, for part of the sonic information the brain processes as indicating breadth and depth results from our two ears picking up the same signal at slightly different times, since they are located at slightly different distances from the sound source(s).

One way of making absolutely stunning stereo recordings of live music is to place miniature microphones in a "dummy" head located in a good seat in the audience. This is generally called the "binaural" technique, and I can personally testify that if the resulting recordings are played back through headphones, the sense of realism is unsurpassed—as long as you don't move your head. If you do, the whole orchestra moves with it!

Two, occasionally more (but best not), microphones can be placed so as to fool our normal hearing "program" into thinking we are hearing the real thing in a listening room that is acoustically very different

from the original concert hall. Fortunately, we're not all that hard to fool—as magicians, advertisers, and even performing musicians well know! My suggestion, therefore, is to begin with a single pair of the usual cardioid (unidirectional) microphones taped together (plastic electrical tape will do very nicely) so as to form an X with an approximate 90-degree angle (or a little less). Pull back sufficiently so that neither mike has to "scan" more than a 45-degree angle to cover the performers. In most auditoriums I've worked in this is a good rule of thumb, for the resulting distance from the sound source will bring in enough hall reverberation for the recording to sound realistic when played back in a typical home listening room.

To get the hang of live recording, what you should do is put on your headphones (use the sealed type that shut out all sounds other than what the mikes pick up) and practice, practice, practice, just as a musician does. You want to be able to "feel" an acoustic space almost palpably when you walk into it and clap your hands a couple of times to get its "ring." That's when you can start modifying my rule of thumb to suit particular circumstances, and it's where you begin to become a real recording engineer. [See the article on "Microphoning" in the October 1981 issue.]

As for your second question, you should keep mike cables as short as possible to minimize noise pickup and high-end rolloff. You'll need professional low-impedance, balanced-line gear for long distances.

Modulation Noise

Q. *In several tape-deck test reports I've encountered the term "modulation noise." Manufacturers don't seem to have a specification for it, so what is it?*

G. PURCHASE
New York, N.Y.

A. In general terms, "noise" is any undesired addition to a signal. Unlike tape hiss, which is a relatively *constant* background factor, modulation noise increases or decreases with the *variation*—"modulation"—of the signal itself.

There are two main types of modulation

noise commonly encountered in recording: FM (frequency modulation) and AM (amplitude modulation). Modulation noise in FM is related to wow and flutter, for which there are standard measurements. Modulation noise in AM manifests itself as a kind of "gritty" quality, a noise "behind" the desired signal, and is more difficult to isolate and measure. Its origins are related to the tape-coating process and to magnetic inhomogeneities among the particles used in the coating.

The easiest way to spot modulation noise is to record a mid-frequency tone at a moderate level on a three-head deck. When you switch between "source" and "tape" you'll hear the grit (unless you have a digital recorder!), and as you alternately raise and lower the record level the grit will track the signal. To my mind, modulation noise is probably the most serious signal-quality problem confronting analog recording.

Test Tapes

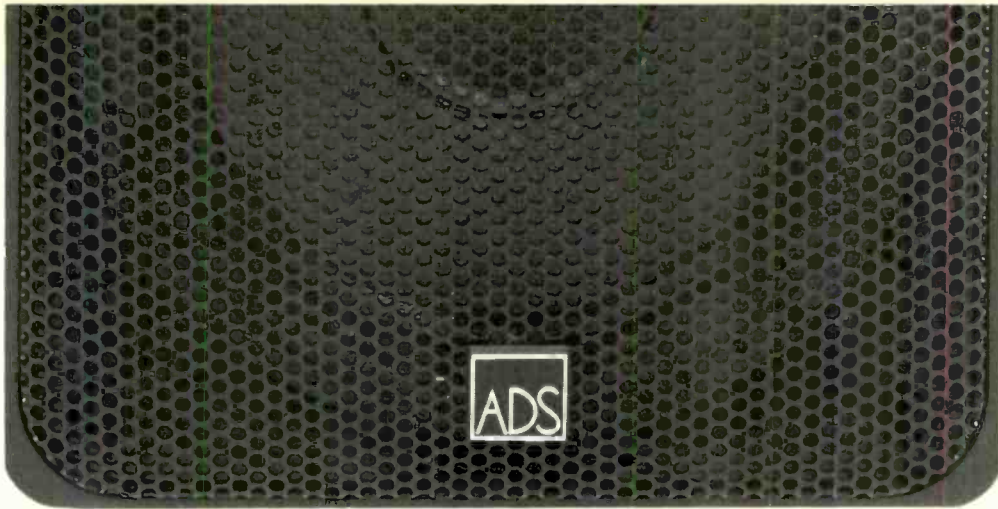
Q. *You and Julian Hirsch always mention the specific test tapes you use in checking a tape recorder. Why? And where can I get a set?*

RODNEY SPODE
Madison, Wis.

A. It *does* seem silly to keep on mentioning the test tapes we use, but the unhappy fact of the matter is that with test tapes, just as with the regular tapes you record and play, the numbers you get when you measure depend on the tape you measure with. More than twenty years ago, before I became professionally involved in hi-fi, I noticed that test reports on the really good open-reel decks seemed always to show a rising high-frequency response with Ampex test tapes. Ultimately that company admitted (in AES papers by J. McKnight and J. Morrison, subsequently reprinted and distributed by Ampex) that their test tapes had indeed been slightly "hot" on the high end in order to compensate for losses that might occur during use.

McKnight and Morrison have since left Ampex to form their own companies to make test tapes. McKnight operates Magnetic Research Laboratories (229 Polaris Avenue, Suite 4, Mountain View, Calif. 94043), and I use the MRL test tapes for open-reel testing. Morrison operates Standard Tape Labs, Inc. (26120 Eden Landing Road, Hayward, Calif. 94545), and he also has a line of fine test tapes available.

Over the years I have used any number of cassette test tapes. Nortronics (8101 Tenth Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minn. 55427) produces two test tapes that are available in some retail stores, and both TDK (755 Eastgate Boulevard, Garden City, N.Y. 11530) and Teac (7733 Telegraph Road, Montebello, Calif. 90640) make commercially available test tapes I have relied upon for years. Their calibrated response is not as wide, however, as the new IEC-standard BASF test tapes (write R. Piselli, BASF, Crosby Drive, Bedford, Mass. 01730) which I now use in my test reports for STEREO REVIEW. Don't be shocked by the prices quoted for the test tapes; they are all precision recordings done in real time, and that's an expensive way to go. □



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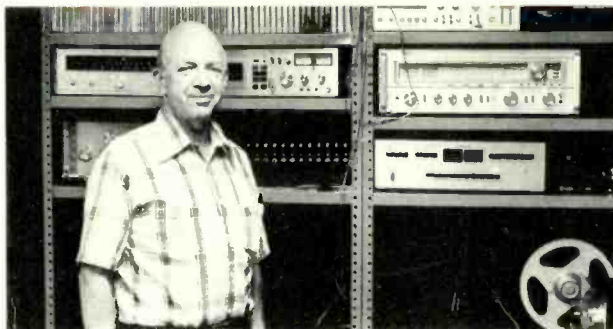
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Technical Talk

By Julian D. Hirsch



● Testing Turntables ●

ONE cannot measure the performance of a tone arm, a turntable, or a phono cartridge individually; you can measure any one of them only while it is in use with the other two. To date, there are no industry-wide standards (in this country) covering the performance rating or testing of these record-playing components. Most measurements are therefore made using more or less obvious general procedures, with the specific test conditions established by the person or organization doing the testing. For practical reasons, I prefer to combine the tests for a record player and a cartridge rather than maintain a "standard tone arm" for all cartridges or a "standard cartridge" for testing all record players (given the rapid changes in cartridge and record-player performance, such "standards" would be short-lived anyway).

The key performance characteristics of a turntable are its speed (accuracy and constancy), flutter, rumble, and immunity to external vibration. The important parameters of a tone arm are its effective mass, tracking error, accuracy of tracking-force and antiskating scale calibrations, damping, and, not least, the ease of mounting and aligning a cartridge on it. In the case of a *separate* tone arm, its own ease of installation on a turntable can be an important factor. Low bearing friction is basic to the proper operation of any arm, but this is difficult to measure with accuracy (it can be estimated from the behavior of the arm in a free-floating balanced state, however). Virtually every arm made today has negligible bearing friction.

As for the cartridge, it must be checked for frequency response, crosstalk, square-wave response, output voltage, tracking ability (as a function of frequency and vertical force), distortion, vertical stylus angle, and sensitivity to load variations (particularly capacitance, which can vary widely among installations). As with the other two components, we are also concerned with how easy it is to install the cartridge in a headshell or other carrier.

What about the sound of these components? Obviously, the cartridge has an effect on sound quality, though this is usually much less dramatic than many people prefer to believe. This aspect of its performance must be judged by listening tests. Despite the often vehement statements to the contrary from some quarters, the turntable and tone arm have no important effects on phono-disc sound reproduction other than those that can easily be inferred from measurements. For example, a severe case of rumble or flutter can have a profound effect on the sound, to the point where it can make the end result completely unlistenable. Even a much milder flutter condition can be most offensive to some listeners, since people differ greatly in their sensitivity to (and tolerance of) flutter. A turntable with poor isolation from its surroundings can give rise to acoustic feedback (howling) or perhaps simply "muddy" the sound when the feedback level does not reach the point of actual oscillation. Tone arms do have internal resonances, but they are usually of very high "Q" (narrow bandwidth) and thus unlikely to modify the sound substantially.

Actual turntable speed is generally indicated directly (and very accurately) by stroboscope markings or similar display systems, and no separate measurement is really needed. To check the effect of line voltage on speed, we play a record with a constant-frequency tone (such as the 3,000 Hz of a flutter test record) and monitor the output on a frequency counter as the line voltage is varied between 95 and 135 volts. Interestingly, it has been *years* since we have found a measurable change (for example, 1 Hz out of 3,000 Hz) in this test.

FOR flutter measurement we feed the pickup output into a Meguro MK667C flutter meter and measure both the JIS (weighted-rms) and either the CCIR or DIN (weighted-peak) flutter, depending on the frequency of the test record we are using (the two are very similar except that they use 3,000 and 3,150 Hz, respectively). We use CBS BTR 150 and DIN 45 545 test records for this purpose. Unlike most measurements, flutter readings require a somewhat subjective interpretation of an irregularly swinging meter pointer and may therefore differ according to who is making the reading—even on the same test setup.

The lowest flutter frequencies (wow) are caused by record eccentricity, which usually determines the minimum flutter reading obtainable with a particular test record. Unfortunately, test records in general do not appear to be made with any greater care than typical music records, making measurements of less than about 0.05 per cent flutter nearly impossible. Lower readings,

Tested This Month

Shure V15 Type V Phono Cartridge • Ohm Walsh 2 Speaker System
McIntosh MC 2255 Power Amplifier • Aiwa AD-3800U Cassette Deck
J.C. Penney Model 3260 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

as published by some turntable manufacturers, imply a direct optical or magnetic reading of the turntable rotation or a measurement made in the turntable's feedback servo loop which corresponds to the flutter-speed variations.

The demodulated output of the flutter meter (which is essentially an audio-frequency FM receiver) is connected to our H-P 3580A spectrum analyzer to obtain a frequency analysis of the flutter rates. Often this is a random band of non-resolvable signals in the range from less than 5 Hz (the spectrum analyzer's lower limit) to perhaps

315 Hz (where there is little to begin with). In my view, DIN-B curves are of little value for expressing the true audible rumble content of a turntable.

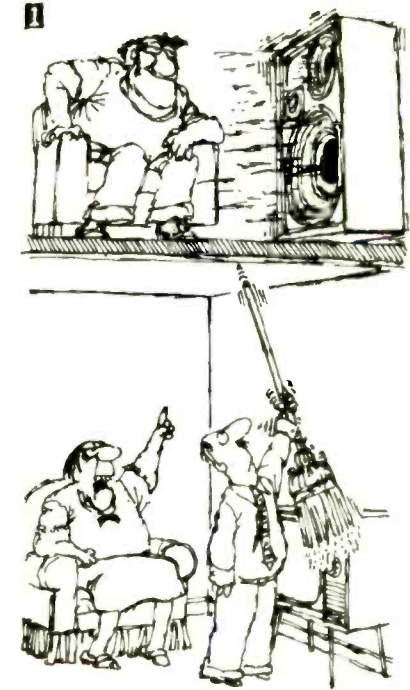
AFTER the meter reading is taken for the reference signal, the record is replaced by a silent-groove disc which is played through the same equalization and weighting networks. The meter shows the total rumble, which is expressed in decibels below the reference level. The ARLL measurement discriminates somewhat against the sub-audible components arising from certain types of warps and eccentricities, and it gives a more valid picture of the *audibility* of the rumble. However, the unweighted measurement (usually 25 to 30 dB higher than the ARLL reading) helps assess the possibility of overload of an amplifier or speaker cone by infrasonic rumble components that are never heard as such. Like flutter measurement, rumble measurement involves a considerable degree of art because of the (usually) wildly oscillating meter pointer.

We have several records that are suitable for rumble measurement, including the DIN 45 544, but as a rule the final reading is made with a silent-groove lacquer disc specially cut for us for this purpose. It has

drivers are driven in phase from a power amplifier with a sine-wave signal sweeping from 20 to 1,000 Hz. The pickup is placed on a stationary record, and its output, after RIAA equalization, is plotted on a chart recorder synchronized with the sweeping frequency. The result is a rough plot of the vibration transmitted through the mounting feet as a function of frequency. The chart scales are corrected to allow for the output sensitivity of the specific cartridge used for the test, so charts for different turntables can be compared using a simple overlay. The results, though entirely qualitative, are reasonably valid for comparing the base-isolation effectiveness of different turntables. Small differences (a few decibels) are meaningless because of the many uncontrolled variables in the process, but fortunately we find that the really outstanding turntables are often 20 or 30 dB better than the "run-of-the-mill" type in this test.

In addition, the turntable is evaluated for ease of use, freedom from groove jumping due to jarring when in normal use, accessibility of controls, and so forth. Its automatic features are also timed, since some turntables take a very long time to start playing after the start button is pushed, while others go into action almost instantly.

THESE tests are not likely to determine absolutely which of two competitive turntables anyone should buy; such tests probably do not exist. However, they do provide a good overview of the turntable's performance and of any weaknesses that might show up on the bench or in actual use. Our reports do not indicate, aside from the test data, which turntables "sound better," but those who believe in the sonic importance of *unmeasured* qualities are free to buy whatever pleases their ears. □

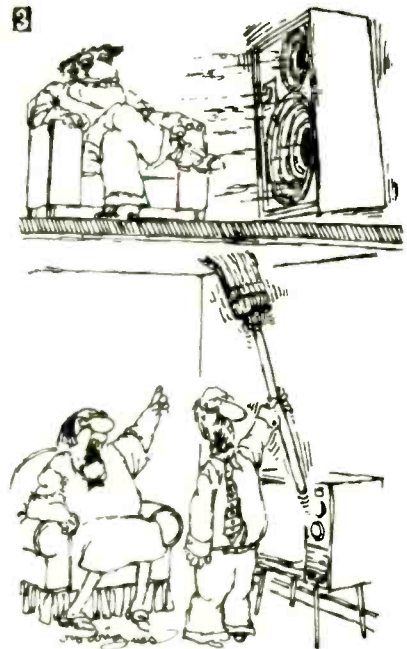


30 or 40 Hz. If peaks are found at certain frequencies, they may provide a clue to the source of the speed irregularity.

Rumble measurement presents a somewhat similar problem, since all test records have some built-in rumble (from the cutting lathe) plus other noise that may cover a good part of the audio spectrum. The measurement is made in two parts. First the system is calibrated to the cartridge sensitivity by playing a standard-level tone and reading the cartridge output after RIAA equalization and amplification. The reference level is 1.4 cm/sec at 100 Hz for an NAB (unweighted) measurement and 3.54 cm/sec at 1,000 Hz for an ARLL (Audible Rumble Loudness Level) measurement. The ARLL spec, which is designed to reflect the ear's sensitivity to sounds of various frequencies, is measured through a filter that rolls off the low frequencies at 6 dB per octave below 500 Hz. The filter also attenuates the high frequencies (which have little effect on the final reading in any case). The very low rumble ratings of some turntables are almost always based on the use of DIN-B weighting, which essentially measures the rumble only in the vicinity of

bands near both the inner and the outer diameters, and these usually give somewhat different rumble readings. We use the better (lower) reading of the two as the turntable's rumble rating. A spectrum analysis of the rumble also shows the presence of any discrete peaks that might indicate an out-of-balance rotating component.

THE effectiveness of the turntable's base isolation is measured, at least qualitatively, with the aid of a small "shake table" using four small dynamic loudspeaker drivers whose voice coils drive corks instead of cones. The turntable is supported on the four corks under its mounting feet, and the



Test reports begin on page 28

The new Harman Kardon CD series of cassette decks.



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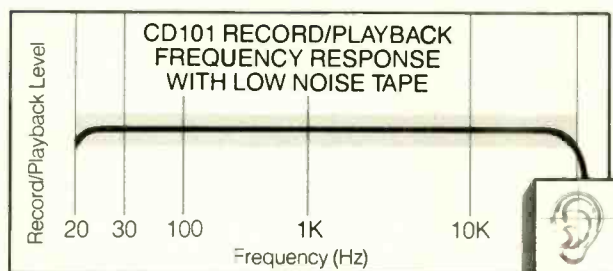
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* Other manufacturers may quote seemingly similar upper and lower frequency response specifications, but without the ± 3 dB tolerance. Without the tolerance specified, these limits can be greatly

exaggerated and therefore misleading.
** Manufacturer's suggested list prices.
† Dolby B, C, HX and HX Professional are registered trademarks of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

harman/kardon
ASK ANY AUDIOPHILE.

Equipment Test Reports

By Julian D. Hirsch
Hirsch-Houck Laboratories



By Craig Stark
Starksonic Studio



Photos by Roy Schneider

Shure V15 Type V Phono Cartridge

- Shure V15 Type V Phono Cartridge
- Tracking Force: 1 gram
- Weight: 6.6 grams
- Price: \$250

SHURE coined the term "trackability" some time ago to describe a key criterion of cartridge performance. It is the ability of the stylus system to trace the groove modulation accurately, neither gouging the soft vinyl nor losing contact with it, over the full range of recorded frequencies and groove velocities likely to be encountered when playing records.

Different aspects of a cartridge's electromechanical design affect its trackability in different frequency ranges. Compliance of the moving system is the controlling factor at low frequencies, and effective tip mass ultimately limits the ability of the stylus to follow very-high-frequency groove modulation. The damping of the moving system is the key to tracking in the mid-range frequencies.

In planning a successor to the V15 Type IV, Shure gave high priority to further improvement of high-frequency trackability, and this required a radical reduction in effective tip mass. The key to this was in the design of the cantilever, or stylus shank, which accounts for a large part of the effective tip mass. Shure engineers concluded that a thin-wall hollow tube was the ideal configuration for the cantilever because it would provide the highest ratio of stiffness to mass.

Tubular cantilevers have been used in many cartridges, but the tubes have had relatively thick walls. Shure's thin-wall stylus shank has a diameter of 18 mils and a wall

thickness of only 0.5 mil. Not every material can be formed into a thin-wall tube of these proportions. An analysis of available materials, from the prosaic aluminum to the exotic diamond, showed that beryllium was the optimum choice. Using a proprietary process, Shure created the "Microwall/Be" stylus shank with an effective mass less than half that of the shank in the V15 Type IV. The result is a 50 per cent higher stylus-resonance frequency (33 kHz).

The hyperelliptical diamond stylus tip, whose contact surfaces are highly polished, is nude-mounted on the end of the cantilever. The generating system of the cartridge is basically the moving-magnet type used in other Shure cartridges, with high-efficiency laminated pole pieces to provide a flat frequency response through the midrange (the older and less efficient core and pole structures tended to give a "sway-backed" response curve). Another feature carried forward from the Type IV is the dynamic stabilizer, which combines the functions of an arm-resonance damper, static discharger, record brush, and stylus guard. The V15 Type V also has the side-guard stylus protector previously offered in Shure's professional cartridges. It retracts the stylus and cantilever safely into the cartridge body during rough handling (the standard factory test of the efficacy of this feature involves scrubbing a test pickup one hundred times across a record).

The 0.2 x 1.5-mil-long contact stylus is designed to track at 1 gram. Unlike most cartridges, the Type V is *not* rated for use over a range of stylus forces, since the 1-gram force is necessary to establish the rated 20-degree vertical stylus angle (there

is, however, a maximum rating of 1.25 grams). To compensate for the stabilizer, the tracking force of the tone arm must be set to 1.5 grams in normal operation.

The frequency-response limits of the cartridge are specified as ± 1 dB from 20 to 8,000 Hz, gradually increasing to ± 2 dB at 20,000 Hz. The rated channel separation is at least 25 dB at 1,000 Hz and 18 dB at 10,000 Hz; recommended cartridge load is 47,000 ohms and 250 picofarads. The trackability of the V15 Type V is specified as 30 cm/sec at 400 Hz, 46 cm/sec at 1,000 Hz, 80 cm/sec at 5,000 Hz, and 60 cm/sec at 10,000 Hz.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** We tested the Shure V15 Type V in a relatively massive S-shape tone arm (about 18 grams effective mass). The installation of the cartridge was by far the easiest we have yet experienced (barring, of course, pre-mounted cartridges or those integrated with headshells). The body of the cartridge holds plastic insert nuts, and, with the cartridge firmly mounted in the installation fixture supplied, it was a simple matter to attach it to the low-mass headshell we used. The two-step overhang and offset-angle adjustment took perhaps a minute to make and resulted in a perfectly mounted cartridge. With the special plastic alignment "stylus" replacing the regular stylus assembly, it took but a moment to set the cartridge-reference surface exactly parallel to the record surface.

We used the recommended 1-gram tracking force (a total applied downward force of 1.5 grams) for our measurements, decreasing it temporarily to 0.75 gram when check-

(Continued on page 30)

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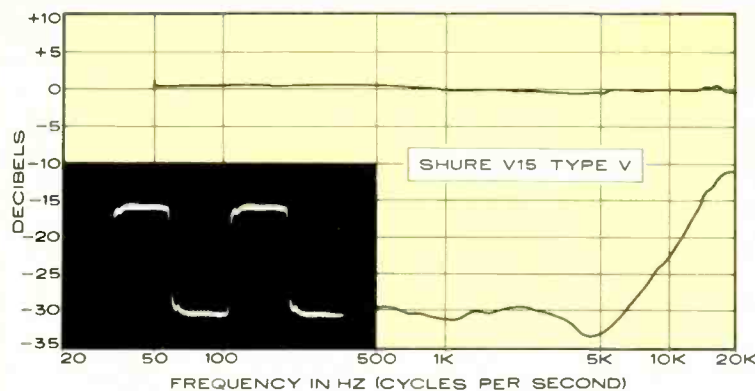
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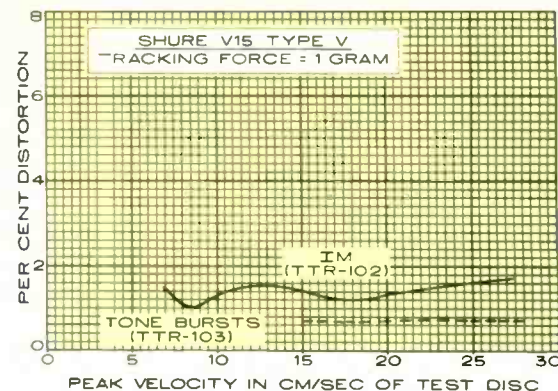
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CARVER

test reports



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.

Shure V15 Type V Phono Cartridge

● **Comment.** Our tests show that the Shure V15 Type V not only lives up to the claims made for it, but in virtually every respect outperforms the best cartridges we have previously tested. In its record-playing performance the Type V is a surpassingly fine cartridge, in every way a worthy successor to the Type IV. We doubt that any commercially pressed record could tax the tracking abilities of this cartridge. Any distortions or other unpleasant sounds can safely be assumed to originate in the record or other part of the system.

The V15 Type V also has several features not directly related to sound that make it a more nearly ideal pickup. These include the highly effective Dynamic Stabilizer (which dramatically enhances the warp-tracking ability of the pickup system) and the relatively unpublicized but nonetheless important Side-Guard protective system. Those who have never made a careless mistake and ruined an expensive stylus may feel no need for such a feature, but for the majority of the record-playing public it could be as important as a foolproof amplifier or speaker-protection system.

I must admit to being most impressed by the installation gauge supplied with the Type V, since I have always found cartridge installation to be one of the most exacting chores in setting up a music system. Trying to position a cartridge in the headshell with an accuracy of perhaps 1/32 inch or better is an exercise in frustration. The importance of this degree of mounting precision is usually ex-

aggerated by audio purists (or manufacturers of mounting and alignment accessories), but there is no doubt that it is desirable if one is to realize the full potential of a record-playing system.

The Shure gauge is a flat plate that slips over the turntable spindle and contains a precision-machined metal block into which the cartridge body fits snugly (Shure refers to it as a "nest"). It takes longer to describe the alignment process than to do it (only a minute or two), but the end result is a cartridge aligned and positioned for perfect tangency at radii of 2.6 and 4.76 inches, which are usually considered to be the optimum points for this adjustment. Best of all, the process requires no squinting at the stylus or its cantilever (the stylus is not even installed in the cartridge during the procedure) or even at the edges of the cartridge body or headshell. The precision and accuracy of the installation are determined by the dimensional tolerances of the cartridge and stylus assemblies themselves (and, of course, of the gauge), which are far "tighter" than could be achieved by eye.

If I sound enthusiastic, it is only because I am. At this time, it is hard to imagine how the V15 Type V could be improved significantly. It offers the most performance in the most areas, plus the most convenience and safety in installation and operation. What more could one ask for? Only a lower price, perhaps, but good things rarely come cheap. It is reasonable to expect that some of the Type V's features will eventually appear in lower-price Shure cartridges, as has already occurred with the Dynamic Stabilizer and the hyperelliptical stylus, both originally developed for earlier models in the V15 series.

—Julian D. Hirsch

ing the cartridge's trackability. High trackability is the forte of the Type V, so we were not too surprised to find that it could play every level on the Shure Audio Obstacle Course records (ERA III, ERA IV, and the new TTR-117) at 1 gram with no audible mistracking. In fact, it breezed through all the high-level test records in our collection without a trace of strain, with but one small exception. The 300-Hz tones of the German Hi-Fi Institute test record could be played only up to the 70-micrometer level without distortion. This is good performance, to be sure, but this test was the only one in which the V15 Type V failed to surpass or match the performance of any cartridge we have ever tested.

The low-frequency resonance in the tone arm used was between 8 and 9 Hz, with its amplitude damped very strongly by the Dynamic Stabilizer (in fact, we had to disable the stabilizer in order to identify the resonance frequency clearly). The cartridge output was 3.4 millivolts with the channel levels balanced within 0.4 dB. The vertical stylus angle was 20 degrees as rated. The cartridge's frequency response was measured with a range of load capacitances in parallel with a 47,000-ohm resistance. The output dropped about 2 dB in the 5,000- to 15,000-Hz range with a 70-picofarad load, and with 440 pF it was almost perfectly flat (± 0.3 dB) up to 12,500 Hz but fell off 4 dB at 20,000 Hz. We used 280 pF for our other tests, since it gave the best combination of flatness and extended high-frequency response. With the CBS STR 100 test record, the response of the poorer of the two channels was +0, -1 dB from 40 to 17,000 Hz, and it was +0, -1 dB from 40 to 20,000 Hz on the other channel. The channel separation averaged about 26 dB over most of the audio range up to 10,000 Hz, falling to about 14 dB at 20,000 Hz. The square-wave response of the Type V was nearly ideal, with negligible overshoot and only very low-level ringing visible on the square-wave

(Continued on page 32)



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test reports

signals of the CBS STR 112 test record.

The final measurement was of tracking distortion, using Shure's TTR-102 and TTR-103 test records. With the Type V, it is probable that we were reading the residual distortion levels of the record and test fixtures. The 400- and 4,000-Hz intermodulation-distortion readings from the TTR-102 varied randomly between 1 and 1.7 per cent for velocities from 6.9 to 27.1 cm/sec. The 10.8-kHz tone-burst distortion from the TTR-103 was a constant 0.7 per cent for

test-disc velocities from 15 to 30 cm/sec. Shure's new TTR-117 record (available free to purchasers of the Type V cartridge) contains complex three-tone test signals, rather than music, to test the trackability of a cartridge. We found it less easy to interpret than the earlier "Audio Obstacle Course" records, in part because the Type V steadfastly refused to distort audibly at its rated 1-gram force. By reducing the force to 0.75 gram, we were finally able to detect mistracking at level 6, the highest on

the record. We tried the TTR-117 test record with several other good-quality cartridges and found that some would play level 6 and others would mistrack audibly at level 4 at their rated forces. Thus the TTR-117 is effective in distinguishing between cartridges of a very high quality level. The record also contains an excellent antiskating-adjustment band that is easy to use and unambiguous in its results.

Circle 140 on reader service card



Ohm Walsh 2 Speaker System

- Ohm Walsh 2 Speaker System
- Rated Frequency Response: 45-16,000 Hz \pm 4 dB
- Size: 11½ inches square (bottom), 9¼ inches square (top), 32½ inches high
- Weight: 30 pounds
- Price: \$700 per pair

THE late Lincoln Walsh, a pioneer in hi-fi some thirty-five years ago, invented a loudspeaker unlike any other in its principle of operation. It creates a coherent cylindrical sound field that is omnidirectional in the horizontal plane. All frequencies, from bass to treble, are radiated from a single cone in time (and phase) synchronism, with the in-

attention that the speaker will create an acoustic waveform that is a close analog to the electrical input signal.

Walsh's speaker patents are now owned by Ohm Acoustics. Some years ago the company developed the Ohm A and Ohm F, both very large, heavy, expensive, and inefficient speakers that could indeed generate an omnidirectional sound field that preserved the waveform of the driving signal to an unprecedented degree.

Ohm has now incorporated much of the Walsh technology in a much more affordable and practical product with a much broader market appeal. The Ohm Walsh 2 is a compact floor-standing system using a Walsh driver to handle the frequencies

from low bass through most of the treble range, augmenting it with a more conventional dome radiator in the uppermost audible octave. The Walsh 2 system is a gently tapered truncated pyramid in shape. The enclosure is covered in veneers of genuine oak or walnut (teak or rosewood are available at extra cost). The upper part, which contains the drivers, is covered by a removable black cloth grille, and the drivers themselves are completely hidden by a cylindrical, nonremovable perforated metal cage.

The Walsh driver's specially designed and tapered cone radiates the highest frequencies from its top (near the voice coil).

(Continued on page 36)

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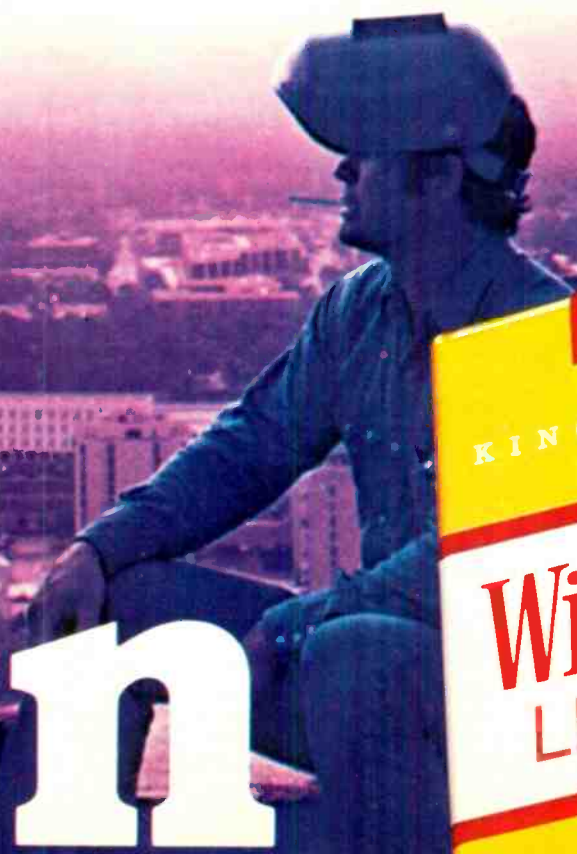
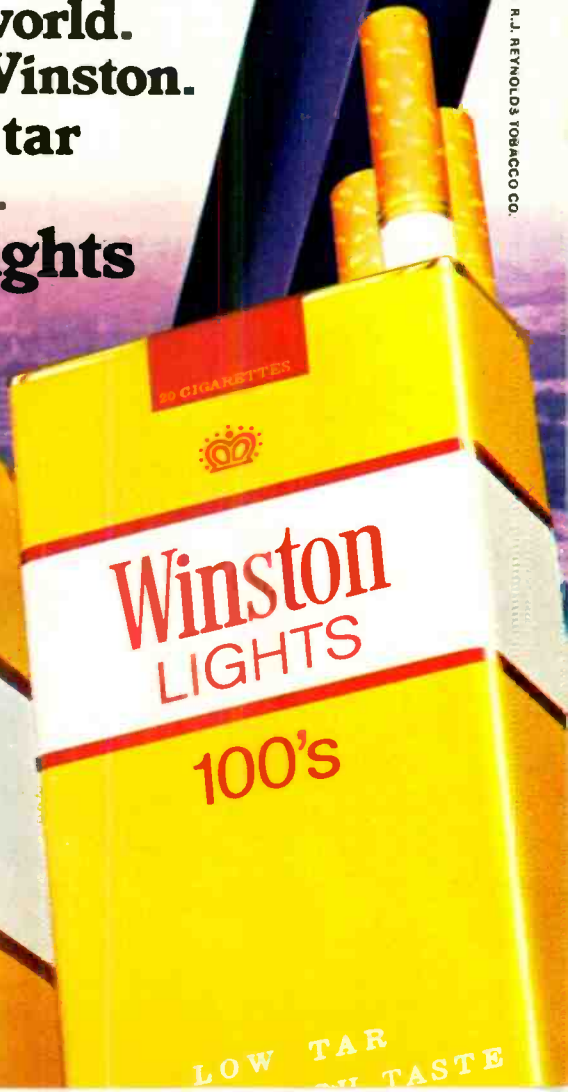
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As the acoustic wave propagates down the cone, the lower frequencies are radiated from the lower portions of the cone. All parts of the acoustic waveform pass the outer circumference of the driver at the same time (in phase), forming a coherent cylindrical wavefront in the air. This is a highly oversimplified description of the action of the Walsh driver, which is capable of propagating a very wide range of frequencies without the usual limitations of cone break-up and other effects that make conventional single-driver systems unsuitable for full-range operation.

The Walsh 2's cone (about 6 inches in diameter) faces down into the speaker enclosure, which is reinforced internally with six 2 x 3-inch wooden crossbraces and contains acoustic absorbing material. The bass system is said to be a sixth-order Butterworth Thiele alignment with additional filtering in the crossover network to convert it to an optimized fourth-order response. (The network also rolls off the response below 30 Hz to protect the speaker against high-level infrasonic inputs.) On the bottom of the cabinet are the port opening, spring-loaded connectors, and a pair of three-position slide switches that permit limited adjustment of the system's frequency response.

Unlike the Ohm F, the main radiator of the Walsh 2 is not designed to radiate omnidirectionally at all frequencies. Absorbent blocks around the driver's voice-coil region limit its rear-radiating high-frequency output to make the overall sound less dependent on the speaker's placement in the room. Just above them is the dome tweeter, facing toward one front corner of the speaker cabinet and filling in the highest treble frequencies. The Walsh 2 speakers are designed to be used in pairs, with their tweeters angled in toward the listening area. The Ohm Walsh 2 is recommended for use with

Ohm Walsh 2 Speaker System

● **Comment.** It is true of any speaker (and especially an "omni") that the sound reaching the listener is strongly affected by the room's acoustic treatment and by speaker placement. Although much of the rear output of the Walsh 2 is deliberately attenuated, a large part of its upper midrange output is directed upward and thus confronts an unpredictable amount of absorption in acoustically treated ceilings before being reflected into the listening area. This was almost certainly happening in our listening room, making it slightly more difficult than usual for us to correlate the measured response with what we heard.

The Walsh 2 was a very fine-performing unit. Its sound was surprisingly neutral, to the point that we were hardly aware we were listening to speakers, and this is one of the greatest compliments

one could pay to a loudspeaker. The sound of the Walsh 2 was well balanced and "all there," though with the totally nonlocalized apparent source that is characteristic of speaker systems with very wide radiation patterns. The HF and LF switches on the speaker had a rather subtle effect, and we found little to choose from between the available response options. The speakers were placed about 2 feet from the wall behind them and about 5 feet from the side walls of the room, but this did not appear to be critical.

The Walsh 2's frequency balance was very good, with a striking absence of the usual mid-bass "chestiness" on male voices and an obviously very solid lower bass. One thing is plain: the Walsh 2 is a legitimate descendent of the Ohm F, with much of its inherent sound character, but at a small fraction of its size and price. We would guess that most listeners, and particularly those who prefer the spaciousness of very wide-dispersion systems, are likely to find the new Ohm Walsh 2 a very appealing loudspeaker both visually and audibly.

—Julian D. Hirsch

amplifiers rated between 30 and 120 watts output, and it has a nominal (as well as minimum) impedance rating of 4 ohms.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The averaged and smoothed room response of the Walsh 2 speakers was quite uniform through the midrange, sloping gently downward above 5,000 Hz and more rapidly above 12,000 Hz. The high-frequency response curves from the left and right speak-

ers were very nearly identical, showing that the dome tweeters had adequate dispersion for full room coverage.

The low-frequency response was measured with the microphone as close as possible to the metal cage surrounding the drivers. The Walsh driver response (not including the port output) was flat within ± 1.5 dB from 90 to 1,300 Hz. A separate measurement at the port, when combined with the cone radiation, yielded a total bass response of ± 2.5 dB from 40 to 1,200 Hz, with a broad, somewhat controllable maximum between 70 and 100 Hz.

Splicing the low-frequency and room-response curves was easy because of the considerable overlap between them. The composite response curve was a smooth line sloping slightly downward from a maximum at 70 Hz. With the mid frequencies used as a reference, response was down 3 to 5 dB at 10,000 Hz and another 2 dB at 15,000 Hz. The INCREASE setting of the HF switch raised the output about 2.5 dB over most of the range from 3,000 to 12,000 Hz. The LF output switch had a moderate effect (about 5 dB total) between 70 and 120 Hz but an opposite response shift of about 1.5 dB from 200 to 1,500 Hz.

Using the FFT analysis program on our Apple II computer to measure a quasi-anechoic response of the entire speaker, we found its output to be flat within ± 3 dB from 200 Hz (the analyzer's lower limit) to about 7,000 Hz, rising an additional 3 dB at 9,000 Hz and falling off somewhat above 12,000 Hz. The response curves measured at distances of 1 meter and 2 meters were very similar.

Our measurements of the speaker's sensitivity (its acoustic output at 1 meter for an input of 2.83 volts) did not confirm Ohm's rating of 89 dB. We found that the speak-

(Continued on page 38)



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

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CIRCLE NO. 41 ON READER SERVICE CARD

test reports

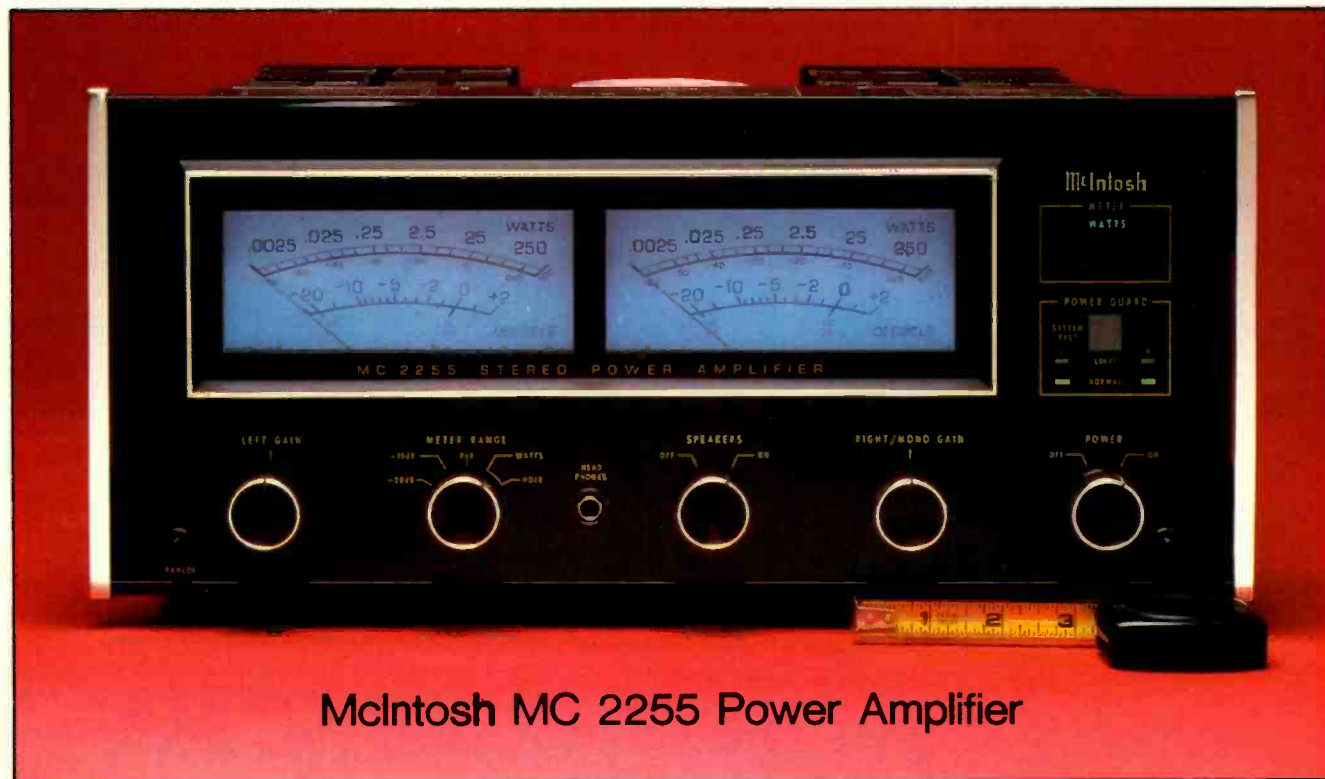
er's mid/high-frequency output was much greater on a vertical axis above the unit than it was anywhere around the periphery of the symmetrical speaker cage on the level of the speakers. We measured a sensitivity of 81 dB in the horizontal plane and 86 dB at a point 1 meter above the speaker. The system impedance was slightly below 4 ohms between 36 and 60 Hz, but it re-

mained above 5 ohms elsewhere in the audio range.

Low-frequency distortion was measured with inputs of 2.83 and 8.94 volts (corresponding to 1 and 10 watts into 8 ohms, or 2 and 20 watts into 4 ohms). Since most of the output below 100 Hz was radiated from the port, our distortion plot was based largely on measurements made at the port.

At 2 watts, the distortion was about 0.5 per cent or less above 70 Hz, 2.5 per cent at 40 Hz, and only 3.2 per cent at 35 Hz. A ten-fold power increase resulted in distortion readings of 1 per cent at 100 Hz, 2.5 per cent at 70 Hz, and 11 per cent at 40 Hz, all fine results.

Circle 141 on reader service card



McIntosh MC 2255 Power Amplifier

- McIntosh MC 2255 Power Amplifier
- Power Rating: 250 watts per channel
- Size: 16¼ x 14¾ x 7½ inches
- Weight: 82 pounds
- Price: \$2,750

THE McIntosh MC 2255 basic power amplifier is rated to deliver its output into loads of 1, 2, 4, or 8 ohms, from 20 to 20,000 Hz, with no more than 0.02 per cent harmonic or intermodulation distortion. Its stereo outputs may be paralleled or bridged to drive a mono load with a maximum output of 500 watts at 0.02 per cent distortion. Depending on the connection used, the mono load impedance can be from 0.5 to 16 ohms.

The unusual load capabilities of the MC 2255 derive from the use of large autotransformers to match the output transistors to their loads. Like vacuum-tube amplifiers, the MC 2255 has output terminals designated for 1, 2, 4, or 8 ohms. Thus, regardless of the speaker impedance, the output transistors are optimally loaded and can deliver their full power without excessive distortion or overheating.

The output stages of the MC 2255 operate in class-B, but a unique biasing system

completely eliminates the crossover distortion usually associated with class-B operation. This being the most efficient mode of linear amplifier operation, the total power consumption of the MC 2255 from the 120-volt a.c. line is only 0.7 ampere at idle (or normal playing volume) and 12 amperes at full output. The input and driver stages form a complete class-AB low-power amplifier which drives the front-panel headphone jack as well as the power stages. Switches connect the input sections for mono operation. In the MONO/PARALLEL mode the right-channel input drives both output sections in phase, and for the MONO BRIDGE mode the other input section is used as a phase inverter so that the outputs can be driven 180 degrees out of phase.

The power stages are protected by a novel Power Guard circuit that makes it impossible to clip the amplifier output by overdriving it. A waveform comparator monitors the input and output signals of the amplifier, and if the output waveform differs from the input by an amount corresponding to about 0.5 per cent harmonic distortion, a red LIMIT light glows on the panel (there are separate lights for the two channels). Any further increase in the drive level causes the

signal to be attenuated ahead of the output section. This prevents the output from ever exceeding its linear operating range (according to McIntosh, the amplifier can be overdriven by 20 dB before distortion reaches 2 per cent).

Internally, the McIntosh MC 2255 is a very complex amplifier, containing some eighty-five transistors, forty-seven diodes, and fourteen integrated circuits. Many of its components are involved in the protective systems and in its novel self-test feature. Each time the amplifier is turned on, an automatic seven-step test sequence checks the key operating voltages for correctness. As each step is executed, the corresponding numeral lights up on a front-panel display and a green light signals that it has been passed. If any stage of the test is not satisfactory, its number remains lit to indicate the problem area. Two different test speeds can be selected, and one can choose to have a "beep" sound after each step or to have the tests proceed in silence.

Two large meters are calibrated logarithmically from less than 2.5 milliwatts to 500 watts output (because of the output transformers, these readings are equally applica-

(Continued on page 42)

DESIGN INTEGRITY:

The Tape Tension Servo technology developed for our 24-track recorders...



...can be found on
our \$1350. DH-510
Open-Reel, Half-Track
High Speed Tape Deck...

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Three-Head, Discrete Dolby-C Cassette Deck.



Many cassette manufacturers compare their sound quality to open reel. Rather than making such inflated claims, Denon chose to incorporate the transport technology developed for our studio and 1/4" mastering machines in to our cassette decks.

Proper tape-to-head contact, absolutely critical for the highest quality tape recording and playback, is controlled by outboard tension sensing arms on studio machines. On the DR-F Series cassette decks, this is accomplished by Denon's Tape Tension Servo Sensor system. Working in concert with the DR-F Series' Non-Slip Reel Drive Motors, which eliminate belts and clutches (the principal source of maintenance problems on conventional cassette decks), Denon's decks offer a literal miniaturization of a studio-type transport.

An equally important example of Denon's design approach for the DR-F Series is the use of DC (capacitorless) electronics throughout, a principle developed for Denon's Advanced Engineering Series.

Denon products share more than name alone.

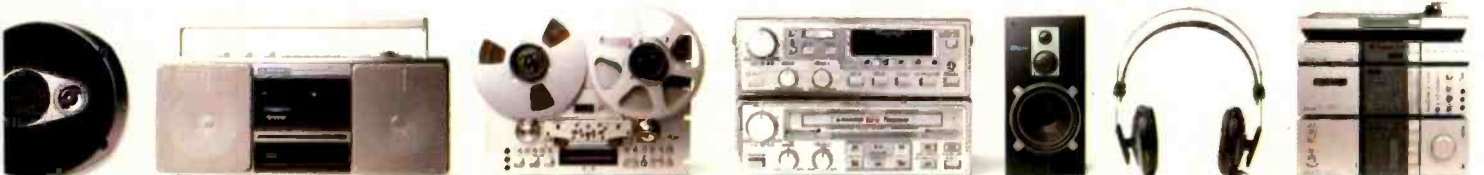
DENON

Imagine what we'll do next.



AT PIONEER, WE TALK ABOUT TWO

Nobody listens to audio equipment. They listen to music. receiver from a receiver. A Pioneer car stereo from a car stereo. A Pioneer



A small distinction to make, but the very thing that distinguishes a Pioneer portable from a portable. And so on. Because at Pioneer, we're convinced



WE ONLY CARE ABOUT TWO THINGS.

that what really matters can't be measured in watts per channel, or total harmonic distortion, or wow, or flutter.

What matters isn't just cassette decks with three direct-drive motors, linear tracking turntables or quartz-lock tuning.

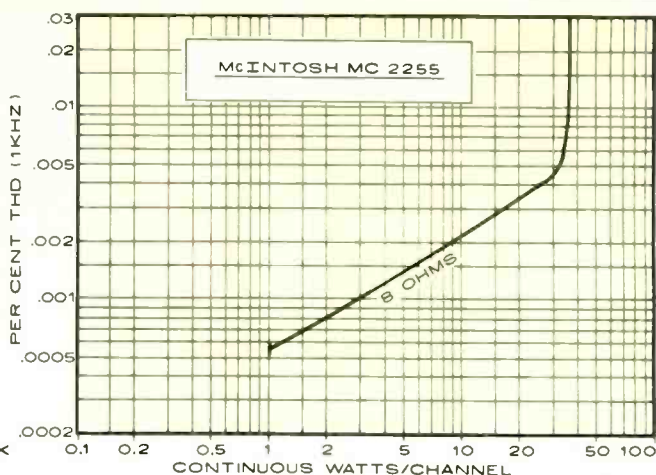
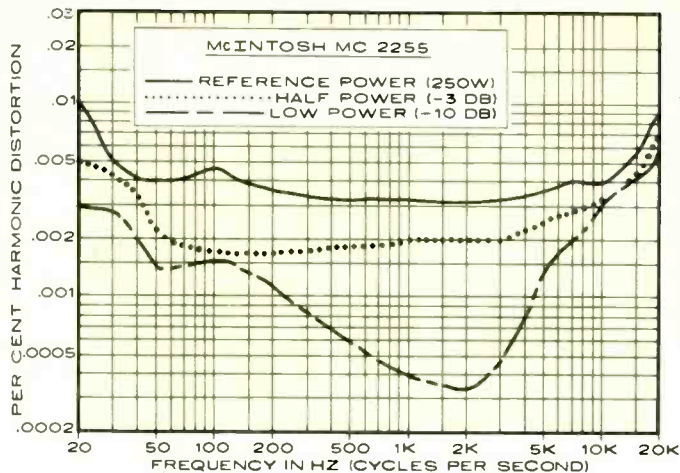
What matters isn't that we make more audio equipment than the next

guy. Or, for that matter, that we've sold more in the last five years than any other audio manufacturer.

When all is said and done, plugged in and switched on, what matters, is the music.

 **PIONEER**[®]
Because the music matters.

CIRCLE NO. 39 ON READER SERVICE CARD



ble to any of the load impedances for which the amplifier is designed). Another scale reads in decibels from -20 to +2 (the latter corresponding to about 250 watts output). Knobs below the meters control LEFT GAIN, RIGHT/MONO GAIN, METER RANGE (-20 dB, -10 dB, 0 dB, WATTS, HOLD), the SPEAKERS outputs, and POWER. The HOLD position of the METER RANGE switch causes the meters to retain their highest readings. The meter-driving circuits allow them to respond to very short program peaks, although they are calibrated in average watts.

At the right side of the panel are the two indicator groups. The POWER GUARD display shows the number of the SYSTEM TEST sequence step as it is executed, and pairs of red and green LEDs show either that the LIMIT (of output power) has been exceeded

or that the amplifier operation is NORMAL. Above this group, a meter group illuminates the words WATTS, HOLD, or DECIBELS, according to the setting of the METER RANGE switch.

On the rear of the chassis are two sets of barrier terminal strips for the speaker outputs, a single unswitched a.c. outlet, and the holder for the 15-ampere line fuse. A three-position MODE switch selects STEREO, MONO BRIDGE, or MONO PARALLEL operation. Next to the two input phono jacks is a switch that sets the input sensitivity to either 0.75 or 2.5 volts for full output depending upon the associated equipment. (The latter is the normally preferred setting for most setups.)

The MC 2255 is a handsome and rugged amplifier, following a long-standing McIntosh tradition in its styling and construction. The panel and most of the top metal-

work are finished in black, with front accents of silver and softly lit blue-green meters. The chassis is chrome-plated. Also furnished with the amplifier are side brackets and hardware for the McIntosh Panloc system for custom installations.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** Preconditioning the MC 2255 at one-third rated power made the heat sinks very hot, but the rest of the amplifier remained comfortably cool throughout our tests. In normal operation the MC 2255 is no more than faintly warm and has no need of a cooling fan or any unusual ventilation precautions.

With both channels driving 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz the distortion was undetectable (well below the noise level) until we reached 10 watts output, when it measured 0.00056 per cent. It increased very gradually with higher power to 0.0032 per cent at 250 watts and 0.0045 per cent at 300 watts. The maximum power (corresponding to "clipping power," except that the waveform could *not* be made to clip) was about 357 watts, with distortion reading 0.24 per cent at the limiting point. The output into 4 ohms (using the appropriate output terminals) was also 357 watts, and we were able to develop 420 watts per channel into 2-ohm loads.

At the rated 250 watts output into 8 ohms, the maximum distortion was 0.01 per cent at 20 Hz. Over most of the audio range it was about 0.004 per cent, rising to 0.009 per cent at 20,000 Hz. At lower power outputs the distortion was substantially lower. The amplifier sensitivity (using the 2.5-volt switch setting) was 0.15 volt for a 1-watt reference output, and the A-weighted noise and hum level was 86 dB below 1 watt. The frequency response of the amplifier was within +0, -0.1 dB from 20 to 20,000 Hz and was down 0.9 dB at 5 Hz and 3 dB at 150 kHz.

The amplifier rise time was about 3 microseconds, and its IHF slew factor was about 10. The IHF intermodulation distortion, measured with 18- and 19-kHz signals, was -94 dB for the second-order component at 1,000 Hz and -67 dB for each of the third-order products at 17 and 20 kHz, all being referred to a 250-watt level.

The clipping headroom of the amplifier
 (Continued on page 44)

McIntosh MC 2255 Power Amplifier

● **Comment.** McIntosh (one of the oldest names in hi-fi, and perhaps the only firm from its time to remain under the original ownership) has earned an impressive reputation for their continued support of their products, their exceptionally conservative design and specifications, and generally outstanding quality. The MC 2255, the first McIntosh product we have reviewed in many years, is a perfect example of the continuation of those policies.

In its circuitry and operating features, the MC 2255 is quite unlike any other basic power amplifier we have seen. By using autotransformers to match the load impedance to the transistor requirements, McIntosh has made an amplifier capable of delivering its full potential performance into almost any load impedance it might encounter. That performance, as our tests have shown, is absolutely first-rate. It is difficult to imagine any home installation needing more

power than the MC 2255 delivers with such apparent ease. Its noise, distortion, stability, and any other quality one might name are quite literally "state of the art."

The Power Guard system is most effective in making it impossible to hard-clip the output of the amplifier. Regardless of how hard it is driven, it simply cannot develop an audible amount of distortion on musical program material (2 per cent is well below the probable threshold of audibility of distortion in a music system being driven to 350-plus watts). This feature should also mean a greatly reduced likelihood of blowing out a speaker, since clipping is a common cause of tweeter damage. For the nontechnical user, the self-test feature is mostly a "security blanket," although we can appreciate that it would also simplify troubleshooting and servicing.

CLEARLY, no effort has been spared in the design and construction of this amplifier. This sort of perfectionism carries a considerable price, both in dollars and pounds (avoirdupois, not sterling!). Considering the probable long life of the MC 2255, that price does not seem at all unreasonable. —Julian D. Hirsch

Creating great music has never been simple.

Now recreating it is.

Audition the AD-3800 3-head cassette deck and you will witness a display of technical sophistication. In 16 seconds, the AD-3800 will automatically record test tones, check playback, then set bias, sensitivity and equalization. It's impressive! Mechanically, the AD-3800 is just as outstanding. AIWA's patented dual capstan tape transport has reduced wow and flutter to just 0.025% (WRMS)! Add to that Dolby C, auto-demagnetizing, 32 section tri-color bar meters, digital tape/time remaining display and the optional remote control. Now you know why it's the top-of-the-line. **CIRCLE NO. 2 ON READER SERVICE CARD**



*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories
AIWA American Inc., 35 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, New Jersey 07074. In Canada, Shiro (Canada) Ltd

The AIWA AD-3800's DATA microcomputer assures unsurpassed compatibility between tape and deck.

was 1.55 dB for 4- and 8-ohm loads and 2.55 dB for 2-ohm loads. The dynamic power output was 455 to 466 watts, depending on the load impedance, giving dynamic-headroom ratings of 2.65, 2.7, and 2.5 dB for loads of 8, 4, and 2 ohms, respectively.

The meters read quite accurately (about 0.2 dB high at full power) and responded to very brief transient signals. They are driven from the class-AB input amplifier instead of from the output stages as in most amplifiers, so the meter readings are unaffected

by switching off the speakers. We found the headphone volume to be only marginally useful with 600-ohm phones. It was adequate with conventional-impedance phones.

Circle 142 on reader service card



J.C. Penney Model 3260 AM/FM Stereo Receiver

- J.C. Penney Model 3260 AM/FM Stereo Receiver
- Power Rating: 60 watts per channel
- Size: 19 x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches
- Weight: 25 pounds
- Price: \$479.95

THE Model 3260 heads the current receiver line of J.C. Penney's Modular Component Series (MCS). The Model 3260 has a digital-synthesis AM/FM tuner with an amplifier section specified to deliver its rated power into 8-ohm loads from 20 to 20,000 Hz with no more than 0.02 per cent distortion. It is a full-feature receiver with six memory buttons (each usable for one FM and one AM station), a digital frequency display whose large (1/2-inch) green numerals can be read from a considerable distance, and LED indicators for signal strength, input source, operating mode, and the audio power output of each channel. The displays occupy the upper half of the panel behind a full-width window.

Small buttons just below the display window select the program source (AM, FM, PHONO, AUX) and increase the sensitivity of the power display by ten times or switch it off entirely. Larger buttons across the bottom of the panel control two sets of speaker outputs, the audio filters (SUBSONIC and HIGH), AF MUTE (a 20-dB volume reduction), LOUDNESS compensation, mono/stereo MODE, FM MUTING, and the MPX FILTER (to remove the FM-multiplex pilot carrier from the audio outputs when recording).

Lever switches control POWER, tape DUBBING from either of two decks to the other, and the TAPE MONITOR functions. The three tone-control knobs (BASS, MID, TREBLE) have center detents, and there is a pair of large concentric knobs for volume and balance. The rear apron of the receiver contains the signal input and output jacks, two a.c. outlets (one switched), and antenna binding posts plus a hinged, pivoted AM ferrite-rod antenna. The two sets of speaker connectors are the insulated spring-loaded type. The receiver's front panel is finished in satin silver, with the top and sides covered in walnut-grain vinyl.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The J.C. Penney Model 3260 receiver is fairly large for its power rating, so even though it is ventilated only by a small grille, it became no more than moderately warm during the pre-conditioning period and the subsequent high-power testing (except during 2-ohm operation).

When driving 8-ohm loads at 1,000 Hz, the outputs clipped at 73.8 watts per channel (IHF clipping-headroom rating of 0.9 dB). The clipping output into 4- and 2-ohm loads was 94 and 82 watts, respectively. Driving the amplifier with the pulsed dynamic-power test signal, we measured a power output at clipping of 89, 96, and 84 watts per channel for 8-, 4-, and 2-ohm loads, respectively. This corresponds to an IHF dynamic-headroom rating of 1.72 dB at 8 ohms.

The 1,000-Hz distortion was very low, being masked by noise below 10 watts, where it reached 0.001 per cent, and climbing to 0.0036 per cent at the rated 60 watts. Into 4-ohm loads, the distortion was only 0.004 per cent at 10 watts, 0.011 per cent at 70 watts, and 0.04 per cent at 80 watts. The 2-ohm distortion was roughly the same as the 4-ohm readings, but at the maximum output of about 80 watts the amplifier became *very* hot, causing us to abandon the distortion test.

Across most of the audio-frequency range the distortion was well below 0.002 per cent at or below rated power output. At high frequencies it began to increase, to a maximum of 0.01 per cent at 20,000 Hz. The IHF intermodulation distortion was measured with equal-amplitude 18- and 19-kHz signals whose combined peak value was equal to that of a sine wave of 60 watts. The second-order distortion component at 1,000 Hz was barely detectable at -95 dB, and the third-order products at 17 and 20 kHz were each -91 dB (all referred to 60 watts). The IHF slew factor exceeded our measurement limit of 25.

The amplifier sensitivity for a 1-watt reference output was 20 millivolts (mV) through the AUX input and 0.3 mV through the PHONO input. The A-weighted noise levels for these inputs were -78.4 and -76 dB, respectively. The phono preamplifier overloaded at a very good 220 to 230 mV at frequencies of 1,000 Hz and below but at a

(Continued on page 46)



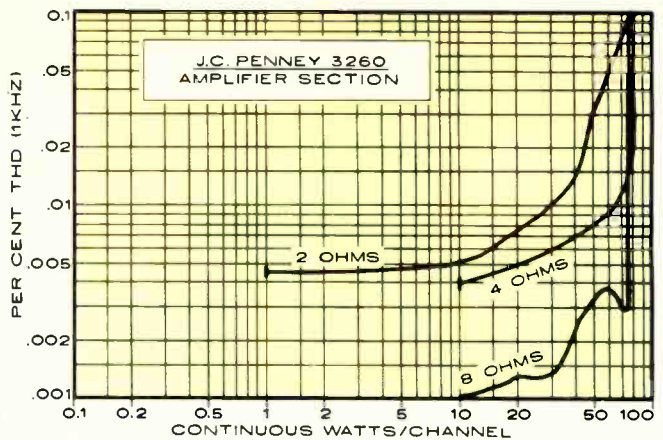
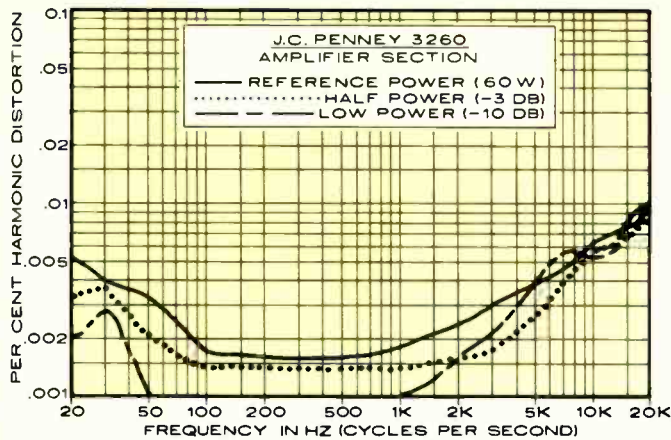
**Come to where
the flavor is.**



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

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

*Kings: 16 mg "tar," 1.0 mg nicotine—1CO's: 16 mg "tar,"
1.1 mg nicotine av. per cigarette, FTC Report Dec '81



**J.C. Penney Model 3260
AM/FM Stereo Receiver**

● **Comment.** Most of the features of the J.C. Penney Model 3260 are not unique in today's receivers, but we were nevertheless impressed by its exceptionally smooth and "bug-free" operation, conservative ratings, and ability to withstand considerable electrical abuse on our test bench.

In our tests, the tuner memories were retained (thanks to a built-in NiCad battery) for several weeks even with the plug removed from a powered outlet. Also, each time the receiver is turned on, it comes on at the frequency to which it was tuned when last operated.

The Model 3260 is one of the few receivers (or amplifiers) with really usable "loudness" compensation. Its moderate bass boost ensures a pleasant, non-tubby sound at low listening levels; with enough added "body" to the program to justify the use of the feature.

Excellent as the Model 3260 is, we

were probably even more impressed by its origins. J.C. Penney is certainly not the usual hi-fi dealer or manufacturer, and this unit is obviously aimed at a broad mass market of consumers. Most earlier attempts to market component hi-fi to a mass market have emphasized flashy "space-age" cosmetics rather than the level of performance that most readers of STEREO REVIEW would expect from a quality stereo component.

THE Model 3260 (and presumably its companions in the MCS line) is a very different matter. This receiver could be placed on the shelf by any audio dealer, and it would look perfectly "at home" in the company of any others that happened to be there. Furthermore, it can hold its own (and then some) against some of the products of the most prestigious names in hi-fi in the same price range. The Model 3260 is the third generation of Penney MCS receivers to pass through our hands, and we are glad to see that it has evolved into a product of which any hi-fi manufacturer (or consumer) could be proud. It is a nice piece of work in every way.

—Julian D. Hirsch

within 0.5 dB overall from 20 to 20,000 Hz. When measured through the inductance of a typical phono cartridge, the high-frequency phono response rose slightly above 2,000 Hz to a maximum of 1.5 dB at 20,000 Hz. This is unlikely to be audible.

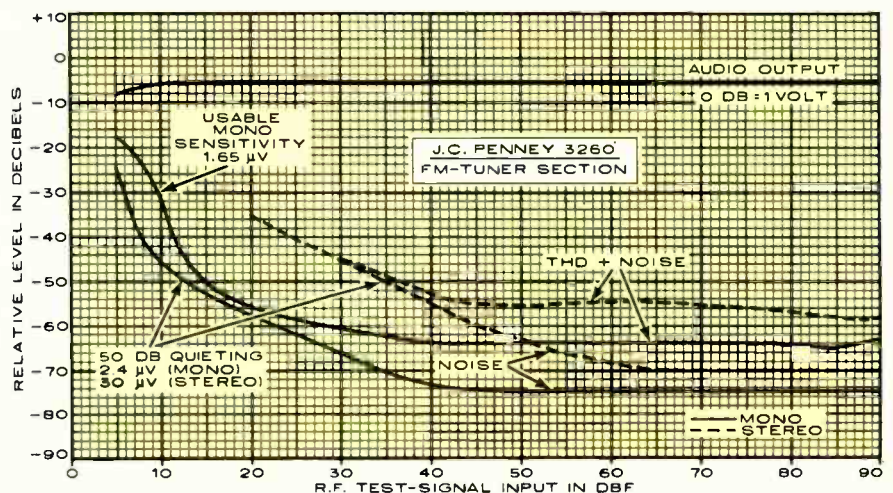
The FM-tuner section of the Penney Model 3260 was unusually sensitive, with a usable sensitivity of 9.9 dBf (1.65 microvolts, or μV) in mono. The stereo threshold was 20 dBf (5.5 μV), at which level the distortion was 1.8 per cent. The 50-dB quieting sensitivity was 13 dBf (2.4 μV) in mono and 35 dBf (30 μV) in stereo. At 65 dBf (1,000 μV) the tuner noise level was -75 dB in mono and -70 dB in stereo, with corresponding distortion readings of 0.066 and 0.19 per cent. The IHF intermodulation distortion of the tuner (with 14- and 15-kHz modulating signals) was -72 dB for the second-order product at 1,000 Hz and -57 dB for the third-order distortion at 13 and 16 kHz. In stereo, the third-order distortion was about the same, but the second-order increased to -57 dB and a number of additional spurious products appeared on the spectrum-analyzer display (this is typical of stereo tuners).

The FM frequency response was virtually flat from 30 to 10,000 Hz and up 1.7 dB at 15,000 Hz. The channel separation was

(Continued on page 48)

considerably lower level at 20,000 Hz. Slew limiting was apparent on the waveform when the 20,000-Hz overload was reached at the equivalent of a 1,000-Hz signal of 46 mV. The measured phono-input impedance was 50,000 ohms in parallel with 80 picofarads.

The tone controls had conventional characteristics, with the midrange control having a maximum range of only ± 6 dB centered at 1,000 Hz. The subsonic filter was 2 dB down at our lower measurement limit of 20 Hz. The high filter response was down 3 dB at 5,000 Hz with a not particularly useful slope of 6 dB per octave above that frequency. The loudness contours boosted both low and high frequencies but were quite mild in their effect, with a maximum bass boost of only 7 dB. The MUTE button reduced the gain by 19 dB. The RIAA phono equalization was accurate



THE V-95RX.

YOU CAN'T EVEN HEAR ITS BEST FEATURE.



This is the Teac that's quicker than the ear. It features Real Time Reverse. When your cassette comes to its end, a miniature infra-red sensor activates either the independent forward or reverse capstan (as appropriate). Its unique four-channel permalloy record/play head is repositioned. And the tape reverses course. All in an astoundingly swift 0.15 seconds. So quick, the gap is virtually inaudible. In record or play. And you'll never have to flip a cassette again.

Yet this is just one feature of an extraordinary deck which also offers the unusual option of both Dolby NR* and dbx** noise reduction. Plus Computomatic. So you can program in advance the exact cuts you want. Along with a three-motor transport system. And an optional full-function remote control.

The V-95RX. You won't know if it's coming or going.

TEAC MADE IN JAPAN BY FANATICS

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* DOLBY® IS A REGISTERED TRADEMARK OF DOLBY LABORATORIES, INC. ** dbx® IS A TRADEMARK OF dbx, INC.CIRCLE NO. 51 ON READER SERVICE CARD

34.5 dB at 30 Hz but a nearly constant 48 to 50 dB from 400 to 15,000 Hz. The 19-kHz pilot-carrier leakage into the audio was -64 dB and the 60-Hz hum was -73 dB. The tuner's muting threshold was 17.2 dBf (4 μ V). The signal-strength lights came on

at inputs from 28.7 dBf (for the first light) to 54.7 dBf (for the fifth one). The FM capture ratio was 1.25 dB and the AM rejection was 60 dB at a 65 dBf input. Image rejection was a good 90 dB. Alternate-channel selectivity was 71 dB and adjacent-

channel selectivity was 5 dB. The frequency response of the AM-tuner section was more or less typical of the performance found in receivers: down 6 dB at 90 and 2,500 Hz.

Circle 143 on reader service card



Aiwa AD-3800U Cassette Deck

- Aiwa AD-3800U Cassette Deck
- Size: 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches
- Weight: 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds
- Price: \$595

THE Aiwa AD-3800U is a three-head, dual-capstan deck that incorporates both Dolby-B and Dolby-C noise-reduction systems. Through the use of a microprocessor chip it is also able to make automatic adjustments of record bias, equalization, and sensitivity, thus minimizing performance differences between tape brands. Separate record and playback heads, using laminated sendust and hard permalloy construction, are enclosed in a single housing. The recording head has a 4-micrometer gap to provide full magnetic penetration of the tape, while a 1-micrometer gap is used for the playback section to increase high-frequency resolution. A d.c. servomotor drives the capstans, and a second d.c. motor is used for the cassette hubs.

The transport of the AD-3800U is solenoid operated. Cassettes are inserted, tape openings downward, into slides on the rear of the cassette-well door. A tinted window on the door provides label visibility, rear illumination allows the user to see how much tape is left on a side, and the heads are accessible for routine cleaning when the door is open. Head demagnetization is accomplished by an automatic circuit that operates when the deck is turned on or when the ADMS button is pressed. The process takes less than 2 seconds, and a LED signals its operation. Record levels are set with a pair of long-throw horizontal slider controls, and a similar (though smaller) slider is used to determine output level. The level indicators

are three-color, sixteen-segment peak-reading displays calibrated from -30 to +10 dB. The electronic four-digit counter can be switched to read out minutes and seconds when recording or playing back, but not during fast-winding operations.

Pressing the DATA SYSTEM button initiates the tape-optimization procedure, during which BIAS, CAL, and EQ indicators flash. On completion, after about 16 seconds, a READY indicator comes on and the tape is automatically rewound to its starting point. Pushbuttons with LED indicators are provided for Dolby-B or Dolby-C noise-re-

duction systems and for tape-type selection. Additional buttons and switches permit muting the recording during commercials, activation by an external timer, and memory rewind and/or play. The rear panel of the AD-3800U contains the usual input/output jacks, a DIN-type connector for a remote-control accessory, and the microphone-input phone jacks. An optional wireless remote control costs \$95.

● **Laboratory Measurements.** The material provided with my sample of the Aiwa AD-3800U indicated that it had been set up for use with TDK MA (metal), TDK SA (CrO₂-equivalent), Sony Dual (ferrichrome), and TDK D (ferric). Because of the ease with which the machine could be adapted to any tape, I tried a variety of additional formulations, including BASF Pro I, 3M Master I, Loran ferric, Sony HFX (Type I), Memorex High Bias, Fuji FX II, Maxell UD-XLII (CrO₂-types), and Sony Metallic, from all of which I obtained essentially equivalent frequency-response curves. My only departure from Aiwa's recommendation was to substitute Maxell XLI-S for the less expensive TDK D in the ferric position, as it gave a better signal-to-noise ratio.

Playback response was measured with the new IEC-standard BASF test tapes, which cover the range from 31.5 Hz to 18 kHz. The slight bass rise below 100 Hz shown in the graph on page 50 is not a characteristic of the AD-3800U but results from using a full-track test tape on a quarter-track stereo deck. The 3.7- and 4.7-dB 18-kHz rolloff is principally the consequence of a
(Continued on page 50)

Aiwa AD-3800U Cassette Deck

● **Comment.** Using the Dolby-C system (or even Dolby-B, for that matter) the Aiwa AD-3800U was able to make impeccable copies of all FM and almost all recorded material. Some slight high-frequency losses could be heard, but only in a direct source/tape recorded comparison of digitally mastered material or interstation FM hiss recorded above a -10-dB input level. This is, of course, excellent performance, and the Aiwa AD-3800U can certainly be recommended to anyone searching for a top-performing cassette deck.

—Craig Stark

The Kyocera Series D-801 Cassette Deck with 3 motors and a direct driven dual capstan...

With only 0.02% WRMS wow and flutter.

If you think 3 motors impress you, think of what they can do for tape performance. One drives our dual capstans to insure constant and highly accurate speed with remarkable low wow & flutter of 0.02%. A second motor drives both the take-up and feed reels while the third motor gently positions the record/playback head against the tape surface. An innovative approach resulting in accurate head-to-tape positioning and optimal head azimuth alignment. But motors alone do not insure top

performance. That's where both Dolby* B and C noise reduction circuits come in, along with a Sendust alloy tape head; electromagnetic braking on both take-up and feed reels; selectable bias and equalization for all types of tapes; 30-20,000 Hz response range; full LED function indication; feather-touch controls; APMR for automatic program search; auto stop; auto repeat, memory and a full bank of operational controls concealed behind a flip-down access panel; plus the convenience of a

4-digit LED electronic timer/counter for precise elapsed time, remaining time, stopwatch and memory stop and registering time and/or counter reference of recorded programs... and more.

But our most impressive feature awaits at your local audio retailer... a demonstration of the D-801...it's just one of a very impressive list of distinguished audio components and systems from Cybernet...where the future is now!



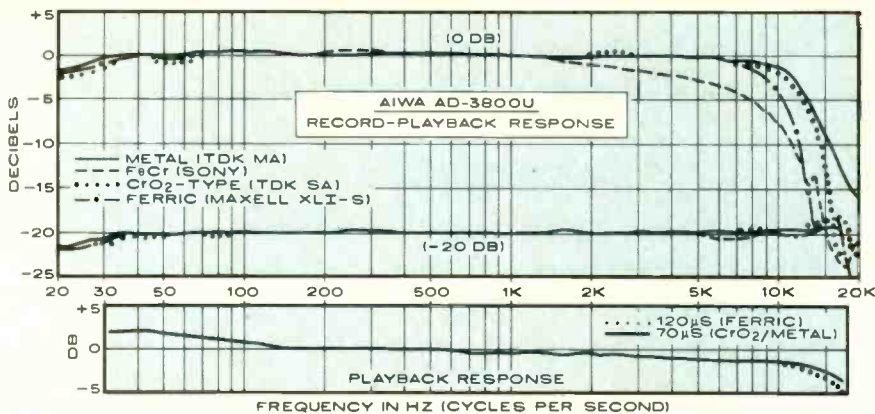
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*Dolby is a reg. t.m. of Dolby Laboratories, Inc.

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CIRCLE NO. 10 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Aiwa AD-3800U Cassette Deck



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 calibrated test cassettes and indicate the deck's ability to play prerecorded tapes.

small modification in the new IEC standards. Overall record-playback response was extremely uniform among the tape types at the normal -20-dB measurement level. The "knee" in the curves was between 16 and 18 kHz. Predictably, the ferrichrome formulation dropped off in its high-end response with a 0-dB input, but TDK's SA

was very close to matching the company's metal-particle tape.

Using a 315-Hz input at the indicated 0-dB record level, I measured only 0.4 per cent third-harmonic distortion with Maxell XLI-S, 0.5 per cent with TDK MA, 1.2 per cent with TDK SA, and 1.8 per cent with Sony FeCr. To reach the 3 per cent distortion

reference point required increasing the input signal level by 8.6, 7.4, 3.3, and 3.5 dB, respectively. On an unweighted basis, without noise reduction, the better-than-average signal-to-noise ratios (S/N) of the four tapes measured 56 dB (XLI-S and MA) and 53 dB (SA and FeCr). With CCIR weighting and Dolby-B noise reduction these figures improved to 66.3 dB for the Maxell XLI-S and the metal TDK MA, to 63.7 dB for TDK SA, and to 65 dB for Sony FeCr. Dolby-C reduced the noise still further, producing excellent S/N figures: 74.5 dB (Maxell XLI-S and TDK MA), 74 dB (Sony FeCr), and 72 dB (TDK SA).

Wow-and-flutter, using a TDK MTT-111 test tape, measured only 0.018 per cent wrms and 0.03 per cent on the DIN peak-weighted basis. The Dolby-level marking was admirably exact, and frequency-response tracking was within ±1 dB with Dolby-B and ±2 dB with Dolby-C up to 15 kHz at a -20-dB input level. At a -30-dB level the high-frequency error increased only slightly to ±1.5 dB (Dolby-B) and +3 dB (Dolby-C) at 15 kHz.

At 1,000 Hz a signal level of 44 mV (0.044 V) at the line-level inputs and 0.3 mV at the microphone inputs was sufficient to produce a 0-dB indication and 350-mV output level. The microphone inputs accepted up to 640 mV before overloading. Fast-forward and rewind times were just under 80 seconds for a C-60 cassette.

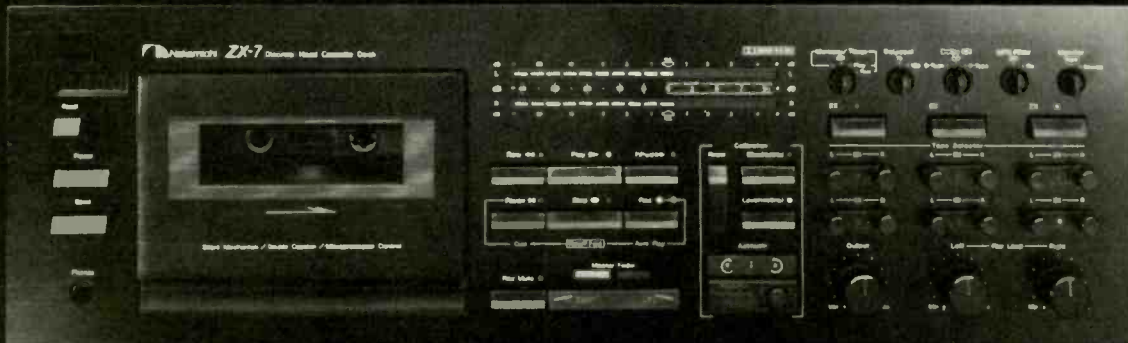
Circle 144 on reader service card

ZX-7...Maximum Performance through Complete Control

With the Nakamichi ZX-7 you command and optimize the vital record parameters—bias, level, and azimuth—which bring to life the true potential lying dormant in every cassette. This kind of control, plus the most advanced technology and features in cassette history, make the ZX-7 a serious recordist's dream-come-true.

Maximum Performance...The ZX-7 awaits you now at your Nakamichi dealer.

Nakamichi For more information, write Nakamichi U.S.A. Corp., 1101 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90401.



Once again, JVC harnesses higher tech in the pursuit of higher fidelity.

The power of higher tech, harnessed by superior engineering. Once again, it's the mark of JVC's leadership. Even in the realm of moderately priced components like these.

The intricacy of JVC turntable design.

You see it, and hear it, in attention to subtle, yet significant details. Like a straight, low-mass tonearm with *tracing hold* to stabilize tracking. And quartz control to insure virtually perfect platter rotation.

Powerful, yet musically pure receivers.

A JVC innovation called *Super-A* removes subtle forms of distortion. So

musical overtones and transients are amplified intact for a pure, musically natural sound. Add graphic equalization and quartz tuning, and you have receivers unsurpassed for performance and versatility.

The innovators in metal cassette decks.

It was JVC who first put together the technology needed to record metal tapes. Now we've added Dolby® C for ultra-quiet recordings. Plus features like Music Scan to find selections automatically. Spectro-Peak metering. Logic controls, digital indication, memory and more.

Speakers more precise than the ear itself.

Our Dyna-Flat ribbon tweeter extends to 100 kHz, higher than the ear can hear. By doing so, it helps provide correct amplitude and phase characteristics in the audible range. So music takes on the focus, detail and spatial image of live sound.

Your JVC dealer is waiting to demonstrate the full new line of higher tech components. Computerized tuners. "Thinking" tonearms. Self-optimizing cassette decks. Higher tech engineering all focused on one goal — achieving the highest fidelity possible.



*Dolby is a registered trademark of Dolby Laboratories.

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CIRCLE NO. 9 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Going on Record

By James
Goodfriend



BUYING FRUSTRATION

NO communications I receive as Music Editor at STEREO REVIEW bother me more than those that tell of the difficulty, or the impossibility, of the correspondent's purchasing a record we have just reviewed. They bother me so much—though they are rarely critical of the magazine or my part in it—because there is so little I can do about them. And they bother me because they are symptomatic of the near-moribund state of this business I once used to love and have, over the years, grown almost to hate.

The classical record business, yes, and the popular record business too, was once made up of music-minded people notable for their enthusiasm, their knowledge, and their taste. Of course, there were always individuals whose sole concern was financial, or some sort of ego gratification that had nothing to do with music, or who had no concerns at all other than having a job, but the mesh of musical and non-musical people was a working one, and everywhere one looked one saw musical people, record people, in decision-making positions. They may not have had ultimate authority, but they made most of the *musical* decisions. With only a few exceptions, they were also greatly interested in how their productions were received. The thought that someone who wanted one of their records was finding it literally impossible to buy it and that nobody with the job of selling those records was taking the matter very seriously would have driven them up the wall.

And yet, to the surprise of no one, least of all readers of this magazine, that seems to be precisely the case today. I cite only two recent examples. First, a reader in the Midwest called to tell me that he had been trying, completely without success, to buy a brand-new London digital record, a record that had received from us a "Best of the Month" designation. He had begun his attempt immediately upon reading the review and was calling me two months later. He had already made the usual rounds—that is to say, first the record store that doesn't know anything, then the special order, then the information that the disc is back-ordered, then the canard that it isn't available, then the lack of concern of someone at the record company, and finally the confes-

sion of the local distributor that while he has forty-eight orders for the record, they are too few for him to bother with. Really? Why put out the record at all?

I gave the gentleman the names and addresses of a couple of stores in New York and a couple in Chicago that I thought *might* be able to help him. One of those stores just happened to call me later about something else, giving me example two. Did I know, asked the gentleman at the store, that RCA has just instituted a new policy that allows stores to order Red Seal records only quarterly (instead of as they need them) for delivery one month afterward? No, I didn't know. Did I understand, continued the gentleman, that even a store such as his, which sells a lot of classical records, could stock only one or two of most items (because of the sheer number of different records they have to stock), and, therefore, if they sold a record in December they might not have another copy of it to sell until April? Yes, I understood it. What did I think of it? I told him I thought that RCA, if such was their attitude, ought to sell their Red Seal division to someone who *wanted* to be in the classical-record business.

AND that is one of the main roots of the problem. The business is almost entirely controlled these days by people who don't *want* to be in the classical-record business. As a field of economic endeavor it has its inherent difficulties: a small audience geographically spread out, low unit prices, a product that needs and cannot get proper quality control, too much direct competition. With the best of intentions there are bottlenecks. With less than the best, the whole affair is one big gridlock. Records are deleted because they don't sell; records don't sell because people are unable to buy them. It has the ring of one of Kafka's minor musings.

The classical-record business is the mess it is today not because of new technologies (in fact, technology bails it out every once in a while), but because a suicidal management system preoccupied with numbers rather than the product, with markets rather than customers, is driving it lemming-like into the sea. □

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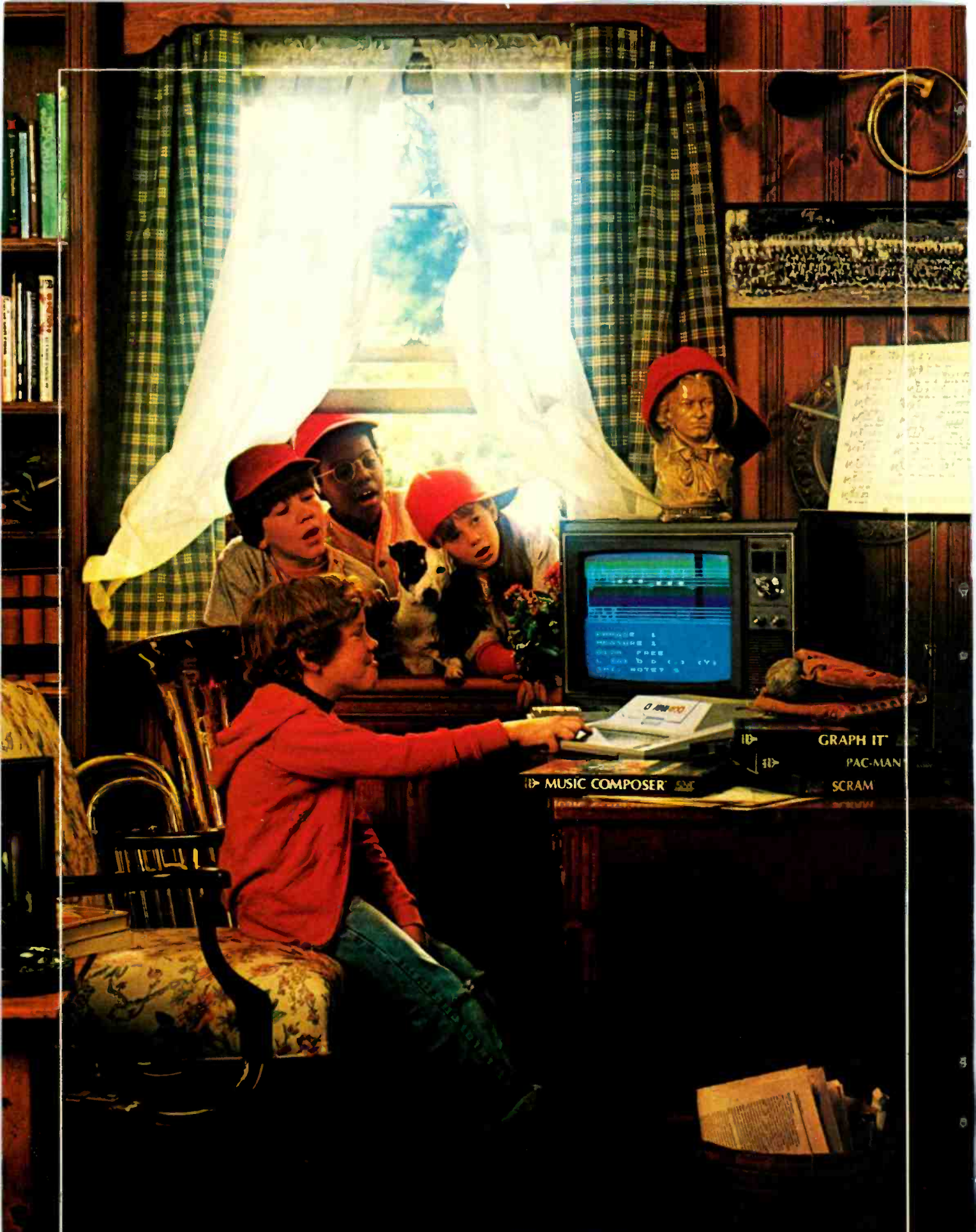
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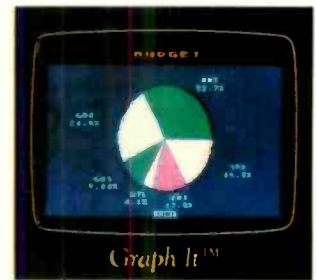


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CIRCLE NO. 3 ON READER SERVICE CARD

CAR STEREO 1982

Manufacturers are playing it cool for now but getting ready for two fascinating new developments: microcassette players and stereo-AM broadcasting

By Ivan Berger

ON-THE-ROAD music lovers can expect some fascinating innovations in car stereo in the future, but few of them, judging from what I saw at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas recently, will be appearing this spring. Manufacturers are being cautious, holding off the introduction of major innovations until the economy improves and perhaps until the stereo-AM situation is clearer (see box on page 58).

This watchful waiting is particularly apparent with reference to the microcassette format. It won't be available in the U.S. for car use this year, but it was shown in prototype form at Las Vegas by Panasonic and Jensen (see the box on facing page for details). As for the products one *can* buy now (or soon), the biggest news is noise reduction, DNR and dbx. The DNR system is the newer one, introduced as a chip by National Semiconductor about a year ago. It's a "dynamic filter," reducing high frequencies (and the accompanying noise) when there is no high-frequency program content and restoring the response when the highs in the music are at the right frequencies and strong enough to mask the noise. It will there-



fore work on any program material, including both FM and tape, and it needs no encoding in advance.

Besides Autotek's in-dash unit with DNR (and Dolby-B) announced last year, there are in-dash units with DNR here or coming soon from Blaupunkt, Boman (in its Carrera series), FAS (the company's first in-dash unit), and J.I.L. Concept (not to mention Jensen's micro prototype). The feature will also show up soon in Audiovox, ARA-Motorola, Sparkomatic, and others—about fifteen manufacturers this year.

Last year, FAS announced an equalizer with dbx (so did Rockford Fosgate, but I didn't see it this year), and dbx itself introduced a separate decoder. A newly announced low-voltage dbx decoder chip is likely to help make the system popular. There are no in-dash systems with dbx yet, but Concord now has a separate dbx decoder and two in-dash units with connections for it.

The Schotz tuner circuit, which uses a signal-responsive variable-bandwidth FM detector, is making its entrance in Proton's car-stereo line this year. It is said to provide better than state-of-the-art specs for capture ratio, sensitivity, and multipath rejection. There will be two models initially: the Model 202, with full tone controls, analog tuning, Dolby-B, a preamp output, and a built-in 5-watts-per-channel amplifier, will be \$189. The Model 201, with auto-reverse, digital tuning, station presets, and Dolby-B, will be about \$300 to \$330. Fancier models are planned, but they probably won't appear this year.

Marantz's IMS (Interference Management System), another FM-cleanup technique introduced last year, will be

on two new Marantz models, the CAR 312 (\$200) and CAR 320 (\$170). Both have reversible face plates which incorporate the molded-in "hex nuts" which have become a Marantz trademark, but not the Marantz gold finish (they're wood-grain on one side, black on the other).

ARA-Motorola has another circuit, the FM Extender, in a line that runs from \$189 to \$400. It's apparently an automatic high-blend circuit. ARA-Motorola's new one-year warranty includes removal and re-installation costs—a new idea, and a very good one.

BLAUPUNKT'S emphasis on "Night Illumination" (it's in at least five of the company's in-dash units and one equalizer) is being echoed by other companies. For example: Kenwood's KRC-1022 illuminates most controls and has an automatic dimmer; Audiobahn's AB-1000-ETX Series II has LEDs on the station-selector buttons; Alpine's illuminated-button Model 7136 has been joined by four other models with this feature (the 7135, 7140, 7146, and 7337); Metro Sound's Blue Sapphire EQ-330 seven-band equalizer (\$133) has green, backlight controls; and Kenwood's new KGC-447 equalizer (\$139) has moving LED spots instead of moving slide controls to show where you've set it. Settings are made by pressing buttons to raise or lower the response in each band. (A similar equalizer is built into Kenwood's latest home receiver.)

Alpine's new Model 3316 (\$200) is a preamp-level, seven-band equalizer with subwoofer output; it has a bypass switch and LEDs marking its slider po-

sitions, plus flashing-LED input-level "meters" which, happily, can also be bypassed. Metro Sound's Blue Sapphire line includes a twelve-band graphic equalizer, the EQ-370, with 50 watts per channel (\$210). Lear Jet also has a graphic-equalizer/booster, the Model 6854, with seven bands and 30 watts per channel (W/ch) at \$130. Pioneer's newest seven-band equalizer, the BP-520 (\$170) has "IC" echo; without echo, it's the BP-520 (\$110). Both versions are designed to deliver 10 W/ch at 5 per cent distortion.

Audiovox has a very compact "paragaphic" equalizer, the AMP-775; it's about 1½ inches high, has seven control bands, and delivers 13 W/ch at 1 per cent distortion. Zapco has a different type of paragaphic unit for about \$375. Its four control knobs act like those on a standard graphic equalizer; however, its filter frequencies and bandwidths can be adjusted as in a "parametric" equalizer. The difference is that you plug in each of the needed filter modules rather than turning knobs to get the characteristics you want. A typical setup might have 35- and 160-Hz filters with a "Q" (sharpness) of 2, a 1-kHz filter with a Q of 0.7, and a 16-kHz filter with a Q of 2.5, all with the intention of flattening your car's acoustics.

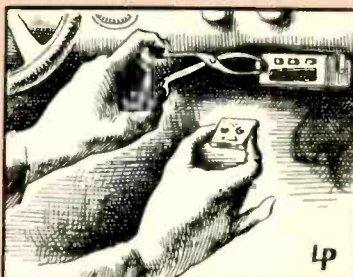
For Porsche owners, Spectron has a preamp/equalizer with a special faceplate for Porsche installations. Classic Research and Engineering's unit has a "Z-Box" speaker enclosure shaped and finished to match the interiors of Porsches (and of Corvettes and BMWs too).

Getting back to in-dash units, Boman

MOBILE MICROCASSETTES

IT was no great surprise to see, at Panasonic's CES exhibit, the Matsushita microcassette system I mentioned in my "Car Stereo" column in March. But I was surprised to see another microcassette prototype too—from Jensen.

The Panasonic deck has Dolby, auto-reverse, and an up-down button for volume control. It also has a tape-equalization switch, with the 70-microsecond position marked "Metal." (Microcassettes need metal tape for a reasonable high-frequency response, unlike standard-cassette units which can do very well with chrome-type tapes.) The microdeck was shown stacked with a frequency-synthesis AM/FM tuner featuring station seek. The system may show up within the next two years.



Jensen's microcassette system was quite different: an all-in-one unit with electronic tuning, six station-preset buttons, and a tape transport in a motorized drawer (with a lid, which could be a nuisance on the road). It also had both Dolby and DNR noise reduction.

Car-stereo designers welcome the idea of using microcassettes because it means that both the tape-transport mecha-

nisms and the front-panel slots can be smaller, leaving more room for circuitry on the inside and controls on the outside. And once the fidelity of the microcassette becomes acceptable (which could be very soon, with metal tape plus Dolby-C or dbx), its convenience could make it very popular. Everything but the very high-end response—say, over 8,000 Hz—seems to be up to the mark. With the micros, even today's skimpy glove compartments could hold enough tapes to keep you happy on a cross-country jaunt, while your pocket could hold hours of tapes for your micro personal portable.

Incidentally, the name "microcassette" distinguishes the *capstan*-driven tape format developed by Olympus from the *rim*-driven Philips "minicassette" format. While the latter works well for dictation, its drive system makes it an unlikely candidate for musical use.

CAR STEREO...

"... a car horn which can play seventy-six preprogrammed tunes . . ."

offers "Rideman" (note the play on "Walkman") stereo-headset jacks on two of its new Carrera models—fine for passengers, but unsafe (and in many places illegal) for the driver to use.

Alpine has a functional styling change, the "SelecTouch Switch," on its new Model 7146 (\$500). Instead of pressing four tiny buttons to set tape equalization, the music sensor, Dolby, or local/distant sensitivity, you press the appropriate corner of a large rectangular switch plate. And Lear Jet has introduced a new, economically priced auto-reverse in-dash unit, the A-68 (\$170).

Most of the other details I noticed on in-dash units were matters of styling: the introduction of a dark, soft, metallic-grey tone on J.I.L. Concept units, a very clean appearance on the Metro Sound Blue Sapphire line, and a new black version of the (Fujitsu) Ten "Mini-Wizard" (its optional remote control is still finished in brushed aluminum, though).

SEPARATE-COMPONENT tuners rarely have the conveniences found on in-dash units, but Sony's new XT-11 (\$350) is an exception. It has auto-scan tuning, presets for six AM and six FM stations, and a three-LED signal-strength indicator. A matching auto-reverse component tape deck, the XK-25, is the same price. Craig also had a component player, the T104, with auto-reverse, Dolby, and preamp-level output.

Aside from these, though, there are few new separate components save amplifiers, but they are in abundance. Audiomobile has an "amp rack" for high-end installations; it includes two high-power amplifiers and an electronic crossover premounted on one easily installed panel. Prices range from \$1,400 to \$1,900 per rack. Mini-Amp has modules that make similar but lower-price and lower-power systems, while Spectron's Amp Rack seems to fall between the two.

Linear Power has redesigned its Model 300, at 150 W/ch and 0.15 per cent distortion "the most powerful production car amplifier in the world." Concord is going the opposite direction with its slim, almost tubular (1½ x 1⅛ inches) HPA-25 monophonic ampli-

fiers, each delivering 12 W/ch at 0.8 per cent distortion. Both Panasonic and Sanyo offer extra-compact amplifiers, too: Panasonic's is the CYSB25 booster amp (\$80), 12 W/ch (EIA rating) and only 1½ inches high, which can be turned on by a car-stereo unit's power-antenna switch. Sanyo's is the PA6030 "palm-size powerhouse," an \$80 unit only an inch high; it delivers 15 W/ch from line- or speaker-level signals.

Alpine also showed a new high-power model, the 3502 (\$350); it's rated at 50 W/ch (EIA) in stereo, but its channels can be bridged to make a 150-watt mono amplifier. Other versions deliver 20 + 20 watts (60 mono) for \$200 and 30 + 30 watts (90 mono) for \$250. Thanks to Class-D output technology, Spectron has a larger but equally low-slung amplifier with much higher power: 30, 60, or 90 W/ch.

Panasonic introduced its new CQ-S747 stereo (\$250) at CES by demonstrating its amplifier with concert-size music-instrument speakers. Considering that such speakers are fairly efficient and that the amp delivers 14 W/ch (EIA), it was no surprise that the demonstration worked, but it was an attention-getter nonetheless.

STEREO AM: COMING SOON

OVER the past decade or so, AM radio-broadcast stations have been losing listeners to FM stations. Given a choice, listeners concerned with sound quality will choose stereo FM over mono AM, so AM broadcasters have been looking for a way to get back their lost revenues. They see stereo AM as the way to do it—particularly with car listeners.

In some circumstances AM has advantages over FM; AM's longer range allows one station to serve a larger area and hence have more listeners—given, of course, attractive programming. And listeners on the road can avoid the annoyance of constantly searching the FM band for a new station whenever they get out of the range of one they have been listening to. Another advantage of stereo AM is its freedom from FM's multipath and "picket-fencing" problems. At the moment, however, the frequency response of the AM section of a typical AM/FM/cassette stereo in-dash unit is something like 50 to 3,000 Hz ± 6 dB, which falls well short of the frequency-response potential of AM stations. It is also important to keep in mind, from the broadcasting standpoint, that *stereo* does not automatically mean *hi-fi*. Will stereo AM cause station managers to upgrade their audio quality to hi-fi levels? Only time will tell.

Proton has a \$250 amplifier that will deliver 50 watts into 4 ohms or 72 watts into 2 ohms. It's the first car-stereo amplifier I've seen with a "soft-clipping" circuit (and button) like those on the NAD home, amplifiers; it also has curved-fin heat sinks. JVC has decided to get into the car-stereo business and will shortly be introducing three in-dash cassette/receivers and four speakers. The top-of-the-line JVC receiver has digital tuning, six presets, scanning, Dolby, solenoid tape controls, and 10 W/ch at 1 per cent distortion for \$379.

IN speakers, the most talked-about development is ADS' new Model 3201 separates, available soon at about \$350 to \$370 per pair. The two-way system's woofer is totally waterproof, and its frame (of non-corroding Ultramide plastic) has six hold-down points instead of the usual four to minimize air leaks and mounting stress when it is mounted on a flexible surface. It has a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter that bayonets onto an easily attached base, but since it is surface-mounted, you can move it about to find where it sounds best before fixing it in place.

On March 5, 1982, after five years of deliberation and one aborted decision, the FCC finally decided *not* to decide on one of five competing stereo-AM systems (Motorola, Harris, Kahn, Belar, and Magnavox, the winner until the FCC changed its mind). Instead, they ruled that broadcasters can use *any* stereo-AM system as long as it doesn't interfere with the present mono-AM system, so it is quite possible that we could even end up with a sixth system from Japan.

The FCC says that this "free-market" solution will "yield the greatest net benefit to the public." If they are referring to the possibility of having a stereo-AM selector switch with five or more positions added to all receivers, tuners, and car-stereo units, it is difficult to see just where that "benefit" might lie. In any event, at press time all parties concerned were rushing full speed in several directions, and one industry pundit has commented that "we would have been better off if the FCC had made their decision by drawing straws."

BECAUSE of the intense competition among broadcast-equipment manufacturers, it is probable that there will be stereo-AM broadcasting by the end of this year. The availability of receiving equipment will not lag far behind, especially in the car-stereo field. So, whatever happens, stereo AM will soon be upon us in one or more forms, in time perhaps even in (would you believe?) hi-fi.

There's a growing trend toward "plate" systems: two or three round drivers mounted together on rectangular plates that can fit over 6 x 9-inch holes. Many of these are derived from minispeaker boxes, such as Infinity's new "i-car" (which is basically the front panel from the InfiniTesimal box). Several other new plates have no box ancestors that I know of: Boston Acoustics has one coming (another home-speaker company hitting the road); Genesis has two new plates, the AM-135 and the larger AM-165 (apparently derived from the AS-165 separates). Isophon has about the largest plate I've seen, a three-way about 8 x 12 inches. Spectron has a two-way plate with polypropylene drivers; the speakers are also available as separates.

Pioneer's rear-deck speaker with a forward-facing "periscope" tweeter has started a mini trend. Among the latest are Isophon's "CARonetta" with rotating tweeter and a Clarion unit with dual tweeters that resembles Mickey Mouse ears.

THE most unusual new subwoofer design is Linear Power's Bass Vent. All that shows above your deck is a small, rectangular grille plate with a 1 3/4 x 6-inch hole. Below the deck, two large drivers face each other across a rectangular tube's narrow axis; the only other opening is that top grille. The fearsome-looking system weighs 12 pounds. An optional amp, the Model 2601, combines a 30-W/ch stereo amplifier for the main speakers with a 100-Hz electronic crossover and a 60-watt mono amp for the subwoofer. Xaxis Transducer Co. has the RAN woofer system. It's a 10-inch woofer with dual voice coil, and it installs in a box in the trunk. (At the CES, Blaupunkt showed a system with multiple small woofers instead of one big one, but I didn't get to hear it.)

Alpine now has subwoofers too in 8-inch (\$100), 10-inch (\$140), and 12-inch (\$160) models. In addition to their equalizer with subwoofer output, they now offer an electronic crossover (\$130) with switch-selected crossover frequencies of 125, 250, and 500 Hz.

Blaupunkt is introducing a new antenna, the Bosch Autoflex. It has a short, flexible shaft (like a CB "rubber duckie") with reverse-wound coils on the shaft. According to Blaupunkt, it's as good on AM as Blaupunkt's similar-size amplified antennas and *better* on FM than the amplified models (not as much signal strength, but lower noise). It's said to cause less wind noise than conventional types and to be unaffected by weather or car washes.

Calfax's Horn-a-Plenty II is a car

horn which can play seventy-six preprogrammed tunes (plus two you program in yourself), sound effects (an oceanliner horn, for instance), and vocal effects (an evil laugh, for example, or an imitation of Cagney calling out "You dirty rat"). If that's not enough,

it doubles as a PA system, alarm clock, and ultrasonic burglar alarm. I like the idea of turning a Rabbit into the Queen Mary, but I'd hate to be at a corner where two Horn-a-Plenty owners were conducting an argument over the right of way via PA. □



"... Hmm—you don't own a car. . . . Well, would you happen to own a 12-volt storage battery?"



Kenwood KRC-712 casceiver



Panasonic CQ-S747 casceiver



Craig T104 cassette player



MetroSound CS 800 casceiver



dbx Model 22 decoder



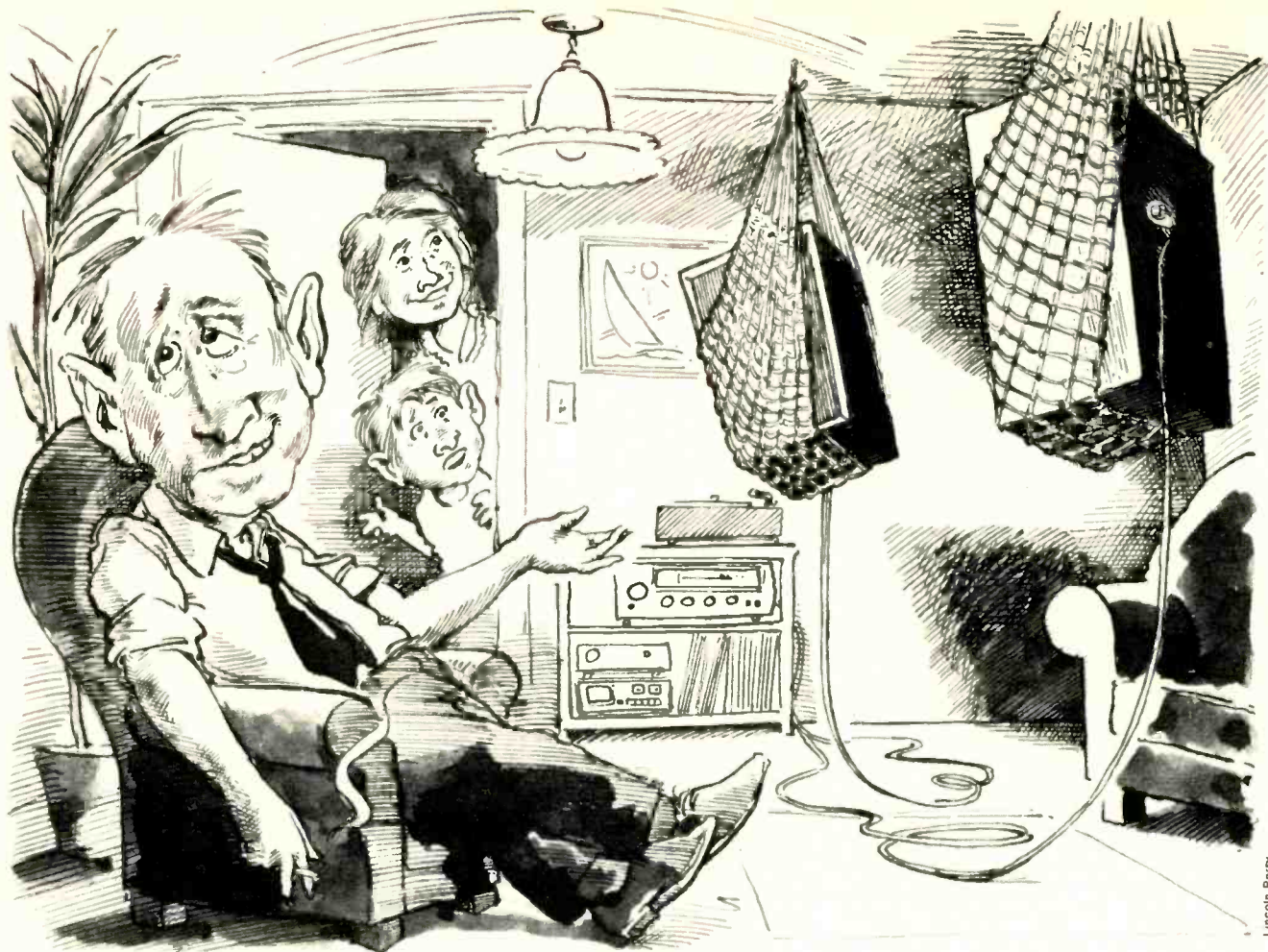
Sony XT-11 tuner



Pioneer BP-720 equalizer/booster



Marantz CAR-320 casceiver



Lincoln Perry

RATING LOUDSPEAKERS FOR "ACCURACY"

Speaker manufacturer Roy Allison finds a logical flaw in Consumers Union's test methods

LOUDSPEAKER design, testing, and evaluation are the subjects of more controversy than anything else in audio. If we agree that the large amount of subjectivity in these activities is the source of most of the disagreement, then the addition of *any* measure of objectivity ought to be helpful, right? Not necessarily.

To take but one recent example, Consumers Union's letter to Julian Hirsch (in *STEREO REVIEW*'s April "Technical Talk") defending their rating system for loudspeakers provides proof that objectivity and freedom from commercial bias do not guarantee good judgment, for it fails to make a convincing case for several frequently criticized aspects of CU's test methods. The procedure CU uses to generate loudspeaker "accuracy scores" is still flawed seriously enough to render these scores almost meaningless. That is most unfortunate, because it need not be so.

Rather than argue against every point in CU's letter with which I disagree, I would like to examine one fatal logical flaw in CU's rationale, specifically, the reason given for *not* considering loudspeaker performance in the sig-

nificant frequency region below 110 Hz in their scoring of accuracy. This stems, I believe, from a basic misconception about the behavior of loudspeakers, a misconception shared by a large number of people.

Consumers Union's criteria for judging loudspeaker performance have changed slowly over the years, but for at least a decade their basic measurement has been of total radiated acoustic power vs. frequency in an anechoic chamber—the *power response*, as it is called. This information has been interpreted and processed by CU in various ways at different times, but the underlying assumption has remained the same: that the most important aspect of a loudspeaker's performance (certainly the most clearly audible aspect) is how its acoustic-power output varies as a function of frequency. There is wide, but certainly not universal, agreement with CU on this point. I am among those who agree.

It is simpler to test speakers in anechoic chambers than in living rooms because there are no sound-energy reflections from room surfaces to confuse the measurements; only the direct out-

put from the speaker is picked up by the microphone. That is why CU, like most other institutions engaged in loud-speaker testing, tests them under anechoic conditions. But a far more important effect is traceable to sounds reflected from nearby room surfaces, for *these sounds actually change the power output of the speaker substantially*, augmenting or reducing it at different frequencies according to a complex pattern which changes as the speaker's location in the room is changed.

If the loudspeaker is placed close to at least one room surface (as it is in most listening rooms), these room-boundary effects, although more pronounced at low frequencies, extend upward to about 500 Hz. Thus, when CU was setting up their speaker-test program a decade ago, they had to face the uncomfortable fact that loudspeaker performance in living rooms would be accurately predicted by their anechoic-chamber tests only in the frequency region above 500 Hz. The lower four octaves (40 per cent of the audible range) would be unpredictably related to the anechoic-chamber tests because there would be no way of knowing where speakers would be placed in users' listening rooms. How, then, could they be *rated* on the basis of the anechoic-test results?

At that point CU, attempting to impose some order on what was then a virtually unmanageable task, made a giant leap of faith, a blanket assumption about the listening habits and living-room decor of loudspeaker users. They decided to assume that speakers would be placed in users' living rooms at least 3 to 5 feet away from *any* room surface—not only the walls, but the floor and ceiling as well. With that assumption, the room-boundary effects *would* be limited to the frequency region below 110 Hz, and the anechoic-chamber test results could therefore be applied down to that frequency. Ignoring the lowest two octaves in the rating process was at least more acceptable than eliminating *four* octaves. However, CU did not tell its readers that an unrealistic room location for speakers had to be assumed in order to validate the "accuracy scores" even down to 110 Hz, though they did point out that changing the speakers' location would affect the bass response.

SINCE CU began using accuracy-score ratings, there have been two developments that have changed the way speaker designers deal with the question of a loudspeaker's low-frequency performance. These changes ought to have simplified CU's rating system tremendously. The first was the *quantifi-*

cation of the room-boundary effect on a speaker's low-frequency output. If we know where a speaker will be located with respect to nearby room surfaces, we can now (using a simple algebraic formula) determine precisely how its acoustic-power output will be modified over the entire bass range relative to its anechoic-chamber response. Knowing a speaker's anechoic-chamber response and its recommended (or assumed) position in a room relative to walls and floor, we know what its real bass performance will be. We also know that this performance will be independent of the room's size, proportions, and absorptive characteristics, and that it will be unaffected by standing waves or room furnishings. It is a response that is a fixed property of that particular loudspeaker when placed similarly with respect to the surfaces of *any* room.

The second change, following quickly

“... a giant leap of faith, a blanket assumption about the listening habits and living-room decor of loudspeaker users.”

upon the first, was in the *design* of loudspeaker systems intended for use in certain general room locations so that their performance could be predicted and optimized. Manufacturers began to recommend fairly specific room locations for their loudspeakers; not all do so even now, but a reasonable preferred location can generally be assumed.

Having been made aware of these developments, CU has included room-boundary corrections in their most recent loudspeaker tests and published the resulting response curves extended down to about 22 Hz. Nevertheless, in an inexplicable failure to follow through on this change, CU still continues to exclude speaker response below 110 Hz from its accuracy-score calculations! They claim that the accuracy scores based on their preferred limited frequency range correlate well with the results of double-blind music-listening tests. But the report doesn't tell us that, for the listening tests, they filter out all music energy below 110 Hz. In other words, the subjective-test signal is artificially limited to the same frequency range as is used for the "objective" accuracy-score calculations! No wonder,

as Julian Hirsch pointed out, that the correlation is so good.

What is CU's justification for this? That, below 110 Hz, "we believe the effects to be quite variable from room to room." But this is consistent neither with observed facts nor with CU's own practice of applying room-boundary corrections to anechoic-test results. If the information is not (in CU's opinion) valid, why do they publish the corrected curves? And if it *is* valid, why is it not included in their score computation?

Listening rooms do, of course, have standing waves at low frequencies, and the perceived frequency response will, of course, change with a listener's location in the room. But this is true no matter what hi-fi component is being evaluated. It makes no more sense to say that the low-frequency response of a loudspeaker is not significant for that reason than it does to say that a tape machine's (or an amplifier's) low-frequency response doesn't matter because the listening room will change it anyway. CU is using an odd double standard here.

THE proof that these accuracy-score ratings are invalid is to be found in CU's own publication. In the September 1981 issue of *Consumer Reports* there were reports and ratings on mid-price loudspeakers (priced from \$400 to \$598 per pair) and also on minispeakers (mostly of shoe-box size). The report condemned all the miniature speakers for woefully inadequate bass performance while commenting favorably on the bass performance of the mid-price systems. The median accuracy score for the "minis" was 83.5; for the larger, more expensive speakers, 85.5. That difference of two percentage points in accuracy scores certainly does not adequately describe the vast difference in accuracy between the two groups, as would be easily perceived by anyone who knows what live music sounds like, primarily because CU has eliminated two octaves of low-frequency performance from the scoring process.

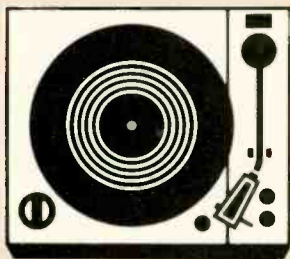
But there is no reason to ignore those octaves. The power response of a loudspeaker can be specified exactly (if we know where it will be placed in a room) down to the lowest audible frequency. Its acoustic-power response is therefore no longer an unknown variable—no more so than is the frequency response of an FM tuner or a power amplifier. Let us hope that CU will soon find it possible to correct the methods they use to prepare future loudspeaker reports so as to make them reflect relative performance capability more realistically—in other words, to make the accuracy scores more accurate. □

Preview for Buyers: AUDIO PRODUCTS AT LAS VEGAS CES

Part 2: Concluding the survey,
begun last month, of the
Winter 1982 Consumer Electronics Show

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Reports by
Peter Mitchell
Ivan Berger
E. Brad Meyer
●

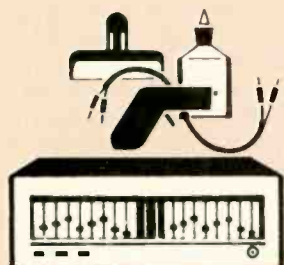
What's New in



TURNTABLES



HEADPHONES



ACCESSORIES



VIDEO SONICS

Turntables

ONE of the principal trends in the turntable market is an increasing proliferation of models with good performance in the middle price range. Typically, these have front-mounted controls that can be operated with the dust cover down, a straight aluminum arm tube, an offset headshell, and a lightweight composite plastic base that resists ringing. Sanyo's TPQ5 fully automatic direct-drive unit (\$170) includes a straight tone-arm tube and low-mass headshell, a high-density platter mat, and a floating suspension that isolates the platter and arm from the turntable base. NAD's Model 5025 semi-automatic belt-drive turntable (\$148) features a relatively low-mass arm (9.5 grams), a 5-mm-thick soft-rubber platter mat for resonance absorption (this will also be marketed separately as an audiophile accessory), and vibration-absorbing feet. Akai has a new belt-drive semi-automatic turntable for \$135 and quartz-lock direct-drive fully automatic models at \$175 and \$250.

Onkyo's new CP-1017A direct-drive semi-automatic turntable for \$160 includes pitch adjustment over a 3 per cent range and three-part vibration-absorbing feet (rubber, coil springs, and felt), while the CP-1028R direct-drive fully automatic model at \$260 adds a factory-installed moving-magnet cartridge and microprocessor programming to play up to eight cuts on a record side in any order. Toshiba showed three new turntables with bases made of a nonresonant high-density molding compound: the SR-B150 (a belt-drive semi-automatic at only \$115), the SR-D350 (a direct-drive semi-automatic with adjustable pitch at \$180), and the SR-Q650 (fully automatic quartz-locked direct-drive, \$230). Vector Research has added a two-speed semi-automatic belt-drive, the VT-150 at \$120.

Garrard, one of the classic names in turntables, introduced a complete new six-model line, three belt-drive and three direct-drive units all equipped with a straight low-mass 9.5-gram tone arm whose horizontal and vertical pivots are in the plane of the record, thus minimizing warp-induced wow. The top model of each type is fully automatic with a headshell that permits adjustment of the vertical tracking angle.

Another major trend is the growing variety of compact, low-profile turntables occupying only about 1 square foot of shelf space, typically offering fully automatic operation with a radial-tracking arm. Hitachi's first radial-tracking turntable, the L70 (\$370), is barely larger in area than a record jacket and has a "digital random program selector" that allows the bands on a record side to be played (and replayed) in any desired order. It is a two-speed model that detects the size of the record on the platter and sets its speed accordingly. Sansui's first entry into the radial-tracking derby, the \$350 P-M7, boasts similar features (playing up to seven bands in programmed order), and its microprocessor also provides control signals to drive a companion Sansui D-M7 cassette deck so that, when dubbing, the recorder's starting and stopping is synchronized with the record's. Technics has

added two more models to fill out its line of compact radial-tracking record players: the \$200 SL-5 is about the size of a record jacket, while the \$250 SL-DL5 has a wider chassis.

JVC's QL-Y7 turntable (\$750) features an "electrodynamic servo" tone arm in which the counterweight and antiskating spring have been replaced by miniature coreless linear motors that control the tone arm's horizontal and vertical movements, virtually eliminating the arm's inertia and allowing tracking force, antiskating, and resonance damping to be controlled electronically—even altered during play by the front-panel dials.

Dynamic servo control of tracking force and infrasonic arm resonance is also featured in three new Denon turntables, the DP-51F (\$425) and DP-52F (\$525) fully automatic microprocessor-controlled direct-drive units and the budget-price record-jacket-size DP-11F at \$200. This feature stabilizes the arm's vertical motion in response to disc warps, thus maintaining constant tracking force, unlike conventional tone arms whose tracking force varies during play because of the inertia of the arm and cartridge.

Kenwood introduced one new turntable at the show, the KD-670 (\$375) with a high-inertia 13-inch aluminum platter driven by a coreless and slotless d.c. motor, a fully automatic tone arm driven by a completely separate motor, and an antiresonant resin base.

Sony has a new turntable that is aimed primarily at owners of Walkman-type stereo tape players with headphones who would like to use them to listen to records, but it also makes a nice "starter" unit for anyone who isn't ready to invest in a complete stereo-component system. The \$175 PS-155 has a built-in phono-preamp circuit and a headphone amplifier that allow stereo headphones to be plugged directly into it. Sony's other new turntable is a front-loading design that can be stacked with other audio components; virtually the entire player slides forward from its case, like a drawer opening, to receive the record, then retracts for play. The \$400 PS-FL5 has a microprocessor control system and three motors: one to spin the turntable's platter, one to cycle the tone arm, and a third to operate the loading system.

At the low-cost end of the market, Mesa introduced two fully automatic multiple-play record changers, the Models 100c (\$85) and 200c (\$90), as well as two semi-automatic single-play models, the 500s (\$80) and 600s (\$85), all factory-equipped with Audio-Technica AT70 pickups. BSR added four models to its Quanta line, each equipped with an ADC cartridge: the 75MX (\$110) and 72MX (\$100) are automatic changers, and the 65SX (\$90) and 62SX (\$80) are semi-automatic single-play units.

Of greater interest, perhaps, are the state-of-the-art products that explore the frontiers of performance—or at least do something different. For instance, Cybernet is a division of Kyoto Ceramic, so its PL-901 belt-drive turntable is equipped with a high-density ceramic spindle, a ceramic thrust bearing, and even a dense 6-pound ceramic platter riding on a brass subplatter.

The 60-pound turntable has no rubber platter mat; the record rests directly on the non-resonant ceramic platter, and Cybernet is also marketing a separate 3-pound ceramic platter mat intended to replace the rubber mats on other turntables.

Onkyo's effort at all-out high-end design is the PX-100M, weighing a solid 88 pounds and sporting a suggested price of \$2,500 without tone arm. This visually striking unit has a black base and a 13-inch polished copper platter driven by a peripheral linear-induction-drive system that uses the solid electrolytic 22-pound copper platter itself as the rotor. (Current flowing in the large copper coils beneath the rim induces eddy currents in the platter that cause it to be

will not produce any net motion of the stylus tip.

Luxman has three new turntables. The PD-289 (\$400) is a fully automatic single-play direct-drive model that uses an optical sensor to control arm liftoff at the end of play, while the PD-284 (\$300) is a semi-automatic unit. The \$1,000 PD-300 belt-drive unit features Luxman's vacuum disc-stabilizer system in which a two-stroke manual vacuum pump temporarily bonds the record to the vibration-absorbing rubber platter mat, flattening out warps.

Nakamichi is known for its cassette decks, including some very exotic and costly models, but the company has come up with a turntable design that is even more exotic



pulled in the direction of flow.) Since there are no "poles," the driving torque is smooth and continuous with no cogging, and in consequence the residual wow-and-flutter of the turntable is specified as under 0.01 per cent rms.

Sansui's XR-Q7 direct-drive turntable features a "Silent Synchronotor" counter-rotating subplatter—actually the flywheel of a second motor mounted coaxially with the main motor and driven by the latter's servo-control speed-correcting pulses, thus producing equal and opposite torsional forces. The purpose is to eliminate any effect that unbalanced torsional forces might have on the turntable's performance, and the system yields a DIN-B weighted rumble specification of better than 80 dB. This \$500 turntable also incorporates the "dyna-optimum-balanced" tone arm Sansui introduced last year, a design in which the arm's mass distribution is calculated to ensure that vibrations reaching the tone arm through its base

and expensive than its most refined cassette machine. The new Nakamichi TX-1000 turntable weighs over 80 pounds and sells for about \$7,000—and that's without a tone arm. The goal of this turntable is to combat the problem of disc eccentricity caused by a center hole that is punched slightly off center at the record plant (a common occurrence); some eccentricity can also be caused by a loose fit between an undersize spindle and an oversize center hole. Believe it or not, these eccentricities can produce more than 0.1 per cent wow, which is enough to be marginally audible and far higher than the specified wow and flutter of many new turntables. So, when you put a record on the Nakamichi TX-1000, it first plays the final groove of the record with a special sensor arm, measures the amount of eccentricity, and then activates two servomotors that, using a system of gears, pulleys, and belts, physically offset the record until the eccentricity is corrected!

—Peter Mitchell

Accessories

ACCESORIES are rarely revolutionary; it's not in their nature. But one revolutionary accessory was unveiled at the Winter CES (or rather in a hotel suite on the show's periphery): the Adaptive Digital Signal Processor (ADSP) from Acoustic Research. The ADSP is completely automatic. Its handheld control unit contains a microphone and a control button. Press that button, and a test signal is fed through your system while ADSP checks the response at your listening position through the mike. Then it calculates how to filter (adjust) the signal to compensate for speaker-response variations, room acoustics, and other factors in the overall response.

What distinguishes the ADSP from such automated equalizers as the dbx 20/20 and Sansui's SE-9 is the way the sound is measured and the adjustment performed. The measured response is used to generate a digital filter program to correct system errors below 1,000 Hz. This program can create "filters" as numerous and as wide or narrow as need be; AR cites filter bandwidths of "only a few hertz" and corrections for "more than fifty peaks and dips in a 1,000-Hz bandwidth" as examples of what it can do. It can also separately correct errors in the direct speaker response and the reflected room response. AR expects to deliver the ADSP unit in mid-1982 at a price somewhere between \$1,500 and \$2,000.

MXR showed a partially completed prototype of a ten-band graphic equalizer with automatic setting and memories for ten different equalization curves. Equalization curves can also be drawn manually (with 0.5-dB resolution) by controls that move an illuminated "cursor" spot over a field of LEDs. Target price is \$1,000.

Audio Control has added CX decoding to its D-10 equalizer and \$10 to its price, making it the D-10X. Kenwood showed the GE-1000, a twelve-band, \$440 graphic equalizer with built-in time delay and a visual display of time-delay "depth." Similar displays are found on other Japanese delay units, including Pioneer's \$195 SR-9 reverb amp, now anodized in "champagne gold" to match the rest of the Pioneer line; the RG-9 dynamic processor (also \$195) has received the same treatment.

I noticed only one new accessory CX decoder, a Kenwood prototype with moving-coil and moving-magnet phono inputs (which means it could also be used to add an extra phono input to a system). However, Toshiba showed two CX-equipped receivers, Audionics and Sherwood showed preamps with CX, and Soundcraftsmen announced a \$15 plug-in adaptor for its 4000-series preamps.

Elsewhere on the noise-reduction front, dbx showed its first combination noise-reduction/expansion unit, the Model 228 (\$499). As a noise reducer, it allows simultaneous encoding and decoding for three- or two-head tape decks and decoding for dbx discs (of which there should be about a hundred and fifty titles by the time you read this). It also offers variable expansion up to a 1:1.5 expansion ratio. If all you want is expansion, the three-band 3BX has now

been replaced by the 3BX Series Two, slimmer (1 3/4 inches high, 19 inches wide) and considerably less expensive (\$549 instead of \$750). Quadraphony reared its controversial head again with the Tetrasound decoder in both home and car versions. The home version, with remote control, will be \$1,200, but Tetrasound units will eventually be available at lower prices.

Not all the boxes you can pass a signal through are signal processors like those mentioned above. Perhaps the most elaborate exception to debut at the show was Russound/FMP's modular speaker-level control system. Instead of resistive L-pads, the Russound units use autotransformers. These waste less power than L-pads. The standard module (\$80) has two autotransformers, one per channel. An alternative \$100 version for high-power systems has two transformers per channel. For complex, multispeaker audio setups, an impedance-matching module (\$150) signals you to turn its transformer switch when overall system impedance drops below a safe 4 ohms. Also new from Russound is the VS-1 headphone junction box (\$80) with speaker switching and headphone level control.

Audiovisual Systems' patch bay made its CES debut. Like most patch bays, this has rear connections for several components plus front jacks for jumper cables to "patch" those components together as you please. Patch bays are an old studio standby; what's new about this \$850 one is that each input and output can be "normaled" together with a switch so that one jack in a pair will automatically feed the other until you insert a patch cable.

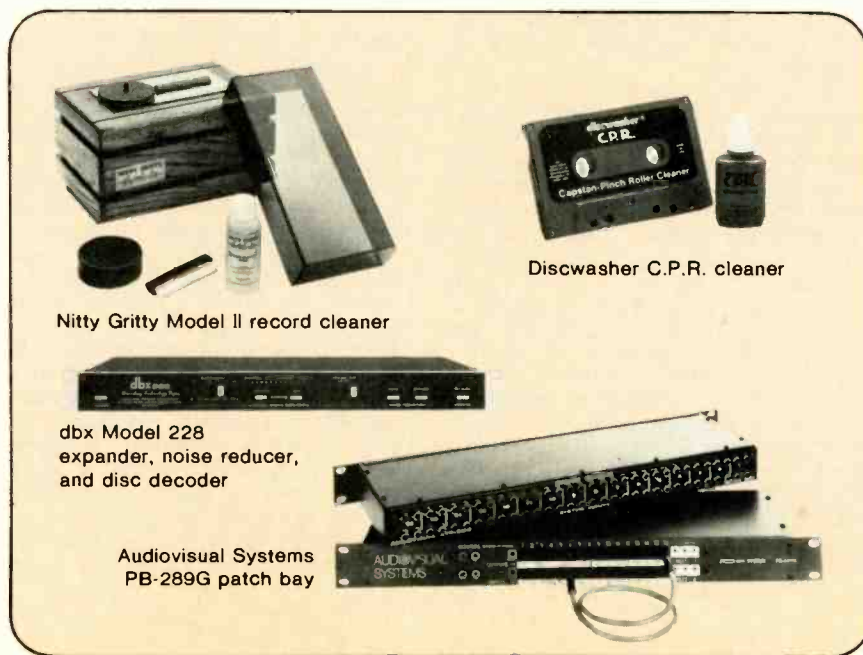
Despite the winds of digital change, new accessories for analog record players keep appearing. Most, as usual, are devoted to record care and cleaning.

Allsop's Orbitrac rotates around the record's center; it includes a pad on which to lay the disc while cleaning to avoid any possible strain on the turntable. Audio-Technica's Techni-Clean is a handheld pad with one-way fibers, built-in fluid reservoir, and a conductive body to drain static from the disc; its storage base suspends the pad so its

fibers won't mat or pick up dirt. Both cleaners are \$25. The Nitty Gritty machines are more expensive but more spectacular. Picture an oak-and-walnut box with a spindle and two Teflon lips on top. You rest the record on the spindle and clean it with the brush and fluid supplied, then you flip it over and rotate it; a vacuum below the soft, non-scratching lips sucks off all dirt and fluid. There's no supporting platform to spread dust back to the recorded surface—it touches only the lips and brush. The smaller Nitty Gritty II is \$299; the Model III, with storage compartment for the brush and fluid, is \$399. Another way to keep record surfaces from contamination is to handle them with Discwasher's new Disc-Handler. It clamps to the edge of a 12-inch LP so you can grasp and flip the disc without hand contact; it also opens the plastic wraps around new albums.

Clamping of a different kind is provided by two vacuum turntable mats designed to hold all but the most horribly warped records flat and to damp record resonances—a technique pioneered by recent Lux turntables. Audio-Technica's AT66 stabilizer replaces the turntable mat and includes a manual vacuum pump with vacuum indicator. The suction holds the disc down with 55 pounds of force but without adding any mass to the system. The vacuum is said to last an hour, which is more than enough for any LP side, and the unit will carry a suggested price of \$275. Reference Monitor International showed a prototype of a simpler vacuum stabilizer called Vac Mat (\$99). You place the record on a mat with a raised rim, then squeeze a gasketed bellows over the spindle to create the vacuum.

Gruv-Glide announced that its record-care formulation (a dry, antifriction, anti-static chemical) has been endorsed by Sheffield Laboratories, of direct-to-disc fame. A kit to treat two hundred LPs is \$22. And if you need replacement shells for one of the new straight-arm turntables, Audio-Technica now has a shell that will fit most of them, though its offset angle will be optimum only for arms of certain lengths. Radio Shack has such shells too.



Nitty Gritty Model II record cleaner

Discwasher C.P.R. cleaner

dbx Model 228
expander, noise reducer,
and disc decoder

Audiovisual Systems
PB-289G patch bay

There were surprisingly few new developments in tape care this year. Allsop has a new tape cleaner, with replaceable felts, for both regular and auto-reverse tape decks. Discwasher has added a C.P.R. (capstan pinch-roller) cleaner to the Perfect Path head cleaner it introduced last year. And LC Engineering Lab has new test tapes (including ones for microcassette use), each dubbed directly from test-tone generators.

—Ivan Berger

Headphones

Most of the emphasis in headphones this year was on the ultra-lightweight, miniature phones made popular by personal portable tape players and radios. This year the phones were even more portable: Aiwa, Mura, and Technidyne showed models with folding headbands. The even more collapsible Sound Partner from Koss has now been redesigned as the KSP-SI "with improved coupling between its transducers and the ear"; the \$35 price is unchanged. Denon's new AH-P5 Pocket phones fold small enough to fit into a cassette box. They're rivaled by phones that have no headband at all but hang directly from the ears; introduced by Sony last year, such phones are now available from Mura and Technidyne as well.

Different companies dealt differently with the conflict between the 3.5-mm headphone jacks of portable equipment and the 1/4-inch jacks of home gear. Aiwa has joined Sony in offering convertible plugs like those on their microphones. Some others, such as Mura, Sansui, Denon, and Audio-Technica, offer their miniphones with short cables having 3.5-mm plugs plus long cable adaptors for 1/4-inch jacks. (Audio-Technica also sells such adaptors separately.) Pioneer's latest lightweight phones have interchangeable cords with muting switches in the junction boxes the cords plug into. You can partially mute Mura's Red Set V too—it has sliding volume controls for each ear, despite its 2-ounce weight.

Not all new phones are ultralight. Beyer introduced the DT660 with ducted-port reflex enclosures (\$95). Pioneer offered the SE-L15 (\$110) with "Variable Chamber" passive-diaphragm enclosures. Fostex showed several "Regular Phase" phones with flat, printed-ribbon diaphragms. And Stax introduced two new models of its electret Earspeakers.

Headphones aren't the only reproducers sold for personal portables. AudioSource, Mura, and Technidyne also offered pocket-size *speaker* systems with 3.5-mm-plug cables for the purpose.

—Ivan Berger

Cabinets and Furniture

If the much-discussed "marriage of audio and video" has been consummated, it is in wood and vinyl rather than in electronics. Many audio components at CES were shown in simulated home settings that included video equipment (Sony's component Profect TV was most prominent). Cabinets



Pioneer SE-L11

Bush Model 1280 home-entertainment cabinet

Mura Red Set IV

Beyer DT 660

designed for such mixed systems were shown by Barzilay, Bush Industries, Mariani, Pulaski, Ridgewood Industries, and SDI Wood Classics. Matching audio and video cabinets were shown by Ashley Arcadia, Bush, Custom Woodwork & Design ("Woodmore"), Gusdorf, Mariani, and SDI.

CWD Woodmore accessories now include video as well as audio tape drawers (and accessories for stacking two of their 30-inch-high cabinets together). Kenmark's expanded range of multiple-drawer tape cabinets now also includes models with drawers for both types of tape.

In pure-audio storage, Sonrise showed rotating tape cabinets for tabletop and floor as well as combination tape/disc racks for the floor. Nour' Discollectors are wall-mounting picture frames that hold one 12-inch record jacket apiece and interlock for multiple-album display.

In styling, the trends continued toward the use of real wood or veneer rather than vinyl or laminates and toward rounded corners. There is also a growing variety of finishes in both real and pseudo wood. Oak is gradually wresting dominance from walnut, with such companies as Fournier and CWD offering both dark and light oak; Gusdorf showed a new "hickory" finish with "cane" inserts and new "burled-walnut" inserts for their walnut-vinyl cabinets. SDI used angled panels of mirror-image wood veneers

for a distinctive, arrowhead-like effect. Ashley Arcadia showed "tambour-style" cabinets framed in concentric moldings.

Audio racks with glass that wraps around to the sides instead of confining itself to the front doors were also popular, less among independent furniture makers (though Ridgewood Industries showed some) than among audio-component makers such as Pioneer, Onkyo, and Sansui. Sansui's new GX-155 was notable for having a headphone jack on its exterior so you can listen privately with the rack's doors closed. It is finished in oak-grain vinyl and has a suggested retail price of \$220. The styling of the Xylophile by Raymond Lepper Works was simple and conservative, but the level of craftsmanship was well above average. So, naturally, was the price: \$520 for a 32-inch cabinet, \$749 for a 64-inch model. Available accessories for the unit include a cassette drawer, sliding turntable shelf, and an under-shelf light.

—Ivan Berger

One-brand Systems

THE first one-brand "rack" systems were introduced in the U.S. about two years ago at the CES. They were intended primarily to broaden the audio market by simplifying the process of buying a home stereo. The theory was that if hi-fi were made

more accessible to those who were intimidated by the complications of choosing individual components, a vast and previously untapped market would open up.

The rack system has proved to be only a modest success. Some shoppers who would not venture into an audio-specialty store have bought rack systems from department stores and appliance dealers, but no major market explosion occurred. At the Winter CES this year there were almost no new one-brand systems introduced.

STEREO REVIEW's readers have already been advised (December 1981) of the advantages and pitfalls of one-brand systems, not so much for themselves but to enable them better to fulfill their function as audio advisors to friends and relatives. Briefly, one-brand systems have adequate electronics with lots of modern features, and the cabinets that come with them are handy. But the loudspeakers supplied with these systems are highly variable in quality and should be auditioned carefully before buying. (To attract rack-system customers who would prefer more familiar loudspeakers, Kenwood and JBL announced a joint marketing agreement under which the Kenwood Spectrum and Audio Purist series will be available with speaker systems from the JBL Radiance line.)

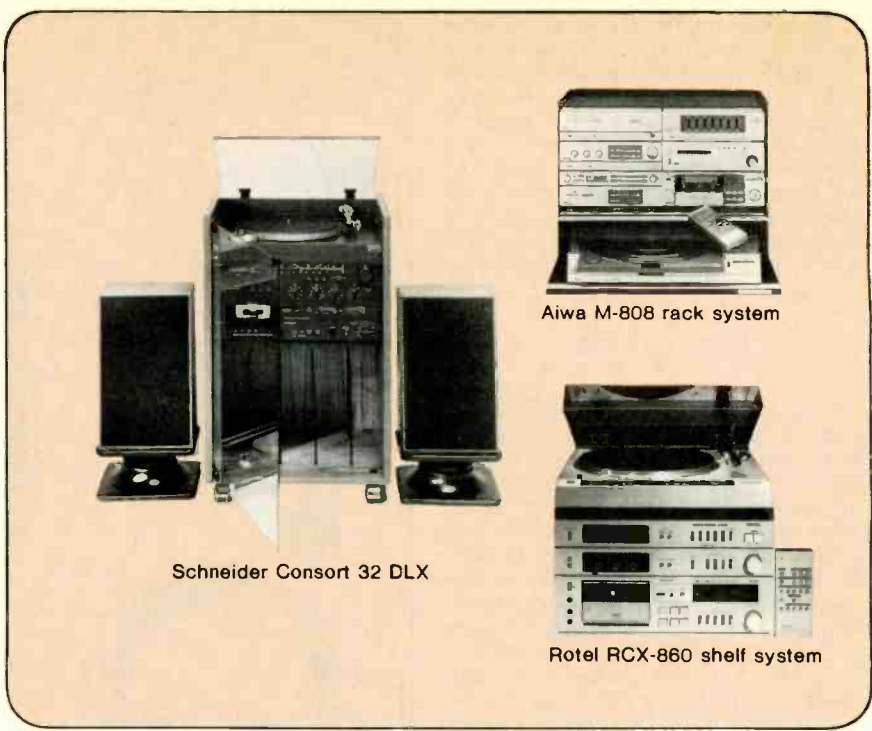
There are some very elaborate rack systems from companies such as Fisher and Rotel that cost over \$2,000. Judging from the few new systems at the show, however, most of the buyer interest is in the \$1,200-and-under bracket, especially in the more compact packages that can be bought either with a cabinet or without. Without a unit cabinet, the stack of components is known as a "shelf system."

Aiwa's new M-808 minicomponent system has a 50-watts-per-channel (W/ch) direct-coupled power amplifier and a separate preamp with a moving-coil phono input. The M-808 also contains a digital tuner with a circuit whose function is to keep digital noise out of the audio section. Options include a cassette deck with Dolby-C, a front-loading turntable that fits into the bottom shelf of the optional cabinet, and a digital timer that can record two events per day, make changes between tuner station presets, and keep track of the time remaining on a cassette. Also available as an accessory is an infrared remote control, an increasingly popular feature in medium-size shelf systems.

Another wireless-remote unit is Rotel's new RCX 860 cassette/receiver, or casceiver. Its rated output is 40 W/ch at 8 ohms, 60 W/ch at 4 ohms. The full 860 system (\$995) includes a turntable, also remotely controllable, and a rack.

Optonica showed four new systems priced from \$650 to \$1,000. At the top of the line is the System 5400, which has a 60-W/ch amp, a moving-coil preamplifier, a direct-drive turntable with a separate motor to control the tone arm, and a pair of three-way speaker systems.

The only major new line of one-brand systems at the show came from the German firm of Schneider, which introduced fourteen rack and shelf systems ranging in price from \$550 to \$1,600. Many of the Schneider systems come either in racks or as groups



Schneider Consort 32 DLX

Aiwa M-808 rack system

Rotel RCX-860 shelf system

of shelf components; the rack systems are bolted into their cabinets so that all the buyer has to do is connect the speakers and the power cord. Schneider's turntables are made by Dual; many of their cassette decks have the mechanism in a sliding drawer for compactness. The most interesting of the Schneider systems is the DCS 8025 (for Direct Contact Series). Each component in the 8025 system has four eleven-pin connectors built into the chassis: male on the top and right sides, female on the left and bottom. Each pin in the connector is uniquely assigned to an input or output function, so the user can stack the components in any order, either vertically or side by side, and all signal connections are made automatically. The basic 8025 system (\$1,150) comes with a 25-W/ch power amp, a separate preamp, an AM/FM/LW analog tuner with five station presets, a sliding-drawer cassette deck, and a pair of three-way speakers.

The line between minicomponents and portables grows ever more blurred. Aiwa, Rotel, Telefunken, and Kenwood now offer mini systems that can be operated from a 12-volt d.c. source. The Kenwood DC-20 system has a dual identity: it is both a portable and a shelf system. The self-contained portable section has its own battery pack and contains a preamp, tuner, cassette deck, small power amp, and self-contained speakers. There is also a larger power amplifier with a 20-W/ch output on which the portable unit sits when it's at home and an optional pair of separate speaker systems with 4-inch woofer/midrange drivers, 4-inch passive radiators, and 1-inch dome tweeters. The larger system will operate on house current or, with an optional adaptor, from a car's, recreational vehicle's, or boat's electrical system. The DC-20 sells for \$700 without the separate speakers, which are \$250 per pair.

—E. Brad Meyer

Video Sonics

ALMOST everyone expects that the next few years will see immense growth in the home-video industry. It is already so large that an exhaustive survey of every new television set or videocassette recorder at the CES would confuse more than it would enlighten. But there is much that is worth talking about, especially from a sonic point of view. The audio in present-day video equipment has a great deal of room for improvement, but much development work has been done.

It is all too easy to conclude that just because people are watching a lot of TV, they will be eager to buy video recorders, video-disc players, and large-screen sets. While most of the attention at a CES is paid to the more glamorous new technologies, the mainstay of the market is still the conventional television set. However, an increasing proportion of TV sets are designed to be integrated into an audio/video home entertainment system.

The growing trend toward component video will help improve TV sound quality. The heart of these systems is the video tuner, which takes the signal from the antenna and converts it to line-level audio and video. The audio is sent to a stereo system and the video signal to a video monitor whose sole function is to reproduce the picture. Sony's Profeel series of video components is the best-known of this new genus; the Profeel 19- and 25-inch monitors alone cost \$850 and \$1,500, respectively.

The Japanese firm of Teknika has introduced its ATV-25 audio/video system, which comprises either a 19- or 25-inch monitor, a low-power stereo FM receiver with built-in cable-ready TV tuner, and (as options) an audio cassette deck, a turntable, a pair of speakers, and a choice of racks to

hold it all. The entire system can be operated by remote control. And although they plan no formal introductions until the June CES, the well-known NAD audio firm held private showings of a high-performance 19-inch monitor with a separate video tuner. NEC showed a basic video tuner and a pair of monitors.

JVC, carrying an old idea to its logical limit, issued engraved invitations to "The Marriage of Audio and Video." Each of the six display areas in their booth offered both kinds of technology. In one, there was a conventional stereo audio system plus a VHD videodisc player and the new AV-2000U monitor/receiver with three sets of audio and video line inputs. The AV-2000U contains a cable-ready tuner, and all functions can be wireless remote controlled.

In the battle of the new video technologies there seems one obvious winner: the videocassette recorder, with its equal ability to record off the air, make home "movies," and play commercially duplicated material. Basic machines in either the Beta or VHS formats can be had at list prices of \$650 or less; somewhat fancier models, often with better-quality audio and high-speed scanning for speeding through commercials, go for about \$1,000 and up.

At the top of the line in consumer Beta machines is the new Sony SL-2500, a sleek, compact unit measuring 17 inches wide and 13½ inches deep (only slightly bigger than this magazine when it is opened flat) and just over 3 inches high. It was designed to be part of the Profeel audio/video component series. Marantz showed a pair of stereo Beta units with Dolby-B and Dolby-C noise reduction. The VHS contingent has not been sitting on its hands either. The new JVC HR-7650U (about \$1,550) also has remote-controllable, noise-free fast motion, slow motion, and still-frame, as well as sophisticated editing capabilities. Of more in-

terest to the audiophile is the machine's stereo sound with Dolby-B noise reduction. Another new VHS home deck, the Hitachi VT-9710, also has Dolby-B.

The sound from these machines is surprisingly good considering the slow tape speed and the narrow (0.1-mm) track width. Judging from a brief sampling, there is distinctly more tape hiss than from an audio cassette deck as well as more audible dropouts. But jazz and popular music were quite listenable, and bass performance is good. There will be prerecorded software for these machines: Paramount and 20th Century-Fox Video (formerly Magnetic Video) both have stereo VHS duplicating machines, and one pundit predicted there will be two hundred *stereo* videocassettes released by this year's end. If that happens, the selection will be larger than the entire optical-disc catalog is at present. In a related development, Mobile Fidelity demonstrated startlingly good stereo sound from master tapes dubbed on a \$2,500 professional VHS deck; they plan to release some of their music albums in stereo VHS form with added picture programming.

The greater demands placed on video tape by the public's desire for better sound, especially at the very slow (less than 0.5-ips) 6-hour VHS speed, have prompted the tape manufacturers to produce another, improved generation of blank tape. Sony's Dynamicron High Grade, Fuji Super HG, and Maxell HGX all offer improved audio and video signal-to-noise ratios.

The prerecorded-tape rental market continues to grow and prosper, and this has attracted the attention of the movie studios, who initially wanted nothing to do with the whole enterprise but have now claimed a piece of the action. As a result, more recent releases will be available for rent, but fees will go up. Another controversy rages over a California court decision that home taping

off the air is a violation of copyright (see "Taping and the Law" in March *STEREO REVIEW*). The consensus at the show was that the matter will be taken care of by legislative means sooner or later (see April's "Bulletin"), and no one seemed to be worrying much except the people who ran the "Defend Your Right to Tape" booth.

The most exciting piece of news at the show for the audio buff was unquestionably the introduction, a little earlier than expected, of the Sony PCM-F1 digital adaptor. This device turns two channels of audio into digital form and then disguises the resulting "bit" stream as an NTSC video signal. Any videocassette recorder, whether Beta, VHS, or U-Matic, can be used with the PCM-F1, and the combination gives results superior to any analog recorder in distortion, noise, and flutter. The breakthroughs here are in size and price; last year's model was the PCM-10, which weighed over 50 pounds and cost \$5,200. The PCM-F1 weighs less than ten pounds and costs \$1,900. It has a rechargeable battery pack and an optional car adaptor, and it matches in size and appearance the very small Sony SL-2000 Betapak. Combining the two is like being able to carry a \$10,000 two-track studio machine slung over your shoulder. The PCM-F1 uses EIAJ fourteen-bit encoding and has switch-selectable sixteen-bit encoding as well.

Push has come to shove in the videodisc market. The CED disc player from RCA has not sold well, and there have been massive layoffs at the main manufacturing plant, even though the discs themselves are selling rather well. In the optical-disc camp the closed DiscoVision pressing plant in Carson, California, is being reactivated by Pioneer Video. LaserVision discs will continue to be produced in Japan and at a new 3M plant in Wisconsin.

Despite predictions that VCRs and videodisc players could coexist peacefully, both the CED and LaserVision catalogs suffer in comparison to the tape rental market in both variety and depth. Disc manufacturers are accordingly scrambling madly to provide new programs. Some of these are interesting, especially the optical titles, which have an increasing emphasis on sound. At CES, Pioneer played stereo videodiscs with CX noise reduction using new machines with built-in decoders. Among the offerings were *Michael Nesmith in Elephant Parts*, *Dragonslayer*, a Covent Garden production of *The Tales of Hoffman*, and a live Ray Charles concert, the last two in CX-encoded stereo.

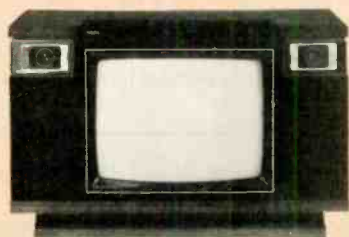
The third videodisc format, the VHD from JVC, made a surprisingly strong showing, with claims that by the end of this year one hundred and twenty-five titles will be available. JVC too is planning a number of stereo music programs on videodiscs.

To summarize: the video market is, at the moment, built around broadcast TV, cable TV, and tape rentals. A lot of attention is being paid to better sound, and in the next few months we will see more of a trend toward video components, with a VCR and perhaps a disc player as accessories. But for now, if all you do with your TV set is turn it on and watch it, you're not outdated quite yet.

—E. Brad Meyer



Technika ATV-19
component audio/TV
rack system



Fisher HT800 dual-speaker TV set



JVC HR-7650U stereo/Dolby VCR

STEREO REVIEW'S SELECTION OF RECORDINGS OF SPECIAL MERIT

BEST OF THE MONTH



• Gordon Lightfoot's "Shadows": a Rare Craftsman at Work •

Is Gordon Lightfoot the best songwriter of modern times? He has written and recorded upwards of one hundred and fifty songs, of which at least ninety are not only "keepers" but demonstrably superior, in one way or another, to most of their contemporaries. I know of no one else who has lately produced such quality in such quantity. He's at it again in his just-released "Shadows" with eleven new ones, and ten of them are beauties as engrossing as they are elegantly structured.

What makes Lightfoot great, I think, is his believability, a quality that probably explains also his successful and graceful assumption of the role of No. 1 post-commercial folkie. He is amply equipped with the credentials to Cole Porter his way through life, being one of the few pop stars who are comfortable reading music, one of the few with a background as an orchestrator, and one of the few with such command of the English language that he can use word play as an end in itself. And so he writes with the folkie's sense of what is real even as he writes with the trained musician's awareness of the many possible ways of expressing it.

Of course, he's also inordinately gifted. His melodies are so natural-sounding you find yourself thinking there's no excuse for their not having existed before. How could a tune so *right* as the one to *Triangle* not have been thought of already? A New York newspaper reported not long ago that we are, according to some smart-ass computer, running out of melodic possibilities. If so, Gordon Lightfoot doesn't know it yet. But if you've ever tried to

invent a tune yourself, you know that the possibilities don't come easy; the melody of *Thank You for the Promises*, for example, is pulled by minor chords into a downward spiral and might make you think, perhaps, of Jacques Brel. It may sound now as if it had been just hanging there in the air all the time, but it took a special ear to seize it and write it down.

"Shadows" is full of these nice touches, full too of songs for which there *are* precedents—but only in the earlier work of Lightfoot himself. *Heaven Help the Devil*, whose forerun-

GORDON LIGHTFOOT: *Shadows*. Gordon Lightfoot (vocals, guitar); Terry Clements (guitar); Rick Haynes (bass); Pee Wee Charles (steel guitar); Barry Keane (drums); other musicians. *14 Karat Gold; In My Fashion; Shadows; Blackberry Wine; Heaven Help the Devil; Thank You for the Memories; Baby Step Back; All I'm After; Triangle; I'll Do Anything; She's Not the Same.* WARNER BROS. BSK 3633 \$8.98, © M5 3633 \$8.98.

ners include *Too Late for Praying*, is the kind of generalized, generally pessimistic social commentary Lightfoot occasionally writes: "We have been captured by the thieves of the night/Held for ransom, if you please." Lightfoot's two other approaches to making social comments, both as nonspecific in their

own ways, involve work songs such as *Cotton Jenny* or what he calls "topical" songs such as *Circle of Steel* or *Cherokee Bend*. Similarly, the title song here is a throwback to another, softer kind of song Lightfoot has written before. But each new invocation of any of these composing modes has its own sound and its own special qualities. *Shadows*, while fitted with quite an active melody, has a whole slew of seven-syllable lines followed by an eleven-syllable "resolution" that paradoxically leaves things still about halfway up in the air.

But I don't have to go into detail to show you there's a rare craftsman at work here; you'll hear that right away. And if you can listen to *Triangle* just once without lifting the stylus back for a quick second helping, you must be one of those perverts who can eat just *one* chocolate-chip cookie. The song is about the Bermuda Triangle, and the words are the imaginings of a sailor who's about to sail through it. It isn't quite as striking as its recent precedent, *Ghosts of Cape Horn*, but it is much more infectious.

I'll Do Anything is almost as strong, although the sentiment it expresses strikes me as uncomfortably close to masochism. As I suggested before, only one song, *Blackberry Wine*, shows any real weaknesses. It and *In My Fashion* (bailed out by a nifty lyric) are variations on the droning kind of thing Lightfoot experimented with during the "Old Dan's Records" days, when he was fascinated with what he called the "E-drone position" on the guitar (he once showed it to me, but I still can't describe it). So is their livelier, catchier

"... I know of no one else who has lately produced such quality in such quantity."



Troubadour Gordon Lightfoot
(Photo: Andy Freeberg/Retna Ltd.)

cousin here, *Baby Step Back*, a soft rocker worthy of Fleetwood Mac; it also has the great groove sense of *Sundown*, but it's not *that* catchy.

The instrumental sound is a further refinement of the acoustic/pedal-steel/synthesizer blend first struck in *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*, still possibly the most restrained use of the synthesizer going. This album mutes the synthesizer sound maybe even more, being in all about as acoustic as "Summertime Dream," one of Lightfoot's best. "Shadows" doesn't rank at the very top of his work, but ten keepers out of eleven is still semi-remarkable, and you have to consider how high that top is. So, to get back to the question at the beginning: "Is Gordon Lightfoot the best songwriter of modern times?" As his compatriot Ian Tyson might put it, "Hell, yes!" —Noel Coppage

Wynton Marsalis' Impressive Debut Album Promises Well for the Future of Jazz

WYNTON MARSALIS: if you have not heard the name before, be prepared to hear it many times again, and for a long time to come. Columbia's new "Wynton Marsalis" is one of the most impressive debut albums I have ever heard, a grand entrance that will undoubtedly give jazz a healthy boost at a time when some of its best practitioners have strayed from the field. What makes the advent of Wynton Marsalis even more impressive is the fact that he is a mere twenty years old, yet he plays with the assurance, articulation, and self-possessed originality of someone who has been performing for at least that many years.

Ironically, Herbie Hancock, one of the first and most prominent of the jazz defectors, played a major role in bringing Marsalis to this stage of his career, including acting as producer of this album. But rest assured that a talent as big as this would soon have emerged without anybody's help. Prior to Hancock's involvement, Marsalis (then a Juilliard student) worked in the pit band for the Sondheim musical *Sweeney Todd*, and he spent the summer of 1980 with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers, which is a school in itself. From Blakey, Marsalis moved on to tour with

the Hancock quartet. He was in fast company with Hancock, Ron Carter, and Tony Williams, but he held his own. Soon there was a great deal of talk about Wynton Marsalis, just as sixty years before there had been talk about another young New Orleans trumpeter named Louis Armstrong.

Will Marsalis be the force Armstrong was? Probably not, but only because the times are different: it is not likely that *any* jazz musician can ever again make the kind of impact Armstrong—or, for that matter, Parker and Coltrane—did. Nevertheless, "Wynton Marsalis" is an extraordinary album about which much will be written, and I predict that Marsalis' contribution to jazz will go far beyond his own music, for he will surely inspire other young players to consider the jazz route. And who knows? He might even inspire some integrity in older defectors.

As for the album itself, there is not a blemish on it. Four of the seven selections were made in a Tokyo studio, with the Hancock group and Marsalis' twenty-one-year-old brother Branford in various combinations. The other three feature a quartet, again with Branford, who plays the saxophone with an eloquence to match that of his younger brother. It promises well for the future of jazz that this breath of fresh air

seems to be coming practically from the cradle.

—Chris Albertson

WYNTON MARSALIS. Wynton Marsalis (trumpet); Branford Marsalis (saxophone); Herbie Hancock, Kenny Kirkland (piano); Ron Carter, Charles Fambrough, Clarence Seay (bass); Tony Williams, Jeff Watts (drums). *Father Time; Hesitation; Twilight; Sister Cheryl; I'll Be There When the Time Is Right; RJ; Who Can I Turn To (When Nobody Needs Me)*. COLUMBIA FC 37574, © FCT 37574, no list price.

The Piano Works of Griffes: a First-rate Survey of American Music at the Crossroads

THOUGH his life was cut short at age thirty-five, Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1884-1920) had time to become the most important transition figure in the period that marked the entry of American art music into the modern age. Though our greatest pioneer,

WYNTON MARSALIS: assurance and originality





DENVER OLDHAM: scrupulous and subtle



RONALD SMITH: understanding and enthusiastic

Charles Ives, had already written far more radical music than Griffes was ever to produce, he remained essentially unknown at the time (1915-1920) Griffes was making his impact; it was only with a later generation that Ives was to make his mark.

Listening to the twenty pieces contained in New World Records' four-disc survey of Griffes' piano music, we can observe the composer's evolution from a gifted eclectic deeply influenced by the French impressionists to the powerful creator of the Piano Sonata and the Three Preludes, music in which he put to his own uses the quartal intervallic practice of Scriabin. Missing here only is any sign of the German influence (Griffes studied in Berlin from 1903 to 1907), but that is displayed chiefly in the early songs.

If one were to attempt a capsule summation of the Griffes style as it is documented here, one might speak of a highly effective amalgam of Gallic sensuality and a Germanic feel for line and structure, for close listening reveals how Griffes, for all his reveling in what was considered (in his day) *outré* harmonic textures, was also intent on establishing clear melodic lines. He did not, in fact, have any hesitation in using time-honored academic devices to underpin his structures, as witness the canonical element in the *Barcarolle* from Op. 6.

Together with the three unpublished

"pieces" and the dance included here, the *Legend* and the *De Profundis* are first recordings. And, as a special bonus, we have a transfer of Griffes' own Duo-Art piano-roll recording of his most popular work, *The White Peacock*. Denver Oldham's performances are scrupulous in their dedication and sensitivity, and his reading of the great Piano Sonata takes its place among the several fine previous recorded versions that begin with the Harrison Potter 78s for the Friends of Recorded Music label back in the Thirties.

It is unquestionably fascinating to hear the two performances of *The White Peacock*—the Griffes piano roll and Oldham's live one—in immediate succession. Though a Duo-Art piano roll played back on a perfectly adjusted reproducing piano of the same type can give us virtually all the nuances of the original performance, it must be admitted that Oldham's exquisite reading is several degrees more subtle than what comes out of the piano roll, even though, as the comprehensive liner-note essay by Gerald Stonehill attests, no effort was spared to achieve the finest possible results. Indeed, no effort has been spared to make all of this Griffes album a first-rate documentary musically, sonically, and historically. It is an important release. —David Hall

GRIFFES: *Collected Works for Piano. Three Tone-Pictures, Op. 5 (The Lake at*

Evening, The Night Winds, The Vale of Dreams); Fantasy Pieces, Op. 6 (Nocturno, Barcarolle, Scherzo); Roman Sketches, Op. 7 (The White Peacock, Nightfall, Clouds, The Fountain of the Acqua Paola); Legend; De Profundis; Three Preludes; Sonata; Dance in A Minor; Pieces in D Minor, B-flat Major, and E Major. Denver Oldham (piano); Charles Tomlinson Griffes (piano roll, in *The White Peacock*). NEW WORLD NW 310/311 two discs \$15.96.

"The Alkan Project": One of Music's Great Eccentrics Has Found A New Champion

CHARLES-VALENTIN ALKAN (1813-1888) is represented more in anecdotes and legends than in performances of his music. Just to mention his name is to call up the scene of his bizarre death (crushed beneath a falling bookcase when he reached for a volume of the Talmud on the top shelf), his reclusiveness, his Satie-before-the-fact titles, the phenomenon of his having composed an *Allegro Barbaro* before Bartók did, the composing style that



BEST OF THE MONTH: RECENT SELECTIONS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

CLASSICAL

- **Delius: Vocal and Orchestral Works — the Fenby Legacy.** UNICORN-KANCHANA DKP 9008/9. "Well-nigh perfect re-creations." (April)
- **Haydn: Complete Songs.** PHILIPS 6769 064. "A significant release . . . Elly Ameling's refinement and involvement multiply the pleasure of discovery." (May)
- **Mahler: Symphonies Nos. 2 and 4.** PRO ARTE 2PAL-2011, PAL-1068. "Revelatory performances, splendidly recorded." (May)
- **Puccini: Tosca.** ANGEL DSBX-3919. "The opera's best recorded performance since 1963." (April)
- **Purcell: Choral Works.** ARCHIV 2723 076. ". . . not only exquisitely performed but brilliantly recorded." (March)
- **Schoenberg: Erwartung; Six Orchestral Songs, Op. 8.** LONDON LDR 71015. "Superb performance of one of the landmarks of twentieth-century music." (March)
- **Thomson: A Portrait Album.** NONE-SUCH D-79024. "Musical portraits in performances that gladden the ears." (May)

POPULAR

- **Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers: Straight Ahead.** CONCORD JAZZ CJ-168. "The Class of '81 graduates with full honors." (April)
- **Dr. John: Plays Mac Rebennack.** CLEAN CUTS CC 705. "Probably the first solo album by a New Orleans pianist . . . hearty and heartfelt." (May)
- **Mark Murphy: Bop for Kerouac.** MUSE MR 5253. "May be the vocal jazz album of the year." (March)
- **Pennies from Heaven.** WARNER BROS. 2HW 3639. "A soundtrack album with a difference." (April)
- **Jean Redpath: Lowlands.** PHILO 1066. ". . . it is melodies we have here, and a voice and a half. Both lovely." (May)
- **Sister Sledge: The Sisters.** COTILLION SD 5231. "Fresh, feminine, and flawless." (May)
- **Doc and Merle Watson: Red Rocking Chair.** FLYING FISH FF 252. "Strong tunes and some amazing flat-picking." (April)

moved Hans von Bülow to call him "the Berlioz of the piano," the virtuosity acknowledged by Liszt as "the finest technique I've ever known." There are two reasons for our not hearing much of Alkan's music in live performance: its difficulty and its unusual dimensions, factors which may have been consequences of the reclusiveness that permitted him to indulge his whims and fantasies without regard for the practicalities of the recital hall. The most striking illustration, surely, is the set of Twelve Studies in All the Minor Keys, Op. 39, which, in its first complete recording, sprawls over five of the six sides in Ronald Smith's Arabesque set called "The Alkan Project."

Now, a "study," or *étude*, is usually a brief piece; the average playing time for the twenty-four *études* that make up Chopin's Opp. 10 and 25 is about two minutes. The average time for Alkan's studies is more than ten minutes, and one of them takes a full half-hour. That one, No. 8, is the first in a sequence of three that constitutes a "Concerto for Solo Piano"; Nos. 4 through 7 add up to a "Symphony for Piano Solo"; No. 11, similarly orchestral in concept, is a grand "Overture" running more than a quarter-hour; and the last in the set is a little tone poem titled *Le Festin d'Esopo*. It has been suggested that, in view of the dimensions and difficulty of this music, the phonograph may be its ideal medium. While it is unlikely that any pianist would undertake to perform the twelve studies of Op. 39 in recital, Ronald Smith makes the two-hour sequence a fascinating listening experience on records.

Smith has been championing Alkan's cause for some time. About nine years ago the Musical Heritage Society issued his Oryx recording of a shorter Alkan program (OR 174), three pieces from which—*Le Festin d'Esopo*, *La Chanson de la Folle au Bord de la Mer*, and the aforementioned *Allegro Barbaro*—are repeated in the Arabesque set (an EMI recording that was unaccountably passed up by Angel), which also includes the *Trois Petites Fantaisies*, Op. 41. He has also published a short biography of the composer, *Alkan, the Enigma*, and he supplies his own annotations for his recordings, which make his understanding of and enthusiasm for the music abundantly clear. More to the point, he seems to be equipped with everything he needs to put his case across musically. This music, after all, is not merely "eccentric," but is packed with both originality and substance. It is as elegantly pianistic as Chopin, as wildly visionary as late Liszt, and yet it shows Alkan to have been as much his own man as either of

those colleagues—between whom and himself there was a great deal of mutual respect and admiration, and with whom he sometimes collaborated in "all-star" events.

Echoes of the salon are rare in Alkan's music. He did not go in for the operatic fantasies and paraphrases that were in vogue in his time, and even in his shorter pieces one senses the "symphonic" concept. Bülow was splendidly apt in likening him to Berlioz, and the visionary qualities in his works look forward to specific developments in orchestral music as well as that for the piano. Smith, for example, in his structural analysis of the half-hour first movement of the "Concerto," notes "an uncanny anticipation of the arctic world of Sibelius' Fourth Symphony . . ."; in describing the "Symphony" he invokes comparisons with Mahler and Nielsen. The listener reasonably familiar with the piano repertoire will detect, unaided, passages in the *études* and the other works recorded in the set that are virtual "pre-echoes" of various twentieth-century piano compositions, but this is only an incidental point, for all the music is quite fascinating in its own right. What a chilling little masterpiece, for example, is *La Chanson de la Folle au Bord de la Mer (The Song of the Madwoman on the Seashore)*, one of the Op. 31 preludes, and what a prophetic summing-up the *Allegro Barbaro* (the fifth of the Op. 35 studies) seems to be at the end of the final side.

IN 1965, the American pianist Raymond Lewenthal made the first full LP devoted to Alkan's solo piano music (it included five pieces from Op. 39). Sadly, that record (RCA LSC-2815) is long since gone from the catalog. Aside from Smith's own MHS disc, which is worth acquiring despite the three duplications, nearly all of the very few other Alkan recordings available now are of works for piano with other instruments (the *Sonate de Concert* for cello and piano, the *Concerto da Camera* No. 2 for piano and strings, etc.). While these are not without interest, it is in the solo pieces that Alkan is at his most impressive, and the Op. 39 studies surely constitute the most important of his own "Alkan projects." Ronald Smith has put us in his debt by recording this music, and recording it so well, and Arabesque deserves our gratitude for making it available. —Richard Freed

ALKAN: Twelve Studies in All the Minor Keys, Op. 39; Trois Petites Fantaisies, Op. 41; La Chanson de la Folle au Bord de la Mer, Op. 31, No. 8; Allegro Barbaro, Op. 35, No. 5. Ronald Smith (piano). ARABESQUE 8127-3 three discs \$20.94, © 9127-3 \$23.94.

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Popular Music Briefs



Mertha Swope/Ernest Gilbert

Angela Lansbury as the pastry-chef Mrs. Lovett in *Sweeney Todd*

ALTHOUGH the Broadway revival of *Little Johnny Jones* with Donny Osmond closed the day after its official opening, the American musical theater is in excellent health. Such hits as *Annie*, *A Chorus Line*, *Barnum*, *42nd Street*, and *Sugar Babies* continue to coin money for everybody involved in them, and four months ago the producers of *Evita* by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice reported that its worldwide gross had exceeded \$130 million. Musicals also seem to be doing well in England, where Webber's *Cats* is a smash hit and the National Theatre is having a big success with *Guys and Dolls*.

We talked this over with singing actress **Angela Lansbury**, who continues to work both sides of the Atlantic. She said, "The world needs to be entertained, to be taken out of itself, and musicals can do that. It's a natural tendency we've seen before—during hard times people seek escapist entertain-

ment. Life is very hard now for a great many people, and they want films and theater that will show them the bright side of the clouds."

Born in England, Miss Lansbury began her career in Hollywood movies while still in her teens. "People used to think of me as a dramatic actress who sang," she said, "but in recent years I've worked more and more in musicals." These include such important shows as *Mame* and *Gypsy*. After a long Broadway run in *Sweeney Todd*, she went to England where she played the Piratical Maid in a new movie version of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance*. "In that I was singing out of my range and just got away with it by the skin of my teeth. Mine is not really a trained voice, you know."

While in England, Miss Lansbury also recorded Richard Bonyng and Douglas Gamley's new version of John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, recently

released by London Records. "The producers wanted a voice with a lot of character for Mrs. Peachum, and I was immensely pleased to be asked to do it. Next to acting I love music best, but I felt I had no business on the same platform with the opera singers Kiri Te Kanawa, James Morris, and Joan Sutherland, who were in the cast." For this recording did her background in musicals give her an edge on the opera singers? "They made me feel that it did, bless their hearts. They were in fear and trembling for the acting, just as I was in fear and trembling for the vocal side of it. But it turned out well, and the English critics liked it."

When Miss Lansbury was elected to the Theater Hall of Fame in New York this spring, she commented that Broadway has become home for her. Broadway is most likely to see her next in a revival of *Mame* now in the planning stages. "I hope we can recapture the fun and joy of the original," she said. "It worked well in the Sixties and should work even better now."

Her current recording project is an album of the Bob Merrill/Jule Styne show *Prettybelle* for Original Cast Records. Back in 1971, Miss Lansbury starred in *Prettybelle*, which never made it to Broadway, but closed in Boston. The company expects to release the album in June.

Miss Lansbury has never recorded *Goodbye, Little Yellow Bird*, the song she sang in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* at the beginning of her career, but she plans to record it some day. "It was the first time the public heard that thin, pure little voice, and it pleases me enormously

that people remember the song—some have even taped it when the picture was shown on TV. My next film after that was *The Harvey Girls*, a musical with Judy Garland. I was disappointed that the producers thought my voice not heavy enough and had me dubbed. No one wants to dub me now, so although it has taken me a while, I feel that I've got my own back." —W.L.

EPIC raiders of the Columbia vaults recently released two volumes of "**Rockabilly Stars**," reissues on the Epic label of CBS recordings by such performers as Johnny Cash, the Everly Brothers, Carl Perkins, and Charlie Rich (see review in the May issue). A third rockabilly album in the series is scheduled for early release.

Epic has also reissued a series of Okeh recordings from the 1930s to the 1960s, five double albums devoted to jazz, Western swing, rhythm-and-blues, soul, and Chicago blues, respectively. If suggestions are in order, Epic merchandisers should now go after the unreleased early work of Barbra Streisand, Bob Dylan and the Band at Royal Albert Hall in 1966, the Yardbirds at the Anderson Theater, and the Byrds live at Monterey. □

THREE new books on three major rock figures past and present have crossed our desk this month. Chronologically speaking, the first is *The Complete Elvis*, edited by Martin Torgoff (Delliah, \$13.95), which surprisingly enough almost lives up to its title. The

centerpiece of the book is an A to Z listing of every person, song, film, and record the King was ever connected with, complete with detailed and, at times, amusing descriptions. The rest consists of critical and historical essays old and new (personal fave: Stanley Booth's classic pre-comeback piece *A Hound Dog to the Manor Born*) and some sensational Fifties photos. All in all, it's a terrific book: well-researched, extremely fair, and a much-needed corrective to Albert Goldman's strangely hate-filled *Elvis*.

Then there's **As I Write This Letter: An American Generation Remembers the Beatles**,

by Marc A. Catone (\$17.95 from Greenfield Books/Pierian Press, P.O. Box 1808, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106). Catone placed ads in various newspapers and rock journals around the country, inviting people to write him their reminiscences of the Beatles, telling how the group affected their lives. The book collects the most interesting of the responses, along with fan art and Catone's own thoughts on the Fab Four. It all has a certain heartfelt charm, but I suspect your Beatles stories or mine are at least as interesting as anything here. Like all artifacts of latter-day Beatlemania, this one is ultimately depressing, both for its implicit rejection of the present and for its perpetuation of a myth we should have long since outgrown. Read Philip Norman's Beatles bio *Shout* and listen to their albums instead.

Finally, we have **Rod Stewart**, by Paul Nelson and Lester Bangs (Delilah, \$8.95), which is in the grand tradition of Bangs' earlier Blondie bio: in a word, snide. This is not a hatchet job, exactly; Nelson still believes in Rod the Mod's artistry and sincerity, even in his later work, and both Nelson and Bangs find Stewart's early work convincing. But Bangs, who contributed the bulk of the biographical and critical material here, goes on to make a pretty damning case against Stewart as the Ultimate Sellout and makes of him a metaphor for all that was wrong with rock in the Seventies. An angry, funny, thought-provoking book. —S.S.

GOOD news for country-rock fans: the Band's "Music from Big Pink," one of the genuine classics of the Sixties, has just been released in an audiophile pressing by Mobile Fidelity Sound Labs (MFSL 1-039). The 1968 original was quite well recorded for its day (as opposed to, say, the Beatles' "Magical Mystery Tour," a bad recording rendered unlistenable by sonic upgrading), and Mobile Fidelity has done a very nice job technically—the new version sounds terrific. As for the aesthetics of the matter, this is surely the most American-sounding music ever played by Canadians. Not for nothing did somebody describe the Band as the only rock group that could have warmed up the crowd for Abraham Lincoln. —S.S.



THE recent resurgence of interest in the Sixties pop group the Monkees came partly from English punk bands who were influenced by them and partly from Japan, where their fan club has been reactivated and their albums have been reissued. Although the Monkees were simply manufactured as an American answer to the Beatles and didn't play very well, they nonetheless got their names and voices attached to a lot of terrific pop singles, and I always liked them.

So when **Peter Tork** (photo above), the Ringo of the group, hit the road in the States (after a successful stadium tour in Japan), I restrained my cynicism. But after catching Tork and his band, the New Monks, at the Bottom Line in Manhattan, I have to admit that you really can't go home again.

When Tork hit the stage, my residue of nostalgic good feeling evaporated almost immediately. His New Monks turned out to be a ghastly bunch of slumming dinosaurs who seemed to be as bored by the heavy-metal clichés they were dishing out as the crowd was. A depressing evening.

Another alumnus of the band, however, has done himself proud. **Mike Nesmith**, whom they used to call the Thinking Man's Monkee, just won a Grammy in the brand new category Best Original Video. The winning program, *Michael Nesmith in Elephant Parts*, is available on his own Pacific Arts label. *Elephant Parts*, which we raved about in the September 1981 issue, is currently available on tape and will be a videodisc (the laser system) by fall. —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

Ⓛ = digital-master recording

□ = quadraphonic disc

Ⓢ = eight-track stereo cartridge

Ⓛ = direct-to-disc

Ⓜ = monophonic recording

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

ADAM AND THE ANTS: *Prince Charming*. Adam and the Ants (vocals and instrumentals). *Scorpions*; *Picasso Visita el Planeta de los Simios*; *Prince Charming*; *Guns West*; *That Voodoo*; and five others. EPIC ARE 37615, © AEC 37615, no list price.

Performance: **Hokey**

Recording: **Good**

These guys are already a bad joke, of course, but for me they're a guilty pleasure. I think it's really neat that they suckered responsible critics into taking them seriously, if only briefly (all that loose talk

about double drumming and African rhythms). It's somehow immensely reassuring to know that a good commercial gimmick can still compensate for utter lack of talent. It's so wonderfully egalitarian. The music on "Prince Charming" conforms to Adam and the Ants' tried-and-tested formula: lots of tribal whooping and hollering, sound effects out of old spaghetti westerns, and troweled-on self-mythologizing. Anybody over the age of fifteen will likely find it numbingly moronic. I rather like it (granted, in extremely small doses) for the proudly defiant drivel it is. S.S.

B-52's: *Mesopotamia*. B-52's (vocals and instrumentals); instrumental accompaniment. *Loveland*; *Deep Sleep*; *Mesopotamia*; *Cake*; and two others. WARNER BROS. MINI 3641 \$5.99, © MMS 3641 \$5.99.

Performance: **Don't ask**

Recording: **Good**

I've always maintained that pop musicians expend far too much effort saying the same things (about love) over and over, so you can imagine my excitement when I discovered some who could write about baking a cake. That happy prospect is offered by the new



LEIF/Retina, Ltd.

McCartney and Friends

YOU can tell by the album's intensity that Paul McCartney wanted his new "Tug of War" to be good. He sings with more conviction and writes with more concentration than he has in years. But if you don't use it, you lose it, and McCartney has been coasting on inoffensive product for so long that when he tries to turn up the energy this time out, not a lot happens.

"Tug of War" has Genuine McCartney stamped all over it. He remains one of pop's great crooners, with a schoolboy tone and a dreamy, bucolic delivery. If the sound of his comforting voice is enough for you, read no further. Musically, he's the Sir Edward Elgar of rock (Elgar composed *Pomp and Circumstance*, the tune you marched to at your graduation). Nobody else writes a high-church hymn tune or an old-fashioned round into a rock song, or arranges "ooh-oohs" for a fifty-voice choir, or makes a dramatic exit on a section of lowing cellos the way McCartney does. The songs on "Tug of War" are roughly divided between sweet-nothing ballads and rockers, the latter including a smattering of funk, rockabilly, and reggae. Both categories have their share of McCartney's characteristic novelty cuts of the *Uncle Albert* variety. Two examples here are *Ballroom Dancing* (with lines such as "Sailing down the Nile in a China cup" that defy interpretation) and *The Pound* (using the international financial markets as a metaphor).

If there is one word for McCartney's ballad lyrics, it is *vague*. Songs such as *Here Today*, *Wander Lust*, and *Somebody Who Cares* are just about impossible to figure out, since they are mainly strings of images apparently picked at random for the way they sound more than for what they mean. When pressed to pin down what he's trying to say in a song, McCartney is apt to cop out with banal phrases such as "There's always someone somewhere who cares" or "It's frustrating" (which, as an expression of human feeling, is about as pointed as "ya know"). Still, there's no law that says a ballad *has* to make sense, and McCartney's skill at penning a hummable pop melody is second to none.

The rockers are another story. When he's on, which is never a sure thing, McCartney can rock with the best. Here, though, he has to fight a bad production job, surprising coming from studio patriarch George Martin. Much of the problem is *over-production*; excessive electronic tampering often disfigures the vocals and horns to no apparent purpose. At some points the production is just wrong, as on *What's That*, a heavy-funk collaboration with Stevie Wonder where there is so much clashing of cymbals and so little bass drum or tom-tom that the beat is lost and the song's momentum peters out. McCartney has only himself to blame, though, if the tune he calls *Tug of War* sounds more like a ride down the Blue Danube with a thousand strings.

THE most talked-about aspect of this album is McCartney's collaborators. *Ebony and Ivory*, a harmless homily on the brotherhood of man, is the first single pulled from "Tug of War" and one of the two songs that team McCartney and Wonder. The electricity generated by the mere presence of these pop deities is not enough to disguise the song's essential blandness. On *What's That*, however, Wonder almost blows his partner out of the grooves with a no-sweat demonstration of funk virtuosity that manages to come through despite the cluttered production. McCartney has to work to keep up.

The third collaboration is the rockabilly *Get It* with Carl Perkins. Perkins steps in with jaunty authority on two verses, pairs with McCartney for the choruses, and is caught for posterity laughing long and hard at the end. While none of the duets really gets the most out of the guest artist, they are the least self-conscious and most plainly *fun* things on "Tug of War." If the rest of the album comes up short, McCartney fans can at least be encouraged by the effort.

—Mark Peel

PAUL MCCARTNEY: *Tug of War*. Paul McCartney (vocals and instruments); Stevie Wonder (vocals, keyboards); Carl Perkins (vocal); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Tug of War*; *Take It Away*; *Somebody Who Cares*; *What's That*; *Here Today*; *Ballroom Dancin'*; *The Pound*; *Wander Lust*; *Get It*; *Interlude*; *Dress Me Up*; *Ebony and Ivory*. COLUMBIA TC 37462, © TCT 37462, © TCA 37462, no list price.

six-song "mini" album, "Mesopotamia," by the B-52's. And the B-52's don't stop with dessert either: they also share some thoughts on the cradle of civilization. Unfortunately, very little of what they say about cake or anthropology is particularly illuminating or even interesting. Yet their merely addressing such themes makes the B-52's a major, and lonely, voice in contemporary pop music. So what if vocalists Cindy Wilson and Fred Schneider can't sing? I doubt that Julia Child can carry a tune either. And so what if the supporting instrumentals—just a beat, really—are so minimal as to be practically nonexistent? What kind of chops do you think Louis Leakey or Desmond Morris have? Give them credit: the B-52's are making baking, ancient civilization, and mediocrity in general a lot more fun to dance to. **M.P.**

BURRITO BROTHERS: *Sunset Sundown*. Burrito Brothers (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *If Something Should Come Between Us*; *Louisiana*; *I'm Drinking Canada Dry*; *What's One More Time*; *Run to the Night*; *Coast to Coast*; and four others. EPIC/CURB FZ 37705, © FZT 37705, © FZA 37705, no list price.

Performance: **Catchy**

Recording: **Good**

Gib Guilbeau has said he and the boys were aiming at AM radio here, but their aim may have been a little high. If AM radio uses this kind of thing, AM radio might improve, and I don't know whether the accountants who run it could stand that. I see what Gib meant, though; every song on this album is easy and, to some degree, glib. Guilbeau and John Beland now seem to be the only full-time members of the Burritos, incidentally; steel player Sneaky Pete Kleinow has appeared on both albums since the group was resurrected, but the publicity and credits suggest that this time he's a guest star.

Guilbeau and Beland have headed for a more clear-cut country sound, cutting down radically on the number of experiments and surprises the *Flying Burrito Brothers* used to spring on us. So, a lot of the old jauntiness and verve are missing these days, but, on "Sunset Sundown" particularly, the boys are turning out some pretty fair juke-box tunes. Guilbeau, originally a Cajun fiddler, is a pretty good singer, and with Kleinow doing his thing in there it never becomes common or manufactured-sounding. Stay tuned. You might hear something other than Kenny Rogers. **N.C.**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

IRENE CARA: *Anyone Can See*. Irene Cara (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Reach Out, I'll Be There*; *My Baby (He's Something Else)*; *Anyone Can See*; *Don't Throw Your Love Away*; *Slow Down*; *You Hurt Me Once*; and four others. NETWORK E1-60003 \$8.98, © E4-60003 \$8.98.

Performance: **Sixties flavor**

Recording: **Good**

Most people who have heard of Irene Cara recall the expectant luminosity she radiated in her portrayal of a teenager preparing for
(Continued on page 78)

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RONRICO RUM & ROSE'S LIME JUICE

stardom in the film *Fame*. Although she had appeared in other films and television productions (she played Alex Haley's mother as a young girl in *Roots: The Second Generation*), it was *Fame*, a tale of talented youngsters almost bursting with hunger for recognition, that created her public image. She became a sort of Eighties version of the young Diana Ross, Barbra Streisand, and Aretha Franklin, all of whom set out as teens to make it against all odds and did. It has been difficult so far to separate Cara's image from her actual talent as a popular singer.

This new album presents her strictly on her own, without props, a gyrating chorus, or an engaging story line. Though she gen-

erates less excitement when stripped of visual enhancement, Cara comes across as a performer with a potentially distinctive style. Most of the material on "Anyone Can See" has a heavy but quite palatable flavor of the Sixties. On several selections the rhythms—with their even beat and nostalgically fashioned arrangements—summon up ghosts of the old Motown sound. The background vocals are carefully wrought, with the ubiquitous Luther Vandross, among others, lending a hand. There is a light, relaxed, comfortable feeling to the whole set. Cara's voice has an appealingly gutsy edge, and she makes these new songs sound like familiar old tunes. Along with *Reach Out, I'll Be There*, which has be-

come strongly identified with her, the other standout here is the title track, a sweetly simple ballad with a fine melodic line.

While this is not an outstanding album in terms of breaking new ground or stirring surging waves of excitement, it stands above most others because of its success in reshaping the molds and moods of the past to suit current tastes. *P.G.*

CHUBBY CHECKER: *The Change Has Come*. Chubby Checker (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Running; Harder Than Diamond; Under My Thumb; Burn Up the Night; It's Only Rock and Roll*; and five others. MCA MCA-5291 \$7.98, © MCAC-5291 \$7.98.

Performance: **Pro at work**

Recording: **Good**

Chubby Checker (Ernest Evans), whose stage name is a variation on Fats Domino's, had a string of novelty dance hits in the early Sixties, the most famous of which is *The Twist*, copied note for note, vocally as well as instrumentally, from the Hank Ballard original. The British Invasion ended Checker's recording career, as it did so many other American pop singers', but he has continued to tour as a "golden oldie" act in small clubs across the country ever since. A terrific stage performer, Evans has been as trapped in the nostalgia mode as Gary U.S. Bonds was until Bruce Springsteen rediscovered him. This new Chubby Checker album attempts to do for Evans what Springsteen's backing did for Bonds; the material even attempts to copy the sound and sentiments of Springsteen's fervent odes to New Jersey seashore life.

It doesn't work, but that's not Evans' fault. Cast in an imitative role, he sings with his usual gusto and professionalism, as though he were trying to sing past the limitations that have been imposed on him. But then, this album is meant for a new generation that doesn't remember Chubby Checker, and it is possible it will be a hit. I hope so. Chubby's been working hard for a living for a long, long time, and he deserves another stroll down Easy Street. *J.V.*

JUDY COLLINS: *Times of Our Lives*. Judy Collins (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Great Expectations; The Rest of Your Life; Granddaddy; Memory; Sun Son; Mama Mama*; and four others. ELEKTRA E1-60001 \$8.98, © E5-60001 \$8.98, © E8-60001 \$8.98.

Performance: **Grandiose**

Recording: **Likewise**

Judy Collins used to make modest albums that came into town like hippies and won over both the flower children and the slightly older group, the Silent Generation or whatever it was called. Now her albums blow into town like big shots, wearing neckties. Well, times change, and people never were that simple anyway.

A trained pianist before she was a "folk" singer, Collins has long had a yen to do things approaching the art song, and "Times of Our Lives" consists largely of not-so-near misses aimed at that target both by her and by other people. Still, it is more interesting and better than her last two or three MOR-aimed albums, and so are her

(Continued on page 80)

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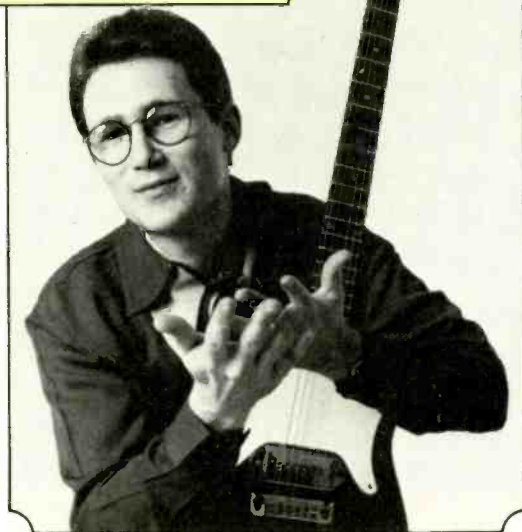
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Marshall Crenshaw



Deborah Fengoid

MARSHALL CRENSHAW is a youngish singer, songwriter, and guitarist who graduated from the Broadway company of *Beatlemania* and then attracted a lot of notice, as a sort of latter-day Buddy Holly, through live gigs around New York City. His debut album for Warner Bros. shows him to be an extraordinary pop craftsman. He's written a slew of concise, tuneful little pop/rock songs, has a wistful yet muscular voice, and fronts a fabulous three-piece band.

Now, pop critics, me included, have a habit of discovering such phenomena every couple of years at least. They're almost a glut on the market, in fact (think of Dwight Twilley or Eric Carmen or Alex Chilton or . . .), and they seem invariably, sooner or later, to disappoint us. So you're going to have to take this on faith: Crenshaw's album has given me more pleasure than anything since I uncovered a virgin mono copy of "The Hollies' Greatest Hits" in a bargain bin in California. Every single song on it sounds like pop heaven, every one makes me want to be seventeen, in love, and driving around in a convertible with the top down and these tunes blasting on the AM radio. They're that wonderful.

Stylistic comparisons with Buddy Holly are actually apt up to a point (check out *Cynical Girl*, which is practically a tribute), but Crenshaw has an incredible ear, and his songs manage also to use some r-&-b influences along with just about everything else that was any good in suburban pop from about 1958 on, including a marked English tinge as a bonus. In general, however, the models for Crenshaw's songs are un-specific. They're just great songs, and since Crenshaw also happens to have one of the most winsome voices in rock history, the combination is irresistible.

I'm hard pressed to single out favorites among the twelve gems on display here. One day I lean toward *She Can't Dance* and the biting guitar solo that slices it in half, another day the sly and utterly adorable rockabilly of *The Usual Thing*. Sometimes what grabs me is the brilliant Merseybeat revivalism of *Soldier of Love* or the gorgeously melodic impact of *Someday, Someway*. Other times I just give up and play the whole album through four or five times in a row while I dance around the room in, as John Lennon put it, wild abandon.

IHAVE TO warn you that this is not particularly fashionable music. The teenagers who lap up the commercial pomp-rock that floods our airwaves may find it anachronistic, and the avant-gardists who think that a tune is a sure sign of artistic bankruptcy will doubtless view it as reactionary. A plague on both their houses, say I. Ironically, what is clearly one of the great rock records of the Eighties might have its initial success on country radio—the crossover potential is there. But let us not pussyfoot; this is the strongest debut album by an American rocker that I have ever been privileged to review. In the immortal words of Redd Foxx: "This is the Big One, Elizabeth."

—Steve Simels

MARSHALL CRENSHAW. Marshall Crenshaw (vocals, guitar); Chris Donato (bass, vocals); Robert Crenshaw (drums, vocals); other musicians. *There She Goes Again; Someday, Someway; I'll Do Anything; Girls . . . ; Rockin' Around in NYC; The Usual Thing; She Can't Dance; Cynical Girl; Mary Anne; Soldier of Love; Not for Me; Brand New Lover.* WARNER BROS. BSK 3673 \$8.98, © M5 3673 \$8.98, © M8 3673 \$8.98.

performances. The obvious improvement is that she's singing on key again, although a couple of these meandering tunes don't seem to call for the singer to strike any definite pitch. *Memory*, the big song from the hit London musical *Cats*, is perhaps not quite in that category, but I think only Cecil B. DeMille might have managed to follow the ponderous, pseudo-stately melody that Andrew Lloyd Webber has grafted onto T. S. Eliot's (and Trevor Nunn's) words. In fact, it sounds as if DeMille commissioned it. Despite the huge orchestral flourishes behind her, Collins gives it a wistful, wide-eyed reading.

I don't think that most of the songs here succeed at what they try to do—Collins did the same sort of thing better in her "Night-ingales" phase—but at least they do *try* things. *Mama Mama*, for instance, has lyrics that sketch out how a woman comes to want an abortion while the melody swirls around like a tilt-a-whirl. There is one little bonus, Judy in her good old voice, with that touch of wildness at the top, singing Hugh Prestwood's *Drink a Round to Ireland*. Overall, this album is at least half a step upward for Judy Collins. **N.C.**

SAMMY HAGAR: *Standing Hampton.* Sammy Hagar (vocals, guitar); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I'll Fall in Love Again; There's Only One Way to Rock; Baby's on Fire; Can't Get Loose; Heavy Metal;* and five others. GEFEN GHS 2006 \$8.98, © M5 2006 \$8.98.

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

Invite Sammy Hagar into your home and right away he comes on with this swaggering rock-and-roll that knocks off round after round of stock guitar riffs like so many bottles of beer, wipes its chin on its sleeve with a swipe of the synthesizer, burps a bass line, and heaves the empties against the wall with a punishing, single-minded beat. That wouldn't be so bad, but the guy's convinced he's a ladies' man and a deep thinker. Maybe he is, but he seems to have exhausted most of his cleverness here on the enigmatic record jacket. Give him credit, though; he has enough energy to be heard in the back rows of the biggest rock arena. In fact, he muscled me right off the couch and out of the living room. **M.P.**

CHAS JANKEL: *Questionnaire.* Chas Jankel (vocals, keyboards, guitars, synthesizers, percussion); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *109; Johnny Funk; Now You're Dancing; Magic of Music; Glad to Know You;* and three others. A&M SP-4862 \$8.98, © CS-4862 \$8.98.

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

Chas Jankel, ex-music director for Ian Dury and the Blockheads, is a crack pop composer and arranger, but I wish he'd stop singing! This second solo album from him is a technical gem, danceable in the extreme, and popping with electronic titillation, but it would be hard to image a sillier record (well, maybe "The Ray Coniff Singers Sing the Plasmatics Songbook").

While it may be the last thing Jankel would like to hear, I have to say that "Ques-

(Continued on page 82)

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Ebel Roberts

Toots and the Maytals

TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS' new Mango album "Knock Out!" is a nearly flawless combination of material brimming with ideas and confident, commanding performances that squeeze every drop of emotional juice out of the music. Over the years, such classics as "Funky Kingston" have estab-

lished Toots Hibbert as reggae's pre-eminent vocalist. "Knock Out!" pushes him into the ranks of the great rhythm-and-blues singers. On it he seems to combine the best of Otis Redding and Al Green, his voice ranging from a husky soulfulness to a wistful falsetto, and the Maytals back him up with singing and playing that match the power of his lead vocals.

At a time when too much reggae seems to be slipping into lazy, monotonous, knee-jerking jamming, this album is packed with catchy melodies and irrepressible rhythms. The music draws heavily on r-&-b traditions, and there's even a bit of country/western yodeling. But the thread that runs through "Knock Out!" is a rock-steady beat—the pulse of all great reggae—that's played freshly and imaginatively.

Hibbert also once again proves himself to be one of reggae's most convincing songwriters. On "Knock Out!" he deals with themes of survival, religious freedom, false idols, and false women; he handles them all with understanding, humor, and feeling. Simply put, "Knock Out!" does everything right. It transcends reggae and rhythm-and-blues to embody what's meant when one talks about *soul*. If you buy only one reggae album this year, this should be it. (The cassette version of "Knock Out!" is one of parent-label Island's controversial "One-Plus-One" tapes. The whole album is recorded *twice*, once on each side of the cassette, so you can, if you wish, erase one side and record something else on it. Me, I just flip it over and listen to Toots all over again.)

—Mark Peel

TOOTS AND THE MAYTALS: *Knock Out!* Toots Hibbert (vocals); the Maytals (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Careless Ethiopians; Never Get Weary; Spend a Weekend; Two-Time; Survival Time; Beautiful Woman; I Know We Can Make It; Missing You; Will You Be Kind.* MANGO MLPS 9670 \$8.98, © ZCM 9670 \$8.98.

tionnaire" could have been a great vehicle for his old boss. Dury, in fact, wrote the lyrics for five of the songs here. (Who else could write something like "Said the pike upon the angler's line/'I wish that I'd been told'," and who else could deliver it with the right kind of utterly lunatic conviction?) The songs are fidgety and funny for the most part (one exception is the vaguely transsexual *Boy*, which is a drag—no pun intended), and the arrangements are punchy and resourceful. But Jankel's guy-next-door vocals are just too unassuming, too . . . well, *normal*-sounding for this quirky music. Listening to his thin crooning is like hearing the guy next to you on the bus singing along to Ian Dury on his Walkman. But "Questionnaire" is such a tour de force of hedonistic Latin rhythms, frantic funk, and special effects that Jankel could sing like Prince Charles and it would *still* be great for dancing.

M.P.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JEAN KNIGHT AND PREMIUM: *Keep It Comin'*. Jean Knight and Premium (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *You Show Me Yours, I'll Show You Mine; Keep It Comin'; Love Me Tonight; What Are We Waiting For; Does It Mean You Love Me;* and three others. COTILLION SD 5230 \$8.98, © CS 5230 \$8.98, ® TP 5230 \$8.98.

Performance: **From the gut**
Recording: **Good**

Jean Knight has a voice and style that come straight from the gut. This is the sort of plain, old-fashioned r-&-b that's played on bar jukeboxes before last call. Without resorting to explicit interjections *à la* Millie Jackson, Knight belts out *You Got the Papers (But I Got the Man)* with an unmistakable hands-on-hips, don't-mess-with-me attitude that drives her message home most humorously. Most of the remaining menu here is less peppery, but an especially delicious morsel on the sweeter side is *Keep It Comin'*, which is highlighted by mellow singing both by Knight and her male partner, identified only as Premium. The duo

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seems modeled after Peaches and Herb, but this peach must have been soaked in brandy. A delight. P.G.

LAKESIDE: *Your Wish Is My Command.* Lakeside (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *The Songwriter; The Urban Man; I'll Be Standing By; I Want to Hold Your Hand;* and four others. SOLAR S-26 \$8.98, © SC-26 \$8.98, ® ST-26 \$8.98.

Performance: **Moving on up**
Recording: **Good**

Lakeside's previous album, "Keep On Movin' Straight Ahead," was competent but unexceptional. On this one the group seems to be striving for greater variety and impact. They have succeeded in part: four of the selections here are excellent. One more, and the disc would have earned a "Special Merit" heading. Among the goodies here are the opener, *Your Wish Is My Command*, a storm of power and special effects, *I'll Be Standing By*, a mighty fine ballad given a deeply emotional vocal reading, and *Magic Moments*, a little mood piece tucked in at the end. However, this release has attracted most attention for Lakeside's unusual slow-drag rendition of the Beatles' *I Want to Hold Your Hand*. They make it sound like a delightfully new composition. Such willingness to try a fresh approach bodes well for Lakeside's future. P.G.

BRENDA LEE: *Only When I Laugh.* Brenda Lee (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *Only When I Laugh; Love Letters; A Good Love Don't Come That Easy; I Know a Lot About Love;* and six others. MCA MCA-5278 \$7.98, © MCAC-5278 \$7.98, © MCAT-5278 \$7.98.

Performance: **Wasted style**
Recording: **Very good**

Back in the Fifties, one of the best of breed in the bright new world of pop was a young country singer named Brenda Lee. She could sing rings around her peers, and still can; she has style to spare. When she can get her hooks into a solid phrase or the right song she still leaves the competition far behind in technique and vocal control. The trouble here is with the material. Give Lee a good comic ballad such as *From Levis to Calvin Klein Jeans*, a deft put-on by Richard Runyeon and Rick Lathrop about a cowboy who turns into a playboy, and her bright humor and happy way with a line shine forth. Alas, one good ballad doth not an album make, and the rest of this stuff is simply not worth the attention lavished on it. Songwriters to the rescue! P.K.

GORDON LIGHTFOOT: *Shadows* (see Best of the Month, page 68)

LORETTA LYNN: *I Lie.* Loretta Lynn (vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *I Lie; There Stands the Glass; I Wanted You to Leave (Until You Left Me);* and six others. MCA MCA-5293 \$7.98, © MCAC-5293 \$7.98, ® MCAT-5293 \$7.98.

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

Never be tentative, the late John Jacob Niles told me, and somebody—probably
(Continued on page 85)

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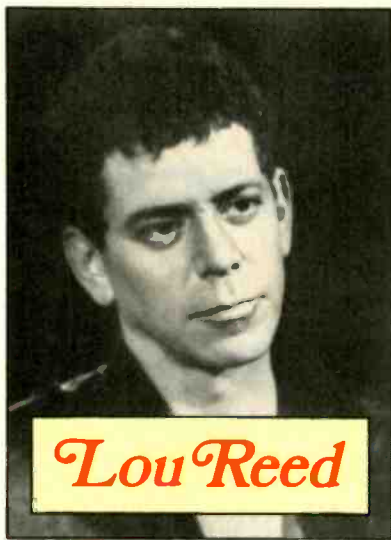


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A FUNNY thing happened to Lou Reed on his way back to RCA Records after a disappointing tenure with Arista; he went and made "The Blue Mask," probably the most mature, moving, carefully crafted, and consistent solo album of his career. It is, for me, the first record he's done alone that can be mentioned in the same breath as his classic albums with the Velvet Underground

(some of which are nearly fifteen years old, if you can believe it).

The Velvets comparison is especially apropos, for one of the things Reed has done here is to use a stripped-down, no-overdub guitar/band sound very much like that on all the Velvets' albums except "Loaded," their penultimate studio effort. And, for the first time in ages, Reed has trusted his instincts enough to be his own lead guitarist. His playing here on the title track and, especially, *Waves of Fear* is simply awesome. Though his style hasn't changed much since his revolutionary barnyard squawks on the Velvets' albums, in the context of the bland metal sludge that dominates the radio it seems as welcomingly abrasive and ear-clearing here as ever.

Reed has found an extremely sympathetic colleague in second-guitarist Robert Quine, one of the few distinctive soloists to have emerged from the New Wave and a musician whose style has been strongly influenced by Reed's prophetic sonic assaults over a decade ago. Add in an especially astute rhythm section, and you have a back-up band fully as splendid as (and reminiscent of) Neil Young's Crazy Horse. In short, "The Blue Mask" features a great rock-and-roll ensemble.

The songs themselves are close to overwhelming. There's no cheap cynicism here, none of Reed's old posturing, role-playing,

or fooling around. Instead, he offers us songs that are passionately felt and tightly edited in a sequence that's alternately terrifying, slyly funny, and spiritually uplifting. Some of the songs are ethereally lovely, such as *My House*, in which the ghost of Lou's idol, poet Delmore Schwartz, takes up residence in his back room (it recalls the third Velvets album, which has been described as "one long sigh"). Others are bone-crushingly dissonant, such as the title track and *Waves of Fear*. But all of them display an immense compassion, a love of language, and a restless intelligence.

AFTER spending a large part of the Seventies impersonating himself (badly) and doing his damndest to cheapen his reputation, Lou Reed has finally shed his masks (blue or otherwise) and made the album that most of us, even his biggest fans, had long since lost hope of ever hearing. Miss this one at your peril. —Steve Simels

LOU REED: *The Blue Mask*. Lou Reed (vocals, guitar); Robert Quine (guitar); Fernando Saunders (bass); Doane Perry (drums). *My House; Women; Underneath the Bottle; The Gun; The Blue Mask; Average Guy; The Heroine; Waves of Fear; The Day John Kennedy Died; Heavenly Arms.* RCA AFL1-4221 \$8.98, © AFK1-4221 \$8.98, © AFS1-4221 \$8.98.

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her husband Doolittle—got that lesson across to Loretta Lynn. She has good judgment about how a song should be done and, once committed, sings with a sort of unself-conscious self-assurance. The program on "I Lie" calls on her versatility a little bit. *I Wanted You to Leave (Until You Left Me)* has her almost getting into r-&-b; it's actually a gospel song with secular words—black gospel. *Save Me*, written by John Moffat, is a white gospel-pop song with not-so-secular words that's the most potent thing in the album. (It is one of six cuts in which Lynn is backed by the Jordanaires.)

While Lynn's performance is consistently impressive here, some of the songs are not. *If I Ain't Got It (You Don't Need It)*, by Max D. Barnes, should lead the two or three that light up jukeboxes; it's the R-rated novelty kind of thing Loretta's fans never tire of. Not a great album, but one aspiring singers could learn from. N.C.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GRAHAM PARKER: *Another Grey Area*. Graham Parker (vocals, guitar); Hugh McCracken (guitar); Nicky Hopkins (keyboards); other musicians. *Temporary Beauty; No More Excuses; Dark Side of the Bright Lights; Can't Waste a Minute; Big Fat Zero; You Hit the Spot*; and five others. ARISTA AL 9589 \$8.98, © ACT 9589 \$8.98, © A8T 9589 \$8.98.

Performance: **Very good**

Recording: **Excellent**

Graham Parker's last album, "Up Escalator," which should have been his commercial breakthrough and wasn't, was for me the least satisfying he'd ever made. He seemed obviously to be acting, and from a man who had once convincingly sung that *Passion Is No Ordinary Word*, it was, to say the least, a letdown. "Another Grey Area," his first album without his now-defunct band the Rumour, is a significant improvement because in it he sounds again as if he means what he's saying.

Musically, this album is of a piece with his last one, which one critic dubbed "The Hummable Graham Parker." It's full of tunes that stay with you and felicitous little instrumental and verbal details, but it is far less blustery, and his old rage is curiously muted. The overall mood is almost—for Parker, anyway—autumnal. Some critics have carped about the high-price American back-up players, but I can't hear what the fuss is about. These guys manage a pretty fair approximation of Parker's usual "Blonde on Blonde" sound, though they do come off a tad impersonal. Given the tenor of the songs, that may have been the point of using them.

There's nothing here as wonderful as the best of "Squeezing Out Sparks," which I suspect will remain Parker's masterwork for the foreseeable future, but *Temporary Beauty* (perhaps the prettiest ballad he's ever done), *No More Excuses*, *Can't Waste a Minute*, the title tune, and a few of the others are compelling enough to help you ignore the fact that Parker is mostly waffling about what's bugging him. But Graham Parker waffling still beats most rockers going full tilt. S.S.

(Continued overleaf)



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POCO: *Cowboys & Englishmen.* POCO (vocals and instrumentals). *Sea of Heartbreak; No Relief in Sight; Cajun Moon; The Price of Love; There Goes My Heart;* and four others. MCA MCA-5288 \$7.98, © MCAC-5288 \$7.98, © MCAT-5288 \$7.98.

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

Rusty Young, on pedal steel, and Paul Cotton, lead guitar and vocals, are the only ones left here from the old POCO (Young is the only member of the original POCO), and nowadays the band does indeed sound like either cowboys or Englishmen, depending on whether Young or Cotton is being in-

cluded. Fortunately, there are a few more cowboy than English sounds here, since POCO plays any kind of head-on rock with a lack of distinction bordering on Eighties-radio anonymity (check out the uninspired *The Price of Love*). But when Young brandishes his steel guitar, POCO stops sounding like a dozen other bands. Even so, the reading here of Gordon Lightfoot's *Ribbon of Darkness* is hurting for ideas, and programming a song called *If You Could Read My Mind* right after it is a bit jarring, since that's also the title of a different, vastly superior song by Lightfoot. Elsewhere on the album, though, POCO shows that it is again a pretty good picking band, and the mix and stereo imaging are unusually good. *N.C.*

THE RAYBEATS: *Guitar Beat.* The Raybeats (instrumentals). *Tight Turn; Big Black Sneakers; Tone Zone; The Backstroke; B-Gas-Rickshaw;* and six others. PVC 8904 \$8.98.

Performance: **On the beach again**
Recording: **Good**

Here's an album that proves something, though I'm not sure just what it is (possibly that it's not what you do, but how self-consciously you do it). The Raybeats are the kind of avant-surf, Ventures Go Modern act that could only have sprung up in Manhattan—these guys have divined qualities in old beach-party records that you or I (or my dog Eric) might miss even after umpteen playings. Their music is non-melodic and atmospherically spooky. Somewhere Dick Dale and His Deltones must be scratching their heads and wondering What It All Means. I think it's fun stuff, but, then again, in the immortal words of Chuck Barris, I like cold toilet seats. *S.S.*

THE RINGS: *Rhythm Method.* The Rings (vocals and instrumentals). *Uh Oh (Here I Go Again); Move Over; Talk Back; Bang Bang (Out of Your Misery); It's Not Enough;* and five others. MCA MCA-5264 \$7.98, © MCAC-5264 \$7.98.

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

I don't know if it was an accident or done for effect, but I like the way the singer here counts off on *Move Over* and then goes into a coughing fit. I'm also impressed by drummer Matt Thurber, who's excitingly rhythmic instead of being, as most rock drummers are, a mere timekeeper. The Rings' sound is neo-punk, and their subject matter is—you guessed it—youthful *Angst* in a turbulent society where values are suspect and the individual is wary and insecure. The Rings' arrangements and production are solid, and their performance is assertive, so if you like the subject matter you'll like this record. I don't like it much, but I like the Rings, and I'd like to hear them do something else. *J.V.*

SHALAMAR: *Friends.* Shalamar (vocals); instrumental accompaniment. *I Can Make You Feel Good; I Just Dropped By Because I Had To; I Don't Wanna Be the Last to Know; A Night to Remember; On Top of the World;* and five others. SOLAR S-28 \$8.98, © SC-28 \$8.98, © ST-28 \$8.98.

Performance: **Polished singing**
Recording: **Good**

The trio called Shalamar is capable of some of the most polished singing to be heard in r-&-b these days, but some of their songs are not strong enough to stand up through repeated hearings. Yet when they are good, they are very, very good, as on this album's *I Just Dropped By Because I Had To*, a lush slow-burner, and *A Night to Remember*, which presents Shalamar at their up-tempo best. Part of the credit for the better than average overall quality of "Friends" should go to Leon Sylvers III, who not only produced it but is credited on some cuts as the vocal and rhythm arranger, composer, and percussionist. I counted at least three other Sylvers nestled in the credits. So, let the Sylvers take a bow too. *P.G.*

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JAZZ



HAROLD ASHBY: *Presenting Harold Ashby.* Harold Ashby (tenor saxophone); Don Friedman (piano); George Mraz (bass); Ronnie Bedford (drums). *Candy; Quickie; Dainty; Over the Rainbow;* and four others. PROGRESSIVE PRO 7040 \$8.98.

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

Harold Ashby was with the Duke Ellington band from 1968 until the Duke's death in 1974, and since then he has gigged wherever the gigs may be. This recording, made in New York in 1978 and now released on a small label headquartered in Georgia, reveals Ashby as a frisky improviser with a sturdy tone and a sense of fun. His transformation of that maudlin old clunker *Over the Rainbow* is remarkable, and his originals (*Quickie, Dainty, Pleading, and Cous Cous*) are pleasurable and hearty fare.

The irritating liner notes sound like federal guidelines on how to appreciate jazz. Ignore them, but do introduce yourself to Harold Ashby's zest and *bonhomie*. J.V.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BENNY CARTER: *Opening Blues.* Benny Carter (trumpet, alto saxophone); Shorty Sherock (trumpet); Ben Webster (tenor saxophone); Barney Bigard (clarinet); Dave Barbour (guitar); Jimmy Rowles (piano); Leroy Vinnegar (bass); Mel Lewis (drums). *Opening Blues; When Lights Are Low; Lula; Heavy-Hearted Blues.* PRESTIGE MPP-2513 \$7.98.

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

Originally released under the title "BBB & Co.," this Benny Carter album was recorded in 1962, but the intervening twenty years have only enhanced its appeal. Just look at the sterling cast: Carter, Ben Webster, and Barney Bigard, three of the greatest reed players in jazz history; Shorty Sherock, whose mellow swing trumpet deserved greater recognition; and a flawless rhythm section that by itself could have made this a notable session. It irks me to see the producer claim credit for a couple of selections that clearly were the creation of these remarkable performers, but nothing can detract from the quality of the music itself. This is simply superb jazz. C.A.

DON CHERRY: *Humus; Sita Rama Encores* (see Classical Reviews, page 107)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

CHICO FREEMAN: *Destiny's Dance.* Chico Freeman (bass clarinet, tenor saxo-
(Continued on page 90)



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Karla Bonoff

"Writing is still a mystery to me..."

WHOS Karla Bonoff?" It was the summer of 1976, and it was an inevitable question if you had heard Linda Ronstadt's latest album, "Hasten Down the Wind," featuring three spectacularly sentimental Bonoff songs. Those songs—*Lose Again, Someone to Lay Down Beside Me*, and *If He's Ever Near*—had considerable if unconventional melodic power behind them and raw personal emotions right up front. They stood naked before you. Some time later I was bowled over in a different way by *Home* in Bonnie Raitt's "Sweet Forgiveness" album. It was not naked and was less intense, starting with a sort of Hemingwayesque objectivity ("Traveling at night/The headlights are bright..."), and, though not so hefty, the melody was absolutely lovely.

Now I have put the question, in an interviewer's various indirect and underhanded ways, to Karla Bonoff herself. Her answers—there is no *one* answer to such a question—and those suggested in her own new (third) album, "Wild Heart of the Young" on Columbia, raise the inevitable contradictions and paradoxes.

Bonoff's first memory of music: "My mother playing Frank Sinatra records twenty-four hours a day." Karla came from "your typical nice West L.A. middle-class family," went to the same high school as Bonnie Raitt, and had a friend who knew Ry Cooder, who was another neighborhood kid but a little older. Her father is a doctor and her mother "a pretty good classical pianist" who used to teach before her marriage.

The first memory of music that made Bonoff sit up and take notice involved the early-Sixties folk business that has been a major influence on her work. "There was a local radio show, and Peter, Paul, and Mary

came on and sang *If I Had a Hammer*, and I remember going, 'Dad, I want that record.' It was the very first record I ever owned."

And her first memory of catalytic action that set her own muse on course involved that folk approach distilled through another generation of songwriters. "When I was fifteen, I was hearing Jackson Browne play his new songs as he wrote them at the Troubadour's Monday 'hoot nights.' He was about nineteen then. I remember the first night he played *Opening Farewell*—the first night I heard it, maybe the week he wrote it—and I hadn't written any lyrics yet, but I was sitting up in the balcony and he played that song, and at that instant I knew what I was going to do. I was going to be a songwriter."

KARLA had already written a few tunes to poems by her three-years-older sister Lisa. She still finds melodies easier to produce than lyrics. "Writing music for me really isn't difficult," she told me. "Writing lyrics takes the most time, really slows me down. Writing is still a mystery to me in terms of how I do it. I don't know what happens when a song starts to come out. If I did, I think I could probably tap into it a little more. Because I was not lyric-oriented, was not someone who read or wrote poetry and stories, because I didn't feel that I had a big vocabulary at my command, I just wrote what I could, as simply as I could, as quickly as I could.

"It is easier for me to draw on personal experiences because my emotions are what inspire me to write. So the songs always end up being about me or my life. I found it was too hard to maintain my interest in some other topic; I couldn't get inspired about it if I were to say, 'Well, I'm going to write a

song about my summer vacation.'... It takes too much energy and too much intensity to write a song if it's not something you really care about."

It may also be pertinent that she doesn't do much rewriting: "I usually get it the first time or I don't get it."

Ronstadt answered my question about Bonoff laconically: "She's a friend of mine." But she also told me Bonoff had been in a band called Bryndle with Wendy Waldman and a couple of members of Linda's band, lead guitarist Andrew Gold and bassist (now Bonoff's producer) Kenny Edwards—who had also played in the Stone Poneys, the earlier band with Ronstadt.

"Bryndle did an album for A&M in 1971," Bonoff said, "and they didn't release it. I think it was ahead of its time—two girls and two guys, four different writers. I don't think A&M thought there was a focus; they thought there was a problem. As we saw later, Fleetwood Mac managed that arrangement just fine. As is often the case, the business end of the industry was behind what people were doing." So Bryndle died, but Edwards was soon making Ronstadt aware of Bonoff's songs.

"I was lucky," Karla said. "At one point, I went through tapes for Linda. They paid me to listen to them, and there were so *many*, most not very good. I think out of two hundred tapes I found one song that I thought I should actually bring to her attention, and it turned out that it had already been recorded by someone else. I'm glad I didn't have to send my tapes through that route."

HOME probably came out so well because Bonoff is, she says, "a real homebody, basically a nester. I had a wonderful family and a wonderful upbringing and that's a strong part of who I am." She kept referring to this nesting urge when talking about the tour then being put together to support "Wild Heart," to be followed by a trip to Japan just about as you are reading this. Too long on the road, she said, makes her forget who she is. The feeling in *Home* "is the feeling you get when you've been on the road too long, when you can't identify with anything any more. You really need those things around you that are yours."

Earlier I mentioned Bonoff's contradictions: there's the emotional, personal, from-the-heart Karla Bonoff way with songwriting on the one hand, and, on the other, a detached, analytical, almost cold way of talking about herself and her work. There's her folkie attitude—with all those influences from Jackson Browne, James Taylor, Joni Mitchell ("her guitar work especially"), and Laura Nyro—juxtaposed with what she calls her "Motown teenage roots," some of which show above ground in her new album.

"I spent the last couple of years listening to a lot of r-&-b, getting away from the music I've listened to so much, and I think it's had an effect. I like the really commercial r-&-b: the Spinners, the Stylistics, some Commodores songs. I started listening to that partly because I was tired of the very

self-conscious approach to music that I and the people I listened to had been involved in, and I just wanted to have fun with it. I'd be washing dishes and stuff and put those records on and they'd invigorate me.

"Then I realized that a lot of the music I had listened to before I started thinking about writing was Motown. I realized I had a kind of pop/r-&-b orientation in my system already that I wasn't really aware of. So I think this new record is simple in that way, a little less introspective, and—I hope—a little more groove-oriented. It's less folk-musical, but I think it's still me."

A critic assessing "Wild Heart of the Young" might use much of the same language. This is not music whose lyrics can be ignored, as most r-&-b lyrics can be nowadays. It is not given over to funk or dancing madness, nor is it even predominantly about fun subjects or the lighter side of relationships. But the teenage Motown roots are there. Compared with the one song here that Bonoff didn't write, Paul Kelly's *Personally*, her eight new tunes are only vaguely Motown-flavored, but the lyrics are less introspective and the melodies simpler than in her previous work. Personally, I find the r-&-b influence benefiting her lyrics more than her melodies. The words still have that characteristic directness and spontaneity; they're just laid out in less convoluted lines. The melodies are catchy, sure-handed, and mostly pretty—but their straight-ahead simplicity leaves no room for the brief, off-the-wall detours her old melodies took, and those *did* lead, sometimes, through a garden of delight. Not surprisingly, I am most pleased with the most folkie-sounding new one, *Dream*.

BUT it all is, as she says, still her, still probing around in the whys and wherefores of relationships, still delivered with soft, warm directness, backed by an in-between ensemble that puts the best of what's left of the L.A. Sound in harmony with David Sanborn's saxophone homage to the old, raunchy days. In any case, this is the album Karla Bonoff *should* make now, according to my grasp of her view of how the world works.

"I believe in fate," she said. "I believe people get what they're supposed to get, and that's just the way of the world. That way at least you don't have to go around feeling you didn't get something you were supposed to get."

That must mean I got as much of the answer to "Who is Karla Bonoff?" as I was supposed to. Hope you do too.

—Noel Coppage

KARLA BONOFF: *Wild Heart of the Young*. Karla Bonoff (vocals, piano, guitar); Russ Kunkel (drums); Bob Glaub (bass); Andrew Gold (guitar); David Sanborn (saxophone); Hawk Wolinski (keyboards); other musicians. *Personally: I Don't Want to Miss You; Just Walk Away; Gonna Be Mine; It Just Takes One; Even If; Wild Heart of the Young; Please Be the One; Dream.* COLUMBIA FC 37444, © FCT 37444, © FCA 37444, no list price.

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phone); Wynton Marsalis (trumpet); Bobby Hutcherson (vibraphone); Dennis Moor- man (piano); Cecil McBee (bass); Ronnie Burrage (drums); Paulinho da Costa (per- cussion). *Same Shame; Crossing the Sud- an; Embracing Oneness*; and three others. CONTEMPORARY 14008 \$8.98.

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

I have for some time now greeted the arrival of a new Chico Freeman album with the same sense of anticipation and curiosity one might afford the sequel to a favorite literary work. In Freeman's case, there has been a series of installments, each at least as excit- ing as the one before. The main character,

Freeman, continues to develop magnificently as his story unfolds. There are other im- portant characters too, not least of whom is bassist Cecil McBee, Freeman's alter ego. He is on hand again for "Destiny's Dance," the latest superb chapter in this ongoing story, and both leading characters are mag- nificently complimented by an extraordi- nary newcomer, the twenty-one-year-old trumpeter Wynton Marsalis. You will be hearing a great deal from and about Mar- salis (see "Best of the Month," page 70), and you will not want to miss this meeting of two exceptional new forces in jazz. Vibist Bobby Hutcherson, pianist Dennis Moor- man, and drummer Ronnie Burrage also contribute to make this a memorable set.

If you have been affected by the youthful spirit, sparkling creativity, and breathtak- ing musicianship of, say, the Armstrong Hot Five's *Potato Head Blues*, you'll like "Destiny's Dance." C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

EGBERTO GISMONTI AND ACADEM- IA DE DANÇAS: *Sanfona*. Egberto Gis- monti (piano, guitar, Indian organ, vocal); Mauro Senise (soprano and alto saxo- phones, flute); Zeca Assumpção (bass); Nene (drums, percussion). *Maracatu; Fre- vo; Loro; Vale do Eco; Cavaquinho*; and five others. ECM ECM-2-1203 two discs \$14.98, © 2E5-1203 \$14.98.

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

This two-record set features Egberto Gis- monti playing alone on one disc and as part of a quartet on the other. All of the music was composed by Gismonti and is flavored with American urban sounds, but it also strongly reflects the rich musical traditions of his native Brazil. It is a wonderful blend that has often been used but never with as much beauty and flair as by Gismonti. "Sanfona" is on my Record of the Year list. C.A.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BILL HENDERSON: *A Tribute to Johnny Mercer*. Bill Henderson (vocals); Joyce Col- lins (vocals, piano); Dave Mackay (electric piano); Joey Baron (drums). *Out of This World; Hooray for Hollywood; Blues in the Night; I Remember You*; and five others. DISCOVERY DS-846 \$8.98.

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

Bill Henderson's "A Tribute to Johnny Mercer" is just about as flawless and de- lightful a collection of the composer's songs as you are ever likely to hear. Accompanied only by pianos and drums, Henderson bends his highly identifiable voice in wondrous ways through a well-chosen thirty-five-min- ute program of songs that only the most re- cent generation could have missed hearing before. As on Henderson's previous Discov- ery album, "Street of Dreams," Joyce Col- lins steps in briefly as vocalist (she does a fair share assisting with arrangements and on piano too), this time contributing her half to a wonderful weave of *My Shining Hour* and *I Thought About You*. The two singers are perfectly matched. C.A.

WYNTON MARSALIS (see *Best of the Month*, page 70)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

JEAN-LUC PONTY: *Mystical Adventures*. Jean-Luc Ponty (violins, keyboards, synthe- sizers); other musicians. *Mystical Adven- tures; Rhythms of Hope; Final Truth*; and two others. ATLANTIC SD 19333 \$8.98, © CS 19333 \$8.98, © TP 19333 \$8.98.

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

Happily, "Mystical Adventures" is neither as airy headed as its title would suggest nor (Continued on page 92)

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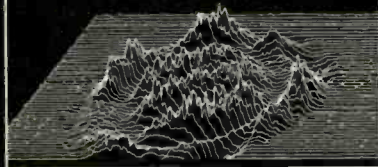
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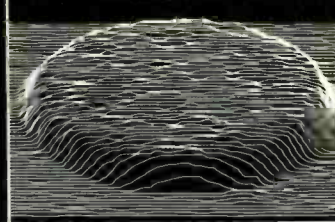


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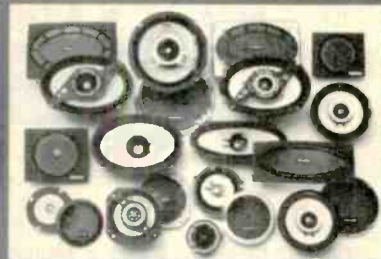
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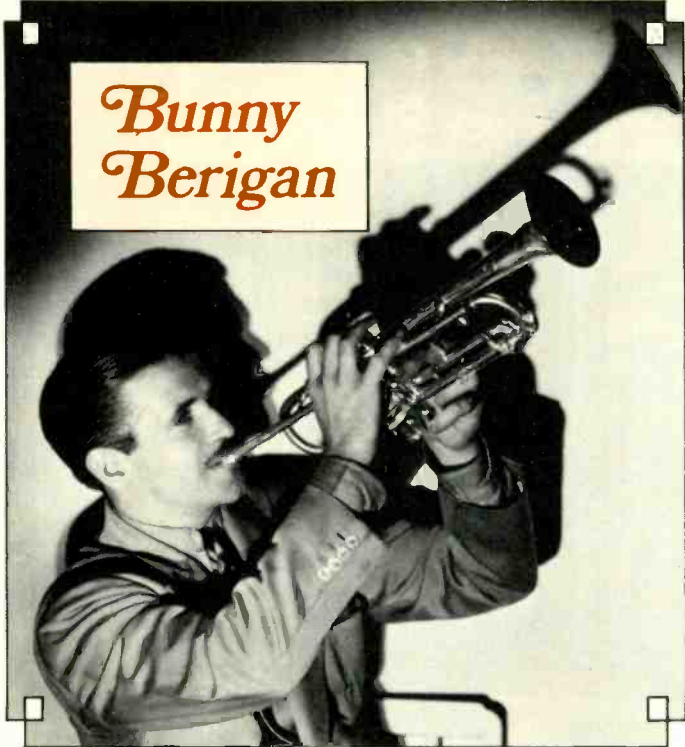
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Bunny Berigan



Culver Pictures

BUNNY BERIGAN and Bix Beiderbecke are supposed to have met in a pick-up band sometime in 1930 or 1931, when Berigan's star was rising and Bix's was setting. Bunny wowed the college crowd on the date, and that made Bix jealous since his career had begun by conquering campuses with the Wolverines in 1923. Bunny and Bix shared other things too: both were totally devoted to music, both were alcoholics, and both died young. But Bix is a legend while Bunny Berigan has remained only a fond memory for fans, fellow musicians, and critics—always worth a paragraph or a footnote but not a full evaluation.

A reassessment of Berigan is possible now that RCA Bluebird has released the first volume in its projected reissue series covering all the recordings he made under his own name, starting in 1937. Berigan formed two bands that year; the first flopped, but the second group included some disaffected musicians from Tommy Dorsey's outfit. The new band played with terrific drive for at least two good reasons: George Wettling, usually remembered as a Chicagoan from the Eddie Condon mob, was the drummer, and Bunny led with exuberant trumpet playing that flashed like a Hussar's sabre.

Unlike Bix—who, drunk or not, always maintained a certain reserve in his playing—Bunny's blasts were always emotional. He was as capable as Bix of playing fast runs, though his middle-register tones had a tendency to sound choked (unlike Louis Armstrong's, who was Bunny's principal model). But the excitement he generated was undeniable, and it remains so today. His band adored him, and though they played with a hell-for-leather zeal, they never tripped over the sometimes tricky arrangements. Berigan also had outstanding

soloists in Joe Dixon (alto sax and clarinet), Georgie Auld (tenor sax), and Sonny Lee (trombone). Their reputations too may rise as a result of this reissue.

The set includes *I Can't Get Started*, Berigan's great hit and theme song (originally recorded on a 12-inch, 78-rpm disc with a playing time of nearly five minutes, unusual for those days), a rousing *Frankie and Johnny*, and, in tribute to Armstrong, *Mahogany Hall Stomp*. Bunny and his merry crew played with such momentum that even the meatball ballads assigned to them are taken as uptempo as possible, with the vocalists (including Berigan himself, who was no slouch) zipping through the bland melodies and stodgy sentiments with happy abandon.

THIS nicely remastered and packaged album will surely be welcome to old fans and surprising to new listeners. It offers compelling evidence that Berigan has been underestimated by musical historians. Of all the figures in the Swing Era, he probably swung the hardest.

—Joel Vance

BUNNY BERIGAN: *The Complete Bunny Berigan, Vol. 1—1937.* Bunny Berigan (trumpet, vocals); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *You Can't Run Away from Love Tonight; 'Cause My Baby Says It's So; Carelessly; All Dark People Are Light on Their Feet; The First Time I Saw You; Love Is a Merry Go-Round; The Image of You; I'm Happy, Darling, Dancing with You; Swanee River; All God's Chillun Got Rhythm; The Lady from Fifth Avenue; Let's Have Another Cigarette;* and nineteen others. RCA BLUEBIRD © AXM2-5584 two discs \$11.98, © AXK2-5584 \$11.98.

the kind of electronic Tower of Babel that Jean-Luc Ponty has frequently erected on previous albums. In fact, it manages to convey a fairly convincing sense of mysticism, not with pompous fanfares or multiple synthesizers playing bogus "music of the spheres" but with subtle melodic gestures and quick nods of rhythm.

The whole first side of the album is the title piece, a suite in five sections. True to the original meaning of "suite," it's very dance-like; many of the tunes even sound as though they were derived from folk dances. It's all very melodic music, and it is complemented by the vigorous solos, particularly Ponty's spirited, syncopated violin and keyboard attacks. If there is a flaw, it's the weak structure. Too many of the suite's movements make promises that are never satisfactorily fulfilled—they sound like introductions that can't find the way to move on into development.

The second side is more conventional, more structured and "progressive" sounding, but also very danceable. It too shows off the formidable solo skills of the players, with tunes tossed enthusiastically from violin to guitar to bass to synthesizer like a hardball on the first day of spring. This is better than average fusion that's not just for confirmed fans.

M.P.

GROVER WASHINGTON, JR.: *Come Morning.* Grover Washington, Jr. (saxophones); vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *East River Drive; Come Morning; Be Mine Tonight; Reaching Out; Little Black Samba;* and three others. ELEKTRA 5E-562 \$8.98, © 5CS-562 \$8.98, © 5T8-562 \$8.98.

Performance: **Smooth**

Recording: **Excellent**

It's been said that jazz is less a kind of music than a way of playing music. No doubt this is a personal prejudice, but to me jazz is music played with a hard-edged, rebellious intelligence, music that expresses rage or mischief more than romance. But there is a whole school of jazz players—Grover Washington, Jr. and Bob James and Stanley Turrentine, to name a few—whose concerns are very different. They're the decorative artists of jazz, not so much architects as interior designers, and Washington is one of the best. His new album, "Come Morning," is all atmosphere, all sensation. Washington's warm alto sax rises from the coolly flowing arrangements like morning mist on the East River or dances away like a jogger's breath in the frosty air. His solos are simple and soulful, their whole effect sometimes hanging on a single note bent to just the right shade of blue. The personnel on "Come Morning" reads like a roll call of the pop-jazz school: Ralph MacDonald, Richard Tee, Eric Gale, Steve Gadd. They contribute a rhythmic environment that's crisp and breezy.

Not everything here works. Washington's use of cooing back-up singers, okay in small doses, starts sounding lame-brained by the middle of side two, and now and then the arrangements are just plain wrongheaded (a galloping version of the Waiters' *Jamming* is the most egregious example). But, for the most part, "Come Morning" is as easy and as comfortable to sink into as a warm bath.

M.P.



THEATER • FILMS

AMARCORD NINO ROTA (I REMEMBER NINO ROTA). Jaki Byard, Dave Samuels, the Carla Bley Band, Bill Frisell, the David Amram Quintet, Steve Lacy (vocals and instrumentals); other musicians. *Amarcord*; *Interlude from Juliet of the Spirits*; *8 1/2*; and seven others. HANNIBAL HNBL 9301 \$8.98.

Performance: **Well-intentioned**
Recording: **Very good**

What we have here is a (somewhat) bewildering variety of musicians—ranging from such jazz artists as Carla Bley, Ron Carter, and Steve Lacy to Blondie's Chris Stein and Debbie Harry—paying tribute to the work of the great Italian film composer Nino Rota. It is a well-intentioned effort, and I hate to knock an obvious labor of love, but, to be blunt, the result is at best a mildly jazzy mood record reminiscent of the kind of thing you might have heard wafting down the hall of a college dormitory in 1958. Estimable as some of the work here is (Jaki Byard's delicate solo-piano version of the theme from *La Strada*, for instance), I think we'd all have been better served if the original soundtracks of these Fellini films had been excerpted for a genuine Nino Rota "Greatest Hits" album. **S.S.**

THE CATHERINE WHEEL (David Byrne). David Byrne (vocals, bass, guitars, percussion, synthesizers, etc.); Yogi Horton (drums); John Chernoff (percussion); Bernie Worrell (Mini Moog, clavinet, piano); Adrian Belew (guitars); Brian Eno (bass, keyboards, vibes); Jerry Harrison (clavinet, drums); Dolette McDonald, Sue Halloran (vocals); Twyla Tharp (water pot). SIRE SRK 3645 \$8.98, © M55 3645 \$8.98.

Performance: **High-energy**
Recording: **Heavy, powerful**

Yes, you read it right: "Twyla Tharp (water pot)." In the original Broadway production of *The Catherine Wheel*, Tharp took a somewhat more important role: she choreographed the work—which is to say, she created it—with music and lyrics contributed by David Byrne of the Talking Heads (one instrumental is credited to Brian Eno). The record is described as "Songs from the Broadway Production," but there's not very much singing (Byrne typically does a rap-rhythm-style Talking Head routine with only some marginal singing). Where's the tune? Hey, this must be Modern Music!

Byrne writes classic arty/surreal rock lyrics. *The Catherine Wheel* (I didn't see it) apparently had something to do with the life and death of the American family, and Byrne's words hover menacingly around this topic. I recently described commercial television as being concerned with "stories

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of extreme violence and danger performed in an elliptical, laconic, laid-back style with heavy, threatening rhythmic undertones and a clipped, stylized surface." Except for the fact that there is no story, that is an accurate description of what's on this disc. Not only is there no literary, dramatic, or narrative content, there is no musical story either. No tune. These are rhythmic outlines for music with a ghastly emptiness inside—tight, heavy, even powerful structures that, frighteningly, contain... nothing.

—Eric Salzman

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

QUARTET (Richard Robbins). Original-soundtrack recording. Armelia McQueen (vocals); instrumental ensemble. GRAMAVISION GR-1020 \$8.98.

Performance: **Jazz Age revisited**
Recording: **Superb**

The dissolution of rootless women wandering around Europe, holding on as best they can to their looks and the men they haplessly depend on, is the theme of the novels of Jean Rhys, an English author who wrote most of her books in the Thirties but was rediscovered in the Seventies by the feminist movement. *Quartet*, written in 1929, is set in the Jazz Age, which afforded the movie makers an opportunity to include some stunning jazz performances. The score is a new one by Richard Robbins, but you'd swear it was vintage material of the period as Armelia McQueen socks it to you in

Luther Henderson's arrangements of *Five-o-Nine* and *Full Time Lover* and as Isabelle Adjani makes the most of a fine song called *Pars*. There's also an *Arabesque Valsante*, a *Tango*, a sizzling interlude in *Maggie's Trot*, and some very French moments in *Au Bal Musette*. This is one score you don't have to have seen the movie to enjoy, especially if you like good Twenties-style jazz done to a turn. More new records like this one just might bring back the Jazz Age along with Jean Rhys' novels. P.K.

REDS (Sondheim-Grusin). Original-soundtrack recording. COLUMBIA BJS 37690, © BJT 37690, no list price.

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

Reds is a lavishly beautiful but somewhat silly movie about two narcissists in search of a cause. It might have been entertaining at half the length and with a more mature viewpoint. The soundtrack album from this long, long movie is, I suppose, as properly and unavoidably grandiose as the film itself. Stephen Sondheim contributes *Goodbye for Now*, the *Lara*-like theme performed by Jean-Pierre Rampal and Claude Bolling. It isn't exactly a house-burner; in fact, it's pretty dull. Even duller is the incidental music that Dave Grusin supplied for most of the rest of the film. The only breaks from the self-preoccupation of the whole enterprise are three tracks performed by the massive Moscow Radio Chorus. They roar through Communist golden oldies—*The*

Red Army Is The Most Powerful of All, the *Internationale*, and *The Engine*—with a spirit and vitality that are missing from the rest of the score. The disc was produced by, of all people, Phil Ramone. P.R.

SHARKY'S MACHINE. Original-soundtrack recording. Randy Crawford, Peggy Lee, Chet Baker, Doc Severinsen, the Manhattan Transfer, Sarah Vaughan, others (vocals and instrumentals). WARNER BROS. BSK 3653 \$8.98, © M5 3653 \$8.98.

Performance: **Star tracks**
Recording: **Glossy**

The new Burt Reynolds vehicle, *Sharky's Machine*, has been fitted out with one of the glossiest, star-drenched soundtracks in memory. In this slick Snuff Garrett production the names tumble after one another: Sarah Vaughan sings the title *Love Theme* and then pairs off with Joe Williams in *Before You*; Chet Baker and Julie London each do a version of *My Funny Valentine*; Randy Crawford, Flora Purim and Buddy De Franco, the Manhattan Transfer, and Doc Severinsen all do their neatly manicured turns. As with most such galas, one star outshines all the rest; in this case it is the unsinkable Peggy Lee. Wrapping her sloe-gin voice and lambent lyric style around a really lousy song—*Let's Keep Dancing*, probably best described as a sort of idiot son of *If That's All There Is*—she is still able to produce the kind of effects that send the listener back to the recording to play her track again and again. P.R.

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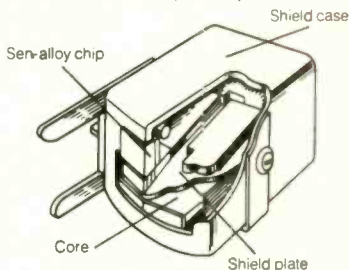
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Classical Music Briefs



Herbert Breilin Associates

OPPORTUNITIES to see and hear a good countertenor in action are not abundant in the United States. But the Public Broadcasting Service will give television viewers two such opportunities this month in their cycle of Monteverdi operas. The cycle consists of *Orpheus* (June 7), *The Return of Ulysses* (June 14), and *The Coronation of Poppea* (June 21), and the casts for the last two include the noted English countertenor **Paul Esswood**, who has recorded both operas for the Telefunken label.

We talked with Esswood earlier this season when he made his New York debut singing the alto part in Handel's *Messiah*. He said, "Mine is a quiet voice—not large, but not small either. It certainly is not fragile. I've done 5½-hour recording sessions nonstop, and I've sung fifteen operas in seventeen days. At first people are fascinated that a man can sing so high, then they are delighted to learn that it is possible to sing that way and be musical at the same time."

Esswood studied at the Royal College of Music in London. He says countertenors are

more common in England because voices of this kind have traditionally been used in the English cathedrals. "When I used to sing at Westminster Abbey, I had a list of at least forty others I could call on whenever I needed a substitute."

Esswood's speaking voice is rather deep. Does this mean his high singing voice is falsetto? "That depends on how you define falsetto," he said. "Certainly the vocal cords are not being used in the usual way. They are vibrating in half their length, and you are getting the first harmonics. It's like touching a violin string to get the overtones." When students ask Esswood whether they should aim to become countertenors or basses, he says they should ask themselves two questions: "(a) Is it natural for you to sing alto, and (b) Is it pleasant for other people to listen to you? If you are going to make noises like a cat on a hot tin roof, don't bother. It must be beautiful to be interesting."

Two conductors have been especially influential in building Esswood's international career: Charles Mackerras and Nikolaus Harnoncourt. When Esswood was only twenty-three, Mackerras gave him his first big break by engaging him for an important recording of *Messiah* for EMI/Angel. With Harnoncourt he has recorded several operas and many works in Telefunken's integral series of the Bach cantatas. His latest U.S. release is Handel's *Xerxes* conducted by Jean-Claude Malgoire for CBS Masterworks. Esswood says, "I stopped counting my records when the number got to three figures."

Although his repertoire in-

cludes music of several centuries, Esswood sings mostly Baroque music written for castrato altos. These days he is so busy in opera that he has little time for recitals. "I like to sing the Handel roles of the heraldic warrior type. In music I like to express a man's sentiments, to express my own emotions. I've never sung anything written specifically for a female, and I've never done a travesty role on stage. I'm afraid I might be quite good at it, and I certainly wouldn't want to become typecast in that sort of thing."

—W.L.



Juilliard School

ANDREW LITTON of New York City, a master's degree candidate at the Juilliard School of Music, has won the Sixth International Young Conductors competition in London, England. He conducted the BBC Symphony Orchestra in Mozart's *Haffner* Symphony. The twenty-year-old Litton, who described winning the contest as "the greatest thrill of my life," is the youngest finalist in the history of the contest. He will make his American opera debut conducting the San Diego Opera in October of this year. □

IN England, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, has licensed films of a few of its performances for distribution on videodiscs. The first of these, Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman* with Plácido Domingo, is now available on Pioneer LaserDisc with a stereo soundtrack that features CBS' new CX noise-reduction system (see this month's "Audio Q. and A.") for more on this use of the CX system).

At the Metropolitan Opera we asked Michael Bronson, executive producer of the "Live from the Met" TV series shown on PBS, whether that series was likely to show up in the home video market. He said, "We are negotiating with unions and artists for the rights to issue past performances, and if agreements are reached within the next few months, we might have videocassettes or videodiscs on the market as early as next winter. We have a definite sense that there is a place for opera in this market. It is not just a dream. Licensing our 'Live from the Met' performances to foreign television now produces a little revenue for the company. Perhaps when the new technology settles in, video can produce a significant amount." □

ATENEUM recently published Charles Osborne's *The Complete Operas of Puccini* (279 pages, \$15.95). Like the author's earlier guides to the operas of Verdi and Mozart, it treats each opera discussed as a work for the musical theater. In the introduction Osborne says, "This book is addressed to the opera-lover . . . who wants to know the background

of the operas he enjoys, to have the works set in their historical context and the music discussed in terms reasonably free of jargon—remembering that operas are not abstract symphonies." It's quite readable, and we recommend it.

—W.L.

In March, Philips Records released the album "Zamfir, King of the Pan Flute" on the Mercury label. It is a recital of classical favorites by Bach, Mozart, Telemann, and others played by **Gheorghe Zamfir**, a Romanian virtuoso on the instrument known as the panpipes, syrinx, Pandean pipes, or pan flute. When we heard the album (and learned of Zamfir's impressive record sales in Europe and Canada), we prophesied that Americans would be hearing a lot of pan-flute playing this year.

Well, we prophesied better than we knew. Unknown to us at the time, the Dance Theater of Harlem was performing at the New York City Center (right next door to Philips' U.S. headquarters), and the troupe's repertoire included *Doina*, a ballet danced to panpipe music on tape—by Zamfir, of course. Then we saw the movie *Quest*

for *Fire* and discovered that its soundtrack included a lot of panpiping. Set in the Stone Age, *Quest for Fire* is a story about life and love some 80,000 years ago. Despite the filmmakers' efforts to re-create prehistory convincingly, *Quest for Fire* struck us as a pretentious geek show, but the soundtrack by composer Philippe Sarde (now available on disc from RCA) is interesting. The music is performed by the London Symphony Orchestra and Les Percussions de Strasbourg conducted by Peter Knight with **Syrinx** as

Simion Stanciu



RCA Records

the pan-flute soloist in such cuts as the *Love Theme* and the *Birth of Love*.

Syrinx is the stage name of pan flutist **Simion Stanciu**, who is, like Zamfir, from Romania. His European recordings on the Carrere label include albums of classical pieces, Romanian folk songs, and Christmas carols as well as a recital with electronic instruments. As far as we have been able to determine, the soundtrack album for *Quest for Fire* is his North American recording debut.

We are not ready to compare Stanciu's technique with Zamfir's, but we're working on it. We don't yet know what James Galway, Jean-Pierre Rampal, and Ransom Wilson will make of these Romanians muscling in on their big flute revival. For all we know, Galway may be in the studio right now making a record with Syrinx or Zamfir. But whatever happens, and at the risk of repeating ourselves, we think there's gonna be a whole lot more pan-flute playing going on.

—W.L.

The Czech pianist **Ivan Moravec** began attracting his ardent American following back in the middle 1960s with his records of Chopin's Preludes and



Elektra/Asylum/Jacki Sallou

Ivan Moravec

Nocturnes on the Connoisseur Society label. Those recordings, no longer in the Schwann catalog, are now available only on In Sync cassettes or Book-of-the-Month Club records, but Moravec fans will be pleased to know that on his recent North American tour he was lured into recording studios by not one, but two U.S. labels: Nonesuch and Vox. At his first American sessions in many years Moravec recorded works by Brahms, Schumann, and Janáček for Nonesuch and compositions by Chopin and Debussy for Vox. Release plans for the recordings have not yet been announced by either label. □

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

Ⓛ = quadraphonic disc

Ⓛ = monophonic recording

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

ALKAN: Solo Piano Pieces (see Best of the Month, page 71)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

J. S. BACH: Seven Motets (BWV 225-231); Cantata 50, Nun ist das Heil und die Kraft; Cantata 118, O Jesu Christ, meins Lebens Licht. Monteverdi Choir; English Baroque Soloists, John Eliot Gardiner cond. ERATO/RCA STU 71337 two discs \$17.96.

Performance: **Resplendent**
Recording: **Superb**

Singing here with a rare combination of instrumental-like precision and clarity and a natural vocal warmth, the some twenty-five male singers of the Monteverdi Choir produce an unearthly sound that is a listening experience in itself. Combined with period strings and natural trumpets, their voices make the heavens open and transport us to

unknown realms. But there is much more here than sheer sound: the Bach motets and the two motet-like cantatas are, of course, masterpieces, and John Eliot Gardiner's interpretations of them are exquisitely wrought.

Gardiner is not afraid to use a wide range of tempos and dynamics, though in each case these are clearly based on the meaning of the words. The articulation of the individual lines and the vocal colorations are similarly based on the sonic structure of the texts. As Bach translates the meaning of the poetry into music, so Gardiner has conveyed the same meanings through his interpretations. The marriage is perfect. *Jesu, Meine Freude* is a tone poem of faith and rejection; *Singet dem Herrn* is the epitome of contemplative joy. The unification of poetical and musical meaning in these performances is virtually unique on records, and Bach's spirit shines brightly through them. **S.L.**

J. S. BACH: Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin (BWV 1001-1006). Gidon Kremer (violin). PHILIPS 6769 053 three discs \$26.94, Ⓢ 7654 053 \$26.94.

Performance: **Inappropriate**
Recording: **Okay**

I like Gidon Kremer's playing very much in a lot of repertoire, but not much in this music. Well, let's say that the D Minor Chaconne is wonderful and that a few other things—abstract pieces such as the E Major Prelude—are strong. These pieces can take Kremer's big, gutsy approach. But mostly he is so far off the beam in style here—uncomfortable-sounding in unfamiliar surroundings—that the music doesn't flow. The dance movements never dance, the ornaments are never ornamental, repeats are never varied, the written-out doubles are played not as varied repeats but as whole separate movements, the wit and ingenuity

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of the music never sparkle but always seem labored and clumsily tragical. Perhaps I'm too harsh. Some may enjoy the sheer heartiness and gusto of the playing, and to some degree the music can take it. But we've learned too much about Baroque performance practice in the last decades to be entirely satisfied with a Russian Joachim version of Bach. *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

J. S. BACH: Suites for Solo Cello (BWV 1007-1012). Frederick Zlotkin (cello). MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 834469 three discs \$23.25 (plus \$1.60 postage and handling charge from the Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724).

Performance: **Elegant**

Recording: **Fine**

This is a wonderfully elegant performance of wonderfully elegant music. In Frederick Zlotkin's hands the cello takes on an airiness that is perfect for the dance movements. In the rhapsodic preludes, the harmonies are savored and the figurations are carefully molded. Zlotkin's ornamentation is particularly rich and bold, especially in the paired optional dances where each repetition of a section accumulates glittering variations. If music for solo cello has intimidated you, try these and enjoy. *S.L.*

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 9, in D Minor, Op. 125 ("Choral"). Jessye Norman (soprano); Brigitte Fassbaender (contralto); Plácido Domingo (tenor); Walter Berry (baritone); Concert Chorus of the Vienna State Opera; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm cond. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON ◊ 2741 009 two discs \$25.96, © 3382 009 \$25.96.

Performance: **Craggy**

Recording: **Good**

Completed in November 1980, this elaborately packaged album marks the end of the more than forty-year recording career of Karl Böhm. He died at Salzburg less than a year later, a fortnight before his seventy-seventh birthday.

Böhm's approach here to the first movement of the Ninth recalls his craggy readings of the Bruckner Fourth and Fifth Symphonies with the Dresden Staatskapelle in the middle Thirties, though, as with the Bruckner scores, he by no means neglects the lyrical aspects. He is generous with repeats in the scherzo, and if his treatment is not as fiery as some, he takes the trip at a pleasingly brisk clip. The high point of the performance is the slow movement, which is marked by great tenderness and spirituality; one senses an element of the valedictory here, and the solemn fanfares toward the close are especially imposing. The choral finale does not have here the Dionysian qualities of, say, the Bernstein or Toscanini readings, but Böhm's rock-steady pacing gives the music a monumentality that builds impressively from one climax to the next. The vocal soloists are outstanding throughout. The Vienna choral forces do their job splendidly too, though I would have liked somewhat more presence in their opening "Freude!" entries.

(Continued on page 100)

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For those who want a Beethoven Ninth steeped in the German classic tradition, this one ranks with Otto Klemperer's 1958 recording as one of high distinction. The sonics are basically excellent, though I do not find that the digital mastering has made for significant enhancement of quality. *D.H.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 1, in C Minor, Op. 68.* National Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlos Païta cond. LODIA • LOD 779 \$17.98, © LOC 779 \$17.98 (from Brilly Imports, 155 North San Vicente Boulevard, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211).

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

Carlos Païta's performance of the Brahms First is almost as impressive for what it is not as for what it is. What it is not is self-indulgent or wayward. What it is is superbly musical; it shines with integrity. This most extroverted of Brahms' symphonies seems to tempt many conductors to pull its rhythms about and distort the phrasing by way of making a "personal statement." But the work is monumental enough as Brahms wrote it without staggering the final statement of the chorale theme, and dramatic enough without gratuitous gear-shifting every few bars; it can fulfill its expressive aims fully if it is simply played as written, with minimal "interpretation" and maximal respect for the score. This seems to be Païta's approach, and in this respect his recording recalls the noble simplicity of the early microgroove versions under Eduard van Beinum and Guido Cantelli—except that within a similar framework Païta manages to project a greater sense of drama, a greater intensity, and still more lyrical expressiveness. The proportions of the work are ideally realized, and the finale comes off with really convincing grandeur precisely because of Païta's faithful adherence to what Brahms set down. No stops-and-starts, no distended phrases, no spotlighting; just sound, honest music making, very much to the glory of Brahms. The orchestra, possibly the most versatile ever assembled for recording, plays like one of the world's great ensembles; concertmaster Sidney Sax distinguishes himself in the slow movement, as do the winds throughout the symphony. The recording (made with the 3M system) is extraordinarily rich and realistic, and the pressing is what we have come to expect from Teldec. *R.F.*

CHERRY: *Humus; Sita Rama Encores* (see PENDERECKI)

CHOPIN: *Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise, Op. 22* (see MUSSORGSKY)

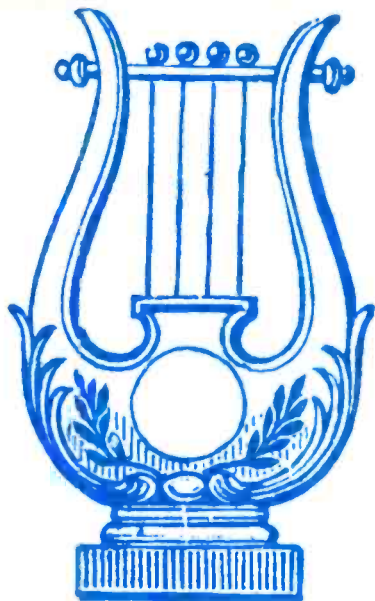
GINASTERA: *Piano Sonata* (see MUS-SORGSKY)

GRIFFES: *Collected Piano Pieces* (see Best of the Month, page 70)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HANDEL: *Concerti Grossi, Op. 3; Oboe Concerto No. 3, in G Minor.* Jürg Schaefflein, David Reichenberg (oboes); Alice
(Continued on page 103)

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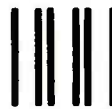
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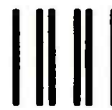
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Harnoncourt (violin); Herbert Tachezi (harpsichord, organ); Concentus Musicus of Vienna, Nikolaus Harnoncourt cond. TELEFUNKEN 6.35545 two discs \$21.96.

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

Besides the six delightful concertos of Handel's Op. 3, conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt here throws in two "extras": a second version of Concerto No. 4 and the G Minor Oboe Concerto. The latter is especially welcome since it gives us a chance to hear the excellent playing of Jürg Schaefflein, whose embellishments and divisions are a model of good taste and imagination. When he is joined by oboist David Reichenberg in the Op. 3 set, the result is a marvel of verve and ingenuity. Their articulation is joyous, their syncopation startling. In the Sixth Concerto, in which the organ is surprisingly enlisted as a soloist, Herbert Tachezi puts on a real show. Handel's figuration seems routine in most performances, but Tachezi's ornaments add sparkle and brilliance.

The orchestral sound is at once gruff and suave. Harnoncourt savors the peculiarities of each fugue subject and keeps the instruments dancing. The tempos are on the slow side, but the tongue-in-cheek compositeness of the overtures and double-time dances is contagious. All the usual Concentus Musicus mannerisms are in evidence, but somehow they are woven here into the musical fabric and become convincing. This is real music making, not merely a display of musical scholarship. *S.L.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

HINDEMITH: Concert Music for Strings and Brass, Op. 50; Morning Music for Brass; Concert Music for Piano, Brass, and Harps, Op. 49. Paul Crossley (piano); Philip Jones Brass Ensemble, Elgar Howarth cond. LONDON ● LDR 71053 \$12.98.

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

Paul Hindemith's Concert Music for Piano, Brass, and Harps, written in 1930, is actually a chamber concerto for piano. There is a movement for piano and brass, another for piano and harps, and a finale for all three. The excellent pianist here is Paul Crossley; the brass ensemble and the unidentified harpists are conducted by Elgar Howarth. The Concert Music for Brass and Strings, Op. 50, is, despite the closeness of date and title to its predecessor, a big symphonic work commissioned by the Boston Symphony for its fiftieth anniversary in 1931. And the *Morgenmusik* (*Morning Music*) was a wake-up chorale played from a tower to open a festival in a small town in North Germany for which Hindemith wrote an entire day's worth of music.

I stress these simple facts because this record comes with liner notes that are extremely uninformative and unclear. Fortunately, there is nothing unclear about the music or the playing or the recording. It is vintage Hindemith. This composer played and wrote for virtually every instrument and instrumental combination associated with the modern orchestra, but his style was particularly appropriate for brass. The early Thirties was the best period of his *Gebrauchsmusik* (music for use) style. And

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Mike Evans/Photogram Intl.

Left to right: Bernard, Szeryng, Petri, Marriner, and Holliger

All-star "Brandenburgs"

RECORDINGS of Bach's ever-popular *Brandenburg* Concertos come and go, but a new Philips set with an all-star roster of soloists and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields conducted by Neville Marriner is absolutely top-drawer. Despite their varied backgrounds, the soloists are perfectly matched not only in technical virtuosity

but also in musical style. The vexing question of old vs. modern instruments has been delicately resolved here by the unconventional use of recorders, gambas, and harpsichord together with modern flutes, violins, oboes, and trumpets. Musically, it works.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this gorgeous recording is the balance. In

the first movement of the Second Concerto, for instance, the potentially awkward combination of violin, oboe, recorder, and trumpet is so well handled that the thematic material is always clearly heard regardless of which instrument is playing which line. In the Fifth Concerto, the solo harpsichord is always up front but never aggressively forward. All of the instruments sound bright and crisp throughout, and they project Bach's intricate sound tapestry in sharp, clean colors.

In general the playing is based on a long line with seamless legato. Though one might quibble about this approach for its lack of Baroque articulation, I can only admire the unity of style and resultant clarity. My only real criticism of the set concerns the absence of a supporting cello in the slow movement of the Fifth Concerto. That aside, these *Brandenburgs* are certainly among the best in the catalog, and they reaffirm that great musicianship can carry the day even at the expense of niceties of authentic performance practice.

—Stoddard Lincoln

J. S. BACH: *Brandenburg Concertos (BWV 1046-1051)*. Henryk Szeryng (violin); Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute); Heinz Holliger (oboe); Carl Pini (violino piccolo); Michala Petri, Elisabeth Selin (recorders); George Malcolm (harpsichord); André Bernard (trumpet); others. Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner cond. PHILIPS 6769 058 two discs \$22.96, © 7654 058 \$22.96.

this is music for playing which is also (as it is not always with Hindemith) music for listening. Good music, superb performances, and an outstanding recording. Bravo! *E.S.*

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOSZKOWSKI: *Piano Concerto in E Major, Op. 59*. David Bar-Illan (piano); Bavarian Radio Orchestra, Alfredo Antonini cond. AUDIOFON 2006 \$11.98.

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

Moritz Moszkowski (1854-1925) was a celebrated piano virtuoso and teacher in his day, best known as a composer for his set of Spanish Dances and various encore favorites. The E Major Piano Concerto, in four movements, presents him in a decidedly more ambitious vein, and it certainly is a humdinger of a display piece, beginning right off with the opening solo-piano recitative. The slow movement is a kind of song without words that leads without pause into an absolutely dazzling scherzo. The finale recalls, in some respects, the corresponding movement of the Tchaikovsky G Major Concerto.

David Bar-Illan simply eats up this stuff, playing wholly as one to the manner born. Veteran Alfredo Antonini and the Bavarian Radio Symphony provide able orchestral support. The disc is expertly recorded, with

the solo piano getting special attention, and the pressing is flawless.

D.H.

MOZART: *The Magic Flute*. Lucia Popp (soprano), Pamina; Siegfried Jerusalem (tenor), Tamino; Brigitte Lindner (soprano), Papagena; Wolfgang Brendel (baritone), Papageno; Edita Gruberova (soprano), Queen of the Night; Roland Bracht (bass), Sarastro; Norman Bailey (bass), Speaker; Heinz Zednik (tenor), Monostatos; Waldemar Kmentt (tenor), First Priest; Erich Kunz (baritone), Second Priest; others. Bavarian Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Bernard Haitink cond. ANGEL DSCX-3918 three discs \$32.94, © 4X3X-3918 \$32.94.

Performance: **Good, not great**
Recording: **Very good, but . . .**

Because *The Magic Flute* is lavishly represented on records, this newest version—the eighth in stereo, not counting several interesting mono predecessors—is not likely to alter existing preferences. It is a sound and uncontroversial performance, sensibly guided by Bernard Haitink. His tempos are deliberate but not dragging, and he displays a fine ear for balances and a keen attention to orchestral detail. Dramatically, however, the performance is not the last word: little is made of dynamic contrasts, and surely the final transformation scene, as the stage becomes illuminated through the elimination

of the dark forces, should have registered a stronger impact.

The singing is generally good. Lucia Popp is exquisite as Pamina; her "*Ach, ich fühl's*" is the set's highlight. Siegfried Jerusalem is an agreeably musical Tamino, though a shade tight in the high register and occasionally off in intonation. Intonation is not one of Edita Gruberova's strong points either, but she delivers the Queen of the Night's arias with passion and fluency. Commendable too are the charming Papagena of Brigitte Lindner and the eloquent Speaker of Norman Bailey.

The remaining cast members are less distinguished. Roland Bracht is a none-too-steady Sarastro with precarious low notes. Heinz Zednik croons and whispers his music, which is not my idea of Monostatos. In the other direction, Wolfgang Brendel floods his music with excessive tone, leaving charm in short supply. Papageno is a role that seems to come naturally to Viennese singers, but, with due regard for such exceptions as Gerhard Hüsch and Hermann Prey, it seems to elude the Germans.

Angel's digital sound is generally imposing, but there are some balance miscalculations, starting with the first scene where Tamino's opening words are too far in the background. And, though the extramusical sounds are realistically captured, the last two "thunders" specified in the score have been omitted.

G.J.

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MOZART: Sonata in B-flat Major (K. 333); Sonata in C Major (K. 545); Fantasy in C Minor (K. 475); Sonata in C Minor (K. 457). Andras Schiff (piano). LONDON CS 7240 \$10.98.

Performance: **Stylish**
Recording: **Fine**

Andras Schiff, probably the best-known of the several admirable Hungarian pianists still under thirty, has already recorded all of Mozart's keyboard sonatas for London/Decca. I'm glad that the discs are being issued one at a time in the U.S. so that the performances can be evaluated and appreciated individually. This first installment is surely a total success. Schiff's feeling for clarity, so evident in his Bach recordings, and his response to the early Romantic idiom combine to serve him especially well in the monumental sequence of the two C Minor works. The music comes to life splendidly and unhurriedly, without posturing or exaggeration of any sort and with a kind of improvisatory sobriety that suits its character ideally. In contrast, Schiff's approach to the disc gives an elegant fleetness to the outer movements that simply does not allow the usual sort of sentimentalizing. Only in the slow movement of K. 333 does Schiff allow the Romanticism that is so apt in the C Minor works to make itself felt, rather less aptly, in a distended phrase or two. This might suggest that as the remaining discs appear we'll find him a bit more at home in the later works than the earlier ones, but the present release, with its stylish playing and rich, warm sound, certainly augurs well for the series.

R.F.

MUSSORGSKY: Pictures at an Exhibition. RAVEL: Jeux d'Eau. GINASTERA: Piano Sonata. Hans-Christian Wille (piano). DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON CONCOURS 2535 016 \$6.98.

Performance: **Piquant and polished**
Recording: **Very good**

MUSSORGSKY: Pictures at an Exhibition. CHOPIN: Op. 22. Paul Schenly (piano). DIGITECH ● DIGI 108 \$11.98.

Performance: **Spiffy and splashy**
Recording: **Very good**

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

MUSSORGSKY (trans. Yamashita): Pictures at an Exhibition. Kazuhito Yamashita (guitar). RCA ● ARC1-4203 \$11.98.

Performance: **Tour de force**
Recording: **Spectacular**

Mussorgsky wrote *Pictures at an Exhibition* to honor the memory of his painter friend Victor Hartmann following a posthumous exhibition of Hartmann's work in 1874. Hans-Christian Wille, at twenty-four a celebrated prize winner in competitions all over the world, manages to convey all the color and complexity of Mussorgsky's musical sketches with a good deal of delicacy and a minimum of flashy exaggeration for effect. Only in the concluding *Great Gate at Kiev* does he show what he can do when he really lets himself go. He also delivers a

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beautifully shaded version of Ravel's *Jeux d'Eau*, a performance that reminded me happily of what Alfred Cortot did with that shimmering piece on an old pre-electrical recording. The program ends with a challenging sonata by the contemporary Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera that is replete with strongly accented South American sounds and rhythms and features some arrestingly syncopated passages. Here too, the fleet-fingered Wille certainly rises to the occasion.

A far more extroverted and showy approach to Mussorgsky's *Pictures* is taken by Paul Schenly, another young pianist and one with slashing power to spare. Schenly is not content to color those old castles, market places, and playing children in pastel shades; he splashes on extremely vivid sound colors, which the digital recording makes seem even more vivid, sometimes too much so. This young virtuoso's swashbuckling style is more appropriate to Chopin's *Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise*, which is delivered with so much energy and agility that I scarcely missed the usual instrumental accompaniment. Schenly can sound like a whole orchestra when he puts his mind—and his fingers—to it.

A third new version of Mussorgsky's *Pictures* features Japanese guitarist Kazuhito Yamashita, who must have at least three hands at his disposal to accomplish the tour de force he pulls off here. It's hard to know which to admire most—the ingenious transcription of so ambitious a piano score for solo guitar (from eighty-eight strings to six!), the astonishing virtuosity of the playing, or the uncanny realism of the digital recording. Listen to that oxcart rolling along in *Bydlo*, attend to the masterly counterpoint accomplished by this nimble guitarist's magical fingers as the solemn, rich old Jew Samuel Goldenberg discusses matters of grave import with his shrill, shoulder-shrugging compatriot Shmuyle, succumb to the fancy fingerwork as the witch Baba Yaga leaps about in *The Hut on Fowl's Legs*, and you might be willing to trade in your latest spectacular recording of the Stokowski—or even the Ravel—orchestral transcription just for a couple of minutes of Yamashita. The price is high, of course, for a recording of solo guitar, but I dare say you'll find it's worth it. P.K.

OFFENBACH: *La Vie Parisienne* (abridged). Danielle Chlostawa (soprano), Gabrielle; Renée Auphan (soprano), Metella; Danièle Millet (soprano), La Baronne; Michel Roux (baritone), Le Baron; Jacques Trigeau (baritone), Le Brésilien; Patrick Minard (tenor), Gardefeu; Jacques Tayles (baritone), Bobinet; others. Chorus and Orchestra of the Concerts Colonne, Laurent Petitgirard cond. PETERS INTERNATIONAL PLE 138/9 two discs \$17.96.

Performance: **Lively**
Recording: **Unspectacular**

This recording is based on the 1980 Paris revival of Offenbach's engaging operetta. A small orchestra of forty-two musicians is used, but the annotations inform us that Offenbach had only eighteen in the pit for the première at the Palais-Royal in 1866. The singers here display slender operetta voices, but they form a nice ensemble, sing in tune, and enunciate their parts superbly.

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Meilhac and Halévy, the librettists-to-be of *Carmen*, concocted a plot for Offenbach that has little cohesive story line but an abundance of lively satire and textual and musical wit. Much of the dialogue is missing in the streamlined version here; the Angel set (SBLX-3839) offers more music, a fuller orchestration, operatic voices, and a far richer sound. But it is an advantage of the present abridgment that the selections are banded and the delectable highlights thus easier to find. No libretto is supplied, however, and I noticed some pressing flaws on side two of my review copy. G.J.

PENDERECKI: *Actions for Free Jazz Orchestra*. New Eternal Rhythm Orchestra, Krzysztof Penderecki cond. **CHERRY:** *Humus—the Life Exploring Force; Sita Rama Encores*. Don Cherry (pocket-trumpet, flutes, vocals); New Eternal Rhythm Orchestra. EVEREST 3484 \$5.98.

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

This live recording comes from the 1971 Donaueschingen Festival and from the very heyday of the intersection between free jazz and avant-garde aleatory music. The New Eternal Rhythm Orchestra is—or was—a band made up of outstanding American, English, German, Dutch, Belgian, Norwegian, and Polish jazz musicians. Don Cherry's *Humus* is a loose collection of themes and thematic elements, mostly from Asia and Africa, that are brought in one by one in the most informal manner and picked up on by the musicians in an atmosphere of good spirits and mellowness.

Krzysztof Penderecki's presence in the midst of these high jinks might seem a little surprising, but, in fact, the distinction between avant-garde jazz and a lot of new non-jazz has been blurred for a long time now. The jazz tradition has accorded more importance to the creative contributions of the players than those of the composer, but, with the advent of so-called aleatory music and free improvisation on the new-music scene lo these many years ago, even that difference has tended to disappear. Actually, the Penderecki and the Cherry pieces here have a lot in common. Penderecki also gives music to the musicians—in this case a written-out score—and then lets them take off from it. The difference is one of tone. Penderecki is organized, serious, full of intention; Cherry is playful, off-the-cuff, messy, nitty-gritty, spiritual. But this is more a difference in personality between the two men (and a distinction between an Old World attitude and a New World one) than a real difference in genre.

Listeners who like Cherry's sloppy big-band idea of ecumenical fun may not take so quickly to Penderecki's long-bearded idea of a free jazz band, but those are the risks. Seems like people were more willing to take those risks ten years ago. A friendly word of warning: my review copy had reversed disc labels. E.S.

RAVEL: *Jeux d'Eau* (see MUSSORGSKY)

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

REGER: *Serenade in G Major, Op. 141a; Serenade in D Major, Op. 77a*. Peter-Lukas Graf (flute); Sándor Vegh (violin); Rainer

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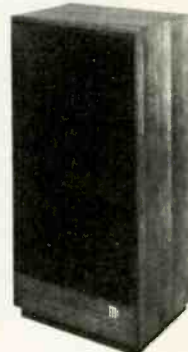
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Moog (viola). CLAVES D 8104 \$11.98 (from Brilly Imports, 155 North San Vicente Boulevard, Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211).

Performance: **Deft**
Recording: **Lovely**

If you think Max Reger is a heavy, dull, and pedantic note-spinner, try the delicate, exquisite G Major Serenade for flute, violin, and viola. It sparkles, it delights. Nor is it some work of youthful exuberance; it dates from 1915, only a year before his death. With its lovely and highly original slow movement and witty, perfectly conceived fast outer sections, it is a masterpiece. Its companion piece on this disc, composed eleven years earlier, is a tad more serious in

tone but also beautifully written, and neither overstays its visit at all.

The success of these works is aided in no small part by the deft performances and the fine recording. For once Reger gets the kind of attention he should get. *E.S.*

SAINT-SAËNS: *Symphony No. 3, in C Minor, Op. 78 ("Organ")*. Frederick Minger (organ); Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Sergiu Comissiona cond. VANGUARD ① VA-25008 \$12.98, © CVA-25008 \$12.98.

Performance: **Fiery and flashy**
Recording: **Spectacular**

Saint-Saëns' Third Symphony was actually his fifth. He suppressed two of the other

four, all written by the time he was twenty-four. The earlier works may be less ambitious and astonishing than the familiar Third, but it would be nice if some of them would get a little of the attention lavished on it. Sometimes it seems that every organist and orchestra in the world is determined to add yet another recording of the *Organ Symphony* to the catalog (I counted sixteen in the current Schwann). In terms of performance, I suspect Toscanini did all that could be done for this work years ago (too bad his sensational RCA recording is no longer available), but in terms of sound many of the later versions have been landmarks. Although there are mightier symphony orchestras than the Baltimore and more celebrated organists than Frederick Minger, under Sergiu Comissiona's fiery guidance their new digital recording seems to my ears the equal of any of its current competitors. Unlike some other recent recordings, the organ and orchestra were recorded together, not mixed after the fact, and additional resonance is provided by the locale, the National Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. *P.K.*

SCHUMANN: *Violin Sonatas: No. 1, in A Minor, Op. 105; No. 2, in D Minor, Op. 121*. Ronald Gorevic (violin); Cary Lewis (piano). CRYSTAL S131 \$8.98.

Performance: **Communicative**
Recording: **Rich and bright**

The Schumann violin sonatas have fared well in all their recent recordings, perhaps because the relatively few violinists who bother to record them really love and understand them. Ronald Gorevic, a youngish Briton now living in the U.S., surely has the measure of them, and in Cary Lewis he has as sympathetic a keyboard partner as anyone could ask. They benefit, too, from a somewhat richer and brighter recording than Desto gave Jaime and Ruth Laredo (DC 6442) or than Vox provided for Zvi Zeitlin (one of Gorevic's teachers) and Barry Snyder (SVBX-5111). However, the Laredos perform the intermezzo from the "F-A-E" Sonata in addition to these two works, and the Zeitlin/Snyder performances are part of an economical three-disc set of Schumann's chamber music made up for the most part of lesser-known works for unusual combinations of instruments. So . . . you pay your money and you take your choice. *R.F.*

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Symphony No. 1, in F Major, Op. 10; Symphony No. 9, in E-flat Major, Op. 70*. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Haitink cond. LONDON ① LDR 71017 \$12.98, © LDR5 71017 \$12.98.

Performance: **Highly charged**
Recording: **Very good**

SHOSTAKOVICH: *Symphony No. 1, in F Major, Op. 10; Symphony No. 9, in E-flat Major, Op. 70*. Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Walter Susskind cond. VOX CUM LAUDE VCL 9003 \$8.98, © VCS 9003 \$8.98.

Performance: **Good to excellent**
Recording: **Good**

There are pluses and minuses for both these new records. Bernard Haitink's recording

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has the advantage of the splendid immediacy of sound provided by London's excellent digital mastering, but the late Walter Susskind offers a distinctly more satisfying pacing of the interlinked final three movements of the Ninth Symphony, in which Haitink's sharply defined tempo contrasts tend to throw one off a bit. One might also question Haitink's tempo contrast between the outer sections and trio of the scherzo in No. 1. On the other hand, his pacing of the opening movement in No. 9 captures every bit of its delectable impertinence, and the London Philharmonic winds accomplish prodigies of virtuosity in the presto of the same work. Still, I feel that Susskind does better with the sweet-and-sour aspects of the finale.

Although the production team of Mark Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz did a very decent recording job in Cincinnati, it doesn't quite match what the London disc has to offer, nor does the Cincinnati orchestra itself sound in the same league here as the Londoners. My own preference for No. 1 remains the composer-supervised Ormandy recording on Columbia and for No. 9 either the Kondrashin on Melodiya/Angel or the reissued Koussevitsky on RCA. *D.H.*

SMETANA: *String Quartet No. 1, in E Minor ("From My Life")*. SUK: *String Quartet No. 1, in B-flat Major, Op. 11*. Bohemian String Quartet. PARNASSUS ® 1001 \$10 (plus \$1.50 postage and handling charge from Parnassus Records, 2188 Stoll Road, Saugerties, N.Y. 12477).

Performance: **Historic sldes**
Recording: **1928**

The Bohemian String Quartet—really the Czech Quartet but always known abroad by its German name—was founded in Prague in 1892 and remained active until the mid-1930s. When these recordings were made in 1928 the violinists were still, incredibly, the original ones: Karel Hoffman and the composer Josef Suk. The violist, Jiri Herold, and the cellist, Ladislav Zelenka, were long-time members too. The group's repertoire was wide, but, not surprisingly, they specialized in the music of Dvořák, Smetana, Janáček, and Suk, many of whose works they premiered or first brought to the outside world.

Parnassus Records is a company that specializes in reissues of early and historic recordings, and this one is certainly of considerable interest. After all, Suk himself plays the violin in his quartet, and the short, vigorous finale performed here is different from that in the published score. But the Smetana performance—of a work only sixteen years older than the ensemble playing it—is of even greater interest.

As John D. Wiser points out in his album notes, the technical basis for the legato/melodic style of playing this music is the portamento or slide. This way of playing the violin was not limited just to Czech or Slavic music but was completely pervasive from at least the late nineteenth century (perhaps a good bit earlier) until well into the first decades of the twentieth. The technique has gone so far out of fashion today, however, that contemporary listeners may be put off; yet, as Wiser notes, the effect is just the way these composers must have imagined their string music would sound. Just listen to Suk and his companions in his

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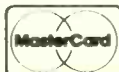
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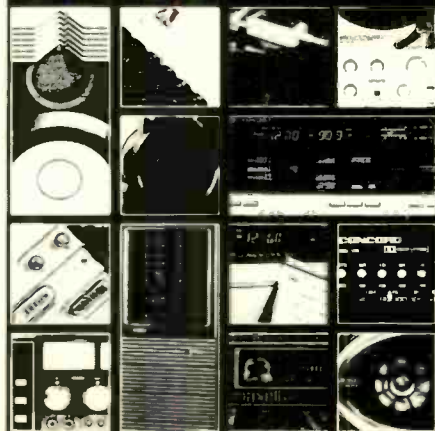
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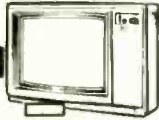
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slow movement: if that isn't authentic, what is? Personally, I'm in favor of a revival of good old-fashioned portamento in modern violin playing—and there are signs that it is already happening.

The case for the old style would be made a little more strongly here if the quartet were just a bit more accurate in intonation. The dry old sound—although serviceable and nicely cleaned up—is quite merciless in its emaciated, close, focused quality. No fancy blend here: everything can be heard very clearly. The performances' charm and musical rewards are provided by the quartet's tightness of ensemble, rhythmic sense, togetherness in rubato, and use of phrasing, articulation, and strong coloration as well as a general expressive liveliness. **E.S.**

SUK: String Quartet No. 1, in B-flat Major, Op. 11 (see SMETANA)

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ONE of the most impressive features of the various concertos by Joaquín Rodrigo—perhaps even more impressive than his gift for infectious tunes and piquant coloring—is his thoroughly idiomatic exploitation of the solo instruments. This feature is no less apparent in the two unfamiliar concertos offered on a new Angel recording than in the wildly popular *Concierto de Aranjuez* for guitar, and the orchestral writing is remarkably imaginative as well. Anyone coming to these works for the first time must wonder how they could have remained so little known all this time. The "Summer Concerto" for violin was written in 1943, just four years after the *Concierto de Aranjuez*, and the Cello Concerto appeared in 1949. Both works show Rodrigo at the very top of his form in terms of creative inspiration, and both give the respective soloists the most attractive opportunities for lyrical display and witty asides. This record was my first exposure to the acclaimed twenty-three-year-old British cellist Robert Cohen, and it is easy to hear what all the fuss is about: he plays like a god. Agustín León Ara is similarly appealing in his concerto, and Enrique Bátiz, as always, has the orchestra brilliantly in hand. The digitally mastered sound is very natural, and the pressing is exemplary. This disc is a winner in every respect.

—Richard Freed

RODRIGO: Concierto de Estío for Violin and Orchestra; Concierto en Modo Galante for Cello and Orchestra. Agustín León Ara (violin); Robert Cohen (cello); London Symphony Orchestra, Enrique Bátiz cond. ANGEL DS-37877 \$10.98, © 4ZS-37877 \$10.98.

ries; Dance of the Blessed Spirits. Handel: Solomon: The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba. Berenice: Overture, Minuet, and Gigue. Water Music: Air and Hornpipe. Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood cond. L'OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 594 \$10.98.

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

Christopher Hogwood must have had two purposes in mind when he chose the repertoire for this delightful record. First, to present in their original scorings, with period instruments and stylistically correct performances, popular pieces that are usually heard in souped-up versions. Second, to display the sonorities of various instruments in an orchestral context. The result is a splendid anthology that makes a perfect introduction for listeners wishing to be initiated into the joys of authentic performance practice on early instruments.

The performance here of Pachelbel's Canon cleans the ears of meaningless string vibrato and shapeless legato. The Gluck dances astonish with the fury of the full ensemble and the contrasting sweetness of the old flute. The Vivaldi and Handel pieces bring in the sounds of oboes, militant brass, and Baroque festive joy. The Academy's strong performances throughout should dis-

(Continued on page 113)

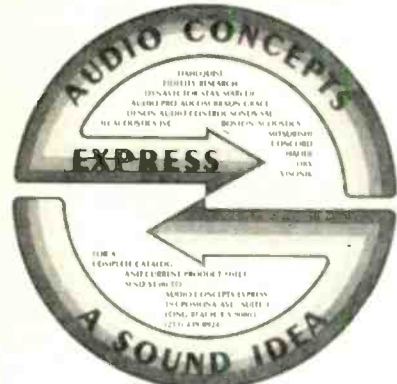
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Performance: **Gutsy, communicative**
Recording: **Warm and clear**

Lili Kraus celebrated her seventy-seventh birthday on April 2, but she obviously has no more intention than Arthur Rubinstein before her of ever assuming an "elder statesman" role in her music making. She has never believed, of course, in such a thing as a "feminine" approach, nor ever felt that the music of any of the four composers represented here was to be regarded in terms of gossamer fragility. There's no mincing reticence in her confrontations with Bach and Mozart, no condescending smoothing-over in her Haydn and Schubert. The playing is, as always, gutsy, involved, and urgently communicative. The program makes more sense than many a collection of unrelated pieces by one composer, and the recording, digitally mastered from a four-track analog tape, presents a comfortable balance of warmth and clarity. R.F.

BOYD NEEL: A Concert for Strings. Wolf-Ferrari: *School for Fathers: Intermezzo*. Collins: *Vanity Fair*. Bizet: *L'Arlésienne Suite No. 1: Adagietto*. Dela: *Adagio; Dans Tous les Cantons*. Rimsky-Korsakov: *Flight of the Bumble Bee*. Wires: *Serenade for String Orchestra, Op. 11: March*. Gibbs: *Dusk*. Mendelssohn: *Spinning Song*. Volkman: *Serenade No. 2 for Strings: Waltz*. Hart House Orchestra, Boyd Neel cond. VOX/TURNABOUT CTC-32007 \$4.98.

Performance: **Luscious lollpops**
Recording: **Excellent**

Some years after founding the eighteen-member Boyd Neel Chamber Orchestra in England and leading it in performances praised all over the world, the late Boyd Neel emigrated to Canada, and in 1954 he started the Hart House Orchestra in Toronto. To judge from this recording, the group played with the same high polish and discipline that characterized the British ensemble. The program here ranges from such chestnuts as Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumble Bee* to a delightful march from the *Serenade for Strings* by Dag Wires, atmospheric pieces by Maurice Dela, and Anthony Collins' melodic miniature *Vanity Fair*. It's a lighthearted, lightweight program, but everything is played so splendidly that it adds up to a thoroughly satisfying listening experience. P.K.

NEW YORK CORNET AND SACBUT ENSEMBLE: German Brass Music, 1500-1700. Schmelzer: *Music for a Carousel*.

Pezel: Suite. Speer: *Sonata for Four Sacbuts; Sonata for Trumpet and Three Sacbuts*. Reiche: *Fugas Nos. 4 and 18*. Haussmann: *Pavane and Galliard*. Praetorius: *Ballet, Spagnoletta; Schützenkönig; Three Settings of "Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ."* Franck: *Intrada*. Isaac: *A la Bataglia*. Stolz: *Melodias in the Hypophrygian and Mixolydian Modes*. Priuli: *Canzona a 6*. Brade: *Canzona a 5; Pavane and Galliard*. New York Cornet and Sacbut Ensemble. TITANIC Ti-97 \$9.

Performance: **Uneven**
Recording: **Full-bodied**

This album gets off to a rather lackluster start with Schmelzer's *Music for a Carousel*. The rhythms in the two *courante* sections are flabby, and the whole performance sounds tentative. Something of the same quality pervades the rest of side one. On flipping the disc over, however, all is changed. Brilliance and precision characterize the rousing rendition of Isaac's *A la Bataglia*, and in the patchwork canzonas the ensemble's handling of the tricky rhythmic and tempo changes is masterly. Both the music and the playing reach their greatest heights with William Brade's sumptuous *Pavane* and *Galliard*.

Despite the unevenness of the music and performance on this record, it will be of great interest to brass buffs. It is a fine collection of old German music and displays its different facets very well. S.L.

(Continued on page 114)

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Two new CRI releases not only offer some attractive recent American music but also document the remarkable rise of performance groups devoted to new music. One disc features the Orchestra of the 20th Century in works by Robert Moevs and Jacob Druckman, the other the Da Capo Chamber Players playing works commissioned for the group's tenth anniversary concert in Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center.

The Orchestra of the 20th Century was founded by Arthur Weisberg in 1975 and has continued to be active in the performance of new music, mostly American. The conjunction of circumstances that brought about its new album is too curious not to be recounted. Robert Moevs, born in Wisconsin in 1920, studied with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. But his Concerto Grosso for Piano, Percussion, and Orchestra, the work offered here, was conceived in 1960, finished in 1968, and won the Stockhausen International Composition Prize in Italy in 1978. As you might imagine, it does not sound like a product of the Boulangerie but is right up there with the serialist avant-garde.

But that's not the end of the tale. Wanda Maximilien, the excellent pianist in the Concerto Grosso, is from Haiti, and the record was subsidized by His Excellency, Jean-Claude Duvalier, the President-for-Life of Haiti, as well as by grants from Rutgers University, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the New York State Council on the Arts. Subsidy these days, I guess, is where you find it.

The piece on the other side of the disc, Jacob Druckman's *Windows*, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1972 and has been played extensively in America and Europe. It took only ten years to get it recorded. *Windows* also belongs to the general category of serial music, but it is full of references to more traditional styles and is on the whole much freer, wittier, more flexible, more articulated and flowing than its disc partner—and thus more engaging. But both pieces are worth your attention, especially in these excellent performances and recordings.

All records released by CRI (Composers Recordings, Inc.) must be fully subsidized up front. Even if the performers donate

their services, there is still the not inconsiderable cost of production. The Da Capo Chamber Players' disc carries the imprints of the National Endowment, the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund (it has just gone out of business), and the Ditson Fund of Columbia University. The original commissions were underwritten by the New York State Council on the Arts, the Meet the Composer program, and the Fromm Foundation. One wonders what will be the future of such projects in the Reagan era.

In tribute to the group's name, all the pieces here make some kind of reference to the idea of repetition—long anathema in new music but now very much on its way back. The most obvious example is Philip Glass' two-chord *Modern Love Waltz*, charmingly arranged for the Da Capo Players by Robert Moran from a solo piece originally contributed to Moran's "The Waltz Project" (the piano original is on Nonesuch 79011, which I produced). The other works range from Joan Tower's amusing retakes of Stravinsky to the warmth of Joseph Schwantner, the wit and wisdom of George Perle, and the austerities of Shulamit Ran and Charles Wuorinen. All are very well played. The recording is close and clear, less wide and warm than on the orchestral record.

—Eric Salzman

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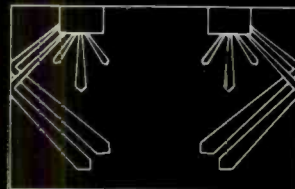
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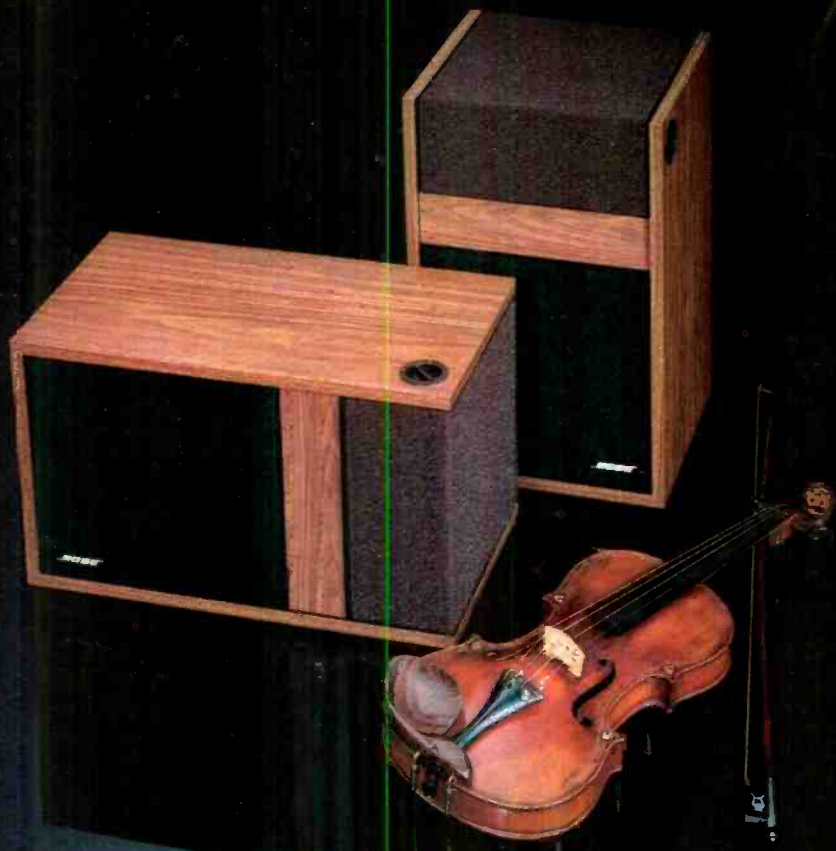
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Kossfire and Dyna*Mite. An explosive duo from Koss.



What a duo the Kossfire/210 and Dyna*Mite M/80 loudspeakers make. Each is an explosion of sound and design innovation that sets them apart from all other speakers in their class.

Take the 4-driver Kossfire loudspeaker, for example. Kossfire's unique dual tweeter design doubles the power handling capability over the all-important treble range while virtually eliminating distortion. There's a big 12-inch woofer and a 5-inch midrange. Even a built-in automatic circuit breaker. And it's all wrapped up in a beautiful pecan veneer, 80-liter, cabinet. No wonder the Kossfire/210 is the first loudspeaker to live up to its promise.

Or take the Koss Dyna*Mite M/80 loudspeakers. Just over 12-inches high, the Dyna*Mite M/80 features a unique 3-driver system with perfect mirror-image performance whether it's standing up or lying down. Dual 4 1/2-inch woofers and a 1-inch dome tweeter turn any music into a dynamite experience. And the Dyna*Mite's natural, hand-rubbed walnut veneer cabinet make it as beautiful to look at as it is to listen to ... on your bookshelves or in your van.

Ask your audio dealer to show you the explosive duo from Koss. We think you'll find them both a dynamite experience. And that's a promise!

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KOSS® Stereophones/Loudspeakers/K4DS Digital Delay System
hearing is believing

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