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 Devices
 Can Alter
 Your Room's
 Acoustical
 Shape



introduction

Fisher 202,

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So it may surprise you to learn how good the 202's AM section is.

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Sounds more like FM than AM specifications, right? That's exactly what we had in mind.

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100 watts is a lot of power for \$249.95.

Technology has brought us a long way. We can remember (and it wasn't so long ago) when even the top receivers made didn't have as much power as the new \$249.95 Fisher 202.

Power is important, not just to blast the neighbors, but to drive today's watt-eating speakers at any volume level without strain.

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IM distortion is a low 1.2%.

And the power bandwidth includes everything humans are capable of hearing: 25 to 20,000 Hz.

All of which merely proves that the 202's power is *usable* power.

The controls.

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Baxandall controls, though they're more expensive than the simple attenuators most low-priced (and many high-priced) receivers use, are a much better way of boosting or cutting back bass and treble.

Besides bass and treble controls, the 202 has an illuminated computer-type function switch (AM, FM, phono, and two auxiliary functions), a volume control, balance control, speaker selector switch. And there's a loudness contour switch, FM muting switch, stereo/mono switch and a tape-monitor switch.

In the back are jacks for almost every function conceivable.

The appearance.

Some people think the new Fisher 202 is the most beautiful component Fisher has ever produced, regardless of price.

Now we're not casting aspersions on the rest of the Fisher line, which has been widely imitated.

But the 202, with its black-out panel and lighted dial pointer, has a certain simplicity about it. (We think it's gorgeous, but perhaps we're biased.)

Technology defeats inflation.

As prices rise, it's become more important for hi-fi companies to spend time and money on research. Because only research will provide less expensive ways to achieve good sound in the home.

The Fisher 202 is the best example of this we know.

The Fisher®

Now, with the of the Fis \$249.95 buys more the history o

In an inflationary economy, technological progress is the sole remaining antidote to rising prices.

Your dollar buys less meat, bread or coffee than ever before—but more penicillin and more airplane miles. Also, luckily for you, more high fidelity.

We sincerely believe that the new Fisher 202 stereo receiver represents a particularly significant milestone in this deflationary evolution of technology. Never has so much high-quality electronics been packed into such a complete package for so little money. The search for low-cost solid-state performance has finally paid off in a big way.

The Fisher 202 has an incredibly good FM tuner section.

Modern technology has permitted tremendous improvements in FM reception, even in a low-priced receiver like the Fisher 202.

Years ago only the best tuners around had a sensitivity rating as low as the new Fisher's 2.5 microvolts. (That's sensitive enough to pull in those weak, distant signals, and make them sound like strong, local stations.)

Only the most expensive equipment had a selectivity figure as good as the new Fisher's 42 dB's. (It will pull in that weak, distant station, even if it happens to be located right next to a powerful, local station on the dial.)

It's not only important for a receiver to bring in a weak station, adjacent to a strong signal, it's also important to be able to reject a weak signal when it turns up at the same point on the dial as a strong one. The figure that measures this is capture ratio. And in the 202, it's only 3 dB. (The lower the number, the better.)

Signal-to-noise ratio is 60 dB. Not many receivers under \$300 have a figure like that. (For all practical purposes, the figure, 60 dB, means that you can't hear any hum, noise, etc. the tuner itself might generate.)

Now, a word about image rejection. Remember how in a lot of the old-fashioned equipment you heard the same station at several different points on the FM dial? Well, the Fisher 202 has eliminated that problem. (Image rejection: 50 dB.)

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Now, for the AM section.

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VOL. 20 NO. 7 JULY 1970

music and musicians

Leonard Marcus A VIDEO ONSLAUGHT?

Robert C. Marsh, Alex Segal, Michael Steinberg

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A Video Onslaught?

Palma, Mallorca, Spain

DEAR READER:

In this lovely, bloody city, where nearly every building over thirty years old appears to have been built for battle, where these days more Scandinavian visitors than Spanish natives are in evidence, where one soon becomes conscious of the almost total absence of Volkswagens among the jam of cars (perhaps Franco never forgave Hitler for losing), and where taxi meters go up by pennies instead of dimes, the international music industry chose to hold its recent second annual conclave. Although many topics were discussed, one stood out by the sheer force of the powers behind it: the coming onslaught of audio-video playbacks and recorders. And I mean onslaught; within two days in Palma four separate systems were presented, each in color, each in stereo, and each incompatible with the others.

Columbia's system, on film, has no home recording facility. The others, tape systems, do retain a potential for home recording. In demonstrations here, all three tape systems looked to me better than almost any TV programs I have seen received by ordinary transmission. Each system uses some sort of cartridge, all the apparatus is simple to use, and for the players at least (supposed to be "workable" with "any" color TV set), all have broken the "\$500 barrier."

But there the similarity ends. Sony's system takes what looks like a large audio cassette, holding ¾-inch-wide tape, which has a playing capacity of up to 100 minutes, in anticipation of operas and movies. The player is expected to cost about \$400 and a camera \$100. Target date is near the end of 1971. The Philips system is also fed by a cassette, although it doesn't look like one: the two reels are superimposed, not side by side. It takes ½-inch-wide tape, is expected to cost about \$350 for the player, and with both camera and tuner, about \$550. It too will presumably be available by the tail end of 1971. An earlier attack was announced by the Japan Victor Company, whose system, first introduced last year, is due to hit the market by the end of this year. JVC's cartridge contains only one reel, with the other in the machine, and thus has to be rewound when you want to eject it. The tape is ½-inch wide and its player will be marketed for "under \$500."

In short, for the potential consumer the situation is a disaster.

Can you imagine owning a phonograph that could play RCA's records but not Columbia's? Or an audio tape recorder that could play Ampex' prerecorded tapes but not Capitol's? That's what will happen to this new medium if some collaboration doesn't take place.

But what's this? In Europe, Sony and Philips are holding discussions? And they're chatting with Telefunken and Grundig and others? And in Tokyo, JVC and Sony and Matsushita (Panasonic) are having meetings? And Ampex' man in Palma is flying to California to discuss the crisis with the powers that be out there? And all the rumors center around "compatibility"?

As an optimist, I hope these rumors are true; at any rate, until they become true I certainly wouldn't buy any of the equipment.

Speaking of tape, next month is our annual tape issue. In it we will tackle such timely topics as **HOW TO MATCH YOUR TAPE TO YOUR RECORDER**, including a chart showing which tape, or type of tape, best suits which unit; **CAN YOUR PRESENT RECORDER HANDLE SURROUND SOUND?** (yours might be adaptable); and **CASSETTE, CARTRIDGE, OPEN REEL—WHICH SHOULD YOU BUY?** Our continuing discography for August will be **BEETHOVEN'S CONCERTOS—A CRITICAL APPRAISAL**.

Leonard Marcus

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letters

The Question of Quadriphony

I cannot agree with your rather bitchy damning of the potential of four-channel sound ["Too Hot to Handle," April 1970]. Though I'm sure all your advertisers stuck with large inventories of two-channel tape machines pray to God you're dead right.

All reports have it that the new four-channel processes have their technical problems to be resolved, but anyone with any respect for American technology knows they will be, and before long. Reports, too, suggest that at their best, the new recordings once again are demonstrably better, with something of the same jump in realism that stereo was over mono.

And while you suggest that equipment bought today can be used for four-channel playback sometime in the future, I've not found that in any long-run sense, "side-riding" equipment ever worked very well. You need an integrated four-channel preamp driving a four-channel, separate power amplifier, 40-60 watts per channel, all channels driven, and not "music power" ratings either.

To the degree that your answer suggests that the phase-over to four channels will cover a period of time—in the manner that mono discs, duplicating stereo releases, hung around far too long—you are probably right. Just never permit yourself to think that a defensive desperation born of the current market can hold back the tide.

*E. D. Hoaglan
Omaha, Neb.*

Keeping Ludwig Clean

I was deeply upset by the letters from H. L. Smith and George C. Stamps that appeared in the April issue complaining about Beethoven's obscene language—particularly the one by Mr. Stamps who took exception to your "idolatry of Jews, Negroes, and Russians." Reminders that portions, however small, of our country's population have ill will toward any of their fellow mankind, be it for different citizenship, religious or political views, or racial background, are always unwelcome.

I would not like to see HF/MA lose income simply because of honesty in translating Beethoven. To make up for one canceled subscription, I would like to order a three-year gift subscription for a friend.

I have never noticed idolatry of any religious, racial, or national group in your pages. I have consistently noticed admiration for many people on the musical scene: composers, conductors, performers, recording engineers, and even management, whose combined work makes up our universal musical culture and whose individual work is worthy of admiration.

*David L. Klepper
Downers Grove, Ill.*

I must say that I found Mr. Stamps's letter far more objectionable and far more obscene than Beethoven's remark. If Mr. Stamps is such an admirer of the composer, I fear that he has picked the wrong man as his hero, for Beethoven had no use for people of his ilk. Perhaps he ought to switch his admiration to someone more appropriate—may I suggest Adolf Hitler.

*Oswald Blatt
Woodbridge, Va.*

Hooray to the editor for responding so intelligently to these unbelievable manifestos of prejudice and lack of insight.

*Lawrence Friedman
Clinton, New York*

I thoroughly enjoyed your superb article on Beethoven's life and times, obscenities and all!

I agree with Beethoven: Napoleon was a Fecal-Faced French Fascist.

*Michael O. Hill
Beardstown, Ill.*

I can't help wondering about your readers who object to Beethoven's language. Would one dare tell them about Shakespeare? I believe he used an occasional obscene word too.

The aim of HIGH FIDELITY is to tell it exactly like it is. If your Puritan reader can't stand the heat, tell him to keep out of the kitchen.

*Duane Norburg
Salina, Kansas*

Profanity has always been the poetry of the common people, the frustrated people, the people who try to get things done against overwhelming odds. An expression such as "*Scheisskerl*," when resulting from suitable provocation, is quite understandable. Beethoven, like most of us who struggle against odds in a world of fools, frequently felt the overpowering need to do his righteous indignation poetic justice.

*Arthur Boehm
Riverside, Ill.*

The Budapest Quartet

Except for its recordings, American audiences will never again hear the Budapest String Quartet with the musicians who brought the group to pre-eminence and sustained its reputation in more than three decades of concert appearances in this country. Few who followed the career of this ensemble, and the changes in the musical climate during those years, can regard its contribution as less than a substantial page of recent musical history.

Many, indeed, must feel that they learned the quartet literature from the Budapest, and especially from the Budapest recordings. At first there were 78s for HMV, Victor, and Columbia, and later a series on Columbia long-play and stereo discs. The present widespread pop-

Continued on page 8

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

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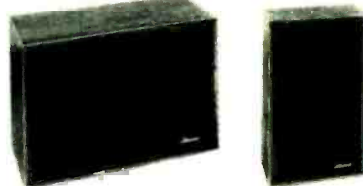


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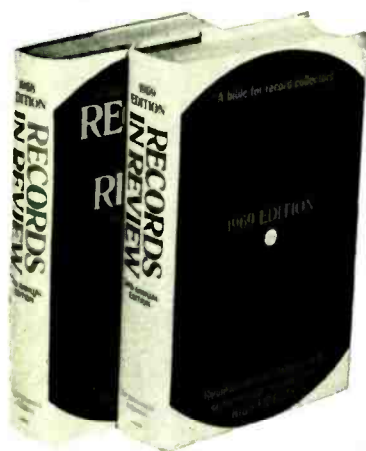
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LETTERS

Continued from page 6

ularity of the Beethoven quartets, especially the late quartets, must be due in a very large part to the pioneering represented by these Budapest recordings. This is written away from my files, but as I recall, the complete Beethoven cycles on long-play and stereo were prefaced by a nearly complete quartet edition on 78, an almost heroic achievement for that period when the potential audience for such music was unknown.

For those who heard the Quartet live with some regularity, the Budapest records could never rival the live performances. But like the faulty Toscanini discs they were treasured for their interpretive force. Naturally when the members of the Quartet were younger and in better health, their performances reflected these things; but if time brought some geriatric problems it also brought refinements of interpretation of the type that comes from long association with a major work.

I confess I am appalled by Robert P. Morgan's treatment of this group and its recordings in his April discography of the Beethoven quartets. The stereo complete edition is dismissed in nine lines of type as "the least satisfactory of all" as if this were some obscure group of unequivocal mediocrity. His reasons for this judgment are quite difficult to formulate from his compressed remarks, but they appear to be based primarily on matters of instrumental and engineering technique. Later he tells us that the mono and stereo versions of the Op. 18 quartets suffer "from similar defects," but again his emphasis seems to go first to technical matters. I find this very strange, because this is music in which interpretive questions are certainly equally important as technical matters, and superficial, yet note-perfect, performances are not uncommon.

Mr. Morgan may well reply that I am a notorious Budapest admirer (with past quotation from this magazine to prove it). Indeed, I have been listening to this Quartet, live and on records, for at least twenty-five years, and I gladly admit that I have the highest respect for its artistic achievements. Certainly Mr. Morgan is under no obligation to share these opinions, but out of regard for the musical contributions of these men, living and dead, if he is to dismiss their recordings so thoroughly from his consideration, he owes us some further explanations for his conclusions.

Robert C. Marsh
Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Morgan replies: Since Mr. Marsh allows that I am "under no obligation to share his opinions," it would seem that his objections result largely from a misconception of the nature or purpose of my quartet discography. My aim was simply to consider all the available recordings, judging them exclusively by present-day performance standards, determined by the dictates of my own present-day ears (which, incidentally, hear quite differently from the way they did

Continued on page 10

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

How did KLH convince the skeptics?

The KLH Model Forty-One, a three-speed deck with the Dolby Audio Noise Reduction System †, recording and playing back at 3¾ in/s, ¼ track, was pitted against a Professional Studio Deck operating at 15 in/s, ½ track. The source—in this case truly an "Acid Test"—was a second generation, 15 in/s, master tape, fully "Dolbyized," played back through the Professional Dolby A-301. Next to a "live" performance, there is nothing more demanding or difficult to duplicate.

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CIRCLE 26 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

LETTERS

Continued from page 8

ten years ago and will undoubtedly continue to change in the future). Thus the information supplied in the first three paragraphs of Mr. Marsh's letter seems totally irrelevant to my article. From my point of view—or at least the one I assumed for the purposes of that article—all of this background information was quite beside the point; all that I concerned myself with was what I heard coming out of my speakers.

This brings me to the second part of Mr. Marsh's letter, which seems to me much more to the point since it takes exception to the brevity of my "dismissal" of the Budapest. Let me begin by agreeing: obviously my remarks were

too brief even to scratch the surface in regard to the specific performance problems. But this is true not only of what I said about the Budapest but about all the recordings I considered, a necessary result of the space limitations imposed upon me. For example, the two complete sets which I most praised received only fourteen lines of type between them! But the point was that since I was discouraging the reader from buying any of the matched sets, I didn't wish to dwell on them too long.

Finally though, I must protest that Mr. Marsh's comments give a quite distorted view of both the tone and content of my comments on the Budapest. If he bothered to read my preceding remarks, he knows that I considered the general level of quality in the quartet recordings

remarkably high and felt that this was "nowhere more evident than in the integral recordings." This hardly implies "unequivocal mediocrity!" As to his objection that I emphasized "technical matters" as opposed to "interpretive" ones, I am reminded of a piano teacher I had as a child who liked to say, "First learn the notes, then add the expression," as if somehow "playing" the notes and "giving meaning" to them were separable components of the performing process. But the way one learns the notes is already shaped by one's understanding (or "interpretation") of them. Thus Mr. Marsh's "superficial but note-perfect" performance seems a fiction to me. If we say that a performance is "superficial," then we are referring to the way in which the notes have been related to one another. In other words, interpretation manifests itself only through the physical ("technical") realities of the performance itself, and it was with this that I concerned myself.

Jazz Reviewers

Thank goodness for the John S. Wilson reviews on the so-called "old" jazz piano, violin, and the "exquisite" Django guitar [April 1970]. Doc Severinsen, in the "Lees Side," asks, "What do people between twenty-five and the grave do for records?" I'll tell you: we depend on reviewers like John S. Wilson to alert us to the worthwhile issues.

Tom Cannon
Murfreesboro, Tenn.

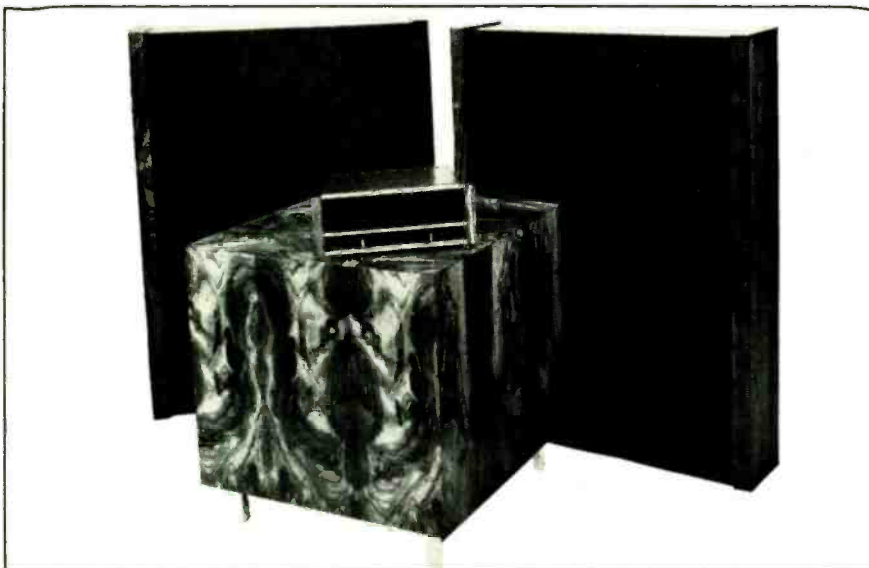
Antiskating Devices

I see that the old antiskating mythology has been given new life by Robert Long in "The Challenge of the Changers" [April 1970]. He argues that when four or five grams of needle force were required, a few tenths of a gram skating force unbalance on the groove walls didn't make any difference, but with "upgraded" cartridges that track at one gram or so the situation is somehow quite different.

The facts are that skating force is almost directly proportional to needle force, and for a well-designed arm is typically $\frac{1}{8}$ its value. For instance, if the needle force is one gram, the skating force will be about $\frac{1}{8}$ gram. The ratio of unbalanced forces on the groove walls remains the same for new and old cartridges, regardless of needle force, and skating force has no more significance now than it ever did.

In a push-pull generating system (which all good pickup cartridges use), minor deflections off center have no practical consequences. This is fortunate, because the vertical deflection of the needle—with or without antiskating compensation—is not only much greater than the horizontal deflection, to begin with, but also changes considerably as the needle traverses every record warp.

Skating force magnitude is dependent also on other things, such as the needle shape and size, the specific record material formulation, and the level of the recorded signal. Thus what is proper anti-



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CIRCLE 24 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Continued on page 12

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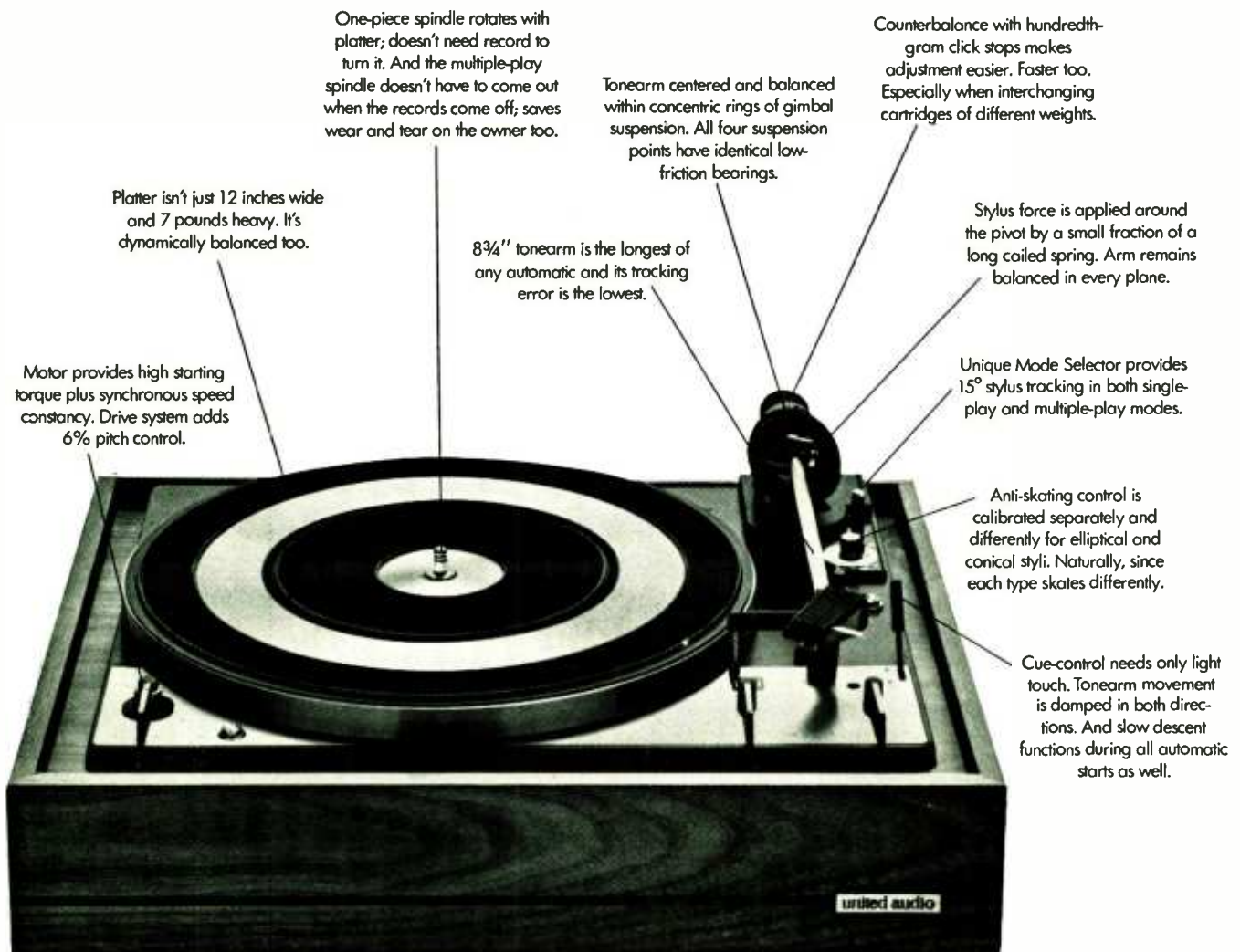
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CIRCLE 17 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

LETTERS

Continued from page 10

skating compensation at one moment is incorrect the next. Even if continuously perfect compensation were possible, it would reduce the needle force requirement by only 10% to 15%—from one gram, for example, to $\frac{7}{8}$ gram.

That difference cannot produce any detectable improvement in performance nor any measurable reduction in record or needle wear. Current antiskating compensation devices thus add to cost and complexity, without audible improvement in results. It would be far more beneficial to consumers if tone-arm designers concentrated on the things that really count: minimum possible tone-arm mass and pivot friction, neutral balance around the

pivots in all planes, proper location of pivots with respect to the record surface, ease and permanence of adjustment, and reliability.

Roy F. Allison,
Vice President
Acoustic Research, Inc.
Cambridge, Mass.

Mr. Long replies: Not all engineering opinion would agree with Mr. Allison's conclusion, though his point is well taken within the frame of reference he assumes. As our article pointed out, tracking force in older changers had been determined not only by the requirements of the pickup in tracking the record, but also by the requirements of the changer mechanism. If tracking force had been shaved as close to optimum for the cartridges of those

days as it is for their modern progeny, engagement of the changer-tripping mechanism presumably would have exerted enough force on the arm to unseat the stylus and cause mistracking. But little attempt was made to be so fastidious. It was the prevailing brute-force approach, rather than the specifics of stylus forces and their vectoral geometry, that made skating force meaningless in days of yore.

Modern pickups simply cannot be handled so roughly. For example, one fine pickup must not be used at more than two grams, according to its manufacturer, because the stylus, which is exceedingly compliant in the vertical plane, actually will bottom at that tracking force, allowing the cantilever to bump against the pickup housing on extremes of vertical modulation. Obviously, such a cartridge is designed with the niceties of modern record-playing equipment in mind—indeed its maker recommends that it be used only in arms equipped with antiskating compensation.

As a consequence, it is well known that antiskating represents perfectionism of a sort. Without it, the stylus exerts slightly greater force against the inner groove wall than it does against the outer groove wall. Therefore, if tracking force is lowered to the point at which the pickup will barely track the outer wall, there still will be a slight margin of tracking force against the inner wall—a slight excess, that is, over the absolute minimum that would be needed to track it. Theoretically, by equalizing the forces exerted on the two walls, you can reduce over-all tracking force by half of that slight excess before mistracking of either wall will begin.

As Mr. Allison implies, the matter is neither as simple as a brief explanation tends to make it sound, nor as drastic in effect as much recent advertising copy would suggest. The consensus of pickup manufacturers seems to be, however, that antiskating is a desirable (if minute) refinement when used with the best of cartridges but probably is wasted on most cartridges of less than state-of-the-art quality even today.

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Thus, when recordings of string quartets are played in the home, listeners are acutely aware of any intrusions of tape hiss or print-through.

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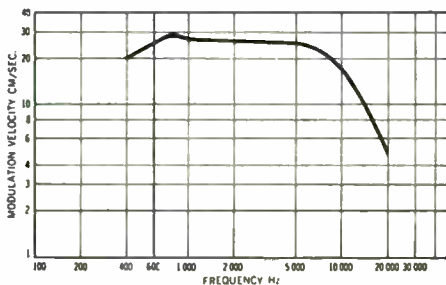
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CIRCLE 45 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

R. M. Lightfoot III



Solti in Chicago.



B. D. Hennessey

Mehta in Los Angeles.

Reports from the International

DGG/Magnum/Manos



Michael Tilson Thomas in Boston.

Made in America—Courtesy of Europe

Long-time readers of this monthly column have probably noted the recent dearth of domestic recording-session reports. It is hardly a state secret that comparatively few classical records are now made in the U.S. owing to a number of complex reasons—two of the most obvious ones are the prohibitive musician union fees and the growing reluctance of America's two largest producers of classical recordings, Columbia and RCA, to expand in an area that promises relatively meager financial rewards. This month, however, we look in on three American-based recording sessions with a trio of the country's finest orchestras. But here's the ironic twist: all of the producing companies are European-based. Chronicled here are Decca/London's latest

adventures with Zubin Mehta in Los Angeles, that label's first recordings of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under its new conductor Georg Solti, and Deutsche Grammophon's initial Boston Symphony Orchestra project under young Michael Tilson Thomas (one should also mention EMI/Angel's continuing series of Chicago Symphony and Cleveland Orchestra discs). The estate of the arts in this country has never been so precarious, and this situation is indicative of the times: as American companies hesitate to record native orchestras, it's a clear case of Angel rushing in where RCA fears to tread. So while waiting for the results of this cultural Marshall Plan in reverse to be re-imported into the country of origin, here's what happened behind the scenes.

Decca/London in Chicago . . .

After fifty-three years of work for American companies, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra now divides its disc-making activities between the two largest British recording organizations—EMI and Decca. The EMI affiliation began last summer and the results are now to be heard on the Angel label. Work for Decca began March 26 with sessions extending to April 8, a schedule neatly constructed around concerts, rehearsals, and music director Georg Solti's determination to be back in London in time for the arrival of his first child. Since Decca was also recording the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra last spring, this meant that recording gear had to be shipped to California, used there, transferred to Illinois, and returned to the Coast for the completion of the Los Angeles schedule.

Both EMI and Decca ran headlong into the same problem—finding a place in which to work. The great Chicago Symphony records of the past were all made in Orchestra Hall, but acoustical revisions in 1966–68, although beneficial for concert and recital purposes, have made the place extremely dry to the ears of recording engineers. RCA personnel, who completed their Chicago Symphony series with Orchestra Hall sessions in 1968, still feel it is the proper place to record, but this is a minority opinion. The current alternative is Medinah Temple, a sprawling theater which the Shriners use for an annual circus, various ceremonies,

and other forms of entertainment. As a concert hall, Medinah is an abomination. The sound is distributed quite erratically throughout the vast seating areas, although the microphones can capture details at the source and preserve things that would quickly be lost to listeners in the hall itself. RCA and EMI concluded that the place required multitrack techniques. RCA has never made less than a three-track master at Medinah. EMI worked in four track, but has the capability to go as high as sixteen and may well be tempted to pull out the stops for future Chicago sessions. Judging from their work last autumn, which I heard in their Hollywood mixing room, splendid results are possible.

The all-Mahler repertory was enough to produce a certain amount of anxiety for Decca: the Fifth Symphony with Yvonne Minton singing the *Songs of a Wayfarer* on the final side, and the Sixth Symphony, complete with three thwacking hammerblows in the finale—Solti is convinced that is what the composer really intended for the work. But the conductor is also a purist. He will not allow anyone to mix for him, which means that Decca arrived in Chicago to make a two-track master on quarter-inch tape, the technique RCA used fifteen years ago. Medinah, it quickly proved, was a bad hall in which to try that kind of job. Producer David Harvey had more than two dozen microphones hanging all over the place, to

feed an enormous mixer from which two tracks emerged. But the control room at Medinah is small, harsh-sounding, and untrustworthy. Tapes from the first sessions had to be sent to Vienna to find out if they really sounded well, and when the word was affirmative, the mood gradually changed from skepticism to hope.

Solti demands that the results sound not simply like a good orchestra but like the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. This not only required close attention to the distinctive qualities of the first-chair voices (one reason why engineer Gordon Parry was tending all those microphones), but also such unconventionalities as asking the violins to stand in order to produce a richer and more smoothly blended tone. The cowbells of the Sixth presumably will be dubbed in later. "We have a man in Vienna auditioning cows right now," quipped manager Terry McEwen.

But if Solti asks a lot, he gives even more. Few conductors are more meticulous about listening and relistening to playback. He will remake a whole section of a movement to remix a few crucial notes, and his explanations to the orchestra are a model for the efficient use of time. Even on the last day he was fighting to the final minute to get every page as close to his intentions as possible. His worries for next year are simple. He wants to do the Eighth Symphony and needs a hall suited to a thousand voices. And perhaps the time has

behind the scenes

Recording Centers

come for technical changes. "In Vienna, for the *Götterdämmerung*," he says, "there was some four track. That may be the solution for Chicago; perhaps we need something more sophisticated. . . ."

ROBERT C. MARSH

Los Angeles

The atmosphere in UCLA's Royce Hall was cordial yet intense on Wednesday afternoon, April 15. Conductor Zubin Mehta and Decca/London producer Ray Minshull made sure of that. The order of the day was a taping of Verdi's late choral masterwork, *Quattro pezzi sacri*, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra and a chorus directed by Roger Wagner. The large-scale work presented considerable demands from a recording standpoint. Proper positioning of many microphones, arrangement of the chorus, and an array of last-minute adjustments constituted normal problems. Unforeseen disturbances also occurred. Extraneous noises from the chorus were traced to creaking folding chairs, which were promptly removed. Later, an unavoidable and quite unnerving sonic boom disrupted a splendid take of the Sanctus. Such events were minimal, however, and the recording was accomplished in three short but busy hours.

Efficiency keynotes a Decca/London project. Their imposing mobile control panel, superficially resembling that of a jet aircraft, was easily installed in a room usually reserved for entertaining after-concert gatherings. The transformed control room also contained elaborate tape equipment and a closed-circuit TV system. Ray Minshull, in the "driver's seat" as it were, communicated with Mehta via a speaker installed on stage. Volume levels were quickly set and final microphone adjustments made for desired balances. Engineers Gordon Parry, Colin Moorfort, and David Frost co-ordinated the technical duties.

The orchestra sat on a platform extending beyond the normal stage over several rows of audience seats. This placement, plus added risers for the brass section, took full advantage of Royce Hall's resonant acoustics. The arrangement was so effective, in fact, that very little extra manipulation of the balance controls was found to be necessary, and the taped playbacks sounded especially natural and lifelike. Large speakers placed in the hall allowed musicians who chose to remain on stage during breaks to hear playback results. After ten minutes of spot-checking tricky passages in the score, take one began with the second "sacred piece," *Stabat Mater*. "The trumpets must float above the chorus," Mehta pointed out. And so indeed they did as the conductor's combination of a firm hand and geniality helped to produce the correct response from his forces. When the take had been completed, Mehta and a few key musicians joined the engineers for a

playback session. "It sounds good . . . very nice!" was the conductor's verdict.

The afternoon sessions continued at a smooth pace and conductor, producer, and orchestra seemed highly pleased with their work. After the orchestra had left for the day, Roger Wagner took over the podium to lead the a cappella *Ave Maria*.

It was a busy week for the L.A. Philharmonic and the Decca/London team. In addition to the Verdi, the orchestra recorded Bruckner's Fourth Symphony, Saint-Saëns's Third Symphony, Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* Suite No. 2, *La Valse*, and *Mother Goose* Suite. "These should be our finest recordings yet," was Mehta's confident judgment on the week's efforts.

ALEX SEGAL

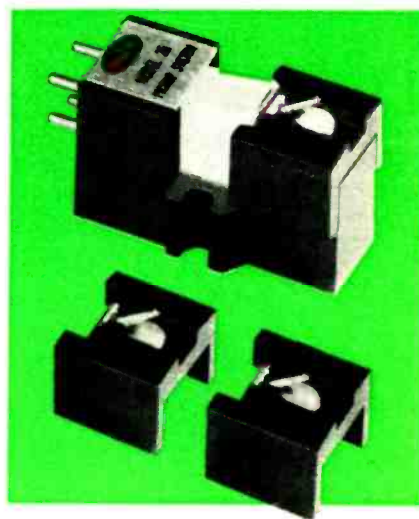
Deutsche Grammophon in Boston

The Boston Symphony first recorded for Victor in the days of Dr. Karl Muck, nearly sixty years ago. On August 31 this year the marriage will be over, and on September 1 the orchestra will belong to Deutsche Grammophon. In fact, with RCA's blessings the BSO has been living openly with DGG since January, and a team of German producers, directors, and technicians has already installed a considerable amount of equipment in Symphony Hall and has taped enough music to fill several LP sides. RCA had planned half a dozen or so BSO records of their own during the 1969-70 season, but most of that project had to be scuttled owing to the illness that has kept William Steinberg out of action since December. DGG had in any event planned to make its first BSO record with the orchestra's twenty-six-year-old assistant conductor, Michael Tilson Thomas—a gracious gesture on the part of the German company to mark its American recording debut by taping a young American conductor leading two American works: Ives's *Three Places in New England* and Ruggles' *Sun-Treader*. Thomas also recorded Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 1 ("Winter Dreams"), while Claudio Abbado has done Debussy's *Nocturnes*, Ravel's *Pavane* and Second Suite from *Daphnis et Chloé* (with the New England Conservatory Chorus for *Sirènes* and *Daphnis*). In addition the BSO Chamber Players have taped the three Debussy sonatas and *Syrinx*, and several Boston Pops records with Arthur Fiedler are to be cut this spring. DGG's plans for 1970-71 are fluid, as indeed they still seem to be for the BSO, depending on Steinberg's health and availability; there are, at any rate, no firm decisions yet on repertory to be recorded.

DGG and the BSO invited reporters to attend the recording of *Sun-Treader* on March 24. A room on first-balcony level containing a modest collection of old instruments along with portraits of Koussevitzky and Major Higginson (founder of the orchestra) served as DGG's control room (as it did during the RCA era), and we heard and watched, via closed-circuit TV, most of the morning session from there. A move to allow visitors to sit in the balcony for a while met with the orchestra's displeasure—partly be-

Continued on page 16

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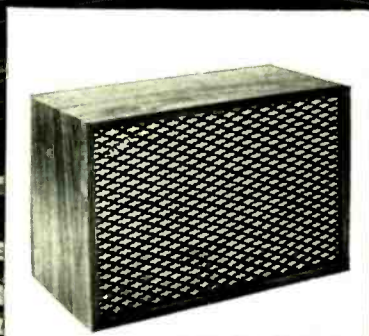
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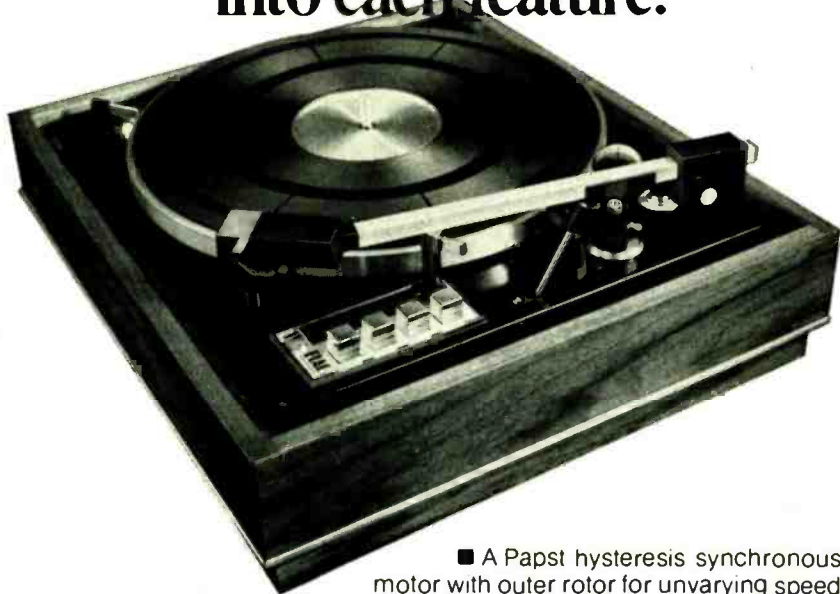
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MIRACORD 50H

CIRCLE 7 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

BEHIND THE SCENES

Continued from page 15

cause photographers were making clicking noises and partly on principle. The idea was abandoned after a time.

The producer in charge of DGG's Boston operations is Karl Faust, whose name will be familiar to those who read the small print on their record jackets, but he was not here for the *Sun-Treader* session. The director was Rainer Brock, an intense but gentle man in Dr. Strange-love spectacles; with him were chief engineer Günter Hermanns and a young man who turned the tape recorders on and off and kept a kind of logbook.

"A modest little piece," commented Thomas about the Ruggles' booming aggressive tone poem when he charged into the control room at the first break. "It should be worked on for weeks," he said later, and its thick impasto of sound presented a formidable challenge to him and the DGG team. The rhythm of the session progressed from a very slow start (after about a half hour Hermanns commented to Brock *sotto voce* in German, "Well, we might get a record made today after all") to a period of smooth and efficient work, culminating in a coda of controlled, civilized panic as Brock and Thomas improvised solutions to make the best use of the ever-dwindling number of minutes. The atmosphere was a little more formal than with an American company: Brock and Hermanns are on first-name terms, but they are called Herr Brock and Herr Hermanns by the third, and obviously junior, member of the team, and he is in turn formally addressed by them, while the conductor is "Mr. Thomas" (with a long O). Inside the control room the language was German, but comments between the control room and the hall remained in English, even though Brock's English is labored and Thomas' German fluent.

Near the end came an interruption when Hermanns heard a low-pitched repeated pop. At worst, it could have been on the tape, undoing the morning's work (and costing Lord knows how many dollars or marks). The hall was cleared so Hermanns could perform his diagnostic work in absolute silence, and he finally located the trouble in one of the Ampexes—fortunately, the tapes were not spoiled. Airplanes caused additional problems—many Boston flights are routed over the Back Bay and Symphony Hall—and DGG's microphones picked them up beautifully, every blessed shuttle. The BSO's program editor, Andrew Raeburn, sighed knowingly, "Runway 33" (an expertise no doubt acquired from his former boss, Erich Leinsdorf, a great airplane and airport buff).

But at ten seconds to one, a recording of *Sun-Treader* was in the can, and probably a very good one. Next, a picnic lunch with "pastromi" (in the local dialect) from the Symphony Delicatessen for the BSO, DGG staff, and guests. But Günter Hermanns has already left, off for Logan Airport, New York, and an appointment with Herbert von Karajan and *Die Götterdämmerung* in Salzburg at eleven the next morning.

MICHAEL STEINBERG

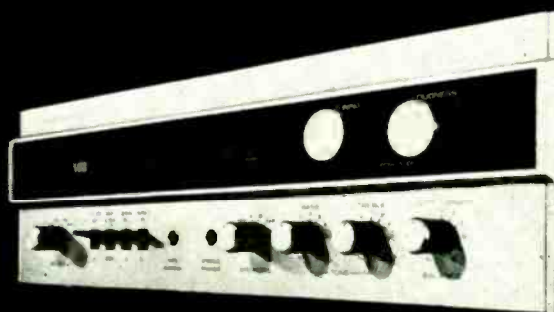
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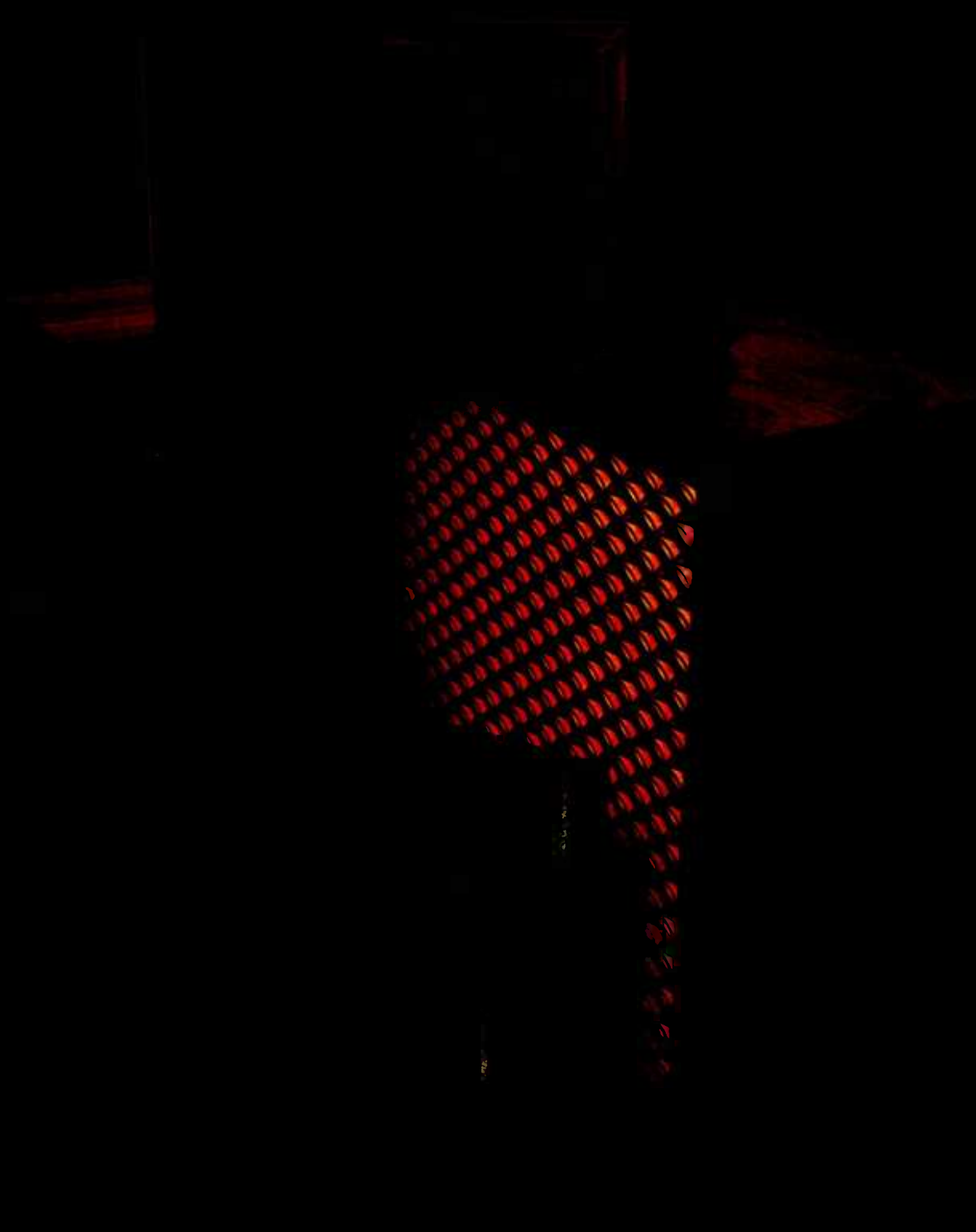
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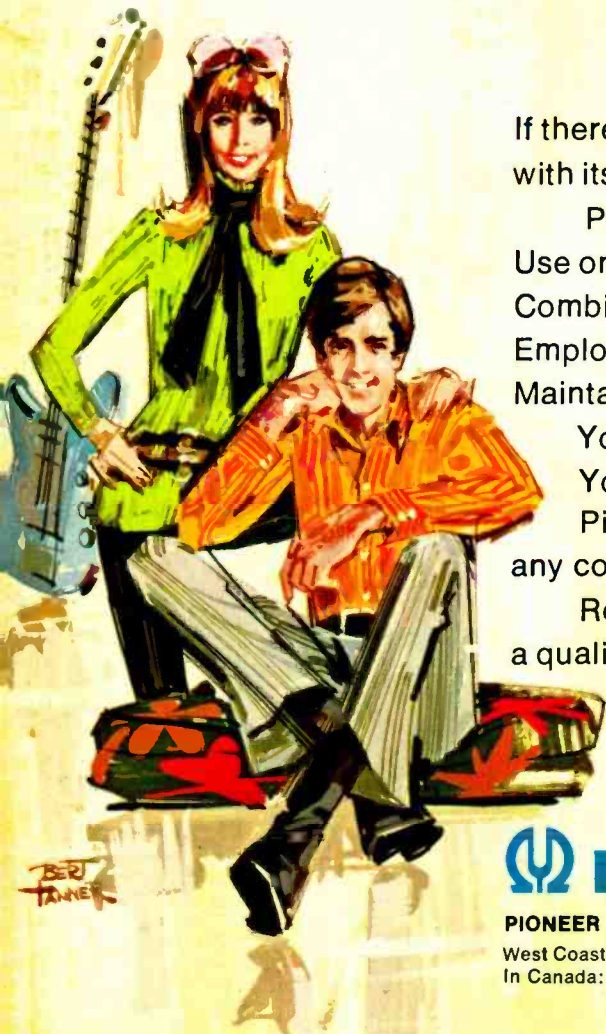
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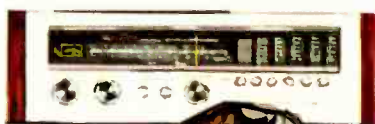
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too hot to handle

In what order would you rate the Teac 6010, the Revox A77, and the Tandberg 6000X? Are tape decks of this quality likely to become obsolete in the near future because of innovations such as the Dolby technique or a change to four-channel sound?—Samuel J. Neiditch, Highland, Calif.

First, we wouldn't attempt to rate the tape recorders you mention in any order. We haven't yet tested the Tandberg, but since the three are quite different in design concept and features, their relative value depends largely on the uses to which they will be put. The question is how you personally would weigh each of the strengths and weaknesses of each machine for your own purposes. Second, we can't see any of them becoming obsolete prematurely. The Dolby system can be bought for any recorder as an add-on component, thanks to the Advent Corporation. And four-channel sound on tape may be entirely compatible with these machines if a matrixing system such as has been suggested for four-channel discs is adopted (squeezing four channels of information, in effect, into the two channels already present in any stereo equipment). If you're anxious to go the four-channel route, Teac already offers a unit for the purpose, of course, using the four-gap head required for Vanguard's Surround Stereo tapes. Which of these systems will prevail we cannot say.

Because I live in an apartment, I would like to do a lot of my listening through headphones. But when I tried the Koss ESP-9 (the type I had planned to purchase) the stereo separation was so complete that I found the sensation quite unpleasant: the sound seemed to originate inside my head and radiate outward, instead of vice versa. At least one preamp, the Dynaco PAT-4, provides for reducing separation to 6 dB, though it requires a modification that would disable this provision to produce the 0-dB separation of true A+B mono—and I have some artificially rechanneled records that I would rather listen to as mono. I seem to recall that there were preamplifiers with continuously variable separation controls delivering everything from full stereo to true mono. Whatever became of them?—Grant C. Schampel, Minneapolis, Minn. Most have slipped into history. But Dyna's PAT-3X, which is still available, has a stepped control that provides various degrees of separation, including

both extremes. Since your reaction to headphone listening is more negative than most people's, it might pay you to look around for either of the Jensen Space Perspective devices that were designed to reduce channel separation via delay lines so that the right signal would reach the left earpiece slightly later than the left signal (and vice versa), simulating the sensation of stereo listening with loudspeakers. The CF-N1 included just the Space Perspective cross-mixing circuitry; the CC-1 control center added level controls and one for full stereo, Space Perspective stereo, or mono. Neither device is made today, but both were designed to work from the speaker terminals of an amplifier and hence would be compatible with the connections needed to drive the ESP-9. The amplifier should be fairly powerful, however, since there is a 3-dB (half-power) insertion loss in the Space Perspective circuit. You may still be able to find one of the models on the shelves of some dealers. But be assured that the separation you describe is not the fault of the Koss; it is typical of all headphones.

Is there any tape recorder whose index counter is driven off the tape transport capstan rather than the take-up reel drive? Every one I've seen works off the reel, so there is no necessary relationship between the speed at which tape is used up and the speed at which the numbers are racked up on the counter. When the reel is turning fast—that is, when it is relatively empty—the counter will show a reading of 20 in only a few seconds, for example. It takes longer—and therefore more feet of tape—to turn to that same number when the reel is almost full. I can see no value whatever in this system and no technical reason why the capstan can't be used to drive the counter so that it would give an accurate measurement of footage at all times.—Jerome R. Sehulster, Hightstown, N. J. Admittedly, a turns counter—the sort of device you describe—is less versatile than a true footage counter; but it shouldn't be called worthless. Many recorder owners reset the counter to zero at the beginning of a tape, make a note of the counter reading at the beginning of each new selection, and use that arbitrary number as a handy index to the music on the tape. It works fine (though it won't tell you the actual lengths of the pieces recorded, of course) as long as the tape is not edited and is always used with reels of

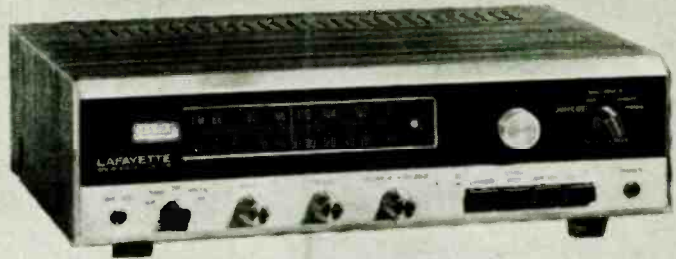
the same hub size. We can see two good reasons why recorder manufacturers don't drive the counter from the capstan. First, such a plan would require complex mechanical linkages. Somehow tape motion would have to be transmitted to the counter in fast-wind modes if you are to use them in locating one selection in the middle of a tape—as you can with a turns counter. And the capstan would have to be stopped or disconnected from the counter in stop and pause modes. (In many recorders the capstan turns continuously as long as the power is turned on.) Second, the drag of a digital counter is nonlinear—for example, it is harder to turn it from 1999 to 2000 than from 2000 to 2001—and might threaten some instability in transport speed if the counter were to be driven directly from the capstan.

I have been trying to determine what record spray to use on my old 78-rpm shellac records. I have heard of a silicone-base spray, but those I have seen specifically indicate that they are not to be used with shellac records. I would like to preserve the records and reduce the surface noise to some extent. Can you tell me of a spray that will do this?—Harold P. Bechtoldt, Iowa City, Iowa.

Many types of 78s, though known as shellac records, were not made of real shellac. A solvent that does a fine job of removing dirt from one kind without attacking the record itself may spell instant death for another kind. Furthermore, the only way a spray is likely to reduce surface noise on a 78 is by gumming up the groove so badly that no high-frequency information—sound or noise—is reproduced. This is because most 78 materials are not as subject to static charges as vinyl and therefore do not attract dust the way LPs do. Our advice therefore would be that you use a lint-free cloth or absolutely clean sponge dampened with plain, old-fashioned water.

What is the meaning of maximum available power (MAP)? This term appears as the rating of stereo music systems in the Montgomery Ward catalogue. I'm familiar with IHF power, continuous power, and power ± 1 dB; but this is the first time I've seen MAP used.—James A. Russell, Jr., Hampton, Va. This, like similar terms used by other producers of mass-market "stereos," means whatever its promulgator wants it to mean and is best ignored altogether by the serious stereophile. Sometimes such ratings involve special tone-burst measurement techniques that are specifically designed to pump a maximum number of watts out of the equipment to jazz up advertising copy with impressive but meaningless figures. The reason they are meaningless in such cases is that the rating will work only for those tone bursts—regular program material cannot be delivered at equivalent levels. And anyway, who needs another rating system? We have too many already.

50 Years Young

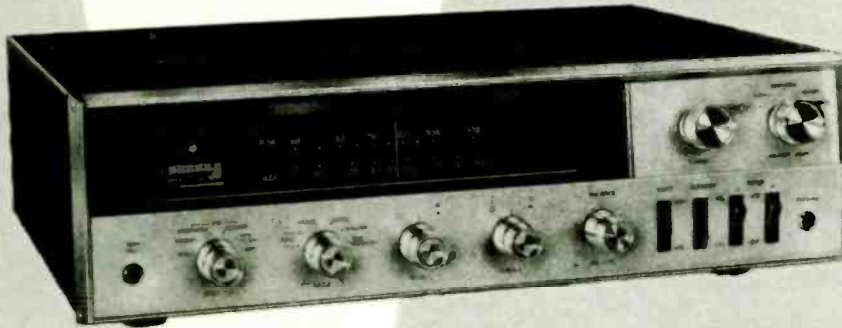


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TUNER SECTION (FM): Sensitivity [IHF] — 1.5 μ V; Stereo Separation — 40 db @ 400 Hz; Capture Ratio — 1.25 db; Signal-to-Noise — 75 db [100% mod]; Cross Modulation Rejection — 90 db; Selectivity — 50 db.

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CIRCLE 28 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

...AND WE MADE IT OURSELVES

One of the most fascinating audio projects around—though it's hardly adaptable to your home music system—is located in Barnsdall Park in Los Angeles. Known as the Sound Tunnel, it was conceived, designed, and constructed by the Junior Arts Center, though a brief description would hardly make it sound within the capabilities of a group of youngsters with or without the help of adult advisors. A dark corridor 2½ feet wide, 7 feet high, and 40 feet long, it is surrounded by grille cloth, sound-absorbent materials, and aluminum. Just outside the cloth are 200 JBL speakers, driven by a complex computer-style programmer that feeds the speakers with sounds that seem to swirl about the listener, advance and recede, or jump from place to place. John Cage already has composed for the Sound Tunnel and a number of other eminent composers have agreed to do so.

But unlikely though it may seem, this really is the kids' show. They were in on the planning and even helped with the wiring of the electronics. Gus Henslick is one of those youngsters. When this picture was snapped he was just handing in one of the two hundred amplifiers needed to drive the speakers—an amplifier he had put together himself using the circuit board and parts



supplied by his elders. (Once it was checked, the protruding wires were clipped off.) The look on his face says more about the project than anything we might add. A world with kids like that in it can't be all bad.

THE SOUND OF QUIET

It's not often that we become enthusiastic about a press conference. Most prove very little one way or the other about the products they are intended to plug since a room large enough and central enough to be a good spot for a meeting usually is less than an ideal stand-in for an average listening room, particularly when it's crammed with us bantering freeloaders of the press.

But Advent did it right. The guest list at the session we attended in a modest-sized suite of the New York Hilton came to less than a dozen. Furthermore, the gentlemen who ran the show had something more than Madison Avenue rhetoric to present. Specifically, the star of the show was the Advent B-parameter Dolby unit.

By B-parameter, Dolby means a sort of stripped-down version of his professional noise-suppression system, affecting only the upper frequency band where such fidelity-deterrents as tape hiss abide. KLH had built such a device (licensed, as is Advent, by Dolby) into two tape recorder models. Advent's, in contrast, is offered as a separate unit. To demonstrate it, the Advent people played a couple of cassettes that, although good by the standards we have come to accept for this format, exhibited the usual hissy and forced-sounding upper range. Then came a Dolbyized ("stretched" is the term that Advent seems to prefer) cassette. Behold! The voice of Joan Baez emerged pure and clear from a background of utter silence.

It still wasn't the same thing as a home listening session, of course. But to hear equipment that so unequivocally improves the sound it reproduces—and to do so without first being regaled by inflated cries of "break-through" and "new breed" and "unique"—was a refreshing experience.

Ultimately, Advent plans to unveil a cassette recorder with the Dolby circuitry built in. How soon stretched



pre-recorded cassettes will be available to make maximum use of the equipment's potential remains to be seen. But on the basis of the New York demonstration we plan to keep an interested eye on the proceedings.

Oh yes, The Advent Noise Reduction Center, as it's to be known, will cost about \$250. It will work with any tape recorder to cram extra dynamic range onto the tape during recording, and then reconstitute the original signal virtually without noise on playback. It's a fairly complex device with a number of interesting features; but we plan to report on that in detail in a future issue—after we've tried it in proper tests.

CIRCLE 154 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

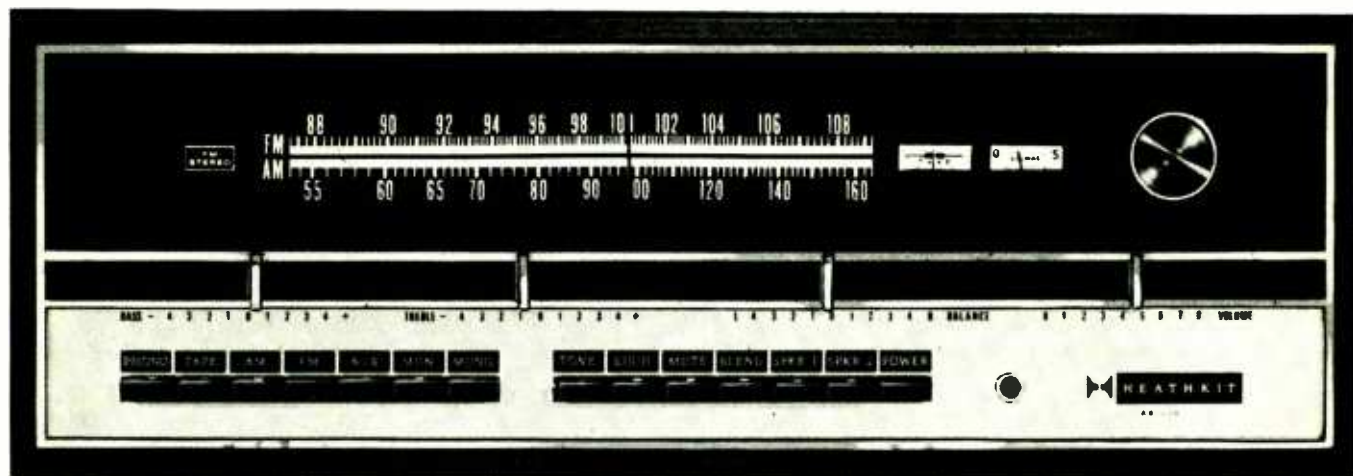
IS THERE A NONMAGNETIC CARTRIDGE IN YOUR FUTURE?

Announcements by Sony and Matsushita (parent company of Panasonic) in Japan have raised once again the possibility that alternatives to the now standard magnetic phono cartridge may be heading our way. Sony's is based on the electret principle used in that company's

Continued on page 30

**“How well does the Heathkit AR-29 perform?
Very well indeed!”...“No other receiver
in its price class can compare with it!”**

Julian Hirsch, Stereo Review magazine



Here's Why...

Here's what Mr. Hirsch says about Sensitivity: "Its FM tuner had an IHF sensitivity of 1.75 microvolts, placing it among the finest in respect to sensitivity."

About FM Frequency Response: "Stereo FM frequency response was extremely flat, ± 0.25 dB from 30 Hz to 15,000 Hz."

About Power Output: "We found the audio amplifiers to be considerably more powerful than their rated 35 watts (rms) per channel. With both channels driven at 1000 Hz into 8-ohm loads, we measured about 50 watts (rms) per channel just below the clipping level."

And this is what he writes about Distortion: "Harmonic distortion was under 0.1 per cent from 0.15 to 50 watts, and under 0.03 per cent over most of that range. IM distortion was about 0.1 per cent at any level up to 50 watts. At its rated output of 35 watts per channel, or at any lower power, the distortion of the AR-29 did not exceed 0.15 per cent between 20 and 20,000 Hz. The distortion was typically 0.05 per cent over most of the audio range, at any power level."

About Input Characteristics: "... the AR-29 can handle any modern cartridge without risk of overload, and provide low distortion and an excellent signal-to-noise ratio."

About Hum & Noise: "Hum and noise were extremely low: -90 dB at the high-level auxiliary input and -71 dB on phono, both referenced to a 10-watt output level."

About Assembly: "... the AR-29 construction made a positive impression." "... assembly has been markedly simplified."

Says Mr. Hirsch about overall performance: "The test data speaks for itself." "... no other receiver in its price class can compare with it."

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CIRCLE 22 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

NEWS & VIEWS *Continued from page 28*

electret microphone. Matsushita's uses a film base on which a coating of germanium semiconductor is deposited. In operation, it produces its signal on the strain-gauge principle.

The electret elements in the Sony cartridge are, in essence, capacitors that carry a permanent electrostatic charge. This type of element has been used by Sony as an alternative to the externally biased elements of condenser microphones. And in the cartridge too the elements function like tiny microphones rather than transducers working directly off the stylus motion in the usual fashion. The mechanical energy of the stylus motion is first converted into acoustical energy, which then impinges on the electret elements to produce the audio signals. Those signals are fed to a pair of FETs in the cartridge, which match the output to the magnetic-phono preamp inputs of receivers and integrated amps.

The Matsushita design apparently is still in the research stage, and phono pickups are only one of a number of likely applications the company sees for the SFT (semiconductor film transducer) principle. Prototypes have been shown in Japan, but the company has said that more work is needed before the phono cartridge can be marketed and so far no details have been received by Panasonic in this country, we are told. The Matsushita idea appears to be unusual among quality nonmagnetic cartridge designs in that it requires no external power supply or bias voltage.

The Sony design does require an external voltage supply—not for the electret elements themselves, since they are self-biased, but for the monolithic FET “preamps” built into the cartridge. Another unusual design that requires external biasing is the Stax electrostatic cartridge. It too is made in Japan. But although it was announced over a year ago, only a very few samples appear to have reached this country so far. One im-

pediment to its being marketed here, we are told, is the difficulty of acquiring UL approval for the design. The last word was that Stax hoped to rework its design so that conductors carrying the biasing voltage would pass UL safety specifications.

There are two other designs that might make a reappearance on the American market. One is the solid-state cartridge made by Euphonics in Puerto Rico and introduced some years ago. Although it achieved considerable favorable notice among insiders, buyers resisted the idea of having to acquire a special arm and power supply along with the pickup itself. While it has virtually disappeared in this country, it is advertised in Europe. The other off-beat pickup, which also requires an external power supply, is the light-beam system shown here briefly by Kenwood. A similar design has been introduced in Japan by Toshiba, and while mention of it appeared in Britain, it has yet to be announced for marketing in this country.

A common denominator of all these cartridges except the Matsushita is, of course, the power supply requirement. Lest it appear that Euphonics' failure to establish its design in this country presupposes similar failure for any cartridge with that requirement, it should be pointed out that Euphonics had looked to the console manufacturers, rather than the component market, for its paying customers. Euphonics had hoped that its design, which delivers essentially line-voltage signals and therefore requires no conventional preamp, would induce console manufacturers to build the bias-voltage take-off into the power supply sections of their amplifiers. But none of them did. Perhaps those of us who think in terms of components are more ready than our mass-market brethren to accept a cartridge that needs a power supply. In the meantime, however, the ascendancy of the magnetic cartridge for quality playback systems remains unquestioned.

equipment in the news



Marantz markets tuner/preamp/control unit

The Marantz Model 24, previously announced but put into production only recently, represents an unusual configuration in stereo components. It contains all the functional elements of a stereo FM/AM receiver except the power amplifier section, and thus permits simple one-unit mounting of all operating controls even when it is desirable to place the power amplifier elsewhere. The power amplifier, of course, may be chosen so that power output will be matched to the requirements of the installation. Among the unit's special features are variable muting of the tuner section and dual-meter tuning. Selling price is \$339; an optional walnut cabinet costs \$32.50.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Sansui adds an AM/FM receiver

Newest in the Sansui line of stereo receivers is the Model 2000A, an AM/FM unit listed for 43 watts continuous power per channel into 4 ohms or 35 watts into 8 ohms. Among the 2000A's features are a muting control, switching for two stereo pairs of speakers, back-panel jumpers between preamp and power amp (to allow use of electronic crossovers, special equalizers, or similar equipment), a switchable “noise canceler” for stereo FM reception, choice of U.S. or DIN-style tape recorder connections, FM antenna connections for either 300-ohm twin-lead or 75-ohm coax, and clip-type antenna and speaker connections. The 2000A sells for \$299.95.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Continued on page 32

IN MAKING RECORDS STANTON IS THE STANDARD



Photographed at Columbia Records.

Whatever your requirements for recording and playback, Stanton's Series 681 cartridges are the calibration standard. And there is a 681 model engineered specifically for each of these critical applications.

The Stanton 681A—For Cutting Head Calibration

With Stanton's Model 681A, cutting heads can be accurately calibrated with the cartridge, for it has been primarily designed as a calibration standard in recording system checkouts for linearity and equalization. Frequency response is factory calibrated to the most rigid tolerances and the flattest possible response is assured for precise alignment of recording channels. Implicit in this kind of stability and constancy is a reliability factor unmatched by any other cartridge for this application.

The Stanton 681EE—For Critical Listening

In critical playback auditioning, whether a pre-production disc sample sounds too "dead" or "bright" is largely a matter of cartridge selection. Here too, Stanton provides the evaluation standard in its model 681EE. In this application, the Stanton 681EE offers the highest obtainable audio quality in

the present state of the art. It is designed for low-distortion tracking with minimum stylus force, regardless of the recorded velocity or the distance of the groove from the disc center. High compliance, low mass and low pressure assure perfect safety even on irreplaceable records.

All Stanton Calibration Standard cartridges are guaranteed to meet the specifications with exacting limits. Their warranty comes packed with each unit—the calibration test results for that individual cartridge.

For complete information and specifications write Stanton Magnetics, Inc., Terminal Drive, Plainview, L.I., New York.





Empire announces low-cost Grenadier

Latest in Empire's line of Grenadier speaker systems is the Model 6000, a three-way system in a walnut enclosure. Like other Grenadiers, the 6000's woofer faces downward so that its sound radiates through a slotted port running around the bottom of the enclosure. Midrange and tweeter drivers, installed on a vertical panel, radiate outward through Empire's "divergent lens" grilles. The Model 6000 costs \$99.95; an extra \$10 gets you an imported marble top. Rated impedance of the system is 8 ohms and power-handling capacity is listed as 75 watts.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Roberts stereo deck accepts 10½-inch reels

The new Model 5050XD from Roberts is a three-motor, quarter-track tape deck with four heads—erase, cross-field (record-bias), record, and playback—and three-speed operation. Among its features are magnetic reel brakes, a felt pad that automatically cleans the tape surface before it reaches the heads, automatic tape stop, sound-on-sound, and tape echo. The deck sells for \$599.95; the similar Model 5050X with built-in power amplifiers and speakers costs \$100 more.

CIRCLE 153 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Two new automatics from PE/Elpa

Elpa Marketing Industries has announced a pair of new turntables in the Perpetuum-Ebner line: the PE 2040 (shown here) and the PE 2038. Both have simplified controls with automatic adjustment of tone arm set-down to the record size being played. Another new feature is an automatic-repeat spindle that, when twisted, will cause the record being played to repeat until the spindle is returned to the automatic position. Both models have a vernier adjustment on the speed control, which selects 33, 45, or 78 rpm. The PE 2040, which has a separate antiskating control, sells for \$145; the PE 2038, with a lighter-weight platter and antiskating that is a function of tracking force, costs \$115.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Dual-element microphone records in stereo

The recently announced RCA Model HK-104 contains two unidirectional dynamic microphone elements and is designed for home use or for recording conferences, where the separation of two-channel recording helps the listener to distinguish between voices and to hear details that are masked in mono recordings. Frequency response is listed by RCA as 150 to 10,000 Hz. The case has a satin chrome finish, and the microphone is supplied with a gray metal desk stand and ten feet of shielded cable. Suggested selling price is \$65.

CIRCLE 155 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Mikado's eight-track deck can record

The latest company to introduce an eight-track deck for home use that can record on the cartridges as well as play them back is Mikado Electronics Corp. The Model HZ8000 deck is styled in black and walnut and is equipped with dual recording meters. Other front-panel controls include channel-select trip button, channel indicator, record button, and dual record level controls. The model sells for \$129.90.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Garrard introduces an automatic turntable especially for the discerning poor.

At Garrard, we recognize that as high fidelity components have become more refined, they've also become more costly.

As Alan Say, our Chief Engineer, puts it, "A house, a motor car and a stereo rig are the three weightiest purchases many chaps make in a lifetime.

"And, today, it can be a toss up as to which is number three."

Unfortunately, there are those with an ear for good music, and the desire to indulge it, who are *not* blessed with limitless means.

For them, we offer the SL72B.

At \$89.50 it is, without question, the world's greatest value in an automatic turntable.

Son of SL95B

Our SL72B is a slightly modified SL95B, at present the most highly perfected automatic turntable you can buy—regardless of price.

The turntable is a bit smaller, the tone arm is simplified, and we've eliminated the ultra-precise counterweight adjustment screw.

But the 72B has the same revolutionary two-stage synchronous motor as our 95B. With an induction portion to reach playing speed instantly, and a synchronous portion to guarantee *unvarying* speed.

It has the same patented sliding weight anti-skating control to

provide permanently accurate settings.

It has the same viscous damping of the tone arm descent in both manual and automatic play. And can be cued in either mode.

It has the same two-point record support, a Garrard exclusive that assures the gentlest possible record handling.

All in all, a degree of refinement quite impossible to find in any other turntable near its price.

Mass produced, by hand

Despite our place as the world's largest producer of component automatic turntables, Garrard steadfastly rejects mass production methods.

At our Swindon works, final assembly of the 72B, like the 95B, is in the hands of nineteen men and women. Hands, not machines.

Each person who assembles a part, tests that finished assembly.

And four of every nineteen final "assemblers" do *nothing* but testing.

Before each unit is shipped, it must pass 26 final checks that cover every phase of its operation.

Thus, remarkably few compromises have been made to achieve its remarkable price.

\$40 saved is \$40 earned

Still, the 72B is *not* the ultimate automatic turntable.

Our 95B bears that distinction.

But at its price of \$89.50, the 72B represents a saving of \$40.

A significant difference to all but the affluent.

To quote Alan Say, "If a penny saved is a penny earned, \$40 is a bloody raise in pay.

"The 72B is the automatic turntable with *almost* everything for the man with everything save money."

From Swindon, with love

The care that goes into a Garrard is preserved by a heritage that often spans two and three generations at our works in Swindon, England.

That care does not vary with turntable price.

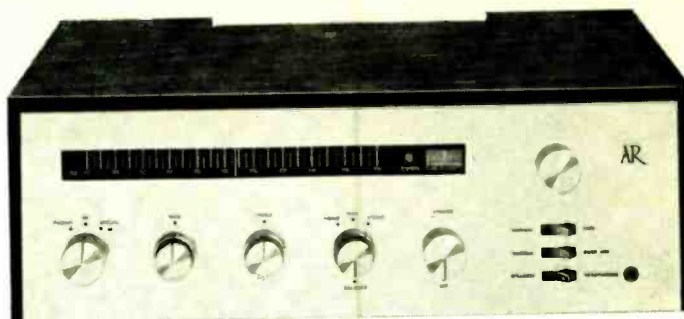
You can select with confidence from six component models starting with the 40B at \$44.50 and running to the SL95B at \$129.50.

Your dealer can help you match a Garrard to your system.



Garrard
British Industries Co.

the AR receiver: the critics' choice



Stereo Review

"From 0.1 watt to 60 watts (both channels driven into 8-ohm loads), the harmonic distortion with a 1,000-Hz input signal fell from less than 0.2 per cent to less than 0.03 per cent . . . IM distortion was under 0.1 per cent from 0.1 watt to well over 60 watts . . . Previous experience with the AR amplifier suggests that the receiver's maximum 4-ohm output for normal operation on program material is in the vicinity of 100 watts per channel . . . The tone controls of the AR receiver are certainly among the best we have ever used. They are meant to be used, and do not destroy musical values at any settings . . . The FM sections measured IHF sensitivity was 1.8 microvolts (better than AR's specified 2 microvolts). Distortion was under 0.5 per cent - which is as low as our test equipment can measure . . . In short, the AR tuner section is, in a number of areas, simply better than we can measure . . . The FM sound was notably clean, and tuning was non-critical. The flywheel tuning mechanism ranked with the best we have used . . . Considering that their amplifier at \$250 is a very good value, one is effectively buying a first-rate FM tuner for \$170 more. We have yet to find a component tuner at anywhere near that price that can compare to the tuner section in the AR receiver."

AMERICAN record guide

"Power? There is plenty. AR advertises 60 watts into 4-ohm loads, 50 watts into 8 ohms, and 30 watts into 16 ohms . . . I found AR to be extraordinarily *conservative* in its rating . . . at 4 ohms, my sample delivered *90 watts* per channel over a 50-20,000 Hz range, *60 watts* at 9 ohms, and *48 watts* at 16 ohms. That is a lot of power! . . . I have painted a purely technical picture. But that does not tell the whole story. Let me say that in practical performance, with *music*, it was simply flawless. I was also impressed by many little things, such as the fact that the unit really *is* flat at the indicated flat settings on the tone controls, and the fact that the tuning meter really *does* indicate the center of a channel accurately.

To sum up: AR's receiver is a handsome, impressively-powered unit that delivers fine performance at a reasonable price."

Popular Science

"An extraordinary approach to hi-fi design . . . a superb high-power instrument that fulfills its *basic* functions in a way that few other receivers can match, much less exceed. The FM tuner incorporates the multisection crystal IF filter characteristic of the best and most expensive separate tuners. The amplifier section delivers an ultra-clear 60 watts per channel RMS into four ohms. (That's 120 watts total continuous power, not "music power.") And unlike many other transistor units, which show a severe rise in distortion at the upper end of the power curve and also as volume is reduced to low levels, the AR maintains a virtually flat (and very low) distortion profile down to inaudibility . . . I found the receiver effortless to use and (feeding into a pair of AR-3a speakers) a joy to listen to . . ."

AUDIO

" . . . a basic honest design which meets or exceeds all its specifications . . . demonstrates its more than adequate reserve power at all dynamic levels . . . Transparency of sound and good transient response were in evidence throughout our listening tests. Calibration was just about perfect . . ."

Full specifications of the AR receiver are available upon request.
The AR Receiver has a suggested retail price of \$420. An optional walnut case is \$20 additional.



Acoustic Research Inc.

24 Thorndike Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02141

CIRCLE 2 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

new equipment reports

THE CONSUMER'S GUIDE
TO HIGH FIDELITY EQUIPMENT



THE EQUIPMENT: Concord Mark III, a three-speed, quarter-track stereo tape deck. Dimensions: 18½ by 13 by 8 inches with dust cover in place. Price: under \$260. Manufacturer: Concord Electronics Corp., 1935 Armacost Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90025.

COMMENT: Concord's Mark III tape recorder offers basic performance characteristics—distortion, frequency response, wow and flutter, and speed accuracy—that compare favorably to those of top-quality consumer models. Maximum deviation from nominal speed was the negligible 0.8%-slow measurement clocked by the lab at 1⅞ ips, which cannot be called excessive. Note too that all three speeds literally were unaffected by line voltage extremes, the hysteresis motor locking to the 60-Hz line frequency to maintain constant speed at all settings.

Meter accuracy was very good, though the meters are difficult to read. Concord uses small red pilot lights to indicate which channels are in the record mode; the meters are otherwise unilluminated. They also are small and their pointer action is quite fast, adding to the difficulty in determining precise readings.

The record-level knobs themselves are neither ganged nor calibrated, making it difficult to preserve the precise balance of the original in copying a stereo signal and reducing the user's ability to reproduce a predetermined level setting without resorting to grease-pencil marks on the face plate or similar dodges. If, for instance, you are planning to record a live concert from FM and have monitored the station's signal levels to establish appropriate gain settings, you will have to be extra careful when fading in during the applause preceding the music since you will be

CONCORD'S HIGH-SPEC MARK III RECORDER

using two knobs neither of which gives more than a rough cue to that predetermined setting.

Mechanically the Mark III has a number of desirable features often omitted from a recorder in its price class—double tension arms, lift-up head cover for editing, and automatic shutoff when the tape breaks or runs through. The main function control, however, felt relatively stiff and even a little awkward. To move from pause—Concord calls it “cue”—to “play” the control must both force the pinch roller against the capstan and close the head shields, into which the pressure pads are built. The action is reasonably efficient and the double tension arms give a good, quick, clean start from pause.

Having mentioned the flip-up head cover—which reveals the three heads (erase, record, and playback) clearly marked in terms of both function and head-gap position—we must add that editing on the Mark III is not as easy as one might hope. In order to cue up the tape to find the precise spot at which a tight edit is to be made, the “cue” mode cannot be used. It stops the transport without stopping the motor or disengaging the record mode—the action one would expect of a pause mode—but does not allow cueing because the playback head is not live in that mode. To cue the tape for editing, the transport must be stopped, the tape threaded behind the capstan to disable the drive system, and the control then moved to play so that the head will be reactivated. At the center of the reel, this technique works well enough, though the rethreading is a bit of a nuisance if you have much editing to do. But near the ends of the reel the torque on the two reels no longer is exerting equal tension on the tape, which tends to run off in the direction of the emptier reel, making cueing awkward. Therefore, in spite of the head cover, we cannot rate the unit as efficient where editing would be necessary. We should point out, however, that some high-priced machines require a similar editing technique.

There are three controls on the Mark III that deserve special mention. Two are on the input/output panel on the right end of the machine, where they can be reached whether it is used vertically or horizontally. One controls the sound-on-sound feature, the other the tape echo. Since the Mark III has no output level

REPORT POLICY

Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by CBS Laboratories, Stamford, Connecticut, a division of Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc., one of the nation's leading research organizations. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Manufacturers are not permitted to read reports in advance of publication, and no report, or portion thereof, may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific samples tested; neither HIGH FIDELITY nor CBS Laboratories assumes responsibility for product performance or quality.

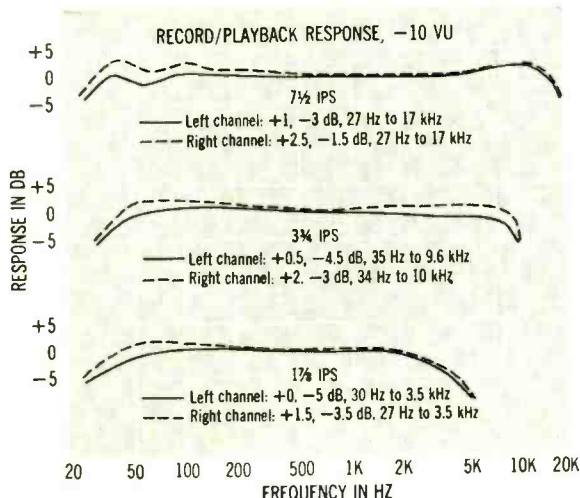
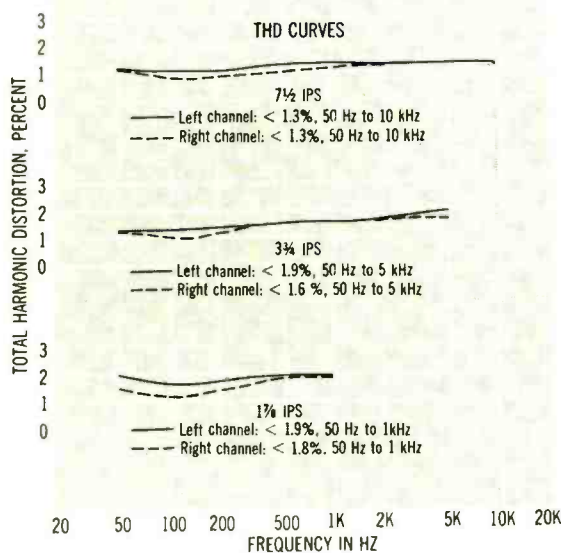
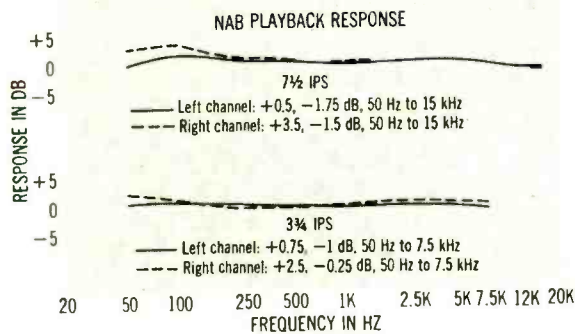
controls, which otherwise could be used for the purpose, levels of the cross-feed for sound-on-sound and output-to-input recycling for echo are controlled by a pair of flush knobs in the panel. These controls are inserted into the circuitry by a pair of switches above them. One switch allows the choice of sound-on-sound, normal use, or echo; the second controls the direction of feed in the sound-on-sound mode: left to right or right to left.

The third control is called the "range expand" on the unit and the "dynamic muting" in Concord's literature. The latter term is the more apt. The device it represents operates, in playback, to begin cutting off output altogether as the signal drops toward back-

ground noise and hiss. The intent is to cut off the noise whenever there is no appreciable signal on top of it to drive the special circuitry beyond its threshold point. The noise is clearly audible behind signals close to that threshold, however; and the noise therefore tends to pop in and out with the action of the muting circuit, drawing attention to itself more than it would if it were present continuously so that the ear could adjust to it and ignore it. When most of the signal is loud enough to mask noise, however, the action is better. Then sudden holes in the program material are made quieter than they otherwise would be. But the sound must be quite dry, with sharp transients at both beginning and end (that is, without a hall resonance that trails off toward the threshold point) if the action of the mute is to be a true plus factor.

To sum up, the Mark III is primarily a deck that, for its cost, provides superior performance in terms of the clean signal it will deliver, as documented in the accompanying lab-test results. In addition, Concord has thrown in a number of features of varying interest and utility, depending on the uses to which you expect to put the deck. Generally speaking, we feel that these extras can prove quite satisfactory for occasional use. For many users, however, the signal quality will be the overriding consideration.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Concord Mark III Additional Data

Performance characteristic	Measurement	
Speed accuracy, 7 1/2 ips	105 VAC: 0.16% slow	
	120 VAC: 0.16% slow	
	127 VAC: 0.16% slow	
	3 3/4 ips	105 VAC: 0.28% slow
		120 VAC: 0.28% slow
		127 VAC: 0.28% slow
1 7/8 ips	105 VAC: 0.80% slow	
	120 VAC: 0.80% slow	
	127 VAC: 0.80% slow	
Wow and flutter, 7 1/2 ips	playback: 0.08%	
	record / playback: 0.10%	
	3 3/4 ips	playback: 0.10%
	record / playback: 0.19%	
	1 7/8 ips	record / playback: 0.32%
Rewind time, 7-in., 1,200-ft. reel	2 min. 34 sec.	
Fast-forward time, same reel	1 min. 56 sec.	
S/N ratio (ref 0 VU)	playback	
	record / playback	
Erasure (400 Hz at normal level)	l ch: 51 dB r ch: 52 dB	
	l ch: 45.5 dB r ch: 47 dB	
Crosstalk (400 Hz)		
record left, playback right	50 dB	
record right, playback left	48 dB	
Sensitivity (for 0 VU recording level)		
	aux. input	
	mike input	
Accuracy, built-in meters	l ch: 130 mV r ch: 135 mV	
	l ch: 0.76 mV r ch: 0.80 mV	
IM distortion (record/play)		
7 1/2 ips, -10 VU	l ch: 3.0% r ch: 2.7%	
	l ch: 3.3% r ch: 3.0%	
3 3/4 ips, -10 VU		
Maximum output, line (at 0 VU record level)		
	l ch: 0.90 V r ch: 0.85 V	

CROWN'S POWERHOUSE IN PANCAKE FORM



THE EQUIPMENT: Crown D-40, a stereo basic amplifier. Dimensions: 19 inches wide (rack-mount size); 1 3/4 inches high; 8 5/8 inches over-all deep. Price: \$229. Model 2C wooden case: \$29. Manufacturer: Crown International, 1718 Mishawaka Rd., Elkhart, Ind. 46514.

COMMENT: The D-40 is a high-quality, professional-grade basic amplifier designed for use with a separate preamp/control unit. Inasmuch as it has individual channel-level controls, it also could be fed directly from any "high level" signal source not requiring equalization, such as a tuner or a tape deck's playback preamps or line output, and so on. For studio use, the D-40 may be readily slipped into place on standard 19-inch rack mounts; for home use, it may be placed as is wherever convenient or, if one wishes to expose it, the amplifier may be dressed up in its optional wooden case.

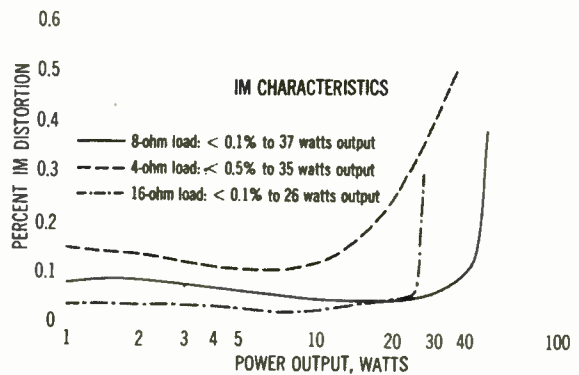
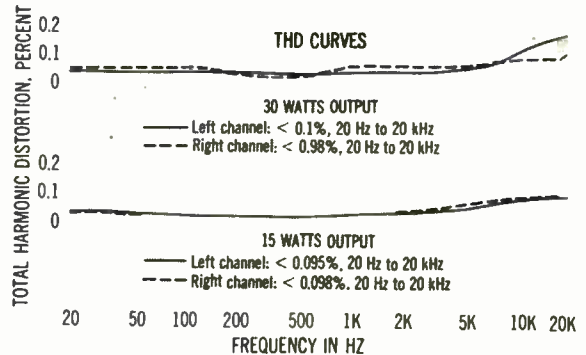
In addition to the level controls, the front panel contains a pilot lamp, a stereo headphone output jack, and the off/on switch. Signal connections at the rear include dual sets per channel: for input connections there's a pair of phono jacks and a pair of phone jacks. For outputs, there are two pairs of phone jacks. The set's AC line cord and fusing (a main power fuse plus four additional fuses for the DC supply circuits) also are at the rear. The line cord comes fitted with a three-prong AC plug for direct connection to a three-wire (separate ground) AC system; a simple adapter, available at hardware stores, converts the plug for connecting into two-wire AC systems. A slight internal wiring change converts the unit from 120-volt to 240-volt operation; another circuit modification changes the D-40 from a dual 30-watt to a mono 60-watt amplifier. Either of these changes can be made by a competent technician.

Tested as a normal stereo amplifier operating on standard AC line voltage, the D-40 easily met its published specifications and scored very high in all performance areas. Distortion was almost too low to be measured; note that we had to expand our vertical scales on the graphs to show the exceedingly small amounts of distortion measured. Response was literally a ruler-flat line from 20 Hz to 100 kHz, being down by only half a dB at 10 Hz. Square-wave behavior, at both low and high frequency test signals, was exemplary, indicating full, uncompromised bass, superb transient ability, and excellent stability. With a signal-to-noise ratio of nearly 100 dB for full-rated output, the D-40 also is one of the most noise-free amplifiers available. Additional attractions of the D-40 include a sophisticated built-in protection system that renders the amplifier invulnerable to damage from shorts, open circuits, or loading mismatch. For those seeking a scaled-down replica of Crown's giant-size, \$685 DC-300, the new D-40 is seriously recommended.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Square-wave response.



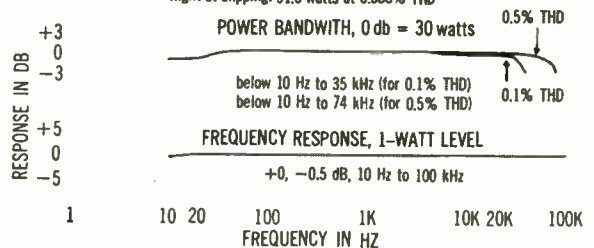
POWER DATA

Channels individually

Left at clipping: 39.1 watts at 0.046% THD
 Left for 0.1% THD: 40.0 watts
 Right at clipping: 39.1 watts at 0.094% THD
 Right for 0.1% THD: 39.6 watts

Channels simultaneously

Left at clipping: 31.6 watts at 0.044% THD
 Right at clipping: 31.6 watts at 0.088% THD



Crown D-40

Additional Data

Performance characteristic

Measurement

Damping factor

40

Input characteristics
 (for 30 watts output)

Sensitivity

700 mV

S/N ratio

98.5 dB



HIGH PERFORMING AMPLIFIER AT REASONABLE COST

THE EQUIPMENT: Pioneer SA-900, a stereo integrated amplifier. Dimensions: front panel, 16 by 5 1/8 inches; chassis depth, 11 inches. Price: \$259.95. Manufacturer: Pioneer Electronics U.S.A. Corp., 140 Smith St., Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735.

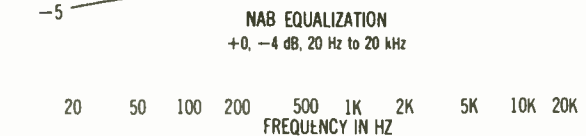
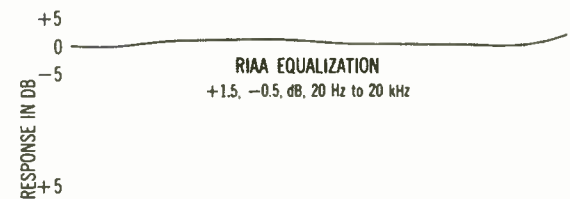
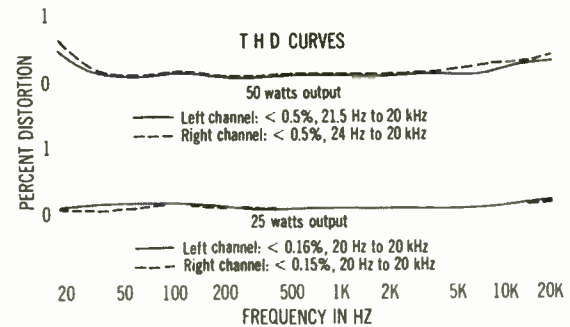
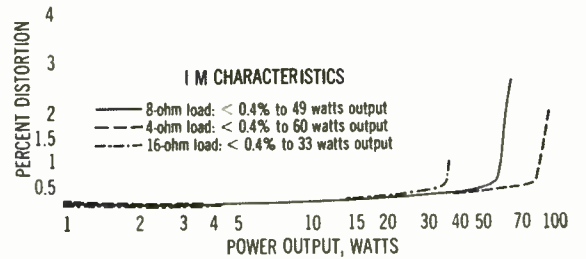
COMMENT: Pioneer has come up with a real winner in its SA-900 integrated amplifier. The unit offers both very high performance and an abundance of useful features. Response is wide and linear; power output is high; distortion is low. It's the kind of carefully designed equipment that should interest the demanding stereo enthusiast—in the studio or the home. As amplifiers go, the SA-900 also boasts fairly good looks, with its brushed-gold escutcheon flanked by rosewood strips. Supplied in a metal case with four feet, it may be installed "as is," or fitted into a custom cutout.

As befits the all-out design approach evident here, the unit's roster of controls and features is more generous than one customarily finds on an integrated chassis. For tone controls, the amplifier has four separate knobs—treble and bass independently on each channel—each of which is a stepped and dB-calibrated control for precise and repeatable settings. The three largest knobs on the panel are volume, mode, and program selector. The mode control offers the options of normal stereo, reverse channel, left channel only, right channel only, and left plus right mono. The selector has positions for signals from a microphone, tape head, phono 1, phono 2, tuner, auxiliary 1, and auxiliary 2. The mike input jacks are on the front panel; the other inputs are at the rear. The phono 1 inputs are controlled by a switch that permits them to accept the very low-level signals furnished by moving-coil pickups without the need for the booster transformer ordinarily required, or the normally low-level signals from other magnetic pickups. The phono 2 inputs are actually two stereo pairs, one handling regular magnetic pickups, the other handling ceramic. You thus can connect any known type of phono pickup to the SA-900, leaving three different pickups connected simultaneously, and make comparisons of any two.

Other front-panel features include a separate power off/on switch, pilot lamp, stereo headphone jack, speaker selector, channel balance control, muting switch, tape monitor switch, and push buttons for loudness contour and high- and low-frequency filters. The speaker selector, in conjunction with rear connectors, permits hooking up two sets of stereo speaker

systems and driving either, both, or none. The headphone jack remains live at all times. The muting switch may be used to attenuate the sound volume by 20 dB without the need to adjust other controls—a useful feature when cueing a record or whipping through the dial on your FM tuner, either of which should be done only after reducing amplifier gain.

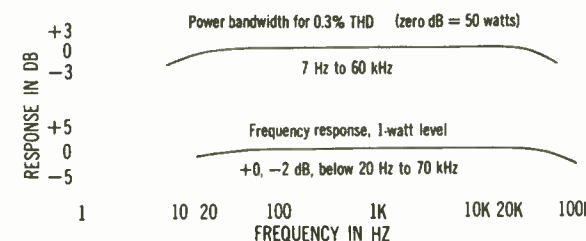
The rear of the amplifier contains the inputs corresponding to the markings on the front-panel selector knob. There's also the stereo pair for feeding signals to a tape recorder, plus a DIN socket for accepting the combined record/playback plug commonly found on European-made tape equipment. A very neatly arranged "circuit interrupt" feature at the rear



POWER DATA

Channels individually
 Left at clipping: 54.5 watts at 0.10% THD
 Left for 0.3% THD: 60 watts
 Right at clipping: 57.2 watts at 0.16% THD
 Right for 0.3% THD: 60 watts

Channels simultaneously
 Left at clipping: 50 watts at 0.12% THD
 Right at clipping: 50 watts at 0.14% THD



Square-wave response.

enables you to electrically separate the SA-900 into a stereo preamp and a stereo power amp for special applications, such as patching in reverb devices, electronic crossovers, or any of the new "spectrum contouring" or "loudspeaker equalizing" accessories. With an electronic crossover setup, you can return part of the signal to the SA-900's own power amps while feeding the rest of it to external power amps. There's also a "center-channel" output (left plus right mono) which can drive an external mono basic amplifier. The options available—combining these features with the unit's multispeaker outputs—can provide endless experimentation for a sound hobbyist. Many of these hookups are explained in the owner's manual which, by the way, is unusually well written and illustrated.

Under test, the SA-900 easily met its performance specifications and shaped up as one of the best integrated amplifiers it has been our pleasure to examine. Power bandwidth, for a mere 0.3% distortion extended from below 20 Hz to 60,000 Hz; frequency response was virtually ruler flat across the audio band, being down by only 2 dB at 70,000 Hz. Both harmonic and IM distortion were nearly non-measurable at normal output levels; equalization, tone controls, and filters all showed desirable and accurate

characteristics. Good signal-to-noise ratios were afforded through all the set's inputs. The unit is very well built and shows evidence of careful workmanship and attention to detailing. All told, for an amplifier as good as this and with as many useful features, you'd expect to pay considerably more than the price listed.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Pioneer SA-900 Additional Data

Performance characteristic		Measurement
Damping factor		63
Input	Sensitivity	S/N ratio
Mag phono MC	2.6 mV	48 dB
Mag phono MM	4.1 mV	67 dB
Cer phono	5.7 mV	57 dB
Tape head	2.8 mV	61 dB
Tape monitor	160.0 mV	86.5 dB
Aux 1	158.0 mV	88.5 dB
Aux 2	160.0 mV	88.5 dB
Tuner	159.0 mV	88.7 dB
Mike	3.0 mV	60 dB

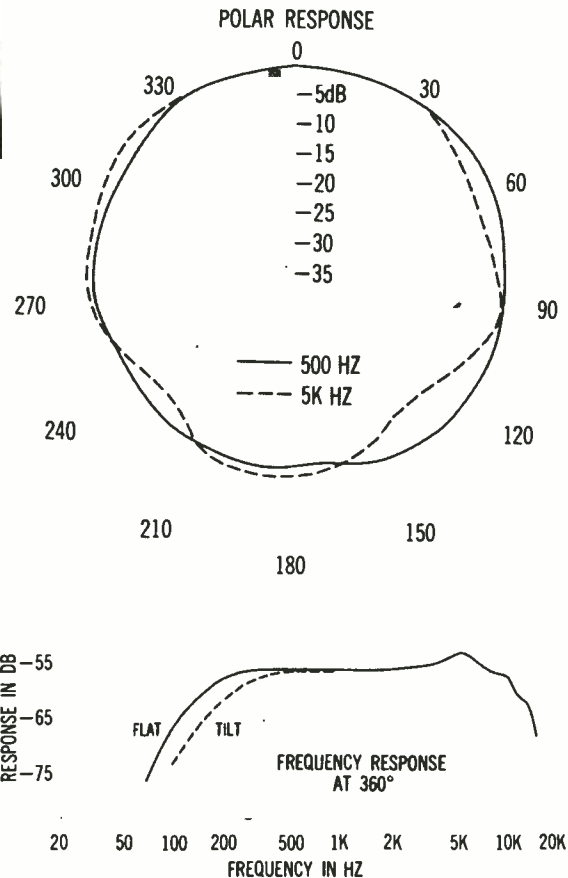
ALTEC MIKE FOR THE SERIOUS RECORDIST



THE EQUIPMENT: Altec Lansing 650A, a dual-impedance dynamic microphone, cardioid pattern. Dimensions: 7½ inches long (less connector); top, 1¾-inch diameter; handle, ¾-inch diameter. Price, with 15-foot shielded cable and carrying case, \$85. Manufacturer: Altec Lansing Division of LTV Ling Altec, Inc., 1515 S. Manchester Ave., Anaheim, Calif. 92803.

COMMENT: By cardioid, we mean of course that the 650A is more sensitive to sounds reaching it from the front than from the rear—the recommended sensitivity pattern for most home use, since the relatively weak rear response helps to suppress the ambient noise that characterizes all but studio recording situations. The polar response curve explains the microphone's action in this respect: sensitivity at the two frequencies shown (500 and 5,000 Hz) is about 15 dB less at the rear of the mike than it is on axis. Lab frequency sweeps confirm that a similar degree of front-to-back discrimination is maintained through most of the frequency range.

That frequency range, as the other curve indicates, may be taken as 70 to 15,000 Hz ± 11 dB, with a smooth midrange and no excessive peaks in the high end. The low-frequency rolloff, an advantage in controlling common noise problems, begins at 200 Hz but can be moved an octave up to 400 Hz, as indicated by the dotted line in the response curve, through the use of a small recessed switch on the mike case. Inasmuch as this switch may be moved only with a small instrument such as a screwdriver, there's no danger of the performer's inadvertently activating it during use. He can, however, activate the on/off switch near the top of the microphone. Should this be deemed undesirable in a given recording situation, a screwdriver will allow you to swing a small



lock plate into position to keep the switch permanently on.

As delivered, the mike is set for 20,000-ohm use, although this impedance may be changed to 200 ohms. At either impedance, frequency response is the same although the output level is reduced by 20 dB

when changing to the lower impedance which, by the way, is likely to be the preferred output setting for use with most home recorders. At 200 ohms the lab measured sensitivity at -55.2 dBm for 10 dynes per square centimeter—slightly better than that claimed by Altec.

For most serious home uses the 650A strikes us as a fine mike. It is a true cardioid—as opposed to the superdirectional, narrow-angle designs. The fact

that directional effects do not begin to show up until the sound source is well off axis avoids the problem of critical placement that often occurs with mikes having a narrower acceptance angle. The response remains well balanced (though attenuated) off axis—an advantage since frequency-selective response off axis, a common characteristic of inexpensive cardioid mikes, can make mike positioning very tricky.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

SHERWOOD'S UNIQUE RECORD PLAYER

THE EQUIPMENT: Sherwood SEL-100, an automatic turntable supplied with integral base. Dimensions: chassis base, 17 by 13 inches; height to top of spindle, 5½ inches. Price: \$149.50. Manufacturer: Sherwood Electronic Laboratories, Inc., 4300 N. California Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60618.

COMMENT: Sherwood's first turntable represents an interesting departure from conventional automatics: it employs belt drive for spinning the platter by means of one motor, while the record-dropping and arm-cycling operation is handled by a second motor. The same spindle serves for both single play and sequential stacking; it lowers a record by means of three small levers that descend elevatorlike, then retract into the spindle to rise again. The action is triggered by a photo-sensitive device under the platter which itself is "floated" in a common suspension with the tone arm. A two-speed (33- and 45-rpm) machine, the SEL-100 will intermix record sizes in the same stack. Four piano-key switches operate the unit; one of these is a hydraulically damped cueing control. The turntable is supplied with an integral base.

The two-piece platter consists of a larger (12-inch, 1-pound, 2-ounce) section fitted over a small member. The arm, a metal tubular type, has a removable pickup shell which will accept any standard cartridge. To adjust for correct overhang, you line up the stylus tip with any of four dots on the platter, as per the instructions furnished. The arm is balanced by a rear movable counterweight, and stylus force is then set by a small knob while you read the amount on a built-in indicator scale. Antiskating, or bias, adjustment is made automatically as stylus force is selected. Signals from the arm are taken from a pair of phono jacks on the underside of the unit via the shielded cables supplied.

The SEL-100 went through its lab tests in heads-up fashion. Thanks to the synchronous motor driving the platter, no speed variations occurred at any of the different line voltages used and speed accuracy for the 33-rpm operation was maintained within a 0.3 per cent slow margin. At 45 rpm, speed accuracy was perfect. Flutter was insignificant at a low 0.1 per cent; rumble by the CBS ARLL method was inaudible at minus 53 dB. The arm's resonance, occurring below 10 Hz, would not be a factor in the system's response. Arm friction, laterally and vertically, was negligible. In this design, the photo-sensitive device, rather than pressure from the arm, trips the automatic cycle; the actual measured stylus force when this occurs is a very low 0.38 gram. The arm can accommodate pickups designed to track at vertical stylus forces up to 4 grams, and its built-in gauge is accurate enough to obviate the need for a separate gauge. For the indicated settings, the following actual stylus forces were measured: 1, 0.9 gram; 2, 1.8 grams; 3, 2.9 grams; 4, 4 grams.

Lab measurements aside, the SEL-100 has a distinct



"personality" which you can know only by using it and which, depending on your personal inclinations, you may or may not like. Although the unit performed very well in terms of measurable test parameters, it has certain peculiarities. For one thing, the change cycle—while probably the gentlest of any automatic yet tested—takes the longest time of any, 14 seconds. The end cycle for manual play also takes 14 seconds. Both actions, which involve repeated movements of the tone arm and the spindle elevator, make us wonder if things haven't been made a little too complicated here.

To play 45-rpm discs you must either use individual spindle inserts for each record (no adapter ring is supplied) or purchase an automatic 45-rpm spindle as an accessory.

Beyond these annoyances, we noted two possible sources of inaccuracy in cartridge settings. The rear counterweight has no positive lock to keep it in place on the arm. If it is inadvertently moved (and this is easy to do), it will of course unbalance the arm and change the stylus force previously set. The pickup shell itself must be tightened to the arm body by means of a knurled ring; when you do so, however, you find that it tends to twist the shell from true horizontal alignment, thus putting the stylus somewhat askew in the groove. As long as the arm has not been secured in its arm rest this may pose no problem. However, the force you must exert to remove the arm from its "lock" position in the arm rest will cause it to twist by a few degrees. You then must try to correct this skew visually by twisting the shell back again, unless you want to settle for less than accurate groove tracing.

On the plus side, the SEL-100—thanks to its unitized platter/arm suspension—remains highly immune to the effects of external shock and vibration. You even can rap sharply on the machine while it is playing a record and the stylus stays in the groove undisturbed. It's a matter of weighing this advantage, and others inherent in the belt-drive design, vs. the inconveniences noted.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

REPORTS IN PROGRESS

**Dynaco Stereo 80
Amplifier Kit**

Radio Shack STA-120 Receiver

“Harman-Kardon was obviously intent upon producing as much receiver as possible for under \$300. In this they have succeeded”

Audio Magazine—February 1970.



Nocturne 820—\$269.95

Any manufacturer who produces a stereo receiver is bound to say that his product is powerful, brilliantly designed, ultra-sensitive, beautifully styled and a terrific buy for the money. In fact, that's exactly what we've been saying about our Nocturne 820.

But it's nice when somebody else says it all for you. Especially when that "somebody" is Audio Magazine.

In the review of the Nocturne 820 in the February issue, Audio said, "Power bandwidth extends from 15 to 40,000 Hz, based upon a 30-watt-per-channel (rms) power rating."

The magazine was particularly interested in the 820's FM performance and stated, "We wonder why published specifications did not include maximum FM S/N, since the measured value was an excellent 70 dB! 1 dB limiting took place at an input signal of only 2 μ V while total harmonic distortion measured 0.5%, as claimed."

Audio also said that the 820 was "just about

as sensitive as any FM tuner we have tested, some 46 stations were received acceptably in our admittedly good listening location. Sixteen of these were received in stereo. Muting was excellent."

The publication was equally enthusiastic about the 820's styling. They said that the unit was "... so elegant ... it would fit in well with almost anyone's furnishings." And, in summation, the review said, "Harman-Kardon was obviously intent upon producing as much receiver as possible for under \$300.00. In this they have succeeded."

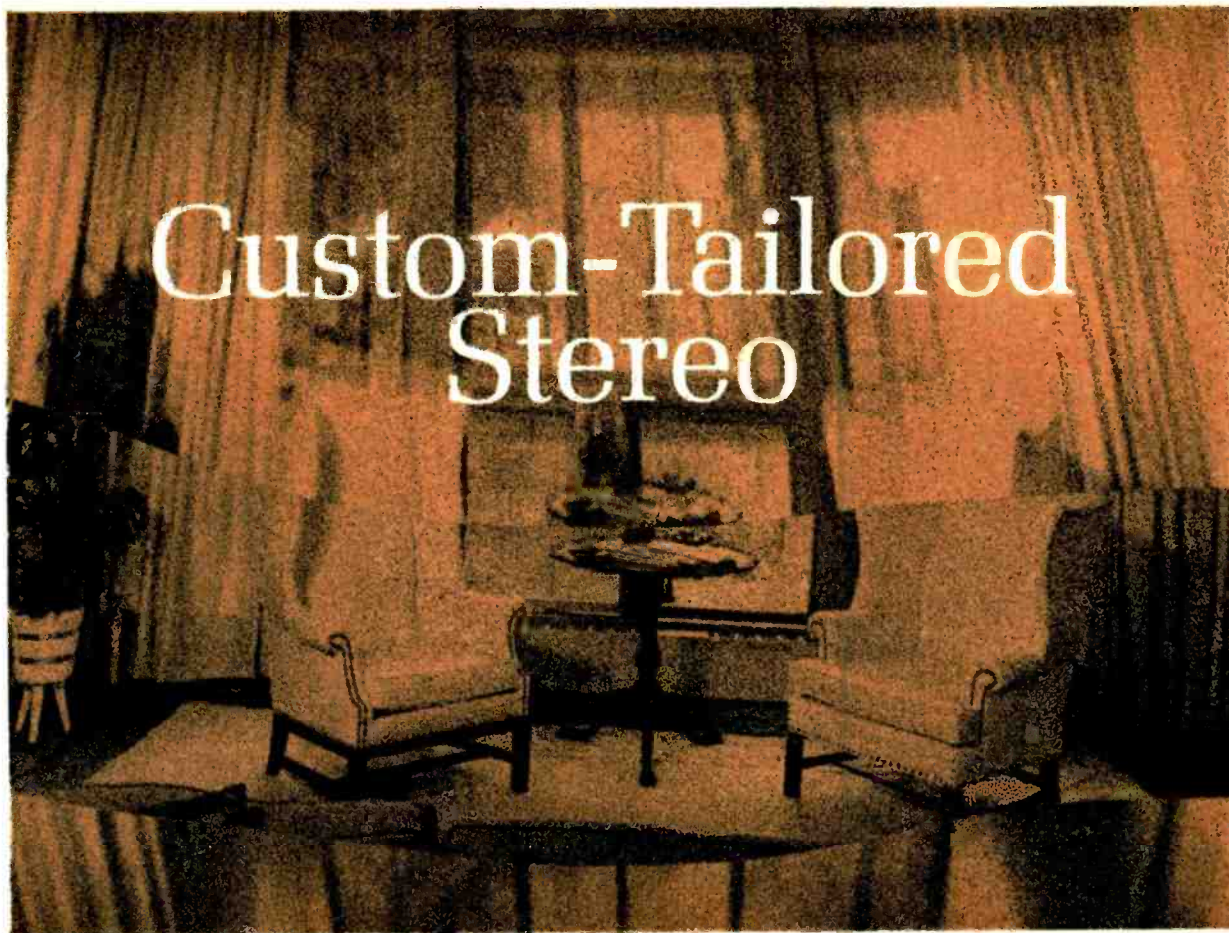
We thank Audio Magazine for their kind words. But words alone will never really tell you how the 820 performs and looks. Why not see for yourself. Visit your Harman-Kardon dealer soon. We think you will agree that the Nocturne 820 is about as much receiver as you can buy for under \$300.00.

For more information write to Harman-Kardon, Inc., 55 Ames Court, Plainview, N.Y. Dept. HF7.

harman kardon

A Subsidiary of Jervis Corporation
CIRCLE 21 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





Custom-Tailored Stereo

by Leonard Feldman

THE IDEAL AMPLIFIER, it has been said, would be a piece of wire that provides signal gain—and nothing more. Yet, a visit to your nearest high fidelity components dealer will quickly dispel any notion that “control-less” stereo constitutes present or even future thinking on the part of audio designers. In fact, after a decade of apparent simplification of the front panels of amplifiers and receivers, a new trend has developed which favors the inclusion of controls beyond any number previously offered.

The renewed interest in control flexibility stems, I feel, not just from an appeal to technological snobbishness on the part of the affluent audiophile but from a whole new philosophy pertaining to the reproduction of music in home environments. Today, the earlier simplistic definition of high fidelity as an attempt to authentically duplicate the original performance in the home is seldom heard any more. True, I know of some dedicated listeners who feed the output of their control-less tuners directly into basic power amplifiers equipped with, at best, a simple volume control, but these people are a vanishing breed.

The fact is, controls are vital in the home listening environment. A living room, regardless of its décor and size, is not acoustically equivalent to Carnegie

Hall and no amount of listening with your eyes closed will make it so. Further, my living room is not acoustically equivalent to yours, nor is the low-frequency cutoff point of my bookshelf acoustic-suspension stereo speaker systems equal to the cutoff point of my neighbor's corner horn enclosures. Moreover, my listening tastes involve dynamic ranges that might be considered ear-shattering by some other of my more sonically timid friends who prefer their kind of music played at levels they find real peachy. Keeping us all happy at once is one obvious reason why some controls are desirable to regulate a playback system. But there are other reasons too.

Because transducers (pickups, as well as loudspeakers) are known to be the least perfect elements in any sound system, there is ample justification for using electronic equalization or compensation to help smooth their response, or make it more linear—especially since electronic compensation can introduce enough variation to counteract the undesirable effects caused by the listening room, which has its own resonances, attenuation characteristics, and reverberation peculiarities.

Controls in one form or another also are justified on purely psychological grounds. Call it “electronic musicianship,” but I believe that high fidelity enthu-

New controls permit you to change the acoustical shape of your room

siasts enjoy having a multitude of controls at their command—much as sports car enthusiasts delight in having additional metering facilities and optional extras in their vehicles. In my view there is nothing wrong with tailoring one's sound to one's taste—and if this means creating orchestral balances never dreamed of by a composer, may I quickly add that J. S. Bach surely never dreamed his two- or three-part inventions would be reproduced via a Moog Electronic Synthesizer either. (Actually how far away from electronic music are the many controls to which we have access these days?) Nor, for that matter, did Berlioz—in his wildest flights of fancy—ever envisage that his *Grande Messe des Morts* would be captured on a plastic disc (or ribbon) and released via two big boxes (or four) in a twenty-foot living room. The amount of electronic compensation involved in this process and the attendant number and variety of knobs, levers, and switches required constitute in sum an art/science form related more to the taste of the listener than the intent of the creator.

The Conventional Controls

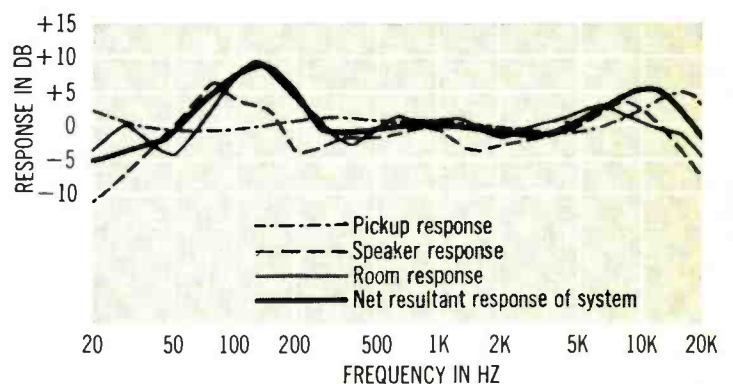
In recent years, as more and more stereophonic reproducing equipment was manufactured, many controls, which were considered necessary at first, have all but vanished from the scene. Remember the phasing control on the first stereo amplifiers? Today, phasing standards are so well established that once your speakers have been connected to work in phase they will continue to do so for all program sources, including the very complex stereo FM broadcasting techniques. Ergo, no more phasing control.

An early control that has not disappeared completely, but is seldom seen on current equipment, is the normal/reverse switch that enables you to interchange stereo channels, left becoming right and vice versa. Channel standardization, like phase standardization, has all but rendered the control superfluous. Still, for personal reasons, I like it and am still pleased with its availability on some receivers and amplifiers. It's fun to flip vocalists and musical instruments about my imaginary stage—and if listening to stereo at home can't be fun, what justification is there for the vast sums of money we expend for equipment?

Associated with the normal/reverse function was a series of mode positions that enabled you to hear through both speakers the left-only signal, right-only, or a mixture of left plus right. The last of these positions, actually a monophonic mixture, has remained as the mono setting of most mode switches. The other two settings have been dropped from most

units in the interest of simplicity, though they did provide one measure of flexibility which is lost as a consequence.

Some of the first stereo amplifiers were equipped with independent left and right controls in addition to a master volume control. The theory here was that the user first set his master volume control to a suitable listening level and then, by means of the separate left and right controls, adjusted the total sound for correct stereo balance. Because most stereo users found this control system cumbersome and confusing, the separate level controls were replaced by a balance control, a single knob that adjusts left and right signal levels relative to one another. Certainly this control represents an improvement and a much needed simplification, but it does lack one possible advantage: matching signal levels to those



Interaction of various peaks and dips in the response of a typically good pickup and speaker system may be complicated by the variables in room acoustics and will thus produce anything but the desired "flat response," as shown by the heavy line. Ordinary tone controls cannot fully compensate for this effect.

assumed by the action of the unit's loudness compensation.

The loudness contour switches that are supposed to compensate for low listening levels by adding prescribed amounts of bass (and sometimes treble) emphasis at various settings of the volume control—more compensation for low settings, less for high settings—are now inflexibly tied to the internal amplification of the equipment. To use a loudness compensation switch correctly, one must have access to separate input level controls for each signal source. In the absence of independent channel-level controls, this ability has been lost by all but a few pieces of equipment that still offer rear-panel input-level controls for external signal sources.

As noted earlier, the balance control seems destined to remain a feature of all stereophonic amplifiers. So does the master volume control (or dual-ganged

variant that functions as both level and balance controls). If correctly designed, it is capable of reducing or raising the levels on both channels uniformly—that is, with little tracking error over a range of more than 60 dB. In practice, however, it is often necessary to use the balance control to compensate for the poor tracking of an inferior volume control.

Tone controls were staples of sound equipment through the monophonic era and are still with us. Despite the protestations of the sound purists, I strongly feel that tone controls are needed to compensate for room acoustics, signal-source deficiencies, and listening tastes. And by tone controls I mean separate knobs for bass and treble. At one time the array might also have included a presence control to boost a narrow range of mid-frequencies to give prominence to a soloist. Presence controls largely disappeared with the advent of stereo, since the stereo image itself now does the job of placing the soloist in a front-center position.

Basically, stereo tone controls come in three possible forms. The simplest are made of dual-ganged potentiometers that accentuate or attenuate both left and right channels simultaneously. A more versatile and complex tone control is the kind that involves the use of ganged but mechanically independent controls so that the pair may be operated as one—often through a friction-clutch arrangement—or as two independent knobs. The most elaborate tone-control arrangement—found as a rule on the costliest units—offers four totally independent tone controls, i.e., separate bass and treble controls for each channel.

Some equipment offers a switch that bypasses the tone controls completely. This addition is not as ludicrous as it might first appear, for there are times when you might want to return to absolutely “flat” or uniform response, and the flat settings on conventional tone controls often fail to correspond to electrically flat response. In addition, some forms of tone-control circuits introduce phase shifts at certain frequencies which, in theory at least, can partly degrade stereo separation or cause slight distortion. An alternate to the tone-control-cancel switch is the type of tone control circuitry that drops out of the amplifier circuit when the associated knob is turned to the flat position. Yet another refinement is the stepped tone control, which makes contact with individual resistors and/or capacitors to achieve precise and repeatable settings.

Although not all tape recorders are equipped with a separate monitoring or playback head, nearly all of today’s amplifiers and receivers include a tape monitor switch, ostensibly intended for just this type of tape machine. This control (usually in the form of a two-position switch) is nothing more than an interruption in the amplifying circuit to enable the insertion of a tape-monitoring signal. Actually, this circuit-interrupt feature can be put to other uses, such as the insertion of some of the newer

pieces of equalizing equipment, which typify the latest thrust in controls for stereo.

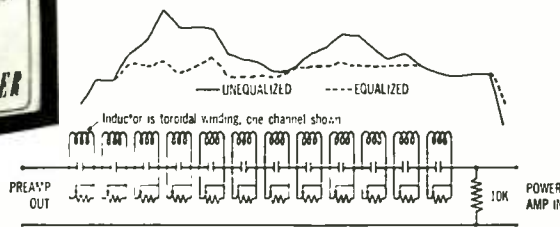
The Unconventional Controls

This past year has produced a new breed of “spectrum contouring” controls that represent a major departure from previous control philosophy—at least in the consumer product area. Tailoring the over-all response curve to suit specific requirements is of course old hat in both the recording and broadcast fields. Precision equalizers capable of shaping a frequency response incrementally, as well as expanders and compressors (or limiters) which increase or decrease dynamic range, are widely used by professionals. Until now, however, very few home audio products sported such sophisticated controls.

In my opinion, the appearance of these new controls constitutes a measure of honesty about product performance not found in any other industry. The manufacturers of these devices are admitting, in effect, that the loudspeaker is not perfect; that your listening room is not a concert hall; and that your otherwise excellent stereo pickup cartridge may indeed have a peak at around 12,000 Hz (something you suspected all along). They’re hinting too that FM broadcasters cannot transmit the full dynamic range of every musical selection and still observe the rules and regulations that cover the broadcast field.

The most predominant new control seems to be an elaborate replacement for the familiar bass and treble controls of your present stereo system. At least a half dozen products in this category are already on the market and more seem to be on the way. Basically, the principle involves boosting or attenuating restricted bands of frequencies, often by carefully calibrated amounts. By way of illustration, JVC/Nivico—producer of the new SEA (Sound Effect Amplifier) preamplifier—explains that the range of an ordinary tone-control combination is limited to boosting or attenuating the entire range of highs and/or lows in a prescribed, and not necessarily ideal, relationship. Thus, if your cartridge has a peak around 12,000 Hz, turning the treble control counterclockwise, by even a small amount, will not just reduce that peak but will affect the frequency response all the way down to 1,000 Hz or even lower. Similarly, a loudspeaker which has a significant “hole” at around 200 Hz (but is otherwise low in distortion at that frequency) cannot be compensated for by the mere clockwise rotation of the bass control. Frequencies all the way up to at least 500 Hz will be boosted to some degree, altering the desired tonal balance of the most important mid-frequencies. By providing individual adjustment of seven frequency ranges, JVC/Nivico comes up with vastly increased tonal compensation capabilities.

Interestingly, measurements of various listening



Crescendo control system on Bogen BR360 receiver, above, is designed to provide adjustment of dynamic range by offering volume expansion and compression. JVC/Nivico receiver, left, has built-in "Sound Effect Amplifier" that provides control over five frequency ranges, to compensate for room acoustics or speaker and pickup characteristics. Below, the Frazier Stereo Environmental Equalizer Model SEE-24, and a chart showing "before and after" response curves; the twelve adjustable circuit sections are intended to match a speaker's response to the room.

rooms have proven that the rooms themselves may often exhibit narrow-band peaks, particularly at lower frequencies where the room behaves like a resonant chamber at a frequency of, say, 150 Hz. A conventional bass tone control rotated counterclockwise would produce only partial correction, but the use of just one compensating segment of the SEA system (or any other similar system) could offer more precise correction.

How many frequency segments are needed seems to have become a new source of controversy. Harman-Kardon announces that its new Citation Eleven preamplifier will feature five sliding controls per channel capable of ± 13 dB of variation at center frequencies of 60, 320, 1,000, 5,000, and 12,000 Hz. In view of the unit's cost—\$295 wired or \$229 as a kit—the number of frequency segments was obviously an engineering decision rather than one based upon manufacturing economies. Much more elaborate is the Frazier Model SEE-24 stereo environmental equalizer which boasts twelve individual controls per channel, each spanning just two-thirds of an octave. It must be emphasized, though, that the SEE-24 is at the other extreme of the new spectrum controls. While the Citation sliders are intended as extra-flexible tone controls for use by the listener to correct many types of imbalances and nonlinearities, the Frazier is intended only for matching the speakers' response characteristics to the room and the owner's taste. Frazier specifies that its unit must be adjusted only by a trained technician using specialized spectrum-analysis equipment. And once he is finished, there are no visible controls on the unit to tempt the owner into unprofessional tamperings.

The Frequency Balance Control offered by Advent lies somewhere between the two. It features ten frequency adjustments per channel, each controlling one octave of the total spectrum, and incorporates a number of convenience features that may duplicate switch functions already present in most stereo systems. These include a mono/stereo switch for listening to only one channel through both loudspeaker systems, a switch for bypassing the system entirely as in instantaneous A/B comparisons, and a tape-monitor switch. The inclusion of the latter is necessary, since the recommended way of using the Advent requires connections to the tape-out/tape-monitor jack combination on a receiver or amplifier.

An elaborately divided spectrum shaper is the Acousta-Voicette Model 729A, introduced by Altec Lansing, as an outgrowth of its Acousta-Voicing technique developed some years ago to help improve the performance of sound-reproducing or sound-reinforcing equipment in large rooms and halls. After measuring such annoyances as standing waves, sonic holes, and resonances, the engineer would insert compensating networks or filters in the amplifiers to be used. The results have been described as productive of smooth, natural sound in places that hitherto were notoriously poor for sound. The present Acousta-Voicette is essentially a simplified and less costly way of accomplishing similar results in home music systems. It divides the total audio spectrum into twenty-four adjustable segments of one-third octaves (on each channel) and offers up to 12 dB of attenuation on each segment. The main targets of Altec Lansing's device, like Frazier's, are room acoustics and speaker response peaks; by correcting these factors the com-

pany feels it is achieving true "environmental equalizing." Other speaker manufacturers—notably J. B. Lansing and Electro-Voice—have indicated their concurrence in the one-third-octave-band approach for commercial sound installations, though neither has announced consumer products in this area.

Another very elaborate spectrum shaper is the Model 124, introduced by B & K Instruments, Inc., which offers twenty-five adjustments per channel. This unit also uses the one-third-octave-per-control technique. Two of these devices would be needed for a normal stereo system. The frequency range covered runs from 56 to 17,500 Hz, and each control offers up to 40 dB of attenuation.

Those audio designers who are opposed to such elaborate tonal compensation devices argue that the average home user is totally unequipped to do a real equalizing job on his living room and/or sound system inasmuch as he lacks the requisite sound-level meters and other sophisticated test equipment used by professionals. In experimenting with two of these new devices, I can state that the combinations of sonic effects made possible by arbitrary or random placement of all the tempting sliding levers is endless and that when used without discretion, the audible results can be most unmusical and in fact devastating. Still, is this any reason to discourage experimentation? I think not. I believe that we may be witnessing the emergence of two different but parallel goals.

On the one hand we have the conservatives, whose quest remains the reproduction in the home of sound that most nearly approximates the live concert hall listening experience. Their radical counterparts, on the other hand, contend that concert hall simulation is irrelevant to the home listening experience, particularly in light of new recording/production techniques that make little or no attempt to duplicate the concert hall experience. From this standpoint it can be argued that controls may be used creatively, somewhat akin to electronic music, and that the more flexible the control setup, the more creative the listener can become. These listeners tend to feel as involved in the creative process as were the composer, conductor, and musicians.

And yet both groups may well accept the new controls. The conservative will use them to make minute and subtle refinements in his stereo system (listening room included), while the radicals can experiment to their hearts' content—and if they upset the levers so badly that the music seems to be coming over a telephone receiver placed inside a beer barrel, aren't they entitled to do so?

The "active" (i.e., amplified) equalizer associated with the Bose speaker system represents yet another approach to tonal equalization in that the equalizer is designed to overcome deviations from acoustically flat response by the speaker systems as well as from varying types of input sources, including recordings and pickups. The active equalizer offers a total of twenty combinations of response and so it too pro-

vides increased equalization positions compared to the conventional tone-control arrangement.

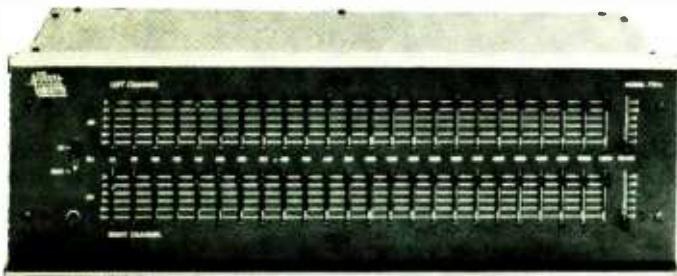
The popularity of the Bose 901 speaker system, for which the Bose equalizer is specifically designed, may have inspired at least one more recent speaker equalizer offered for universal use with any reproducer. This unit, the Model SE-III from Elektra-Amplidyne Research, offers six-step adjustments on each of its separate high- and low-frequency controls, ranging from flat to maximum, for a total of thirty-six possible response contours. Like the Bose, it has its own tape-monitor switch to replace the one on your receiver or amplifier if the tape jacks are used for patching the device into the system. A rear control regulates input levels and another switch may be used to bypass all the equalization when desired, in making instant A/B comparisons for example.

Acoustron Corporation, producer of the Erath/LWE speaker system, states that the feedback system embodied in its speakers effectively produces flat response from a speaker system despite room acoustics. Peaks in speaker response are smoothed out by means of feedback voltage derived from the speaker voice coil. The only control involved in this system—called a room gain control—may be used to compensate for room characteristics at low frequencies. Feedback from the speaker's voice coil also figures of course in the Servo-Statik I speaker introduced by Infinity Systems, Inc. Here, a woofer is driven by an integral amplifier whose relative gain may be adjusted.

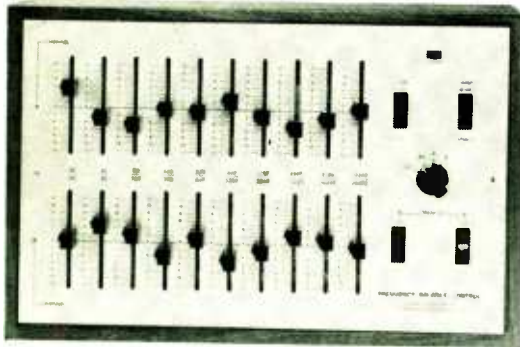
In a similar way Kenwood's Supreme 1 integrated stereo triamplifier offers a certain amount of spectrum contouring capability without actually adding a great many controls to the front panel. The amplifier includes three separate ranges of power amplification per channel. Since the output of each is intended for connection to individual speaker elements (one for woofer, midrange, and tweeter), and since each has its own level control, the audio spectrum can be successfully divided into at least three segments through the built-in electronic crossovers. Much the same can be said for almost any multi-amplification system, of course, since some sort of controls are necessary to adjust the relative balances of the frequency ranges involved.

Yet another type of speaker control, which is not an equalizer in the usual sense and can be used with frequency contouring or not, is the dimension device just brought out by David Beatty, a prominent Kansas City, Missouri audio dealer and installer. This unit permits installing two stereo pairs of speakers in one room and then varying the apparent stereo spread among them from a relatively narrow aural focus to a greater sense of breadth.

In the quest for new, more meaningful stereo controls, Bogen has added a compressor/expander circuit called Crescendo Control in some of its receivers and compact systems. Unlike earlier compressor/expanders, this unit operates only at signal levels above 100 millivolts, so that expansion will not in-



B & K Model 124 Spectrum Shaper, above, handles one channel with twenty-five frequency-shaping controls. Top left, Altec Lansing's Acousta-Voicette Model 729A, a stereo spectrum shaper offering twenty-four frequency adjustments plus gain control on each channel. Below it is the Advent Frequency Balance Control which divides the audio band into ten segments on each channel. Directly below, the SE-III Loudspeaker Equalizer by Elektra Amplidyne Research; offered for use with any speaker system, it has six adjustments on both treble and bass controls.



crease background noise, hiss, or hum. In the compression mode, background music listening is possible without total sacrifice of low-level musical passages. The Crescendo Control allows a variable range of action in both directions, with the maximum expansion position adding an extra 10 dB of dynamic range.

Finally there are the devices that add reverberation to a sound system regardless of other possible controls already being used. The latest to come to my attention is the Model SR-202 from Pioneer described as a "solid-state double scatter unit" capable of controlling the reverb time from zero to a few seconds.

Danger Signs—and Hope

At best, the new controls can add an audible improvement to most stereo systems by overcoming problems of room acoustics, speaker system imbalance, or deficiencies in program material. Conceivably they can, with judicious use, virtually change the acoustic shape of the listening room—or at least improve the performance of speakers in that room.

Obviously, the apparent duplication of control functions will require a new kind of orientation on the part of stereo listeners. Just as obviously it's going to take some practice and restraint to use the new controls effectively. If the spectrum equalizers are intended to replace conventional tone controls, then those tone controls should be left in the flat position. Just because some spectrum contouring de-

vices afford ranges of ± 12 dB or more on each of their many levers is no reason to suppose that a pattern of hills and valleys should be set on the levers when one is trying to equalize one's surroundings or speakers. Usually, moderate amounts of compensation at specific audio ranges will do the job beautifully unless, as I say, you just want to have some fun and create your own kind of music—one totally unrelated to the real thing.

If simultaneous four-channel stereo is indeed the next major revolution in the stereo component field, you may be sure that imaginative designers will come up with yet another generation of controls. Some will be superfluous and will fall by the wayside, some will be too late in coming and will finally appear only as a result of consumer demand, and some will be just what was needed from the beginning. I have three suggestions for the latter category. How about a balance control in the form of a "joystick?" Keep it in the center as a starting point, then swivel it in any direction—for it will have a ball-and-socket joint—to establish correct balance between all four channels at once. Next, I propose a level-setting switch that will allow you to individually select left front, left rear, right front, and right rear speakers for checking levels. Finally, for headphone listeners a "blend switch" that can be used for listening to four-channel stereo via headphones—so you can at least remix the rear channels back into their respective front channels. It's either that or sprout another pair of ears!



The Winners

And How They Won High Fidelity's Electronic Music Contest

DON'T YOU PEOPLE out there have anything better to do? After all, when we announced our Electronic Music Contest last August we reasonably expected that only a dozen or so readers would have the time, talent, and inclination to compose music for the home tape recorder. But as the November 1 deadline neared and well over one hundred tapes had already been submitted, the judges began to wonder whether they shouldn't have got involved in something more predictable. Like Miss America contests, or Ouija boards.

And then, even more burdensome, the great majority of your tapes turned out to be well crafted and devoid of amateurish sloppiness. The judges had anticipated that at least a significant proportion of the works would be so poorly conceived, constructed, and recorded that many of the compositions could be eliminated in a minute or two. Instead, you subjected them to tapes of considerable variety, originality, and even refinement of tonal palettes. The sections of the individual works were judiciously juxtaposed. And the technical quality of the recordings maintained, for the most part, a remarkably high quality. We can't help wondering what might have happened had we not had the foresight to limit the tapes to seven minutes.

At any rate, the vast majority of contestants did succeed in amusing, entertaining, and diverting the judges. How could they fail, with creative minds that dreamt up such a wide-ranging variety of titles: from the conventionality of *Opus 1* to the far-out reaches of *Marble Cooped Cushion Tops*; from the proletarian bent of *Basic Legend of Truck Farming* to the other-worldliness of *Cosmic Koto*. We also received curiously related titles, such as *The Flight of the Caterpillar* from one contestant and *The Fall of the Power-Mad Bumblebee* from another.

Inevitably, some of the entries were composed on professional equipment—on Moog or Buchla synthesizers. Two of them, in fact, emerged as winners. However, most of the contestants were restricted to amateur-grade equipment—the first prize winner, for instance. Talent will tell.

Some of the contestants chose their sound sources with classical purity; Mr. Ashforth's *Vocalise* and Mr. Hannah's *Marble Game*, for examples, both demonstrated vast aural variety from single sources—for the one, a male mouth, for the other, marbles, and one can only wonder at the results if they had collaborated. Other composers were as eclectic as Mr. LeMaster (whose *Marine Street Grays* included among its myriad sources a harmonica, a sine wave, an electric guitar, a dropped root beer bottle, and a cat's meow). Quite a few works were aleatory—that is, with some compositional decisions left to chance—like Mr. Allen's *Gnosoidua*.

The comic-relief highlight of the judicial sessions came from one tape that, described in its essay as derived totally from a solo clarinet, issued a veritable Mantovanian glory of orchestration. When this "clarinet" performed the even holier electronic miracle of sounding like a human voice announcing that, by golly, it *was* Mantovani, and followed this with a Ballantine Ale commercial, our perceptive judges began to get suspicious. The tape, of course, had been wound backward; the reverse did indeed come from a decidedly nonvirtuoso clarinet.

The second nonwinning highlight was submitted by Daniel Richard Eisenstein of The Bronx, New York, for whom the judges were tempted to create a special award. "The author's goal," according to the essay he wrote explaining his piece, *Golden*, was to "permit the listener to temporarily attenuate his attention. . . . Several feet of tape were made in a discotheque, with direct patch into the group's amplifier but not the recorder. . . . Comfortable, sound-proof headphones are essential. Experience has proven that to receive the full effect they need not be plugged in." The tape, needless to add, was completely silent. *Golden*, indeed!

A final surprise for the judges was the excellence of some of the accompanying essays. We here reprint some of our favorites, those that seemed especially enlightening to other home tape recordists who might want to try their hand at this latest, electronic form of self-expression.

First Prize

Allen Watson III
Redwood City, Calif.



Dreams of Demons

Mr. Watson has a degree in mathematics and works in scientific programming for the Singer Research Center in Palo Alto. He plays the classical guitar, has sung in coffee houses and in a performance of the Mozart Requiem. As previously announced, HF's first prize was \$100 worth of tape, the brands to be chosen by the winner. Mr. Watson's choice was Ampex 444.

Other Winners

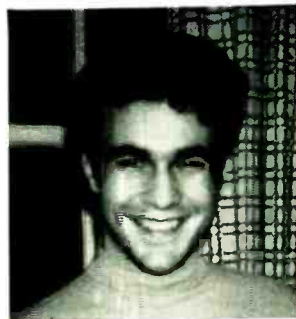
Alden Ashforth
Hollywood, Calif.



Vocalise

Mr. Ashforth is on the music faculty of UCLA. His hobbies are French wines, omelets, croquet, punning, poker, harpsichords, beagles, collage paintings, and astrology.

Brian Earle
Oberlin, Ohio



Window Piece #4

Mr. Earle is a junior at Oberlin College. A music major, he is studying acoustics and electronic music studio techniques. Among his interests are playing the recorder and designing new theaters for music and multimedia events.

Don Hannah
Las Vegas, Nev.



Marble Game

Mr. Hannah is a tuba player in the Earl Green Orchestra, which plays at the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas. His special interests include orchestrating and arranging, color photography, and the construction of electronic gadgets in conjunction with electronic composition.

Ian G. Masters
Toronto, Ont.



Drink to Me Only With Thy Noise
Mr. Masters received a BA in English literature from the University of Toronto, worked in accounting, and is currently involved in free-lance broadcasting and writing. His chief avocation is tape recording, both audio and video.

Michael E. Sprague
Pacifica, Calif.



Revolution: Past. Present. Future
Mr. Sprague is manager of the Radio Shack store in San Bruno, California. His interests include music, oil painting, and writing (fiction and poetry). He plays the trumpet and guitar (folk and electric), and is the author of *The Original Down East Brewer's Guide*.

Beatrice Witkin
New York, N. Y.



Glissines
Miss Witkin works with New York University's Composers Electronic Workshop. She is the originator of Composers Recognition Week in New York City, and is on the Board of Directors of "Music In Our Time."

**Honorable
Mentions**

Richard K. Allen, San Jose, Calif.
Gnosoidua

Jan Blankenship, Columbia, Mo.
Lunar Rhapsody

Joseph Carroll, Las Vegas, Nev.
Tape Dance

Dudley Duncan, Ann Arbor, Mich.
A Cosmic Koto

Thomas Formikell, David Cozzens,
Essex Junction, Vt.
An Open Cage

John Hasson, Broomall, Pa.
Earuv

Janet Kayan, Linda Mitchell, Samuel Goldfarb, Rockville, Conn.
Aleatoric

Ron LeMaster, Boulder, Colo.
Marine Street Grays

Carl Michaelson, Woodside, N.Y.
Mandala

Raymond L. Moore, New Canaan, Conn.
Trip Through the Milky Way

James A. Reichert, New York, N.Y.

Two American Portraits: Confrontation and Convention

Larry Rosen, Northvale, N.J.
Song for Piano and Nose Flute

Roar Schaad, Normal, Ill.
Sounds Like

Robert Schick, Stroudsburg, Pa.
Trio for Fixed Classical Guitar and Two Echo Chambers

Ethan G. Winer, East Norwalk, Conn.
An Assault on One's Ears

What They Did

Allen A. Watson III (*Dreams of Demons*)

Two sound sources were used for this tape. The first was a variable-frequency square-wave generator, provided with vibrato and a keyer to produce fast attack and slow decay. The second was the tape recorder's amplifier circuits, whose noise was made to accumulate via an "echo" hookup—that is, by recording with the signals from the monitor head mixed back into the input channels. The sounds so produced were manipulated during recording to produce a variety of effects, as shown in the following table.

NOISES

Grush: The sound produced when the gain of the echo channels is advanced until noise build-up occurs.

Slush: A grush that is made to slosh from channel to channel by manipulation of the gain controls.

TONES

Twirtle: The sound obtained when the square-wave generator is keyed, especially when the speed and pitch have been raised by copying the tape.

Hweet: With the square-wave generator on continuously, the gain control is used to produce a very slow attack and decay.

Bleep: One of a group of twirtles, keyed at the repetition rate of the tape recorder's echo mode so that the tones are superimposed.

MIXED SOUNDS

Jumble: With the square-wave generator connected to the recorder input, the recorder in "pause" mode, and the echo gain controls well advanced, the take-up reel is turned by hand so that the tape can be moved at an irregular speed.

Dreams of Demons begins with several sequences of grushes. The sounds were varied by fading the echo gain up and down, copying at different speeds, then splicing short sections together. A typical sound is produced by intersplicing—that is, by alternating short pieces of contrasting sounds.

The middle section consists of a number of sequences of twirtles, along with a hweet duet passage which was produced by recording one channel at a time, adding echo the second time around.

In contrast to these relatively musical sounds, the last section is more distorted, consisting mostly of jumbles. Here the effects of re-recording at different speeds and intersplicing can be heard.

The production of this tape entailed the use of two tape recorders, both Ampex home models: an inexpensive stereo mixer, connected to produce stereo "echo"; a splicing block (and yards and yards of splicing tape); and a square-wave generator, built from plans in Motorola's *Integrated Circuit Projects*.

Alden Ashforth (*Vocalise*)

All the sound sources in this work are produced from the mouth of the human male. About a dozen sounds were recorded: whistling, popping, buzzing, humming, etc.; they appear in the work in their original form (in the middle section) and are altered only by means of speed change and reverberation. Splicing was employed only for the purpose of compositional organization (not to alter attack and decay). Speeds used were from 15 ips down to 15/16 ips.

Four master tracks were spliced. One presents all of the source material slowed down fourfold and fed to both channels so as to move gradually back and forth through the stereo image and finally fade out at the end by descending below the threshold of human hearing. The other three master tracks are superimposed in a three-channel arrangement (left and right speakers, and composite center channel); these are the "upper" channels.

The form of the work is tripartite. Within each of the three sections the material is rotated between the three "upper" channels, so that all material appears in each "voice" but never simultaneously, much in the manner of triple counterpoint. The formal model was, in fact, Bach's F minor Sinfonia (Three-part Invention). The "low" channel, however, runs straight through the work without repetition, acting as a kind of "ground bass." The middle section is distinguished in sonority by the absence of reverberation in the upper three voices.

No attempt was made to imitate musical instruments. The attempt, rather, was through the exploitation of the vocally produced sounds to imitate and, in a sense, satirize the cliché components of electronic synthesizers. The total effect, despite the high degree of formal organization, is intended to be high-spirited and good-natured satire: a tape scherzo in the original sense of the term "scherzo," i.e., a joke.

Magnecord and Uher tape recorders were used, with Synchron microphones and a Fisher reverb unit (spring type).

Ron LeMaster (*Marine Street Grays*)

This work involved the following sound sources:

1. Direct recording of an electric guitar being played with a metal bar being slid up its lowest string and fed through a distortion unit of my design into the mike input of the recording deck. Dubbed from 1 7/8 ips to 7 1/2 ips and remixed for the stereo movement.

2. Swab brush, used for cleaning recorders, striking a metal against which the two mikes are strapped. Dubbed from 3/4 to 7/2 ips.

... 5. Recordings made of the following sounds: a signal tap on the tip of the mike, a cat meowing, and another, sharper tap on the mike. Echo function on the tape deck kept on throughout the recording. Echo volume kept raised to sufficient volume to provide indefinite feedback of the input signal and build-up of internally generated noise.

... 7. Harmonica recorded with mike held against its back side. Dubbed from 3 3/4 to 7 1/2 ips with bass boost from a Fisher preamp and reverb.

8. Sine waves recorded directly from a signal generator: first, a low note, recorded in center stereo position; second, a high sound of varying frequency recorded over the low note. A lamination of ferromagnetic foil between two pieces of photographic negative fitted over the erase head in order to keep it from erasing the first tape.

... 10. Reverb unit being kicked: first in center stereo position. More kicks then overlaid at different volumes and balanced in different stereo positions.

11. A piece of thin cardboard being rubbed across the tip of a mike.

12. A fifty-cent piece being dropped and spun on an electric griddle with the mike under the griddle. Echo function kept on throughout, but with the control turned completely down at first, then turned up.

13. Sine wave from signal generator with some overtones added by overdriving the Fisher preamp. Recorded with slight reverb.

... 17. Internal noise and feedback built up during recording by the echo on the tape deck, with the echo level turned up but with no input signal.

18. Quart root beer bottle dropped from about four feet onto a concrete stoop. Recorded with two mikes directly into the mike inputs on the tape deck.

... 23. A cotton bed sheet being ripped. Dubbed at normal speed and remixed for stereo movement, with reverb.

24. A tall, narrow beer glass, half filled with water, being tapped by a fork and tilted to vary pitch and timbre.

... 29. Air being let out of a balloon while the neck of the balloon was being slightly pinched. Recorded first on the left channel, then repeated and recorded on the other channel of the same tape segment.

Raymond L. Moore (*Trip Through the Milky Way—An Electronic Panorama*)
The three basic motives of this work are: a twenty-three-note row in which the interval of a fourth appears thirteen times; a series of thirteen fourths; and a

Continued on page 101

Berlin State Opera, Bruno Walter and Bruno Seidler-Winkler, cond. Odeon 80686/8 (three discs, unavailable in the U.S.).

WAGNER: *Die Walküre: Act I, Scene 2* (with Helen Traubel). NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond. RCA Victrola VICS 1316 (electronically rechanneled).

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY (songs and arias recorded between 1913-60). ASCO 121 (two discs, mono only, deleted).

LIGHTER SIDE OF MELCHIOR. Camden CAL 424 (mono only, deleted).

OPERA RECITAL (arias by Wagner, Verdi, Meyerbeer, etc.). Preiser LV 11.

Melchior's voice was one that seemed to record well, whatever the year—more than can be said of Flagstad, whose prewar records suffered from the inexperience of early electric-era engineers who had great difficulties in recording large operatic voices (even to the end, her E/F/F-sharp range could blast a groove, no matter how well made). It is doubly unfortunate that Melchior made so few records during the decade of his prime, 1930-40. However, items like the *Odyssey Tristan* excerpts, dating from 1944, are still unsurpassed—this is truly an indispensable record.

Thus far, Electrola/Odeon is the only company to own Melchior's one complete Wagner role—Sieg-mund, in Acts I and II of *Walküre* (there are minor cuts in Act II, but none in his role). No one has yet matched his magnificently sustained Wagnerian fortissimo on the "Wälse!" of Act I or the equally difficult Wagnerian pianissimo of "*Schwester, geliebte*" in Act II. The presence of his equals—Hotter, Klose, Lehmann, and Bruno Walter—make this recording unique indeed.

As well as being the paragon of Heldenenters, Melchior also epitomized the physical appearance that audiences ridicule in the never-ending parody that now seems an indispensable part of the Wagnerian apparatus. On stage, he was a gigantic torso holding its own upon spindly legs, with equally spindly arms gesticulating frantically in a rhythm that usually did not correspond with the rhythm of his singing. Yet his face, minus the superfluous chins, was that of Praxiteles' Hermes (it eventually became the sculptor's Poseidon) and his voice resembled a Titan's son—his Siegfried was truly of Olympus and Valhalla. Electrola/Odeon again has the bulk of Melchior in this role, recorded on amazingly fine-sounding 78s of 1928-30. To fit these excerpts on two LP discs, several valuable sides featuring the unique conducting of Albert Coates are missing—no more exciting a conductor of Wagner ever lived. A mad Russian by upbringing despite his name, he did things to music one either loves or hates. Less problematical is the Wanderer of Friedrich Schorr—no argument here, except for the severe abridgment.

Melchior's collaboration with Traubel and Toscanini is exciting, though he loses a few beats toward the end of the *Götterdämmerung* duet. The latter is

the only recorded example of Traubel's high C—not the best, but it is there, and the entire scene is superbly sung and inimitably conducted.

Unavailable but valuable is ASCO 121—Lauritz Melchior's fiftieth anniversary, commemorating his baritone debut in 1911. Several baritone items are heard, yet they only show us the familiar voice minus the top tones that he built up later. These bands, it must be warned, are recorded one-half tone high, so *caveat emptor*. If not too well processed, the set is still valuable, filling in many gaps of his recorded career including some examples of his Otello.

On single discs, the Preiser is most important. This enterprising Viennese company has done yeoman work in transferring unusual cuttings of old-timers to LP, and this one shows the Melchior voice in its prime, excellently transferred. Of particular interest are the *Tannhäuser* excerpts, especially a *Romerzählung* (which uses two conductors), the longest of all his versions. Though not easy to find (at this writing the best stocks of Preiser recordings are at Mielke's on East 86th Street and King Karol, 111 West 42nd Street, both in New York City), it is worth the search.

A sad loss is Melchior's once well-represented Scandinavian song repertory on RCA and Columbia 78s—not one remains. Most of these delightful songs, sung so lyrically yet with virile emphasis when called for (and often including full chorus and orchestra), have never been recorded by other singers—not even by Aksel Schiøtz. Victrola, are you listening? You could also re-release Camden 424, "The Lighter Side of Lauritz Melchior," a souvenir of his movie-making days for M-G-M (1945-53), in which he usually played Foxy Grandpa—much as Leo Slezak did for UFA a generation before. A good deal of this record is pure camp, though of an unsurpassable variety. The pop tunes, sung with a rhythmic vigor that rivals the best youngsters, reveal a man who thoroughly enjoys life. The bounce of his voice with Tommy Dorsey is a formidable duet in itself, and if the ersatz operas cooked up from Mendelssohn and Liszt never offered him such phrases as Tristan's "*Vor deinen Augen süß zerronnen*," he sang them with equal dedication. Melchior never condescended to his material—was it any accident that his voice opened more World Series games than any other singer of the past twenty years?

The Flagstad Recordings

GLUCK: *Alceste* (as Alceste, complete). Geraint Jones Singers and Orchestra. Richmond SRS 63512 (three discs).

GRIEG: *Haugtussa*. SINDING: *Songs (4)*. Edwin McArthur, piano. London LL 5290 (mono only, deleted).

GRIEG: *Songs*. Edwin McArthur, piano. London LL 5263 (mono only, deleted).

GRIEG: *Songs*. Philharmonia Orchestra. RCA Red Seal LM 99 (mono only, deleted).

MAHLER: *Kindertotenlieder; Lieder eines fah-*



Right: Lauritz Melchior in his early days as a baritone, in the role of Germont in *La Traviata*; the Norwegian soprano Kirsten Flagstad before she burst upon the American scene. Below: Flagstad and Melchior with the San Francisco Opera Orchestra recording famous scenes from Wagnerian music dramas. On the podium is Edwin McArthur.



renden Gesellen. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. London OS 25039. PURCELL: *Dido and Aeneas* (as Dido, complete). Mermaid Singers and Orchestra, Geraint Jones, cond. Odeon ALP 1026 (deleted). DORUMSGAARD: *Songs*. Gerald Moore, piano. Odeon ALP 1140 (deleted). SCHUBERT: *Lieder*. SCHUMANN: *Lieder*. Edwin McArthur, piano. London LL 5262 (mono only). SIBELIUS: *Songs*. London Symphony Orchestra, Oivin Fjeldstad, cond. London OS 25005. WAGNER: *Götterdämmerung* (as Brünnhilde, complete). Oslo Philharmonic, Oivin Fjeldstad, cond. London A 4603 (six discs, mono only, deleted). WAGNER: *Götterdämmerung: Immolation Scene*. Philharmonia Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Seraphim 60003 (mono only). WAGNER: *Das Rheingold* (as Fricka, complete). Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. London OSA 1309 (three discs). WAGNER: *Siegfried: "Heil dir, Sonne"*; *Tristan und Isolde: Narrative and Curse; Die Walküre: Todesverkündigung* (with Elisabeth Höngen and Set Svanholm). Philharmonia Orchestra, Georges Sébastian, Issay Dobrowen, and Karl Böhm, cond. Seraphim 60082 (mono only). WAGNER: *Tristan und Isolde* (as Isolde, complete). Philharmonia Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Angel 3588 (five discs). (Re-

channeled "Breitklang" edition on Odeon SME 91170/4, unavailable in the U.S.) WAGNER: *Tristan und Isolde: Liebestod*. Orchestra, Hans Lange, cond. RCA Victrola VIC 1455 (mono only). WAGNER: *Die Walküre: Act I*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. London OSA 1204 (two discs). WAGNER: *Die Walküre: Act III; Todesverkündigung*. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, cond. London OSA 1203 (two discs). WAGNER: *Wesendonk Songs* (with other arias). Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans Knappertsbusch, cond. London OS 25101. WAGNER: *Wesendonk Songs* (with songs by Grieg and Brahms). Gerald Moore, piano. Seraphim 60046 (mono only). BENEFIT CONCERT: *Symphony of the Air*, Edwin McArthur, cond. Orfeo-Sonic SDST 3 (three discs, deleted). NORWEGIAN AND AMERICAN SONGS (recorded between 1920-29). Harvest 1004 (mono only, deleted). OPERA RECITAL (arias by Beethoven, Weber, and Wagner). Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Camden CAL 462 (mono only, deleted). SONG RECITAL (songs by Bach, C. P. E. Bach, and Wolfgang Franck). Gerald Moore, piano. RCA Red Seal LHMV 1070 (mono only, deleted). SONG RECITAL (songs by Brahms, Schubert,

Strauss, and American composers). RCA Red Seal LM 1870 (mono only, deleted). SONGS FROM NORWAY (songs by Grieg, Alnaes, Lie, etc.). London Symphony Orchestra, Oivin Fjeldstad, cond. London OS 25103. GREAT SACRED SONGS (songs by Mendelssohn, Parry, etc.), London Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. London OS 25038.

Unlike Melchior, Flagstad possessed a voice that knew no period critics could call "prime." Even during her last recording sessions at the age of sixty-four, the pure columnar sound of her voice remained intact to the top B (the C was a problem, even in her youth—she always had the note, but would sing it only when she had the *tone* ready). Though her voice aged, as all must, hers aged like the finest Rothschild wine—such a vintage is not likely to reappear. I remember the one conversation I had with Flagstad in Oslo in 1959; the great lady, looking like a redheaded Dame May Whitty with the inevitable pince-nez, said to me, "If you don't have it, a teacher can't give it to you—if you *do* have it, they are powerless to stand in your way. But the greatest of all teachers was—and is—Time; he has his own curriculum, which you'll not find in any studio." The glory of her last records, including music she had recorded time and time again, bears eloquent witness to that fact.

There are two indispensable recordings of Flagstad in Wagner—the 1952 *Tristan* under Furtwängler and the 1955 Carnegie Hall concert (which coincidentally fell on Melchior's sixty-fifth birthday—as well as Gigli's; what a day to dedicate to the great singing of great music!). This concert contains for me her finest singing on record—either commercial or *sub rosa*. Time was apparently the teacher of McArthur as well, for here his conducting is truly worthy of Toscanini's erstwhile NBC Orchestra.

Enough superlatives have been written of the *Tristan*—the only regret here is that Melchior *could* have made it with her, even in 1952. Of special interest is Odeon's rechanneled *Breitklang* edition—the sound (whatever they did to it) is Wagnerian in the best sense. One might describe it as approximating the sound one hears from Box 1 at the Met—not center, but really *in it*. The trivialities of the spliced Cs seem unimportant here, but for the record, I find the four Cs spliced in *Siegfried* and *Tristan* the same except for the second C in *Tristan*. It was Flagstad's custom to sing the first C in each opera, to the end—is there anyone who was *there* to give a definitive answer?

Regrettably unavailable at present is London's complete *Götterdämmerung*—a radio performance that she recorded to mark the beginning of her term as directress of the Norwegian National Opera Company. All that is missing from her performance is the Prologue high C—at sixty-two the voice was still rock-solid. There's a great deal missing from the rest of the performance, however, including the inexplicable cut of the interlude following "Hagen's

Watch" in Act I, and the supporting cast seems to have been chosen more out of patriotism than vocal qualification. Svanholm (who was director of the Stockholm Opera at this time) displays a steady assurance that still conquered his dry voice, and no one in recent memory has sung that little coloratura phrase with its high C, "*Meinem frohen Mute*," so well. I find it rather charming to hear two operatic general managers making love to each other—whatever the source, Wagner was for once well served by operatic management.

Truly outstanding is the Seraphim 60082—a transfer far superior to previous incarnations—and her marvelously sexy-voiced Fricka in the London *Rheingold* was a superb conclusion to her recording career. The Camden is a classic, of course; no doubt it will soon be reissued—it better be! No one ever sang "*Abscheulicher*" like this, though it is regrettable that she did not record more of Beethoven's Leonore—a role in which her magnificent speaking voice was the equal of her singing one. I doubt if anyone has heard anything quite like her "*Nichts, nichts—mein Florestan*," with its little sob at the end.

The loss of her two all-Grieg recitals, particularly the RCA with its matchless *Vaaren*, is indefensible. Seraphim could reissue the latter, including the three orchestral songs recorded at the same time but never transferred to LP. Though she recorded the *Haugtussa* cycle three times, not one is currently available. This, one of Grieg's most beautiful utterances, was a particular favorite of Flagstad and McArthur, best served by their last version for London. We still have "Songs of Norway" and the Sibelius songs—get them while you can.

An interesting oddity was the Harvest disc, which begins with two bands recorded in 1920—a great guessing-game record for they are really terrible. Watch your guests' faces when they hear the third band, *Mot Kveld*, recorded shortly after the birth of her daughter—it's another voice, and one not to be gained from any teacher. The sound on this disc is not good, but aside from the beginning, it contains several interesting items, like *Home Sweet Home* and two versions of *Solvejg's Song*.

Of her lieder recitals, London LL 1546 is outstanding, particularly the Schubert side. Her postwar RCA recitals were all spoiled by the dead studio sound which seemed to afflict most of the takes, but LM 1870, containing much material otherwise unavailable, is worth a reissue.

In later years, Flagstad commissioned vocal works from promising young composers, and also studied the correct performance practice of older music; both reached splendid fulfillment in the legendary Dido and the songs on LHMV 1070 arranged by Arne Dørnumsgaard, whose own songs are often delightful.

In closing one should not overlook the "Sacred Song" album—these old chestnuts never had it so good, and Flagstad makes *Silent Night* as much her own as did Schumann-Heink. It is a perfect record with which to say "good night" to your friends, and a fitting way to conclude this article.

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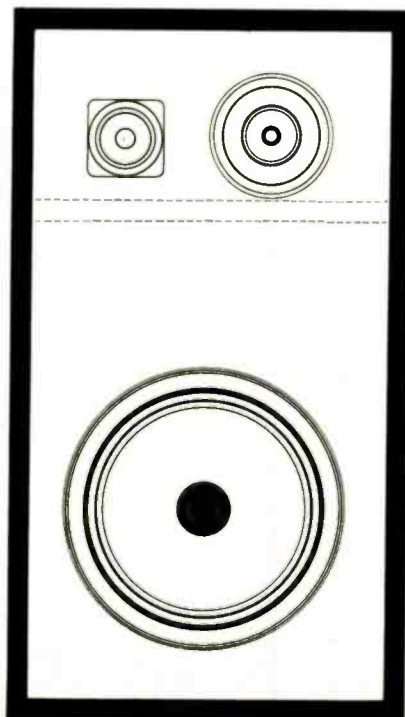
How does the new **Rectilinear Xa** sound? We're hopelessly prejudiced, so we'll quote Hirsch-Houck Laboratories instead (Equipment Test Reports, *Stereo Review*, June 1970):

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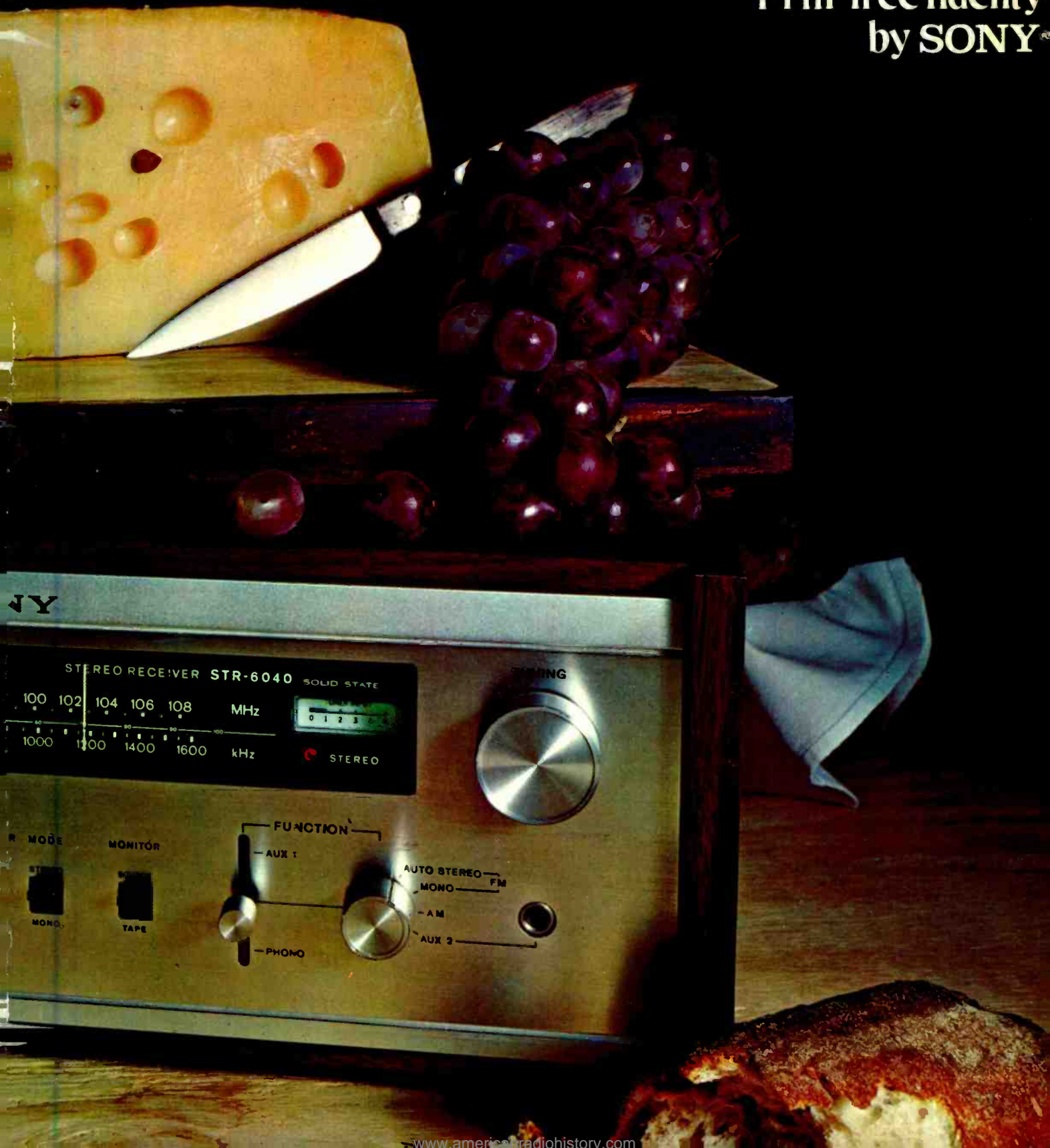
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Beethoven on Records

Continuing High Fidelity's appraisal of all available recordings of the composer's music

by David Hamilton

THE GREATER PART of Beethoven's nonsymphonic orchestral music is related to the theater: ballet music, overtures, and incidental music for plays. Of this literature, only the overtures appear with any frequency in the concert hall—and with good reason, for they not only have the most substantial musical content, but are also best able to stand alone, independent of their original dramatic function.

For documentary purposes, it is certainly desirable that we should have integral recordings of all these theater scores—perhaps even including those for such forgotten dramas as Kuffner's *Tarpeja*, Treitschke's *Die Ehrenpforte* and *Die gute Nachricht*, Duncker's *Leonore Prohaska* (one number of which is Beethoven's orchestration of the Funeral March from the Piano Sonata, Op. 26), and so on. However, the items of musical—as distinct from historical-biographical—interest are fairly well represented on records today.

Inasmuch as most of the items considered here are short works, they have been offered by record manufacturers in a bewildering variety of combinations and permutations. Quite often, they ride along as fillers to longer works, usually Beethoven symphonies. Evaluation of these associated larger works is being made by my colleagues, so I have generally followed a policy of ignoring the economics of the coupling problem. Each collector will have different lacunae that need filling, and different alternatives to balance. If your preference in Beethoven symphonies should be for Ansermet, Klemperer, or Toscanini, for example, you will find yourself automatically supplied with a selection of overtures; if not, you must pick and choose, deciding whether a certain overture performance is worth a duplicate symphony recording, or the like.

The listings that follow are divided into three main categories: theater music, overtures, and miscellaneous, the latter comprising that (for better or worse) unique work *Wellington's Victory*, plus the marches and dances for orchestra. At the end, I have added a short note about some interesting out-of-print recordings to whet the appetites of more adventurous collectors.

The Theater Music

The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43 (Ballet).

- Overture; Introduction; Nos. 1-5, 9, 10, 14-16 only. Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond. Vanguard VSD 71124, \$5.98.
- Overture; Introduction; Nos. 1-3, 6-12, 14-16 only. Menuhin Festival Orchestra, Yehudi Menuhin, cond. Angel S 36641, \$5.98.

• Overture; Introduction; Nos. 1-5, 8-10, 15-16 only. Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Zubin Mehta, cond. London CS 6660, \$5.98.

• Overture; Nos. 10, 12a, 5, 16 only. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3032, \$5.98 (with Symphony No. 2).

Once upon a time, really complete recordings of *Prometheus* were obtainable, but with the disappearance of the excellent Van Beinum version (London LL

577, mono only), putting together a complete version of this engaging series of Beethovenian gestures is like the solving of a jigsaw puzzle—and this puzzle is missing a piece: No. 13, rather more than the "brief divertissement" so casually dismissed in a footnote to the Angel liner. Of the available fragmentary versions, Menuhin's may be nominally the most complete, but the absence of No. 5—a spacious Adagio with wind and cello solos—is a severe price to pay. My choice inclines to the Mehta version,

*excluding the nine symphonies, which will be discussed in a later issue.

quite the most relaxed example of his conducting I have ever heard; of all these men, he most convincingly projects the fact that this is music by *Beethoven*. Part of this may have to do with the Furtwänglerish tone quality he elicits from the Israeli orchestra, but more centrally it is a function of the rhythmic life he imparts to the playing. Menuhin, on the other hand, makes everything sound very light and just a little precious. Abravanel's is strictly a utility job. As far as they go, Leinsdorf's Boston players—especially the wind soloists in No. 5—do very well, but there is more to *Prometheus* than this limited selection. Until something more complete turns up I recommend Mehta, despite a cut in No. 8 and a slightly annoying build-up of resonance after every loud attack.

Egmont, Op. 84 (Incidental Music to Goethe's play).

- *Netania Devrath, soprano; Walther Reyer, speaker; Utah Symphony Orchestra, Maurice Abravanel, cond. Vanguard VSD 2139, \$5.98.*
- *Friederike Sailer, soprano; Peter Mosbacher, speaker; Symphony Orchestra of the Southwest German Radio, Edouard van Remoortel, cond. Turnabout TV 34262, \$2.98.*
- *Overture; Nos. 1, 4, 7 only. Birgit Nilsson, soprano; Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond. Angel S 3577, \$11.96 (two discs, with Symphony No. 9).*

Of all the plays for which Beethoven wrote incidental music, this is the one that still survives on the modern stage, at least in its native country, and it would be nice to have a complete recording of Goethe's play making use of Beethoven's masterful transitional interludes. However, the phrase "transitional interludes" pinpoints the difficulty with the music when taken out of context in the concert hall or on records; about half the numbers do not really stand by themselves, for they proceed from one unspecified starting point to another equally unspecified destination. For concert purposes, the "Music from *Egmont*" should be limited to the Overture, the two songs, *Clara's Death*, and—if intelligently planned, and delivered by an authoritative speaker—the *Melodrama* and *Victory Symphony*. Except for the last two items, this is what Klemperer gives us in his first-class recording; unfortunately, it is available only in a two-record set. The complete versions are of journeyman quality, and both fall down badly in the *Melodrama*: Vanguard because of a stiff performance, Turnabout through some idiotic cutting of Egmont's speech (contradictory to the text given in the liner notes), so that the *Victory Symphony* arrives without any preparation. The next conductor to record *Egmont* should consult the splendid old Scherchen version (Westminster

WL 5281, later available as Ducretet-Thompson DTL 93085; mono only), where Fred Liewehr, aided by the conductor's superb sense of timing with the attendant drum rolls, proved without a doubt that Beethoven knew exactly what he was up to in the theater. Until another such version comes along, Remoortel's is slightly preferable as a reference set—but neither of the other singers is a patch on Birgit Nilsson, then still at the beginning of her international career.

The Ruins of Athens, Op. 113 (Incidental Music to Kotzebue's play).

- *Overture; Nos. 1, 3, 4, 7, 6 only. Beecham Choral Society, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham, cond. Angel S 35509, \$5.98 (with Symphony No. 2).*
- *No. 4, Turkish March only. Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Columbia MS 7504, \$5.98 (in the "Beethoven's Greatest Hits" collection).*
- *No. 4, Turkish March only. Capitol Symphony Orchestra, Carmen Dragon, cond. Capitol SP 8635, \$4.98 (in the "I Like Beethoven" collection).*

Unlike *Egmont*, *The Ruins of Athens* was merely a type of grandiose pageant, with little dramatic substance, played as the end of a triple bill to celebrate the opening of a new theater in Budapest. The music is mostly illustrative and mostly trivial (e.g., the notorious *Turkish March* and the even sillier chorus of dervishes). Beecham gives us a representative selection, including a processional with chorus that illustrates Beethoven's skill at orchestral expansion if not his interest in musical development. The performance is quite capable, if occasionally on the fussy side. (The chorus sings in English.) Fanciers of the *Turkish March* can doubtless locate still further alternative versions; of these two, Dragon's is the livelier and cleaner.

The Overtures

Collections

- *Prometheus; Leonore No. 2; Fidelio; Coriolan; Egmont. Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. Stereo Treasury STS BTH S 1, \$19.92 (eight discs, with the complete symphonies; also available separately—see listings below).*
- *Prometheus; Leonore Nos. 1, 2, 3; Fidelio; Coriolan; Egmont; Ruins of Athens; King Stephen; Namensfeier; Consecration of the House. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2707 046, \$11.96 (two discs).*
- *Prometheus; Leonore Nos. 1, 2, 3; Fidelio; Coriolan. Boston Symphony Orchestra, Charles Munch, cond. RCA Victrola VICS 1471, \$2.98 (Leonore No. 3, Coriolan, and Fidelio also on RCA Victrola VICS 6003, \$5.96, two discs, with Symphony No. 9).*
- *Leonore No. 3; Coriolan; Egmont;*

Fidelio. Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Münchinger, cond. London CS 6053, \$5.98.

- *Leonore No. 2; Coriolan; Egmont; King Stephen. Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Columbia MS 6966, \$5.98.*
- *Prometheus; Coriolan; Egmont; Consecration of the House. NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond. RCA Victrola VIC 8000, \$23.84 (mono only, eight discs, with the complete symphonies; Septet; two movements from the String Quartet, Op. 135).*

A few general comments on these collections may be in order. The Ansermet and Toscanini items are rather special, since few collectors are likely to acquire these sets simply for the overtures (in England, the Toscanini overtures, including also *Leonore* No. 3, are on a Victrola single). The Karajan set is the only integral version of these works; the *Namensfeier* Overture can be had only in this set. Of the single-record selections, only the Szell seems to me of high quality. As will emerge below, my most consistent preference is for Klemperer's performances, and it would be kind of Angel to emulate their English affiliate, who have collected that conductor's overture performances onto a single record for the convenience of those who do not want to acquire all the associated symphonies.

The Individual Overtures

The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43 (Overture to the ballet).

- *Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond. London CS 6510, \$5.98 (with Symphony No. 7).*
- *Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15064, \$2.49 (with Symphony No. 6).*
- *London Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. Mercury LPS 9000, \$5.98 (with Leonore No. 3; Wellington's Victory).*
- *Karajan (see Collections).*
- *Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond. Angel S 35658, \$5.98 (with Coriolan; Symphony No. 2).*
- *Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond. Melodiya/Seraphim S 60061, \$2.49 (with Symphony No. 4).*
- *Munch (see Collections).*
- *Toscanini (see Collections).*

An odd lot, from which only the Klemperer strikes me as having really reached the heart of the matter. Kondrashin can be ruled out for faulty wind intonation in critical spots, Munch for impossibly muffled sound (his superstaccato opening chords almost disappear in the resonant surroundings, thereby obscuring some vital harmonic information), and Ansermet for the kettledrum-concerto balance. Dorati gets clean playing in his rather machine-driven performance—an

Beethoven on Records

approach even more imposingly carried off by Toscanini's very shipshape and febrile reading. Both Karajan and Abbado are more relaxed, but still accurate; the latter is notably the best recorded of all, with exceptionally fine timpani sound.

Klemperer, not surprisingly, takes the slowest tempo of all, but this gives him room to bounce into the syncopations and to achieve some really elegant balances and blends of sound (note the way the winds stand out above the orchestra in the closing page).

The Four Overtures to *Fidelio*, Op. 72.

- Karajan (see Collections).
- Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond. Angel S 36209, \$5.98.
- Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. London CS 6328, \$5.98.
- Munch (see Collections).
- Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Columbia MS 7068, \$5.98 (*Leonore No. 2* also available in the Szell collection—see above).

This particular coupling is the only combination of Beethoven overtures that seems to have found widespread favor, and it provides a fine opportunity to compare Beethoven's four different solutions to the same problem—in particular, the fascinating juxtaposition of the Second and Third *Leonores*, which utilize the same basic thematic materials. Owners of complete *Fidelio* recordings will of course have at least one, and possibly two, of these works already (see Part I of this continuing discography in the January 1970 issue).

Of the five integral possibilities, my preference is for Klemperer's imposing statements, although they are somewhat less well disciplined and rather more blowzily recorded than his earlier, tauter mono versions (Angel 35258). The fundamental logic of these performances, their clarity of chording and phrase structure, and their rhythmic momentum (a matter quite independent of tempo) remain unique. Szell's readings are a shade on the mechanical side (I sometimes feel that the players are fitting their phrases to the beat rather than playing along with it), but undeniably sound, even if the recording is on the boomy side. Karajan, on the other hand, is lacking in rhythmic address and variety of articulation, so that the generally good playing leaves a somewhat limp impression. The Israel Philharmonic isn't in the same class as these other orchestras, and Maazel's taut readings are the sort that need taut execution. Finally there is the jaunty approach of Munch, played with much vigor and a good deal of precision, but hardly a single idea in evidence except the desire to get

from the beginning to the end of each piece.

Leonore Overture No. 1, Op. 138.

- BBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, cond. Seraphim IC 6015, \$8.94 (mono only, three discs, with *Symphonies Nos. 1, 4, 6*; Brahms: Tragic Overture; Mozart: Die Zauberflöte Overture).

Toscanini's three-decade-old recording is poor competition for the modern ones; for all his dynamism, the orchestra isn't up to the strenuous demands, and the result is tense and driven.

Leonore Overture No. 2, Op. 72a.

- Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15068, \$2.49 (with Symphony No. 2).
- Boston Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3006, \$5.98 (with Symphony No. 4).
- Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond. Columbia MS 6487, \$5.98 (with Coriolan; Brahms: Academic Festival Overture; Wagner: Meistersinger: Prelude).

The formal problem presented by this work is considerable, with the massive introduction, the weighty and various development, and the coda-doing-double-duty-as-recapitulation. Leinsdorf, after an excellent start, falls down with a square, unpleasantly blatty coda (it is marked presto, but weight is needed as well as speed). Walter's string section seems to be skimpy, but he manages to achieve a well-balanced, finely detailed performance (the little passage between the trumpet calls is shaped with exceptional care). Klemperer approaches the problem of the overture's proportions with characteristic ingenuity; by playing down the tempo contrast between introduction and main movement he keeps the former from overweighting the piece—an adjustment of scale that is confirmed by Beethoven's own decision in *Leonore No. 3*. (The Ansermet version was not available for comparison.)

Leonore Overture No. 3, Op. 72a.

- Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Karel Ančerl, cond. Parliament S 633, \$2.98 (with other overtures—Wagner: Lohengrin; Mozart: Le Nozze di Figaro; Weber: Oberon; Prince Igor).
- New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. Columbia MS 6223, \$5.98 (with other overtures—Rossini: Semiramide; Weber: Oberon; Mendelssohn: Ruy Blas; Berlioz: Benvenuto Cellini).
- London Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. Vanguard Everyman S 190, \$2.98 (with Symphony No. 5).
- London Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. Mercury LPS 9000, \$5.98 (with Prometheus; Wellington's Victory).
- Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, An-

tal Dorati, cond. Wing MGW 18016, \$1.89 (with Coriolan; Egmont; Symphony No. 5).

- Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 139001, \$5.98 (with Fidelio: Coriolan; Schubert: Symphony No. 8); Deutsche Grammophon 139015, \$5.98 (with Fidelio: Coriolan; Symphony No. 8); also, see Collections.
- London Symphony Orchestra, Josef Krips, cond. Everest 3119, \$4.98 (with Egmont; Wellington's Victory—also in Everest 3065, \$39.84, eight discs, with Egmont and the complete symphonies).
- Boston Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 2701, \$5.98 (with Schumann: Symphony No. 4).
- Münchinger (see Collections).
- Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, William Steinberg, cond. Command S 11016, \$5.98 (with Symphony No. 4).

A remarkable work in any case, this overture seems even more so in the light of its predecessor, for the stringent economies Beethoven practiced upon his material are revealed for all the world to see. Along with Klemperer and Furtwängler (now available only in the latter's complete *Fidelio* set, the champion here—and not for the last time in this survey—is Sir Adrian Boult, who directs a performance in complete contrast to those of his more celebrated colleagues, but one equally valid. Boult does nothing unconventional, but the remarkable clarity and ensemble that he achieves, coupled with the rhythmic liveliness and variety of the playing, make for a performance of unusual integrity. Very near the first rank, in this particular case, is Karajan: an exceptionally committed performance by his standards.

In a lower category we may place a number of acceptable but unremarkable efforts: Ančerl (a respectable bargain issue), Bernstein (occasionally fussy, but certainly not dull), Dorati (a bit pressed, and the bass line hard to discern), Leinsdorf (straightforward, but a little thick in sound), and Steinberg (ditto for the interpretation; the orchestra is enveloped by a brave resonance that, oddly enough, does not obfuscate anything). In the cellar, primarily because of the low standards of playing and ensemble, are Krips and Münchinger.

Fidelio Overture, Op. 72b.

- Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15067, \$2.49 (with Symphony No. 7).
- London Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. Vanguard Everyman S 193, \$2.98 (with Symphony No. 6).
- Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 139001, \$5.98 (with Leonore No. 3; Coriolan; Schubert: Symphony No. 8); Deutsche Grammophon 139015, \$5.98 (with Leonore No. 3; Coriolan;

Symphony No. 8); also, see *Collections*.
 • *Münchinger* (see *Collections*).
 • *Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 1991, \$5.98* (with *Symphony No. 7*).

Beethoven's final solution to the curtain-raiser problem comes off pretty well in all of these versions except the Münchinger. Ansermet is better than usual, and for some reason the timpani are less obtrusive here than in his other recordings. Boult's reading is skillfully gauged and decently recorded, Reiner's equally well played but handicapped by some rather rough early stereo sound. My particular favorite, along with the stately but splendidly articulated Klemperer, is the recently deleted version by Montoux and the London Symphony (RCA Victrola VICS 1170, with *King Stephen* and the *Second Symphony*), which should not be too hard to find.

Coriolan, Op. 62 (Overture to Collin's play).

- *Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15055, \$2.49* (with *Symphony No. 4*).
- *London Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. Vanguard Everyman S 127, \$2.98* (with *Symphony No. 3*).
- *Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. Wing MGW 18016, \$1.89* (with *Leonore No. 3*; *Egmont*; *Symphony No. 5*).
- *Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 139001, \$5.98* (with *Fidelio*; *Leonore No. 3*; *Schubert: Symphony No. 8*); *Deutsche Grammophon 139015, \$5.98* (with *Fidelio*; *Leonore No. 3*; *Symphony No. 8*); also, see *Collections*.
- *Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe, cond. Capitol SP 8635, \$4.98* (in the "I Like Beethoven" collection).
- *Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, cond. Angel S 35658, \$5.98* (with *Prometheus*; *Symphony No. 2*).
- *Vienna Festival Orchestra, Josef Krips, cond. Vanguard S 214/5, \$5.96* (two discs, with *Egmont*; *Missa Solemnis*).
- *Boston Symphony Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 2969, \$5.98* (with *Symphony No. 7*).
- *Munch* (see *Collections*).
- *Münchinger* (see *Collections*).
- *Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Fritz Reiner, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 2343, \$5.98* (with *Symphony No. 5*).
- *Szell* (see *Collections*).
- *Toscanini* (see *Collections*).
- *Columbia Symphony Orchestra, Bruno Walter, cond. Columbia MS 6487, \$5.98* (with *Leonore No. 2*; *Brahms: Academic Festival Overture*; *Wagner: Meistersinger Overture*).

This is the most tightly constructed of Beethoven's overtures (note particularly how the closing theme picks up the rhythm of the second theme's middle and bass parts) and there are quite a few good recordings. In the top rank I

would place Boult's honest, beautifully articulated version, Klemperer's slower, magisterially phrased account, and Walter's expansive one. The best-played are the Reiner and Szell, but both conductors have a slight tendency to rush. Karajan and Munch represent the tempo extremes—almost nine minutes as against slightly over six, respectively. Neither makes a convincing case for his ultra-nonconformity, and Karajan's over-polished sonic surface manages to submerge important orchestral details. Competent but not well recorded are Kempe (too much resonance) and Krips (a tubby, muffled sound); quite acceptable is Leinsdorf's sober, well-played account. The overdrummed balance once again rules out Ansermet's tense version, while Münchinger doesn't get very good playing. The quarter-century-old Toscanini reissue is surprisingly flexible with respect to tempo, very forcefully articulated, and rather tolerably recorded; if only he hadn't jumped so many beats on rests and held notes! (The Dorati recording was not available for comparison.)

Egmont, Op. 84 (Overture to Goethe's play).

- *Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Ernest Ansermet, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15038, \$2.49* (with *Symphony No. 5*).
- *London Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra, Sir Adrian Boult, cond. Vanguard Everyman S 147, \$2.98* (with *Symphony No. 7*).
- *London Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. Mercury SR 90317, \$5.98* (with *Consecration of the House*; *Symphony No. 5*).
- *Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. Wing MGW 18016, \$1.89* (with *Leonore No. 3*; *Coriolan*; *Symphony No. 5*).
- *Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Ferenc Fricsay, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 136226, \$5.98* (with *Liszt: Les Préludes*; *Mozart: Eine kleine Nachtmusik*; *Smetana: Moldau*).
- *London Symphony Orchestra, Pierino Gamba, cond. London CS 6397, \$5.98* (with *Piano Concerto No. 5*).
- *New Philharmonia Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond. Angel S 36684, \$5.98* (with *Symphony No. 6*).
- *Karajan* (see *Collections*).
- *Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Rudolf Kempe, cond. Capitol SP 8635, \$4.98* (in the "I Like Beethoven" collection).
- *London Symphony Orchestra, Josef Krips, cond. Everest 3119, \$4.98* (with *Leonore No. 3*; *King Stephen*; *Wellington's Victory*—also in *Everest 3065, \$39.84*, eight discs, with *Leonore No. 3* and the complete symphonies).
- *Vienna Festival Orchestra, Josef Krips, cond. Vanguard Everyman S 214/5, \$5.96* (two discs, with *Coriolan*; *Missa Solemnis*).
- *Münchinger* (see *Collections*).
- *Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, cond. London CS 6556, \$5.98* (with *Symphony No. 6*).

- *Szell* (see *Collections*).
- *Toscanini* (see *Collections*).

This is certainly a piece to separate sheep from goats in matters of orchestral sonority, and a number of these conductors have difficulty in achieving a satisfactory combination of orchestral clarity and sonic weight. That it can be done is shown by Boult, Schmidt-Isserstedt, and Szell (as well as by Klemperer in his selection from the incidental music), but nearly everyone else founders, sooner or later, on matters of instrumental balance in chord progressions, dynamics (particularly, the failure to achieve the requested piano dolce quality in the short wind phrases), ensemble attacks, and intonation. Such problems dog all three versions with the London Symphony, of which the Krips is the least good (his Vienna version is more rhythmically alive, but less well recorded), the Gamba pretty fair until the horns spoil the rhythm of their motto statements just before the coda. Giulini's new version is limp and thick in sound; Fricsay's older one underarticulated and afflicted with sour wind tone; Kempe's welcome urgency is smothered by clouds of echo; and Münchinger's literal reading is marred by beat-jumping. Toscanini certainly gets precision, but his ferocity of accentuation (underlined by a dry, tinny acoustic) is very wearing. Again, I am impressed by the utter clarity of Boult's reading and by Klemperer's powerful rhythmic scansion, but Schmidt-Isserstedt's restrained version and Szell's rather more driven one are reasonable alternatives. (The Ansermet and Dorati/Minneapolis versions were not available for comparison, and the advance German pressings of the Karajan set provided for review did not include this work, which will be added to the American set.)

The Ruins of Athens, Op. 113 (Overture to Kotzebue's play).

- *Karajan* (see *Collections*).

In its original context, this piece did not open an evening, but rather followed an intermission; consequently, Beethoven did not give it the weight of most of his curtain raisers. (Significantly, when he reused the *Ruins* music on a later occasion that required an overture at the beginning of the evening, a new work was written: *The Consecration of the House*.) Karajan's performance is typically smooth, with minimal articulation—a complete contrast to Beecham's slightly unkempt but livelier version (in his set of the incidental music).

King Stephen, Op. 117 (Overture to Kotzebue's play).

- *Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Janós Ferencsik, cond. Parliament S 165, \$2.98* (with *Symphony No. 4*).
- *Janssen Symphony Orchestra of Los*

Continued on page 102

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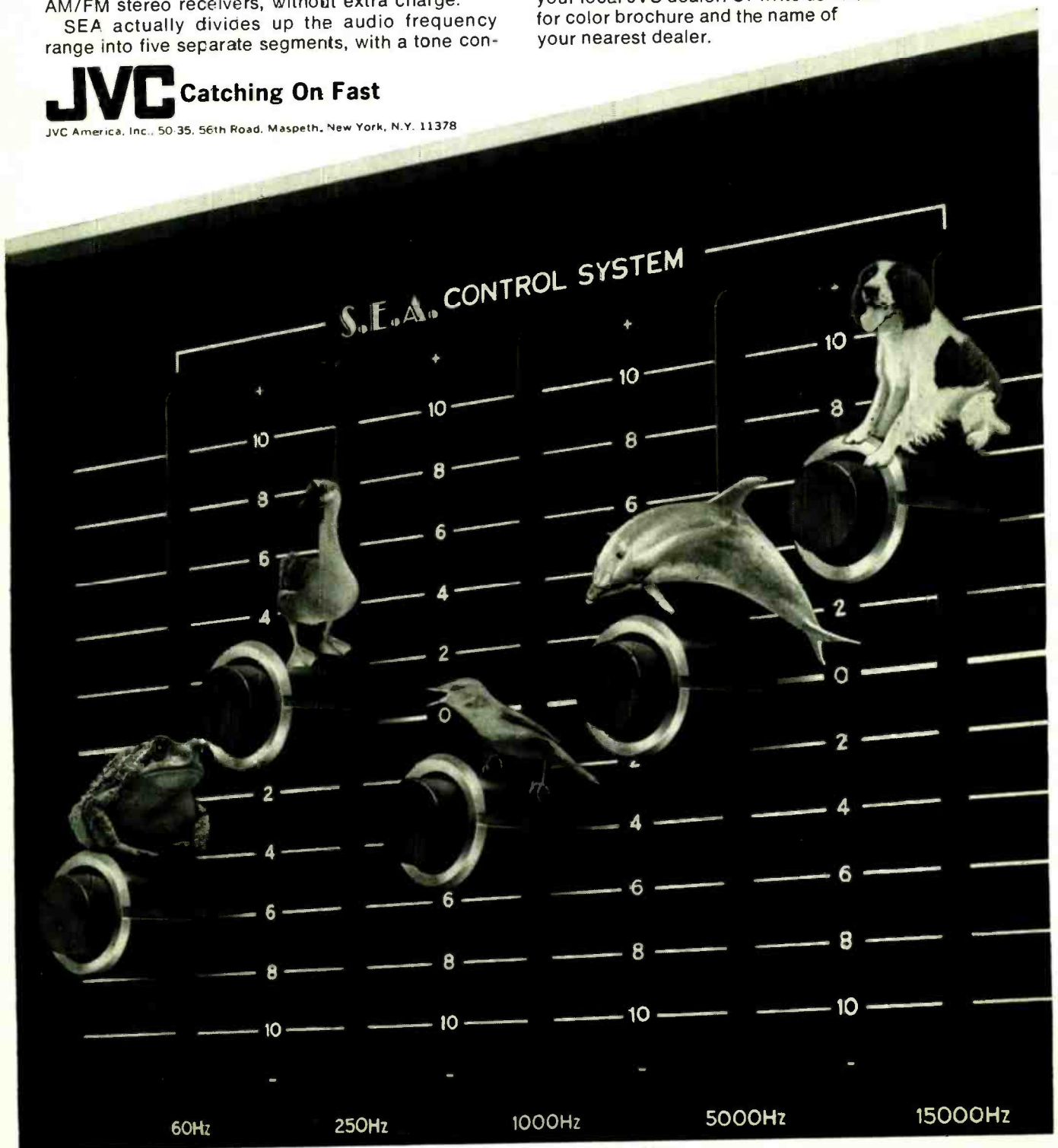
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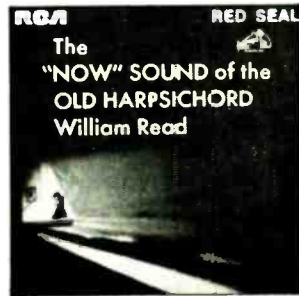
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by David Hamilton

The Prophetic Busoni's greatest *Doktor Faust* operatic achievement recorded at last

NOW THAT MOST of the standard operatic literature has been recorded in sextuplicate or more, record producers are turning ever more frequently to the various fringes of the repertory—those operas whose appeal is basically limited to a single national tradition, those that once, but no longer, enjoyed considerable acclaim and currency, and those works by well-known composers that have, for whatever reason, never established themselves on any regular basis. Given the prevalent lack of adventure among our entrepreneurs of live operatic performance, we cannot but be grateful for such recordings: the Schwann catalogue lists any number of works that have not been staged—even in New York, our most operatically active metropolis—in many years, if ever. For all that recorded opera is a fundamentally incomplete and unsatisfactory medium, it is better than nothing—and there is some reason to believe that at least on a few occasions the existence of a recording has helped to stimulate a production (particularly in theaters where the manager is unequipped to decipher a score).

When we shall have an opportunity to witness stage productions of Ferruccio Busoni's operas in America I would not venture to guess (there may, in fact, have been a semiprofessional production of two, probably of *Arlecchino*). There have been some concert versions: most notably, *Arlecchino* by Mitropoulos and the New York Philharmonic around 1950, and *Doktor Faust* by Horenstein and the American Opera Society in the early 1960s. There was once a quite nice recording, by a Glyndebourne ensemble, of *Arlecchino* (Victor L.M. 1944; this might now be an appropriate time for a Seraphim reissue), a delightful work, in which the *commedia dell'arte* characters that Strauss and Hofmannstahl had revived a few years earlier for *Ariadne* are engaged in explicit burlesque of the German late-Romantic idiom.

Doktor Faust is generally agreed to have been Busoni's greatest achievement, even though it remained unfinished at the composer's death in 1924. In the often-quoted words of his great admirer, Edward J. Dent, "one cannot apply to *Doktor Faust* the ordinary standards of operatic criticism. It moves on a plane of spiritual experience far beyond that of even the greatest of musical works for the stage." Actually, this is the kind of statement that, by its very extravagance, induces skepticism,

even resistance, in the reader: without, God knows, wishing "the ordinary standards of operatic criticism" on anything—even *Adriana Lecouvreur*—I suspect that the good Dr. Dent was confusing uniqueness with absolute quality.

Doktor Faust is indeed unique, if not "far beyond . . ." etc. It has enormous seriousness of purpose (if also a degree of ellipticality in dramatic exposition), and it is composed with impressive skill and more than a little inspiration. (I do not know the extent of the role played by Busoni's pupil Philipp Jarnach in completing the opera: the fact that the most remarkable music comes in the last two scenes suggests that the editorial work consisted mainly of realizing fairly complete sketches or a short score—or else that Jarnach was a greater composer than anything he did later would lead us to believe.)

Busoni thought a good deal about what opera should be, and particularly about *Doktor Faust*. His writings on the subject will be found, albeit somewhat awkwardly translated, in a Dover paperback collection of his essays under the title *The Essence of Music*. Some of these thoughts are more ideological than logical in import ("Opera should take possession of the supernatural or unnatural as its only proper sphere of representation and feeling"), and it is also clear that however strongly Busoni felt he was adhering to Mozartean ideal, his was an ideal based on a still very Romantic view of Mozart.

Although he sidestepped Goethe in formulating his libretto ("veneration before the overpowering task led me to renounce [Goethe's drama]"). Busoni retained much of the Romantic conception of the overreachingly ambitious man who desired to know and experience everything. Since he went back to the puppet plays that had also served as a source for Marlowe's drama, the English-speaking listener will find the latter a good deal closer to Busoni's story than the familiar Goethe-derived librettos of Gounod's and Boito's operas. Gretchen never appears in *Doktor Faust*, although she is alluded to and her brother is the central character of one episode. The central dramatic event is Faust's affair with the Duchess of Parma, who conceives a child by him.

Musically, the most obvious characteristics of the opera are its reliance on closed forms (not at all unlike

the procedures that Alban Berg employed in *Wozzeck*, the opera he was writing in the same years), the strongly contrapuntal texture (but an austere counterpoint, quite unlike the efflorescent harmonic weavings of Richard Strauss), and a brilliant, very specific orchestral imagination. The vocal writing, especially that for Faust, is mainly in the tradition of Wagnerian arioso, although the eerily high tenor part of Mephistopheles is an original and very effective conception, a perfect foil to Faust's more Wotanesque cantabile.

Busoni's prophetic role in German neoclassicism is much in evidence, not only in the formal sphere (note particularly the *Sarabande* and *Cortege*, which were composed earlier, in a slightly fuller form, that may be heard on the odd side of Ogdon's recording of the Piano Concerto, Angel S 3719), but also in the episodes that prefigure the "back-to-Bach" textures of Hindemith and Kurt Weill. The choral writing looks both forward and back—almost to Ligeti at the end of the opening Sinfonia, back to *Der fliegende Holländer* in the competing choruses of the tavern scene (but then this is also found in *Wozzeck*). And I should not neglect to mention Busoni's fascination with bell sounds and his ingenious use of the celesta.

It must be clear from all this that I find *Doktor Faust* a work of high quality—and not nearly as uncompromising as Dr. Dent's rather lofty words of praise might seem to suggest. It has a great deal of color, some really gorgeously expansive writing (especially in the episode where Faust invokes Helen of Troy), and rises in the last scene to a very expressive and dramatic climax. Not an opera of characterization, it is rather an opera of ideas—and a very convincing one.

A few words about the recording, which is good enough to convey all these qualities if not so good as to silence qualifications. First, two pervasive problems: the apparently inevitable DGG fondness for giving the voices excessive prominence; and the omission, mostly in fairly small bits and pieces, of something like one-eighth of the opera. Since the recording is based on a production for the Bavarian Radio, it is possible that the cuts were made to conform to some fixed broadcast schedule; there is certainly no obvious space problem on the records.

Among the singers, Fischer-Dieskau is obviously the most important, and he is an impressive protagonist despite his usual vocal flaws and some inaccuracies here and there, for he understands the basic character of Busoni's lines. William Cochran manages the tessitura of Mephistopheles with considerable success if not unalloyed beauty of tone. I do not care for Hildegard Hillebrecht (the Duchess of Parma), who sounds like Leonie Rysanek on a very bad night, without the thrust and sense of line that usually compensates for Rysanek's difficulties. The orchestra and chorus are quite good, and Leitner does a really impressive job—if only he had not allowed those cuts!

In sum, then, an opera that rightfully belongs in the great tradition of the German musical theater: serious, imaginative, prophetic, and sometimes inspired; in a recorded performance that effectively projects much of its greatness. It would be interesting now to have a recording of its historical counterfoil, Hans Pfitzner's *Palestrina*—we reviewers are never satisfied!

BUSONI: *Doktor Faust*. Hildegard Hillebrecht (s), Duchess of Parma; William Cochran (t), Mephistopheles; Anton de Ridder (t), Duke of Parma; Manfred Schmidt (t), A Lieutenant; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b), Faust; Karl Christian Kohn (bs), Wagner and Master of Ceremonies; Hans Sotin (bs), A Theologian; Marius Rintzler (bs), A Jurist; Chorus and Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio, Ferdinand Leitner, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2709 032, \$17.94 (three discs).

Prime Rock

A quality report from
Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young
by Morgan Ames



Crosby, Young, Stills, and Nash are flanked, left and right, by sidemen Reeves and Taylor.

MOST FORMS of popular music have reached peaks of quality during the past decade. There was never a finer moment in mainstream musical comedy than the show *My Fair Lady*. Frank Sinatra has defined the topmost level of standard popular singing. Bill Evans, in his prime, perfected the art of improvisational jazz piano.

Compared with these fields, rock is a child. But in today's accelerated life pace, rock (as we know it) may have already reached its prime and could well be developing into quite a different medium altogether. If so, then rock, the most explosively alive musical expression of the present, has reached its apex with this group—Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young (who, like me, must have grown tired of all the Strawberry Alarm Clocks and such clever, anonymous group names).

Like their first album, this (their second) defines today's rock, as rock defines the temper of the times. When heard in 1970, the *My Fair Lady* album will first strike a nostalgic chord; CSNY's first area of attack here is the very bloodstream. But while *My Fair Lady* ran for years and Sinatra has made something like three shelf feet of record albums, it is rumored that Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young are already near the point of disbanding. This is one more illustration of the temper of the times:

mortality rates are high in the rock field these days. Even the Beatles—established a mere six years before Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young—produced nearly twenty albums before the group announced a parting of the ways. For those who respond to the musical nourishment offered by CSNY, the probable death of this group (each will continue on his own, one hopes) comes as a particularly regrettable blow. Of the army of groups floating around this is the one we cannot afford to lose. But considering the insensitivity of the music business, perhaps they can't afford to go on.

Shortly after their first album (an instant hit, kicked off by its chart single *Marakesh Express*), Crosby, Stills, and Nash took on a fourth member: singer/writer/guitarist Neil Young, already in sympathy with Steve Stills from their time together in another group, Buffalo Springfield (in itself a stylistic forerunner of CSNY). Drummer/percussionist Dallas Taylor also appears on both albums.

This group creates its existence not on stage but in the recording studio—yet another characteristic of today's musical climate (though most studio-created groups never approach the level this one has reached). Most or all of their material appears to be written and arranged in someone's smoky living room with the group gathered tightly around one or two acoustical guitars. Later the same mood is transferred to the recording studio, where basic tracks are laid down, followed by countless overlays of intricate triangular voicings and instrumental colors. This group's concentration is superb. Each song is seen through from beginning to end. Work is slow, knowing, and responsible. There are no goofs. They know what they want and they know when they have reached the sound. In its way, their vocal marriage is every bit as flawless as that of the Hi-Lo's in the '50s—though of course it lacks the slickness that characterized that earlier, less personal idiom.

Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young are all song writers, individualistic but true to their group identity. David Crosby contributes two dissimilar tunes here: *Almost Cut My Hair*, which demonstrates the weary paranoid humor acquired by all longhairs who must deal with a society that still means to make trouble for them. Crosby's title tune, *Déjà vu* (with John Sebastian guesting on mouth harp), is just that: already seen or haven't I been here before? Steven Stills, my favorite of the four writers, has contributed *Four and Twenty*, a dark and loveless two-minute statement performed solo with acoustical guitar. Stills's turbulence and musicality spill out of *Carry On*, densely group-sung and played. Graham Nash's writing is less sophisticated than the others, with country overtones on *Teach Your Children* (Jerry Garcia on steel guitar) and a homey love song called *Our House*. Neil Young's songs pop out at you: *Helpless* and *Country Girl*, both passing through endless settings, produce a haunting aftertaste.

The only outside inclusion is Joni Mitchell's *Woodstock*, but Miss Mitchell is not really outside, neither musically, emotionally, nor personally. Let's say they were raised on the same block. It is fascinating to note how vastly different *Woodstock* is treated on this album as compared to Miss Mitchell's new album (on Warner Bros.), and then to realize later that, for all the differences, the emotional expression is the same.

Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young is a serious group, seriously musical, seriously funny, fragile, sturdy, compelling, exciting, profoundly talented and capable. No other group in rock can touch them.

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH, AND YOUNG: *Déjà vu*. Rock quartet, vocals and instrumentals; Dallas Taylor, percussion and drums; Greg Reeves, bass. (*Country Girl*; *Our House*; *Carry On*; seven more.) Atlantic SD 7200.

Mozart's Symphonic Miracles

Karl Böhm conducts the early works—
Pablo Casals explores
the six late masterpieces

by Paul Henry Lang

WHAT AN EXTRAORDINARY contrast Mozart presents on these new recordings: the budding classical symphony and its magnificent flowering! The term *sinfonia* or *symphony* is ancient and has many meanings, though the one current today is as recent as the end of the seventeenth century. It was applied to the Italian opera overture presenting three brief movements in one, which established a new species of orchestral music altogether different from the suite. This is the visible beginning of the classical symphony, but how music got to this point is still one of the mysteries of musical history. We have no modern comprehensive history of the symphony, and what our textbooks say is usually far off the mark, for no scholar has as yet been able to sort out and pull together all the ingredients into a logical sequence and stylistic synthesis. These ingredients are bewildering: baroque sonata, suite, fugue, concerto, partita, serenade, ballet music—and opera; surely an extraordinarily complicated picture. So long as scholars were attempting to derive the symphony from purely instrumental antecedents they could not arrive at satisfactory results, but now that it is becoming more and more apparent that the catalyst was opera, more precisely *opera buffa*, perhaps we shall be able to clear up this important and fascinating problem. We still know very little about how this music made its way from the stage to the orchestra pit, but we can follow the symphony from the pit to the concert hall, as opera symphony becomes concert symphony, and with this we are almost at the point of departure for this review. However, the dualism of the sonata-symphony, the antithetic tonalities and themes, as well as their consequent development and exploitation, was still rudimentary with the Italians, though their melodies were rich, the rhythm lively, and the élan of the orchestra bracing. From our vantage point we can see that the Italians could not have developed the symphony beyond a certain degree, while the north Germans could not yet grasp the operatic element—they had little opera to speak of—so it devolved on a buffer state to reconcile and unite the two. It was Austria which brought about the marriage of the Italian opera-descended beginnings with the German penchant for "absolute" music.

All this is, of course, less than a sketch, for a host of musicians were involved in this complicated early history of the symphony, but this much had to be said because the listener, familiar with the great symphonies of Mozart's mature period, may dismiss the first dozen of the fifty-odd symphonies as inconsequential, though the second dozen may elicit a condescending acknowledgment as youthful efforts not without some attraction. There is much more than that to these works. This Italian



Deutsche Grammophon/Neumeister

Top, Karl Böhm; right, Pablo Casals.



phase in Mozart's instrumental compositions left profound impressions on the young man and while eventually he accepted Haydn's symphonic principles and carried them to the summit, the Italian cantilena and the dramatic tone coming from opera remained with him to the end of his life. Thus Mozart really used a mixed style and was actually called an "impure" instrumental composer. Anyone else would have come a cropper with this blend of styles but not this incredible genius, though it must be admitted that many of his early symphonies are largely routine works, lacking in individuality. Still, few of them are without some flashes of genius.

The first group in this batch of recordings, K. 16, 19, and 22, were composed when Mozart was eight or nine, and, as in all such cases, Father Leopold, an able composer in his own right, undoubtedly lent a hand. Surprisingly enough, the very first symphony exhibits the principal theme Mozart was to use in the finale of the *Jupiter* Symphony. It recurs in several of the symphonies. The autograph of K. 43 (Vienna, 1768) is not in Leopold's but in Wolfgang's handwriting, and there can be no question of authenticity. These early symphonies have little intrinsic value but they are enormously interesting historically and psychologically, permitting us to see the birth of genius. Besides, they are never less than pleasant, bright, and euphonious, even though remaining on the surface. Needless to say, we cannot expect to find here real thematic development—there are only transposed or sequential repetitions—but everything is neat, clear, and always pleasing to the ear, and the child shows remarkable poise. There is a curious vocal quality in these works, and not only in the slow movements, that shows an unmistakable relationship to the bittersweet southern Italian church music we know from Pergolesi. This melodious and elegiac church music must be considered one of the ancestral ingredients of the classical symphony, especially in Mozart's music; it shows up even in such works as the slow movement of the C major Piano Concerto, K. 467.

K. 76, 48, and 45b are from 1767-68; K. 73, 81, 84, 95, and 97 from about 1770. (The seeming discrepancy in chronology is due to the revised dates in the new Köchel catalogue; they also invalidate the old numbering of the symphonies.) There is definite growth here, undoubtedly the result of the first Italian journey. Though the development sections are very brief, never more than a dozen measures, and there is no real conflict in them, only modulations, the boy handles tone and texture like a veteran. K. 76 has an allegro theme that is cantabile in the inimitable Mozartean way, showing that the "singing allegros" were present even at this early stage. The slow movements are serenades or arias—melting melodies lightly accompanied, often with pizzicato strings.

They are angelically lambent and Italian to the core. K. 45 is remarkably mature and festive, its Andante intensely dramatic, while 45b offers an amalgam of the popular with the refined. K. 45a interests with its somber bass theme, also having a nice serenade complete with muted violins and "guitar" accompaniment. K. 73 shows the opera overture derivation: the Allegro goes into the Andante without pause. The finale of this symphony is full of ideas, in Haydn's popular vein; it is a so-called *Kehrausfinale*, a term untranslatable but meaning "let's close up and turn them out." In the group formed by K. 74, 81, and 84 the fourteen-year-old composer shows growing security in the style. Now the divertimento makes its appearance, especially in the finales which are both bluff and delicate, obviously composed with gusto. In K. 84 the "mixed style" is very attractively used in tongue-in-cheek manner—Mozart was having fun.

The next group was composed in 1771, demonstrating a more serious attempt at thematic work between the tutti clichés. K. 75 is no longer a student work; it is moody—even the Minuet has a serious tone. The Andante, an aria with a beautiful melody, is touched by a slight melancholy, while the Rondo finale is a fine dance piece with delightful episodes. This work should urgently be rescued from anonymity and restored to the repertory. K. 110, immediately following K. 75, also has a glossy Andante, a striking canonic Minuet, and a sparkling gavotte for the final movement. Leopold Mozart is by now so far outdistanced that he can no longer change anything in his son's scores. November and December yielded another set of symphonies, some composed in Milan, some in Salzburg. K. 96 offers a highly dramatic, sicilianalike slow movement with passionate accents; it is worthy of the best of Gluck, and indeed the piece has a Gluckian cast. K. 114 also is very operatic, with exquisite part-writing in the Andante. In the 1772 group there is nothing left of the naïveté of the earlier symphonies: the sixteen-year-old composer is a finished craftsman. K. 128 is a full-fledged symphony in miniature, the thematic work imaginative, with plenty of original ideas. K. 129 starts in the image of Christian Bach, full of well-controlled tension. This is an exceptionally fine symphonic allegro, and its development section, while brief, is genuine.

The urge for thematic development now becomes stronger, and Mozart needs more room for the exploita-

tion of his ideas. This he achieves in K. 130, and with this work he has arrived at a milestone. The orchestra is augmented by a second brace of horns, and now in the Allegro we encounter those fleeting clouds that are so typical of Mozart even in his happiest works. The Minuet is bold, and instead of the usual slight, romping piece, the final Allegro is a serious and large sonata structure. In K. 132 the Andante sings gloriously in a long-breathed melody, the Minuet is symphonic, its trio mysterious, and the episodes in the extended Rondo finale dainty. This work is seemingly in five movements, an extra Andante being tacked on after the finale. But the piece must be a variant, a substitute for the first Andante, for surely Mozart would not end an E flat symphony in B flat. Being thorough Germans, the DGG people play it nevertheless; we should accept the piece as a sort of bonus. The Allegro in K. 133 is impeccably symphonic, its construction seamless, and its propulsive energy invigorating. The Andante exhibits trim filigree work, and the final Allegro, a full-dress sonata movement, has both dash and neat contrapuntal work. The 1772 crop of symphonies comes to an end in August with a fine composition, K. 134. Its sharply manipulated themes require a larger structure, and for the first time we see a coda. A pensively flowing Andante, magnificent in texture and sound, flanks a dramatic little *scena* in the middle; it too requires a coda. The Finale is sophisticated, with a number of asymmetrical sentences adding piquancy.

Now we enter the spring of 1773. K. 162 starts with broad and festive gestures. The Allegro is pronouncedly operatic in texture, and so is the Andante—it could be sung as an aria. The whirlwind *Kehrausfinale* does not spare even the gentler subsidiary themes as it dashes along at breakneck speed. K. 181 opens with a grand, energetic Allegro, elaborately luminous yet with quite a few dark shadows; the young man begins to show insight into the deeper recesses of life. It is interesting to observe how the baroque sequencing, which the youngster, like everyone else, used as a musical life buoy, is now transformed into logical symphonic passagework. The Allegro is followed by an aria rather than a serenade, the solo oboe playing it with a glow, but the darker accents are not missing here either. The Presto reminds us of the banquet music in *Don Giovanni*. Four months later Mozart composed K. 182, and with this Symphony the set of eight recordings ends, purposely (I think) drawing the line before the group consisting of K. 200, 183, and 201, for these latter, unqualified little masterpieces open the third phase of Mozart's symphonic output.

Böhm leads the excellent segment of the Berlin Philharmonic in splendid performances. He has a highly developed sense for the relationship between tempo and dynamics, carefully avoids the "cuteness" others apply to these early symphonies, and each one is presented as a tooled and burnished vignette. The allegros are crisp, the andantes ineffable, and the finales brisk. No detail escapes the conductor, and many of his colleagues could learn from him the difference between nonlegato and staccato, as well as how to keep the basses moving in ballet slippers. The balances are good, though at times the winds could be a little more assertive. The sound is excellent. Some will undoubtedly say that these performances are too immaculate, too glossy and spruced up. But that is exactly what is needed here, for with the few exceptions mentioned above these symphonies are pretty, cool, and aristocratic; the passion and the twinkle were yet to come. The only reservation I have concerns the omission of some of the repeats. Practically all eighteenth-century sonata structures demand repetition of the exposition, and in these tiny movements the repeat is mandatory, except in the opera sinfonia. This is a notable achievement, completing Böhm's traversal of the symphonies.

Now we must vault over the ages—artistically speaking—for between K. 182, the last of the Böhm series, and K. 385, the first of the Casals records, there are nine years and a host of masterpieces. We have actually skipped all the intermediate symphonies in which Mozart gradually asserted his individuality, and are facing some of the greatest and universally loved creations in the entire symphonic literature. With Casals we are also facing a different concept of the Mozartean symphony, and with his orchestras a different type of ensemble and a different kind of sound. First of all, we must take notice of the fact that these are not carefully monitored performances made in a studio, a fact which places all concerned—including the listener—at considerable disadvantage. The tapes were made at actual performances: we hear not only coughing and applause, but also the maestro shushing his players or singing with them. And there is constant and very disturbing echo, both fore and aft, sometimes lasting for a whole measure and bedeviling the pauses. The bass comes off very badly, at times sounding like distant cannonade, and in general there is a lot of noise in the nether regions, aided and abetted by the hollow rumble of the timpani. Casals shows a kinship with that other fabulous super veteran, Toscanini, except that the vigor of this nonagenarian, his sharp rhythm, and his elan—well, near ferocity in the tutti—outdo even the Italian's relentless drive. Casals is undoubtedly a great conductor and there is no telling what he could do with a permanent orchestra, even at ninety-three. This last remark should not be taken as a slight toward his ensemble; it is an *ad hoc* orchestra, but all the *ads* and *hocs* are first-class musicians, and the ensemble is remarkably precise. Nevertheless, orchestral homogeneity demands long symbiosis. Casals also shares Toscanini's weakness in that he cannot resist the temptation of sweetening the lyric passages by slowing down and swooning a bit over them. So there are *ritardandos* and *rubatos* where there should be none; also, some of his tempos are too slow or too fast. Both the *Linz* and the *Prague* symphonies begin too slowly, while on the other hand, the finale of the *Jupiter* is sheer bedlam. When he hits the right tempo and the acoustic conditions favor him for the moment, as in the finale of the E flat Symphony, the result is heart-warming. The actual performances were undoubtedly better than the recordings and I must come to the conclusion that this album is more valuable as a memento from an extraordinary artist's life than as competition to, say, Böhm or Szell. It should be acquired and listened to as such.

MOZART: Symphonies: in G, K. 45a ("Alte Lambacher"); in B flat, K. 45b; in G ("Neue Lambacher"); in F, K. 75; in F, K. 76; in D, K. 81; in D, K. 95; in C, K. 96; in D, K. 97; No. 1, in E flat, K. 16; No. 4, in D, K. 19; No. 5, in B flat, K. 22; No. 6, in F, K. 43; No. 7, in D, K. 45; No. 8, in D, K. 48; No. 9, in C, K. 73; No. 10, in G, K. 74; No. 11, in D, K. 84; No. 12, in C, K. 110; No. 13, in F, K. 112; No. 14, in A, K. 114; No. 15, in G, K. 124; No. 16, in C, K. 128; No. 17, in G, K. 129; No. 18, in F, K. 130; No. 19, in E flat, K. 132; No. 20, in D, K. 133; No. 21, in A, K. 134; No. 22, in C, K. 162; No. 23, in D, K. 181; No. 24, in B flat, K. 182. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2721 013, \$36 (eight discs). **MOZART: Symphonies:** No. 35, in D, K. 385 ("Haffner"); No. 36, in C, K. 425 ("Linz"); No. 38, in D, K. 504 ("Prague"); No. 39, in E flat, K. 543; No. 40, in G minor, K. 550; No. 41, in C, K. 551 ("Jupiter"). Festival Casals Orchestra of Puerto Rico (in No. 36); Marlboro Festival Orchestra (in the other symphonies), Pablo Casals, cond. Columbia D3S 817, \$11.98 (three discs).

classical

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ALBENIZ: Suite española (orch. Frühbeck de Burgos). New Philharmonia Orchestra, Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, cond. London CS 6581, \$5.98.

It's good to find Frühbeck de Burgos diverted, at least temporarily, from the big symphonic showpieces that he has been recording of late. He plays many of them surprisingly well for a relatively young conductor. Of course, he can't yet match the old maestros in this repertory, but he performs a quite unique service here by recording, for the first time, in topnotch orchestrations (his own!), eight of Albéniz'—and Spanish music's—most seminal pieces. The *Suite española* has been recorded occasionally before in its original piano version (most notably by Alicia de Larrocha for Epic), and even more often in nondescript transcriptions; but here at last it is translated into symphonic terms that well-nigh match the familiar and effective Arbós orchestration of five pieces from Albéniz' larger-scaled *Iberia* Suite.

The new orchestrations, obviously modeled on Arbós' *Iberia* scores, are perhaps a bit overelaborate, but they are idiomatic and fascinatingly kaleidoscopic, while the arranger/conductor's irresistibly songful and zestful performances are enchantingly recorded. My only complaint is that the jacket notes are lacking in detailed information and pertinent dates. Also, on my review copy, the selections listed for Side 1 actually are heard on Side 2 and vice versa. In any case, the original sequence has been changed and one piece replaced by another of Albéniz' in order that they all may represent Spanish provinces. The original order was *Granada (Serenata)*, *Cataluña (Corranda)*, *Sevilla (Sevillañas)*, *Cádiz (Saeta or Canción)*, *Asturias (Leyenda)*, *Aragon (Jota or Fantasia)*; also known as the *Jota Aragonesa*, Op. 164, No. 1), *Casilla (Seguidillas)*; also known as No. 5 of the *Cantos de España*, Op. 232), and *Cubana (Tango)*. In the present program this last piece is replaced by an orchestration of *Córdoba (Nocturne)*, No. 4 in the Op. 232 *Cantos de España*.
 R.D.D.

BACH: Magnificat in D, S. 243—See Bruckner: Te Deum.

BACH: "Organ Favorites, Volume 4." Prelude and Fugue in D Major ("Great"), S. 532; Prelude and Fugue in C minor ("Great"), S. 546; Chorale Preludes: Nun komm der Heiden Heiland, S. 659; Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott, S. 720; Jesu, meine Zuversicht, S. 728; Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier, S. 731; Nun freut euch, lieben Christen g'mein, S. 734. E. Power Biggs, organ (Flentrop Organ in the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge, Mass.). Columbia MS 7424, \$5.98.

E. Power Biggs, in his long and active career, has done more than anyone in this country to encourage a wider appreciation of good organ music, good organ playing, and good organs. His integ-

riety has always been high, his ambitions noble, and his technique just a bit below what a perfectionist might ask for. Yet his Bach readings have invariably been a model of style (for those who don't care to go too far out on a limb), and until just recently technical difficulties have never really interfered with the performance. Now, however—and on this record in particular—the struggle is beginning to be apparent. To be sure, Biggs manages all the notes accurately and the sensible tempos are what we've always expected from him, but the occasional unevenness of touch, irregularity of phrasing, and tendency to release certain held notes before their time suggest that the pieces are costing him more effort than they once did. Columbia's ultraclose miking further guarantees that every minute irregularity will be clearly spotlighted for us. A softer recording ambience might have changed the picture radically.

In every other respect this release proves to be very satisfying. Biggs' readings of the two preludes and fugues are cleverly worked out and tasteful. The D major Prelude may be taken too cautiously, but for the Fugue he adopts a jaunty pace and plays straightforwardly, letting the humor speak for itself. Filling out the disc are five chorale preludes, one from the set of eighteen "Leipzig" chorales. The remaining miscellaneous four are relatively little-known and seldom-recorded works, which Biggs brings to life imaginatively.




The liner includes some clever notes by Biggs and plenty of information about the Flentrop Organ in the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard, though it would have been useful to know the specific registrations for each piece. I also wish to protest once more about Columbia's unnaturally close and unpleasantly strident recording. The Flentrop organ simply does not sound like this. C.F.G.

BACH: St. John Passion, S. 245. Elisabeth Grümmer (s); Christa Ludwig (ms); Fritz Wunderlich (t), Evangelist; Josef Traxel (t); Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (b), Jesus; Karl Christian Kohn (bs), Peter and Pilate; Choir of St. Hedwig's Cathedral, Berlin; Berlin Symphony Orchestra, Karl Forster, cond. Seraphim SIC 6036, \$7.47 (three discs).

This performance, which has been available for a number of years as an Odeon import, is the first domestic release of a *St. John Passion* since Telefunken's controversial but highly acclaimed version more than four years ago. Karl Forster

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enters a field that is still awaiting a fully satisfying version. His rich and colorful performance possesses many fine moments, to be sure, but it is also afflicted with some major flaws which prevent it from sweeping the field.

In the *St. John* Passion, Bach has placed the primary emphasis on the action of the story or the Biblical words themselves, as told by the Evangelist and the chorus, whereas in the *St. Matthew* more attention is given to the subjective reactions to these events in the meditative and reflective arias, ariosos, and chorales. One of the first requirements for a successful performance of the *St. John* Passion, therefore, is a strong, forceful, highly skilled chorus and an expressive, dramatically effective Evangelist. Fritz Wunderlich fulfills his role ideally: the tenor's grasp of the music and his ability to convey the excitement and continuity of events is unsurpassed by any of his counterparts in competitive recordings (and, I must add, the competition from Kurt Equiluz on Telefunken and Ernst Häfliger on Archive is very stiff indeed). Wunderlich's readings of the scenes of Peter's weeping, Christ's scourging, and the earthquake after the crucifixion are particularly gripping.

Precisely because Wunderlich performs so admirably, the shortcomings of the Choir of St. Hedwig's are all the more disappointing: the group is just too large and sluggish (or insufficiently drilled) to manage the elaborate and complex "crowd-scene" choruses with conviction. Time and again they are late with the tricky entrances and often several measures have gone by before everyone is singing in the same tempo. (The basses' entrance in the fugal chorus "*Lässest du diesen los*" is not only sloppy but in the wrong key; not until the middle of the second measure do they find the pitch or the tempo.) As a result, Forster has been forced to adopt tempos in many of these pieces that are entirely too slow to convey the inherent terror or excitement. It is in these very pieces that Karl Richter (Archive) does such a spectacular job of portraying the demoniac frenzy

of the mob with his perfectly trained Munich Bach Chorus. Curiously, the chief downfall of the Richter set is his perverse handling and overinterpretation of the chorales, while Forster's simple, unaffected, and straightforward manner here displays a wonderful sensitivity for these carefully placed moments of repose and reflection. Forster's group also does a superbly eloquent job with the final madrigal chorus, "*Ruh! wohl!*"

The next most important ingredient for a successful *St. John* Passion is a baritone who can convey the lyrical warmth, eloquence, compassion, and humanity of Bach's music for Jesus. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau supplies all these qualities in full measure, without for a moment lapsing into sentimentality. I cannot imagine a more sympathetic or moving interpretation.

Elisabeth Grümmer's relaxed and easy handling of the two soprano arias is certainly the best available. Christa Ludwig also gives satisfying and moving accounts of her two arias, particularly the adagio lament, "*Es ist vollbracht*," sensitively accompanied by the obligato viola da gamba. Josef Traxel provides an impassioned and musicianly reading of "*Ach, mein Sinn*," but not without signs of strain in the upper register. The gentle arioso "*Mein Herz! in dem die ganze Welt*" comes off perfectly well, but how nice it would have been if Wunderlich had changed hats and doubled as tenor soloist in the arias. Karl Christian Kohn, the bass soloist who also portrays Peter and Pilate, is quite effective in the scurrying aria, "*Eilt, eilt*." However, in his other aria with chorale, "*Mein teurer Heiland*," and in the delicate arioso "*Betrachte, meine Seel*" accompanied by violas d'amore and lute, Bach seems to be writing for a much lighter, more lyrical baritone than Kohn's booming basso. How nice it would have been had Fischer-Dieskau. . . .

Forster has assigned the continuo to a harpsichord and cello throughout, except for Jesus' recitatives where there is an abrupt switch to the organ. This is a defensible if somewhat eccentric device imitative of the *St. Matthew* Passion, where Bach has assigned a string quartet to accompany all of Jesus' phrases. Here, of course, Bach has not indicated that Jesus should be set off in any special way, but it must be said that Forster's treatment is considerably less clumsy than Vandernoot's (Nonesuch). Elsewhere, Heinz Friedrich Hartig's harpsichord contributions are well conceived and add much to the effectiveness of many scenes.

Like Seraphim's earlier *Christmas* Oratorio release from Odeon, this pressing seems to sacrifice much of the original warmth, though the clarity and excellent balances are retained throughout. If it's a budget recording you're looking for, this one will certainly be your first choice.

C.F.G.

BARTOK: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2; Four Pieces for Orchestra, Op. 12. Alexis Weissenberg, piano (in the Concerto); Philadelphia Orchestra. Eugene Ormandy, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3159. \$5.98.

The Philips disc contains some very fine piano playing; I have not previously heard Bishop in twentieth-century repertoire, of which he is clearly something of a master. But the engineers have so overbalanced the solo instrument in the Bartók Concerto that the record cannot really be recommended; no piano ever sounded so prominent as this in the concert hall, and the Second Concerto is—as the composer is quoted in the liner notes—not "for piano with *accompaniment* from an orchestra, but for piano *and* orchestra." The Stravinsky is more satisfactorily managed, although still larger than life; this is a reasonable alternative to other versions in the catalogue, and certainly preferable to the unfortunate Entremont/Stravinsky collaboration on Columbia.

RCA's engineers come up with an entirely different acoustic result for the Bartók Concerto, but it isn't really much of an improvement: one of those topless, tubby, muddily-resonant Dynagroove jobs, which doesn't do much to clarify the intricacies of the scoring (although one can hear that Weissenberg has a powerful command of the technical problems). In fact, if you want a really remarkable example of the degree of sonorous variation possible in recordings of one and the same work, try comparing Bishop/Davis, Weissenberg/Ormandy, Entremont/Bernstein (Columbia MS 7145) and Anda/Fricay (DGG 138111). The last of these remains my preference; although the Columbia engineers achieve the most convincing musical results, the two Hungarians bring more rhythmic vitality to their somewhat more dully recorded version.

Bartók's Op. 12 orchestral pieces were composed in 1912, although not scored until 1921. Comprising a Prelude, Scherzo, Intermezzo, and Funeral March, they represent an extension of that Central-European impressionist idiom that Bartók developed most successfully in the opera *Bluebeard's Castle* (1911) and from which he was already turning away, as in the *Allegro barbaro* for piano, which falls between the opera and Op. 12 in the composer's catalogue. For all its richness of sonority (especially in the Prelude), this is not a strong work: limited and monotonous in its development of rather obvious gestures.

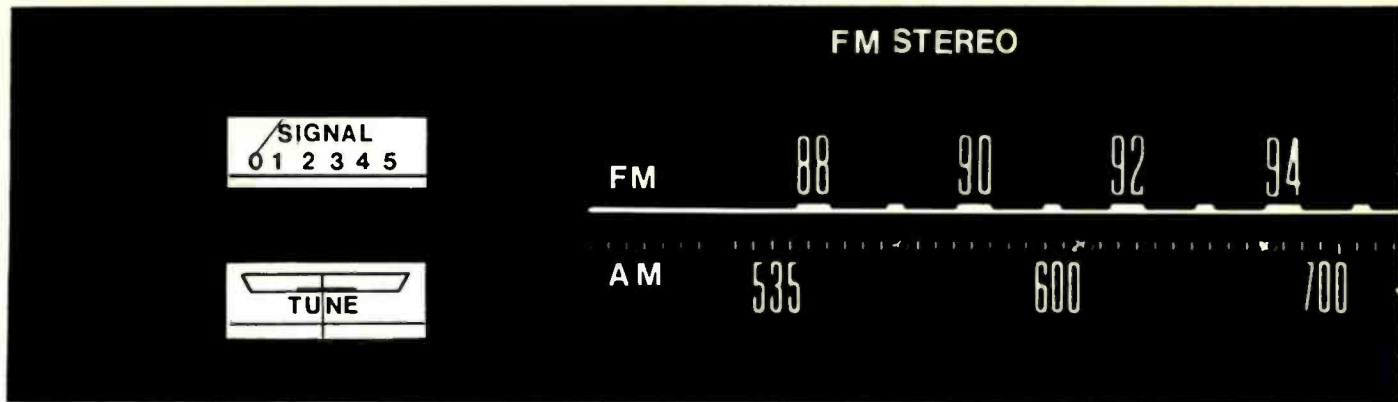
The Philadelphia Orchestra under Ormandy gave the first American performance of these pieces as recently as last November, but this is not, as averred on the jacket, the first recording; an earlier version, by the Budapest Philharmonic under Miklós Erdélyi, was issued last year on Hungaroton SLPX 1302 (part of a projected complete recording of Bartók's music). There are points where the leaner sound of the Hungarian ensemble seems preferable, but the Phila-



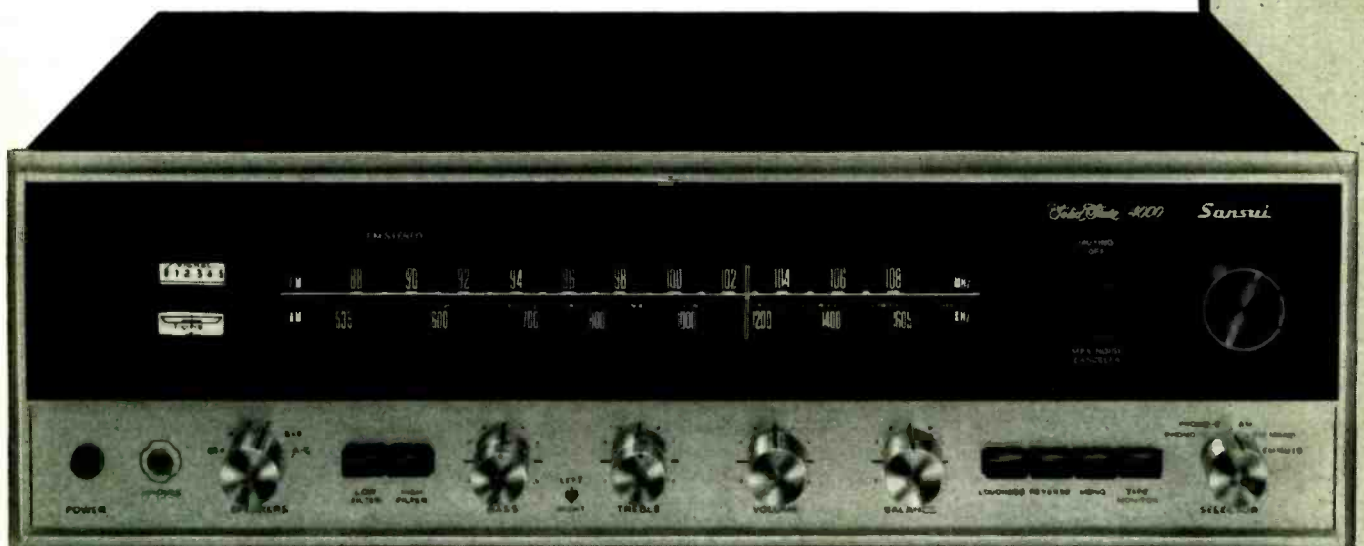
Fritz Wunderlich—an admirable Evangelist in the Bach *St. John* Passion.

BARTOK: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2. STRAVINSKY: Concerto for Piano and Winds. Stephen Bishop, piano; BBC Symphony Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. Philips 839761, \$5.98.

Continued on page 80



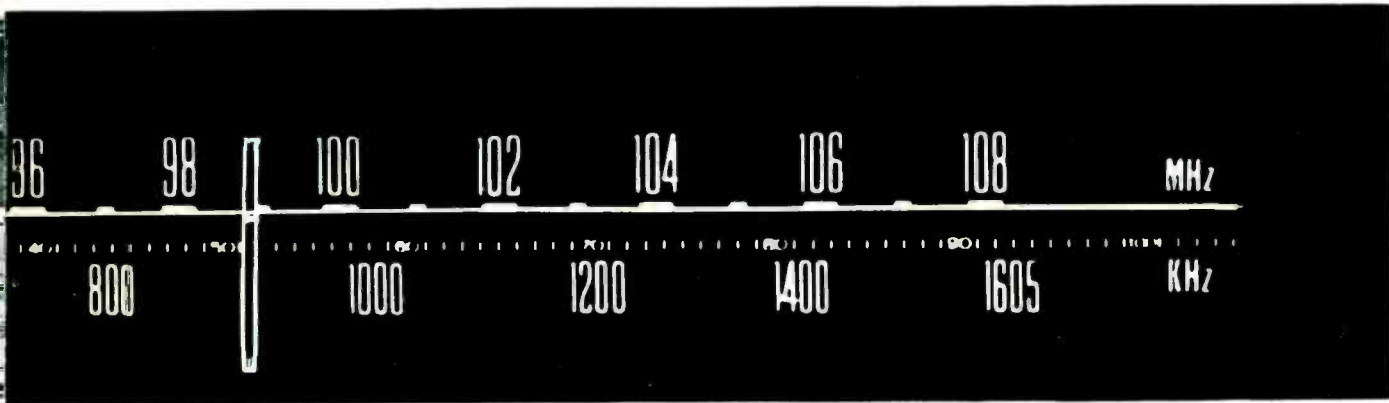
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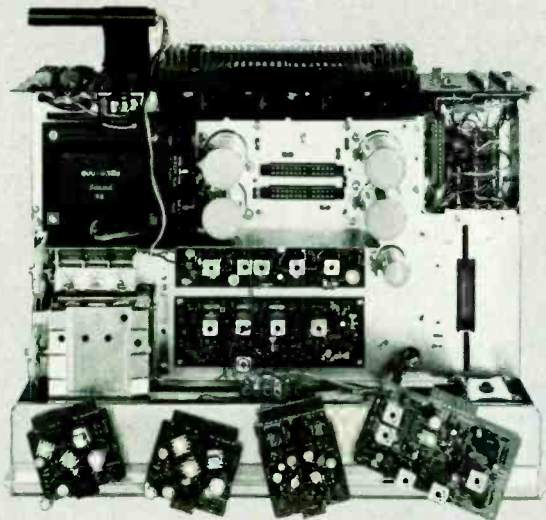
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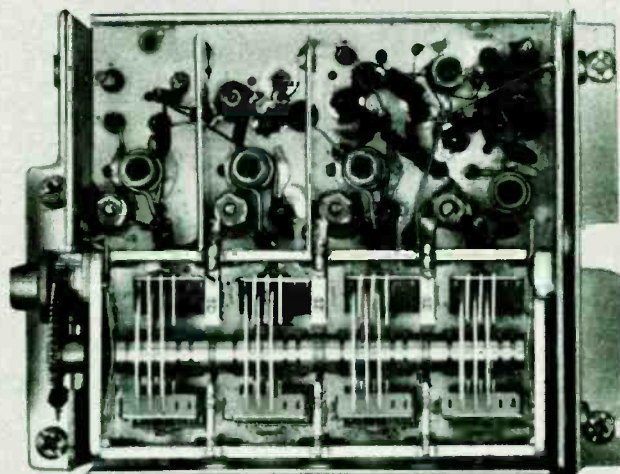
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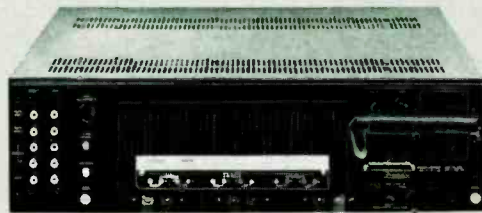
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delphians in full cry make a pretty fair effect, and this side of the disc is acoustically rather decent. D.H.

BEETHOVEN: Quartets for Strings: No. 12, in E flat, Op. 127; No. 13, in B flat, Op. 130; No. 14, in C sharp minor, Op. 131; No. 15, in A minor, Op. 132; No. 16, in F, Op. 135; Grosse Fuge, Op. 133. Guarneri Quartet. RCA Red Seal VCS 6418, \$11.98 (four discs).

With this release the Guarneri Quartet completes two-thirds of its projected Beethoven cycle: only the early quartets, the six of Op. 18, remain to be recorded. Like the previously released middle set, these recordings of the last five quartets have much to recommend them. First of all, the Guarneri's ensemble playing is something to marvel at. These four musicians have obviously studied each piece very carefully: they know exactly what they want and the interpretations have been rehearsed to the point where the desired result is achieved beautifully and effortlessly. Yet despite the many good points, for my taste the performances miss being a total success.

Late Beethoven demands a very individual approach—each piece, in fact, has its own unique requirements—and it is just this sense of individuality that I find lacking here. The Guarneri's lovely sound, so sweet and homogenized in character, is attained by smoothing out the individual characteristics of the four instruments. Then too, their readings are so "refined" in all respects that tension—a quality crucially important, in one way or another, to each of these works—remains at a minimum. Thus contrasts are played down, whether in regard to changes in dynamic level, tempos, or general character. For example, the second movement of Op. 132 is taken at such a slow, relaxed pace that the third movement (the *Heiliger Dankgesang*), which is the actual slow movement, fails to communicate its proper effect. In fact, the whole rhythmic aspect of their playing seems strangely anemic; there is no thrust, no drive toward cadences. As a result, everything appears to be etched on a small scale, a fatal flaw in dealing with music of this degree of complexity. In sum, I am left with the impression that although what I hear is beautiful, it is ultimately monotonous (in the original sense of the word) and thus boring; there are simply too few surprises.

The best of the set is Op. 135, and here I must admit that their approach achieves marvelous results. But then this piece is built on a considerably smaller scale than the other four. Even here the tempos seem a bit on the slow side, but the over-all effect of relaxed lyricism comes off quite well in this case. There are also isolated movements in other quartets which are magnificent—e.g., the first of Op. 131—but they fail to overcome the problem of total balance and continuity. And in these pieces more than in any others I can think of, it is the totality that tells the tale and not

the individual movements. Incidentally, the *Grosse Fuge* (performed with marvelous control but without projecting the fantastic urgency of this piece) is given as an "additional" finale to Op. 130, placed after the usual sixth movement. This seems to be becoming standard procedure.

In closing, let me say that if this is your kind of Beethoven you will probably never hear it better played. My admiration for this Quartet is immense: here are four truly first-rate musicians who respond to one another in an extraordinary way. And though my disagreement with them is certainly fundamental, I am the first to admit that it is essentially a disagreement in temperament. We should thank heaven there is still more than one way to play Beethoven! R.P.M.

BEETHOVEN: Sonatas for Piano: No. 3, in C, Op. 2, No. 3; No. 13, in E flat, Op. 27, No. 1; No. 24, in F sharp, Op. 78. Wilhelm Backhaus, piano. London CS 6638, \$5.98.

Backhaus' stereo remake of the Beethoven Sonata cycle hurries to "incompletion": with one more still-to-be-released installment, we shall have all thirty-one of the thirty-two works that the veteran pianist was able to re-record. (He saved the monumental *Hammerklavier* for last, and—as you know—time ran out in July of last year.) Backhaus sounds more old-fashioned than ever in these works, rhapsodizing melodic lines in an almost Paderewskian manner (he used to be much more aloof in his younger days). The pianist frequently plays his left hand ahead of his right, there are numerous bass-octave additions and a sort of general editorializing that is more Backhaus than Beethoven.

Op. 78 fares best here. The first movement introduction is broad and tender, with the ensuing Allegro full of charm and fancy. The Allegro vivace could be more reckless, but in the main it has brio



Wilhelm Backhaus—a complete Beethoven sonata cycle minus the *Hammerklavier*.

and heart. Backhaus has some rather arbitrary views regarding tempo relationships in the first movement of Op. 27, No. 1. He begins in a rather clipped, perfunctory manner but then literally halves the count at the first broad melodic utterance. The mid-movement allegro outburst has the requisite scurrying brio, but Backhaus' fingers—amazingly deft as they are for an octogenarian—do not always obey their master. I am also a bit disturbed by the way Backhaus starts certain movements (the second of this Sonata, for instance): often they are a bit under tempo and slide into a basic speed after about three bars. Op. 2, No. 3—as Backhaus sees it—is a primarily technical, "virtuoso" composition. He throws away the Adagio by taking it too matter-of-factly, and his technique is not quite up to snuff elsewhere. The first movement, with its broken octaves, is accurate enough but sounds tense and disjointed. The Scherzo, taken at a very fast *alla breve* "Schnabel" pace, is rather stumbly and out of control, and Backhaus makes heavy weather of some of those chordal figurations in the fourth movement's development section.

Regrettably, a disappointing memorial, though not without some interest. Good, velvety reproduction, a bit percussive on top. H.G.

BEETHOVEN: 32 Variations in C minor, G. 191; 6 Variations in F, Op. 34; 15 Variations and Fugue in E flat, Op. 35 ("Prometheus"). Claudio Arrau, piano. Philips SAL 3764, \$5.98.

Claudio Arrau's first recording of the C minor Variations (this is his second of the F major and his third of the *Prometheus*) rates particular attention here, for it is one of the few technically accurate readings that treats the writing in musical rather than purely virtuosic terms. There is wonderful spacing and clarity to this performance, with all sorts of meaningful colors and harmonic pointing; and yet, in the end the listener finds even greater impact and dramatic fulfillment than in the more rigid, less poetic accounts by Gilels (Angel), Moravec (Connoisseur), and Horowitz (Angel COLH—soon to be reissued on Seraphim). One tends to forget that this chaconnelike structure is also a tone poem full of pathos and humanity—and it is good to have so splendid a reminder as Arrau offers here.

The pianist is equally fine in Op. 34, which, in reality, is "in F Major" only at the beginning and end—a rare instance of tonal ambiguity for a classical composer. Arrau shapes this imaginative progression of shifting tonalities with a wonderful sense of mystery fully appropriate to the music's lyrical content. This latest performance of the brilliant E flat Variations (the so-called *Eroica* Variations due to Beethoven's later use of the theme in the last movement of his Third Symphony) is slower and more inflected than the still available second version on Decca DXA 122. That earlier account was a bit less fussy and more direct, but the superb modern sound of the new Philips disc allows for greater clarity and

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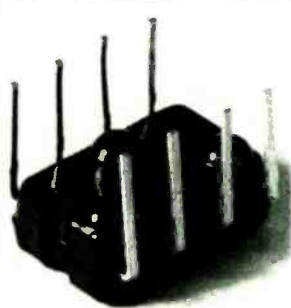
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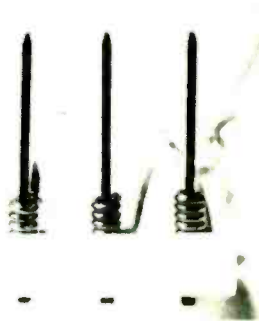
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In sum, a superb collection. H.G.

BRAHMS: Serenade No. 2, in A, Op. 16.
DVORAK: Serenade for Ten Wind Instruments, Cello, and Bass, in D minor, Op. 44. Members of the London Symphony Orchestra, Istvan Kertesz, cond. London CS 6594, \$5.98. Tape: ●● L 80224, 7½ ips, \$7.95.

An odd-ball program, but fun. Brahms's Serenade, scored for orchestra without violins, was written when he was twenty-seven and is remarkably banal in parts—bouquets of clichés adorn the first movement, which is filled with "pretty" woodwind writing. The third and fifth movements are sprawling and disjointed affairs which veer from what Clara Schumann managed to call a "spiritual atmosphere" in the third (well, maybe) to sheer circus music, complete with piccolo, in the fifth. It is a serenade with pretensions. But Brahms uses the instruments well, and the kaleidoscope of colors in that last movement keeps you waiting for what will come next. Some conductors might be tempted to jazz up the piece more than Kertesz does; he votes to treat it seriously, without undue emphasis on accents or rhythmic dynamism or speed (in the Scherzo), and he makes a good case for this attitude.

The Dvořák Serenade, unlike the Brahms, is chamber music—one instrument to a part, with flute deleted in favor of a contrabassoon and an extra horn. The music is more naïve than the Brahms; it contains bright little marches and an engaging dialogue for clarinet and oboe in the Slavic third movement (and here, too, a suggestion of darkness looms). The instrumentalists are very good indeed. S.F.

BRUCKNER: Te Deum. BACH: Magnificat in D, S. 243. Anne Pashley, soprano; Janet Baker, mezzo; Robert Tear, tenor; Don Garrard, bass (in the Bruckner); Lucia Popp and Anne Pashley, soprano; Janet Baker, mezzo; Robert Tear, tenor; Thomas Hemsley, bass (in the Bach). New Philadelphia Chorus and Orchestra, Daniel Barenboim, cond. Angel S 36615, \$5.98.

Daniel Barenboim makes his disc debut as a choral conductor here with a Bruckner Te Deum that is strong and attractive, with many poetic details. The opening movement is robust and intense and the tempos are well judged except for an abrupt and, to my mind, unnecessary accelerating two measures before letter D (Eulenburg score). The movement is further enhanced by the contributions of a first-rate quartet of soloists. The tenor solos in the "Te ergo quaesumus" and "Salvum fac populum tuum" movements are especially well done by Robert Tear, who supplies more weight and a more ringing top than his two counterparts on the Jochum (DGG) and Haitink (Philips) recordings. However, Barenboim often lingers indulgently and awkwardly at the ends of phrases here.

The "Aeterna fac, cum sanctis tuis" is terrifically exciting, although the fast tempo seems a bit frantic; and for some reason Barenboim completely ignores Bruckner's *etwas langsamer* marking after letter P. In the final movement, "In te, Domine, speravi," which leads into the grand double fugue and the "Non confundar" section, Barenboim is most convincing. If not as eloquent as Jochum or as shattering as Haitink, it is a most powerful statement, nevertheless (Ormandy's insensitive and poorly balanced rush job is completely out of the running). The recording is lush, and balances are excellent throughout, although there are a few instances of pre-echo. This is the first recording in which the organ (marked *ad libitum* by Bruckner) can be heard at all, and the grandeur gained thereby is immeasurable.

On the "flip" side Barenboim gives us Bach that is flip, casual, full of silly mannerisms and eccentricities, and blatantly unidiomatic. The sound is elephantine and tempos are often so fast that the excellent chorus can produce only a blur of tone. It is difficult to understand why Barenboim should record music about which he seems to know very little and care even less.

C.F.G.

BUSONI: Doktor Faust. Hildegard Hillebrecht, William Cochran, Anton de Ridder, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Karl Christian Kohn; Chorus and Symphony Orchestra of the Bavarian Radio, Ferdinand Leitner, cond. For a feature review of this recording, see page 69.

DVORAK: Serenade for Strings, in E, Op. 22. KUBELIK: Quattro forme per archi. English Chamber Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 139443, \$5.98.

Kubelik not only offers a lovely performance of the Dvořák Serenade here, but also demonstrates his own talent as a composer in the Czech tradition. In the Dvořák, Kubelik quite rightly resists the temptation to sentimentalize the phrasing or to indulge in an overly lush texture and excessive vibrato. Without being too lean or inexpressive, this performance combines warmth, clarity, and considerable lyric elegance. The English Chamber Orchestra contains some fine string players who perform most responsively under Kubelik's sensitive direction.

As a composer, Kubelik hardly represents any stylistic extremities, but he obviously knows how to score idiomatically for strings: there is considerable textural variety in his juxtaposition of solos against tutti and in his lucid divisi scoring, reflecting both his background as the son of a great violin virtuoso and his experience as a conductor. Stylistically these *Forme* could be described as mildly neoclassic in harmony and rhythm, with a Czech-influenced lyric impulse. The structures seem to hark back to eighteenth-century forms. The piece is worth hearing and provides an appropriate disc mate for Kubelik's fine Dvořák Serenade.

P.H.

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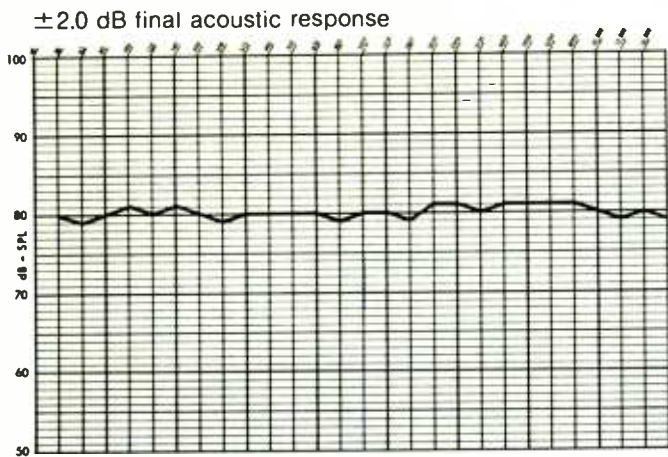
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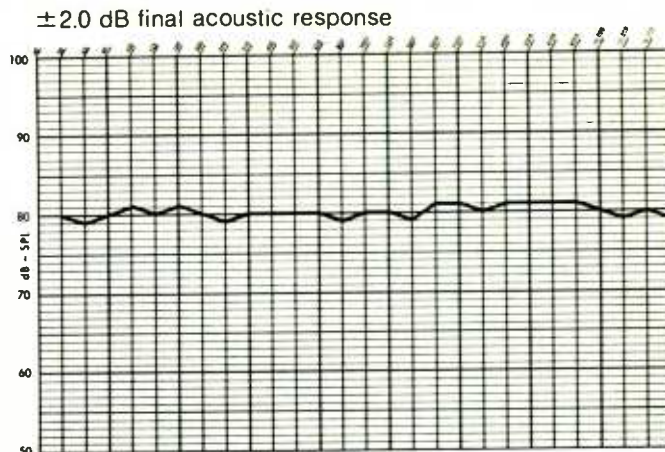
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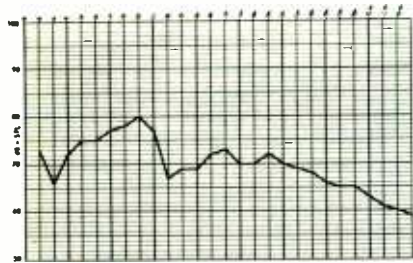
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DVORAK: Serenade for Ten Wind Instruments, Cello, and Bass, in D minor, Op. 44—See Brahms: Serenade No. 2, in A, Op. 16.

FLOTOW: *Martha*. Anneliese Rothenberger (s), Lady Harriet; Brigitte Fassbaender (ms), Nancy; Nicolai Gedda (t), Lionel; Hermann Prey (b), Plunkett; Dieter Weller (bs), Lord Tristan; Hans Georg Knoblich (bs), Sheriff of Richmond; Chorus and Orchestra of the Bavarian State Opera (Munich), Robert Heger, cond. **ANNELIESE ROTHENBERGER:** "Opera Recital." **MOZART:** Don Giovanni: Vedrai carino. **WEBER:** Der Freischütz: Wie nahte mir den Schlummer . . . Leise, leise; Und ob die Wolke. **BIZET:** Carmen: C'est des contrabandiers . . . Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante. **DVORAK:** Rusalka: Du lieber Mond. Orchestra of the Bavarian State Opera (Munich), Hermann Hildebrandt, cond. Angel SCL 3753, \$17.94 (three discs).

It's difficult to drum up much of a case for *Martha* these days, even as a period piece. The music, touched by a fresh Schubertian lyricism at best and a harmless vacuity at worst, does have its charming moments. In fact, if the characters were not quite so repellent, *Martha* might still offer a viable escape into an Arcadian operatic never-never land.

But where can one find a pair of such hypocritical and unpleasant protagonists as Lady Harriet and Lionel? Harriet, depicted in the opening scene as a pampered and spoiled lady in waiting to Queen Anne, finds life simply too boring. For some momentary diversion, she decides to dress herself and her maid, Nancy, in peasant costume and attend the Richmond Fair. There they meet two honest rustics, Lionel and his half-brother Plunkett, who, naturally assuming the girls are offering their services as hired help, "buy" them for a year's indenture. Lionel, probably the most hypersensitive cry baby in all opera, falls in love with Harriet (called "Martha" for the pur-

poses of her country masquerade). But she pulls rank (what if the Queen found out?) and he's dreadfully offended, throws a temper tantrum, and retires to a mossy bank to sulk. When Harriet discovers that Lionel is really the long-lost Earl of Derby and it's all right to love him, she stages a phony replica of the Richmond Fair to simulate their first meeting, hoping that the memory will revive his affection. Of course it works. Frankly, I wouldn't give two cents for the success of that marriage.

The "lower-class" pair of lovers, Nancy and Plunkett, are less objectionable—they bear a strong family resemblance to Susanna and Figaro, but Flotow's music never raises them much above the level of operatic types. Perhaps the best way to approach *Martha* is via a disc of excerpts (Angel offers a very fine one, by the way, on S 36236). Here one can enjoy the high points of the score—the duets and quartets, especially the three in Act II, rather than the comparatively pallid arias—and disregard the plot.

If one must own a complete recording, Angel's new performance should do very nicely—it's a beautifully finished piece of work from first to last. Conductor Heger has tightened up the score in many places by cutting repetitive passages, but I doubt if anyone will offer objections. He gives a strong, un sentimental reading, perhaps a bit overweighted in places, but there is usually a graceful bounce and lilt to the orchestral accompaniments. Except for a slight edginess up top, Anneliese Rothenberger does all one could reasonably expect for Lady Harriet: her voice is warmer and more evenly focused than when she recorded Angel's excerpted account of the opera, while her musicianship and unaffected vocal charm remain as welcome as ever. Gedda has a really impossible task with Lionel, but he too is in exceptionally fine voice and he underplays the character's less attractive traits without turning him into a complete cipher. I doubt if any other tenor could do a more sympathetic job.

Plunkett is a bass role, but for the purposes of a recording the producers evidently felt that a baritone would create a less fatherly impression. The low Gs don't seem to bother Prey unduly (at least as recorded) and he gives the important bass lines in the ensembles solid underpinning. Even more to the point is his elegant voice and happy-go-lucky high spirits. Nancy's music also lies quite low, but Brigitte Fassbaender's plummy mezzo copes easily—she is a delightful performer and I'm sure we'll be hearing more from her.

Angel's sound is bright and forward, although my pressings contained a lot of gritty surface noise and the quality on Side 3—which holds the entire thirty-minute Act II—deteriorated badly toward the center of the disc. A booklet with complete text and translation is provided along with an enthusiastic appreciation of the opera by one "J.K." (who informs us that *Martha* was performed "last year" at the Met with Tucker and Farrell; to the best of my knowledge, Tucker sang only in the 1961 revival, while the mere idea of casting Farrell—

The Sound World of Chou Wen-Chung

by Alfred Frankenstein

THIS IS THE FIRST record to be devoted entirely to compositions of Chou Wen-Chung, and it is one of the finest records of the year on all counts.

Pien (Transformations), the longest work of the four, is a chamber orchestra piece sounding a little like a cross between Webern and Varèse (the latter was Chou's teacher and close friend). The emphasis on detached tones evokes the Webernian *Klangfarbenmelodie*. The instrumentation, for wind instruments and percussion and plenty of snarls from the brass, recalls Varèse, as does the hard-driving, dissonant character of the piece in certain passages. What is very much Chou's own—but derived from Chinese tradition—is the composer's way of paying "minute attention to each tone, providing for numerous ways to attack it; to vary its intensity, pitch, and even timbre while the note is continuing, and to conclude it." Put all these things together in a performance of remarkable power and authority, record it perfectly, and something most striking and exceptional results.

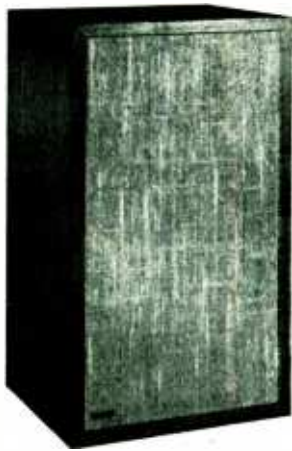
The same variety of attacks, "bending" of pitches, and the rest, are employed in two of the remaining three works on the disc. *Yü Ko (Song of the Fisherman)* is an ancient Chinese melody marvelously adapted for chamber orchestra. It is full of the melancholy of Chinese poetry and the mysticism that comes out so strongly in Sung Dynasty painting. It is one of the very few musical compositions, indeed, that seem thoroughly equiv-

alent, in East-West terms, to the great-master periods and styles of Chinese literature and visual art.

Cursive is a piece for flute and piano, played by Harvey Sollberger and Charles Wuorinen. Here the non-European subtleties of phrasing are even more marked than they are in *Pien*, thanks to the superb performance. The piano part calls for playing on the keys in the normal manner, for plucking and glissandos on the bare strings, and for the "preparation" of the piano with dampers and mutes of various kinds, à la John Cage. Much goes on in very little time here, but the music says infinitely more than its modest time limits would suggest.

The Willows Are New is a straight piano piece, composed in 1957, well before the other three works which date from the '60s. If *Pien* sounds like Webern *cum* Varèse, this composition sounds like Debussy and Henry Cowell. It is also an adaptation of an old Chinese tune. The music's exoticism is the Debussy facet; its dissonant texture and hard, spare tonal surface is from Cowell. This work is not so quite mature and original as *Pien*, *Yü Ko*, and *Cursive*, but the performance by Yi-An Chang is altogether masterly and lends the whole very considerable stature.

CHOU WEN-CHUNG: *Pien*, *Yü Ko*; *Cursive*; *The Willows Are New*. Group For Contemporary Music, Harvey Sollberger, cond. Composers Recordings CRI 251, \$5.95.



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Eileen, one assumes—as Lady Harriet boggles the mind).

Rothenberger's little recital on Side 6 makes a pleasant addendum. The soprano is especially affecting in Agathe's two arias from *Freischütz*—ample proof that she has officially graduated from the soubrette class with honors. P.G.D.

HINDEMITH: Die Serenaden, Op. 35; Sonata for Oboe and Piano. SCHUMANN: 3 Romances for Oboe and Piano, Op. 94. Ronald Roseman, oboe; Gilbert Kalish, piano (in all the works); Lois Winter, soprano; Karen Tuttle, viola; John Goberman, cello (in *Die Serenaden*). Desto DC 6484, \$5.98.

This is an exquisitely beautiful record. Roseman is a consummate oboist: his tone is utterly beautiful, his intonation is perfect, his nuance and phrasing the last word in refinement and understanding.

On one side of the record he presents both Schumann's familiar Romances (so often heard as violin solos but so much more meaningful on the oboe, for which they were conceived), and the light, deft, witty Sonata by Hindemith. (The label, by the way, reverses their order; the Schumann comes first, not the Hindemith.)

On the reverse side Roseman joins forces with the singer and the string players for *Die Serenaden*, which Hindemith describes as "a little cantata on romantic texts," although it is actually a

work of some size. There are eight movements, two of them for the instruments alone, and in each section the instruments are used in different combinations. The whole thing is wonderfully ingenious and entertaining and demonstrates both Hindemith's link with Brahms and his own very special, mordant, somewhat satirical attitude toward the German past. Miss Winter's voice is a little small; otherwise everything is perfect except the fact that the texts of the songs are given on the jacket only in English translation. A.F.

KUBELIK: Quattro forme per archi—See Dvořák: Serenade for Strings, in E, Op. 22.

LISZT: Les Préludes; Orpheus; Tasso, Lamento e trionfo. London Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond. Philips 839788, \$5.98.

Apart from *Les Préludes*, Liszt's thirteen tone poems rarely turn up on today's concert programs or on recordings. Haitink's new release of Nos. 2, 3, and 4 might well presage a complete set, although Philips' liner makes no promises. Actually, while the performances here are beautifully played by the LPO, one wonders whether Haitink really has his heart in the music. The grandiose climaxes of *Les Préludes* and *Tasso* could easily descend to stormy fustian, but these passages must be treated with a

certain amount of uninhibited vigor if the musical point is to be made. Haitink seems a trifle embarrassed by it all and reins his forces just when they should let loose.

That disappointing aspect aside, the conductor's lightweight approach does well by Liszt's more restrained poetic moods—*Orpheus* is a complete success, a rapt lyrical statement with some especially sensitive solo work from the concertmaster and English horn player. The first two sections of *Tasso* too work out nicely and one can well imagine the poet's spirit haunting the lagoons of Venice and the festivals at Ferrara. Also welcome is the over-all luminous warmth of the orchestral texture and the conductor's care in clarifying Liszt's very individual technique of thematic development.

Sonically, the performances are superbly balanced and admirably spacious, but the low-level cutting and distant perspectives only help to underplay punchless finales. P.G.D.

MESSIAEN: Harawi. Noelle Barker, soprano; Robert Sherlaw Johnson, piano. Argo ZRG 606, \$5.95.

Although he has composed relatively little vocal music, Messiaen has always been especially successful in this field. Not only do his abstruse histrionic gestures take relevance from the texts (his own), but more importantly, problems of form are less in evidence, both in detail and in the over-all sense. It is not

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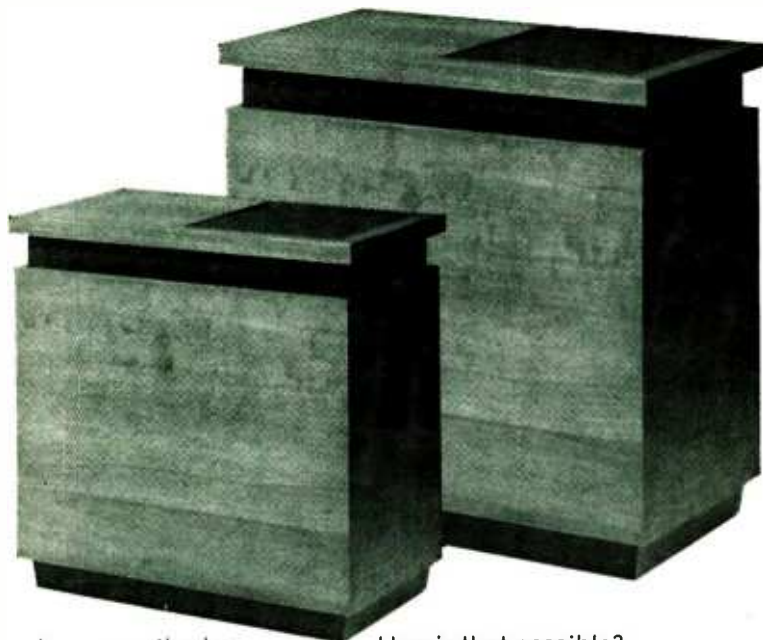
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surprising, then, that *Harawi* (an ancient Peruvian word meaning a love song that ends in death for the lovers) is among the composer's finest works.

Stylistically the work, written in 1945, falls between the *Quartet for the End of Time* of 1941 and the *Turangalila* Symphony of 1948. In common with these pieces, *Harawi* features bird calls, Hindu rhythms, disjunct melodic lines, and cataclysmic piano writing, all hallmarks of the Messiaen style. The composer's approach to vocal writing is also quite original (considering the date of composition), consisting of big melodic arches, melismatic vocalises, sighs, whispering, simple chanting, and even, in one song, a scream. The piano often carries the main musical burden. But

any attempt to describe the grandeur and endless fascination of this fifty-minute cycle would be useless—the piece simply has to be heard.

The performance is first-rate. While I cannot deny a preference for a larger and plummier sound than Miss Barker produces, her vivid projection of the work's dramatic essence more than compensates for any lack of vocal amplitude. Even more impressive is the brilliant realization of the piano part by Robert Sherlaw Johnson, which displays all the thrust and color Yvonne Loriod (Mme. Messiaen) brings to her husband's music. Argo's sound, slightly favoring the vocalist, is fine, and texts, but no translations, are provided. Unreservedly recommended. R.W.S.

MOZART: Concertos for Violin and Orchestra: No. 2, in D, K. 211; No. 5, in A, K. 219. Zino Francescatti, violin; Zürich Chamber Orchestra, Edmond de Stoutz, cond. Columbia MS 7389, \$5.98.

Francescatti and the Zürich Chamber Orchestra give Mozart's Concerto No. 5 a workout, and I think they try too hard. A whiff of exaggeration blows in at the very opening measures, when the violins bite into those detached eighth notes with what can only be called venom; from there on the movement is full of nervous energy, with De Stoutz emphasizing all sorts of subordinate figures and accents in the tutti, rather self-consciously. In the slow movement, Francescatti is not content to give a series of equal notes equal value, but pushes here and pulls there and in the process loses that sense of lofty peace which this movement can convey. And I may be out of date, but the last I heard, that appoggiatura in the third measure of the last movement was supposed to be played as an appoggiatura and not as a grace note. Before calling in Quantz and Leopold Mozart as my witnesses, I'll admit that maybe Francescatti knows something I don't know. Still, I insist grumpily that almost *nobody* plays it as a grace note; and to hear it as such is unsettling.

The Concerto No. 2 comes through unscathed, with less fussiness but quite a bit of portamento and "warming up." One of the best things about it is the interplay between violin sections of the orchestra, nicely caught in stereo.

S.F.

MOZART: "The Early Symphonies." Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Karl Böhm, cond. **MOZART: "The Last Six Symphonies."** Festival Casals Orchestra of Puerto Rico; Marlboro Festival Orchestra, Pablo Casals, cond. For a feature review of these recordings, see page 71.

PROKOFIEV: Symphony No. 5, in B flat, Op. 100. Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. Melodiya/Angel SR 40126, \$5.98.

RACHMANINOFF: Symphony No. 3, in A minor, Op. 44. Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Yevgeny Svetlanov, cond. Melodiya/Angel SR 40117, \$5.98.

Rachmaninoff and Prokofiev are two leading twentieth-century practitioners of the large-scale symphony, an idiom that has appealed less and less to composers during the past five decades or so. Both of these symphonies, in their totally different ways, represent their respective composers' best efforts in this major orchestral form, and they are firm staples in the Russian orchestral repertory.

However, there are in this country today at least fifteen or twenty symphony orchestras that could give performances of both works that are better played than the readings on these discs. In the case of the Rachmaninoff Third, a "provincial" American orchestra is easily

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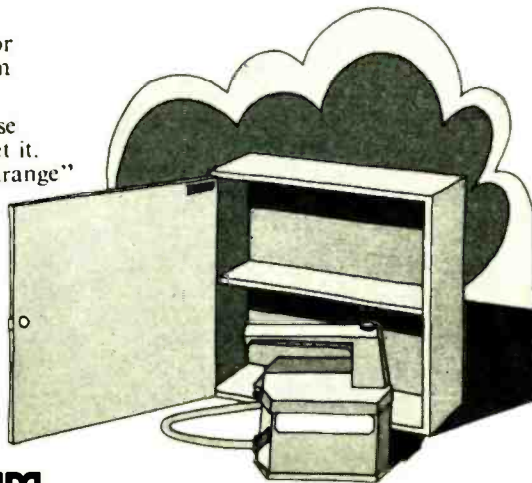
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superior: the Utah Symphony under Maurice Abravanel, one of the few American orchestras outside the "big five" to record with any regularity. The Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra simply does not qualify for major international stature. Only its strings have any real distinction of technique or style, and even they tend to get slightly out of tune in higher registers. The solo woodwinds are lackluster both in tone and execution, and the tutti wind choir provides a virtually indistinguishable background in the over-all texture. The typically Russian brass section contains raucous trumpets and vibrato-ridden horns that sound more like saxophones in such exposed passages as the slow movement of the Rachmaninoff. Despite a general ensemble efficiency born of frequent rehearsal and performance, the total effect falls markedly short of the kind of orchestral standards we expect from recordings. How ironical that due to the suicidal policies of our musicians' unions many American orchestras of superior quality cannot be given the kind of international recording exposure accorded inferior Russian orchestras on the Melodiya/Angel label.

Though Svetlanov commands high regard as one of the best Russian conductors, I hear little in this performance to justify his renown. He completely fails to convey the moody gloom of Rachmaninoff or to provide any enlivening impulses that the music so badly needs. Abravanel is far more successful here, although the best performance of this Symphony is still Ormandy's with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Though the first movement is extremely long, Svetlanov takes the full exposition repeat, and there are no cuts.

Prokofiev was obviously a much more original symphonic master than Rachmaninoff, and his Fifth justly deserves its popularity. Despite my misgivings about the quality of the Moscow Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rozhdestvensky's performance commands interest as part of his continuing series of the complete Prokofiev symphonies (only the Second remains to be released). The results may not be as compelling as those of Ansermet, Bernstein, or Karajan—to say nothing of a superb performance by Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. Each of these conductors has a different approach to this Symphony: Ansermet and Karajan stress its lyric element, Bernstein and Ormandy its more overt theatricality. Rozhdestvensky, however, does project a varied range of expressive moods: the first movement has an almost oppressive tragic flavor that contrasts sharply with the Allegro giocoso of the finale. The shortcomings of the orchestra preclude this disc from serious consideration, though—a pity, for Rozhdestvensky's interpretation is really a very interesting one. P.H.

RACHMANINOFF: Symphony No. 3, in A minor, Op. 44—See Prokofiev: Symphony No. 5, in B flat, Op. 100.

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OS-26138



RAVEL: Complete Piano Music. Samson François, piano; Pierre Barbizet, piano (in *Ma Mère l'Oye*). Seraphim SIC 6046, \$7.46 (three discs).

There are now five recordings of Ravel's "complete piano music"—and not a single one of them is complete! All five omit *La Valse*, though the composer himself made very effective versions of that piece for both solo and piano duet. Casadesus (*Odyssey*) and François include the *Ma Mère l'Oye* duet but omit the two concertos (though, in fairness, Casadesus has recorded the Left Hand Concerto elsewhere and François couples both of them on an Angel disc); Perlemuter (*Vox*) includes the concertos but omits the duos; both Gieseking (Angel) and his pupil Werner Haas (World Series) slight the duos and the concertos.

François is a stimulating player, with imagination aplenty and technique and temperament to burn. Sometimes he is

inclined to burn too much of it here. In the difficult *Scarbo* movement of the *Gaspard de la nuit*, François' pianistic arson reaches bonfire proportions. The pianist is almost violent here, producing a cataclysmic intensity that breaks the line into little spurts and jabs more suitable to Scriabin or Prokofiev. The *Alborada del gracioso* is similarly full of gnarled, tortured rhythmic mannerisms. In the Pavane—a piece best played with the utmost objectivity and simplicity such as we find in the performances by Richter (piano version) or Cantelli (orchestral format)—François sounds like a naughty little waif wolfing down the strawberry jam.

On the other hand, there are also many moments of very beautiful playing on these well-recorded discs. *Ondine* is leisurely and formidably detailed; the *Valse nobles et sentimentales* are fine (save for a few noble ones that are rather too *sentimentale* and vice versa); the

alternately understated and highly exaggerated treatment of *Ma Mère l'Oye* (with Barbizet a splendid partner) is deliciously sophisticated; and many of François' racy tempos in the *Tombeau de Couperin* are both apt and unusually perceptive. Best of all, though, is the performance of the symmetrical little *Sonatine* of 1903. François' treatment is neither unduly severe nor excessively precious: he achieves ample sonority and uses the pedal generously without blurring important details. Tempos are moderate and there is quite a lot of judicious yield and tempo rubato.

If you want a more conventional view of Ravel, the anthologies of Casadesus (in mono) or Haas (in more recent stereo sonics, but not quite so interpretively poised as Casadesus) would seem your best bets. I myself heavily lean to Perlemuter's deep musicianship and slightly less polished technique in the *Vox* album, but perhaps I am influenced by the knowledge that this pianist was a student and close friend of the composer. François is an interesting, highly controversial personality in his own right, and his interpretations will be particularly *simpatico* if you tend to hear Ravel as a precursor of Prokofiev or the would-be composer of Stravinsky's *Firebird*. H.G.

Raymond Lewenthal and Anton Rubinstein: Two Irresistible Victorians

by Robert C. Marsh

THE JACKET of the Columbia disc pictures, as a misty backdrop, that paradigm of Victorian taste, the Albert Memorial. Nothing could be more appropriate; to the Victorians, the great Russian composer was not Tchaikovsky, still less Mussorgsky, but Anton Rubinstein whose concertos and *Ocean* Symphony were viewed with the highest admiration. Rubinstein has been eclipsed, but whether he should be given the antiquarian status of the Albert Memorial is another matter, especially when we have pianists of Lewenthal's accomplishments around. If, indeed, the repertory is expanding backwards as well as through the assimilation of contemporary music, we must have performers who can take a work such as the Rubinstein No. 4 or the Scharwenka No. 2 and play it with maximum skills and minimum inhibitions. Lewenthal can.

This is the significant difference between these two recordings. Lewenthal, in his excellent keyboard lecture on the 7-inch bonus disc, offers examples of Rubinstein's three best-known solo works. Ponti plays them (and four others of lesser value) complete. But Lewenthal is so adept at making this music sing, so thoroughly in command of the idiom, so completely in sympathy with the composer, that a couple of phrases from him convey more than Ponti's spare and studied traversal of the whole. Moreover, in the Concerto, the technical level of the Columbia disc is so much finer than the

Candide (Dolby notwithstanding) that the Ponti version must lose its attraction for all but the most determined bargain hunters.

On the other hand, if we are to have romantic concertos, what a pleasure it is to hear them played with the sweep and power, the high spirits, the cascading arpeggios, the gorgeous phrasing, and the pure sense of delight that Lewenthal and the orchestra bring to both these works. I wish the Scharwenka were complete, for it seems to be great fun, but I am equally grateful that the Rubinstein was given ample space on both disc sides so that its sonorities would ring out. Those who swear by Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff ought to find it irresistible.

RUBINSTEIN: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 4, in D minor, Op. 70. SCHARWENKA: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2, in C minor, Op. 56: Finale. Raymond Lewenthal, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, Eleazar de Carvalho, cond. Columbia MS 7394, \$5.98.

RUBINSTEIN: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 4, in D minor, Op. 70; Melody in F, Op. 3, No. 1; Réve angélique, Op. 10, No. 22; Great Etude in C, Op. 23, No. 2; Romance in E flat, Op. 44, No. 1; Valse in F, Op. 82, No. 6; Polka bohème, Op. 82, No. 7; Valse-Caprice in E flat. Michael Ponti, piano; Philharmonia Hungarica, Othmar Maga, cond. Candide CE 31023, \$3.98.

SCHUMANN: 3 Romances for Oboe and Piano, Op. 94—See Hindemith: Die Serenaden, Op. 35; Sonata for Oboe and Piano.

STRAUSS: Metamorphosen. WAGNER: Siegfried Idyll; Adagio for Clarinet and Strings. Jack Brymer, clarinet (in the Adagio); Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. Argo ZRG 604, \$5.95.

The *Metamorphosen* of 1945 is probably the last major work of our century to have been widely performed and recorded by the conductors of the great old German school. There have been disc versions by Karajan (the first, on 78s only), Furtwängler, Krauss, Klemperer, and Horenstein, as well as by such less celebrated maestros as Hollreiser and Otmar Suitner. A recent Barbirolli version was issued in England as the odd-side filler to his Mahler Sixth, but that was eliminated in the American release, and this Argo disc is thus the first domestic appearance of a non-German-oriented *Metamorphosen*.

Clearly, the events that the piece memorializes—the destruction of the Munich opera house, and, in a wider sense, of an entire German cultural and musical tradition—have special significance for musicians rooted in that tradition, but the excellent British ensemble also gives a sympathetic reading. It is never clear just to what extent these Academy performances are actually conducted; in the present case, the really superb string playing is not quite matched by the sense of over-all shaping, of direction toward a climax, that can be felt in the Furtwängler, Krauss, and Klemperer performances. Only the last of these three is available in stereo (Angel S 35976); although not

as cleanly executed as the Argo version. It is much more strongly articulated on the larger structural level. Both Krauss (Amadeo 5034) and Furtwängler (now out of print, it may well turn up again on Heliodor) were recorded in concert performance, and they suffer from some scruffy playing—but the results are nevertheless very expressive. Argo's recorded sound is excellent (surpassed only by that of Suitner's German Decca, not yet issued here), but the Klemperer certainly strikes me as the best first choice, particularly for those who don't yet know this extremely moving distillation of Strauss's harmonic and contrapuntal mastery. Along with the *Four Last Songs*, it is his most honest and touching musical statement.

The overside *Siegfried Idyll* is, surprisingly, not presented in the true original version, with only one player to a part. Marriner uses solo strings at the beginning and the end, and for a short passage in the middle, but elsewhere a larger body of strings is brought into play. This procedure introduces an extra level of contrast and resulting articulation which I don't find particularly convincing or necessary. (It is possible to get away with varying the quantity of multiple strings, but the difference between solo and tutti is much too distinctive.) All the same, this is the closest you can get to the original *Siegfried Idyll* unless you like Bruckner—both the alternatives. Solti (beautiful if a bit intense) and Klemperer (disappointing), are fillers for two-disc sets of that master's Seventh Symphony (Solti's is also included as a filler in Deryck Cooke's introduction to the *Ring*). The amiable clarinet Adagio is very nicely done—a curio for the Complete Wagnerian. D.H.

STRAVINSKY: Concerto for Piano and Winds—See Bartók: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Five Tudor Portraits. Elizabeth Bainbridge, contralto; John Carol Case, baritone; Bach Choir; New Philharmonia Orchestra, David Willcocks, cond. Angel S 36635, \$5.98. **VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: Merciless Beauty; Along the Field; Ten Blake Songs.** Lois Winter, soprano; John Langstaff, baritone; Marvin Morgenstern and Hiroko Yajima, violin; John Goberman, cello; Ronald Roseman, oboe. Desto DC 6482, \$5.98.

After the craggy Fourth Symphony of 1935, Vaughan Williams evidently required a change of pace for his next work. He couldn't have found better contrasting material than the unbuttoned, raucous poetry of John Skelton, tutor to Henry VIII, who penned some of the most delightfully ribald verses in Anglo-Saxon literature. The five poems that comprise this choral suite revolve around the saltier aspects of Tudor life. The first depicts Elinor Rummings's ale house, with its harridan of a proprietress, "droopy and drowsy, scurvy and lowsy, her face all blowsy, comely crinkled, wondrously

wrinkled like a roast pig's ear, bristled with hair." Another frank portrait (written in a wild brand of pig Latin) is that of John Jayberd, the late clerk of Diss: "a man renowned for malice, double-hearted and double-tongued, worn out by old age, suspected of all, loved by none." Less biting but equally refreshing are the tributes to pretty Bess and jolly Rutterkin; and, for a bit of repose, there is Jane Scroop's lengthy Requiem to Philip, a pet sparrow done in by Gib the cat.

Vaughan Williams obviously had a fine time with this colorful stuff: there are good tunes aplenty and the burbling woodwinds vividly re-create Skelton's earthy personalities. At times, though, the orchestral fabric tends to be a trifle

bloated and the choral writing seems to defy textual clarity (fortunately Angel supplies a complete text). Then too, a twenty-two-minute lament on the death of a bird may well strike some as misplaced emphasis despite the attractive ideas and a clever parody on the *Dies irae* chant. A carefully prepared performance could probably minimize these drawbacks, and while the orchestra plays quite well here, the soloists and chorus are terribly proper—the English oratorio tradition at its most depressing. If this piece is going to make the kind of impression the composer surely intended, a leaner choral texture and a far less inhibited approach is really essential. The sound is fine, if a trifle over-reverberant, but the review copy was rather noisy.

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The three austere song cycles on Desto's offering reveal quite a different side of Vaughan Williams. None of them calls for a piano—the composer was always rather indifferent towards this instrument—but each is written for high voice, accompanied by two violins and cello (*Merciless Beauty*, 1921), solo violin (*Along the Field*, 1924), or solo oboe (*Ten Blake Songs*, 1958). With these sparse combinations, Vaughan Williams was able to distill his own personal brand of lyrical invention, and the subtle interweaving of the chaste melodic lines with their almost archaic modal flavor shows how thoroughly he had absorbed and transformed the English folksong idiom.

Such deceptively simple, exposed vocal writing makes tremendous demands on the singers. Voices of exceptional purity and letter-perfect intonation, as well as a musical elegance of an uncommon order, are prime requisites in capturing the fragile beauty of these elusive settings. Unfortunately, neither of the two soloists at hand really fills the bill. Lois Winter's rather colorless, metallic soprano traces the line accurately but with charmless monotony, while John Langstaff's brusque, burly baritone overwhelms the material and his excessive vibrato quite often obscures the pitch. Desto's recording was evidently made in an extremely dry, echoey hall, and the long reverberation period frequently seems endless (except in several spots where it has been accidentally snipped out by a careless tape editor). These delicate songs deserve better treatment. P.G.D.

WAGNER: Siegfried Idyll; Adagio for Clarinet and Strings—See Strauss: Metamorphosen.

recitals & miscellany

MONTSERRAT CABALLE AND SHIRLEY VERRETT: "Operatic Duets." ROSSINI: Semiramide: Alle piu calde immagini. DONIZETTI: Anna Bolena: Dio, che mi vedi; Sul suo capo aggravi un Dio; Va, infelice. BELLINI: Norma: Mira, o Norma. OFFENBACH: Les Contes d'Hoffmann: Barcarolle: Belle nuit. VERDI: Aida: Silenzio! Aida verso noi s'avanza. PUCCINI: Madama Butterfly: Flower duet. PONCHIELLI: La Gioconda: E un anatema! Montserrat Caballé, soprano; Shirley Verrett, mezzo; Ambrosian Opera Chorus; New Philharmonia Orchestra, Anton Guadagno, cond. RCA Red Seal LSC 3153, \$5.98.

The mating of the high female voice with the low yields some of the most consistently felicitous music to be heard in the opera house. Composers have long been at work mining this rich vein, choosing sometimes to match the singers

harmonically, at other times to oppose them in dissonance, but most frequently to interweave their two melodic lines in intricate and affecting design. In this way they are able to exploit the uncommonly satisfying (and sometimes profoundly stirring) tonal interval of one third, which is about the basic distance between the registers of a soprano and a mezzo.

This record shows what marvelous music and drama can be made from these ingredients: Amneris tricking Aida into revealing her love for Radames; Jane Seymour urging Anne Boleyn to choose annulment rather than the scaffold; Adalgisa drawing Norma back from the brink of suicide; Gioconda and Laura contesting for the love of Enzo; Cio-Cio-San and Suzuki spreading the cherry blossoms for Pinkerton's welcome. And how surely and skillfully these duets are sung here, by two artists of supreme accomplishment and matched temperament.

Miss Caballé contributes her accustomed silken agility and security of intonation: hear how she starts the recital with Semiramide's highly decorated phrases. Miss Verrett brings to her work a rounded mellowness and an awesomely long-breathed capacity for phrasing.

If there is a complaint to be registered at all in connection with this outstandingly listenable release, it is not about tone and beauty but rather about the dramatic values. The singers are so clearly preoccupied with the challenge of making heavenly sounds, the conductor so bent on meeting their every comfort, that the tension sags in a way that would be unbearable *in vivo*—though perhaps it matters less on a record. There is far more slash and thrust in the Aida/Amneris duet than we are permitted here; the *Butterfly* excerpt achieves its utter loveliness of tone at the expense of a loss of true excitement at the hero's impending return. The *Anna Bolena* scene (a very long affair this—more than seventeen minutes and most of it recitative) has many slack passages.

The recording perspective places both singers too far back from the microphones, denying their voices an element of necessary presence, a degree of sculpture that might have helped with the drama. This affects the Offenbach Barcarolle in particular—it gets lost in the welter. True, this is more or less how it is usually heard in the opera house, way off in the distance; but the effect at home is not so atmospheric—just muffled.

If you are content to forgo the values of impact and dramatic tension and to take this recital in the spirit offered—as an exercise in shapely singing and beauty of tone—then you will find much here to enjoy. G.M.

CAPELLA ANTIQUA: "Ars Antiqua." LEONIN: Alleluia Pascha nostrum. PEROTIN: Alleluia Pascha nostrum; Benedicamus Domino. ANON.: Ave virgo virginum; Benedicamus Domino/Beatis nos adhabe; Judea et Jerusalem; O Maria maris stella; Kyrie virginitatis amator; Vetus abit littera; Deus in adiutorium; Alle psallite cum luia; Verbum bon-

um et suave; Sanctus; Belial vocatur; Salve virgo virginum/Omnes; De se debent bigami/Studentes coniugio/Kyrie; Victime paschali laudes; Ave gloriosa/Ave virgo regia/Domino; Ave gloriosa mater salvatoris; Kyrie magne deus potentie; Homo luge/Homo miserabilis/Brumas e mors; Flos ut rosa floruit; Jube domne benedicere/Primo tempore; Lux vera lucis radium; In illo tempore: Egressus Jesus; Salve virgo virginum. Capella Antiqua of Munich, Konrad Ruhland, cond. Telefunken SAWT 9530/1, \$11.90 (two discs).

It looks very much as if Telefunken's *Das alte Werk* series is going to be the first recorded encyclopedia of early music. Archive started out to accomplish this, but their ambitious *Werkgruppen*

have petered out into an uneven assemblage of discs with little or no unifying plan. What distinguishes *Das alte Werk* is the editorial notion that each release should present a study in depth of a particular period or repertoire; and I assume that eventually these surveys of carefully selected areas will cover the whole field up to what we consider the standard repertoire.

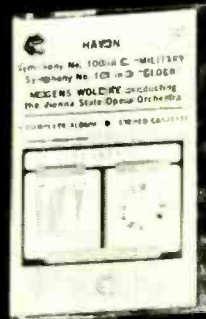
The comparison of Telefunken's "Ars Antiqua" album with an encyclopedia article is not farfetched, nor do I intend it to be derogatory. What impresses in this splendid set is not so much the quality of the music (which is marvelous) or the performance (equally fine), but the intellectual content. Few listeners

Continued on page 97

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Victor de Sabata



Heinrich Schlusnus

Historical Treasures from Heliodor

by David Hamilton

NEXT TO the archives of EMI in Europe and RCA in America, those of the Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft are the most extensive and historically significant in the world of recordings. From time to time, items from the DGG backlist have appeared on LP, but only recently has the German company set up a special series devoted to reissues comparable to EMI's "Great Recordings of the Century." The "Heliodor-Historisch" label has been prominent in Germany for a couple of years now.

Now the "Heliodor Historical Series" is being launched in the U.S., and we may hope to have many of the important DGG recordings of the past readily available. However, some changes have been made in the series for domestic consumption, and not all for the better. First, the recordings have been "reprocessed to simulate stereo effect"—a practice that has not improved the sound quality (although it has not always meant a noticeable deterioration) and seems unlikely to attract additional buyers to a series whose appeal is precisely defined by the "historical" label.

Second, these discs are pressed domestically rather than imported, and I am sorry to report that the quality is markedly less good than on the original German versions: a higher level of surface noise and a disturbing number of pops and groove skips. (My review copies were regular shrink-wrapped finished discs, not test pressings; in all cases, they were compared with German originals.)

Third, the documentation of dates and accompaniments is far from satisfactory. In his excellent annotations for the De Sabata and Furtwängler/Bruckner records, James Goodfriend manages to slip in the years of recording, but nowhere else is this kind of information carried over from the German jackets. I have supplied as much as is practicable in the reviews that follow.

Finally—and it becomes an issue because of the preceding points—the American Heliodor series is only a "part-

bargain" label: at \$4.98 per record, these releases are only a dollar less than regular imported DGGs—i.e., the records that I have found to maintain the highest over-all level of quality control in the industry. In fact, the \$4.98 price is just what New York import dealers have been asking for the non-"spurio," silent-surfaced originals of the Heliodor series. While those imported pressings give liner notes only in German, this will probably not weigh heavily in the balance for serious collectors. I would willingly pay the price asked, or even "full price," for pressings of regular DGG quality, and I might (although much less willingly) accept some downgrading in return for a real bargain price—but the combination we are being offered is rather less attractive. May we hope that DGG and their American agents will reconsider their policy on this series?

MARIA CEBOTARI: "Operatic Arias" (sung in German). **MOZART:** *Le Nozze di Figaro:* Deh vieni, non tardar; Don Giovanni: Batti, batti; Vedrai carino. **VERDI:** *La Traviata:* Ah! fors' è lui . . . Sempre libera; Addio del passato; Parigi, O cara; *Rigoletto:* E il sol dell'anima; Tutte le feste; *Bella figlia dell'amore.* **BIZET:** *Carmen:* Micaëla's Aria. Maria Cebotari, soprano; Elisabeth Waldenau, mezzo (in *Rigoletto*); Walther Ludwig, tenor (in *Traviata*); Helge Roswaenge, tenor (in *Rigoletto*); Willi Domgraf-Fassbaender, baritone (in *Rigoletto*); various orchestras. Heliodor 2548 700, \$4.98 ("electronic stereo"). Tape: 3312 700, \$4.98.

In some respects, the late Maria Cebotari was similar to such American prima donnas of her period as Grace Moore: she was a beautiful woman, the star of numerous opera-centered films, and the possessor of a handsome but imperfectly produced and controlled voice. Without doubt, Cebotari's musicianship was markedly superior to that of most of her transatlantic counterparts, but I have all ways suspected that much of the effect

she evidently made in the theater was beyond the reach of the microphone—which in fact further spotlighted her vocal deficiencies, sometimes almost cruelly. The present record, its appeal already compromised by the use of German texts and by the somewhat gritty, sometimes distorted sound (from Berlin radio broadcasts in 1941–43), is not really an adornment of her reputation.

The Mozart selections I find rather unattractive—rough and soubrettish without compensating charm; the same version of the *Figaro* aria is also available on Urania 7036, a "Cebotari Memorial Record," of interest mainly for its mistaken inclusion of a "*Martens aller Arten*" that is actually sung by the young Elisabeth Schwarzkopf! The *Traviata* snippets don't measure up to a better-sounding and more complete selection (Urania 7011, deleted), in which Cebotari, in more secure voice, was partnered by Roswaenge and Schlusnus. And the appearance of Roswaenge in the *Rigoletto* duet and quartet recalls that DGG possesses a complete version of that opera in which Erna Berger joins Roswaenge and Schlusnus—a real performance that, and one which would be welcome if we must have Verdi in German. Domgraf-Fassbaender, who gets to sing "*Piangi, fanciulla*" as well as the quartet, may not have been one of nature's chosen *Rigolettos*, but he makes his part in the famous ensemble count for something.

I've dwelt on the supporting singers because there really isn't much to say about Cebotari; her singing here is without much variety or character and she offers little distinction on the sheerly technical level. Incidentally, the processing of this disc is exceptionally poor, with strange knocking sounds that aren't on the German pressing. Further, the labeling is ghastly: only German titles are given, and they are pulled apart and run together in a most peculiar way.

HEINRICH SCHLUSNUS: "Song Recital." **MAHLER:** *Songs of a Wayfarer.* **STRAUSS R.:** *Hymnus; Morgen; Traum durch die Dämm' rung; Heimliche Aufforderung.* **SCHUBERT:** *An Schwager Kronos; Der Atlas; Der Jüngling an der Quelle; Nachtstück.* **BRAHMS:** *Die Botenschaft; Wie bist du, meine Königin.* **WOLF:** *Gebet; Der Gärtner; Verborgenheit; Gesang Weylas.* Heinrich Schlusnus, baritone; Hessian Radio Symphony, Winfried Zillig, cond. (in the Mahler and first three Strauss songs); Michael Raucheisen (in *An Schwager Kronos*), Franz Rupp (in *Atlas*), and Sebastian Peschko (in all others), piano. Heliodor 2548 702, \$4.98 ("electronic stereo"). Tape: 3312 702, \$4.98. This performance of the Mahler cycle, taken from a Hessian Radio broadcast in August 1951 when the singer was sixty-three years of age, is nothing short of miraculous. Every note is sung—really sung—square on pitch, with a rock-solid legato, superb dynamic control, and a genuine "Golden Age" sound. In sheer vocal terms, this is the greatest performance ever recorded of the cycle and a standard against which all modern baritones will be found wanting. To be sure,

there is some unkempt orchestral work in the third song, and the over-all shaping of the performance hardly compares with that which Furtwängler provided for Fischer-Dieskau's imaginative but vocally weaker version (Angel 35522). The Strauss songs, recorded in April 1950, are also very fine, although the orchestral version of *Morgen*, with its solo violin, sounds extra soupy when transposed down a tone to F major (G is a much brighter key for strings).

The second side contains a selection of *Schlussus* lieder recordings made between 1928 and 1943 (the U.S. issue of this side differs slightly in content from the German version). They are well chosen; I particularly admire the straightforward, nonlachrymose *Verborgenheit*, the smooth *Botschaft*, the fervent *Heimliche Aufforderung* (a song that can so easily reek of the beer hall), and the gorgeous legato of *Nachtstück* (the opening piano measures are unfortunately omitted, probably because of 78-rpm time limitations). Not all of these tracks were included in Decca's long-deleted (and poorly processed) "Schlussus Sings" series; they belong in every self-respecting collection of vocal art. Unfortunately, the rechanneling moves the voice away from the speakers, its presence diminished by a palpably false echo (*Gesang Weylas*—a free but very convincing performance—is still worse, with two distinct *Schlussus* audible). This is a shame, for the sound of all this material was basically very good for its day and the accompaniments are excellent (I have given precise details concerning who plays what, since the liner does not).

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 9, in D minor (original version). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Heliodor 2548 701, \$4.98 ("electronic stereo"). Tape: 3312 701, \$4.98. **BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 4, in B flat, Op. 60; Symphony No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67.** Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Heliodor 2548 704, \$4.98 ("electronic stereo"). Tape: 3312 704, \$4.98. All of these have been with us before: the Bruckner (a concert performance, October 7, 1944) on DGG 18854 and then on KL 31 in the 1964 memorial album; the Beethoven Fourth (a concert in June 1943) on DGG 18742; the Fifth (from Furtwängler's first group of Berlin concerts after the war, in May 1947) on DGG 18724 and later in "stereo" on Heliodor HS 25078.

It's too bad that the tonal quality of the Bruckner recording is not really first-rate; unfortunately, no other Furtwängler performance of this Symphony seems to have been preserved. One could hardly ask for a more eloquent reading, however; clearly, it was one of the conductor's great days, and the orchestra is with him all the way.

The Beethoven disc is not quite so indispensable, partly because the conductor made other and better-sounding versions of these pieces. In fact, since so many Furtwängler Fiftys have not been issued commercially, perhaps it will be worth listing them in brief, for clarification:

1) a 1927 Polydor set of 78s; 2) a 1937 HMV studio version, now available in Japan on a fine Angel dubbing; 3) a 1943 concert performance announced for issue by Turnabout in an album box with their previously issued *Eroica* and Ninth; 4) the 1947 one under consideration; and 5) the 1954 Vienna studio version in Seraphim IC 6018. The Heliodor version is on the weighty side—not slow as such, but very forcefully articulated, and with many details given an almost exaggerated emphasis. The 1943 Turnabout is much less excitable, although not less exciting; it is a lean and compact reading, with more on-going phrasing. The playing is better in the earlier performance, which I have so far heard only in the British Unicorn transfer—which also sounds cleaner, if less rich, than the bass-heavy Heliodor issue (despite a less good S/N ratio in the basic material).

The Fourth is a spacious, expansive performance, rather better recorded than the Fifth but not as good as the Vienna studio version (Odeon SM 91412).

On both these discs, the stereo reprocessing does not seem to have been tangibly deleterious. The Beethoven disc is cut at a rather low level; this is the first time either of these performances has been squeezed onto a single side.

BRAHMS: Symphony No. 4, in E minor, Op. 98. KODALY: Dances from Galánta. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Victor de Sabata, cond. Heliodor 2548 703, \$4.98 ("electronic stereo"). Tape: 3312 703, \$4.98.

Italy's greatest conductor after Toscanini, Victor de Sabata is today best remembered for that remarkable recording of *Tosca* with Callas, Di Stefano, and Gobbi. However, like his older compatriot, De Sabata was equally noted as a symphonic interpreter—and, also like Toscanini, he very much disliked the restrictions imposed by studio recording techniques. Two principal series of discs comprise most of his recorded orchestral repertory: the first, made in Berlin during the spring of 1939, includes the present release, Respighi's *Roman Festivals*, Strauss's *Tod und Verklärung*, Verdi and Wagner excerpts, and a Mozart Requiem; the second, dating from 1947–48 in Rome, included Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, Debussy's *Jeux*, Respighi's *Fountains*, and overtures by Rossini, Verdi, and Wolf-Ferrari. There was also an *Eroica* on English Decca 78s. A good deal of this material has been reissued in Europe since De Sabata's death, and I hope more of it is made available here.

The Brahms Fourth circulated once before, on an inferior dubbing (Decca DL 9516); it is especially treasurable for a superbly sustained reading of the slow movement. The remainder is also good, although the last two movements seem to press forward a bit too rigidly. Both here and in the rousing Kodály, the Berlin Philharmonic covers itself with glory, both for virtuosity and sensitivity—there is some beautiful solo wind playing. This was always one of the best-sounding series of 78s, and is still pretty impressive, although the reprocessed stereo sacrifices some immediacy and presence.

will sit down to listen to four sides of thirteenth-century sacred music as they might to a Mahler symphony. If they do, they will find it hard going, because this is concentrated stuff. There is great variety in the selection, which includes organa, conductus, motets, and an assortment of peripheral forms and sources, but each piece demands full attention. If one is willing to make the effort, however, the long hard pull is worth it: what emerges from these discs is an over-all musical achievement that matches the towering structures of the Gothic cathedrals and puts these anonymous thirteenth-century composers on a level with the designers of Chartres or Notre-Dame.

Architecturally and dramatically the most exciting works here are the mighty organa of Leonin and Perotin: this music must have electrified the thirteenth-century congregation that first heard them in the festive pageantry of the Christmas or Easter services. Starting with a rather elaborate chant, the composer expands the music vertically, creating mighty pillars of sound at key points in the work. The result might be likened to the beauty of a suspension bridge whose tall towers both contrast with and enhance the sweep of the bridge itself. Within the organal sections there is a tension not unlike that of a bridge's cables. For example, a pattern of elaborate changes over a single drone (sounding like something straight from Ravi Shankar) builds up an almost unbearable tension which is suddenly and dramatically released when the cantus firmus breaks and moves on to another note—whereupon the whole process starts again. *Alleluia Pascha nostrum*, a responsory for Easter, is presented in both its early magnificent Leonin form and in its later, equally impressive garb fashioned by Leonin's successor, Perotin. Both works are sung in their entirety so the listener gets the full effect of the contrasting elements—single-line chant, polyphony over a drone, polyphony in which all the voices move in audible patterns.

Judea et Jerusalem, an organum tripulum for Christmas Eve, also shows the same fascinating relationship of musical elements in a slightly shorter form. Two settings of the final words of the Mass, "*Benedicamus Domino*," show the later transition from Perotin's three-part organal version to a texted motet. Also attributed to Perotin is the unusual four-voice conductus, *Vetus abit littera*, whose clashing dissonant lines and short phrases give a curious modern flavor.

The popular *Alle psallite cum luita*, a protoround from thirteenth-century England which appears on almost every program of early music these days, is given a rather staid performance—to illustrate its liturgical connections, I presume. However, the warm melodic English style, the "*contenance anglaise*" which so impressed the Burgundians in later years, permeates the smooth three-voice conductus setting of *Ave gloriosa mater salvatoris*. As a contrast, a setting from *Bamberg Codex* of the same work—two thirds of it that is, with a quick chattering upper voice and a complementary

text, *Ave virgo regia*—demonstrates the concern for linear construction rather than the vertical approach that dominated continental composition for the next century.

The final side of the two discs is devoted to peripheral regional sources, some from a period considerably later than the thirteenth century. For instance, a two-voice hymn of St. Ludmilla stemming from Prague, *Lux vera Lucis radium*, and a polyphonic chant recitation, *Primo tempore*, from a manuscript in Dissen. The presence of these naïve and old-fashioned sounding works, some even containing traces of parallel organum, shows both the persistence of tradition and the genuine popularity of what seems to us a comparatively rough and uncouth style.

The recording and the performances are superb throughout. The Capella Antiqua, relying heavily on its fine male voices, are under the always impeccable direction of Konrad Ruhland. The instrumental doubling skillfully underlines the voices but never intrudes or steals the limelight from what is basically vocal music. The method of performance of the motets in particular is often calculated to bring out structural detail, but Ruhland never allows his didactic impulses to outweigh his musical ones. The sound is excellent, particularly impressive in the organa whose mighty phrases were intended to roll through cathedral corridors. The accompanying booklet, in addition to supplying thorough documentation of the sources and an informative text in German and English, even includes excellent facsimiles of eight of the works. For anyone seriously interested in medieval music, this package is a must. S.T.S.

SHURA CHERKASSKY: "Piano Recital." CHOPIN: Polonaise No. 6, in A flat, Op. 53; Scherzo No. 4, in E, Op. 54. LISZT: Polonaise No. 2, in E; Rigoletto Paraphrase. SAINT-SAENS (arr. Godowsky): Le Cygne. STRAUSS-GODOWSKY: Wine, Women, and Song. STRAUSS-SCHULTZ-EVLER: Concert Arabesques on Motifs from "The Beautiful Blue Danube." Shura Cherkassky, piano. Mercury SR 90520, \$5.98.

Aside from a few labored passages—and even some wrong notes in the Chopin and Liszt—Cherkassky's playing on this disc is pretty much what one remembers from his previous work on records. In other words, the tone is consistently silvery and beautiful and the interpretive approach full of a volatility that is occasionally prone to exaggeration. In Chopin, for example, he manages to bring off successfully all sorts of phrasing and tempo liberties that could—but somehow do not—lead to anarchy. He achieves a piquant and fanciful quality in that composer's Scherzo, and endows the Polonaise with heroic proportions yet never pounds the keys. The Liszt Polonaise, on the other hand, is too labored and rhythmically distorted to make its full impact. Here—and in the *Rigoletto Paraphrase*—Tamás Väsáry's equally limpid-sounding but more cohesive performances (on



Shura Cherkassky returns—with all his volatility and silvery piano tone intact.

currently unavailable DGG discs) were much to be preferred. Similarly, I feel that Cherkassky breaks the line excessively in the Strauss-Schultz-Evler *Blue Danube* transcription—Josef Lhevinne's rhythmically "straight" versions are more successful (particularly the magnificently processed piano-roll performance for Argo, which, like Cherkassky's, is uncut).

In *Le Cygne*, arranger Godowsky roasts Saint-Saëns innocuous *Swan* on the spit of vulgar exhibitionism, serving it up with unwanted chromatic sauce, garnished with all sorts of cheap inner-voice complexities.

I'm happy, though, that Cherkassky is recording again: He is an interesting performer, well worth knowing. H.G.

REYNALDO HAHN: "Song Recital." ANON.: Musette du XVIIe siècle. MOZART: Così fan tutte: Un aura amorosa. ROUSSEAU: Le Devin du village: Air. BIZET: Les Pêcheurs de Perles: De mon amie. OFFENBACH: La Boulangère a des écus: Les charbonniers et fariniers; Que voulez-vous faire? MASSENET: Si tu veux, Mignon. FAURE: Le parfum impérisable. REYER: Les larmes. TIERSOT: Le retour du marin; Le pauvre laboureur. CHABRIER: L'île heureuse. GOUNOD: Chanson de Mai; Aimons-nous; Maid of Athens. HAHN: La Barqueta; Offrande; Le cimetière de campagne; L'énamourée; La paix; O mon bel inconnu. Reynaldo Hahn, baritone and piano. Rococo 5322, \$5.95 (mono only).

Reynaldo Hahn (1875–1947) wore many musical hats during his seventy-one years. Posterity remembers him primarily for his songs—the most famous one (*Si mes vers avaient des ailes*) was written at age thirteen—but he also penned a number

of operas, operettas, and ballets, many of them quite popular in their day. In addition to his creative work, Hahn also found time to write music criticism for *Le Figaro*, author two books, organize and direct a number of music festivals, and earn a reputation as a Mozart conductor of some distinction. Leo Riemens recounts the whole story in his interesting (if rather overstated) case for the composer in the liner notes included with this disc.

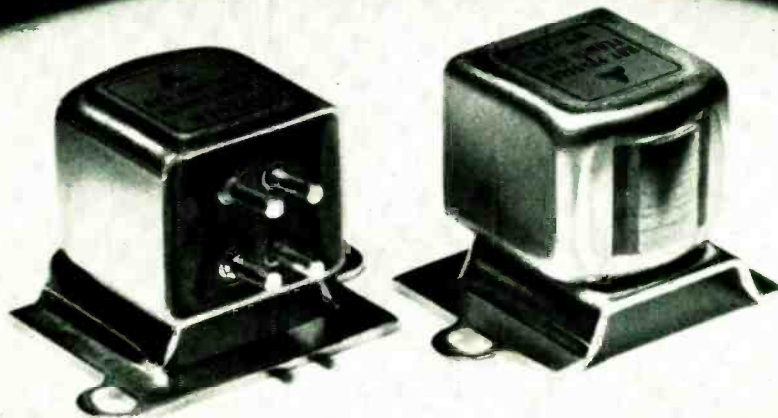
Hahn sang a great deal too—rarely in concert and never on the stage, but frequently for salon gatherings and small groups of friends. As it emerges from these grooves, his voice is a rather odd cross between Pierre Bernac and Maurice Chevalier: a light French baritone of pleasing quality, if of no great richness or depth, and an interpreter with a highly refined sense of style and declamation. Not surprisingly, Hahn is a fastidious musician and he pitches his voice with the unerring accuracy of a virtuoso violinist. Ferrando's love song from *Così* (sung down a half tone if the transfer is correct) upholds his reputation as an early Mozartian purist, although the latter part of the aria is severely abridged—probably to fit the 78-rpm format.

Rococo does not provide recording dates, but judging from the sonics and the condition of the voice, these twenty items originated either early or late in Hahn's career. As with any singer whose art is based more on style and delivery than vocal projection, the passing of time hardly makes a difference in the overall condition of the voice—in fact, one of the best performances is the late-vintage Offenbach excerpt which twinkles with a delightfully saucy boulevardier touch. Of course, his own songs are phrased with loving care: a perfect marriage of fragile material and wispily evocative vocalism. Hahn accompanies himself on almost every selection, and in the last item he is paired with the French actress Arletty. Some of Rococo's originals are a bit scratchy, but on the whole the restoration job is entirely satisfactory. P.G.D.

THE HISTORIC ORGAN: "Austria." SPETH: Toccata quarta in E minor. FROBERGER: Capriccio in C. KRIEGER: Fantasia in D minor. PACHELBEL: Partita on "Alle Menschen müssen sterben." FISCHER: Prelude and Fugue in D minor. (Henke Organ in the Herzogenburg Monastery of the Augustinian Canons.) KRIEGER, J.: Toccata in D; Prelude and Ricercare in A minor. KRIEGER, J.P.: Toccata and Fugue in A minor. FROBERGER: Canzona in F. KERLL: Canzona in G minor. PACHELBEL: Partita on "Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott." (Weckeri Organ of the Franciscan Church in Vienna.) Herbert Tachezi, organ. Telefunken SAWT 9527, \$5.95.

THE HISTORIC ORGAN: "Switzerland." BACH: Fantasia super Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott, S. 651; Komm, Gott, Schöpfer, Heiliger Geist, S. 667. BUXTEHUDE: Ciacona in E minor. SCHEIDT: Psalmus sub communionem Jesus

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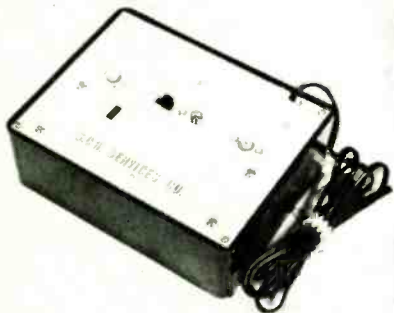


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Christus, unser Heiland. HANFF: Chorale Preludes: Ein feste Burg; Wäre Gott nicht mit uns diese Zeit; Auf meinen lieben Gott (Bossart organ of the Monastery Church in St. Urban). Siegfried Hildenbrand, organ. Telefunken SAWT 9534, \$5.95.

These two new releases in Telefunken's apparently open-ended "Historic Organ" series offer us three more fine examples of the baroque organ builders' art and a sampling of what German composers contemporary with the instruments themselves were writing for the organ.

Herbert Tachezi, perhaps better known in this country for his imaginative continuo contributions on many of the Centurus Musicus recordings, turns in spirited and stylish readings here on two old Austrian instruments. The first, in the Herzogenburg Monastery, was under construction in the year Bach died and would be a happy choice for recordings of many of that master's larger organ works. Its forty stops are divided among three manuals and pedal with the *Hauptwerk* and pedal in the main case and a larger *Rückpositiv* containing all the stops for the remaining two manuals, designated *Grosspositiv* and *Kleinpositiv*. The full organ sound is magnificently stark and crisp and extremely transparent, owing in part to the relatively high proportion of mixtures and very few reeds. Side 2 is devoted to the oldest church organ in Vienna, a two-manual, twenty-stop instrument built in 1642. Its most notable feature is a horribly out-of-tune six-rank mixture, which fortunately is used in only one piece. When it is off, the sound is most attractive.

Siegfried Hildenbrand's disc is given over entirely to performances on what he has called "the largest and most important example of historic organ building art that Switzerland has to show." It displays, typically, more French influence than its counterparts further north, with its cornets, tierce stops, quints, and over-all warmer sound. Hildenbrand gives us proficient and stylish readings, if not as imaginative as Tachezi's. Recorded sound on both discs is rich and clean and, as usual in this series, the enclosed notes are full of information about the instruments, including complete specifications and detailed registrations for each piece.

C.F.G.

ANNELIESE ROTHENBERGER: "Opera Recital"—See Flotow: Martha.

EUGENE ROUSSEAU: "The Virtuoso Saxophone." Eugene Rousseau, saxophone; Marion Hall, piano. Coronet 1601, \$5.95.

Of the six pieces here recorded two are of interest. One is a flute sonata by a forgotten baroque composer named Giovanni Platti played on the B flat soprano saxophone: its bright, agile, reedy sound goes well with baroque figuration but casts a new color over it. The other thing of interest is a magnificently dramatic sonata by Hindemith, originally for

E flat alto horn, played on the virtuoso saxophonist's usual instrument, the E flat alto.

You might think the idiom of the alto horn would not lend itself well to the reed pipe, but it does; maybe the work is really not idiomatic for the instrument with the cup mouthpiece. Anyhow, this is one of the best Hindemith recordings now available and one of the best affirmations of the fact that Hindemith is still a major figure in modern music.

The other four pieces on the record are trash of the kind they print in instruction books and need not even be listed by title. A.F.

YOSHIO UNNO: "Violin Recital." BEETHOVEN: Romances for Violin and Orchestra: in G, Op. 40; in F, Op. 50. MASURENET: Thais: Meditation. SAINT-SAENS: Introduction and Rondo capric-

cioso, Op. 28. SARASATE: Zigeunerweisen. TCHAIKOVSKY: Souvenir d'un lieu cher, Op. 42: Melody. Yoshio Unno, violin. CBS Symphony Orchestra, Tadashi Mori, cond. Columbia MS 7411, \$5.98.

Add a few more items (such as the Lullaby from *Jocelyn* by Benjamin Godard) and what you have here is the top ten of the violin repertory from the halcyon days of the double-faced shellac disc and the wind-up phonograph. At first it seems a bit strange that anyone should make his debut in such music today, but this is no put-on. After all, the greatest violinists of the past recorded some or all of these pieces, and Unno quickly shows that he is no Japanese gypsy but a violinist of top-grade international caliber. Not surprisingly he turns out to be a Szigeti student, and all admirers of that illustrious

gentleman should take note. Unno has been an exceptional pupil and recalls his master at his best.

Works of this type are not, in Schnabel's phrase, "better than they ever can be played," but rather are only as good as their finest performance. Unno plays them straight with superior intonation, extraordinary taste, and fantastic technique. Moreover he gets superlatively good recording with what I assume is a Japanese orchestra. It's more than equal to this assignment.

So there you are. If the *Introduction and Rondo capriccioso* can still tempt you, if fabulous fiddling in the grand old manner delights you, if gorgeous strings are your pleasure, meet Mr. Unno.

Now, please, how does he play the Beethoven Concerto? R.C.M.

The Winners—What They Did

Continued from page 51

sine wave glide tone whose ups and downs are governed by the interval of a fourth.

Several one-voice lines were created from these three basic motives. They in turn were copied—halving or doubling the tape speed, and hence creating still more lines. After this, four of these lines were combined to create a building block—i.e., a four-voice unit.

I then combined these building blocks, with the result that in the middle of the composition there were sixteen distinct lines on each stereo channel and thirty-two in the center. The composition is a multivoiced canon at the octave.

Don Hannah (*Marble Game*)

This work is really a theme and variations for a shoe box full of marbles. Their impact on various objects, as well as the sounds of being shaken or rolled, is the sole source of sound material.

The introduction consists of a two-inch marble rolling down a huge cardboard tube. Its sound is altered by taking the original tape and playing it back on my Revox A77, but with the reel motors off, and rocking the reels back and forth by hand. The stereo effect was produced with the balance control on the Revox, using it like a pan pot. The output was recorded on a Tandberg 64.

Bouncing marbles off the bottoms of various containers and objects gave me the short, pitched sounds needed for melodic material. After some experimentation, the choices were narrowed to eight: a cardboard take-out coffee cup, a gas station gift coffee cup, an oleo container, a heavy drinking glass, an empty soft-drink can, a large plastic bucket, and a brick. One coffee cup sound was recorded with an AKG D200E mike; the other with a contact mike, \$1.98 variety. The bucket was recorded with the AKG; others with the contact mike.

Each sound was recorded one hundred times each on left, center, and right channels, so that position, as well as pitch

and time, could be used as a variation. After recording, each sound had to be located on the tape, marked, cut out in a 14-mm segment, and stored away.

Next come the sounds of the marbles being dropped inside a drinking glass. These sounds are utilized to produce a fast ping-pong effect. They are left- and right-channel sounds, 5 mm in length, butt-spliced together for maximum speed of channel alternation.

There follows a gradual acceleration, two glissandos, and a gong. The acceleration is really the mathematical series 1-2-3-5-8-13 used backward and thus producing a logical speeding-up of attacks. Between the first two attacks there is 230 mm of blank leader, between the second and third there is 140 mm, and so on down to 5 mm between the last two. The glissandos are the speeded-up recording of a marble being rolled across a piano bench. The gong is actually the slowed-down sound of a marble bouncing off the bottom of an empty soft-drink can.

The second section is a theme and variations built from only two sounds: the oleo container and the cardboard coffee cup. Both were struck on the bottom with a tossed marble and the impact recorded in mono with a contact mike. A rhythmic figure of the two sounds was constructed and a tape loop made of the sequence. I played the loop on one machine, feeding the output into an old Alamo reverb unit, then to a guitar wa-wa pedal, then into the second machine. Several minutes of the loop were recorded on the second machine, all the while varying the reverb controls and the pedal. This gave me a complete range of sounds from dry to full reverb and full-range to fully filtered. The wa-wa pedal, of course, acted as the filter.

In order to get speed variations, the resultant altered tape, at 7½ ips, was re-recorded on the Tandberg at 1½ ips, then played back at 3¾ on the Revox, transposing up by one octave. Repeating the process and playing back at 7½ moved the sound up two octaves. Playing the same altered tape at 3¾ dropped the sound one octave. (The fifth possibility, playing the altered tape at 1½, just didn't sound good with this kind of

material.) These re-recording methods together with the original gave me four usable versions of my loop.

Next, I fed each of the four versions into a home-made ring modulator, using a Heathkit signal generator to supply a carrier. It was producing square and sine waves, mostly in the regions of 25 to 40 Hz and 12 to 15 kHz, with an occasional sweep across the band just for the heck of it.

And now, with eight versions of the material, I chose to organize it through an aleatory procedure—tossing coins. This method, fully described, would sound quite arbitrary. Nevertheless, it worked. I stuck with it only so long as it produced interesting results; everything else was hacked out. Considering my Las Vegas environment, the gambling-dictated results seemed a very normal solution.

Richard K. Allen (*Gnosoidua*)

Most of the sound originated with musicians playing upon various percussive objects (pots, glasses, bells) into two mikes that fed my Ampex 1200 recorder. The three heads enabled me to add echo, and the pinch-roller system enabled me to control the transport speed by varying the pinch-roller pressure and allowing tape slippage. Buzzing sounds came from electric razors touching wine glasses. Intercut with this were sounds taped directly from a Moog Synthesizer (demonstration at Stanford University) which were again distorted by tape slippage. Some Moog sounds were re-recorded backwards, using a Sony deck.

At the beginning, a tone was created by putting my poor Ampex into record mode and fast forward simultaneously. The 7½ ips sound is the bias brought down to the audible spectrum. The heavy feedback which follows was an accident during fast-forward-record. I left it in.

At two minutes into the piece, a sweeping, thunderous sound was the result of starting and stopping the fast-forward-record mode with the addition of echo.

The conclusion involves the fast forward-record mode running and stopping. Background noise is from echo, driven almost hard enough to be self-sustaining.

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BEETHOVEN ON RECORDS

Continued from page 65

Angeles, Werner Janssen, cond. *Everest* 3119, \$4.98 (with Egmont: *Leonore No. 3*; *Wellington's Victory*).

- *Karajan* (see *Collections*).
- *Philharmonia Orchestra*, Otto Klemperer, cond. *Angel S* 35843, \$5.98 (with *Symphony No. 5*).
- *Szell* (see *Collections*).

For this minor theatrical occasion, Beethoven did not exert himself beyond the provision of amiable thematic material and a few interesting harmonic touches. After discarding the Janssen (a refurbished 78-rpm set, in which the artificial echo very nearly succeeds in drowning out the performance) and the Ferencsik (capable, but not noteworthy), we are left with three good readings: Karajan, Klemperer, and Szell. Because of his tighter integration of the two main tempos, I incline toward Klemperer, who, as usual, secures brilliant rhythmic pointing from the Philharmonia players (note the cross-syncoptions by the violins in the sequel to the first subject). But the others are quite satisfactory, and so is a recently deleted version by Pierre Monteux (*Victrola VICS* 1170, with the *Fidelio* Overture and the *Second Symphony*), which may still be available.

Namensfeier, Op. 115 (*Overture for the Name Day of Kaiser Franz*).

- *Karajan* (see *Collections*).

Although far superior to *King Stephen*, this unpretentious but beautifully crafted work has been roundly neglected. Karajan's performance is good enough, and its current uniqueness constitutes the major inducement for the purchase of his set.

The Consecration of the House, Op. 124 (*Overture for the opening of the Josephstadt Theatre*).

- *London Symphony Orchestra*, Antal Dorati, cond. *Mercury SR* 90317, \$5.98 (with Egmont; *Symphony No. 5*).
- *Czech Philharmonic Orchestra*, Janós Ferencsik, cond. *Parliament S* 156, \$2.98 (with *Symphony No. 2*).
- *Karajan* (see *Collections*).
- *Philharmonia Orchestra*, Otto Klemperer, cond. *Angel S* 35661, \$5.98 (with *Symphony No. 4*).
- *Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra*, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, cond. *London CS* 6512, \$5.98 (with *Symphony No. 4*).
- *Toscanini* (see *Collections*).

This ingenious and imaginative overture-fugue dates from the period of Op. 111, the *Diabelli* Variations, and the *Missa Solemnis*, and is on a comparable level of mastery. It is, however, not an easy piece to play, and this fact may account for the relative paucity of recordings. All are basically sound performances, although the Dorati is rather fiercely played, Ferencsik lets pass some inexactitudes in the introductory march, and Toscanini races to his climaxes.

Karajan is sabotaged by his engineers, for the blowy kettledrum sound masks the wonderful bassoon runs under the trumpet fanfares. This same problem spot is oversolved by London's technicians, who make the bassoons larger than life; otherwise, Schmidt-Isserstedt's performance is admirable, and the tight, clearly pitched timpani sound here is a model. Not quite as translucent, but superbly played, is the Klemperer, a magisterial demonstration of orchestral balance, accenting, and steadiness of intention—certainly the classic performance of the piece.

Miscellaneous

Wellington's Victory, or *The Battle of Vittoria*, Op. 91.

- *London Symphony Orchestra*, Antal Dorati, cond. *Mercury LPS* 9000, \$5.98 (with *Leonore Overture No. 3*; *Prometheus*—also on *Mercury SRD* 19, \$2.98, with *Tchaikovsky*: 1812 Overture).
- *Orchestra*, Morton Gould, cond. *RCA Red Seal LSC* 2433, \$5.98 (with *Grofé*: *Grand Canyon Suite*).
- *Janssen Symphony Orchestra of Los Angeles*, Werner Janssen, cond. *Everest* 3119, \$4.98 (with *King Stephen*: *Leonore No. 3*; *Egmont*).
- *Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra*, Herbert van Karajan, cond. *Deutsche Grammophon* 139045, \$5.98 (with *Marches*).
- *Vienna State Opera Orchestra*, Hermann Scherchen, cond. *Music Guild MS* 801, \$2.98 with (*Orff*: *Entrata*; *G. Gabrieli*: *Canzona in primi toni*).

Poor Beethoven has been subjected over the years to a good deal of puritanical censure for this amiably simple-minded piece, which he composed for no more immoral purpose than to secure some ready cash. At its first performance in Vienna, many of the day's leading virtuosos took part, evidently regarding the whole affair much in the spirit of a *Hoffnung* Festival; we would do well to emulate their attitude. The available recordings may be divided into three categories, according to their respective motivations: musical (Scherchen), military (Karajan, Dorati, and Gould), and financial (the crass resurrection of Janssen's quarter-century-old effort, the sole justification for whose existence disappeared when the first LP recording was issued). Only Scherchen lets us hear the full extent of whatever musical content Beethoven injected into his cheerful potboiler, although we have to put up with a variety of minor eccentricities and orchestral deficiencies. The other three offer a plethora of artillery in place of the very specific percussion effects that Beethoven asked for. I find the Karajan relatively less offensive, but if it's ordnance you really want, by all means hear Dorati (who includes an extra band devoted exclusively to firearms, without interruptions by Beethoven).

Twelve German Dances, WoO. 8 (1795).

- *Northern Sinfonia*, Boris Brott, cond. *Mace S* 9070, \$2.50 (with *Mozart*: *German Dances*; *Schubert*: *German Dances*).

HIGH FIDELITY MAGAZINE

• *Orchestra de la Radiodiffusion Française*, René Leibowitz, cond. *Counterpoint 5554*, \$5.98 (with Mozart: six German Dances; Schubert-Webern: six German Dances).

Written for the artists' ball in the Redoutensaal, these lively essays on the various possibilities of the eight-bar phrase deserve something better than this. Despite the note on the liner, which states that the recording was made on "Ampex stereophonic equipment using Telefunken and Altec microphones," Leibowitz' sensible, rather dull readings were in circulation long before Ampex made a stereophonic tape recorder. The effect is as if one of those old French telephone-booth recordings had been run through an echo chamber, and I suppose that's what did happen. (The Brott version was unavailable for comparison.)

Twelve Contradances, WoO. 14 (1801).

• *Vienna State Opera Orchestra*, Paul Angerer, cond. *Nonesuch II 71141*, \$2.98 (with dances by Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, and Lanner).

• *Innsbruck Symphony Orchestra*, Robert Wagner, cond. *Vox STPL 512500*, \$4.98 (with dances by Haydn and Mozart, deleted).

• Nos. 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12 only. *Willi Boskovsky*, violin; *Boskovsky Ensemble*, *Vanguard VSD 2129*, \$5.98 (with miscellaneous Viennese dances).

This group of dances has won everlasting celebrity (on record liners if not in the concert hall) as the source of the theme varied in the Finale of the *Eroica* Symphony. (It also turns up, along with another piece from this set, in the ballet *Prometheus*.) The two complete recordings offer a clear enough contrast: Angerer's smallish ensemble, in which the wind writing counts for something; Wagner's fuller orchestra, where the numerous strings combine with room resonance to smother most of the wind detail. Both performances are well rhythmized and gracefully phrased, although neither ensemble is likely to receive the Golden Tuning Fork for superior intonation.

Boskovsky's selection is listed here primarily for admonitory purposes: not only is it incomplete, but it also involves some modifications of Beethoven's scoring—which may be excusable for café purposes, but will fail to satisfy the serious Beethovenian.

Marches

• *Military March in D*, WoO. 24; *Polonaise in D*, WoO. 21; *Ecosseise in D*, WoO. 22; *March in C*, WoO. 20; *March in B flat*, WoO. 29; *March No. 1*, in F, WoO. 18; *March No. 2*, in F, WoO. 19. *Wind Ensemble of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra*, Herbert von Karajan, cond. *Deutsche Grammophon 139045*, \$5.98 (with Wellington's Victory).

• *March in B flat*, WoO. 29; *March No. 1*, in F, WoO. 18; *March No. 2*, in F, WoO. 19. *Musicians of the 6th Military Music Corps*, Major Johannes Schade,

cond. *Telefunken SLT 43104*, \$5.95 (in the "March Music at the Royal Prussian Court of Brandenburg, 1685-1823" collection).

More minor Beethoveniana, but not entirely trivial. The three most interesting pieces are those duplicated on the Telefunken disc, which also presents smoother, snappier readings and includes in the two F major marches (written around 1809-10) the trios that Beethoven added later, probably around 1823. One might characterize the difference between the performances in terms of concert hall (DGG) vs. parade ground (Telefunken)—the latter being, to my mind, more appropriate to the nature of the material.

Supplement: Collectors' Items

Theater Music

In addition to the *Prometheus* of Van Beinum and the *Egmont* of Scherchen mentioned above, the assiduous student of Beethoven may wish to hunt for deleted recordings of the complete *Ruins of Athens* music (Concert Hall CHS 1158) and the 1790 *Ritterballett* (Urania 7111); I cannot, however, vouch for the quality of the performances.

Overtures

With the exception of Arturo Toscanini, the famous Beethoven conductors of the first half of the century are now very slightly represented in the catalogues. Those with a historical bent should note, first of all, Columbia ML 4467, which contained Felix Weingartner's classic *Fidelio*, *Leonore* No. 2, and *Consecration of the House*. To supplement the overtures included in his complete *Fidelio*, Furtwängler collectors must now turn to Europe: the Berlin concert performances of *Egmont* (1947) and *Leonore* No. 2 (1949) have been reissued in Germany on Heliodor 88008 (coupled with Symphony No. 4), which is carried by some specialty houses in this country; another *Leonore* No. 2, a 1954 studio version, is on Electrola 90132. Furtwängler's recording of *Coriolan* has not been transferred to LP as yet, and I have not traced recordings of any other overtures by him. Bruno Walter recorded more works than are now listed: a pre-war *Fidelio* Overture was dubbed onto Electrola 83389 (a collection of historical recordings related to the Munich Opera), and his 1954 *Egmont* may still be found on the Philharmonic anniversary bonus record given with Columbia MS 7057 (Bernstein's recording of the Mendelssohn *Italian* and Schubert *Unfinished*). The same *Egmont*, together with *Leonore* No. 3, was earlier issued on Columbia ML 5232 (with the two Brahms overtures). Beyond these, there were many other recordings by Mengelberg, Weingartner, Walter, Busch, Schalk, Blech, and even Nikisch (from 1914) that have never been dubbed.

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A SELECTIVE GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S REISSUES

BRITTEN: Noye's Fludde, Op. 59. Sheila Rex (c), Owen Brannigan (bs), et al.; English Chamber Orchestra, Norman del Mar, cond. Argo ZNF 1, \$5.95 [from London OS 25331, 1961].

What an astonishing opera! Benjamin Britten has written many works designed especially for the participation and delectation of the small fry, but none quite combines such compositional sophistication and expressive simplicity as this winning one-act opera.

The text of *Noye's Fludde* is taken from one of the medieval Chester miracle plays which retells the familiar biblical tale with concentrated dramatic effectiveness and delightful Middle English syntax. Three fine old Protestant hymns form a meeting point between performers and congregation: *Lord Jesus, think on me* is the processional, *Eternal Father, strong to save* is sung during the flood, and *The spacious firmament on high* acts as the concluding postlude. Meantime, on stage, God delivers his pronouncements, the ark is built, the animals arrive (scurrying onto the ark with delighted cries of "*Kyrie eleison*"), the storm breaks and subsides, the dove returns with an olive branch, and God conjures up his rainbow-covenant. The cast calls for two professionals as Noye and his "Wiffe," while children sing the parts of Noye's sons, their wives, and the animals. Britten has written a brilliant orchestral score requiring solo strings, percussion, and two pianos (adult players), fleshed out by a large number of younger musicians who attend to the grateful yet accommodating music for ripieno strings, recorders, bugles, hand bells, and slung mugs. Certainly a unique instrumental complement and what a fresh, appealing sound it makes.

The recording reproduces a live performance in the wonderful medieval church in Orford, a little village near Britten's home in Aldeburgh. Perhaps balances and such are not always ideal and occasionally something is lost in the cast's almost too lively enthusiasm for the work, but everyone involved is clearly having a marvelous time and that flavor is infectiously communicated. A complete libretto is included, with a generous selection of production photographs.

DELALANDE: De Profundis. Soloists; Vienna Chamber Choir; Vienna State Opera Orchestra, Alfred Deller, cond. Vanguard Everyman SRV 296, \$2.98 [from Bach Guild BGS 5052, 1963].

This eloquent, dark-textured choral work is one of the glories of French baroque sacred music. Unfortunately, Deller's performance captures the spirit of the piece with only intermittent success: the soloists, chorus, and orchestra leave

little to be desired, but the conductor's rather mincing approach to the score robs the music of much of its grandeur. Phrases are continually dissected and examined in a most artificial manner, and the composer's massively architected blocks of sound rarely rise with much strength or purpose. Until something better comes along, though, this will have to do; luckily the sonics are appropriately spacious and grandly scaled, partially atoning for Deller's limp leadership.

DVORAK: Symphonies: No. 7, in D minor, Op. 70; No. 8, in G, Op. 88; No. 9, in E minor, Op. 95 ("New World"). Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Columbia D3S 814, \$11.98 (three discs) [from Epic BSC 155, 1959].

Now that Epic is defunct as a classical label, what is to become of the many fine Szell, Igor Kipnis, Alicia de Larrocha recordings, not to mention such incompleated torsos as Lionel Rogg's Bach organ series and Lili Kraus's Mozart sonata cycle? The reappearance of Szell's version of Dvořák's last three symphonies gives a partial answer: the most marketable items will undoubtedly find a new home on the parent Columbia label. The rest may well be relegated to phonographic limbo, and I would suggest a hasty purchase of the few remaining Epic pressings left in some stores before the supply is exhausted.

Taken as a whole, Szell's patrician, superbly controlled performances of these lovely works are full of musical felicities, although I cannot honestly say that these rather stern readings would be my own first choices were I shopping for single-disc formats. Szell wins out in the Brahmsian Seventh, but I rather lean toward Kubelik in No. 8 (DGG) and Klemperer (Angel) in the *New World*. The bargain price is tempting, though, the Cleveland Orchestra is in top form, and Columbia's sound still stands with the best.

LISZT: Sonata for Piano, in B minor; Funérailles. SCHUMANN: Toccata in C, Op. 7; Arabesque, in C, Op. 18; Traumeswirren, Op. 12, No. 7; Presto Passionato, Op. 22. Vladimir Horowitz, piano. Seraphim 60114, \$2.49 (mono only) [from Angel COLH 72, recorded 1932-34].

Vladimir Horowitz' career has been fraught with drama—the details are too well known to require any recapitulation here. His performances, too, whether live or on disc, have also reflected a dynamic albeit puzzlingly complex musical personality who has never ceased to develop

and surprise. The Liszt Sonata, recorded when the pianist was twenty-eight, remains one of Horowitz' most exciting, edge-of-the-ledge performances, generating the kind of unbridled immediacy one rarely hears from today's heavily-spliced interpretations. Yet for all its vibrancy, the reading is one of ironclad integrity and uncommon musical perception. A classic "recording of the century" if there ever was one.

The Schumann items and Liszt *Funérailles* are no less valuable documentations of the young Horowitz at his best. Seraphim's transfer of COLH 72 reproduces the high-quality remastering of the Angel original.

MENDELSSOHN: Symphony No. 3, in A minor, Op. 56 ("Scotch"); Hebrides Overture. London Symphony Orchestra, Peter Maag, cond. Stereo Treasury STS 15091, \$2.49 [from London CS 1961, 1960].

Whatever happened to Peter Maag? On the basis of the few discs he made for London a decade or so ago, he seemed to be one of the brightest young conductors to come along in years. If anyone needs to be reminded of the fact, here is his outstanding version of Mendelssohn's *Scotch* Symphony, still by far the most desirable performance available and now even more attractive at Stereo Treasury's bargain price.

The London Symphony Orchestra sings its way through this reading, gloriously balanced in all instrumental particulars; the tempos are just right and the recording is robust, with a beautiful spread between the two speakers. Sensibly located on Side 1—an appropriate introduction to the principal offering—is an equally superb account of the *Hebrides* Overture.

MUSSORGSKY: Khovanshchina. Melanie Bugarinovich (c), Alexander Marinovich (t), Drago Startz (t), Dushan Popovich (b), Miro Chantalovich (bs), Nicholas Tzveych (bs), et al.; Chorus and Orchestra of the National Opera, Belgrade, Kreshimir Baranovich, cond. Richmond SRS 64504, \$11.92 (four discs) [from London LLA 29, 1955].

Mussorgsky's epic panorama of political, religious, and personality clashes in old Russia just prior to Peter the Great's elevation to the throne is a fascinating operatic canvas. There are problems of course—the action is diffuse and occasionally the opera seems to inch along at an unconscionably slow pace, but Mussorgsky's gallery of intriguing musical characterizations rarely permit one's attention to wander for long. Each portrait in the drama stands out in sharp relief: the fatuous, scheming Ivan Kho-

vansky; his weak-willed son, Andrei; the saintly Dosife; the shallow, pro-Western Prince Galitsin; and the tormented Marfa, sensuous, superstitious, deeply committed to her religious beliefs—and a figure of real tragedy.

Richmond's reissue of London's Belgrade performance follows the Rimsky-Korsakov edition scrupulously. It's a competent, enjoyable recording if of no great musical or dramatic profile. Both Marfa and Dosife are in good hands though: Melanie Bugarinovich possesses what seems to be a large contralto of impressive quality and richness, while Miro Chagalovich, once one has adjusted to his rather nasal production, is a moving Dosife. The rest of the cast will do for the time being, although Baranovich's direction might have been tauter and more smartly paced. A complete libretto, in Cyrillic, transliteration, and English, is included.

The current Russian performance, listed on the MK, Ultraphone, and Period labels, also uses the Rimsky version; Mark Reizen's magnificently sung Dosife provides the only point of interest here. All three pressings manage to squeeze the complete opera on six sides, but the sound is vastly inferior to Richmond's well-recorded if conservative stereo reproduction. Perhaps someday we'll have a recording of the Shostakovich edition, which reinstates some of Rimsky's suppressions such as the Galitsin / Khovansky / Dosife / Lutheran Pastor debate, the long scene between the Scribe and the Streltsy in Act I, and Kuzka's specialty number during the Streltsy carousels in Act III. All of this music was in the Russian film that circulated here a few years back, and the latter two items were once available, superbly performed, on a long-deleted Vanguard disc of excerpts (VRS 6022).

VERDI: "Verdi Heroines." Leontyne Price, soprano; various orchestras and cond. RCA Red Seal VCS 7063, \$6.98 (two discs) [from various RCA Red Seal originals, 1960-69].

Verdi and Mozart seem to be Leontyne Price's personal preferences in opera. While her recorded efforts on behalf of the latter composer have been somewhat variable, few sopranos are more suited by voice and temperament to Verdi's heroines. Actually one should probably qualify the statement a bit—the noble, stately ladies of the later operas are best served here, for Price does not seem especially comfortable with Elvira's florid arias (from *Ernani*) nor with the smothered dramatics of Lady Macbeth's Sleepwalking Scene.

As Aida, though, she is supreme (both arias on this disc are taken from her early recital album), and the two Leonoras, *Trovatore* and *Forza*, have not been so luminously vocalized since Milanov. The "Addios" of Violetta and Desdemona are also gorgeously phrased—perhaps one day we'll hear her attempt both roles in their entirety. In the meantime, there's enough good Verdi singing here to keep anyone happy.

JULIAN BREAM, "The Art of the Spanish Guitar." Julian Bream, guitar. RCA Red Seal VCS 7057, \$6.98 (two discs) [from various RCA Red Seal originals, 1960-68].

Aside from a half dozen vignettes by Rodrigo, Torroba, Falla, et al., the Spanish element of this repackaged recital comes from the very nature of Bream's instrument rather than the music at hand. Bach, Weiss, Scarlatti, Ravel, Diabelli, Boccherini, and Britten are dubious Spaniards at best—and, as Shirley Fleming points out in her informative notes, would it occur to anyone to refer to "The Art of the Italian Violin?"

No matter. Julian Bream is one of the noblest practitioners of this six-stringed charmer from Iberia and the program comprises an uncommonly wide range of interesting music from previous releases. The older selections, of course, are heard in arrangements, while the extended Sonata by Diabelli combines two movements each from two different guitar sonatas—exactly why this was necessary we are not told. Britten provides the musical meat with his provocative *Nocturnal*, a set of seven variations on Dowland's *Come, heavy sleep*. But the entire recital is a marvelous showcase for Bream, whose subtle voicing of the instrument and supple command of tonal coloring have been given silky-smooth reproduction.

FERRUCCIO TAGLIAVINI and PIA TASSINARI: "The Cherry Duet and Other Love Duets." Duets from *La Traviata*, *L'Amico Fritz*, *Mefistofele*, *Tosca*, and *Werther*. Pia Tassinari, soprano; Ferruccio Tagliavini, tenor; RAI Orchestra, Mario Rossi, Pietro Mascagni, and Arturo Basile, cond. Everest 3275, \$4.98 (electronic stereo only) [from Cetra 50018, recorded in the 1940s].

Shades of the *Telephone Hour*. This husband-and-wife team used to appear regularly on that radio institution during the Forties and the *Mefistofele* "Lontano" duet was their specialty. Tagliavini, as was his wont, croons a good deal in this music, although the *L'Amico Fritz* cherry-picking scene (from the complete recording conducted by Mascagni) and the *Werther/Charlotte* confrontation (not from the complete recording—it's sung in Italian here) show the tenor at his graceful, mellifluous best.

I suspect that Tassinari was the major talent in this duo, but she never quite emerged from her husband's shadow outside of Italy. She had a large voice, a bit raw at times, but well focused and used with taste, imagination, and good dramatic instincts. Late in her career she turned to the big mezzo parts, and, I'm told, made quite a stunning impact with them. Unfortunately the fine points of this generally attractive disc are pretty well negated by Everest's usual sloppy presentation: the rechanneling results in plentiful distortion and the whole recording plays a semitone sharp.

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Reliving Stereo's Golden Age. Last February, when I greeted RCA Victrola's first releases of 8-track tape cartridges, I may have stressed their bargain price (\$4.95 each) even above their very real musical and technical attractions. But as the series expands, I have been more and more delighted with RCA's success in reviving some of the finest achievements of early stereo. Today, any knowledgeable audiophile can easily spot—even in mobile playback—the marked differences between the stereo sonics of the late Fifties and those characteristic of more recent engineering practices. But many of these same audiophiles may actually prefer the older technology—less dramatically vivid, perhaps, but often more grandly expansive and “natural.” I have been particularly taken by a Reiner/Chicago masterpiece of 1958 which has never been on tape before and which I missed in both its original and reissued disc editions. This is the Brahms Second Piano Concerto with Emil Gilels (Victrola V8S 1018), one of the most glowingly eloquent and genuinely romantic readings I've ever heard, captured in buoyant, big-auditorium sound.

I am also delighted that these bargain-priced Victrola cartridges are now bringing to the tape catalogues more of the memorable Toscanini mono treasures. (Incidentally, the present tape-cartridge editions are, like the recent disc releases, processed in unginmicked monophony despite an erroneous note to the contrary on the packaging.) I particularly liked the “Five Tone Poems” program (Victrola V8S 1021, \$4.95) comprising Toscanini's inimitable readings of the Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet* Overture, Smetana's *The Moldau*, Sibelius' *Finlandia*, Liadov's *Kikimora*, and Glinka's *Kamarinskaya*. The latter, which dates from 1940, shows its sonic age a bit, but the others, from 1946-52, sound remarkably fine. By comparison, there was somewhat less sheer sonic appeal (to my ears at least) in the 1951-53 Respighi *Fountains* and *Pines of Rome*, now augmented by the 1950 Saint-Saëns *Danse macabre* and 1953 Berlioz *Roman Carnival* Overture (V8S 1014, \$4.95). But of course the Maestro's performances of the Respighi tone poems are quite *sui generis*.

Cassette Progress: Programmatic. The recent flood of musicassette releases from American manufacturers still includes relatively few classical music programs, and the majority of these are confined to best-selling warehouse selections. The imported Deutsche Grammophon cassettes, however, feature not only standards but many imaginatively chosen off-the-beaten-path materials, including

at least a couple of anthology programs otherwise unavailable in other domestic disc or tape editions. One is a collection of twenty-three “Romantic Love Songs” (DGG 921017, \$6.95) which includes some of the finest lieder by Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, R. Strauss, and Wolf sung by such skilled female interpreters as Bumbry, Lear, Streich, and Seefried, and comparably notable male artists as Fischer-Dieskau, Häfliger, Hotter, and Wunderlich. Even more admirable (by cassette standards) is the inclusion of German and English texts. Unfortunately there are no texts with an *In dulci júbilo* program of Christmas music “from the time of Praetorius” (DGG 924016, \$6.95). The accompanying leaflet has a hard time just finding space for the long list of composers and titles represented here. Apart from a *Dialogue of the Ascension* by Schein, there are shorter part songs and motets (rather than “carols” in the present-day sense of that term) by such masters as Bodenschatz, Cappius, Eccard, Freundt, Gumpelzhaimer, Othmayr, Osiander, Jacob and Michael Praetorius, Schaerer, Scheidt, and Walther. There were indeed giants in those days, and their music still speaks as arrestingly as when it was first conceived.

I've also relished a Harp Concerto, Carl Reinecke's Op. 182, that I'd never heard before—a highly distinctive example of Romantic music—and another of Nicanor Zabaleta's polished solo performances. The coupling is a deft version of Mozart's familiar Concerto for Flute and Harp with Zabaleta and Karl-Heinz Zöller accompanied by the Berlin Philharmonic under Ernst Märzendorfer (DGG 923111, \$6.95). As for contemporary music, so sparsely explored in the tape catalogues, it's a joy to welcome a delectably humorous little cantata that even the most conservative listeners will wholeheartedly enjoy: Henze's *Moralitäten* of 1967, with an Auden text based on Aesop fables (sung here in a German translation). The coupling (in DGG 923094, \$6.95) is a more serious choral work, *Musen Siziliens* of 1966, after Vergil, which I find less distinctive except for its flashily virtuoso concertante parts for two pianos. The composer conducts both performances, and texts are included.

Cassette Progress: Technological. The considerable technical merits of all imported musicassettes I've heard so far still continue to be handicapped to some extent by the frequency-range and surface-noise problems generally considered to be inherent in the 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ -ips, $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch-wide cassette tapings. But there are dramatic indications that these limitations

are beginning to be conquered—first in several outstanding Angel cassettes I reviewed some months ago and now in some of the latest RCA Red Seal cassette releases.

Notably better than the first RCA productions in this format are two Fiedler/Boston Pops cassette programs. One is a reissue of the fine Tchaikovsky *Swan Lake* excerpts of 1964 (now in RK 1009, \$6.95) and the other is a rambunctious collection of Lennon and McCartney tunes (RK 1135, \$6.95); both programs, in their very different ways, make extreme technological demands—demands that have not been fully conquered by the cassette medium but have been met with surprisingly impressive results. There is unmistakable evidence here that technologically, as well as programmatically, cassettes are making rapid strides toward maturity.

Great Tidbits. Despite this apparent contradiction in terms and despite musical sophisticates' sneers, bits-and-pieces collections of the “Greatest Hits” genre continue to thrive commercially with a less discriminating mass public. I haven't changed my own mind about their dubious value as “easy” substitutes for complete masterpieces in serious home listening. But I have discovered a more legitimate, or at least more excusable, role for their hors-d'oeuvres approach to great music—these 8-track cartridge pot-pourris serve as perfect carbone sing-alongs. The first examples I've had in this format from the fast-growing Columbia series of various composers' “Greatest Hits” programs have turned out to be rewardingly delightful as light travel entertainment. The Mendelssohn smorgasbord (Columbia 8-track cartridge 18 11 0126, \$6.98) includes the complete Violin Concerto with Stern and Ormandy, two piano pieces by Serkin, a couple of transcriptions by Kostelanetz, the Scherzo from the String Octet by a Marlboro Festival ensemble, the finale of the *Italian* Symphony by Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic, and Ormandy/Philadelphia versions of the Scherzo and Wedding March from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The Bizet program (18 11 0128, \$6.95) is, if anything, even more enticingly tune-packed, featuring excerpts from *Carmen* (all for orchestra except for a chorus from Act IV which enlists the Mormon Tabernacle Choir) and from the incidental music for *L'Arlesienne*, plus a transcribed aria from *The Pearl Fishers*—all in familiar recorded performances by Ormandy, Bernstein, and Kostelanetz. There are also cassette editions, which probably would be good for alfresco or mobile playback where cartridge facilities are unavailable.

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Bob Dylan: art or politics?

Leave the Message for Western Union

ONE OF THE MOST sinister words ever to creep into the lexicon of artistic criticism is "relevancy." It is particularly common—the idea, if not the actual word—in the criticism of Mr. Nat Hentoff.

It is difficult to trace the origin of the idea of "relevancy" in aesthetics. Certainly it was being debated as far back as the fifteenth century. And Beethoven was seduced by it into writing *Fidelio*, one of his less successful works precisely because he was concerned here with social statement rather than purely artistic communication. But the idea did not become prevalent until our own time.

Social statements are dandy, and I make them quite regularly. But not in my songs, and not in my fiction. For when the issue to which the work of art is relevant has passed (witness the novels of Sinclair Lewis), the work of art becomes irrelevant. But that is not the only reason for avoiding conscious relevancy. There is a better one.

The purpose of art is to move you, and in the process of moving you, to expand your soul. It is not to teach you lessons in social studies. He who can only apprehend a work of art that makes a statement on a social issue does not apprehend art at all.

When my sister at the age of three or four saw Niagara Falls for the first time, she said, "What's it for?" We thought that very funny in the family. Yet years later, in Paris, as I walked through the Tuilleries gardens and looked at the statues, so lovely in the sunlight, I wondered why they were there. And then it struck me: they were there because they

were pleasing to the eye and for no other reason. Beauty is its own justification. I had made my first break with "relevancy," which really should be called "utility."

Relevancy is instilled in us in school and college. Some damn-fool teacher, who cannot himself perceive art and certainly cannot create it, tells you a book is important because it contains such and such a message; or he teaches you to appreciate, if that is the word, a symphony by saying that "here we hear Fate knocking at the door" or "this represents the triumph of the proletariat" and so forth. He cripples the minds of his charges by giving them crutches, he makes it almost impossible for them to perceive a work of art as and for what it is: a work of art.

One of the greatest curses visited on North American culture is the teaching of artistic appreciation. It is almost invariably done by incompetents.

We are seeing the payoff today in the popularity of all sorts of ugly but "relevant" artists. What they produce may or may not be valid sociology, but it is almost invariably bad art. Frustrated by the impossibility of communicating the aesthetics of music, I have not infrequently fallen into the trap of opposing the argument of relevancy with an argument of irrelevancy. It may be true, and indeed it is, that there is a profound cynicism in the way the industrial establishment records crummy popular music protesting against—the industrial establishment. Any fool should see right through this disgusting sham. But in the end, my opposition to this garbage on the grounds that it is bad sociology and worse politics (two subjects in which I have a profound interest) begs the real question.

Bob Dylan is a bad artist not because his social protesting is (a) incompetent and (b) hypocritical, but because he is a mediocre guitarist, a lousy singer, and a poor poet. I can prove a case of political stupidity against him, but that's not the point. He makes ugly sounds. *That* is the point and nothing else is.

At the very time when young people

are crying "love" to the world, we have slipped into an antisensitivity mode that is one of the really frightening developments of our time—more frightening even than the ecological disaster around us.

Because we have been urged to social reform by the likes of Mr. Hentoff—and by me too for that matter—we have been concentrating our attention on what is ugly and wrong about our world. Even our art is focused on it. But we do not know what it is that we want when and if we clean up the mess we are in. It is the function of art to remind us of what is worthy of our aspirations and at present neither the movie industry nor the record industry is interested in taking on the task. The attention to ugliness is too profitable.

We have forgotten romanticism. In our preaching of generalized love, we have forgotten about love for the individual. It is instructive to read W. H. Auden's introduction to Anne Fremantle's *The Protestant Mystics*. Auden classifies the kinds of mystical experience, including the Vision of Dame Kind (the perception of God through a sense of union with nature) and the Vision of Lady Fair, as exemplified by Beatrice and Dante. In the latter experience, the profound love of another human being, usually sexual at its foundation, expands into the perception and love of God.

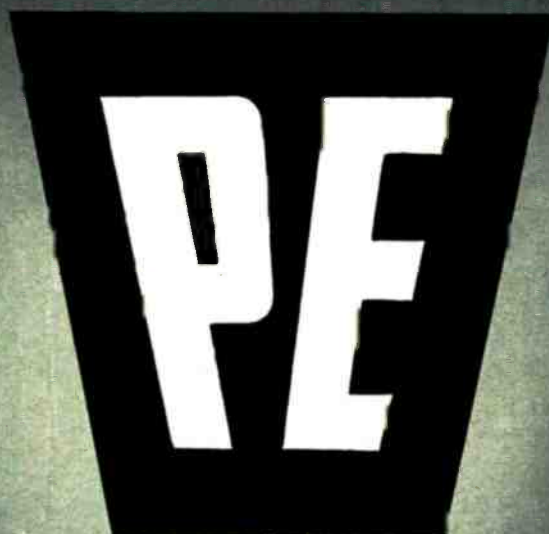
"Love," Malcolm Lowry wrote in the tragic and magnificent letter to Yvonne in *Under the Volcano*, "is the only thing that gives meaning to our poor ways on earth; not precisely a discovery, I am afraid." But it *is* a discovery, and people today are being conditioned by uglified art against ever making it.

It is much easier to love four billion people than to love one. They make no demands on you and it leaves you with a fine, virtuous feeling that your heart is in the right place. The art of our time, whether films, fiction, or music, is focused on making it impossible for people to love *one another*, including and perhaps particularly those young people who talk so much about love and write it on walls. They are being taught only to fornicate, which after a time becomes boring. After that must come love. If you cannot graduate to that, you are dead inside. And most people in this time and in this place are dead inside.

If you do not understand why, look to the arts: they have become as ugly as a highway blazing with neon lights and strewn with empty beer cans.

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LES McCANN: Comment. Les McCann, vocals and keyboards; William Fisher, arr.; Selwart Clarke, cond. (Baby, Baby; What I Call Soul; Yours Is My Heart Alone; four more.) Atlantic SD 1547, \$4.98. Tape:  81547, \$6.95;  51547, \$6.95.

What a pleasure to see pianist/singer Les McCann finally come into his own. His last album ("Swiss Movement" with Eddie Harris) soared up the charts and stayed—not just the jazz and soul charts, folks, but also the pop charts, where it counts.





Always a fine singer, McCann has finally become a comfortable one. This time Atlantic has featured him in an expensively produced all-vocal album with orchestra, Valerie Simpson's beautiful vocal chorus, and much more.

McCann is a tireless detective for interesting new material. Over half the songs here were written by two sisters he discovered somewhere, Helen and Kay Lewis—*How Many Broken Wings; Can't We Be Strangers Again; What I Call Soul; Baby, Baby*. The songs are full-blown, and they could ask for no better singer to introduce them than McCann, who is often aided by Roberta Flack, a stunning singer in her own right.



There has always been a loving touch of the preacher in Les McCann. His best albums have an air of celebration about them, and are usually recorded among a flock of friends. All that comes through here in the title tune, *Comment*, by Charles Wright and Yusuf Rahman. It's a five-and-a-half minute track, part vocal, part testifying, made with a loose and happy choir of friends including singer Gene McDaniels. I offer warm thanks for McCann's sweet reading of *Unless It's You*, written by Johnny Mandel and myself. The album closes with a singularly heartfelt version of Franz Lehár's *Yours Is My Heart Alone*.

One can be successful in the arts without being honest, but honesty always cuts through in a special way. Few artists express that quality more warmly than Les McCann. M.A.

CROSBY, STILLS, NASH AND YOUNG: *Deja vu.* Rock quartet, vocals and instrumentals; Dallas Taylor, percussion and drums; Greg Reeves, bass. For a feature review of this recording, see page 70.

DELANEY AND BONNIE AND FRIENDS: *On Tour.* Delaney and Bonnie Bramlett, vocals; Eric Clapton, guitar; rhythm accompaniment (Things Get Better; Coming Home; I Don't Want to Discuss It; That's What My Man Is For; four more). Atco SD 33-326, \$4.98. Tape:  326, 3¾ ips, \$5.95;  4326, \$5.95;  8326, \$6.95;  5326, \$6.95.

THE INSECT TRUST: *Hoboken Saturday Night.* Insect Trust, jazz-rock quintet; rhythm accompaniment. (Be a Hobo; Somedays; Reciprocity; Trip on Me;

Glade Song; Ducks; six more.) Atco SD 33-313, \$4.98. Tape:  8313, \$6.95;  5313, \$6.95.

I decided to review the new Delaney and Bonnie record before I listened to it. Their first album ("Accept No Substitute" on Elektra) was superb and their stage act even better. They are among the few whites who have ever successfully captured the essence of blues; Delaney is a fine rhythm guitarist, they are both excellent vocalists, and the addition of Eric Clapton couldn't hurt.

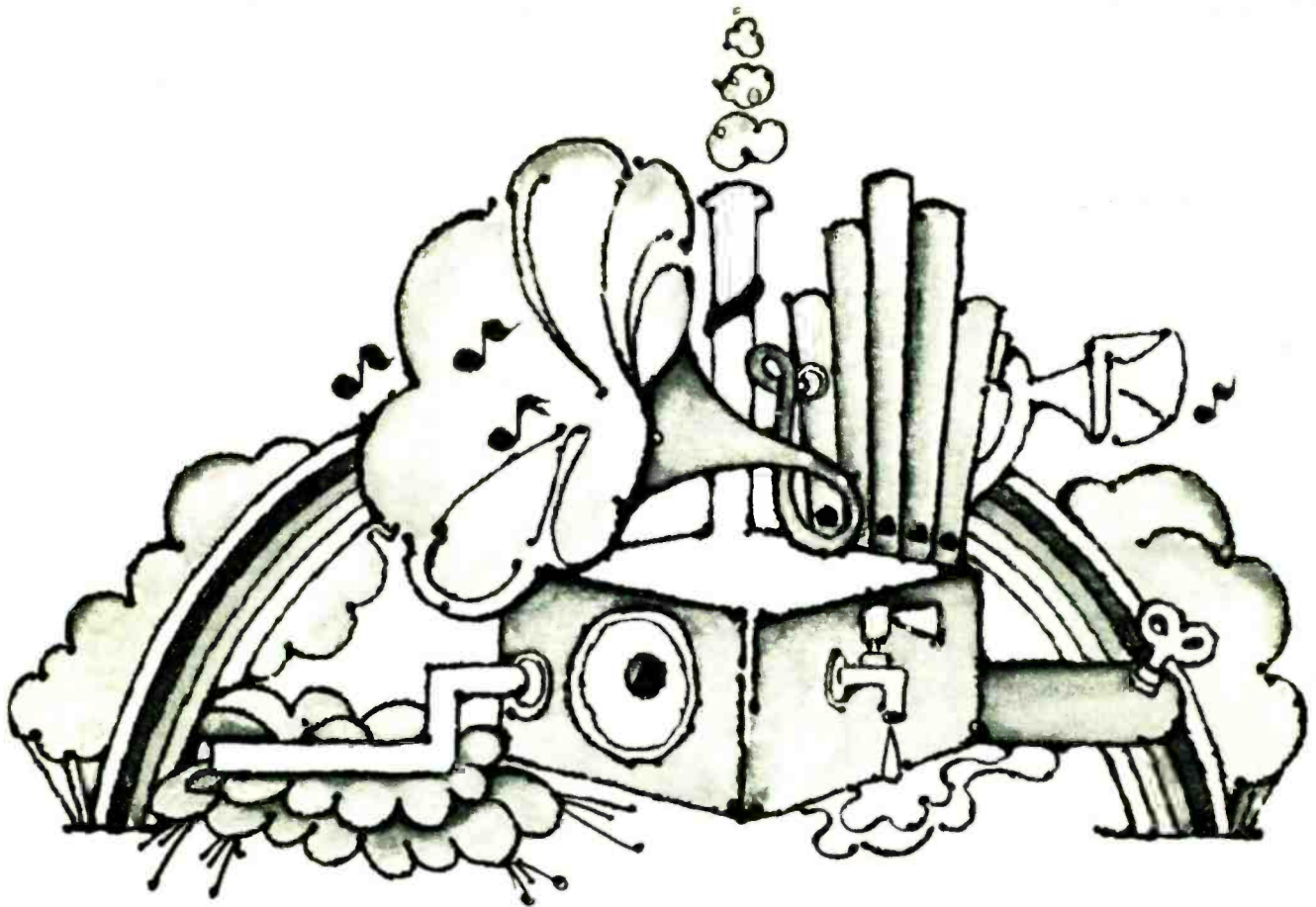
Unfortunately, the album is a disappointment—which isn't really surprising because the album was recorded live and live albums are almost never as durable as studio jobs. In the studio a musician can rework his material until he gets it just the way he wants it. No such opportunity is granted the stage performer. And a performance that is tremendously exciting on stage often turns out to be pretty ordinary when subjected to the scrutiny of audio without visual. In the case of D and B and Friends, live recording does not give a fair picture. They are a much better band than this album would indicate and I urge you to get the earlier album, or wait for their next studio release, which is bound to be a knockout.

I have read that Clapton is modestly taking a back seat in the group. From the evidence on this album and on the show I saw with the group, Clapton is making a very fair evaluation of his contribution.

I'm not sure what Insect Trust will settle down to, but for now they mix rock, jazz, and good-timey music in about equal quantities. Lead-singer Nancy Jeffries has a very unaffected style that works especially well on the good-timey stuff. The band has apparently listened carefully both to traditional jazz and to avant-gardists like Roswell Rudd (at one point Trevor Koehler plays his baritone like King Curtis). Apparently the band has neither a drummer nor a bass player (several studio musicians including Elvin Jones are added for the album), which probably means that they don't play outside the studio. Too bad—a band as good and as original as this should be heard as widely as possible. Recommended. J.G.

FOLK FIDDLING FROM SWEDEN. Björn Ståbi and Ole Hjorth, violin. (Skullbräddleken; Vals; Polska; Systerpolska; eleven more). Nonesuch H 72033, \$2.98.

Attention, Nashville country fiddlers and fans! If you want to know what *really* old, completely uncommercialized, traditional fiddle music can sound like, lend an ear to these two youngsters from Sweden. Here are virtuoso yet authentic demonstrations of folk tunes from the province of Delarna, played in the improvisational styles of famous Swedish fiddlers from an earlier generation. The present players learned both the tunes and



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their floridly decorative *krus* (orna-
ments) first hand from these fine old
masters.

Most of the performances are unac-
companied duos, but there are a couple
of solos, each a fascinating *Vallåt* (a cow-
horn tune or *Ranz des Vaches*). One piece,
Sackpipslåt (*Bagpipe Tune*) deliberately
imitates the bagpipes, but to an uninitiate
many of the other performances may also
be reminiscent of Scottish bagpipe play-
ing at its best. They are easier on one's
ears, to be sure, but they suggest many
of the same drone effects under complex
arabesques of floridly decorated tonal
lines; and some of them are even more
intricate, rhythmically and modally.

Nonesuch has performed an invaluable
ethnomusicological service by getting
these skilled interpreters into the record-
ing studio (following their appearances at
the 1969 Newport Folk Festival), captur-
ing their art so honestly, and supplying
Gordon Ekvall Tracie's helpful annota-
tions. R.D.D.

LARRY NORMAN: Upon This Rock.
Larry Norman, vocals; Tony Harris, arr.
(Moses in the Wilderness; Forget Your
Hexagram; You Can't Take Away the
Lord; eight more.) Capitol ST 446, \$4.98.

Along with a rather alarming number of
bad young songwriters, the country is
however producing some very good ones.
We must now include among them
twenty-three-year-old Larry Norman, who
views things in a unique way.

Norman, a former member of a group
called People, is obviously a product of
rock. He is also religious in the most
traditional, "Americana" sense of the
word. Love the Lord and watch out for
the devil. Hip hell-fire and brimstone—
and, unless I'm crazy, Norman is for real.

The album is constructed as a show.
Even its title is ingenious. Its basic mes-
sage is simple, as in *Sing That Sweet
Sweet Song of Salvation* ("and let the
people know that Jesus cares"). The other
side of the coin hints at warnings that
resemble superb trips known among
heavy dopers. *Ha Ha World* touches on
an acidish fantasy that occurs in the
kitchen and includes a disappearing
chicken: "I had money and fame but my
wealth wasn't wise/What good are the
coins on a dead man's eyes/And the
ringing of chimes in my head said it's

time to start praying." Norman's state-
ments pop out of his titles: *Walking
Backward Down the Stairs* or *Forget
Your Hexagram. Nothing Really Changes*
takes a historical trip: "Would Beethoven
join a jazz quartet/Would Ben Hur drive
a blue Corvette/Would Aristotle be an
acid head/Would Cain kill Abel with a
bayonet?" The peculiar creative flow
seems unstoppable. Norman's music is
semisophisticated rock, better than some
and worse than others. His voice is
young, sometimes frisky, sometimes soft.
Its tone has the nonsinger sound appro-
priate to rock.

I am unfamiliar with the names of
producer Hal Yoergler and arranger
Tony Harris, but they've done fine work
here. Harris seems to be into everything
from Berio to the Staple Singers. His
album ending is perfect.

Larry Norman is an unusual talent
and, one suspects, a more peaceful one
than you'd expect in a twenty-three-year-
old. I like his message and recommend
his album. M.A.

RAY NOBLE/AL BOWLLY: Volume 2.
Al Bowlly, vocals; Ray Noble's Orches-
tra. (Guilty; Here Lies Love; Not Bad;
thirteen more.) Monmouth-Evergreen
7021, \$4.98.

This second collection on Monmouth-
Evergreen of Ray Noble's English rec-
ordings (1931 to 1934) with Al Bowlly
maintains the musical and recording
standards of the superb first set, although
some of the material is scarcely inspiring.
But Noble's arrangements and Bowlly's
singing could usually transform even the
most dreary hack song: at times the
magic is incredible. Although Bowlly is
tripped up by the awkward lyrics of *A
Couple of Fools in Love*, the piece is
turned into a Noble gem by a rugged
baritone saxophone solo and a beauti-
fully cutting growl trumpet.

Fortunately, Noble and Bowlly don't
always have to overcome adversity in this
set: it has its share of tunes on which
everything falls brilliantly into place—
Peter Mendoza's haunting *My Sweet*, Cole
Porter's *Experiment*, the buoyant *It's
Great To Be in Love*, an idiomatically
torchy treatment of Benny Carter's *Blues
in My Heart*. Noble's ensemble writing,
which combines a rugged sense of solid-
ity with a translucency that allows bright

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individual lines to shine through, is always fascinating. And his soloists have a positive, personal quality that keeps a variety of colors lighting up every arrangement. No popular band ever combined imaginative arranging, crisp, clean performance, and superb recording as consistently as Noble's. It's these qualities that sustain even the lesser moments on this disc. J.S.W.



IKE AND TINA TURNER: Come Together. Tina Turner, vocals; Ike Turner, guitar; vocal and rhythm accompaniment. (It Ain't Right; Too Much Woman; Honky Tonk Women; Contact High; Evil Man; Doin' It; six more.) United Artists LST 7637, \$4.98.

The Turner Review is one of the best stage acts in pop music. Tina Turner, fiery and alive, is the quintessential woman; she is also one of the two or three best female song vocalists. The Ikettes, the vocal back-up trio, are lovely, sexy, highly visual, with tricky dance steps and perfect harmony. And Ike Turner, cool beyond belief, is a good vocalist and one of the best songwriters, guitarists, and bandleaders in r & b. They recently toured the nation with the Rolling Stones—the first time they have received the kind of national attention they deserve—and not only were they a tough act to follow but many listeners felt they were an act that the Stones *couldn't* adequately follow. Yes, despite the excitement they have generated on stage over the last dozen years and despite a plethora of albums in the Schwann catalogue, this aptly titled LP is the first time their talents all come together on a record.

The program is beautifully balanced between Ike's originals and well-known tunes like *Honky Tonk Women*, *I Want to Take You Higher*, *Evil Man*, and the title tune (if you have ever seen Tina sing *Come Together*, you don't want to miss the record; it brings it all back). The band is tight and the format straight r & b, which means that Tina's voice is the central thing with riffing by the Ikettes and the band as Ike's guitar fills in the gaps. The concept is anything but original, but the execution is flawless, and Tina is an intense performer. This is the best r & b record released this year. J.G.

SONGS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. Soviet Army Chorus and Band, Boris Aleksandrov, cond. (From *Out of the Forest*; *Cavalry Song*; *Song of the Barge-Haulers*; six more.) Melodiya/Angel SR 40127, \$5.98.

While certain propaganda potentials may lurk here for listeners who understand Russian, others will find Aleksandrov's latest mixture pretty much as before from earlier releases by the same forces. The selections run a full gamut of moods from rollicking to lamenting; the tenor, baritone, and bass soloists range from vocally superb to terrible (but they all can, and do, sing good and loud); and the big, robust male chorus is backed up by brass, balalaika, and bayan (Russian accordion) instrumentals. The entire ensemble is powerfully recorded in appropriately big sonics.

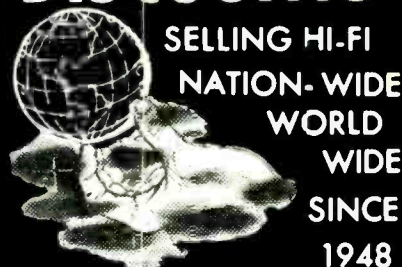
The swaggering *Cavalry Song* is done with infectious gusto, the atmospheric *Song of the Barge-Haulers* is worked up to a thrillingly dramatic climax, and the scherzlike *Ah, Nastasya* is galvanized by genuine humor. Then, there are two ventures somewhat off the beaten path. One, the uninhibitedly romantic *Native Land*, might have been composed by the Moscovite opposite number of Hollywood's Henry Mancini. The other is a large-scaled, gravely ceremonial *scena* entitled *The Cliff*, which achieves considerable grandeur as well as eliciting more richly sonorous singing and playing than I've encountered in any of the Aleksandrov group's earlier releases. R.D.D.

BARBARA KEITH. Barbara Keith, vocals and guitar; rhythm accompaniment. (Ferris Wheel; Stranger Song; Midnight Vow; My Easy Days; Lullaby; Tie Me Down; six more.) Verve FTS 3084, \$4.98.

LANCE LeGAULT. Lance LeGault, vocals; instrumental accompaniment. (Big Truth; Tub Thumper; Take Your Hate; The Big Wind; Cajun Man; Voodoo Gram; six more.) T-A 5002, \$4.98.

Country-and-western music is being revitalized from within and without. I don't really know who Barbara Keith is, but I suspect after listening several times to this album that she is not authentic country but is somebody who really digs the c & w sound (the equivalent of white

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blues singers). In any case she is a first-rate writer of country songs. Almost too good, in fact, because she seems to accept some of the clichés that she is manipulating, especially those that have to do with male-female roles. The performances are smooth, straight c & w, unobtrusive, solid, effective. I imagine a lot of these songs will begin to turn up regularly on the albums of other country singers and several are potential hits with the right singers.

Lance LeGault is a more original writer, though producer Jack Good has chosen, apparently consciously, to pile Tom Jones-type arrangements on top of him. He doesn't need that kind of help. In fact, between his expressive Louisiana country-soul voice and his excellent songs, he needs very little help at all.

Good records.

J.G.

RANDY NEWMAN: 12 Songs. Randy Newman, vocals and piano; orchestra. (Rosemary; If You Need Oil; Lover's Prayer; nine more.) Reprise 6373, \$4.98. Tape: 4RA 6373, \$5.98.

This album presents twelve recent songs by Randy Newman, surely one of our most important young songwriters. His work is full of original streaks, to wit, "Let's burn down the cornfield, and I'll make love to you while it's burning."

Musically, however, Newman is in a phase that I find a bit hard to take. His piano playing, basic and interesting, emerges harsh on such tunes as *Have You Seen My Baby*, with its grinding four beats to the bar. Newman's naturally gritty, lazy voice, when combined in such coarse musical settings, tends to grate.

Quite possibly the album's direction was chosen in an attempt to make Newman commercial, for while many Newman songs have been successful (*Love Story*, *So Long Dad*, *I Think It's Going to Rain Today*), Newman has not yet made a mark as a performer. Hopefully Newman will eventually make such a mark, but I prefer to hear him in somewhat softer settings, such as in his first album. And why weren't the song lyrics included in this package?

A talent as meaningful as that of Randy Newman is not to be dismissed. Watch for his next album.

M.A.

jazz



MILT BUCKNER: In Europe, 1966. Milt Buckner, piano; Jimmy Woode, bass; Jo Jones, drums. (Feeling Sorta Villingen; Chit'lin's à la Carte; Yours Is My Heart Alone; seven more.) Prestige 7668, \$4.98.

Milt Buckner is a short, wide, pudgy bundle of joy and his keyboard work is a delightfully literal translation of his appearance. He has, for some reason,

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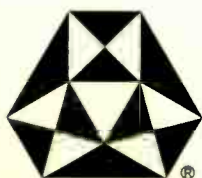
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been sadly neglected by recording companies in recent years so it is a double pleasure to find him not only recorded but recorded as well and as understandingly as he is on this disc.

The performances offer a fine mixture of Bucknerisms—from a recollection of his Lionel Hampton days on *Hamp's Boogie Woogie* to a bright, driving new piece *Alec Lovejoy* (which shows off his block chords at a fast tempo and samplings of his warm way with a ballad) and a marvelous slow blues *Saba House Party*. Aside from his block-chord approach, the most idiomatic element of Buckner's style is his use of a vocal line to accompany his piano—midway between Erroll Garner's rhythmic grunts and Slam Stewart's unison octave effect. *Pick Yourself Up* and *Robbins Nest* are, in this sense, deep-dyed Buckner.

This is a relaxed, straightforward set of performances on which Buckner gets superb accompaniment from Jimmy Woode's bass (a tower of strength on *I Only Have Eyes for You*) and Jo Jones, whose subtle brush work is featured on *Cute*. J.S.W.

CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS: Miss Annabelle Lee, Red Nichols, Frank Cush, Chelsea Quealey, Sylvester Ahola, and Bill Moore, trumpet; Tommy Dorsey, Herb Winfield, Ivan Johnston, Chuck Campbell, and Abe Lincoln, trombone; Jimmy Dorsey, Arnold Brillheart, Bobby Davis, Fud Livingston, and Adrian Rollini, saxophone; Irving Brodsky, Jack Russin, and Ted Black, piano; Tom Fellingini, banjo; Stan King and Herb Weil, drums. (Charleston; Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue; Manhattan; nine more.) Biograph 12020, \$5.98.

CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS: Hallelujah! Essentially the same personnel as above. (Clementine; Glad Rag Doll; Everything Is Hotsy Totsy Now; nine more.) Biograph 12021, \$5.98.

The California Ramblers, a white band organized by Ed Kirkeby in 1922 and built around Adrian Rollini (a similarly named group was started a couple of years earlier by an Ohio banjo player, Ray Kitchingman), was one of the most prolific recording bands in the Twenties and, during the latter part of the decade, it included some of the best white jazz musicians of the day. These two discs are drawn from the Ramblers' peak period, 1925 through 1929, when the personnel included Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Red Nichols, Rollini, Chelsea Quealey, Abe Lincoln, and several less celebrated but equally interesting men such as Bill Moore (a black trumpet player who was smuggled into this white band as "The Hot Hawaiian") and Bobby Davis, a versatile reed man whose work on alto stands comparison with that of Jimmy Dorsey—who was at this time (as these records show) absolutely sensational.

The recordings were originally made for the vertically cut Edison label and, for the mid-Twenties, the sound is remarkably good. Most of the material consists of pop tunes of the day and, superficially, these are commercial dance rec-

ords, including period-style vocals. But the Ramblers, along with Jean Goldkette's orchestra, was a pioneer big, hot band and everything it plays bristles with a jazz feeling. A primary factor is Rollini's bass saxophone which keeps booting the ensembles along. And the solos, although they vary in quality, hold to a generally high standard, especially when the soloists are Bill Moore, Red Nichols, Tommy Dorsey, or particularly Adrian Rollini and Jimmy Dorsey.

Those who know Jimmy primarily from his band-leading days—from the Dorsey Brothers Orchestra of 1934 on through the years—may be surprised by the fire with which he played in the Twenties. These two discs are invaluable both as evidence of jazz developments in the Twenties and as a representation of pop music styles in that decade. J.S.W.

STUFF SMITH: Memorial Album. Stuff Smith, violin; Heribert Thusek, tenor saxophone; Otto Weiss, piano; Peter Witte, bass; Charly Antolini, drums. (Ain't She Sweet; April in Paris; Sweet Lorraine; four more.) Prestige 7691, \$4.98.

This disc, according to Dan Morgenstern's liner notes, was the last one made by Stuff Smith before his death in September 1967. It was recorded in Germany in April 1967 with a quartet of musicians whose names are not likely to ring any bells of recognition. It is an unpretentious set and because of that an unusually good representation of the strong central core of Stuff's playing.

There are no novelties here, no invitations to excess—just a group of strong, standard tunes plus *One O'Clock Jump*. They serve to bring out the warmth and melodic imagination that were often covered over in Stuff's performances. There is a particularly beautiful version of *Yesterdays* which shows that Stuff had great abilities, transcending those that he usually put forward as a gut-bucket swinger and raucous comedian. The set provides a graceful finish to a career that, like Fats Waller's, was too often conditioned by superficial circumstances. J.S.W.

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