

JANUARY 1973

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HIGH FIDELITY®

Sills vs. Sutherland in Tales of Hoffmann

10 Lab Test Reports



Decca Mk 5 phono cartridge



Kenwood KX-700 cassette deck



LDL 749 speaker system



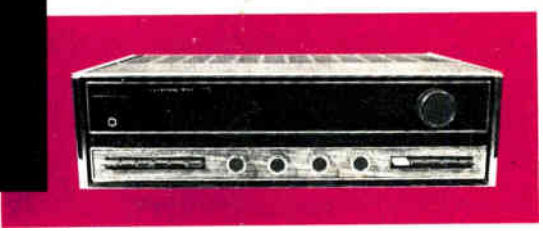
Sony PS-5520 turntable



Wollensak 8054 cartridge deck

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Magnavox 8896 stereo receiver



Scott 477 stereo receiver



Fisher 504 stereo/quadrasonic receiver



Heathkit AJ-1510 FM tuner



JVC VR-5541 stereo "SEA" receiver

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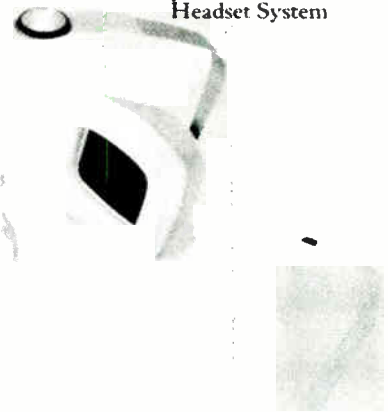
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HIGH FIDELITY

10 Lab Test Reports



First Full Stereo Tests for Tuners and Receivers!

They begin on page 49.



They're alive and well. See page 83.

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Current and back copies of High Fidelity and High Fidelity/Musical America are available on microfilm from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

The Game of the Name

In the three-record "Gala" version of London Records' *Die Fledermaus* there are two performing "artists" who will never make it into Baker's Dictionary: Omar Godknow and B. Fasolt. The first is the *nom d'enregistrement* of a very British Decca/London producer whose common expression of surprise is "Oh my God, no!" and the second is an anagram of "fat slob." I understand that following London's pioneering efforts *New York Magazine* began assigning professions to punny names (Lois Carmen Denominator, math teacher). Reverting to music, here are some musical personages who have crossed my mind, with appreciation to Contributing Editor Gene Lees for some contributions. If any of them duplicate *New York's* efforts, I can only plead innocent to having actually seen that magazine's results.

Axel A. Rondeau, *conductor with unsteady beat*
Noah Zweller's Yudu, *his envious assistant conductor*
Mischa Solemnis, *director of the chorus*
Horace Toccata, *violin virtuoso*; Len Danier, *his accompanist*
Don Dewitt Rashleigh, *violinist contemplating solo career*
Yvonne Toby Alon, *cellist specializing in Bach's solo suites*
Kent Reed, *incompetent clarinetist*; Lois Rae Chester, *contrabassoon*
Preston Piston, *trumpet*; Zero Terry Valve, *French horn*
William Uvover, *trombone*
Tim Penny and Roland E. Drumm, *percussion*; Justin Tyme, *cymbals*
Oberon di Flor, *sitar soloist*
Conrad Zinarms and Lester B. Trubble, *musicians union representatives*
E. Moses Lawn and Custer Grass, *retired players*
Arturo Verseeze and Ida Wanda Godair, *tour managers*
Helen Highwater, *fund raiser*; Zino Eval, *publicity director*
Robin de Riche and Gabe Tudor Paur, *benefit-concert organizers*
Pandit Cecil Leslie, *Anglo-Indian music critic*; Juan Cinna Weill, *his Marrano "stringer"*; Juan Canaday, *ballet critic*
The Itty brothers: Manuel Dexter, *pianist*, and Hy Fidel, *audio engineer*
The O'Hare brothers: Hank, *rock guitarist*, and Gerardt, *usher*
Roddy van Ewer, C.B.E., *recently knighted record producer*
Eileen Dover Beckwood, *prima ballerina*; Hugo Dere, *choreographer*
Candace Firmus, Moe Tete, and Minnie Singer, *musicologists*
Aaron da Djeestring, *Dutch composer of violin music*
Johann Sebastian O'Strength, *influential German-Irish composer*
Béla Buttons, *Hungarian electronic-music composer*
Oscar Wencel Simi, *second-rate composer seeking rich patroness*; Allison D. Uppinupp, *rich patroness of second-rate but often-played composers*
Allie Louie Ah, *Chinese-American Handel specialist*
Warren Peace, *baritone specializing in Prokofiev opera*
Jose Caniusi, *tenor specializing in baseball games*
Senta Coventry, *black-listed Wagnerian soprano*; Edith Rico Smeal, *fat mezzo*; Sheila Peale, *sexy star of Salome*
Léon Macduff, *fencing coach at Scottish Opera*
Drummond Phyfe, *bagpipe bandmaster*
Shirley Guinness and Mercy Schallfolloe, *oratorio singers*
Dinah Loan, *songstress who lost her TV show*; Les Dan Able, *her producer*; Darryl B. Morticum, *her agent*
Solomon Gaynor Holwhorl and Lucy Soll, *gospel singers*
Teresa Baumann Gilead, *psalmiste*; Frances Fuller Snobbs, *chanteuse*
Bertha di Bluze, *Soul singer*; Frieda Panthas, *activist folksinger*
Mike Henry Tisathee, Zvi Landau Libidy, Obediah Singh, *Irish-Israeli-Indian trio specializing in American patriotic songs*
Ptolemy Zasu Kaire, *transvestite blues singer*; Thea Jove Acquarius, *hermaphroditic idol of rock musical*; Oliver Hedda Goodtime, *last of the red-hot papas*
Carmen Trudy Rye and Nicol Seeger, *folk duo*
Baron Eddie Tor.

Leonard Marcus

Next month's issue will include **A SURVEY OF 4-CHANNEL RECEIVERS** as well as two opposing answers to the classic question **WHY HAVE THERE BEEN NO GREAT WOMEN COMPOSERS?**, one written from a Libber viewpoint ("They've been squelched by male chauvinism"), the other written by a psychologist ("They're inherently incapable")—both writers, incidentally, being female.

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New England: The Publishing House, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230. Telephone: 413-528-1300. Russell Gilchrist.

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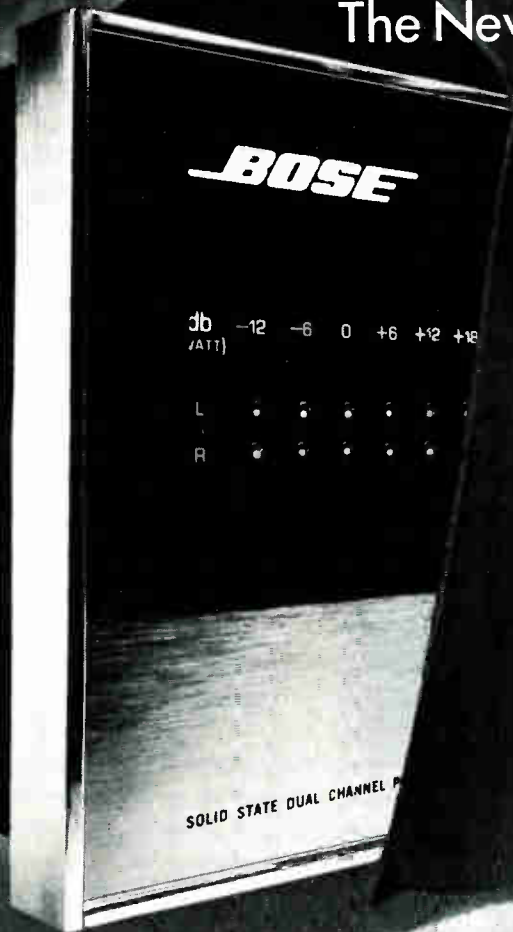
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letters

Recording Disservices

W. Rex Isom's article, "How to Prevent and Cure Record Warping" [September 1972] discussed certain esoteric causes of record warpage (folded corners of paper sleeves, storage which is nonvertical/nonhorizontal, and even labels with unaligned grains!), but made no mention of such common causes of deformation as pinch warpage and misaligned stampers.

Furthermore, a lot of what Mr. Isom wrote was just plain *silly*. He said, for example, that the plastic shrink wrap, after the album has been opened, can contract and exert a pressure on the record that could result in warpage. Now it turns out that the cardboard jackets on albums are between 12 $\frac{3}{8}$ - and 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inches tall, and so the jacket would have to be pulled inward at least $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch before any contact *at all* would be made. This I have never seen.

His advice on curing warped records was even worse. I followed the procedure on one of my most severely warped discs, heating it slowly with an ordinary 40-watt light bulb, and then placing it under 67 pounds of books. Seven hours later the shape of the warp had changed from a sort of complex double sine wave to a nice, even bump. I placed the record back under the books and left it for three days, at the end of which time the warp had reverted to precisely its earlier shape. The surface area of a 12-in. disc is approximately 113 inches; divide 67 pounds by this, giving just under 6/10 pound per square inch, and the failure is understandable. Actually, the problem is much worse than that, since any contact between the record and weights is restricted to the bead and label areas, where it is least needed.

Jerry Ebner
Chicago, Ill.

No manufacturer of records has done a greater disservice to the serious record collector than RCA with its introduction of the superthin disc. As one who has repeatedly returned RCA classical recordings before finding an acceptable product—or given up in disgust on occasion—I can only suggest that either something is definitely wrong in the RCA pressing plant or else the new wafer-thin discs are impossible for distributors to handle without serious damage.

Clive P. Condren
San Francisco, Calif.

The last batch of Turnabout recordings that I purchased were completely spoiled by poor surfaces and lack of quality control (the glue from the label, in one case, had spilled all over one side). It is disheartening to read an excellent review in your magazine and upon purchasing the record to find that it is defective.

Don Stewart
College Park, Md.

Like many other record club members who have had to return numerous warped pressings to the club, I was angered at the injustice of having to pay postage to return defective merchandise. A letter I recently received from the manager of customer services at RCA Mu-

sic Service will, I am sure, prove useful to other RCA (Columbia, Capitol, etc.) club members: "If you will advise us the amount of moneys [*sic*] paid for postage by returning selections by fourth-class post, we will be happy to forward a reimbursement."

G. M. Lawless
Concord, N.H.

For me, recordings are an investment, not only in the fundamental terms of dollars and cents, but in terms of the time one takes to consider one version over another, of purchasing the recording and living with it, and the satisfaction it yields. Although RCA Records has provided lovers of opera and classical music with some fine artists and interpretations, the quality of this company's discs is so inferior that it has become an impossibility for me to ever purchase RCA recordings again, no matter how great the particular performance.

William Carroll Schwartz
Bronx, N.Y.

Kenton Shortchanged

John S. Wilson's review of Stan Kenton's album, "Stan Kenton Today" [October 1972] was welcome, but I disagree with him on the recording's quality. London has succeeded in



Stan Kenton—better recorded elsewhere.

making a wonderful rhythm section sound thumpy while playing down the brasses, which are so important in the Kenton band. Comparison of songs duplicated in the London set with Stan's own Creative World recordings will bear me out. Both his Redlands and his Brigham Young albums are better recorded and much more representative of the sound this band has today.

I have a high regard for London and Phase 4 (i.e., Benny Goodman's wonderful album), but the Kenton band has eluded the engineers. However, I would not part with this Phase 4

album because of his closing number, *God Save the Queen*, a fantastic arrangement.

Irvin Sassaman
Tamaqua, Pa.

Varnay's Vocal Art

We recently returned from a European holiday full of musical highlights and joys—among them a performance of Von Einem's operatic masterpiece of Dürrenmatt's *Der Besuch der Alten Dame*, made memorable by the truly unsurpassed performance of Astrid Varnay in the title role. We were fascinated not only by this great singer's acting but by her vocal art.

Knowing her only from her recordings, we were impressed anew by this great operatic personality, whose recorded endeavors should be reissued for the benefit of a generation of new listeners.

Hans Kramer
Cape Town, South Africa

"Hit Parade" Scores

Oh, nostalgia! The "Hit Parade" article by Owen Lee [October 1972] was masterfully written, and by a true music lover. I am certain it contained as much nostalgia for many others of the "over-fifty" crowd as it did for me.

Lucian A. Spriggs
Thousand Oaks, Calif.

The "Hit Parade" article was just great. In his statistics however, Father Lee left out one film that I found most fascinating: *Top Hat*. All of Irving Berlin's songs for that film made the Hit Parade: *Top Hat*, *White Tie and Tails*, *The Piccolino*, *Cheek to Cheek*, *Isn't This a Lovely Day*, and *No Strings*. No other show has even come close except *On the Avenue*, again by Berlin, with *This Year's Kisses*, *I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm*, *You're Laughing at Me*, and *Slumming on Park Avenue* scoring with only two songs not making it.

Bob Grimes
San Francisco, Calif.

Bernstein and Mahler

I don't agree with Robert C. Marsh's remark in his reply to Bill Curtis' letter [October 1972] that Leonard Bernstein was only riding the "crest of Mahler's new popularity." To many, he is very much a creator of that popularity. Bernstein not only expressed the romanticism, but the violence, the mysticism, the longing, and the suffering in Mahler's works. I believe Bernstein correctly interprets the Mahler vision in his recordings. Though Bernstein's readings are uneven (so are those of Solti, Haitink, and Kubelik, for that matter), they are a major landmark in a new Mahler era.

M. Jerel Zoltick
Princeton, N.J.

Mendelssohn for Tenor

In her review of the Mendelssohn violin concertos [October 1972], Andrea McMahon wondered how the Andante from the E minor would sound sung by a tenor.

There is an arrangement called *He That Be-*

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CIRCLE 38 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

lieveth recorded by a tenor named A. Strange on an Australian Columbia 78: much more accessible (and no doubt more enjoyable) is an arrangement by André Previn for the MGM film *Two Sisters from Boston*, sung as a duet for soprano and tenor by Nadine Connor and Lauritz Melchior, available until recently on Camden LP CAL 424 ("The Lighter Side of Lauritz Melchior").

Michael Schulman
Toronto, Ont.
Canada

A Small but Mighty Band

In R.D. Darrell's review of the new Czech Brass Orchestra version of Sousa Marches [September 1972], his appellation "All-Sousa" eliminates, I suppose, the 1970 Longines Symphonette release (SYS 5140 44) "Sousa on Parade" featuring the Eastman Wind Ensemble conducted by Frederick Fennell. Unfortunately, Longines succumbs, along with most of the record industry, to the temptations of deceptive packaging since this collection of "Sousa on Parade" really has only twenty-nine of the forty-five marches actually composed by J. Philip.

However, your readers who are into Sousa and/or marches should know that this collection is one of the two or three greatest band albums ever recorded. The band is small but mighty, and Fennell's way with each score is outstanding.

William F. Wagner
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Evergreen Critic

Rarer still than the singer of whom one never tires is the evergreen critic; it was a delight to find Conrad Osborne's review of the Melchior lode in the October *HIGH FIDELITY*. Once again he brought good news (the reissue of the Leider/Melchior Polydors); he reaffirmed facts "those out there" need to be reminded of (his discussion of true lyric singing). Lastly, he proclaimed a self-evident truth I'd stupidly never thought of before—the relationship between styles of delivery in the spoken theatre and in opera. I am tired of hearing every ugly sound hailed as a "dramatic effect." of listening to singers who command no real beauty of tone speak of their willingness to sacrifice what they do not possess in the interests of dramatic truth.

Richard M. Dyer
Cambridge, Mass.

Slighted Composers

I was unhappy to see no mention of Vaughan Williams' music in your October issue, which coincides with the one hundredth anniversary of his birth. While you have devoted a fair amount of space to reviews of recordings of his compositions recently, some special notice should have been taken of this occasion.

Dr. Roland F. Hirsch
Orange, N.J.

Now that we have recordings of the Anton Rubinstein Fourth and Fifth Piano Concertos, the *Konzertstück*, and the *Ocean* Symphony, when can we have tapings of some of his twenty operas, two cello concertos, violin concerto, and the rest of his six symphonies and



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five piano concertos? Surely his music, melodic and cleanly written, is worthy of more attention. Will someone please turn on the Rubinstein machine?

Joseph M. Ganster
 Birmingham, Ala.

Just an old gripe—there are too many new releases of “warhorses” (although I love them all) swelling the already lengthy lists in the Schwann catalogue, but Virgil Thomson is neglected. I am unable to obtain two of his delightful compositions—*Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River: Suite*—though Stokowski’s readings are listed. It is a shame that the public is denied these fine examples of American music.

Barton King
 Citrus Heights, Calif.

Tchaikovsky's Missing Variation

Recalling with some nostalgia a 1930 recording of the young Menuhin’s Tchaikovsky Trio in A minor, I am disappointed that at least two new releases of this work fail to give us the complete score.

The elaborate eighth variation is omitted in a recent and generally spiritless performance by the Budapest Trio (Heliodor 89 802) for reasons unspecified. In the notes accompanying the Beaux Arts performance on Philips 6500 132, this variation is “optional,” and I presume it was the musicians’ prerogative to pass it up. The performance is otherwise exquisite. If I recall correctly, the Menuhins repeated the final variation, indicated as “B” of the second movement. Perhaps some musician familiar with the work may enlighten me: Was this also a musical option or a case of youthful zeal?

Leland Windreich
 Vancouver, B.C.
 Canada



High Fidelity, January 1973, Vol. 23, No. 1. Published monthly by Billboard Publications, Inc., publisher of Stereo, Stereo International, Modern Photography, American Artist, Billboard, Vend, Amusement Business, Merchandising Week, Music Labo, Photo Weekly, Gift & Tableware Reporter, Record & Tape Retailer, Record Mirror, Discografia Internazionale, World Radio TV Handbook.

High Fidelity/Musical America. Edition published monthly. Member Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Editorial correspondence should be addressed to The Editor, High Fidelity, Great Barrington, Mass. 01230. Editorial contributions will be welcomed. Payment for articles accepted will be arranged prior to publication. Unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by return postage.

Subscriptions should be addressed to High Fidelity, 2160 Patterson St., Cincinnati, Ohio 45214. Subscription rates: High Fidelity/Musical America: In the U.S.A. and its Possessions, 1 year \$14; elsewhere, 1 year \$15. National and other editions published monthly: In the U.S.A. and its Possessions, 1 year \$7.95. Subscription rates for all other countries available on request.

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behind the scenes



Pondering the problems of the "unrecordable" *Carmen* are (from left to right) DGG producer Thomas Mowrey, Leonard Bernstein, consultant John McClure, Marilyn Horne, Bernstein aide John Mauceri, tenor James McCracken, and engineer Gunter Hermanns at Manhattan Center.

Bernstein's *Carmen*— The First Major U.S. Opera Recording in Seven Years

NEW YORK

"Quiet, please. We're going to record the factory bell for thirty seconds, so hold your ears." Thus spake DGG's American-based recording director, Thomas Mowrey, ushering in the final session in the German label's project to tape the Metropolitan's 1972 opening night new production of *Carmen* (the virtuoso bell-ringer's performance was perfect, by the way—"One take, and no inserts," commented conductor Leonard Bernstein admiringly).

The Met's *Carmen* marked DGG's most ambitious (and costly—a \$250,000 price tag is one educated guess) American undertaking to date; it was, in fact, the first really significant opera recording to be taped in this country by a major label since RCA blew the works on *Lohengrin* with the Boston Symphony in 1965. (There have been of course RCA's *Julius Caesar* and a few others since.) When one thinks of DGG's last complete *Carmen*—an *auf Deutsch* affair from Dresden starring Sona Cervana, strictly for local consumption—the company's thirst for international prestige has now reached a pinnacle of sorts. With no less a presence than Bernstein on the podium, the Metropolitan's name blessing the proceedings, and an all-star cast

headed by Marilyn Horne, James McCracken, Adriana Maliponte, and Tom Krause, this *Carmen* could scarcely fail to create waves of interest. Furthermore, despite its bread-and-butter status and the number of noted prima donnas who had participated in past recordings (Callas, Price, Bumbry, De los Angeles, and Resnick to name the obvious), *Carmen* has yet to achieve a really first-class representation on disc—one noted producer, John Culshaw, finally threw up his hands in despair after guiding his third different version through the tape machines and declared the piece unrecordable.

On the docket for the last session was, appropriately enough, the final *Carmen*/José confrontation as well as the Gypsy Song and the Act III Prelude (the spoken dialogue was to be dubbed in later). DGG decided on the vast expanses of the Manhattan Center ballroom for its venue—once a popular recording site before domestic union scales made classical recording in New York a sometime thing and now ironically the scene for periodic mass union rallies. The Philharmonic used to record here and most of Igor Stravinsky's last New York sessions for Columbia were conducted amid its garish 1920 Byzantine decor. A veteran of those sessions and Bernstein's former Columbia producer, John McClure, was called upon by DGG as a consultant—

certainly no one else is better acquainted with the hall's acoustical characteristics. And the sound as it emerged from the four speakers in the control room had all the richness and body of pre-Philharmonic Hall NYP tapes (DGG, despite their wait-and-see attitude toward quad, naturally opted for the eventual possibility of a four-channel version).

"You've missed some very exciting sessions," Bernstein assured me just before heading out into the chilly recording area for the last duet. "We've taped stamping feet, men shouting *olé*, women's screams *diminuendo* and *crescendo*. . . . Actually, the possibilities for extramusical sounds in a *Carmen* recording are virtually endless, so I've asked that only the essentials be included." One vital effect is *Carmen*'s traditional scream as Don José's knife meets its mark, and there was some discussion about the when-and-how. Marilyn Horne suggested, in just one assumes, a whispered gasp of "Es-ca-mil-lo. Arrghh!" Ultimately it was decided to take Miss Horne *in camera* later on and record a variety of shrieks to decide on the most effective one.

Although neither Horne nor McCracken are strangers to the score, both they and all the other participants clearly looked to Bernstein for the final solution of all musical problems. McCracken, especially, was a study in concentrated intensity during the takes and playbacks, constantly on the lookout for comments on how to improve the fine points of his interpretation. "Don't make *Je ne menace pas* sentimental," the conductor coached McCracken; "try to think, 'Look, I'm not menacing you, I'm pleading with you,'" and Bernstein dropped to one knee with considerable dignity. Later he convinced Horne not to hold "*Oui, je l'aime*" quite so long, even when Horne protested plaintively. "Yes, I know we're both musicians, but I'm a singer." Nonetheless, Horne had profuse opportunities to show off her voice, particularly that ultrapowerful baritone chest tone as she goaded McCracken into murder.

With the final duet safely completed, the Gypsy Song was given a nonstop first take. The opening flute thirds were a shambles and the ensemble left a great deal to the imagination right up to the final crashing chord. "That's terrible!" Bernstein moaned melodramatically, throwing one arm into the air in horror. "It's like we were sight-reading it." "It's heaven—print it!" remarked Horne with ill-disguised whimsy after hearing the take. A stop-and-go second take gave Mowrey and his crew the needed material to make a perfect entity, but Bernstein still wasn't satisfied. "The misery of this piece is that it's impossible to make a smooth splice in such an unbroken and

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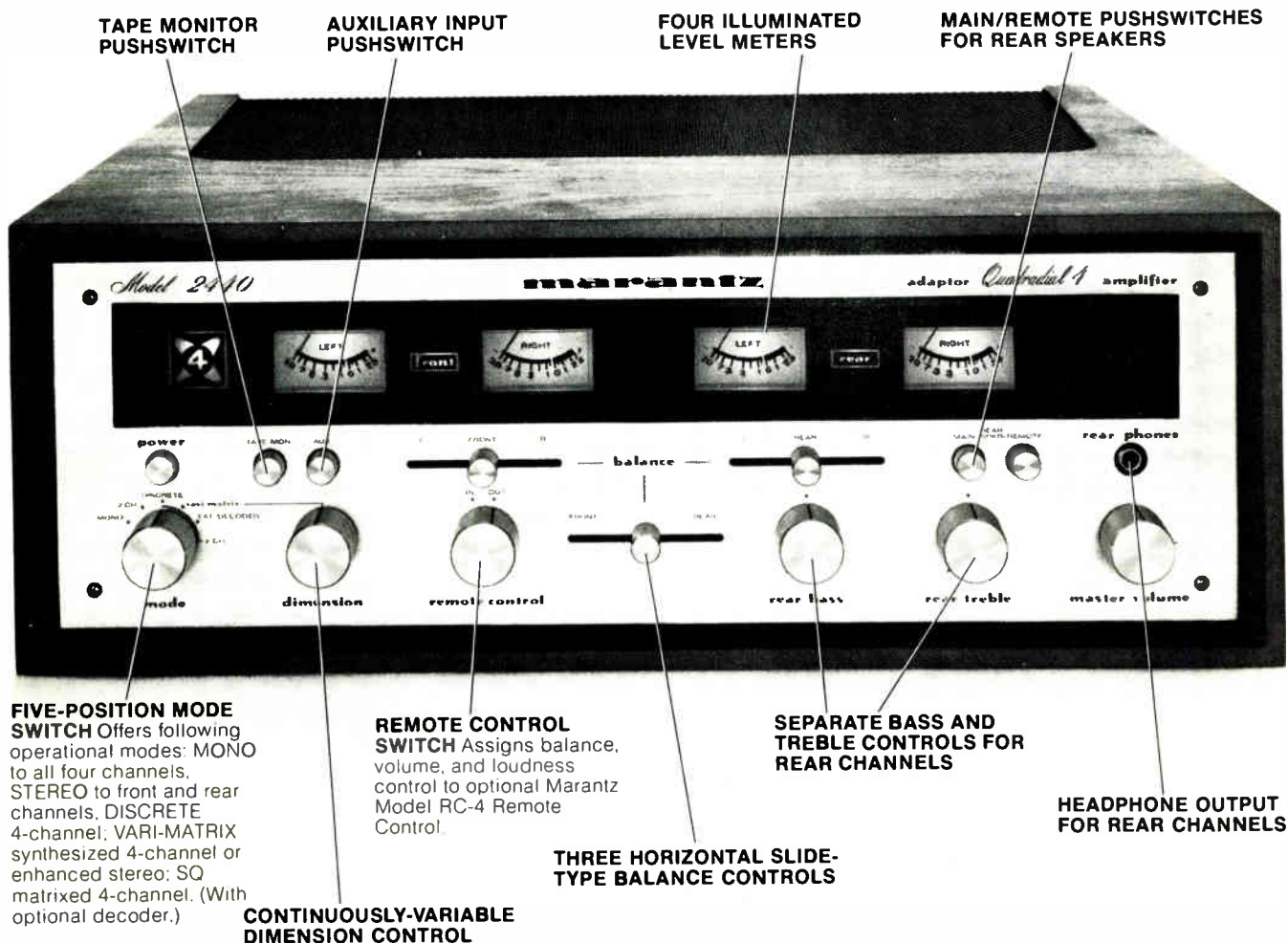
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imperceptible accelerando." So he asked for another complete take and the miracle happened. "Terrific!" Bernstein beamed, and DGG's *Carmen* was virtually a *fait accompli*. PETER G. DAVIS

LONDON

Sutherland Meets Caballé in Turandot

Guided past Decca/London's security system as the sole visiting journalist, I entered Kingsway Hall for what some record people were claiming as one of the most costly opera sessions ever: two

of the highest paid (if not *the* highest) sopranos in the world appearing on the same stage together, Joan Sutherland singing Turandot with Montserrat Caballé as Liù.

It was certainly a casting coup, and if anyone was apprehensive in advance about fireworks of temperament, they need not have worried. There were the two great ladies on stage, the happiest of colleagues, laughing and joking together between takes. It so happens that Puccini's two soprano principals meet only once in the opera, which did of course simplify any problems of confrontation, but from the look of it they could have been recording *Rosenkavalier*.

Sutherland—who was, after all, the *raison d'être* of the set from Decca/London's point of view—was tactfully placed on the stage slightly to the right of Caballé, who was then allowed her favorite central position. You could argue rationally enough that in this death scene Liù is far more important than Turandot, but not every rival prima donna would have seen it that way. Nor did Sutherland in the rehearsal beforehand sing out with full voice, as she normally does in preparation, but followed Caballé's practice of "marking." And then in the big playback, after the main master take had been completed with remarkably little fuss, Sutherland considerably listened in the passageway, outside the cramped control room, again making it clear that this session belonged primarily to her colleague. When Sutherland's key phrase in the scene came (a surprised questioning: "*L'amore?*"), she turned to me with a nod, and commented like a wife appraising her housework: "That'll do." She was right.

Only one more take for minor amendments to Sutherland's contribution, and Turandot was ready to take off for the airport and home to Switzerland. But before she went, she warmly kissed Caballé good-bye, and the male members of the cast demanded equal greeting—Luciano Pavarotti, Nicolai Ghiaurov, and Tom Krause. Last of all, conductor Zubin Mehta rushed from his rostrum to make sure of a kiss from Sutherland too. Loud cries of appreciation from the orchestra. "I shan't wash my face tonight!" Mehta promised.

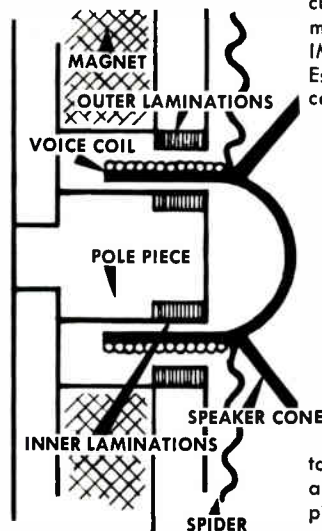
One member of the cast was absent. For the smallest of the named roles, that of the Emperor, Decca/London's chief recording manager, Ray Minshull, had made an inspired choice: Peter Pears, one of the company's most cherished tenors but one who till now had never been recorded in Italian opera. His sessions, a couple of days earlier, had gone exceptionally well, as indeed had all twelve. Mehta, always a methodical recording conductor, was in the happiest mood: With cricket test matches being played between England and Australia he was able for once to watch a favorite sport normally denied him.

Opera Galore. Caballé, who had earlier been recording EMI's *Guillaume Tell*, had a third opera commitment in London when she took the role of Norma in RCA's new set of Bellini's opera, taped at Walthamstow with Fiorenza Cossotto, Plácido Domingo, and Ruggero Raimondi, with Carlo Felice Cillario conducting the London Philharmonic. Once again an artist was anxious to get away to the airport, but this time, since Walthamstow is on the wrong side of London and Plácido Domingo had to appear on stage within hours in some distant op-

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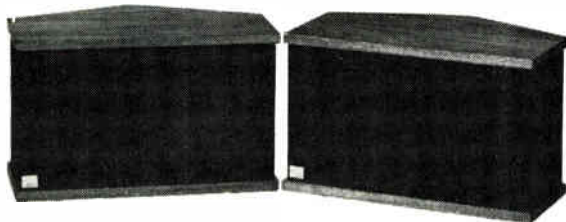
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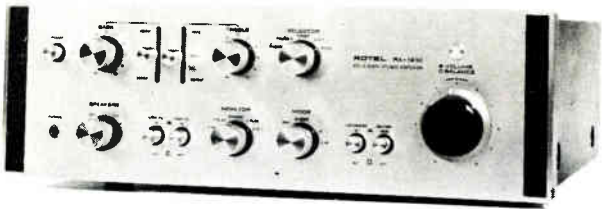
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era house, a helicopter was called in. Even then it was touch and go, and Caballé, so often a center of past crises, was the one who kept murmuring soothingly: "Be tranquil!" In her duet with Domingo she insisted that any flaws in her contribution could readily be left till later in the interest of getting Domingo off to his helicopter. In the end they all came out to wish him good-by, with Cillario commenting: "Look, no wings!"

Opera sessions were the order of the day all summer, for EMI also taped Caballé in Verdi's *Giovanna d'Arco* and Philips lined up Cristina Deutekom, Carlo Bergonzi, Sherrill Milnes, and Ruggero Raimondi for an equally rare Verdi opera, *Attila*. Lamberto Gardelli is the conductor with the Royal Philharmonic. Erik Smith, the Philips recording manager, was lyrical himself about the music of *Attila*, even after his heavy five-day stint. Happily for record collectors (and the company) it will fit neatly onto four LP sides.

Taping All Over Town. Recording sessions in all the main London recording halls were so intensive last summer that when at the last minute EMI decided to record André Previn and the Yale Quartet in Brahms's Piano Quintet they were hard pressed to find a hall. Twenty-four hours before the sessions were due to start (on the very day that elsewhere Sutherland and Caballé were on stage together) they were still looking. In the end they resorted to All Saints, Tooting, the South London church where EMI had recorded such large-scale works as Mozart's Requiem with Barenboim and Act I of *Walküre* with Klemperer.

Recording manager Suvi Raj Grubb was a little apprehensive about taping a chamber work in such a setting, but without too much difficulty they found the right, not too reverberant, spot in one of the side aisles. In the end Previn's doubt was less about the acoustics than about the temperature. On a scorching August day, he could justly complain, "It's cold in here." It was through their records (which bowled him over) that Previn first thought of asking the Yale Quartet to play with him in London's South Bank Summer Music, and the recording sessions came as a welcome bonus.

One startlingly brisk job well done was Barenboim's work with the London Philharmonic on Elgar's Second Symphony. The sponsors, surprisingly, are Columbia Records, who are even thinking of encouraging still further Barenboim's new passion for Elgar. Paul Myers, the Columbia recording manager, commented that the sessions seemed like intensive American undertakings rather than more leisurely British-style ones, since Barenboim—who had just conducted two concert perform-

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ances—went straight for a master take of each movement at the first attempt. As a result, the whole work was completed to everyone's satisfaction in an exhilarating five hours—instead of the nine hours budgeted for the fifty-five-minute symphony.

In another CBS project Barenboim accompanied Pinchas Zukerman for two more installments in their Mozart violin concerto series with the English Chamber Orchestra. Then for Deutsche Grammophon, Barenboim and the London Philharmonic tackled Brahms's *German Requiem* with Edith Mathis and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau as soloists after an Edinburgh Festival performance. The Festival Chorus also takes part, directed (like the LSO Chorus in London) by Arthur Oldham. It was for Oldham that Barenboim, to celebrate his colleague's birthday, conducted a full-scale choral version of *Happy Birthday* before one of the sessions. What would Brahms have thought? The sessions took place—like those of DGG's *Cenerentola* last year—in a school hall, George Watson's College, and when not recording everyone turned for entertainment to the television relays from the Olympic Games.

Less happy relays from Munich after the murder of the Israeli athletes affected at least one day of the intensive chamber music sessions that Artur Rubinstein had at Victoria Hall, Geneva, with Henryk Szeryng and Pierre Fournier. This time their main concern was to complete the Brahms piano trios, and this they did, one per day despite Rubinstein's upset over Munich, adding the Schumann D minor at the end. The wonder—according to RCA recording manager Max Wilcox (unfortunately, I missed the sessions)—was that every day it was Rubinstein who outstayed the lot of them in sheer stamina, pressing on with the sessions, determined not to break off before each work was completed.

Stokowski too was in great form when in Prague that same week he recorded for Decca/London's Phase 4 label an unexpected coupling, Elgar's *Enigma Variations* and Scriabin's *Poème d'extase*. Everyone was rather worried—everyone except Stokowski—when he sprained a tendon in his leg and had to appear on crutches. But once on the rostrum he insisted on standing. Nor was he worried by the television lights at one of the performances. What the recording team under Raymond Few did was to record his two live concerts with the thought of marrying the results afterwards—a fairly easy matter in the Elgar Variations at least. That, incidentally, is a work the Czech Philharmonic had not played since 1909. *Floreat* Elgar, says the English commentator, EDWARD GREENFIELD

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... response is within ± 2 dB over the entire range. *Audio*
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The cartridge had very good shielding against induced hum. *Stereo Review*

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We found it impossible to attribute superior sound to costlier competing models. *High Fidelity*
Priced as it is, it is a real bargain in cartridges. *Audio*

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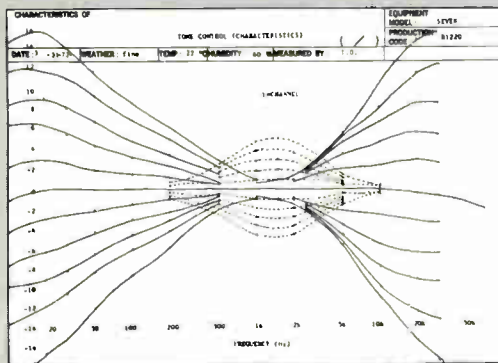
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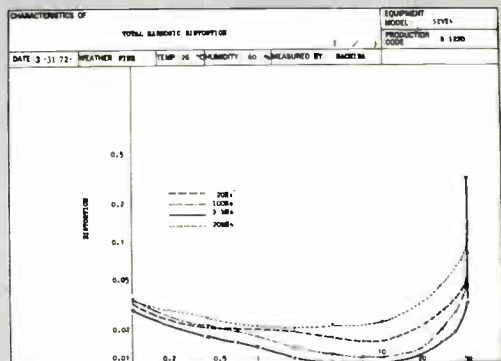
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IC 150

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D 150

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those were the days

A nostalgic romp through the pages of High Fidelity and Musical America

60 Years Ago

So many complaints of atmospheric conditions in Carnegie Hall, and their serious effect on the health of people who go there, have been received by *Musical America* that a representative of this publication has made an investigation of the ventilation there, talking with music critics, physicians, subscribers to the symphony orchestra concerts, and the executive officials of Carnegie Hall. A Wall Street man told our reporter: "Formerly I had a reputation among my friends of being musical and of appreciating and admiring good music. On several occasions I have found myself dozing at Carnegie concerts, which has subjected me to a lot of ridicule. For a long time I wondered what was the matter. Then I began to understand. It was the bad air in the hall that made me drowsy."

Massenet's *Manon* returned to the Metropolitan this month with Farrar, Caruso, Gilly, and Rothier. Caruso was in fine vocal shape, but it takes considerably more than golden tones lustily emitted to make an ideal Des Grieux, and in well-nigh every respect Caruso falls short of realizing this ideal. His Des Grieux has neither grace, subtlety, polish, nor the remotest suggestion of Gallic elegance. Dramatically he is an awkward, unappealing, ungainly figure. His vocal style is about as little calculated to meet the requirements of Massenet's music as it would be to do justice to Mozart or Wagner. And alas for Caruso's French pronunciation!

40 Years Ago

A manifesto against modern music, signed by some of Italy's most prominent composers, has caused considerable stir. Ottorino Respighi, Ildebrando Pizzetti, Riccardo Zandonai, Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli, Giuseppe Mulè, Alberto Gasco, Alceo Toni, Guido Guerrini, Gennaro Napoli, and Guido Zuffenato are the signatories; and the document attacks contemporary tendencies in no uncertain terms: "We are," it says, "against this art which cannot and does not have any human content, and desires to be merely a mechanical demonstration and a cerebral puzzle. The confusion of Babel reigns in the musical world. For

twenty years the most diverse and disparate tendencies have been lumped together in a continual chaotic revolution."

Antonio Scotti has sung his farewell. A weary but gallant figure in spite of his sixty-seven years and his sinister make-up as the Chinese opium-den keeper of Leoni's *L'Oracolo*, he took leave of a legion of long-time admirers after forty-three years in opera, all but ten of which had found him on the boards of the Metropolitan. Lawrence Tibbett led a group that sang *For He's a Jolly Good Fellow*. There were many moist eyes. "God bless you all for what you do for me," said Scotti in a little speech. Then he too wept.

20 Years Ago

Vladimir Horowitz contributed his services for the New York Philharmonic Pension Fund benefit concert, playing the Tchaikovsky concerto twenty-five years almost to the minute after he had made his American debut with it. His performance was a phenomenal display of pianism, quite aside from any considerations of interpretive taste. It does no injustice to any of the parties concerned to infer that the occasion had the atmosphere of a bullfight. The deafening applause continued for fifteen minutes. And Mr. Horowitz deserved every bit of it for his unbelievable show of technique. The sheer velocity was fantastic. George Szell kept the orchestra up to the soloist as best he could, but the evening belonged to Mr. Horowitz.

20th Century-Fox is planning a technicolor picture, tentatively labeled *The Girl With Black Glasses*, which will have the Metropolitan Opera as its setting and a plot constructed around the success story of Roberta Peters, whose golden opportunity came two years ago when she was called upon suddenly to step into the role of Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* upon the illness of Nadine Conner. Miss Peters may play herself in the picture. Will it be done that way? In view of the Hollywood maxim, never do anything the right way if a good wrong way is available, probably 'tis a consummation only to be wished.

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too hot to handle

How much added frequency response should I expect in using Crolyn tape as opposed to a good ferric oxide brand?—Allan Mesko, Lima, Peru.

Chromium dioxide tapes (of which Du Pont's Crolyn is the best known) don't offer greater frequency response as such. In layman's terms, they offer greater "room" for fitting information into a given length of tape. This property can be used in a number of ways, depending on the design of the recorder. Some equipment makers use it to pack extra high-frequency information (that is, more extended high-frequency response) into the recorded signal; others use it to allow recording at higher levels, in effect, and therefore to keep the signal farther above inherent noise levels. Or the extra room can be used to prevent distorted sound on short-duration peaks (for added headroom, as an engineer would put it). In fine, the added room means added performance; to attempt measurement of the improvement in terms of frequency response alone is meaningless.

I have a Panasonic RS-820S (The Bainbridge) stereo FM/AM receiver with built-in 8-track recorder. I had thought I could use its amplifier for the front channels if I converted to four-channel stereo, using a Sansul QS-500 for the back channels; but the RS-820S has no tape monitor connections. How would I connect the QS-500 into the system?—Ronald W. Mannon, FPO, New York.

Unless you're willing to make internal changes in the Panasonic, it looks as if you're out of luck. The RS-820S is not what we would consider one of Panasonic's more flexible models. (It's really a compact.) You could connect a speaker-matrix adapter like the Dynaco Quadaptor to the output terminals of the Panasonic and add only a second pair of speakers. This will give you matrix decoding of sorts—but will give neither the precise parameters of QS decoding, the discrete-quadrasonic input, nor the variety of control options offered by the Sansul. A suggestion: next time, choose real components, not a compact.

In your report on the Heath AD-110 cassette-deck kit [September 1972] you omit any mention of wow and flutter. If this is a new policy regarding tape-machine testing, I must protest. In the same report you give the speed error as 1.2% fast (not an unusual figure) and say that this error will cause a correctly recorded tape to "sound

about a half tone up in pitch." A half tone represents a change in frequency closer to 6%. What's going on?—Allen Watson III, San Francisco, Calif.

A half tone does, as you say, represent a difference in pitch of some 6%; and we were wrong to characterize the relatively minor discrepancy in the AD-110 as "about a half tone." It is, however, somewhat poorer than par for the better cassette decks today, where speed error often runs a little *under* 1%. The omission of wow and flutter data was not intentional. Due to a makeup error the entire "additional data" box was left out, though the speed-error data were discussed in the text. In addition, the lab clocked 0.15% wow and flutter in playback and 0.17% in record/playback; a rewind time (for a C-60 cassette) of 1 min., 54 sec., and a fast-forward time 3 sec. longer; playback S/N ratios of 50 dB (left channel) or better; record/playback S/N of 45.5 dB (left channel) or better; erasure of 59 dB; crosstalk of 39 dB (record right, play left) or better; aux input sensitivity of 90 mV (either channel) or better; meter tracking (with respect to the DIN 0 VU) of 6 dB high (both channels); maximum output from DIN 0 VU of 1.1 V (left channel) and 1.3 V (right channel); and IM distortion at -10 VU of 7.5% (left channel) or better. Good figures, all; both a confirmation of and a basis for our statement that the AD-110 is a very desirable unit in its non-Dolby class.

A reliable stereo dealer recently told me that components purchased abroad in military commissaries have a different design and are of inferior quality by comparison to the same models sold in the United States. I was interested in buying the Sony 580 open-reel deck abroad, but now I'm not sure I should. What do you think?—Ron Domingue, Wallingford, Conn.

It's not really a question of product quality so much as one of product servicing. Some units sold overseas differ in circuitry (particularly in the power supply section) from units carrying the same model number but sold here. The change can cause problems for a service technician, since he normally will have only the U.S. service manual (showing the wrong circuitry) to work from. Beware of warranty problems in particular. Superscope, the U.S. importer of Sony tape products, is unusual (though not unique) in that it will honor warranties on models it sells even if the particular unit was not bought through Superscope. Most U.S. im-

porters state flatly that if they made no profit on the sale, they have no way of funding warranty repairs.

The clarity and range of the sound, together with the balances between orchestra and singers, in the DGG recording of the Met's farewell to Rudolph Bing are top-notch. Yet it was recorded in the same theater and presumably under the same conditions that apply for the Saturday afternoon Met broadcasts. Surely American broadcast engineers, working on a regular basis and in mono, should be able to do at least as well as a German crew setting up for the first time and with the added complexities of stereo recording. Are the standards of our broadcast industry really that antiquated?—Daniel Waxler, Dover, N.J.

A host of factors can influence the comparison you suggest. You're presumably listening to the Met broadcasts via what might be called the direct feed to WQXR-FM, New York. Listeners in the rest of the country aren't so lucky; their stations must get the signal via land lines that don't do anything good for signal quality. That knowledge is enough to dim the enthusiasm of even the most devoted of broadcast engineers. Then there's the question of visible microphones. Presumably DGG was allowed placement options that the Met would discourage for use during full-length presentations as disruptive of the stage "picture." But most important, in our guess, would be economic considerations. Recently published memoranda of the Bing era make it clear that a DGG recording project was discussed long before the farewell gala. And such projects can raise extra revenue for undernourished Met coffers. A DGG *Carmen* conducted by Bernstein is now under way as a matter of fact; but if you could record an equally attractive (though mono) Bernstein *Carmen* off the air, you would be less likely to buy the commercial recordings—and therefore the Met would have less hope of the extra revenue. While we don't like to think that the Met has deliberately limited the quality of the broadcasts, its officers obviously have little reason to make the sound really superb.

Why is it that whenever I get interested in a tuner it turns out to be available for FM only? The Citation 14 and Citation 15, the Dynaco FM-5, and the Heathkit AJ-1510 look particularly good at the moment; but you can't buy comparable AM tuners and I don't want to be without AM.—Elton Morse, Amarillo, Tex.

You can buy the Dyna FM-5 with AM as well; in that form it's known as the AF-6. Apparently manufacturers have found that most buyers of sophisticated (and expensive) separate tuners tend to look down their noses at AM and are therefore unwilling to spend even a little more for the "inferior" broadcast medium. The result is that buyers in the boondocks, where there's limited choice in available FM programming, feel shortchanged—particularly since listeners in such areas often need a very good AM section as well in order to pull in distant stations.

Quadraphonics and Obsolescence Prevention

"Should I buy quadraphonics?" "Which systems will survive the next two or three years?" Be assured you're not alone in your uncertainty about four-channel. Manufacturers also cannot afford to invest in a product that will be out of date in a few months. Thus while no component can be all things to all users, manufacturers and their customers share a common interest in avoiding instant obsolescence.

We recently visited one company (Harman-Kardon) that had sampled customer feedback on quadraphonics via questions to some two hundred visiting dealers. These questions included: Do customers ask to see stereo or quadraphonics in the stores? (Generally stereo was the answer.) Is it best to stress the stereo capabilities of the units and only mention four-channel functions in passing, or should the emphasis be on quadraphonics? (Again, most of the dealers thought that stereo was the bigger enticement.) Even at this point the company avoids labeling the four models of its new receiver line either "quadraphonic" or "stereo." And each model's amplifier section can operate not only as a quadraphonic system, but as two independent stereo systems, or even "strapped" to produce a single but higher-powered stereo amp.

This approach is typical of U.S. manufacturers, most whom are hedging on an exclusively four-channel approach.

Japanese companies, however, are often opting for quadraphonics at the expense of stereo versatility. But if H-K's dealers were any indication of the general American attitude, 2-channel/4-channel versatility would appear to be the best approach for now in the U.S.

Motorola and the Piezoelectric Tweeter

Motorola has developed a unique tweeter. It has no magnet, no voice coil, no air gap, and—when incorporated into a multidriver system—it requires no crossover network. It operates on the piezoelectric principle whereby mechanical stress on crystal elements can be translated to electrical voltage (as in ceramic pickups) and vice versa (as in this new speaker).

Piezoelectric transducers are said to convert more energy with less heat—that is, they are more efficient—than dynamic transducers. The tweeter is constructed

of two oppositely polarized ceramic discs separated by a corrugated center element. An input voltage causes one disc to expand rapidly while the other contracts. The design reportedly delivers 100 dB at 4 volts rms, will



handle 35 volts rms continuously without burning out, and can be used with dynamic drivers of varying impedances.

Motorola says it hopes to introduce the principle in full-range speakers and in flat, planar radiators.

Standards Dept., U.S. Army Div., Video Sect.

It's axiomatic that the videotape picture—at least in forecasting the home market—will continue cloudy until there is more agreement on standards, or at least until software manufacturers can tell with some reliability which videotape systems have enough acceptance to make the mass production of blank tapes and prerecorded programs worthwhile. The U.S. Army (of all people) recently gave one system a noticeable nudge. Commenting that its present 600 recorders had racked up an excellent reliability record, it decided to standardize on the Sony U-Matic videocassette system for future purchases, which are expected to bring the army's total recorder ownership in this format up to as much as 10,000 units by the end of next year.

Sony Corp. may not be quite as pleased with this announcement as one might presume. The last time the army complimented the company it was on the quality of its small TV monitor units, which the army had been using as part of a TV-guided bomb system. That news triggered a prompt note of complaint from Sony to the U.S. Ambassador in Tokyo. Sony, it seems, considers its products to be entirely peaceful and was unhappy to find them being requisitioned for military use. One major army use for the U-Matics will be in training procedures; another will be for entertainment in army hospitals.



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direct-coupled amplifier output. Outside the 7070 features champagne gold front with blue black-out dial and lighted tuning indicator, tape dubbing switches and 4-channel composite output for add-on decoders.

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Or, 200 Rte. 110, Unit 4, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735.

In Canada contact: William Cohen Corp., Montreal; Branch Office: Toronto

CIRCLE 41 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

equipment in the news

APL pentagonal speaker system

The APL-16, a new speaker system from Applied Physics Laboratory, is designed to distribute acoustic energy uniformly at all audible frequencies and to be capable of producing very high sound-pressure levels. To do this, the unit uses sixteen identical full-range 4½-inch high-compliance drivers—four facing outward at the front and twelve radiating from the back panels—within a single airtight infinite baffle. All drivers are coupled in phase and driven through a passive equalizer. The APL-16 is recommended for use with amplifiers delivering at least 30 watts of continuous power per channel and is said to be capable of handling 200 watts per channel. Price: \$387.50.

CIRCLE 152 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Capacitance pickup from Toshiba

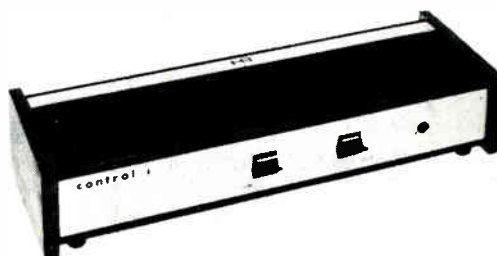
The C-401S phono cartridge from Toshiba America uses the stylus cantilever arm as one plate of an electret condenser transducer. Integrated-circuit amplifiers built into the cartridge amplify the signals from this transducer and feed them to the SZ-200 equalizer. The pickup system is said to have a dynamic range approaching 100 dB and a frequency response of 20 to 35,000 Hz. The C-401S and SZ-200 retail at \$129.95. The new cartridge also is available as part of the Toshiba SR-80 belt-driven turntable unit costing \$299.95.

CIRCLE 151 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Automatic shutoff device from HR

A novel accessory from the HR Manufacturing Co., Inc., of Sarasota, Florida could be a boon for the absent-minded. It is the Model SAC-1, the letters standing for Signal-Activated Control. With the SAC-1 connected into the stereo system, everything runs normally as long as there's a signal going to the loudspeakers. When the signal stops, the SAC-1 will shut off the system after ten minutes. The price is \$39.95.

CIRCLE 154 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Kenwood's KR-5200 receiver

Kenwood has designed the KR-5200 stereo FM/AM receiver with direct-coupled output for wideband response and low distortion. Rated at 30 watts per channel continuous power with both channels driven into 8 ohms, the receiver has connections for two tape decks, inputs for two aux sources, a front-panel microphone jack, and separate preamp output connections on the rear panel. The KR-5200 is priced at \$349.95.

CIRCLE 91 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

New Garrard turntable module

Garrard is offering its 42M Pre-Pack, a three-speed record changer, complete with a Shure or Pickering magnetic cartridge with elliptical stylus. The 42M/S contains a Shure M75ECS cartridge, while the 42M/P features a Pickering V-15 APE-4. The turntable is delivered with the chosen cartridge premounted and the tone arm balanced. The complete unit, with either cartridge, sells for \$90.85.

CIRCLE 153 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



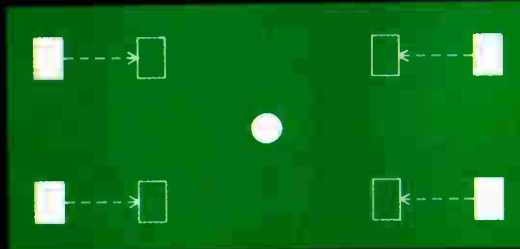
CIRCLE 45 ON READER-SERVICE CARD →

Our 4-channel receivers can change the size of your living room.

Just move one slide control. And suddenly the room seems deeper. Another slide control. And it seems wider. The sound appears to move. Until speaker separation is just right for you. No matter how big or small your room is. With Panasonic's Acoustic Field Dimension (AFD). Only in our discrete 4-channel receivers. Models SA-6800X and SA-6400X.

Panasonic feels that the discrete sound system is the best for 4-channel. Whether you're listening to 8-track tapes or Compatible Discrete 4-channel (CD-4) records. Like RCA Quadradiscs.

Of course, these receivers can also handle matrix. Which makes AFD even more important. Because most encoding systems for matrix records have their own op-



timal speaker separations.

Another benefit for matrix recordings is our phase shifter. It has three different settings that correspond to the phasing of the various matrix systems. So virtually any matrix recording can be played.

All our receivers also make sure that the stereo collection you've amassed won't go to waste. You can play it straight. Or enhance it. With our Quadruplex™ circuitry.

Of course, there are other features in these Panasonics. Like our single lever remote balance control. It lets you control the balance of all four channels. From your easy chair. And as for the SA-6800X specs, we think you'll find them as interesting as its special features.

Model SA-6400X gives you 150 watts IHF at 4 ohms. With many of the same specs as Model SA-6800X.

So go to your franchised Panasonic Hi-Fi dealer for your

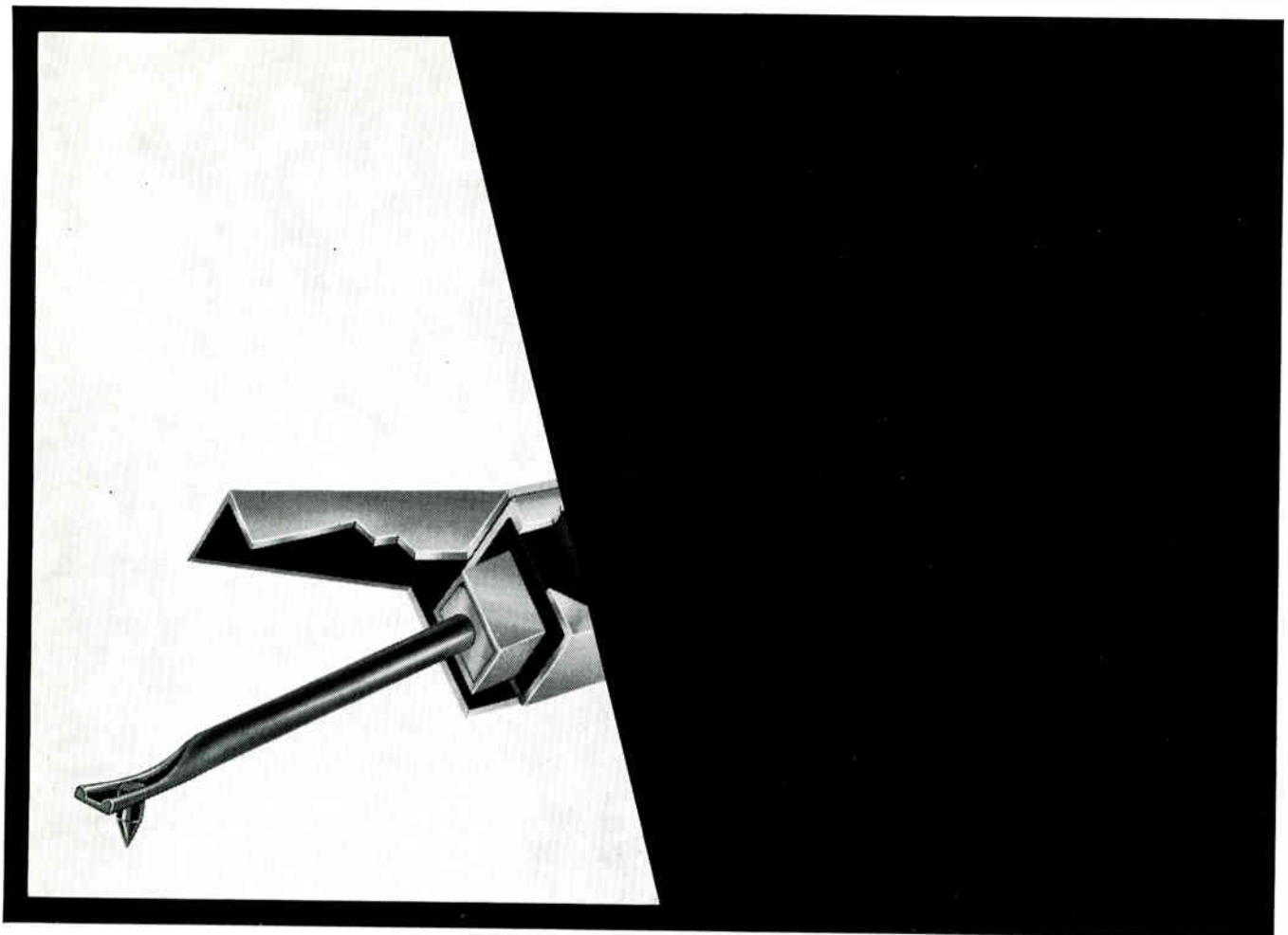
4-channel receiver. It's the only way to make sure you get one that's the right size for your living room. Whatever its size.

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Power (IHF)	300 watts at 4 ohms
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Power bandwidth	7Hz-40kHz, -3dB
FM usable sensitivity	1.8µV
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Straight talk about a stylus



Listen carefully and you can still hear some audiophiles refer to the record stylus as . . . "the needle." Although we are not about to quibble over semantics, we would like to go on record, so to speak, as observing that the stylus of today bears no more resemblance to a needle than it does to a ten-penny nail. In fact, it is probably the most skillfully assembled, critically important component in any high fidelity system. It must maintain flawless contact with the undulating walls of the record groove — at the whisper-weight tracking forces required to preserve the fidelity of your records through repeated playings. We put everything we know into our Shure Stereo Dynetic Stylus Assemblies — and we tell all about it in an informative booklet. "Visit To The Small World Of A Stylus." For your copy, write:

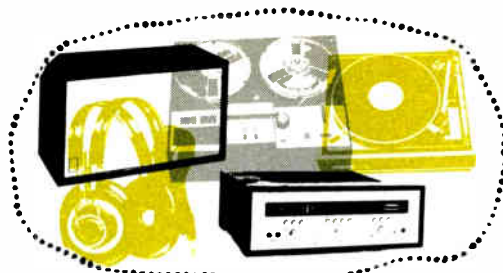
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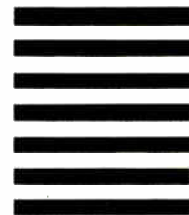
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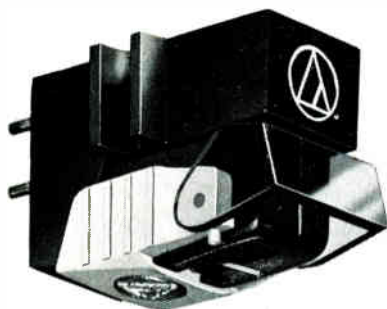
*Suggested retail price.

Continued from page 34

Dolbyized cassette deck from Panasonic

The RS-276 cassette deck is one of several with Dolby B noise reduction circuitry introduced this year by Panasonic. It also has a two-motor drive system, a memory rewind feature, bias adjustment for chromium dioxide tape, automatic stop at the end of the tape, a lockable pause control, and separate VU meters for each channel. The price is \$399.95.

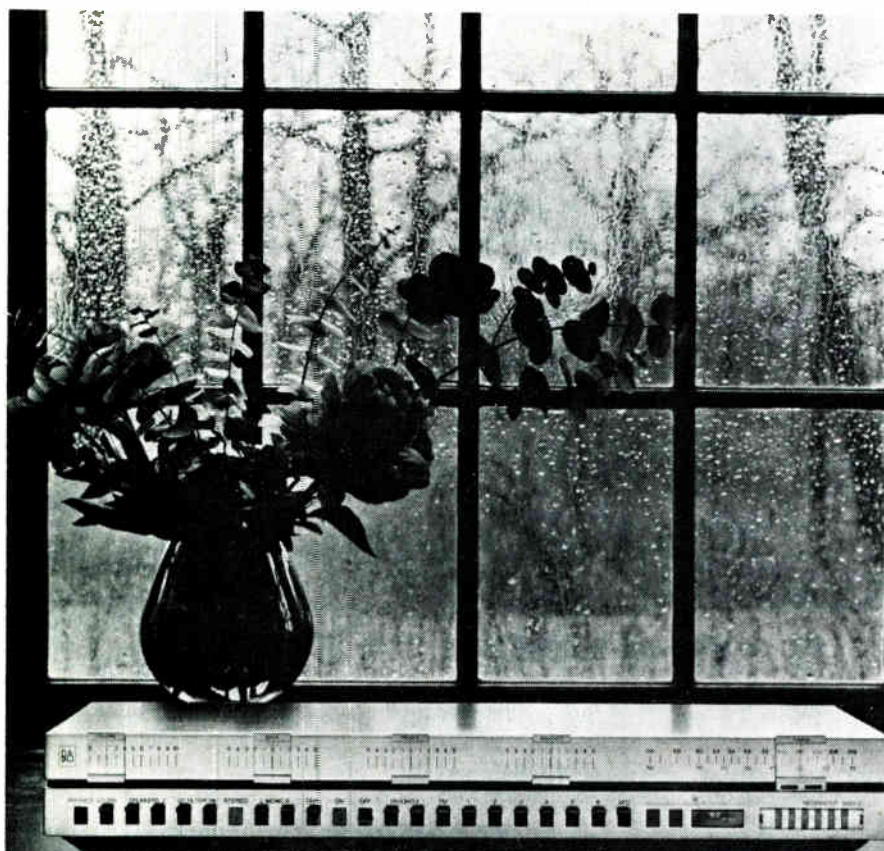
CIRCLE 92 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Audio-Technica introduces phono cartridge line

A new line of phono cartridges from Audio-Technica uses a dual moving magnet design to provide, the company says, better tracking ability and extended response. The Model AT-14S (shown) has a nude Shibata stylus on a tapered cantilever and tracks at $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ grams. The price is \$69.95. Other models range from the AT-10 (spherical stylus, \$19.95) to the limited-edition, hand-selected AT-15S (nude Shibata stylus, \$150).

CIRCLE 155 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Beomaster 3000-2, Stereo Receiver from Denmark

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From Denmark for discerning Americans.

Do you appreciate subtle differences in the reproduction of fine music? We do.

We are Bang and Olufsen, one of the most respected manufacturers of electronic products in all of Europe. We have perfected a stereo system that combines sophisticated electronic circuitry with the restrained elegance of Scandinavian design.

We'd like you to know more about us. The Museum of Modern Art knows us well enough to have placed our work in their permanent design collection. Once you review the B & O system you'll probably share the Museum's appreciation for our Beovox speakers and unique Beomaster 3000-2 FM Stereo Receiver. The receiver, for instance, features ceramic filters, field effect transistors and integrated circuits for superior performance and sensitivity. There is the convenience of precision slide tuning and varactor diodes to simplify station pre-setting and selection. Other advantages are inputs for a turntable and two tape decks, plus outputs for two sets of speakers.

Bang & Olufsen

The best time to upgrade your component system is before you buy it.

If you're a typical reader of this magazine, you most likely have a sizeable investment in a component system. So our advice about upgrading might come a little late.

What you might have overlooked, however, is the fact that your records are the costliest and most fragile component of all. As well as the only one you will continue to invest in.

And since your turntable is the only component that handles these valuable records, advice about upgrading your turntable is better late than never.

Any compromise here will be costly. And permanent. Because there is just no way to improve a damaged record.

If the stylus can't respond accurately and sensitively to the rapidly changing contours of the groove walls, especially the hazardous peaks and valleys of the high frequencies, there's trouble. Any curve the stylus can't negotiate, it may lop off. And with those little bits of vinyl gone the high notes and part of your investment.

If the record doesn't rotate at precisely the correct speed, musical pitch will be distorted. No amplifier tone controls can correct this distortion.

If the motor isn't quiet and free of vibration, an annoying rumble will accompany the music. You can get rid of rumble by using the bass control, but only at the expense of the bass you want to hear.

Experienced component owners know all this. Which is why so many of them, especially record reviewers and other music experts, won't play their records on anything but a Dual. From the first play on.

Now, if you'd like to know what several independent test labs say about Dual, we'll send you complete reprints of their reports. Plus a reprint of an article from a leading music magazine telling you what to look for in record playing equipment. Whether you're upgrading or not.

Better yet, just visit your franchised United Audio dealer and ask for a demonstration.

You'll find Dual automatic turntables priced from \$109.50 to \$199.50. That may be more than you spent on your present turntable, or more than you were intending to spend on your next one.

But think of it this way. It will be a long, long time before you'll need to upgrade your Dual.

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CIRCLE 19 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
WorldRadioHistory

At Last—An Up-to-Date Tuners and

by Peter E. Sutheim

WHERE BROADCASTING is concerned, high fidelity and stereo FM have become virtually synonymous; and FM tuners and receivers today invariably include the multiplex circuitry necessary to stereo reception. Yet high fidelity product specifications rarely include much information on stereo performance of FM circuitry, and the IHF (Institute of High Fidelity) standard on FM tuner testing—promulgated in mono days—makes no mention of stereo. So while we buy our FM equipment for stereo listening, our choice must be based on information relevant only to mono performance.

Not that FM receiver design has been standing still for ten years. On the contrary, two innovations of the early Sixties have been like whips cracking over the designers' heads: the FCC's 1961 decision to permit the multiplexed broadcasts themselves and the widespread application of the transistor (and, later, the integrated circuit). The demands made on circuitry by the need to handle and decode multiplexed information, plus the adaptability of solid-state devices to even the most complex circuit configurations, has brought a sophistication and refinement to present equipment that surpasses that of a decade ago.

The use of ICs and field-effect transistors (FETs) literally transformed many areas of electronics—not just in terms of their compactness, economy of manufacture, and reliability, but in circuit design itself—in the kinds of choices an engineer makes to solve a design problem. Designs that were unwieldy or even inconceivable with tubes, and are still uneconomically complex with discrete transistors, have become standard with ICs. The results are usually pleasing in every way: They work better; they cost less to manufacture; they are more reliable, more compact, and more convenient.

The price of stereo is not only greater complexity in the transmitting and receiving equipment, but—perhaps more important in this context—poorer signal-to-noise ratios in the signals themselves. Unquestionably, when a channel of given capacity transmits more information, that information becomes more vulnerable to disruption by noise—meaning unwanted signals or random disturb-

The author, a former audio editor of Radio-Electronics, is a professional recordist and audio consultant.

ances. While most of us are aware of a usual increase in background noise level, and sometimes distortion, when we switch from mono reception to stereo, we tend to forget that this degradation of signal-to-noise ratio is largely an inherent consequence of transmitting stereo instead of mono.

There are definite theoretical limits to how well even the best possible tuner can perform when it has to handle a stereo signal. A stereo signal contains more information than a mono signal—namely, the stereo “difference” information that sorts out left and right components within the “sum” signal we call mono. A subcarrier that forms part of the FM station's signal transmits this difference information. The subcarrier, a 19-kHz pilot signal (to keep the receiver's demultiplexing synchronized with the transmitter's multiplexing), a little extra space for the fallibilities of available filters, and still more space to allow for a background-music subcarrier (the well-known SCA subchannel)—all this drastically increases the information “loading” of the FM channel.

The greater bandwidth required to accommodate all of this information makes a stereo tuner more susceptible to noise than an equivalent mono tuner. FM theory can calculate the amount of degradation quite precisely, and it works out to approximately 23 dB as long as the peak noise intensity is not much greater than one tenth of the peak signal strength. Other design systems could have been used—and were tested—that would have degraded stereo performance less, but only at the expense of compatibility with SCA reception or of more complicated circuitry.

This does not mean that the ultimate program-to-noise ratio of stereo reception must be 23 dB worse than mono reception. Clearly, good stereo reception gives just as quiet a background as one gets from the best mono broadcast. What it does mean is that even with theoretically perfect equipment the RF (radio-frequency) input signal strength must be about 23 dB greater to produce a given degree of quieting (suppression of noise and distortion) with a stereo signal received in the stereo mode than with a mono signal received in the mono mode. A 23-dB increase in voltage corresponds to a factor of approximately 14. Thus if 10

Approach to Stereo FM Receivers

The fixation with mono FM sensitivity as a performance index can be misleading.

microvolts will produce an acceptable level of quieting in mono, it will take about 140 microvolts to produce the same degree of suppression of total noise, hum, and distortion in stereo, all other things being equal.

That fact can be interpreted in several ways. One somewhat simplistic interpretation would have you move in toward the transmitter (say, from 70 miles away to 5 miles away) to get the same quality of reception in stereo as you do in mono. While unrealistic, this dramatizes how drastically you lose coverage when you receive a stereo broadcast in the stereo mode. Further on, I'll offer suggestions on what to do about that.

Getting the Facts

The only existing U.S. measurement standard for FM tuners was published in December 1958, some two-and-a-half years before stereo FM broadcasting officially began, by the IHF (then the IHFM—Institute of High Fidelity Manufacturers). While not explicitly giving performance criteria, the IHF did standardize measurement techniques and procedures so that results of tests made by different labs on different tuners could be compared meaningfully. The question is: How well does the standard accomplish its goal?

The measurement procedures themselves imply certain assumptions about the performance of tuners—assumptions that now may be invalid in these days of stereo broadcasting and tremendous technical improvements. For example, sensitivity is to be measured by using a 30-dB suppression of total hum, noise, and distortion below the level of the audio. A 30-dB signal-to-noise ratio is excellent for communications where intelligibility is all that is demanded; it is barely adequate (if that) for high fidelity music reproduction. In this and many other examples, the standard's authors may have been overcautious or excessively eager to see that no manufacturer's tuner would look too bad when measured by the specified procedures. Any decent tuner now, some fourteen years later, will still give a respectable sensitivity figure (that is, a nice low number) for 40- or perhaps even 50-dB quieting,

which is much more meaningful. We have learned also that sensitivity as such is hardly the most important of ten or so specifications that can be applied to an FM tuner. Yet, like the horsepower of a car or the output power of an amplifier, it has become the popular number one thinks of first and uses most to characterize the unit. The blame for that rests partly with the IHF standard and overzealous advertising based on it.

Through a combination of excusable ignorance, lack of foresight, and inexcusable commercial pressure, the IHF standard for tuners is clearly inadequate for mono FM. But more important now, it offers little help in checking a tuner's performance on stereo signals. Although the bulk of musical FM broadcasting today is in stereo, neither manufacturers nor magazines in this country have been publishing sensitivity or quieting characteristics measured in the stereo mode. In this respect the stereo data provided by CBS Laboratories for the accompanying illustrations represent a radical departure.

Since stereo channel separation curves and harmonic distortion figures are obvious gauges of stereo reproduction quality, they always have been shown. But it is less well known that a tuner's sensitivity—the signal voltage required at its antenna terminals to produce a specified amount of suppression of noise and distortion—is always theoretically poorer in stereo than in mono. A tuner aligned for the best possible performance on stereo signals needs a slightly greater signal from its antenna than a tuner similarly aligned for mono. To put it differently, a tuner aligned for the best IHF sensitivity only (smallest number of microvolts for a 30-dB suppression of hum, noise, and distortion) may perform very poorly in other, more important ways—especially when receiving stereo. Again, sensitivity as such is a relatively unimportant gauge of a tuner's quality.

There is no *simple* correlation between any one tuner's sensitivity figure for stereo reception and that for mono. The relationship depends on several factors in the design of the tuner—factors that influence other performance characteristics as well. By understanding the implications and interrelationships of the data presented with tuner test

reports you can easily judge how a particular tuner will perform in your situation.

Note the *steepness* of a tuner's quieting (sensitivity-vs.-limiting) curve as discussed in many articles in this magazine ["How to Understand Our FM Test Reports," HF, February 1972] and elsewhere. This is more important than the exact value at which the curve crosses the 30-dB quieting line (its IHF sensitivity rating). The curve should plunge quite rapidly to very nearly the lowest noise and distortion the tuner can manage (preferably -50 dB or better), and it should reach that value when the input signal voltage is between 10 and 50 microvolts—the lower the better. The (mono) curve shown in the illustration for the Panasonic SA-5800 is an excellent example. With the signal strength at the tuner's antenna terminals at only 20 microvolts, the total hum, noise, and distortion ("total garbage," as one engineer calls it) is 57 dB below a full-strength (100% modulated) 400-Hz tone. The Dynaco FM-5, the Fisher 801, and the Pioneer SX-626, also shown, have excellent quieting curves in that respect.

It is important to recognize that the IHF standard calls for measuring sensitivity with respect to *all* undesirable material at the tuner's output—not just random noise (hiss). Therefore a relatively high minimum quieting figure (say -40 dB) could be caused by hiss, hum, or distortion. The curve does not distinguish between them, although distortion measurements do. Since a level of -40 dB below 100% modulation corresponds to 1% of that modulation level, the curve will never fall below the -40-dB line no matter how well the tuner suppresses hiss or impulse noise if the tuner's residual distortion is 1%. Poor limiter design or insufficiently wide IF or detector bandwidth could result in such a comparatively mediocre figure. In the latter case, the deficiency should also show up as high distortion in stereo (shown in the report's "Additional Data" box), poor stereo separation, and probably also poor capture ratio.

Now look at the stereo curves. Their slope always will be less steep than that of a mono curve for the same tuner. Sometimes the measurement is made only from the point where the automatic mono/stereo switching circuitry in the tuner "decides" the signal has acceptably low noise; where the tuner permits, measurements are made right down to the 30-dB quieting point.

Frequently the stereo curve bottoms out at a value well above that for mono reception. Again, just looking at this pair of curves offers no way of knowing whether the stereo multiplex decoding circuitry, the IF stages, or the detector is at fault. Ideally, the stereo and mono curves should converge as the signal gets greater (that is, as they move toward the right in the graph). If the best stereo performance falls noticeably short of the best mono performance, the tuner is not as good as it might be.

If you live in a fringe area, you should look for a tuner whose curve shows that its total noise and distortion reaches an acceptably low value at a low RF input voltage *in the stereo mode*. As an example, examine the curve for the Panasonic SA-5800. Even though its stereo quieting figures always are about 8 dB poorer than the corresponding mono figures, the stereo curve for this tuner indicates that you will be able to receive at least acceptable stereo (noise and distortion 40 dB or more below 100% modulation) at signal values from 10 microvolts upward. Such reproduction can roughly be compared to stereo from pre-Dolby cassettes and other slow-speed tapes of a few years ago—not great but perhaps good enough to be enjoyed if you're not after the ultimate in high fidelity sound.

Contrast this with the less attractive curves in this group. The threshold circuitry of these models may not allow the tuner to switch to the stereo mode until input signal is much stronger—even as high as 30 microvolts or more. And the tuner may barely reach a quieting figure of 40 dB in stereo. (Once again, however, sensitivity curves tell only part of the story in tuner performance, and it would be a mistake to reject any model on this basis alone.)

Some Positive Approaches

Now, what can be done to fill that 23-dB gap between mono and stereo performance? Try separately or together:

1. *Changing the location of the receiving antenna.* Increasing its height is especially helpful. Other things being equal, at moderate distances from a transmitter, doubling the receiving-antenna height roughly doubles the signal voltage delivered to your tuner. In addition, raising the antenna often increases its distance from noise-causing RF sources, like the ignition systems of passing cars. If you are in the "shadow" of a hill, there may not be much you can do unless you can put your antenna on the hill. FM, like television (which is in the same general part of the electromagnetic spectrum), is basically a line-of-sight propagation medium. You get the best results when the receiving antenna can "see" the transmitting antenna.

2. *Using a more directional antenna.* A VHF antenna with several elements is usually designed to capture signals more effectively from one direction than from others. Besides intercepting more of the desired signal, a directional antenna can greatly reduce interference, both co-channel (from a station on the same frequency as the desired one or from multipath reception) and adjacent-channel (from a signal on the channel next to the desired one). Used with a tuner that has a good capture ratio and good alternate channel selectivity, a directional antenna can produce excellent reception where it seemed impossible before. But unless all the signals you want to receive are within a fairly

For the First Time in FM Testing: Stereo Sensitivity Curves

As the accompanying article points out, high fidelity FM components are invariably stereo; yet no standard for the measurement of stereo sensitivity and quieting characteristics has existed for FM tuners and receivers, and with very few exceptions these parameters have consequently gone unspecified. That lack is being remedied in all our tests of FM equipment beginning with this issue's test report section, which will include the stereo sensitivity or threshold figures together with the stereo quieting curve.

The stereo testing method represents a logical extension of our mono measurements, which are based on IHF standards. The FM carrier frequency is modulated with a 400-Hz tone, and the tuner's resultant audio output is measured for quieting (i.e., its freedom from noise and distortion, in dB) at various carrier input levels (in microvolts). Plotting these points with the carrier frequency set near the middle of the FM band (at 98 MHz) provides the quieting curve. Sensitivity is defined as the input level for which the output is minimally (30 dB) above the level of noise and distortion. This point is measured not only at 98 MHz, but at the extremes of the FM band as well: 90 and 106 MHz.

So far, the method described is equally appropriate whether mono or stereo measurements are being made; the only difference between them is the adding of a multiplex subcarrier to the stereo input. But as RF input is reduced the automatic mono/stereo switching in many tuners and receivers reverts to mono output, even with stereo broadcasts, before quieting has reached 30 dB, preventing stereo sensitivity measurements. When this happens we show the minimum input (in microvolts) for which the tuner circuit will produce a stereo output, and the quieting (in dB) that it achieves for that stereo threshold value. This, too, is tested at all three carrier frequencies.

Almost a year ago, before beginning the present stereo testing program, we asked CBS Laboratories to check these areas of performance on all FM equipment we sent them for test-report documentation. Neither the lab nor our editors knew precisely what they would find, of course. While theoretically a fairly consistent relationship *might* show up between the stereo curves and their mono counterparts, we all doubted that this would be so. And the accompanying illustrations, which are derived from that pilot testing program, prove that our doubts were well founded.

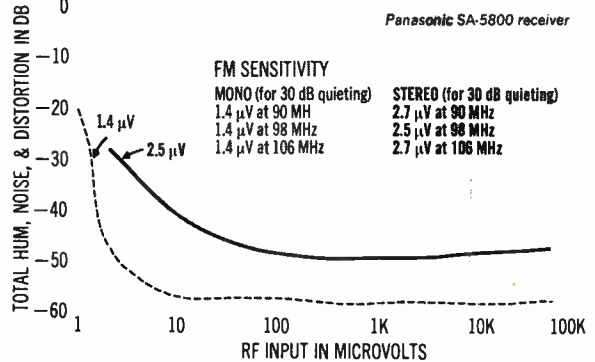
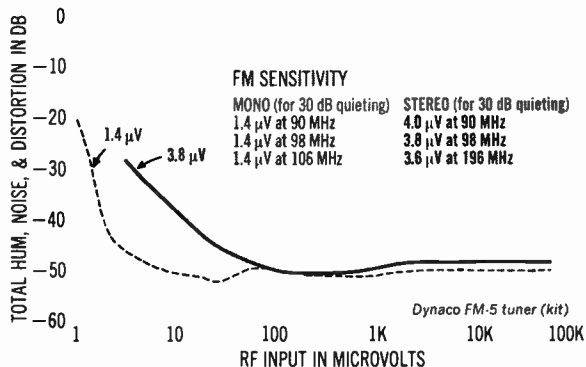
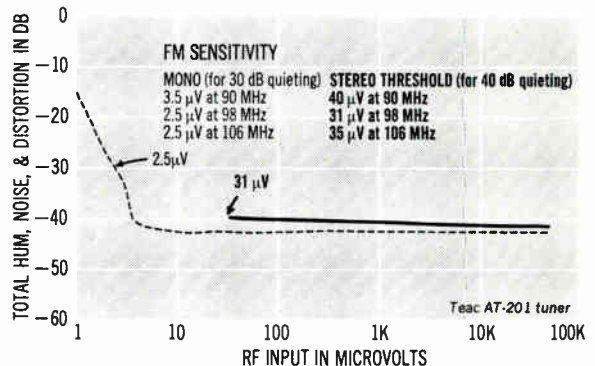
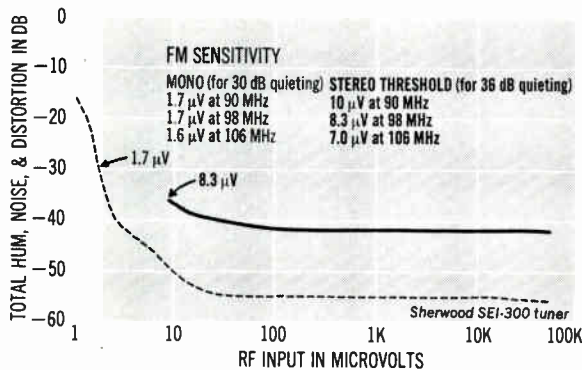
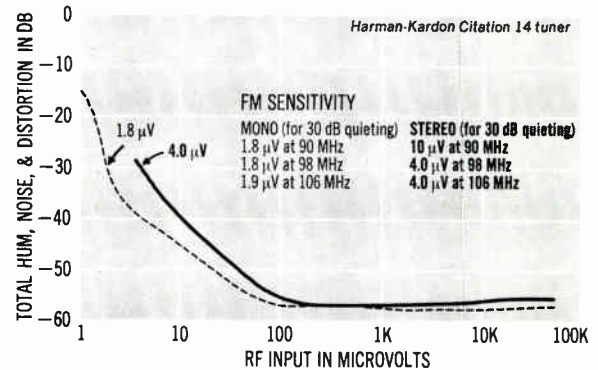
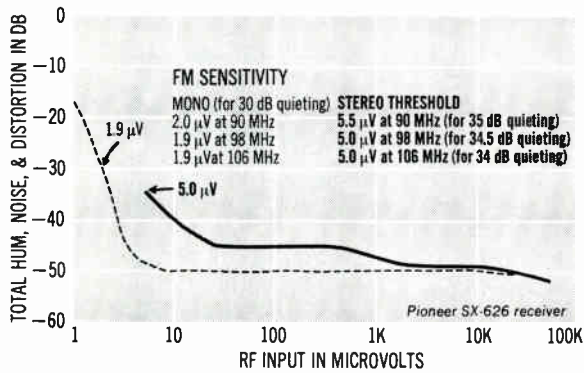
For the pilot tests, the lab did not use quite the method outlined above. The main difference between that stereo test setup and the regular mono method was in the frequency at which the FM carrier was modulated: 1 kHz, rather than 400 Hz. As a result, the mono and stereo curves shown here may not be technically comparable (though the indicated sensitivity and/or threshold ratings should be). This difference in testing method may, for example, explain why some stereo curves are slightly better than their mono counterparts at some input levels. What the curves do show unequivocally is that there is no reliable correlation whatever between mono and stereo performance in FM equipment, and that therefore mono measurements are no guide in this respect when you are buying for stereo listening.

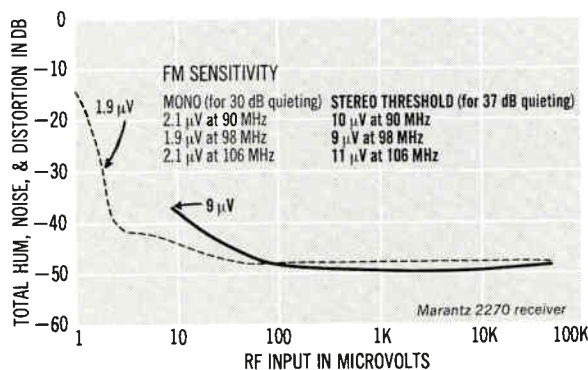
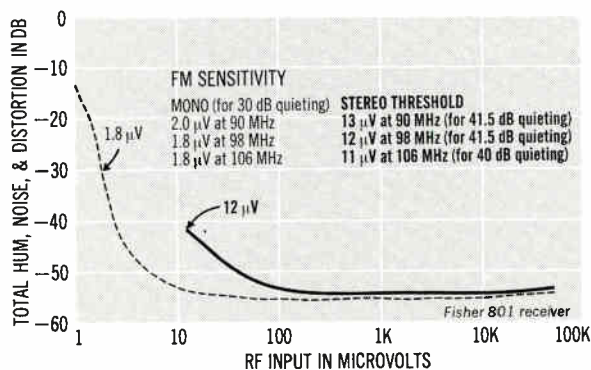
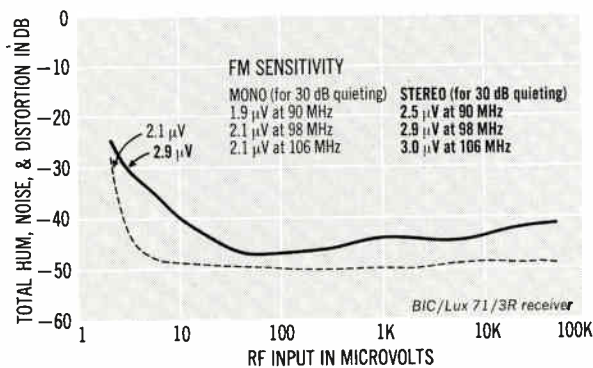
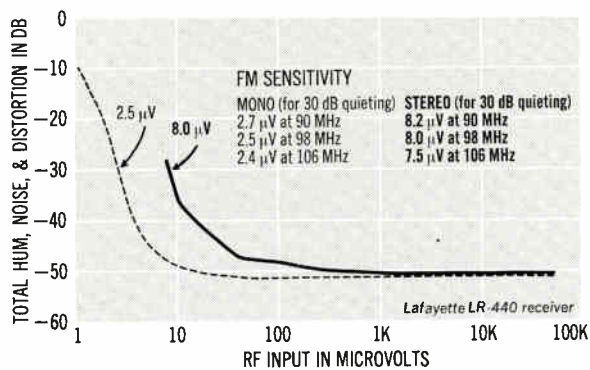
Our new testing procedure is, we believe, both sane and informative. While any magazine likes to feel that it has an "exclusive," we hope that ours does not remain so for long. We would rather see stereo measurements of FM quieting and sensitivity replace mono across the board as a description of reference for component performance.

SENSITIVITY AND QUIETING:

Mono and Stereo Compared

The graphs shown here were derived from tests made with stereo tuners and receivers submitted for test reports over several months, as described on the previous page. The dotted line in each graph represents the mono curve published in our original test report. The heavy, continuous curve is published here for the first time and represents stereo performance. Comparable curves, made by a method more precisely matched to the IHF mono sensitivity test specifications, appear in five of the test reports elsewhere in this issue.





narrow arc—that is, in nearly the same direction from your location—you will need a rotator with a directional antenna.

3. *Getting a better FM tuner.* By better, I mean one with greater *stereo* sensitivity for one thing. But again, don't ignore other factors. Unless the tuner has good alternate-channel selectivity and capture ratio, its apparently excellent sensitivity rating may be meaningless.

A booster probably won't help much unless your tuner's deficiencies are primarily in sensitivity and the booster is a very good, up-to-date one—preferably of the type that mounts at the antenna and feeds an amplified signal down the line. It is not a booster's brute gain (how much it amplifies) that matters in this application, but whether or not its own signal-to-noise ratio is better than that of the tuner's front end. If not, the booster will bring little or no improvement.

The Other Specs

So far, in order to make certain points clear, we have dwelt inordinately on sensitivity. Actually it is relatively unimportant in urban or suburban locations, where typical signal strengths are between 1,000 microvolts and several *volts* (enough to light a flashlight bulb). A glance at the accompanying curves will show that almost every tuner has achieved its maximum possible value of quieting by the time the RF input reaches 100 microvolts. Clearly, sufficient signal strength is not the problem for most listeners. In fact, some tuners show a degradation in quieting as the RF signal strength rises to very high values. The reasons for this differ with the design. It is the tuner's distortion that rises, not its noise level.

It would be illuminating to know something about the tuner's *cross-modulation rejection*—especially if the stereo sensitivity curve indicates that something peculiar (like a rise in distortion) happens at high RF levels—in situations in which the tuner will encounter high signal levels. Difficulties of this sort suggest that the manufacturer has not been sufficiently concerned with high RF levels. Cross-modulation results from excessive signal levels at the front end of the tuner and generally causes one or more stations to appear at several spots on the tuning dial, often right on top of or right next to a weaker station.

If you have this problem with your present tuner, you may be able to reduce it by using a *less* effective antenna or by reducing antenna height, but only at the sacrifice of the weaker stations, which you then may not be able to hear at all.

Thanks to the field-effect transistor, this is much less of a problem than it was in the early days of transistor tuners. A good tuner today should handle an input signal range of 80 dB, or 10,000 to 1. In other words, its spec for cross-modulation re-

jection figure should be 80 dB. A figure of 70 dB is acceptable, but the higher the better. This may well be a most important specification for city dwellers.

If you expect to use a relatively sensitive tuner in a suburban location with a good outdoor antenna, its selectivity (its ability to reject interfering stations on channels near the one you want) is almost equally important. *Adjacent-channel selectivity* figures express the degree to which the tuner suppresses the signal from the channels next to the one you want. (For example, the channels adjacent to 99.5 MHz are 99.3 and 99.7 MHz. FM channels are spaced 200 kHz—0.2 MHz—apart and always end in an odd number.) *Alternate-channel selectivity* refers to discrimination against the next adjacent channel—99.1 and 99.9 MHz in this example.

The FCC never allocates local stations closer than four channels (800 kHz) apart—for instance, 96.3 and 97.1 MHz. But any decent tuner with a modest antenna will be sensitive enough to get stations from other nearby locations that have been allocated frequencies in between: say, 96.7 MHz. It would be nice if the tuner could separate those three stations cleanly, without audible interference. That's where alternate-channel selectivity comes in. While figures of 40 dB once were considered respectable, today's quality equipment will do better than 60 dB; the higher the figure, the better.

Adjacent-channel selectivity is a delicate matter. It is extremely difficult—some say impossible—to design IF filters that will pass all the required sidebands for good stereo performance on the desired channel (which may require a bandpass of about 250 kHz) and still discriminate adequately against the sidebands of the adjacent channels' signals. Still, some of the best tuners on the market are able under certain conditions to extract a usable signal from each of several FM channels only 200 kHz apart.

Another vital specification is *capture ratio*. The capture effect is unique to FM—nothing like it exists for AM—and means that a signal only slightly stronger than another signal on the same frequency will "capture" the detector of an FM tuner and effectively block the weaker signal. The ratio of the strengths of the stronger (wanted) signal and the weaker (unwanted) signal is called the capture ratio. In the best tuners it may be as little as 1 dB; the smaller the better, but 2 to 3 dB is an excellent figure. A good capture ratio usually works with good selectivity to make possible the adjacent-channel legerdemain described in the previous paragraph.

A good capture ratio also has a profound effect on a tuner's ability to cope with multipath interference. Multipath reception occurs when the receiving antenna picks up the desired station via two or more paths of different lengths. One path may be a direct, line-of-sight path, others may be reflections from hills, aircraft, or tall structures, or all the signals may be reflected. Because of the different (and sometimes changing) path lengths, they arrive

at different times, causing erratic cancellation and reinforcement of certain sidebands in the FM signal. Any alteration in sidebands creates distortion and, in case of stereo, confusion between channels. A tuner with a good capture ratio, aided if necessary by a properly aimed directional antenna, can often latch onto the strongest signal, be it original or reflected, and suppress the others into inaudibility.

Capture ratio is intimately related to the bandwidth of the tuner's detector and to the limiter quality—its *AM rejection*, or how well the tuner suppresses any changes in the intensity (amplitude) of the signal. Because instantaneous frequency deviations of the transmitted signal carry the desired information in FM, the receiver can, and should, be completely insensitive to any changes in carrier amplitude or intensity. Any amplitude modulation (AM) of the carrier represents interference or noise of some kind—most likely pulse noise from electric motors, ignition systems, etc., or another FM station "beating" with the desired one. The better the tuner's ability to reject AM, the more useful it will be, especially in areas of relatively high electrical noise, such as cities. AM suppression should be 40 to 50 dB or more (the higher the number, the better).

In Search of Sanity

Once you start digging into the theory of FM transmission, reception, and tuner design, you almost inevitably conclude that real improvement in one aspect of a tuner's performance cannot occur without corresponding improvements in most of its other significant aspects. Now and then a new model draws attention with a spectacular improvement in one characteristic (too often sensitivity). If the engineering effort and the advertising behind the tuner are sincere, there should be similar improvements in most of the other important characteristics.

If the sensitivity figure, say, seems disproportionately good compared to other features—considering also the price of the unit—suspect "tweaking." Tweaking is a test-bench procedure closely related to fudging and finagling. If the hottest sensitivity is what you are after, you can get it, but only by diluting virtually every other property of a good tuner: good capture ratio, low stereo distortion, good separation. They all interlock. Hence the need for across-the-board upgrading if the improvement is to have real meaning for the user.

Most of the gains made in FM tuner design over the last few years have been real, thanks to many factors in circuit design. But the temptation to tweaking remains; and as long as mono FM sensitivity continues to be the most talked-about specification in tuner performance, it also will remain the one most likely to be tweaked—usually at the expense of stereo performance. ■



Fisher 504:

Top Value in Stereo/Quadraphonic Receiver

THE FIRST FIVE REPORTS in this month's issue are the first in which stereo (as well as mono) sensitivity and quieting data are presented. For an explanation of this new testing technique, see the announcement in the foregoing article.

The Equipment: Fisher 504, a stereo/quadraphonic FM/AM receiver in wood case. Dimensions: 21 1/2 by 7 by approx. 16 inches, including case and projections at back of case. Price: \$499.95. Manufacturer: Fisher Radio Corp., 11-40 45th Rd., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

Comment: The Fisher 504 is so loaded with features and so competent in its performance that we can confidently say it represents the best value we've yet encountered in a quadraphonic receiver. Let's begin with the front panel. Across the top are mode indicator lights (two-channel, SQ, four-channel), FM center-tuning and FM/AM signal-strength meters, tuning dial, input-selector indicator lights, tuning knob, and finally a special audio display that indicates relative signal strengths in the four channels by means of four pilot lights. Across the bottom are the AC power switch, front and back headphone jacks, five tone-control sliders (front bass, front treble, midrange, back bass, back treble), and at the center of the panel, a quadraphonic "joystick" balance control flanked by eight switches: reduced volume (which cuts output by about 20 dB), FM muting, SQ decoder, FM noise filter, AM DNL (dynamic noise limiter—an unusual and welcome feature comparable in its effect to a combination of muting and noise filtering in FM), high filter, low filter, and loudness. Continuing across the bottom panel we have a seven-position out-

put selector, five-position mode/monitor selector, five-position input selector, master volume slider, on/off switch for the audio display, and phone jacks for connecting the input and output of an outboard tape deck.

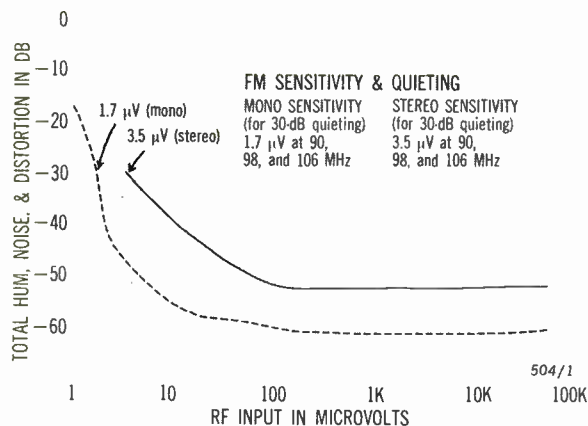
The total complement of back-panel preamp connections includes magnetic phono, two aux inputs (both quadraphonic), and quadraphonic tape record/play-back—plus a set of quadraphonic input connections, marked "accessory" with devices like room equalizers in mind, that can be used as a second set of tape monitor connections. There is plenty of provision, therefore, for the use of outboard Q-8 tape or Quadradisc equipment—to say nothing of stereo program sources—while the built-in decoder will take care of matrixed discs or simulated quadraphonics from stereo sources. Spring clips are provided for two quadraphonic sets of speakers—a total of sixteen clips for eight speakers.

When the unit is switched from quadraphonics to the stereo mode, an odd thing happens. Into 8-ohm loads the total rated power increases from 128 watts (32 x 4) to 180 watts (90 x 2); into 4-ohm loads it *drops* from 160 watts (40 x 4) to 100 watts (50 x 2). This behavior is easier to describe than to explain and is a concomitant of the unusual 4/2-channel switching configuration plus the amplifier's feedback circuits. The result is that the numbers involved are unusually confusing to the uninitiated. Suffice it to say that for quadraphonic use, the 504 delivers plenty of power for each of the four loudspeakers—including extremely inefficient ones—of conventional design in any normal room, and even enough power for two sets (eight loudspeakers) in many situations.

And being conservatively rated by Fisher (as the lab data show), it is also an unusually clean amplifier at

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.

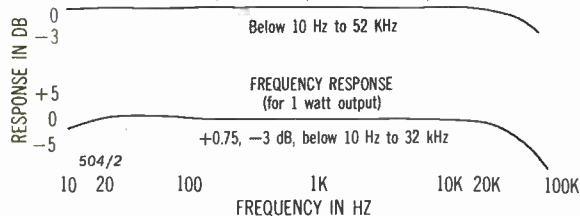


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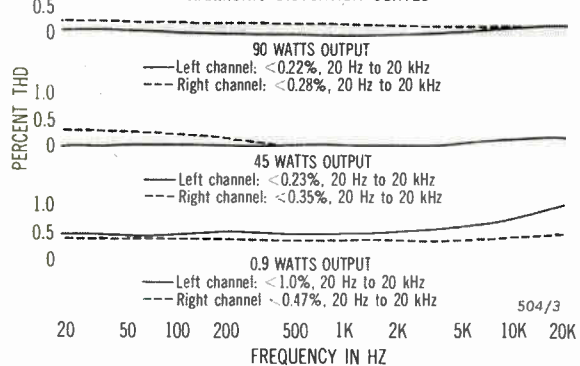
STEREO CHANNELS INDIVIDUALLY
 Left at clipping: 128.0 watts for 0.25% THD
 Left at 0.5% THD: 130.4 watts
 Right at clipping: 126.4 watts for 0.30% THD
 Right at 0.5% THD: 129.6 watts

FOUR CHANNELS SIMULTANEOUSLY
 Left front at clipping: 35.3 watts for 0.11% THD
 Left back at clipping: 36.1 watts for 0.10% THD
 Right front at clipping: 35.3 watts for 0.06% THD
 Right back at clipping: 36.1 watts for 0.10% THD

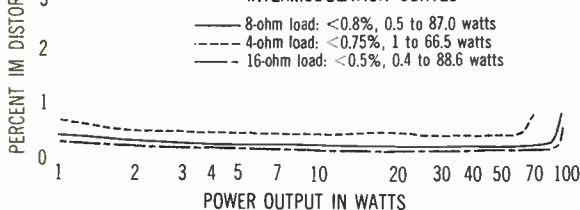
POWER BANDWIDTH
 (for 0.5% THD; 0 dB = 90 watts)



HARMONIC DISTORTION CURVES



INTERMODULATION CURVES

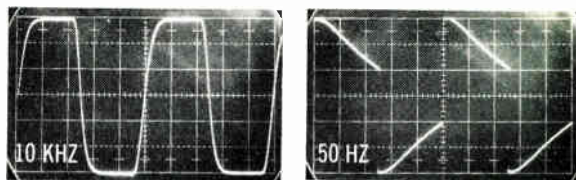


rated output. If we have any quibble with this section of the 504 it is that distortion does tend to creep up a bit—but only a bit—at low output (below 1 watt). This is a small price to pay for what is, over-all, the best amplifier performance we've yet encountered in a quadrasonic receiver.

The tuner also is exceptionally fine. The stereo quieting curve is so good that it resembles the *mono* curve in many an inexpensive receiver; the 504's *mono* curve is superb. The ultimate quieting in both (better than 50 dB in stereo, 60 dB in mono) suggests the finest of separate tuners. Don't be unduly alarmed at the 17% distortion figure at 10 kHz in stereo reception; as we've pointed out before, the harmonic products of 10 kHz are above audibility, so this figure represents more electrical than audible performance.

A price of \$500 is not peanuts, but we have yet to examine in detail any quadrasonic receiver—at any price—that offers more, over-all, to the music listener.

CIRCLE 141 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Square-wave response

Fisher 504 Receiver Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	1.2 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	66 dB		
S/N ratio	66 dB		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.08%	0.20%	0.25%
1 kHz	0.14%	0.19%	0.20%
10 kHz	0.73%	17%	17%
IM distortion	0.5%		
19-kHz pilot	-37 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-59 dB		
Frequency response	mono +2.75, -0.5 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
	L ch +2.25, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
	R ch +2.5, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
Channel separation	> 40 dB, 27 Hz to 1.3 kHz		
	> 30 dB, 20 Hz to 5.4 kHz		
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	30		
Input characteristics (for 90 watts output)	Sensitivity S/N ratio		
phono	2.2 mV	58 dB	
aux 1	210 mV	66 dB	
aux 2	210 mV	65 dB	
tape monitor	240 mV	66 dB	
accessory	240 mV	66 dB	
RIAA equalization accuracy	+0, -2 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz		

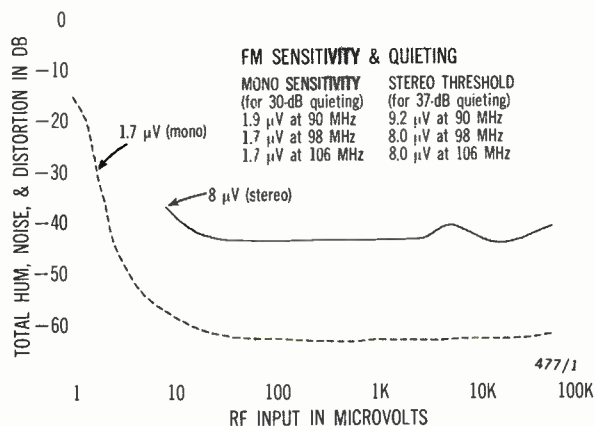


A Powerful Receiver from Scott

The Equipment: Scott 477, a stereo FM/AM receiver in leatherette-finish case. Dimensions: 17½ by 5½ by approx. 15 inches, including projections front and rear. Price: \$445; wood case optional. Manufacturer: H. H. Scott, Inc., 111 Powder Mill Rd., Maynard, Mass. 01754.

Comment: The 477 is an unusual receiver in many ways, some of which are suggested immediately by a rundown of its control and connection options. The dial area at the top of the front panel is fairly straightforward: AM/FM signal-strength meter; FM center-tuning meter; the dial itself with lighting pointer, selector indicators, and stereo indicator; tuning knob. The input selector has positions for mike/phono 1, phono 2, FM, AM, and "extra"—what most manufacturers label "aux." Next are stereo phone jacks that parallel the tape input and output connections on the back panel, then miniature phone jacks for left and right mike inputs. The balance, ganged bass, ganged treble, and volume knobs are followed by a series of pushbutton switches: loudness compensation, tape monitor, mode (mono/stereo), high filter, FM muting, and loudspeakers (1, 2, 3, 1 & 2, 1 & 3). Finally there are the main power switch and the headphone jack, which is live at all times.

On the back panel are several groups of phono jacks. The group for the "extra" inputs also includes an output from the FM detector section for use in adding an out-board four-channel decoder if and when a discrete or quasi-discrete broadcast method is approved by the FCC. Other groups of phono jacks handle tape input



POWER OUTPUT DATA

CHANNELS INDIVIDUALLY

Left at clipping: 75.0 watts for 0.11% THD
 Left at 0.5% THD: 78.1 watts
 Right at clipping: 75.0 watts for 0.09% THD
 Right at 0.5% THD: 78.1 watts

CHANNELS SIMULTANEOUSLY

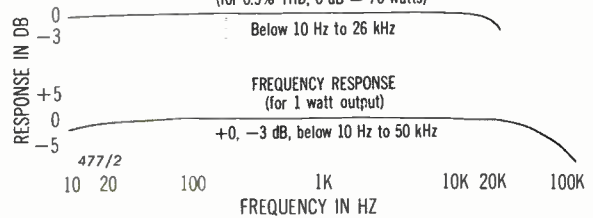
Left at clipping: 67.9 watts for 0.15% THD
 Right at clipping: 67.9 watts for 0.14% THD

POWER BANDWIDTH (for 0.5% THD, 0 dB = 70 watts)

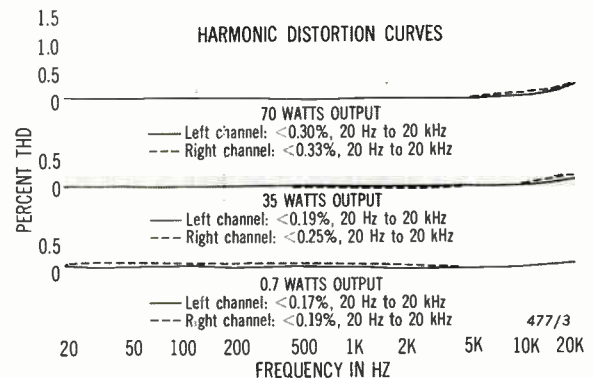
Below 10 Hz to 26 kHz

FREQUENCY RESPONSE (for 1 watt output)

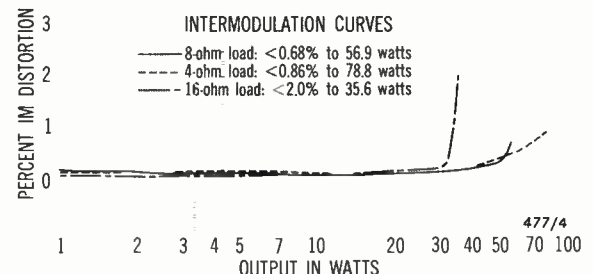
+0, -3 dB, below 10 Hz to 50 kHz



HARMONIC DISTORTION CURVES



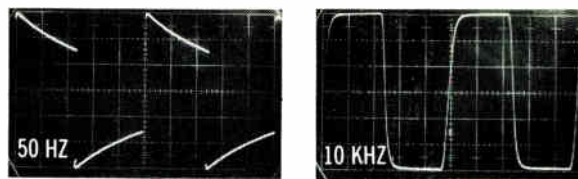
INTERMODULATION CURVES



and output, "accessory," and phono 1 and 2. The accessory connections actually are preamp output and power-amp input jacks and are connected by jumpers (supplied) in normal use. Their most obvious function is in adding room equalizers, quadraphonic add-on units, and similar equipment; Scott provides instructions for adapting them as a second tape-recorder connection, in conjunction with the "extra" input. There are two switches close to the phono inputs. One adjusts preamp sensitivity (high/low) to the output of the cartridge in use; the other converts phono 1 for use (via the front-panel jacks) as a mike preamp. The main speaker connections are of the usual spring-clip type; those for the second and third speaker pair are phono jacks. There are screw connections for AM antenna and 300-ohm FM antenna, a socket for 75-ohm FM antenna, and a thumbscrew connection for grounding associated equipment—a turntable, for example. There also are switched and unswitched convenience AC outlets (one of each), pop-out output fuses, and a circuit breaker that protects the entire unit. If you have any trouble with the unit—or the system to which it is connected—you'll find these last two items particularly handy in design. Your service technician may find a special bias test socket on the back panel helpful as well. We note that Scott includes an order form for the 477 service manual (\$1.00) with the unit. This seems like an excellent idea; even if you don't plan to do your own servicing, the manual can make the difference between a successful repair and a fiasco at your local repair service.

Not that we foresee any special need for repairs on the 477. Its various functions performed well in our home tests. And in the lab it demonstrated the excellence of its design. Harmonic distortion proved to be well under spec (0.5%) in all the amplifier tests, for example; only three readings were above 0.2%. The FM section likewise turned in excellent figures, of which those for mono quieting (better than 62 dB over much of the operating range) were perhaps the most spectacular. All told this is the most impressive Scott receiver we've tested in some years, and it's a solid design job on any terms.

CIRCLE 144 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Square-wave response

Scott 477 Receiver Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	1.5 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	60 dB		
S/N ratio	73 dB		
IM distortion	0.7%		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.06%	0.64%	0.78%
1 kHz	0.10%	0.19%	0.21%
10 kHz	0.26%	1.9%	1.1%
Frequency response	mono + 0, -3 dB, 25 Hz to 15 kHz		
L ch	+ 0, -3 dB, 25 Hz to 15 kHz		
R ch	+ 0, -3 dB, 27 Hz to 15 kHz		
Channel separation	>35 dB, 130 Hz to 3.3 kHz		
	>25 dB, 20 Hz to 7.2 kHz		
19-kHz pilot	-65 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-68 dB		
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	25		
Input characteristics (for 70 watts output)	Sensitivity S/N ratio		
phono, high	1.7 mV	67.5 dB	
phono, low	3.5 mV	70 dB	
mike	4.8 mV	70 dB	
tape, extra	250 mV	80 dB	
RIAA equalization accuracy	+ 0.75, -0 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz		

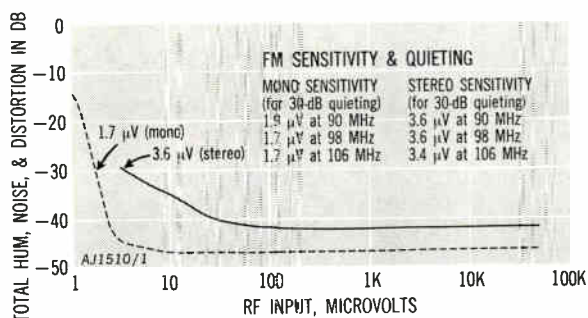
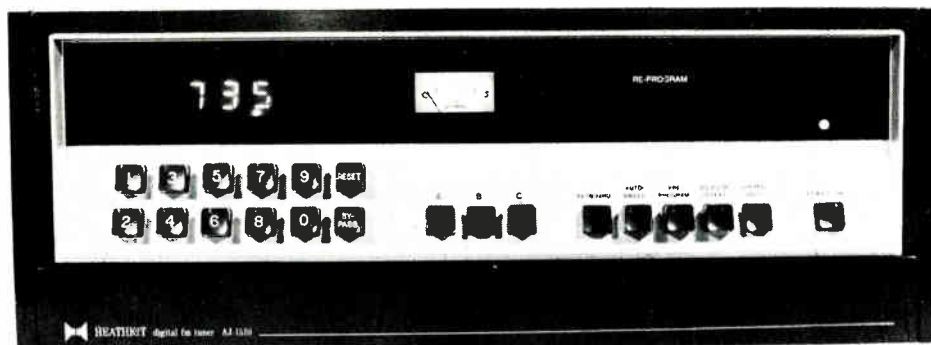
The World's Most De Luxe FM Tuner Kit

The Equipment: Heath AJ-1510, a digital FM tuner in kit form (not available wired). Dimensions: 16 1/4 by 6 by 14 3/4 inches. Price: \$539.95; optional wood case, \$24.95. Manufacturer: Heath Co., Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022.

Comment: This Heath tuner is just plain fun. No wonder that three of the eight audio experts we asked to select their Christmas present for last month's issue originally selected it. In talking about the AJ-1510, Heath uses the phrase "computer tuner"—a phrase that turns out to be far more than just advertisingese for "new." All the visible controls on the front panel are pushbuttons: the ten digits for punching up the station frequency plus a reset button for clearing the frequency "memory"; an auto-

sweep button plus a bypass button to reactivate the sweep mode once the tuner has locked in onto a station; and a stereo-only button, three buttons for choosing card-programmed stations, a muting (Heath, in communications style, calls it squelch) defeat button, and the power-switch button. Above these buttons is a blackout dial through which the tuned frequency appears on digital-readout tubes, together with the signal-strength/multipath meter. (There is no center-tuning meter since the phase-lock circuitry prevents mistuning.) There also are various indicators that appear, depending on operation—even one that announces improper programming or malfunction.

But that's not all. Hidden behind a cleverly designed pop-out panel at the bottom are card slots for station



preprogramming and controls for things like automatic gain, muting sensitivity, mode (mono, stereo, high-blend), and meter action. While one position of this last switch is intended for the detection of multipath conditions, the tuner's back panel has oscilloscope outputs as an optional aid in antenna orientation. It also contains the regular audio output jacks, screw terminals for 300-ohm or 75-ohm antenna leads, and an unswitched AC outlet.

Internal construction relies heavily on plug-in circuit boards and preassembled wiring harnesses, simplifying construction, checkout, and servicing. Like several other Heath products we have reviewed recently, the AJ-1510 includes built-in test leads and switches that convert the signal-strength meter for use in checkout, so that no external meter is needed even for alignment. But there remains a great deal to be done in building such a complex unit; our kitbuilder required some 40 hours. Most of the job is pretty straightforward, however, and few difficulties were encountered. The logic circuit did not work at first, due partly to a defective IC (many ICs are used in the unit) and partly to having missed a solder connection; but Heath's service department was as usual co-operative.

Actual performance data proved less spectacular than the unique computer logic system. Maximum quieting, for instance, was only 46.5 dB in mono; distortion figures were no better than average at, for example, about 25% in the midrange for mono operation; S/N is not much better than average.

But the lab measurements did turn up some exceptionally fine numbers. Alternate-channel selectivity

Heath AJ-1510 Tuner Additional Data

Capture ratio	1.8 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	> 100 dB		
S/N ratio	67 dB		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.36%	0.52%	0.65%
1 kHz	0.24%	0.35%	0.35%
10 kHz	0.35%	1.7%	1.2%
IM distortion	0.1%		
19-kHz pilot	-66 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-68.5 dB		
Frequency response	mono + 0.5, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
L ch	+ 1.5, -0.75 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
R ch	± 1 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
Channel separation	> 35 dB, 125 Hz to 5.6 kHz		
	> 25 dB, 33 Hz to 15 kHz		

(better than 100 dB) is the best yet measured. The tuner's ability to reject pilot and subcarrier tones (66 and 68.5 dB respectively) also is exceptional. But the star of the show remains the logic—the most comprehensive collection of tuning modes and aids we have yet worked with. One example should demonstrate what we mean. Metropolitan Opera broadcasts are available locally on at least four stations with reasonably good signals; but reception conditions, station engineering practice, and the vagaries of land-line transmission to the stations all produce differences in signal quality that may change from Saturday to Saturday or even hour to hour. Of all the tuners we have tested, only the AJ-1510's triple punched-card slots make it possible to compare stations instantaneously with unequivocally perfect tuning. This ability is a joy to the listener and, now that we've experienced it, virtually a necessity to the recordist.

CIRCLE 150 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



JVC Receiver: Moderate Cost, Special Features

The Equipment: JVC VR-5541, a stereo FM/AM receiver in wood case. Dimensions: 19½ by 6 by 13 inches. Price: \$389.95. Manufacturer: Victor Co., Japan; U.S. distributor: JVC America, Inc., 50-35 56th Rd., Maspeth, N.Y. 11378.

Comment: JVC has included its SEA (Sound-Effect Amplifier) multiband tone-control system in a variety of equipment—most of it fairly elaborate and relatively expensive. The Model 5541 combines a five-band version of the SEA with a moderately priced receiver that is at once simple and versatile, making the special advantages of SEA available in a particularly attractive form—and one that in our opinion should be of special interest to the tape hobbyist who can't afford a lavish system. But more of that in a moment.

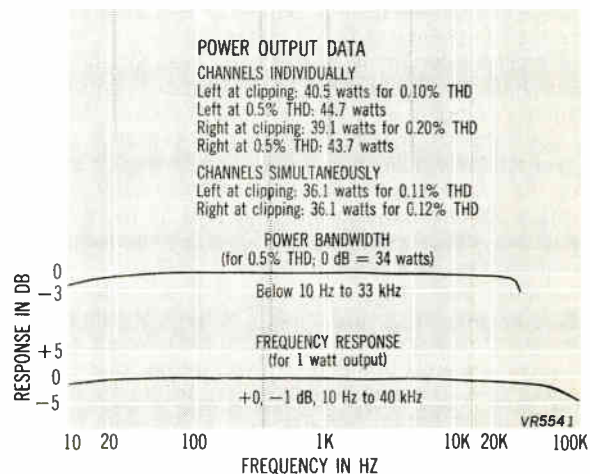
The 5541 has two meters (signal strength and center tuning) beside its tuning dial. Across the bottom are a power switch, headphone jack (live at all times), speaker selector, a group of tape-recording controls, and knobs for balance, volume, and input selection. At the right end is the SEA section: five sliders calibrated for up to 12 dB of boost or cut in frequency bands centered at nominal frequencies of 40 Hz, 250 Hz, 1 kHz, 5 kHz, and 10 kHz respectively. The sliders are continuous-acting, but have click detents every 2 dB along the scale. Below the SEA are pushbuttons for FM muting, loudness, mono mode, low filter, high filter, and SEA defeat.

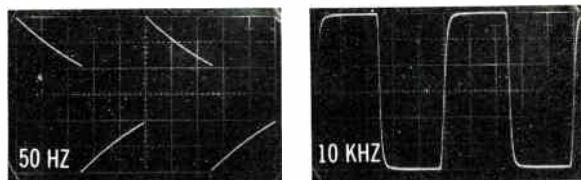
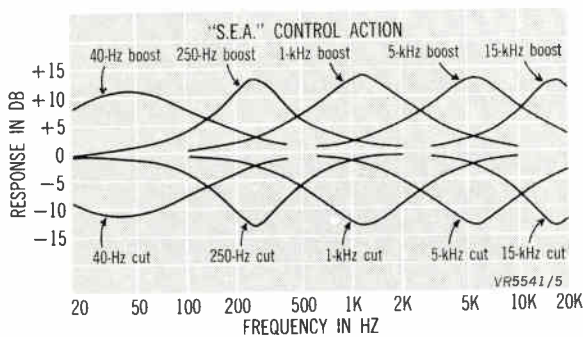
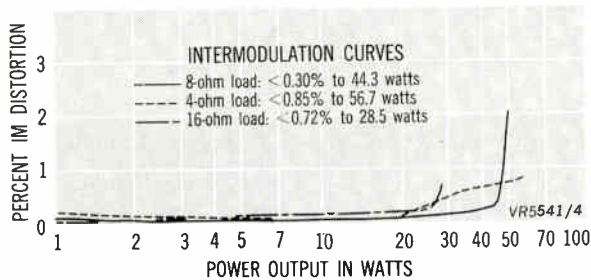
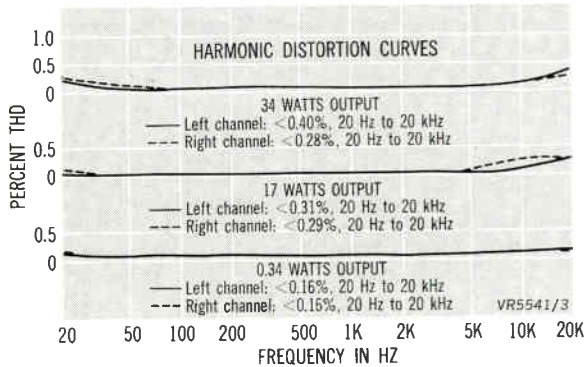
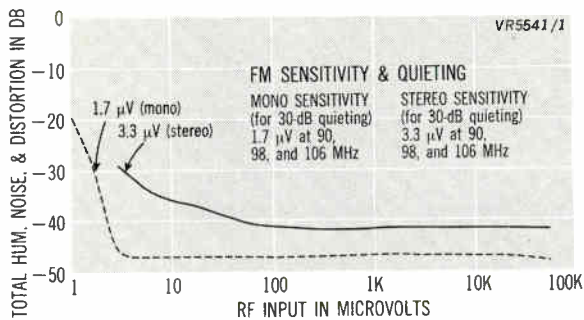
On the back panel are the usual input connectors for phono cartridge, two aux sources, two tape recorders (including recording outputs), and preamp-out/main-in connections—normally bridged by the supplied jumpers—for use with outboard equalizers or similar units. A similar jack is provided for feeding the FM detector output to a quadraphonic adapter, should one become available. The spring-clip connections for three stereo pairs of speakers are unusually handy in their arrangement. There are screwdriver terminals for AM and FM (300-ohm) antenna leads, a spring-loaded grounding connector, and two AC convenience outlets—one

switched, one unswitched. And there is a screwdriver adjustment for the FM muting threshold.

That's a lot of features for a unit in this price class, but it's not all. We said that this unit might be of particular interest to tape recordists. Not only does it have connections for two recorders, it also has phone jacks on the tape section of the front panel which can be used alternatively with the tape 2 jacks at the back. This tape panel also contains the two monitor switches. But most important of all, it includes a third switch by means of which the feed to the tape recorders can be taken off the amplifier's output (through an appropriate loss pad of course) and therefore *after* the SEA circuit. The SEA circuit thus can be used not only as a sort of simplified room equalizer (or complex set of tone controls, depending on your point of view), but as a program equalizer as well. You can copy old records, poorly equalized tapes, or any similarly substandard source and retain the SEA improvement permanently in your tape copies.

That improvement can be considerable. While there





Square-wave response

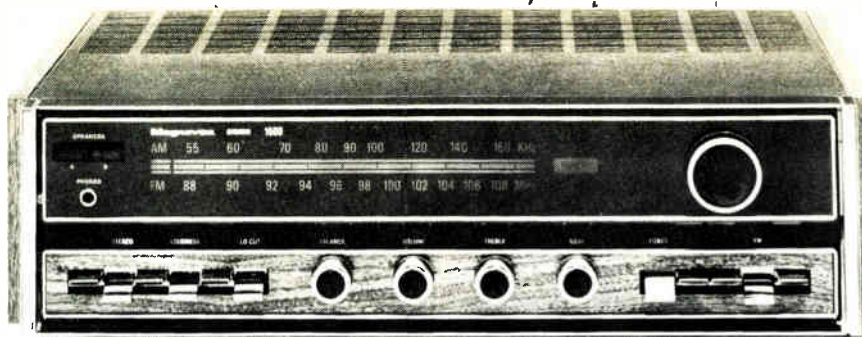
JVC VR-5541 Receiver Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	0.75 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	75 dB		
S/N ratio	69 dB		
IM distortion	0.83%		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.50%	1.0%	0.77%
1 kHz	0.43%	1.1%	0.86%
10 kHz	2.0%	12%	10%
Frequency response	mono +0, -2.5 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
	L ch +2.25, -1.5 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
	R ch +0.75, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
Channel separation	>35 dB, 20 Hz to 450 Hz		
	>25 dB, 20 Hz to 8 kHz		
19-kHz pilot	-72.5 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-75.5 dB		
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	61		
Input characteristics (for 34 watts output)	Sensitivity S/N ratio		
phono	1.6 mV	60 dB	
aux (1 & 2)	105 mV	81 dB	
tape (1 & 2)	105 mV	78.5 dB	
RIAA equalization accuracy	+0.75, -2 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz		

are some special narrow-band effects (60-Hz or 120-Hz hum, the "high-Q" resonance of some early electrical disc cutters, and so on) that the SEA cannot ameliorate without affecting a relatively wide portion of the audible spectrum, we were very impressed by what it will do in this respect. (JVC has a very similar receiver model that gives the recordist even more; the VR-5551, for an additional \$60, has a little more power plus left and right mike inputs with their own master level control.)

At 34 watts per channel the 5541's amplifier section has more than enough oomph for any conventional speaker pair in normal rooms; but if you plan to use more than one pair, models of relatively high efficiency probably would be desirable. (The speaker switching prevents simultaneous use of the outputs for all three speaker pairs.) Harmonic distortion is well under JVC's 0.5% spec and, in fact, stays below 0.1% over much of the unit's operating range. The FM section is particularly good in terms of capture ratio (better than 1 dB) and frequency response; in other respects it is about par for an inexpensive unit—and considering its special features we'd consider the 5541 to be notably inexpensive. To put it another way, we've encountered few receivers that offer so much fun per dollar—particularly to the recordist.

CIRCLE 145 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



A "Real" Receiver from Magnavox

The Equipment: Magnavox Model 8896 (one of the 1500 series), a stereo FM/AM receiver in wood-and-metal case. Dimensions: 18¾ by 5½ by approx. 16 inches, including case and projections, front and rear. Price: under \$320. Manufacturer: Magnavox Co., 345 Park Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Comment: Whenever a mass-market/console company announces "true component audio products," we tend to be skeptical. Magnavox has done so repeatedly in recent years, but until now the products involved were more gussied-up compacts than true components. The present line—to judge by the 8896, the top receiver model but one—is notably different. The 8896 can, indeed, be called a true component audio product.

Most of the control panel is fairly conventional, but with a few unusual features that reflect the peculiarities of the 8896. The AM dial is above the FM dial; and the AM section is distinctly more successful than the FM section, which lab tests show to be no better than so-so. Using only the built-in AM antenna, and FM via our local cable, stations crowd in on both. This is a joy where AM is concerned, since some receivers pick up only local stations without an external antenna, but a nuisance on FM since the dial is marked only in even megahertz. (There are no calibrations between 100 and 102, for example.) The single meter happily shows center tuning for both FM and for AM stations. Though there are two sets of speaker taps on the back panel and a head-phone jack on the front, Magnavox has made no provision for speaker switching; whatever is connected plays. A particularly confusing design feature is the lack of identification on the lever switches until you have pressed them. The identification lights up only for the switches you have pressed, forcing you to hunt about for the right switch until you have memorized them all.

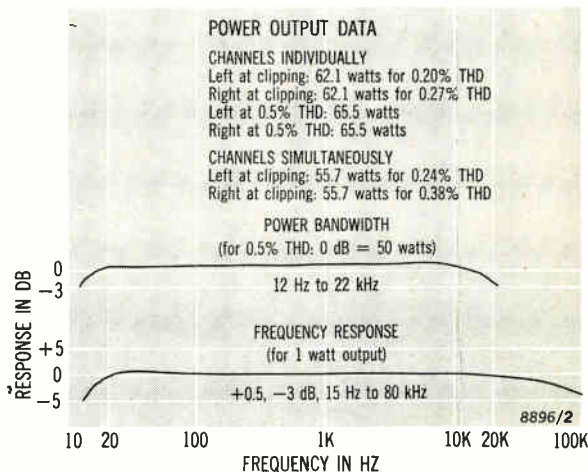
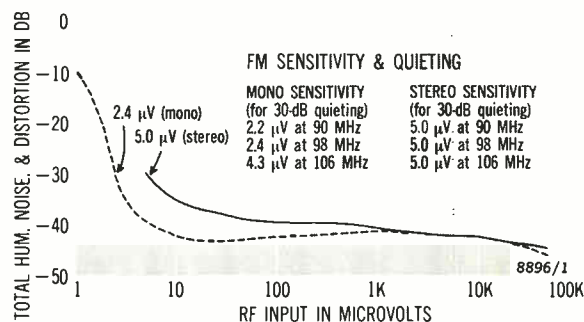
On the back panel are separate magnetic and ceramic phono inputs with a selector switch. There also is a special three-prong plug socket for use with Magnavox changers wired to shut off the entire system when the changer shuts off. The rest is conventional: phono-jack connections for tape in and out, plus aux input, screws for the FM antenna (300-ohm only) and ground, spring clips for the two pairs of speakers, one switched and one unswitched AC outlet. Finish of the knobs, plates, and other visible parts is not particularly impressive, though the appearance is neat and the construction reasonably sturdy.

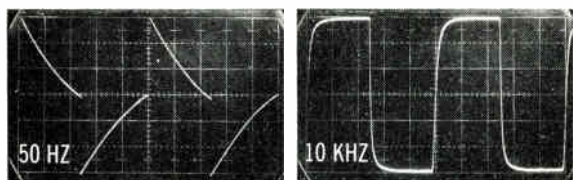
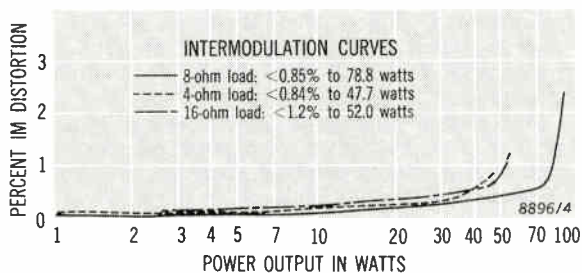
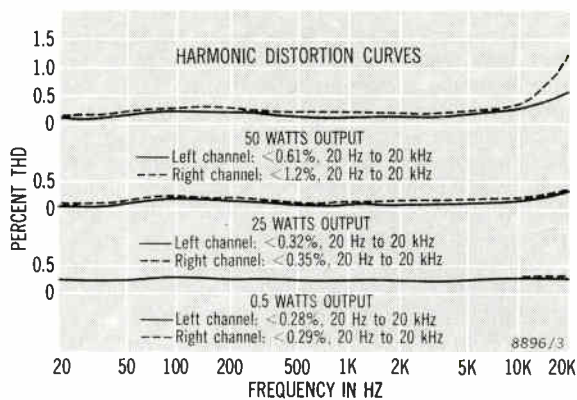
The stereo FM quieting curve is not bad. It descends to about 40 dB through most of the operating range—a less than ideal figure, but comparable to some other stereo receivers and tuners we've tested. The mono curve is not much better than the stereo curve, and in fact we would not consider it up to par. Distortion also is a little higher than average, but most of the remaining tuner measurements represent par or better for a me-

dium-priced receiver. The Magnavox amplifier-section ratings (50 watts per channel) turn out to be honest ones. Rated distortion is exceeded at rated output only by a small margin and only at the extreme top of the frequency range. (Had the unit been rated by the 1-kHz power/distortion method—which until recently was fairly common even among component manufacturers—the distortion might have run considerably higher at rated power.) Even at low output IM distortion remains quite low, while harmonic distortion averages about 0.25%—a reasonable figure. One peculiarity showed up during the CBS Labs tests: At full volume output the tone controls become inoperative. At practical operating levels in our living room, the controls do function as they should, however.

We're glad that Magnavox has made a serious effort to put out real components. (The more varied the choice, the better things are for the consumer.) But while the effort has been fairly successful, and may lead to still better things in future, we can't recommend the present model without qualification.

CIRCLE 142 ON READER-SERVICE CARD





Square-wave response

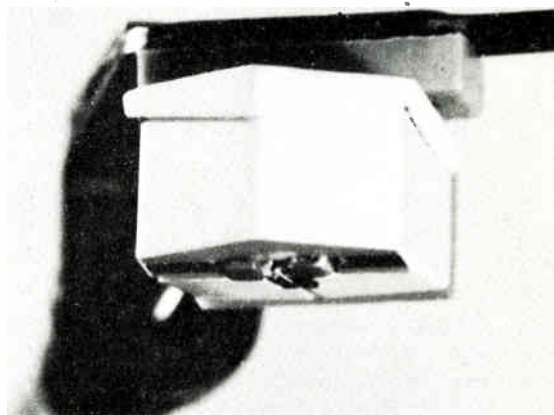
Decca's Unconventional New Pickup

The Equipment: London/Decca Mk 5, a stereo phono pickup with spherical stylus. Price: about \$100; "Export" (de luxe) version, about \$125. Manufactured by Decca Special Products, England; U.S. distributors: Paoli High Fidelity Consultants, Inc., P.O. Box 867, Paoli, Pa. 19301 (East); Audiophile Imports, 8 E. Erie St., Chicago, Ill. 60611 (Midwest); ESS, Inc., 9613 Oates Dr., Sacramento, Calif. 95827 (West).

Comment: The latest in the prestige Decca series of pickups, the new Mk 5 employs an unusual internal structure based on the use of new magnetic materials Decca claims makes possible a more direct translation of stylus motion into output signal—what the company calls "positive scanning." In addition, the new design is

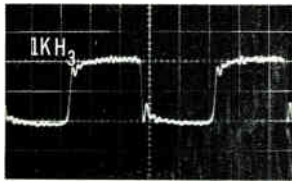
Magnavox 8896 Receiver Additional Data

Tuner Section			
Capture ratio	2 dB		
Alternate-channel selectivity	63 dB		
S/N ratio	58 dB		
THD	Mono	L ch	R ch
80 Hz	0.96%	0.57%	0.70%
1 kHz	0.80%	0.59%	0.52%
10 kHz	0.50%	2.7%	2.8%
IM distortion	1.0%		
19-kHz pilot	-45 dB		
38-kHz subcarrier	-60 dB		
Frequency response	mono		
	+2, -3 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz		
	L ch	+2.25, -3 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz	
	R ch	+2, -3 dB, 20 Hz to 15 kHz	
Stereo separation	> 30 dB, 40 Hz to 7.3 kHz		
	> 20 dB, 20 Hz to 12.5 kHz		
Amplifier Section			
Damping factor	80		
Input characteristics (for 50 watts output)	Sensitivity		
	magnetic phono	2.2 mV	S/N ratio 53 dB
	ceramic phono	100 mV	54 dB
	aux	158 mV	71 dB
	tape monitor	450 mV	69 dB
RIAA equalization accuracy	+0, -3 dB, 23 Hz to 20 kHz		

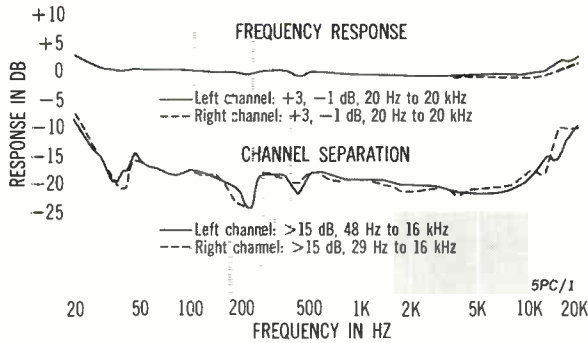


credited with less hum, lower mass, reduced stray magnetic field, and higher signal output.

In careful listening over wide-range speakers and with a variety of program material, these claims translate to very wide-range, clean sound with a full dynamic range and excellent clarity in both the stereo image and the internal musical detail. There is a sense of utterly



Square-wave response



hair-trigger transient response that makes for realistic reproduction, especially of program material that has strong percussives.

These audible virtues are the more impressive when you look at the published specifications and lab test data. The same spec sheet was delivered with both versions of the Mk 5. CBS Labs ran complete data on the "Export" model and checked critical items with the standard model, which proved to be very similar. By today's widely accepted standards, some of the "numbers" do not seem very auspicious. Distortion figures

are about par for the better pickups. Output (for 1 kHz at 5 cm/sec) measures 4.9 mV in the left channel, 5.5 in the right. Decca specifies a compliance of only 12 ($\times 10^{-6}$) laterally and 5 vertically, though CBS Labs measured it at 30 and 5 respectively. And the vertical tracking force recommended is 2 to 3 grams. It went through the lab's torture test at 2.4 grams and we subsequently used it at 2.5 to 3 grams. The compliance and tracking-force figures, particularly, remind us of the first stereo pickups of some twelve years ago.

Decca is aware of this apparent anomaly and has issued a lengthy technical explanation of why they believe their design philosophy to be correct despite what most other pickup manufacturers are doing. While the explanation is beyond the scope of this report, it states flatly that ultra-high compliance is, in itself, no guide to pickup performance, and that ultra-low tracking forces will not necessarily result in either better sound or less record wear. Further, Decca favors the spherical stylus over the elliptical. Tip radius is specified at 0.6 to 0.7 mils; the lab found it to be slightly smaller, and of good geometry.

As a consequence of its unconventional internal design, the Mk 5 has only three connecting pins. (A single ground serves both channels.) This requires you to tie together the two ground leads in the arm's shell. Be careful when doing so; these leads and their clips are fragile. Decca supplies extra clips in case of misadventure, but they are a trifle loose and need some tightening with a long-nose pliers. In our judgment, the chore involved is well worth the effort. The Mk 5 merits serious audition by anyone interested in discovering how great records really can sound.

CIRCLE 146 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Kenwood's Dolby Cassette Deck

The Equipment: Kenwood Model KX-700, a stereo cassette record/play deck with built-in Dolby B circuitry, in wood case. Dimensions: 15½ by 4¾ by 11¾ inches. Price: \$259.95. Manufacturer: Trio/Kenwood, Japan; U.S. distributor: Kenwood Electronics, 15777 S. Broadway, Gardena, Calif. 90248.

Comment: The format has become familiar—a Dolby cassette deck for under \$300. Kenwood's is unusual both in being well under \$300 and in including more than minimal features (as well as good performance). Among the features are three recording-equalization options (for "regular," low-noise ferric oxide, and chro-

mium dioxide tapes respectively), automatic stop and drive disengagement at the end of the cassette, playback level controls, and sturdy transport controls with a nicely thought-out interlock system. (You can go directly from "play" to fast wind, for example, but must go by way of "stop" in switching back to "play," avoiding damage to the tape.) Though we wouldn't describe the unit as luxurious, it strikes us as well built and nicely detailed for its price class. For instance, the meters are fully calibrated and even include a special Dolby-level marking.

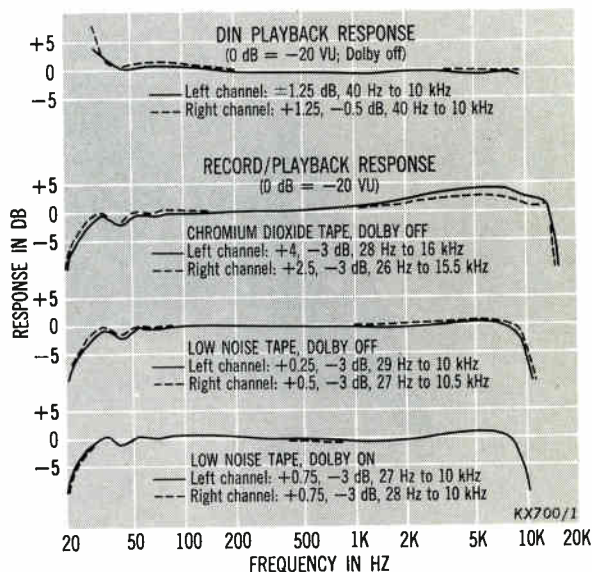
The special meter design has given Kenwood an option denied to manufacturers who arbitrarily equate

Kenwood KX-700 Cassette Deck Additional Data

Speed accuracy	105 VAC: 1.0% fast 120 VAC: 1.0% fast 127 VAC: 1.0% fast
Wow and flutter	playback: 0.10% record/playback: 0.15%
Rewind time, C-60 cassette	1 min. 6 sec.
Fast-forward time, same cassette	1 min. 6 sec.
S/N ratio (ref. DIN 0 VU, Dolby off)	
playback	L ch: 54 dB R ch: 56 dB
record/playback	L ch: 48 dB R ch: 48 dB
Erasure (333 Hz at normal level)	56 dB
Crosstalk (at 333 Hz)	40 dB
Sensitivity (for 0-VU recording level)	
line input	L ch: 80 mV R ch: 80 mV
mike input	L ch: 0.27 mV R ch: 0.27 mV
Meter action	
ref. DIN 0 VU	L ch: 2 dB high R ch: 2 dB high
ref. Dolby level	L ch: 1 dB high R ch: 1 dB high
THD (record/play, -10 VU)	
L ch:	< 1.7%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
R ch:	< 1.5%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
IM distortion (record/play, -10 VU)	
L ch:	7.3%
R ch:	7.0%
Maximum output (ref. DIN 0 VU)	
L ch:	3.1 V
R ch:	3.4 V

Dolby reference level (a fixed value, specified by Dolby Labs) with the 0 VU indication (a value subject to considerable variation, as the meter-action figures in our reports document). Kenwood has chosen a fairly high recording level; the 0 VU as indicated by the meters is only 2 dB below the DIN standard. The reduced high-frequency headroom resulting from this choice might have caused problems in capturing high-amplitude, high-frequency sounds but for Kenwood's treatment of another option: the equalization for chromium dioxide. Kenwood's choice here has been to offer identical playback equalization for all tape types, thereby increasing headroom and frequency response (rather than signal-to-noise ratios) with chromium dioxide by contrast to those models in which playback equalization is altered as well. In sum, low-noise ferric oxide tape (like TDK's SD, with which most of the lab measurements were made) will perform well on the KX-700 with most program material; for best results with demanding program material, chromium dioxide is in order.

A part of the difference is visible in the frequency-response graphs. The record/playback curves for low-noise ferric oxide do not extend very far at the top end. (Lowering the 0-VU point presumably would have extended them a bit; similarly, the relatively low levels of most high-frequency signals can be relied on to increase effective top-end response.) The chromium dioxide curves are "flat" out to about 15 kHz—an excellent mark. Whether you will hear the difference is questionable and will depend on the program; often both types of tape sounded good enough to be indistinguishable from the original source material.



In other respects the KX-700 resembles most cassette decks. Jacks for mikes and stereo headphones are at the bottom of the front panel; phono-jack pairs, plus a DIN socket, handle input and output connections on the back panel; the main controls can be understood at a glance. Speed accuracy is, at 1% fast, acceptable and—presumably thanks to the hysteresis motor—unaffected by changes in line voltage. Insertion of a plug into a mike jack automatically disconnects the line input for that channel. If you wish to mix live sounds with existing recordings, you will need an outboard mixer of some sort. There is a three-digit tape counter and a connection for grounding the unit to your receiver or control amplifier should you encounter any hum problem. (We didn't.)

Taking all things together, the KX-700 is an attractive unit: a good value, easy to use, and well calculated to please those who want good sound with a minimum of fuss.

CIRCLE 143 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

REPORTS IN PROGRESS

Fisher ST-550 loudspeaker system

B & O 3000-2 stereo receiver

Lenco L-85 turntable



Sony's Automatic Single-Play Turntable

The Equipment: Sony 5520, a two-speed single-play turntable with integral arm and automatic options, supplied in wood base with hinged dust cover. Dimensions: 17¾ by 15 9/16 by 6¾ inches. Price: \$139.50. Manufacturer: Sony Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Sony Corp. of America, 47-47 Van Dam St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

Comment: If you are like many owners of record changers who use them almost exclusively as single-play turntables, why did you buy a changer? Perhaps you like the automatic arm setdown and liftoff and want, in any event, a preinstalled arm. The 5520 seeks the best of both worlds and further shows evidence of optimizing various critical performance and design features so that the resultant product is something more than just a record changer minus the changing mechanism.

It is stylish and well engineered. A pair of lever switches at the front left select speed (33 or 45 rpm), while a multipurpose circular control at the right selects the operational mode. One lever on this control chooses between manual and automatic start; another selects the record size (7, 10, or 12 inches) for the automatic mode. Used automatically, the arm lifts off its rest and cues the record at the outer edge. At the end of the record the arm lifts up and returns to rest, shutting off the machine. In either mode you can cue the record manually at any point via the finger-lift on the shell or by flipping a cueing lever behind the mode control. There's a "reject" position on this control to interrupt play and return the arm to rest. Finally, the control has a "repeat"

position that starts the unit automatically and will repeat the record indefinitely until you reset the control. In our tests the 5520 went through all these operations flawlessly. The arm-cueing device worked beautifully, with no side drift and with ample damping for gentle arm descent.

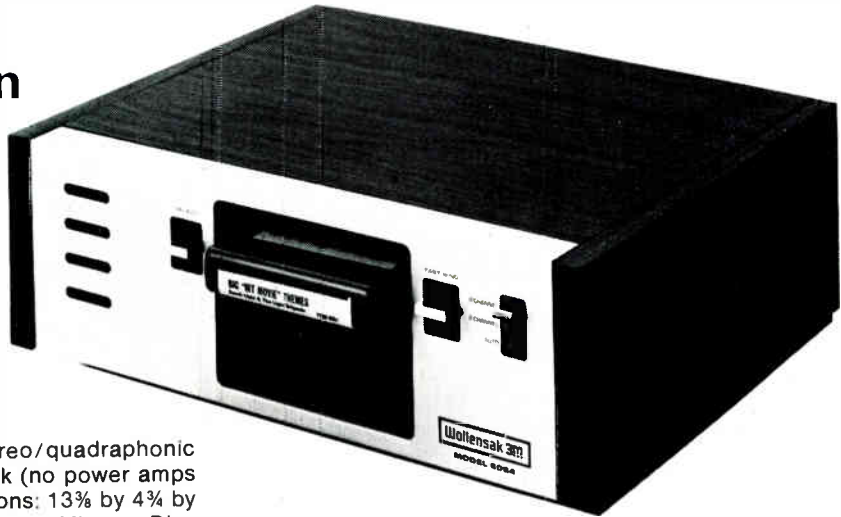
The diecast aluminum alloy platter, a shade under 12 inches in diameter, weighs 2½ pounds including the rubber mat and center dress piece. It is belt-driven from a synchronous motor. There is no provision for fine speed adjustment, but at the critical speed of 33 rpm no adjustment is needed; speed was absolutely accurate regardless of the test line voltage used. At 45 rpm it was consistently 1 per cent fast. Flutter averaged 0.07 per cent and rumble was clocked at -55 dB—performance that is seldom matched in even the best changers. Arm resonance was measured by CBS Labs (with a Shure V-15 Type II Improved cartridge) as a 9-dB rise at 6.1 Hz.

The tone arm is a well-balanced metal tubular type with rear counterweight and removable shell that accommodates any standard pickup. It has negligible friction laterally and vertically. Adjustments are included for optimum stylus overhang (a gauge and template are supplied, and the adjustment is quite easy); for vertical tracking force (absolutely accurate, with a range up to 3 grams); and antiskating. The latter is applied by means of a suspended weight—keeping compensation constant throughout the record side, which spring devices can't always do. It can be omitted or adjusted for any of three compensation settings depending on tracking force. Tracking forces under 1.5 grams get no compensation in this system—an approach open to dispute perhaps, but one that Sony has worked out with excellent accuracy according to the lab test.

The Sony 5520 comes with a carefully written and well-illustrated instruction manual and a 45-rpm single-play doughnut adapter. All told, the Model 5520 strikes us as a very appealing unit.

CIRCLE 149 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

Modern 8-Track Player from Wollensak



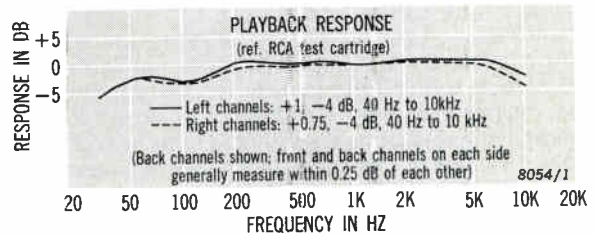
The Equipment: Model 8054, a stereo/quadrasonic 8-track tape-cartridge playback deck (no power amps or speakers) in wood case. Dimensions: 13¾ by 4¾ by 9¾ inches. Price: \$119.95. Manufacturer: Mincom Div., 3M Company, 3M Center, St. Paul, Minn. 55101.

Comment: The sleek styling of the 8054 is efficiency itself. The so-called program indicators are the numbered pilot lights in horizontal "slots" at the left. The cartridge slot is at the center, flanked by a selector lever (which advances the head position manually from one program to the next) and a fast-wind lever. At the right is the mode selector: 2-channel, 4-channel, automatic. The back panel has phone jacks for the four line-level outputs.

There is no on/off switch; as you slide a cartridge into the slot the unit first turns itself on and then, when the cartridge is all the way in, begins play. Play advances automatically from one program to the next, unless you skip by using the selector lever. The automatic switching between stereo and quadrasonic modes uses the special slot built into the Q-8 case (and omitted for stereo) to trip its sensor. We didn't find ourselves using the manual override much, but now that quadrasonic recording decks are becoming available the override will permit playing home-made quadrasonic tapes housed in the standard blank-tape cases, which so far are without the special slot. The fast-forward feature is a big help in looking for an individual selection, particularly in a Q-8 (which of course requires twice the tape-loop length for a given playing time by comparison to a stereo cartridge).

And that just about says it—except to add that in terms of sheer sound the 8054 is the most satisfactory 8-track player we've yet encountered. Its relatively wide-range electronics leave an unfiltered freshness to the top frequencies. They also allow more of the noise from the slow-speed tapes to pass through than in competing, but less wide-range, models we've tried. The choice is up to you; but until an 8-track player whose performance is up to that of the better cassette decks comes along, we'll take the Wollensak approach. As the lab figures document, the 8054 is not state-of-the-art; but neither is the 8-track medium itself. And the 8054 is a very attractive buy.

CIRCLE 148 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Wollensak 8054 Player Additional Data

Speed accuracy 2.1% slow at 105, 120, and 127 VAC

Wow & flutter 0.16%

S/N ratio (ref. 400 Hz, RCA test cartridge)

left front ch.	45.5 dB
right front ch.	42.5 dB
left back ch.	43.5 dB
right back ch.	42.5 dB

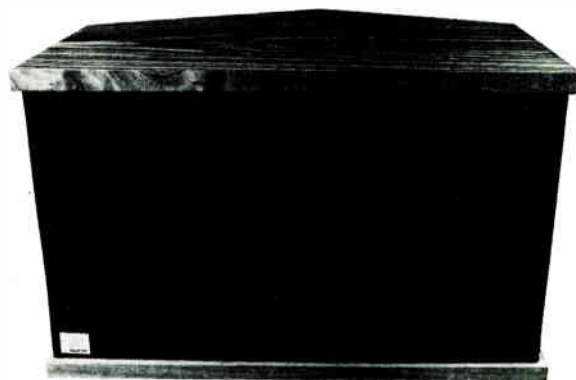
Channel separation

record 1, play 2	42 dB
record 3, play 4	39 dB
record 5, play 6	40 dB
record 7, play 8	39.5 dB

Maximum output (ref. 400 Hz, RCA test cartridge)

left front ch.	0.95 V
right front ch.	0.85 V
left back ch.	0.75 V
right back ch.	0.80 V

First Speaker System with Laminated Magnet Structure



The Equipment: LDL-749, a polyhedral multidriver loud-speaker system with wood base and top. Dimensions: 19¼ by 12¼ by 12½ inches. Price: \$279.50 per pair. Manufacturer: Linear Design Labs, Inc., 114 Wilkins Ave., Port Chester, N.Y. 15073.

Comment: In the November 1971 issue ("News & Views") we published first reports of a German design for laminated magnets in dynamic devices. The claim was made—and confirmed by initial tests—that gains in both efficiency and distortion could be achieved by building the magnet structure from lamina, rather than solid material. So it was with considerable interest that we heard of Linear Design's having both taken over as U.S. representative for the process and applied it in an adapted version of the LDL-749.

The front of the unit contains a single, centered driver. Four identical drivers are mounted in each of the angled back panels, making a total of nine drivers. There is no crossover, and therefore no balance controls; connections are made to screw terminals at the bottom of the unit. The intent of such a design should be thoroughly familiar to our readers by now: to deliver most of the sound into the listening room in such a way that it is heard by reflection off nearby walls, opening up the sound and simulating the large radiating surfaces of the concert hall. To achieve this end the speaker must be placed away from the wall—perhaps about a foot or less is optimum in most rooms—and rotated until the most satisfactory stereo image is achieved.

We asked CBS Labs to test the modified model, and then A/B'd it with the original model in our listening room. But more of that in a moment. The impedance curve proved to be almost a textbook example, without the little quirks that can make multiple-speaker hookups problematical. Following bass resonance (centered at 140 Hz) the impedance drops to its rating point of 9.5 ohms (at about 450 Hz) and then rises gradually to beyond 16 ohms as frequency increases. Linear Design's rating of 8 ohms is therefore appropriate. Even in the extreme bass the impedance drops only slightly below this value, so it is an unusually safe model for parallel hookup to solid-state amplifiers.

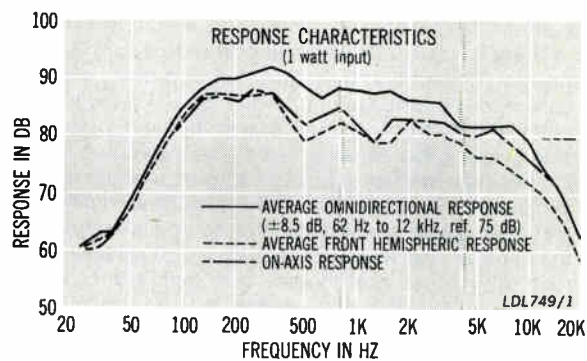
The standard test level of 94 dB at 1 meter was achieved for 4.5 watts input, representing high efficiency. The unit handled continuous tones of 100 watts without exceeding distortion limits, and pulsed tones to 131.5 watts (263 watts peak) for an output of 110.5 dB: a good dynamic range. High-level pulse photos did show some waveform distortion, however.

You'll note that the frequency-response curve is not encouraging. Linear Design has an equalizer unit (for use with any speaker—not just the 749) in the works, but at this writing it's not yet available. We played the speak-

ers through a JVC SEA (multiple-slider tone-control) receiver (the VR-5541, reviewed elsewhere in this issue), applying up to 12 dB of boost in the extreme bass and up to 10 dB at the high end. We'd suggest that you use something similar (several available equalizer models will do the job) with the 749 and provide some reserve power for that purpose. Perhaps 20 to 50 watts per channel would be appropriate in almost any room, though the 749 can be driven by less and will handle more.

With the equalization applied, the sound is well balanced and reasonably smooth. Dispersion is excellent of course; in fact so much of the sound is reflected off nearby walls that the normal truisms of high-frequency dispersion (the axiomatic beaming of individual drivers) do not really apply. In comparing the present version with the original we could hear little difference, though the bass did seem somewhat more efficient with the laminated magnet.

CIRCLE 147 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



LDL-749 Speaker Harmonic Distortion*

Output Level (dB)	Frequency			
	80 Hz		300 Hz	
	% 2nd	% 3rd	% 2nd	% 3rd
70	0.60	0.90	0.22	0.70
75	0.95	1.1	0.21	0.68
80	1.7	1.3	0.22	0.74
85	2.6	1.6	0.26	0.57
90	4.3	2.0	0.33	0.44
95	5.6	3.1	0.50	0.30
100	5.3	5.9	0.75	0.23
105			1.5	0.40
106.5			2.5	0.28

*Distortion data are taken on all tested speakers until distortion exceeds the 10% level or the speaker produces the spurious output known as buzzing, whichever occurs first.

More than the memory lingers on as new groups — and a few old — continue to experiment with “some of the most exciting music this planet has ever known.”



Where Did All the Big Bands Go?

by Gene Lees

A FEW MONTHS AGO, I attended a concert on the campus of the University of California in Irvine by Don Ellis and his big orchestra and Willie Bobo's powerful little Latin jazz group. It was the first jazz concert ever presented at that campus, students told me—and it was a sellout. And this in a time when a number of rock concerts in that area had bombed.

The students loved the music, although the concert went on a little too long; a number of them told me of a growing interest in jazz among young people. Ellis himself said that he had been playing at universities all through the West, and the response was always the same: large and enthusiastic crowds. “If only the record companies would become aware of it,” he said.

What ever happened to the big bands?

Well, Stan Kenton is out there still, and selling his records by direct mail. Woody Herman has an extremely vigorous band of young musicians, and audiences of all ages love them. Duke Ellington, Buddy Rich, and Count Basie are still very active. Jack Daugherty's excellent big-band album on A&M, “The Class of '71,” got excellent airplay and sold well.

Anyone who thinks interest in the big bands is

dead had better tell it to the *Reader's Digest*: Their LP reissues of big band music from the past have sold in the tens of millions. Time-Life, aware of this interest, started a program of re-creating the band sound of the past. Up in Canada, the prestigious Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has seen fit to mount a full-scale television series on the big bands, re-creating their sounds and, when possible, having their original leaders like Charlie Barnet and Woody Herman as guests on the show. When a show on the superb band of the late Claude Thornhill was mounted, Gerry Mulligan (who played and wrote for Thornhill) was the leader.

And if that evidence of interest in the big bands isn't enough, try this statistic on for size: There are an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 big jazz-inflected orchestras in the colleges and high schools of the United States.

It is significant that even during the musical drought of the 1960s, professional musicians would get together to form big bands and play for the fun of it, much as orchestral musicians will play string quartets together for pleasure.

The rock era now seems to be ending, as even the young grow weary of an endless thunderous amplified twang and as the social and moral values of the

rockers and their hippy followers fall deeper into well-deserved discredit. If the young do discover big bands, much of the credit will belong to such groups as Blood, Sweat & Tears and Chicago. Whether you like them or not, they introduced the younger listeners to the sound of horns.

If we have big-band music again, it will not be like that of yesteryear. It will be more like the music in the aforementioned Jack Daugherty album or Gerry Mulligan's recent album on A&M. This new kind of big-band music incorporates the musical changes of the past twenty-five years: new instrumental groupings, complex Latin rhythms recently imported, the better elements of rock rhythms, which jazz players have of late been refining into something authentically exciting.

Artie Shaw, one of the major exponents of the big-band style, once told me that he thought the band era was unique and that there would never be another like it. And he was right, for if there is a revival on the scale the present activities suggest, it will, for the aforesaid reasons, be different. But Shaw meant something more than that.

The lay public cannot be expected to appreciate subtle and important music. There always has been a lot of bad popular music around, and that is the kind that the public seems to love most. Yet in the big band era millions of young people fell in love with first-rate music. For a brief, magical moment of history most popular music was good and good music was popular.

There were corny bands, to be sure. But the significant thing is that men such as Basie, Chick Webb, Herman, Ellington, Kenton, Thornhill, Jimmie Lunceford, Tommy Dorsey, Shaw, and many others achieved considerable success and personal popularity with music that was genuinely superb.

It is difficult to date the big-band era precisely. The seed began growing in the early 1920s, the body and leaves of the plant were apparent by 1930, and the full flowering occurred between 1935 and 1945. After that the plant went to seed. But the seeds fell on fertile ground and men such as Henry Mancini (once of the postwar Tex Benecke band), Johnny Mandel (a former Woody Herman Herder), Quincy Jones (an alumnus of the Lionel Hampton Band), Lalo Schifrin, Oliver Nelson, and the beloved (there is no other word for him) Benny Carter took the skills and techniques of big-band writing, crossed them with those of the classical conservatories, and turned movie music into the hardy, healthy hybrid it is today. Meantime, some of their colleagues went into the universities and planted the seeds of the astonishingly flourishing "stage-band" movement. And big-band-oriented schools like the Berklee College of Music in Boston and North Texas State in Denton, Texas taught big-band writing and playing to a generation of exceptional young musicians.

The big-band sound was, and is, closely associ-



Fletcher Henderson, above right with Benny Goodman, supplied many of the arrangements that made the fame of Goodman's band as a swing group, but Henderson's rewards were less substantial.



Frank Sinatra (above right with Tommy Dorsey), whose big band experience led to a new style of singing, and Ray Eberle (below right with Glenn Miller) were among the many vocalists who appeared as a big band standard feature.





Not all of the golden era big band leaders are out of business. Among those still active are Count Basie (left) and Stan Kenton (below left with Gene Krupa).



The big band influence has come down to the later generations whether it is in the music of a composer/arranger like Henry Mancini (left) or in the nationwide appearances of Don Ellis' (above) group.



ated with jazz. It is necessary thus to qualify the definition carefully because not all the big bands played jazz, and not all the jazz bands were big. The best big bands were indeed jazz orchestras, but there were commercial dance bands that were quite good, and some of those "Mickey Mouse" bands, as they were known, were capable of creditable jazz when their leaders occasionally gave them their heads.

There were big bands before 1920. In World War I, Negro musician Lt. Jim Europe led a widely admired band that played for American troops overseas, as Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw would do one war later. But the big bands as we know them really began to take shape in the 1920s, as the instrumentation that later became so familiar evolved—saxes, trumpets, trombones, and rhythm section. Various men contributed to this development, but primary credit is usually given and no doubt belongs to Fletcher Henderson and Don Redman, with important contributions by Edgar Sampson and Benny Carter—all four were blacks, and three of the four were saxophone players.

Henderson formed his own orchestra, but it failed commercially and he went to work for Benny Goodman as an arranger. The success of the Goodman band popularized Henderson's kind of writing (and vice versa!) and paved the way for other bands built on Henderson's pattern. Indeed, some of the famous "Benny Goodman arrangements" came directly out of the book (as a library of arrangements is called) of the Henderson band, and some of Goodman's hits, including *Stompin' at the Savoy* and *Don't Be That Way* were written by Sampson originally for Henderson. Goodman today is a wealthy man, and Henderson is long since dead—of frustration, some say. And there is bitterness in certain black musical circles over these events. Some of it is justified, though it is difficult to blame Goodman personally for conditions that obtained in American society at that period.

Another critically important figure in the development of the big-band sound was Duke Ellington, whose approach was quite different from that of Henderson and Redman. To understand the era, and even much of today's music, it is necessary to examine this difference.

What Henderson, Redman, and the others had been seeking was a large ensemble that would swing. To achieve this, they segregated the instruments. That is to say, trumpets played with trumpets, trombones played with trombones—though part of the time they functioned together. But the saxophones maintained a separate identity. Except in massed tutti passages, they worked as a counterforce to the brass.

Ellington didn't do things that way. The Duke and his right-hand man, the gifted arranger and composer Billy Strayhorn (who also is dead now), liked to mix the sections—perhaps voice a clarinet

with muted trumpet and trombone, as in *Mood Indigo*. Ellington was interested in shades of color.

Ellington's approach influenced the Claude Thornhill band and its genius arranger, Gil Evans. And the Ellington-Evans approach influenced Gerry Mulligan, Miles Davis, and the small-group jazz movement they pioneered in the late 1940s, when the big bands were falling on hard times.

Both approaches, that of Ellington-Evans and that of Redman-Henderson, have had an extraordinarily wide and profound influence on twentieth-century music. When I saw a Russian musical variety show in Switzerland two or three years ago, I noted with interest that the orchestra's format was the one developed by these men in the '20s, '30s, and '40s.

At first there were four saxes—two altos and two tenors. Ellington used a baritone saxophone, played by the stalwart Harry Carney. By 1940, more and more bands were adding baritone saxophones. The instrument not only gave a band a stronger bottom sound, it permitted the use of the more advanced harmonies that were becoming popular with arrangers and audiences.

There were variants on the format, of course. Woody Herman in the 1940s went to three tenor saxophones and a baritone, the famous "Four Brothers" sound. But five became the ideal sax section, and still is.

At first there were three trumpets and either two or three trombones. And that works, since it permits five-way voicings. But the brass sound grew in power, and eventually four trumpets and three trombones became standard; some bands went to five trumpets and four trombones. Brass writing had become so advanced, and the players were expected to perform such high and arduous passages, that lead trumpet players, the workhorses of the orchestra, tended to tire. So it became advisable to "split the lead chair" among two players. And when five trumpets and four trombones did at last play together as a section, it was one of the most dazzling sounds in all music.

But in general the experiment with format could be said to be complete when most bands had five saxes, four trumpets, and three trombones. That still is the basic pattern, although for many years saxophone players have often been expected to double on flute and occasionally even on oboe or English horn. The best of them do it effortlessly, and some of them arrive at record dates with so many instruments that they look like plumbers' assistants.

The rhythm section consisted, by the 1940s, of piano, bass, drums, and sometimes guitar. The Count Basie rhythm section, for example, was instantly identifiable to the more astute band fans by Freddie Green's rock-steady and flowing guitar work, so subtle that it was closer to a texture than an audible sound. The pianist was often a lost soul in the

rhythm section. No one really knew what to do with him or why he was there, but he was, and he was usually confined to playing rhythm figures that no one in the audience could hear, and superfluously reinforcing the harmonies in a manner similar to the keyboard player in the baroque era. Gerry Mulligan later did a sensible thing, though it shocked everyone: Like Haydn two centuries ago, he tossed the harmony-filling keyboard out of his bands, whether small groups or large. Still, the best big-band pianists provided an interesting added color in their solo work, and many of them (such as Mel Powell, who went on to become director of Yale's Electronic Music Studio and dean of the School of Music at the California Institute of the Arts) were much admired.

It was *de rigueur* for a band to have two singers: a girl and a boy. They were there for romantic reasons, as the interpreters of ballads, usually saccharine ballads of little depth or worth. The instrumentals were what the real fans waited for. A lot of the band singers weren't very good. Yet the best American singing, as represented by Frank Sinatra and Peggy Lee, grew out of the big band era. Both began as band singers.

The band era was withering by the late 1940s, as transportation costs rose and television exploded (or imploded, some would argue) on the entertainment world and broke the public habit of going out to be amused, and as the newly developed long-playing record made the public more and more dependent on the phonograph for its music.

There were dozens of big bands traveling throughout America during the late 1940s. There were probably hundreds of others in business, if you count the "territory bands," some of them excellent, which never broke through into the big time. Their leaders enjoyed a modest regional success, but frequently musicians who trained in these local groups went on to bigger things: Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Sonny Dunham, Lucky Millinder, Will Bradley, Harry James, Vaughn Monroe, Charlie Spivak, Lionel Hampton, and all the others whose names rang like those of gods rambling around an American Olympus.

They created a musical style that has influenced the entire world. It is hard to imagine what music would be like had they never existed; it is hard to imagine a sound for America had those bands never played.

Most of the bands are gone now, their leaders dead, as in Thornhill's case, or retired, as in Barnet's. But some of these remarkable men, as we have noted, are still out there, and they, with younger musicians like Jack Daughterty, the kids in the bands on the campuses, and the rehearsal bands scattered around the country, continue the far-from-finished experiment with some of the most exciting, interesting, and inventive music this planet has ever known. ■



by Marvin Grosswirth

Mengelwängler: “65 Years on the Podium Is Enough”

THE MUSICAL WORLD reacted with shocked surprise last week when Kurt Wilhelm Mengelwängler, the “Grand Old Man of Music,” announced that he would retire next month, on his ninety-third birthday.

“Sixty-five years on the podium is enough,” the white-haired maestro said in an exclusive interview shortly after the announcement. “After all,” he continued, “sooner or later those of us who are getting on a bit have to step down to make room for the younger ones.”

The brilliant and colorful career which comes to a close this season began in 1908. Mengelwängler, then twenty-eight, had already established himself as an instrumental virtuoso playing first-chair triangle with the legendary West Tyrolean Zither and Glockenspiel Chamber Society. The conductor, Fritz Furtberg, fell ill minutes before a concert and although Mengelwängler had never seen the score of *Echoes of Bavaria*, the major work to be performed that evening, he mounted the podium and with the steel beater of his triangle, conducted the orchestra in a stirring, history-making performance.

“Ever since then,” the Maestro admits, “I have had a penchant for thick, heavy batons. It has worked very well for me too. I must say, especially in this last assignment.

“The secret of successful conducting, you see, is fear. If the conductor can properly intimidate the orchestra, preferably with threats of physical violence, then he will have no problem.” While Mengelwängler’s technique may not work for everyone his success over the past fifteen years with the New York Department of Corrections Recidivist Philharmonic clearly indicates that he has fully mastered his own technique.

“At first,” he confesses, “I was reluctant to take on ‘The Repeaters,’ as our orchestra is popularly known. I had a quite comfortable berth with the Armonk (N.Y.) Symphony Orchestra during the season, with a rather pleasant and lucrative summer position at the Junior High School 209 School of Music. I held the Miss Parkhill Chair in Triangle there and was greatly respected. I believe I hold the record, among the entire J.H.S. 209 faculty, for the least number of muggings by students.

“But I could not resist the challenge that The Repeaters presented: young, vibrant musicians with just enough hostility to bring new dimensions to old music. I shall never forget what they did to *Liebesträum*,” he says in a near whisper, as a barely perceptible shudder passes through his frail body.

It was early during his career with The Repeaters that Mengelwängler refined the conducting technique that brought him international fame. He well remembers the first time he used it.

“I was rehearsing the orchestra in a symphonic ar-

range of *Spanish Eyes*, based on a Radio City Music Hall orchestration, and it seemed to me that the string section was slowly closing in on me. I did not become concerned, however, until I realized that I was up against the wall, just under a window. Undaunted, I raised my arms for a crescendo and my right hand struck the bars, one of which came loose. I pulled it free and began conducting with it. Within a minute or two, the string section rejoined the rest of the orchestra. I have been conducting with an iron bar ever since.”

Was there any truth to the theory that the iron bar serves as a resonator which enables the Maestro to feel the vibrations of the orchestra?

“None whatsoever. The iron bar serves primarily as a deterrent to the musicians.”

Of the three auditoriums linked inextricably in our music history with Mengelwängler’s name—Philharmonic Hall, Carnegie Hall, and the P.S. 209 Assembly Hall—which was his favorite?

“No question about it—Carnegie Hall,” he asserts. When it is suggested that Carnegie’s superb acoustics are the reason for the preference, the Maestro responds with a look of contempt.

“Don’t be a *dummkopf*,” he sneers. “What does a conductor know about acoustics? Look, you have about forty fiddles on your left, some thirty or so cellos, violas, and basses on your right, a whole assortment of horns and whistles directly in front of you, and way in the back, a timpanist with an iron grip on his mallets and blood in his eye. Do you seriously think a conductor can hear the acoustics with all that racket going on?”

Why, then, the preference for Carnegie Hall?

“Because the podium is a good three inches higher than any of the others. You can loom over the orchestra better. That, plus the iron bar, scares hell out of them.”

Mengelwängler modestly denies—but with little conviction—that he is the founder of what has been called the Iron Bar School of Conducting. “Many modern conductors,” he claims, “achieve exactly the same effect with an ordinary wooden baton. It only *sounds* like they’re conducting with an iron bar.”

What does the future hold in store for the Grand Old Man after retirement?

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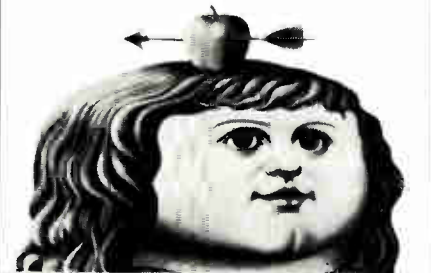


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On Columbia Records

A Sutherland/Sills

Tour de Force

Two new recordings of *The Tales of Hoffmann* take a fresh look at an old problem.

by Andrew Porter



Sutherland (left) and Sills in their roles as Olympia.

Les Contes d'Hoffmann has not lacked recordings. In early LP days there was the Opéra-Comique set on Columbia, Cluytens-conducted, assembled from thirty-two 78 rpm sides, with Raoul Jobin as its hero and a trio of heroines; it represented much the sort of performance to be heard in Paris in those days, quite lively and enjoyable, not especially distinguished. (The Opéra-Comique as a company is no more; but Solti, they say, is planning a slap-up new *Hoffmann* for the Paris Opéra.) Then London brought out the soundtrack of the 1951 *Hoffmann* film—distinguished by Sir Thomas Beecham's conducting, and precious little else. Of more recent sets, Angel's of 1965, again conducted by Cluytens, remains in the catalogue, to be considered along with the two new albums under review.

Un peu d'histoire, as they say in the Michelin guides, makes an essential introduction to any account of a *Hoffmann* performance, since scarcely any two of them nowadays present the same text—and one of the main

points of the new London album is that it is the first *Hoffmann* on record that tries to get back more closely to the *opéra comique* of Offenbach's original intention. I'll try to be as brief as possible. Offenbach died before his work reached the stage. Ernest Guiraud completed the score for the premiere in 1881, omitting the Giulietta act, but (in order to save the pretty Barcarolle, which Offenbach had lifted from his operetta *Die Rheinnixen*) shifting Antonia from Munich to Venice. When Giulietta returned she did so in the wrong sequence, before instead of after Antonia. From there, the tale becomes one of increasing textual corruption, with sung recitative gradually ousting all the spoken dialogue. In Vienna, Mahler omitted Prologue and Epilogue. Hans Gregor opened the Berlin Komische Oper in 1905 with an expanded *Hoffmann* that included Coppélius' Spectacles and Dapertutto's Diamond airs; and his version was the basis of the scores published by Choudens and by Peters which served, and still serve, for most revivals. At the Opéra-



Sills as Antonia

Comique in 1970 the piece was billed with rare frankness as “by Offenbach and Guiraud”—if not with complete accuracy, since more additional hands than Guiraud’s are to be discerned in the edition.

In Paris the work had been very successful, achieving over a hundred performances in its first year. There was a setback in Vienna, where *Hoffmann* had its second production; on the second night a fire broke out, destroying the Ring Theatre and killing hundreds of people. Gregor’s version at the Komische Oper was given 400 times in six years; and Reinhardt’s elaborately spectacular production for Berlin’s Grosse Schauspielhaus filled the huge place for a run of 175 performances in 1931–2. Then in Germany the Jewish Offenbach’s music was banned—until after the war, when *Hoffmanns* sprang up everywhere in all sorts of editions. Meanwhile in England, Arthur Hammond, musical director of the Carl Rosa Opera, had got closer to the composer’s original intentions by scrapping the extraneous sung recitative, and reordering Antonia and Giulietta. At Covent Garden, Günther Rennert followed suit, not quite so rigorously, in 1954—a production in which Joan Sutherland sang Antonia, then Giulietta, and then Olympia; and currently, Sadler’s Wells plays a version which also makes use of Arthur Hammond’s researches. So does Richard Bonynges edition, given in Seattle in 1970, and heard now in the London recording. The Angel and the ABC albums both use the old Choudens score.

The various “rectifications” have had a twofold purpose. First, to give sense and shapeliness to the plot; and second, to present a fresher account of Offenbach’s score than is possible when its numbers are stuck together by page after page of recitative. The recitative is not unskillfully written, but it becomes tedious, and by anticipation

and repetition of motifs it weakens the effect of Offenbach’s tunes when they do arrive. The case is rather like that of *Carmen*. The Angel recording and the new Metropolitan Opera production seem to me proof beyond doubt that *Carmen* is more effective with spoken dialogue. The London album proves that the same is true of *Hoffmann*. Though one doesn’t want, on record, to listen to masses of spoken dialogue, Bonynges has got the proportions right: not too much speech, but enough to carry the plot, to provide touches of character, and—most important—to afford the proper springboard for the musical numbers.

As for the first consideration, it is perhaps less important on record than in the theater. Barbier and Carré strung together three diverse tales of E. T. A. Hoffmann as a *drame fantastique*, giving their work a sort of unity by making Hoffmann himself the hero, and a sort of theme by making the three heroines three aspects of one fatal temptress, Woman, who if not resisted could lure the poet from his true vocation. Hoffmann is tempted in turn by a pretty face, by dreams of shared artistic glory, by voluptuous sensuality—and finally by the diva Stella, who offers all three in one. The authors’ work was not tidy. Strictly speaking, Hoffmann’s Evil Genius saves him from the entanglements by destroying the three women who threaten him. But in a loose fashion it works well enough—though less clearly in the opera than in the play. Originally, both in the play and in the opera, the heroines were played by one woman. Later the piece became the excuse for an all-star display. When the Metropolitan Opera first mounted *Hoffmann*, in 1913, the audience could enjoy Frieda Hempel, Olive Fremstad, and Lucrezia Bori all in the same evening. The Angel set has Gianna d’Angelo, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, and Victoria de los Angeles. Sylvia Geszty at the Berlin Komische Opera (for Felsenstein’s production, which is the most consistent from a dramatic point of view, though high-handed in its treatment of the music), Beverly Sills at the New York City Opera and for the ABC recording, and Joan Sutherland in Seattle and for the London recording have returned to the idea of allowing a single soprano to display her diverse charms and accomplishments.

With that out of the way, we can turn to the new sets. The Prologue sets the general picture. Bonynges’ handling of the score is for the most part brighter, livelier, more colorful, and more delicate than Julius Rudel’s. Rudel is thoroughly capable, but his touch is not so light. The Suisse Romande chorus of students sounds happier with the French text than do John Alldis’ capable Englishmen. Both orchestras play well. Placido Domingo, hero of the London set, occasionally lets his French slip and Italianizes a French finale; Stuart Burrows, for ABC, is more careful but shows less character. Though he has a lighter voice, his use of it is not so even as Domingo’s. Honors in the Kleinzach song are pretty even, with my preference being for Domingo’s more romantic treatment of the “*Je la vois, belle comme le jour . . .*” episode. The Minuet which introduces the Olympia act again shows Bonynges more elegant and more spirited than Rudel. London has discovered a marvelously witty, flittery player for Spalanzani, Jacques Charon, campier even than M. Cuénod; Charon speaks his dialogue in such a way that we seem to catch the busy flutter of jeweled fingers. He sings with a thread of tone even slighter than Cuénod’s—and delightfully. Huguette Tourangeau, while not quite ideally neat in Nicklausse’s *couplets*

about the doll and the copper cock, makes more of it than does Susanne Marsee. Bonyngé has retained Copélius' air (unnecessarily, I think, though he says "the ear is used to it"); Gabriel Bacquier is overemphatic here, and Norman Treigle more effective. Little to choose between them in the Lindorf air of the Prologue. Domingo's handling of the romance, "*Ah! vivre deux*," is a little heavy in tone, not really forward or "French" enough; Burrows is slimmer, and has some very nice notes, but the line does not pour smoothly enough. At last the heroine makes her appearance. No comparison here, for the tones of Sutherland's Olympia are limpid, and those of Sills's Olympia are not. (Neither of them, for that matter, is quite so accurate, or quite so charmingly doll-like, as D'Angelo for Angel.) Sutherland astonishes us in the second verse by throwing out a shapely trill on high C. In the waltz roudades of the finale she also outsings Sills.

The Venice scene in most Hoffmann productions is a pretty confused piece of dramatic action, besides being musically ineffective. Bonyngé has made sense of it by taking his dialogue from the play, and restoring both the earlier position of the duel and the ending in which Giulietta expires, having drained a cup of poison intended for Hoffmann. He retains the Diamond air—none too well done by Bacquier, who essays, without ease, the final G sharp. Treigle is content with the alternative E. (Ernest Blanc, for Angel, gives a far more interesting account of the piece than either of them.) In the *couplets bachiques* Domingo is spirited; Burrows brings a very taking diminuendo to the second verse. Neither heroine achieves quite that compound of voluptuousness with urgency by which Schwarzkopf gives life to a character who has no solos, and very little characteristic music. There is no septet in Bonyngé's edition (so-called "septet"; it involves six soloists and the chorus). It has been plausibly suggested that this "septet" is someone's reworking of a quartet from the Epilogue which Offenbach intended for Hoffmann, Stella, Nicklausse, and Lindorf. Bonyngé has thinned it to quartet texture, slimmed the orchestration, and replaced it in the Epilogue—where it sounds good and fittingly gathers up the main characters in ensemble. In the usual place, it tends to make everything that follows seem an anticlimax. Bonyngé approves, and practices, the switching of Antonia and Giulietta acts. I do not think he is right: partly because the orchestral reworking of the Barcarolle as an entr'acte makes an odd bridge between Antonia and the Epilogue; partly because the septet/quartet, catching up a motif from the Barcarolle, follows most naturally in the same act as Giulietta; partly because the Venice act, being short and pretty insubstantial, needs to be rounded off with the Epilogue, while the Antonia act can well stand on its own; and chiefly because the original emotional progression of Hoffmann's loves is more effective. However, it is not a big matter. The Barcarolle is exquisitely done in both of the new sets, smoothly, with caressing tone. Sutherland's portamento in the final pages of "*Ah!*" is the more voluptuous. Her spoken French is filled with charm, interest, and dramatic point.

As Antonia, her "*Elle a fui*" is a little too grand in manner. Sills sings the romance with greater charm, greater simplicity, and greater pathos (Antonia also was very much the best of Sills's heroines in the new City Opera production). The most touching Antonia of all, however, is Angel's Victoria de los Angeles, simply because



Sutherland as Giulietta

her timbre is so limpid and beautiful. Sills has more character, but De los Angeles does not always sound at ease; there is something about the way she utters the words "*Elle a fui*" each time, that gives a kind of delight not to be found in the other versions. Domingo's quick, ardent account of "*J'ai le bonheur dans l'âme*" is excellent. Frantz's *couplets*, assigned to the voice known technically as a *trial*, can indeed prove something of a trial in performance. ABC's Nico Castel makes little of them, while London's Cuénod has more wit and variety of inflection. Both Dr. Miracles are effective. Throughout the scenes, Bonyngé's use of the spoken dialogue gives his version an edge over the stodgier edition favored by Rudel; and his Epilogue is very much the more effective.

What conclusions, then? Beverly Sills's out-and-out admirers—and for that matter Joan Sutherland's—will already have backed and bought their favorites. The ABC set finds Sills in far happier voice than she was on the first night at least of the new City Opera production, when vocally she did not do herself justice. (She sang the start of the Doll Song standing on one leg, which was something of a feat but can hardly have made the vocalization easier.) She brings character to her three roles, and the voice is steadier than it sometimes is, though the timbre is not limpid enough for my taste. Norman Treigle, undistracted by the prancing and posturing called for by Tito Capobianco's production, is also vocally more dapper than he was in the theater. Stuart Burrows makes a pleasantly lyrical Hoffmann, and the small roles—the Nicklausse excepted—are well taken, if not exceptionally well. Joan Sutherland, on the other hand, gives one of the liveliest, most sparkling, and most interesting performances she has put on record, a triple centerpiece to an account of the opera which has been alto-

gether freshly considered. Bonyngé seems to have inspired all his collaborators with fresh enthusiasm for the piece, and his album may do much to kindle new appreciation in listeners who may have become bored with *Hoffmann*. Plácido Domingo makes an ardent Hoffmann, Gabriel Bacquier is a slightly routine villain, with impressive moments. The smaller parts are well taken, and exceptionally well by Messrs. Charon and Cuénod. The Angel has three remarkable heroines, and in Nicolai Gedda a very accomplished though to my mind somewhat characterless hero.

The London recording is more spacious and natural sounding than the ABC—though a slight, persistent sur-

face noise disturbed my pressings (possibly I struck an unhappy set; it would not be worth mentioning except that it has become a rather too common fault recently on Decca/London pressings). The ABC surfaces are cleaner though there is a bad patch of prickle, right at the Barcarolle). William Weaver contributes a graceful essay on Offenbach, and Bonyngé a clear account of the textual history, to the London libretto-booklet. In the ABC booklet, George Movshon skates over the matter—understandably enough in the circumstances. Recitative vs. spoken dialogue is not so much a matter of time as of variety in pace and texture: The London set lasts 142 minutes, the ABC only seven more.

OFFENBACH: Les Contes d'Hoffmann.

London OSA 13106, \$17.94 (three discs).

Stella, Olympia, Giulietta, and Antonia	Joan Sutherland (s)
Nicklausse and Muse	Huguette Tourangeau (ms)
Voice of Antonia's Mother	Margareta Lilowa (ms)
Hoffmann	Plácido Domingo (t)
Spalanzani	Jacques Charon (t)
Andrés, Cochenille, Pitichinaccio, and Frantz	Hugues Cuénod (t)
Nathanaël	Pedro di Proenza (t)
Lindorf, Dapertutto, Coppélius, and Dr. Miracle	Gabriel Bacquier (b)
Herrmann	Paul Guigue (b)
Schlemil	André Neury (b)
Crespel	Paul Plishka (bs)
Luther	Roland Jacques (bs)

Chorus and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Richard Bonyngé, cond.

ABC Audio Treasury ATS 20014/3, \$17.94 (three discs).

Stella, Olympia, Giulietta, and Antonia	Beverly Sills (s)
Nicklausse and Muse	Susanne Marsee (ms)
Voice of Antonia's Mother	Patricia Kern (ms)
Hoffmann	Stuart Burrows (t)
Andrés, Spalanzani, Pitichinaccio, and Frantz	Nico Castel (t)
Nathanaël and Cochenille	Bernard Dickerson (t)
Lindorf, Dapertutto, Coppélius, and Dr. Miracle	Norman Treigle (bs)
Herrmann and Schlemil	Raimund Herincx (b)
Crespel	Robert Lloyd (bs)
Luther	John Noble (b)

John Alldis Choir; London Symphony Orchestra, Julius Rudel, cond.
Selected comparison (both recordings): Cluytens

Ang. 3667

A Szigeti Treasury

Columbia's survey of the legendary violinist's recorded artistry is a tribute to all concerned.

by Harris Goldsmith

"THE ART OF JOSEPH SZIGETI." Columbia's six-record retrospective issued in commemoration of the great violinist's eightieth birthday last September 5, does honor to his many admirers as well as to the subject himself. The album is also a tribute to the finest instincts of the record industry and ought to be supported heartily by everyone who loves recorded classical music.

For once, true artistic planning took precedence over expediency. Szigeti, like so many artists with long phonographic histories, recorded for a number of different labels and contractual entanglements could easily have prevented this collection from materializing. In resurrecting some of Szigeti's earliest—and greatest—recorded performances (many of which have been out of print for nearly thirty years), everyone concerned displayed dedication, tact, generosity. The release is, in fact, another sterling example of the new spirit of co-operation that has recently enabled discophiles to hear such goodies as the Furtwängler *Ring*, the Lipatti/Ansermet Schumann concerto, and the Pablo Casals anthology which Columbia issued last year. As with the Casals package, Angel/EMI generously allowed Columbia to delve into their archives for all but three sides of this offering and also permitted the release of two live performances in which Szigeti collaborated with another EMI artist, Ar-

tur Schnabel. Many private record collectors (particularly R. Peter Munves, now classical & r director at RCA) are also to be thanked for kindly making their cherished copies of the original shellac albums available to Columbia's technicians for disc-to-tape transfer. In some instances even more might have been possible: For instance, when English EMI made their own transfer of the 1932 Szigeti/Walter Beethoven Concerto on HQM 1224, they were able to find the original metal negatives. Custom vinyl pressings were then made to eliminate virtually all the shellac hiss and these were subsequently used in producing the master tape. The resultant pressing is a little brighter and smoother than the new one in the Columbia album, but the difference is much less substantial than one might think. On the whole, Columbia's technical work has been accomplished with loving care and they have given us some of the most honest transfers it has been my pleasure to hear. In fact, I expect that many will be amazed at the degree of vitality and presence coaxed from source material of so long ago.

Ironically, the poorest-sounding specimens in the collection just happen to be the most recent. These are the aforementioned Szigeti/Schnabel performances of Beethoven's *Spring* and G major Violin/Piano Sonatas, both taken down via the airwaves from a concert at New

York's Frick Collection in April 1948. Schnabel and Szigeti collaborated on several memorable occasions but never formally before the recording microphone. This concert (which also included a performance of Mozart's E flat Sonata, K. 481) seems to be the only surviving memento of their work together. The sound is not very pretty—the piano is a bit backward in the balance and tends to shatter and crumble on loud notes; Szigeti's violin is uncomfortably miked and comes across with a decided husky rasp. There is also an intermittent off-the-line buzz and some noise from the original acetates. These not inconsiderable defects are all the more obvious as Columbia, for some reason, chose to turn the treble all the way up during equalization. With the peaking compensated for, however, the reproduction becomes listenable, and in any case the performances are of sufficient musical and historical interest to make any sonic considerations inconsequential.

These readings crackle with excitement. There is a buoyancy, a kind of rigorous angularization that projects the music with dynamic shape and gives it breadth and significance. It is instructive to compare this Szigeti/Schnabel *Spring* Sonata with the other live performance he recorded with Claudio Arrau at the Library of Congress. Szigeti may have been in smoother technical form on the earlier occasion but buoyed here by Schnabel's lifting phraseology, he achieves a vitality and immediacy of communication far transcending the other reading which goes through its paces a bit too earnestly. A similar comparison holds true of the Szigeti/Schnabel and Szigeti/Arrau readings of Op. 96 (the versions with Arrau are preserved in the Vanguard/Everyman set of all ten Beethoven sonatas), but here the contrast becomes even more striking. For one thing, this latter piece closed the program while Op. 24 had opened it. Both Szigeti and Schnabel, a bit tense in the earlier work, had warmed up by then and were at their most lucid and communicative. A predominantly lyrical work is thus treated to a diversity and powerful inflection that fully realizes the inherent poetry but also suggests a dynamism akin to other Beethoven works like the *Serioso* Quartet and the *Kreutzer* Sonata. In my experience, only the ancient Parlophone recording by Lili Kraus and Szymon Goldberg treated this piece in like manner. One certainly hopes that the great Szigeti/Schnabel reading of the Mozart Sonata will also eventually be made available to the public. I wish too that Szigeti's gentler, utterly different but equally beautiful account of Beethoven's Op. 96 with Mieczyslaw Horszowski (which, alone of his three performances of the work, had really first-class sound) will similarly be restored to circulation.

Szigeti made two recordings of the Bach Violin Concerto in D minor—a reconstruction from the harpsichord work in the same key which many musicologists think was written originally for violin. I applaud Columbia's decision to reissue the earlier 1940 version with Fritz Stiedry conducting the New Friends of Music Orchestra rather than that of a decade later made at the Prades Festival under Pablo Casals' direction. The violinist's gaunt energy and incisive bowing give the astonishingly dynamic, even daemonic, music glorious sweep and poise, and his tone has none of the distressing wobble that makes the later version so painful to hear. Stiedry's direction is a trifle reticent and impersonal but I much prefer it to Casals' swoopily legato, overromanticized approach. The 1940 sound too is clearer and better



Joseph Szigeti—his latest album contains recordings made as early as 1908.

balanced than that of 1950—a bit dry, perhaps, but full of biting impact. The only problem (hopefully restricted to just a few copies) is that each of the three movements starts with an annoying pre-echo.

One side is devoted to Handel's noble Sonata in D major and Bach's Sonata No. 1 in G minor for Unaccompanied Violin. The Handel was recorded in 1937 with Nikita Magaloff. As was customary in prebaroque-revival days, embellishments are few and far between, and a piano is used in lieu of the harpsichord. I, for one, am tired of tinkly, overly decorated, mincingly effete "authentic" performances, and find Szigeti's manly, beautifully intoned, utterly uncluttered phrasing ideal. Again there is a later Szigeti recording of this work (c. 1954) with Carlo Bussotti, but it can't compare to the one at hand—Szigeti's heartfelt playing had by then become flabby and tremulous and the piano overbalanced the violin. The sound of the 1937 performance is dated but in much better ratio.

No Szigeti anthology would be worth its salt without an example of his unaccompanied Bach. Two are included here. The 1931 recording of the G minor (which at one time enjoyed a place of primacy as Columbia Masterworks album X-1) sounded strange and after a few phrases I realized why: The transfer is fractionally high in pitch (less than a quarter tone, but just enough to disturb me). After adjusting my turntable for this discrepancy, I was able to marvel anew at Szigeti's fluency



Szigeti with Bartók before a performance of the latter's works.

and line. This is a more youthful reading than the one heard in the Vanguard album of all the sonatas and partitas—more virtuosic, and in the finale, taken at a true presto. In this case, however, I must confess a preference for the later version: Breadth and insight in this work are as important as facility, and while the 1931 reading is certainly artistic and knowing, it strikes me as a bit facile and distant compared with the miracle the older Szigeti produced with a still serviceable technique at his disposal.

The 1908 *Preludio* to the E major Partita, on the other hand, goes all out for virtuosity and adds up to an incandescent experience unmatched by the admirable but very sober Szigeti performance of fifty years later. The fifteen-year-old Joska was indeed already an artist ready to begin an international career: His tone is silky, his phrasing full of comprehension, and if the intonation is less impeccable than what he achieved in his heyday, the bow arm is if anything smoother and more assured. All told this is much more than a mere curio and for all the unabashed, extroverted bravura, it puts to shame the “mature” Sarasate’s unbelievably vacuous run-through of the same excerpt (also preserved on an early acoustical and by now notorious to all violin fanciers). The sound here is surprisingly warm and listenable once the ear adjusts to the diminished amplitude and ferocious background roar.

Szigeti recorded the Beethoven concerto with Bruno Walter twice—for the first time in 1932 with the British Symphony Orchestra and again in 1947 with the Philharmonic-Symphony of New York. In the earlier performance (reissued here), the violinist is in incomparably better form: His bowing is more decisive, his fingerwork cleaner, and his intonation far truer of the mark. There is also a lustrous energy and detailed tracing of the line only vaguely approximated in the later reading. As a matter of fact, the violin tone is better recorded on the

earlier discs—more closely microphoned and thus more pungent in overtones and less clouded by reverberation. The orchestra, alas, isn’t. The tuttis sound starved—partially the result of overmonitoring but chiefly, I suspect, because less than the full complement of players was used. Moreover, it seems to me that the Walter of 1947 was a stronger, less deferential conductor than the Walter of 1932. In the 1932 performance the tempo of the first movement drifts about in vague, apologetic fashion and since this concerto is as much an orchestral work as a purely violinistic one, this subservience must count as a drawback. One would be well advised, then, to supplement Szigeti’s masterly recorded performance with another, more soundly symphonic one (the recently reissued Heifetz/Toscanini, for example, builds the orchestral tuttis in incomparable fashion).

Sir Hamilton Harty also varies the tempo considerably in Szigeti’s 1928 Brahms concerto but the effect there is one of willful authority rather than vacillating hesitancy. On first rehearing I was distracted by Harty’s direction in which the climaxes accelerated wildly at one instance only to draw back abruptly the next. On further listening, it began to make sense: Orchestral playing has, to be sure, changed drastically but while there is generally more literal strictness of tempo today, there was often a greater pulse and more meaningful continuity in those days. Szigeti’s way with this music is astringent and rapturous rather than smugly complacent. The early recording spotlights his solo line with great—sometimes excessive—prominence (just the reverse was true in the 1945 Szigeti/Ormandy performance). Also spotlighted is the oboe soloist in the second movement who leaps upon the unsuspecting listener with raucous acerbity of tone and phrasing. Marcel Tabuteau would have been an improvement of course, but in order to hear that great artist one would also have had to sacrifice Sir Hamilton’s inspired leadership and Szigeti’s virginal inspiration. Co-

lumbia is to be applauded for not making that swap! Even Szigeti's third recording of the Brahms—which finds the violinist in rather good estate, has excellent modern sound, and is perceptively led by the late Herbert Menges—must take a back seat to this stunningly resurrected antique. I always recalled the original 78s as having very dead sound; the brightness of this transfer is a tribute to the resourcefulness of Columbia's restoring engineers (or perhaps a rebuke to my own faulty memory). The annoying pitch variations between the original sides have been fortunately—and totally—eliminated.

Some collectors have held the Szigeti/Beecham performance of the Mendelssohn E minor in exalted reverence for close to forty years. I, myself, have always been an old Kreisler man for this concerto. Kreisler's first electrical recording of the work in 1926 with Leo Blech and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra has a delicacy and soaring effusiveness unequaled by any other performance known to me (including Kreisler's own later effort). Szigeti and Beecham have a big approach—strong, meditative, full of weight and humanity. I find it distinctive and impressive but a bit stodgy and lacking in grace and humor. Perhaps the first two movements can sustain—and even benefit from—the added nobility and seriousness of intent, but certainly the winged finale is made to sound impossibly sedate. I also am disturbed in this work by Szigeti's sometimes jagged bowing and his rather imperfectly realized spiccato.

I was, on the other hand, touched by the Szigeti/Beecham reading of Mozart's D major Concerto, K. 218. Again, the tempos are on the leisurely side but there is more purity and linearity than in the Mendelssohn. Sometimes Szigeti uses a touch of wide vibrato on his low notes, yet this luxuriance is always counterbalanced by a sinewy, flaming rapier-thrust incisiveness that keeps the tensile strength of the writing from becoming unstylistically romantic. Szigeti's earnestness is, moreover, beautifully complemented by Sir Thomas' bluff heartiness. The ensemble is rather large but kept admirably within the bounds of taste and style. Joachim's cadenzas, a bit long and anachronistic, are nonetheless decidedly worth hearing. The 1934 sound, as in the 1933 Mendelssohn, is a bit portly on the low end and not too bright above the staff; still quite a lot of detail comes through and balance is generally good.

The best sounding of the three Szigeti/Beecham concertos is the Prokofiev No. 1, a bona fide phonographic classic if ever there was one. Szigeti brings a gorgeous dreamlike lyricism to the music—and when required, a biting probity and characterful sarcasm. Technically too he is in absolutely splendid form in this pioneer recording, negotiating the treacherously difficult pages of the Scherzo with supreme gossamer finesse and playing virtually all of the fearsome harmonics dead in tune. And what a marvelously lush and beautifully focused tone he achieves at the beginning of the finale. Even David Oistrakh's superlative reading with Prokofiev himself (on an old Colosseum disc) must yield pride of place to Szigeti's revelatory performance. Beecham—generally indifferent if not downright antagonistic to twentieth-century music other than Sibelius and Delius—supports his soloist with unexpected empathy. He brings the grandpa-like bassoon solo in the third movement to such charming life that it breaks my heart that this illustrious baronet never recorded (and narrated!) *Peter and the*

Wolf. As indicated, the sonics are still worthy, with clarity and exceptionally good balance and detail. All the special tonal effects come through with point and resonance.

The final side of the sixth disc is devoted to bonbons. But these are bonbons with a difference: the 1908 Bach *Preludio* already discussed; a 1926 performance with Nikita Magaloff of the Dvořák-Kreisler *Slavonic Dance* in E minor, Op. 72, No. 2; Kreisler's own *Liebesleid*; Stravinsky's *Pastorale*; Rimsky's *Flight of the Bumblebee*; Bartók's *Hungarian Folk Tunes* and *Roumanian Dances*. The Dvořák is rather angular and ascetic—more *Zigeuner* than *Slavonic* but none the worse for the shift in locale (I recall the later version with Andor Foldes as being *schmaltzier*). The Kreisler is interesting since it is always intriguing to hear another great individualist play a work exclusively associated with a distinguished colleague: Hofmann playing Rachmaninoff's preludes is another case in point. There is no use pretending that Szigeti plays the *Liebesleid* idiomatically—he probably didn't want to—but you can bet that he interprets it beautifully and, I think, convincingly. After being deluged with exhibitionistic, rhythmically wayward "traditional" accounts of the Bartók pieces—the *Roumanian Dances* especially—you might well find Szigeti's objective, delicately proportioned, and very metrical readings similarly unidiomatic. But for whatever it is worth, the man on piano here is Bartók himself! Would that Columbia had chosen the version of Stravinsky's *Pastorale* that had the composer leading a small woodwind ensemble. Unfortunately, the powers that be bypassed that charming disc and also a later Szigeti record of the piano version (with Harry Kaufman) to bring us, instead, this 1933 performance with Magaloff. The *Bumblebee* (not really a Szigeti specialty) gets a waspishly intense reading.

It seems almost churlish to add that this superb anthology doesn't tell the whole Szigeti story. In fact there is quite enough left over for another equally enticing package: the Bloch concerto and *Baal Shem*; Stravinsky's *Duo Concertant* with the composer at the piano; Brahms's D minor Sonata with Egon Petri; the Bach A minor Unaccompanied and that composer's Double Concerto with Carl Flesch; Beethoven's Sonatas, Op. 30, No. 2 and Op. 96 with Horszowski; the Ravel Sonata; Bartók's *Contrasts* with Benny Goodman and Bartók in a good undoctored mono pressing; the two Prokofiev sonatas; and much else besides. Whether or not we get those items, dear reader, is up to you: The fact is that for all their generosity and good will, the record companies are in business to make money, and unless you support the offering now at hand there is little or no hope of retrieving the rest. Any collector who fails to avail himself of the present bounty will be infinitely the poorer for it.

THE ART OF JOSEPH SZIGETI. Joseph Szigeti, violin; various accompanists and conductors. Columbia M6X 31513, \$23.92 (six discs, mono).

BACH: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D minor, S. 1052; Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin, No. 1, in G minor, S. 1001; Partita for Unaccompanied Violin, No. 3, in E. S. 1006; *Preludio*. **BARTÓK:** Hungarian Folk Tunes. **BARTÓK-SZEKELY:** Roumanian Folk Dances. **BEETHOVEN:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 61; Sonatas for Piano and Violin, No. 5, in F, Op. 24 (*Spring*); No. 10, in G, Op. 96. **BRAHMS:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, Op. 77. **DVOŘÁK-KREISLER:** Slavonic Dance, in E minor, Op. 72, No. 2. **HANDEL:** Sonata for Violin and Continuo, in D, Op. 1, No. 13. **KREISLER:** *Liebesleid*. **MENDELSSOHN:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in D, K. 218. **PROKOFIEV:** Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, No. 1, in D, Op. 19. **RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF:** Tsar Saltan: Flight of the Bumblebee. **STRAVINSKY:** *Pastorale*.

An eruption of hostile recorded humor

proves to be too much of a bad thing.

Black Comedies

by Henry Edwards

IN RECORD LAND, nothing inspires imitation like a hit, and record land does have a big hit these days—Cheech and Chong's comedy album "Big Bambu" (Ode SP 77014). At this writing at least nine comedy albums have been rushed into the stores as a result of the success of "Big Bambu." Most of them are attempts to be as "cool," "groovy," and "hip" as Cheech and Chong. Imitation once again proves not to be the most sincere form of flattery and most of these LPs are dreadful. In fact, "Big Bambu" itself is a pretty awful piece of work. To understand why the seven discs under consideration are so bad, one should first consider why Cheech and Chong have hit it big.

America's first "Mexican-Chinese" comedy team appears on stage looking as hirsute as their young audience. They mirror the language, attitudes, and behavior of that audience. They also share an open secret with their fans: They are pro-dope. They elicit laughs of recognition. The audience applauds the code words and the attitude of the pot smoker. At a Cheech and Chong performance, audience and performers come together in a ritual that resembles a midnight meeting of a teenager's secret society. Cheech and Chong are one of the most boorish, vulgar, pandering comedy teams in the history of American show business and they have converted comedy into a cheering section of passive adolescents whose gratification comes from applauding those who publicly flaunt convention. Their imitators are busy finding new and trying ways to create discs in which established codes of behavior are subjected to ridicule.

More sophisticated than Cheech and Chong, George Carlin is also aware that he must establish a special rapport with his audience. He too immediately strikes a note of irreverence and he liberally applies some of Lenny Bruce's scathing techniques to the foibles of contemporary society. On "Class Clown," the comedian rambles on about the ways kids misbehave. He discusses at some length each of the secretions of the human body. He then displays his ability at cracking his knuckles. He also makes cutting remarks about the war in Vietnam, the ecology mess, and the U.S. government's treatment of Muhammad Ali. On *I Used to Be Irish Catholic*, he devastates the hypocrisies of organized religion, gleefully taking on asinine priests, phony miracles, and conservative values. Of his youth in a boys' parish school, he remarks: "They were pushing for pain and I was pushing for pleasure!" *Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television*, in true Bruce fashion, confirms the absurdity of censoring any word in our language. (Ironically, Carlin was busted in Milwaukee last summer using these seven words in his act.) Cheech and Chong play the parts of ordinary, everyday, dimwitted adolescents. George Carlin is an interesting variation on their formula: He is the precocious, rebellious adolescent who is aware of the world's faults and feels compelled to expose these faults in public.

Murray Roman, another Lenny Bruce prototype, has elected to be the "relevant" adolescent. The first side of

his "Busted" disc is drawn from his own experience behind bars; the second is a collection of previously released material. On Side I Roman deals with issues like prison corruption and parole reform but he sheds no light on them. He also mimics blacks, something I'd thought comedians had grown out of quite some time ago. His other material (all of it delivered at the same monotonous pitch) seems to have neither pith nor point. "Busted" is meaningless and a waste of time.

The National Lampoon, a successful contemporary college-oriented magazine, has its own record label and "Radio Dinner" is the very first LP to be released on that label. Here is an irreverent publication that is able to laugh at those things that most practitioners of youth culture hold dear. After all, someone on this disc does remark: "If dope smoking doesn't rot your mind, why do so many teenyboppers like Cheech and Chong?"

More than half of the sketches on this disc must be counted as misses but along the way *Lampoon* does dish up plenty of hilarious, wicked, vicious parody. *Magical Misery Tour* presents an anguished John Lennon singing a primal scream song to end all primal scream songs climaxed by a beatific Yoko Ono commenting: "The dream is over!," a perfect spoof of the Lennons' early Plastic Ono Band albums. Joan Baez, portrayed as a grand old lady of social protest, is introduced as "Her Nibbs" and she sings: "I'm needed from Belfast to Bangla Desh!" Bob Dylan performs one of those "Fabulous Sixties" TV commercials and eagerly endorses such Sixties detritus as Barry McGuire's *Eve of Destruction*. A hippy DJ tells his listeners that "pain is so out of sight." The Republican Party is defined as "a leisure service of I.T.T." Creators Tony Hendra and Michael O'Donoghue are obviously well aware of the foolish aspects of current pop culture and they are not afraid to expose those foolishnesses. They are capable of flashes of cutting wit, an almost lost art during this self-indulgent time. With more disciplined writing, *National Lampoon* should be able to create a series of truly quality contemporary comedy albums that will be more adult than adolescent.

Marshall Efron is probably best known as the irreverent consumer expert on TV's *The American Dream Machine*. It was inevitable that Efron would wind up in a recording studio in an attempt to create something wacky and perverse enough to capture some of Cheech and Chong's market. Efron's LP, "The Nutrino News Network," centers around a radio station in Abysmo, New Jersey that features two broadcasters who not only announce the station's programs but also participate in some of the station's features. This disc includes a sampling of typical programs in a day in the life of this particular station. The programs include *Love of Love*, an obscene soap opera; *The Haircut*, an absurdist feature that takes place in a barber shop; *Musical Matinee*, a foul-mouthed country-and-western interlude; and *The Case of the Missing Nutrino*, a serial featuring Captain Privilege and Peter Patriot, two conservative comic book-

style heroes who hunt "the criminals of inner space." The less said about all of this gibberish the better.

Gore Vidal's *An Evening with Richard Nixon* opened on Broadway last April, only to close a few weeks later. It was a disastrous evening from every point of view. Why release an original cast album of it six months after it flopped? Obviously, because it is just as infantile and meretricious as Cheech and Chong's "Big Bambu."

An Evening with Richard Nixon tells the life story of the President using the President's own words, cast in the form of a debate between a Vidal type and a William F. Buckley type. Once again, we have the Checkers speech and the "You won't have me to kick around anymore" press conference. Along the way, Nixon is called "two left feet" and "iron butt" by those who knew him as he grew up. Vidal is an intelligent writer and perceptive social critic but he seems unable to control his pettiness. Here, Vidal has also taken on an unnecessary job. The credibility gap and the failure of the political system to solve so many of life's ills have made many, many citizens feel that their leaders are buffoons and they don't need Vidal to lead them to that conclusion. In addition, so much has been written about Nixon's psyche it is doubtful that *anyone* could enlighten us any further. Satire at its best is not nastiness but the revealing of truth. The truth in this instance does not revolve around President Nixon; it revolves around the American people, their fears, their frustrations, and their peculiar need for Richard Nixon in this time of confusion and stress. The satirist who deals with these factors will automatically understand why the Nixon personality has finally earned a very real niche in history. Meanwhile, this disc, a cut above Cheech and Chong, just may find an audience, those who look upon insult as art.

After all of this hostility, put-on, put-down, and cynicism, it should be a pleasure to take a respite and turn to the more traditional comedy of Bill Cosby. Cosby certainly does have a much gentler approach. The comedian is friendly, warm, wry, and easygoing. "Inside the Mind of Bill Cosby" deals with family arguments about television watching and the various methods used to bring up the Cosby children. It is nothing more or less than recorded TV situation comedy. A TV sit-com can be a trying thing; even though Cosby himself is a charmer, a visit to his household can be just as trying.

Monte Python's Flying Circus is the catchall name for seven young English comedians who are currently the rage of British television and the stars of a feature film, *And Now For Something Completely Different*. They are the precocious adolescents. "Another Monte Python Record" offers up a dash of cannibalism and a moment in which Pablo Casals plays Bach while plunging hundreds of feet into a bucket of hot fat. It is all very civilized lunacy, however. For example, on *World Forum*, none other than Lenin, Marx, Ché Guevara, and Mao Tse-tung engage in the typical inane games-show competition. During this disc the listener is constantly being reminded that he is listening to a phonograph record, an unusual use of a typical Brechtian device. The listener is even supplied with two short play scripts so that he can act along with the LP. For all their seeming cleverness though, Monte Python's Flying Circus members are just another bunch of aging college cut-ups, creating the kind of material that is just far out enough to make the unknowing feel truly sophisticated. This characteristic may be enough to make them successful with the huge, indiscriminating audience that Cheech and Chong have proved is out there.

A final word should be said about this record's jacket. It is typical of a low-priced edition of Beethoven's Second, conducted by "Dietrich Ealtheher," down to the liner notes on the back which start out straight and wind up turning Beethoven into a tennis champion heading toward Forest Hills Stadium. The real name of the album is crayoned in over this design. It is a zany, unusual piece of graphics and far more amusing than almost anything that can be heard on these seven discs.

Cheech and Chong have certainly started too much of a bad thing. Irreverence is not enough.

GEORGE CARLIN: *Class Clown*. *Class Clown*; *Wasted Time*; *Values*; five more. Little David LD 1004, \$5.98.

MURRAY ROMAN: *Busted*. *Busted*; *Chencho and Hector*; *Hundred Dollar*; fifteen more. United Artists UAS 5595, \$5.98.

RADIO DINNER: Presented by The National Lampoon; written by Tona Hendra and Michael O'Donoghue; featuring Tona Hendra, Michael O'Donoghue, and Christopher Guest. *Deteriorata*; *Phono Phunnies*; *Teenyrap*; *It's Obvious*; seven more. Banana/Blue Thumb BTS 38, \$5.98.

MARSHALL EFRON: *The Nutrino News Network*. Written by Marshall Efron; featuring Marshall Efron, Barton Heyman, Dennis Longwell, and Marilyn Sokol. *Love of Love*; *Land Sales Spot*; *Musical Matinee*; five more. Polydor PD 5029, \$5.98.

AN EVENING WITH RICHARD NIXON, Written by Gore Vidal; featuring George S. Irving. *Prologue*; *The Birth of a Nixon*; *College Days*; twelve more. Ode SP 77015, \$5.98.

BILL COSBY: *Inside the Mind of Bill Cosby*. *The Invention of Basketball*; *Survival*; *Ennis' Toilet*; seven more. Uni 73139, \$5.98.

MONTE PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS: *Another Monte Python Record*. *Apologies*; *Spanish Inquisition*; *World Forum*; eleven more. Charisma CAS 1049, \$5.98.



Cheech (left) and Chong—the audience applauds the code words.

classical

reviewed by

ROYAL S. BROWN
 R. D. DARRELL
 PETER G. DAVIS
 SHIRLEY FLEMING
 ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN
 CLIFFORD F. GILMORE
 HARRIS GOLDSMITH
 DAVID HAMILTON
 DALE S. HARRIS
 PHILIP HART
 DONAL J. HENAHAN
 PAUL HENRY LANG
 ANDREA MCMAHON
 ROBERT C. MARSH
 ROBERT P. MORGAN
 H. C. ROBBINS LONDON
 JOHN ROCKWELL
 SUSAN THIEMANN SOMMER

ANON: Missa Fuit homo missus; Missa Sanctissimae Trinitatis—See Dufay: Missa sine nomine.

BACH: Cantatas: No. 51, Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen; No. 199, Mein Herze schwimmt im Blut. Edith Mathis, soprano; Pierre Thibaud, trumpet; Munich Bach Orchestra, Karl Richter, cond. Archive 2533 115, \$6.98.

Selected comparisons:
 Ameling/Winschermann Phil. 6500 080
 Bogard/Moriarty Cam. 2710
 Giebel/Leonhardt Tel. 9513
 Stader/Richter Arc. 198 027

Edith Mathis and Karl Richter are up against some of the best competition in the business with their new recording of that soprano tour de force, *Jauchzet Gott*, and I'll say straight away that there are four other versions I'd recommend ahead of this one. Edith Mathis simply doesn't have the vocal agility and sureness to negotiate the tortuous coloratura cleanly, especially at Richter's exceptionally brisk tempos. Too many notes at ends of phrases get swallowed up and too many consonants don't come through. The result in the first movement is a rather limp reading, in spite of Richter's efforts to keep things moving rapidly and crisply. Richter's own previous recording with Maria Stader, though taken at a much more deliberate pace, is far more incisive: Stader really sings like she means it and has the facility to pull it off.

The final chorale and alleluia on this new recording are more effective, thanks to Richter's energetic direction and the really superb playing by the two solo violins (and Pierre Thibaud's brilliant trumpeting), but the necessary vocal fireworks as heard on Carole Bogard's breath-taking reading (unfortunately hampered by a weak orchestra), are missing.

I am also quite fond of Agnes Giebel's more

restrained and truly elegant performance with the Concerto Amsterdam, but the best over-all reading I've heard is by Elly Ameling and Winschermann. The piece suits Ameling's voice to a tee and she sings with real flair. Winschermann's accompaniments are crisp and energetic, and the Philips recording is the cleanest one of the batch.

Ameling's recording of No. 51, like this new Mathis/Richter version, is coupled with No. 199, another solo cantata with oboe and strings. In this lovely, restrained work—a perfect foil to the jubilation of No. 51—both ladies are in good form, but I would still give the nod to Ameling because of her purer, basically more beautiful sound. C.F.G.

BEETHOVEN: An die ferne Geliebte, Op. 98; Sechs Lieder von Gellert, Op. 48. **BRAHMS:** Vier ernste Gesänge, Op. 121; Fünf Lieder, Op. 94. John Shirley-Quirk, baritone, Martin Isepp, piano. Argo ZRG 664, \$5.98.

Selected comparison (Beethoven):
 Fischer-Dieskau DGG 2720 017
Selected comparison (Brahms):
 Kipnis Ser. 60076

On the Beethoven side of this disc, the noted English baritone does not seem to be in his best voice, with some ill-focused tones and strained high notes tending to negate the careful attention to diction, phrasing, and other musical matters. The Brahms side goes rather better, and the real partnership of singer and pianist counts for a great deal in the *Ernste Gesänge*—probably the best currently available modern version (although the old Kipnis performance, on Seraphim 60076, remains a special touchstone). It is good to have the Op. 94 songs as a set, too; they share a unity of theme, and these Hotteresque performances put them across strongly except in the *Sapphische Ode*, when the somewhat thew tone gets in the way of a smooth line.

Voice/piano balance is good, although the over-all acoustic is on the cloudy side. Texts and translations are provided in a leaflet, but the second stanza of *Sapphische Ode* seems to have been lost somewhere along the way.

Alternatives for the Beethoven: none but Fischer-Dieskau, in the DGG Beethoven edition—a shade more sentimental, perhaps, but notably better sung. D.H.

BEETHOVEN: Quartets for Strings: No. 10, in E flat, Op. 74 (*Harp*); No. 11, in F minor, Op. 95 (*Serioso*). Quartetto Italiano. Philips 6500 180, \$6.98.

Selected comparisons:
 Amadeus DGG 2720 313
 Guarneri RCA 3298

The Quartetto Italiano, having recently brought out recordings of Beethoven's five late quartets, now appears to be working its way backwards through this literature. Their new issue includes the last two quartets written before the final five. Composed in 1809 and 1810 respectively, Opp. 74 and 95 are particularly interesting in that they form a kind of stylistic bridge leading from the great dramatic works of Beethoven's middle period (represented among the quartets by the three *Rasoumovsky* Quartets, Op. 59) to the introspective profundities of the last period. The Quartetto Italiano provides careful, well-shaped performances of both works; yet despite the consistently clean playing and precise

intonation, the group fails to communicate the kind of intense personal involvement between performers and composition which to my mind really brings this music to life. The competition here is very steep indeed: Both the Amadeus and Guarneri have excellent versions of these two works. I think I would go with the Guarneri, whose less exuberant approach seems better suited to these particular quartets—and in any case the Amadeus performance, apart from the cassette edition, may be had only in their box of the complete quartets. R.P.M.

B BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 4, in B flat, Op. 60; Coriolan Overture. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Wilhelm Furtwängler, cond. Turnabout TV 4344, \$2.98 (mono); from concert performances, 1943).

Most of the Furtwängler material on Turnabout stems originally from wartime radio recordings "liberated" by the Russians and issued recently in the Soviet Union. However, this Beethoven Fourth is a somewhat anomalous case, for it turns out *not* to be the same as the Russian disc—at least for the first two movements, which on the latter clearly stem from a performance with a rather noisy audience. What the Turnabout corresponds to, in fact, is the DGG issue (currently listed, in fake stereo, as Heliodor 2548 704), on which these movements are similar, but not identical, to the Russian version, and lack audience participation. To compound the confusion, all these recordings share the same (audienceless) Scherzo and Finale!

How this all came about, I cannot tell—but, for the record, the Turnabout issue is not as good as the DGG, with a pronounced pitch wobble at the end of the second movement; the Heliodor is cut at a lower level than the original DGG (to accommodate the Fifth Symphony on the verso), but the phony stereo isn't too bad, although the sound is dull in any case, with a boomy, ill-defined bass. Despite the considerable rhythmic vitality (I don't mean speed!) in the end movements, there is some doubt in my mind about Furtwängler's initial tempo in the Adagio, where the $\frac{3}{4}$ measures are hard to feel as entities. More satisfactory, both in sound and performance, is the 1952 Vienna version (now on Odeon 1C 047 00806).




New to the American market is the *Coriolan*, a better-balanced but rather gritty recording from a 1943 concert (the original had applause at the end, but Turnabout has excised that somewhat overenthusiastically, removing the last three measures of the Overture as well). Most notable in the reading is an exceptionally elegiac approach to the coda, but

Explanation of symbols

Classical:

-  Budget
-  Historical
-  Reissue

Recorded tape:

-  Open Reel
-  8-Track Cartridge
-  Cassette



Leon Fleischer—dynamic, comprehending.

the totality is again less satisfying than the Vienna studio version of 1947 (Odeon LC 047 00843).

Much as one appreciates Turnabout's avoidance of phony stereo in its Furtwängler reissues, it would be nice to have more data on the provenance of these recordings—and to avoid the duplication of already available versions, which is a waste of everyone's effort.

D.H.

B **BRAMHS: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in D minor, Op. 15.** Leon Fleisher, piano; Cleveland Orchestra, George Szell, cond. Odyssey Y 31273. \$2.98 (from Epic BC 1003, 1958).

Just recently Columbia offered the Serkin/Szell readings of both Brahms concertos (the second with reputedly improved sound) as a "twofer" at \$6.98; now, on their low-priced Odyssey label, they restore Leon Fleisher's admirable account of the First (Fleisher's excellent No. 2 will presumably be reissued in the near future).

Fleisher's dynamic, enthusiastic, and comprehending reading of the D minor was for some time my favorite way to hear this music. Brahms was, after all, a young man himself when he conceived this assertive, defiantly confident music, and Fleisher aptly emphasized the very robust qualities that can bring the writing to life. On rehearsing, I am still immensely drawn to the interpretation but feel that Fleisher's point-making is perhaps a bit *too* bright-eyed and eager, too unreposeful for its own good. The more recent readings by Curzon and Serkin (both of which share with Fleisher's the advantage of Szell's superb collaboration) realize many of the identical felicities Fleisher brings to light but with slightly more simplicity and benignity. But why quibble? This is a superb recording of a superb concerto, inexpensively priced, and sounding even fuller than it did before. Warmly recommended.

H.G.

BRAMHS: Sonata for Piano, No. 1, in C, Op. 1—See Schumann: Davidsbündertänze, Op. 6.

BRAMHS: Vier ernste Gesänge, Op. 121; Fünf Lieder, Op. 94—See Beethoven: An die ferne Geliebte, Op. 98.

BRUCKNER: Symphony No. 5, in B flat. Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond. Philips 6700 055, \$13.96 (two discs).

Selected comparison:
Klemperer

Ang. 3709

Every advance in recording technology and playback technique brings a chorus of objections. I am sure there were protests when the cylinder gave way to the disc, and I remember vividly the furor over the demise of the 78.

Now we hear charges of four-channel fraud, suggesting that the move toward quad sound is a plot to flimflam the consumer. I agree that some early quad releases gave a poor idea of the potential of the new medium, and I have yet to hear a satisfactory quad demonstration at an electronics show. Confusion is still possible.

But there is nothing I see to alarm the most vigilant consumer in the present state of quadraphony. Quad discs and stereo discs are fully compatible, so you are free to ignore the whole business if you want to, and some of the most interesting quad effects come from decoding discs that are sold as conventional stereo material. Philips and London releases offer particularly good opportunities for such exploration. As it turns out, a very substantial number of stereo records sound better when played back through four speakers, and that is a phenomenon that everybody ought to be able to hear for himself.

The albums cited above are a perfect case in point. Haitink is nearing the end of his complete edition of Bruckner, and it has been a notable series of performances. Here and there other editions have proved to be serious rivals, but Haitink's work throughout has revealed scrupulous musicianship, insight, and an uncommon ability to bring out the grandeur and long singing lines of this music.

The Fifth Symphony is not a popular work in the sense of the Fourth or the Seventh. It is rather severe and formal: The finale, a magnificent architectural design, combines sonata form and a double fugue. This movement in particular suffered at the hands of the brothers Schalk, who worked over the score outrageously before the first performance. The Schalk version is presently available in a Knappertsbusch recording. It should be regarded strictly as a historical document.

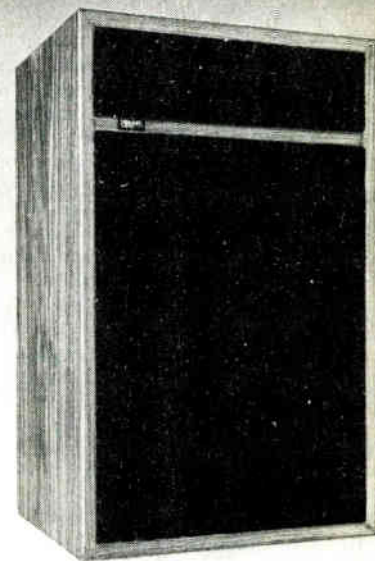
The music is perfectly suited to the Klemperer temperament, and his genius for precise articulation, strong phrase outlines, and ensemble clarity is fully revealed in his recording. Remarkable too is the manner in which with an accent here, a little underlining there, he shows you as forcefully as possible how this complex score is put together.

Haitink's performance is of quite a different sort. It is more energetic, more spontaneous, and more lyric in character, while still deeply focused in the distinctive Bruckner idiom and completely suited to the character of the work as expressed by the composer's markings. Klemperer gives you more of the structure of the work, Haitink more of the drama. Both approaches are completely justifiable, and the choice is yours. (If you really admire the score, there is ample reason for having both versions.)

The special asset of the Haitink is the manner in which it is recorded. The levels are higher than in the Klemperer, so the Scherzo

Continued on page 82

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CIRCLE 65 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

by Clifford F. Gilmore

Brandenburgs for the Underground

IT WOULD BE EASY to argue that there are already more than enough *Brandenburg* Concerto recordings and that we should declare a moratorium on new versions for a generation or two. Just going through the current issue of *Schwann* we can find several recordings to satisfy every conceivable taste: There are Klemperer and Munch for those who still want to hear big orchestral transcriptions of chamber music; then we have Richter, Ristenpart, Münchinger, and Gberman for those who've discovered that the music does sound better when played with a little energy and incisiveness. Moving up to more current styles of performance we have the *Concentus Musicus* recording on Telefunken and the lively *Collegium Aureum* reading on Victrola, both of which feature original instruments and up-to-date ideas on the stylistic habits of baroque musicians. These two, especially the *Collegium Aureum*, have been my own favorites since they first appeared.

Now along comes Anthony Newman's new recording (luckily, before we declared that moratorium) and we have to invent a whole new category in which to put it: so fresh and original are his ideas and accomplishments, that the result is basically unlike any other recording. Newman's version probably will appeal first to the audience that already has some sympathy with the original-instrument and stylistic-accuracy movement, especially that segment looking for a performance which, like this, also has some guts. I expect this record will also become a hot item among those not-yet-jaded youngsters who've been reading reviews of his earlier solo records in underground papers like *Rolling Stone* and hearing them on radio stations aimed exclusively at the rock generation. That so-called rock generation evidently senses a kindred spirit in Newman's incredibly youthful, vivacious, and energetic performances.

But coupled with this youthful impetuosity is a brilliantly logical and analytical mind that is able to project more of the essence of Bach's music than any other performer I know. Newman's secret is in balancing these two qualities: There have been analytical performers before who delighted musicologists and bored the public; and there have been virtuosos who've won bravos and standing ovations while enraging the musicologists. Newman is already hearing bravos from both these camps. Because of the uniqueness and integrity of Newman's



Anthony Newman—pleasing all.

ideas and the over-all success with which he has put them into practice here, this is one of the most important baroque records of the decade; I'll never be able to listen to these works again in the same way, and I challenge anyone interested in Bach to hear these performances and test his own ability to break out of old listening habits and be moved by Newman's penetrating insights.

One of the first things we notice about these performances is Newman's preference for fast, nimble, and bouncy tempos. Almost without exception, his fast movements are faster than those on any other recording, and in nearly every instance a jolly, foot-tapping lilt that is irresistible is established. In spite of these often quite fast tempos, none of his instrumentalists ever seems rushed or hurried. The slow movements, on the other hand, are just as consistently slower than we are used to. Here the mood is completely relaxed and the rhythm free and lyrical, giving the soloists all the time they need to delicately ornament their lines. A short cadenza is even added for the two violas in No. 6. The middle movement of the Fifth Concerto is perhaps the most elegantly played and most exquisitely decorated movement of the set. Here flute, violin, and harpsichord all ornament freely and make numerous rhythmic alterations, particularly with slurred pairs of even sixteenths, which are changed to the *coulé* or Lombard rhythm in which the first note of each pair is shortened and the second lengthened. The middle movement of the Second Concerto is also elaborately ornamented and overdotted is applied whenever appropriate.

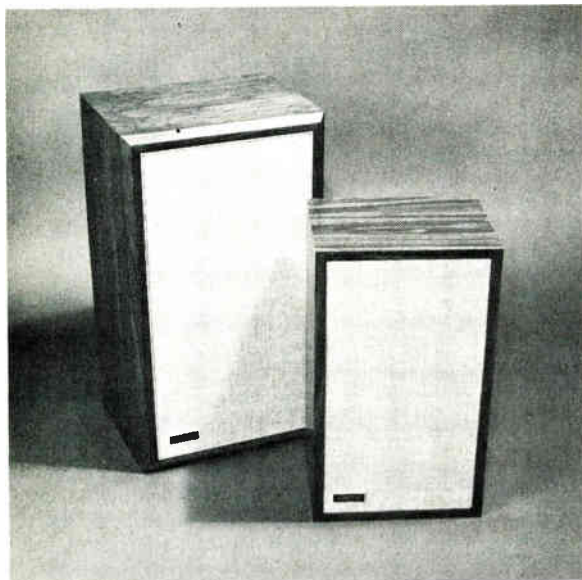
Newman's handling of the rhythmic pulse, or his use of rubato, is the next unique feature of his playing that we become aware of on first hearing, and I've become more and more fascinated with it on subsequent hearings. Those who have heard his organ and harpsichord records will recognize the same principles at work here, but the result is somehow smoother, more subtle when employed by a group of musicians. Basically, the purpose of the rubato is to delineate the structural building blocks of the piece, to point up phrase endings, or important cadences or other structural devices. Besides marking the end of one phrase, they provide a gentle springboard for the beginning of the next. A good speaker also inserts little pauses when he comes to commas or periods in his speech to separate one thought from the next, and I think Newman has a similar aim in separating one musical thought from the next. Admittedly, these interruptions in the pulse take some getting used to, since no other performer of my acquaintance has ever done anything like it (although Gustav Leonhardt does occasionally seem to be on the same track). In the last movement of the Third Concerto, for instance, we are so used to hearing an almost hypnotically regular pulse from the first note to the last, that these little burps can be quite a jolt at first. But in the end we find that we have listened more intelligently and we admire Bach all the more when some of these structural devices are made clear.

Music as complex as these concertos has points of interest in virtually every measure. No one could possibly bring all these out in one performance, even if he knew they were there, but Newman's performance is remarkable because he has been able to ferret out and expose so many. One example from the Fourth Concerto: In the first solo section of the last movement, beginning at measure 43, while the two recorders play the principal theme in imitation, the violin plays an eighth-note accompaniment, each of the first ten measures' first notes delineating an ascending scale followed by a descending circle of fifths ending on the dominant. In the next ten measures the whole pattern is repeated in the key of the dominant. Now a violinist might play this passage fifty times without ever being aware of this hidden line, but Newman has somehow gotten his violinist to bring out each of these notes in such a

Continued on page 82

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BRANDENBURGS

Continued from page 80

way that we clearly hear a "brand new" contrapuntal line emerge from the hiding place where it always was implicit.

There are, alas, a few warts on the Mona Lisa, and I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't report them. Newman's mix-and-match solution to the old-instrument-vs.-new problem seems to me a regrettable compromise. (Baroque oboes and a baroque bassoon are used in No. 1, recorders in Nos. 2 and 4, an eighteenth-century flute in No. 5, and gambas in No. 6; the horns, trumpet, oboe in No. 2, and strings are all modern instruments.) The usual complaint is that there will be problems of balance when mixing old and new instruments, though in this case virtually every balance problem has been corrected in the sixteen-track master tape. There is still some disorientation: We know that a modern trumpet can't play duets with a recorder, though we are hearing it and are hearing both parts equally well.

If we overlook some very slight intonation problems in the minuet of the First Concerto (baroque oboes and bassoon in the first trio and first violin in the second trio), all the soloists deserve the highest praise. I will, however, single out Martin Berinbaum, whose stratospheric trumpeting in the Second Concerto is breathtaking, and Shelley Gruskin, whose nimble and silver-toned recorder playing in the Second and Fourth Concertos is superb. Newman's continuo playing is fascinating in itself, and his cadenza in the Fifth Concerto is, of course, hair-raisingly fast, clean, and exciting.

The recording was made with Columbia's new sixteen-track equipment, which guarantees that Newman's already crisp, clean, generally one-player-to-a-part textures emerge with astonishing clarity and beautiful stereo placing.

BACH: Brandenburg Concertos (6), S. 1046/51. Vera Beths, Annie Kavafian, Yosef Yankelev, Robert Zimansky, Paul Gurevich, and Ida Kavafian, violins; Irene Breslaw, Walter Trampler, and Karen Phillips, violas; James Kreger, Fred Sherry, and Robert von Gutfeld, cellos; Judith Davidoff and Mary Springfels, violas da gamba; Richard Fredrickson, bass; Shelley Gruskin and Herbert Myers, recorders; Sally Logemann, Joshua Siegel, and Virginia Brewer, baroque oboes; Julie Feves, baroque bassoon; Ronald Roseman, oboe; Martin Berinbaum, trumpet; A. Robert Johnson and David Jolley, horns; Anthony Newman, harpsichord and cond. Columbia M2 31398, \$9.98 (two discs).

Selected comparisons:

Coll. Aureum	RCA VICS 6023
Goberman	Ody. 32 26 0014
Harnoncourt	Tel. 9459/60
Klemperer	Ang. 3627
Munch	RCA 6140
Münchinger	Lon. 2301
Richter	Asc. 2708 013
Ristenpart	None. 73006

CLASSICAL REVIEWS

Continued from page 79

really rolls (with Haitink's faster tempo an extra help), the final chorale truly blazes forth with the majesty of Bruckner brass writing.

If you introduce the effects that two rear speakers can provide, you are back in the Concertgebouw, seated about the first row of the balcony, with the sound levels (taken from a music level meter in the listening room) approximately the same as a live performance (as best I can judge) and a wonderful sense of being surrounded by a big, resonant concert hall. Of course in conventional stereo playback, the sound is also very fine, but not like this. It is quite astonishing and vastly gratifying to have a Bruckner symphony come to you on records with this sense of immediacy and presence. And it must be heard to be appreciated.

R.C.M.

B CHAVEZ: *Soli I; Soli II; Soli IV.* Sally Van Den Berg, oboe; Anastasio Flores, clarinet; Louis Salomons, bassoon; Felipe León, trumpet; Vicente Zarzo, horn; Clemente Sanabria, trombone; Rubén Islas, flute; Carlos Chavez, cond. Odyssey Y 31534, \$2.98.

Soli is the name Carlos Chavez has given to a group of suites in which various movements highlight different instruments; in the three chamber pieces recorded here, Chavez exploits the diverse instrumental combinations with mixed success. Written almost thirty years before its successors, *Soli* No. 1 (1933) for oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and trumpet is by far the best, and also the most Chavezesque with its obsessive rhythmic patterns and its lively interplay of jaunty melodic lines. On the other hand, the second (1961), scored for standard wind quintet, rambles on interminably.

In his double-talky liner notes, Chavez states that his basic formal principle—nonrepetitiveness—inherently implies and forces creation; but it is difficult to see how the long (oh, is it long!), predictable, and characterless progressions in *Soli* II of so many contemporary harmonic, intervallic, and rhythmic clichés can be termed creative, just because few of the clichés are repeated. *Soli* IV (1964) for horn, trumpet, and trombone, while also seeming a bit cerebral, at least offers some interesting antiphonal effects, an intriguing use of sustained notes, and some harmonies that often seem closer to those of progressive and third-stream jazz than those of *Soli* II. The playing is generally quite good, the recorded sound splendid.

R.S.B.

B R CHOPIN: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in E minor, Op. 11. **LISZT:** Totentanz for Piano and Orchestra. Alexander Brailowsky, piano; Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. Odyssey Y 31533, \$2.98 (from Columbia MS 6252, 1961).

It would be charitable to say that Brailowsky had passed his prime when he taped this, his third and final recording of Chopin's E minor Concerto. Charitable but not really accurate: His old Polydor version of the Barcarolle (I never heard the roughly contemporaneous

shellacs of the concerto) has a memory slip in the opening bars and displays essentially the same roughshod approach to technical challenges, the same unsuppleness of tone, and the same calculating, utterly unintuitive feeling for rubato and phrasing.

Still, the man had a career and a big one at that. Much of the appeal, I suspect, derived from his basic forthright honesty and grim determination. A certain geniality bespeaks of a love of music and of playing the piano; a rigorous dependability, even when threatened by near technical breakdown, keeps the performance moving ahead come hell or high water. One *has* to admire such unflinching tenacity.

The Liszt, a blasphemous confection based on the hallowed *Dies irae* motive, gets a most enthusiastic—but hardly subtle—reading.

The twelve-year-old reproduction still sounds exceptionally realistic.

H.G.

CHOPIN: Etudes, Opp. 10 and 25 (complete); Fantasy in F minor, Op. 49; Scherzo No. 3, in C sharp minor, Op. 39. Aleksander Slobodyanik, piano. Melodiya/Angel SR 40204/5, \$5.98 each (two discs).

The newsworthy item about this integral performance of the Chopin etudes is that it comes from an actual concert performance at the Moscow Conservatory. Few artists would undertake to play this music before an audience and even fewer of them would permit such candid performances to be circulated on a record. In some instances, the (quite understandable) reticence is regrettable: Robert Goldsand, for instance, has often played these treacherously difficult pieces far better "live" than he did on his basically admirable but slightly inhibited recording of them for Concert Hall Society. Horowitz allowed a public performance of Op. 10, No. 8 to be pressed on vinyl, and the late South American pianist Rosita Renard found her way onto disc with an extended group of these studies taken "on location" at her last recital in Carnegie Hall. Slobodyanik, though, is the first person to go on record with an *in toto* concert performance.

For the most part, his technique is extraordinarily clean. Only occasionally is there a wrong note or a skipped one—generally his work displays precision and color. On the whole, I found the Op. 10 better than the Op. 25: In the first set, the young Soviet virtuoso plays most musically—with long-spanning, elastic phrasing and a personalized differentiation of texture and color. Many inner voices emerge to give the music added warmth and profile, and the prevailing impression—despite the rather murky-sounding instrument—is one of spacious breadth and cantabile lyricism.

In the Op. 25, Slobodyanik is less attractive. In that set, some of his musical ideas strike me as rather arbitrary. He drags the middle section of No. 5 and treats No. 7, admittedly an elusively meditative piece, in mawkish, stolidly deliberate fashion. The lighter essays—e.g., the one in double thirds—get accurate but rather heavily methodical treatment, and there is too much toying with pulse in the opening of the No. 11, the so-called *Winter Wind*. A few of the Op. 25 pieces, however, such as the *Aeolian Harp* No. 1, are attractive in Slobodyanik's unaffected, directly phrased readings. Each set of etudes comes on a separate disc filled out with a large Chopin piece

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CIRCLE 46 ON READER-SERVICE CARD



Aleksander Slobodyanik—a test well met.

(presumably studio-recorded). I didn't much care for Slobodyanik's rather slack account of the great F minor Fantasy, but the Third Scherzo gets an admirably incisive, forward-driving statement. The octaves there are cleanly fingered, the ensuing ostinato full of sprint and bounce, the momentum unflagging even in the difficult-to-sustain choral central episodes.

The reproduction is clear but not particularly lovely. The sonority is a bit hard and drab—splintery above the staff and murky below. I hasten to add that Slobodyanik himself is not to blame—he produces a singing tone.

H.G.

DEBUSSY: Piano Works. Michel Beroff, piano. Angel S 36874, \$5.98.
Estampes; Images: Books I and II; Pour le Piano.

This and a concurrently issued Stravinsky collection are billed by Angel as Michel Beroff's American Recording Debut. Just what, may I ask, is a debut? My dictionary defines the word as "a first step," "a beginning"; but recently a brilliant young artist made his "debut" at Hunter College after he had played twice in Carnegie Recital Hall, twice at Alice Tully, and in several other major New York City auditoriums (accompanied by rave reviews from the critics). In like manner, M. Beroff participated in Angel's own recording of Messiaen's *Quartour pour le fin des temps*, issued three years ago, and I suspect that his "debut" now simply indicates that Madison Avenue is about to do a gala publicity job on this dazzling young (twenty-two-year-old) Frenchman.

I have very much the same reaction here as I had after hearing Beroff perform the Bartók Second Concerto with Boulez and the New York Philharmonic. He is obviously a colossal technician with brilliant facility, accuracy, and supreme lightness of touch when needed. He gives the music he plays an X-ray clarity and never for a moment lapses into bad taste. On the other hand, there is very little difference between his Bartók and his Debussy, and for all the admirable craftsmanship, I sincerely believe that the quintessential quality of both composers quite eludes this performer. In

basic type, Beroff can best be classified as a modernist—he is not without a sort of poetry, but generally strives for high-powered virtuosity and objectivity. In the more lyrical pieces, Beroff spins out a fine line and keeps all the textures cool and clean. *Pagodes* gets a flowing performance with exceptionally even trills and lucid colors. *Soirée dans Grenade* is rather stylized, with a fine-spun nervous intensity and quite a lot of tempo rubato. Generally, it's a rather intimate, quizzical statement. The toccatalike pieces—e.g., *Jardins sous la pluie*, *Mouvement*, *Poissons d'or*, and the outer sections of *Pour le Piano*—become rather hard-nosed and overbrilliant. Nuance is in better supply in *Reflets dans l'eau*, *Cloches à travers les feuilles*, and *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*, but everything is, to one degree or another, lacking tenderness and inner glow. If you like your Debussy triple sec, this extremely well-reproduced disc might be more to your liking than it is to mine, but even within this mode of "anti-impressionist" interpretation, Beveridge Webster's Debussy cycle for Desto has more strongly characterized, deeply motivated, passionately felt performances.

H.G.

DELIBES: Coppélia. Bolshoi Theater Orchestra. Yuri Fayer, cond. Melodiya/Angel SRB 4111, \$11.96 (two discs).

Selected comparison:
Bonyngé

Lon. 2229

Though this album reads "Complete Ballet," "complete" here means the complete Bolshoi Ballet production: James Lyons' extensive liner notes concede that score Nos. 4, 12, 15, 18, and 20f are omitted. Since these (all relatively brief) sections were included in Bonyngé's version of last October, since the latter's Orchestre de la Suisse Romande boasts more refined tonal qualities than the Russian orchestra, and since London's sonics are sweeter, more lucid, and better balanced than Melodiya's, it might seem that the present *Coppélia* competition corresponds almost exactly with that between the Zuraitis/Melodiya version (January 1972) and Bonyngé/London version (June 1970) of Adam's *Giselle*.

But the similarity holds good only up to a point. Interpretatively, veteran Fayer surpasses Bonyngé just where the latter is weakest: in rhythmic verve and theatrical excitement. The more seductive aural appeal and the completeness of the Bonyngé set keep it as the discographic first choice, but some listeners—balletomanes in particular—well may prefer the more dramatic Fayer reading. R.D.D.

DUFAY: Missa sine nomine. ANON.: Missa Fuit homo missus. Capella Cordina, Alejandro Planchart, dir. Lyrichord LLST 7234, \$5.98.

DUFAY: Missa Ave regina coelorum; Ave regina coelorum III (motet); Lamentatio Sanctae matris ecclesiae Constantinopolitanae; Puisque vous estes campieur; Se la face ay pale. Capella Cordina, A. Planchart, dir. Lyrichord LLST 7233, \$5.98.

OCKEGHEM: Missa Ecce ancilla Domine. ANON.: Missa Sanctissimae Trinitatis. DUFAY: Benedicamus Domino. Capella Cordina, A. Planchart, dir. Lyrichord LLST 7237, \$5.98.

Even with "old music" as popular as it is today it is a rare occasion to come across so rich a treasure-trove as these three discs from Lyrichord. Usually one only hears on records bits and pieces of Renaissance music, charming in themselves but not really satisfying in the aggregate. One longs for something more substantial and here it is, five (or perhaps four and a half) previously unrecorded Masses from the fifteenth century, two superb works by Guillaume Dufay, one early one late; a beautiful anonymous English Mass; one of Johannes Ockeghem's majestic and mysterious masterpieces; and finally a continental cycle of settings for the Proper of the Mass, this for Trinity Sunday.

To hear two Masses of Dufay together, one written at the beginning of his career around 1420 and the other at the end over fifty years later in 1472, is truly an extraordinary experience. Not only for the predictable development of personal style but because between these two works a cultural revolution had taken place, the Middle Ages became the Renaissance.

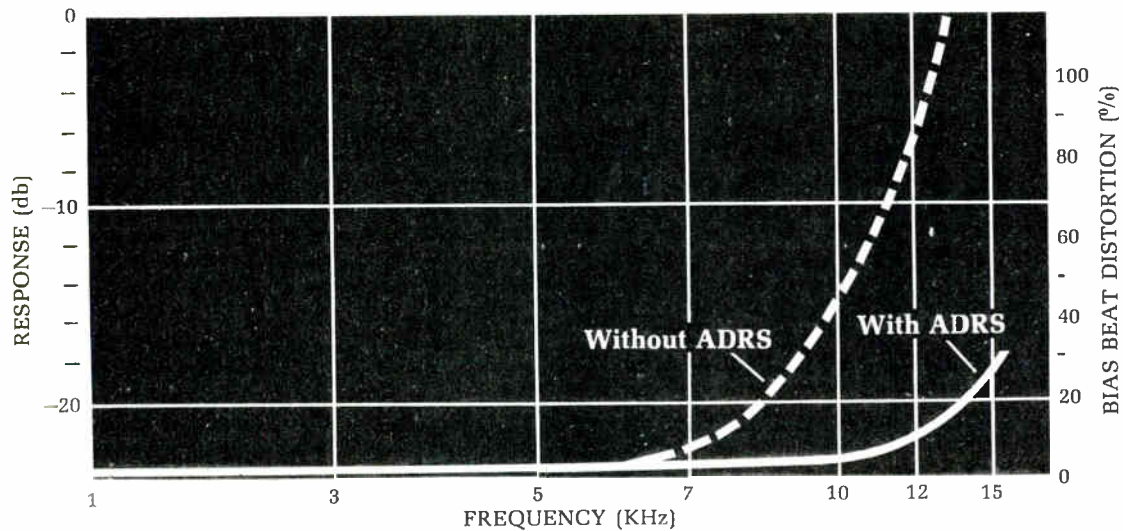
The *Missa sine nomine*, so called because it is apparently freely composed and not based on any pre-existing tunes, is a compact, cheerful work. It must have taken courage for the young composer to set out without a model of cantus firmus to write this complete Mass cycle, but there are few signs of hesitation or insecurity in the music. The Kyrie, Sanctus, and Agnus are particularly successful, being linked both by motives and repeated figures. Only the Credo, whose chattering syllabic style and awkward archaisms suggest that it may be an interpolation, seems discordant. The sound of the *Missa sine nomine* recalls Machaut. Writing with three rather than four voices, Dufay achieves a sonority remarkably like that of the fourteenth-century master. Open fifths, empty cadences, sudden stops and starts, even passages in hocket reinforce echoes of the past. The nervous melodic style of the preceding century predominates, though occasionally Dufay's natural lyric gift shines through. Most of all one notices the lack of softening thirds and sixths. The small proportions, the independence of the vocal lines which are all in the foreground, and the angular lines and corners suggest nothing so much as the miniature painting of some medieval book illustration.

Fifty years later (*Nabucco* to *Falstaff* in Dufay's career) we are in a different world. Here is a large canvas, lovingly painted in glowing colors with figures arranged in space according to the new art of perspective. The four voices of the Mass are clearly interdependent, related one to another and each to the whole. Wisps of decorated cantus firmus melody, the lovely Marian antiphon *Ave regina coelorum*, permeate all the parts. Suddenly two voices will rush forward in canon only to be surrounded by their fellows and caught up in the fabric again lest they disturb the intended proportions of the final composition.

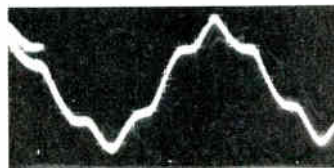
The melodic and harmonic writing is now more beautiful, and one feels Dufay is luxuriating in beauty for its own sake. Melting thirds, chains of consecutive sixths, full chords are everywhere, and, let's face it, thirds are more sensuous than open fifths. This is precisely what the church fathers had been complaining about for so many years, but church-imposed morality could no longer stem the very human craving for sensual enjoyment.

ADRS*

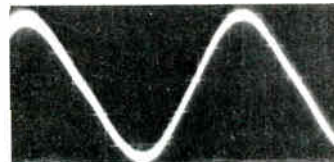
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The *Missa Ave regina coelorum* is a long, expansive work, a perfect opportunity for the mature Dufay to exercise his voluptuous melodic style. Gorgeous duos seem to unfold and blossom into full choruses. In a particularly effective passage in the Credo interlocking ascending suspensions at the words "et ascendit" create a firm line upward to heaven. Romantic shifts in tone cast new lights on the music—a passage in the second Agnus, for example, quoted from a motet which Dufay astonishingly wrote for his own death ten years before the fact. In the motet (the *Ave regina coelorum III* on the same antiphon and also included on this recording), the startling modal change analogous to a classic composer's sudden plunge into a distant minor key

occurs when the composer inserts a personal plea "miserere supplicanti Dufay" into the prayer. In the Mass the same note of urgency is sounded by the musical context alone.

Where did the new style come from? Well, it had many sources as one might guess, but you can hear at least one of them in the *Missa Fuit homo*—the "contenance angloise," the famous English "sweetness" whose dissemination was one of the happier effects of the Hundred Years' War. The *Missa Fuit homo* is one of the superb pieces of medieval art for whose creation we must thank the greatest of all medieval artists, the one known as Anonymous. Composed on an English cantus firmus for the Vigil of St. John the Baptist at about the same time as Dufay's *Missa sine nomine*, *Fuit homo* has a

tender personal touch lacking in the continental work. Flowing duet sections make ample use of thirds and sixths while a rigidly laid out cantus firmus provides a firm medieval backbone to the Mass. Each movement is organized into three sections characterized by progressively faster time measures, giving an impressive unity to the work as a whole.

Jumping forward again in time, Ockeghem's *Missa Ecce ancilla* and the Proper settings for the Holy Trinity Mass are effectively presented together, much the way they might have been heard in some wealthy cathedral on Trinity Sunday around 1470. The contrast between the two throws Ockeghem's extraordinary style into relief. The ominous grandeur of the Ordinary setting appearing among the genial and lyric movements of the Proper must have startled fifteenth-century listeners as much as it does us today. By the time of the *Missa Sanctissimae Trinitatis* the sweet style had made its way to the continent. Soft fauxbourdon chords and a song style in which two voices accompany the gracefully decorated chant melody in the superius create a pretty sound in Dufay's Burgundian tradition.

Ockeghem, whose *Missa Ecce Ancilla* actually predates Dufay's *Missa Ave regina coelorum*, is a different story. An independent and one feels strongly personal composer, he stands alone like some giant, troubled statue barely touched by the stream of life that flows about him. The dark low registers, the turbulent lines, and the thick solid texture of his music create an effect that is grand and imposing. Long movements are broken up by duo sections (the Mass is for four voices) which, instead of lightening the texture, just make the full sections more massive. Yet despite the disparity of style, Ockeghem's Ordinary and the anonymous Proper actually complement each other quite well. The eternal and unchanging Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus stand like mighty granite pillars holding up the massive vaulting of the church while the ephemeral Proper provides the decorative touch, letting flashes of light dance through stained glass windows onto carved capitals.

The Capella Cordina, a group of about twenty-five singers and instrumentalists, is a nonprofessional organization in New Haven, Connecticut. The three discs made semi-annually in 1970 and 1971 are somewhat uneven in quality, no doubt partly due to changing personnel. The singers have occasional trouble tuning intervals and chords, but the instrumentalists make quite reputable medieval sounds on modern violas, bassoons, and an English horn. On the whole, these are good solid listenable performances. Alejandro Planchart is a sensitive and knowledgeable conductor with an excellent feel for rhythmic drive and over-all structure. He chooses suitable tempos and keeps them moving without sounding hysterical. By far the best sound is on the *Missa Ave regina coelorum*; if you buy this glorious work you don't get another Mass but you do get some attractive small change by Dufay, the motet setting of *Ave regina*, which I would have preferred in a more subdued and perhaps slightly slower reading, though this one emphasizes the motet's relation to the Mass; the beautifully melodic lament over the fall of Constantinople; a rather aggressive performance of Dufay's famous love song *Se la face ay pale*; and *Puisque vous estes*, a rousing entertainment number along the lines of "Anything you can do I can do better." S.T.S.

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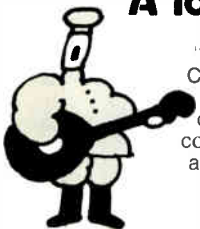
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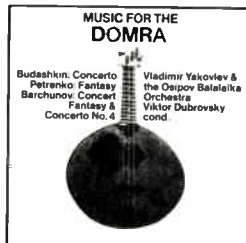
A long-overdue recording

Rachmaninoff based his second opera, "The Covetous Knight," on a play by Pushkin. Chaliapin inspired the opera, and its highlight, the dramatic second-scene monologue, was composed for him. Gennady Rozhdestvensky conducts the Moscow Radio Symphony and an all-male cast in this premiere stereo recording of the one-act work. SRBL-4121 (2 discs)



Debut for the domra

You know the balalaika, but you may never have met its cousin, the domra—the fretted folk instrument, with half-globe body and three strings. This album features today's domra virtuoso, Vladimir Yakovlev, and the famed Osipov Balalaika Orchestra in four concertos. They combine the vigor of folk music with symphonic drama. Every moment evokes the color, the sound, the very soul of Russia. SR-40200



And a world premiere

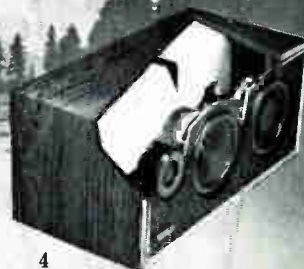
It was a rare moment. As the premiere of his Symphony No. 15 ended last January 8, the overflow audience in the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory gave Shostakovich a seven-minute standing ovation while he embraced the conductor, his son Maksim. For the world's first recording of what is viewed as an autobiographical work, The Moscow Radio Symphony is again conducted by the composer's son. Shostakovich himself was present for the taping, adding a note of authority, along with a unique historical significance. SR-40213



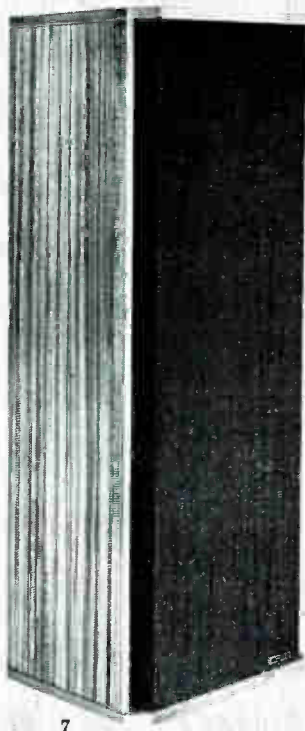
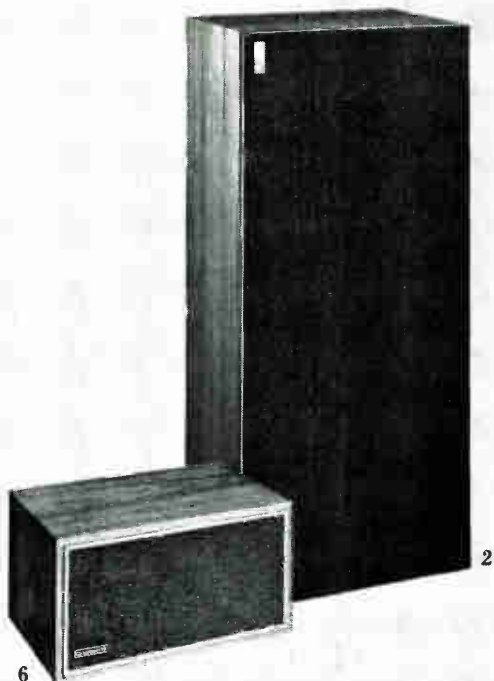
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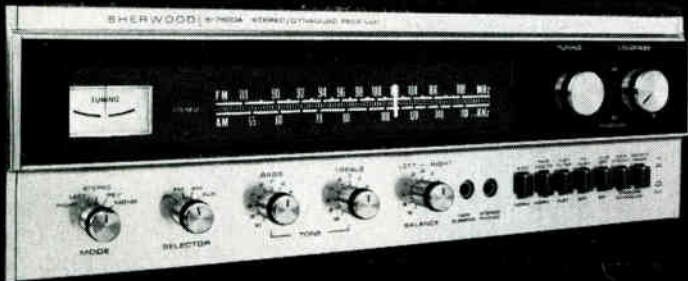
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B FAURÉ: Choral Music. Gabriel Fauré Chorale. Turnabout TVS 34486, \$2.98.

Cantique de Jean Racine, Op. 11; Maria Mater gratiae, Op. 47, No. 2; Tantum ergo; Ave verum, Op. 65, No. 1; Ave Maria; En prière; Messe basse; Requiem, Op. 48; Pie Jesu; in Paradisum.

During his long career—he was a “contemporary” of Wagner as well as of Stravinsky—Gabriel Fauré became a sort of father figure to several generations of French musicians, not only as a teacher but also as an arbiter of style—for many of his countrymen his music represented ideals of reticence, honesty, and sensitivity. Though his Requiem is most widely known, his best qualities are also displayed in his substantial output of chamber music.

Here, as a sort of pendant to the Requiem, Turnabout offers a selection of choral music, much of it directly stemming from his long-time tenure as church organist; this relationship is emphasized by the inclusion of two sections from the Requiem itself. The chronology of these pieces covers a considerable portion of Fauré’s career, but none of them adds much to our estimate of him. The most important piece here is the Low Mass, which strongly reflects the influence of Gounod; fortunately Fauré later succeeded in shaking off that saccharine style.

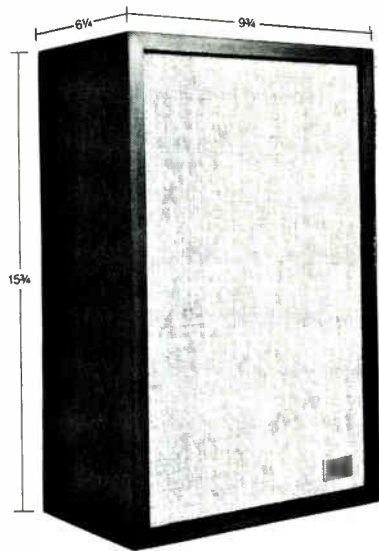
The record identifies the performers only as the Gabriel Fauré Chorale: Actually, a variety of unnamed soloists, ensembles of varying size, and a generally discreet organ accompaniment are employed. The singers are all women, plus possibly some children; it is hard to tell, in fact, whether some of the singers are boys and girls or extremely light-voiced women. P.H.

HAYDN: Symphonies: No. 83, in G minor (*La Poule*); No. 101, in D (*Clock*). Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Angel S 36868, \$5.98.

These two symphonies have been done so many times before in such similar ways that one almost wonders why Karajan bothered to record them. Both works get perfectly valid interpretations, given the premise that it’s all right to play Haydn with a full-sized modern orchestra. To doubt this premise it is only necessary to recall that, even in the late period of the “Paris” and “Salomon” symphonies, Haydn was writing for an orchestra of at most sixty players.

But Karajan and his Philharmonic forge right ahead anyway, adding insult to injury by playing the first and last movements as lushly and dramatically as possible. The first movement of *La Poule* definitely recalls Brahms. Both finales are also too fast, that of *La Poule* distressingly so. The music gets quite out of hand and becomes a blur. The slow movements, on the other hand, are eminently enjoyable. They are marred only by Karajan’s tendency to dramatize the louder, climactic sections out of proportion to the basic sound.

Over-all, this is conventional Haydn. It is wholly consistent with the Haydn style that is frequently accepted as natural and proper. But for a different perspective—and a chance to hear the woodwinds—try Dorati and the Philharmonia Hungarica or Maerzendorfer and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra. A.M.



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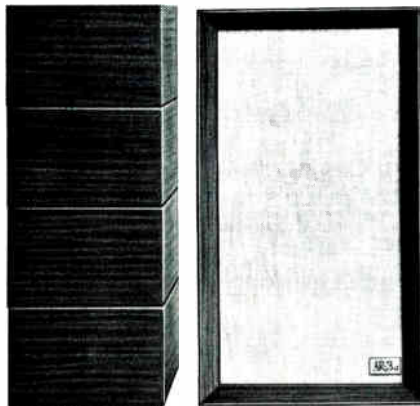
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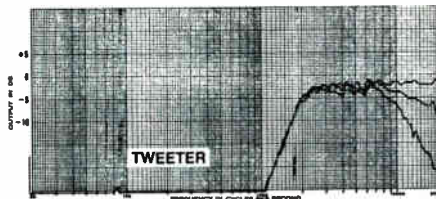
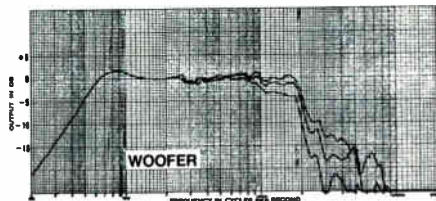
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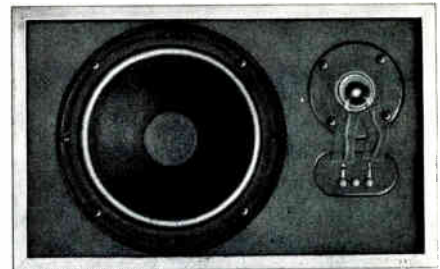
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HENZE: Der langwierige Weg in die Wohnung der Natascha Ungeheuer. William Pearson, baritone; Fires of London Piano Quintet; Philip Jones Brass Quintet; Gunter Hampel Free Jazz Ensemble; Giuseppe Agostini, Hammond organ; Stomu Yamash'ta, percussion; electronic tape. Deutsche Grammophon 2530 212, \$6.98.

Hans Werner Henze can be a maddening man. For twenty-five years he has been turning out works that mark him as among the most talented composers of his generation. Yet just when he seems to have hit upon some reasonable focus for the dizzying eclecticism of styles at his command, he darts off in another direction. Many great artists of this century have been similarly restless—Stravinsky and Picasso come to mind immediately. But unlike them, Henze fails to establish his mastery over one style before turning to another, often less promising one.

In the past few years, since the last of his operas in the mid-Sixties, he has concerned himself above all with expressly political multimedia theater pieces in a variety of contemporary idioms. In *The Raft of the Frigate Medusa* he allied a chromatic vocal line with lush instrumental effects reminiscent of his previous orchestral works. In *Essay on Pigs* he broadened the range of the vocalizing and fragmented the orchestral accompaniment into a more recognizably up-to-date texture. Then, in *El Cimarrón*, he stripped down the ensemble to one virtuoso singer and three virtuoso instrumentalists. The result was one of his finest works to date: evocative, unpre-

tentious, and coherent in a way which made eclecticism into an incontrovertible virtue.

The Tedious Way to the Dwelling of Natascha Ungeheuer is the latest in the line. First performed in Rome and Berlin (to whistling and catcalls) in 1971, it represents an unfortunate step backward to the overbusy idiom of *Essay on Pigs*—and a less successful handling of that idiom besides. The instrumental forces have been expanded to include a baritone soloist, taped voices, piano quintet, brass quintet, jazz quartet, organist, and percussionist. Conversely the vocal line, cast in the same extended *Sprechgesang* of *Essay on Pigs*, is notably less colorful, probably because the current protagonist, William Pearson, is for all his conscientious operatic gifts less of a freakish vocal gymnast than Roy Hart was in the earlier work.

The text of *Natascha* is by Gastón Salvatore, a Chilean leftist now living in Berlin who also provided the words for *Essay on Pigs*. It recounts in convoluted, deliberately opaque fashion the allegory of the attempted seduction of the hero away from true revolutionary fervor by Ms. Ungeheuer, who Henze tells us is the "false Utopia" of radical chic. The work is divided into eleven scenes bridged by instrumental interludes, and is meant to be played in semistaged form, with prescribed costumes, props, and gestures.

It would appear that as Henze piles on the performers he diminishes the resultant variety. *El Cimarrón*, with four people, commanded one's rapt attention over seventy-five minutes; *Natascha*, with seventeen onstage plus tape engaging at one time or another in



Hans Werner Henze—exposing radical chic or ridding himself of the taint?

nearly every fashionable avant-garde style of the past twenty years, casts a pall of boredom long before its fifty-eight minutes are over. The prevailing effect, whatever is overtly going on aurally, is angry, flat, and harsh. All colors, it would seem, however virtuosically applied and however (as here) virtuosically

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executed, turn into mud if mixed too indiscriminately together.

Ultimately one begins to wonder about Henze's intentions in writing this piece. The text is full of oblique hints at ironic, despairing self-parody: If modish leftism is inimical to the revolution, and if an artwork offends the bourgeois intelligentsia (and would simply appall the workers if they ever bothered to listen to it), then what function is the supposedly "revolutionary" artist fulfilling? There is a whole school of critics who like to explain the avant-garde solely in terms of its supposedly deliberate provocations of the bourgeoisie—as if artists had nothing better to do than antagonize critics. Here, however, one is almost forced to the conclusion that Henze meant to make his *Tedious Way* as tedious as possible, perhaps to distance himself from that world of West-German artsy radicalism he so much despises and is so much a part of. It would be hard for an outsider to guess how much his motive was the enlightenment or alienation of his audience, and how much self-purgation.

J.R.

LISZT: Totentanz for Piano and Orchestra—See Chopin: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1, in E minor, Op. 11.

MAHLER: Symphony No. 1, in D. Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Erich Leinsdorf, cond. London Phase 4 SPC 21068, \$5.98.

Selected comparison:
Leinsdorf

RCA 2642

One could choose few better routes to an understanding of Mahler's First Symphony than this new recording by Erich Leinsdorf and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. It is the presentation of a master by a master.

On first hearing, the recording is immensely impressive. It becomes more so when compared with the version made ten years ago on RCA when Leinsdorf was the new conductor of the Boston Symphony. Orchestra and conductor were unfamiliar with and unused to each other at the time. While making allowances for this unfamiliarity, the listener is still struck by the palpable increase in understanding and control exhibited on the new disc. The early recording is by no means defective. It is a fine performance, but it can be criticized on the grounds of overromanticism, overblown sound, and some inattention to detail.

The London recording has none of these. Throughout there is a precision that proves Leinsdorf and his orchestra to be consummate Mahler interpreters—which is to say, they realize that the score as given does not need addition or exaggeration, only full and faithful articulation of what is there. Every tempo is exactly on the mark; every nuance is observed. The slow introduction to the first movement, for example, can drag or it can lurch: here the sound is broad and solid. The second movement's rhythm lends itself to heavy-footed clumping; Leinsdorf gives it the perfect Austrian lilt.

Some details might be mentioned: In the RCA recording Leinsdorf takes the repeat of the first movement's exposition, but in the new

version he does not. This is a point of some dispute: Mahler suppressed the repeat in his later performances of the symphony, but the indication always remained in the score. It thus becomes a matter of personal preference; this reviewer favors leaving out the repeat on the grounds that the forward motion of the music seems thereby enhanced to a greater degree. London does the listener a disservice by awkwardly dividing the third movement—it is an irritation, and perhaps not really necessary.

But such matters do not detract from the value of the performance. For those who have no recording of this symphony, it is an excellent way to start; for those who have one or several, it should prove an enlightening and thoroughly pleasurable addition. A.M.

B **MARTIN:** Concerto for Harpsichord and Small Orchestra; Ballade for Trombone and Orchestra; Ballade for Piano and Orchestra. Christiane Jaccottet, harpsichord; Armin Rosin, trombone; Sebastian Benda, piano; Chamber Orchestra of Lausanne, Frank Martin, cond. Candide CE 31065, \$3.98.

Another bravo for Candide. After their outstanding release of Martin's Violin Concerto and Second Piano Concerto, we are now offered three more of this important Swiss composer's works, the most exciting of which by far is the beautifully played and recorded Harpsichord Concerto (1951-52). From the very outset of this work, with its bleak, re-



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peated six-note theme whose rhythmic character is at least as important as its melodic contour, there is no mistaking the composer. Indeed, one is strongly reminded in spots of Martin's *Petite symphonie concertante* (which, by the way, sorely needs a new recording). But for all the Martin trademarks that carry over from one piece to the next, one always finds fresh and fascinating ideas in each work, and in the Harpsichord Concerto Martin has been able to adapt a rather Bachish harpsichord style (the Fifth *Brandenburg* Concerto comes to mind at several points) to his decidedly contemporary rhythmic and harmonic textures, all of which are highlighted by the particularly delicate and subtle scoring, referred to by Martin quite accurately as "transparent." One

is also captivated by some of the complex cross rhythms between the harpsichord and orchestra in the second movement, which is basically a set of accelerating variations built around a rather Ravelian chordal theme. Christiane Jaccottet has a supple, flowing manner of playing the harpsichord, and she manifests a perfect understanding of the Martin concerto in her performance here. I must add that I have never heard better harpsichord sound on a recording.

Neither of the ballades benefits from the sensitive solo work of the Harpsichord Concerto, and in both cases the solo instruments seem under-recorded. Nor does either ballade display the harmonic or formal tightness that represents one of the strong points of the later

concerto. But both, on the other hand, offer a more opulent melodic and orchestral style than one usually finds in Martin's work, and there are enough of the composer's earmarks, from the four-note theme after the introduction in the Trombone Ballade (1940) to the ostinato rhythms at the opening of the longer, more elegiac Piano Ballade (1939), to keep Martin fans happy. I might add that the colorful but dark-hued painting by Bazaine reproduced on the cover is a remarkably good choice to accompany Martin's music. Let's hope Candide doesn't stop here. R.S.B.

MOZART: "The Eight-Year-Old Mozart in Chelsea": six divertimentos and five contredanses for various instruments. Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. Philips 6500 367, \$6.98.

Neville Marriner and Erik Smith, a Philips official and Mozart expert, have expended a great deal of trouble on this recording which they might more profitably have lavished elsewhere. When Mozart was eight and staying in Chelsea during his English expedition with Leopold, he filled a notebook with musical sketches for keyboard—usually only a melody line with bass, leaving chords and inner parts to be done later.

The so-called London notebook came to light in the late nineteenth century and was published in the twentieth. Erik Smith has taken these very sparse and innocent exercises and—working, as he says in the album notes, less on analysis than on intuition—has filled in the inner parts, supplied tempo and dynamic indications, occasionally composed closing measures, joined random movements to make complete pieces, and orchestrated the results, emphasizing woodwinds.

Smith's intuition is irreproachable, his documentation of what he has done meticulous, and this slender music offers some tunefulness and a great deal of bustle. But the real Mozart remains on those rudimentary notebook pages (and possibly some of that was dictated by Leopold—who, after all, had Wolfgang copy out an entire symphony of C. F. Abel during this same English visit, a symphony mistakenly known as Mozart's No. 3 for years).

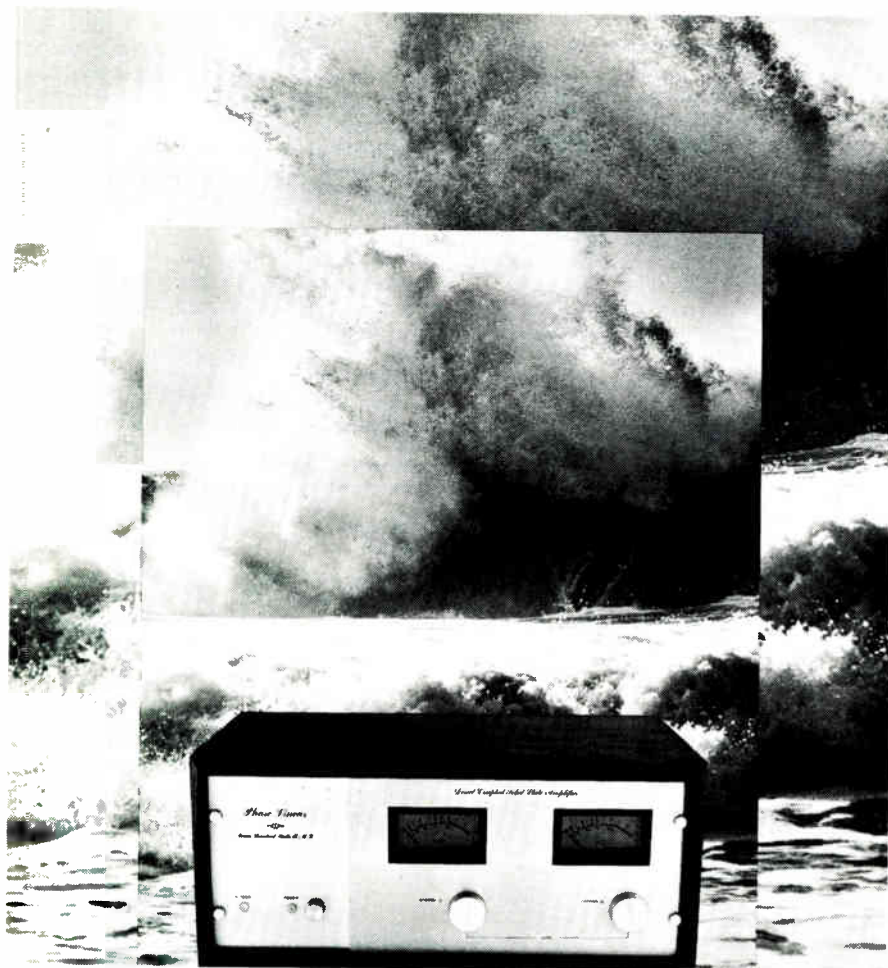
This recording is neither innately interesting enough to warrant more than one hearing, nor historically valid enough to stand as a historical document. S.F.

OCKEGHEM: *Missa Ecce ancilla Domini*—See Dufay: *Missa sine nomine*.

OFFENBACH: *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. Joan Sutherland, Plácido Domingo, Gabriel Bacquier, et al.; Chorus and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Richard Bonyngé, cond.
OFFENBACH: *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. Beverly Sills, Stuart Burrows, Norman Treigle, et al.; John Alldis Choir; London Symphony Orchestra, Julius Rudel, cond. For a feature review of these recordings, see page 69.

PAGANINI: *Concertos for Violin and Orchestra: No. 1, in D; No. 4, in D minor*. Arthur Grumiaux, violin; National Opera Orchestra

Continued on Page 98



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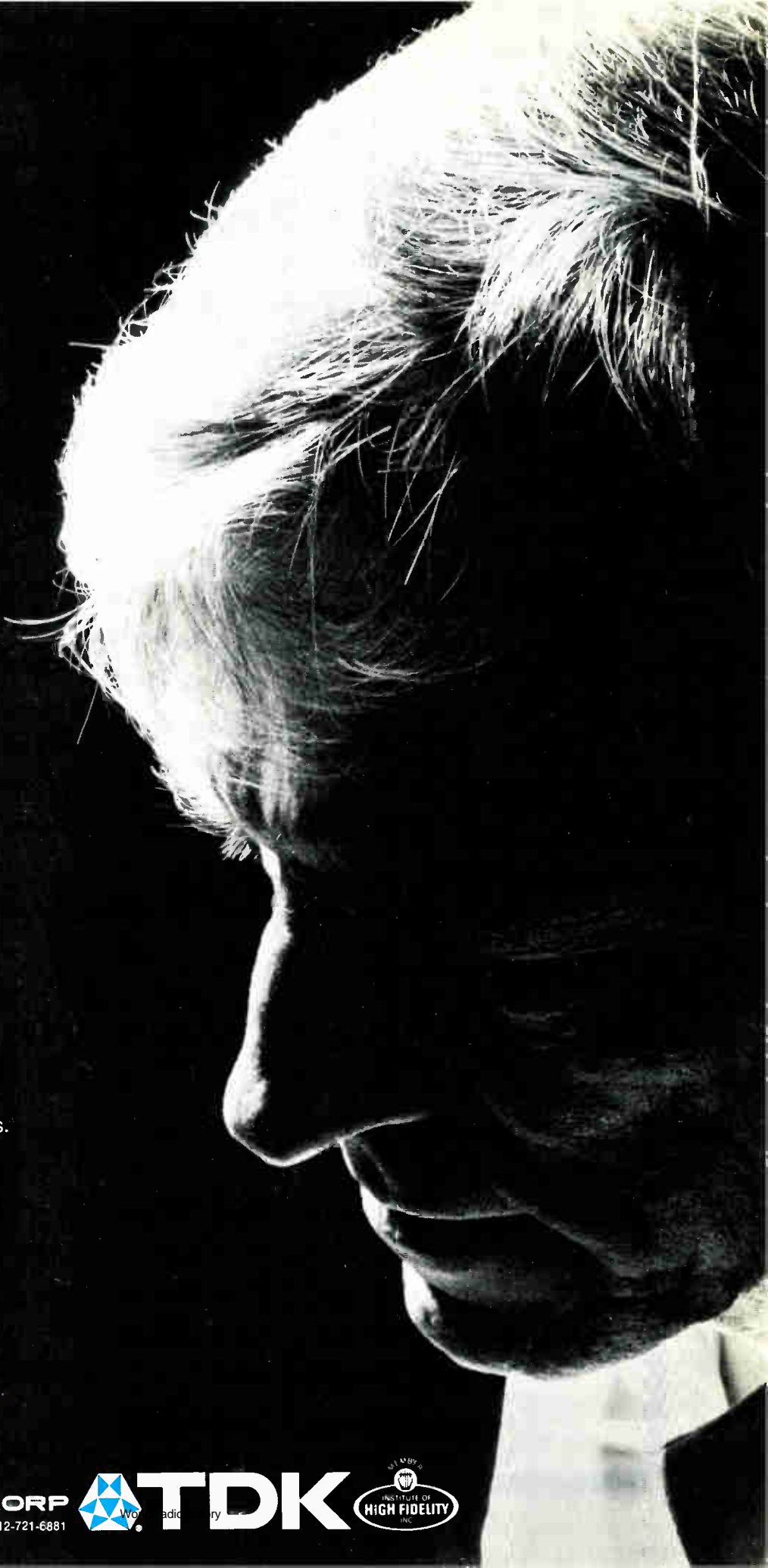
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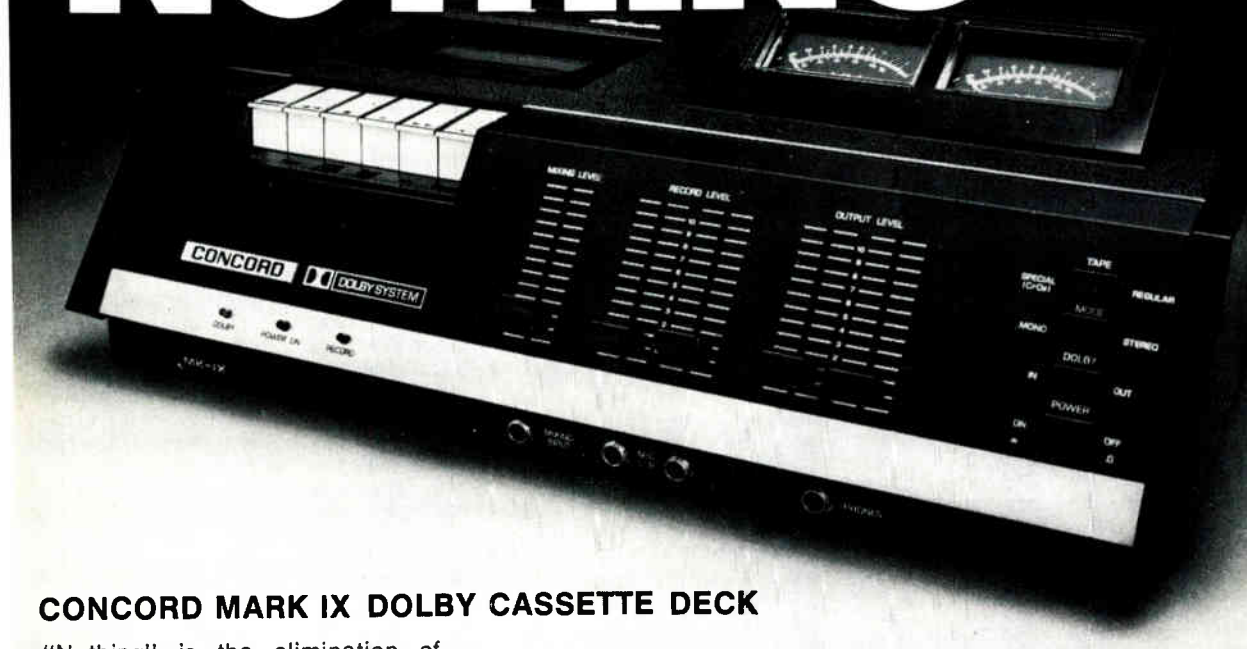


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Continued from page 92

of Monte Carlo, Piero Bellugi, cond. Philips 6500 411, \$6.98.

I don't know about the rest of the fiddle fanciers in this world, but I make one mistake before listening to each new Paganini recording that comes along: I assume that only a razzle-dazzle, purely virtuosic type of soloist can make the most of it—that a notably mature, “serious” artist is going to fail, somehow, to bring off the fireworks. Once again the theory proves wrong. Grumiaux personifies, if anyone does, the serious, searching violinist. And what does he do with the old wizard, Paganini? He brings to the music the best elements of his own accomplished technique, and sets up a beautifully balanced, well-controlled, unfrazzled pair of performances—striking both in their agility and in the warmth lavished on those famous lyric themes.

Grumiaux can glide up and down the fingerboard in parallel thirds and sixths with the best of them, and he does it without any sense of stress; he can also dance around up there in the stratosphere and make music of every note of it. I was particularly struck by the springiness and crystalline clarity of the finale of No. 4, and by the full, warm tone applied to that melancholy rhapsody in the slow movement. There is only one moment of shakiness in the whole recording, and that's during the double-stopped harmonics in the last movement of No. 1, where for some reason the soloist sounds a bit stricken. For the rest, there is clean fingerwork and precision bowing all the way, and a remarkably judicious, Italianate use of rubato on the songful subjects. Grumiaux plays his own cadenza in No. 4, August Wilhelmj's in No. 1.

The orchestra brings plenty of brilliance to the circus-music opening of No. 1, and pitches into its chores with a will. S.F.

PERGOLESI: Stabat Mater. Mirella Freni, soprano; Teresa Berganza, mezzo; Scarlatti Orchestra of Naples, Ettore Gracis, cond. Archive 2533 114, \$6.98.

Selected comparison:
Raskin and Lehane/Carocciolo Lon. 25921

In the brief span of his twenty-six years, Pergolesi managed to compose a substantial quantity of theatrical and church music: *La Serva padrona* and the present *Stabat Mater* alone place him among the most notable composers of the first half of the eighteenth century. The *Stabat Mater*, his last completed work and composed while he was dying of consumption, is a masterful and highly expressive setting of the traditional Latin hymn describing the Virgin standing before the Cross.

In Pergolesi's time, there was not much distinction between church music and the secular world of opera, so it is not necessarily inappropriate to select two well-known opera singers for this performance. Both Mirella Freni and Teresa Berganza are in fine voice and their singing here will delight their admirers. It will not delight those who expect authentic eighteenth-century singing style throughout: Here one hears inflection, rhythmic emphasis, and vocal coloring much more appropriate to Rossini, Verdi, and Puccini, though Berganza is more in keeping with the style than her partner. The London record with Raskin and Le-

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hane comes closer to the stylistic ideal—even the recently deleted Philips disc with Lear and Ludwig may be preferable to the Archive issue in this respect.

With this consideration in mind, however, the Archive release is a beautifully produced record with ravishing singing, good orchestral playing, excellent balance of soloists, and fine ambience of reproduction. P.H.

RAVEL: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra: in D (for the left hand alone); in G. Philippe Entremont, piano; Cleveland Orchestra, Pierre Boulez, cond. (in the Concerto in D); Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, cond. (in the Concerto in G); Columbia M 31426, \$5.98.

There was once an early London disc of the *Left Hand Concerto* in which the opening pages sounded like a witches' cauldron. Suffice it to say, Boulez—with his mania for detail—and the modern, ultradefined recording techniques bring it all into the midday sun. The conductor's view of this piece is as outstanding here as it was in a recent "live" performance in Philharmonic Hall—broad, rhythmical, very dynamic, and extremely clear.

The soloist in that concert performance was Leon Fleisher and it is sad that his outstanding, elucidating interpretation couldn't have been perpetuated in Columbia's recording. Entremont's pianism, by contrast, is a bit coarse and splashy, without Fleisher's fine tonal gradations and without that player's

keenly analytical grasp of Ravel's motivic workmanship. Still, he brings a modicum of snap and bravura to the music and fills out the broader pianistic outlines of Boulez' purposeful conception.

The earlier Entremont/Ormandy reading of the G major Concerto is reissued from Columbia MS 6629 where it shared vinyl with Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*. This is a competent but not particularly distinguished account. The pianistic side is a bit blotchy and helter-skelter, and Ormandy's "big orchestra" approach lacks the *de rigueur* intimacy and personalized jazzy details. H.G.

SCHUMANN: Davidsbündlertänze, Op. 6.
BRAHMS: Sonata for Piano, No. 1, in C, Op. 1. William Masselos, piano. RCA Red Seal LSC 3291, \$5.98.

Selected comparison (Schumann):
Kempff DGG 139316
Selected comparison (Brahms):
Katchen Lon. 6410

Neither of these works has been recorded a great deal, and they appear on recital programs still less often. In the case of the Brahms, it's easy to understand why, with Schumann less so.

Brahms's C major Sonata is almost as hard to listen to as it is to play. It is angular and bristling, a raw statement of youthful strength. Except in the first movement, the themes are of limited interest, and their development is superficial. Despite moments of beauty, it is a piece we can live without.

Papillons and *Fantasiestücke* are the Schumann piano suites we hear most often, but the dialogue between the composer's alter egos Florestan and Eusebius as embodied in the *Davidsbündlertänze* is superior to the former and at least as interesting as the latter. The eighteen pieces, more or less evenly divided between Florestanian ebullience and Eusebian reserve, give insight into Schumann's personal and musical character perhaps more clearly than any of his other works. But one need know nothing of Schumann's fanciful *Davidsbund* or the personifications of his divided personality to recognize that this is exceedingly good piano music.

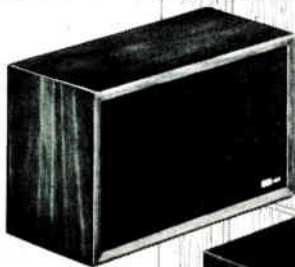
Masselos plays excellently in both works but comes out on top only in Schumann; there is just too much working against him in the Brahms. Even the first movement, the most interesting, sounds bombastic; the second-movement variations sound disjointed no matter how smoothly they are played, and the finale rambles so much that even Masselos' heroic attempts to forge an over-all unity are failures.

His sense of drama and close attention to the infrequent lyrical passages make his performance more successful than Julius Katchen's on London. Katchen's approach is quite restrained, robbing the piece of its dramatic character, and his frequently choppy playing is no help.

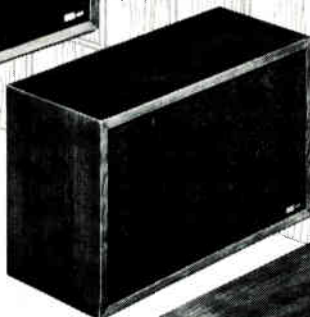
Kempff's playing of the Schumann is more serene than Masselos'. He minimizes the obvious contrasts among the pieces, while Masselos makes the most of them and gives the suite a sparkle I find lacking in the earlier recording. A.M.

Shostakovich: Symphony No. 13, Op. 113 (Babi Yar.). Artur Eizen, bass; U.S.S.R. Rus-

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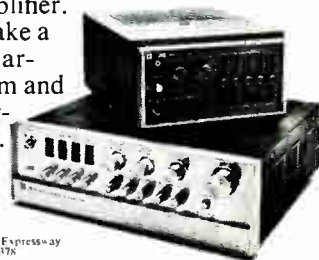
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Pavarotti, Sherrill Milnes,
Regina Resnik, Helen Donath —
The Orchestra of L'Accademia
Nazionale di Santa Cecilia,
Rome — Bruno Bartoletti
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Offenbach: THE TALES OF HOFFMANN

Joan Sutherland, Plácido
Domingo, Gabriel Bacquier —
L'Orchestre de la Suisse
Romande — Richard Bonyngé
OSA-13106

sian Male Chorus: Moscow Philharmonic Or-
chestra, Kiril Kondrashin, cond. Melodiya/
Angel SR 40212, \$5.98.

Selected comparisons:
Krause/Ormandy
Gromadsky/Kondrashin

RCA 3162
Ev. 3181

Rumor has had it for a long time that the Rus-
sians had made a studio recording of the
Shostakovich Thirteenth (not to be confused
with the live version that found its way out of
Russia and has been available on Everest for
some time), but only recently has this rumor
finally been confirmed. Of course, between
the time the work was put on ice in Russia
shortly after its premiere (in December 1961)
and the present recording, the score to the
symphony somehow found its way to these
shores and was quickly introduced by Or-
mandy (and later by André Previn in England)
to concert audiences. Interestingly enough,
many of the reactions in the West were just as
silly in their own way as those of the Russian
censors: The editress of France's *Harmonie*
magazine, for instance, was incensed because
Ormandy's unparalleled recording of the
Thirteenth nudged out Boulez' *Pli selon pli* for
the Montreux prize in 1970; she lashed out
against Shostakovich's conservative musical
style and refused to realize the absurdity of
judging the two works, whose aesthetic inten-
tions are universes apart, by the same stand-
ards. Where, one wonders, would it all end if
one were to start talking of the emotional con-
servatism of *Pli selon pli*...?

All disputes aside, the outstanding element
of this second Kondrashin recording, which
like the first contains the textual revisions in
Yevtushenko's *Babi Yar* poem demanded by
the Soviet authorities (as does the score re-
cently released in the U.S.S.R.), is bass Artur
Eizen, who has a much better idea of pitch
than Vitaly Gromadsky on the Everest disc
and whose expressive, resonant voice balances
much better with the rest of the symphony
than Tom Krause's on the Ormandy release—
although Krause, who is really a bass-bari-
tone, more than makes up for this in his com-
munication of the music. The nightmarish
frenzy Kondrashin is able to work up in the
second movement also struck me as particu-
larly appropriate. But as is frequently the
case with Kondrashin, there is a matter-of-
factness to much of the Russian conductor's
style that simply undercuts the grandeur of the
music, whose towering sense of tragedy is, I
can only repeat, perfectly re-created by Or-
mandy. One need only compare the over-
whelming drama of the third-movement cli-
max in the Ormandy version with the tame
effect the same passage receives in Kondrashin's
performance. Furthermore, the sound
on the Kondrashin disc suffers from a
markedly pinched quality, and although the
recording is worth having for the different
point of view it offers on this masterpiece—and
for Eizen's exceptional voice—it remains a
very distant second to the Ormandy perfor-
mance. R.S.B.

TCHAIKOVSKY: Symphony No. 2, in C minor,
Op. 17 (*Little Russian*). New York Philhar-
monic, Leonard Bernstein, cond. Columbia
M 31195, \$5.98.

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orchestral conductors, Leonard Bernstein has recently brought his emotional involvement with music into better focus with his musical responsibility and directorial authority. His ardor no longer forces him to take technical risks with his orchestra or to indulge himself in questionable interpretive excesses.

As in his recent reading of the First Symphony, Bernstein makes little effort to distinguish between "early" and "late" Tchaikovsky. His energetic and emphatic interpretation stresses those aspects of this music that foreshadow the full-blown developments of the last three symphonies in tonal weight and rhythmic drive if not in melodic inspiration.

Needless to say, the New York Philharmonic follows Bernstein's leadership with all-

out playing, and the reproduction has an appropriately full-bodied impact. P.H.

VAČKÁŘ: "Eyes Front!" Czechoslovak Army Central Band, Karel Šťastný, Jindřich Brejšek, and Eduard Kudelásek, conds. Supraphon 1 14 0745, \$6.98.

Marches: Riviera; Awakening; Fine Lad; Liberation; Triumphal Homecoming; Tempo (Maybe Today, Maybe Tomorrow); Eyes Front! Dances: South Moravian Dance No. 1; Evening at Sea (Waltz); Dobřejoyce Polka; Serenade: Reminiscence of Zbiroh.

Václav Vačkář is a new name to me, and I am unable to find him in any available reference work. Nevertheless, he turns out to be (on the evidence of the music here as well as of the multilingual liner notes) a Czech bandmaster

and composer of considerable fame in his native country—a minor nationalistic master, indeed, comparable to at least some degree with Denmark's Hans Christian Lumbye, say, and our own John Philip Sousa. Vačkář's dates are 1881-1954 and he apparently rose to prominence in the early years of Czech independence, after World War I, when he was able to supply the need for new military-band marches replacing those too closely identified with the Austrian Empire—examples of which were featured in Supraphon's earlier "Old Austrian Marches" program (1 14 1020). But in addition to the seven brisk, catchily tuneful marches here, there are three engaging examples of his dance compositions (one of which, the polka, celebrates the composer's birthplace, Dobřejoyce) and an evocative *Reminiscence of Zbiroh* Serenade which features flugelhorn and baritone (the instrument, not a vocalist) solos.

All of these are decidedly lightweight, primarily appealing for their simple but distinctive melodic charms, and only in small part for compositional techniques which don't go far beyond elementary imitative-phrase and routine-accompaniment writing. And unfortunately the eighty-piece army band is either mighty thin- and coarse-toned in itself or is made to seem so by acoustical dry recording. No matter: You don't have to be Czech or even share my own personal susceptibility to Czech music in general to enjoy Vačkář's disarmingly fresh music-making. R.D.D.

VERDI: Requiem. Mirella Freni, soprano; Christa Ludwig, mezzo; Carlo Cossutta, tenor; Nicolai Ghiaurov, bass; Wiener Singverein; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Deutsche Grammophon 2707 065, \$13.96 (two discs).

Selected comparisons:

Serafin	Sera. 6050
Toscanini	RCA 6018
Ormandy	Col. M2S 707
Bernstein	Col. M2 30060
Barbirolli	Ang. 3757
Reiner	Lon. 1294
Leinsdorf	RCA 7040
Solti	Lon. 1275
Glulini	Ang. 3649

Of making many Verdi Requiems there is no end. This is the eighth stereo recording currently available and among the most interesting; yet for all its considerable virtues it falls short of persuasiveness. The Requiem is one of those works that, like *La Traviata*, seems to defy satisfactory performance on discs. Sometimes (the Toscanini set, for instance, or the Serafin) the principal fault lies with one or another of the vocalists. Sometimes (the Ormandy) conductor and soloists alike share the responsibility. Sometimes (the Reiner) the chorus lets one down. Sometimes (the Bernstein) the unsatisfactory quality of the recording plays a decisive part. Sometimes (the Barbirolli, the Leinsdorf, the Solti) the conductor must take the full blame. Such is the case with the present recording.

Herbert von Karajan is the most exquisite of conductors. In the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra he has at his command what must surely be the finest orchestral ensemble in the world today. From the merest whisper to the loudest cry they play with refinement, fleetness, accuracy, and beauty of timbre. One is continually astonished by the range of inflections they are capable of and the subtlety of



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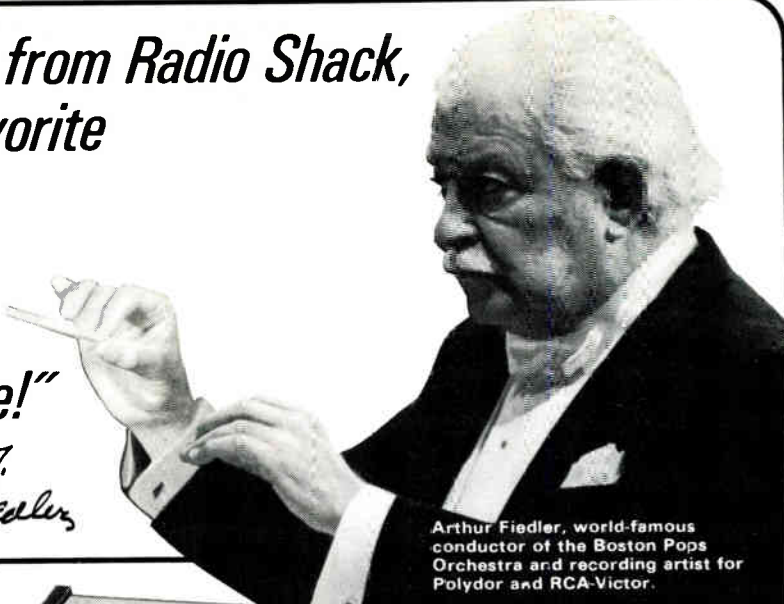
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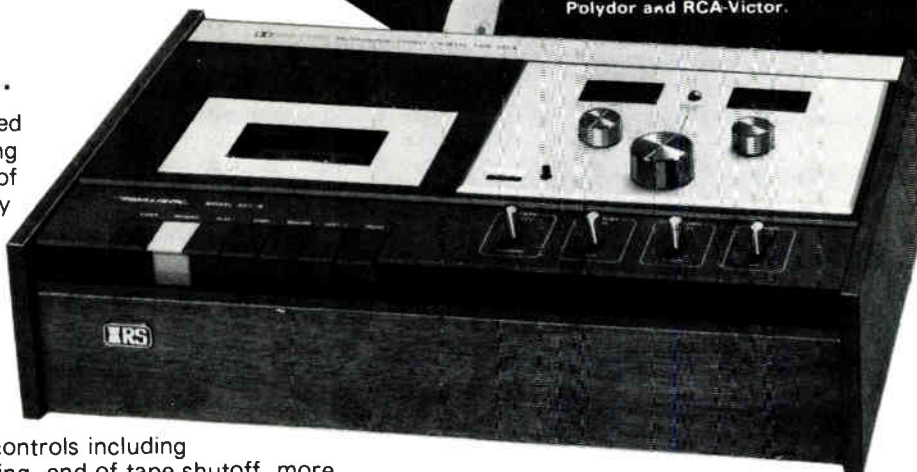
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their phrasing. Above all, one is ravished by their unfailing mellifluousness and their singing tone. Under Karajan they perform with a unanimity of purpose that one can only attribute to selfless dedication. The present recording is but a further demonstration of their quality. The smoothness and the orchestral sheen of this Requiem, unapproached by any of the rival versions, are a source of great pleasure, but also a source of great uneasiness.

As Verdi's vast conception unfolds itself and the perspective shifts from heaven to judgment and damnation, from repentance to fear and then to hope, one more and more misses in Karajan's treatment the appropriate kind of elemental fire. Verdi's manner is forthright. The almost sensuous immediacy of his spiritual convictions produces a drama of faith, not a meditation on the subject. Karajan minimizes the conflicts inherent in this work. There is no fear in his conception of it. His reading is all consolation, all reflectiveness. The allegro moderato marking for *Lux aeterna* becomes a pronounced adagio. Double-forte markings turn into mezzo forte. Retards are frequently employed.

The comparison with Giulini is enlightening. Under Giulini the superb Philharmonia Orchestra goes at the music with passion. String attacks are much more vivid, the winds use greater vibrato, the timpani roll out emphatically, the orchestral balances are less homogenized. You hear awe in the vibrant playing the bassoon figure in *Quid sum miser*, whereas in Karajan's version you are beguiled by the honeyed sound. Giulini's emotional directness seems to me infinitely truer to the music than Karajan's contemplative, chamber-ensemble approach, which, compared to the former, yields results that are beautiful, bloodless, and withdrawn.

Giulini would be the clear choice among Requiems were it not for the insuperable drawback of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, stylistically and temperamentally at odds with the music, mannered and arch to boot. Karajan's soloists, on the other hand, are without exception very good. Freni is lovely, a clear, forward soprano voice full of human overtones. Her soft top notes are not ideally free nor quite disembodied enough, and she tends to aspirate fast passages, but within the narrow emotional range imposed by the conductor she gives a remarkably touching performance. Christa Ludwig, that uniquely satisfying artist, is wonderful, though by the very nature of things Giulini, in whose performance she also features, gets more intensity out of her. The same is true for Ghiaurov, another singer shared by both conductors, though he seems to have suffered a certain diminution in basic vocal power since the earlier recording was made. Cossutta, as handled by Karajan, is excellent. The voice is not especially attractive nor at full stretch especially dependable, but here he uses it with great distinction, and his phrasing throughout is very musical. The commendable trills in the *Hostias* are sung piano. All four voices blend beautifully. This is the most distinguished and gratifying vocal quartet of any recording so far. More's the pity that the ends it is made to serve should be so artistically dubious.

The quality of the recording is generally fine. However, the placement of the chorus (the very accomplished Wiener Singverein) is troublesome. At times the singers are simply too indistinct and covered to be heard prop-

erly, though this may be the fault of Karajan's preference for a low emotional temperature.

D.S.H.

WAGNER: Tristan und Isolde.

Tristan	Jon Vickers (t)
Isolde	Helga Dernesch (s)
Brangäne	Christa Ludwig (ms)
Kurvenal	Walter Berry (b)
King Mark	Karl Ridderbusch (bs)
Melot	Bernd Weikl (b)
Young Sailor and A Shepherd	Peter Schreier (t)
Helmsman	Martin Vantin (t)

Chorus of the German Opera, Berlin; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. Angel SEL 3777, \$29.90 (five discs).

Selected comparisons:

Furtwängler	Ang. 3588
Böhm	DGG 2713 001
Solti	Lon. 1522

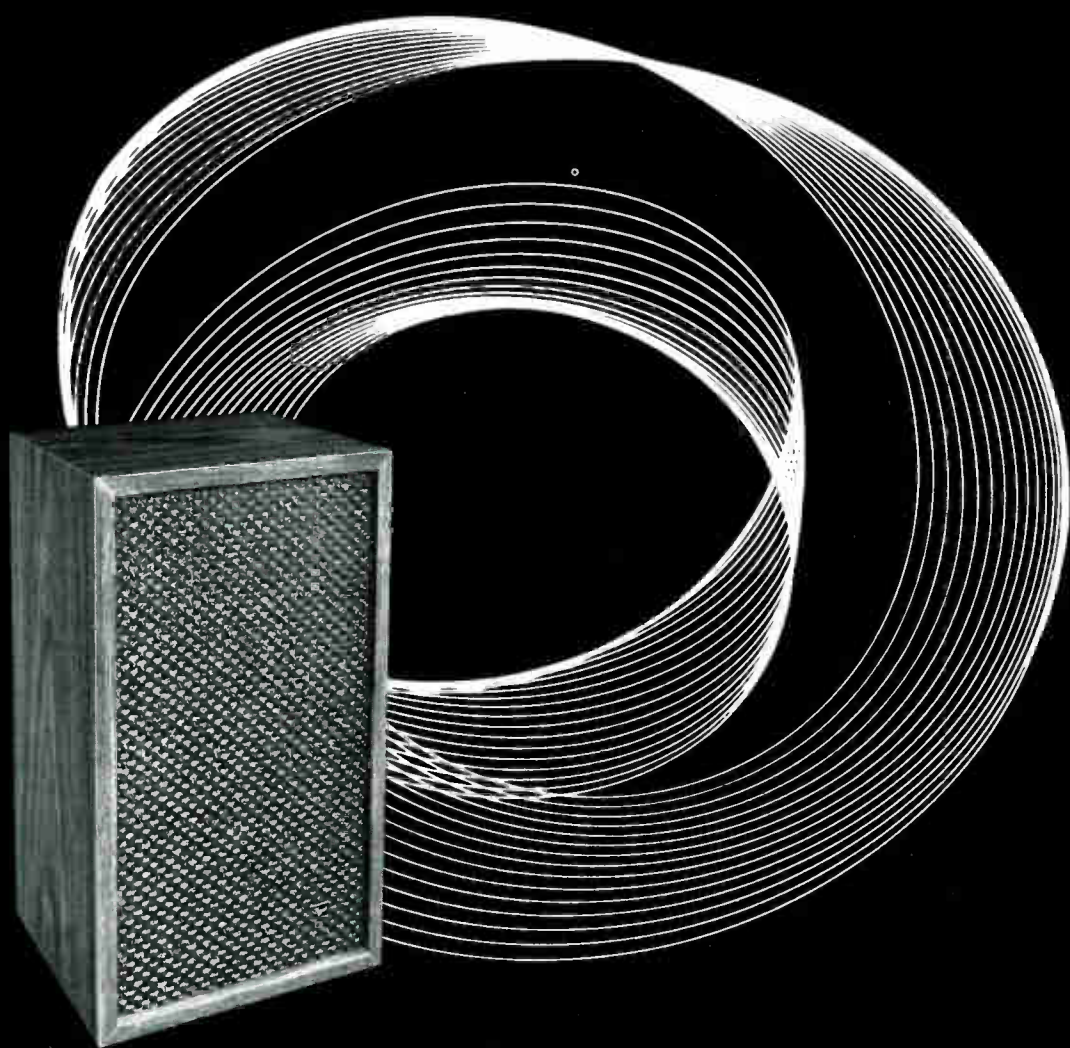
Tristan und Isolde is filled with yearning. For that reason conductors who tackle the work must create a sense of impetus and inevitability. From the unresolved harmonic tensions of the Act I prelude, the opera moves with irresistible momentum into the ceaseless ebb and flow of the love duet, then to the arching frenzy of Tristan's soliloquy, and at last to a consolatory resolution in Isolde's *Liebeshod*, where the struggle of Tristan and Isolde toward erotic consummation reaches its long-delayed climax in mystical understanding.

Among complete recordings of this opera only two, it seems to me, do real justice to the composer's intentions: Wilhelm Furtwängler on Angel and Karl Böhm on DGG. (Solti's performance on London seems to me a failure, on account of the conducting, the Tristan, and the recording.) These are very different kinds of performance, yet each in its own way evinces the dynamism, the sense of urgency and aspiration, which is at the heart of Wagner's conception. Furtwängler is magisterial and luminous, while Böhm, impetuous and immoderate, drives forward with unflagging excitement. Both of these sets belong in every opera lover's collection.

The new Karajan recording is not in the same class. Karajan's grasp of the score cannot be doubted. Every nuance in his performance is determined by intelligence. There is not a moment when the listener is intellectually unaware of the opera's design. The climaxes are beautifully judged; each one grows progressively in intensity until the death of Tristan, at which point turmoil dissolves into serenity.

Karajan's virtuosic handling of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra enables him to gauge his effects to a nicety. Karajan favors very transparent textures. The climax of the Act I Prelude is gloriously clear. The orchestral peroration after the drinking of the love potion is both pellucid and tonally resplendent. King Mark's hunting party fades into the night with ravishing delicacy, like "the horns of elfland faintly blowing." The fatal entrance of Mark at the end of the love duet is powerful yet lustrous. So is the opening of the last act. By comparison with all this, Böhm is almost coarse. Certainly, no other orchestra on discs—not even Furtwängler's Philharmonia, then at its magnificent peak—plays with as much refinement, technical skill, and sheer sensuous beauty as the Berlin Philharmonic.

Yet in the end the whole enterprise is vitiated by the willfulness of Karajan's ap-



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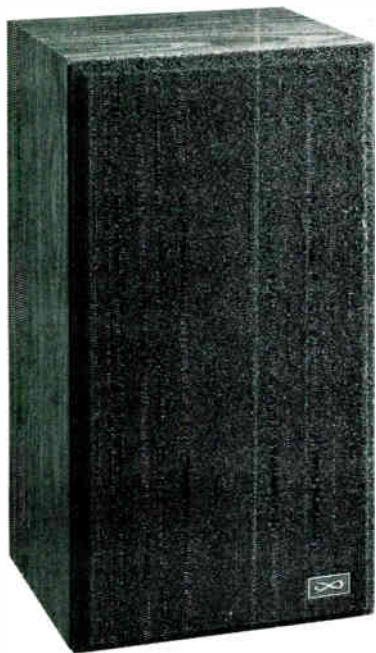
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proach. His performance, it is true, shows an awareness of Wagner's total design, but the trouble is that he fails to unfold that design in a convincing way. He simply cannot refrain from demonstrating his virtuosity, whether it is appropriate or not. He is at his worst in reflective and lyrical passages, where he invariably slows the opera down to an alarming degree, reduces the orchestra to a whisper, and creates a mood of drowsy, listless reverie. He handles unbridled passion with greater persuasiveness, but all his heaven-storming crescendos cannot save the situation. For this reason, even though Karajan's dynamic range is very much greater than Böhm's, the general effect is infinitely less lively.

Instead of impetus Karajan creates an impression of stasis. In several places he sounds completely immobilized. A glaring example is the 6/8 section in the *Liebesnacht*, "So stürben wir." Others are Brangäne's Warning, Tristan's "O, König!" and the introspective parts of his last-act soliloquy. At times like these Karajan seems utterly transfixed by his own ability to conjure up delicate murmurings from his vast forces. Often he seems to be brooding over the music in an act of self-communion. Matters are not helped by his tendency to drown out the singers at certain points, as he does when Isolde snatches the love potion from Tristan, or again at the crest of the *Liebestod*.

The casting of Isolde is another of this set's problems. In her best form, Helga Dernesch would be an unlikely choice for a role that makes such heroic demands. Dernesch is not a dramatic soprano. She is a lyric soprano with a dark, mezzolike coloration and very little upward extension. Beyond G her notes are hit or miss and show a tendency to be both strident and under pitch. In this performance, however, she is not merely miscast, she is under par. Even granted her unsuitability for this vast assignment and the waywardness of her intonation on top notes, she sounds particularly ill at ease on this occasion. What is so unsettling here is the very apparent lack of security in her middle voice. She is sorely tried by a line like, "Mir erkoren, mir verloren, hehr und heil, kühn und feig! Todgeweihtes Haupt!" even though its range of just over an octave—from D to E flat—is hardly demanding. From start to finish the voice is throaty, muffled, and monotonous. Moreover, Dernesch is verbally indistinct. The volcanic passion of the Narrative and Curse is quite beyond her powers; so are the transports of the Love Duet and the rapture of the *Liebestod*. There can be no comparison between her performance and the vocal stamina and variety of Nilsson on DGG, let alone the majesty of Kirsten Flagstad on Angel.

But apart from the vibrato-ridden Melot of Bernd Weigl, the rest of Karajan's cast is quite a different matter. Christa Ludwig, perhaps not so vocally fresh here as on DGG, is nevertheless as splendid a Brangäne as ever. Schreier is very good. Ridderbusch may not command the plangency of Talvela on DGG, but he is a wonderful King Mark, the voice firm, the manner grand, the enunciation of the text moving. Despite Karajan's tempos he rises to great heights in Act II. Walter Berry is intelligent, but sounds vocally tired. Some of his attempts at vocal acting, like the exaggerated portamento with which he mocks Isolde in Act I are unsuccessful. Eberhard Wächter is vocally fresher and more convincingly forthright on DGG.

Jon Vickers is one of Karajan's most important assets. Wolfgang Windgassen had the benefit of many years' experience in the role of Tristan before recording it with Böhm, whereas Vickers is very new to the assignment. It would not be fair to expect Vickers to match up to his predecessor so quickly. Windgassen's performance is full of unforgettable detail: his moment of self-accusation before being struck down by Melot's sword, his horror in the last act as he recalls the potion, his final incandescent moments as he falls dead at Isolde's feet. Vickers, while not yet capable of such insight, has his glories too. The voice, for one thing, is a more magnificent instrument than Windgassen's ever was, and it rides the great outbursts of Acts II and III with splendor. From beginning to end Vickers sounds like a true hero, and never more so than in the last act, when the voice blazes up with fiercely noble anguish. Here Vickers is unsurpassed. With more experience (and a different kind of conductor) he will probably be able to express the poetical side of Tristan's character without indulging in so much dynamic exaggeration. Karajan, it would seem, encourages Vickers' tendency to muse rather than sing. In this set (as in the Karajan *Walküre*) Vickers does a lot of very soft singing. Almost all of it has too little real tonal body. Even so, Vickers' last act is tremendous and despite all drawbacks sufficient cause for owning this performance.

But prospective buyers should be warned that there are technical as well as artistic problems here. Both the recording of the performance and the manufacture of the discs leave much to be desired. The sound is congested and lacking in presence. A treble cut is necessary for even reasonable results. Moreover, the acoustic keeps changing. At one moment the singers are very forward, then suddenly—e.g., at "O sink' hernieder Nacht der Liebe!"—they recede into the distance. Brangäne, singing from a remote watchtower sounds louder than the lovers before us. There is some odd placement in the last scene of Act II and the final melee on Kareol is very confused, with Brangäne once again louder than anyone else. The review pressings were noisy and plagued by rumble. D.S.H.

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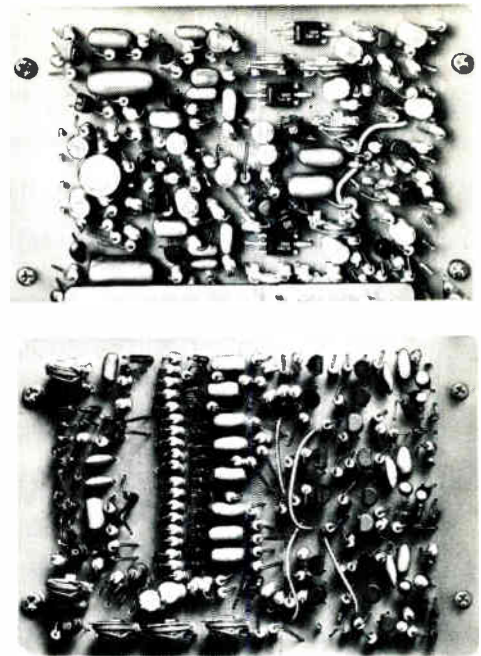
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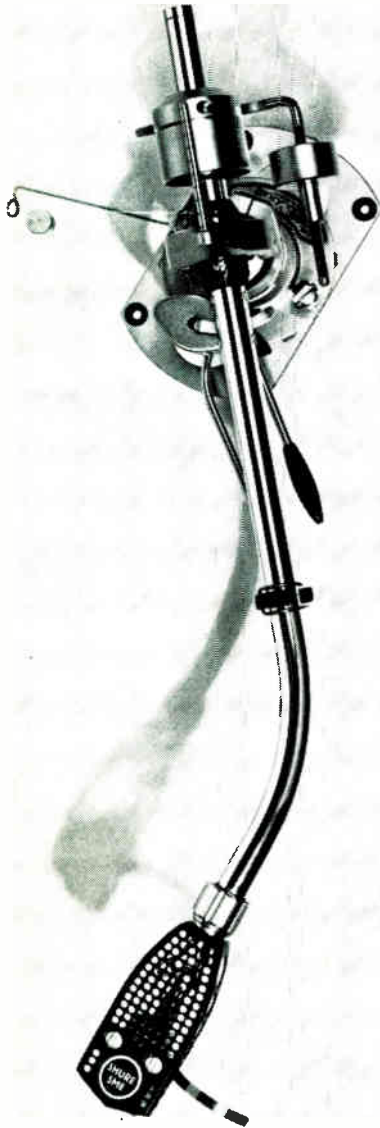
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certain unique problems. It seems quite silly to sit down and listen solemnly to an hour of music with very little if any intellectual content, and certainly the composers of these fluffy numbers would have been horrified if they thought anyone would ever do just that. Dance music is usually written to be danced to or, in a more stylized form, intended for what the browser bins label as Easy Listening. As very few people today are inclined to indulge in Renaissance dances either at parties or at home, I assume the many records of medieval and Renaissance dance music on the market must be intended as Easy Listening background for those with a taste for early music.

Just as today's Muzak styles range from mellifluous strings to upbeat Latin rhythms, so do the various interpretations of the many shawm, sackbut, recorder, and viol consorts which have proliferated in the past decade. Musica Reservata and the Hungarian Camerata are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Since I prefer my background unobtrusive, I prefer the very lovely sound of the Hungarian group to the clamorous antics of the English. The Camerata Hungarica Ensemble adopts a kind of organic approach to this music: moderate tempos, simple scoring emphasizing the soft instruments (recorders and viols), and a maximum amount of beautiful tone and phrasing. The mellow liquid sound of the solo recorder played, like the viols, with quite a bit of vibrato is a delight to listen to.

Despite the potential exoticism of the music—half of Hungary was dominated by the Turks throughout the sixteenth century—the tunes and arrangements are very much in the mainstream of Western Renaissance traditions. About half the selections come from collections published in the Netherlands, the Renaissance center for instrumental dance music, and the remaining works, taken largely from Bence Szabolcsi's *Ungarische Tanzmusik des 16. und 17. Jh.*, also conform to the prevailing continental taste. Perhaps an expert could pick out specifically Hungarian characteristics, but to my ear the pieces sound melodious and attractive but unexceptional.

Anyone familiar with Musica Reservata's earlier recordings knows their beat-out-that-rhythm-on-a-drum style of performance. Snappy rhythms and sharp acidic sound characterize most of these rousing Italian dances. The repertoire is more homophonic and rustic in appeal than the Hungarian selections and the outdoorsy approach is well suited to their boisterous nature. This would be a successfully sprightly background record if it were not for the intrusively hoarse, coarse *villottas* which open and close each side, exhibiting the worst excesses of Musica Reservata's vocal ensemble. Easy Listening it is not. S.T.S.

SELMA KRAMER: "A Treasure of Piano Encores." Selma Kramer, piano. Orion ORS 7261, \$5.98.

BACH: Fantasia in C minor; Siciliano in G minor.
BRAMHS: Intermezzo in B flat minor, Op. 117, No. 2.
CHOPIN: Nocturne in C sharp minor, Op. posth.
CHAMINADE: Autrefois in A minor. **HAUBIEL:** Noche en España; Elves Spinning. **MÉHUL:** Sonata in A, Op. 1, No. 3. **RACHMANINOFF:** Prelude in G, Op. 32, No. 5; Prelude in G sharp minor, Op. 32, No. 12. **SCARLATTI:** Sonata in E, L. 23; Sonata in B minor, L. 499.

Selma Kramer (former pupil of Hans Hermanns, Leonid Kreutzer, and Artur Schnabel) has, to judge from the many press quotations

on the album, concertized extensively. Nevertheless she will probably be a new name to most listeners (as she was, indeed, to me). This well-recorded collection shows her to be an artist of the older school: strong, expressive, and sometimes a bit too inclined toward mannerism. She plays Scarlatti as if it were meant for the piano—effusive, without ostentation, but just a trifle heavy-handed. In the Bach Fantasia, a tendency to anticipate with the left hand might well raise the eyebrows of those purists used to a chaster approach. (The Siciliano, taken from the E flat Flute Sonata, S. 1031, is here performed in a Victorian baroque adaptation by Leonid Kreutzer, so we won't even begin to discuss style.)

The Méhul sonata is apparently Miss Kramer's discovery and gets prime billing on the sleeve. Sir Thomas Beecham used to charm us with some of this French classicist's (1763-1817) music; the sonata is of like quality: suave, graceful, and utterly winning. It is played with gusto and relish. The romantic compositions on Side 2 offer more scope for a romantically oriented performer, and frankly I am a little surprised that Miss Kramer doesn't come off better than she does. The Brahms intermezzo is mauled by too willful a rubato and the Chopin nocturne lacks mystery and a true singing line. The Rachmaninoff preludes are likewise slightly coarse and monochromatic. Only in the wistful Haubiel and Chaminade does the pianist regain her former zestfulness. H.G.

"MUSIC AT MAGDALEN: THE XVII CENTURY."

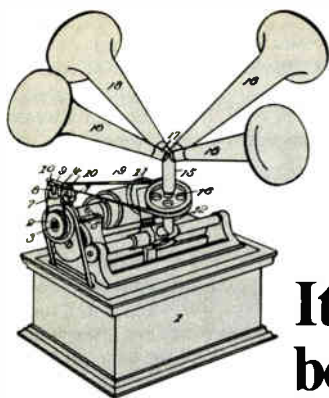
Magdalen College Choir, Oxford; Elizabethan Consort of Viols, Bernard Rose, dir. Argo ZRG 693, \$5.98.

NICHOLSON: Cantate Domino; O Lord consider my distress; Come Holy Ghost; O Lord on whom I do depend; O Lord turn not away; No more good herdsman; In a merry May morn; Sing shepherds all; When Jesus sat at meat. **GILES:** Cease now vain thoughts; God who at this time; Out of the deep. **B. ROGERS:** Voluntary; Te Deum; Nunc dimittis.

English church music of the early seventeenth century, the verse anthem in particular, is all but unknown in this country. Lute songs, viol consorts, even whole baroque operas are more common on disc and even in live performance. The reason for this neglect is fairly clear. Like much music of the same era, the effect of the English baroque anthem is dependent on a particular quality of sound. And while we have church choirs aplenty capable of doing full justice to Mendelssohn, Bach, and even Tallis and Byrd, the verse anthem relies on the presence of treble and countertenor voices, something that we with our tradition of mixed choirs have never cultivated. Not only is the music conceived for these voices, but there is something in the reedy little lines that is enhanced by the hollow echoey acoustics of the stone churches and cathedrals where the anthems were originally sung.

"Music at Magdalen" is a topnotch example of the sound and spirit of English music just before the Puritans banned it from the churches. The style is basically polyphonic, but the use of organ and viols as accompaniment, as well as a growing harmonic awareness on the part of the composers, frees the individual lines to respond to the accents of the English text with great elasticity.

All the works on this recording were new to me. The most prominently represented com-



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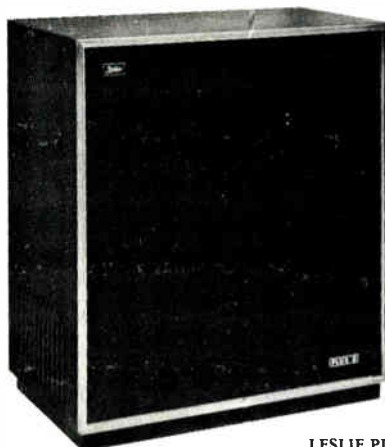
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poser is Richard Nicholson who was active at Magdalen College for nearly half a century, becoming the first University Professor of Music at Oxford in 1627. His anthems are workmanlike examples of their time, but one misses the extra touch, the sudden inspiration which turns a commonplace phrase into a memorable one. His secular music is not much more interesting. In addition to their duties in the church service itself, Jacobean choir schools frequently put on court entertainments, pastoral plays with songs and dances. *No more good herdsman* and *In a merry May morn*, trifling ditties which were probably enhanced by charming costumes and scenery, are representative of the genre. Nicholson's position may have earned him the chance to write one of the famous Oriana madrigals, though he was comparatively young at the time. *Sing shepherds all*, is a good example of middle-of-the-road music.

Nathaniel Giles's connection with Magdalen is a lot more tenuous (according to *Groves* he may have been a clerk in the chapel for one year), but his music is definitely superior to Nicholson's. *God who at this time*, in particular, is a splendid work avoiding the stop-and-go sectionalism which plagues the verse anthem especially. His *Out of the deep* is a worthy English equivalent of the better Renaissance Latin settings of the *De profundis* and the fine German baroque cantatas based on *Aus tiefer Not*.

Everything about this recording is very much in style—so much so that one would like to imagine a continuous tradition of performances for three centuries in the stone walls of Magdalen Chapel, though I suppose the enlightened eighteenth century had no truck with the rather severe style of the anthems in particular. A bit of continuity may be provided by Benjamin Rogers' simple *Te Deum*, however, which has made its way into the College Grace and at least one of the traditional college celebrations. There is a kind of authenticity about the choir as well. They are good, but not too good. The solos are evenly shared; everyone does his part but no one stands out as a Star Performer. To complete the auditory picture, the engineering catches the quality of the chapel interior without undue resonance, adding a final touch to a recording that successfully captures the sound and spirit of the early seventeenth century at Oxford. S.T.S.







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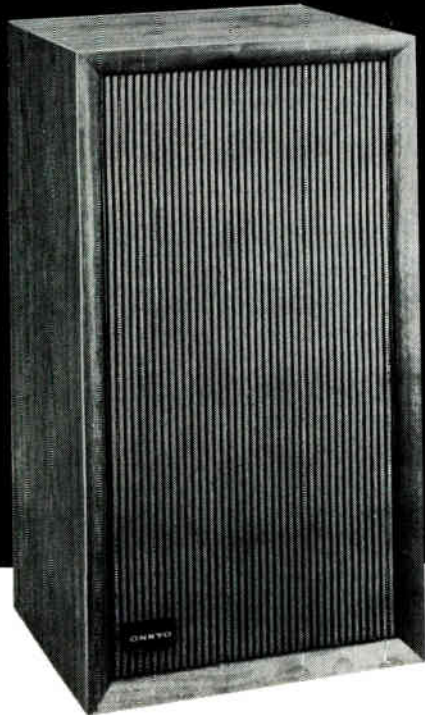
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CIRCLE 44 ON READER-SERVICE CARD
WorldRadioHistory

in brief

BACH: English Suite, No. 2, in A minor, S. 807; Fantasia in C minor, S. 906; French Suite, No. 6, in E, S. 817; Italian Concerto, S. 971. Alicia de Larrocha, piano. London CS 6748, \$5.98.

De Larrocha is a pianist par excellence and if her Bach playing is not in *echt* tradition (whatever that is—Landowska? Kirkpatrick? Tureck?), it undoubtedly is a distinguished listening experience. In general, De Larrocha/Bach reminds me somewhat of Beecham/Handel: The tempos are prevailingly broad and the phrasing is very flexible. Dance movements are pointed with a courtly charm, and curvaceous grace always takes the place of hard metricality. Rallentandos at cadences are not infrequent but are always handled with admirable good taste. Ornamentation is elegant and though the resources of the modern piano are fully used, Mme. De Larrocha keeps her sonority bright, gleaming, and refreshingly spare. In short, thoroughly musical, spontaneous and natural-sounding performances of four masterpieces, with executive brilliance and absorbing, sympathetic personality. Beautifully reproduced in the bargain. H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Duet for Viola, Cello, and Two Obligato Eyeglasses, in E flat, WoO. 32. **HAYDN:** Duet for Violin and Cello. **HINDEMITH:** Duet for Viola and Cello. **PISTON:** Duo for Viola and Cello. **VILLA LOBOS:** Duet for Violin and Cello. Irving Ilmer, violin and viola; Leopold Teraspulsy, cello. Coronet 1715, \$5.95.

Two excellent instrumentalists have put together a recital of almost-unknowns, and it makes diverting fare—at least, the twentieth-century works do. The Haydn duet (unauthenticated, according to the album notes) is of moderate interest, and the Beethoven *Eyeglasses* duo is a rather tedious affair for my money. But Villa Lobos' exotic Duo for Violin and Cello—demanding, craggy, and full of colorful instrumental effects—ought to be aired more often on the concert platform; it is so skillfully scored that the two instruments complement each other in a good, close-knit texture. The Piston is attractive, with succulent linear interweavings in the first movement, some ingratiating parallel activity in the second (a lovely slow movement that lives up to its "serene" designation), and plenty of rhythmic bounce and fluid melodicism in the third. The Hindemith is a one-movement essay with a great deal of rhythmic thrust in which the instruments alternate in predominance. Ilmer and Teraspulsy are both on the faculty of Indiana University, and perform handsomely. S.F.

GERSHWIN: An American in Paris (rev. F. Campbell-Watson); Cuban Overture; Porgy and Bess: A Symphonic Picture (arr. R.R. Bennett). National Orchestra of the Monte Carlo Opera, Edo de Waart, cond. Philips 6500 290, \$6.98.

The gifted young Dutch conductor, Edo de Waart, has already gained a respected reputation as a Mozart interpreter. But while he has an obvious relish for Gershwin's music and is less heavy-handed with it here than in his March 1972 accompaniments for pianist Werner Haas, he still hasn't mastered the insouciant jauntiness of the lively passages or the cool casual lilt of the lyrical ones. He dallies too (each of the performances here runs some two minutes longer than the preferred ones by Fiedler for RCA); but what conclusively jinxes this whole program is its sonic unattractiveness, patently less the fault of the somewhat dry engineering than of the Monte Carlo players themselves—or more fundamentally of their instruments. The percussion section is handicapped by tinny cymbals and gong and lightweight bass drum, in particular; if this orchestra is to continue tackling American music it should petition Princess Grace to subsidize the purchase of more appropriate *batterie* equipment. R.D.D.

GOULD: Soundings; Columbia. **FLOYD:** In Celebration, an Overture for Orchestra. Louisville Orchestra, Jorge Mester, cond. Louisville LS 716, \$5.95.

The only really good thing here is Morton Gould's *Columbia*, which its composer describes as "a set of contrasting sequences in the shape of pronouncements, airs, dances, memorials, hymns, parades, and flourishes," all based on *Hail Columbia* and *Columbia the Gem of the Ocean*. It sounds like something by Charles Ives that his professors had corrected—Ives with right notes. Even the description quoted above is eminently Ivesian in its prose style. But the work has vitality and zest, and it is entertaining to see what changes Gould is able to ring on those familiar tunes. *Soundings* is an effort on Gould's part to write a sort of two-movement symphony. It doesn't come off very well, but one can't be sure of who's to blame, the composer or the conductor. The blame in the case of Carlisle Floyd's blatantly trashy *In Celebration* rests, however, only on one pair of shoulders. A.F.

R

HANDEL: Apollo e Dafne. Margaret Ritchie, soprano; Bruce Boyce, baritone; Ensemble Orchestral de l'Oiseau-Lyre, Anthony Lewis, cond. Oiseau-Lyre OLS 130, \$5.98

Oiseau-Lyre continues the reissue of its elderly monos "electronically reprocessed"; some of them are surprisingly viable—though not this one. Bruce Boyce is not a bel canto singer; the voice is a bit dry and hollow and does not take kindly to coloraturas. Margaret Ritchie, the Dafne, is a better singer but has some mannerisms à la Joan Sutherland. Anthony Lewis, an excellent musician, is not at his best here; things are pretty stereotyped. In fairness I must say that all participants may owe their lowered status to the artificial sound which is quite poor. P.H.L.

HANDEL: Concerto Grossos, Op. 6: No. 1, in G; No. 2, in F; No. 10, in D minor; No. 12 in B minor. Munich Bach Orchestra, Karl Richter, cond. Archive 2533 088, \$6.98.

Excellent performances of four of Handel's twelve Op. 6 concerto grossos, boasting a resonant recorded tone and superb unanimity not only within each section of the orchestra but over-all as well (which accounts for the fine, clean, precise entrances on fugue subjects). The tempos move along as they ought; the solo work on the part of the concertino violinists is unfailingly attractive. Richter's conception does not have quite the extra measure of virtuosic flair of Neville Marriner's on London—those performances being slightly bouncier in rhythm and more flexible in dynamic shaping. But the soloists' tone is more appealing on the Richter, and the recording in general should prove a rewarding one to live with day in and day out. S.F.

MOZART: Quartets for Strings: No. 5, in F, K. 158; No. 6, in B flat, K. 159; No. 7, in E flat, K. 160; No. 8, in F, K. 168. Quartetto Italiano. Philips 6500 172, \$6.98.

Mozart's youthful "Italian" quartets (1772–73) should be more popular with the recording fraternity. They are a delight to the ear: melodious, elegant, and extremely well made. The Quartetto Italiano is a worthy exponent of the music; their ensemble is faultless, this kind of suave and seductive melody is in their bones, and they avoid any cuteness. Excellent sound. P.H.L.

ORFF: Trionfo di Afrodite. Helena Tattermuschová, soprano; Ivo Zidek, tenor; Czech Philharmonic Chorus; Prague Symphony Orchestra, Václav Smetáček, cond. Supraphon 1 12 0877, \$6.98.

DGG's deliberation in completing the Jochum re-recordings of the full Orff trilogy, which they pioneered in mono, has permitted Smetáček and Supraphon to beat them out in stereo. No matter. Except for its stereo primacy and the enthusiasm with which it is performed, this *Afrodite* is strictly a minor-league production: coarse in both vocal and orchestral tonal qualities, lacking sonic weight and breadth in its recorded sonics. In any case, *Afrodite* is the homely stepsister of the Orff family, only dimly echoing the dynamic drive and dramatic excitement that characterize *Carmina Burana* in particular. R.D.D.



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CIRCLE 7 ON READER-SERVICE CARD

4-channel discs/tapes

BY ROBERT LONG

New Pressings of First Quadradiscs. At this writing three recordings have come out on RCA's "discrete" Quadradiscs. Why the quotes around discrete? Because, as the matrix people love to point out, the four signals of quadraphonics are not kept separate and distinct throughout the reproduction cycle, but are mixed in such a way that stereo playback equipment will pick up a combination of front and back on both sides. This combining (or "folding," as it often is called) of the quadraphonic sound image is accomplished by a sum-and-difference signal process that is by definition a form of matrixing. And therefore the recordings are not truly discrete.

They might as well be to my ear; and anyone who fusses about the terminology is to that extent being a bit pedantic. Outside of a little more noise in extremely quiet passages, I really can find no audible basis for distinguishing between the Quadradisc and the discrete open-reel tape—or the Q-8 cartridge, which has more noise yet. I've been playing the Hugo Montenegro "Godfather" record and the "Fantastic Philadelphia, Vol. 1" (both of which were reviewed in this space by Leonard Marcus last July) with a Panasonic solid-state Shibata-stylus cartridge and demodulator, feeding into the discrete inputs of several different quadraphonic setups. First let me say that these are not the same pressings that were reviewed in July. At least partially due to Marcus' review, they have been remastered and there is a noticeable improvement in noise. Beyond that, the quadraphonics are still unusually clear and unequivocal. Although they carry the same catalogue numbers, we note a changed logo on our copies of the remastered pressings (see photo).

QUADRADISC



Old (top) and new Quadradisc logos

Incidentally, Panasonic's Shibata-stylus cartridge is very good for stereo records as well as quadraphonic, and I have no qualms about using it for everything.

Enter London Records. London has issued no quadraphonic discs, but it appears to be making master tapes for the purpose; Ampex has released several of its titles in Q-8 form. One is "Children of

France" (London/Ampex L 77150, \$7.98), a collection of often familiar, Gallicly romantic songs, sung by the Chorale des Enfants de l'Opéra de Paris. The results are, as you might expect, charming rather than spectacular. From *What Now, My Love* (in French of course) to *Plaisir d'amour*, the tots chirp joyously. It's not everybody's cup of onion soup, but well recorded, with a comfortable, unforced quadraphonic perspective. And as for children's singing, *quelle expertise!*

Another is "Film Spectacular No. 4" (London/Ampex L 77173, \$7.98), subtitled "The Epic" and performed by Stanley Black conducting the London Festival orchestra and chorus. Spectacular, yes; epic, yes again. But sadly the music, which celebrates the soundtracks of *Patton*, *Stagecoach*, *Ben Hur*, and such, just isn't that interesting. Even the opening of *Zarathustra* (from *2001*) doesn't come off; whether because of the arrangement, the tape transfer, or poor deep-bass response in my 8-track player, the celebrated organ pedal point sounds more like a bad hum in the equipment. Whatever the cause, this is the one fault I could find with the sound.

Guessing Games. At the New York High Fidelity Music Show I had an opportunity to try an experiment with audiences at the seminar programs. Using direct copies of master tapes, supplied by Vanguard for the purpose, I played the same passage from the Berlioz Requiem in three different forms: simulated quadraphonics (via a simple matrix) from the stereo master, decoded quadraphonics (via a full-logic decoder) from the SQ master, and quadraphonics directly from the discrete master. When I asked the audience to identify which was which, ninety per cent correctly picked the discrete version, but there was very nearly a fifty-fifty split in trying to distinguish matrixed from simulated.

The setup and room (a fairly large ballroom) was hardly ideal for quadraphonics—no public demonstration ever is to my mind—so the experiment may prove nothing. But in that room and with that recording, at least, the audiences' judgment was unequivocal: They heard a greater difference between matrixed and discrete program material than between matrixed and simulated. Until a wide variety of recordings is available in all three formats for A/B/C comparison—and until record producers have had more time to explore the inherent properties of matrixing—I'd prefer to reserve judgment.

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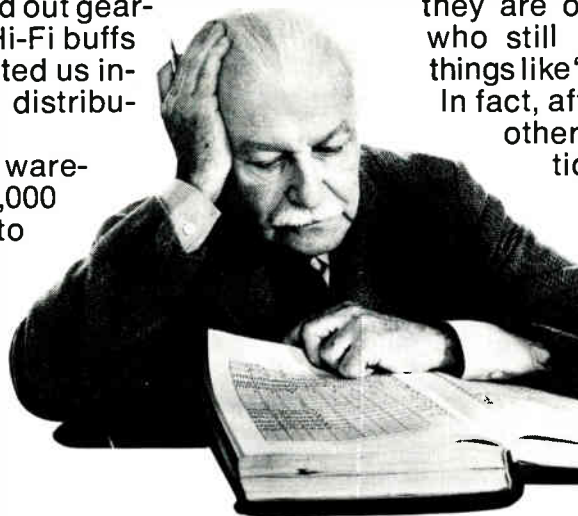
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MARTHA VELEZ: *Hypnotized*. Martha Velez, vocals; Woodstock Rangers, horns, keyboards, rhythm, strings, and woodwinds accompaniment; Homely and Horny, vocal accompaniment; other vocal accompaniment. *Lay It On The Line*; *Boogie Kitchen*; *Magic In His Hands*; six more. Polydor PD 5034, \$5.98.

The members of the Martha Velez cult are a small but voluble lot. The general public may not know who Martha is but that means nothing to her fans, who eagerly shout from each and every rooftop that Ms. Velez is the greatest rock singer of our times. They're not mad. Martha Velez is splendid; she has an indescribable voice, full-bodied and versatile, capable of achieving stunning effects, yet always under control. A disciplined artist, Ms. Velez lets you know she is one of the vocal furies but she always keeps you at arm's length so that you can admire the marvel without slobbering over it.

Magic in His Hands, a number that combines a country-and-western sound with a Hair feeling, is a haunting and funky cut; *Byrdcliffe Summer* is an emphatic statement of the happiness that comes when winter finally ends. You'll also enjoy the LP's title cut, *Hypnotized*, a totally compelling selection, and *Black Rose*, a song with a fascinating, enigmatic lyric. Spider Barbour's *Lay It On the Line* has that hit single sound without being obnoxious about it. Obviously, producers Richard Gottwehr and Keith Johnson had great insights into and respect for the talents of Martha Velez and also the skills to pull together into a cohesive whole the thirteen musicians and seven vocalists who back the singer on this disc.

Containing a number of overdubs that are Yoko Ono-esque without stepping over the boundary that separates imagination from self-indulgence, the Velez voice on this recording performs a series of daring turns and creates some spectacular effects. Martha's cult should grow by leaps and bounds. H.E.



RENEE ARMAND: *The Rain Book*. Renee Armand, vocals and lyrics; Roger Kellaway, Mike Melvoin, and Jim Gordon, arr. *Elizabeth Rain*; *Does Anybody Love You*; *England*; seven more. A&M 4369, \$5.98.

Record sales are sloping downward. Albums that sell the most are given the automatic title "million-sellers," but who really knows? In the face of this, A&M is taking a chance with a fine young unknown talent, Renee Armand. She is the kind of artist who may not make it the first time out, since quick sellers have an aroma of bubblegum, one way or another. But A&M is to be congratulated on its foresightedness. Miss Armand, for all her youth, is a grown-up, a quality artist by instinct.

Miss Armand's voice is clear, warm, and unhesitating. In collaboration with Kerry Chater and Jim Gordon, she has written all her own lyrics. The words range from excellent (*You and I: I'm Going Away*) to not-quite-focused (*Falling Ladies*). But a song is more than a lyric. Most people don't even know the words to their favorite song. It's the marriage that counts: music, words, singer.

The album can be broken down into three kinds of sounds. One is the A&M sound, which I have always liked. You hear it on albums by Sergio Mendes, the Carpenters, the new Lani Hall record, etc. In this set, it covers *You and I* (a beautiful song about a love that just missed); *Raining in L.A.*; *Does Anybody Love You*; and others.

The second sound grows out of the remarkable arrangements of Roger Kellaway (*Falling Ladies*, a fragile tapestry in strings, and *I'm Going Away*, on which Miss Armand does her deepest singing).

The third sound is one we have not heard before, created by drummer Jim Gordon, who produced most of the album. Gordon is perhaps best known for his work with such rock stars as Joe Cocker. But he is much more than the best drummer around. On two tracks, *England* and *I Think You're Letting Me Go* (he wrote both tunes), Gordon plays piano, acoustic and electric guitar, and percussion, as well as drums. Gordon's work adds up to a driving and hypnotic musical whole which leads Miss Armand into her most sensual singing. The interesting vocal presence on parts of *England* is produced by a process called phasing. These two tracks are, for me, the ones in which lyrics matter least and over-all impact is strongest.

About the mix. Sometimes it's fine. On other tracks, such as *Friends*, Miss Armand's voice—the point of all the work—is all but lost in the texture of the band. It's more likely that it happened in the mastering rather than in the mixing—and it has happened before at A&M, otherwise an excellent studio in which to record. An even texture is fine for some albums, but with an artist such as Miss Armand, vocal identity is the factor that pulls the album together.

Despite flaws, Miss Armand's debut album proves that she is a lady to be taken seriously, a durable sort of talent; the same goes for Jim Gordon as a producer. M.A.

JOAN BAEZ: *The Joan Baez Ballad Book*. Joan Baez, vocals and guitar; Fred Hellerman, guitar. *East Virginia*; *Henry Martin*; *All My Trials*; *House of the Rising Sun*; *Silkie*; *Lily of the West*; *John Riley*; *Silver Dagger*; fifteen

more. Vanguard VSD 41/42, \$9.98 (two discs).

Over ten years ago Joan Baez, the leading figure in the folk revival, was singing traditional Anglo-American ballads. She has since drifted like nearly everyone else into contemporary material. Now Vanguard has released this retrospective detailing the traditional years.

It's a welcome collection, though a bit unnecessary for those who own Miss Baez' early LPs. The fact that Vanguard released the set at this time may, I think, be considered typical of the general feeling that contemporary folk composition has become a bit boring lately and that some attention to the classics is now in order. M.J.

COMEDY RECORDS. For a feature review of comedy recordings by George Carlin, Murray Roman, Radio Dinner, Marshall Efron, Gore Vidal, Bill Cosby, and Monte Python's Flying Circus, see page 76.

RICHEL HAVENS: *On Stage*. Richie Havens, vocals and guitar; Paul Williams, guitar; Eric Oxendine, bass; Emile Latimer, congas. *From the Prison*; *Old Friends*; *God Bless the Child*; *The Dolphins*; *My Sweet Lord*; *No Opportunity Necessary*, *No Experience Needed*; *Tupelo Honey*; *Just like a Woman*; *Teach Your Children*; *High Flying Bird*; *San Francisco Bay Blues*; five more. Stormy Forecast 2 SFS 6012, \$5.98.

This is the first "live" recording by the man who is perhaps the folk scene's leading vocal stylist, and it's a fine one. Havens sings most of his familiar songs, including masterful versions of *Just Like a Woman* and *San Francisco Bay Blues*. He fails only by tending toward repetitiveness, and by including one or two ill-chosen selections. (*My Sweet Lord* really requires a vocal chorus, which Havens does not provide). M.J.



BONNIE RAITT: *Give It Up*. Bonnie Raitt, vocals, bottleneck, and acoustic and electric guitars; rhythm accompaniment. *Nothing Seems to Matter*; *Love Has No Pride*; *I Know*; seven more. Warner Bros. 2643, \$5.98.

This is the second album from Bonnie Raitt, a young singer/guitarist/sometime writer with old-time musical instincts.

Miss Raitt's musical world is one of blues, rag piano, bass-drum pedal solid on one and three, Dixie clarinet, and songs with words like, "You can make me do like this, you can make me do like that, oh baby but you got to know how." Sweet hints in the air of Bessie Smith. A red-velvet parlor car in the middle of the space age.

All this from a fragile and very young-looking lady with red hair, a redhead's complexion, and a shy smile. Miss Raitt's backup musicians are equally young and contemporary looking. The warmest of the old and new meet in Bonnie Raitt and her friends. All are wonderful musicians, all work closely together.

If there is one quality above others that makes Miss Raitt purely likable, it is her relaxation. One feels she has not so much chosen her style as glided into it with intuitive ease.

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The sonic presentation was excellent; voices were natural with no coloration; orchestral music was balanced and full; transients came through cleanly; the organ sounded authentic. Indeed, for a system of its size and price, designed for home use, the Grenadier strikes us as among the best." **High Fidelity**

CONSUMER COMMENTS: **R. A., Portsmouth, N. H.**, The rich true sound of stereo • **W. S., Canoga Park, Calif.**, The style for my wife . . . the sound for me • **J. A., Hyattsville, Md.**, Superior sound over anything near it in price • **D. O., Vallejo, Calif.**, That's good sound • **T. F., St. Louis, Mo.**, Fantastic sound and the fine quality in the design • **R. G., New York, N. Y.**, I love it; you made it! • **D. D., Honeybrook, P. A.**, Fantastically good fidelity • **J. F., Vancouver, B. C.**, This speaker is truly a work of art!



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Bonnie Raitt is bursting with talent, sunshine, sadness, and friends with whom to share her gifts. Presumably worldly success will come. If not, she's still way ahead of the game. Listen to her. M.A.

ED SANDERS: *Beer Cans on the Moon*. Ed Sanders, vocals and autoharp; Hemptones, strings, vocal, and rhythm accompaniment; other woodwinds, keyboard, and string accompaniment. *Rock & Roll People*; *Nonviolent Direct Action*; *Henry Kissinger*; nine more. Reprise MS 2105, \$5.98.

Ed Sanders is a practicing poet, former member of that outrageous satirical band, the Fugs, a peacenik, a recording artist, and author of that term paper about Charles Manson, *The Family*. In "Beer Cans on the Moon" this eclectic local character takes on ecology, space travel, the rock culture, and a number of other *au courant* topics. The results, unfortunately, are totally predictable.

Everyone knows that littering the moon is thoroughly indecent; everyone knows that the oil spills off the shores of San Clemente are obscene; everyone knows that Henry Kissinger has escaped from the canvas of a surrealist painting; we do not need Sanders' ditties to make these things clearer. In *Rock & Roll People*, Sanders says: "They say rock-and-roll and politics don't mix/and they say rock-and-roll never cured any social ills/but when rock-and-roll people get together on a hill/share their hope, grow their food, make their clothes, build their homes with sharing/then the rock-and-roll people are gonna take over the world. . . ." We do not need this kind of banality either.

Only on *Yodeling Robot* does the poet display any real wit. Here the yodeling robot falls in love with Dolly Parton and suffers because Dolly's yodels make him feel truly sad and "his iron eyes never can weep."

Sanders writes of this album: "I have writ-

ten and sung compositions presenting ideas and beliefs I cling to with my every desperate moment on earth: freeshare, non-violent direct action, universal ethics, universal decent living conditions, cultural total freedom and humor. It isn't easy."

It obviously isn't, judging from the material on this album. H.E.

*** THE BEST OF DELANEY & BONNIE.**

Delaney Bramlett, vocals and guitar; Bonnie Bramlett, vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *When the Battle Is Over*; *Only You Know and I Know*; *Never Ending Song of Love*; *Soul Shake*; seven more. Atco SD 7014, \$5.98.

This album encompasses material recorded by the influential soul/gospel/rock ensemble both for Elektra and Atlantic. The absorption of those companies into the great-parking-lot Kinney Communications makes this possible, which I suppose is another argument for conglomerates.

D & B was the birthplace of Leon Russell and the Hollywood Backup Band—Bobby Whitlock, Carl Radle, Bob Keys, Jim Gordon, Jim Price, Jim Keltner—who have played on dozens of important recordings. For this reason alone, "The Best of Delaney & Bonnie" is significant. It's also powerful, rocking music. M.J.

GARY GLITTER: *Glitter*. Gary Glitter, vocals; vocal and instrumental accompaniment. *Rock and Roll Part 1*; *Baby Please Don't Go*; *The Wanderer*; nine more. Bell 1108, \$5.98.

Both the English and American charts have been topped by two singles that bear the strange titles, *Rock and Roll Part 1* and *Rock and Roll Part 2*. These cuts, both of which rely upon repetitive pounding rhythms and lyrics that are more nonsense than anything else, may strike one as the very worst of contemporary pop music or another of this season's amusing novelties. I'm good-natured enough to consign these "tunes" to the novelty category and to declare that their author/per-

former, Gary Glitter, is quite a novelty also.

Glitter, all decked out in the flashiest clothes possible, combines the current peacock craze with a hefty dose of Fifties nostalgia. On his "Part 2" creation, he even tosses in a sprinkling of something that sounds as if it had escaped from David Bowie's "Ziggy Stardust" album. Glitter does not miss a trick. True, there is not much artistry involved in what he does but it does seem to be all in fun.

On this disc, this deep-voiced one-man Sha Na Na extracts every bit of melodramatic emotion from Richie Valens' *Donna*. He also does the same for Chuck Berry's *School Day* (*Ring! Ring! Goes the Bell*). His *The Wanderer* is an engaging if synthetic brand new Fifties tune, and his *Rock On* has an insistent, urgent sound that is infinitely irresistible.

Glitter may not be a musical genius but he has compounded something that can certainly be called amusing. H.E.

*** JOHN DENVER:** *Rocky Mountain High*. John Denver, vocals, guitar, and songs; rhythm accompaniment. *Paradise*; *Goodbye Again*; *For Baby*; *Seven* more. RCA LM 4731, \$5.98. Tape: ● P8S 1972, \$6.95; ●● PK 1972, \$6.95.

John Denver has changed not a whit in the ten years since I first heard him singing in a club called Ledbetter's in Westwood. The club was owned and run by Randy Sparks, one of Denver's first supporters.

I am reminded of that period, during which I was coaching acts at that club (not Denver, he didn't need it), because of one of the songs in this new Denver album: *Darcy Farrow* by Steve Gillette and Tom Campbell. I first heard it at that time when its composers were on the local scene. Things were much folkier then. Sparks and the New Christy Minstrels were making brashly commercial "folk" music. Denver himself was not commercial. He was pure folk.

He still is, with his clean voice and his almost styleless style. Denver may be the only really successful straight folksinger left. (Joan Baez is closer to pop music these days.) Denver's simplicity makes him more interesting as a recording artist than as a performer. On stage he just stands there and sings; on records his purity comes through beautifully.

Denver has also proved to be a fine songwriter. He is not a consistent writer, but when he's hot he's hot: *Leavin' On a Jet Plane*; *Country Road* (my favorite); *Poems, Prayers and Promises*; *Goodbye Again*; and others. One of Denver's new songs is called *Prisoners*. Unfortunately he has keyed it so high for his voice that shrillness dominates and the impact of its strong lyric (Vietnam POWs) is almost lost. Also included in this set is a wonderful song by John Prine called *Paradise*.

It is impossible to imagine that John Denver is anything less than a very nice guy, and this likability shines through his music and his sweet voice. Perhaps that explains the durability of his appeal. M.A.

CHICAGO: *Their Latest Release*. Terry Kath, guitar and vocals; Peter Cevera, bass and vocals; Robert Lamm, keyboards and vocals; Lee Loughnane, trumpet, background vocals, and percussion; Walter Parazaider,

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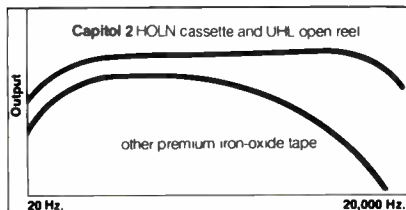
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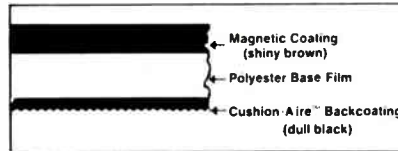
The side of the new tape that faces the heads is a shiny brown, and not as dark as most tapes. The shiny mirror-smooth tape finish improves high-frequency response by improving head-to-tape contact.

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woodwinds and percussion; James Penkow, trombone and percussion; Danny Seraphine, antique bells, congas, and drums. *A Hit By Varèse; All Is Well; Now That You've Gone;* eight more. Columbia KC 31102, \$5.98.

Chicago aims its material directly at a college audience, and the band's college audience has given Chicago great success. By blending jazz and rock à la Blood, Sweat & Tears, Chicago offers its fans the illusion that they are getting music rather than noise, even though the monotonous regularity of this seven-man ensemble's approach lost its luster records ago.

Unfortunately, the group's lyrics can be just as mediocre as its music. Chicago still seems preoccupied with the concerns of collegians during the Sixties. The results are embarrassing. In *State of the Union*, the band mulls over an antiestablishment voice that cries the following profundity: "Tear the system down." *While the City Sleeps* contains the following perceptive observation: "Men are scheming/New ways to kill us/And tell us dirty lies." In *Dialogue*, Robert Lamm and Terry Kath debate the merits of being an activist or a stoned freak. Then the group sings: "We can make it happen/We can change the world now/We can save the children/We can make it better."

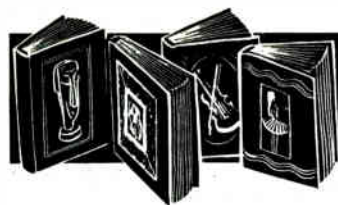
All I can say is: "Ha! Ha!" H.E.

BRADY BUNCH. Brady Bunch, vocals; Al Capps, arr. *Day After Day; American Pie; Time to Change;* nine more. Paramount 6032, \$4.98.

The acting personnel of a children's TV show cannot be discussed in terms of their aggregate musical talent. It's silly. Say, instead, that the album is efficient. The six children sing every bit as well as your children do. They have the advantage of being supported by several professional studio singers, recorded so that they blend in and you won't know they're there, plus the arrangements of a first-rate man, Al Capps. All is brought together by knowing producer Jackie Mills. It is difficult to like or dislike them. The people who own the Brady Bunch want some of that Partridge Family money from records, but they haven't got a David Cassidy. As I said, it is an efficient package, like Kellogg's. M.A.

* **CONWAY TWITTY:** *I Can't Stop Loving You/(Lost Her Love) On Our Last Date;* Conway Twitty, vocals; strings, rhythm, and keyboard accompaniment. *(Lost Her Love) On Our Last Date; Candy; Hold To My Unchanging Love;* eight more. Decca DL 75361, \$4.98.

If country-and-western music is your first love, you won't have to be urged to purchase Conway Twitty's new release. He has come a long way since 1958 when he was an incipient Elvis who had a gold record entitled *It's Only Make Believe*. Twitty is now a highly polished c & w artist. The first side of this disc does suffer from repetition, but Twitty really succeeds on Side 2 with mournful versions of *I Can't Stop Loving You* and *The Key's in the Mailbox*. He also does some mighty fancy country rocking with *White Lightning*. Twitty should never have worried about the burden of his humdinger of a name. H.E.



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THE CLASSICAL STYLE: HAYDN, MOZART, BEETHOVEN. Charles Rosen.

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*** MEMPHIS SLIM:** South Side Reunion. Memphis Slim, piano and vocals; Buddy Guy, guitar and vocals; Junior Wells, harmonica; A. C. Reed and Jimmy Conley, saxophones; Philip Guy, guitar; Ernest Johnson, bass; Roosevelt Shaw, drums. *When Buddy Comes to Town; How Long Blues; Roll and Tumble*; seven more. Warner Bros. 2646, \$5.98.

Memphis Slim is a bridge between the blues singers of the Twenties, Thirties, and Forties and those who have adapted to the electric sounds of the Fifties, Sixties, and Seventies. He is a contemporary who was part of the earlier scene, who sings and plays piano with authority in that older style, and yet is completely at home with an electric bluesman such as Buddy Guy.

Slim is the commanding and influential performer on this disc which is drenched in boogie-woogie variants. He has a big, virile singing voice that projects authority easily without the need to emphasize the *macho* qualities common to current blues singers. Buddy Guy complements him with a higher but less potent voice and with some electric guitar solos that balance Slim's rolling, forceful piano style. Junior Wells receives prominent billing but contributes relatively little—less, for instance, than A. C. Reed and Jimmy Conley whose saxophones add to the good-time jump quality of the ensemble that Slim has brought together for this recording. J.S.W.

*** DON GIBSON GANG:** The Al Capone Memorial Jazz Band. Ned Lyke or Nap Trotter, trumpet; Bill Hanck or Jim Beebe, trombone; John Topel, tenor saxophone; John Harker, clarinet; Don Gibson, piano; Ken Salvo or Charlie Marshall, banjo; Dick Carlucci, bass and tuba; Mike Schwimmer, washboard and vocals; Wayne Jones, drums. *Aunt Hager's Blues; Chimes Blues; 1919 Rag*; seven more. Long Groove LS 1, \$5.95 (Long Groove Records, P.O. Box 192, Deerfield, Ill. 60015).

The Chicago jazz world appears to be developing a new school of jazz based on, but not really copying, the old Chicago jazz of the Twenties. The new school has many of the same characteristics of the old one—the hell-for-leather ensemble playing, saxophonists who would rather be hot than right, echoes of Bix phrases and the Stacy-Hines style of piano, and many of the old tunes. But the best players in the new Chicago movement have shown that they are not entirely welded to the old school, even though they haven't quite created an idiom that clearly defines their own playing.

Don Gibson's band—an amplification of a group that plays in Long Grove, Illinois—is one of the better exemplars of the new Chicago school, and the reason for its exemplariness is unusual: It has a great rhythm section, an area which is, more often than not, the principal downfall of contemporary bands playing in the traditional vein. Gibson uses a five-piece rhythm section anchored in the

strong, steady drumming of Wayne Jones (who is at the heart of a great deal of the new Chicago jazz), strongly supported by Ken Salvo's banjo (or occasionally Charlie Marshall's), and the bass or tuba (particularly the tuba) of Dick Carlucci. Gibson adds piano chords; Mike Schwimmer plays a washboard that is felt more than heard (the best balance for a washboard) and also sings with assurance and spirit. Schwimmer's vocals give the group another plus over most of its contemporaries, whose singers usually sound like country club cut-ups on their fifteenth beer. With this foundation, the fact that the horn men are erratic soloists is not all that important.

The ensemble has a properly eruptive fire for a Chicago group. Jim Beebe plays some robust, Teagarden-tinged choruses on trombone, while Nap Trotter and Ned Lyke rise to some of their occasions on trumpet. John Topel, the group's tenor saxophonist, manages to sound different on every selection, thanks partially to a recording balance that sometimes puts him out in left field or sometimes brings him up front, and a style that can be pure Emmanuel Paul/New Orleans at one moment and whirling Chicago drive in the manner of Boyce Brown and Bud Freeman at another. Note particularly a rugged waltz version of *Summertime* and a *Yama Yama Man* that could stand as the complete illustration of the relationship of the New Chicago school to the old. J.S.W.

*** BUCKY PIZZARELLI:** Green Guitar Blues. Bucky Pizzarelli and Mary Pizzarelli, guitars; George Duvivier, bass; Don Lamond, drums. *Tangerine; Bizarre; Goodbye*; twelve more. Mon-

When the two-guitar team of George Barnes and Bucky Pizzarelli broke up in January 1972, after working together for more than a year and a half, the jazz world lost its most brilliant guitar duo. Everything was not lost, of course, because both guitarists have continued on separate paths. George in collaboration with other guitarists and Bucky on his own.

Bucky on his own, with his seven-string electric guitar, is quite something. He was the prime melodist of the Barnes and Pizzarelli combination (George leaned toward zippy rhythm pieces), and this solo album by Bucky sings with gorgeous melodies—some taken ad lib, delicately and sensitively, some with gently sinuous backing from George Duvivier and Don Lamond.

There are times when this is almost as much Duvivier's set as it is Bucky's for his accompaniment is so right that it becomes an essential part of Bucky's guitar lines, and there are moments when Duvivier steps out on his own—on *The Summer Knows* and *Satin Doll*—with a simple grace that is not often associated with bass solos. Bucky shows another side of his playing when he shifts to classical guitar for a Villa Lobos prelude and Tarrega's *Ade-lita*. He also introduces a new guitar duo—playing, with his fourteen-year-old daughter, Mary, a lively novelty written by an earlier two-guitar team, Dick McDonough and Carl Kress. This is a beautiful collection, more varied, more imaginative than jazz guitar albums are apt to be and the first really suitable showcase that Bucky Pizzarelli has had on records. J.S.W.

TEDDY WILSON AND MARIAN MCPARTLAND: Elegant Piano. Teddy Wilson and Marian McPartland, pianos. *Bluesette; Lover Man; Quiet Nights*; seven more. Halcyon 106, \$4.98 (Halcyon Records, Box 4255 Grand Central Station, New York, N. Y. 10017).

Possibly because they are, by nature, such individualists, jazz pianists have very rarely played duets. Certainly there are no piano duos comparable to, say, Whittemore and Lowe, Ohman and Arden, or Vronsky and Babin. The only piano pairing that lasted for any period of time was the dual boogie-woogie-ing of Meade Lux Lewis and Albert Ammons when they were playing at Cafe Society in New York in the early Forties—although they were just as apt to be a trio with the addition of Pete Johnson, who also played at the club in those days. Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn played together at times but they really performed as sequential soloists, a real game of musical chairs. So it's a remarkable occasion when two pianists of the stature of Teddy Wilson and Marian McPartland are paired together for half a disc (they share solos on the remainder).

They try a little bit of everything here—a blues, a bossa nova, a jazz waltz, and a couple of standards. Both pianists manage to be mutually supportive; they avoid stepping on each other's lines, and create generally valid performances. In the process, however, some of the distinctive qualities of each pianist are subordinated; on a one-shot basis such as this, it is a little much to expect a new duo personality to appear. Even so, when they are dealing with the familiar and basic elements of a blues, their joint performance is filled with fresh and stimulating insights. And the presence of Mrs. McPartland helps lift Teddy Wilson out of his standard run-through on a too well-worn part of his solo repertory, *Just One of Those Things*—a refreshing change. J.S.W.

theater and film

HENRY VII AND HIS SIX WIVES. Music from the film soundtrack; Early Music Consort of London, David Munrow, dir. Angel SFO 36895, \$5.98.

This recording from the soundtrack of the movie (not the television) version of Henry VIII and his six wives includes authentic sixteenth-century dances, music in the style of the sixteenth century used as a background to some of the dramatic scenes, and several songs and ballads historically associated with the characters which did not appear in the movie at all. These are perhaps the high point of the disc, but if you buy soundtrack records as souvenirs of the film, their inclusion will probably be somewhat confusing. The original dances, well played on authentic instruments, are nice enough and I have no quarrel with David Munrow's composed/arranged music which is very stylish and no doubt dramatically appropriate, but the final *mélange* is something of a hodgepodge.

If you enjoyed the film and would like a more aesthetically satisfying selection of music in the same style, equally well played by the same ensemble, I would recommend Munrow's recent release "Pleasures of the Court" also on Angel (S 36851). On the other hand if

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With the Dolby noise reduction circuits operating, the A77 is so quiet it's scary. This machine really provides sound reproduction! No person for

whom I demonstrated the recorder could distinguish between live and recorded sound in A-B tests. For decades hi-fi ads have been bullshitting about "concert hall realism." The Revox really achieves it.

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tion multiplex signals, and a head-phone jack.

Inside the machine is where the technofreaks will really get off. Rigid girders, heavy metal plates, big Pabst motors, carefully routed wiring, beautiful plug-in circuit boards, fancy connectors, the works. Everything NASA quality; built for quiet, smooth operation and long life. It's obviously a machine that should last as long as you do, and Revox guarantees it to; and from looking it over, it doesn't seem like they're going to spend much money making good on their pledge. A few parts that come in contact with moving tape (heads, pressure roller, and capstan) are only guaranteed for one year; but the heads are the big-radius professional type that should be good for many years of normal use, and roller and capstan sleeve are cheap and easy to replace.

If you can't afford the full \$969, the A77 is available without the Dolby circuits for about \$200 less, and if you only plan to dub from records or radio, or record loud rock music, you may as well save the bread. Other formats and options are also available, including built-in playback amps and speakers, rack mounting, variable speed, half-track operation, 15 ips speed, selsync, and on and on and on.

I have a few bitches about the machine: the braking is slow; the meters are a bit small; and the photocell tape shutoff can be annoyingly activated by white leader tape spliced between tape sections; but I manage. I have really gotten to love the Revox A77 Dolby B. I know of nothing better.

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in brief

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BY R.D. DARRELL

Hubris: Mahler's Impossible Dream.

One's biases undeniably tend to slant ever more steeply as one grows older; yet in the realm of musical experience this tendency sometimes can be arrested, or even reversed, by exceptionally potent recorded performances. Only recently, a prejudiced conviction of my own (that *Tannhäuser* was an irredeemably dull opera) yielded to the combined persuasiveness of Solti's interpretative eloquence and London's most thrilling engineering. So this month I almost hoped that the same combination might release me from an even stronger musical antagonism—but in the case of Mahler's *Symphony of a Thousand*, my old objections are in some ways confirmed rather than contradicted by the grandeurs of the Solti version and only softened a bit by the more modest persuasions of Haitink in a simultaneous reel release from Philips.

Although I'm usually a pro- rather than anti-Mahlerian, his gargantuan Eighth Symphony always has struck me as a classic example of overweening ambition, an attempt to lift oneself into Heaven by one's own bootstraps, a foolhardy challenge to Fate that the ancient Greeks named hubris. Often this madness is so superhuman that some observers, awed by the act itself, refuse to deny it success—or at worst esteem it as a "magnificent failure." (Beethoven's Ninth is an example some of us might cite.) So for many listeners the sheer loftiness of Mahler's aims in his Eighth may obscure the hard fact that his heavenstorming remains tragically earthbound, never really "coming off" in the concert hall, much less in recordings.

In any case, it is true that technological advances enable the two latest Eighths in stereo (with quadraphonic editions still to come) to argue their own cases more eloquently than any previous versions. They are London/Ampex K 90211 and Philips/Ampex K 7049, each a double-play 7½-ips reel, \$11.95. The more dramatic reading and more spectacular sonics are those of the former, the Solti version, with international soloists, Viennese choruses, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Yet while its rival, conducted by Haitink with international soloists, Amsterdam choruses, and Concertgebouw Orchestra, has markedly less sonic breadth, impact, and presence, the completely natural, more distant, large-auditorium recording and still more its restrained, gentler, and even (where possible) intimate reading poignantly enhance one's sympathy for the composer's attempt to realize his truly impossible

dream. Hence, while I must recommend the Solti version first to audiophiles and to all those who find unalloyed grandeur where I find grandiosity, it's the Haitink version that's more likely to soften the hearts of those who condemn Mahler's hubris for attempting more than he—or any composer—can possibly achieve.

"Of Battles Long Ago." There hardly could be a worse time than the present for the appearance of any recorded war documentary, so it should be stressed that Frederick Fennell's great evocation of *The Civil War: Its Music and Its Sounds* was planned for and first released (in two double-disc volumes) during the centenary celebrations of the early 1960s. When it was finally brought to tape only recently, I passed it over initially for review consideration. But after checking back on the original disc reviews I began to suspect that I was missing something exceptional in the way of incomparable sonic, as well as martial, value—a suspicion immediately confirmed when I began listening to the tape edition (Mercury/Ampex L 901/2, two double-play 7½-ips reels, \$7.95 each).

What we have here is a revitalization of the music sung and played on both sides of the Mason and Dixon line during the war years—music recorded in its original scorings and on period band instruments, which are also heard in representative field music (bugle and drum calls) of both armies. There are in addition sixty-page illustrated booklets of scholarly annotations. All these attractions are so fascinating in themselves as well as for their historical importance that one can well afford to skip over the last quarter of each reel devoted to narrated battle re-enactments exploiting authentic cannon and musket fire. These "Sounds of Conflict" now seem of limited interest in comparison with the wealth of *musical* appeals predominating elsewhere in these documentaries.

The Other Manon. Puccini's first real hit, *Manon Lescaut*, has been doubly handicapped on the stage by the even greater popularity of his later triumphs and (outside Italy) by the competition of Massenet's earlier operatic version of the same Prévost story. On tape it's been unlucky too: The sole complete version—London's of 1964 starring Tebaldi—actually was recorded nearly a decade earlier and currently is out of print (except for a single reel of highlights). But not only does this ensure a warm welcome for Angel's new musicassette version (4X2S 3782, two cassettes, boxed, \$9.98; libretto on request), advance interest has been stimulated by the fact that its stars—Montserrat Caballé and Plácido Domingo—gave a preview of its Act II duo in the recent Met Gala honoring Sir Rudolf Bing (recorded by Deutsche

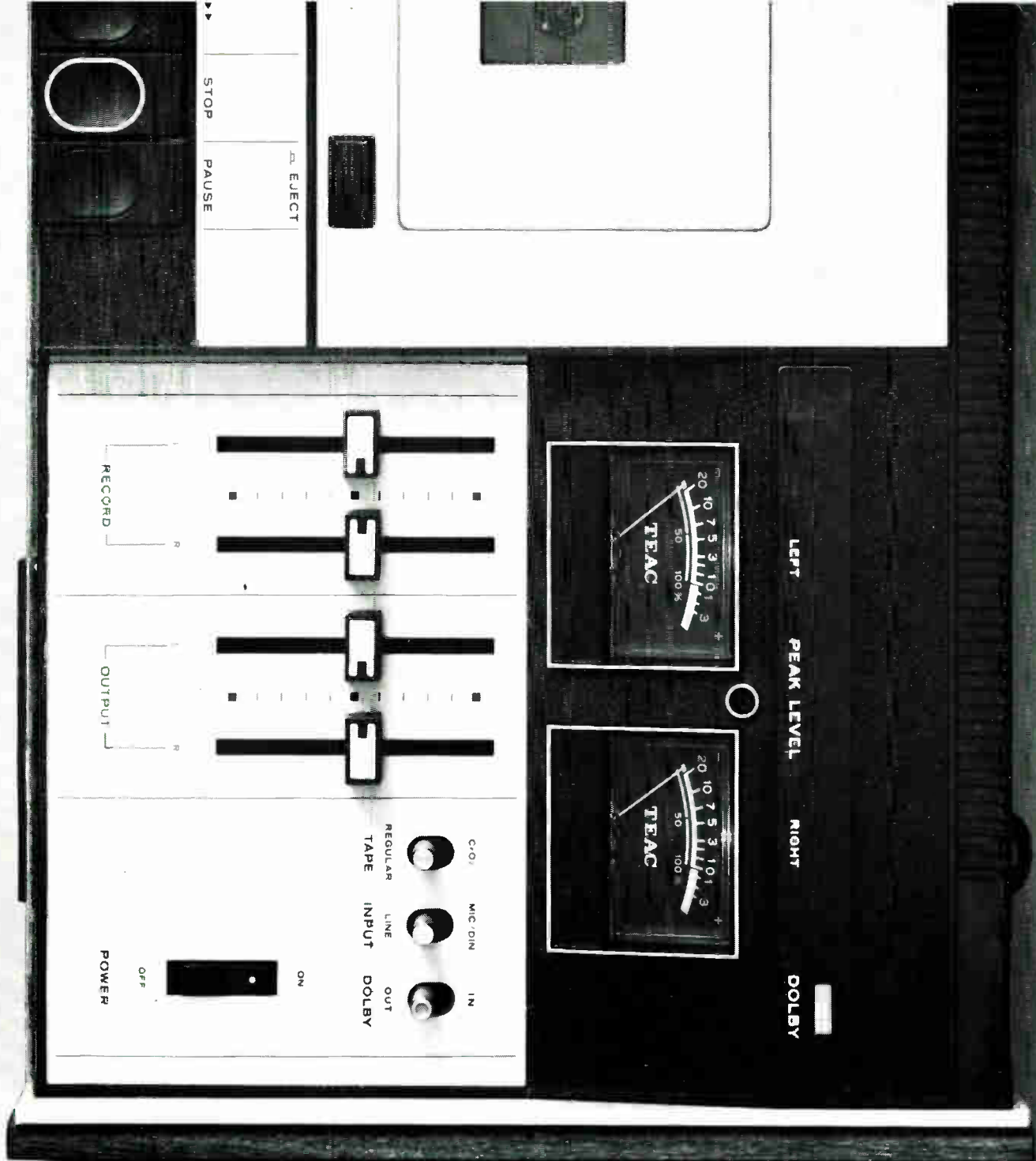
Grammophon). As might be expected Caballé sings entrancingly, and if conductor Bruno Bartoletti can't make the Ambrosian Chorus, New Philharmonia Orchestra, and the minor cast members sound idiomatically Italian, co-star Domingo is Italianate enough in his emoting and roaring to more than make up for that. Indeed, his robustness and the generally high modulation level of the recording effectively help to cover up most of the non-Dolbyized cassette surface noise.

Goodies, but Definitely Oldies. Reappearances of earlier, often years earlier, releases continue to figure largely among the "new" listings originating in this country—often enough a good rather than a bad thing in at least some respects, but a policy I can more readily approve when there is some cost saving than when there is none.

First mention, then, goes to a bargain double-play cassette edition (Columbia MGT 31418, \$7.98; also a 7½-ips reel, MG 31418, at the same price) coupling Isaac Stern's famed 1960 performances of the Beethoven and Brahms Violin Concertos, with Bernstein and Ormandy respectively, in big-sound recordings which still stand up impressively well.

Second, if only because it represents less of a saving, is Arthur Fiedler's "Great Children's Favorites" collection (RCA Red Seal RK/R8S 5076, double-play cassette and cartridge respectively, \$9.95 each). Reissued here are the fine 1964 pairing of Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals* with Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* (both with admirably straight narration by Hugh Downs); the very early stereo-age Tchaikovsky *Nutcracker* Suite; and, startlingly, a Prokofiev *Peter and the Wolf* with narration by Alec Guinness. What's startling here is that the only Fiedler/Guinness *Peter* I know was recorded in 1952 (released in 1954)—and it certainly sounds like undoctored monophony here. But the sonics are amazingly good all the same, and since Guinness does a first-rate, completely unmannered job, unwary buyers may be deceived but they won't really be cheated.

The releases of the "Greatest" this and that continue on and on, but at full list prices I can give only qualified commendation to "Greatest Hits/The Violin," a couple of concerto movements and various popular encore pieces in polished virtuoso performances by Stern and Zukerman (Columbia MT/MA 31405, Dolbyized cassette/8-track cartridge, \$6.98 each); "Greatest Hits/The Piano," familiar warhorse pieces in rather heavy-handed virtuoso performances by Entremont (Columbia MT/MA 31406); "Mahler's Greatest Hits" (RCA Red Seal RK/R8S 1206, double-play cassette and cartridge respectively, \$6.95 each). ●



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