

HIGH FIDELITY

ICD 08398

MUSICAL AMERICA
EDITION

Exclusive Reports

- The Hottest New Audio Gear
- 6 Lab/Listening Tests
- Willie "Nonstop" Nelson


BARTÓK: 100th ANNIVERSARY SECTION!

- Firsthand Report: His Turbulent American Years!
- Recommended Recordings
- Exclusive! New Personal Photographs



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A red kazoo is positioned on the left side of the image, angled towards the center. On the right side, a black speaker is shown, with its internal cone visible. The background is a solid blue color.

Conventional kazoo
has paper cone.

WHAT'S GOOD FOR A KAZOO IS BAD FOR A SPEAKER.

Blow into a kazoo and what do you hear? A buzzing noise you'd expect from a toy that costs about fifty cents. But just as the paper cone in a conventional kazoo creates a buzzing noise, the paper cone in most conventional speakers creates distortion.

The reason? Paper cones flex. As they alter their shape, they alter

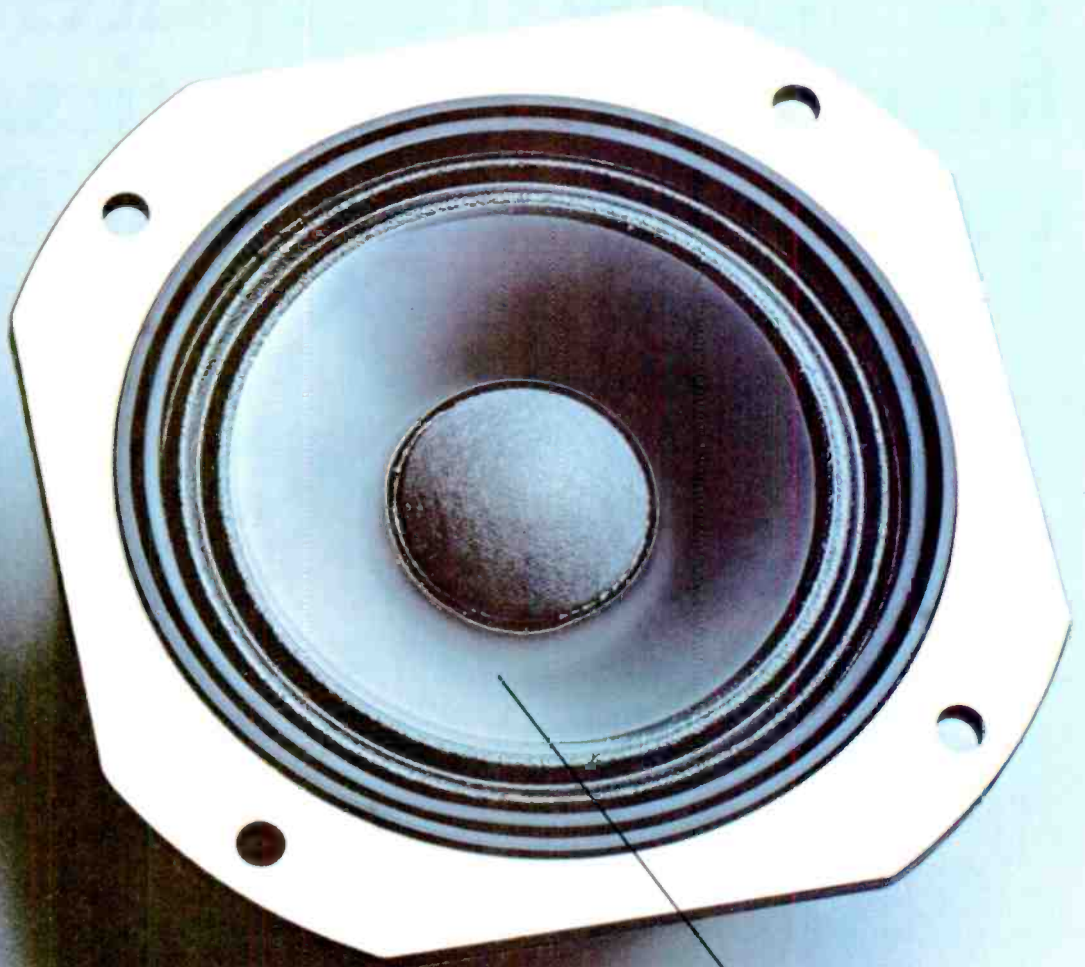
your music.

Pioneer's HPM speakers have cones made of Polymer Graphite instead of paper. This amazing material reduces speaker distortion up to three-fold. Which means instead of listening to your speakers you can listen to a lot more of your music.

What's more Polymer Graphite



Conventional speaker has paper cone.



Pioneer's speaker has polymer graphite cone.

is lightweight and non-resonant. So it doesn't add any of its own sound to your music.

So why buy a conventional paper speaker and limit your system's high fidelity, when you can buy a Pioneer HPM Polymer Graphite speaker and improve it.

 **PIONEER**
We bring it back alive.



Pioneer HPM Polymer Graphite.™

The moving coil replacement from Stanton Magnetics... the revolutionary 980LZS!



Now from the company to whom the professionals look for setting standards in audio equipment comes a spectacular new cartridge concept. A low impedance pickup that offers all the advantages of a moving magnet cartridge without the disadvantages of the moving coil pickup. At the same time it offers exceedingly fast rise time—less than 10 micro seconds—resulting in dramatic new crispness in sound reproduction—a new “openness” surpassing that of even the best of moving coil designs. The 980LZS incorporates very low dynamic tip mass (0.2 mg.) with extremely high compliance for superb tracking. It tracks the most demanding of the new so called “test” digitally mastered and direct cut recordings with ease and smoothness at 1 gram.

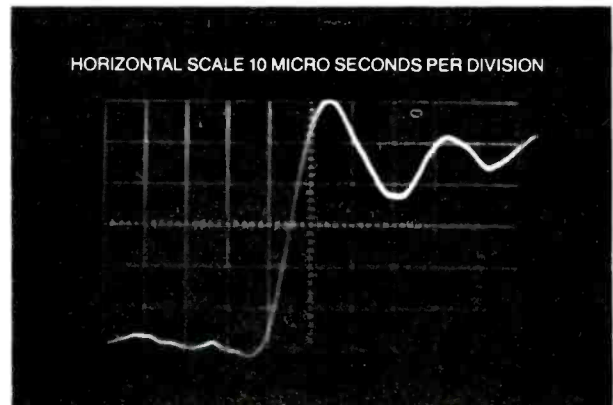
The 980LZS features the famous Stereohedron™ stylus and a lightweight samarium cobalt super magnet. The output can be connected either into the moving coil input of a modern receiver's preamps or can be used with a preamp, whose output is fed into the conventional phono input.

For “moving coil” audiophiles the 980LZS offers a new standard of consistency and reliability while maintaining all the sound characteristics even the most critical moving coil advocates demand. For moving magnet advocates the 980LZS provides one more level of sound experience while maintaining all

the great sound characteristics of cleanliness and frequency response long associated with fine moving magnet assemblies.

From Stanton... The Choice of The Professionals.

For further information write to: Stanton Magnetics, Terminal Drive, Plainview, N.Y. 11803.



Actual unretouched oscilloscope photograph showing rise time of 980LZS using CBS STR112 record.



STANTON

THE CHOICE OF THE PROFESSIONALS™

HIGH FIDELITY

**MUSICAL AMERICA
EDITION**

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begins after page 32

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Letters

Joplin: Raunchier than Thou?

While reading Daniel Paget's review, "From the Saloon to the Salon: Rifkin's Genteel Joplin" [November 1980], I recalled that one of Beethoven's biographers liked to use the word "chaste" to describe his music, especially the last quartets. Mr. Paget uses words like "lascivious" and "raunchy" to describe the music of Joplin. These writers remind us that Tannhäuser's curse is very much a part of our "civilization." (We should seriously think about this if we would understand what motivates, at least in part, the present-day feminist.) A wiser Wagner would have sent his fallen hero to a psychiatrist for treatment rather than to the Pope for absolution.

Do we equate Joplin with Venus, whom we sneak out the back door to meet for an occasional hot time, while Beethoven represents the chaste Elsa, whom we truly love? Isn't there something in the compositions of both men that touches us, not just in a "sensual" way, not just in a "spiritual" way? Is it enough to say that "Solace" is "lascivious," i.e., not "chaste"? I am touched by this music, and the word "lascivious" wouldn't quite do to express my feelings. I'm touched in a similar way by the slow movement of Beethoven's E flat Quartet, Op. 127. Should anyone be offended if I confess that my feelings about this music are not entirely chaste?

Mr. Paget cites certain facts of Joplin's personal life to support his argument that "the dominant quality must be physical excitement, if not downright raunchiness." What would he do with Brahms, of similar background and experience? Do performances of his music need more raunchiness? In that case, we should remember that Barbra Streisand ventured into classical repertoire a few years ago with some success.

James A. Smith
Lansing, Mich.

A Maligned Mazer

I think it uncalled for that a critic like Robert Marsh should go to a national magazine to attack associate conductor Henry Mazer, who is hardly known outside Chicago and whose specific talents were never at issue until Marsh brought them up ["Letters," January]. What is noteworthy about Mazer is that, outside of guest conductor Leonard Slatkin, he is the only one who consistently performs

new works with the Chicago Symphony. This year he has scheduled six works, four of which are first performances by the orchestra.

The lesson Chicago can offer is not that Mazer's talents might be insufficient, but that an orchestra can become too good. Because Chicago is cursed with one of the greatest orchestras in the world, concert-goers repeatedly attend what amount to open rehearsals for recording sessions. Abbado, Levine, and Solti have let us in on their Mahler cycles, and Solti and Barenboim are returning to prepare for their Bruckner recordings. When Levine did a celebrated Brahms cycle (released on RCA), Solti tried to go him one better (London Grammy Award release). Each year's programming schedule looks like a carbon copy of the season before.

When critics, including Marsh, have challenged Maestro Solti to program new works, he has replied that the result would not be perfection and that people demand perfection from Solti/Chicago. "Perfection" is about all we get nowadays. But how poorly could the orchestra play Pettersson, Piston, or Koehlin? Even if it played badly, at least we'd get to hear them.

The more celebrated the conductor and the finer the orchestra, the more unimaginative the programming turns out to be. One might travel to St. Louis, Milwaukee, Salt Lake City to hear what's new or not often heard in orchestral music. But in the supposed cultural centers of our nation, there is too much by way of reputation, money, and competition for anyone but an associate conductor to take a chance on programming different music.

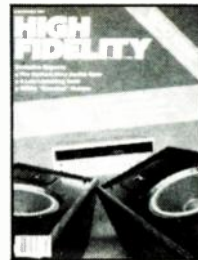
Harry White
Chicago, Ill.

Used Audio Components

Thank you for finally addressing the subject of used audio equipment. Sam Sutherland's fine article [December 1980] did, however, overlook the most effective way of buying, selling, and trading: "Audiomart," the monthly classified paper that is the largest marketplace in the world for used audio gear. For the subscription price of \$12, the audio enthusiast also gets free personal ads all year. There are no brokerage or dealer costs, since advertisers deal directly with each other. We'll send a free sample on

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Cover photograph by Bob Brody.



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Technics linear-tracking turntable. Program it to play any cut. In any order. Even upside down.

Once again, Technics makes turntable history with the introduction of the world's first programmable linear-tracking turntable. The direct-drive SL-15 does what no other turntable can: Automatically plays the record selections you want with zero tracking error, and skips the ones you don't.

The SL-15's microcomputer and infrared optical sensor let you play up to 10 cuts per side, in any order. Just press the program keys in the order of the selections you want to hear. And with the repeat button, the SL-15 can repeat the entire program or any selection.

The fact is, the SL-15 will perform virtually any turntable

function, automatically. It selects the record size and speed, finds the lead-in groove and begins playback at the touch of a button. And it does it more accurately than you can.

More proof of the SL-15's accuracy is its quartz-locked, direct-drive motor and dynamically-balanced, linear-tracking tonearm. In addition to tracking perfectly, the SL-15 plays a record as accurately upside down as it does right side up.

Technics also offers other linear-tracking turntables, including our famous SL-10 and our new SL-7. But whichever turntable you choose, all prove when it comes to linear-tracking, Technics is a cut above the rest.

Technics
The science of sound

request. At \$12 we also publish an accurate price guide along with a helpful text written for the consumer rather than the dealer.

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Why Not Bootlegs?

Contrary to Howard Reed's letter [December 1980] on curbing record piracy through licensing, I wonder why you

don't review bootleg records. They are as much a part of the record industry as products from Columbia or RCA. The best records of many artists, such as Bruce Springsteen, are bootlegs. If they cost artists so much money, why are they all millionaires? The real pirates are companies that charge \$9.00 per record.

R. R. Keller
Park Ridge, Ill.

Let's Hear It for Digital

In response to the finicky article in the November 1980 issue, "Digital vs.

Analog vs. Direct-Cut Discs": Of course, digital sounds better! I have not heard the discs evaluated in the article (an odd selection), but my ears tell me that the more spectacular moments in the digital "Firebird" and "Pictures at an Exhibition" (Telarc), "Images" (Angel), and numerous others are much more beautiful and overpowering than any competition on analog recordings. I've heard only a few direct-cut discs, such as Leinsdorf's Wagner program, but they too sound incredibly lifelike and exciting. Perhaps your listeners are too jaded to hear what excites the rest of us.

Jack Sullivan
New York, N.Y.

Carver Development

I am upset that the January issue of HIGH FIDELITY carried the item on the Yamaha pyramid power amplifier ("High Fidelity News") without reference to the fact that the B-6 and A-6 are manufactured under license to Carver Technology Development, Inc. Your statement that the B-6 is "similar in concept to the Carver Corporation's Magnetic Field amplifier" is merely a partial truth, which could easily confuse the reader as to who developed the technology. Bob Carver developed the Magnetic Field amplifier technology under which Yamaha is licensed.

Diana Raphael Carver
Carver Technology Development,
Inc.
Woodinville, Wash.

We regret the vagueness of our original phrase, but we cannot itemize the licensing agreements that lie behind every product we mention. If we did, every reference to cassette decks or tapes would perforce mention Philips, for example.—Ed.

Schoenberg Transcription

A minor correction to Irving Lowens' review in the October 1980 issue: Webern's transcription of Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano "was designed to go along with," not "a transcription for the same instruments" of the composer's "Pierrot lunaire," but with that work itself. "Pierrot lunaire" requires (in addition to a speaker) precisely the five players of those instruments, with the flutist doubling on piccolo, the clarinetist on bass clarinet, the violinist on viola.

David Hamilton
New York, N.Y.

the best value in hi-fi

Three V15 Type IV Technological Breakthroughs

Dynamic Stabilizer Suspended from two viscous-damped bearings, acts like a shock absorber to maintain constant cartridge-to-record distance and uniform tracking force; eliminates record groove skipping caused by warp; cushions the stylus from accidental damage.

Electrostatic Neutralizer 10,000 conductive graphite fibers discharge static electricity from the record during play. Eliminates attraction of dust and tracking force variations caused by static charges.

Telescoped Shank Greatly improves trackability at the critical middle and high frequencies. Lowest effective mass, with no sacrifice of necessary stiffness or strength.

Plus a Studio Cartridge Innovation

SIDE-GUARD Stylus Deflector
A unique lateral deflection assembly developed by Shure for its professional studio cartridge—prevents the most common cause of stylus damage by withdrawing the *entire* stylus shank and tip safely into the stylus housing before it can be bent by sideways thrusts.

**In 6 Models to Match Any
Turntable, Any Budget** All these features are incorporated into six moderately-priced cartridges—with tracking forces ranging from ¾ to 3 grams, and three different stylus configurations—including the revolutionary distortion-reducing Hyperelliptical stylus. Headlining the M97 Series is the M97HE-AH, featuring a precision aligned cartridge-headshell and adjustable overhang.

For all the facts
see the February 1981
issue of
High Fidelity
or circle 50 on
Reader Service Card



THE HEADLINER™
Model M97HE-AH
with adjustable integrated headshell

M97 SERIES phono cartridges



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Only Custom-Tailored Sound meets your taping needs.

If tape is the only sound that's right for you, to maximize your taping requirements, an ADC Sound Shaper® Two MK III frequency equalizer is a must.

When they designed the Sound Shaper Two, they had you in mind. Because, aside from being a superb all-around equalizer, it lets you work with tape the way you want. For example, now you have two-way tape-dubbing capability, a feature many receivers don't offer. You can "custom-tailor" a record and then record it the way you would have engineered it. And that includes your golden oldies because, with the Sound Shaper Two, you can virtually eliminate the surface noise which has accumulated

over the years.

The entire ADC Sound Shaper line is impressive. The basic Sound Shaper One is a great introduction to frequency equalizers. And the top-of-the-line Sound Shaper Three, the *Paragraphic*™ equalizer, combines the ease and control of a graphic equalizer with the precision and versatility of a parametric. And, all Sound Shaper equalizers, except the Sound Shaper One, feature LED-lit slide controls, allowing for visual plotting of the equalization curve.

With the Sound Shaper Two MK III, you can appreciate the difference custom-tailored sound makes — over and over again.

Custom-Tailored Sound



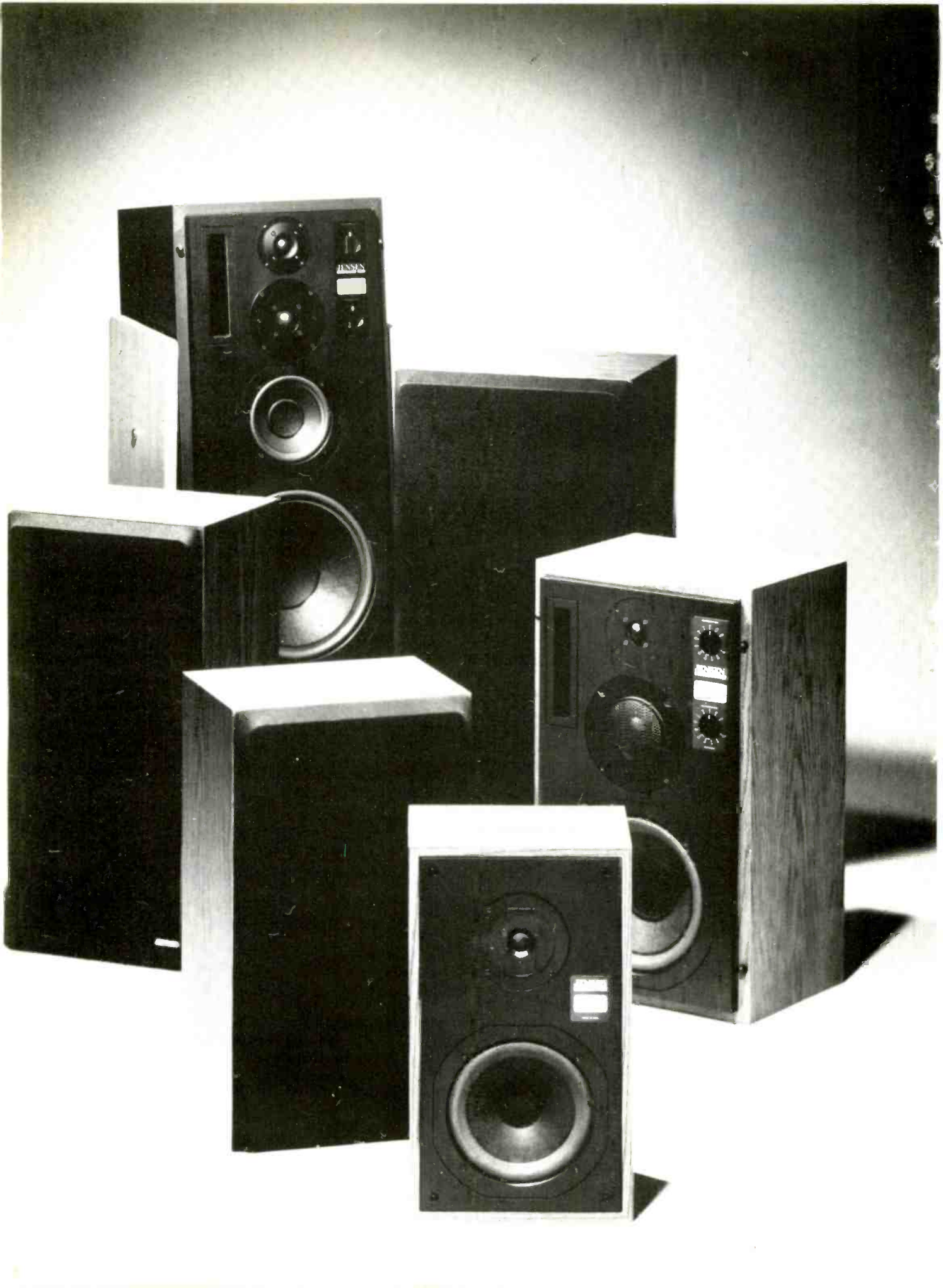
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Circle 1 on Reader-Service Card



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**Compare the new Jensen System Series
Speakers to the leading competition and you'll
hear what we're talking about.**

Just for a minute, forget the specs, the response curves, the graphs and acoustic theories. Let's get back to the ultimate test of a speaker. It's music, pure and simple.

At Jensen, we're so sure of our new line of System Series Speakers that we urge you to compare them. Match any of our speakers against comparable models of any other top brand speakers.

Listen to your favorite, most familiar recording. Listen at all levels and from all areas of the room. And see if you don't choose the Jensen for better sound.

When it comes to choosing home audio speakers, it's really quite simple. Compare them all. We know you'll like the Jensen System Series Speakers.

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

**JENSEN
HOME AUDIO**

Music... pure and simple.

Circle 19 on Reader-Service Card

Spring Product Preview

A sneak peek at some exciting new gear from the Winter Consumer Electronics Show.



A new twist to a traditional format. Mitsubishi's X-10 Interplay system (at right) combines a vertical linear-tracking turntable, a cassette deck, and a receiver rated at 25 watts (14 dBW) per channel. The turntable detects disc size and automatically sets playing speed; the receiver section includes six station presets for its servo-lock FM tuner. The X-10 will sell for \$690.

The Model 776 from Mission Electronics (below) is the only battery-operated full-function preamp we know of. The constant voltage from its two rechargeable lead-acid batteries is said to result in performance superior to that of AC-powered preamps. The Model 776, housed in a cast-metal enclosure that spells out the company name, costs \$1,000.



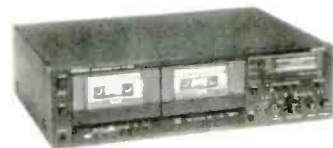
You can have two for the price of one—almost—with Optonica's RT-6605 cassette deck (top right). Separate tape



NEXT MONTH: An in-depth look at the complete CES product picture. Including—

- Latest trends in separates.
- New directions in tape noise reduction.
- The lowdown on the newest receivers, turntables, cassette decks, speakers.

Plus, in **VIDEO TODAY**, a full report on the burgeoning video revolution.



compartments for recording and playback make dubbing a snap. In addition, Optonica says this approach permits the use of heads and electronics optimized for their specific functions. A dubbing level control, calibrated in dB, enables you to tailor dubbing levels to the capabilities of the tape formulation you are using. The RT-6605 costs \$550.

Apt's Power Tracking Integrated Amplifier (below) is said to combine many of the features of the Apt/Holman preamp and Model One power

amp. The new integrated model is rated at 80 watts (19 dBW) per side into 8 ohms, with a whopping 6 dB of dynamic headroom. The unit derives its name from a switching power supply that tracks the input, providing higher voltages when required to reproduce musical peaks. Its price is expected to be less than \$800 when it comes on the market this spring.



(More)

Circle 37 on Reader-Service Card ▶

The continuing story of TDK sound achievement.

Parts Eight and Nine.



Parts Eight and Nine, the two sides of the TDK shell, are not merely well matched. They are mirror images. TDK engineers knew that unless every part of the TDK cassette mechanism was encased in a perfect, unchanging world, the total effort to create perfect sound would be lost.

To achieve the perfect mirror image, a test cassette was cast in solid metal. With it, TDK engineers determined the delicate interrelationships between parts.

They found eight key points of contact between tape and shell. Whenever the sides were not perfectly parallel, to a micron, there was phase shift and sensitivity loss. A difference of more than a few microns could affect the sound as well as damage the tape.

To avoid structural problems, TDK engineers chose a very special plastic. High impact styrene. It performs impressively in tem-



TDK cassette tape-to-head interface area.

perature extremes and holds its shape under stress. Then a metal die was designed to cast the shell. The die alone has 428 separate parts for superb quality control.

Before a TDK shell design is approved for mass production, it's checked in thermostatic chambers to an accuracy of $\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$. Its image magnified 5 to 20 times on a 600 millimeter screen.

Surface roughness is checked on a graph enlarged 100 to 1,000 times. To be sure there's no variance, the two shell halves are precision molded from

matching dies and kept side by side until they are precisely mated by five computer-torqued screws. There is no room for error in a TDK cassette. Even the TDK label is made of a special paper.

Looking through today's

larger TDK window, you'll have a perfect view of tape movement and direction. It's the direction TDK has set for cassettes. Total performance depending not merely on the tape but the design and interplay of every component part. With TDK, music will continue to be the sum of its parts. And that's quite an achievement.



 **TDK**
The Amazing Music Machine.

THE REALIZATION OF GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

THE SANSUI "Z" SERIES.

Music lovers expect uncommon products from Sansui. And Sansui delivers. The Sansui "Z" Series of synthesized digital receivers are designed and built with a loving logic that can be seen, touched and heard. Take the Sansui 5900Z, a reasonably priced receiver with every important feature you could possibly want for the heart of your high fidelity system.

SYNTHESIZED DIGITAL TUNING

You can't mistune a Sansui synthesized digital receiver. Not even a little. Press the up/down tuning buttons. The digital circuitry ensures that every station received is automatically locked-in for lowest possible distortion, with its frequency indicated both on a digital readout and by an LED indicator along an analog type dial.

TOUCH VOLUME CONTROL & LED PEAK POWER LEVEL INDICATOR

The Sansui 5900Z uses a pair of touch-buttons to adjust the listening level. Relative volume control setting is indicated on a fluorescent display. Actual peak power amplifier output is shown by 14-segment LED indicators.

12 PRESET STATIONS

To make FM and AM tuning still easier up

to 12 user-selected stations may be "stored" in the 5900Z's memory circuits for instant recall. The last station received will be remembered when the tuner is turned on again; and memories are kept "live" even during a power outage.

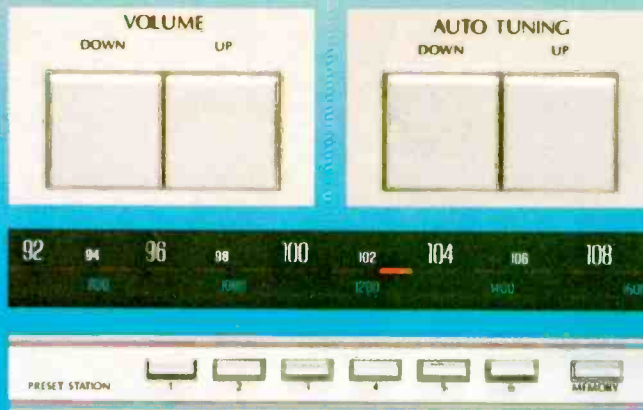
DC-SERVO AMP FOR DEPENDABLE POWER

The leader in DC technology, Sansui uses a servo-controlled amplifier circuit in all "Z" receivers to eliminate unwanted ultra-low frequencies — like record warps — while maintaining the advantages of direct-coupled circuitry in their amplifier sections. The 5900Z delivers 7.5 watts/channel, min. RMS, both channels into 8 ohms, from 20-20,000Hz, with no more than 0.03% THD.

And there's more. Like LED's for every important function. Two Muting Modes. Two tape deck connection with dubbing. And much more.

Visit your Sansui dealer and make sure you

see all the wonderful stereo receivers in the Sansui "Z" Series. And expect great things. You won't be disappointed.



Sansui

SANSUI ELECTRONICS CORP.

Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07031

Gardena, Ca. 90247

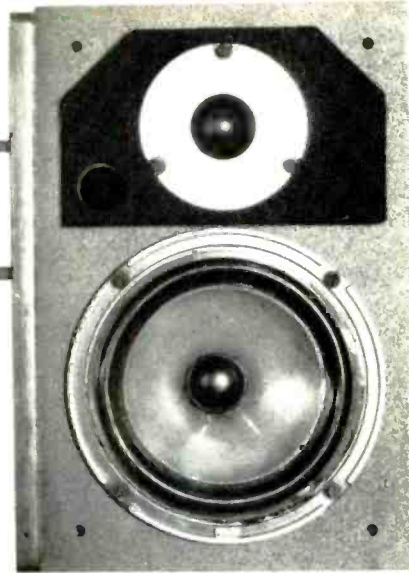
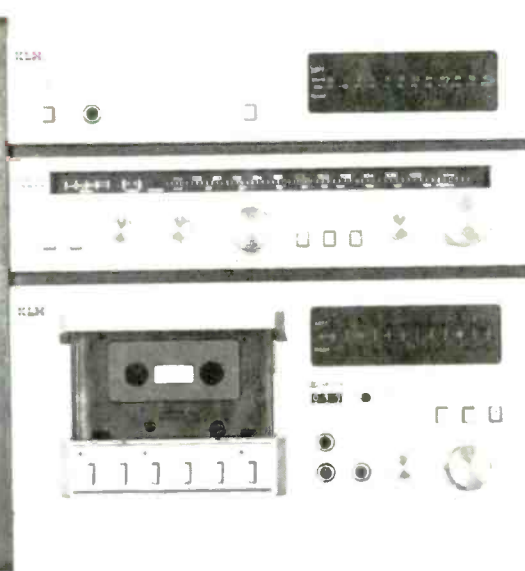
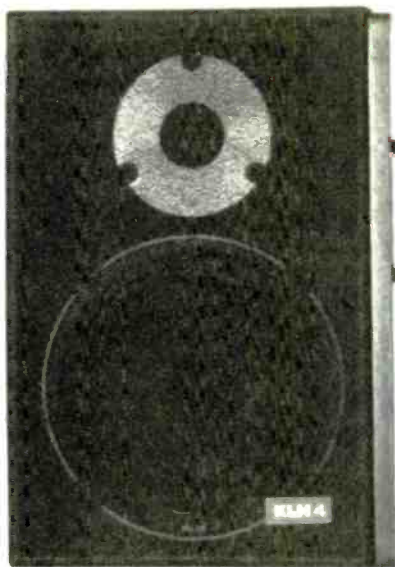
SANSUI ELECTRIC CO., LTD., Tokyo, Japan

SANSUI AUDIO EUROPE S.p.A., Antwerp, Belgium

In Canada: Electronic Distributors

Circle 30 on Reader-Service Card





JBL has updated its popular L-150 floor-standing loudspeaker (left). The L-150A contains a redesigned tweeter (said to have been developed with the aid of laser holography techniques), an improved midrange driver, and a 12-inch woofer with JBL's proprietary symmetrical field geometry magnetic structure. A passive radiator rounds out the driver complement. The L-150A costs \$695.

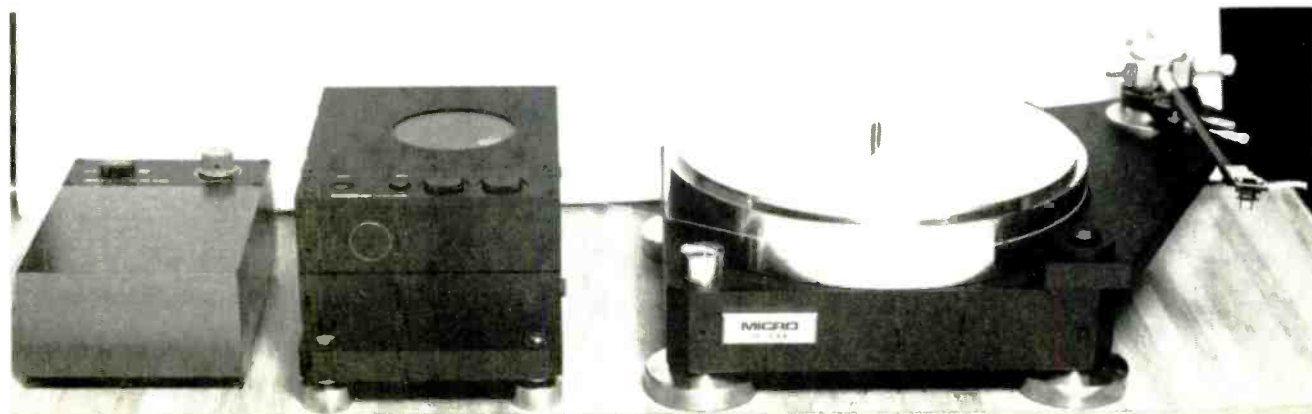
KLH's System 400 mini-component ensemble (above) marks that company's return to full-line manufacturing. A walnut rack houses a power amplifier, rated at 30 watts (14 3/4 dBW) per side, an AM/FM tuner/preamp, and a metal-ready cassette deck. Also included is a pair of KLH-4 loudspeakers with polypropylene woofers. Price for the entire package is \$1,000.

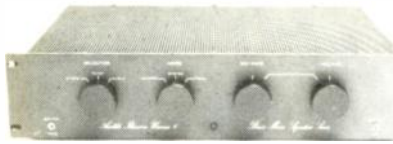


After some subtle modifications, the Oracle turntable (above) returns as the Delphi, a belt-drive design manufactured by Trans Audio Industries of Canada. The Delphi is said to have been designed for maximum acoustic isolation. Its three-point spring suspension is tuned to 3.5 Hz, and a screwdown clamp couples records tightly to a resonance-damping platter mat. Price of the Delphi, without arm, is \$1,095.

Micro-Seiki's latest in turntable exotica (below) is the air suspension SX-8000 system. A 48-pound stainless-steel platter is supported above a solid zinc base by a thin layer of air, supplied by a separate air pump. The motor and electronics make up a third component, with drive force communicated to the platter via an Aramid fiber cord. The SX-8000, which can accommodate as many as four tonearms, costs \$10,000.

(More)



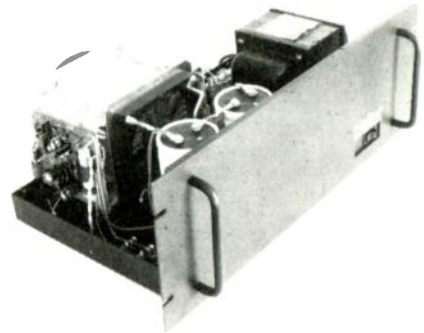


The tube mystique continues with the Uranus-1 preamp from Audible Illusions. Constructed with separate regulated power supplies for each channel, it is said to have been designed with extremely high overload capability on all amplifier stages. The Uranus-1 is expected to sell for about \$1,000.

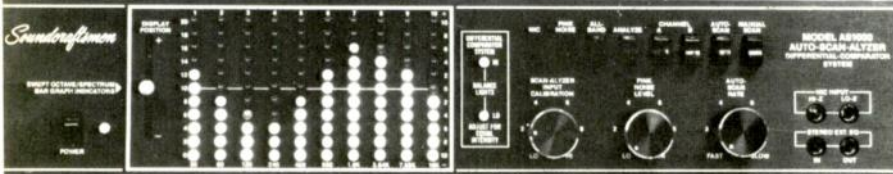


Toshiba calls its new noise-reduction system ADRES-V and includes it in the Model PC-X66AD cassette deck. The system employs a 1.5-to-1 compression/expansion ratio along with dynamically varying recording and

playback equalization. The results, claims Toshiba, are 20 dB of noise reduction and a dynamic range of up to 98 dB at 1 kHz. The PC-X66AD is expected in June for \$360.



More power is the news from the David Hafler Company, whose DH-500 power amp is rated at 250 watts (24 dBW) per channel into 8 ohms. A low-noise fan cools internally mounted heat sinks and MOS FET output transistors. The amplifier can be bridged for mono operation, resulting in a claimed 800-watt (29-dBW) output. Slated for delivery this summer, the DH-500 will be available in kit and factory-wired versions for \$550 and \$700, respectively.



Real-Time Spectrum Bar-Graph Auto-Scan-Alyzer, \$449.

You can *dramatically* improve your system through fast, accurate and continuous analysis with this new State-of-the-Art Real-Time Frequency Analyzer. The Auto-Scan-Analyzer also provides 0.1dB Read-Out patent-pending circuitry, a Bar-Graph of each individual octave or Full Bar-Graph Display, plus Variable-Rate octave-by-octave Automatic Sweep Scanning, both visually and aurally.

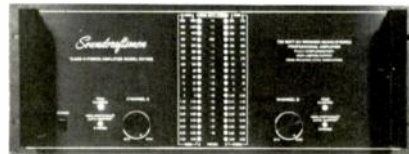
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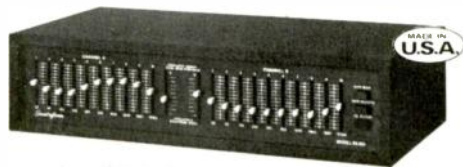
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The new CLASS "H" ANALOG logic Vari-Portional circuit • AUTO-CROWBAR protection circuit • Input level controls • Adjustable range meters • Main and remote speaker selection • Clipping indicators • 250 watts RMS minimum p/c 20-20KHz @ 8 ohms • Less than 0.1% THD • T.I.M. BETTER THAN 0.02% • NON-LIMITED output assures crisp clean peaks • S/N-105dB • 7 Amplifier models, from \$549.

The Equalizer you buy should have all 10 of these features:

- Real-Time Frequency Analyzer Test-Record
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- Two Zero-Gain controls
- EQ Tape Record
- Tape Monitor
- EQ defeat
- ±16/12dB octave gain
- S/N- 105dB
- THD 0.01%
- Cabinet included

\$249⁰⁰



also available in silver

FREE! 16-page Full-Color Brochure

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

SEND \$6.00 FOR EQUALIZER-EVALUATION KIT: 1-12" LP TEST RECORD 1 SET OF COMPUTONE CHARTS, 1 COMPARISON CONNECTOR CABLE, AND 1 INSTRUCTION FOLDER.



After several years' absence from the cassette deck field, Advent is back with the Model 203. Continuing the pioneering tradition of the Model 201, which did much to popularize Dolby B, the new unit is one of the first decks to incorporate Dolby C, for a claimed additional 10 dB of noise reduction at mid and high frequencies. The Model 203 will sell for about \$350 when it comes on the market this spring.

For more information, circle the appropriate number on the reader-service card.

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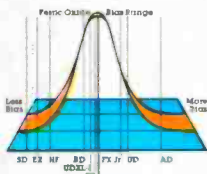
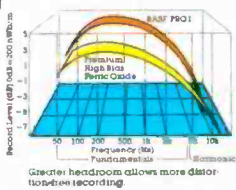
Circle 8 on Reader-Service Card ▶

The Tape Guide

Professional·I.
The one tape that stands up when you crank it up.



Premium ferric oxide tapes have more headroom which allows higher maximum recording levels (MRL). Among all premium ferric oxides PRO I has the best MRL for loud recordings. Uniform maghemite particles provide increased headroom for very accurate and loud recordings with virtually no distortion. In the fundamental music range (20Hz-5kHz) PRO I can be



PRO I is designed to be compatible with the normal bias setting of more cassette decks than any other ferric tape.

recorded louder and driven harder than even high bias tapes. PRO I is the internationally accepted reference tape, whose bias point is specifically matched to the Type I/normal/ferric position on today's high quality cassette decks.

Professional·II.
The world's quietest tape puts nothing between you and your music.

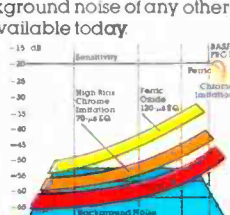


High bias tapes consistently provide wider frequency response and less tape noise (hiss or background noise) than any other tape type. Among premium high bias tapes PRO II is in a class by itself. It is the second generation chromium dioxide tape with superb frequency response and outstanding sensitivity in the critical (10kHz-20kHz) high frequency range. It also has the lowest background noise of any other competitive tape available today.



The fine chromium dioxide particles in the PRO II, unlike ferric oxide particles, are homogeneously shaped and uniformly sized to give this tape superior performance.

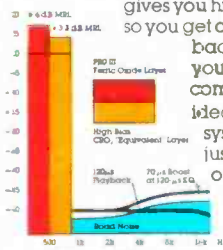
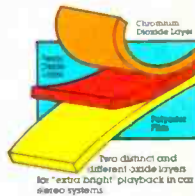
PRO II will capture the many subtle harmonics of the most demanding recordings and play them back with the reality and presence of a live performance. PRO II is the tape for the Type II/chrome/high bias position that comes closest to Metal tape performance for half the price.



Professional·III.
The only car tape that eliminates the car.



Ferrichrome tapes combine the benefits of chromium dioxide and ferric oxide tapes for superior performance in car stereos. The top layer is pure chromium dioxide for unsurpassed highs and low background noise. The bottom layer is ferric oxide for superior lows and great middle frequencies. And it also gives you higher recording levels, so you get clearer, louder playback without cranking up your volume control to compensate. PRO III is the ideal tape for car stereo systems and performs just as well in the home on the Type III/ferrichrome position.



PRO III provides a higher maximum recording level (MRL) than high bias tapes, and effectively boosts the highs to overcome road and car noise.

GUARANTEE OF A LIFETIME

"The guarantee of a lifetime."

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



Patented "Jam-Proof" Security Mechanism (SM):

All BASF tape cassettes come with our exclusive SM — Security Mechanism. Two precision arms actually "guide" the tape in a smooth, exact and consistent track, so that winding is always even, no matter how often the cassette is played. SM puts an end to tape jamming.



BASF

Crosby Drive, Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

Now with the new BASF cassette shell.
Greater precision for greater performance.

CrossTalk

Q. I have a B.I.C. T-4M cassette deck, whose line input is rated at 200 millivolts, and a Yamaha C-6 preamp, whose line inputs are rated at 150 millivolts. Can the preamp drive the tape deck to an adequate level, or do these ratings not matter?—Wayne Noel, address unspecified.

A. The Yamaha does not amplify line-level input signals going to its tape output, so the tape deck sees exactly the same source signal as the preamp does and at exactly the same level. In short, don't worry about it: The two specifications have nothing to do with each other.

Q. I want to get more of a "concert hall" sound from my system, which now consists of a Yamaha CR-1020 receiver and TC-1000 cassette deck, a Dual 626 turntable with an Ortofon cartridge, and Infinity RS-1.5 speakers. Can I achieve the "surround" effect I'm looking for without going quadriphonic, and if so, what additional equipment will I need?—John Wright, New York, N.Y.

A. These days you won't get much of the effect you're looking for even if you go quadriphonic because so few quad recordings are being made and so few really good ones ever were made. You can, of course, use the matrix systems (like SQ) to "enhance" ordinary stereo recordings. Used either way, they require an additional amp and a second set of speakers, preferably very similar or identical to the main pair. Delay lines, which at present are the most popular means of ambience enhancement, also require at least one other amplifier (though some include the second amp on the same chassis). Newest on the scene are image-enhancement devices, such as the Carver C-4000 Sonic Holography preamp (test report, January 1980), but while they give you a more realistically three-dimensional stereo image, with greater depth and localization, they create no hall-sound effect as such.

Q. My deck, a Technics RS-M11 Mk. 2, is metal-compatible, though I don't intend to use metal tape for now. A friend has a DBX 122 noise-reduction unit, which increases signal-to-noise ra-

tio by 30 dB and headroom by 10 dB; but in order to maintain wide frequency response, he must record at about -20 VU, peaking at -10 VU. Is there any other unit that reduces noise as much but will allow recording at higher levels?—David Leason, New York, N.Y.

A. It sounds as though you missed our coverage of noise-reduction systems in our August issue. The answer is a qualified no; but the question is why you would want to get still more noise reduction by recording at a higher level. To use your figures (which, basically, we agree with), 30 dB of noise reduction in a 2:1:2 compander system like DBX's presumes a 60-dB dynamic range in the original program content. (If it were more, the noise reduction would be more, too.) With inherent tape noise somewhere around 50 dB below "0 VU" and maximum recorded level at -10 VU, minimum compressed program level would be at -40 VU, some 10 dB above the noise and therefore some 20 dB above it after playback expansion. So total signal-to-noise ratio, from maximum reproduced program level to reproduced tape hiss, would be 80 dB. Your other equipment may well have that much dynamic range, but relatively few listening rooms do.

Q. I own a good turntable, but when I play records, the woofer cones in my speakers start to bounce madly back and forth. This does not happen when I play tapes or FM broadcasts. What causes this, and will it hurt the woofers?—Nephtali Vasquez, Los Angeles, Calif.

A. It sounds as though the low-frequency resonance of your arm/cartridge combination is occurring down in the record-warp region below about 8 Hz. The resonance boosts the warp signals, which your amplifier then dutifully passes on to your speakers, causing excessive cone excursions and wasting amplifier power. Muddy sound is a more likely result than permanent woofer damage. You can cure this problem at the source by using a lower mass tonearm, a lighter cartridge, a pickup of a lower compliance, or some combination of these to raise the resonance frequency into the safe region between 8 and 12 Hz.

Q. My record collection spans twelve years and a succession of turntables, most incorporating inexpensive cartridges. Now I have a B.I.C. 80-Z turntable with an Audio-Technica AT-12Sa cartridge, and most of my records sound like they're being played on a Victrola, with lots of surface noise. Is there anything I can do to get rid of the noise?—Douglas Rowe, Livonia, Mich.

A. The first step is to try cleaning the records. Many fine products are available for this purpose (see "Record Cleaners and the Real World," July 1980). If that fails, and if the noise consists mostly of ticks and pops, a dynamic noise filter such as the SAE-5000 might help. You should arrange for a home trial before buying, however; such units can literally be overwhelmed if there is too much noise. In that case, the only way out is a good high-cut filter (which will lop off some of the music with the noise) or new records—which may not be as bad as it sounds. Remember that you can buy 35 or 40 LPs for the price of a tick-and-pop suppressor. The most capable noise-suppression device we've worked with, from Packburn Electronics, costs a cool \$3,000 or so.

Q. I've bought a few of the new digitally mastered records and have been duly impressed with their bass impact and overall clarity. To me, however, they sound somewhat anti-septic in the treble. Is there some technical tradeoff that makes digital better on the lows and analog better on the highs?—Phil Bucoli, East Orange, N.J.

A. The sound of recordings made at the same time from the same source with a properly adjusted analog recorder plus good noise reduction and with a digital recorder should differ very little if at all. What you are hearing is probably the result of microphone technique and placement, rather than recording technology. Microphones sound quite different from model to model, even when they are of the same basic type and pickup pattern, and just moving a mike a few feet can make a significant audible change. Remember also that, whether by necessary compromise or sloppy cutting and manufacturing, few records sound exactly like their master tapes. **HF**

IS YOUR TAPE
ERASING ITSELF
EVERY TIME
YOU PLAY IT?

If lately your favorite recordings sound like they're gradually unrecording, it could be the tape they're on.

You see the oxide particles on some tapes just aren't bound on very well. And when the oxide particles come off, your music could come off sounding faded and weak.

Maxell, however, has developed a unique binding process that helps stop those oxide particles from taking a hike. We also polish our tape to a mirror finish to reduce friction, the major cause of oxide shedding.

So with Maxell, even if you play a tape over and over, the music won't disappear before your very ears.

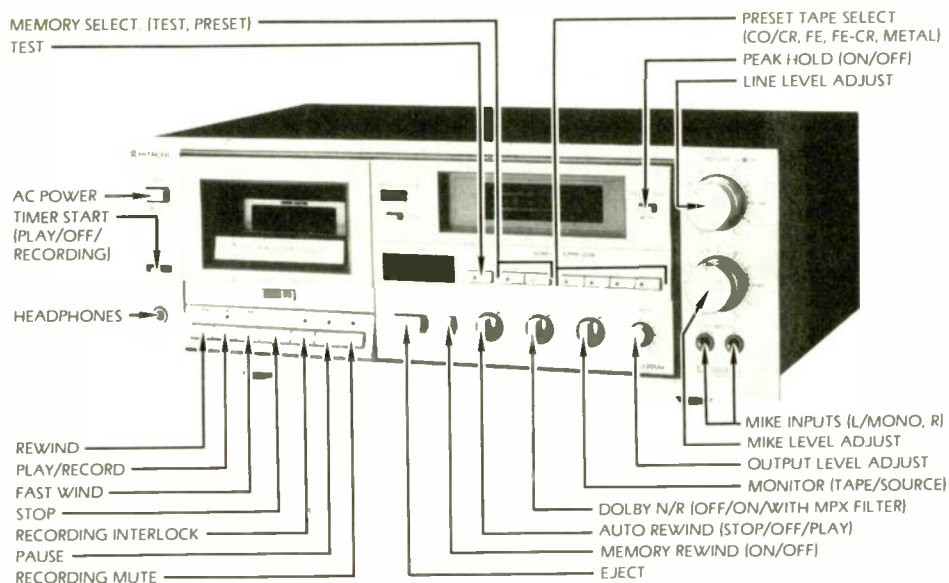


IT'S WORTH IT.

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

New Equipment Reports

Preparation supervised by Robert Long, Peter Dobbin, and Edward J. Foster. Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted) supplied by CBS Technology Center or Diversified Science Laboratories.



Hitachi's Thoroughgoing Tape Adjustment

Hitachi D-3300M cassette deck, in metal enclosure with simulated wood-grain finish. Dimensions: 17 1/4 by 6 inches (front panel), 10 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$700; optional RB-100 remote control, \$40. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Hitachi, Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Hitachi Sales Corp. of America, 401 W. Artesia Blvd., Compton, Calif. 90220.

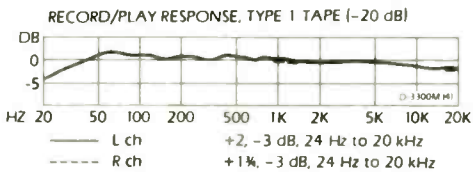
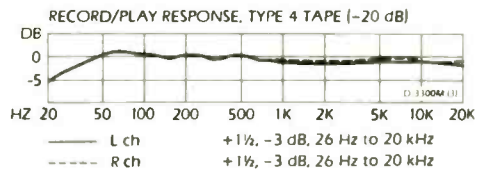
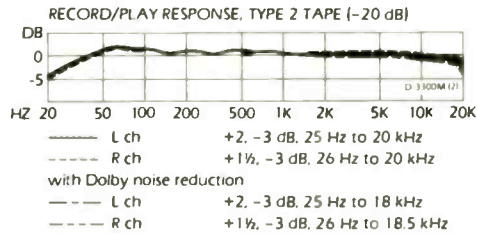
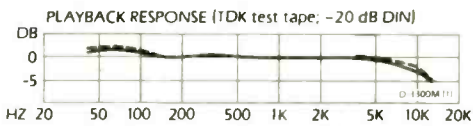
We continue to marvel at self-adjusting decks, though the microprocessor technology that makes them possible is not abstract and, at least at the upper price levels, the inclusion of some sort of automated tape matching is not all that uncommon. When you start recording on the D-3300M and press TEST START, the ATRS (Automatic Tape Response System) panel comes to life: The 1-kHz LED comes on, followed by that for 7 kHz, alternating with that for 15 kHz until the microprocessor is satisfied with the flatness and Dolby calibration of its work. Then the deck stops, and we sit bemused. In the face of so pre-emptive a feature, it's hard to focus on all the others in this very enjoyable deck.

But let's start with the transport itself. As the accompanying data show, speed is totally unaffected by line voltage but notably on the slow side. Most decks run a bit fast (improving high-frequency response ever so slightly), and we generally consider anything within $\pm 1\%$ as above reproach for consumer purposes. Thus, a figure of 1.5% slow is surprising. It might even prove a subject of complaint if you were to play on it tapes made on a deck that runs 1.5% fast, or vice versa, because reproduced pitch would then be about a quarter-tone off the mark. (That is, middle C would reproduce about half way between C and either B natural or C sharp, depending on which machine was used for recording and which for playback.) This still would not be a major consideration in most consumer applications (remember that, when you record and play on the same machine, pitch remains exact), and the speed behavior of the transport is otherwise excellent. Notice, in particular, the wow figures; those for record/play are lower than those for playback, meaning that there is less wow in the deck than in the test tape, and are in the champion class—never bettered and seldom equaled since we began using the ANSI measurement spec two years ago. The credit presumably is due to Hitachi's brushless, coreless, slotless capstan-motor design. This, we think, is more important than absolute speed.

There are some nice twists to the transport controls, whose "logic"

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Hitachi D-3300M cassette deck



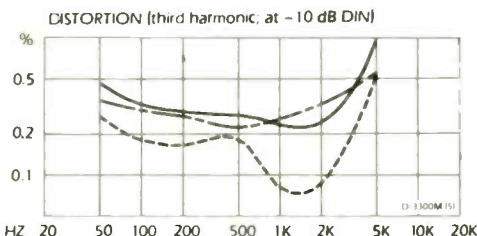
S/N RATIO (re DIN 0 dB, A-weighted)

	Type 2	Type 4	Type 1
record/play without noise reduction	56 dB	56 dB	54½ dB
Dolby record/play	64¼ dB	63¼ dB	63 dB

METER READING FOR DIN 0 DB +2 dB

METER READING FOR 3% DISTORTION (at 333 Hz)

Type 2 tape	+2 dB
Type 4 tape	+5 dB
Type 1 tape	+5 dB



ERASURE (333 Hz; re DIN 0 dB)

Type 2 tape	74¼ dB
Type 4 tape	64 dB

CHANNEL SEPARATION 31¼ dB

SPEED ACCURACY 1.5% slow, 105 to 127 VAC

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)

	average	maximum
playback	± 0.05%	± 0.06%
record/play	± 0.03%	± 0.04%

permits ad lib hopping from one function to another without passing through STOP or collecting damaged tapes. If you simultaneously press the recording interlock and the PAUSE, the PLAY button automatically lights as well; you are ready to go when you release the PAUSE (which actually requires you to press PLAY in this deck). Unfortunately, the tiny LEDs that indicate current operation mode are omitted from the fast-wind buttons; since it's relatively difficult to see what's going on in the cassette compartment, we found ourselves squinting at the deck trying to determine whether a fast-wind mode had begun or ended. On the other side of the ledger, the PAUSE makes exceptionally transient-free "edits" on the tape—no pops, no ticks, no burbles, so to speak—and leaves only a tiny (approximately ¼ second) hiatus in any sound continuing through the pause.

The metering scheme is pleasant, though it, too, struck us as a good idea that could have been better. The pattern is clear and the calibration adequate, extending from -20 to +8 dB with 1-dB increments between -3 and +3 dB. And Hitachi gives you a choice of peak or peak-hold modes, with quick response and no overshoot. But the peak hold does not decay after a few seconds to let you know what range the sound has got into in the meantime (an arguable benefit since it will "remember" a maximum even if you're out of the room). And it doesn't operate at all below -1 dB, meaning that, if you don't have the level set near the correct spot to begin with, the peak hold won't help you get it better.

Passing over the many other well-recognized features cataloged in the picture, that brings us back to the pièce de résistance: the automatic tape matching. As the presence of three test frequencies should suggest, it does considerably more than most user-adjusted bias/sensitivity controls. You begin the process by choosing one of four tape groups (corresponding to our Types 1-4), which determines the microprocessor's starting point and methodology. If, for any reason (for example, because you've pressed the wrong tape-type button), the microprocessor can't successfully complete its adjustments, it will stop the transport and flash the TEST button's LED to signal the error. But if all goes well, the microprocessor adjusts for tape sensitivity (to the nearest ¼ dB), determines bias response, and sets bias from it according to a formula for the tape type, then goes for flattest response by trimming recording equalization in two bands. The methodology is a close approximation of what a technician would do on the test bench and makes most user controls seem unconscionably crude by comparison.

The results, as you might expect, were excellent replication, using the monitor switch to A/B playback with source, on any branded tape we threw at the deck. On the Diversified Science Laboratories test bench, the microprocessor seemed to have some doubt about how to set the deck for metal tapes, but we consistently got excellent results with them in listening tests. All this makes it relatively unimportant which brands are used for measurements. We weren't surprised that Hitachi suggested tapes from its Maxell subsidiary: UDXL-I for the Type 1 ferric, UDXL-II for the Type 2 ferricobalt, and MX for the Type 4 metal. Actually, Hitachi offers its own branded product in all three categories and adopts its own nomenclature, which is similar but not identical (Hitachi's UD-EX appears to be interchangeable with Maxell's UDXL-II, for example), on the faceplate. And the manual, which is otherwise distinctly above average and appears to be produced expressly for the U.S. market, compounds the difficulty by using the Maxell nomenclature as it existed (before the recent introduction of XL-IS and XL-IIS) in Japan. These contributions to confusion are both reprehensible and unnecessary; Hitachi doubtless has its own reasons for visiting them on its customers, but the habit is unending.

The deck itself, however, is generally very endearing. For example, when you have run a tape through the test procedure, you then have the option of either using the resulting settings just for that tape or of putting them into the permanent memory for that particular tape type. (Incidentally, there is even a silver oxide battery to retain the memory when the power cord is disconnected and a front-panel LED to tell you when the battery needs replacement.) So you can record optimally on an "oddball" formulation that doesn't match the memorized information and do so without disturbing that information. Very neat.

Our overview of the D-3300M sees it as a beautifully conceived deck in most respects, with a few small but maddening exceptions. The extreme right end of the front panel sums up what we mean. It holds two mike inputs; if you use the left

SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB, 333 Hz)	
line input	90 mV
mike input	0.69 mV
MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping)	
	60 mV
MAX. OUTPUT (from DIN 0 dB)	
	0.83 V

one only, you automatically get mono. Bravo! Then come the mike and line recording level controls, each with separate elements for the two channels, for excellent flexibility in setting, mixing, and balancing levels. Again, bravo! Yet these controls have no connection whatever between their left and right elements. That makes it very easy to correct channel balances, but also very easy to get them wrong and almost impossible to execute synchronous level changes (fades) in both channels without intense concentration.

Circle 132 on Reader-Service Card

A Quick Guide to Tape Types

Our classifications, Types 0 through 4, are based largely on those embodied in the measurement standards now in the process of ratification by the International Electrotechnical Commission. The higher the type number, the higher the tape price generally is in any given brand. Similarly, the higher type numbers imply superior performance, though—depending in part on the deck in which the tape is used—they do not guarantee it.

Type 0 tapes represent "ground zero" in that they follow the original Philips-based DIN spec. They are ferric tapes, called LN (low-noise) by some

manufacturers, requiring minimum (nominal 100%) bias and the original, "standard" 120-microsecond playback equalization. Though they include the "garden variety" formulations, the best are capable of excellent performance at moderate cost in decks that are well matched to them.

Type 1 (IEC Type I) tapes are ferrics requiring the same 120-microsecond playback EQ but somewhat higher bias. They sometimes are styled LH (low-noise, high output) formulations or "premium ferrics."

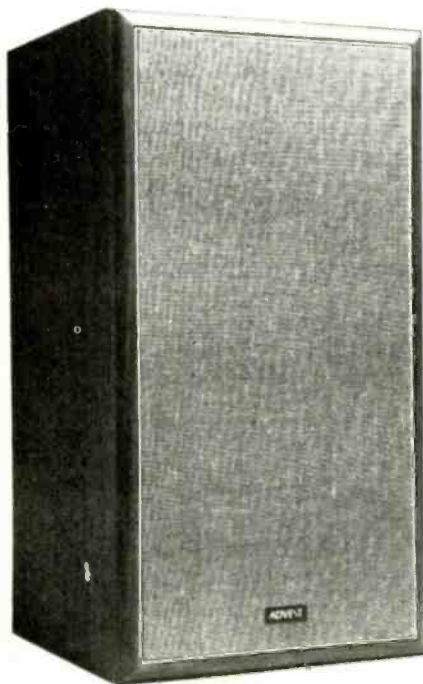
Type 2 (IEC Type II) tapes are intended for use with 70-microsecond

playback EQ and higher recording bias still (nominal 150%). The first formulations of this sort used chromium dioxide; today they also include chrome-compatible coatings such as the ferricobalts.

Type 3 (IEC Type III) tapes are dual-layered ferrichromes, implying the 70-microsecond ("chrome") playback EQ. Approaches to their biasing and recording EQ vary somewhat from one deck manufacturer to another.

Type 4 (IEC Type IV) are the metal-particle, or "alloy" tapes, requiring the highest bias of all and retaining the 70-microsecond EQ of Type 2.

An Advent for the '80s



Advent 5002 loudspeaker system, in wood cabinet with vinyl finish. Dimensions: 14¼ by 26 inches (front), 11½ inches deep. Price: \$200. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Advent Corp., 195 Albany St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

For ten years, The Advent Loudspeaker—even after it had acquired companions like The Smaller Advent Loudspeaker—was the one to beat. Though its price inched slowly upward from the original \$112, thousands of budget-conscious audiophiles saw it as a rare combination of low price and high performance. The speaker market today, however, is considerably more active and a good deal more sophisticated than it was in 1970, and there are lots of fine bookshelf loudspeakers whose sound makes the venerable Advent seem a bit old-fashioned. No doubt responding to this, Advent has redesigned and assigned model numbers to each of the four units in its line, with the 5002 occupying the spot once held by the original ("Larger") model.

At first glance, the 5002 seems identical to the older model. The relatively tall enclosure, beveled front edges, and characteristic knitted grille remain. Also held over is the "classic Advent woofer," a 7½-inch driver with a long-throw voice coil, but joined here by a redesigned parabolic domed tweeter and a new crossover network that includes a novel tweeter level control. Mounted in the recess above the screwdown binding posts on the rear of the enclosure is a two-position toggle switch marked BACKGROUND/NORMAL. According to Advent, the BACKGROUND setting is suitable for music listening "when conversation is the focus." In tests at CBS Technology Center, the cocktail party switch (as one staff member dubbed it) resulted in a shallow response dip in the presence range from 500 Hz to 4 kHz. This does, indeed, make the music less obtrusive, though we found that a lower volume setting is a far more efficacious way of achieving such an objective.

Put through its paces at CBS, the 5002 easily withstood the 20-dBW (100 watt) continuous-tone test and held up to 33¼-dBW (2,400 watt) pulses before exceeding distortion limits. The impedance curve is remarkably well



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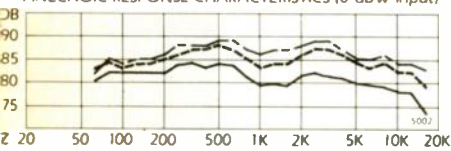


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Advent 5002 loudspeaker

ANECHOIC RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS (0-dBW input)



..... boundary-dependent region
 — average omnidirectional response
 - - - - average front hemispheric response
 - · - · on-axis response

AVERAGE OMNIDIRECTIONAL OUTPUT
(250 Hz to 6 kHz)

81% dB SPL for 0 dBW (1 watt) input

CONTINUOUS ON-AXIS OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)

108 dB SPL for 20 dBW (100 watts) input

PULSED OUTPUT (at 300 Hz)

121% dB SPL for 33% dBW (2,400 watts) peak

"NOMINAL" IMPEDANCE

5.5 ohms

APPROX. TWEETER CONTROL RANGE (re "flat")

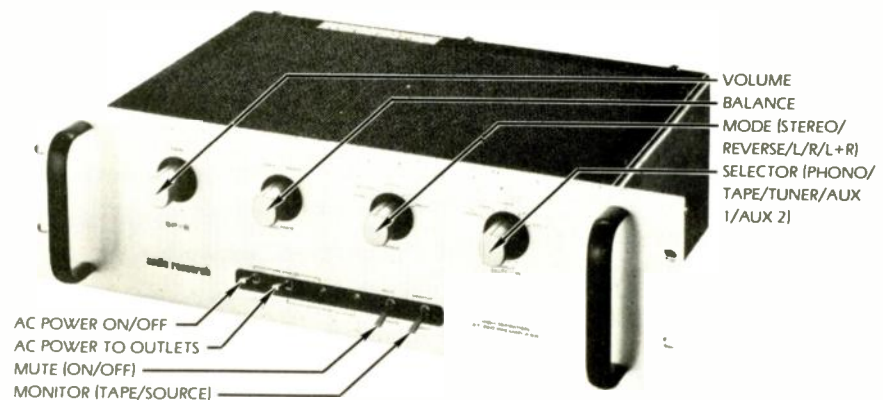
-2 dB, 1-3 kHz

controlled, rising from the nominal 5.5 ohms at 120 Hz to 20 ohms at 1,200 Hz, with values never dipping below 7½ ohms from there up to 20 kHz. Considering the overall nontaxing impedance values and moderate efficiency of the system, the 5002 should present an easy load for just about any power amp.

At moderate sound pressure levels, both second and third harmonic distortion products remain quite low, averaging well below ½% from 100 Hz to the 10-kHz test limit. At loud levels (100 dB SPL), the redesigned tweeter shows its stuff, keeping second and third harmonic distortion well below ½% over its range. The woofer/midrange driver, however, is not so sanguine about loud playing levels, with second harmonics rising to about 2½% from 150 to 400 Hz and third harmonics reaching about 1% in the same range. The scope trace shows almost perfect handling of the high- and low-frequency pulses, marred only by a very slight wrinkle in the 3-kHz pulse to connote possible cabinet reflections.

In listening tests, all the auditioners commented first on the uncanny imaging. When reproducing well-miked recordings, the 5002s present a marvelously detailed re-creation of the original sound stage with an unusual amount of depth. Overall tonal balance was likewise judged excellent; bass is strong but not heavy, and the redesigned Direct Report tweeter handles difficult high-frequency percussives with beguiling ease. The tweeter can be a bit aggressive, though what was judged a touch of steeliness on string tone was easily tempered by a slight treble cut at the preamp. Auditioners were of mixed opinion as to some midrange effects. The warmth and presence that some heard on vocals sounded slightly hollow to others.

Considered in toto, the 5002 is a fine effort. Though its price is roughly double that of the original Advent, it is a bargain in the loudspeaker market by today's standards. In the conclusion to our test report on the original (May 1970), we wrote that "it should enjoy a well-deserved popularity among a large spectrum of listeners." We expect nothing less for the 5002.



AC POWER ON/OFF
 AC POWER TO OUTLETS
 MUTE (ON/OFF)
 MONITOR (TAPE/SOURCE)

VOLUME
 BALANCE
 MODE (STEREO/
 REVERSE/L/R/L+R)
 SELECTOR (PHONO/
 TAPE/TUNER/AUX
 1/AUX 2)

Audio Research's Classic Tubed Preamp

Audio Research SP-6 preamplifier

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING 10.5 volts

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD, 20 Hz to 20 kHz)

aux input ≤ 0.026%

phono input ≤ 0.028%

Audio Research SP-6B preamplifier, in rack-mountable metal case. Dimensions: 19 by 5¼ inches (front panel), 10¼ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlets: three switched, one unswitched (1,600 watts max. total). Price: \$1,500. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor, except 90 days on tubes. Manufacturer: Audio Research Corp., 6801 Shingle Creek Parkway, Minneapolis, Minn. 55430.

It's difficult to discuss tubed circuitry without becoming partisan, so beset with opinion, both pro and con, is the subject. If HF has traditionally taken the view that the results, rather than the means, are what matter, it's more a question of sanity than of impartiality. Suffice it to say that the SP-6B, which employs vacuum tubes in the signal stages, is a superb preamp—even a classic of its type.

To the audiophile used to solid-state gear, in particular, a number of features may stand out as unusual. When you turn on the preamplifier, the muting is designed to prevent any output for a full two-minute warmup period. That may seem interminable if you're used to a few seconds at most, but even much transistor



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MGA/MITSUBISHI
 MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC SALES AMERICA, INC. 3010 E. Victoria St., Compton, Ca. 90221



Shown here with optional CX-10 Cabinet and SX-10 Loudspeakers

FREQUENCY RESPONSE	+0, -½ dB, 10 Hz to 52 kHz; -3 dB at 181 kHz	
RIAA EQUALIZATION	+½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz; -½ dB at 5 Hz	
INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (IHF loading; A-weighting)	sensitivity S/N ratio	
aux	30.5 mV	78 dB
phono	0.48 mV	73½ dB
PHONO OVERLOAD (1-kHz clipping)	550 mV	
PHONO IMPEDANCE	50.6k ohms; ca. 60 pF	

equipment doesn't really settle down to fully stabilized operation for, say, a half-hour or so. The manual muting feature, a switch that kills all output, is nice for preventing nasty transients when you're changing pickups but startling if you're used to the usual 20-dB attenuation. (Perhaps the latter should be called "muffling" instead of "muting.") There's also a front-panel switch for the three switched convenience outlets. The back-panel outlets themselves are the heavy-duty grounded (three-prong) variety; Audio Research suggests that you plug your amp into one and switch it on only after the preamp has fully warmed up. (Automatic output muting occurs when the preamp senses DC conditions, which would represent an abnormal drive signal to the amplifier.) And note that this is one of the few preamps designed to accommodate the switching of behemoth amps with grounding plugs.

If you're one of those listeners who simply won't read manuals, you may wonder what the little back-panel switch marked "60 dB" is for. (You'll find it just after you finish exclaiming about the nonstandard signal jack strip, on which the right channel rather than the left is at the top.) If you remove the plate that prevents inadvertent switching, you'll find that the alternate position is marked "50 dB," and you may figure out that it reduces overall gain to keep the volume control (actually marked GAIN) operating in the normal range even with an amplifier that adds excessive gain for your room and speaker efficiency. (The plate is there because, as the manual warns, you should not flick this switch with the juice on.) The specs work out this way: The phono-section gain is rated at 34 dB; this level, plus the direct feed from the high-level inputs, is delivered to the tape-recording output; from that stage via the VOLUME to the main output is rated for another 26 dB (or 60 dB from the phono input) with the VOLUME wide open and this switch in its normal position. Switching it reduces the gain of this final section by 10 dB.

One other rather uncommon feature harks back to earlier equipment: the dual tape inputs with one set evidently intended for playback only. One pair, marked TAPE, feeds directly to the corresponding selector position. You could use them for the playback side of a deck connected to the recording outputs, but then you would have no way of monitoring signal quality, even with a "three-head" deck, because switching to TAPE would disconnect your previous source feed. The logical hookup for this use is what Audio Research calls MONITOR—the tape side of a classic tape/source switch. According to the manual, it is there partly for switching in and out any ancillary equipment, like an equalizer. Unless the outboard unit has its own monitor switching (most do), you would lose that function in your system. We don't want to belabor that point, however; the tape switching options are adequate, though they are markedly less elaborate than the sort of independent two-way dubbing often provided for these days in separate preamps and even some integrateds and receivers.

The listening tests were delightful. That is no subject for surprise; the data disclose no reason for any other reaction. Distortion never exceeds 0.01% (the limit to which we will chase today's vanishingly small steady-state distortion) by much; when it exceeds it at all, it is at frequencies of 10 kHz or above, where the harmonic distortion products are all at 20 kHz and above. Not incidentally, Diversified Science Laboratories could discern no harmonic other than the "soft" second (the least objectionable of all, given equal percentages). If you have a fussy phono pickup that alters sound depending on capacitive loading, the SP-6B allows circuit-board modification to suit. The approximately 60 picofarads that DSL measured is negligible; it's essentially a question of adding a capacitor whose value matches the pickup manufacturer's spec.

But good as it is, we are not so naive as to suppose that audible quality alone will make or break this preamp in the marketplace. The feelings about tubes vs. transistors harbored by owners, would-be owners, uncommitted shoppers, and the pontificators they meet along the sidelines have a powerful influence. To urge (as we often do) that you shop for the features—switching, and so on—that will best integrate with your system, your needs, and your habits would be idle here. The SP-6B is a classic: superb in sound, unconventionally yet well conceived, solidly put together. Those are not statements we would be willing to make of all tubed preamps, high though their reputation as a class may be in some circles. But, as always, the ultimate decision is yours.

Yamaha's Elegant Headset



Yamaha Model YH-100 dynamic headset, with 8-foot straight cord. Price: \$95. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Nippon Gakki Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Yamaha International Corp., P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, Calif. 90622.

The appeal of the YH-100 headset is immediate: its charcoal gray and black earpieces, suede inner headband, and black spring-steel outer bands make it as elegant-looking as headphones can probably ever get. Yet here is an example of form and function blending synergistically. The wide inner headband distributes the almost 12 ounces of weight smoothly and evenly across the head, reducing the headset's apparent bulk. The outer steel bands, adjustable via side-mounted sliders, provide the necessary force for firm contact between your ears and the earpieces, which are mounted with ball-and-socket joints so that they swivel easily and naturally to accommodate the curvature of your head.

The YH-100 employs what Yamaha calls orthodynamic drivers, with an aluminum voice-coil photo etched on a thin polyester diaphragm. The benefits of such a drive system are said to be fast and uniform diaphragm motion for low distortion and good transient reproduction. The ear pads measure 3 inches in diameter—wide enough to cover the ear completely to form an acoustic seal that provides a degree of isolation from ambient sounds. The unit is rated by Yamaha at a highly efficient 98 dB SPL for a 1-milliwatt (-30 dBW) input, yet it is claimed to tolerate as much as 10 watts (+10 dBW) of continuous input.

Testing the headphones with a variety of musical material, we were struck first by the depth and power of the bass response. The large ear pads and firm pressure exerted by the steel bands provide enough acoustic coupling to trap bass information, making the beat of a kettledrum or the deepest organ note a startling experience. The Yamaha's ability to reproduce complex musical passages is excellent as well. Massed strings, woodwinds, and brass come through in fine style. Especially noteworthy is the headset's handling of quick, high-pitched tones; the plucking of a classical guitar and the soft brushings of a cymbal are reproduced with delightful ease.

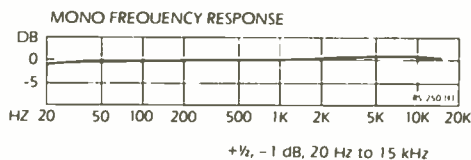
There is some coloration to the tone of the YH-100, most noticeably in voices. Auditioners described it as warm and mellow, however, and none regarded it as negative. Also, in comparison to open-air designs, there is the usual but decidedly unnatural sensation of the orchestra being inside your head—in our experience a tradeoff necessary for the deep bass response afforded by the unit's quasi-seal. Moreover, the isolation afforded by such headsets broadens their applicability to monitoring functions during live recording sessions.

The YH-100, though hardly lightweight, has been designed for comfort, and we found it one of the least fatiguing of comparably massive designs. Its subjective tone, though a bit colored, is satisfying and rich. If extended frequency response, some acoustic isolation, comfort, and beautiful design are desiderata in your choice of headset, the YH-100 definitely warrants an audition.

Circle 131 on Reader-Service Card

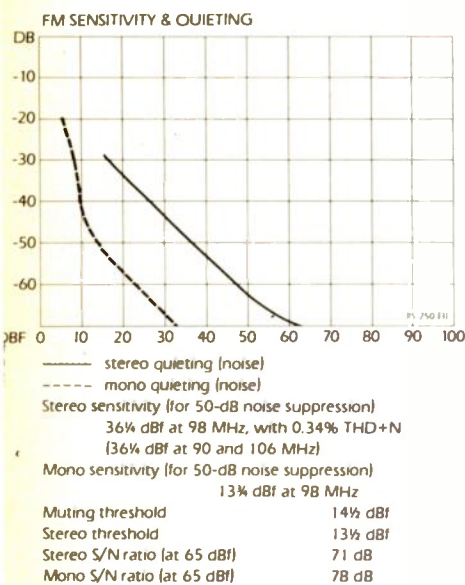
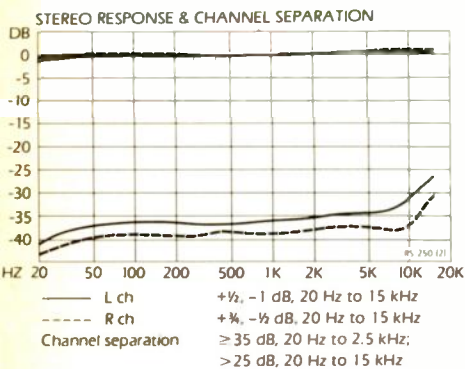
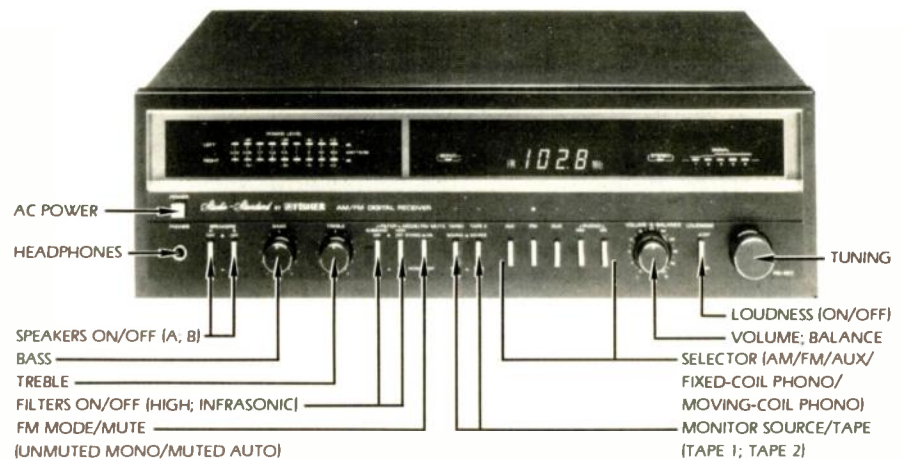
A Fisher "Digital" Receiver

Fisher RS-250 tuner section



Fisher RS-250 AM/FM receiver, in metal case. Dimensions: 17¼ by 5¼ inches (front panel), 14 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. AC convenience outlets: one switched (60 watts max.), one unswitched (120 watts max.). Price: \$430. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: made in Japan for Fisher Corp., 21314 Lassen St., Chatsworth, Calif. 91311.

A newcomer to componentry, viewing this receiver without predisposition or prejudice, might find it capable, sensibly designed, and not particularly distinctive in any material respect: very much in the mainstream of today's receivers, in fact. We begin with this statement because more experienced eyes—including some on our staff—look for some trace of the "old" Fisher whenever they hear the name. They won't find any here, nor should they expect to; to judge the products of Fisher Corporation by the standards of Fisher Radio (and therefore of its founder and president, Avery Fisher) is unfair to both. Circuits, markets, production economics, and life styles have changed, and the Fisher name along with them. At the same time, the RS-250 vividly documents Fisher's liveliness, it has not been consigned to that mid-fi graveyard in which lie so many once-great audio names.



CAPTURE RATIO	1 dB
ALTERNATE-CHANNEL SELECTIVITY	58 dB
HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD+N)	
	stereo mono
at 100 Hz	0.14% 0.14%
at 1 kHz	0.11% 0.10%
at 6 kHz	0.23% 0.16%
STEREO PILOT INTERMODULATION	0.086%
IM DISTORTION (mono)	0.063%
AM SUPPRESSION	64 dB
PILOT (19 kHz) SUPPRESSION	70½ dB
SUBCARRIER (38 kHz) SUPPRESSION	> 85 dB

Take, for example, the digital frequency display. In Fisher Radio's last days there were a few ultra-expensive "digital tuners"; today's microtechnology puts them only a chip away and—together with the RS-250's LED signal-strength display—makes them too cost-effective to be ignored in a competitive market. The Fisher design includes only these two elements plus pilots for stereo reception and servo lock on the station: There is no analog tuning scale or multipath indicator or channel-center display. This last would make no sense in any event, because the servo keeps the station centered and cannot be defeated for manual second-guessing. As a result, tuning "clings" to any station it is locked to; if you turn the tuning knob (and hence the main tuning capacitors) with a gentle enough hand, the servo will follow you, compensating for the basic mistuning, for 0.5 megahertz or more—that is, better than two channels away. Throughout the process, the digital display, as well as the sound, will confirm that the station remains locked in, despite the movement of the tuning knob. And, predictably with such a design, the actual FM performance is very good indeed.

The design is otherwise quite straightforward. There is provision for two tape decks (and Tape 1 can avail itself of either standard pin jacks or a DIN socket) but without dubbing switching; you must reconnect one deck to copy tapes. The tone controls do not influence response at all at their detented center positions. At other settings, they shelve toward the frequency extremes, with maximum actions of about +15 to -12 dB. The infrasonic filter is quite efficient; the high filter has a gentle slope and relatively low hinge frequency, dulling musical sparkle along with any hiss. The loudness action provides some compensation in the extreme highs as well as a broad bass boost relative to 1-kHz response. The volume control detents deliver increments of about 1-2 dB over most of the control range, only exceeding 3 dB at more than 50 dB of attenuation, and thus are more consistent and fine-grained than might be expected in this price range.

The measurements from Diversified Science Laboratories demonstrate a consistent excellence of technical performance, in fact. The dynamic headroom is unusually generous and means that, with 8-ohm loads, the amplifier will handle music transients to the equivalent of 85 watts per channel. Distortion not only is

Fisher RS-250 amplifier section

RATED POWER	17 dBW (50 watts)/channel	FREQUENCY RESPONSE	+0, -¼ dB, < 10 Hz to 20.8 kHz; -3 dB at 66.4 kHz
OUTPUT AT CLIPPING		RIAA EQUALIZATION	± ¼ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz; -2% dB at 5 Hz
8-ohm load	18½ dBW (67 watts)/channel	INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW, A-weighting)	
4-ohm load	19 dBW (79 watts)/channel	aux	sensitivity 19.5 mV S/N ratio 82 dB
16-ohm load	16½ dBW (45 watts)/channel	fixed-coil phono	0.36 mV 77 dB
DYNAMIC HEADROOM (8 ohms)	2½ dB	moving-coil phono	9.1 µV 80½ dB
HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD, 20 Hz to 20 kHz)			
at 17 dBW (50 watts)	< 0.017%		
at 0 dBW (1 watt)	< 0.01%		

The logic behind the Revox B77.

The logic is the logic which is built-in.

It's an ingenious and highly sophisticated system — much like the human nervous system — which controls the deck's functions.

You can push any button in any order with no chance of damaging your tapes. Our motion sensing system constantly feeds status reports to the logic circuitry which activates your commands in proper sequence.

The logic also permits full-function remote control, and an editing mode that keeps the playback circuitry live, even when the motors are stopped. You can make your splices right on-the-beat, and our built-in splicing block makes it easy.

The design and construction of the Revox B77 further guarantee smooth and accurate operation. To get the

long-life advantage of ferrite without static build-up or heat degradation, we use Revox's exclusive Revodur heads, made of metal to dispel heat and static, and vacuum-coated with permalloy for durability.

The B77 has a unique capstan motor that's monitored by a tacho head to precisely control speed and limit wow and flutter to professional studio standards.

Revox offers many options with the B77 including a full range of speed configurations from 15/16 IPS to 15 IPS, variable speed control, ¼ track record/playback and more.

All this professional quality is neatly engineered to fit in a deck you can carry. After all, if you own a machine this good, it's logical to take it with you.

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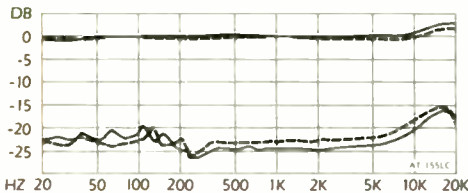
PHONO OVERLOAD (1-kHz clipping)	
fixed coil	260 mV
moving coil	5.8 mV
PHONO IMPEDANCE	
fixed coil	51k ohms, 100 pF
moving coil	20 ohms
DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz)	80
HIGH FILTER	-3 dB at 2.9 kHz, 6 dB/octave
INFRASONIC FILTER	-3 dB at 15 Hz, 12 dB/octave

Top Pickup from Audio-Technica



Audio-Technica AT-155LC phono pickup

FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION
(test records: STR-100 to 40 Hz, STR-170 above)



Frequency response	+3, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
— L ch	+3, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
- - - R ch	+3, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
Channel separation	≥ 22 dB, 150 Hz to 4.5 kHz, ≥ 19 dB, 20 Hz to 9 kHz

SENSITIVITY (at 1 kHz) 1.55 mV/cm/sec

CHANNEL BALANCE (at 1 kHz) ± < ¼ dB

VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE 24½°

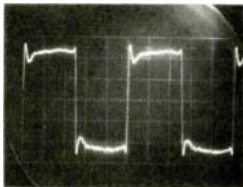
LOW-FREQUENCY RESONANCE (in SME 3009 arm)
vertical 8.0 Hz, 3 dB rise
lateral 6.8 Hz, 3½ dB rise

MAXIMUM TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU, 1.3 grams)
at 300 Hz > +18 dB
at 1 kHz +15 dB

WEIGHT 8.2 grams

TIP DIMENSIONS
tip radii 9.5 by 16.5 micrometers
scanning radii 8.4 micrometers

SQUARE-WAVE
RESPONSE (1 kHz)



very low, but consists of no significant harmonics beyond the relatively benign second. Though the resistive loading from fixed-coil phono pickups is a hair above the normally specified 47,000 ohms, the difference is not large and the "classic" nature of the loading—with clear-cut capacitive and resistive values—helps prevent unpleasant surprises even with a "fussy" cartridge.

Unfortunately, for both Fisher and its competitors, even a receiver this good is not really out of the ordinary these days. That is, we can cite no pre-emptive reason either for buying or for not buying the RS-250. There are minor differences, to be sure; but the plateau on which receiver design finds itself is both elevated and relatively featureless. If the latter characterization sounds boring, just remind yourself that you're the beneficiary of the former.

Circle 134 on Reader-Service Card

Audio-Technica AT-155LC fixed-coil phono pickup, with multiradial diamond stylus. Price: \$225; ATN-155LC replacement stylus, \$100. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor, excluding stylus wear. Manufacturer: Audio-Technica, Japan; U.S. distributor: Audio-Technica U.S., Inc., 1221 Commerce Dr., Stow, Ohio 44224.

The AT-155LC could well be termed the top model in Audio-Technica's "regular" line of five pickups. One model is claimed to overreach it in performance, but more cost-effective production techniques are said to make the 155LC a close runner-up. A fixed-coil design, the pickup employs dual miniature magnets attached directly at the rear of a pure beryllium cantilever. The generating system mates pole pieces to the yoke assembly—what Audio-Technica calls a "para-toroidal" design—to keep magnetic losses to a minimum and efficiency high. Other features include a permalloy center shield between the left- and right-channel coil assemblies to suppress electrical crosstalk and a nude-mounted multiradial stylus for maximum groove contact with minimum tip mass.

On the test bench at CBS Technology Center, the 155LC performed with lots of style. It tracked the CBS "torture test" at 0.8 gram, the lower limit of Audio-Technica's recommended vertical tracking force range. For the remainder of the tests, however, VTF was reset to the mean of that range, 1.3 grams. Sensitivity is a generous 1.55 millivolts, with a difference of less than ¼ dB between channels.

At greater than 22 dB, separation through the critical midrange and lower treble regions is quite adequate. With the cartridge mounted in our "standard" SME arm, low-frequency resonance is fairly well damped and sufficiently removed from the warp-frequency area. It should be removed still further if you use an arm with lower effective mass.

Tracking ability is superb; in the low-frequency test, the pickup traced the highest velocities available on the CBS test record. Square-wave response shows very fast rise time. (The ringing evident in the photo derives from the cutterhead used to make the test record rather than the pickup.) Microscopic examination of the stylus revealed excellent polish and, most critical with a multiradial tip, equally fine alignment. Vertical tracking angle comes in a bit high but well within the range we've found with other top-notch cartridges.

Frequency response is just about ruler flat from 20 Hz to 10 kHz, but from there to 20 kHz, response in both channels starts to climb. A rising high end is something we're accustomed to seeing in underdamped moving-coil pickups, and in listening tests some auditioners commented that the 155LC has some of the typical moving-coil sound. All auditioners remarked on its excellent detailing; the most complex of musical passages were effortlessly reproduced. Likewise, deep bass notes, voices, and woodwinds emerged with high marks. Brass and high strings, however, did not escape without a bit of added brightness, which some auditioners described as a steely quality, while others heard it simply as extra "zing." It's still, at least in part, a question of taste.

Circle 135 on Reader-Service Card

Circle 14 on Reader-Service Card ▶

NEW HIGHS. The 5001D defines hard-to-get high frequencies because it comes with a cantilever that doesn't easily distort them.

It's boron-vapor hardened to track under "G"-forces that would buckle ordinary cantilevers.

NEW FIDELITY. In addition to hearing more highs you're going to hear less noise from a 5001D.

There's nothing complex about the benefits of Samarium-Cobalt magnets. They are simply less massive and higher in output than conventional ones.

So, if we had to give a reason for our signal-to-noise ratio being better than most, it's because the materials we use are better than most.

NEW TECHNOLOGY. Because the 5001D features Empire's inertially damped tuned stylus system, its performance is consistent—even when the capacitance varies from one system to the next.

Which means, the performance we monitor in our lab is the performance you're likely to hear at home.



NEW SECURITY. Empire's two-year limited warranty is 365 days longer than the one-year limited warranty offered by many other manufacturers.

An extra year in no uncertain terms.

NEW SOUND. The Empire 5001D. You're an arm's length away from a new listening experience.

EVERYONE WHO WANTS THEIR OLD SYSTEM TO SOUND LIKE NEW, RAISE YOUR ARM.



EMPIRE

There's a new sound
waiting in your system.



AUTOPHILE

It's Mailbag Time Again

by Robert Angus

It's time to tackle your auto sound questions. Though I welcome hearing from you, the volume of mail is just too large for me to respond individually. Still, if I missed your question this time, chances are good that I'll get to it in another issue.

Q. During the last year, record companies have cut back sharply on eight-track cartridge recordings, concentrating instead on cassettes. Is there any way I can convert the eight-track player in my car so that I can play the more readily available cassettes?—Stan Hynes, Brooklyn, N.Y.

A. Accessories companies stopped making converters—cartridge-shaped devices with their own playback head and a slot for insertion of a cassette—almost ten years ago. The converters never worked very well, and today they collect dust in radio parts stores. In their heyday, the going price was about \$30; if you can find one today, don't pay more than \$8.00. Better yet, save time and energy and junk your eight-track deck in favor of a good cassette system. You'll notice an immediate and dramatic improvement in sound quality.

Q. I'm planning to install a new system in my two-year-old car, and my dealer doesn't want to give me much for my old gear. Is there a market for used car stereo equipment?—M. Wald, Cranston, R.I.

A. Yes, but you may be disappointed at how little your used system is worth. You'll get the best price if you sell it privately, through a classified ad in the local newspaper or shopping guide. You can ask a higher price if you sell before you remove it from the car; the prospective buyer can hear it in action, and components usually look more at-

tractive installed than sitting on a shelf in your garage. Auto sound equipment that came with new American cars a few years back is not in much demand, which means that you'll be lucky to realize 10% of what you paid for it. Car components, particularly those with audiophile specs, maintain their value much better; a one-year-old, 20-watt receiver, for example, may bring as much as 70% of what you paid for it.

Q. Last year I bought a metal-ready cassette deck for my home system, and I have been making metal recordings of my direct-cut discs. But my car stereo unit isn't equipped for metal tape, and I've been afraid to play these tapes on it because I heard they could damage the softer heads in older car decks. Is that true, or are they safe to use?—Bill Hutton, Nashville, Tenn.

A. Not only will your car deck reproduce metal tapes without damage to either tape or player, but you'll probably love the quality of sound produced. Most car interiors soak up high frequencies like sponges, and the extra treble boost that results when a metal tape is played back with the incorrect 120-microsecond equalization common to most car decks will be welcome, indeed. And stop worrying about wearing out the playback head; metal-particle tape is no more abrasive than any other kind of tape.

Q. Last summer I left one of my favorite cassettes sitting on the dashboard in the sun. When I came back to the car, the cassette shell was bent out of shape. The tape appears to be undamaged, and I'd hate to lose the recording. Is there any way I can heat the shell and bend it back into proper shape for playing?—Craig Reynolds, Charleston, W.Va.

A. Forget it. Instead, invest a dollar or two in a cassette repair kit. (Radio Shack offers one for \$1.19.) Break open the old shell and carefully remove the tape. Transfer it to the new shell in accordance with the instructions on the package. This procedure is much simpler than trying to repair the old shell, a process that is doomed to failure and likely to result in more serious damage to the tape or your equipment.

Q. I've just bought a new car stereo system, and it sounds beautiful except that I get ignition noise on the AM band. Is there anything I can do to eliminate it?—Jill Clayton, Baton Rouge, La.

A. First, head back to the dealer who installed it. There are several things he may be able to do, ranging from

shifting the leads to installing a noise arrester. In severe cases, the cure may require replacement with a new unit or a different brand. As long as the job is under warranty, let the installer cope with the problem. If you did the job yourself, start by trying to route the antenna lead away from your car's electrical system. Next, consider the installation of a noise suppressor either at the receiver or, for spark plug noise, at the distributor.

Q. I've found that by taking the cassettes I want to play in the car out of their plastic boxes and putting them in the glove compartment, I can carry about 20% more than if I pack boxes and all. A friend, however, claims that it's a dangerous practice. Is he right?—L. Brindle, Boston, Mass.

A. Absolutely! Loose cassettes pick up dust and gunk that not only get inside the deck, but eventually work their way inside the shell, causing jamming. The boxes are handy, cheap tools for keeping your tapes clean. Use them, even if you have to do with less music each time you drive.

Q. I recently bought one of those lightweight stereo cassette portables that you listen to through headphones. Frankly, my tapes sound better through them than through my car speakers. Is there any way I can add a headphone jack to my car system so I can use the headset while driving?—John Holstein, Washington, D.C.

A. There are a few car stereo units that come with headphone jacks, and it's theoretically possible to add a jack to any system. But there are municipalities and states where it's illegal to drive while listening to headphones, and a number of safety experts believe that doing so impairs driver efficiency and alertness. You may indeed get better sound, but on balance, it's not a very good idea.

Q. Do auto insurance policies cover car stereo systems or do I need to buy extra coverage?—Tim Graves, Lenox, Mass.

A. If you have a comprehensive policy, your stereo equipment is probably already covered, provided that the gear is installed permanently in the dashboard or screwed under the dash. If you're in doubt, get out your insurance policy and read it. If you still don't understand it, consult your insurance agent. If your broker can't help you, write the underwriter directly and ask exactly what your coverage is. When he replies, staple the letter to your policy and file it, along with your receipts for the car stereo gear, in a safe place. **HF**

A New Angle in Record Playing

Stylus rake angle joins the pantheon of phonographic parameters.

by the Editors of HIGH FIDELITY

Diagrams by Discwasher, Inc.

We were delighted when CBS Technology Center informed us, early in 1979, that one of its ongoing research projects had resulted in a formerly unattainable accuracy in the assessment of vertical tracking angles for playback styli. (See "Tracking-Angle Error: A New Slant" by James V. White, HF June 1979.) Though much had been written about the distortion introduced into disc playback by incorrect VTA adjustments, the means of measuring—and therefore standardizing—the angle and of correcting any misadjustment had remained elusive. Now, we thought, a new era of perfection in phonographic reproduction is upon us.

It wasn't that simple. Few pickup manufacturers seemed aware of the work done at CBS and elsewhere. Most continued to use a measurement method that the research had discredited. A few were so frank as to admit that, in essence, they "eyeball it" and then go for best sound; if their subjective findings disagree with a lab test, the latter is discreetly ignored. And we consistently

found that, though the VTAs of many quality pickups measured extremely high with the improved CBS technique (a frequency-modulation method, as opposed to the amplitude-intermodulation method that had been used for years), they still sounded dandy. How could they, when theory dictated that we should experience audible—even gross—distortion?

If Jon Risch and his colleagues at Discwasher are correct, at least some of the inconsistencies may be traced to the angle between the stylus' contact patch (or "footprint") and the plane of the record. Dubbed stylus rake angle, the concept has shown up in a few audio journals over the years, but Discwasher's study appears to be the first full-scale exploration of it as an important element in record playback.

To understand the ramifications of this study, it is necessary to digress a bit and retrace the research procedure. Bruce Maier, president and founder of Discwasher, had charged his engineering staff with the task of conducting

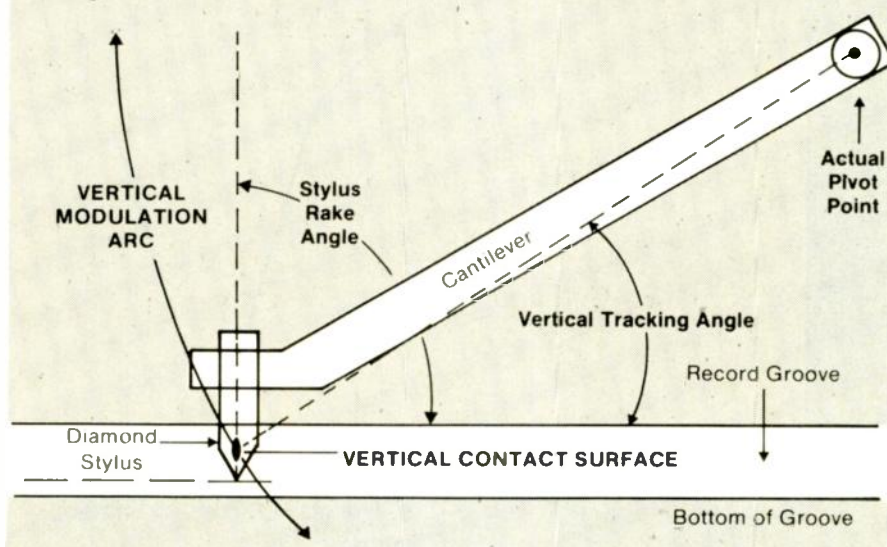
what he termed "an infinite regression analysis" of disc-playback variables. The research group's first requirement therefore, was a reference playback system with all of the known variables as tightly controlled as possible.

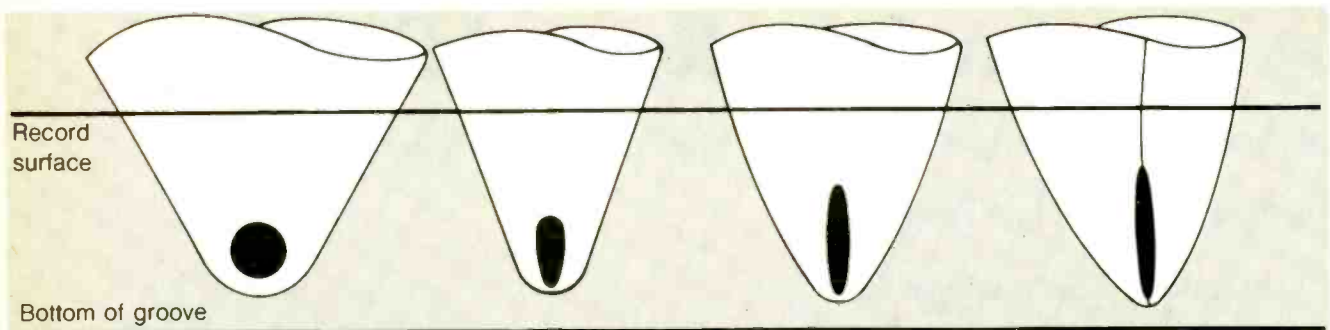
Insuring correct vertical tracking angle was a prime concern, of course. A specially modified tonearm allowed precise adjustment of rear-pivot height—and hence, in theory, vertical tracking angle—during record play. But first attempts to determine correct VTA proved puzzling. As VTA was changed, no clear-cut correlation with distortion developed. Risch's curiosity was piqued, and he sought out a test record designed specifically for VTA adjustments, settling on a disc cut by Telefunken (and distributed in this country by Gotham Audio Corporation in New York) for making measurements according to the DIN specification No. 45,542.

The record contains two sets of IM bands, with each set divided into seven separate bands cut at VTAs ranging from 6 to 30 degrees. One set of bands contains tones at 370 and 630 Hz, which add to an IM product at 1 kHz. The other set has tones of 1.85 and 3.15 kHz, adding to 5 kHz. With a test pickup mounted according to the manufacturer's recommendation, the 1-kHz and 5-kHz tests gave very different results. In theory, both tests should have produced a null in intermodulation when the test cut's VTA matched that of the playback stylus. The 1-kHz test showed such a null at 26 degrees, though the cartridge was specified for a lower VTA; the minimum in the 5-kHz test was much less pronounced and indicated a VTA of 21 degrees.

With such equivocal data, Risch hypothesized that some additional form of high-frequency mistracing was occurring, caused by a less-than-ideal orientation of the stylus' footprint in the groove. Studying typical stylus geometries, he realized that a spherical

Diagram explains the relationship between the vertical tracking angle and the stylus rake angle. Both are shown here in relation to the record surface.





The shape of the "footprint," or bearing surface (shown in black) in which the stylus tip actually contacts the groove wall, is determined by tip geometry. Spherical (far left, representing a 0.7-mil tip) rests on a round area of groove wall; at the other extreme is the Shibata tip (far right, with a 3.0-mil bearing radius), which rests on a tall, narrow area. In between are a typical elliptical (center left, with a bearing radius of 0.7 mil) and what HF calls a multiradial (center right, shown with a bearing radius of about 2.0 mils), though most manufacturers have their own brand designations.

stylus would continue to contact the groove area in the same way over a wide range of vertical angles and therefore be largely immune to vertical alignment problems. Not so with the more expensive elliptical and multiradial styli. Their narrow profiles can present larger contact areas to the groove wall, but these shapes will fit the modulation correctly only if vertical tolerances are strictly maintained.

To test this hypothesis, he compared the distortion generated by essentially identical pickups, one with a spherical and the other a Shibata stylus. The tests confirmed that distortion with the spherical stylus remained relatively consistent between the two sets of test cuts, as it should where VTA alone is involved; inconsistencies in the data with the Shibata tip suggested that rake angle was the prime factor in maintaining lowest possible distortion. For one thing, the data showed distortion at many frequencies—not just the second-order products of VTA misalignment.

The investigation was aided materially when the research group acquired a stylus assembly in which the Shibata tip was misaligned with respect to the cantilever, putting correct stylus rake angle (SRA) and correct VTA about 4 degrees apart. Again, as the system was optimized for SRA—necessarily misadjusting VTA since one can't be changed without altering the other—distortion was minimized, while optimizing the VTA increased the miscellaneous distortion without banishing the second-order products that, in theory, should have been minimized.

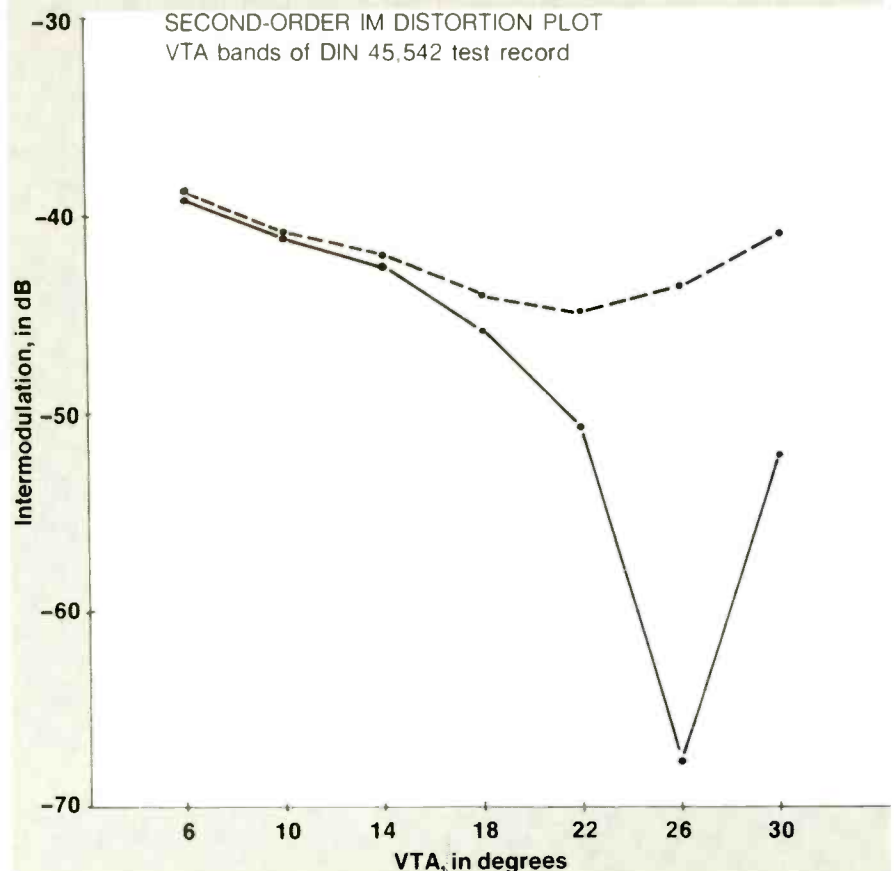
Risch theorizes that the increased distortion arising from incorrect SRA comes as a result of groove modulations

"grabbing" at the edges of the stylus—torquing and twisting it, thereby exciting vibrational modes in the cantilever. The net result, he says, is a perceivable increase in primarily high-frequency distortion and brightness, all the things that sound extremely nasty on a high-quality system.

What is needed, he says, is an ac-

curate reference for both pickup manufacturers and record-mastering engineers, many of whom take pride in shimming their cutterheads to change VTA for "that personal touch." But if the cure remains elusive, the present era of audiophile discs seems uniquely prepared to see the quest to a fruitful conclusion. **HF**

A plot of the VTA measurements made with the intermodulation bands on the DIN 45,542 test record. The solid line connects points measured with the bands that sum to 1 kHz; the dotted line, those that sum to 5 kHz. In theory—and assuming that VTA alone were involved—the two curves should be very similar.



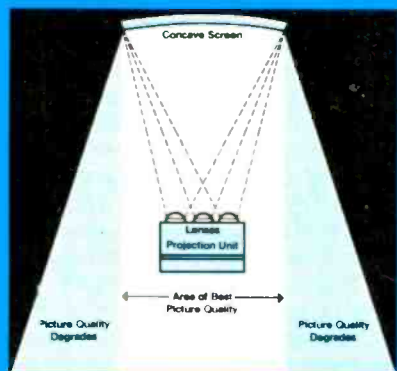
VIDEO TODAY

& TOMORROW

VideoFronts

New "speed viewing" device; laser systems adopt LV symbol; new blank tape lines; and more. Page A2

Projection Television



Owning big-screen TV — pitfalls to avoid. Page A4

Projection Television

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Hands-On Report Akai ActiVideo System

Our editors test this portable VCR/camera pair. Page A7



VideoFile Basic Lighting

A ready reference for simple lighting situations. Page A11



TubeFood

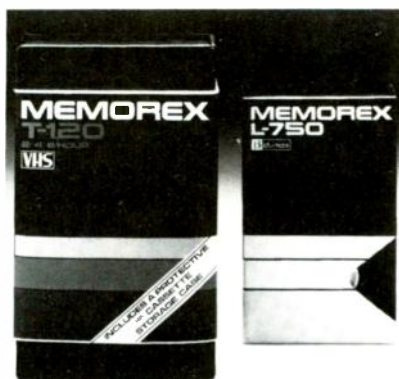
A short report on new video cassettes and video disc releases. Page A15

VideoFronts

Latest Video News and Products

Looking Toward Tomorrow

With this issue, VIDEO TODAY becomes VIDEO TODAY & TOMORROW. Why? Because video evolves at an ever-increasing pace, "tomorrow" has become more and more inseparable from today.



A line of Beta video cassettes and a series of newly formulated VHS cassettes are available from Memorex. The VHS version benefits from a high-density magnetic-particle packing procedure that is said to improve RF (by 4 dB) and chroma output in the 6-hour play mode, where the narrow head gap and tape path often leads to degraded picture and sound quality. The new formulation has little effect on reproduction quality in the standard 2-hour mode. ■ Prices for the Beta cassettes, which come in L-250, L-500, L-750, and L-830 lengths, have not been released; the VHS tapes are tagged \$17 for T-60, \$19 for T-90, and \$25 for T-120. ■ Promised for later this year is a VHS cassette running 2½, 5, or 7½ hours. The longest type sold in the U.S. now is 6 hours.

A new idea in "speed viewing" has been unveiled by VSC (Variable Speech Control) Company. VSC's remote-control device contains what it describes as a linear, bipolar chip coupled with a bucket-brigade circuit from Matsushita to form a "super-chip." It says the unit allows you to operate any VCR between normal



and twice-normal speed and get both a viewable picture and *normal* sound—that is, sound that doesn't suffer from the "Donald Duck effect," such as that often heard when you accidentally play a 33-rpm record at 45 rpm. ■ The practical application? VSC feels that many TV programs and movies can be speeded up without impairing the content. Imagine watching *60 Minutes* in only half an hour!

The New Look of LaserVision

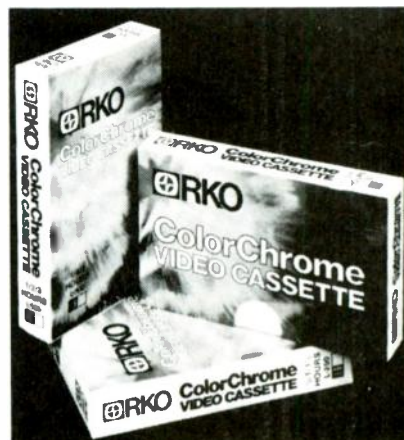
Four companies who have pinned their video disc hopes to the laser-optical star have formed LaserVision Associates to promote their design. Charter members are U.S. Pioneer Electronics Corporation, Magnavox Consumer Electronics Company, DiscoVision Associates, and MCA DiscoVision, Inc., all intimately involved in either laser-optical discs or players. ■ The "LV" logo (shown here) will appear on all laser discs and players "to emphasize the com-



patibility of the products within the system," according to the association. ■ Until now, the laser system has had the video disc market to itself; within weeks, however, RCA is scheduled to offer its noncompatible SelectaVision at more than 6,000 dealerships.



A switcher for multiple video sources comes from Rhoades National Corporation. The SW-5X1 (\$50) accepts up to five sources—such as VCR, video game, home computer, pay TV, roof antenna, video disc player, or cable TV—and, via low-loss, high-isolation switching, selects one for viewing on your TV screen. Inputs are load-compensated, meaning that inactive inputs are switched into 75-ohm loads to maintain the correct loads on all your video components. ■ The switcher comes in semigloss black aluminum with rubber cushion feet. The three-position toggle switches are rated for 50,000 operations.



Breaking into the video cassette field, RKO Tape Corporation is supplying both VHS and Beta tapes, along with a color-coding system for easy cataloging. It provides pressure-sensitive labels in a different color for each of nine categories: movies, sports, news, documentaries, education, drama, music, comedy, and specials. ■ Christened ColorChrome, RKO's video tapes utilize a chromium dioxide formulation. Prices for VHS have yet to be announced; Beta tapes cost \$13 for L-250, \$17 for L-500, and \$21 for L-750.

(Continued on page A16)

Letters



A Case of Force-Reading?

I object to your including the VIDEO TODAY section in HIGH FIDELITY. I feel it is not appropriate to the nature or the name of this magazine. There are at least five or six publications on the newsstand that cater exclusively to video enthusiasts, so why are you trying to force this topic on people who are interested in audio equipment?

Video has become the main topic in your latest issues, with more space devoted to it than to high fidelity equipment. I can't tell you what to print, but you can't tell me or people like me how to spend our money. These sixteen-page sections are totally irrelevant to me.

I was about to subscribe to HIGH FIDELITY before you added this feature. As of now, I will not purchase your next issue if you continue to water down its original subjects of sound reproduction and reviews.

Edward Fondakowski
Miami, Fla.

Rather than force-feeding our readers, we have instead responded to demand for more information on video. HF has reported on video for more than ten years, and as any devotee of audio should know, it has become more interrelated with video than it once was. Many audio companies now also offer video products.

We have been careful to expand our video coverage without sacrificing any coverage of our regular subjects. The number of pages devoted to audio, for example, is not affected by the size of the VIDEO TODAY section. —Ed.

A Cry in the Wilderness

I am writing in regard to your video disc articles in the December issue. How much longer are you folks (and the industry) going to continue gushing about the "superb" quality of video disc images? Assuming that the term refers to really superlative or eye-opening performance, the im-

ages afforded by video disc machines in their present state of development are far from superb.

I have seen both the MCA and the Pioneer systems about a dozen separate times, and every time the picture was marred by easily observed defects. Although the images were about as clear as common TV can display, they all showed slight but distinct snow, horizontal color banding at various times, and general color

noise. This mediocre level of performance is confirmed by the technical reviews I have seen. A recent vectorscope picture showed that the ideal, tight pattern of color spots was broadly smeared, indicating noise; this was supported by a numerical rating some dB below that of "typical" home VCRs (which are not overwhelming). Perhaps more to the point — especially as the quality of the

(Continued on page A16)

ICELAND

You haven't seen it all until you've seen this unspoiled land.

WHAT'S ALL THIS TALK ABOUT ICE?

You don't hear it from people who've been here. Just from those who haven't.

Fact is, you'd have to deliberately search for it to find ice in Iceland. Most of our geography consists of picturesque villages and natural wonders. Volcanic craterlakes. Huge rock formations. And thundering waterfalls. The largest in Europe.

All of which makes for breathtaking views. And some of the most awesome colors this side of the solar system.

COLORFUL AS MAES. AND A HECK OF A LOT CLOSER.

Much of Iceland is as it was centuries ago. Clean, natural, colorful. We have over 240 varieties of birdlife. A rare, native breed of pony. And lots of other things that make bringing your camera almost mandatory.

Start planning today to visit us soon. Your travel agent can plan your itinerary and brief you on our wondrous sights.

And Icelandair will get you here in non-stop comfort from New York in 5 hours.

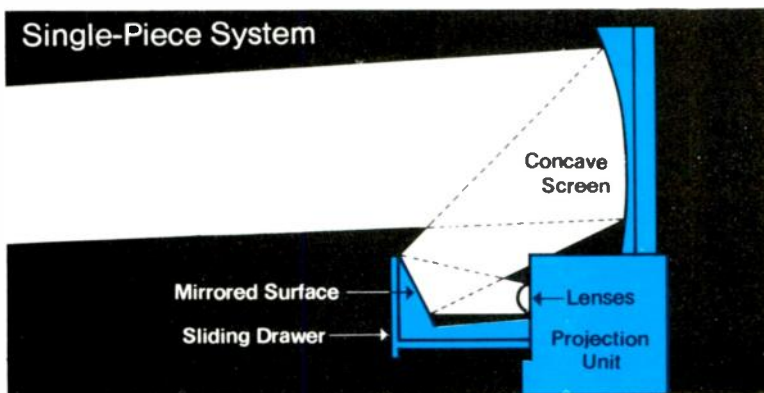
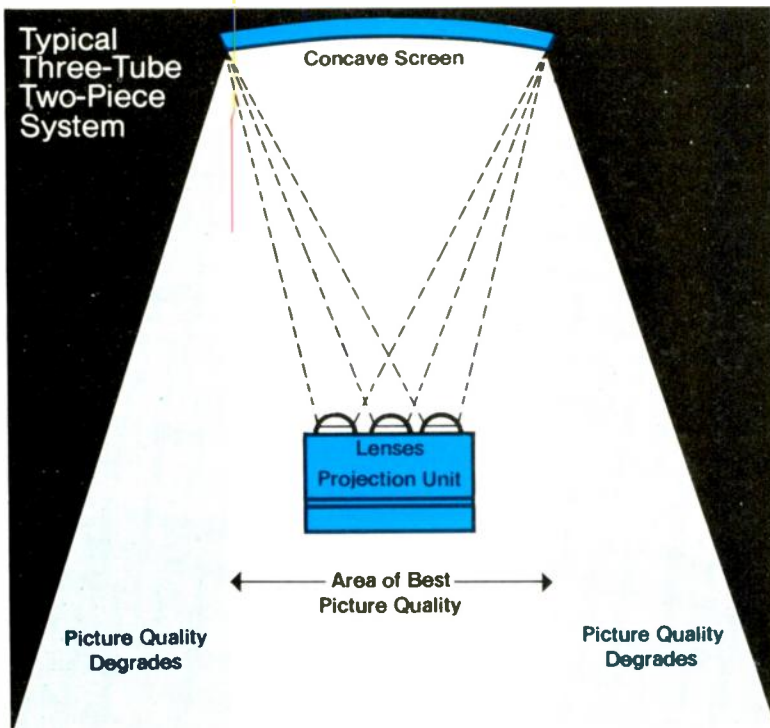
ICELANDAIR

For the Icelandair toll free number in your area call 800-555-1212. Or for full details write Iceland, PO Box 105, West Hempstead, NY 11552.



Owning a Big-Screen Television

Pitfalls to avoid when considering a video projection system for your home. by William Tynan



Viewing big-screen television is a very different experience from that of sitting in front of the "boob tube." The very size of the screen—usually from 4 to 7 feet diagonally—means that whatever room you place the system in automatically becomes the "TV room." It also means that any problems with your sources of video programming will be magnified many times. These are only a few of the special considerations involved in owning big-screen, or projection, television.

Before you think twice about purchasing one of these systems, decide where you will place it. Both the single-piece and two-piece types require a good deal of space. Two-piece designs require a permanent spot for the projector, since moving it if it's temporarily in the way is not a simple matter. It takes a while to align the projection unit with the screen, and any change in position means you'll have to realign them.

Two-piece setups have another drawback: Wires running to and from the projector must be concealed, or at least shielded to prevent people from tripping on them. A typical complement of wires includes the power line and the antenna or cable lead-in. Projection units usually contain speakers that are aimed forward toward the screen. Sound is reflected back from the screen, and the effect is similar to having a speaker near the center of the screen. However, many people prefer using separate high fidelity speakers located at either side of the screen. In this case, the wires to these speakers will also have to be concealed.

Best viewing results in subdued room light. The more light that splashes on the screen, the more the picture suffers. When planning your setup, ask yourself if you can easily orient the screen away from light sources and whether a dim viewing room will inconvenience others in your household.

It also turns out that the best "primary" viewing area is in a narrow rectangle, roughly the width of the screen, extending straight forward from the screen. In most cases, this means that the screen must be placed against the wall with the shorter dimension. Otherwise only a few people can fit in the primary area.

A sharp, crisp image also depends directly on the quantity and quality of light projected on the screen. Simple and inexpensive systems employ a

large lens that attaches to the front of a standard TV. For the most part, their picture quality is marginal; the image is dark, colors are poor. Two- or three-tube designs can produce as much as 80% more light output than a conventional TV.

The screen itself is very important for high-quality pictures. When you buy a projection system, the screen usually comes as part of the package and should be chosen as carefully as the other elements. Many models employ a concave design, primarily to reject ambient room light. Screens also differ in their gain—essentially a measure of the amount of projected light that is reflected back to the viewing area. Normally, the higher the gain, the better. But be certain

that a high gain figure has not been obtained at the expense of the width of the primary viewing space. Also determine whether the screen has a washable surface. Many do not, and fingerprints may cause permanent damage.

Picture sharpness is a function of several variables, including signal quality. A poor TV signal that contains noise, or "snow," will be almost unviewable on a large screen; the snow will indeed look like giant snowflakes. And poorly recorded video tapes will reveal their shortcomings in this enlarged format. Of equal importance is a quality lens properly focused on the screen. All things being equal, a "fast" lens—one with a low f-stop number, such as f/0.9—is best because it allows as much light as

possible through to the screen while allowing you to critically focus the image (since the depth of field, or distance that the image is in sharp focus, is extremely short at low f-stops, and it is very easy to see when something is out of focus).

Another thing to consider is where you will get the system serviced should it break—not to mention how much repairs will cost. Projection TVs are so uncommon at this point that finding a qualified repair service may be impossible. Your only recourse, in that event, is returning it to the factory.

Finally, bear in mind that you may find that owning a projection TV makes your home the one people invite themselves to for special video events. And that's the big picture.

A Buyer's Guide to Big-Screen TV

by Deborah Garry

For the purposes of this guide, we chose to divide projection television systems into two main classifications: one-tube and three-tube design. The latter is generally acknowledged as the superior technique for producing brightness and clarity of picture. Here separate red, green, and blue images (hence the need for three tubes) are projected onto a screen, where they converge to form a full-color picture. One-tube systems employ a standard shadow-mask picture tube and, via an add-on lens arrangement, project the image onto a separate screen. Because of the shadow mask, the level of projected light is usually lower than that from three-tube designs, and some manufacturers advise that subdued ambient lighting is especially important for one-tube projection viewing.

Predominating so far in both formats are one-piece systems, in which the focal distance is controlled by the designer either through a pullout mirror (for front projection) or through

precisely aligned rear projection. In the two-piece format, the projector and screen must be separated by a precise distance if proper focus and convergence are to be assured.

Though we have attempted to make this a comprehensive listing, the market is growing rapidly, with new introductions occurring constantly. And a catalog of features can give you only part of the story. We strongly advise you to audition a number of projection TV systems before settling on a particular brand or model.

THREE-TUBE SYSTEMS

Advent Corp., 195 Albany St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

The VB-225 is a two-piece, front-projection system with 6-foot screen. It offers electronic tuning, remote control, audio and video outputs, as well as RF and video inputs. Recommended projector-to-screen distance is 8 feet. Price: \$3,300.

■ The VB-125 includes the same features in a one-piece, front-projection design with 5-foot screen. Price: \$4,000.

Curtis Mathes Sales Co., 1 Curtis Mathes Pkwy., Athens, Tex. 75751.

The F-517R is a one-piece, front-projection setup with a 5-foot screen. It has electronic tuning and remote control. Price: not available.



(Continued on next page)

General Electric Co., 1 College Blvd., Portsmouth, Va. 23705.

The GE 45-EP-1000P is a one-piece, rear-projection design with electronic tuning, remote control, and standard RF inputs. Screen measures 45 inches. Price: not available.

Heath Co., Benton Harbor, Mich. 49022.

The Heath GR-4000 kit is a two-piece, front-projection system with a 6-foot



screen. It offers convergence controls, built-in crosshatch generator, and test meter. Price: \$2,200.

Kloss Video Corp., 145 Sidney St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

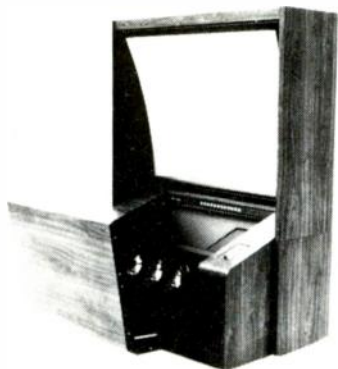
Kloss's Model One is a two-piece, front-projection design with a 6½-foot screen. Among features are



audio output jacks, Novatron tubes, electronic tuning, and remote control. Price: \$3,000.

Mitsubishi Electric Sales of America, Inc., 3030 E. Victoria St., Compton, Calif. 90221.

The VS-505U is a one-piece, front-



projection system with a washable 50-inch screen. It has a 16-function remote control and audio output jacks. Price: \$3,700.

■ The VS-510UD also is a one-piece, front-projection design with washable 50-inch screen. This model features input and output terminals for accessories and an 18-function random-access remote control. Price \$4,000.

Panasonic, 1 Panasonic Way, Secaucus, N.J. 07094.

Panasonic's Cinemavision is available in two models. The CT-4500 is a one-piece, rear-projection design with a 45-inch screen. It has audio and video inputs and outputs, as well as a crossbar generator for convergence adjustment. Price: \$3,300.

■ The CT-6000A is a one-piece, front-projection system with a 5-foot screen. Functions include electronic



tuning, remote control, and automatic shutoff in closed position. Price: \$4,000.

Quasar Co., 9401 W. Grand Ave., Franklin Park, Ill. 60131.

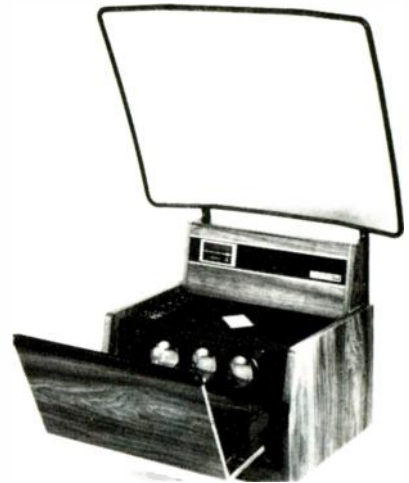
The Quasar PR-4800SP is a one-piece, rear-projection design with a



45-inch screen. Two audio amps are combined with four speakers; among other features are electronic tuning, remote control, and video input and output jacks. Price: \$3,750.

Sears, Roebuck & Co., Sears Tower, Chicago, Ill. 60684.

The Sears 5450 is a one-piece, front-projection unit with a 50-inch washable screen. It comes equipped with



electronic tuning, remote control, audio output, video input, and LED time and channel display. Price: \$3,000.

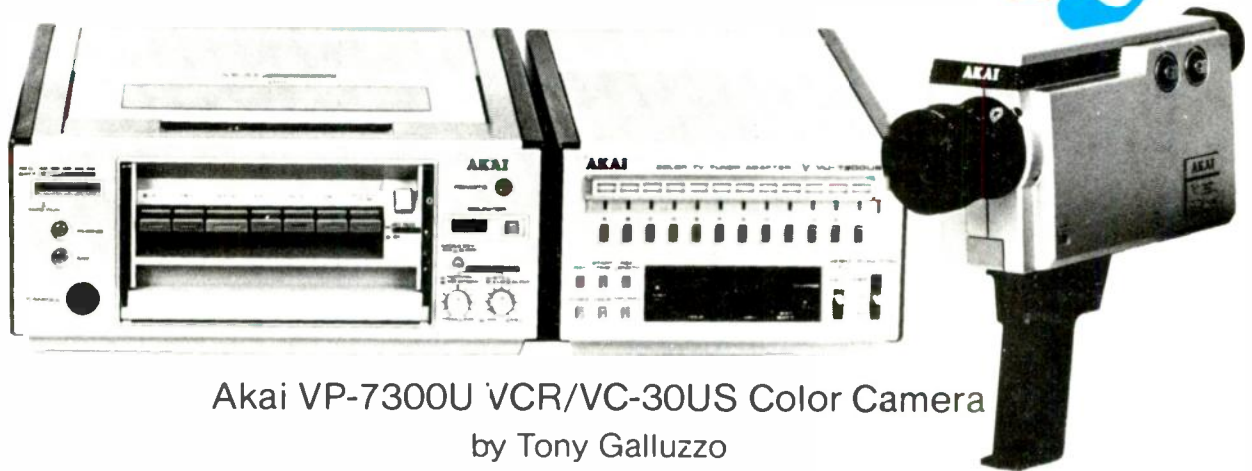
Sony Industries, 9 W. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10019.

Sony's KP-5000 and KP-7200 are one-piece, front-projection systems of foldaway design. They feature



express tuning and remote control. The KP-5000, which has a 50-inch screen, costs \$3,700; the KP-7200, with a 72-inch screen, \$4,200. Two-piece versions, Models 5020 and 7220, sell for \$2,500 and \$3,000, respectively. (Continued on page A13)

Portable Versatility



Akai VP-7300U VCR/VC-30US Color Camera

by Tony Galluzzo

It has been a long way down the pike from the first portable VCRs to the current "more portable" units that have blossomed in versatility as their dimensions have been carefully trimmed. The term "portable" remains relative to how fast you can run while carrying a child on your hip. The Akai VP-7300 recorder—one of the lightest of the newer crop—rides against your side without much trouble for a while, but eventually even 15 pounds, 10 ounces can become a wearisome load. Still, considering the machine's ease of operation and generally fine performance, the weight factor dims a bit as your enthusiasm for mobile video takes over.

Akai recently introduced a Dolby stereo version of its ActiVideo system, the VP-7350 recorder and VU-7350 tuner/timer. But we stayed with the older model for review since most features are the same and we have had more of an opportunity to live with it and see how it endures several months of use. Thus far, outdoors and indoors, with both amateurish handling and carefully controlled usage, the system is surviving just fine and pleases everyone who has seen the results on our lab monitor.

Unlike Akai's black-and-white VCR, which employed the company's own cassette system, the ActiVideo recorder uses the widely accepted VHS format. Standard VHS recording speed is 1.32 ips (2 hours), and that's the only normal speed you have to work with. The VP-7300 does allow double-speed playback, but unless

you wanted a Keystone Kops effect, you would resort to it only for a rapid search of program material. Other modes include STILL FRAME, SLOW MOTION, and what we would call step-frame or single-frame advance—each picture rolling into place at an extremely slow, steady rate. Though they can be valuable tools for analyzing specific action, visual continuity is shattered by a glitch-like frame line that rolls down the screen as tape advances across the video heads. The glitch pattern is not unique to Akai equipment; most home video recorders now on the market suffer the same or similar disturbances when operated at slower-than-normal speeds.

But this recorder is not just another ho-hum item in the increasing lineup of portable VCRs. Consider this: You can recharge the slender nickel-cadmium battery in an unusually swift 1½ hours and be ready to go with approximately 1 hour of mobile recording time. To our way of thinking, this aspect alone shows Akai's progressive thinking and willingness to fill the needs of serious video enthusiasts.

The battery slips easily in and out of the rear of the recorder and plugs into a mini-jack, allowing you to insert a spare battery in the field within seconds. An RF converter next to the battery compartment selects between VHF channels 3 or 4, depending on which is available for VCR operations in your locale. The converter can be removed for servicing or replacement.

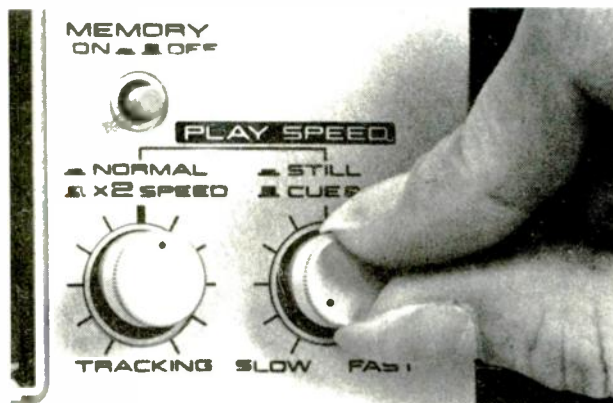
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HANDS-ON REPORT (continued)

When the battery is fully charged, all five LED indicators on the front panel are lit. Soon after you start the recorder, the far right LED will go out, this is normal and nothing to worry about. When it's time to recharge, the same LED will begin flashing and the one beside it will go out. If you're too involved in shooting to notice this, a light in the camera's viewfinder will give you a few seconds' warning before the recorder stops automatically.

Battery drain depends on several factors, and playing back segments consumes more power than you may realize. Therefore, carrying a spare battery as insurance makes a good deal of sense. If you want to keep the battery in top condition and prolong its use, recharge it fully before storing your equipment.

The LED panel also signals when moisture buildup on the head drum within the recorder exceeds normal limits. This usually occurs under conditions of extreme humidity such as moving the system from cold to warm temperatures. The only practical solution is to remove the cassette and wait until conditions improve. While you may rarely need this warning device, be glad it's there. Moisture is a major enemy of video tape machines and can cause tape to stick to the head drum.



Playback speed options are slow motion, very slow step frame, twice normal, and normal. Still motion is also possible; note that using this mode for extended periods accelerates head wear.



Thorough use is made of single LED panel, which indicates battery strength, proper tape run (LED at far left flickers), and moisture (dew) buildup on the head drum.

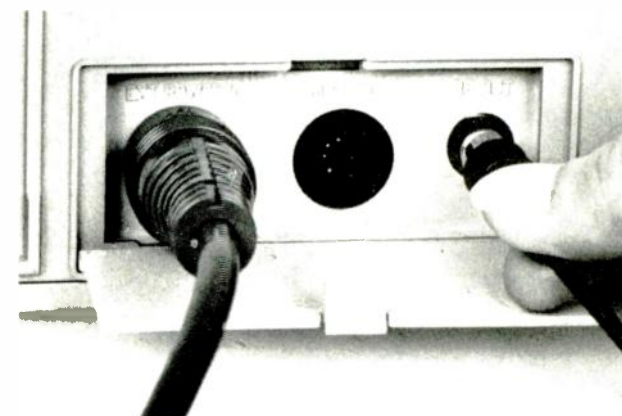
We used the recorder's companion VU-7300 tuner/timer to recharge batteries. An AC power adapter—half the size—performs the same function. Either way, you can recharge the battery in the recorder or charge it outside while continuing to shoot with a spare. An optional battery cord lets you operate the recorder from your car's 12-volt DC source.

If you plan to use the Akai recorder with a color video camera exclusively for home video movies, you probably can do without the tuner/timer. But you'll miss a great deal of the system's potential without it. The newer VU-7350 tuner/timer is just as versatile as most home systems, with electronic pushbutton controls that can be preset to twelve channels, including UHF. A programmable 24-hour LED display allows you to automatically record two programs a day for up to seven days. A memory rewind feature on the recorder lets you zip back to a preselected program; simply set the counter at "000," and the tape stops rewinding at "999."

What can you expect in terms of handling and quality with ActiVideo? Let's look at one more component and find out. Though we could have used Akai's more elaborate color camera with electronic viewfinder, we chose the rather compact VC-30. At little more than 3 pounds, it's not much heftier than most super 8 sound



Controls are simple and straightforward. To record, you depress the PLAY and RECORD keys. Sound dubbing is also possible.



Inside a flipdown cover are connections for external power, a TV monitor, and—via the RF output—a standard television. An RF converter is built into the set.

cameras, and it contains at least a few of the same features.

You frame and focus by peering into a bright, through-lens optical viewfinder with a split-image circle at center. To adjust initial focus, set the 15-to-45mm f/1.9 built-in zoom at the telephoto position, turn the focusing ring to infinity, and aim at an object more than 100 feet away. Now you can play with the eyepiece diopter control until the split-image circle seems sharpest to you. Set it, and leave it. Each time you focus on a new subject, snap the zoom out to 45mm, focus carefully, then reset the focal length for the framing you require. But that's where any similarity with super 8 ends.

Images are focused through the lens and onto the faceplate of a single $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch vidicon tube. Horizontal resolution is rated at about 240 lines—fairly standard for color video cameras of this type. While the auto iris control is very accurate and can accommodate a broad range of lighting levels, Akai has kept the thinking video camera operator in mind. Turning the iris control knob at the camera's side lets you click out of automatic and set the level you prefer. Manual fades are possible by closing the iris down completely. If the viewfinder exposure lamp glows red, the scene is underexposed; if it's green, it's overexposed. Exposure should be accurate when the lamp is off, and was, in fact, each time we shot

without the aid of a monitor to check results. Even when the lamp began glowing slightly red, exposures were within acceptable limits. Under extremely low lighting conditions, we found that using the +6-dB gain control perked up the image.

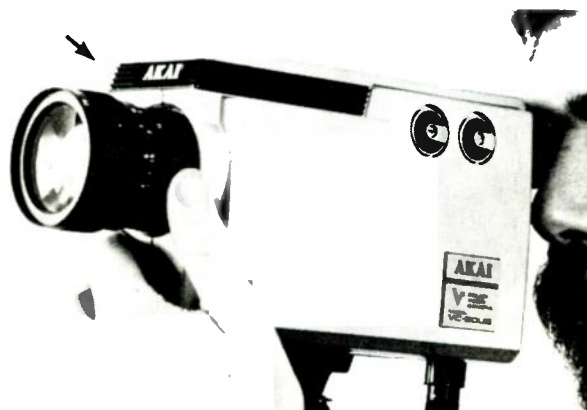
To arrive at the best color obtainable, of course, it's best to preset controls while viewing the image on a color TV screen. At the rear of the VC-30, you'll find a color temperature switch. Set it for the prevailing light, whether daylight and fluorescent (5,000°K), dawn/dusk (4,800°K), or tungsten light (3,000°K). These settings are approximate, since true color temperature varies in each case. (Photoflood or quartz studio lighting, for instance, is actually 3,200°K.)

To fine-tune the color, switch your television set to a broadcast channel with a strong signal and adjust carefully. Switch back to your VCR channel. Zoom the camera lens into the edge of a white wall or white card, focus, and turn the tint control at the rear of the VC-30 until you lock in as true a white as you can. Observe the TV screen and, if necessary, tone down the hue control on your set. You should now have reasonably correct color balance.

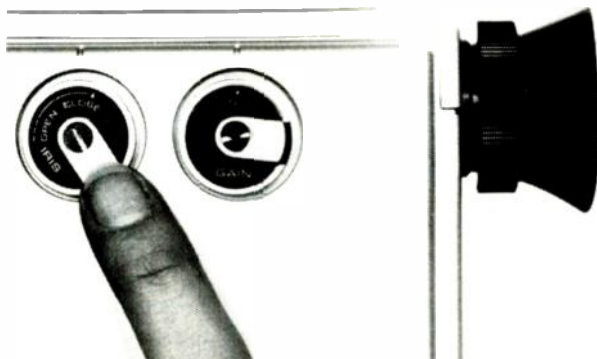
Because this camera is a relatively simple single-tube
(Continued on next page)



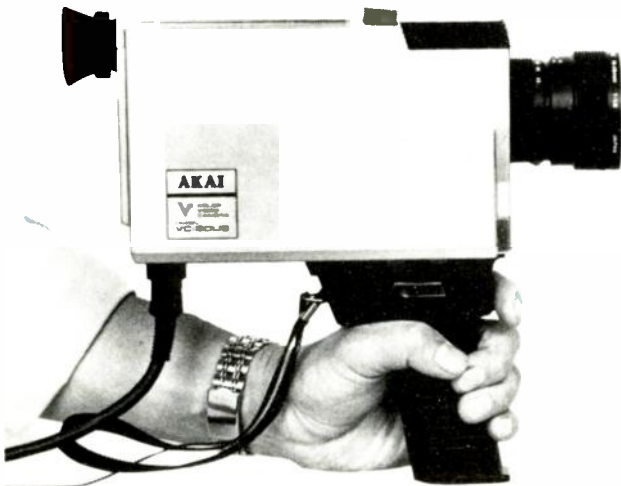
Control panel is on rear of camera. First set color compensator for lighting in use. Then turn tint control to fine-tune (see text).



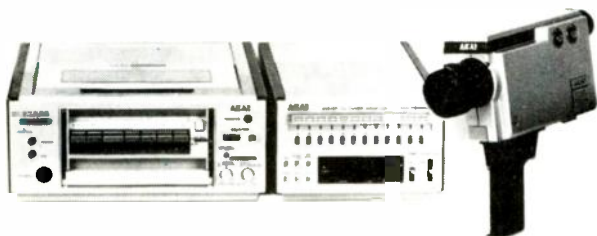
VC-30 color camera is lightweight and quick to use. Controls are easily reached, zoom is smooth. A built-in omnidirectional mike is mounted in the top left front (see arrow).



To set your own exposure level, snap out of auto iris into manual. Close iris completely to fade out a scene. In very low light, turn dial at right from NOR to +6-dB gain to increase picture contrast.



Showdown between Akai video camera and Canon automatic-focus super 8 sound camera? Not at all, but it does show how small color video cameras have become. The VC-30 is among the most compact on the market.



AKAI ACTIVIDEO SYSTEM

ActiVideo TP-7300 recorder:	\$1,125
ActiVideo VU-7300 tuner/timer:	\$375
Both models sold as pair:	\$1,495
VC-30 color camera:	\$799.95

model, it cannot handle complex color situations as well as more advanced ones containing two tubes or more sophisticated circuitry. Light reflected off less than pure white surfaces and onto our subjects added green shadows around their eyes and created a rather spacy-looking hair tint as well. But careful lighting did pay off, and we managed to obtain color images of impressive quality with this system. We fared best when shooting outdoors, as long as glinting sunlight and large areas of dull shadow didn't compete within the scene. We even experimented with mixing window light with fluorescent illumination and obtained soft, pleasant results, though the daylight playing on a face proved to be considerably "cooler" (slightly bluer) than the rest of the picture.

In extremely low light, using a 150-watt lamp aimed at the subject from about 10 feet away, the image on our screen was barely discernible, even though we set the illumination level at the practical minimum suggested by Akai (100 lux or about 9 footcandles). Kicking in the +6-dB gain, however, made the image more acceptable.

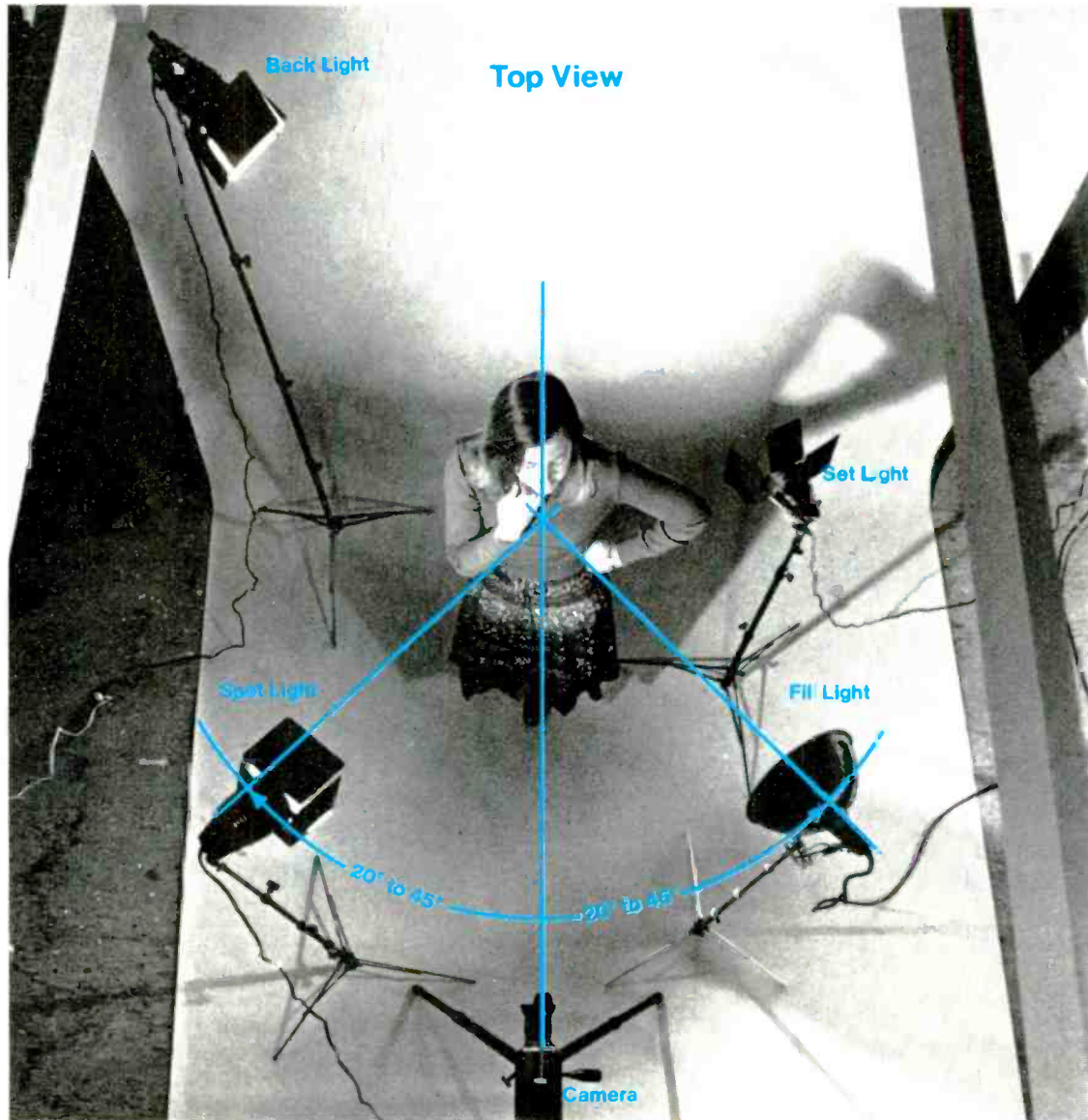
What does this mean in practical terms? It means you can probably use any but the very lowest room illumination and still be able to view a "readable" image on your receiver. Adding lights will certainly provide you with a richer, more pleasing picture, but it all depends on the level of quality you find acceptable.

As for sound, we generally relied on the omnidirectional microphone built into the front of the VC-30 camera. If we remembered to stay within about 6 feet of our subjects, sound was intelligible—clearer, in fact, than we would have thought possible. But, when faced with subjects speaking normally in hushed tones, we found ourselves moving closer and closer, until we were beyond the minimum focusing capability of the lens. Solution? We attached a separate mike with miniplug to the recorder, shot some more tape, and listened to the results. No contest. The separate microphone placed 1 or 2 feet from our hammy actors—disguised as serious office staffers—won out every time, providing a clarity and "presence" not possible with the built-in mike. Anyone familiar with super 8 sound cameras won't be surprised by this discovery. If you do use a separate microphone with the 7300 recorder, make sure it's the low-impedance type. (Akai rates the input at 500 ohms.)

If you're in the mood to enhance your sound-tracks with a music background or narration, Akai has provided a sound-dub feature on this recorder. To do this best, reset the footage counter to zero, then play back your recorded material. Jot down footages where you want music or voiceover narration to cue in and out. Now rewind and play back to each chosen spot and engage RECORD PAUSE/PLAYBACK to obtain a still frame. (DOUBLE SPEED/TRACKING and STILL/CUE, SLOW should be depressed.) After the necessary connections have been made between your audio recorder or microphone and video recorder, press PLAYBACK and SOUND DUB simultaneously. Disengage RECORD PAUSE/PLAYBACK, and proceed with a trial run. Automatic gain control will take care of volume levels, but you will have to move the mike back far enough from your TV receiver to avoid feedback. Since the audio signal is recorded on a narrow track outside of the video image area, sound-dubbing won't affect the picture, unless you mistakenly press the PLAY and RECORD buttons.

(Continued on page A13)

Lighting indoor home video movies can be very simple. On these pages you'll find all the basics. Note that angles suggested for the various lights are starting points; each situation will call for a slightly different setup.



Glossary of Lighting Terms

Key Light This is the primary source of light. For most situations, place it 20° to 45° to either the left or right of the camera and at a vertical angle of 30° to 45° with respect to the subject. A focusable spotlight (see above) will concentrate light on the subject.

Fill Light Shadows created by the key light can be softened by this light. Place it on the side

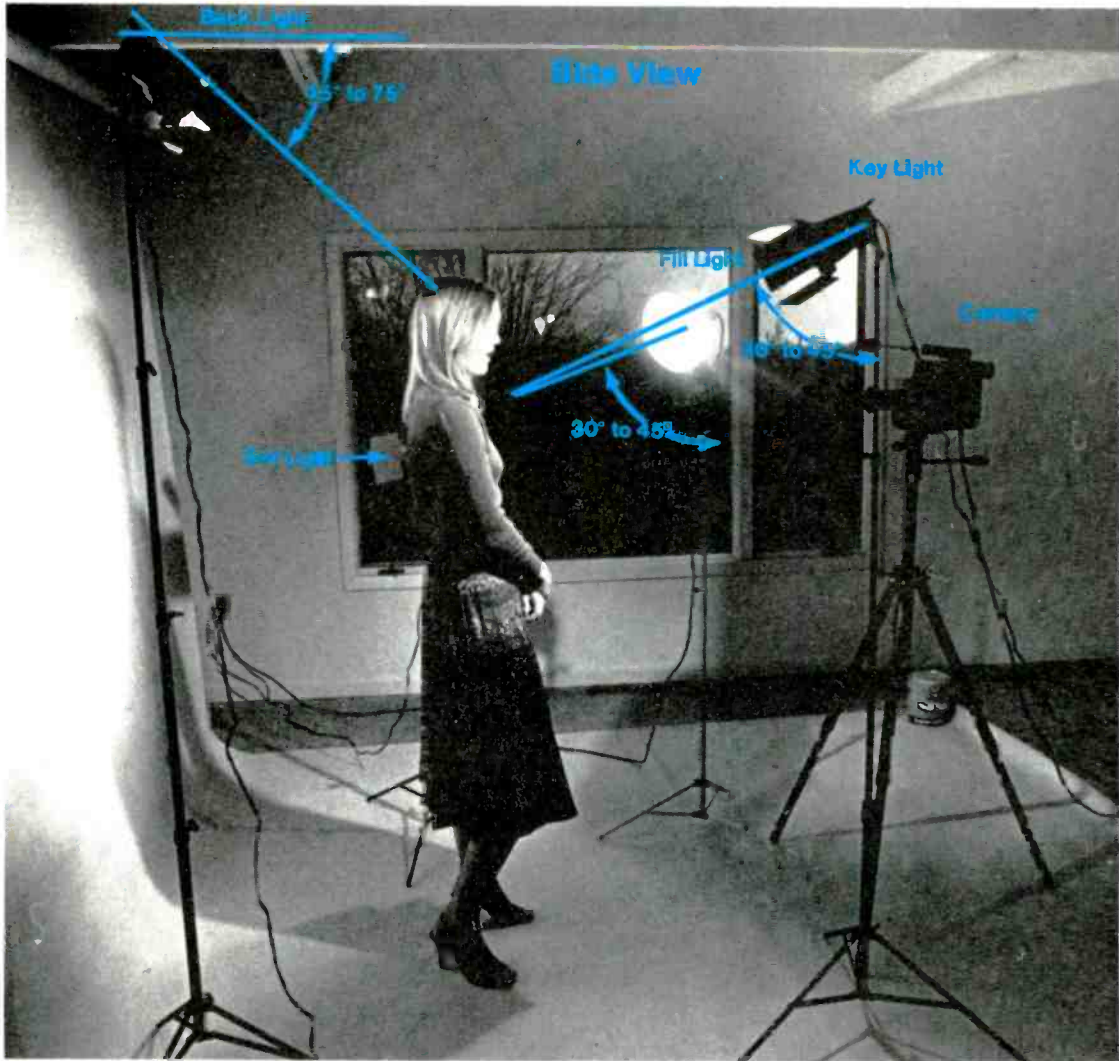
opposite from the key light, at approximately the same horizontal and vertical angles. A fixed-focus floodlight (see above) placed at a slightly lower angle than the key light softens shadows around the eyes and below the nose and chin.

Set Light More critical than it might at first appear, this light must strike the set (background) softly and evenly or you'll create an overly bright "hot spot." In general, use just enough light to

establish the set in the background; overlighting tends to emphasize the set instead of the subject.

Back Light This serves to separate the subject from the background, giving dimension to the picture. As such, it should be subtle and not so bright as to create a halo effect around the person's head or shoulders. This light is normally mounted at an angle of 45° to 75°; the

(Continued on next page)

**GLOSSARY** (continued)

higher, the better, since this will minimize chances that its rays will strike the front of the camera lens.

Barn Doors These adjustable pieces of black metal, attached to a ring around the front of the light, can be moved to control the amount of spill, or light falling outside the area specifically to be lighted. Because they are very near the floodlight, barn doors become very hot after only a few minutes; be careful when you adjust them.

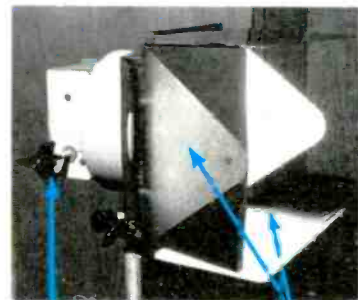
How to Set Up Your Lights

1. Determine where the action for a scene will occur.
2. Decide what camera angle(s) you'll use, and place the camera

accordingly.

3. Place the key, fill, back, and set lights in their approximate locations.
4. Turn off the standard room lighting and then turn on each of the floodlights, one at a time. Preferably with the performer in front of the set, aim and focus each of the lights individually.
5. Turn on all the lights at once and, using the electronic viewfinder on your camera — or better yet, a separate video monitor — make final adjustments of individual lights.
6. If you have only a single set of lights and plan a number of different scenes, you'll have to readjust lighting for each scene. You can save a lot of time during taping if you first run through the entire lighting sequence, noting approximate positions

and angles in a notebook and marking locations with tape on the floor. Should you have the luxury of several sets of lights, set them all up in the beginning, and switch them on and off as necessary like TV production studios do.

Typical Variable-Focus (Spot to Flood) Light

Variable-Focus Knob Barn Doors

BUYER'S GUIDE (continued)

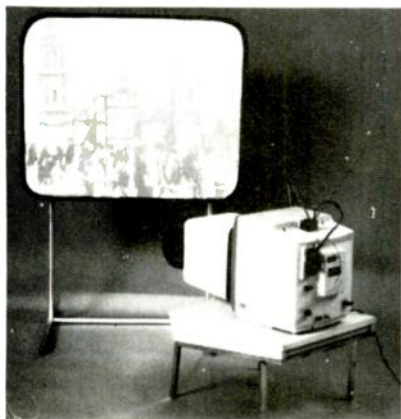
ONE-TUBE SYSTEMS

Burke Industries, 4303 Bryan St., Dallas, Tex. 75204.

Burke Industries manufactures the Alpha and Kolorama one-piece, rear-projection series. The Alpha 1 is available with three screen sizes: 50-inch, \$1,300; 60-inch, \$1,400; or 72-inch, \$1,500. The Kolorama RP-5373, with a 50-inch flat screen, is priced at \$3,000.

F & F Sales Co., P.O. Box 1047, Havertown, Pa. 19083.

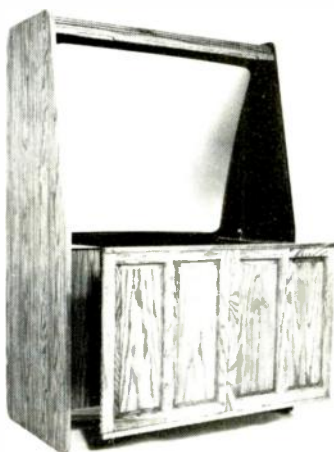
UltraVision is an add-on, two-piece, front-projection system. There is a choice of four screen sizes: 4-foot,



\$500; 5-foot, \$600; 6-foot, \$800; and 7-foot, \$1,000. Any 12-inch or 13-inch TV set can be used, but a switch to invert the picture must be installed.

Muntz Giant Screen TV, 7700 Densmore Ave., Van Nuys, Calif. 91406.

The Muntz 2352R-3 and 2367 are one-piece, front-projection systems. They offer electronic tuning, remote



control, and a choice of cabinet styles. The 2352R-3, with 52-inch screen, costs \$1,400; the 2367, with 63-inch screen, costs \$1,600.

New Products Co., Highway 73 and Fellowship Rd., Maple Shade, N.J. 08052.

The Originator is a one-piece, front-projection system with a choice of screens measuring 4, 5, or 7 feet. Prices are \$500, \$600, and \$700, respectively.

Pyramid Manufacturing, 13127 Harper Ave., Detroit, Mich. 48213.

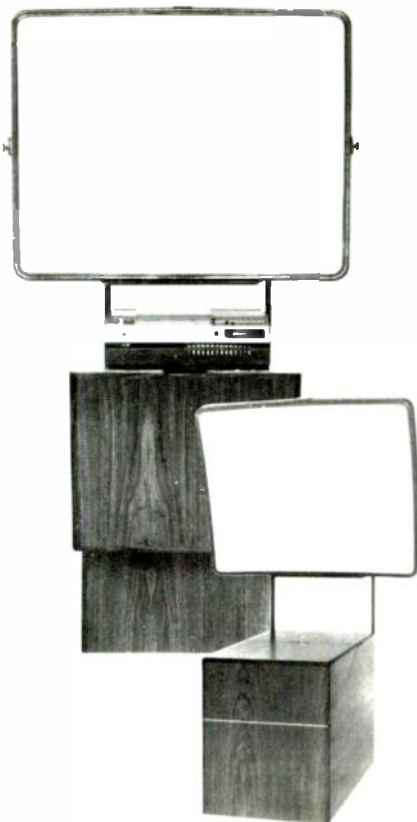
The FM-105 and FM-102 are two-piece, front-projection units. The former comes with a 50-inch screen and costs \$1,600; the latter, with 80-inch screen, \$1,900.

Tele-Kit, 15 Green Hill Lane, Spring Valley, N.Y. 10977.

Six add-on models are available for use with 12- or 13-inch TV sets. Screen size varies from 45 to 72 inches, with prices ranging from \$368 to \$560.

Transvision Corp., 5627 Paradise Drive, Corte Madera, Calif. 94925.

The VidiMax 500 is a two-piece, front-projection system available with 50-inch or 60-inch screen. Screen floor stands and remote control are optional. Prices: \$1,100 and \$1,500.



HANDS-ON REPORT (continued)

While we can't say that the picture edits between shots are the cleanest possible, we had no problem with unsightly picture breakup, rollovers, or glitches. We attempted to edit our shots back-to-back with some sensible continuity while we taped, and each shot snapped into place with merely a fleeting disturbance obtrusive only to the most critical among us. When we were careful with our lighting, using either 3,200°K studio lights or indirect daylight, image clarity and color were quite pleasing. With scenes shot in low ambient light, we were still impressed by the system's ability to produce a recognizable image. When we pushed the VC-30 by panning too fast or shooting an overreflective subject, we paid the price; trailing images smeared across the screen, and ghost images retained for a period on the camera tube were visible over new material. But, for the most part, our results with the ActiVideo camera/recorder setup were impressive and made us want to keep shooting and continue experimenting with video taping.

The latest ActiVideo system, mentioned earlier, provides both 2- and 6-hour recording times when taping off the air and still gives you up to an hour's worth in the battery-operated mode. There is even a key lock to prevent unauthorized access to the VP-7350 recorder and an "instant program location search," a fast-forward mode that will locate the start of any video sequence.

Akai engineers have obviously put a great deal of thought into ActiVideo. The result is a very convincing case for portable video movies.

Coming in April's

VIDEO TODAY

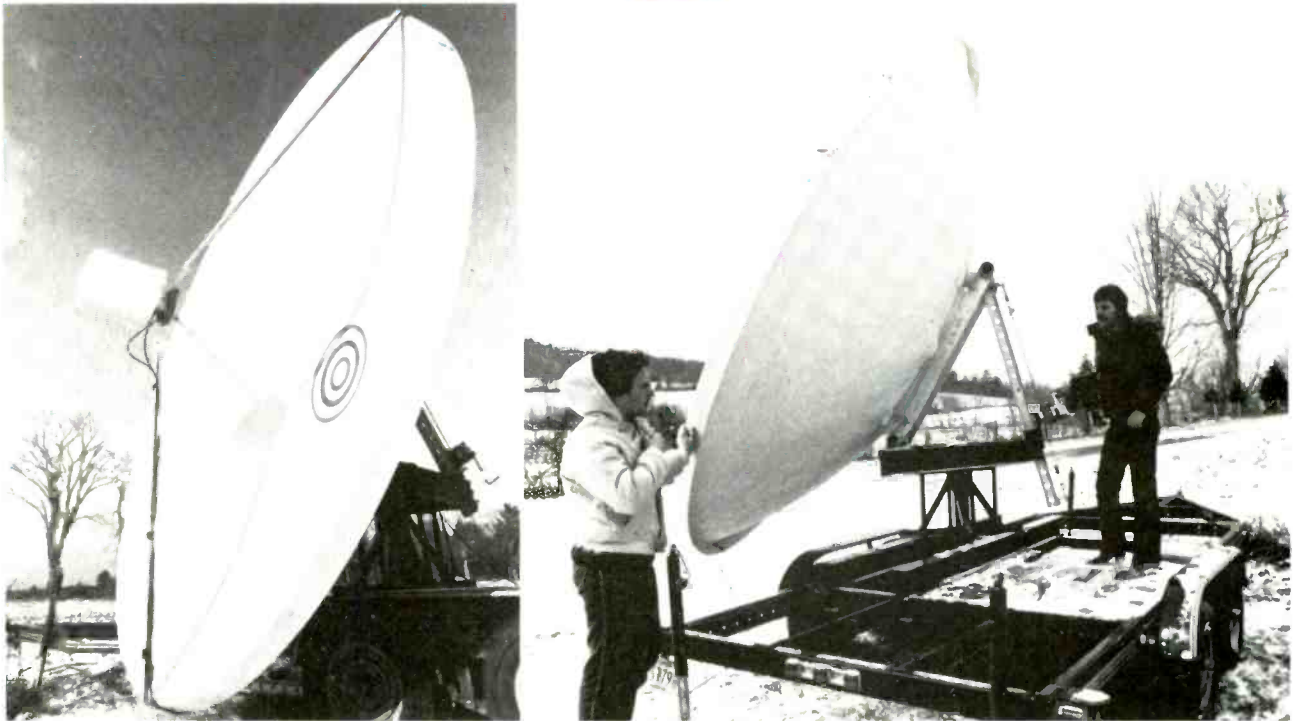
& Tomorrow

Special Report

50 of the hottest and latest video products

Video Vignettes

Via Satellite. From New York. It's...



Satellite pictures of the John Lennon memorial service were transmitted from Central Park in New York. Technical quality of picture from Cable News Network was excellent. No live coverage of the event was otherwise available in this rural Connecticut location.



Backyard satellite antenna is oriented to one of a dozen satellites that maintain stationary positions thousands of miles above the Earth. Handheld switcher selects among satellites and allows viewer to pick any of twenty-four channels from each.

Readers of VIDEO TODAY & TOMORROW often have video experiences that are of general interest. From time to time we'll select from those submitted to us and share them with you. This month's video vignette was submitted by Curt Roberts of Copake, New York, who watched the John Lennon memorial service from Central Park, New York City, live via satellite TV.

I live in a section of Upstate New York where TV reception is spotty at best. When I heard a friend of mine was trying out a new backyard satellite TV antenna in nearby rural Connecticut, I couldn't resist the opportunity to see his setup.

When I arrived, workers from Third Wave Communications were setting up the dish. Since the installation was only temporary, it was still mounted on its traveling trailer. The workers told me they could orient the antenna to any of almost a dozen satellites by choosing the correct azimuth and elevation angles. The one they settled on first was carrying twenty-four channels of TV (as most satellites do).

The selection of programming was mind-boggling—two channels of HBO (Home Box Office), four different pay TV movies, one channel of Spanish programming, at least two of religious programs, Ted Turner's pioneering Cable News Network (CNN), and more. And all of this from only one satellite.

We settled on the CNN coverage of the Central Park memorial service for slain Beatle John Lennon. First of all, it was the only live coverage available in this area; more important, it was the clearest, sharpest, least "TV-like" picture I've ever seen.

My friend agreed that the wide range of programs and the high quality of the pictures were turning him into a blurry-eyed video freak. He was running his VCR hours each day to capture it all on tape. Some of his favorites were unedited network news and the Johnny Carson show (minus the commercials), which are transmitted via satellite prior to the time they are usually broadcast. When would he view it all? As soon as the trial installation was over.

The price of the antenna and associated equipment is a little out of my range—about \$10,000—but when the cost comes down, I'll get one. Once you've seen the technical quality of a satellite TV picture, it's hard to accept less.

TubeFood

A monthly roundup of new (and sometimes original) video tape and video disc programs scheduled for release.

Magnetic Video has issued twelve new video cassettes. All are full-length feature films, except for *The Master and His Method*, a 60-minute instructional tape featuring international soccer star Pele. Movie titles are *Black Marble*, *Night Games*, *They Shoot Horses Don't They*, *The Killing of Sister George*, *Kotch*, *Lovers and Other Strangers*, *Jesus of Nazareth*, *Farewell My Lovely*, *Brief Encounter*, *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, and *Myra Breckinridge*.

Bringing up Baby by the Tube?

The gentleman who is a household word wherever diapers and Pabulum abound, Dr. Benjamin Spock, will now advise parents electronically



Caring for Your Newborn with Dr. Benjamin Spock, available on video cassette from VidAmerica, a Video Corporation of America company.

via video tape. *Caring for Your Newborn with Dr. Benjamin Spock* is the "first electronic book ever published," according to George Gould, chairman of the board of VidAmerica, a subsidiary of Video Corporation of America, which is releasing the "book" on Beta and VHS cassettes.

The cassette/book is a two-hour teaching tool for parents and child-care workers, covering such topics as birth, daily care, bathing, common concerns in the first year, sickness, and living together. The project was video-taped in Rogers, Arkansas, where Dr. Spock now resides, and more than thirty young couples were enlisted in order to derive a good balance of questions and concerns.

The condensed half-hour version seen recently by the press shows the doctor's leisurely and humorous approach as he speaks with several parents and holds a variety of infants far better than any politician. He even demonstrates proper bathing techniques and insertion of thermometers as well as the soothing of parental fears about handling the delicate little wobblers.

Caring for Your Newborn will be sold for \$55 by video hardware dealers. Alfred Markim, president of VCA, says that eventually special interest tapes such as this will be just as sought-after as video cassettes of feature films are now.

New video cassettes available from Paramount Home Video are *Airplane*, *Urban Cowboy*, *Friday the 13th*, *The Hunter*, *Rough Cut*, *Coast to Coast*, *Breaking Glass*, *Barefoot in the Park*, and a special two-hour version of the television miniseries *Shogun*.

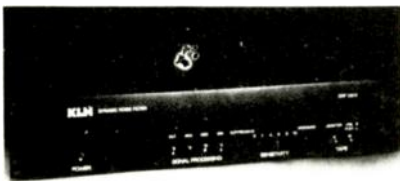
A group of ten feature films is being released on laser-type video discs by Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment: *Chapter II*, *The China Syndrome*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind—The Special Edition*, *The Deep*, *Emmanuelle*, *Gimme Shelter*, *Great Moments in Baseball*, *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, *Midnight Express*, and *Z*.

VIDEOFRONTS (continued)



A head-cleaning tape for VHS decks is the latest addition to BIB's Videophile accessory line. The company suggests that you use the VE-11 (\$27) after every 40 hours of play on your VCR. The head-cleaning operation takes about 15 seconds; the cassette contains sufficient tape for about 20 applications.

Want audio quality as well as video quality? KLH suggests you employ its DNF-1201A Dynamic Noise Filter (\$379) to reduce video tape hiss. When played through a high fidelity stereo system, hiss usually masked by the poor quality of TV set speakers can be annoying. The device is said to reduce tape noise by from 5 to 14 dB during quiet passages. It is connected between the audio output jack of the VCR and tape monitor circuit of your stereo system.



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LETTERS (continued)

recordings improve—the *inherent* performance of the picture, as determined by the encoding standards selected, is significantly below broadcast standards in both luminance and chrominance bandwidths, not to mention S/N ratios, which may be more dependent on the recordings.

In short, I honestly feel that judgments of "superb" quality at this point will someday have all the credibility of similar comments made with respect to early audio cassette decks or Grandma's 1940 AM radio. My personal feeling is that video fidelity has been sacrificed for play time; I would have thought that recordings that the consumer must pay for would be *better* than broadcast quality, rather than the claimed "virtually equal."

While you may find these remarks extreme, consider that the quality of consumer TV is now similar to that of the aforementioned 1940 radio; any competent TV engineer can tell you how much farther quality has to go. If you question this, consider that, with 500 or so scanning lines of resolution, a 25-inch TV should be able to display detail as small as $\frac{1}{50}$ of an inch. Compare that to the $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch resolution typical of a fairly decent consumer TV.

You may well detect a certain tone of a video fidelity fanatic crying out in the wilderness. Since this is where audio high fidelity got its start in the '40s, it amazes me that your magazine would not have more historical perspective and, in particular, a much more critical eye toward potential and actual product performance in an exciting new branch of the field.

Another minor point: When describing the operation of video disc players, you mention a wait of a "few seconds" after starting play. The MCA machines I have seen take at least 30 to 45 seconds, including an agonizingly long time of visual picture breakup, before the image settles down. The Pioneer unit I recently saw cuts this time about in half, with a good picture as soon as the muting circuit releases. In any case, this wait of more than "a few seconds," combined with a withdrawal cycle almost as long, makes the equipment much less "handy" than the audio gear we're used to. I assume the manufacturers can speed up this process, if reviewers and consumers indicate that they care, just as the latest VCRs have cue-and-review scanning,

which would have been a dream only a year or two ago.

I fully agree that the quality of the recordings is poor. Some I have seen have 20 to 30 random black dashes visible in the picture at all times.

I am very interested in the success of this field, and praise should, of course, be given when truly deserved. But I think the many questionable decisions being made by the manufacturers, including RCA's mono sound, the existence of three formats, the apparent attempt to establish each system on the basis of initial availability of software (most of which in a few years will be as obsolete as the early LPs that were transcribed from 78 masters), and the obvious lack of faith in the possibility of "hi-fi" video, all call for a much more critical attitude on the part of the press.

I hope the same concern for quality that has driven the audio field to high levels of achievement at affordable prices will have the same long-term effect in video.

Patrick H. Quilter
Vice president of engineering
QSC Audio Products
Costa Mesa, Calif.

A Video-Letter Proposal

By profession, I am an engineer, and often I come up with ideas that seem like they should be acted on. The basic idea is the setting up of shops in the major cities throughout the world for the purpose of recording and viewing "video letters." This would enable the average person to visually communicate with friends at a price lower than that for a plane ticket.

I have submitted my idea to a large video company, which has sidestepped it, so I'm writing to you. I feel that, if the idea finds its way into enough trash cans via enough people, someone may do something constructive with it.

Franklin Bartels
Cardiff by the Sea, Calif.

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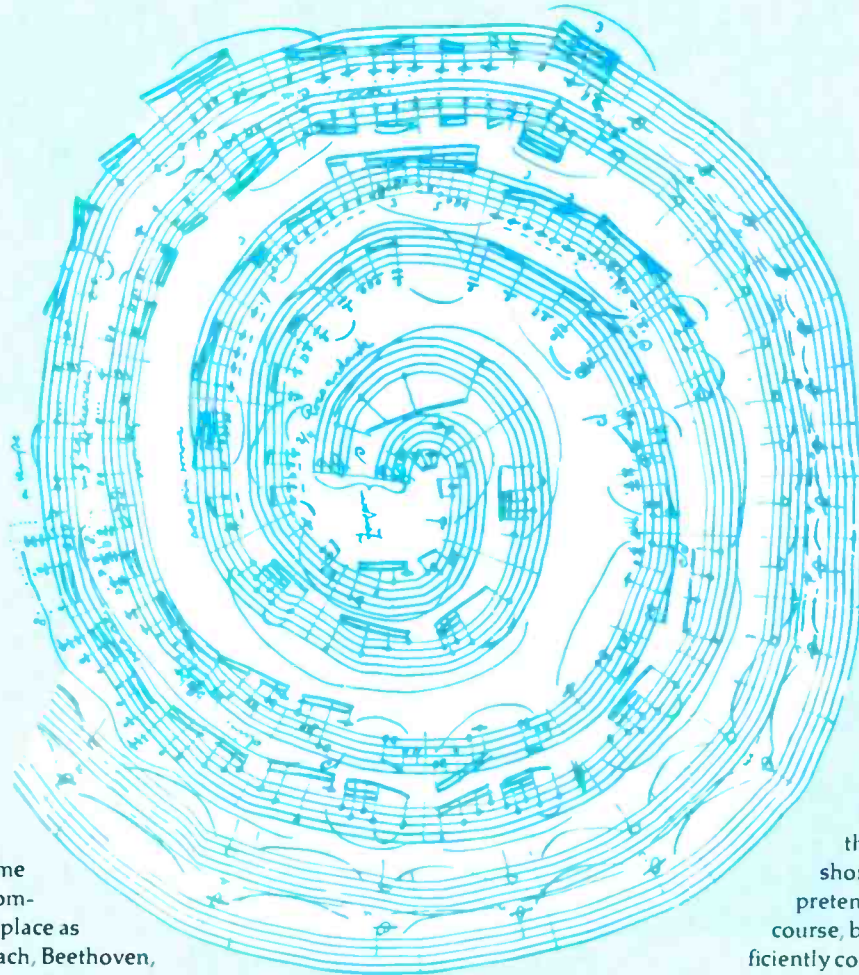
Béla Bartók

A Centenary Tribute

BÉLA BARTÓK, who died in New York's West Side Hospital on September 26, 1945, was born in Nagyszentmiklós, Transylvania (then Hungary, now Romania), on March 25, 1881. This month we could also have celebrated the Telemann tercentenary; with no slight to that worthy composer intended, we've chosen to concentrate on Bartók.

Though—contrary to some early predictions—the composer has yet to take his place as the fourth "B" behind Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms, he has certainly held his own in the company of the other great twentieth-century innovators, Stravinsky and Schoenberg. And as will be stressed repeatedly in the following pages, he was not just a composer, however great, but an excellent pianist and a pioneering ethnomusicologist. To dabble in three such related pursuits is not unusual; to achieve in even one of them the absolute mastery this versatile and consummate musician achieved in all three is rare indeed.

This is not HIGH FIDELITY's first brush with Bartók; longtime readers will recall Alfred Frankenstein's October 1956 discography. That issue brought to light—on its cover, no less—Robert Berény's



The second of Bartók's *Seven Sketches* for piano, "Seesaw," further captioned, "In memoriam perpetuum horiarum 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 p.m. 16.II.1909"—in its dozing (un)final measures, an obvious spoof of "perpetual motion."

1913 oil portrait of the composer, previously thought to have been destroyed; in fact, as was subsequently determined, it had been stolen from the artist in 1915 and bought at auction following the culprit's 1933 death. Ownership of the painting remains in dispute to this day, and our use of it involved us briefly in the interminable tangle of litigation that

has enmeshed the Bartók estate.

Nothing daunted, we take up the cudgel again. And again, the centerpiece of our tribute is a discography, this time by Jeremy Noble, whom we are trying to lure out of "retirement." (Inauspiciously, he was last heard muttering something about having let himself be talked into this.) No such survey short of book length can pretend to completeness, of course, but this one is sufficiently comprehensive that we will have to run to two installments, with the second to follow next month's celebration of our own thirtieth anniversary.

In a separate survey, David Hamilton discusses Bartók's own recordings and, more generally, his pianism. Paul Henry Lang, who witnessed Bartók's career both in midflight, in Budapest, and at its tragic end, in New York, here adds perspective to the unrelievedly bleak picture we've been given of the composer's last years. And finally—first, actually—we welcome writer and television producer Curtis W. Davis to share memories and magnificent photographs of his recent trip to Eastern Europe "in search of Béla Bartók." J.R.O.

Bartók's Homeland

Hungary's shifting borders never contained this restless nationalist.

by Curtis W. Davis

"A genius is a wonder, just like the other incomprehensible things of this world," says Professor Antal Molnár (below), ninety-one this year, whose friendship with Béla Bartók dates back to before World War I. Molnár was the violist of the celebrated Waldbauer Quartet that, in the first joint Kodály/Bartók concerts in March 1910, premiered both composers' First String Quartets. Of Bartók's work Molnár adds, "This was a revolution. At first the music was unintelligible. Around the thirtieth or fortieth rehearsal we began

to see the light. By the 100th we knew we were playing a masterpiece and its author must be a genius." The event marked Bartók's coming of age as a composer.

Born in Eastern Hungary in a town now part of Romania, Bartók spent his teenage years in Pozsony, the former Hungarian provincial capital. His widowed mother taught school, and the family lived in a second-floor front apartment of the square gray building (below) that still stands on Korház utca (Hospital Street) opposite a busy shop-

ping center. Pozsony, known to the Germans as Pressburg, is now part of Czechoslovakia and called Bratislava. After World War I, Hungary was stripped of much territory. But Bartók found such arbitrary boundary lines separating Hungarians from Slovaks, Serbs, Croats, and Romanians irrelevant. For more than thirty years he traveled across this fertile land, cultivated memories of these tillers of the soil. The province of Maramures (above) was one of his frequent stops.





Bartók was never at home in the stiff formal salons and studies of Central Europe (below). He preferred instead the rural villages, especially in his beloved Transylvania, where farmers and their wives could gather to sing for him, play flutes and fiddles, and tell tales. He took all this down on his Edison recorder, accumulating nearly 8,000 cylinders between 1905 and 1936 (of which some 4,500 survive). He carted his precious blanks over many miles of rocky, rut-gouged roads and returned home to transcribe the music in meticu-

lous notation (next page). He also took along a camera to record a wealth of images, some of which adorn later pages in this issue.

Near Körösfő, north of Cluj in Romania, lives Kata Marton Ambrusné (below), at eighty-two one of the last survivors among those who sang for Bartók. It was in Körösfő that he had his elaborately carved peasant furniture made in 1907, and the woodworking craft is still expertly practiced there. I cannot forget the old woman's friendliness—we called her familiarly “Kata-

neny”—or her fine voice and strong embrace. Nor will I forget the taste of her golden chicken-barley soup served on the undecorated porch of her plain wooden home; the railing served as our table, while the fragrant odor of the grape arbor overhead mixed with that of the chickens, horses, and other livestock in a veritable Bartókian epiphany.

Farther north in Maramures, in Bogdan-Voda, stands a farmhouse whose family room (above) once served as a gathering point for villagers invited there to share their music with Bartók.





These pictures, and the associated memories, are the product of an expedition I undertook to Hungary last summer to retrace just a few of Bartók's steps as part of the production of a film documentary I was writing and directing—a coproduction with the CBC, Toronto, and MTV, Budapest—to commemorate his centenary. My thoughts turned again and again to the heartbreak he must have felt upon deciding to leave Hungary at the outbreak of World War II. I often thought, too, of the cemetery we visited in Maramures (below), which to me symbolizes that living culture of

which he preserved so much in the nick of time.

Bartók wrote in virtually every form, and the Hungarian Children's Choir (above) sings many of his subtly complex reworkings of songs about bread baking, courtship, and sorrow. The value of his masterpieces is immense, but his legacy is greater still, for he was nourished by the oldest and deepest roots of his people, absorbing and giving back in his music the essence of that great heritage. "The people of the world recognize themselves in this music," says Yehudi Menuhin, to which

Prof. Molnár would add, "Bartók wanted to raise the whole of mankind to that level where there is no more poverty or starvation, where people do not kill other people. If we analyze his art deeply, we will find that this is its final meaning." **MF**

*Curtis Davis served as coproducer and principal writer of the recent television series *The Music of Man* and, together with Yehudi Menuhin, wrote the accompanying book. He is currently working on a biography of Leopold Stokowski.*



Bartók at Columbia

The proud pilgrim's troubled final years as seen by one who tried—with partial success—to help.
by Paul Henry Lang



Nicholas Murray Butler (center), Columbia University president, with the November 1940 recipients of honorary doctorates (from left): French historian Paul Hazard, American physicist Karl T. Compton, British jurist Sir Cecil Thomas Carr, and Bartók.

It sometimes appears that man's worst scourges are not accidental catastrophes that engulf us indiscriminately, but tragedies measured to each of us individually, tragedies that complete our own little destinies. Something of the kind can be seen in the fate of Béla Bartók. His was a strong soul in a body frail but intense, with penetrating bright eyes, lively gestures, precise and ready words, always alert and courageous, as if the whole man were the blade of intelligence drawn from its sheath. Both war and injustice—and his firm response—rudely disrupted his life's course.

Bartók started his career at a time and place auspicious for a young and gifted musician. At the turn of the century there still existed in Central Europe, notably in Hungary, a great liberal tradition that nourished the arts. Wealth and fame seldom companion the service of serious and forward-looking art, but in those days an artist and scholar could indeed live and work in peace, his activity sanctioned even by officialdom. Though as a "radically modern" composer Bar-

tók did meet opposition—often violent—he steadily rose in status; some of his compositions were published, his concert tours were successful, and he became professor of piano at the Royal Academy of Music in Budapest. Universal Edition of Vienna welcomed him into a company that would come to include the elite of twentieth-century music: Mahler, Schoenberg, and other leading lights of the age.

Acclaim greeted not only the creative artist and the piano virtuoso, but also the pathbreaking scholar, the folklorist, who attacked a vast fortress of misconceptions. He demolished bit by bit the picture the world had of Hungarian music as reflected in the Hungarian dances, rhapsodies, *csárdás* scenes, and other fabricated urban export articles. By collecting, transcribing, and publishing in impeccably researched and annotated collections the unspoiled music of the peasantry, he revealed the true national heritage. This was iconoclasm, albeit in the best sense of the word, and it did not sit well with many

people, especially when he explored the music of Czechoslovakia, Romania, and other neighboring nations then regarded as enemies of a Hungary dismembered by the treaty of Trianon. At the outbreak of the Second World War, his position in Hungarian and European music was so assured that nothing could hurt him. So why was it that he left the security of Budapest and set sail for the New World, arriving in New York in October 1940 as a little-appreciated and impecunious refugee?

A man can be characterized by the relationship of his intellectual and moral qualities; when equally elevated, they are in balance, yielding a rare integrity and nobility. Such a noble mind was Bartók's: He could see the truth and had the courage to hew to it and to speak it. And when the evils of Nazism plunged Europe, and subsequently the entire world, into misery and anguish, he voluntarily relinquished his prominent position, because he refused to have commerce with the legions of hatred and destruction. Had he but taken a passive

attitude, like Richard Strauss, he could have remained the commanding musical figure in Hungary, for he could not have been denounced as a *Kulturbolshevik* or non-Aryan. But he refused to condone evil, raised his voice in the defense of friends and colleagues now hunted and humiliated, forbade that his works be performed in Germany, and chose exile in defense of principle.

The man who arrived in New York was a little-known pilgrim. It is sadly ironical and not a little uncomfortable to recall that the New York newspapers, announcing the arrival of several musicians seeking refuge in this country, casually mentioned his name as a "Hungarian pianist and composer," singling out from the group Vladimir Golschmann, a perfectly decent but minor musician, as the most important new arrival. It was painfully clear that Bartók had to start life anew, from the bottom.

Yet—and this is not generally known—the difficulties he encountered were to a considerable extent of his own making; his integrity was so fierce that he could not make even reasonable compromises. There were enlightened musicians in this country who fully realized his standing in twentieth-century music, and there were offers of good positions—always to teach composition. His reasons for refusing are not altogether clear. He was, however, a "national" composer, his idiom outside the international current of contemporary music, and he may have felt that his own style would conflict with teaching composition in a foreign setting. I believe he was unwilling also to expose young students to so decided an influence, remembering his own apprenticeship at the academy under the thoroughly Germanic Hans Koessler—a period he later considered a false start. He wanted to teach piano or ethnomusicology, but the country was then overstaffed with piano teachers, while ethnomusicology was almost totally unknown in 1940. There was not a single chair in our universities for this discipline. We did have a few able scholars hidden in anthropology departments, yet anthropology itself was then a new discipline; an opening for a *musical* folklorist was indeed a rarity.

There was, however, a first-class ethnomusicologist at Columbia University: George Herzog, a professor in the anthropology department, was working in the field of American Indian music and linguistics. Based on this contact, a

Bartók's integrity was so fierce that he could not make even reasonable compromises.

genial conspiracy was initiated. Such fellow Hungarians as Fritz Reiner, Joseph Szigeti, and Eugene Ormandy got the money. Herzog and I, who had known Bartók since our student days at the conservatory, did the rest, aided by Douglas Moore. Bartók was appointed research fellow in Columbia's department of anthropology without teaching duties. The university had access to a large collection of Serbo-Croatian folk music, and he went to work with gusto, transcribing and analyzing it with a view to publication. (Columbia University Press, after agonizing delays, published the fine volume after his death.) All this had to be done informally and *sub rosa*, as this proud man would not accept anything resembling charity.

During his stay at Columbia, we "colleagues" had a very pleasant relationship with Bartók. Although he was an almost fanatically private person, he often visited the music department. We had small dinner parties at the faculty club or in our homes, and we hung on his words, because most of us realized that we were in the presence of genius. And when, at the piano, he would show us some fabulous rhythmic combinations he had found in his research (he very seldom spoke of his own music), we were enthralled. He, in turn, always prodded Herzog to show him the results of his research in American Indian music, which interested him very much.

Then things took a bad turn. By 1942 the funds gave out, and what with wartime conditions, the university felt unable to budget a nonteaching position. Performances of his work were few, as were concert engagements—and both, it was only later known, were pitifully underpaid. Our renewed efforts to persuade him to accept a position as teacher of composition were unavailing.

This episode in Bartók's life in America has been misinterpreted. Understandably, we did not want to reveal the background of his appointment, and Columbia was accused of ignorance and heartlessness, even though it graciously played along with the conspirators, bending the rules to do so, and made an appointment that was—to say the least—

unconventional. It also bestowed on Bartók the honorary degree of doctor of music, which pleased him very much. The chief source of the misunderstandings of his stay in the United States was a "biography" by Agatha Fassett, full of inaccuracies, lengthy quoted conversations that never took place, and all sorts of hearsay anecdotes. The 1954 edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, displaying editor Eric Blom's well-known dislike for everything American, called Bartók's treatment in this country "shameful," though the article admits that "of how [he] lived during his last years we still have no clear picture."

Beyond question, all of us, caught up in our own problems and trying to cope with wartime restrictions, failed to improve his lot, and we deeply regret this failure. ASCAP, in sharp contrast to the behavior of his publishers and managers, came generously to his assistance when apprised of the situation, but by then it was too late; leukemia soon claimed its victim. Those who see nothing but deplorable indifference toward a great artist overlook the difficult and confused situation—and Bartók's own inflexible resistance to accepting any contribution not earned. The privacy he so ardently desired became a loneliness no one could breach. Only after his death did Victor Bator, his Hungarian-born friend, mentor, and executor, discover the extent of his deprivation.

Bartók's persevering idealism counted on no reward; through exile and illness, living from hand to mouth, it kept him above the waves, sustaining his creative activity until his dying day. In the end, he succumbed, the soul vanquished by the frail organism that had never really contained it. The world that showers its gratitude on the fashionable idols of the day does not understand artistic and moral integrity of so stern a nature; his funeral was attended by a mere handful. Succeeding generations may consider him another of those geniuses an unresponsive society has permitted to perish, yet perhaps it was inevitable that a man of his character would, like many others, appear to be fate's victim. Whatever his hardships, however deep his disappointments, his art was triumphant. Even in the *Concerto for Orchestra*, composed in the shadow of death, that vernal energy that always characterized his activity still shows through, unbroken, without resignation—indeed, transfigured. **HF**

Bartók at the Piano

A skimpy but valuable recorded legacy surveyed.

by David Hamilton



Not given to public displays of whimsy (except in his music), Bartók hints at a smile in this 1901 photograph, and his subsequent doodles seem to confirm the mood.

Most of the great composers have engaged with music in more than one way. Many have also been performers, and that is still a lively tradition. As essayists and critics, composers have written, illuminatingly and sometimes scathingly, about their art and its practitioners. Many have taught young composers and performers. Not a few have undertaken scholarly research and theoretical speculation. Obviously, such compound attachments to music often interact, enriching each other. The performer's familiarity with an instrument stimulates the composer's imagination; the composer's insight brings a special authority to his criticism; the scholar's discoveries suggest new compositional techniques or materials.

No richer exemplar of the virtues

of such a manifold musical life can be found than Béla Bartók. He was one of the major figures in twentieth-century composition. He was also a pianist of the first rank. His studies in the folk music of his native Hungary and surrounding lands, a significant contribution to the then still young discipline of ethnomusicology, were absolutely decisive for the direction of his work as a composer. Although he considered composition unteachable, Bartók was for more than twenty-five years professor of piano at the Budapest Academy and, as an offshoot of this activity, made performing editions of much of the standard keyboard literature; his intimate knowledge of the instrument and its technique was surpassed only by his daring and inventiveness in wresting novel sonorities

from its hammers and strings.

The several aspects of this career are, for the most part, amply documented. Bartók's music is in print and has been performed frequently and well on records. (See Jeremy Noble's discography, following.) His essays and a good selection of letters have been translated into English (St. Martin's Press). His ethnomusicological works, only partly published in his lifetime, are still appearing; the melodies Bartók recorded and transcribed are essential evidence of a crucial and now irrecoverable stage in the history of the cultures he studied. And in the printed literature we find ample evidence of his prowess as a pianist.

It is worth emphasizing at this point that Bartók would have been a notable pianist even had he never written a

note of music; unlike Igor Stravinsky, for example, he was not simply a composer who concertized to proselytize for his own works and to pay the bills (though this last factor mattered to Bartók, too, especially during his last years, in America). At various times in his life, one or another of his activities predominated, but the piano had come first: He began lessons with his mother on his fifth birthday and made his first public appearance at eleven. At the Budapest Academy, piano and composition were equally important, and in Paris in 1905, Bartók entered the Prix Rubinstein competitions in both categories; as pianist, he was ranked second to none other than Wilhelm Backhaus, but no composition prize was awarded.

In the years before World War I, Bartók abandoned public performance to pursue his folk-music researches, but he resumed an international career as a pianist in the 1920s, even touring the United States in 1927. When he resigned his teaching position in 1934, after twenty-seven years, it was in order to devote more time to the ethnomusicological studies. In those last, sad years in America, the combination of insufficient public interest and his advancing illnesses put an end to concertizing by early 1943, after which Bartók worried primarily about the future of his wife Ditta, herself a pianist; the Third Piano Concerto was a legacy for her to play.

Testimonials to the qualities of his playing are not hard to find. According to Lajos Hernádi, a Hungarian pianist who studied with Bartók during the 1920s:

Whatever he chose to play, every single work sounded genuine under his fingers, from the ideal tempos and phrasings to the most lucid larger outlines of each piece. . . . His playing was devoid of all superficial, irrelevant flourish—Bartók was not a colorist when he played the piano. Probably this was the only deficiency in his playing, and it appeared only when—very rarely—he played works by composers like Chopin These pieces sounded somewhat strange, as if they had been carved in granite—but they were granite masterpieces all the same.

And an American who studied in Budapest, Wilhelmine Creel Driver, wrote in 1950 to Halsey Stevens, Bartók's biographer:

After studying Bach with him and hearing him play the suites and partitas, all other Bach playing sounds lifeless to me. . . . He was, of course, more at home with some composers than others. I am sure there has been no greater performer of Scarlatti, Bach, Beethoven, Liszt, and Debussy. . . .

Considering the period during which Bartók was active as a pianist—the first forty years of the century—and his subsequent reputation, we might reasonably expect his playing to be documented extensively in sound as well as in words. Alas, this is not so; his recorded legacy is skimpy indeed. (See accompanying box.) If by some miracle we should turn up a similar cache of recordings by Beethoven, it would contain, say: lots of dances and other short pieces,

Bartók would have been a notable pianist even had he never written a note of music.

some of them recorded more than once; an early piano sonata; a violin sonata and one of the violin romances; the *Kakadu* Variations; a live-performance recording of the *Archduke* Trio in which the players get badly out of synchronization in the last movement; a batch of his and Haydn's folksong arrangements; a few Bach preludes; a short Mozart piece; and violin sonatas by Handel and Mozart.

The comparison is not entirely fair, of course, because the catalogs of the two composers are rather differently balanced—Bartók wrote relatively few large-scaled works for solo piano and very many shorter ones, including those invaluable teaching pieces. Nor does one really regret the extensive recorded selections from the *Mikrokosmos*, that repository of twentieth-century rhythmic, harmonic, and textural devices; Bartók's resourceful playing is a source of constant wonder, a model of precision and security of rhythmic detail, clarity of contrapuntal lines, and control of dynamic gradations. (Occasionally, here and in other recordings, he varies the written score with octave doublings and other small elaborations.)

Still, it is disappointing that we have no recorded evidence of how Bartók played the Etudes, Op. 18, or the piano sonata, or *Out of Doors*. Not to men-

tion the piano concertos—but then no Bartók concerto was commercially recorded at all during his lifetime. (An air check of the 1939 premiere of the Second Violin Concerto has survived, published on Hungaroton LPX 11573.) Even though Bartók and his wife gave the premiere of the concerto version of the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion with Fritz Reiner and the New York Philharmonic in January 1943, it seems unlikely that any recording was made of this, his last public appearance as a pianist; in accordance with the timid repertory policy that prevailed for the Philharmonic broadcasts in those days, the concerto was omitted from the Sunday afternoon concert, the one that went out over the air.

What does survive of Bartók's playing in large-scale works, however, does come from live performances. Of these, the Library of Congress recital with Joseph Szigeti in 1940 is the most important. Their performance of Beethoven's *Kreutzer* Sonata is of an extraordinary sweep, intensity, and directness of musical purpose. Comparison with the Szigeti/Arrau performance of a few years later (Vanguard SRV 300/3, electronic stereo) forcefully demonstrates Bartók's mastery of inflection and of dynamic and agogic accenting, sharpening the music's expressive character and variety, and stimulating Szigeti to greater precision as well. The pearly filigree of the piano's right hand in the fourth variation of the slow movement makes one long for a Bartók recording of Beethoven's last piano sonata.

A feature of Bartók's playing that tends to raise modern eyebrows is his frequent arpeggiation, or "rolling," of chords not marked to be played so. This common stylistic feature of turn-of-the-century playing is perfectly acceptable in music whose regular metrical patterns are not thereby significantly obscured—at least, once one has become used to it. When applied, however, to Bartók's own music, the practice can be more than simply distracting, for his asymmetrical and irregular rhythms need to be sharply and unequivocally articulated; at several points in his Second Sonata and First Rhapsody, the composer's not-together hands distinctly impede musical comprehension—a case where the pianist has not caught up with the implications of the composer's music. In other respects, despite a few live-performance mishaps, these two performances are vivid and compelling; the final page of the sonata

is especially eloquent. Only the Debussy sonata is below the highest standard, with some of the "granitic" quality described by Hernádi; to be sure, the restricted frequency range of the recording probably affects the tonal qualities of this piece more severely than the others. For the Beethoven and Bartók works, this Vanguard set remains the indispensable document of the composer's music-making.

Such an epithet cannot, alas, be applied to the air check of the Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion. Some of the phrasings and articulations are of documentary interest, but this under-rehearsed, ill-coordinated, poorly recorded affair is hardly a fair picture of what Bartók must have intended this masterpiece to sound like. The Columbia studio sessions yield higher quality from lesser music. *Contrasts*, commissioned by Benny Goodman at the instigation of Szigeti, is a lively divertimento; unfortunately, the current Odyssey edition, in "electronic stereo," does not show either this or one-half of the *Mikrokosmos* recordings to best advantage. (The studio recording of the First Rhapsody registers the piano more clearly than does the Library of Congress version, but the performance is a shade less spirited.) CBS might fittingly commemorate the centenary with a two-disc set containing good mono dubbings of all its Bartók-plays-Bartók material, banding the *Mikrokosmos* pieces individually for the convenience of students and, if there is still room, filling it out with Szigeti's postwar recording of *Portrait* No. 1.

The best news about anniversary reissues, as of this writing, is that EMI has prepared for Hungaroton a tape master of all the solo material that it owns (the 1929 Budapest and 1937 London sessions), plus the 1930 session with Szigeti and a selection from the 1928 folksong recordings. I have been able to hear a sampling of this, and can report that it is much more vivid and open in sound, if also more noisy, than the dubbings of these same recordings on the Peter Bartók LP. The latter, hard to find, will still be valuable for its other contents, especially the lucid, subtly accented, pianistically beguiling performances of four Scarlatti sonatas (K. 212 especially entrancing for its feather-weight emphasis of the dissonant clashes), and for the free and powerfully cumulative reading of Liszt's "Sursum

corda." I hope, however, that we can someday have a new reissue of this material as well; there is more depth of tone in that Liszt, at least on my French Pacific 78 pressing, than is captured on the Bartók LP. As of this writing, it is not known what companies outside of Hungary may pick up the EMI transfers, but they are worth grabbing in whatever form they eventually reach the American market: The Op. 14 Suite and *Allegro barbaro* are the most important of the shorter works that Bartók recorded, and the folksong arrangements are played and sung with a unique combination of authority and abandon. In the cases where Bartók later remade certain works, the earlier recordings are often more vigorous than the late Continental set—though, at its price and for its *unicæ*, that, too, is surely worth having.

Bartók at the Piano: The Recordings

December 1928, Budapest: Hungarian HMV
BARTÓK AND KODÁLY (arr.): *Hungarian
Folksongs* (with various singers).
No complete reissue*

c. 1929: broadcast air check
SCARLATTI, D.: Sonatas, K. 70, 212, 427, 537.
BARTÓK 903

November 1929, Budapest: Hungarian HMV
BARTÓK: *Allegro barbaro*. Bagatelle, Op. 6, No. 2. Burlesque, Op. 8c, No. 2. *Ten Easy Pieces*: "Evening in the Country"; "Bear Dance." Romanian Dance, Op. 8a, No. 1. Suite, Op. 14.
BARTÓK 903

January 7, 1930, London: English Columbia
BARTÓK-SZIGETI: *Hungarian Folk Tunes*.
BARTÓK-SZÉKELY: *Romanian Folk Dances*.
(With Joseph Szigeti, violin.)
CBS M6X 31513

February 5, 1937, London: English Columbia
BARTÓK: *Mikrokosmos*: Nos. 124, 146.
BARTÓK 903

c. 1937, Budapest (?): Hungarian Patria
BARTÓK: *Hungarian Peasant Songs*: Nos. 7-12, 14, 15. *Nine Little Pieces*: "Air"; "Tambourine." *Petite Suite*: No. 6. "Bagpipes." Three Rondos on Folk Tunes: No. 1. LISZT: *Années de pèlerinage*, Third Year: "Sursum corda."
BARTÓK 903

c. 1938: broadcast air check
BARTÓK: *For Children*: Nos. 3, 4, 6, 10, 12, 13, 15, 18, 19, 21. ** *Ten Easy Pieces*: "Evening in the Country"; "Bear Dance."
TURNABOUT TV 4159 (op)

April 13, 1940, Library of Congress, Washington: recital
BEEHOVEN: Violin Sonata No. 9 (*Kreutzer*).
DEBUSSY: Violin Sonata. BARTÓK: Violin

A legacy that is inadequate in terms of what might have been, Bartók's recordings are nonetheless essential supplements to our image of the man. The significance and authority of his recordings of his own music go without saying, of course, but his recordings of music by other composers are perhaps the most revelatory of his mind and spirit. This is not entirely paradoxical; playing his own music, he draws on aspects of himself that are already pretty clear in the music to begin with, whereas the music of others summons up different facets of his personality. Thus it is that, after hearing the entire Bartók discography, my most vivid and telling impressions are of the intellectual and expressive thrust of the *Kreutzer* Sonata, the sonority of the Liszt piece, the tonal wizardry of the Scarlatti sonatas. **HF**

Sonata No. 2. Rhapsody No. 1. (With Szigeti.)
VANGUARD SRV 304/5 (e)

1940, New York: Columbia Records
BARTÓK: Rhapsody No. 1 (with Szigeti).
COLUMBIA ML 2213 (op)
BARTÓK: *Contrasts* (with Benny Goodman, clarinet, and Szigeti).
ODYSSEY 32 16 0220 (e)
BARTÓK: *Mikrokosmos*: Nos. 94, 100, 108-9, 113, 120, 128-9, 131, 133, 138, 140, 142, 148-53.
ODYSSEY 32 16 0220 (e)
BARTÓK: *Mikrokosmos*: Nos. 97, 114, 116, 118, 125-6, 130, 136, 139, 141, 143-4, 147.
COLUMBIA ML 4419 (op)

c. 1941, New York: broadcast air check
BARTÓK: Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion (with Ditta Pásztory Bartók, piano; Harry I. Baker and Edward J. Rubsan, percussion).
TURNABOUT TV 4159 (op)

c. 1943, New York: Continental Records
BARTÓK: Bagatelle, Op. 6, No. 2. *Three Hungarian Folk Tunes*. *Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs*, Op. 20: Nos. 1, 2, 6-8. *Nine Little Pieces*: "Preludio all'ungherese." *Petite Suite*. Three Rondos on Folk Tunes: No. 1. *Mikrokosmos*: Nos. 69, 127, 145 (arr. for two pianos; with Ditta Pásztory Bartók).
TURNABOUT THS 65010

(op) out of print
(e) electronic stereo

* A few selections have been included in Hungarian LP collections; a larger sampling is reissued in the anniversary LP prepared by EMI for Hungaroton.

** Five additional pieces (Nos. 26, 30, 31, 34, 35) on the Vox 78-rpm edition have apparently never appeared on LP.

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"Béla Bartók, the mild-mannered Revolutionist," published in New York on the occasion of his first visit, 1927

Other Tributes

When National Public Radio learned of our plans for this issue, it decided to augment its previously scheduled Bartók programming with an hour-long special titled *Collector's Bartók* centered around some of the recordings discussed in David Hamilton's article. The broadcast, featuring *Contrasts* and excerpts from *Mikrokosmos*, will originate on the composer's birthday, March 25.

And among the many recordings of Bartók's music scheduled for release this spring, one significant reissue package that won't appear in stores merits special attention: a three-disc (two-cassette) set from Book-of-the-Month Club entitled "Béla Bartók: A Celebration." Pressed by Columbia Special Products, the discs contain not only familiar items from the CBS catalog (*Boulez Concerto*

for Orchestra, Bernstein Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta, Serkin/Szell First Piano Concerto, Stern/Bernstein Second Violin Concerto), but also the Szigeti/Bartók Library of Congress recordings of the Second Violin Sonata and First Rhapsody; though derived from Vanguard, the historical recordings are here offered in unadorned monaural dubbings. An attractively illustrated booklet includes an introduction by Harold C. Schonberg and exhaustive notes, complete with music examples, by musicologist Benjamin Suchoff, who, in his capacity as trustee of the Bartók estate, supplied many of the photographs in these pages. The album is available only by mail from Book-of-the-Month Records, Camp Hill, Pa. 17012, for \$21.95 plus \$1.50 for shipping. **HF**

Bartók Recordings

Part I: Early, Piano, and Stage Works

The patchy domestic catalog has its attractions, but the Hungarians get the paprika just right.

by Jeremy Noble

It is a comfortable misconception that the unimpeded interaction of public curiosity and the desire for reasonable profit will automatically secure the dissemination of all the music that is worth hearing. In fact, the larger the public, the more it resists having its preconceptions bruised; the commercial enterprises that service it tend, with rare and precious exceptions, to follow taste rather than to lead it. The result is that even the giants of twentieth-century music would be poorly represented in the record catalogs if it were not for individual enthusiasms: Robert Craft's for Schoenberg and Webern, Goddard Lieberson's and John McClure's for Stravinsky are the most obvious examples. Without the filial commitment of Peter Bartók, the founder of Bartók Records, and the more mixed but no less acceptable fervor of whatever authorities direct the Hungarian record industry, a centenary survey of Bartók on records would be a very patchy affair. Hardly any of the early music or the songs would be available, and only a single version of much of the music he wrote for his own instrument, the piano. So I make no apology for the frequency with which I shall refer, in what follows, to the (nearly) complete edition of Bartók's music on Hungaroton. And since these records are not listed in SCHWANN, let me give straight away the address from which they are available, in case you should have difficulty in persuading your dealer that they exist: Qualiton Records, 39-28 Crescent St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101.

In the survey that follows I have tried to keep to a generally chronological ground plan, but because a strictly chronological account would involve a lot of repetitive backtracking, I have grouped the works by genre. In this installment you will therefore find 1) the early works (excluding piano and vocal) up to 1912; 2) the solo piano works from Bartók's whole career; and 3) the three stage works composed between 1911

and 1919, which represent a summing up of the past and a turning toward something new. Details of the records referred to are grouped at the end of each section. "Sz." numbers, used in the text only to avoid confusion between works with similar titles, refer to András Szöllösy's work list; though not complete, it is the generally accepted Bartók "Köchel" and is easily accessible in, for example, József Ujfalussy's book on the composer and the *New Grove Dictionary*.

Early works

The earliest piece currently available on disc is the one completely orchestrated movement of a symphony Bartók wrote during his last year at the Budapest Academy of Music, 1902-3. The only feature that one might with hindsight recognize as characteristic is the opening ostinato, which later gets a

This photograph and those that follow were taken by Bartók on his expeditions through Eastern Europe; clearly his interest in folk culture went beyond the musical.



brief fugato treatment; otherwise the idiom of the movement sounds more like Dvořák's, though handled with a rather un-Dvořákiian economy of thematic material. (The young Bartók evidently knew his Brahms.) Far more specifically Hungarian are the two other pieces on the same disc, Hungaroton SPLX 11517: the symphonic poem *Kossuth* and the Scherzo for Piano and Orchestra (Sz. 28). *Kossuth* shows the young composer attempting (with only partial success) to harness his new enthusiasm for the Strauss of *Zarathustra* and *Heldenleben* to his passionate Hungarian nationalism. Much more successful is the scherzo, which was never performed during Bartók's lifetime, though he gave it the opus number 2; the hypersensitive young composer was so upset by a hostile early rehearsal that he withdrew the score completely. In spite of the title, it is a fully worked-out half-hour work, better integrated than *Kossuth* and more ambitious than the piano-orchestra version of the solo rhapsody. It has a better claim than the latter to be included in complete sets of the piano concertos, but apart from this disc, with soloist Erzsébet Tusa, the only recording available is György Sándor's (Turnabout TV-S 34618): A tougher, more strongly directional performance than Tusa's (and more than two minutes shorter), it is decently recorded, but coupled with a distinctly antique version of Kodály's *Háry János* Suite.

Another suppressed piece from this period, in which no problems of rival versions arise, is the piano quintet recorded on Hungaroton SLPX 11518. This time it was not hostility, but ill-timed admiration that led Bartók to withdraw the score; no doubt correctly, he interpreted its enthusiastic reception at a 1921 performance as a backhanded attack on his more recent music. Although a little diffuse, it is a perfectly competent and attractive example of late-Romantic chamber music, rather in Dohnányi's vein.

The Hungarian flavor is much stronger in the Rhapsody (Sz. 27), which proclaims its Lisztian ancestry from the very first bars. Originally written for piano solo (and so recorded by Gábor Gabos on Hungaroton SLPX 1300), it was soon expanded for piano and orchestra and has become more familiar in that guise. Of the three current recordings, I prefer Géza Anda's (coupled with the First Piano Concerto on Privilege 2535 333), which has much better or-

chestral playing and recording than Sándor's (coupled with a mixed bag of non-Bartókian items on Turnabout TV-S 34130). Tusa underplays the bravura that seems an essential part of the piece in her sensitive performance on Hungaroton SLPX 11480, but the other work here makes more pressing claims. Bartók's Suite No. 1 for orchestra (Sz. 31) is, of all these pieces, the one in which his Hungarianism (still unpurged of the *verbunkos* tradition) comes closest to that of his friend Kodály: Unusually extrovert and even genial, it could surely be as much of a popular success as *Háry János* or the *Peacock Variations*. The recording by the Hungarian State Orchestra under János Ferencsik sounds a little dim in comparison with Antal Dorati's recent version on London CS 7120; but although the Detroit Symphony's winds and brasses are certainly more virtuosic than the Hungarians, its strings are not, a fact that even London's rather over-resonant acoustic cannot obscure. Dorati also seems, on this evidence, no longer to devote as much care to precision of rhythm and dynamics as he once did, but most listeners will probably prefer the more glamorous London sound.

The Second Suite (Sz. 34), though most of it was written in the same year, 1905, is a fascinatingly different piece, withdrawn where the other is outgoing, mordant where it is genial. This may be why we never hear it in the concert hall and why there is no recording apart from Miklós Erdélyi's on SLPX 11355; but it may also be why Bartók came back to it as late as the 1940s, first arranging it for himself and his wife to play on two pianos and then carefully revising the orchestral score. Erdélyi's recording, with the Budapest Symphony Orchestra, is coupled with smaller orchestral pieces of a folkly nature, but the suite itself is a substantial work that merits acquaintance. The two-piano version is played by the composer's widow and Mária Comensoli on SLPX 11398; the loss of orchestral color is to some extent offset by the perfect lucidity of the texture (aided by one of the best-balanced recordings of two-piano music that I have heard).

The last of the suite's four movements was composed in 1907, the year of the composer's passionate involvement with the violinist Stefi Geyer and of the two works particularly associated with her. As is well known, the so-called Violin Concerto No. 1 (Sz. 36), which Bartók



dedicated to her (and which was not heard until after her death in 1958), shares its first movement with the *Two Portraits*, Op. 5 (Sz. 37); but whereas the second movement of the *Portraits* is merely an arrangement of one of the piano Bagatelles, Op. 6, a mockingly grotesque treatment of Stefi's theme that in no way balances the lyrical outpouring of the first movement, the second movement of the concerto is a large-scale rondo with many diverse elements, including references to the Andante. Of the available recordings of the concerto, there is not a lot to choose between the performances of Yehudi Menuhin with Dorati (Angel S 36438) and Dénes Kovács with András Kórody (Hungaroton SLPX 11314). Your choice may well be determined by the coupling: Angel offers the viola concerto, Hungaroton only one of the *Romanian Dances* (Sz. 47a) and the shorter of the two suites from *The Wooden Prince*, which can surely appeal only to obsessive collectors.

If you have the concerto, you may not want the *Two Portraits* as well, but they turn up on an attractive disc (SLPX 1302) also containing Erdélyi's performances of the *Two Pictures*, Op. 10 (Sz. 46), and the *Four Pieces* for Orchestra, Op. 12 (Sz. 51). The *Pictures* are not to be confused with the earlier *Portraits*; those were explicit representations of two aspects of the girl Bartók was, or had been, in love with, while the *Pictures* (*Images* in the French title) are imaginary landscapes in the tradition of Debussy, whose music was at this time (1910) having its fullest impact on Bartók's har-

mony and orchestration. For the *Pictures*, the choice is once again between Erdélyi, this time with the Budapest Philharmonic, and Dorati's record with the Detroit Symphony already mentioned; the former offers a clearer, if rather distant, sound, and the latter a glamorously wide frequency range and a good deal of unwanted hall resonance.

Any devoted Bartókian who neglected to acquire Eugene Ormandy's RCA recording of the *Four Pieces* before it was deleted, or to import Eliahu Inbal's Philips version while it was still available, will in any case have to rely on the Erdélyi record for this puzzlingly unsuccessful work. From its title one might imagine that this was Bartók's acknowledgment of recent musical events in Vienna (Schoenberg composed his *Five Pieces for Orchestra* in 1909, Webern his *Six* in 1910), but in fact his music has none of their aphoristic intensity. His score is still closer to impressionism than expressionism, and uncharacteristically diffuse.

It seems clear that at this stage of his development Bartók needed the discipline of a dramatic narrative to give his music cohesion and impetus.

[In the lists that follow, performing groups are indicated with appropriate combinations of St (State), P (Philharmonic), R (Radio), S (Symphony), O (Orchestra), and Ch (Chorus). Where a set includes more than one disc, the number is given parenthetically following the record number.]

- HUNGAROTON SLPX 11517—Scherzo (from Symphony in E flat); *Kossuth*; Scherzo for Piano and Orchestra (Sz. 28) (with Tusa). Budapest SO, Lehel.
- TURNABOUT TV-S 34618—Scherzo for Piano and Orchestra (Sz. 28). G. Sándor; Luxembourg RO, Cao. (Also KODÁLY: *Háry János*: Suite. London PO, Solti.)
- HUNGAROTON SLPX 11518—Piano Quintet. Szabó; Tátrai Quartet.
- DG PRIVILEGE 2535 333—Piano Concerto No. 1 (Sz. 83); Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra (Sz. 27). Anda; Berlin RSO, Fricssay.
- TURNABOUT TV-S 34130—Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra (Sz. 27). G. Sándor; Southwest German RSO, Reinhardt. (Also works by Honegger, Janáček, Stravinsky.)
- HUNGAROTON SLPX 11480—Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra (Sz. 27). Tusa; Budapest SO, Németh. Suite No. 1 (Sz. 31). Hungarian StO, Ferencsik.
- LONDON CS 7120—Suite No. 1 (Sz. 31); *Two Pictures* (Sz. 46). Detroit SO, Dorati.
- HUNGAROTON SLPX 11355—Suite No. 2 (Sz. 34); *Romanian Folk Dances* (Sz. 68);

Transylvanian Dances (Sz. 96); *Hungarian Sketches* (Sz. 97). Budapest SO, Erdélyi.

HUNGAROTON SLPX 11398—Suite for Two Pianos (Sz. 115a). Pásztory Bartók, Comensoli. Concerto for Two Pianos, Percussion, and Orchestra (Sz. 115). Pásztory Bartók, Tusa; Budapest SO, J. Sándor.

ANGEL S 36438—Violin Concerto No. 1 (Sz. 36); Viola Concerto (Sz. 120). Menuhin; New Philharmonia O, Dorati.

HUNGAROTON SLPX 11314—Violin Concerto No. 1 (Sz. 36) (with Kovács); *Romanian Dance* (Sz. 47a); *The Wooden Prince* (Sz. 60); Suite. Budapest PO, Kórody.

HUNGAROTON SLPX 1302—*Two Portraits* (Sz. 37) (with L. Szücs); *Two Pictures* (Sz. 46); *Four Pieces for Orchestra* (Sz. 51). Budapest PO, Erdélyi.

The solo piano works

The piano was Bartók's instrument in a more complete sense than it was for any major twentieth-century composer apart from Prokofiev. Plenty of other composers have been fine pianists, of course, but few have been so thoroughly involved with the whole tradition of pianism, both as a virtuoso mode of self-expression and as a body of pedagogical method. To Bartók both aspects were important from the start. The fact that he possessed a formidable technique did not alienate him from beginners' problems; if anything it seems to have made him more conscious of the need to provide the young pianist with purely musical challenges. And he himself would often include groups of these relatively simple pieces in his own recitals, as if to proclaim that they were as intrinsically musical as his more elaborate works. So I think that it is right, indeed inevitable, that both of the "complete" recordings of Bartók's piano music—Vox's (Sándor) and Hungaroton's (various pianists)—have included just about everything.

Hungaroton starts its series with a disc (SLPX 1300) on which Gabos plays two works not to be found in the Sándor set: the *Four Pieces* of 1903 (including an impressive study for the left hand) and the original solo version of the *Rhapsody*, Op. 1 (Sz. 26), which I am inclined to prefer to its better-known expanded form with orchestra.

Gabos has no rivals in these two works, but comparisons arise with the works on the second record in the Hungaroton series, particularly with the Op. 6 *Bagatelles*, in which we find Bartók exploring in miniature some of the new



technical ideas that his study of folksong was beginning to give him. Of the four available versions, Robert Silverman's (Orion ORS 74152) is scrupulously thought-out but a little lacking in spontaneity; there are also some pressing-defects on my copy. Tibor Kozma, on a mono record (Bartók 918), is crisp, serious, and rather lacking in charm. Kornél Zempléni (Hungaroton SLPX 1299) gives the gentlest and in some ways the most attractive performance, though his disc, one of the earliest of the Hungaroton series, has some pre-echo.

Sándor, in Vol. 3 of the Vox series (SVBX 5425/7), shows at once the strengths and weaknesses that characterize all his performances to a greater or lesser extent: a constant determination to project the music, combined with a certain waywardness about details of tempo and dynamics. It is true that Bartók himself said many of the pieces in *Mikrokosmos* could be taken at different speeds (though his own recordings stick pretty closely to the published markings). But I cannot believe that a composer who marked his tempo modifications so carefully really wanted much application of additional rubato. Nor can I believe that Sándor's constant insistence on turning piano into at least mezzo forte (particularly when "bringing out the melody") is what Bartók had in mind. To me the effect is overemphatic, utterly different from the aristocratic reticence and control of Bartók's

own playing. Nor can I accept it as necessarily Hungarian, since none of the pianists in the Hungaroton series seems to indulge in it. Is this not a case of the cook in exile developing a heavier hand with the paprika than he would have been encouraged to use at home? I don't know, and I don't wish to imply that the three-volume Vox set is not a remarkable achievement and good value for its very reasonable price. But I do think that the application of a single, strongly individual style to such a large body of music becomes wearing after a while—and also misleading, if it is the only one available. For those libraries that can afford it, I would think that the complete Hungaroton series (I shall continue to discuss the individual records below) would be at the least a valuable corrective, while private buyers looking only for a particular piece might do well to consider such alternatives as exist.

Loránt Szücs, who plays four of the sets from 1908–10 on SLPX 11335, seems if anything to exaggerate the reticence; Sándor certainly projects the impassioned rhetoric of the *Two Elegies* (Sz. 41) more convincingly, though he again seems overemphatic in the more modest *Sketches* (Sz. 44). On the other hand, Zempléni's unaffected simplicity of approach pays off in *For Children* (Hungaroton SLPX 11394/5), where Sándor seems too determined to put it across.

So far in comparing the two series it has been possible to balance the good qualities of each against the other, preference being partly a matter of taste; but with young Dezső Ránki's disc (SLPX 11336), we come to a pianist who combines all of Sándor's vividness of response with a much more refined sense of detail. This emerges from a comparison of their accounts of the *Three Burlesques* (Sz. 47), of the *Allegro barbaro*, of the Suite, Op. 14 (Sz. 62), and even of the folksy little *Sonatina* (Sz. 55), though Ránki takes its middle movement too slowly, I think. This record, which in conformity with the overall plan of the Hungaroton series also contains a few less important pieces, is one that I can recommend wholeheartedly as a model of elegant and vital playing. (Gary Graffman, incidentally, gives a nice, firm performance of the suite on Odyssey Y 35203, but the sound is a little archaic by present standards, and I could not recommend the disc for this piece.)

For its next record (SLPX 11337), Hungaroton returns to Gabos; fortu-

nately, on this disc he plays with more personality than he did on his earlier one, since it contains two of Bartók's most important piano works, the fiendishly demanding *Studies, Op. 18* (the pianistic equivalent of *The Miraculous Mandarin*), and the closely related but much simpler *Improvisations, Op. 20*, with their climactic elegy for Debussy. Gabos may not bring off the hair-raising difficulties of the studies with quite so much panache as Paul Jacobs on a fascinating disc devoted to twentieth-century studies (Nonesuch H 71334), but the details are firmer, and he certainly outclasses both Sándor (who makes unusually heavy weather of these pieces) and Noël Lee, whose otherwise attractive record (Nonesuch H 71175), also containing the suite, the Sonata (Sz. 80), and *Out of Doors*, suffers from a rather topky, disembodied sound. The *Improvisations* show that Gabos can combine sensibility with strength, and in the piano transcription of the 1923 *Dance Suite* he does everything possible by means of phrasing and touch to make up for the loss of the original's orchestral colors. (Silverman's version is more than respectable but not in this class.)

For her only solo disc in the Hungaroton series (SLPX 11338), Tusa is allotted two of the big works from Bartók's hard-edged postwar period, the sonata and the suite *Out of Doors*, both composed in 1926, as well as some minor ones. The first bars of the sonata dispel any doubts that she carries enough weight for them: Her phrasing is marvelously vivid in both strenuous and reflective music—a function of the musical thought rather than an applied stylishness. Apart from Sándor (dashing but not always precise) and Lee (put out of court by that flimsy sound, though his slow movement is more nearly in tempo than Tusa's), there is a good recording of the sonata by Gabriel Chodos on Orion ORS 73122; its only drawback is the now familiar reluctance to come down to a real piano, so that the tension is too unremitting. This seems a common fault in Bartók performance (spread by bad example?): It also afflicts parts of Stephen Bishop-Kovacevich's otherwise impressive record (Philips 6500 013) containing *Out of Doors* and the sonatina as well as the final book of *Mikrokosmos*, the set of graded piano pieces on which Bartók worked on and off for almost the last twenty years of his life. There are one or two points in Bishop-Kovacevich's play-



ing of *Out of Doors* where he scores over Tusa (a stronger left hand in the galloping last movement, for one), but he is hampered by a clangy, reverberant piano sound. No one is as good as Tusa, incidentally, at bringing out the one important note from each tone-cluster in "The Night's Music" without ever infringing its overall pianissimo—a feat no less remarkable for being unspectacular.

As for a complete *Mikrokosmos*, the choice lies once more between the extrovert Sándor on Vox (the whole of Vol. 1) and the much more intimate playing of Szücs (Books I-IV) and Zempléni (Books V-VI) on Hungaroton SLPX 11405/7; though Ranki's recording on Telefunken 36.35369 failed to reach me, I would have no hesitation in recommending it on the strength of his splendid record mentioned above. Finally, on SLPX 11320, Hungaroton gives us the two-piano transcriptions Bartók made to play in recital with his wife, Ditta Pásztory Bartók; here she plays them with Tusa. The two pianos are not balanced quite as well as in the recording of the Second Suite already mentioned, but the interpretation carries a special authority.

Vox SVBX 5425 (3)—*Mikrokosmos* (Sz. 107). G Sándor.

Vox SVBX 5426 (3)—*For Children* (Sz. 42); *Allegro barbaro* (Sz. 49); *Romanian Folk Dances* (6) (Sz. 56); *Romanian Christmas Carols* (20) (Sz. 57); *Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs* (Sz. 71); *Sonata* (Sz. 80); *Out of Doors* (Sz. 81); *Three Rondos on Folk Tunes* (Sz. 84); *Petite Suite* (Sz. 105); *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* (Sz. 110) (with Reinhardt). G Sándor.

Vox SVBX 5427 (3)—*Three Hungarian Folksongs from the Csik District* (Sz. 35a); *Fourteen Bagatelles* (Sz. 38); *Ten Easy Pieces* (Sz. 39); *Two Elegies* (Sz. 41); *Seven Sketches* (Sz. 44); *Four Dirges* (Sz. 45); *Three Burlesques* (Sz. 47); *Sonatina* (Sz. 55); *Suite* (Sz. 62); *Three Hungarian Folk Tunes* (Sz. 66); *Three Studies* (Sz. 72); *Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs* (8) (Sz. 74); *Nine Little Pieces* (Sz. 82). G Sándor

HUNGAROTON SLPX 1300—*Four Pieces; Rhapsody for Piano* (Sz. 26). Gabos.

ORION ORS 74152—*Fourteen Bagatelles* (Sz. 38); *Dance Suite* (Sz. 77). Silverman.

BARTÓK 918—*Fourteen Bagatelles* (Sz. 38); *Romanian Folk Dances* (6) (Sz. 56); *Romanian Christmas Carols* (20) (Sz. 57). Kozma.

HUNGAROTON SLPX 1299—*Ten Easy Pieces* (Sz. 39); *Three Hungarian Folksongs from the Csik District* (Sz. 35a); *Fourteen Bagatelles* (Sz. 38). Zempléni.

HUNGAROTON SLPX 11335—*Two Elegies* (Sz. 41); *Two Romanian Dances* (Sz. 43); *Seven Sketches* (Sz. 44); *Four Dirges* (Sz. 45). L. Szücs.

HUNGAROTON SLPX 11394/5 (2)—*For Children* (Sz. 42). Zempléni.

HUNGAROTON SLPX 11336—*Three Burlesques* (Sz. 47); *Allegro barbaro* (Sz. 49); *The First Term at the Piano* (Sz. 53); *Sonatina* (Sz. 55); *Six Romanian Folk Dances* (Sz. 56); *Romanian Christmas Carols* (20) (Sz. 57); *Suite* (Sz. 62); *Three Hungarian Folk Tunes* (Sz. 66). Ránki.

ODYSSEY Y 35203—*Suite* (Sz. 62). Graffman. (Also works by Prokofiev, Lees.)

HUNGAROTON SLPX 11337—*Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs* (Sz. 71); *Three Rondos on Folk Tunes* (Sz. 84); *Three Studies* (Sz. 72); *Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs* (8) (Sz. 74); *Dance Suite* (Sz. 77). Gabos.

NONESUCH H 71334—*Three Studies* (Sz. 72). Ja-

(Continued on page 53)



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cobs. (Also works by Busoni, Messiaen, Stravinsky.)

NONESUCH H 71175—Three Studies (Sz. 72); *Out of Doors* (Sz. 81); Suite (Sz. 62); Sonata (Sz. 80). Lee.

HUNGAROTON SLPX 11338—Sonata (Sz. 80); *Nine Little Pieces* (Sz. 82); *Out of Doors* (Sz. 81); *Petite Suite* (Sz. 105). Tusa.

ORION ORS 73122—Sonata (Sz. 80). Chodos. (Also works by Bloch, Franck.)

PHILIPS 6500 013—*Mikrokosmos* (Sz. 107), Book VI; *Out of Doors* (Sz. 81); Sonatina (Sz. 55). Bishop-Kovacevich.

HUNGAROTON SLPX 11405/7 (3)—*Mikrokosmos* (Sz. 107). L. Szücs (Books I-IV), Zempléni (Books V-VI).

TELEFUNKEN 36.35369 (3)—*Mikrokosmos* (Sz. 107). Ránki.

HUNGAROTON SLPX 11320—*Mikrokosmos* (Sz. 107): Seven Pieces for Two Pianos (arr. Bartók) (Sz. 108). Pásztorj Bartók, Tusa. Forty-four Duos for Two Violins (Sz. 98). Wilkomirska, M. Szücs.

Stage works

Like many other composers, Bartók seems to have reached a stylistic crisis about the time of the First World War—partly a matter of organizing large-scale works with a musical syntax that appeared to have been stretched to the breaking point, partly a matter of reconciling the exalted late-Romantic concept of the artist as Nietzschean superman with a world in which individuality looked like being swamped forever by mass movements and mass slaughter. Certainly the three stage works—the opera *Bluebeard's Castle* (1911) and the ballets *The Wooden Prince* (1914-16) and *The Miraculous Mandarin* (1918-19)—all proclaim the perfervid individualism of Bartók's attitudes at this time. For him quite as much as for Wagner a couple of generations earlier, the central fact was the genius' (i.e., his own) relationship to the world and, more particularly, the sexual

aspect of that relationship, about which each of these works attempts to make a large general statement. *Bluebeard* demonstrates the self-destruction inherent in the relationship between a creative man and even the most loving of women. (The published letters to Stefi Geyer come to mind.) *The Wooden Prince* purports to give the same kind of relationship a happy ending, with each of the parties purged by experience. With the *Mandarin*, the shadows fall once more: The exotic and elemental stranger is drawn to the sordid everyday world by his sexual needs; only in satisfying them can he find the peace of extinction.

Whatever we may think of the message of each of these works, they clearly meant enough to Bartók at the time to stimulate him to the largest, most ambitious scores he had yet composed, scores that draw on the whole of his musical experience. The intensity of feeling that underlies *Bluebeard* is such that for the whole course of the work he achieves a completely individual and convincing amalgam of the three main influences on his music thus far: Strauss, Debussy, and Hungarian folksong. In *The Wooden Prince*, probably because the relatively banal scenario did not echo his deepest psychological experience, that stylistic amalgam comes apart, like curdling mayonnaise. In the *Mandarin*, a new synthesis is achieved, but on a much more individual basis, with a new rhythmic and harmonic vocabulary from which definable forebears have almost disappeared. With these three works, spanning less than a decade, Bartók seems to have purged himself of the whole Romantic world view. Never again did he feel tempted to exalt subjective experience in this explicit way, except once, and much more obliquely, in the elusive

Cantata profana of 1930.

Interestingly enough, these three scores, crucial as they are to any real understanding of Bartók's development, remained almost unknown until a generation ago. He himself prepared shortened versions (the so-called suites) from the two ballet scores, but they met with little success in the concert hall. Only with the advent of the LP did the complete scores become more familiar, and if the number of available recordings is any indication, they must now be said to have arrived.

Not surprisingly, it is *Bluebeard*, with its opportunities for orchestral display and nuanced psychological portrayal, that has made the most headway. Currently there are at least six versions available; at the time of writing I have not yet heard a seventh, conducted by Sir Georg Solti (London OSA 1174, January). What is more, none of them is without good qualities, and one can choose only by pinpointing individual failings that might be perfectly tolerable in a live performance. Thus Dorati's newly reissued version, as Paul Henry Lang remarked in reviewing it last August, is marred by Olga Szönyi's shrill and unsteady performance as Judith. Since this version is obtainable only as part of a three-disc set (Mercury SRI 3-77012) containing all three stage works, it may be as well to say straight away that Dorati's accounts of the other two scores, and particularly of the *Mandarin*, are among the very best. Ferencsik's performance on Hungaroton SLPX 11486 is sung by two Hungarian singers of a younger generation; clearly they have grown up with the work, and familiarity has begun to breed sloppiness, an imprecision in rhythms, tempos, even notes that represents, I'm afraid, the digestion of a finely chiseled masterpiece into a repertory work. The very full (even by Hungaroton's generous standards) annotations, though, contain a lucid account by György Kroó of the work's psychological meaning—required reading for singers and producers, I think. The new version by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and his wife, Julia Varady, on Deutsche Grammophon 2531 172 (August) is inconsistent in style, with Fischer-Dieskau himself turning in an intelligent but excessively mannered performance that somehow misses real dignity. The two most powerful versions are those of István Kertész (London OSA 1153) and Pierre Boulez (CBS M 34217);

of these I marginally prefer the latter, which I reviewed in some detail in February 1977, above all for the thrillingly intense singing of Tatiana Troyanos. But like Lang, I find that the elderly recording under Walter Susskind (Bartók 310/11), with Endre Koreh as an unforgettably majestic Bluebeard, still says some things better than any more recent version; it will be interesting to see what it sounds like if it is ever transferred onto a single stereo disc, since on two monos it is hardly competitive.

The Wooden Prince is also available complete in two first-rate versions, of which Dorati's (already mentioned) seems to me the more idiomatic and Boulez' (CBS M 34514) slightly the better recorded. In any case, both meet the virtuoso demands of the score more completely than the Hungaroton version (SLPX 11403) under Kórody. Although I do not really believe that such weaknesses as *The Wooden Prince* has are mended simply by truncating it, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski's coupling of the

suites from this work and *The Miraculous Mandarin* on Candide QCE 31097 is worth investigating if economy is vital.

If you can come to terms with the *Mandarin* at all, though, it seems to me that you will want the complete score; the so-called suite lops off the entire final section, containing the Mandarin's grisly *Liebestod*, a passage that clearly stimulated the deepest reaches of Bartók's imagination. Once more Boulez (CBS M 31368) and Dorati are close rivals, outclassing the performance on Hungaroton SLPX 11319. This time my preference would go to Dorati, who sustains the work's ferocity better and keeps its impetus even through that disintegrative final section. As a footnote, I should mention that Solti's recording of the suite (London CS 6783) is just about unbeatable as far as it goes, with every lurid gesture honed to a razor's edge. But I shall come back to that record when I consider the various versions of the wonderfully contrasted work with which it is coupled, the *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*.

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- HUNGAROTON SLPX 11486—*Bluebeard's Castle* (Sz. 48). Kasza, Melis; Budapest PO, Ferencsik.
- DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 172—*Bluebeard's Castle* (Sz. 48). Varady, Fischer-Dieskau; Bavarian StO, Sawallisch.
- LONDON OSA 1158—*Bluebeard's Castle* (Sz. 48). Ludwig, Berry; London SO, Kertész.
- CBS M 34217—*Bluebeard's Castle* (Sz. 48). Troyanos, Nimsgern; BBC SO, Boulez.
- BARTÓK 310/11 (2)—*Bluebeard's Castle* (Sz. 48). Hellwig, Koreh; London New SO, Susskind.
- CBS M 34514—*The Wooden Prince* (Sz. 60). New York P, Boulez.
- HUNGAROTON SLPX 11403—*The Wooden Prince* (Sz. 60). Budapest PO, Kórody.
- CANDIDE QCE 31097—*The Wooden Prince* (Sz. 60): Suite. *The Miraculous Mandarin* (Sz. 73): Suite. Minnesota O, Skrowaczewski.
- CBS M 31368—*The Miraculous Mandarin* (Sz. 73) (with Schola Cantorum of New York); *Dance Suite* (Sz. 77). New York P, Boulez.
- HUNGAROTON SLPX 11319—*The Miraculous Mandarin* (Sz. 73); *Dance Suite* (Sz. 77); *Hungarian Peasant Songs* (Sz. 100). Budapest PO, J. Sándor.
- LONDON CS 6783—*The Miraculous Mandarin* (Sz. 73): Suite. *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* (Sz. 106). London SO, Solti. **HF**

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Record Reviews

The New Pluralism

DG's cross section of recent music gives signs of an emergent consensus: Anything goes.

by Robert P. Morgan

The music of the past ten years or so seems to show composers moving toward a new consensus, albeit a tentative one. Characteristically, it is not a question of the discovery and acceptance of a new musical language or style, but of the emergence of a tacit agreement that all the technical and expressive means of the past are now fair game, to be used either individually or in combination, as the requirements of a particular conception may dictate. Whatever else can be said about today's music, there is nothing doctrinaire about it; the old pressures for consistency, limitation, and restraint are gone. The new pluralism admits not only all of the varied possibilities of past and present Western concert music, but also those of popular and folk idioms drawn from cultures throughout the world.

Of course it was not always thus. In the early 1950s, the dogmas of serialism and indeterminacy held virtually exclusive sway among the more progressive young composers. And at the time, these two approaches seemed irreconcilably opposed: On the one hand a rigorous, quasi-scientific method of mathematical exactitude, on the other an essentially intuitive one with a decidedly irrational flavor. Perhaps the single most significant development of the postwar years was the gradual realization by composers of both stripes that serialism and indeterminacy can be considered simply opposite extremes of an ultimately unbroken continuum of compositional possibilities. This opened up a period of radical experimentation in the 1960s in which the previously ignored middle ground was intensively explored. To be sure, serialism and indeterminacy were not discarded, but incorporated into a wider and more diverse range of compositional interests that encompassed textural music, trance music, quotation, collage, etc.

The 1970s brought no fundamental



Toru Takemitsu
Master of understatement and restraint

changes in compositional technique, only a shift in attitude toward the wealth of new possibilities already developed. As it became increasingly apparent that the number of foreseeable new compositional areas to be investigated was gradually shrinking to the vanishing point, more emphasis began to be placed on the integration of the techniques already available into a more consistent and communicative musical language. Recent music is more audience-oriented than that of the 1950s and '60s, but not because—as one keeps reading—composers have turned their backs on the radical methods of the immediate past. While this may be true of some (George Rochberg comes to mind), more typically composers seem interested in assimilating these methods and shaping them into a more direct and immediately accessible musical statement. Serialism is far from dead; indeed, evidence of its continued influence is everywhere apparent.

These thoughts were prompted by this large and varied group of recordings of contemporary compositions, the majority written within the past decade. Of the fifteen discs, all but two are part of a special release from Deutsche Grammophon. (Another reminder of the central role this label continues to play in the propagation of twentieth-century music; if only a major American company felt a similar responsibility!) All but three are devoted to music by Europeans. The exceptions, offering works by Japanese composers Toshiro Mayuzumi and Toru Takemitsu, reflect one of the most prominent characteristics of postwar music: its international—in-



Gyorgy Ligeti
Characteristic technical assurance

deed, world-inclusive—quality. Both men belong to the generation of Japanese composers who reached maturity in the years immediately following World War II and who became interested in creating a synthesis of Western musical elements with aspects of their own musical and cultural heritage.

Mayuzumi is represented by two relatively early orchestral works, the *Nirvana* Symphony of 1958 and the *Musical* Symphony, completed two years later. The former is the larger and more ambitious; purely orchestral segments alternate with sections featuring a male chorus in music derived from a type of Buddhist chant. Mayuzumi juxtaposes and reconciles the harshness and austerity of the chant with the delicate timbre developments in the orchestral music—reminiscent of a toned-down Varèse, though in fact inspired by the sound of Japanese temple bells—to produce a compelling image.

Mayuzumi's subtle transformations of color are taken significantly farther in Takemitsu's work. The four pieces here, all from the 1970s, are wonders of understatement and restraint. Working with most delicate manipulations of texture and articulation carried out almost exclusively at a soft yet varied dynamic level, Takemitsu produces a sort of latter-day musical impressionism.

The RCA and DG discs contain different versions of one composition. *Quatrain*, originally written for the Tashi ensemble (with which the composer has been closely associated) to perform with orchestra, was later reworked (as *Quatrain II*) for



Bruno Maderna

A conductor's profound knowledge of the possibilities of the modern orchestra

the chamber group alone. This is a beautifully paced work, which unfolds gradually through a process of continuously evolving variation. Although the two pieces are basically the same, the purely orchestral passages of the original version had to be extensively revised to render them idiomatic for the smaller group. Of the other Takemitsu compositions, I particularly like *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*, a highly poetic orchestral creation in which his ability to give shape and substance to the most ephemeral musical materials shows to especially telling effect.

Of the European composers represented, Bruno Maderna resembles Takemitsu somewhat in general conception, but achieves radically different results. He also thinks primarily in terms of rich textural fields punctuated by lyrical moments; here however, the lyricism projects a very emotional character and occurs within the context of an intensely dramatic overall structure. These orchestral works were all written within the five years preceding Maderna's untimely death in 1973. He was a conductor of international reputation, specializing in contemporary music, and his profound knowledge of the possibilities of the modern orchestra is amply evident. All three pieces contain some degree of indeterminacy, but the frame within which choices are to be made is carefully specified; the purpose is to use complex rhythmic relationships to build textures of considerable density in which the exact positioning of individual details is of secondary importance. Typical is *Quadrivium*, a brilliant vehicle for four solo percussion-

ists who play a wide variety of instruments. The orchestra is divided into four roughly equal groups, each associated with one of the percussionists; and the score develops as an extended exploration of the possibilities of combination and opposition in this quadratic arrangement.

Luciano Berio's *Coro* (1976) reveals yet another facet of the internationalism of recent music. Almost an hour long, it contains thirty-one relatively short sections (which tend to get longer as the work progresses), each featuring a text in one of several languages (Italian, Spanish, French, German, English). *Coro* is aptly named: The chorus dominates each section, although the vocal articulation seems at times to be influenced by what is happening in the instruments. The composition principally is based on expressive and structural features derived from various types of folk music found throughout the world. Berio does not, however, use existing folk tunes (as he did, for example, in his *Folksongs* of 1964). Rather, as in his more recent *Cries of London*, he attempts to permeate the entire conception with the spirit of folk melody. His ability to sustain a structure of this length is impressive; effective transitions between the individual segments prevent formal fragmentation, and points of climactic emphasis produce a coherent larger shape. (Moreover, the consistency of approach places the work at some distance from another extended vocal piece, his 1972 *Recital*, which quotes liberally from virtually the entire range of Western vocal literature.) Although *Coro* has its problems, notably a failure to provide sufficient contrast over

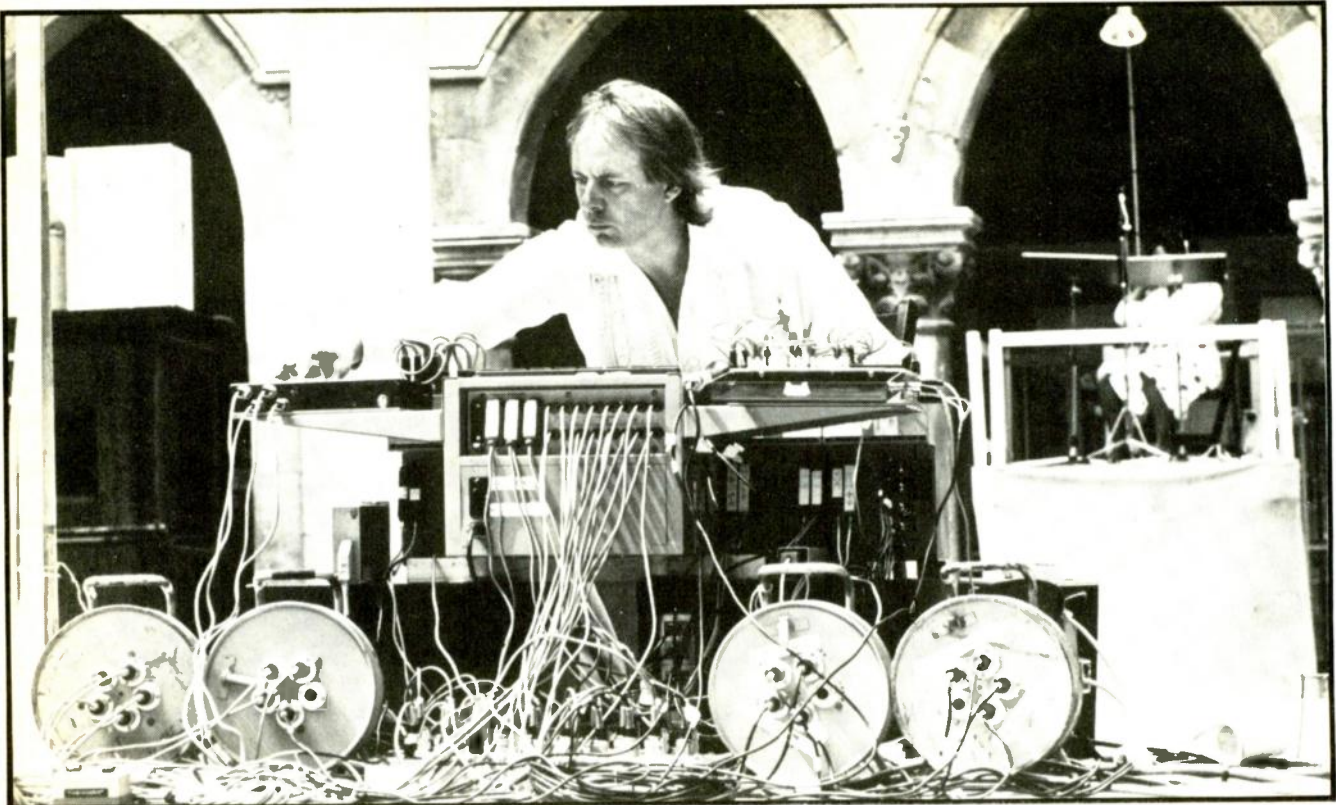


Bernd Alois Zimmermann

A logical integration of borrowed material

such a prolonged span, it suggests that Berio is moving in an important new direction—ultimately fruitful, I suspect.

Length becomes even more problematic in Stockhausen's *Sternklang*. Although this recorded version lasts more than two hours, it represents a considerably shortened form of the concert piece that consumed some three hours at its premiere performance in 1971. Another, more serious problem: A recorded rendition cannot reproduce essential aspects of the composer's original conception. *Sternklang*, written as open-air music, is scored for five separate small ensembles, each consisting of four performers, placed around a central percussionist at considerable distances ("as far as possible") so as to form the five points of a star. These groups interact, mediated by "sound-runners," who transport musical models from one ensemble to another; to coordinate it all, the percussionist (or "signalman") hammers out common tempos at appropriate intervals. The "models," relatively simple rhythmic and intervallic patterns, are repeated, chantlike, in a manner that will be familiar to those who know the composer's *Stimmung*; but whereas *Stimmung* was based entirely upon a single six-note chord, *Sternklang* uses five such vertical structures, all based on the natural harmonic series and performed in "pure" tuning. Thus, there is a good bit more harmonic variety than in the older work, although the rate of harmonic change is still extremely slow. Clearly, *Sternklang* needs to be not only heard, but seen—indeed, experienced as a total musical, spatial, and dramatic entity that aspires to become ritual.



Karlheinz Stockhausen: "Spiritual message" within a mystical framework

Much more successful is Stockhausen's *Sirius* (1977), an almost equally extended work for soprano, bass, trumpet, bass clarinet, and electronic sounds, based on the twelve "melodies of the zodiac" (one for each astrological sign). These melodies, originally produced by Stockhausen for *Musik im Bauch* (1975), were meant to be played by music boxes. (A Swiss company actually manufactures a different box for each.) But here they have texts and are intended for live performance. And whereas the original melodies were formally complete in themselves, here they function as the principal source for elaborate variations and transformations, each controlling one of the twelve sections of the central segment of the work. This segment is entitled "Das Rad" ("The Wheel"), as the whole set can be rotated to begin a given performance with the sign appropriate to the time of year. There are also two briefer sections, an opening "Presentation," in which each performer is "introduced," and a closing "Annunciation," during which the composition's basic message is verbally delivered. This mystical framework is typical of Stockhausen's recent output, as is the "spiritual message," apparently transmitted to earth from the star Sirius through one Jacob Lorber. I can't quite take all this seriously (although Stockhausen obviously does), yet at least in this instance, the musical results are impressive indeed. The unusual inventiveness of the complex and inter-

esting relationships drawn from the basically simple zodiac tunes gives rise to a work that reveals new and unexpected secrets with repeated hearings.

Which brings us to the keyboard pieces. The Kontarsky brothers' duo-piano recording offers music by Bernd Alois Zimmermann and Gyorgy Ligeti. Zimmermann, not well known in this country (he killed himself in 1970), is represented by his *Perspektiven* and *Monologe*. The former is in two distinct parts, dating from 1955 and 1956, respectively; written under the spell of Webern and integral serialism, both nevertheless reveal a growing interest in the organization of musical sound in terms of large-scale blocks rather than discrete, pointillistic units. *Monologe*, a later version of a 1960 composition for two pianos and orchestra called *Dialogue*, is more individual. The same year Zimmermann completed his magnum opus, the opera *Die Soldaten*, with which *Monologe* shares a juxtaposition of serially structured music with quotations from the standard literature. One of the first composers to think along these lines, he integrates the borrowed material into his own encompassing conception with a logic that is all too rare.

Ligeti's *Three Pieces*, entitled *Monument*, *Selbstportrait*, and *Bewegung* and written in 1976, are to date his only works for piano. All three movements are essentially light in character, yet they reflect the unusual level of musicality and technical as-

urance characteristic of this composer. The middle piece, for example—in translation, the full title runs "Self-Portrait with Reich and Riley (and with Chopin also Present)"—is an affectionate evocation of facets of the three composers (e.g., Riley's pattern transformation, Reich's phase shifting, and the whirlwind rhythmic continuum of the finale of Chopin's B flat minor Piano Sonata), combined with Ligeti's own techniques of canonic and textural juxtaposition, in a work of true rhythmic inventiveness and insistence.

Finally, Pollini's five-disc set of twentieth-century piano music can be considered briefly, since all of these recordings have appeared previously. The set covers a considerable range of music written in this century, including three works from the postwar period. Boulez' *Second Sonata* dates from 1948, the composer's twenty-third year, but already shows strong personal character. Though technically it owes much to Webern (who had then only recently been "discovered" in France), it also reveals the mark of Schoenberg in its extended scope and dramatic range.

The two works by Luigi Nono are more recent and were written especially with Pollini in mind. *Como una ola de fuerza y luz* (1971) is a large-scale conception for soprano, piano, orchestra, and electronic tape (the latter consisting mainly of manipulations of prerecorded female voices and piano playing). Dedicated to the slain Chilean

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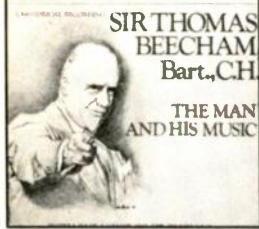
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revolutionary Luciano Cruz and based on a poem about him by the Argentinian poet Julio Huasi, this dramatic and moving lament builds to a climax of overwhelming intensity (presumably portraying the "wave of power and light" of the title). ... *Sofferte onde serene* ... , completed five years later, uses piano and tape alone. Although it resembles the earlier piece in its investigation of relationships between Pollini's actual playing and its electronic transformation, it seems considerably more neutral in character and more static in harmonic conception.

The other material, dating from the first half of the century, includes almost the complete piano works of the Second Viennese School (only Berg's early Sonata, Op. 1, is missing), the first two of Bartók's three piano concertos, Prokofiev's Seventh Sonata, and Stravinsky's arrangement of three pieces from *Petrushka*. This makes an interesting and varied group, one that effectively illustrates the remarkable changes in keyboard writing that took place early in the century (as remarkable in their own way as the more recent extensions evident in the Ligeti and Nono compositions). Especially well represented is the new "percussive" approach apparent in the works of Stravinsky, Bartók, and Prokofiev. But ultimately more revolutionary, perhaps, is the rethinking of pianistic possibilities found in the works by Schoenberg and Webern, both of whom, guided by a radically new conception of musical organization, produce keyboard distributions far removed from anything previously envisioned.

I have said nothing yet about the performances. Since all are quite good, I will confine myself to mentioning the few that stand out. Most impressive is the Pollini set, which illustrates this artist's ability to deal effectively with an extraordinary range of literature, meeting each work on its own terms and bringing to it a penetrating insight and an apparently infallible technique. (He also deserves mention as the only pianist I can think of who, having established a major reputation as a performer of standard keyboard literature, continues to explore a varied body of twentieth-century music.) Finally, the Tashi quartet and Kontarsky duo must be singled out for the remarkable care, precision, and sensitivity they bring to their performances. But all of these discs are well done, and collectively they offer an arresting view of a significant cross section of the music of our time.

MAYUZUMI: Nirvana Symphony*; *Mandala Symphony**.

Japan Chorus Union*, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Yūzō Toyama* and Kazuo Yamada*, cond. PHILIPS 9500 762,

\$9.98. Tape: 7300 841, \$9.98 (cassette).

TAKEMITSU: Quatrain; *A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden*.

Tashi, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa, cond. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 210, \$9.98.

TAKEMITSU: Quatrain II; *Water Ways; Waves*.

Tashi; various performers. [Max Wilcox and Peter Serkin, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-3483, \$8.98. Tape: ARK 1-3483, \$8.98 (cassette).

MADERNA: *Aura; Biogramma; Quadrivium*.

North German Radio Symphony Orchestra, Giuseppe Sinopoli, cond. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 272, \$9.98.

BERIO: *Coro*.

Cologne Radio Chorus and Symphony Orchestra, Luciano Berio, cond. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 270, \$9.98.

STOCKHAUSEN: *Sternklang*.

Various singers, instrumentalists, and synthesists, Karlheinz Stockhausen, and dir. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 123, \$19.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

STOCKHAUSEN: *Sirius*.

Annette Meriweather, soprano; Boris Carmeli, bass; Markus Stockhausen, trumpet; Suzanne Stephens, bass clarinet; Karlheinz Stockhausen, dir. and electronic realiz. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 122, \$19.96 (two discs, manual sequence).

LIGETI: *Three Pieces for Two Pianos*. **ZIMMERMANN:** *Perspektiven; Monologe*.

Alfons and Aloys Kontarsky, pianos. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 102, \$9.98.

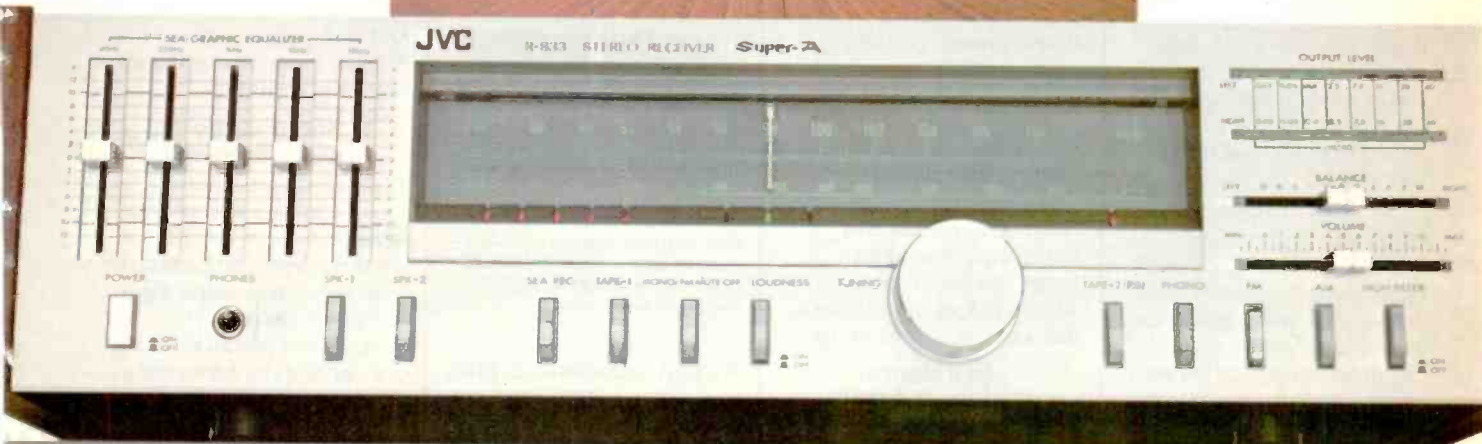
MAURIZIO POLLINI: *Piano Music of the Twentieth Century*.

R Maurizio Pollini, piano; Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond.*; Slavka Taskova, soprano*; Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond.*. [Rainer Brock and Karl Faust, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 229, \$49.90 (five discs, manual sequence) [from various DG originals, 1972-79].

BARTÓK: *Concertos for Piano and Orchestra, Nos. 1 and 2*.* **BOULEZ:** *Sonata for Piano, No. 2*. **NONO:** *Como una ola de fuerza y luz*; ... *Sofferte onde serene*. ... **PROKOFIEV:** *Sonata for Piano, No. 7*, in B flat, Op. 83.¹ **SCHOENBERG:** *Piano Works: Three Pieces, Op. 11; Six Little Pieces, Op. 19; Five Pieces, Op. 23; Suite, Op. 25; Pieces, Opp. 33a and 33b*. **STRAVINSKY:** *Petrushka: Three Movements*.¹ **WEBERN:** *Variations for Piano, Op. 27*.

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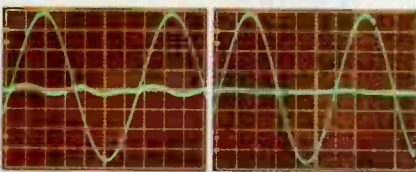
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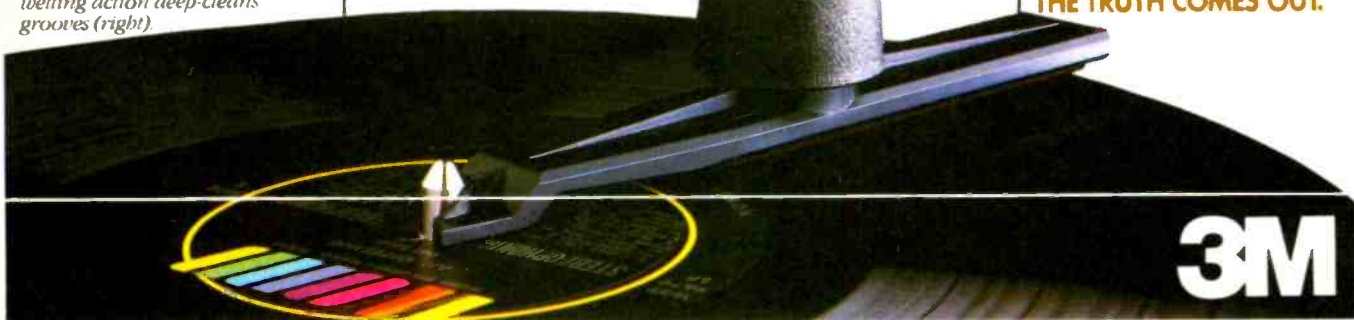
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BACH: Sonatas for Viola da Gamba and Harpsichord: No. 1, in G, S. 1027; No. 2, in D, S. 1028; No. 3, in G minor, S. 1029.

Catharina Meints, viola da gamba; Doris Ornstein, harpsichord. [Roy Christensen, prod.] GASPARO GS 212, \$7.98 (Gasparo Co., P.O. Box 90574, Nashville, Tenn. 37209).

János Starker, cello; Zuzana Růžičková, harpsichord. [Milan Slavický, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1111 2485, \$8.98.

COMPARISON:

Harnoncourt, Tachezi Tel. 26.35350

The performances of Bach's gamba sonatas by Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Herbert Tachezi recorded nearly ten years ago remain the standard by which others must be judged. (Originally issued on a single disc, they are now available only in a two-disc set with the *Musical Offering*—HF, May 1978). I've not heard the Jordi Savall/Ton Koopman versions issued in Europe by EMI—probably rather exciting—but among the alternatives currently available here, the new recording by Catharina Meints and Doris Ornstein is the first to pose worthy competition for the Telefunken set.

Meints plays three different viols: a 1723 Hassert, a 1743 Ouyard, and a 1677-80 Tielke. Each sounds lovely indeed, as does the Dowd harpsichord (after Taskin) used in the D major and G minor Sonatas. (The harpsichord heard in the G major, by John Leek of Oberlin, sounds just a bit tinny.)

The performances are impressively suave, with Meints fairly reveling in her instruments' velvety sonorities. Her playing is smoother and less strongly characterized than Harnoncourt's—though perhaps more labored—and she favors marginally slower tempos. I still prefer Harnoncourt ever so



Steve Reich in his most ambitious work to date—see page 74.

slightly but shall certainly give the new version further hearings. The recorded sound is quite fine. In the Second and Third Sonatas, the harpsichord occasionally overpowers the gamba; if the fault does not lie in the instruments themselves, it may lie with the players.

The debits of the Starker/Růžičková recording far outweigh its credits. The use of a cello in place of a gamba is not in itself fatal, for I have heard quite satisfying performances of these pieces with cello and piano. The problem here is that the players' conceptions of the music are jarringly incompatible—and neither seems really in tune with its essence. Producing an unfocused and unrelentingly tremulous tone that effectively smudges the music's outlines, not to mention its finer details, Starker plays in a heavy-handedly Romantic way even as harpsichordist Růžičková tinkles along metronomically in tight-lipped neobaroque fashion. Moreover, the recording makes the cello sound distant and blurry, while the harpsichord, all too prominent, is at once thin and boxy of tone. S.C.

BEETHOVEN: Sonatas for Violin and Piano (10).

Henryk Szeryng, violin; Ingrid

Haebler, piano. PHILIPS 6769 011, \$49.90 (five discs, manual sequence).

Sonatas: No. 1, in D, Op. 12, No. 1; No. 2, in A, Op. 12, No. 2; No. 3, in E flat, Op. 12, No. 3; No. 4, in A minor, Op. 23; No. 5, in F, Op. 24 (*Spring*); No. 6, in A, Op. 30, No. 1; No. 7, in C minor, Op. 30, No. 2; No. 8, in G, Op. 30, No. 3; No. 9, in A, Op. 47 (*Kreutzer*); No. 10, in G, Op. 96.

COMPARISON:

Perlman, Ashkenazy Lon. CSA 2501
BEETHOVEN: Sonatas for Violin and Piano: No. 2, in A, Op. 12, No. 2; No. 4, in A minor, Op. 23.

Arthur Grumiaux, violin; Claudio Arrau, piano. PHILIPS 9500 263, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 785, \$9.98 (cassette).

Henryk Szeryng began the international phase of his recording career as a protégé of Arthur Rubinstein, and one of their first collaborations was a coupling of the *Spring* and *Kreutzer* Sonatas for RCA (still available as LSC 2377; a subsequent account of Op. 30, No. 3, has been withdrawn).

Szeryng is a remarkably consistent artist—a fact readily discernible from his recordings of whatever vintage. (*Odyssey* and *Monitor* have reissued some taped for French Pathé years before his brief stint with RCA. His most recent work, of course, has been for the Polygram siblings Deutsche Grammophon and Philips.) Basically, his playing is that of an innate classicist: lean, aristocratic, and controlled, stressing shapely contours rather than pulsating emotional warmth. A highly finished technician—and in his peculiar way a musician of considerable temperament—he has never been one to storm the heavens.

His approach to the Beethoven sonatas is a bit more ascetic than Itzhak Perlman's, with the *sforzandos* generally more caustic and slashing, the sonority tighter and more focused; the divergences are highlighted by the reproduction: London's resonant and diffuse, Philips' more secco and compact. Nevertheless, the two cycles share certain important features: Both are essentially "modern" in their avoidance of wide tempo variation and flamboyant portamento, and both are textually scrupulous—using the Henle urtext, presumably. (Cf. my review of the Perlman/Ashkenazy *Kreutzer*, July 1975.)

I have never particularly responded to Ingrid Haebler's piano playing, but Szeryng's influence seems beneficial: For whatever reason, she plays with greater profile and intensity here, digging in more

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Critics' Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BACH: English and French Suites, S. 806-17. Curtis. TELEFUNKEN 46.35452 (4), Jan.

BARTÓK: Bluebeard's Castle, Op. 11. Sass, Kováts, Solti. LONDON OSA 1174, Jan.

BEETHOVEN, MOZART: Keyboard Works. Bilson. NONESUCH H 71377, N 78004, Feb.

BEETHOVEN: Violin Concerto, Op. 61. Mutter, Karajan. DG 2531 250, Feb.

BERG: Lulu: Suite. Der Wein. Blegen, Norman, Boulez. CBS M 35849, Jan.

BRAHMS, BEETHOVEN: Clarinet Trios. Pietserson, Greenhouse, Pressler. PHILIPS 9500 670, Feb.

BRAHMS: Double Concerto, Op. 102. Perlman, Rostropovich, Haitink. ANGEL SZ 37680, Dec.

BRAHMS: Piano Trios Nos. 1, 2. Schneiderhan, Mainardi, Fischer. BRUNO WALTER SOCIETY BWS 739, Feb.

DVOŘÁK: Symphony No. 7, Op. 70. Philadelphia, Ormandy. RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-3555, Nov.

GRIEG: Works for String Orchestra. Norwegian Chamber Orchestra, Tønnesen. Bis LP 147, Nov.

HANDEL: Sonatas for Two Oboes and Continuo (6). Holliger, Bourgue, Jaccottet. PHILIPS 9500 671, Dec.

HAYDN: L'Incontro improvviso. Zoghby, Ahnsjö, Dorati. PHILIPS 6769 040 (3), Feb.

HOLST: The Planets, Op. 32. Scottish National, Gibson. CHANDOS ABRD 1010, Feb.

JANÁČEK: Diary of One Who Vanished. Márová, Příbyl, Páleníček. SUPRAPHON 1112 2414, Nov.

LISZT: Hungarian Rhapsodies (7). Various. ARABESQUE 8011, Dec.

MASSENET: Le Roi de Lahore. Sutherland, Lima, Milnes, Bonyngé. LONDON 3LDR 10025 (3), Jan.

MOZART: Eine kleine Nachtmusik, K. 525; Ein musikalischer Spass, K. 522. Amadeus. DG 2531 253, Dec.

PURCELL: Music for a While. Deller, Christie. HARMONIA MUNDI FRANCE HM 249, Jan.

RUGGLES: Complete Works. Thomas, Kirkpatrick. CBS M2 34591 (2), Oct.

SCHOENBERG: Orchestral Works. BBC Symphony, Boulez. CBS M 35882, Jan.

SOLER: Keyboard Works. Puyana. MERCURY SRI 175131, Dec.

ARTHUR FIEDLER: Forever Fiedler. RCA CRL 3-3599 (3), Sept.

FERNANDO DE LUCIA: The Gramophone Company Recordings, 1902-9. RUBINI RS 305 (5), Dec.

EZIO PINZA: The Golden Years. PEARL GEMM 162/3 (2), Feb.

vehemently on fortissimos and not holding back on agogic accents. Her articulation is dryly expert, and her playing is mostly vigorous and unpretentious—recognizably Beethovenian. She maintains good basic rhythm, and virtually every movement is sensibly accented and structurally clear. The balance between the two instruments is exemplary, with the piano rightfully assuming an occasional lead.

Still, there is too much prosaic primeness. High-spirited movements, such as the finale of Op. 30, No. 3, show inordinate sobriety; conversely, moments of piercing introspection (the slow movements of Op. 30, No. 2, Op. 47, and Op. 96, most notably) tend to be neutralized by brisk, perfunctory tempos. The *Eroica*-like opening movement of Op. 12, No. 3, though strong in intent, bogs down in its own earnestness, and the first movement of the *Kreutzer* is not "Presto." The playing, never less than accomplished, is too often phlegmatic.

Some of my unkind words for the earlier installments in Philips' other cycle by Arthur Grumiaux and Claudio Arrau (9500 055/220, April 1980) I now cheerfully eat. A few problems remain, perhaps, as in the slightly choppy finale of Op. 12, No. 2, but that work's Andante and the galloping vigor of the Schumannesque Op. 23's first movement suggest the meeting of minds that seemed previously to elude them. These performances, in fact, have more thrust and buoyant energy than Szeryng/Haebler.

Philips uses the same annotations for both cycles, a sensible economy. H.G.

BEETHOVEN: Symphony No. 6, in F, Op. 68 (*Pastoral*).

Stuttgart Klassische Philharmonie, Karl Münchinger, cond. [Peter Springer, prod.] INTERCORD INT 160.828, \$10.98 (distributed by Brilly Imports, 155 N. San Vicente Blvd., Beverly Hills, Calif. 90211).

Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond. [Hans Weber and Hanno Rinke, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 266, \$9.98. Tape: 3301 266, \$9.98 (cassette).

Philadelphia Orchestra, Riccardo Muti, cond. [Christopher Bishop, prod.] ANGEL SZ 37639, \$8.98. Tape: 4ZS 37639, \$8.98 (cassette).

Here are three recognizably different views of Beethoven's countryside. Karl Münchinger's account uses reduced forces, but unlike Michael Tilson Thomas' with the English Chamber Orchestra (CBS M 35169, April 1980), it doesn't sound small; though the performances share a certain astringent clarity and edge, especially in the strings, Münchinger's thunderstorm is thoroughly commanding. Some of his

older performances seem overly genteel (his Haydn *Surprise*, for instance), yet this is a refreshingly brisk, warmhearted *Pastoral*, very much in the tradition of Schalk, Weingartner, Erich Kleiber, and Toscanini/BBC Symphony. The Stuttgart Klassische Philharmonie plays with passion and precision, and the reproduction is splendidly balanced and robust.

Carlo Maria Giulini's Los Angeles Philharmonic is not especially massive-sounding either. The strings are sweet and warm if not absolutely disciplined or polished, the winds and brasses thoroughly musicianly if slightly characterless. The want of virtuoso ensemble makes this reading sound less full and massive than Giulini's riper one with the New Philharmonia (Angel S 36684), despite its slowish pacing. In many ways it resembles the famous late-1950s Bruno Walter edition (Odyssey Y 33924) and probably uses many of the same players. While nothing goes seriously wrong here, Jochum's recent London Symphony *Pastoral* (Angel S 37530) makes a stronger case for the genial, easygoing approach.

Riccardo Muti's recent Seventh (Angel S 37538, July 1979) was listless and tentative in its first two movements but on the button in its last two. His *Pastoral* flows consistently, yet, as with much of the young conductor's recent work, phrasing is flaccid and incoherent. Whether due to amorphous acoustics, an overlarge orchestra still insufficiently attuned to his desires, or, quite possibly, his own lack of musical direction, detail becomes trivial and linear tension flags in the unfolding phrases. There are no stresses, good or bad, in the outlining of structure, bass lines amble along without providing support, everything sounds bland and lifeless. With his superior sensitivity to nuance and color but his seeming unconcern for rhythmic rigor, Muti reminds one of Georges Prêtre (who, however, had the good sense of steer clear of the classics).

All three conductors observe the third-movement repeat, but only Muti that in the first movement. His and Giulini's accounts are better than some; Münchinger's is better than most—a classic reading that I expect to return to often. H.G.

BERIO: Coro. For a review, see page 56.

BERLIOZ: Symphonie fantastique, Op. 14.

Cleveland Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS M 35867, \$8.98. Tape: MT 35867, \$8.98 (cassette).

COMPARISONS:

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Maazel's Berlioz is the wholly uninhibited arch-Romantic wildman who originally concocted the truly fantastic, putatively autobiographical, drug-dream program for his Op. 14 "symphony." It's now largely forgotten that the mature composer withdrew that program, retaining only the movement titles. And despite obsessive popular fascination with the programmatic fiction, musicians have always been far more fascinated by the score's strictly musical qualities.

Nevertheless, Maazel's old-fashioned approach (relatively novel in recordings nowadays) serves well for the last two movements: Rarely have the "March to the Scaffold" and the "Witches' Sabbath" achieved fiercer bite and impact or sounded more terrifyingly demonic. But the same vehement intensity makes for an emotionally heavy-handed first movement and a hard-pressed, inelegant second. By contrast, the third movement is straightforward, too consistently prosaic to capture the music's incomparable poignancy. Maazel observes the first-movement repeat while wisely ignoring that in the fourth and uses a cornet-à-pistons in the second. Actually, the cornet is here tonally coarse enough to explain the reluctance of many conductors to use it. For that matter, all the Clevelanders sound somewhat unrefined tonally, especially in the louder tuttis—on disc at least; I haven't yet heard the cassette.

The sole attraction here is the sensational impact of the two last movements. Elsewhere, there is no challenge to the sonic lucidity of Mehta's digital version (August 1980) or to the Gallic authenticity of Monteux, Munch, and (with a French orchestra) Martinon. The 1974 Davis account, however, combines Apollonian poetic eloquence, superb orchestral playing, and overwhelmingly dramatic and solid recording. It remains the first choice for most connoisseurs in any of its disc or tape formats—but especially in the recent Barclay-Crocker open-reel edition ("Tape Deck," November 1980). R.D.D.

DEBUSSY: Nocturnes (3); Jeux.

Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bernard Haitink, cond. PHILIPS 9500 674, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 769, \$9.98 (cassette).

DEBUSSY: La Mer. RAVEL: Ma Mère l'Oye; Rapsodie espagnole.

Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond. [Hans Weber and Hanno Rinke, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 264, \$9.98. Tape: 3301 264, \$9.98 (cassette).

Continuing his Debussy cycle, Bernard Haitink performs the *Nocturnes* with

his usual care and integrity—and with a sobriety these pieces can ill afford. The readings are disconcertingly static, especially those of "Nuages" and "Sirènes." One need only refer to the old Monteux/Boston Symphony recording (Quintessence PMC 7027) to find the qualities missing here: a feeling of ebb and flow, a vitality even in the softest and slowest passages. The surging quality of Monteux's "Sirènes" reminds one that this is, after all, a sea piece. Haitink's reading is less evocative, and his rather sedate choir of sirens wouldn't lure any sailor off course.

In "Fêtes" he is reasonably animated yet still too sober. The muted trumpet fanfares that begin the processional section are much too loud, with none of the requisite feeling of distance. He correctly presents the first trumpet note as a sixteenth, rather than the thirty-second one often hears; but as if to prove the point, that note is so completely detached from what follows as to destroy the magical atmosphere of the passage. And why do so many conductors, Haitink included, ignore the slurs in the trumpet parts here and in the succeeding woodwind and horn passages? Monteux was one of the few to heed them.

Jeux is among the most difficult works in the repertory to conduct, what with its frequent changes of tempo and the flexibility required within the various tempos. Haitink handles all this beautifully, presenting the score as a convincing totality rather than the series of short episodes it can easily become. This "tennis game" is enjoyable, though again just a bit too serious, missing some of the playfulness and spontaneity of Martinon's recording (Angel S 37066). The Concertgebouw Orchestra plays both works beautifully, and the recording meets Philips' usual high standard.

During their 1979 spring tour, Carlo Maria Giulini and the Los Angeles Philharmonic gave one of the finest live performances of *La Mer* I've ever heard—a warm, vibrant, surging, exciting account. Thus, I approached their recording, presumably made around the same time, with great anticipation, only to be bitterly disappointed; it has none of the qualities I remember from the live performance. True, most of the tempo and dynamic markings are scrupulously observed, and the orchestra plays well. Nevertheless, this rendition, virtually devoid of animation, falls flat. The famous triplet passage for divided cellos in the first section, which should be played scherzando, is pulled back and made to sound "expressive"—entirely out of character. And at many other moments throughout, the vitality of the music gives way to this kind of "expression." The great climax in

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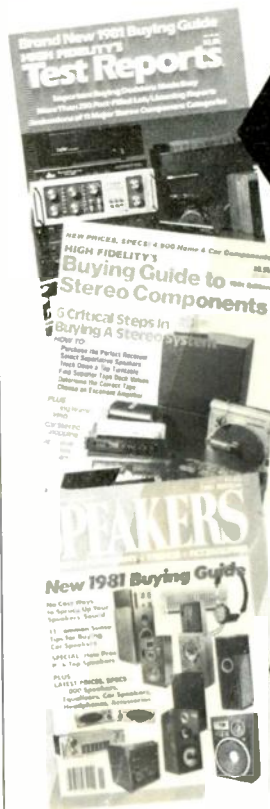
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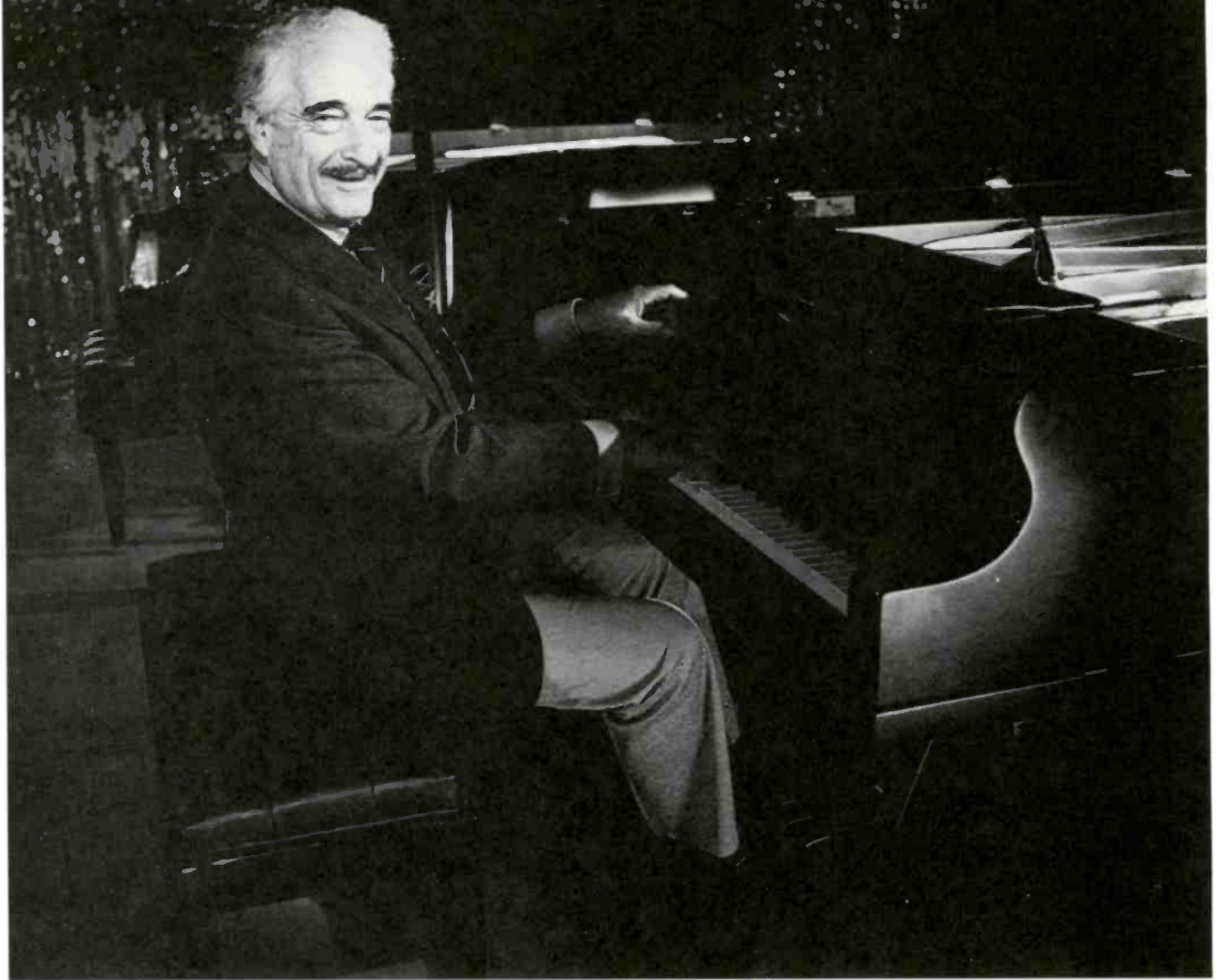
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HIGHLIGHTS OF MARCH

- Tuesday 10** The National Symphony under Rostropovich performs the premiere of a commissioned work, *Sinfonia Capriciosa*, by Peter Mennin.
- Wednesday 11** The first U.S. performance in this century of Cherubini's opera *Lodoiska* is given by Clarion Concerts in New York, directed by Newell Jenkins.
- Thursday 12** The Detroit Symphony embarks on a ten-day Bartók Festival commemorating the 100th anniversary of the composer's birth.
- Monday 23** A joint recital, with orchestra, is given by Joan Sutherland, Marilyn Horne, and Luciano Pavarotti at Avery Fisher Hall; Richard Bonyngé conducts.

Contributing editors:

Charles B. Fowler, education

Jack Hiemenz, television

Joan La Barbara, new music

Jacqueline Maskey, dance

Patrick J. Smith, book reviews

Dorle J. Soria, personalities

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Dylana Jenson: misinformation?

I want to correct the record of the story on Dylana Jenson which appeared in the December 1980 issue (*Dylana Jenson: The Silver Medal Had Two Sides*). On page 24, there is a statement which says, "Before Dylana left for Moscow, the family had decided that she would need a professional manager on her return. They fully expected that someone would be interested in taking over her career after the competition, and their expectation was reinforced when she became the youngest and the first woman ever to win at the Tchaikovsky. But on her return, no manager could be persuaded to take on the Silver Medal winner."

As a serious, professional manager interested in developing careers, I find this stereotyping of managers unfair. On August 24, 1978, I read an article in our local paper about the Tchaikovsky winners and wrote the following letter to Miss Jenson:

Dear Miss Jenson:

I want to congratulate you on your excellent playing during the Tchaikovsky Competition this month.

It is a thrill to hear about the brilliance of such a young performer. I wish you every success. If you do not have management and are considering working with a manager, I would very much like to discuss your future with you.

I have worked successfully with pianist Natalie Hinderas, tenor Rolf Bjorling (son of Jussi Bjorling), pianist Leon Bates and many others. We are enjoying success now with two young string ensembles, the Fresk Quartet and the Audubon Quartet

(they just won two international prizes).

Please call or write me if you are interested. If not, best of luck in your future and congratulations on your excellent showing in Russia.

Sincerely yours, (Signed Joanne Rile, Artists Management)

I received a telephone call and a letter from Miss Jenson's father. I later recommended her to a community orchestra in Boston where she did perform. But, her father told me at that time, he was handling her career and he planned to continue.

I have no quarrel with this, or selecting any other manager. I just feel it is unfair and deceptive to say "no manager could be persuaded to take on the Silver Medal winner." This may seem like a P.R. gimmick for Miss Jenson now, but it seems an unnecessary twisting of the truth to me at the expense of artists managers.

Joanne Rile
Manager
Philadelphia, PA

Regarding the article on *Dylana Jenson*. During September 1978, I was approached by telephone by Leo Jenson, father of Dylana, to accept his daughter for managerial representation. It was agreed that a tape of her Silver Medal performance at the Tchaikovsky International Competition would be forwarded for my consideration, although I do not usually accept those artists whom I have not personally heard. I listened to Miss Jenson's tape and was impressed enough to contact her father with my positive response. He went so far then as to submit a paste-up for publication as an advertisement in this management's section of the *MUSICAL AMERICA* Annual Directory for 1979-

80. Further, I suggested a performance, with fee, with a community orchestra in Philadelphia in order that I might audit Miss Jenson's talents in person during rehearsal and performance circumstances. Mr. Jenson and I agreed verbally that Miss Jenson was, in the meantime, to be included on our roster. Subsequently, I was informed by Miss Jenson that I would be, in effect, a "co-manager" with her father, necessitating a mutual sharing of commissions on fees.

Needless to say, yet I said it most distinctly, "I cannot accept you, Miss Jenson, on my roster under such conditions. Perhaps we should speak again when you have reached your majority and desire major management."

At a still later date, a national news magazine called me seeking confirmation of a story on Miss Jenson's announcement of a proposed "defection" by herself to the Soviet Union because U.S. managers were, supposedly, "not interested" in her American talent. The magazine had been in receipt of Miss Jenson's name as associated with my roster from a small printing during the short period of time we had been associated—roughly three weeks circa autumn 1978. I dispelled the notion that American artists managers had been disinclined to notice this prize-winner. Apparently, the same tactic employed upon this office was utilized elsewhere, according to a number of my American colleagues, and I relayed this information to the news magazine reporter who took no further credence in what seemingly was a condemnation of the artist's country and countrymen.

Such persistence, on the part of an artist, has its "pay-offs." It resulted in blind acceptance by *MUSICAL*

AMERICA's author Bridget Paolucci of the artist's "say so!" A telephone inquiry by the author to a number of New York based artists managements would have resulted in a more balanced estimation of Miss Jenson.

We pride ourselves on those artists we represent under the logo: "MAXIM GERSHUNOFF presents." For Miss Jenson to have been able to join a roster which includes the concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Joseph Silverstein; the American violinist whom David Oistrakh called "one of the world's greatest violinists," Oscar Shumsky; the concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic, Glenn Dicterow; and a young man who was recognized by the *New York Times*, at age sixteen, as "a major new talent!," Endre Balogh, would have been distinguished company indeed. As I have endeavored to illustrate, despite Miss Jenson's printed protests, such a management had been available to her. But our advertisements appearing in your Annual Directory, with regard to each individual artist represented, carry the following particular: "Exclusive Management: MAXIM GERSHUNOFF, INC." Unfortunately, we are restricted to maintaining a commission on artists' fees of twenty percent, unlike lawyer-managers of pop-stars who charge fifty percent and upward for their services in behalf of their artists.

I have never objected to being termed a "flesh-peddler," so long as the epitaph's deliverer is aware that I am also: a para-psychiatrist; travel agent; lender without usury; answering service; mail-deliverer; hand-holder; "best-friend" (for the duration of the contract): program adviser (oft-times ignored, but later regretted); publicity consultant (without

benefit of the fees that public relations counselors receive); fashion consultant; AND *I know my music*, having been educated at a distinguished American conservatory, the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, and further having had the opportunity to perform under such maestros as Reiner, Toscanini, and Mitropoulos.

In summary: please have your authors check their facts.

Maxim Gershunoff
 Manager
 New York, NY

Mrs. Paolucci replies:

When Dylana Jenson told me that no manager would take her on after the Tchaikovsky competition, I deliberately asked if she really meant no one at all. She reiterated that her father had approached "all managers" and that none were interested in promoting the second-place winner. Perhaps, as Maxim Gershunoff suggests, I should have checked on her statement by making a few phone calls. But there are dozens of managers in New York, and the chances of my contacting the very ones interested in Miss Jenson's career were slim.

I work with a number of managers in my career as a writer and a broadcaster, and, as many of them know, I understand and respect the difficult, many-faceted nature of their profession. This story was in no way intended to be a derogatory comment on managers. I am disappointed that some have interpreted it as such; above all, I am disappointed that Miss Jenson chose not to answer fully when queried about the events following her success in Moscow.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Miss Jenson's recitals and concerts are now arranged through Shaw Concerts Inc.; she is under the personal management of Greengrass Enterprises Inc.

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The Thouvenel String Quartet

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Shirley Fleming

"You have to feel that the group is more important than yourself, that you can spend your life developing in this way"

When an eight-day Ernst Krenek festival was organized two years ago by the music department of the University of California at Santa Barbara, one of the nuggets that emerged from that lively survey of the composer's disparate output was the cycle of the seven string quartets presented, complete for the first time, by the Thouvenel String Quartet. And just as many of the Krenek scores were unfamiliar, the Thouvenel itself was probably unfamiliar to all but hard-core quartet-watchers. If you happened to live in Midland, Texas, where the group is in residence, or if you happen to have caught individual concerts in Boston or Washington, their emergence at Santa Barbara might have been no surprise. But to many, the Krenek connection piqued curiosity. Finally, this winter and spring, New York audiences are learning more about both Krenek and the Thouvenel.

The ensemble—violinists Eugene Purdue and Teresa Fream, violist Sally Chisholm, cellist Jeffrey Levenson—have come to town with a Big Package: a Krenek eightieth-birthday series at Carnegie Recital Hall that includes six of the seven quartets (plus the Beethoven Rasumovskys and the Schubert C major Quintet). The final concert on June 7 will feature the world premiere of Krenek's Quartet No. 8, written especially for the Thouvenel and marking the composer's return to the quartet medium after a long hiatus. The Thouvenel, it seems, has enticed one of this century's important composers back to a medium he laid aside thirty-seven years ago—the best kind of service that those on the performing side of the fence can render those on the creative side.

When we met the members of the quartet on the morning after their first concert of the New York series, it was easy to see why Krenek has been responsive. The players are young, happy in their work, enormously enthusiastic about their "patron" composer, and determined to grow as a performing entity.

The Thouvenel was formed in 1975 at the University of Indiana at Bloomington, where its members were all engaged in graduate study. But the circumstances uniting them reach even farther back—and, in fact, might have indicated to an astute crystal-ball gazer that these players were in some sense destined to come together. "Three of us were born in Oklahoma," violinist Purdue points out, "and Jeffrey was born in Wichita, twenty miles from the Oklahoma border." The relationships become increasingly entwined, as one learns that violist Chisholm and cellist Levenson knew each other as children, and that second violinist Fream's sister studied with Eugene Purdue's father. The fathers of Purdue and Chisholm also knew each other—which may or may not have eased the way to matrimony: in any case, violinist and violist are husband and wife, and harmony, Krenekian and otherwise, prevails. (The quartet, incidentally, is named after a nineteenth-century French cello maker, Henri Thouvenel, and Levenson, who played a Thouvenel, reveals outside help in choosing this name for the ensemble: "We asked a psychic friend of ours about the best name, and she said there would be the letters T, H, U, V, and L in it. It's a very pretty name, and maybe a bit mysterious to people.)

The most important bond among the four players, as Levenson affirms, is the common ground provided by study at Bloomington. "It has helped a great deal that we all studied there. Our temperaments are similar." Another stylistic link was formed by work with the Juilliard Quartet during

the annual coaching sessions at the University of Michigan in East Lansing, and the Thouvenel members speak with special fondness of Juilliard cellist Joel Krosnick, "who is sort of our godfather." Krosnick will join the group for the Schubert Quintet performance that closes the New York series.

In the final analysis, of course, the strength of any string quartet arises from its own conviction and commitment, and Purdue speaks for his companions when he defines the quartet player's state of mind: "You have to feel that the group is more important than yourself, that you can spend your life developing in this way. You want to express something with wonderful colleagues, and four ideas are better than one. It becomes a very rich thing. I knew that for me, it was the only way to go."

The "going" for the Thouvenel has been accelerated by their unusual position in Midland, where they were invited to establish themselves as quartet in residence in 1977. They speak with understandable enthusiasm about this arrangement, which allows them the growing time so essential to any young ensemble. The idea came about through the initiative of Thomas Hohstadt, conductor of the Midland-Odesa Symphony, who met Jeffrey Levenson at an American Symphony Orchestra League management seminar. Midland "took off" with Hohstadt's suggestion, and private funds were generated to make the plan possible. The Thouvenel players occupy first chairs in the Midland-Odesa Symphony and find themselves in the happy position of building their own audience for chamber music in a city of 80,000 population. They have caught on quickly, and they are widely accessible. "We've played in banks, shopping centers, dress shops, at Christmas parties, and in the lobby of the Community theater. We've built up a core of supporters, and the audience now is really electric." The generous spirit of Midland's support is indicated by the fact that local patrons are paying for the current Krenek series in New York. "How many cities," asks Purdue. "would raise money for a group to play Krenek in another city?" How many, indeed?

The investment looks like a winner. The Thouvenel, by virtue of its Krenek specialty, now occupies a niche in the quartet literature virtually uninhabited. Krenek chose the group, via audition tapes, to present the quartet cycle at Santa Barbara, and the association has clearly been a happy one on both sides. The Krenek scores pose a formidable challenge, encompassing as they do the entire range of the composer's life-long exploration of various compositional styles. The experience of learning them has been a rich one—"What you do with new music carries over into the rest of the literature," says Purdue. "You try to get into some unfamiliar composer's mind and you dig, and it helps you to get into Beethoven or Mozart. When you do something for the first time, there's a creative spark. We formed the quartet for growth, and I think that is our foundation."

And what of the Krenek Quartet No. 8? "We haven't seen the score yet but we're intrigued. When Krenek writes for performers he knows, he is very insightful, he makes it a kind of personality portrait. We'll find out something about ourselves."

The complete cycle has been recorded on the Orion label, under the composer's supervision, and is scheduled for release this year.



Sally Chisholm, Eugene Purdue,
Theresa Fream, Jeffrey Levenson

Grove 6: A Dashing Debut

New 20-volume edition of a famous dictionary is the last word

Dorle J. Soria



Sir George Grove



On August 11, 1820, in England in the village of Clapham, an eighth child was born to Thomas and Mary Grove. He was named George and it is said that if he had been the eldest he would have become, like his father, a "Fishmonger and Venison Dealer."

Instead he was free to develop a variety of talents and interests aided by a capacity for hard work—a basic Victorian virtue—which brought him success in many contrasting fields, as a civil engineer who built lighthouses in Jamaica and Bermuda and who helped develop British railways; as a geographer and historian; as a Biblical student who inaugurated a Palestine Exploration Fund; as editor of *MacMillan's Magazine*; as a largely self-taught musician who contributed analytical notes to the programs of the famous Crystal Palace Concerts for nearly forty years and who was director of the Royal College of Music from 1882 until 1894.

But all this would by now be forgotten had not George Grove done on thing which was to give him musical immortality. He was the founder and editor of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, which first appeared in parts, then in four volumes, between 1877 and 1890, and which has remained, through successive editions, the most important work of musical reference in the English-reading world. George Grove was also a close friend of the Macmillan family, which has remained the loyal publishers of *Grove* from that day to this—over a century.

It was a very different musical world, that from which Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* emerged. Many things of the past were still to be discovered. Grove himself, with the composer Arthur Sullivan, had gone to Vienna in search of Schubert manuscripts, a trip which led to the finding of the complete *Rosamunde* music. Much of the future was still around the corner. Wagner was in his last years but Brahms had not yet written his Third and Fourth Symphonies and Tchaikovsky his Fifth and Sixth. Verdi's *Otello* and *Falstaff* were to come, as were Puccini's first successes. And much of the globe was still considered nonexistent. In that first *Grove*, musicians of Eastern or African origin were ignored because, as Sir George stated in his Preface, "all investigations into the music of barbarous nations" had been left out "unless they have some bearing on European music." In the editions to follow, the world retained to a large extent the musical boundaries set in that Victorian age, and even the Victorian code of morals persisted for a considerable time. An example is from an article on Richard Strauss in Volume IV of the 1908 *Grove* (quoted by Slonimsky) in which the editor Fuller-Maitland, and a leading critic, stated that Strauss's "passion for notoriety is in no doubt in great measure responsible for his choice of Wilde's *Salome* as the subject of an opera. . . . Music itself cannot be prostituted to base uses, though various qualities incidental to music may be turned to the purposes of pornography. There is plenty of passion in the work, and there is no doubt that on the average hearer it produces a sense of nausea."

It is, or was, 1980—another world, another period of music and of musicology. And when, on November 22, at the Starlight Roof of the

Waldorf-Astoria in New York, the publication of the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* was celebrated, the festivities were for a new-age edition, twenty volumes and over eighteen million words, of which ninety-seven percent were freshly written, international in scope and covering all Eastern as well as Western music, early music, folk music and jazz, and the place of music within life and society.

Never did a book have such a coming-out party. Some five hundred people were invited. And first, under the Persian-style ceiling decorated with little birds, a champagne reception was held. On a raised platform, suspended against the back wall, was a huge blown-up volume of the *New Grove*, showing two facing illustrated pages. On one side was a grand piano waiting for Pinchas Zukerman and accompanist Marc Neikrug to salute the occasion with Beethoven and Franck sonatas—the violinist being, incidentally, one of the youngest performing artists to be recognized in *Grove*.

"Greetings and Remarks" launched the evening's ceremony. The first speaker was Nicholas Byam Shaw, managing director of Macmillan Publishers of London, in whose offices editorial work on the dictionary was carried on for twelve years. He introduced the Right Honorable Harold Macmillan, former Prime Minister of England. He was followed by Stanley Sadie, editor of *Grove 6* and also music critic of the *London Times* and editor of the magazine *Musical Times*. Then came two of America's leading composers, Virgil Thomson and Leonard Bernstein. Checking in Volume 2 of *Grove*—marked "Back to Bolivia," which only meant it began with a German monastic composer named Konrad Back and ended with the country—we noted that Bernstein was given a page and a quarter whereas Sir Thomas Beecham, no composer but a baronet, has a page and a half and Samuel Barber two and a half pages. The Beatles (appropriately following "beat") are also honored among the B's and given a most serious treatment, such as: [*Sergeant Pepper*]"—"the music is mostly in E major, with the mediant and submediant providing the only other important tonal area and tension is directed through the work to a cathartic orchestral crescendo at the end." Beethoven, of course, receives his due: sixty pages. George Grove, who worshipped Beethoven and wrote a book about him and his symphonies, used to say, reverentially, that he was "living with Beethoven."

Iarold Macmillan, spruce and lively at eighty-six, hair and mustache almost white but his words rosy with optimism, affectionately called *Grove 6* "this new girl." He said he was glad to have left the "uncongenial world of politics" for the "happy world of publishing" and noted that five generations of Macmillans had by now been involved in the publication of *Grove*, which he called, with satisfaction, "no longer a British but an Anglo-American enterprise." The former Prime Minister is proud of his own American heritage. He had told one reporter this story of his childhood in London: He had asked his American mother why she made certain the curtains were tightly closed at night, and she said it was a habit left over from her childhood in Spencer, Indiana, "because then the Indians were right on the other side of



Stanley Sadie

“George Grove was a typical Victorian and the nineteenth century was the century of the great amateur. Grove practically wrote all of that first dictionary himself. He was what today we call a Renaissance Man.”—Harold Macmillan

the river.” He himself likes to look back to the period when *Grove* began. It has all happened “because George Grove was a typical Victorian and the nineteenth century was the century of the great amateur. Everybody felt they could do everything. Grove practically wrote all of that first dictionary himself. He was what today we call a Renaissance Man. I call him a true Victorian. He had no doubts about anything.”

Virgil Thomson, whose eighty-fifth birthday will begin a new round of musical celebrations next November, beamed and said he prized his *New Grove* and that “I’ll be swimming around in it for quite a while.” The champagne mood of the evening was only disturbed by Leonard Bernstein who, having asked permission to speak of a few “irrelevancies,” began by stating that the long white silk scarf which covered his shirtfront was not to be taken as “the new chic”; it was there because he had lost his buttons. He then, in an emotionally charged voice, announced to the audience of musicians and scholars that November 22, that day, was the date of the death of President John F. Kennedy, an anniversary being ignored by press and public. He went on, speaking politically and passionately, until at one point a man rose from his seat to shout him down. Then Bernstein asked everyone to stand in silent tribute to the memory of Kennedy. By that time many persons, including admirers of the slain President, were so irritated that they stubbornly remained seated. Quickly and diplomatically Maurice Macmillan, board chairman of Macmillan, took over the microphone and put the party back on its festive tracks. “This is a very great occasion for my firm and my family,” he said and introduced Pinchas Zukerman, who began the Beethoven *Spring Sonata*.

The next day we had a chance to talk with Stanley Sadie, the remarkable editor responsible for the remarkable *New Grove*. Dr. Sadie is a friendly man with a quiet voice which masks his enormous scholarship and drive. A lofty forehead is perhaps the only outward clue to intellect and erudition. In addition to bringing the sixth edition of the dictionary to fruition, he himself—a Mozart authority—wrote its long piece on Mozart as well as two of the opera sections, the general introduction, and the section on Viennese opera of the late eighteenth century.

We said it had been a splendid party despite the Bernstein interlude. He said: “If I had spoken of anniversaries I would have mentioned that November 22 was St. Cecilia’s Day—the patron saint of music—and also Benjamin Britten’s birthday. I’m sorry I forgot about that.” We thought of George Grove “who had no doubts.” Was he like that? He smiled and shook his head. “I have many doubts.” It had been a long pull, he said. There had been 2,300 contributors and a staff of fifty highly trained editors. More than seven million dollars had been invested, a heavy responsibility. And modern computer technology had been used, techniques which sometimes proved monster instead of magician. He ruefully recalled the time when “Haydn made our computer have a seizure.” And he told of the strange mail which used to come from far corners of the world to their London office, addressed to

Continued on page 27

The Joffrey's Back in Town

The big production is "Relâche," which set Paris on its ear in '24

Jacqueline Maskey



The Joffrey Ballet, absent from New York for two years—indeed, absent from almost anywhere, so dire was its financial condition and so bleak its prospects—returned to the City Center for a month-long season (October 28–November 23). Certainly the company—much of it new in membership, but with a few senior members like Denise Jackson, Gregory Huffman, Glenn White, and Luis Fuente reassuringly present—seemed in buoyant spirits, a state which it was able to communicate to the considerable audience it attracted to Fifty-fifth Street. If there is safety in numbers, then the new Joffrey is home free.

The Joffrey company reconstituted (by way of a lifeline thrown by the National Endowment for the Arts in the form of a matching grant, and some astute decisions emanating from the business office) is, except in matters of personnel, very little changed in aim, style, and variety of repertoire. As artistic director, Joffrey adheres to policies made plain in the past: "Significant" revivals (the Picasso-Massine-Satie *Parade* in 1973, this year the Satie-Picabia *Relâche*), a couple of new pieces by associate director Gerald Arpino (*Epode, Celebration*), productions of those deemed to be "comers" (Choo San Goh, Jiri Kylian). This season Joffrey also beckoned to the avant-garde with Laura Dean's *Night*, and boosted Marjorie Mussman's wispy *Random Dances* from Joffrey II into the big time. Admirable though this is as enterprise, the company did not entirely avoid the dangers involved in mounting so large, free-wheeling and eclectic a repertoire: the new pieces were in capital shape, older ones (like Ashton's *Les Patineurs*, which is now



Huffman and Danias in *Relâche*

danced in so hyper a fashion that one suspects something has been slipped into the skaters' cocoa) took on strange shapes and inappropriate values.

"Relâche"

The big production of the season was *Relâche*, which set Paris on its ear in 1924 when premiered not, surprisingly, by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes but by Rolf de Maré's Les Ballets Suédois. *Relâche* was set off as a flare in the Dadaist heavens by the painter Francis Picabia who also issued feverish communiques defining it ("Relâche is perpetual motion, it is life, it is the minute when we all seek to be happy; . . .) and statements meant to annoy those of conventional mind ("Why not ruin ourselves? Relâche advises you to be free-livers, for life will always be longer in the school of pleasure than in the school of morality . . ."). In his book, costumes, and

décor, Picabia touched on some relevant manifestations of pop culture still with us: the automobile (his décor is an enormous curtain of headlights), the cinema (René Clair contributed a brief film, *Entr'acte*), the celebrity (here with attendant papparazzi). Satie, that elderly bad boy, contributed a score perfectly attuned to Picabia's taste and himself appeared on stage wearing a bowler and driving a 5 HP Citroën.

In the current production, Joffrey manages to revive the Picabia-Satie-Clair contributions, but not Jean Borlin's choreography. This he entrusted to Moses Pendleton of the Pilobolus Dance Theatre, who comes up with something akin to the manic spirit of the piece cued to Picabia's cast of gorgeous girl (Starr Danias), handsome man (Gregory Huffman), a bucket-bearing, Legion of Honor-decorated fireman (Michael Bjerknes), and a chorus of men in evening dress. It is the latter for whom he invents his chief jokes—one can't call it choreography—using the group as an audience on stools down the center aisle of the theater, as a mobile on-stage line through which a push reverberates as a signal along a telegraph wire, as a willing staircase for Miss Danias, who steps coolly from hand to hand (the gentlemen's) on her way to glory. Amusing as these arrangements are at first sight, it is the lack of solid choreography which projects for *Relâche* a rather shorter performance expectancy than that enjoyed by the earlier piece.

"Return to the Strange Land"

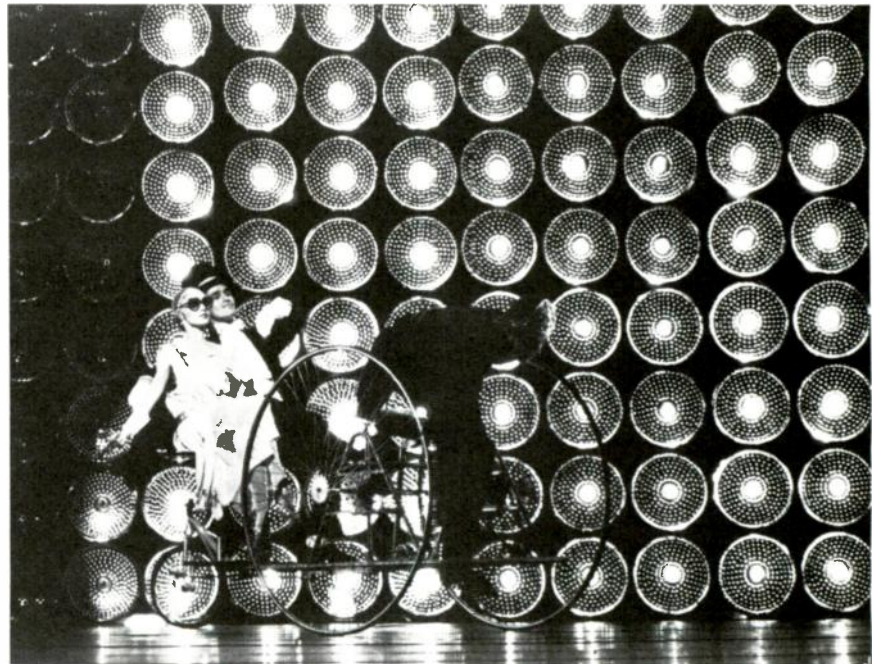
For the most part, the Joffrey repertoire, though large, was modestly produced, save for *Relâche*, the glamorous Cecil Beaton-designed *Illuminations*, and Joffrey's own *Post-*

cards, set to a number of Satie songs sung by soprano Brenda Quilling. An homage to Satie—the drop curtain by Joe Brainard featured allusions to the composer, his ballets, and even to his milieu in the scowling black cat advertising the cabaret *Le Chat Noir*—*Postcards* produced little that was cohesive as a ballet beyond a lyrical *pas de deux* danced by Denise Jackson and Ross Stretton and some waltz passages danced charmingly by the ladies of the *corps*. The men's solos—complicated and demanding—seemed by their very complexity removed from the ballet rather than an integral part of it. In sum, Joffrey's first ballet since the 1973 *Remembrances* disappointed as much as it engaged.

The best of the ballets new to the company slipped in with the least fanfare: Jiri Kylian's *Return to the Strange Land* (Janáček). Small in scale—six dancers in two pairs of duets and trios—the action of its individual sections was brought unerringly to rest in climactic constructions of sculptured fantasy. The piece hummed with an extraordinary tension maintained by the dancers. They were Gregory Huffman, Beatriz Rodriguez, Glenn Edgerton, Michael Bjerknes, Cynthia Anderson, and Ross Stretton, and magnificent is not too overheated a word to use in praising their efforts.

Clifford's Los Angeles Ballet

John Clifford in the middle '60s was making a stir in the New York City Ballet. Small, dark, swift, with a pugnacious quality which demanded attention, Clifford looked like a maverick let loose among the docile flock of the *corps de ballet*. Clifford didn't get fired; rather he got promoted, and with his excellent elevation and performing flair fell heir to a number of Edward Villella's roles, most memorably the "Rubies" section of *Jewels* and the third movement in *Symphony in C*. Restless and ambitious, he was given a number of chances to choreograph, and choreograph he did, usually with more



Michael Lawrence

The Picabia sets: some pop manifestations are still with us

confidence than clarity. Clifford in those days poured out steps like an uncapped gusher, using his friends and classmates in his ballets so that audiences became aware of the youngsters as individuals rather than as anonymous units in the *corps*.

Clifford has been since 1973 the founder-director of the Los Angeles Ballet and on the basis of that company's brief debut season at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (November 13-16) I'd say he's doing on the West Coast much the same sort of thing that he did in New York: pouring out largely mediocre ballets in which brief passages send out signals which indicate a talent, but one erratic in its development. Of the two-program series, I chose the less familiar: *Pastorale* (Bloch), a decent-enough Graham-rooted piece by Deborah Zall, followed by three Clifford works: *St. Paul's Suite* (Holst), a *pas de deux* for Laura Flagg and Reid Olson, *Les Amants* (Debussy), and *Charleston* (James P. Johnson), "A Ballet Burlesque of the Prohibition Period."

The major work on the program was clearly intended to be *Les Amants*, which began with the dancers

in a compact group indicating community, then loosening, finally shattering as the dance pursued its theme: love partnerships between the same and opposite sexes. While Clifford's approach was sympathetic to all combinations, the dances themselves veered strongly toward the banal, with only that for Bryan Pitts and Miss Flagg developed to the point of clear-cut emotional expression.

The weakness of Clifford's choreography is mitigated to a degree by his ability to spot a personal quality or technical accomplishment—like Johnna Kirkland's austere self-possession or Laura Flagg's rapier-swift jumps—and highlight it, or to recognize and give scope to qualities in a dancer hitherto obscured. Certainly he has done this for Miss Flagg, who has emerged as the company's leading dancer, one of unsuspected versatility and charm. Miss Flagg danced faithfully and facelessly for years with the New York City Ballet, but since joining Clifford has enjoyed the gratifying experience denied her in Manhattan: that of bringing down the house, which she does quite easily as a gum-chewing jazz baby on the loose in *Charleston*. **MA**

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Music in Our Schools: An Agenda for the Future

Three proposals, made herewith, could make a difference

Charles B. Fowler



March 9-15 has been designated by the Music Educators National Conference as Music in Our Schools Week, a national celebration of the import and impact of music in American education. The occasion affords an opportunity to take stock and to look ahead.

Music was the first art form to be incorporated into the public school curriculum, well over a hundred years ago. If its beginnings in the Boston schools were somewhat tenuous and limited to singing, it soon spread to other school systems and enlarged its framework to include instrumental music study as well. The growth during all these decades has been nothing short of remarkable. There is no question that today, music education is available in some form in every school system in the country. The quality of America's school bands, choruses, and orchestras surpasses by far those of most other countries in the world.

With that said, I would like to propose an agenda for music education in the final two decades of this century.¹

Music education should be democratized. It may seem like a truism to say that the study of music should be made inviting and accessible to every student at every educational level, yet it is a goal that has alluded us. While few music educators would disagree with the motto, "Music for every child, every child for music," many have steadfastly focused the music programs—particularly those at the secondary level—upon selective and restrictive performing groups and on teaching the talented.

It must be acknowledged that, in music, many students are eliminated early from the main events. The determined search for talent, though it may start within the general music study provided for every student in the elementary school, soon zeros in to concentrate on performance specialism by the secondary level. It's practically unheard of to offer beginning lessons on an instrument at that level, let alone to offer courses in music that meet *the interest* of all students. Music on the secondary level, for the most part, is a team sport reserved for the few who have already demonstrated that they know how to carry the ball.

Providing a broader curriculum that would open music study to all students would require that music teachers make their peace with the quality versus quantity dichotomy. Would proliferation of arts study move the arts toward mediocrity? I see the development of greater numbers of interested musical amateurs—and here I refer to listeners and song writers as well as performers—as a way to keep music in general alive and vibrant. When he was Chancellor of the State University of New York, Samuel Gould said, "I do not subscribe to the theory that a democratic nation, concerned for all its citizens, cannot work in the interests of excellence."

First and foremost, then, I believe that the agenda for music education must embrace a democratic philosophy and open the art of music to every student. That some students have music and others do not is blatant discrimination that should be eliminated in public education.

Creativity in music should be given as much emphasis as performance. The greatest failure of American music

education is that music, by and large, has not been taught as a personally expressive medium. Unlike the other arts, musical expression is generally restricted to re-interpretation. By limiting musical expression to the re-creative, music becomes a second-hand art.

Performance and interpretation, of course, can be somewhat creative. I say "somewhat" because there are strict limits upon just how much interpretation is permitted. Transgressions of "taste," as we call these interpretive borders, are quickly admonished. Consequently, the range of self-expression in music is apt to be considerably narrower than that permitted, say, an actor who is interpreting a role on the stage. In music, we are stifled by tradition to the point of near suffocation. One manifestation is that we have become print-bound. Most musicians tend to be slaves to the printed page. In high school and college programs that have finally added jazz after all the years of resistance, what is the approach? The students are taught to read the charts. Yet this music originated as a primarily aural and improvisatory art—a true medium of self-expression. Indeed, music itself must have originated in this manner.

To achieve a creative orientation, I propose that improvisation be given major emphasis to the point where it becomes a deliberate and important part of what every student learns in the music classroom. As one of the gates through which students gain access to music as a self-expressive art, improvisation is central to what music education is all about.

In my way of thinking, we should be giving students the opportunity to play with sound in the same

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¹I first proposed this agenda at a symposium at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, in March of 1978.

Avant-garde Operas

Ashley's "Perfect Lives," Siebert's "Titanic": one is an enigma, the other a bore

Joan La Barbara



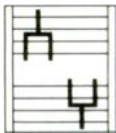
Mimi Johnson

Van Tieghem and Kroesen in "Lives": a view of life on the cornbelt



Engelrand

Ashley: he had answers



What is "opera"? Literally, it means "works." It has come to be associated with grand-scaled theatrical productions with music, generally sung throughout, but each definition has to be expanded a bit to accommodate the exceptions. So, when the avant garde rediscovered "opera" and the so-called purists started yelling that these operas didn't have proper arias and didn't fit the mold, those with dictionaries and some knowledge of history could retort that if it was theatrical and used music then it probably was an opera, or could lay claim to the term.

"Perfect Lives" in Paris

Two recent cases in point are an American opera produced in Europe and a European opera produced in America. Robert Ashley's *Perfect Lives* (*Private Parts*) was designed as a video opera and not intended for the stage. In its presentation at the Pompidou Center (Beaubourg) in Paris last October, there was some ambiva-

lence about the role, or attitudinal position, of the audience. Onstage was a bank of video monitors, arranged in a kind of pyramid with three on each side and one at the top, a total of seven. (One could comment about the relationship between the seven monitors and the seven episodes of the opera.)

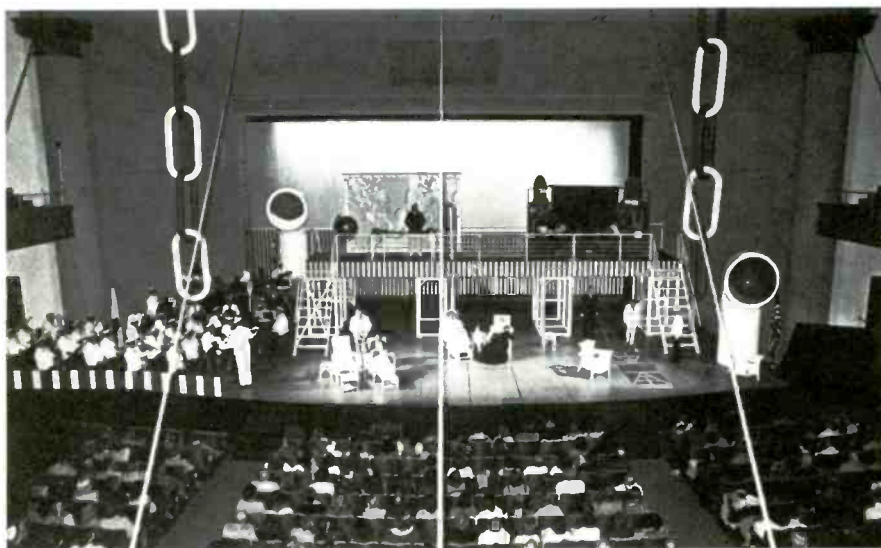
Stage right, seated (and occasionally standing) were a man (David van Tieghem) and a woman (Jill Kroesen), who served as the Greek chorus, singing their commentary on the story and sometimes moving the story line forward. Stage left, dressed in Liberace-like rhinestones and sequins, sat "Blue" Gene Tyranny playing almost non-stop cocktail piano music. Center stage stood Ashley in a tailored suit of shiny silvery-gray material, hands thrust in pockets, almost motionless, reciting his litany of life in and on the "corn belt" in a pitched speech that never once veered toward *Sprechstimme*. Two video camera operators moved about onstage, capturing particular aspects of the

scene, close-ups on the pianist's hands, the back of a head, an eye, a mouth, shoes, and so forth, flashing them onto the onstage monitors to give us a different perspective on the performers. Mixed with the live action shots was pretaped material: the cornfield with Jill and David in costume slowly approaching the camera, scenes in a park, a playground with the "chorus" acting as protagonists, and often the pianist's hands in slow motion, in stop action, in outline, synthesized.

The audience comments were curious, sometimes confused, and Ashley had an answer for almost all of them. "The words were not always understandable." . . . "They weren't intended to be." . . . "It wasn't very theatrical." . . . "It wasn't meant to be performed onstage—it's a video opera." . . . "The video monitors were too small and too far away." . . . "It's meant to be like the Merv Griffin Show where the audience sees very minimal action from behind cameramen and on small monitors—only



"Titanic": an unraveling of twisted stories



Only the set and staging kept the opera afloat

we were making art out of it."

Much of the music was prerecorded and mixed with the live singing and playing, allowing for a slick sound presentation. To describe the music I can only think of what it was not; it was not "easy-listening," it was not "light rock," yet those terms apply somehow. It was middle-of-the-road, perhaps a road in the corn belt, and that is where the essence of the work comes forward. In attempting to present a view of the American Midwest, Ashley has chosen to present a drabness, a place of non-happening, of ordinariness, using low-key performance attitudes, low-

key, off-hand delivery, determined casualness, contrasting the drab with bright costumes and color video.

It is an enigmatic work, as much of Ashley's work tends to be, and causes one to consider its parts and its effects. Again, as in some of Ashley's other work, it draws on the talents and contributions of the participants to formulate a kind of group personality or consciousness. Individually, its parts—as theater, video, performance, music, drama, poetry—are less than satisfying, but as avant-garde art it succeeds in making the audience ponder and consider, reflect and question; thus, it stimulates the

mind to activity, which is a positive result.

"Titanic" in Los Angeles

The city of Los Angeles is celebrating its two-hundredth birthday during 1980-81, and the city of Berlin, its "sister city" (for reasons that are still unclear to me), gave her a lavish gift, three months of cultural activities: concerts, performance art, theatrical events, ballet companies, dance troupes, art exhibits, and *The Sinking of the Titanic* (*Untergang der Titanic*), an opera by a young German composer, Wilhelm Dieter Siebert.

Conceptually, the *Titanic* is fascinating. The audience participates as second-class passengers (leaving the soloists to play the first-class celebrities and the chorus as "steerage"). With all the expectation and build-up, that it does not work is terribly disappointing.

It is the banality of the music that hurts the production most, though the slow pacing of the story, less than adequate dialogue, and thin, one-dimensional characters aid and abet the sinking. The set and the staging, however, were quite impressive. Royce Hall on the UCLA campus was transformed into a ship by adding smokestacks, banners, gangplanks, and cardboard tourists outside; inside, the stage area was designed as main deck and later ballroom, and two additional performing areas as a stateroom (for the Astors) on the left, and a "deck" for the poorer passengers on the right.

On opening night, the real mayors of Los Angeles and Berlin gave speeches on a decorated platform outside the "ship" (unfortunately, their voices were practically inaudible, as they were unamplified). Then the festivities began with groups of singing actors extolling the promise of the New Land and the great unsinkable Titanic. A full dress band played folk tunes and ordinary ship launching music (!); Lady Astor, the ship's captain, and the White Star Line's owner sang speeches, and an

Continued on page 33

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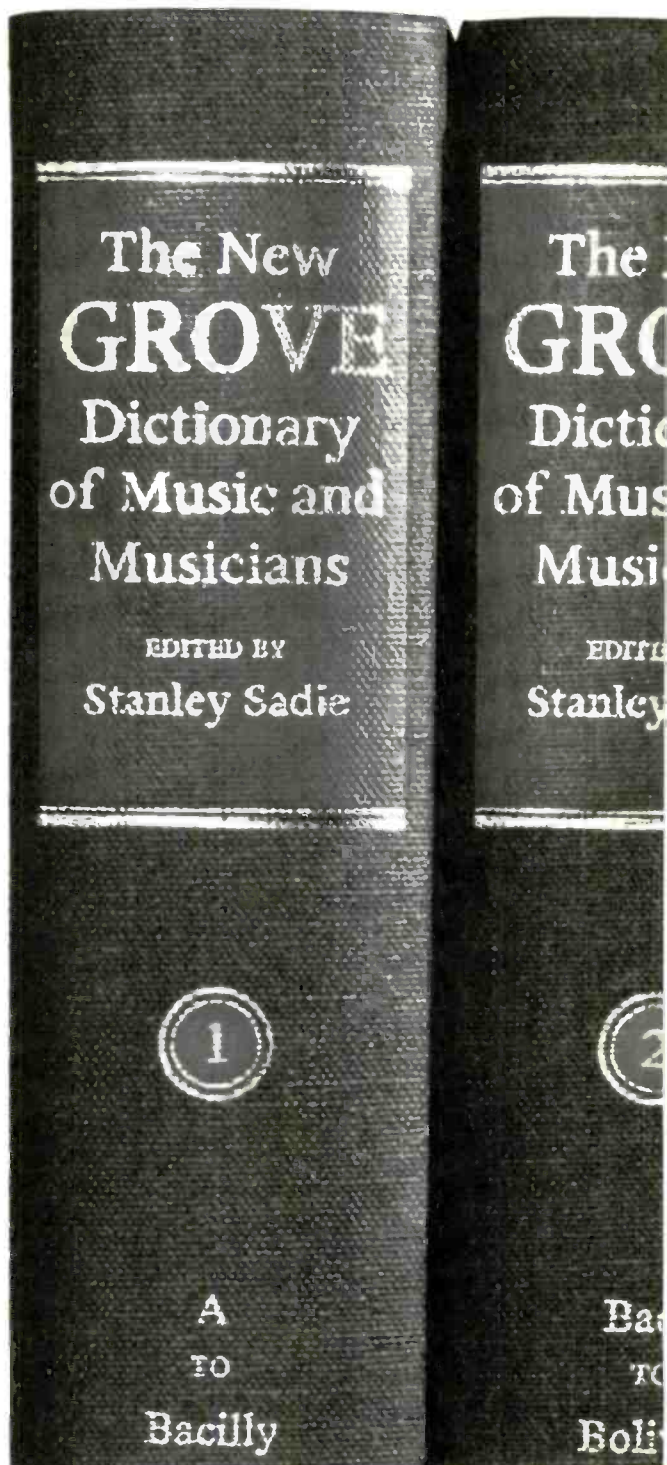
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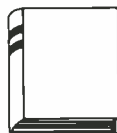
Pages from the Life of Dmitri Shostakovich

by Dmitri and Ludmilla Sollertinsky.
Translated from the Russian by Graham Hobbs & Charles Midgley

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich,

246 pages, \$12.95

Reviewed by Boris Schwarz



This is a shallow and expendable book. The authors, Dmitri and Ludmilla Sollertinsky—a husband-and-wife team—have missed the opportunity of making a meaningful contribution to our knowledge of the “inner” Shostakovich and have given us instead a flat, Party-line narrative of his life. Only on page 216 do the authors timidly acknowledge that they actually knew Shostakovich personally. The fact is that Dmitri Sollertinsky is the son of Shostakovich’s most intimate friend Ivan Sollertinsky, who died in 1944 at the age of forty-one. The Piano Trio Op. 67 by Shostakovich is dedicated to the memory of his friend. The Sollertinsky family has access to the voluminous correspondence between Shostakovich and Sollertinsky, which touches on all kinds of topics—art, music, politics, and daily occurrences. But the authors were afraid to dip too deeply into this unique source and serve us instead some banal excerpts. These “Pages from the Life . . .” skim over the surface; everything of importance is glossed over or entirely omitted. Often the uninitiated reader is misled; the informed reader is annoyed.

Was the publication of this modest volume meant as a Soviet reply to the appearance of *Testimony: The Memoirs of Shostakovich*? There is a

Boris Schwarz, whose Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1970 was published by W. W. Norton in 1972, is the author of the entry on Shostakovich in the New Grove Dictionary.

fleeting reference to “Shostakovich’s autobiography” in the Authors’ Note, but it may well refer to the composer’s autobiographical essay in the journal *Sovietskaya Muzyka* (1956 No. 9), written when he turned fifty. The complete absence of bibliographical information or explanatory footnotes is one of the disturbing shortcomings of this book.

More glaring is the systematic omission of the names of certain great performers who worked closely with Shostakovich and gave first performances of his works; often they were the recipients of dedications by the composer. For example, the cello concertos are mentioned but not Mstislav Rostropovich; the Thirteenth Symphony is discussed but not Kiril Kondrashin; the Fourteenth Symphony is described but there is no mention of Rudolf Barshai and Galina Vishnevskaya. Why are these names omitted? Because these artists are emigrés and have become “non-persons” in the Soviet system. Such political expediency is highly objectionable.

The Party-line is also obvious in the manner certain critical events of the years 1936 and 1948 are treated by the authors. The vicious attack in *Pravda*, “Chaos instead of Music,” (January 28, 1936) is dealt with in five lines; the next attack a week later, “Ballet Falseness,” is not even mentioned. Glossed over is the mental anguish of Shostakovich, whose best friends did not dare defend him openly. Those who dared perished: Marshal Tukhachevsky was purged and shot in 1937, Meyerhold was arrested, deported, and died in a camp. Their help is mentioned on pages 77-79, but not their fate. Shostakovich’s withdrawal of his Fourth Symphony, the genesis of his Fifth Symphony, the entire tragedy of that year 1936 is treated with dispatch.

Equally flat and understated is the description of the cultural purge

of 1948 which nearly destroyed Soviet music. The authors refer to “severe criticism in the Soviet press” but do not mention that the purge was part of a political move against the creative intelligentsia engineered by Zhdanov. The authors studiously avoid any connection with political events—the names of Stalin, Zhdanov, or Khrushchev never appear in the book—although the cultural policies of these leaders served as guidelines for the artists. Only once is there a fleeting reference to the mistakes of the “cult of personality” (p.139)—that Soviet euphemism for Stalinist terror. These facts are freely stated in up-to-date Soviet histories, so why do these authors pussyfoot around every problem? Perhaps the original Russian text was written for an adolescent reader, but there is no reason why the American public should be served such pabulum.

Among the few positive aspects of this book are the translated excerpts of letters and brief comments by composers who studied with Shostakovich—Tishchenko, Levitin, Weinberg, Rozanov, Karayev and others. The encounter with the Fitzwilliam Quartet strikes an optimistic note; the composer made a special effort to attend the British premiere of his Thirteenth Quartet at York University. Those who know the recordings of this young group or who heard the remarkable all-Shostakovich program in New York in October 1980 will well understand Shostakovich’s satisfaction. In view of the constant poor health of Shostakovich during the last fifteen years of his life, one is surprised to see how much traveling he undertook all over Europe in order to attend or supervise the premiere of one of his works. He took particular delight in the revival of his youthful operas, *The Nose* and *Katerina Izmailova* (“Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk”), and played an active role in the staging process. Those privi-

leged to see Shostakovich during his brief American visit in June 1973 (he received an honorary doctorate from Northwestern University) remarked on his vitality and enthusiasm. Readers of this journal are reminded of the interesting "Interview with Shostakovich" by Royal S. Brown in *HIGH FIDELITY*, October 1973. Shostakovich's attitude toward his performers was considerate but not uncritical, as we learn from the remarks of the violinist Tsyganov (pp. 219-21).

The translation is satisfactory, the editing could have been tighter. One error on p.229: the composer Shebalin speaks of his orchestral "christening" and continues, "I conducted a symphony by K.S. Saradzhev." It should be the reverse: Saradzhev (who was a conductor) conducted a symphony by Shebalin.

The Operas of Alban Berg, Volume I: *Wozzeck*

by George Perle

University of California Press,
231 pages, \$20



If you want to know more about *Wozzeck* after reading this book, you will have to wait until another life and talk to Alban Berg. George Perle, the most indefatigable and devoted disciple of Berg's compositions, has here said it all, and if you want to take issue here and there with his analyses, you had better have strong ammunition. The work is dissected (like *Wozzeck's* corpse?) measure by measure, with music examples galore, and is discussed in terms of the formal design, representation in music, and musical language.

There are two main reasons why this book should be consulted—if not read thoroughly—by music lovers who might be repelled by the minuteness of detail and analysis. Unlike Douglas Jarman's *The Music of Alban Berg*, which is an admirable but impenetrable volume to all but the specialist, Perle includes several chapters on the development of the opera, and in so doing corrects numerous errors



The Bettmann Archive, Inc.

Berg: the most obsessed

that are still current about *Wozzeck*. Indeed, Perle's preface (and its splendid closing perorational paragraph against the Chéreau production of *Lulu*) should be read by all opera lovers. Perle shows, for instance, that Berg did not base his opera on the Franzos edition of the play, as had been heretofore thought, but on the later Landau edition (which is given in an appendix).

The other justification for Perle's detail is that Alban Berg was possibly the most obsessed of all composers on numerological games and superstitions, and a great share of his stature as composer must be ascribed less to his mania for form than to his ability to transform this obsessiveness into music which sounds natural and is tremendously moving in the opera house. It may be true, as Stravinsky said, that constriction generates freedom, but I know of no other composer who was able to extricate himself from a tighter straightjacket than Berg. It is evident, then, that this compositional obsessiveness needs to be explored in a work like Perle's, and so it is, exhaustively.

Perle's identification with Berg's work naturally leads him to make extreme statements about its significance. He says "I have . . . come to the conclusion [that Berg's music was not retrogressive compared to Schoenberg's and especially to We-

bern's, and that he] was the most forward-looking composer of our century and that he had progressed further than anyone else in the direction of that comprehensive reformulation of postdiatonic compositional procedures that had motivated Schoenberg's discovery of the twelve-tone system in the first place." Berg's short life and limited number of works mitigates against a summary acceptance of this position, but the continued popularity of his two operas and two or three of his other works certainly points toward the conclusion that, had he lived, he would have dominated his two Second Vienna School colleagues to an even greater extent than perhaps he does already.

When I told Perle that I could not wait for Volume II, on *Lulu*, he said that he could hardly wait himself. May it be soon in publication.

P.J.S.

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Jim Kallett

Cosima Wagner

Cosima Wagner's Diaries, Volume II: 1878-1883

Harcourt, Brace, 1,200 pages, \$35

The Diary of Richard Wagner: The Brown Book (1865-1882)

presented and annotated by Joachim Bergfeld. Translated from the German by George Bird

Cambridge University Press, 218 pages, \$15.95

The first of these latest emanations from the Wagner cornucopia is the completion of Cosima Wagner's logorrheic fascination with her husband, written for the benefit (!) of her children. It's of course the mixture as before (reviewed in these pages), with even more attention paid to how the Master slept each night, what he dreamed, and the various demons (real, imagined, or constructed) that beset his path. As in the first volume, there is a wealth of detail here to be sifted and evaluated, for rarely have we been given a more comprehensive portrait of a composer whose mind ranged far wider than music. To take one instance: Wagner's interest in Shakespeare reveals the constantly probing inquiry of his restless mind.

The first complete publication of Wagner's own diary, *The Brown Book*, is a far more disjointed and scrambled work. In part written for Cosima, it is an amalgam of short-handed sentences, poems, sketches and the like which is not suited for extended reading. It does, however, in-

clude valuable material, such as the prose sketch for *Parsifal*. P.J.S.

Recollections of Gustav Mahler

by Natalie Bauer-Lechner; edited and annotated by Peter Franklin; translated from the German by Dika Newlin

Cambridge University Press, 250 pages, \$22.50

Natalie Bauer-Lechner could today be described as a groupie, but unlike other members of that tribe she was a trained musician and kept detailed notes of the years of closeness with Mahler—up to his marriage. These recollections, then, for the first time translated, offer a valuable insight into Mahler's thoughts and opinions, as well as depicting the world in which he existed. The passages on the Vienna Opera and on conducting are illuminating. P.J.S.

ALSO NOTED:

Opera: A Pictorial Guide,

by Quaintence Eaton

Abaris Books, 528 pages, \$35

My Favorite Comedies in Music

by Victor Borge and Robert Sherman

Franklin Watts, 150 pages, \$8.95

On Education

Continued from page 14

way they play with paint. In this way, students are not the mere recipients of a rigid and finished musical commentary on the world as it was; they are participants in evolving a musical expression of their world as they feel it and envision it. And this applies as much to college and university curricula as to the public schools. I, for one, cannot comprehend how degrees can be given in music without requiring even one course in composition.

Music education must serve the purposes of American education and the needs of American society. Music should enter the bloodstream of the school and the community. Part of the reason music exists on the periphery is that music educators are content with compartmentalized isolation and insulation.

Too many music teachers champion their own purposes and allow their courses to stand outside the primary goals of education and the interests of the American people.

I believe that achieving the first two goals set forth above—to reach every student and to bring more of a creative emphasis to music teaching—will help this cause. But they will not suffice. There is an old saying that the last thing a sea fish discovers is salt water. Music education's salt water is education and the community.

For this reason, I believe that music educators should take the lead in establishing the arts in the context of all kinds of new educational and social *transactions*—between the arts, between arts specialists and classroom teachers, between the arts and other subjects, and between the school and the community. That is a new kind of dynamism.

Students need options, not only in the study of music, but also in studying all the arts. I see music educators taking the lead in establishing comprehensive arts programs in all schools. Theirs was the first art in the schools and is the most organized. They have the established base to promote the arts as a curriculum area comparable to the sciences. Every child growing up in the United States has the right to understand the kind of perceptions about the world that the arts afford. By broadening the focus to promote aesthetic as well as musical sensitivity and understanding, the case for music itself would be strengthened.

By adopting these three basic modes of operation—commitment to democratization, to giving creativity as much emphasis as performance, and to placing music in the service of education and society—I believe music education will begin to reach the people and the power structure and establish a broader public constituency. So, as we acknowledge the achievements of music education during the week of March 9, let us also celebrate the possibilities for the future. **MA**

General News

Beverly Sills, general director of the New York City Opera, announced that, in cooperation with KUSC-FM, Los Angeles, and National Public Radio, thirteen City Opera productions will be recorded live in performance for NPR distribution. Eight productions will be recorded in Los Angeles' Chandler Pavilion and five will emanate from the New York State Theater. The broadcasts will be aired in the summer of 1981. . . . **National Public Radio** announced production grants in support of twenty-six new radio projects in the first round of the Satellite Program Development Fund. The SPDF awarded \$300,000 to station-based and independent producers to encourage new public radio programming. . . . **Dorland Mountain Colony**, an artist's colony in California, offers composers an opportunity to work in the isolated atmosphere of a cottage on a 300-acre nature sanctuary. For an application for a one-to-three-month residency, write: Administrative Secretary Dorland, The Nature Conservancy, Box 921, So. Pasadena, CA 91030.

Conductor **Michael Tilson Thomas** made his debut with the Berlin Philharmonic in October 1980, as part of a two-month conducting tour of Europe. His tour began at the Flanders Festival in Belgium and concluded with the Amsterdam Philharmonic in the Netherlands. . . . **Carole Farley**, American soprano, made her first appearance in Canada in the complete version of Berg's *Lulu* in October with the Canadian Opera Company in Toronto. . . . Composer/pianist/author **Abram Chasins** joins the University of Southern California early this year to initiate a course on "Making It in Music." The workshop is designed to assist talented young musicians in evaluating their gifts accurately and selecting realistic career goals.

Appointments

French conductor/pianist **Philippe Entremont** has been appointed music director and conductor of the New Orleans Philharmonic Symphony beginning next season and continuing through 1984. . . . **Theo Alcantara**, music director of the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, has been appointed artistic director and conductor of the Music Academy of the West Summer Festival. The Spanish conductor succeeds Maurice Abravanel. . . . Detroit Symphony Orchestra music director **Antal Dorati** has been named Conductor Laureate of that organization as of June 1981. Dorati joined the orchestra in November 1977.

Carl Pini, concertmaster of London's Philharmonia Orchestra for five years, has been appointed concertmaster and assistant conductor of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. His colleague in the Philharmonia's first violin section, **Benedict Cruft**, will become associate concertmaster in Hong Kong. . . . **Murray Gross** has been selected by Antal Dorati to be the Conductor Fellow of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in the 1980-81 season. . . . The Exxon/Arts Endowment Conductors Program, administered by Affiliate Artists Inc., announced residencies for nine young conductors who will receive "on the job" training with major musical organizations. The participating conductors and their respective appointments are: **Raymond Harvey**, Indianapolis Symphony; **George Manahan**, New Jersey Symphony; **Michael Morgan**, St. Louis Symphony; **James A. Setapen**, Denver Symphony; **David Agler**, San Francisco Opera; **Alan Balter**, Baltimore Symphony; **Clark Suttle**, Buffalo Philharmonic; **Hugh Wolff**, National Symphony; and **Myung-Whun Chung**, Los Angeles Philharmonic and Debut Orchestra. . . . **Pearl Chertok** was elected president of the American Harp Society, Inc.

Competitions

The Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards announces its competition for instrumental chamber music compositions. Works must be scored for one through thirteen instruments, and a minimum of fifteen minutes. For application (deadline July 15, 1981) write: The Secretary, Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards, Kennedy Center, Washington D.C. 20566. . . . The Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia is scheduling its **First International Harp Competition** from September 28 to October 8, 1981 in Rome. For the program of required repertoire, write: Mario Zafred, President, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Via Vittoria 6, 00187 Roma, Italy. . . . **The Washington International Competition** for pianists under twenty-eight will be held April 10 and 11, 1981. For further information, write: Jane Goetz Lea, 3310-35 St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20016. . . . **The Minna Kaufmann Ruud Distinguished Performance Awards** are open to women singers between the ages of 20 and 29. Prizes are \$2,000, two \$1,000, and one \$500; final auditions are in Pittsburgh April 13. March 1, 1981 is deadline for applications, to be addressed to Chatham College, Pittsburgh, PA 15232; application fee is \$10.

Awards

William Schuman was awarded the Boston Symphony Orchestra-Mark M. Horblit Award for distinguished composition by an American composer. The prize of \$5,000 was established in 1947; Roger Sessions was the most recent recipient, in 1977. . . . The second annual Gina Bachauer Memorial Piano Scholarship Competition, held at the Juilliard School, resulted in first-category scholarships of \$5,500 awarded to **Duane Hulbert**, 24, of Eden Prairie, Minnesota, and **Momoro Ono**, 21, of Lutherville, Maryland.



Weaver and Boozer



Between bouts of training at Lake Tahoe, Nevada, world heavy-weight champion Mike Weaver took a rest to visit with his jogging buddy, mezzo-soprano Brenda Boozer. The two met while running around the reservoir in New York's Central Park, and have become eternal "training partners." . . . Mayor Ed Koch presented Isaac Stern with the Bronze Medallion of the City of New York at a gala reception attended by over 150 personalities from cultural, business, and political communities. Standing with Stern is Dick Asher, deputy president and chief operating officer of CBS Records Group; and Joe Dash, vice president and general manager, CBS Masterworks. . . . Fernando Valenti began his thirtieth an-

Asher, Koch, Stern, and Dash



Valenti and Buckley



niversary season with a benefit concert for the Friends of Music at Yale, and was visited by **William F. Buckley, Jr.** Valenti is preparing a recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, and Volume 1 of his *Harpichord Method* will be published in 1981. . . . Pianist **Garrick Ohlsson** celebrated his tenth anniversary recital at Carnegie Hall with his parents. A decade ago, Ohlsson became the only American to win Warsaw's Chopin Competition. . . . Bass-baritone **Sir Geraint Evans** received the San Francisco Opera Medal from **Kurt Herbert Adler** before a delighted assemblage of fellow artists and a capacity audience. The award was presented to Evans "with appreciation for his exceptional contributions to the Opera since 1959."



Ohlssons et fils

Adler and Evans



Debuts and Reappearances

New York

Daniel Barenboim, piano

At his all-Schubert recital at Carnegie Hall on November 29, Daniel Barenboim displayed a lively involvement with the music—the Impromptus, D. 935 and the great B flat Sonata, K. 960—and a head full of ideas, most of them good ones. After an embarrassing start (the top C of the opening arpeggiated chord was prominently “split”), the first Impromptu was rendered in a purposeful way—somewhat bouncier than usual, but with strength and color. The second one, in A flat, was a trifle stately and somber (after all, it is an Allegretto, not an Adagio), but wholesome and unsentimental. The B flat major Theme and Variations was the high point of the afternoon, the theme more *alla breve* than on Barenboim’s recent DG recording, and all the elaborations noble and beautifully timed.

Barenboim delivered a highly impressive account of the first movement of the Sonata: for once, the tempo was not too draggy, and despite the omission of the long repeat with its astonishing first ending, the rendition was much more dramatic than it usually is. Some of the same sweeping gestures carried over into the Andante sostenuto—and wrongly so: Barenboim’s account of that emotional pinnacle was crass and externalized. The *ppp* ending in C sharp major, a moment of potential otherworldliness, was gruff and ordinary (not to say much too loud). As for the Scherzo, that began with suitable delicacy but bogged down with too much playing around with tempo and phrasing. The finale was quite acceptable, save for some pounding and flailing in the difficult development section.

As for the encores, the third *Moment Musical* was sturdy and charmless (with an overdone *ritardando* spoil-



Chip Barish

Barenboim: a lively involvement

ing that magical entry in F major at the end); the C sharp minor *Moment Musical* was exquisitely voiced in its outer Bach Prelude-like sections and rhythmically obscure in its central trio; the E flat Impromptu of D. 899 too “macho” (Barenboim’s aggressive runs were a far cry from the purling beauty of a Lipatti or a Perahia).

But for all my reservations, I liked the concert. Barenboim has made giant strides in the direction of timing and paragraph playing. He consistently made music, and held at least one person’s rapt attention.

HARRIS GOLDSMITH

New York

Bethany Beardslee, Richard Goode

The foul canard still circulates that singers who specialize in modern music ruin their voices for anything else. It is an illogical notion, considering that modern songs demand greater precision of rhythm and pitch than do their predecessors. In any case, Bethany Beardslee, whose reputation is that of premiere specialist in modern song, put the question to rest when she and Richard Goode appeared at the Abraham Goodman House, on November 16, to perform an all-Brahms program. Miss Beard-

slee’s light, clear soprano—in a selection of seventeen songs including *Therese*, *Auf dem Kirchhofe*, *Das Mädchen*, and *Es traumte mir*—seemed in no way to have been eroded by a youth spent in the eccentric company of atonality and quarter tones, and her grasp of Brahms was musically and textually tight.

If greater satisfaction was not achieved during the recital, it must be laid to three causes. Traits in her German pronunciation were either wrong or too regional (*Liebe* is not pronounced “leeuh,” *Sticht* not “shtisht”); her seemingly codified gestures were too frequent and distracting; and, as the evening wore on, her intonation began to wander alarmingly, even beneath the camouflage of portamenti.

Richard Goode’s accompaniment was of a fathomless depth and texture, and rock solid in its support of her. His febrile solo performance of the *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel*, however, seemed much more devoted to display than to music. He was in too much of a rush, tumbling forth his notes in a careless flurry, never allowing the variations to sink in and be savored. It cloyed. BROOKE MCELLOWNEY

New York

Simon Estes, bass-baritone

Simon Estes’ first New York recital (Carnegie Hall, December 7) revealed a strongly disciplined and well produced bass-baritone of good power in a program of operatic selections (Verdi, Wagner, Rachmaninoff), songs (Schubert, Mahler), folk songs, and spirituals.

What is remarkable about Estes’ voice is its technique. The voice has a large range, absolutely under control—an unvarying column of air from top to bottom which can be moulded and inflected by the singer. His breath control is likewise excel-

lent: he can change gears from loud to soft (his soft singing is very beautiful), and can execute interval leaps with accuracy. The voice is in such splendid condition that I would assume he could take on the longest roles without tiring. The sound he produces, if strong, is somewhat grainy and spread, with an incipient beat to it, and it is not quite large enough to dominate. But its assets far exceed its deficiencies.

Estes knows exactly what his voice can do, and this leads him into over-emphasizing its qualities. Time and again he adopted tempos slow to the point of stasis, and even with his abilities, the momentum broke down into boredom. In the *Schwanengesang* group, his pace for the beginning of "In der Ferne" was morbid, and his speeding up for the second section did little to mitigate the preceding. "Die Taubenpost," taken much faster, had a similar aura of heaviness about it. In the Mahler group, the calculated lethargy of "Ich atmet' einen linden Duft" overrode the rapt ecstasy of the setting, and Estes' lack of coloring ability and final bravura punch robbed the showy theatricality of "Um Mitternacht" of its graduated power. In "Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen," however, the softly intoned slowness illuminated rather than interfered.

The recital demonstrated that Simon Estes has a voice whose technical refinements could be put to very valuable use in the nearby opera house. Paul Liljestrang accompanied.

PATRICK J. SMITH

New York

Minnesota Orchestra (Marriner)

The Minnesota Orchestra's first appearance in Carnegie Hall (November 7) since Neville Marriner became music director resulted in a pleasant enough concert, but one which lacked fire. After the obligatory opening overture, this time Ber-



Estes: remarkable technique

lioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*, played in an extroverted manner, the evening included two relatively unfamiliar works, Stravinsky's ballet homage to Tchaikovsky, *The Fairy's Kiss*, and Elgar's Violin Concerto, with the ubiquitous Itzhak Perlman as soloist.

The Stravinsky is a good test for an orchestra, because it requires gradations of soft playing, perceptive balances, and a distinctive woodwind section. The Minnesota Orchestra showed to advantage, although needing a bit more phrasing flexibility. The soft playing was excellent, and the colors that Stravinsky wanted were brought out by Marriner. He lacked a degree of rhythmic bounce and forward movement, though: the work without ballet reinforcement, tends to become a wallflower—pretty

enough, perhaps, but neither Tchaikovsky nor Stravinsky.

The Elgar concerto is likewise a good test for an orchestra, although it is more difficult to bring off. Elgar's writing appeals strongly to his coterie, but outside of it his appeal is circumscribed. In the concerto, Elgar tried for a more interior work than is usually the case with solo concertos, and provided lots of soft passages to suggest this inner quality. Itzhak Perlman played the solo part with his usual sweet flair, using an exaggerated portamento for the first movement, and seemed a little restrained in the louder passages. He may have done this because Marriner's accompaniment was reticent rather than romantic—the conductor did not seem to want to dwell on the harmonic felicities with which the score is saturated and which serve to mitigate the simple-mindedness of too many of Elgar's themes.

PATRICK J. SMITH

New York

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Grant Johannesen, President





ARNOLD SCHOENBERG INSTITUTE ARCHIVES

Pierrot Lunaire Ensemble, 1912. Schoenberg is third from left

under Zubin Mehta, November 21, was Mozart's Concerto in B flat K. 595, and it emerged—albeit with some ragged orchestra backing—supremely serene, if in the old style of Mozart playing. (There was no embellishing in the slow movement, the larghetto was taken as almost a largo, and the allegro as an allegretto.) But Curzon's pointedly precise pianism and natural shapeliness of phrase ensured that the playing never became sentimental or—that bane of Mozart—sounded as if a lavender sachet bag were hung under the piano. Such musicianship is rare these days, and treasurable.

The world premiere was a fifteen-minute orchestral timbre-wash by the American composer (and concert pianist-accompanist) Marc Neikrug titled *Eternity's Sunrise*. This piece, in short sections which become longer, works gradually to a climax and then eventually wisps upward into the ether. Its undemanding sonorities fall pleasantly upon the ear.

Mehta ended the concert with a brash and exuberant reading of Copland's Third Symphony, in honor of the eightieth birthday of the composer. The work has held up well, and if its faults—some note-spinning, a too-rigid adherence to an elaboration of the first-movement themes—are obvious, that is to the good because we can forget them the easier. What resists forgetfulness is the individuality and character of Copland's musical thought. Symphonies may not be his chief strength, but Cop-

land's gifts in suggestive "American" writing and rhythmic verve are so infectious that they override nit-picking. The final "Fanfare" movement may also be obvious but—dammit—it works, and it works splendidly, in terms of a rousing finale and in terms of this symphony. The Friday afternoon ladies whooped with joy, and rightly so.

PATRICK J. SMITH

New York

N.Y. Philharmonic: Schuman Symphony No. 9

A mong the innumerable works produced in commemoration of the European tragedy under the Nazi Occupation, few have the artistic merit of William Schuman's Symphony No. 9, *Le Fosse Ardeatine*. The Roman caves of the title were the site of the massacre by the Germans in 1944 of 335 Italian Jews and Christians in reprisal for the Italian Underground's slaying of thirty-two Nazi soldiers. Schuman visited the site, now a shrine where the victims remain buried, in 1967, and his one-movement, half-hour-long symphony, first played by the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1969, was the result.

It is heartening to find a work of this kind making its way into the repertory. Rich in orchestration and taut in structure, it conveys its mood in a poignant yet unsentimental manner. As performed by the New York Phil-

harmonic under Zubin Mehta on November 13, it seemed like one of the more durable symphonies composed by an American in recent years, with a somber but lofty opening string theme providing basic musical material that is later built into a powerful, almost terrifying climax for the entire orchestra. Only in the middle section of the work, when the composer lightens the texture as if recalling some of the happier episodes of the aborted lives, does the music become a bit meandering and disconnected. Schuman, currently celebrating his seventieth birthday, was on hand to acknowledge the audience's warm applause.

In the second half of the program Pinchas Zukerman gave a rather muscular performance of the Brahms Violin Concerto. Zukerman, who is a conductor as well as a violinist these days, played with a good deal of foot-tapping, head-nodding and body English, but somehow produced in the sweet and reposeful slow movement his most beautiful sounds. Between the Schuman symphony and the Brahms concerto, both works of sobriety and substance, it was a solid evening of music-making at the Philharmonic. HERBERT KUPFERBERG

New York

Orchestra of Our Time, Maureen McNally: "Pierrot Lunaire"

I n connection with the exhibit of Expressionist art at the Guggenheim Museum, the Guggenheim theater hosted a concert November 20 featuring that touchstone of musical expressionism, Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. In keeping with the art museum ambience, this was not a "straight" performance, but one acted by the *Sprechstimmiste* and lighted and directed by Robert Engstrom. Members of the Orchestra of Our Time were conducted by Joel Thome.

Maureen McNalley, who performed the cycle, is a singer who has

studied acting with Lee Strasberg and Uta Hagen. She used the texts as basis for costume changes, gesturing, and vocal emoting, mostly in the range of croons and sighs. To the converted, this self-conscious mooning-about may have had some point. It did get away from a literalness that often besets the cycle—after all, there must be an element of unbalance and outright madness in any performance. But McNalley's efforts contained far too much Method for the madness, and since three-quarters of the text was unintelligible, even in the confines of the small Guggenheim theater, what should have been arresting was evanescent. Why wasn't the opportunity taken to translate the poems (which are in any case themselves translations), if this was meant to be a theatrical as well as a musical experience? The lighting effects (probably because of the makeshift equipment) were amateurish and irrelevant.

Before the cycle, the concert presented an affectionate parody of the work by Schoenberg's pupil Hanns Eisler titled *Palmström*. This performance, done in correct *Sprechstimme* by Richard Frisch, had the sly humor and the vocal impact that the later performance lacked. Pianist Dwight Peltzer then gave an idiomatic reading of Berg's Opus 1 Piano Sonata.

PATRICK J. SMITH

New York

Thouvenel String Quartet: Krenek

The Thouvenel String Quartet should be congratulated for its ambitious programming. The quartet is making its New York debut with four concerts featuring seven string quartets of Ernst Krenek in addition to the three *Rasumovsky* quartets and Schubert's Quintet in C major. On their final concert, June 7, they will present a world premiere: Krenek's most recent quartet, No. 8, commissioned by the Thouvenel Quartet.

Krenk was eighty on August

23, 1980. His first five quartets are not twelve-tone, as are his Sixth and Seventh, which were presented on the inaugural concert of the Thouvenel's series on November 23. The Sixth Quartet is a long, weighty, and restless work. It "marks the high point in the first phase of my preoccupation with the twelve-tone technique," the composer has said. Quartet No. 7, also in five movements, is slower, shorter, and perhaps more accessible than the Sixth. Its thematic structure is tight and the overall form is palindromic: The fifth movement returns to the tempo and the material of the first; the third movement's center is a series of striking rhythmic unisons. Both works belie the stereotypical description often assigned to twelve-tone music—they are consistently expressive, quite obviously the works of a great composer whose command of his vocabulary is absolute. Krenek has not written for this medium since 1944. We should eagerly await his Eighth Quartet.

The Thouvenel—Eugene Purdue and Teresa Fream, violins; Sally Chisholm, viola; and Jeffrey Levenson, cello—performed the difficult Krenek works with assurance. The same could not be said of the Beethoven Op. 59 No. 3. Oddly, there the first violin's intonation wavered; but the violist should be singled out for praise. It is to be hoped that this quartet remains together; they have a valuable contribution to offer to the chamber music world.

ANDREA OLMSTEAD

San Francisco

San Francisco Symphony members: Samuel's "Three Minor Desperations" [premiere]

A new, four-concert series sponsored by the San Francisco Symphony and dubbed "New and Unusual Music at the Galleria" ended its first season on November 28 with a program featuring Gerhard Samuel

Continued on page 40

Artist Life

Continued from page 10

the *Fictionary of Music*, the *Sixtionary*, or once to *Grovel's Dictionary*. And the unrelated articles which would arrive—one of them about river worship in Africa. And the bewildering descriptions! A contribution from the Far East had described a tuba zither as "suspended from a tree in Indonesia and stuck into the ground in Central America."

One of the least likely and happiest byproducts of the years preparing the *New Grove* were the marriages which resulted. Stanley Sadie said: "There were at least four marriages I know of." Then, shyly. "And my marriage was made in *Grove*." He told us about it. "My wife is American. She comes from Oregon and she did her doctoral work at Cornell. There she participated under Neal Zaslaw in a seminar on French

Original 1847 Version

MACBETH

Giuseppe Verdi

EDITED BY DAVID LAWTON

JUNE FISKE

BONNIE BRADLEY

JAMES STITH

VENCENZO MANNO

RICHARD CRIST

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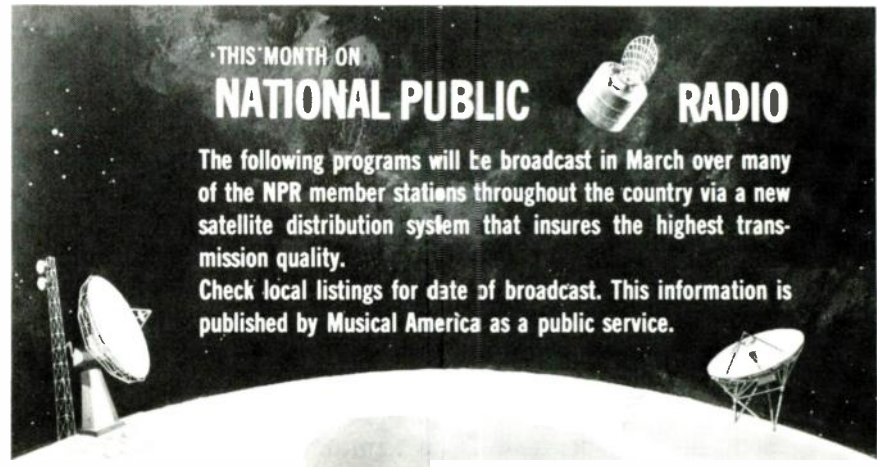
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Baroque, as a result of which I got into a correspondence with her on an odd subject. It was about the dancer Camargo and the question was . . ." He stopped. "I don't know if you should print this." We encouraged him. We knew a little about La Camargo. She was the great early eighteenth-century ballerina and she had such shapely legs that she shortened her long skirts a few inches, to the scandal of society. Sadie went on bravely. "The question was this. Did she or did she not wear underwear under her skirts?" He hurried on—question unanswered. "Later, when Julie was in Paris finishing her thesis, a friend suggested that when she went to London she visit the *Grove* offices. Julie was indifferent to the idea but her friend persuaded her. 'It might do your career some good.' Anyway she came, we met, and we discussed other things than La Camargo. Later we met again. Meanwhile my first wife had died. And eventually, two and a half years ago, we were married."

Mrs. Sadie was in America with her husband, but in a non-professional capacity. Her book on the bass viol in French Baroque music is being published by the University of Ann Arbor. She herself plays bass viol, cello, and Baroque cello—"pleasant sounds to have around the house." But during that American trip she had no time for her career. She was occupied with taking care of their baby Celia, named for the Purcell song *Celia Has A Thousand Charms*, which can be found—naturally—in the *New Grove*.

Stanley Sadie looks forward, not too hopefully, to having a little more time for himself and his family. But *Grove 6* is about to be released in Australia and England and there is always his work on the *Times* and *Musical Times*. As for the dictionary, "one day we ought to be thinking about the next edition, I suppose." We don't think we will ever want or need another *Grove*. This one will be for years to come—as Virgil said—"a nice place to swim around in." **MA**



THIS MONTH ON NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

The following programs will be broadcast in March over many of the NPR member stations throughout the country via a new satellite distribution system that insures the highest transmission quality.

Check local listings for date of broadcast. This information is published by Musical America as a public service.

GRAND PIANO

J.B. Floyd & John Cowell: Floyd performs works by Beethoven and Rachmaninoff; Cowell performs works by Beethoven and Gottschalk. (Floyd recital taped Jan. 15, 1980, Illinois; Cowell, March, 9, 1980, U. of Arkansas.)

Seymour Lipkin & Michael Habermann: Lipkin performs works by Rachmaninoff, Mozart, and Ravel. Habermann, performs an all-Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji program. (Lipkin recital taped May 1, 1980, U. of Cincinnati; Habermann, Aug. 9, 1979, U. of Maryland Piano Fest.)

Raymond Lewenthal: Works by Mozart, Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Strauss/Grunfield, Dohnanyi, and Scriabin. (Taped Sept. 20, 1978, Saint John's U., Minnesota.)

John Perry: Works by Beethoven, Schubert, Ravel, and Prokofiev. (Taped June 26, 1980, Utah.)

Paul Jacobs: Works by Stravinsky, Gershwin, Copland, Debussy, Schoenberg, William Bolcom, Frederic Rzewski, and Virgil Thompson. (Taped Dec. 16, 1979, New York.)

INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

James Conlon, conductor: Overture to "The Ruler of the Spirits," opus 27, by Carl Maria von Weber; Beethoven's "Emperor" Piano Concerto; Dvořák's Symphony No. 4 in D minor, opus 13. (Taped Jan. 26, 1980.)

John Nelson, conductor: Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 2 ("Resurrection") with the Indianapolis Symphony Choir. Charles H. Webb, Jr., director; Maureen Forrester, contralto; Benta Valente, soprano. (Taped Feb. 22, 1980.)

Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, conductor: "Music at Night" by Skrowaczewski; Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No. 3 in C, opus 26 (Byron Janis); and Brahms's Symphony No. 2. (Taped March 22, 1980.)

John Nelson, conductor: Bach B Minor Mass with the University Singers of Indiana University. Alan Harler, director; Pamela Coburn, soprano; Jan de Gaetani & Shirley Love, mezzo-sopranos; Paul Sperry, tenor; Thomas Paul, bass. (Taped April 4, 1980.)

John Nelson, conductor: "Les Nuits d'Été," op. 7, by Berlioz; and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in D minor, op. 125 with the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir. Charles H. Webb, Jr., director; Phyllis Bryn-Julson, soprano; Janice Taylor, mezzo-soprano; Seth McCoy, tenor; Paul Plishka, bass. (Taped May 17, 1980.)

INTERNATIONAL CONCERT HALL

Riccardo Ceilly conducts the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra: Schoenberg's Kammermusik, op. 9; Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2, opus 19 (Radu Lupu); and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4. (Taped Jan. 16, 1980, Philharmonie Hall, W. Berlin.)

Seiji Ozawa conducts the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra: Cello

Concerto by Eugen d'Albert (Ottomar Borwitzky); Mahler's Symphony No. 1. (Taped Feb. 3, 1980, Philharmonie Hall, W. Berlin.)

Herbert von Karajan conducts the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra: Beethoven's Violin Concerto, op. 61 (Anne-Sophie Mutter); Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5, op. 100. (Taped Feb. 16, 1980, Philharmonie Hall, W. Berlin.)

Colin Davis conducts the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra: Overture to "King Lear" by Berlioz; Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 (Emil Gilels); and Sibelius Symphony No. 1. (Taped April 4, 1980, W. Berlin.)

LOS ANGELES PHILHARMONIC

Andrew Davis, conductor: Haydn's Overture to "La Fedelta Premiata" and Cello Concerto in C; West coast premiere of Donald Erb's Cello Concerto (Lynn Harrell); Symphony No. 1 in A-flat, opus 55. (Taped Jan. 11, 1981.)

Leonard Slatkin, conductor: West Coast premiere of Joseph Schwantner's "Aftertones of Infinity"; Bela Bartók's Piano Concerto No. 1 (Peter Serkin); Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 5 in D minor, op. 107 ("Reformation"). (Taped Jan. 18, 1981.)

Leonard Slatkin, conductor: William Bolcom's "Commedia"; Symphony No. 6 in E minor by Ralph Vaughan Williams; Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D, opus 61 (Itzhak Perlman). (Taped Jan. 25, 1981.)

Jesus Lopez-Cobos, conductor: Bartók's Rumanian Dances; Piano Concerto No. 3 (Michel Beroff); Mahler's Symphony No. 1 in D. (Taped Feb. 1, 1981.)

Jesus Lopez-Cobos, conductor: Mozart's Symphony No. 13 in F, K.112 and Piano Concerto No. 25 in C, K.503 (Misha Dichter); Schumann's Symphony No. 2 in C, opus 61. (Taped Feb. 8, 1981.)

NPR RECITAL HALL

The String Quartet of the Soviet Television & Radio Large Symphony Orchestra: Works by Shostakovich, Tchaikovsky, Beethoven. (Taped April 14 in Helsinki.)

Evelyn Lear, soprano, and Martin Katz, piano: Works by Bizet, Fauré, Schumann, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky, Tchaikovsky, Britten, Wolf, and Ginastera. (Taped Nov. 19, 1979 at North Texas State University.)

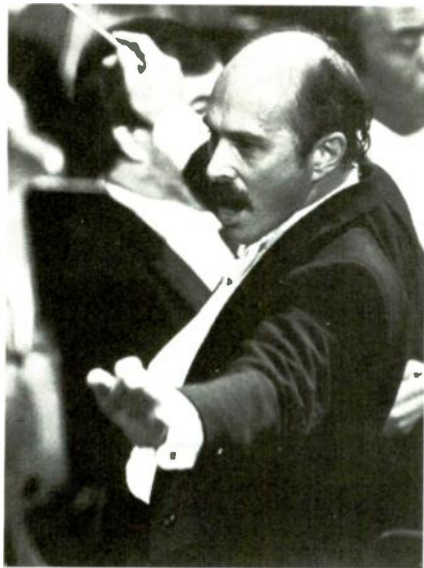
Gregory Fulkerson, violin; Robert Shannon, piano: Copland's Sonata; Richard Wernick's Cadenzas and Variations II; Four Nocturnes by George Crumb; Six Pieces for Violin and Piano by Charles Wuorinen; and Second Sonata by Ives. (Taped Sept. 27, 1980, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.)

Robert Davidovici, violin & Jean Mainous, piano; Curtis Macomber, violin & Edmund Niemann, piano: Davidovici and Mainous perform Bach, Cage, and Hugh Aitken. Macomber and Niemann perform Roger Sessions and John Corigliano. (Taped Sept. 27, 1980, Kennedy Center, D.C.)

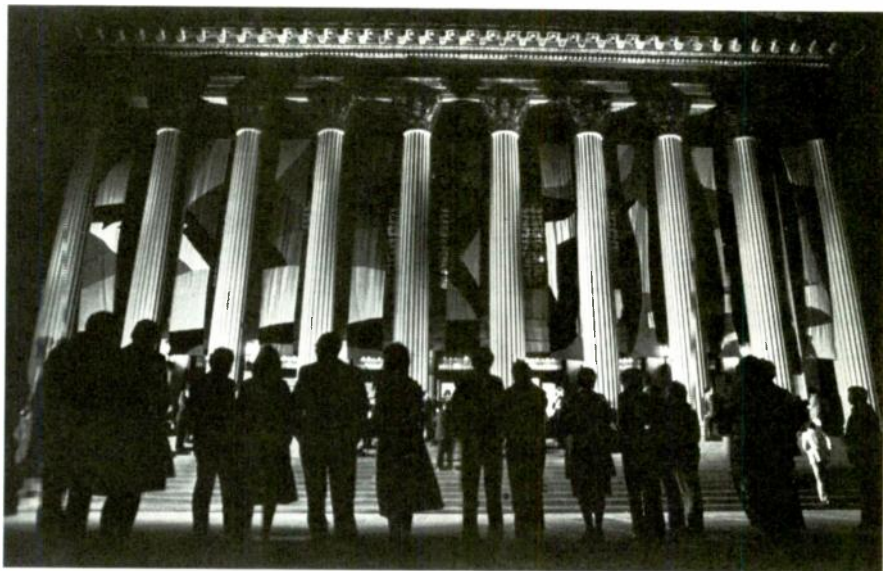
A Successful Restoration

Springfield's Symphony Hall takes a new lease on life

Byron Belt



Gutter: the time was ripe



Symphony Hall: "adaptive re-use" of neo-classical elegance

Leopold Stokowski, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and soprano Marcella Sembrich opened Springfield's Symphony Hall on the soprano's fifty-fifth birthday, February 13, 1913. For decades after that, the hall glistened with musical celebrities and fancy dress balls, but as downtown Springfield declined in the post-World War II period, so did the neoclassical elegance of the building designed by F. Livingston Pell and Harvey Wiley Corbett.

Today there is a major resurgence in downtown development, and during the past ten years conductor Robert Gutierrez has built the Springfield Symphony into a major ensemble fully able to offer an exciting Stravinsky *Rite of Spring* and mount operas from Mozart to Wagner with impressive effect. The time, in short, was ripe for Symphony Hall to be given new life. Its sound has always been considered excellent, but

seating and sightlines were disastrous. And so the community undertook what architect John Juros of Reinhardt Associates describes accurately as "adaptive re-use."

To preserve the handsome interior and yet transform the hall into something useful for the orchestra, dance, opera productions, and Broadway attractions, Tony-award-winning Robert Morgan was brought in as theatrical consultant, and Christopher Jaffe was engaged to supervise accoustical changes.

Appropriate fanfare

That all concerned have done their work well was the judgment of most who attended a gala weekend which reopened the National Register of Historic Places treasure with appropriate fanfare and justifiable pride. Gutierrez led a model showcase program with the Springfield Symphony, one that displayed the splendid quality of his orchestra and chorus and also challenged the hall with music ranging from a sassy, ulti-

mately noble setting of the National Anthem which composer Gunther Schuller entitled *Music for a Celebration* through the finale of the Beethoven Ninth Symphony to Ravel's *Bolero*. The sound proved both brilliant and warm, a rare and winning combination.

The first recital was given by peripatetic celebrating violinist Isaac Stern, whose program was strongly assisted by pianist Andrew Wolf. Stern himself has not been in finer form in years. After a generous program of sonatas by Beethoven and Brahms and shorter works of Bartók, Szymanowski, Dvořák, Kreisler, and Bloch, Stern spoke warmly of the "wonderful auditorium."

Springfield took the proper road of historic preservation, and it now boasts an elegant, traditional facility with all of the finest modern technical improvements. The performing arts and the dynamic Western Massachusetts area are rich beneficiaries of intelligent leadership and a wise use of resources. **MA**

Byron Belt is Critic at Large for the Newhouse News Service.

The André Meyer Collection— A Treasure in Jeopardy

One of the world's great private musical collections faces dissolution

Martin Berkofsky

"An unpublished manuscript of Franz Liszt? Impossible," I thought. I carefully lifted the yellowed pages from the table, setting aside manuscripts of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du printemps* and Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, from between whose pages the Liszt had appeared. Setting it on François Meyer's piano, I slowly began to decipher the composer's writing: it was the *Déak* from Liszt's *Hungarian Portraits*, but somehow not quite familiar. Daily visits to the Meyer apartment for the next week to hand-copy the manuscript—too delicate to be trusted to a photo-copy machine—and subsequent comparison of my feverishly written efforts with a published version confirmed my suspicions: I had come upon a revised version of *Déak* in the André Meyer Collection; a version which had never been published.

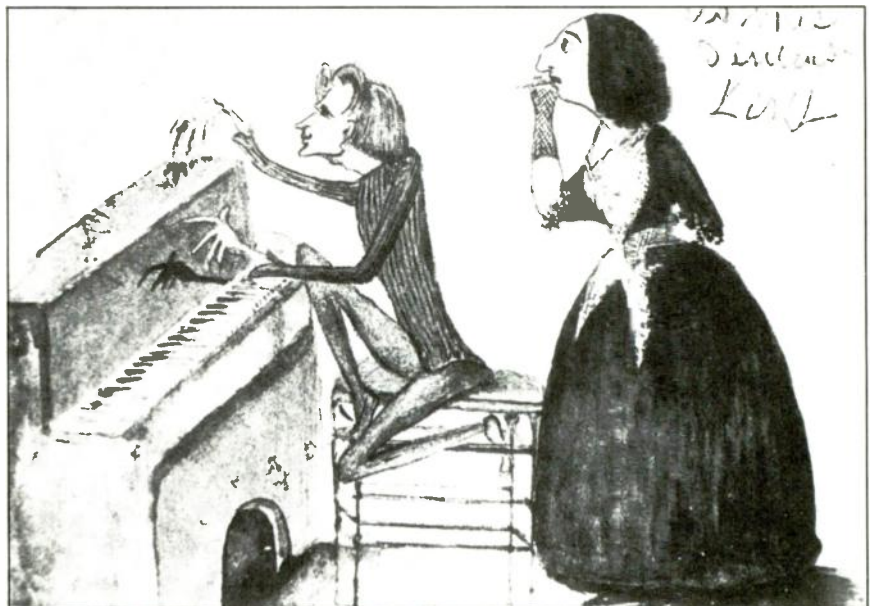
Just a few days before my first glimpse of this surprise, I had been invited by the American Embassy in Paris to visit the Meyer Collection together with Ambassador and Mrs. Hartman and Gilles Daziano of the cultural and performing arts section. They had heard about the campaign to keep the collection together, to save it from the auctioneer's block and from dealers who would profit hugely from commissions earned by selling off André Meyer's bequest to his two sons, piece by piece. Attempts

Martin Berkofsky is an American pianist living in Paris; he received the Yale University Sanford Fellowship in recognition of his work in the restoration of Max Bruch's long-lost Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra.



Photos by Jean-Marc Ouach

Entrance to the Collection "guarded" by Geminiani's portrait



Watercolor of George Sand and Liszt by Sand's son, Maurice



Harpsichord by Hans Ruckers, 1583, once owned by the Medicis



François Meyer, Martin Berkofsky

to find a library, institution, or foundation—some organization which could purchase the collection and keep it intact—had been made. A buyer still had not been found, and François Meyer, one of the heirs, thought sadly of the impending dismemberment of his father's lifetime work.

From Bach to Stravinsky

My curiosity grew; how had such an assemblage come to be? Its catalogue, over four hundred pages long, includes such rarities as manuscript pages from Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*, *Les Troyens*, *Symphonie fantastique*; Debussy's manuscripts of *Pelléas et Mélisande* and the String Quartet; Ravel's manuscript of the piano

Sonatine; Stravinsky's manuscript of the *Rite of Spring*. What set of circumstances brought André Meyer to amass manuscripts and letters from Wagner, Mahler, Beethoven, Satie, Massenet, Rossini, Delibes, Poulenc, Milhaud, Richard Strauss, Saint-Saëns, D'Indy, and Chabrier? To build a treasure trove of first editions of Scarlatti, Lully, Vivaldi, Palestrina; Bach's *Clavierübung* Vol. I of 1731; Rameau's harmony treatise, hand-notated by the author? Hundreds of portraits, statues, drawings; two originals by Delacroix of Chopin; Jean Cocteau's pencil sketches of Satie, Stravinsky, Picasso? A museum of ancient instruments, some dating from the sixteenth century? What would be the fate of André Meyer's

life work?

From an early age André Meyer was a lover of music. His cultural education had been overseen by an uncle who was a personal friend of Chabrier. An able pianist and excellent judge of musical scores, André Meyer financed his growing collection with a profitable textile business he and his brother directed. By no accident, in the 1920s he moved the textile dealership to a Paris house built by Lully in 1670. He was rewarded by the discovery there of a coffer which had belonged to the composer's wife.

His flourishing textile trade took him all through Europe, and business visits to each city were invariably coupled with stops at antique



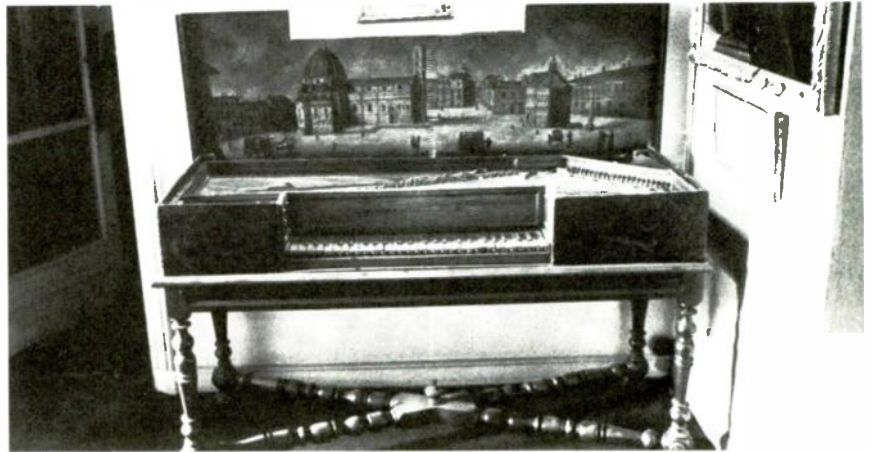
Dantan caricature of Rossini



Stravinsky by Cocteau: among the many



André Meyer: treasure hunter



Seventeenth-century Italian harpsichord with a view of Florence

dealers. The collection grew, with some additions acquired through careful negotiations, others by good fortune: a Berlioz manuscript was purchased in Paris for some three francs, and the set of Dantan statuettes was given to him by a shopkeeper grateful to have his window space cleared!

The war years

Good fortune saw the collection and its owner through the war

years. With the advance of the German armies toward Paris, Meyer secretly divided the priceless pieces among trusted friends before fleeing with his family in 1940. His brother, who stayed in Paris, fell victim to the war in 1941, and André Meyer attempted to return to the city for the funeral. Arrested on his reentry, he was recognized by an Austrian interrogation officer who, upon discovering Meyer's identity, revealed that he himself was involved with the

Vienna Opera before the war and had in fact visited the Meyer Collection some years earlier. Safe passage was quickly arranged.

Later when Meyer and his family were forced to flee to Switzerland, the collection again provided rescue. Pursued by German patrols, Meyer crossed the Swiss border with the scores of *Pelléas* and *Sacré* under his arm; when his identity was confirmed by a dealer in rare books, he was allowed to stay. Deposit of the manu-



The salon housing much of the Meyer Collection

scripts in a Swiss bank secured enough funds to survive the remaining war years.

1945 saw the restoration of the Meyer Collection in Paris. A Hausmann oil of Bach requisitioned by Göring—arriving with a Swastika in the corner—was repaired by friends. Meyer's apartment soon became a focal point of musical life: Stravinsky was delighted to rediscover his *Sacre* manuscript and Rostropovich came to study the notebooks of Debussy.

What will happen now to this collection? The work of nearly seventy-five years could be undone in one day's auctioning. François Meyer sadly relates that the Paris Opéra has even offered its building for an auction sale of the collection. Time is running out, for unless a way is found to keep this treasure together, a lifetime's work will be dissolved. Perhaps there is an institution that can still save this priceless museum. There are many who fervently hope so. **MA**

New Music

Continued from page 16

authentic champagne bottle crashed against the building/ship. Then we were ushered inside, walking across wooden gangplanks and into the theater. There the trouble became apparent, as we sat for an interminable time listening to the unraveling of twisted stories: the idle and corrupt rich, the financial wheeler-dealers, the captain steering into an ice field to make better time to New York, the blasé attitude of the wireless communications men who had reports of icebergs and failed to take them seriously enough, the reporter always muckraking and moralizing only to be eventually corrupted, the pitiful yet hopeful poor, used and abused, the womanizing first mate, and on and on *ad nauseum*.

Perhaps Siebert would have done better to hire a librettist who could move things along. Perhaps he would have done better to hire a composer to help bring some life into the music, which consisted of a pastiche without integrity or originality. To the character Guggenheim, the art collector, went the twelve-tone serial music (though Siebert needs a brushing up on his school serial techniques); to flirtatious Lady Astor, the coloratura lines, etc. All in all, the ideas, though not inventive, were cute and somehow appropriate, just poorly executed. The cast did an admirable job with the light material and one was left wishing they had had a better vehicle.

In the end, as the audience was brought to the stage to join the final ballroom party and the collision rumors were circulating, and as the ladies were pushed toward the exit stairway (this is a period piece, remember) and forced down into the cellars of the building past steerage passengers locked in cages and behind doors, amidst smoke and strobe lights and screaming, one could see how exciting the production might have been, if only we hadn't stopped caring so many hours earlier. **MA**

"Superweekend" at USC, Chamber Music at Ford Theater

Old grad Marilyn Horne returns to celebrate

Melody Peterson

Los Angeles celebrated 1980 not only with its own bicentennial but with the hundredth birthday of the University of Southern California as well. USC is no small matter on this coast. A recent advertising supplement to the *Los Angeles Times* generously boasted its achievements in law, medicine, education, football, *et al.* Finally, all this history came together in a birthday kickoff labelled "SUPERWEEKEND," October 3 to 5.

For the School of Music, "SUPERWEEKEND" meant yet another triumphal return of superstar graduate, soprano Marilyn Horne in recital with pianist Martin Katz (Class of '66) in Bovard Auditorium. It also signalled a halfbaked strum-a-thon by the guitarplaying father and brothers Romero (brother Pepe teaches on the USC faculty).

Horne at USC

Horne's recital was an occasion marked far beyond the sentiment of a homecoming. Offered in memory of her brother, educator Richard B. Horne (a victim of the 1978 PSA air crash in San Diego), it officially noted the establishment of a School of Education scholarship fund in his name. The tone of the event was one of fond remembrance and even a bit of jolly boosterism as Horne urged from the stage that "whoever receives [the new scholarship] should receive a lot of money. Small scholarships are very hard to take!"

The recital itself simply confirmed what we already knew: that

Melody Peterson is a music critic who writes for the Los Angeles Times.



Horne: vast resources

the range and amplitude of Horne's vocal instrument, the intelligence in its application, and the heavenly reciprocity of the Horne-Katz partnership make for a rare and memorable evening, indeed. In a program of Handel, Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Strauss, Wolf, Bizet, and Falla (with encores by Donizetti, Lampugnani, and the Copland setting of *At the River*), one can only cite personal favorites. First on this list? The stately process, the exquisite control, and the quiet colors of the "Dove sei" from Handel's *Rodelinda*. In a town where restlessness and the urge to applaud frequently supercede simple attention, the audience on this night was stopped in its tracks by pure artistry. The pouring out of warmth in Schumann's *Widmung*, the joyous fluency of Handel's *Bel piacere*, the spinning delicacy of Schubert's *Im frühling*, and the feisty dialogue of

Strauss' *Für fünfzehn Pfennige* testified again to the soprano's vast resources.

As the auditorium heated up like a steam room (inadequate air conditioning at the end of a blistering, smoggy day), Horne wiped her brow and went on, building up to and unleashing that giant voice in the stirring climaxes of Wolf's *Mignon*, and giving us a darkly delicious *Adieu de l'hôtesse Arabe* of Bizet, among others. Falla's *Seven Popular Spanish Songs* closed the official program. Although hearty, sultry, and beautifully timed, Horne's Falla seemed almost too opulent for this listener. A minute complaint, to be sure.

The Romeros

Larger complaints were in order on Sunday, however, when the Romeros appeared in varying combinations and capacities with Hans Beer conducting members of the USC Symphony. For this listener, the Romeros seem consistently to prove that there is more popular than musical strength in familiar numbers. Celin and Pepe opened the program with a sketchily articulated and dynamically drab playing of Vivaldi's Concerto in G. While it was early in the season for student ensembles, Beer and the USC contingent supported with confidence although not always with clarity.

Role change time came with the world premiere of father Celedonio's three-movement composition *Por Soleares* for solo guitar (Pepe) and orchestra. This is, quite bluntly, a work undeserving of further performances (though one guesses they will occur, nevertheless). The guitar is Spanish; the strings are Hollywood;

the musical ideas arranged and orchestrated like one bad splice after another. Castanets sound from the back of the hall. Celeste chords ring in from out of the blue. Tutti's dead end. Melodic attempts are strangled. Development is nil.

The orchestra sounded confused. Beer and Pepe labored conscientiously while making little sense. Much of the audience rose to its feet with whistles and cheers. At least one highly regarded USC music faculty member walked swiftly out and never returned.

In yet another switch, Angel Romero took up the baton while Pepe did (solo) honors in Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. Angel's left hand is self-conscious and the general demeanor stilted, but he is musical and may yet make a conductor if he can serve his apprenticeship out of the spotlight. Rodrigo's *Concierto Andaluz* for four guitars concluded the program in a cheerful although less than incisive performance.

Local chamber ensembles

There it sits. Steeply up a hill and across the freeway from the Hollywood Bowl, hovered over by Washingtonia palms and Italian cypress and plumey clouds. The John Anson Ford (formerly Pilgrimage) Theater is an intimate antithesis to the Bowl—the perfect hideaway for small ballet companies, or jazz ensembles or, as Los Angeles County (which administers it) also saw fit last fall, for chamber music groups.

The plan provided for a series of five free concerts, each spotlighting an ensemble or ensembles from one of the area's leading orchestras. This year, the Long Beach, Glendale, and California Chamber Symphonies plus the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and Pasadena Symphony were represented on successive Tuesday nights beginning in mid September. Unfortunately too few Angelenos know of, much less how to get to, the Ford Theater. Regrettably, Tuesday isn't the best of all possible concert nights. Opening night, furthermore,



Zearott, Speltz, Leonard

coincided with the first day of school in a city shredded by contradictory busing decisions. The results? One concertgoer estimated that thirty people heard the Long Beach musicians.

This listener caught the inner three concerts, an extremely varied and increasingly interesting lot. Glendale, for example, chose to educate its crowd (about ninety) from the ground up. While one is not enchanted by a demonstration of harmony with "Old MacDonald" as its vehicle (the whole-tone version proved particularly trying), concertgoers here seemed appreciative of the tour neatly guided by Myron Sandler of the Mallory String Quartet. With violinist Blanche Belnick, violist Abraham Weiss, and cellist Judith Perett, Sandler essayed an uneven first movement of Mozart's *Eine kleine Nachtmusik* (grossly distorted because Sandler forgot to turn off his narrator's microphone), the first movement of Dvořák's *American Quartet* (ditto, plus much experimental dimming and brightening of the theater lights), and a lumpily unyielding first movement of the Ravel Quartet. Smaller portions of Haydn, Stravinsky,

Dubensky, Griffes, Still, Bartók, and Liadov further demonstrated musical styles.

The evening improved considerably when a second Glendale group, the Pacific Percussion Ensemble, arrived. Timm Boatman, Frank Logar, Todd Miller, and Wallace Snow launched effortlessly into an intelligently insistent Toccata of Carlos Chavez, sprinkled evocative droplets of tapped timp, marimba, and xylophone in Hovhanness' *October Mountain*, and produced by a nifty William Kraft *Ostinato* with brushed snares, tambourine, and bass drum. Sandler's narrative was, in this case, enhanced by solid ensemble and substantial chunks of music. The evening closed with Michael Colgrass' colorfully organized Music for Percussion and Robert Moran's aimless *Bombardments*.

The casual goodwill that the Ford inspires prevailed again at the next concert, when the California Chamber Players appeared, and on the following event when woodwind players from the LACO took over. It now became apparent that dress was as diverse as California itself (suits and ties for Glendale, tuxes for the CCP, open shirts and sportscoats for the LACO winds), and that whims of the weather could add their own devilish delights to these affairs.

Violinist Brian Leonard, cellist David Speltz, and pianist Michael Zearott, for example, gave the most thoroughly charming performance of Dvořák's *Dumky* Trio one has heard—and not entirely for the right reasons. From the first, the Dvořák seemed a labor of love, the musicians superfluent, emphatic, (perspiring), on a very warm, very still night. Then Speltz's music began to flap, as wind stirred through open doors and windows. The cellist continued to play intensely, stabbing the music into place with the tip of his bow at virtually every phrase end.

Mendelssohn's D minor Trio, Opus 49, unattended by gremlins, proved totally exciting. The opening

Continued on page 39

The Anchorage Civic Opera

A sense of isolation encourages self sufficiency

Karen Monson

There are many things to see in Alaska: fjords, mountains, moose, elk, eagles, glaciers, totems, and on and on. One would not, however, necessarily expect to find grand opera. Think again.

That is not to say that the Anchorage Civic Opera is worth a special trip to the American outpost in the high-up Pacific Northwest. But if you happen to be in the largest city of our forty-ninth state at performance time, by all means go. Chances are, you'll be in for a pleasant surprise.

Things don't happen in Alaska in quite the same way they happen in the rest of the nation or, for that matter, in the rest of the world. Start by asking how many cities with populations of just over two hundred thousand have their own opera companies (plus a symphony orchestra, civic ballet, repertory theater, youth symphony, imported concert series, etc.). Almost 1.5 percent of the people in Anchorage go to the opera, as compared to significantly less than one percent of the population in the other American cities most nearly comparable in size. In Anchorage, they stand in line for the privilege of paying as much as \$12.50 for a ticket; next season, they'll probably stand in line to pay \$18.

OperAlaska

Yet the Anchorage Civic Opera earns less than one-sixth of its total budget from ticket sales, and can spend almost twice what it takes in on salaries for eight full-time staff people. This strange and, to the company, wonderful state of affairs is new; a donation from the state of

more than \$200,000 spurred the formation of OperAlaska, a touring arm of the Anchorage Civic Opera with its own accounts and its own small staff but, obviously, with a great dependency on its mother ensemble. The grant from the state, added to monies from the Municipality of Anchorage, the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, meant that more than half of the Anchorage Civic Opera's \$416,000 budget for 1980-81 came from public funds. The company needed to raise only \$67,000 this season in private and corporate gifts, and before the first production opened, the goal was almost met. Money doesn't work the same way in Alaska as in the "lower Forty-eight." There seems to be a lot more of it.

During this season, its sixth, the Anchorage Civic Opera is presenting three productions—or perhaps one should say, three and three-quarters productions: they opened with Verdi's *Rigoletto*, the presentation that I saw at the beginning of November; following tradition, that was the "professional" offering of the season, the Big Show, with imported "stars" (actually lesser luminaries; see below), but with the members of the forty-two-piece orchestra paid a mere \$11 per service, the comprimarios paid only nominal fees, and the chorus paid not at all. In February-March, five performances of Offenbach's *Christopher Columbus* are the customary home-grown presentation, using a greater amount of local talent. Then at the end of May, the Anchorage Civic Opera sponsors Western Opera Theater's production of Donizetti's *Elixir of Love*, with major funding from Sohio Alaska Petroleum Company. In addition, the ensemble will take *Christopher Columbus*

to Juneau and will tour a small bill of the Gilbert & Sullivan *Trial by Jury* and various excerpts, both under the OperAlaska banner. And a fund-raising dinner opera with singing waiters may add as much as \$9,000 to the coffers in the spring.

In 1975, after several abortive efforts, the Anchorage Civic opera reemerged with a \$12,000 *I Pagliacci*. In '76 the schedule consisted of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*; comparisons with Central City, by the way, are welcomed. The next year brought *La Bohème*, and in 1978 they tried two productions, *The Mikado* and *La Traviata*. Gilbert & Sullivan turned out to be a hit, so 1979 brought *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Doing it themselves

Grace Oakley, the music teacher turned real-state salesperson who is now the president of the board, thinks that it's the sense of isolation that inspires Alaskans to self-sufficiency, to do it themselves even when the "it" is grand opera. But the woman who has been principally responsible for the existence of the Anchorage Civic Opera is Elvera Voth, whose talent and pioneering spirit have been the guiding forces behind much that has happened musically in the town. She went to Alaska from Kansas in 1961, in large part because she was frustrated by having to vault the hurdles that were placed in front of women who wanted to conduct on the Outside. ("Outside" is the term Alaskans use for the rest of the United States; people who don't live in Alaska are, then, Outsiders.)

For a dozen years, Elvera Voth prepared the Anchorage Community Chorus to sing in the Alaska Festival of Music under Robert Shaw; she started the music department at the

Karen Monson, the author of a biography of Alban Berg, is director of the arts center of Scottsdale, Arizona.



Jim Levrakis

Rigoletto: better than many on the Outside

University of Alaska in Anchorage and reached the rank of full professor before she retired a few years ago. Since last summer, she has been working full-time for the Anchorage Civic Opera, which means only that she is being paid for what she has been doing for a half-dozen years anyway. Elvera Voth's observations about Alaska and its cultural scene are among the most interesting I've heard: her audiences, she says, want either the grandest of the grand operas, or something totally frivolous. Like so much about the state, opera has to be larger than life, or something quite apart from reality.

Among the various problems that Miss Voth faces is the transience of the Alaskan population. She estimates that the turnover among members of her chorus and orchestra is at least fifty percent a year. To train her chorus, which is superb by any standard, she dishes out language tapes, and music tapes and scores of the operas during the summer, and asks only that the "kids" show up at her rehearsals when they happen to be free from their fishing boats and mining camps. For *Rigoletto*, she took five singers (out of about forty) who did not read music, and worked with them note-by-note and word-by-word until they were confident.

The orchestra is a much more serious problem. Clearly, the Anchorage Civic Opera will not take another step toward professionalism until it has a better group of instrumentalists. But those needed people are not

to be found in Alaska. The core of the opera orchestra is the core of the Anchorage Symphony; it's not the fact that they earn only \$11 per service that keeps the players away. They quite simply aren't there in the first place.

Visible results

And yet there is hope—and more: there are results to be seen. The Anchorage Civic Opera's *Rigoletto* looked better than many I've seen on the Outside, with credits to director Patrick Tavernia, designer Carey Wong, and lighting expert Eugene Dent, all of whom were brought in for the occasion. As I mentioned, the chorus was superb; the orchestra was utterly inadequate, but Bruce Ferdin, the young man who conducted the world premiere of Phillip Glass's *Satyagraha* last year in Rotterdam [see December issue], knew how to make the best of what could have been a worse-than-awkward situation, and convinced the beleaguered players to unite with a modicum of accuracy and a good deal of soul.

The singers of lesser roles, mostly Alaskans, were weak. The principals, however, were definitely of professional caliber, especially Richard Clark, the Rigoletto; Gloria Mannacci was adequate as Gilda, and if Dale Smith has no business singing the role of the Duke, that is not to say that he does not have an attractive tenor voice—maybe even for Mozart.

What saves the Anchorage Civic

Opera, at least for some productions, is the size of the hall in which the group often performs. (It will come as no surprise, at this point, when I say that there is great competition among the city's various performing arts organizations for the use of the relatively few auditoriums, none of which has a *bona fide* pit.) The Sydney Laurence Auditorium (named for the painter) in downtown Anchorage seats only about 650 people. The opera's administrators will list the hall's weaknesses without being asked; they are undoubtedly right, but the point is that they are still in the incredibly luxurious position of being able to put on opera in such an intimate setting. Quite simply, it is the smallness of the auditorium that lets the voices sound and the audience get involved. And, of course, there are plans to get bigger and bigger.

To an Outsider, bigger and bigger does not signal better and better. But Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, the architectural firm, and Bolt Beranek, and Newman, the acousticians (the team that did the new Louise M. Davies Hall for San Francisco) are in the process of designing a new performing arts center for Anchorage that will be, in the words of the opera's young administrative director, Michael More, a "little Lincoln Center." The complex will include an 1,800-seat opera house, an 800-seat playhouse, and a concert hall of about 2,500 capacity. Needless to say, the money is there. To an Outsider, there is no way that the Anchorage Civic Opera can justify having its own house, 365 days a year; and the same Outsider would hate to see the company's productions have to expand to fill almost three times the space they now fit. Still, it is a fascinating prospect, like most things in Alaska, where people think not of the past, but only of the future. And that future is rosy, to put it mildly. As I think I said, things don't happen in Alaska the way they happen in the lower Forty-eight. It is a phenomenon to watch. **MA**

Casals Festival Rallies Against Odds

Jorge Mester plans for gala 25th anniversary this year

Shirley Fleming

When the Casals Festival was canceled in the spring of 1979, it seemed that the last vestige of the Old Man's magic had finally evaporated. Jorge Mester had just been engaged as music director, but the international glitter had dimmed, the festival board was under all-out attack by local musicians, composers, and politicians, who demanded a more prominent role in the proceedings, and every effort to get fresh plans underway bogged down in acrimonious controversy. There was a possibility that Marta Casals Istomin, who had resigned from the board, might withdraw the name of her late husband from the festival entirely.

The issue was fundamental—should the festival continue to concentrate on engaging artists of international caliber, with the aim of drawing an international audience (and much-needed tourist dollars) to Puerto Rico, or should it become more a showcase for local talent, encouraging Puerto Ricans to take pride in a homegrown product? The fallout from this dissension hit in various crippling ways. In 1979, for instance, the musicians of the Puerto Rico Symphony objected to the proposed participation of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra because some—though not all—of the first chair positions in the specially formed Festival Orchestra were to be filled by St. Paul players. There was further objection to the appearance as a guest conductor of U.S. violinist/conductor Sidney Harth, who had served as concertmaster of the Festival Orchestra in previous summers and had been, according to one observer, “a hard taskmaster.” Local composers were adamant in their demand for greater representation on festival programs,



Mester at the Governor's mansion: here rests the state of the arts

but turned down Mester's proposal that selection of scores be made by an outside panel consisting of Aaron Copland, Alberto Ginastera, and Krzysztof Penderecki.

When negotiations over such matters ground to a halt in 1979, it was anybody's guess whether Festival Casals would—or could—be revived.

A simmer of resentment

Not the sort of situation to warm the heart of most music directors, but Jorge Mester, going into his tenth year as director of the Aspen Festival, was not dismayed. Against considerable odds, the 1980 festival did take place, and the machinery was set in motion for a gala twenty-fifth anniversary celebration in the summer of 1981.

The 1980 festival resolved some of the questions of local involvement. Concerts were made more widely accessible—there were lunchtime events in shopping centers, historic buildings, and in the lobby of San Juan's famous El Convento Hotel. Chil-

dren's concerts were given by visiting ensembles such as the American Brass Quintet and the Beaux Arts Trio, and by a local student string ensemble. Recitals and concerts were performed by Puerto Rican soloists, and most of the visiting artists gave masterclasses, open to students from the Conservatory.

But some local resentments simmered still. There was, for example, the episode of the first chair clarinet auditions for the Festival Orchestra. Mester, to fill this position in the fairest manner, arranged “blind” auditions with procedures duly published and circulated in advance. Players were to perform behind a screen, with a rug on the floor to disguise male or female footsteps, and a monitor was to speak for the auditioner to eliminate voice clues as to sex. At the first audition, four clarinetists tried out, and two were eliminated. The remaining two returned for another audition, and were judged to be equal. One was a Puerto Rican man, the other a U.S.-born woman who al-

ready occupied principal chair in the Puerto Rico Symphony. At this point, Mester proposed that, to break the tie, evaluation of the two players continue through the pre-festival rehearsal period, with the players alternating in first chair and the final choice to be made at the end of the rehearsal weeks. The man refused. Mester then told both players to think it over for five days ("until I had to leave for the airport"), and stated that if one player accepted the proposal and the other did not, the one who accepted would get the job. The woman accepted, and was consequently engaged for first chair; the man refused second chair and two weeks later sued Mester for \$50,000, charging discrimination on the basis of both nationality and sex. Five months later, the case was dismissed from court.

The 1980 festival

The stress of such pre-festival contretemps was not, fortunately, visible during the festival itself, and although attendance was notably skimpy at early concerts, by the end there was standing room only. International names on the performing roster included conductors Sergiu Comissiona and Odón Alonso (director of the Spanish National Radio and Television Orchestra), pianist Garrick Ohlsson, cellist Zara Nelsova, bass Justino Diaz (Puerto Rican born), soprano Elly Ameling (substituting for Victoria de los Angeles), and violinist Ruggiero Ricci. John Barnett, director of the Puerto Rico Symphony, conducted one Festival Orchestra concert, and Mester led the opening and closing concerts.

On the occasion I heard him—the inaugural concert at the University of Puerto Rico on June 10—it was clear that he had shaped the orchestra into a responsive and disciplined ensemble. Nelsova was strong and committed in Bloch's *Schelomo* at the concert, and two days later held a masterclass (four students and not many more auditors) that was alive with her own unmistakable energy,

insight, and human involvement.

A political dilemma

As we go to press, the political/administrative structure of cultural life in Puerto Rico stands at a turning point, with the outcome of the disputed November 4 gubernatorial election still in doubt. But for the first time, a cabinet-level post has been created by incumbent Governor Carlos Romero Barceló for a Chairman of the Board of Arts and Culture Development; the newly appointed administrator will oversee the activities of four corporations: 1) the Conservatory of Puerto Rico; 2) the Puerto Rico Symphony; 3) the Performing Arts (including the Casals Festival); and 4) the new Arts Center, whose scheduled late-1980 opening was postponed until after the final election decision.

Meanwhile, whatever the election outcome, the groundwork has been laid for the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration this June. In a departure from preceding practice, the Festival Orchestra has been scrapped in favor of the Puerto Rico Symphony, functioning in its stead, and the Cincinnati Symphony will be in residence—performing, Mester points out, large-orchestra works that have never before been done in Puerto Rico (he mentions the Mahler Fifth and *Le Sacre du printemps*).

Whether it is fair to expect the Puerto Rico Symphony to fill the boots of a specially groomed, intensely trained Festival Orchestra, staffed by some of the best free-lance players available anywhere, remains to be seen. It is also unclear, at this juncture, whether the Casals Festival is to draw its audience primarily from the island or will endeavor to create the kind of international—or at least North American—interest it once commanded. (The program book, last summer, was printed only in Spanish.) Mester is optimistic: "I see the festival growing in the way Pablo Casals hoped it would," he says. And he is doing his considerable best toward that end. **MA**

L.A. "Superweekend"

Continued from page 35

voared. The Andante, though occasionally relentless, was never less than ardent. The Scherzo scampered forward, its momentum and balance superbly maintained. The finale only reconfirmed the players' technical and musical aplomb. (This was their debut as a trio. One hopes to hear them in that combination again.)

In the following week, flutist David Shostac, oboist Allan Vogel, clarinetists Gary Gray and David Atkins, hornist Robin Graham, and bassoonist John Steinmetz distinguished themselves with the same high polish and verve that makes the LACO special. Clarinets and bassoon elegantly rippled through Mozart's Divertimentos Nos. 2 and 4. Horn, bassoon, clarinet, and flute took a jaunty turn at Rossini's Quartet No. 4 in B flat (with Miss Graham impressively tossing off whizzy passage-work). Shostac and Vogel set out a buoyant Telemann Duo in B minor. And finally, all ended with Anton Reicha's Quintet in E flat, its every movement exuberantly applauded by an inebriated gentleman in the front row. Vogel, in the best manner of coping at the Ford, bowed politely in response to a lengthy outburst after movement two. The man sat down. The show went on. **MA**

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Debuts

Continued from page 27

as both composer and conductor.

Publicity flyers promised the world premiere of a Samuel work entitled *Two Minor Desperations*. By the evening of the performance, however, *Two* had become *Three*, the composer having furnished a middle section at the last minute. What neither the audience nor Samuel had anticipated was a Fourth Minor Desperation—a loud buzz emanating from the amplification system that had been set up to improve the acoustics of the Galleria Showplace, an immense brick structure located in the city's rehabilitated warehouse district. The noise prompted Samuel to interrupt soprano Constance DeFotis and an ensemble drawn from members of the Symphony. All waited until the errant speaker was silenced. Then *Three Minor Desperations* was begun again.

After it was all over, the composer was visibly upset. But he needn't have been. His new piece, set to the superb love poetry of Jack Larson, received a dramatic reading the second time around—a performance that revealed *Three Minor Desperations* as an important contribution to the contemporary vocal repertory. The style of this work is calculated but in no sense facile. The essential strength of the music comes from the way it manipulates the listener emotionally: Samuel seems to be one of the few contemporary practitioners interested in and successful at doing this.

Disclaimers notwithstanding, the piece sounds vaguely tonal. The vocal part—which DeFotis handled with impeccable intonation and diction—is lyrical, and musical rhymes are used to great effect. Most impressive, perhaps, is the writing for instrumental ensemble. Each change of texture and choice of timbre strikes the listener as being utterly right.

The program also included compositions by Robert Moran and Stephen Mosko, as well as a virtuoso vocal performance by Moran of Roman Haubenstock-Ramati's spas-



Samuel: utterly right

modic *Credentials*. On the whole, the concert was, like the rest of the series, notable for the relative accessibility of its music and the largeness of the audience.

KENNETH W. FAIN.

Syracuse

Syracuse Symphony: *Reise Symphony II* [premiere]

Jay Reise's gripping *Symphony II*, premiered by the Syracuse Symphony under Christopher Keene on November 6 and 8, is a twenty-minute work for very large orchestra incorporating both tonality and what the thirty-year-old composer calls "the searing gestures of post-Webern serialism." That combination may be common these days, but this score is far more compelling than most comparable works. First, Reise—a composer as attuned to Fauré and Rachmaninoff as to Boulez—has a deeply felt lyrical strain: few contemporary composers could match the bitter-sweet melancholy of his rich string outpourings. Second, although it is an expansive work (tempo are often slow, ideas develop over broad spans), every note tells. The structure is tight (a short Prelude in sonata form, followed by an Aria with variations uniting slow and fast movements in the manner of Beethoven's



Reise: accessible yet complex

Op. 111); and the transitions are paced so that the climaxes seem inevitable—cataclysmic rather than merely brutal.

Most important, Reise has achieved a rare balance between accessibility and complexity. As the warm audience response demonstrated, *Symphony II* hits hard. Yet each rehearsing yields a deeper appreciation of the dense counterpoint, the metric modulations, and the intricate motivic interrelationships: this is music whose beauties go well beneath the surface. *Symphony II* is dedicated to the Syracuse Symphony, who played it with power and authority. Even where the sheer mass of musical material offers a temptation to smudge, Keene demanded (and got) a chilling clarity of articulation.

Given the obvious effort that went into preparing this premiere, one would have forgiven the orchestra for sloughing off on the rest of the program. But there was no need. George Coble, undaunted by his lip-wrenching first trumpet part, came right back to join soprano Phyllis Bryn-Julson in a spirited account of Bach's Cantata No. 51. The orchestral accompaniment to Bryn-Julson's sumptuous reading of Griffes' *Three Songs of Fiona MacLeod* was similarly expert, and the evening ended with a buoyant Beethoven Second.

PETER J. RABINOWITZ

the middle of the finale, which was absolutely shattering in Toscanini's hands (as in no other conductor's), sounds decidedly tame. In short, this just isn't my cup of sea.

The Ravel side of this generously filled record is somewhat more successful. Giulini offers a beautiful and sensitive *Mother Goose Suite*, but again the "Laideronnette" movement, the only lively section of the piece, is too slow, and the majestic closing pages sound a bit perfunctory. The *Rapsodie espagnole* is elegantly done, but the fast sections lack excitement. For want of any animation preceding it, the abrupt acceleration near the end seems merely an afterthought. And just prior thereto, what should be a slight holding back becomes a complete stop.

Throughout this record, all concerned seem to be striving to produce the most beautiful sounds possible; they end up draining the music of impact. Nor does the boxy, lopsided recording help. The orchestra leans into the right channel, and many soft violin passages in *La Mer* are simply inaudible. Perhaps DG should take lessons from Philips in how to record an orchestra. J.C.

DEBUSSY: Vocal and Choral Works.

Barbara Hendricks* and Solange Vallancien*, sopranos; Jocelyne Taillon, mezzo-soprano*; Léonard Pezzino, tenor*; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone†; Chorus of the Orchestre de Paris**†, Orchestre de Paris, Daniel Barenboim, cond. [Wolfgang Stengel*†, Günther Breest*†, Werner Mayer†, and Steven Paul†, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 263, \$9.98.

*La Damoiselle élue**; *Trois Ballades de François Villon*†; *Invocation*†; *Salut Printemps**.

The real wonder here is Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's performance of the 1910 *Trois Ballades de François Villon*, marvelous songs written in Debussy's tightest and sparsest style. Less intelligent singers try to sweeten them, make them charming; Fischer-Dieskau, far from adding sugar, finds cynical undercurrents in the love song, the prayer, and the ode to the women of Paris. These are songs of the street, not the parlor. With vivid backing from Daniel Barenboim and the Orchestre de Paris, his reading suggests that he'll find his own pleasures with his own head and gut, bargaining forth to take from life whatever he can get. It's a wonderfully evocative performance, and even though the *Villon* Songs don't fit neatly with the other works, one has to be glad they're here.

The rest of the pieces, all choral, are still less familiar. The best known is the lat-

est, *La Damoiselle élue*, written when the composer was in his midtwenties and probably the prime example of his mystical/religious side. This setting of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's text for women's voices and orchestra descends directly from *Parsifal* but also relates to Massenet in its naive eroticism; in the best sense, it is very, very pretty. Barbara Hendricks, the sweet and pure soprano, and mezzo Jocelyne Taillon, who sings the story line, join the women of the Orchestre de Paris's chorus.

The other two choruses, of which I can trace no previous recordings, were both losers in Debussy's quest for the Prix de Rome. *Salut Printemps*, set for soprano solo, women's chorus, and orchestra, is the earlier of the two; though charming, it did not even make the finals of the competition. The next year, 1883, *Invocation* did qualify its composer for the second round, but again, he did not get to Rome. For tenor, men's chorus, and orchestra, this is the more inventive of the short cantatas, yet neither shows Debussy at his best. He never entirely lost his spark in trying to please the judges, but the chosen subjects and texts evidently failed to inspire him.

The weakest link in these performances is the chorus, which tends to be sloppy. The Orchestre de Paris plays extremely well, with just the right shadings and turns of phrase. K.M.

DVOŘÁK: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, in A minor, Op. 53; Romance in F minor, Op. 11.

Josef Suk, violin; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann, cond. [Jan Vrána, prod.] SUPRAPHON 1410 2423, \$8.98 (SQ-encoded disc).

R Josef Suk, violin; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Karel Ančerl, cond. [Ladislav Šip, prod.] QUINTESSENCE PMC 7112, \$5.98. Tape: P4C 7112, \$5.98 (cassette). [From ARTIA ALP 193, 1962.]

Salvatore Accardo, violin; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 9500 406, \$9.98. Tape: 7300 614, \$9.98 (cassette).

These alternative issues of the same coupling offer a fascinating comparison of both musical and technical philosophies. The Supraphon disc was made in 1978, when Suk was nearing his fiftieth birthday; the Quintessence (previously available on Artia, and more recently as a Supraphon

Correction: Bridget Paolucci, in her article "The New Young Lions" [January], recommended the recording "The Art of Richard Stoltzman," incorrectly identified as an Orion product; it is actually Desmar DSM 1014G.

import) dates from the early Sixties and preserves the work of a then up-and-coming virtuoso.

Both, in their different ways, offer noteworthy performances, the newer versions being a bit more relaxed and genial. Without in any way lessening his patrician dignity, Suk has become a little more free-wheeling rhythmically—more conscious of the longer line, the grand gesture. Some of the change may reflect factors other than age; Neumann's conducting is somewhat more easygoing than Ančerl's tauter, more Szellous approach, and the later recording, sonorous and natural-sounding, is less insistent in its pinpointing of detail. All the instrumental asides are readily discernible, but one no longer has the feeling that presence mikes are all about, ready and eager to capture every countermelody with prickly clarity. Though the earlier engineering wears its years honorably, it betrays moments of strident acerbity notably absent from the later production. The older readings have more than proved their durability, but the new ones may have still greater emotional substance.

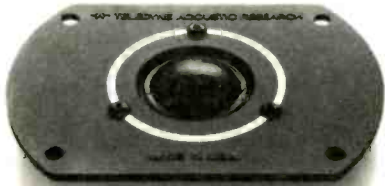
Accardo's sound, as in his Brahms and Bruch performances, tends toward "whiteness"; while Suk's interpretations are essentially similar, trim and classical, his sonority seems positively burnished by comparison—copper, as opposed to chrome. This is not meant to derogate Accardo. Indeed, his moonlit purity of tone effectively sets off the intertwining solo part from the uncommonly robust, dark-sounding Concertgebouw backdrop. Philips' engineering may well be the best these works have ever had, adding somewhat more focus and definition to the spacious heft of the newer Suk version. Davis elicits some delicious soft timpani playing, but the Czech trumpets are occasionally more incisive I'd be hard pressed to choose: I slightly prefer Suk's sound in this rapturous writing, and of course, the Czech Philharmonic's Dvořák needs no special pleading; but Davis and Concertgebouw provide such superlative backup for Accardo's adroit and distinguished solo work that the finish is a dead heat.

This lovely music has fared unusually well on record, from its earliest days with Menuhin/Enesco and Kulenkampff/Jochum right down through Martzy/Fric-say, Stern/Ormandy, Perlman/Barenboim, and three Milstein editions to the three versions here, which emphatically belong in such illustrious company. H.G.

HAYDN: Mass No. 10, in B flat (*Theresien-Messe*).

▲ Lucia Popp, soprano; Rosalind Elias,

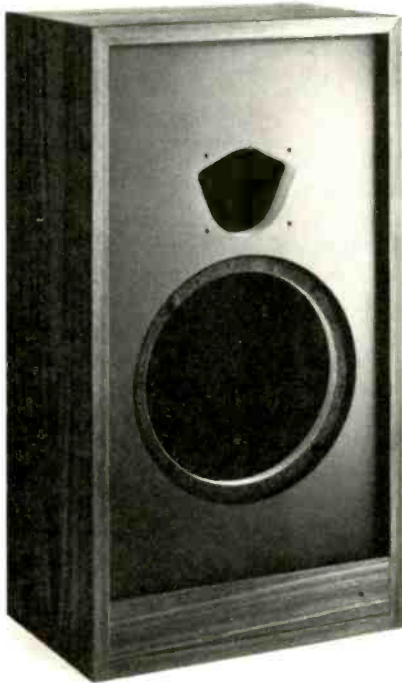
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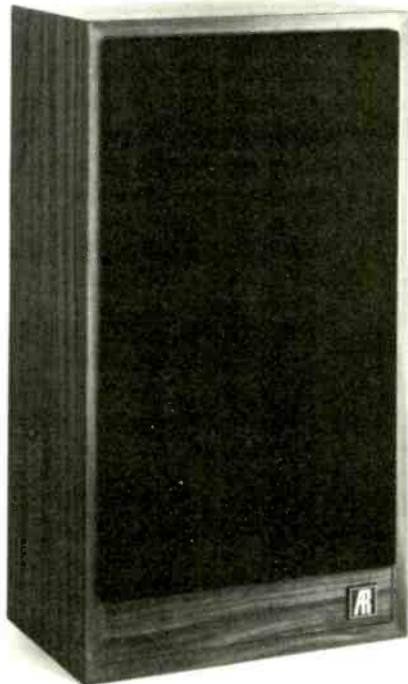
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mezzo-soprano; Robert Tear, tenor; Paul Hudson, baritone; London Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, Leonard Bernstein, cond. [John McClure, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS IM 35839, \$14.98 (digital recording). Tape: HMT 35839, \$14.98 (cassette).

HAYDN: Mass No. 2, in E flat (*Missa in honorem Beatissimae Virginis Mariae; Great Organ*).

Judith Nelson, soprano; Carolyn Watkinson, alto; Martyn Hill, tenor; David Thomas, bass; Christ Church Cathedral Choir (Oxford), Academy of Ancient Music, Simon Preston, dir. [Peter Wadland, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE DSLO 563, \$9.98. Tape: KDSL 563, \$9.98 (cassette).

Haydn's Masses were often attacked for their frivolity; the composer is said to have replied that when he thought of God's infinite goodness "he could have written even a *Miserere* in tempo allegro." More recently Charles Rosen has renewed the attack (in *The Classical Style*); he calls this excuse "magnificently disingenuous" and judges Haydn's Masses "uncomfortable compromises." I think they only appear to be compromises because we are unfamiliar with the stylistic conventions of eighteenth-century Viennese and Austrian church music; the same accusation of wild stylistic variety has been leveled at Mozart's C minor Mass.

These recordings capture, in their very different ways, some of the joyful simplicity and exuberant power of Haydn's devotion. It may seem absurd to say that the small-scale recording, with a tiny choir of boys and men, is more joyful and more powerful than Bernstein's grandiose vision with the London Symphony Chorus, yet that is the result.

Bernstein's performance is a great, generalized dance of God: a gloriously operatic set of dance movements shorn of any sense of period style. The performance is alive and cohesive, and there is much less stumbling on the sidelines than I remember from the live account he gave in London while recording the work. Yet there is always a feeling that the choral singing should be tighter, that the strings' passage-work should be more precise; the "*Qui tollis*" should bite harder, the "*Et resurrexit*" should take wing. The one treasurable feature here is Lucia Popp's solo soprano, stylish in the Benedictus, with a simple, unfussy integrity that puts her companions in the shade. Listen to them all in the lovely "*Et in spiritum sanctum*" section: First Rosalind Elias bumps clumsily into the flowing phrase; then Paul Hudson and Robert Tear sing it boringly; but then Popp floats up to a top B flat with just the right lilt.

The Academy of Ancient Music's version of the long, so-called *Great Organ*

Mass is far cooler. It follows the accounts of the *Missa brevis* in F and the *St. Nicholas Mass* (Oiseau-Lyre DSLO 538), among the freshest and most delightful Haydn performances I have ever heard. Choir and soloists have a crisp, clear sound that is well supported by the original instruments. Simon Preston's direction, however, does not overlook the powerful moments in the music, and as I have indicated, he obtains far more precision and force at those points than Bernstein could. The "*Et vitam venturi*" fugue is outstanding; the clean-edged accuracy in the "*Gratias agimus*" is delicious. There are moments of weakness in the work, though not, I think, in the "*Dona nobis*," which (both in his Haydn biography and on the sleeve) H. C. Robbins Landon criticizes for its interruption of a "noble fugue" and "great fugal line" with chirping organ solo passages. He cannot have heard this performance: Here the "*Dona nobis*" skips along exuberantly with a feeling of pastoral abandon, and Christopher Hogwood's organ interpolations are not in the least incongruous. Robbins Landon also writes of a "monumental" Sanctus, but here it is broad and gentle.

This is a most successful recording. It leads me to hope that, in spite of the popularity of the Academy/Christ Church *Messiah*, which Hogwood conducts, the direction of their choral recordings is left in Preston's hands, for his instinctive understanding of the music ideally complements the Academy's studied care. N.K.

LIGETI: Three Pieces for Two Pianos. For a review, see page 56.

MADERNA: Aura; Biogramma; Quadrivium. For a review, see page 56.

MAYUZUMI: Nirvana Symphony; Mandala Symphony. For a review, see page 56.

MOZART: Die Entführung aus dem Serail, K. 384*; *Alternative Duet and Insert Arias* (*Smith arr.)[†].

CAST*:

Constanze	Christiane Eda-Pierre (s)/ Renate Pichler (spkr)
Blondchen	Norma Burrows (s)/ Pia Werfel (spkr)
Belmonte	Stuart Burrows (t)/ Friedhelm Ptok (spkr)
Pedrillo	Robert Tear (t)/ Franz Rudnick (spkr)
Osmin	Robert Lloyd (bs)/ Herbert Weicker (spkr)
Bassa Selim	Curt Jürgens (spkr)

John Alldis Choir, Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Colin Davis, cond. PHILIPS 6769 026, \$29.94 (three discs, man-

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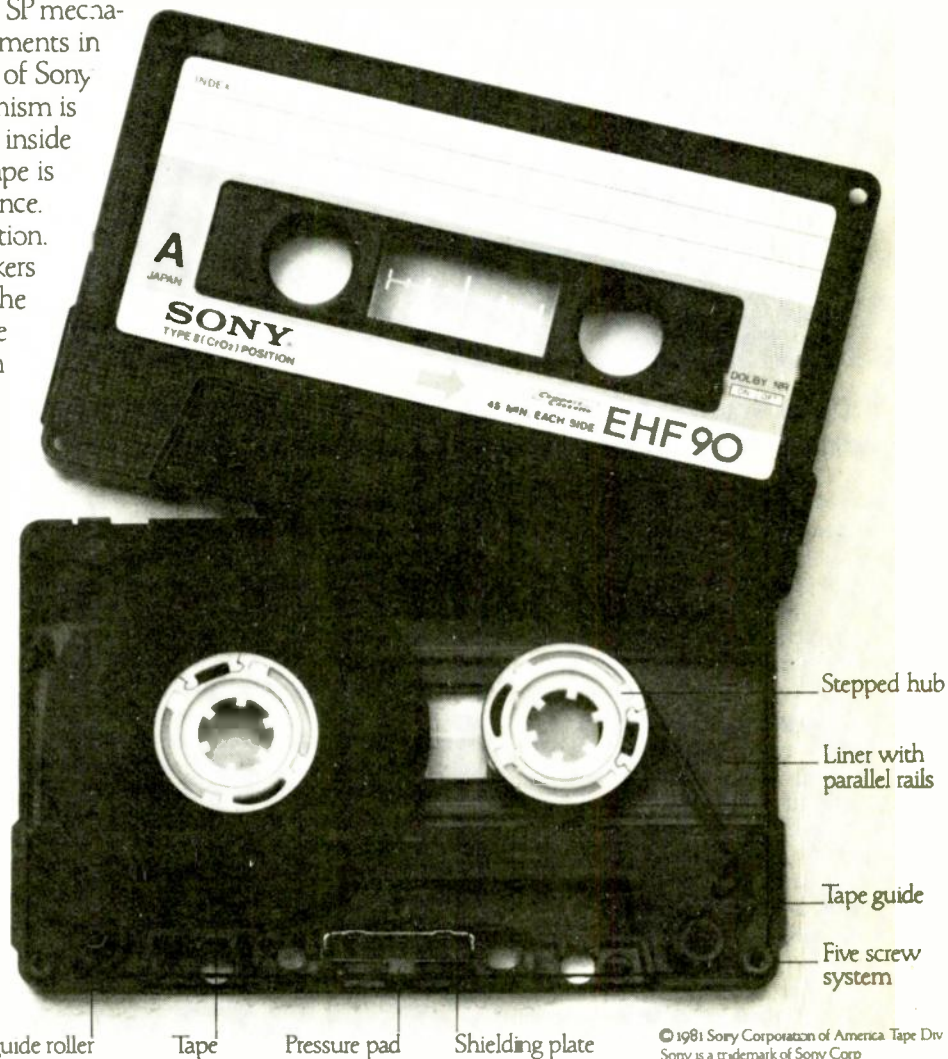
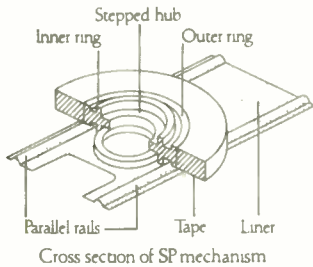
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ual sequence). Tape: 7699 111, \$19.96 (two cassettes).

Duet: Welch ängstliches Beben, K. 389 (Burrows, Tear) Arias: Männer suchen stets zu naschen, K. 433 (Lloyd)*; Müsst ich auch durch tausend Drachen, K. 435 (Burrows)*; Ich möchte wohl der Kaiser sein, K. 539 (Lloyd); Schon lacht der holde Frühling, K. 580 (Eda-Pierre)*.

COMPARISON—*Entführung*:

Auger, Grist, Schreier, Moll/Böhm

DG 2709 051

After Sir Colin Davis' recent recordings of Puccini and Verdi, it is a relief to

find him tackling music in which he sounds so thoroughly at home. Using smaller forces than usual, he achieves a very convincing lissomeness. Indeed, from the standpoint of conducting, this performance—clear in texture, fleet, and lively—is by far the most persuasive available. By comparison, Karl Böhm's reading now seems somewhat stodgy, if still undeniably handsome. Davis' would be the undisputed winner if only the cast were stronger. As it is, the choice is difficult. Though Böhm's singers are by no means the most distinguished imaginable, they nevertheless ex-

cel Davis', a curiously unsatisfactory lot.

It is no doubt consistent with Davis' view of the opera that his singers should be lightweight vocally (so, as it happens, are Böhm's), but they are, in addition, lightweight artistically. Of ardor and emotional engagement I hear little evidence in the tasteful, technically proficient singing of Stuart Burrows (Belmonte) or in the involuntarily tremulous tones of Christiane Eda-Pierre, who, paradoxically enough, sounds secure only in the more demanding sections of passagework, abundant in the role of Constanze. Robert Lloyd, top-heavy in voice, is a singularly unconvincing Osmin; he seems to have learned the part by rote. Robert Tear, possessor of one of the ugliest voices on disc, comes across as a fussy, prissy Pedrillo, maddeningly *undersung* and overinflected. Norma Burrows is a pert enough Blondchen, though not as secure vocally as she was at the Met last year. The chorus is good, and the Academy of St. Martin plays with real distinction.

The distinguished actor Curt Jürgens portrays Bassa Selim as if he were whispering the role into a confidant's ear. The actors who handle the spoken sections of the libretto match their singing counterparts in neither timbre nor personality. Nor do their German accents always coincide.

A curious grab bag fills the sixth side. Apart from the bass aria, K. 539, all are pieces abandoned by the composer and completed and orchestrated by Erik Smith. The results are of minimal interest. The sound is finely gauged, but my pressings are not quite as faultless as I have come to expect from Philips. Notes and libretto are given in German, English, and French. D.S.H.

RAVEL: *Ma Mère l'Oye*; *Rapsodie espagnole*—See Debussy; *Nocturnes*; *Jeux*.

REICH: *Music for a Large Ensemble**; *Octet**; *Violin Phase**.

Various performers*; Shem Guibory, violin*. [Manfred Eicher, prod.] ECM 1-1168, \$8.98 (distributed by Warner Bros. Records, Inc., 3 E. 54th St., New York, N.Y. 10022).

Steve Reich's works tend to be slow-moving affairs, with complex rhythmic and harmonic structures hatched from what seems at first to be the crudest kernel of a musical idea. He may have two or more instrumentalists begin by playing a figure in unison and then gradually go out of phase with each other. Or he may write into his scores a series of verbal cues that tell certain players to add or subtract notes from their parts, making the phase shifting even more complicated. In a way, each of these slowly

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unfolding pieces represents in microcosm Reich's entire composing career: Just as one moment in a piece seems to have melted out of that preceding, each new work seems an embellishment on the principles of the previous model.

Thus, the Octet (1979) that fills Side 2 owes a great deal to the *Music for a Large Ensemble* (1978) that opens Side 1. The latter, in turn, is an amplification of ideas and techniques Reich first explored in *Music for Mallet Instruments, Voices, and Organ* (1973; DG 2740 106) and *Music for Eighteen Musicians* (1976; ECM 1129). The third work here, *Violin Phase* (1967), provides an interesting perspective: While it is closer in form and feeling to the piece of *mylar vérité* phase shifting that brought the composer to attention, *Come Out* (1966; Odyssey, deleted), its lineal connection to the later works here is quite clear.

In fact, *Violin Phase* is the most satisfying composition of the three. Here a solo violinist plays with (against?) up to three recorded tapes of himself, the four strands weaving in and out of phase. Merely coping with the gradually changing tape patterns presents problems enough, yet the score further demands that the "live" violinist extrapolate some of the unwritten patterns formed by the phase shifting and play

those along with the tapes. Shem Guibbory chooses some pretty, almost Prokofiev-like patterns that liven up what could easily be a more tedious score in lesser hands.

Music for a Large Ensemble, scored for twenty-eight players and two singers, is Reich's most ambitious work to date, not only in the number of performers, but more significantly, in his more aggressive (and in a way, more traditional) approach to instrumental part-writing. Granted, the start-to-finish Reichian repetition of melody and rhythm remains, providing here and in the octet a kind of foundation for a modestly melodic superstructure. But instrumental groups enter and exit more suddenly than in his previous pieces, and the repetitive melodic material changes more quickly. Also, the internal section divisions are more clearly marked and discrete, less gradual than in earlier scores; and Reich allows the instrumental density to ebb and flow more freely.

Neither the octet nor the *Music for a Large Ensemble* might be mistaken for a tuneful composition, but both have an attractively jazzy feeling. Still, there are problems inherent in Reich's chosen style: First, despite more melody and greater scoring finesse here than in his other scores, the musical ideas are scant. Second, there is a

lack of real contrast. No matter how subtly the dynamics and density shift, the insistent rhythmic repetition continues without a moment of mitigating silence (an important compositional element Reich eschews), and the effect can soon become wearying and soporific.

The performances, by an ensemble whose core has worked closely with Reich for years, are no doubt ideal, if sometimes a bit music-boxy. The recording is often muddy, especially in the fuller sections of *Music for a Large Ensemble*. For those unfamiliar with Reich's music, this may provide as good an introduction as can be had on a single disc, pairing as it does an early phase piece with more recent efforts on both large and moderate scales. But easier entry to his world might be gained via the *Music for Eighteen Musicians*. A.K.

STOCKHAUSEN: Sternklang; Sirius. For a review, see page 56.

TAKEMITSU: Instrumental Works. For a review, see page 56.

VERDI: Requiem.

Katia Ricciarelli, soprano; Shirley Verrett, mezzo-soprano; Placido Domingo, tenor; Nicolai Ghiaurov, bass; La Scala

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Chorus and Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2707 120, \$19.96 (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: 3370 032, \$19.96 (two cassettes).

COMPARISON:

Schwarzkopf, Ludwig, Gedda,
Ghiaurov/Giulini Ang. SB 3649

As one who much admired Claudio Abbado's performances of the Verdi Requiem in Washington and New York during the 1976 visit of La Scala, I have been eagerly anticipating his recording. Abbado's sense of the work as a dramatic and musical totality, his ability to instill in his associates a comparable passion and understanding, had yielded results on the Toscanini level and promised a recording that would rival, even surpass, the best modern version, that of Carlo Maria Giulini—who, in his present, more Olympian phase, no longer projects the work with the intensity of his 1963 recording.

In the event, my hopes have not been realized. All the earmarks of Abbado's care and precision are here. Certain textures are beautifully realized: the shifting orchestral tremolos as the first Dies Irae fades away, the uncanny proto-Stravinskian orchestration immediately thereafter (at "Quantus tremor"). The exceptional qualities of the Scala chorus and orchestra can sometimes be discerned: the strength and depth of the choral tone, the warmth of the strings, the bite of the brass.

But only sometimes discerned—for this is a hard and ugly piece of recorded sound, a real step backward from DG's previous Requiem, that suave and uncommitted Karajan performance (2707 065) that might just as well have played the piece from back to front, so suppressed was any

sense of direction and destination. As usual with DG, the solo voices are unnaturally prominent; here, unfortunately, there is no sense of air and warmth resounding around them. The chorus in full cry—in 1976 a noble sound—now emerges raw and barky, and it covers the orchestra too much in the Sanctus, obscuring independent lines and sometimes its own detail as well. At that exquisite point in the Agnus Dei where the two women soloists are joined by a trio of flutes, my notes read, "This doesn't sound like a real place"—and that is frequently the case: Balance, resonance, and tonal quality imply mutually incompatible spaces, which is destructive of both sonic and musical credibility.

Even this might be tolerated for the sake of a great performance, but one does not happen here. I can't say whether Abbado's tempos are slower than they were in 1976 or are simply articulated with insufficient vitality. Some are slower than Verdi's metronome marks: Though the opening of the piece is well sustained even so, the Offertorio is labored, with none of the barcarollesque swing implicit in the writing. Most of the time, this feels as if everyone were being too careful, worrying more about getting things Correct than about getting them Right. I have encountered other Abbado recordings where this happens, by contrast with his concert performances: the Mahler Second Symphony (DG 2707 094), for example, or the Stravinsky *Pulcinella* that I reviewed last year (DG 2531 087, February 1980). Too bad that it should have happened in this piece, obviously as important to him as to most listeners.

In the circumstances, the inequities of the solo quartet matter less than they

might. For all her clearly intense commitment, Katia Ricciarelli has an awkward time negotiating some of her lines—for example, letting us down at the end of the Offertorio by not making her final phrase a single long upbeat to the high A flat. Shirley Verrett, who on some past occasions has sung the soprano part in the piece, has her own technical problems—note the curious forward, "French"-sounding vowels she employs in the lower register—but she almost always gives her phrases some sense of weight and continuity. These two voices, so different in dimension, production, and color, adamantly refuse to blend in the "Recordare" and Agnus Dei.

In Leonard Bernstein's 1970 recording of the Requiem (CBS M2 30060), Plácido Domingo sang the tenor solo, a little tentatively; he now draws it on a more heroic scale, but sings less smoothly. I suspect that the slow tempo in the "Ingemisco" makes him uncomfortable. And I'm certain that the same problem bothers Nicolai Ghiaurov in the "Confutatis," for he indulges in a certain amount of beat-jumping. This is Ghiaurov's third time round the piece on records, and the voice has grown steadily more wooden in tone; to hear him at his best, go back to the Giulini recording.

Go back there, too, to hear Verdi at his best. I am not convinced by Giulini's long and gradual ritards at the ends of movements (Abbado uncharacteristically indulges in this same mannerism at the end of the Offertorio), and the singing of Elisabeth Schwarzkopf is painfully unidiomatic, but that is still the preferable overall statement in stereo. Toscanini's 1951 NBC broadcast is the other point of reference, of course; it's still available from RCA (LM

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6018). I'm afraid Abbado's recorded performance ranks even below the recent Mutiset (Angel SZB 3858); though a distinctly less elevated conception of the score, the latter does convey a sense of something vivid happening, and it is decently recorded. DG's background essay by David Rosen is as fine an introduction to the Requiem as I have read. D.H.

ZIMMERMANN: Perspektiven; Monologe. For a review, see page 56.

Recitals and Miscellany

MAURIZIO POLLINI: Piano Music of the Twentieth Century. For a review, see page 56.

EDWARD TARR AND ELIZABETH WESTENHOLZ: Works for Trumpet and Piano.

Edward Tarr, trumpet; Elizabeth Westenholz, piano. [Robert von Bahr, prod.] Bis LP 152, \$9.98 (distributed by Qualiton Records, 39-28 Crescent St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

GERSHWIN: Rhapsody in Blue (arr. Dokschtser). **MARTINŮ:** Sonatina. **ALEXIUS:** Sonatina. **HINDEMITH:** Sonata.

EDWARD TARR AND ELIZABETH WESTENHOLZ: Works for Trumpet and Organ.

Edward Tarr, trumpet; Elizabeth Westenholz, organ. [Robert von Bahr, prod.] Bis LP 151, \$9.98.

CELLIER: Theme and Variations on Psalm 149. **HOLMBOE:** Triade, Op. 123. **WERNER:** Duo, Op. 53. **WEINER:** Fantasy No. 1, Op. 57.

THE VOICE OF TRUMPET AND ORGAN.

Byron Pearson, trumpet; Arthur Vidrich, organ. **CRYSTAL S 365**, \$7.98.

TORELLI: Sinfonia con Tromba. **HOVHANESS:** Prayer of St. Gregory. **SCHILLING:** Canzona über "Christ ist erstanden." **PINKHAM:** The Other Voices of the Trumpet. **NUCKOLLS:** Chaconne. **LANGLAIS:** Chorale Preludes (2): Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu dir; Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.

Back in 1966 a startling new planet swam into my ken: the extraordinary American-born musicologist/trumpeter Edward Tarr, featured in an EMI Odeon program, "Kunst der Trompeter." Later my "wild surmise" was richly confirmed by his Nonesuch series of concertos and duos, now lamentably curtailed. While any new representation of this artist would be welcome, the Bis examples are triply so: They compensate for some of the European

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recordings not made available here previously; they demonstrate that Tarr is not only a period-instrument and early-music specialist, but a bravura virtuoso second to none in modern repertoires; and they offer new, simply thrilling sonic triumphs.

At normal symphonic playback level, the closely miked clarion trumpet passages approach glass-shattering intensity. Yet with the vivid tonal qualities tautly controlled and subtly colored, these great blasts of sound are like invigorating sea gales. And the piano and organ parts—collaborations, not mere accompaniments—are by no means subservient; indeed, the young Dane Elizabeth Westenholz plays with matching authority and tonal attractiveness on both a Bösendorfer piano and the Copenhagen Vangede Church's 1979 Frobenius and Sønnen organ.

The trumpet-piano program will have the broader appeal for nonspecialist listeners, both for its powerful rendition of one of the most substantial works in this repertory, Hindemith's 1939 Sonata (with its characteristic *Trauermusik* finale), and for its spectacular novelty, the preposterous transcription of *Rhapsody in Blue* by the great Soviet trumpeter Timofey Dokschitser. I once accused Dokschitser of artistic vulgarity, and here is a prime example; yet this performance has such brilliance, impudent relish, and idiomatic authenticity that it's quite an irresistible romp. The sonatina by the North Carolinian Alexius is an unpretentious recital piece, disarming fun to hear as well as play. And the other sonatina, Martinů's of 1957, offers a stimulating reminder of that Czech composer's distinctive originality and motoric energy.

The companion trumpet-organ disc also presents two remarkable works probably unfamiliar to most Americans, if they are not indeed recorded first: the unashamedly old-fashioned but profoundly moving—often poignantly haunting—1973 Duo by Fritz Werner (1898-1977), long-time director of the Heinrich Schütz Choir in Germany, and the fascinatingly odd yet rewarding 1974-75 *Triade* (dedicated to Tarr and Westenholz) by another of the great musical originals, the Dane Vagn Holmboe (born 1909), still far too little known. Then there are the less striking though sturdily effective variations on a Goudimel psalm tune by the French organist Alexandre Cellier and an overly improvisatory, meandering fantasy (premiered by Tarr and George Kent in 1976) by the Baltimore-born (1925) expatriate composer Stanley Weiner.

A mixed bag indeed. But the two recordings are ringing proof that a scholar/trumpeter can fully match—or beat—such showmen-virtuosos as Maurice André and

Gerard Schwarz at their own game.

So powerfully has the trumpet-organ discography been dominated by Tarr, with Kent and now Westenholz, that any less charismatic performers can only be overshadowed. Witness the recording by the Baltimore Symphony's former principal trumpeter Byron Pearson and blind scholar/organist Arthur Vidrich—pedestrian, sometimes even stilted, performances using an unattractively thick-toned organ (the 1975 Reuter in Detroit's First Baptist Church). And while the recording itself is cleanly bright, the helter-skelter nature of the program further confines its appeal to specialist listeners.

The only early work is a fine Torelli concerto reduction (G. 8, in D, not the familiar one in that key). Everything else is mostly conservative-contemporary, topped by the oft-recorded Hovhannes *Prayer of St. Gregory*, and mildly daring only in Daniel Pinkham's *Other Voices of the Trumpet*, with its inexplicable interpolation of electronic sound effects. The remaining works are at best dull, at worst ersatz. R.D.D.

Theater and Film

RÓZSA: *Jungle Book: Suite*.* WAXMAN: *Paradise Case: Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra*.† WEBB: *Enchanted Cottage: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*.‡

■ Sabu, narrator; Victor Symphony Orchestra, Miklós Rózsa, cond.* Edward Rebner, piano; Franz Waxman, cond.† Max Rabinowitsch, piano; Constantin Bakaleinikoff, cond.‡ [John Steven Lasher and John Waxman, prod.] ENTR'ACTE ERM 6002, \$9.98 (monaural).

Film-music aficionados have long criticized the soundtrack-recording format, in which a disconnected series of usually brief, fragmentary, often repetitious music "cues" are strung together or stretched out to fill an LP. The Classic Film Scores series on RCA vividly demonstrated the validity of an alternative approach that offers much greater variety and substance by gathering several ten- to fifteen-minute suites or pot-pourris from different scores into a single program. Unfortunately, film composers have too rarely attempted the distillation needed to give their work cohesion, direction, and shape in concert performance and thus a hope for permanence.

This long-awaited Entr'acte historical reissue restores to the catalog three early, near legendary efforts in this vein. To hear Miklós Rózsa's music for *The Jungle Book* in this initial recorded setting is to experience anew the amazing freshness, opulence, and graphicness of his imagination. He probably never surpassed the sensuous-

ness, spontaneity, and invention of his response to the musico-dramatic possibilities of Korda's two fantasy films. (The other, of course, was the even more spectacular *Thief of Baghdad*, available in Elmer Bernstein's Film Music Collection.) The best—for that matter, the whole—of Rózsa is embryonically present in this fairy-tale opera without singers. He depicts a menagerie of idiosyncratic animal natures in sound, and the lure and menace of the surrounding jungle are palpable in his simple, bright colors, harsh outlines, and flat perspectives, reminiscent of the paintings of Rousseau.

All the garish and luxuriant vitality emerge in this performance, which Rózsa conducts with all the relentless intensity and authority of a Toscanini leading the NBC Symphony (some of whose members probably participated in this studio session). Sabu's somewhat wistful reading of the Kipling-inspired narration adds point to—and occasional respite from—the real drama, which is all in Rózsa's scoring.

Among the first generation of Hollywood composers, after Rózsa and Korngold, Franz Waxman was probably the most capable—in both training and temperament—of writing autonomous works for the concert hall. His adaptation of his 1947 score for Hitchcock's courtroom drama *The Paradine Case* is a "rhapsody" for piano and orchestra along the lines of Richard Addinsell's *Warsaw Concerto* (originally used in a film score). But whereas Addinsell's writing stresses bravura elements, Waxman's is much more introspective; its chromatically serpentine, slightly neurotic main theme conveys an entangling sense of erotic compulsion, though a secondary idea is more open and aristocratic. Both undergo a compact, modified "ballad" treatment based loosely on variation techniques.

Encouraging as it is to find Roy Webb's vast, unsung contribution to film music represented on LP for the first time, his "concerto" for the romantic fantasy *The Enchanted Cottage* is an atypically pallid and diffuse exercise in an impressionist manner. Although Webb was never so distinguished as his better-known contemporaries, he was quite innovative harmonically; a better sample of his work can be found in a Decca Phase-4 collection by Stanley Black entitled "Satan Superstar," which features a suite from Webb's bloodcurdling score for *The Seventh Victim* (plus excerpts from Waxman's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*).

For the Rózsa and Waxman works, *Entr'acte* provides well-nigh flawless transfers from the original 78s, with negligible scratch and wow. This is one of the most significant historical reissues of film music of the past several years. P.A.S.

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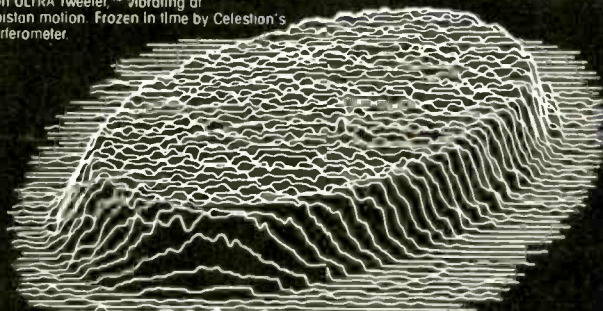
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The Tape Deck

by R. D. Darrell

RCA's soft-pedaled digitals

"Caution" evidently is RCA's digital watchword. Though it utilized Soundstream digital reprocessing techniques with the Caruso reissue series (1977), it didn't release its first new symphonic digital recording until late in 1979. That Bartók concerto and several subsequent releases were issued only on disc until quite recently, when tape equivalents finally began appearing. And disconcertingly, these tapes contain no labeling or other indication that they stem from the same digital masters as the corresponding discs. They do, though, via the usual analog submasters for tape production, so I'm told—an assurance I badly needed to avoid risking another misidentification like my embarrassing one just over a year ago with the Barclay-Crocker open-reel edition of Unicorn's *Ilya Murometz* Symphony.

Apparently RCA is not committing itself to special "audiophile" chromium-based tapes at premium prices, but is content—for now at least—to let these ferric-based, standard-priced (\$8.98 each) musicassettes find buyers without the abracadabra lure of the "digital" rubric. Fair enough, especially since their disc counterparts now have been raised in price (to \$11.98) and the processing is first-rate.

In the one direct comparison I've been able to make, the tape edition is an identical sonic twin of the disc, except for a slight mitigation of the latter's high-end fierceness, which actually gives the tape the greater aural appeal. This recording also offers the most novel program of the series: Stravinsky's *Sacre du printemps* in a solo piano version of near Lisztian brilliance. The Sam Raphling arrangement may be no substitute for the full score, but in Dickran Atamian's bravura performance (ARK 1-3636), it sheds revelatory new light on Stravinsky's historic milestone. And thanks in considerable part to the lucidity of its digital origins, the recording also provides a memorable musical experience in its own right.

Without the opportunity to make similar comparisons with three other digitally recorded cassettes, I can only suspect that they lack some of the bite and impact of their disc equivalents. But their sonic attractions are top-notch—including a characteristic transparency of inner detail and

some less typical high-end sweetness and overall warmth. Thus the expectedly elegant Philadelphia performance of Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra* (ARK 1-3421) is a model of detailed clarity. Unfortunately, Eugene Ormandy's reading does not have the rhythmic vitality and dramatic conviction of the best versions, most of which are no longer available in tape editions.

Eduardo Mata and his Dallas Symphony obviously set themselves impossible tasks in trying to compete—even digitally—in the star-studded discographies of Ravel's complete *Daphnis et Chloé* (ARK 1-3458) and Stravinsky's 1919 *Firebird* Suite (coupled with his *Symphony in Three Movements*; ARK 1-3459). Only rabid Dallas boosters would claim that these performances rival the most polished, yet Mata and his forces do strikingly well. The choral sections of *Daphnis* are unusually effective, and both recordings excel in their marked sonic lucidity and evocation of atmosphere. And RCA's Dolby B noise-reduction is fine—at last.

Plodding on: Bach-ward...

While the general public may be more tolerant, most connoisseurs will find the current big-name Bach releases wanting. Certainly the new Karajan/Berlin Philharmonic *Brandenburgs* (Deutsche Grammophon 3370 030, two-cassette box, \$19.96) do not improve upon the stylistic insensitivities of his c. 1965 versions. Again in the great *Magnificat* (coupled with Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*; DG 3301 048, \$9.98), even the most virtuosic orchestral playing and gleamingly sweet sonics can't compensate for the remoteness of the vital choral parts and the absence of genuine sympathy with Bach style.

More surprising is the failure of one of the earliest Bach revivalists, Karl Richter, to profit by the most recent lessons of the New Enlightenment. His latest Munich Bach Choir and Orchestra *St. Matthew* Passion (Archiv 3376 016, three-cassette box, \$29.94)—despite abler soloists and twenty-one years of technological progress—represents little if any advance over his famous old one. There may even be some regression, at least in executant stolidity and overall sluggishness.

Three current period-instrument Bach recordings, though far more authentically interpreted, will probably appeal only

to specialist listeners. Admirable as they are, they just don't radiate the magic that can transcend the strangeness of echt baroque timbres and styles. Witness the rough and reverberant (yet fascinating) qualities of the replica organ Nicholas Jackson plays in his earnest but sober Christmas program: *Orgelbüchlein* chorale preludes, S. 603-15, etc. (Spectrum SC 217, \$4.50, plus \$1.50 for shipping; Spectrum, Harriman, N.Y. 10926). Or the "expressive" mannerisms of the Cologne Musica Antiqua's trio sonata in an otherwise rewarding complete *Musical Offering*, S. 1079 (Archiv 3310 422, \$9.98). A better bet to win converts may be the engaging if restrained versions of the S. 1044 Triple Concerto and S. 1067 Second Suite by Trevor Pinnock's English Concert with flutist Stephen Preston (Archiv 3310 410, \$9.98).

... and sideways

Paradoxically (for purists), the most magnetic Bach attractions this month are transcriptions. Not Stokowskian inflations, however, these are legitimate rescorings with changed timbres of the kind habitually practiced by Bach and his contemporaries. Jean-Pierre Rampal's novel metamorphoses of the S. 525-30 Trio Sonatas for organ into sonatas for flute and harpsichord (RCA Red Seal ARK 1-3580, \$8.98) are delightful—both in themselves and as new slants on the original versions. My only complaint is that Rampal's fluting is given greater sonic prominence than Robert Veyron-LaCroix's equally deft harpsichord playing.

The incomparable harpist Nicanor Zabaleta returns in inspired rearrangements for harp and strings of Bach's organ solo transcriptions—S. 973, 976, 978—of Vivaldi violin concertos. Less startling but also delectable are Handel's Concertos Op. 4, No. 5, and Op. 7, No. 4, with harp substituted for organ. Garcia Navarro conducts the English Chamber Orchestra (DG 3301 114, \$9.98).

Heinz Holliger excels with the oboe d'amore part in the presumed original version of the S. 1055 Harpsichord Concerto (DG Privilege 3335 410, \$6.98). But the other reconstructions here (S. 1056 for flute; S. 1064 for three violins) are no match for Neville Marriner's more recent versions (Argo KZRC 820). **MF**

BACKBEAT.



Willie Nelson, Voice of America

by Stephen Holden

A great song has to have its own personality—as well as a good lyric and a good melody. And it has to be simple. If it gets too complicated, you have to listen to it too many times to appreciate it. And that makes it hard for John Doe on the street to pick it up. The first time he hears it, it's got to hit him between the eyes."

That's Willie Nelson's pop philoso-

phy in a nutshell. It's a view that befits country music's greatest living singer/songwriter, a man with no formal musical training who throughout his thirty-odd years as a performer has accompanied himself on the same battered six-string Martin acoustic guitar. Like James Taylor and Bob Dylan, Nelson has a quintessentially American voice. But where their

styles are partly the self-conscious products of the 1960s folk revival, his is utterly unaffected, timeless, plain.

Few performers have a more thorough working acquaintance with American song literature. In a career that spans three decades and includes nearly fifty albums, Nelson has recorded everything from traditional gospel hymns to Tin Pan Alley and Broadway standards, from Christmas carols to country laments. With his keening, nasal baritone and his off-handed storyteller's phrasing that never bothers with extraneous verbiage, his style has its own distinct personality. Extreme passion constantly threatens to break through extreme reserve, but never does. Few other male singers get to the emotional core of a song so readily and deliver its key phrases with such conviction and personal commitment.

In December I pursued Nelson from New York to Austin, Texas, and back. I watched him do his annual Christmas show at the Austin Opry House (which he owns), where I met his thirty-person touring entourage—known as the Family—and the six good old boys and one woman in his band. Among them are Willie's sister Bobbie on keyboards, one-time Flying Burrito Brother Chris Ethridge on bass, and legendary Nashville session guitarist Grady Martin. Their plain, honky tonk style perfectly complements Nelson's earthy singing.

When I finally met with him back in New York it was two days after John Lennon's murder, and in his first show at the Palladium he dedicated Leon Russell's *A Song for You* to Lennon. Nelson hadn't been to New York for three years, and since his last visit he had exploded from a cult figure into a national superstar. Face to face, he seems more diminutive than he does on the stage or screen, and he moves with an almost elfin grace. Hyper-alert with huge, haunted brown eyes and a face the color and texture of a peach pit, he wears his auburn hair in two long braids. From the side, he has the proud profile of a Buffalo nickel; from the front he suggests a hippie Santa Claus. Nelson is forty-seven years old, but he looks literally ageless. Which he is.

Three years ago, he reached across all markets and age groups with "Star-

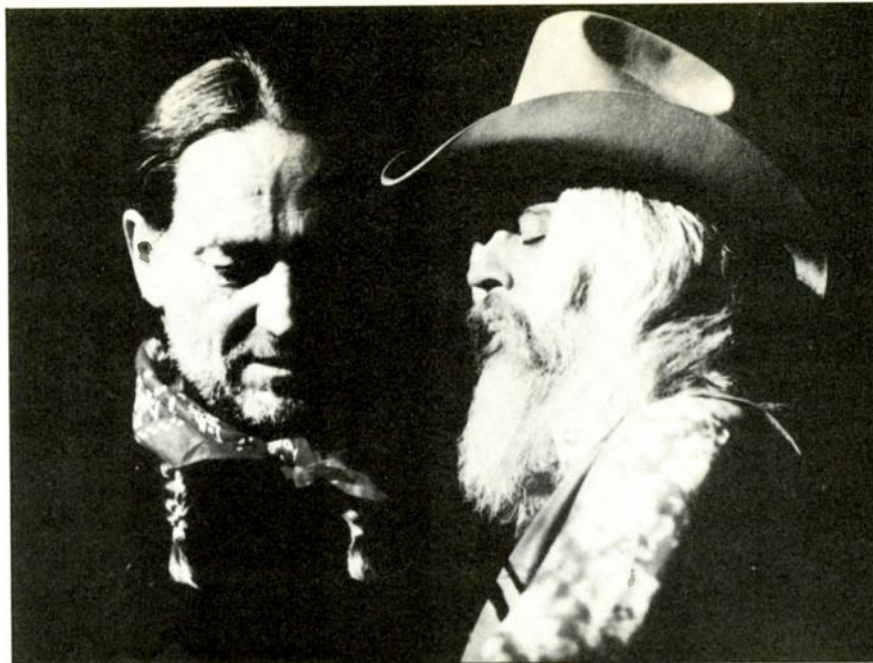
dust," an album of standards by composers like Hoagy Carmichael, Irving Berlin, Duke Ellington, and the Gershwins. Produced by Booker T. Jones in a very spare style, "Stardust" has sold over two million copies in the U.S. and remains well fixed on both the pop and country charts. "One for the Road," a double album of more standards that Nelson made in 1979 with his close friend Leon Russell, has gone gold, and a third album of chestnuts, "Somewhere Over the Rainbow," is scheduled for release presently. That was recorded live at Gilley's, the Houston club immortalized by *Urban Cowboy*.

"The style of 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' is a little different," Nelson says. "For one thing there are no drums—only two rhythm guitars, a bass, a fiddle, and a lead guitar. I tried to use pickers who knew Django Reinhardt's type of music. [Many people credit Reinhardt with being the father of modern jazz guitar playing.] I've always been a big fan of his. He probably influenced my playing more than anybody.

"I've been doing these standards ever since I was six or seven years old," he continues. "I first heard them when my sister Bobbie was learning to play piano. She'd buy the sheet music of the Forties tunes. Hearing them so much, I'd pick them out on guitar and sing along with her. When I started to work clubs around Texas, those songs were requested. *Stardust* was requested right along with *San Antonio Rose* and *Fraulein and Harbor Lights*. The people I was singing to in beer joints and clubs didn't know about labels like pop or country. All they liked was songs and music."

The road from honky tonk singer to country superstar has been arduous. Brought up by his grandparents in a small farming community north of Waco, Texas, he was given his first guitar when he was ten. His grandfather gave him a few rudimentary lessons, and when he was thirteen he formed his first band. Later he took a wide variety of jobs—from encyclopedia peddler to janitor—to support himself while working the rough and tumble honky tonk circuit between San Antonio and Fort Worth.

The church was as strong a formative influence as the club life. "I grew up in a Methodist Church," he recalls. "A lot of us who were singers and pickers learned to do what we do in church. We learned all the church and gospel songs, so they had to filter into the other music we perform. I know it does mine. When I'm writing



With Leon Russell, collaborator on "One for the Road"

songs, I often catch myself using gospel melodies that are similar to those I heard growing up. They're like pop standards. And there are just books and books of them."

Try as he might, Nelson couldn't settle down to any kind of full-time work except music. He left high school at sixteen, was discharged from the Air Force with a back injury a year later, and attended Baylor University for one brief semester. A stormy marriage to a Waco car hop dragged on for eight years and produced three children. He also worked on and off as a disc jockey in Texas and the Pacific Northwest. Outside of performing, he says it was the only job he ever really enjoyed.

When he was in his mid-twenties, Nelson had his first song published, *Family Bible* (still Leon Russell's personal favorite in Willie's catalog). He sold all rights to it for \$50. He then wrote his classic *Night Life*, which has been recorded by more than seventy artists, and sold it for a mere \$150. It was only after he moved to Nashville in 1960 that he started to make a decent living from his writing. Recognition came quickly. Hank Cochran signed him to his publishing company, and, when Willie became the bass player in Ray Price's road band, Price made *Night Life* his theme song. Three other classic country laments emerged during this period: *Crazy* (made famous first by Patsy Cline and more recently by Linda Ronstadt),

Hello Walls, and *Funny How Time Slips Away*.

By his own estimate, Nelson has written close to eight hundred songs in all, a large portion of which have been recorded by top artists other than himself. Among them are Elvis Presley, Kris Kristofferson, Aretha Franklin, Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Bing Crosby, and Ray Charles. The list goes on and on. Nonetheless, he doesn't consider himself especially prolific. His four original songs for *Honeysuckle Rose* followed a five-year dry spell, and he says they were relatively easy to write because they were dictated by the story.

"I never write more than ten or twelve songs a year," he says. "But I've done it since I was ten or eleven years old, so it adds up. I go for months without writing anything, and then maybe I'll write two songs in one day. Songs are like labor pains. You just have to wait for them to come. Sometimes the tune comes first, but usually it's the idea. It starts out in my mind, and I think about it while I'm driving, and I put the melody around the lyrics. Only later do I get around to working on it with the guitar. Almost everything I write is autobiographical."

Nelson's songwriting success paved the way for his singing career. Signed to Liberty Records, he recorded several albums before moving to RCA where he eventually cut nearly twenty albums. Unfortunately, Nelson's down-to-earth sing-



With Robert Redford in *The Electric Horseman*

ing style didn't fit well with RCA's assembly-line productions, which coated everything with strings, and he is understandably unhappy with most of those discs.

There has been a great deal of speculation about Nelson's move from Nashville to Texas in 1969. "People always say, 'Well you and Nashville really got into it.'" says Willie, "when actually me and Nashville never had any problems at all. It was a couple of bastards in Nashville I had problems with. Now I don't think they're quite as set in their ways as they used to be. When I was there, I got so used to hearing those syrupy strings that I don't care if I ever hear strings again."

Nelson and his second wife, Shirley, were divorced the same year he moved, and shortly thereafter he married his present wife, Connie. In Texas, Nelson bought a second-hand bus and started touring the southwestern circuit. Times had changed, and in clubs like the Armadillo World Headquarters in Austin, he found an enthusiastic younger rock audience for his music. To help call attention to himself and the burgeoning Austin scene, in the summer of '72 he threw the first of his famous Fourth of July picnics in the village of Dripping Springs, Texas. It has since become an annual event.

"There had been a Dripping Springs Country Festival the year before," Nelson recalls. "And I thought it was a hell of a good idea. But it was held at the

wrong time of year, and festival was a bad word back then, so I changed it to picnic and invited some friends like Leon Russell, Kris Kristofferson, Charlie Rich, and John Prine to come and play without any promise of money. If we made money, then we'd split it up, and if we didn't, we'd all lose. As it wound up, we made a little."

The picnic was a key event in showcasing Texas "outlaw" music as the hip alternative to Nashville. The outlaw mystique re-established the link between rock and country music that Dylan had made with his "Nashville Skyline" LP, but this time the message was coming from the source instead of a visiting rock dignitary.

As Nelson became an important symbol for Texas country music, his recording career began to come together. In 1971, he recorded one final album in Nashville for RCA called "Yesterday's Wine." A conceptual masterpiece, it contains what he believes to be his two most sophisticated songs: *Summer of Roses* and *December Day*. Unfortunately, being ahead of its time it sold poorly and today it's out of print. If "Yesterday's Wine" marked an aesthetic turning point, Nelson's meeting with soul producer Jerry Wexler proved to be a commercial one. With Wexler's endorsement, Nelson moved in 1972 from RCA to Atlantic, which was just setting up its short-lived country division. Under the arrangement, the singer was at last able to choose his

musicians, and on "Shotgun Willie," his first record for the label, he worked with the nucleus of his present touring band. The album and its followup, "Phases and Stages," both sold respectably. The subject of the latter, a concept LP, was marriage, with Willie taking both the male and female points of view.

"I decided to write from both sides just for the challenge," he says. "The man's side is autobiographical, of course. The woman's side? Well, they told me I hit it pretty close. I might have been a girl in a previous life."

"Phases and Stages" came out in 1974, just as Atlantic was dissolving its country division, so Nelson moved to Columbia, where he was again given complete artistic freedom. His first LP, "Red-Headed Stranger," another concept album, is one of the barest-sounding country records ever put out. Here, Nelson combined traditional songs (the hymn *Just as I Am*) with country standards (Fred Rose's *Blues Eyes Crying in the Rain*) and original material (*Time of the Preacher*) to tell a mystical story of love and death, vengeance and redemption. The record was completed in a day and a half at a cost of under \$20,000.

"'Red-Headed Stranger' practically came all at once," he recalls. "I was in a car, riding back to Austin from Colorado, and my wife Connie suggested I do an album around the song, which she'd heard me singing a thousand times to the kids. I'd first heard it when I was a disc jockey in Fort Worth. I had a show every day from noon to three—the kiddie hour was at one. The little kids liked it so much that I knew the big kids would too. We were in Steamboat Springs when we started, and by the time we got to Denver, I had most of the album in my head. We already had *Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain* and I'd written *Time of the Preacher*. As soon as we reached Austin, I got out my guitar and a tape recorder and put down a rough version."

In 1976, one year after the release of "Red-Headed Stranger," RCA pumped more juice into the outlaw craze with "The Outlaws," a packaged concept LP featuring Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Tompall Glaser, and Jessi Colter. That sold over a million copies, making it the biggest-selling country album up to that time. The Country Music Association gave it three awards: Best Single (for *Good Hearted Woman*), Best Album, and—to Willie and Waylon—Best Vocal Duo. The CMA wasn't the first to acknowledge his talents:



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In the film *Honeysuckle Rose*



1979 Entertainer of the Year

In 1975 Willie had received a Grammy award for Best Country Vocal Performance with *Blue Eyes Cryin' in the Rain*.

Despite all this, Nelson has continued to defy conventional record business wisdom—successfully—by refusing to stick to the tried and true. His next disc, "The Troublemaker" (1976) was a gospel collection, followed by "To Lefty from Willie," a tribute to the great '50s honky-tonk wailer, Lefty Frizzell. In 1978 came "Stardust" on Columbia and RCA's "Waylon and Willie," which went platinum. "One for the Road," the two-disc collaboration with Russell, was followed in '79 by "Willie and Family Live," a thirty-four-song set that has also surpassed the million mark. That same year saw the release of "Pretty Paper," an LP of Christmas material, and "Willie Sings Kristofferson." "San Antonio Rose," an album of country-swing duets with his old mentor Ray Price, came in 1980, as did the soundtrack for *The Electric Horseman* (in which Nelson played a small role and sang a few tunes), and *Honeysuckle Rose*, his first starring movie. The last two LPs have respectively gone gold and platinum, helping to make his name the most ubiquitous on the country charts.

Though *Honeysuckle Rose* wasn't a box-office smash, it did establish Nelson as a compelling film presence, and he recently finished shooting his second major feature, *Barbarosa*, a contemporary cowboy movie directed by the Australian auteur Fred Schepisi. Willie says he has no intentions of cutting down on his music in order to become a movie star. If he did, the blow to country music would be hard,

since he is probably more responsible than anyone for the genre's having gained the kind of respectability that rock & roll has enjoyed since the mid-Sixties.

Somewhat surprisingly, Nelson himself is not much of a rock fan: "When rock was getting started, it filtered over into the club bands pretty quick. I liked the heavy rhythm, but I didn't particularly care for the lyrics, because I couldn't understand them, and so I started sticking my ear up to the speaker like the kids."

The phrase "like the kids" reminds me that he is a generation older than most rock fans, and suggests that he might be the first of a breed of older star who will someday be able to say that they "outlasted" rock. That, of course, is a long way off, for he is by no means through as yet. Having become the custodian of one of the most valuable, and still largely untapped, resources of musical Americana—the honky-tonk song—Nelson has an aesthetic gold mine to work.

"The three writers who've probably influenced me the most are Floyd Tillman, Hoagy Carmichael, and Johnny Mercer," Nelson says. "Floyd Tillman wrote *Slipping Around*, *I Love You So Much It Hurts*, *It Makes No Difference Now*, and hundreds of other hits. I'd love to do a Floyd Tillman album. And maybe a Roger Miller album. A lot of people don't realize it, but Roger is a great ballad writer. Though I haven't done much with black music yet, I'd love to do an album with B. B. King. And another one with Ray Charles." At the rate he's been going, he'll probably have them all done by the time he's fifty. ☘

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Audiophile Disc Update: Technology Isn't Everything

by Crispin Cioe

The quality of any audiophile disc is dependent upon a wide range of variables. But the overriding one for all three major types—direct-to-disc, digital, and half-speed mastered—is the quality of the music and the suitability of the technology to its character.

For example, digital recording's highly touted advantages over analog are the relative elimination of such gremlins as tape noise, harmonic and intermodulation distortion, wow and flutter, crosstalk (leakage between channels), and print-through (leakage in the reel itself from one layer of tape to another). It also has better frequency response and fuller dynamic range: most machines do not have the capacity for multiple tracking and overdubbing. All of this means that digital recording is probably better suited to classical, jazz, and folk music than to rock, where multitracking, some distortion, and even leakage is integral to the style. Direct-to-disc also sidesteps certain distortion factors by transferring the signal directly to a master lacquer disc in real time. As an aesthetic production tool, it is likewise better suited to the purer, less electronic musics, particularly since those are by nature live, one-take-only realizations.

It's not surprising, then, that the bulk of pop audiophile releases are half-speed mastered, or rather remastered. The process itself seems simple enough: In recutting the master disc, the original master tape and the lacquer are run at half the normal speed (33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm), enabling the cutting stylus to trace undulations with greater accuracy. The oft-cited advantages of this include better frequency response, wider dynamic range, and considerably less distortion. In addition, the disc mastering engineer can readjust the equalization on the master tape to some degree.

Usually, a half-speed remastered disc sounds better than the original did. Indeed, in some cases the results are awe-inspiring. In others, however, you have to wonder why the effort was made in the



Baez: vocal richness enhanced

first place. All of these discs are reissues—some of them were recorded ten years ago. Recording technology has changed radically in the past decade. Older mixing consoles and circuitry produced comparatively high levels of distortion, which half-speed remastering can't eliminate. By the same token, some of the newer material that has been recorded on contemporary state-of-the-art equipment suffered from its inception from sloppy production and/or musicianship. Half-speed remastering can't fix that, either. Indeed, while it may improve the sound of one element—say, the vocals—it may underline the deficiencies of others.

The quality of a half-speed remastered disc, then, always depends on that of the original recording. Pressing quality is of equal importance. Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab sends its master lacquers to JVC in Japan to be pressed on what they call Super Vinyl. Their literature states that "Japan is the only place in the world where such high quality vinyl is made. . . . It is heavier and harder than ordinary vinyl." Nautilus recordings are cut and pressed in Los Angeles and use Teldec virgin vinyl. CBS Mastersound discs use the company's own vinyl formulation, improved record stampers, and "custom-designed computers and extensive visual

and aural inspection [for] special and more critical quality control tests. . . ." Despite such claims, I have received several audiophile discs on which the audible clicks and pops were even visible on the record's surface.

DBX has also entered the audiophile marketplace with its encoded discs. These use an encoding/decoding process that involves recording a 2:1 compressed music signal that, when decoded, yields an extremely wide dynamic range and dramatically reduced surface noise. A reasonably priced DBX decoder (\$129, retail) connected to the home amplifier decompresses the signal at the turntable. Of course, extraneous noises that existed on the original master tape will be reproduced along with the music signal, so we're back to the same axiom: This is a process that works best on recently recorded LPs that have been produced, mastered, and pressed carefully—not on golden oldies that were long on creativity and tape hiss.

I listened to the following albums extensively on my home system, and in the control room of Greene Street Studio, a busy twenty-four-track facility in Manhattan. My system includes a Dual 1257 automatic belt drive turntable with a Shure V-15 type IV cartridge, a Harman Kardon 630 amplifier/receiver, Acousti-phase monitor speakers, and a DBX 21 disc/tape decoder. Greene Street's control room has a Sony direct-drive PS II turntable with a Pickering D-300 stylus, Urei A-11 time-aligned speakers driven by a Crown PS-2A amp, as well as two small Auratone speakers driven by a Crown DC-150.

Joan Baez: Diamonds and Rust
Joan Baez & David Kershenbaum, producers. Half-speed remastered, Nautilus NR 12

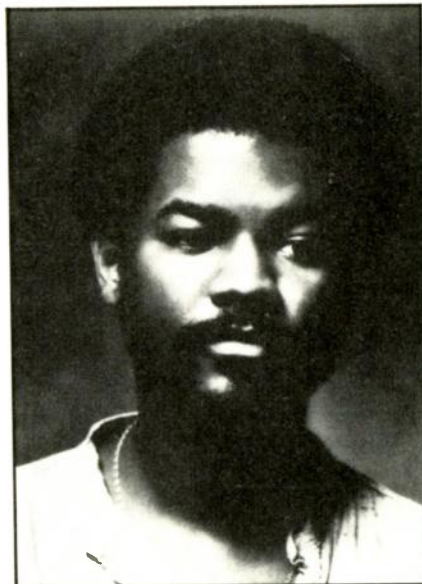
Although the cream of LA's studio musicians played on this well-engineered 1975 LP, it was originally produced with more emphasis on an ambient "room"



Basie: mixed results



Ella: loose but assured



Klugh: one of the best to date

sound than on layering or special effects. As a result, the quiet pulse of Joan Baez's music is greatly enhanced overall by the increased dynamic range. The remastering process has brought out Wilton Felder's fine bass playing as well—note his sensitive touch in the lower ranges on the title tune. And whenever Baez slides into her fabled upper-register vibrato, the richness and presence of her voice are gripping.

Count Basie, Joe Turner, Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson: Kansas City Shout

Norman Granz, producer
Digitally recorded
Pablo D 2310859

Joe Turner and Eddie Vinson are classic blues shouters and here, backed by Basie's elegant unit, both are in fine voice and spirit. The digital recording yields mixed results, however. On the trio setting of *Just a Dream on My Mind*, the bass, drums, and piano sound slightly antiseptic and therefore lack the proper grit and bite to support Turner's wonderfully dirty blues phrasing. But with the entire Basie band behind Vinson's potent, Charlie Parker-tinged alto sax on *Cherry Red*, the fullness of the mix and the rich timbres are awesome, even on the soft passages. One final note: Despite the disc's striking, blood-red vinyl pressing, my copy is a tad much in the click and pop department.

Blood, Sweat & Tears

James William Guercio, producer
Half-speed remastered, DBX encoded
Direct Discs Labs SD 16605

Blood, Sweat & Tears was the original jazz/rock horn band, and this, its second LP (released in the late '60s), was a milestone in its day. The new recording's extended dynamic range will be an attraction, especially on the well-known flute passages in the Erik Satie variations. In addition, the horns sound a little brassier on *Spinning Wheel* and Jim Fielder's bass a little fuller on *You've Made Me So Very Happy*. But even with DBX encoding, there is still a certain amount of the tape hiss that was part and parcel of the '60s.

The Doobie Brothers:

The Captain and Me
Ted Templeman, producer
Half-speed remastered
Nautilus NR 5

This one is definitely worth the remastering effort. Producer Ted Templeman managed to keep a vibrant separation between instruments without losing the authentic rock ensemble playing and looseness that was always the Doobies' strongest suit. On *Long Train Runnin'*, the guitars literally ring while the congas and percussion are noticeably crisp and clean. Tom Johnston's unique voice never sounded richer, especially on chestnuts

like *China Grove* and the evocative *Dark Eyed Cajun Woman*. "The Captain and Me" was originally released in 1973, proving that this is a band that started out good and just kept getting better.

Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, Joe Pass, Niels Pederson: Digital III at Montreux

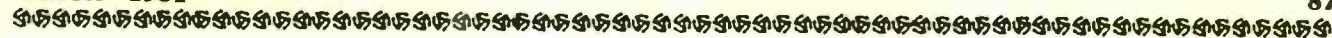
Norman Granz, producer
Digitally recorded
Pablo Live D 2308223

This was one of those loose-but-assured jazz festival nights when swinging was first and foremost on everyone's agenda. The on-location digital recording has pulled together nicely the normally distant, scattered strands of a live jazz disc. An inspired *Flying Home* gets marvelous full coverage by Ella, from her lowest growls to her highest "shoo bee wop." The Basie band segment is also superb, with an eloquently two-fisted drum solo by Butch Miles on *Good Mileage*. A Joe Pass-Niels Pederson guitar and bass duet on Sonny Rollins' *Oleo* closes the set with bristling energy and presence.

Earl Klugh: Finger Paintings

Dave Grusin & Larry Rosen, producers. Half-speed remastered
Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab MFSL 1 025

"Finger Paintings" features light-weight, almost fluffy pop/jazz, built



around Earl Klugh's gorgeous classical touch on acoustic guitar. As an audiophile disc, though, this is one of the two or three best nonclassical releases to date. Steve Gadd's snare and cymbal work pulse with life. Anthony Jackson's swelling bass has an uncanny depth and glow in all registers, and even the string section sounds balanced and perfectly placed in the mix. And through it all, Klugh's nylon strings lace out of the speakers like cotton candy, especially on *Dance with Me* and *Keep Your Eye on the Sparrow*. A must.

Loggins & Messina: Full Sail

Jim Messina, producer
Half-speed remastered; DBX encoded
Direct Disk Labs SD 16606

This album was a big hit in the early '70s at the crest of Loggins and Messina's pop/rock success, but the original production wasn't especially brilliant. Remastering has brightened the duo's vocals nicely, and the Al Garth-Jon Clarke saxophone combo, always my favorite element, has also been enhanced, notably on the hit single *My Music*. But the overall production, including a fairly lackluster rhythm section sound (despite fine playing), hasn't changed much in this reissue. The DBX process is best appreciated on quiet numbers like *A Love Song*.

Joni Mitchell: Court and Spark

Half-speed remastered
Nautilus NR 11

Here is another very popular mid-'70s item whose production values varied drastically from song to song. Sometimes the bass sounds muddy, sometimes the cymbals compete with Joni Mitchell's vocals. In comparison with the original, remastering has significantly enhanced the high end, with the singer's inflections and intent clearer than ever. This album completed Mitchell's transition from folk singer to pop innovator, and the creative sparks that flew around her and her band make it a classic. That may be all the more reason to own the audiophile version, but this one is not without surface noise.

Olivia Newton-John: Totally Hot

John Farrar, producer
Half-speed remastered
MFSL 1-040

A purely pop release from '77, this is one of those remasters that sets the



Joni: clearer highs



Seals and Crofts: predictable

standard for all others. The original production standards were impressively high, with superb miking, equalization, and instrument placement in the mix. The use of the Apex Aural Exciter also translates well in the remastering. The Top-40 hit *A Little More Love* features outrageously resonant guitar fills and rhythm parts from Steve Lukather, set against a spanking clean snare sound. Olivia's sweet soprano rides the crest of these great sounds effortlessly. Again, slight surface noise is sometimes discernible on the occasional quiet passage and between cuts.

The Numa Band

Ron Steele, producer
Digitally recorded
Ovation OV 1760

The Numa Band is a spirited jazz/funk sextet from Chicago. They recorded this album live with the Mitsubishi digital recorder and transferred it direct-to-disc without edits or overdubs. The material is all original and very solid melodically, with its roots in the mainstream work of such players as Freddie Hubbard and Herbie Hancock. The most outstanding feature here is the live feel transmitted via digital, with strong solos from saxist Jack Baron, trumpeter Russ Iverson, and innovative keyboardist Bob Sutter. The ensemble work is somewhat predictable and laid-back, but the Numa Band is trying to capture the moment here, and they succeed.

Seals and Crofts: Summer Breeze

Louie Shelton, producer
Half-speed remastered
Nautilus NR 10

Seals and Crofts write great songs and this record contains some of their best, including *Hummingbird* and *Summer Breeze*. But remastering these older pop productions (this one's from '72) tends to yield predictable results: Vocals and guitar parts at the high end are intensified and broadened, quite possibly through re-equalization. Yet the original flaws, including distortion and, in this case, a sporadically muddy bottom end, haven't really been remedied.

Spyro Gyra: Morning Dance

Jay Beckenstein and Richard Calandra, producers. Half-speed remastered
Nautilus NR 9

The original "Morning Dance" was a little bit top-endy, and this remaster gets a rounder sound up there, especially on Jay Beckenstein's expressive alto sax. The bottom is also richer and cleaner, and the bass sounds slightly fatter. Spyro Gyra plays swinging, Latin-inflected pop/jazz with flair and polish, so the music deserves the audiophile technology. But this was a good-sounding record when it came out last year, and, though the improvements are discernible, they're very subtle.

Continued on page 98



Bar-Kays: working in unison to move a crowd



BT Express: jump aboard

Any Trouble

John Wood, producer
Stiff America USE 6
by Gene Sculatti

This band looked great on paper. It won *Melody Maker's* competition for the best new band of 1980. It was interviewed, analyzed, and signed to Stiff Records, which had already delivered such delights as Elvis Costello, Nick Lowe, the Damned, Yachts, and Lene Lovich. Surely, Any Trouble's debut album would reveal great flames behind all the cannon smoke.

Sadly, it doesn't. "Any Trouble" is but one more product of the fickle British music scene, whose press schedules mandate the biweekly discovery of exceptional new bands, even when there aren't any. Running on good hooks and Elvis Costello energy, this welterweight pop band places somewhere between Joe Jackson and late-period Greg Kihn.

The musicianship can't be faulted, nor can the precise, almost brittle arrangements that the genre demands. The group covers Springsteen's *Growin' Up* reasonably well, and bops through ten originals with titles like *Playing Bogart*, *Nice Girls*, *(Get You Off) the Hook*, and *Girls Are Always Right*. The last two songs—along with a surprisingly spirited version of Abba's *Name of the Game (Live)*—are the only indications of greater potential.

The LP also sports the most lackluster cover ever given a Stiff release, which may serve as a tip-off to potential buyers. By building great expectations around acts like this one (and last year's *Dirty Looks*), Stiff may have to answer charges that it is running out of steam.

The Bar-Kays: As One

Allen A. Jones, producer
Mercury SRM 1-3844
by Tom Vickers

As Memphis' premier funk band, the Bar-Kays have been around a long time. "As One" serves as an adequate showcase of their powerful horn arrangements, churning bottom rhythms, and on-the-money street harmonizing. The problem this time is that they serve up an imitative soul stew rather than their patented Memphis variety.

Take their latest hit for example. The title, *Boogie Body Land*, evokes Earth, Wind & Fire's *Boogie Wonderland*. The quirky synthesizer blurts and whistles sound like a Cameo outtake. The lead vocalist's call and response rap/chant during the percussion break sounds very similar to Kurtis Blow on *The Breaks*.

Elsewhere, the Bar-Kays trade in the street for the ethereal "land of love and happiness" philosophy espoused by EWF's leader, Maurice White. *As One*, *Open Your Heart*, and *Deliver Us* reek of preachiness and worn-out jazzy horn charts. The uptempo *Work It Out* has a powerful groove with its boss bass line and hard-kicking brass and is the closest they come to Memphis funk. Finally, on *Take the Time to Love Somebody*, the old Stax horn tradition gets a real workout. Except for some superfluous strings, this is the Bar-Kays at their love-ballad best, with all of the emotion translated perfectly in the arrangement.

On stage this is a strong band: Eleven pieces of solid talent working in unison to move a crowd. But it seems a heavy touring schedule has worn them

out, causing them to simply regurgitate recent hits and ideas by other groups. Come on guys, be yourselves.

BT Express: Greatest Hits

Various producers
Columbia JC 36923
by Tom Vickers

The BT Express emerged in the mid-'70s during the first wave of disco-mania. This collection shows its growth from a riff/groove disco outfit into a fiery, song-oriented funk band. Since it hasn't recorded many bona-fide hits, the group has justified the LP's title by calling the two sides "Old Gold" and "Future Gold." The former includes *Express*, *Peace Pipe*, and *Give Up the Funk (Let's Dance)*, all mainly instrumental numbers with non-sense chants and no substantial melodic content. Only on '78s hit *Shout It Out* and its initial smash, *Do It (Till You're Satisfied)*, do the grooves become songs with intros, bridges, hooks, and choruses.

If Side 2 is any indication of where the Express is headed, it should pick up a lot of passengers. The opening *Stretch* is one of the year's hottest dance tracks—solid funk with no strings attached. A hot guitar works out over an equally fiery rhythm track, and though the lyrics are still light, some voice box effects give the song a more contemporary feel. The ballad *Let Me Be the One* eases things up a bit, with a pleasant melody set over an instrumental arrangement that builds in dynamic intensity. *Midnight Beat* closes the album on an up dance note and is marred only by a stilted horn arrangement.

The eight-man BT Express has outlasted much of its boogie/funk competi-



Cooder: defies categorization

tion and seems to be moving successfully into the sound of the Eighties. If you like to dance, hop on board.

Ry Cooder: Borderline
Ry Cooder, producer
Warner Bros. BSK 3489
by Crispin Cioe

"Borderline" is in every way an extension of Ry Cooder's understated classic of two years back. "Bop 'Til You Drop." It too was digitally recorded by longtime engineer Lee Herschberg, and it uses most of the same musicians to play revampings of similar r&b and country material. But it's all so uniquely resonant, carefully arranged, and beautifully performed that the LP never sounds like a mere rehash.

The songs are delicate but never precious, each serving as a showcase for Cooder's by-now seamless style: an uncluttered fusion of soul and Tex-Mex, realized via a virtual spectrum of Western Hemisphere guitar styles. On *Why Don't You Try Me*, he meshes William D. Smith's sonorous organ swells with wailing gospel backup vocals and calypso-flavored guitar fills. George "Baboo" Pierre's wonderful percussion and Jim Keltner's drumming put the tune somewhere between Jamaican reggae and L.A. funk. Likewise, Cooder's arrangement of 634-5789—the soul tune that Wilson Pickett first lionized—runs through a variety of rhythm shifts, underlining the flair he and his musicians have for coming up with interesting melodic parts. Adding further strength to the album's fine solo work is singer/songwriter John Hiatt, a solid addition to Cooder's

hand-picked coterie. Hiatt also provides congenial backup vocals and contributes *The Way We Make a Broken Heart*, a gentle tale of infidelity and romance.

Singing is by no means Cooder's long suit, but he brings a good humor and looseness to his immaculately tailored tunes that is always appropriate. The crux of his art is nothing less than a panoramic view of American popular music, past and present, contexted in a gentle wash of cross-rhythms and styles. The best example of this is the LP's title cut (slightly reminiscent of his lovely score for the film *The Long Riders*) on which a bottleneck guitar, Hammond organ, and vibes dance around a pealing, syncopated Mexican-tinged melody. *Borderline* virtually defies categorization and so does its author.

Creedence Clearwater Revival: The Royal Albert Hall Concert
Fantasy MPF 4501
by Mitchell Cohen

The decade of Vietnam was turning in turmoil, and Creedence Clearwater Revival—a band that was not thought of as particularly political, let alone radical—was turning out hit records that to this day have a mood of defiance and an edge of doubt. *Bad Moon Rising*, *Who'll Stop the Rain*, *Fortunate Son*, *Up Around the Bend*, and *Don't Look Now* proved lead singer and composer John Fogerty as astute a rock commentator as his time produced. *Lodi*, *Commotion*, *Green River*, and *Proud Mary* were the work of a first-rate American band with a strong sense of open places and Saturday night restlessness, and an inheritance of rockabilly, r&b, folk, and country music.

Much of Creedence's finest material, fourteen songs' worth, is on "The Royal Albert Hall Concert," recorded eleven years ago at the height of its popularity. It isn't the sharpest performance the quartet ever gave—some signature tunes like *Born on the Bayou* and *Proud Mary* are slack in a way that implies the group was tiring of them. But the LP does show that when the time came to crank it out on stage, Creedence could do it with precision and energy. The 2½ minute singles are punchy, and the longer jams (*Keep on Chooglin'*, for example) are not the aimless expeditions indulged in by many of the band's Bay Area contemporaries.

It is true that Creedence was basically disinclined to alter its songs drastically in concert, and the Albert Hall record

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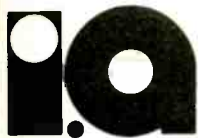
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Fleetwood: intact

doesn't contribute anything startlingly new to the CCR story. But it is far from mechanical and a fine representation of Fogerty's craft as a singer-writer-guitarist-rocker. Particularly crackling are *Traveling Band*, a Little-Richard-styled number that hit before "band on the road" tunes became clichés, and *Fortunate Son*, an angry anthem of powerlessness. The album is a bargain at its "midline" price and good enough to make one wonder, again, what has become of John C. Fogerty. His output in his few years at the top makes most rock of the Eighties sound half-baked.

Fleetwood Mac Live

Richard Dashut, Ken Caillat,
and Fleetwood Mac, producers
Warner Bros. 2WB 3500 (two-discs)
by Sam Sutherland

With the release of "Tusk" in the fall of 1979, Fleetwood Mac served notice that it had more than sleek pop singles up its sleeve. And while radio programmers and rock critics mulled the quirks of that ambitious four-sided project, the Anglo-American quintet underlined its intent with a global concert tour that carried the LP's experimental fervor onto the stage. This new live album, recorded during that tour, thus stands apart from the sleek, hits-dominated concert souvenirs recently released by such platinum peers as the Eagles and Supertramp. It opts instead for a documentary approach that leaves the rougher sonics and leaner arrangements of live Mac intact.

As with "Tusk," this two-disc set is really Lindsey Buckingham's show. Although Stevie Nicks and Christine McVie

are fully represented with their better-known songs, the highlights are Buckingham's possessed readings both of hits (*Go Your Own Way* and *Monday Morning*) and more obscure tracks, such as *I'm So Afraid* from "Fleetwood Mac" and *Not That Funny* from "Tusk." Perhaps the most telling demonstration of his power as front man is his update of *Oh Well*, one of the original lineup's best-known signatures. What was once a guitar duel is now an equally convincing tour de force for Buckingham's fevered singing and driving finger picking. It measures how successfully he has bridged his own folk-derived guitar technique with the harder edges and heightened dynamics of blues-oriented rock.

In an era when top pop and rock bands routinely "revise" their concert tapes in the studio with overdubs, repaired flubbed instrumental lines, and smoothed out raw vocal harmonies, it's particularly heartening that Fleetwood Mac has apparently left these performances intact. The three new songs were recorded during a separate show for "friends and crew" at Santa Monica Civic Auditorium, and, while these are cleaner sounding, they appear unedited.

Of them, a new version of the Beach Boys' *The Farmer's Daughter* deserves special mention. Here, the early surf ballad works as both a homage to its authors and as a classic example of Mac style, balancing creamy harmonies and the classic twang of its guitar motifs.

That same sense of tradition and discovery recurs throughout "Fleetwood Mac Live." And as every one of its records has shown in some degree, it's no accident that this venerable band takes its name from the rhythm section of Mick Fleetwood and John McVie. Despite the roughness of crowd response and a higher measure of reflected hall sound than usual in a closely miked concert recording, production is accurate and faithful to the band's stage personality. Such fidelity may give "Live" a harder time with radio playlists, but true fans will be grateful.

The Fleshtones: Up-Front

Paul Wexler, producer

IRS SP 70402

by Gene Sculatti

The Fleshtones first surfaced as part of the second wave of New York's ongoing rock renaissance in 1978. A year

later they released *American Beat*, as auspicious a debut single as one could ask for. Unfortunately, the record's lively celebration of '60s punk roots left listeners unprepared for the quartet's next outing on last year's Red Star sampler "2X5." On that disc the group traded raw punk for something more studied and a lot less vibrant, sounding like an art-school outfit with more ideas than it could handle.

"Up-Front" neatly restores their original focus and finally reveals the Flesh-tones for what they really are: perhaps the best of the dozens of bands working in '60s-derived American pop/rock. Theirs is a thoroughly modern approach, unlike that of the neoclassicists who devote themselves to slavishly recycling every riff the Standells, Seeds, and Raiders ever wrote.

Of the five songs here, *The Girl from Baltimore* and *Feel the Heat* easily take the honors. Both are upbeat anthems spiced with harmonica, electric organ, and Peter Zarella's marvelously undisciplined vocals (which bear a slight resemblance to the charming primitivism of Jonathan Richman). *Cold, Cold Shoes*, a remake of the Stones' *Play with Fire*, and the sax-crazed instrumental *Theme from "The Vindicators"* don't merely pay homage, but extend and improve upon their obvious models. This is not the hyperkinetic excitement of the Knack, the Romantics, or the late DMZ. Rather, it is music that uses past influences to fashion something refreshingly contemporary.

Amos Garrett: Go Cat Go
Michael Melford, producer
Flying Fish FF 226
by Sam Sutherland

Like Ry Cooder, guitarist Amos Garrett has carved a solid niche for himself without resorting to the usual ploys associated with rock's guitar cult: Although he can summon all the speed and power of his better-known axe-wielding peers, Garrett has always concerned himself more with nuance, his best solos making their mark through restraint rather than flash. Like Cooder, too, this Toronto-born player has long displayed a wide-ranging musical intelligence that has enabled him to graft elements of country, jazz, and Hawaiian styles onto his own playing, lending his work an effortlessly exotic piquancy.

Until now, Garrett has pursued the path of sideman, starting with Ian and Syl-



Garrett: breezy, brainy

via's Great Speckled Bird in the late '60s, which saw him contributing to an early vision of country rock. Among other significant associations, Geoff and Maria Muldaur relied heavily on Garrett's playing while still performing as a duo, and both have frequently tapped his services for their respective solo ventures.

"Go Cat Go" reveals the actuality of Garrett's importance to those projects. The laconic vocal personality he revealed on an earlier LP with Geoff Muldaur here takes center stage, and if his guitar remains the more eloquent voice, his singing is ripe with humor.

Long-term followers of his work will be surprised at the material's relatively strong rock emphasis. The LP mixes somewhat obscure roots including rockabilly and New Orleans r&b with more current works by Garrett, synthesizer player Phil Aaberg, and John Hiatt. (Hiatt, incidentally, forms yet another link with Cooder, since the songwriter is currently touring with Cooder's band.) Garrett's playing thus hews more to muscular rhythm work than might be expected, but his shimmering, note-bending solos and resonant tone are still much in evidence. His guitar never overwhelms the fine backing band, though, and there are numerous arranging flourishes that flesh out the more quixotic elements of his style: Buddy Knox's *Hula Love* gets an appropriately clichéd wall of ukeleles and mandolin, setting up the right tropical pulse, and on the equally silly-but-sweet *Made in Japan*, Aaberg synthesist Hiroshi Sato, and Gar-

Continued on page 93

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Jazz

by Don Heckman
& John S. Wilson

Toshiko Akiyoshi: Notorious Tourist from the East

Toshiko Akiyoshi, producer
Inner City IC 6066

The musical activity generated by Toshiko Akiyoshi and Lew Tabackin is amazing. They jointly lead a big band and each has her/his own small combo and recording and live dates. Having already recorded her pieces with the big band, Akiyoshi here exposes her small group writing for the first time on record. In addition to being an explicit example of her inventive mainstream abilities, the LP gives Steve Huffsteter, a trumpeter in the big band, a chance to shine. **J.S.W.**

Anthony Braxton and Derek Bailey: Live at Wigmore

Martin Davidson, producer
Inner City IC 1041 (two discs)

This two disc set is a documentation of a 1974 concert performance by saxophonist Anthony Braxton and guitarist Derek Bailey in London. Braxton's more recent Arista recordings have revealed a performer whose intellectual structures were more interesting than the music they produced. But here, Braxton justifies his reputation as an avant-garde luminary, aided in large measure by Bailey's remarkable guitar work. **D.H.**

Keith Jarrett: The Celestial Hawk

Manfred Eicher &
Keith Jarrett, producers
ECM 1-1175

Keith Jarrett's latest is a three-movement work for piano and symphony orchestra, recorded at Carnegie Hall in early 1980 by the composer and the Syracuse Symphony. Except for a few creative moments from Jarrett's piano, the performance could easily be mistaken for a self-subsidized recording of a composition by an elderly academic. Why Jarrett or ECM feels anyone would be interested in amateurishly rehashed nineteenth-century clichés is a mystery. **D.H.**

Dick Johnson and the Dave McKenna Rhythm Section: Spider's Blues

Carl E. Jefferson, producer
Concord Jazz CJ 135

A piano and reed duo rarely turns up in jazz. Where's the bass? Where are the drums? With Dave McKenna on hand, they're not necessary. His strong piano—roaring through *Carioca*, floating on *A Gypsy Air*—combined with Dick Johnson's clarinet, flute, and soprano and alto saxophones creates the equivalent of a full band. The program ranges through bop, Billy Strayhorn, Fats Waller, and a couple of Dick Johnson originals. **J.S.W.**

Tete Montoliu: Lunch In L.A.

John Koenig, producer
Contemporary 14004

Tete Montoliu's forceful and brilliant unaccompanied piano on Sonny Rollins' *Airegin* opens this set at such a high level that the rest seems to roll downhill. *Sophisticated*

Lady, another solo, brings the level up again, but his duet with Chick Corea on *Put Your Little Foot Right Out* is a real disappointment. **J.S.W.**

George Shearing: On a Clear Day

Carl E. Jefferson, producer
Concord Jazz CJ 132

This album is proof positive of the continuing growth of George Shearing and Brian Torff as a team. Torff contributes two compositions here—a boiling *Blue Island Blues* and *Brasil '79*—and his virtuosic bass solos bring a strengthening balance to Shearing's piano. Shearing sings on *Have You Met Miss Jones?*—a song that offers little for any singer. **J.S.W.**

Steve Swallow: Home

Manfred Eicher, producer
ECM 1-1160

Bassist Steve Swallow's composing skills are brought front and center in this collection of pieces based on the poetry of Robert Creeley. The performances—especially those by singer Sheila Jordan and pianist Steve Kuhn—are right on the money for the epigrammatic, near-Haiku poems. Swallow's careful use of the synthesizer, as well as a willingness to let his textures find their own proper levels of density, bode very well for his future work as a composer. **D.H.**

McCoy Tyner: 4 X 4

Orrin Keepnews, producer
Milestone M 55007 (two discs)

McCoy Tyner's reputation as a near-perfect accompanist is fully vindicated in this two-record set. He fronts four quite diverse groups—respectively featuring Freddie Hubbard, John Abercrombie, Bobby Hutcherson, and Arthur Blythe—and handles the

neo-bop of the first, the fusion of the second, the mainstream of the third, and the avant-gardisms of the fourth without even bothering to catch his breath. It's an extraordinary example of Tyner's performing breadth. **D.H.**

Sadao Watanabe: Bird of Paradise

Kiyoshi Itoh, producer
Inner City IC 6061

Alto saxophonist Sadao Watanabe is Japan's best-known jazz player. He goes for world approval on this outing with a program based on such well-known Charlie Parker improvisations as *Bird of Paradise*, *Donna Lee*, *Yardbird Suite*, and *Star Eyes*. That he succeeds at a task that would intimidate most domestic musicians is remarkable. That he does so with obvious effort says more about the greatness of Parker than it does about the efficiency of Watanabe. **D.H.**

Bob Wilber: Dizzyfingers

Fred Miller, production
coordinator
Bodeswell BW 101
(Bodeswell Records,
Box 624, 12 Oriole Circle,
Brewster, Mass. 12631)

In 1978, Bob Wilber recorded his multiple-reed arrangements of Goodman hits with a group of Swedish musicians. Titled "Swingin' for the King," it led to a month-long engagement at Michael's Pub in New York in 1980. "Dizzyfingers" was recorded at the end of that month, with Wilber and Swedish vibist Lars Erstrand performing Goodman material backed by Scott Hamilton's rhythm section and pianist Mark Shane. It is much closer to Goodman's original combo performances than Wilber's previous outing. **J.S.W.**



Winwood: penchant for melody

Continued from page 91

rett weave ringing, gong-like accents.

As those choices suggest, "Go Cat Go" is leavened with tongue-in-cheek ideas and arch playing. For guitar fans who don't need cranium-piercing volume and gothic drama, Amos Garrett comes highly recommended as a breezy, brainy alternative.

Steve Winwood: Arc of a Diver

Steve Winwood, producer




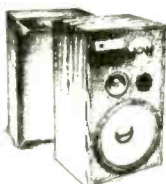


Island ILPS 9576

by Crispin Cioe

Steve Winwood's career has covered an unusually wide spectrum of musical ground: He was lead singer in the seminal British r&b unit the Spencer Davis Group, he played a major role in the late '60s supergroup mania with Ginger Baker and Eric Clapton in Blind Faith, and he headed that most individual and refined of funk/rock combos, Traffic. In between he has played keyboards in such diverse ventures as Stomu Yamashta's GO and the salsa group the Fania All Stars.

"Arc of a Diver" is his second and most fully realized solo album. More than any of his projects so far, it reveals that at the core of all of his legitimately adopted rhythmic influences (American r&b, Latin,

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African) lies a truly English penchant for melody. Some of the songs here are among the best he has ever recorded, their tunes at once unusual and utterly memorable. The title track (authored with ex-Bonzo Dog leader Viv Stanshall) is an exquisitely serpentine melody that marries Winwood's burnished tenor voice and bluesy inflections with a folksong modality and wafts luxuriously over a slow and burbling funk groove. The tune is that rarity—an unabashed love song that sounds fresh and unhackneyed. Other strong cuts here were authored with Will Jennings, who cowrote the Crusaders' big hit of last year, *Street Life*. *While You See a Chance* mixes a majestic chord progression, full of churchy leading tones, with an elliptical lyric that examines the question of just how "free" a life spent in and out of love can be.

Winwood plays all the instruments on this self-produced album. As a drummer, he keeps good time and has a pleasingly light and swinging touch on the cymbals; on guitar, he provides serviceable parts and solos. But as a keyboardist and arranger of keyboard textures, he is beyond compare. On tune after tune, his organ, electric and acoustic pianos, and synthesizers interlock in graceful tapestries that always beautifully support and embellish the melodic direction at hand. If there is still such a thing as romantic elegance in rock, "Arc of a Diver" is its epitome.

Warren Zevon: Stand in the Fire

Warren Zevon & Greg Ladanyi,
producers. *Asylum 5E 519*
by Mitchell Cohen

In Warren Zevon's songs, an excitable boy builds a cage out of his prom date's decayed bones; a werewolf buys a blood-red Cadillac and goes after James Taylor; a waitress is an agent for the Russians; a father and daughter ride into the night, leaving her lover dead. There are pistols all over the place, and asking a raven-tressed girl to dance is a gesture of bravery. Rock this hard-boiled, macabre, and funny merits more than the generally well-behaved music on Zevon's previous albums, and with "Stand in the Fire" it finally gets more. Recorded live in Los Angeles with a real band (not the facile Asylumites that have backed him on disc before), it makes the most compelling case yet for Zevon as a master of irrational acts.



Zevon: menacing machismo

His willingness to tamper with his own text adds detail to the adventures of the dapper *Werewolves of London*. But he does small harm to *Mohammed's Radio*, his most soaringly melodic song, where references to the Ayatollah and Jimmy Carter are inappropriate. In almost every other case—especially *Lawyers*, *Guns and Money* and *I'll Sleep When I'm Dead*—the versions here are more vivid and visual than their studio predecessors. Of the two new originals, the strange, morose, Stones-like stomper *The Sin* is flashier than the sketchy title track. And the set concludes with a Bo Diddley medley featuring *Bo Diddley's a Gunslinger*. Are there any rock antecedents more pertinent to Zevon's character than the image of a sly, rambunctious guitarist at the O.K. Corral?

"You don't wanna dance. I'll kill ya!," Zevon shouts at his road manager from the stage during *Poor Poor Pitiful Me*. That's the tone of "Stand in the Fire": exclamatory and insistent, with an attitude toward machismo that is both menacing and mocking. Zevon's technical and emotional limitations as a singer have held him back in the past, but here he goes full-out, and his tales of desperateness, desire, betrayal, and violence (and humor) have never seemed more fully realized. "Stand in the Fire" is live rock & roll as a martial art, and a credit to the genre.

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=====**JAZZ**=====

**Monty Alexander Trio:
Montreux Alexander Live!**

Willi Fruth, producer
Pausa 7083

by John S. Wilson

The arrival of bebop turned the attention of most jazz pianists toward light, thin, right-handed lines. Since then, the relatively few ruggedly two-handed pianists have usually been survivors from or throwbacks to the pre-bop days. Monty Alexander has been an exception. His style is a very personal one that mixes linear flow with a strong, two-fisted drive and a broad sense of color and drama that is reminiscent of Erroll Garner.

Alexander's potential did not reach full realization until he got together with bassist John Clayton, once with the Basie band, and drummer Jeff Hamilton. "Montreux Alexander Live!," recorded in 1976 at the Montreux Festival, is the trio's first recording. Though delayed in release, it is significant in its representation of Alexander in his own proper recorded context for the first time.

Clayton is a key element here, playing with the kind of dramatic impact that motivates Alexander and contributing an arrangement of Nat Adderley's *Work Song*. He has put the piece in an unusually light, flowing context, enabling the trio to sustain it for over thirteen minutes—a notable achievement for a group this size. That segues into *Drown in My Own Tears* and eventually *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, creating a medley that showcases the trio's wide variety of approaches. This is a group that has something to say.

Cal Collins: By Myself

Frank Dorritie, producer
Concord Jazz CJ 119

by John S. Wilson

Cal Collins has been playing guitar for forty years, has made four albums of his own, and toured with Benny Goodman for three years in the '70s. So, as Jim Crockett suggests on the "By Myself" liner notes, Collins must be a little tired of being called "the best unknown guitarist in jazz." This may be true, but his previous work is simply not in the same league as this unaccompanied collection.

With Goodman, and on his earlier



Collins: a guitar classic

albums, Collins was a capable, swinging guitarist with an imaginative outlook. But on "By Myself" he combines strumming and picking to create a pianistic style that is full of colors and shading. His rhythmic instincts explain Goodman's interest in him. Here he gives *The Nearness of You* a lazy, swinging quality. At the other end of the spectrum, *Route 66* becomes a virtuosic mixture of single notes and chords that dazzle and swirl over a driving pulse. To cap it all off, Phil Edwards has recorded Collins' performances with a remarkable close-up fidelity that catches the full resonance of the strings without any extraneous mechanical sounds. This set is a guitar classic.

Steve Khan: Evidence

Steve Khan & Doug Epstein,
producers. Arista/Novus AN 3023

John Scofield: Bar Talk

Mark Bingham & John Scofield,
producers. Arista/Novus AN 3022

Larry Coryell: Standing Ovation

Larry Coryell, producer
Arista/Novus AN 3024

by Don Heckman

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Continued on page 99

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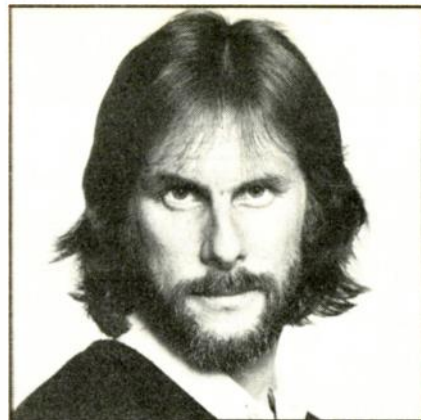
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Weisberg: slick and refined

Continued from page 87

Styx: Pieces of Eight

Styx, producers
Half-speed remastered
Nautilus NR 15

Why Styx? The group always has struck me as an ersatz blend of Yes and Grand Funk Railroad, with lead singer Dennis DeYoung copping most of his vocal moves from Mark Farner. Granted Styx has loads of rabid recording-buying fans and one of the most finely honed melodic sensibilities in hard rockdom. Still, when echo, distortion, and a massive wash of guitars and synthesizers are endemic to the sound and style, why bother remastering? All it has done is to brighten things up a bit, and I question whether that is worth the increased tariff.

Tim Weisberg: Tip of the Weisberg

Jeffrey Weber and Tim Weisberg, producers. Digitally recorded, DBX encoded. Nautilus NR 7

This is polished instrumental rock with funk, Latin, and jazz flavorings. Flutist Tim Weisberg has a clean, incisive tone, great technique, and a fine band. The digital recording is a live one, and his instrument sounds focused and distortion-free in the upper register. However, on the more overtly rocking tunes like *Pork Chops*, digital's very cleanliness has eliminated the possibility for a distorted bite that might've added spice to the mix. Conversely, on the more quietly grooving funk tunes like *All Tied Up*, the distortion-diminished depth and presence nicely match the song's mood. Given the live situation, this is a very refined production. The album also has absolutely the least surface noise of any I've played on my system. ☺



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Coryell: pick of the litter

Continued from page 95
 director, Steve Backer, certainly should be congratulated for his efforts. Unfortunately, two of the three promise more than they deliver.

Steve Khan's "Evidence" is one of those multi-overdubbed one-man shows that are becoming disturbingly popular. Using four different guitars, Khan gamely works his way through Lord knows how many different tracks. There's no question that he does it well; Khan is as technically adroit a guitarist as there is. The real issue is whether or not all this intensive layering results in music that is worthy on its own terms—exclusive of our admiration for the technical means by which it was created.

In this case, only Side 2 is worthy. Khan plays a medley of nine Thelonious Monk tunes, ranging from such lesser-known items as *Think of One* and *Evidence* to the more familiar *Ruby, My Dear*, *Monk's Mood*, and *Little Rootie Tootie*. Once past the curious sound of these highly pianistic melodies being realized on guitar, one senses the genuine creative interest that these angular, off-the-wall pieces have provoked in Khan. Usually he does little more than state the theme, play a variation or two, and move into a closing statement. Given the exceedingly personal quality of the music, that's about all one can expect from most

interpreters (Steve Lacy is one notable exception). As a result, we learn far more about Khan from these readings than we do about the music. Since he is a provocative, even adventurous young player, that's not necessarily anything to carp about. But one might have hoped for more.

John Scofield's "Bar Talk" is both more familiar and more enigmatic. I have not yet heard anything from this guitarist that explains his exalted reputation, and this outing is no exception. The major point of interest is a track called *New Strings Attached* on which Scofield plays dramatically out of tune (presumably in justification of the title). Cute, but a bit more of an in-joke than would seem appropriate for a commercial release.

Scofield's playing is competent, but rarely evocative, so the spotlight falls on bassist Steve Swallow, surely one of our most underrated contemporary musicians. And drummer Adam Nussbaum is understated but always intense, filling in the gaps beautifully. But even a super rhythm section can't salvage a pedestrian recording.

Larry Coryell's "Standing Ovation" is far and away the best of the three albums. For the most part it is a solo effort like Khan's. The exceptions are *Piano Improvisation*, in which Coryell reveals creditable keyboard chops, and *Spiritual Dance*, a classical Indian-style piece in which he is joined by Dr. L. Subramaniam on violin and tambura. I'm not sure if it's because Coryell is a bit older than the other guitarists, or if it's simply a matter of a different kind of creative energy, but there is a range to his music—an historical awareness—that is simply nonexistent on the other two discs. *Discotexas*, for example, reveals an intimate knowledge of the parameters of Southwest blues playing; it is neither a re-creation nor a satire, but a contemporary look at a still-vital musical form. *Ravel* and *Wonderful Wolfgang* have obvious classical references, but, again, the impressionism and Viennese classicisms are filtered through Coryell's musical consciousness.

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Mulligan: strong and clean

last two years he has been building a repertoire and pulling together the bright threads that gave promise to the group's initial performances. At the same time, he has buttressed his own solos on baritone and soprano saxophones with the very compatible trumpet and flugelhorn of Tom Harrell. The result on this, the group's first disc, is a very strong, very Mulliganesque ensemble with a clean, full, and precise attack.

The Mulligan originals bring out the rich melodic qualities of his playing. *Song for Strayhorn* features a soft, warm, and beautifully lyrical baritone saxophone solo; *Walk on the Water* soars on the full, uplifting vitality of his soprano sax and the crackling clarity of Harrell's flugelhorn. Two of the most interesting pieces are Duke Ellington's *Across the Track Blues* and Tommy Dorsey's theme, *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You*. As far as I know, no one has ever recorded or even played the former except Ellington himself, and Mulligan follows the original arrangement with some fascinating substitutions. Tom Harrell is forcefully himself in Cootie Williams' trumpet solo; Mulligan—on baritone—first matches Barney Bigard's cha-leaumeau clarinet spot and then turns Lawrence Brown's lyrical trombone solo into a much more forceful statement. The band takes a looser approach to the Dorsey theme, crisply swinging through to what culminates in a rambunctious cele-

bration. This orchestra has character, discipline, and a high level of probing musical excellence; it's a well-realized reflection of Gerry Mulligan.

Waldo's Gutbucket Syncopators: Feelin' Devilish

Stomp Off SOS 1001

Terry Waldo: Wizard of the Keyboard

Stomp Off SOS 1002

Terry Waldo and Bob Erdos, producers
(Stomp Off Records, P.O. Box 342,
Dept. F, York, Pa. 17405)

by John S. Wilson

Terry Waldo cuts across a wide swath of musical Americana: ragtime, jazz, vaudeville, blues, and novelties such as the Korn Kobblers' *Don't Give Me No Goose for Christmas*. "Feelin' Devilish" and "Wizard of the Keyboard" are the first releases from Stomp Off, a new label that plans to focus on newly recorded traditional jazz and ragtime. "Devilish" features Waldo with his seven piece band, the Gutbucket Syncopators; on the other disc he plays piano and sings, backed by Eddy Davis on banjo and Vince Giordano on tuba.

Waldo has been performing for over a decade and has made seven other records for various independent labels. Yet he remains a less than polished practitioner. "Wizard of the Keyboard," for instance, shows him to be an able pianist, but with the Syncopators his solos tend to slow whatever momentum the group has built up. His singing has a rather flat directness that is adequate for comedy songs such as *Goose for Christmas* or *If You Talk in Your Sleep* but isn't up to capturing the rich flavor of Jelly Roll Morton's *219 Blues*.

But there is much on these two discs to praise. The Syncopators are marvelously brash, slamming through their performances under Roy Tate's reckless trumpet. Tate's solos are filled with challenging twists, turns, and breaks; they are augmented by Jim Snyder's dark, gruff, wah-wah trombone and Frank Powers' rich, soaring clarinet. The two takes of *The Man from the South*, an old Ted Weems nit, show how much better the group is under a full head of steam than when it is being careful.

The trio disc is a mixture of rags and novelties. It includes a recently discovered Jelly Roll piece, *Exit Gloom*, and a fascinating original by Waldo, *Proctology*, which is full of Morton nuances.

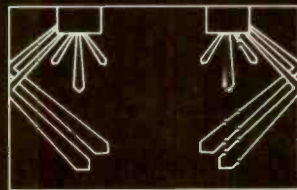
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Record Care, Part 2: A Record Life Study

How long will your phonograph records last?

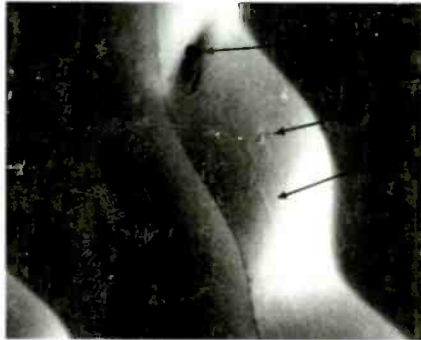
How many times can you safely play records without degrading sound quality?

Using quality playback equipment, the factors of Record Longevity are twofold and closely interrelated: the record must be kept free of contamination, and the stylus must be kept clean during playback.

Scanning electron microscopy clearly shows the need and contribution of both record cleaning and stylus care.

Exhaustive research shows that with proper record/stylus care, an entire "life span" of 200 play events will not damage record surface quality or fidelity. (Most albums are played a total of 50 times or less.)

200 Plays Without Record Cleaning

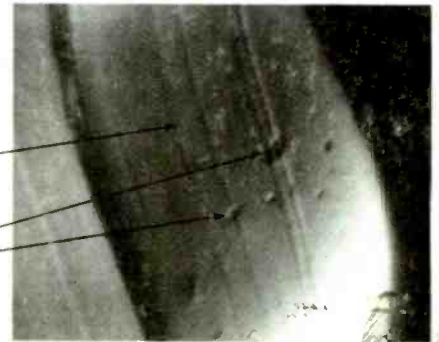


Pit from dust abrasion
Ground-in microdust.
Prominent dust abrasion.

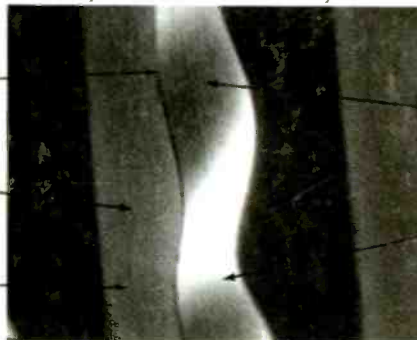
Prominent stylus path from
abrasive-coated diamond
face.

Vinyl particles welded by
contaminated upper area of
stylus.

200 Plays Without Stylus Care



200 Plays With Record and Stylus Care



Results of D4 Record Care:

Clean central radius due to
capillary attraction of D4 Fluid
into D4 pad fabric.

Microdust-free stylus path
due to exclusive D4 "spiral
fiber" particle holding.

No wall-slurry of "lubricant"
products.

Results of SC-2 Stylus Care:

Reduced wall abrasion due to
uncontaminated diamond
face.

Cleaned stylus leaves no
welded-in particles.



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