AUGUST 1981 $1.95
ICD 08398

# High Fidelity

## MUSICAL AMERICA EDITION

begins after page 52

## SPECIAL TAPE ISSUE

We Rate 6 Exciting Tape Decks, 9 New Super-Cassette Releases

A Breakthrough in Noise Reduction—How Dolby C Works

Sneak Preview—Brand-New 1982 Audio and Video Equipment

"Fake Conductor" Hoax Exposed

## Which Personal Portable Should You Buy?

### 37 Models Compared




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# THIS YEAR, PIONEER DISCOVERED A NEW ART.

# Pioneer goes beyond state of the art electronics to make a major new contribution in human engineering.

In the past 40 years Pioneer has made countless contributions to the state of the art in High Fidelity. Now Pioneer is introducing new components that actually restate the art. We call it High Fidelity for Humans.

This year to a list of audible innovations and incredible specifications we have added human engineering features that give the owner of our equipment a new ability to control it and the quality of the sound it produces.

For example, Pioneer's new CT-9R, three direct drive motor Cassette Deck has a Time Remaining Counter with a digital readout that shows you how much recording time is left on a tape. So you won't run out of tape before running out of music. There's also an Index Scan feature that previews a tape by playing the first five seconds of each piece of music. And to give the CT-9R an incredible signal-to-noise ratio with extended high frequency response, Pioneer's engineers developed RIBBON SENDUST tape heads with laminations 4 to 5 times thinner than conventional Sendust heads. And only Pioneer has them.

Our new Quartz Synthesized F-9 Tuner has a Multipath Indicator that goes so far as to tell you when a signal is being reflected off nearby objects or buildings. So you can adjust your antenna for the best reception. It can also memorize six of your favorite FM and six AM stations and retrieve them instantly. And to make sure every one always sounds its best, our engineers combined two of our exclusive ID MOSFET transistors in a Push-Pull Front End circuit. When you tune in a weak station there's no worry about stronger stations causing distortion due to front end overload. And Quartz-PLL Synthesized tuning makes drift impossible.

## Pioneer's new components bring tangible as well as audible advances to high fidelity.

Unique features on the new Pioneer A-9 Integrated Amp include a Subsonic Indicator. It lights up only when you need to use the Subsonic Filter to get rid of very low frequency interference caused by record warps and such. Inside, a new DC Servo circuit eliminates all capacitors from the signal path so they can't muddy up the signal. That gives you a purer signal with superb definition.

Pioneer's SX-7 Receiver brings you precise electronic control of most functions including volume. The Auto Station Scan control previews the entire band and eight FM and eight AM Memory Presets recall the stations you prefer instantly. What's more, Pioneer's patented Non-Switching amp does away with one of the most troublesome and audible forms of distortion—the noise generated when output transistors switch on and off thousands of times a second.

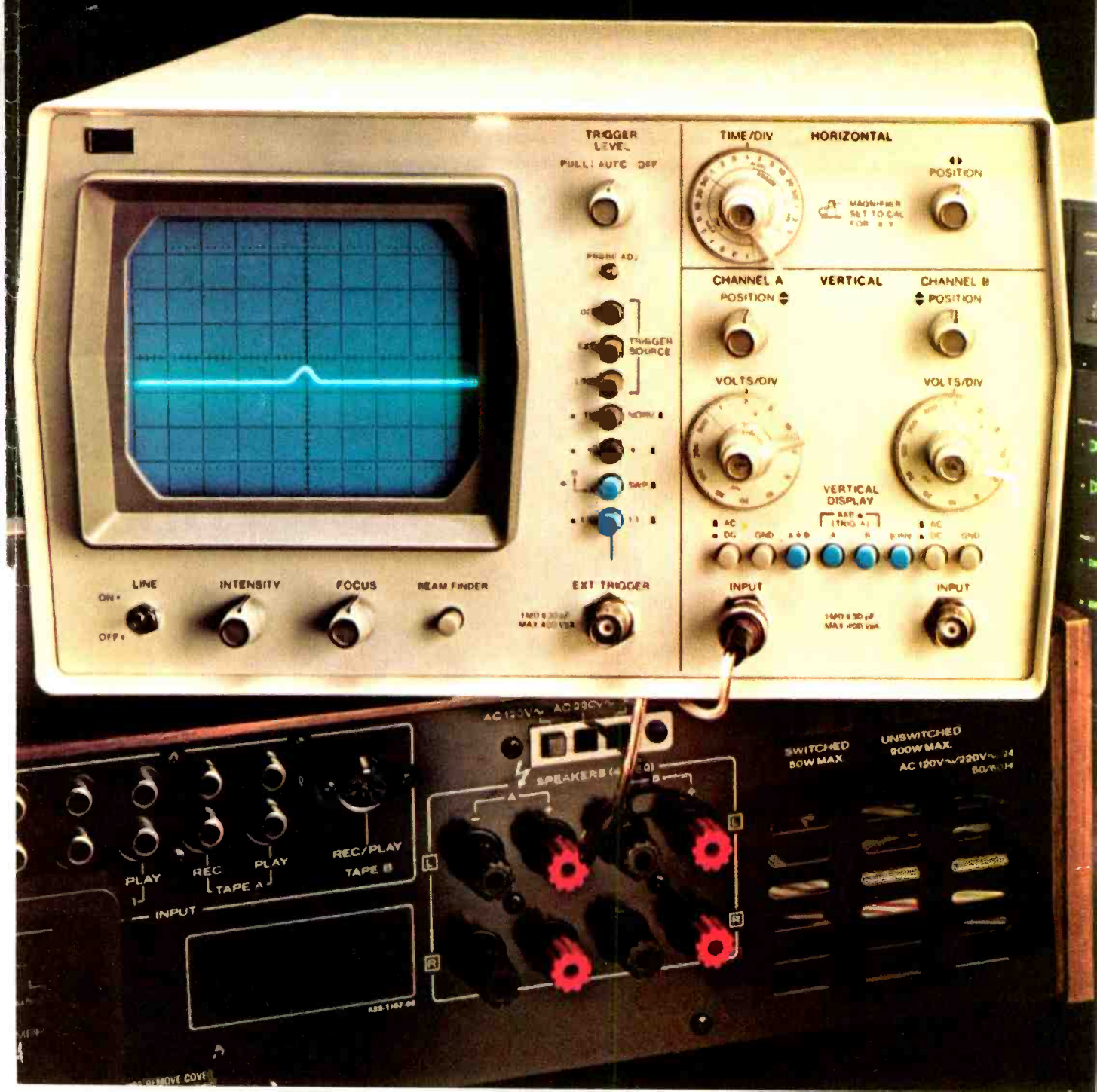
Our new top-of-the-line turntable, the Linear Tracking PL-L800 is another feat of human engineering. It features a linear motor that drives the tonearm across the track by electromagnetic repulsion—another Pioneer innovation. So it's extraordinarily quiet with no noisy belts, worm gears or pulleys and tracking error is virtually non-existent. The tonearm itself is made of Polymer Graphite—an amazing material that dampens resonance. And there's a coaxial suspension system that isolates the platter and tonearm assembly. These features combine to keep what's going on in the room around the turntable from becoming part of the music.

And all this is just the beginning. While the Pioneer concept of human engineering makes our components a pleasure to live with, Pioneer's innovative electronics and technology make them a pleasure to listen to. If you'd like to hear more, visit your nearby Pioneer dealer. You'll see and hear why Pioneer components are #1 with humans who care about music.

PIONEER
WE BRING IT BACK ALIVE

Circle 24 on Reader-Service Card

# EVERY YEAR, HI-FI COMPANIES MAKE MINOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE STATE OF THE ART.

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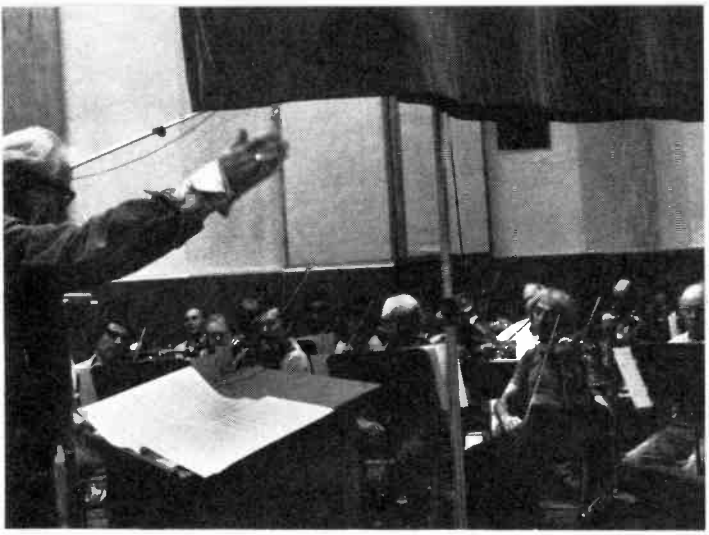


# The Professionals


## A complete, new line of cartridges built to the exacting standards of professional requirements

The famous Stanton 881S set a new standard in audio performance that quickly won world acclaim among professionals, reviewers and audiophiles alike. In fact, it became a new standard by which the industry measures and still maintains that reputation.

Now built to the same careful standards, Stanton introduces three new cartridges – 881E, 880S and 880E. The 881E includes the calibrated perfection of the 881S but with an elliptical stylus. The 880S and 880E include the famous Stanton Stereohedron stylus or elliptical stylus respectively in applications where calibration is not of prime importance.

All four cartridges use lightweight, super powerful samarium cobalt magnets to produce strong output signals with extremely low dynamic tip mass. The entire series provides tracking performance equal to or better than cartridges costing far more. In fact, every cartridge in the series performs superbly with the most demanding of current test records.

"The Professionals", a series of four cartridges giving a choice of price and standard requirements, all with the prestige and quality reputation of the Stanton 881S. The cartridge that leads a line used in more professional applications across the world than any cartridge ever made.

From Stanton. .The Choice of The Professionals.

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

STANTON

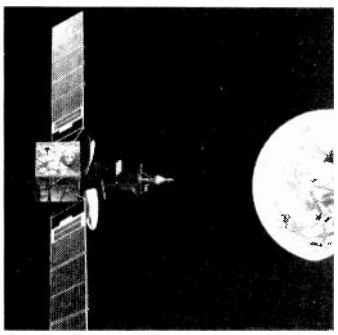
THE CHOICE OF THE PROFESSIONALS™

Circle 23 on Reader-Service Card

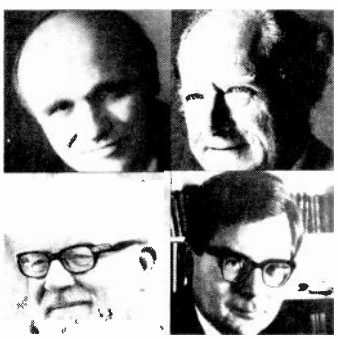
# High Fidelity

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 8 AUGUST 1981

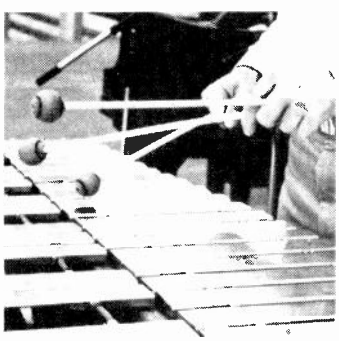
39 *Mini-Madness*



A2 *Half Way Home*



47 *Which is Wilson?*



70 *Mallet Magic*

## AUDIO



## VIDEO TODAY AND TOMORROW
## A Special Bonus Supplement Begins after page 46

## CLASSICAL MUSIC



## BACKBEAT/Popular Music



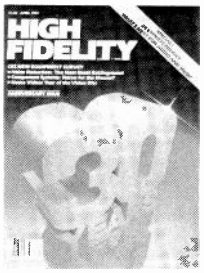
*** Cover Stories**

# Letters

## Disembracing Digital

My continuing disappointment with the ballyhooed digital recordings [November 1980] makes me wonder what all the excitement is about. I have an assortment of audiophile discs and find that they lack much of the low-level information and natural overtones that add so much to recorded music. Some people might initially notice a clinical quality that they would label "more accurate." But I find that digital records offer less clarity in the highs (which sound jangling) as well as less harmonic information and resolution. Listening to them is fatiguing.

In your April issue ["The Next Thirty Years"], Bruce Maier, president of Discwasher, said: ". . . in comparative listening, digital home equipment must affordably achieve subtle but vast improvements in many of the parameters we associate with musical realism." I have seen negative comments from other experts. In general, the skeptics question the wisdom of committing performances to a not fully tested technology that "fixes" the sonic quality of the record the customer buys—through no choice of his. And many believe it




could be a grave error for the recording companies to continue this involvement with a technology that is causing such dissension.

Whether the problems associated with digital discs have to do with the current recording hardware or the playback equipment, or whether some listeners are simply more susceptible to "digital fatigue," I cannot say. But I am disturbed by the nonmusical nature of the digital records I have heard and by the widespread fascination with "the emperor's new clothes."

**Bryan Ellingson**
Benicia, Calif.

A great many listeners are equally convinced that the new suit is the reality and the birthday suit the illusion. There simply has not been enough adequately scientific study of the digital medium to permit a definitive resolution of the controversy it has precipitated.—Ed.

## Stravinsky Clarified

In a review in April, I asserted that "Stravinsky himself sanctioned the two-piano realization employed by Eden and Tamir in their 1969 recording" of *Le Sacre*. Indeed, as David Hamilton pointed out in his review of the original London issue [February 1970], that performance adds "some gratuitous and very dubious further modifications" to Stravinsky's original four-hand score. Rather, it was the 1967 Thomas/Grierson version on Angel that was, according to annotator Lawrence Morton, "at the composer's recommendation, . . . *recorded* [as opposed to performed in concert] on two instruments."

**Derrick Henry**
Belmont, Mass.

## Unreviewed Recordings

Cheers for William Fregosi, who registered his complaint on "Records that Fall in the Cracks," in the April issue ["Letters"]. I also regret the absence of any review in HIGH FIDELITY of the extremely significant recordings of Reimann's *Lear* and the English National Opera performance of *Götterdämmerung*. There can be no valid excuse on either score, particularly when attention and space are given to yet another recorded version of Handel's *Messiah* and old warhorses like *Rigoletto*.

A bouquet: I thoroughly appreciated your review of Goldmark's *Queen of Sheba* on Hungaroton. That is a significant recording—but so are the others.

**R. W. Upshaw**
Short Hills, N.J.

To put the Reimann controversy to rest (please!), we will publish a review of *Lear* in the near future by Alfred Frankenstein.—Ed.

## Help for RFI

In answer to A. J. Goldsworthy's inquiry regarding CB radio interference ["CrossTalk," April], one thing to look for and correct is antenna wires that run parallel to phono/tape cables. It should be noted that Mr. Goldsworthy has a receiver, and most of them have their cable jacks adjacent to antenna terminals. To prevent RFI, the wires and cables should be led away from the receiver in different directions.

Even these precautions will not necessarily solve the problem, especially in cases where there are strong signals because of either transmitter proximity or significant antenna system gain. Mr. Goldsworthy should next ask the manufacturer whether shorting plugs may be placed in his receiver's unused phono input jacks, tape input jacks (including DIN jacks), and aux jacks. They really work. A supply came with my receiver, but only for the phono inputs. I bought additional jacks for use at the aux and tape inputs.

This points up a reason for using a separate tuner. It would greatly assist the isolation of antenna terminals from phono/tape jacks and leads from cables.

**Richard Morron**
Greenwich, Conn.

*(Continued on page 7)*


# Beyond quartz, the world's most precise tuning system, lies a new ability to expand sound.

Imagine you're in a room with Technics SA-828 receiver. What you hear is beautiful stereo. Then you activate Technics variable Dimension Control. Incredibly, the sound begins to move. The stereo image widens to the point where the music begins to surround you. You're intrigued by its richness and depth. You're enveloped by a new experience in sound. That's the wonder of the patented technology in Technics Dimension Control.

Just as wondrous is quartz synthesis, the world's most precise tuning system. That's how the SA-828 quartz synthesizer eliminates FM drift as well as the hassle of tuning. You can even preset and instantly retrieve 7 FM and 7 AM stations, all perfectly in tune.

Another perfect example of Technics technology is our synchro-bias circuitry. What it does is constantly send minute amounts of power to the amplifier transistors. And since they can't switch on or off, switching distortion is eliminated.

And when it comes to power, the SA-828 has plenty: 100 watts per channel minimum RMS into 8 ohms from 20Hz to 20kHz with no more than 0.005% total harmonic distortion.

The SA-828 goes on to show its sophistication with a super-quiet phono equalizer, soft touch program selectors, fully electronic volume control, and a Dimension Control display that doubles as a power level meter.

Technics SA-828 is part of a full line of quartz synthesized receivers. Hear it for yourself. Beyond its quartz synthesizer lies a new dimension in sound.

**Technics**
The science of sound

# WHY ONLY SONY TAPE HEARS FULL COLOR SOUND.

There are some good and sound reasons Sony audio tape is second to none. Why Sony tape has such a sensitive, full frequency response all along the sound spectrum that it is actually capable of recording sounds that go beyond the range of human hearing. That incredible range, sensitivity and balance is what Full Color Sound is all about.

### A history of milestones

When you get a Sony tape you get a lot more than tape. You get the entire history of tape recording.

Sony has been a pioneer in tape manufacturing since it began over 30 years ago. In fact, we made the first audio tape ever in Japan. Sony technology was in the forefront then... and it still is! (Who else could bring you the amazing Walkman?)

Besides a history of spirited determination to be the very first in technology, there's the knowledge that comes from also being pioneers in high fidelity audio *equipment.* (After all, you'd better know all there is to know about tape decks before you make a tape. Sony does.)

Another reason for Sony's unmatched excellence is our unmatched — almost fanatic — insistence on the highest quality material and manufacturing methods. Sometimes our standards are so high we can't find machinery that meets them, so we have to invent the machinery ourselves!

Then there's Sony's unique balance system. The fine-tuning of all the elements that go into making a tape, so that each complements the other, and together deliver the finest recording that is humanly and technically possible.

### The new tape standard: State-of-the-Sony

Fact: Everyone uses magnetic particles for tape. But not everyone insists on buying super-fine grade particles, and then carefully examining and mixing each and every lot to be absolutely positive that the quality is consistently pure and homogenous. Sony does.

Fact: Sony has a unique formula for binding the particles to the tape. Binding determines the life of the tape and the heads. Because of the high standards we demand, Sony had to invent its own binder.

Fact: Another example of Sony high technology is in the coating process. The coating of magnetic particles must be *absolutely, uniformly even* all along the tape. Any variation at all, and the consistency and quality of the tape are compromised. Not only did Sony perfect the process for its regular tapes, but Sony outdid itself with its dual-coated tapes, where it was necessary to produce a top coating that was *super*-thin. We actually managed to create a perfect coating that's only 1 micronmeter thick! (Especially impressive when you realize some other tape makers have trouble producing an even coating 4-5 micronmeters thick, much less 1 micronmeter thick!)

### Hearing is believing

Sony tape comes by its extraordinary quality honestly. It has a heritage of breakthrough innovation. And a history of being famous throughout the world for leading technology, quality and dependability.

And that is why only Sony tape has Full Color Sound. But you don't have to take our word for it. Listen to Sony tape as fanatically as you wish. As they say, hearing is believing. **SONY**



(Continued from page 4)

## Huzzas for Messiah

To Kenneth Cooper and his discussion of Handel's *Messiah* in the April issue: Amen.
**William Bowman**
Alliance, Ohio

## "Surround Sound"

I refer to your answer in the March "Cross-Talk" column to John Wright's query about how to get more "surround sound" from his system. I was surprised that you did not mention Audionics' Space and Image Composer, which decodes SQ matrix but is interesting mainly because of its very efficient "stereo enhance" function.

It is not inexpensive (about $1,000) but delivers the best surround sound I have heard, and the effect cannot be compared to that obtained from the first-generation enhancement systems that were in use during the "quad era." (The Space and Image Composer was developed by Audionics of Oregon in 1979.) I believe that the better instrument localization it provides makes it an exciting alternative to delay lines, but it does require an additional amplifier and a second set of speakers.
**Alain Curetti**
Cannes, France

## Ligeti Piano Studies

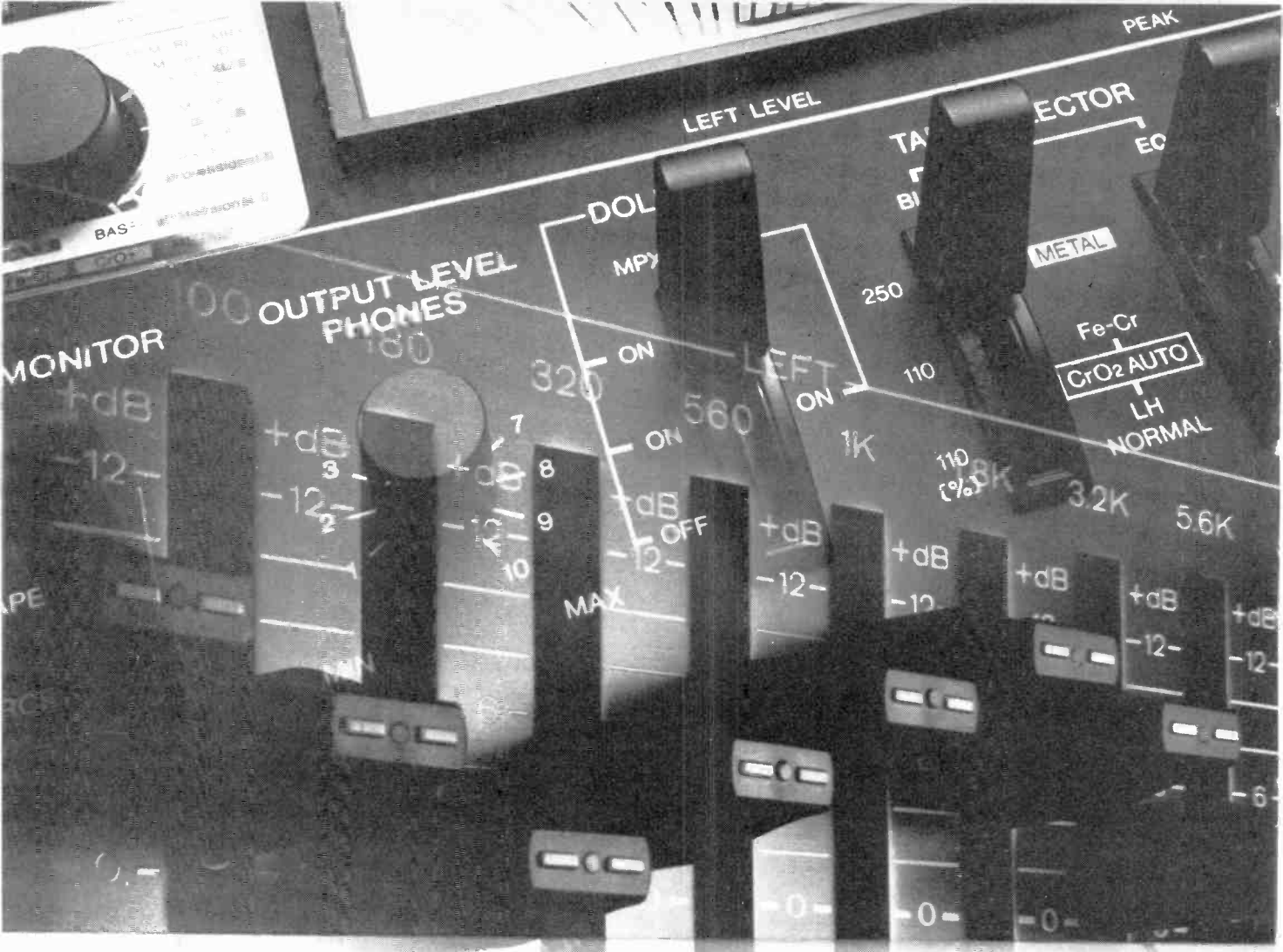
In a feature review in your March 1981 issue, Robert P. Morgan states "Ligeti's Three Pieces. . . . written in 1976, are to date his only works for piano." Is he unaware of this composer's *Musica Ricercata*, a suite of piano studies composed between 1951 and 1953 and performed by Lisa Pohjola on Bis LP 18?
**Michael Quigley**
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Mr. Morgan replies that he is aware of this early student work.—Ed.

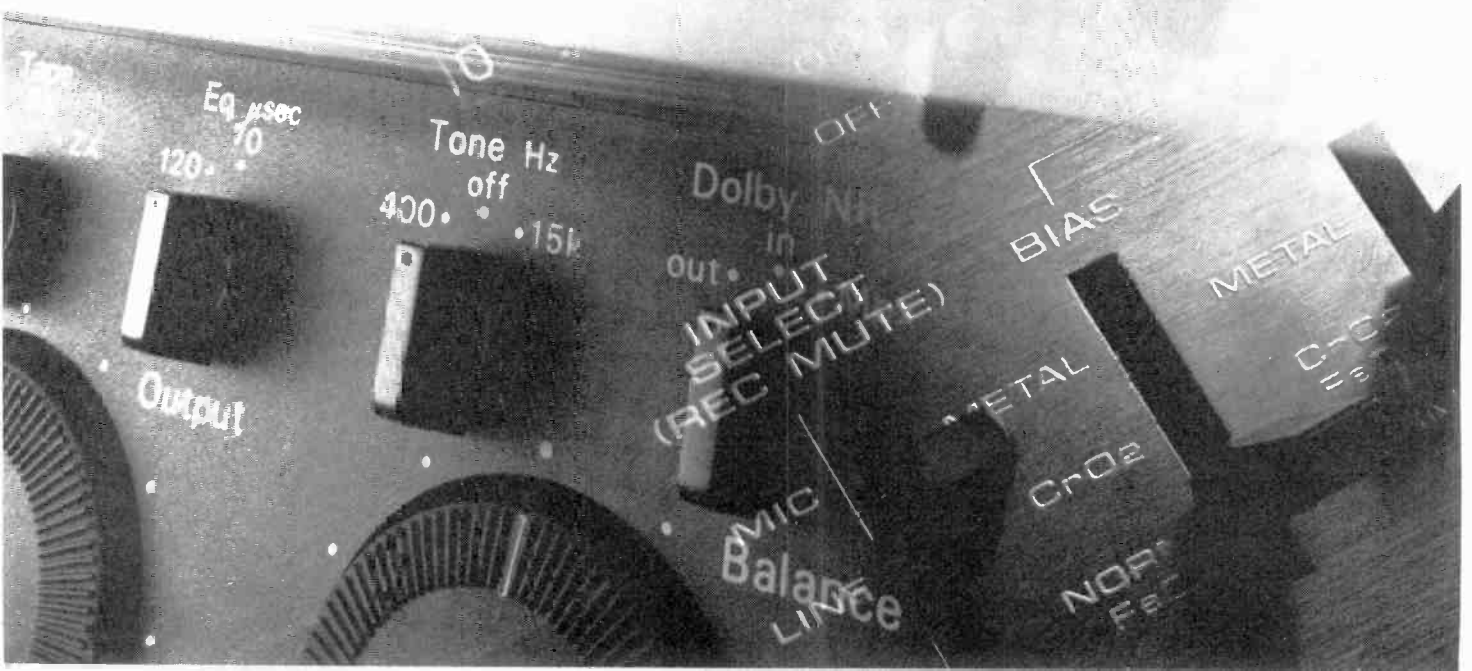
## Record-Release Listings

A few years ago record manufacturers periodically issued leaflets listing their new releases. This seems to have been discontinued, and those of us who do not reside in metropolitan areas are unaware of what new records are available. The ads by Preiser and Caedmon help, but the ads of the major producers often are limited to one or two major releases and don't even give their serial numbers. Couldn't HIGH FIDELITY find space to list the reissues and new releases?
**Richard Dahl**
Tomahawk, Wis.

A selective but extensive listing of new releases and reissues can be found in another ABC Leisure Magazines publication: SCHWANN RECORD & TAPE GUIDE, which comes out monthly. Further information can be obtained by writing to Schwann Record Catalogs, 535 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. 02116.—Ed.




# Simply overwhelming




# Overwhelmingly simple

At Aiwa, we believe the only thing about quality recording that should overwhelm you is the quality of the recording.

That's why our engineers developed the Aiwa AD-M800. A microcomputerized cassette deck that's so advanced, it's simple.

The AD-M800's specifications tell you it's the last word in cassette deck technology. But its D.A.T.A. microcomputer system lets you know a new era of recording accuracy and simplicity is just beginning.

Instead of imprecise tape selector switches or confusing variable bias and eq switches, the AD-M800's D.A.T.A. microcomputer system is as simple as it is accurate.

For "master" quality recordings with ruler-flat tape frequency response all you do is press "start". D.A.T.A. does the rest.

It's so smart, it automatically senses what type of tape you've chosen, then selects the best setting from over 250 million possible combinations to optimize bias, equalization and calibrate sensitivity. All in less than 30 seconds!

And thanks to its memory, next time you use the same tape it won't take any time at all. D.A.T.A. can recall past analyses instantly.

But D.A.T.A. is just one of the AD-M800's outstanding features. There are a lot more. Like Aiwa's V-cut Sendust CVC 3-head system. Infrared remote control. Both VU and Peak LED metering. Double Dolby* NR. And Dual Motor Drive.

The Aiwa AD-M800. It's that advanced. It's that simple. That's why it's the top of our line.

*Dolby is a trademark of Dolby Laboratories.

**AIWA®**
**SIMPLY ADVANCED**

For more information, write: Aiwa America Inc., 35 Oxford Drive, Moonachie, New Jersey 07074. In Canada, Shriro (Canada) Ltd.

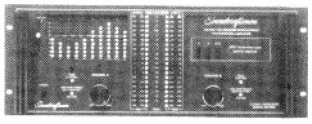
**Circle 2 on Reader-Service Card**

# High Fidelity News

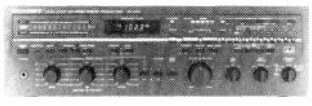
New equipment and developments by Peter Dobbin

## Product Preview: What's in Store for '82

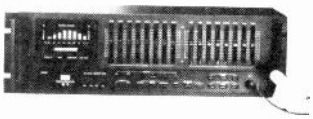
A sneak peek at some of the most exciting new gear introduced at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show.



**Not many power amps** come with a pink-noise test record, but that's a clue to the extra function of the Soundcraftsmen RA-7503. A 100-LED frequency-spectrum display enables continuous monitoring of output in discrete octave bands. The amplifier itself is rated at 250 watts (24 dBW) per channel, or 750 watts (28¾ dBW) when bridged for mono. Its Class H circuitry automatically switches to a higher power-supply voltage when required, and the impedance-sensing feature adjusts the power supply to difficult loads without triggering protective circuits. Both are said to make the amp well suited to pros and consumers. The RA-7503 sells for $1,150.

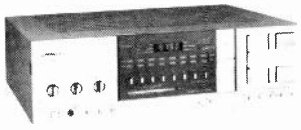


**Vector Research's** feature-laden VRX-9500 receiver is the first to have built-in DBX noise-reduction circuitry, which enables recording and playback of DBX-encoded tapes and playback of DBX-encoded discs. It also has a programmable timer that can turn the receiver—together with any component plugged into its back-panel switched AC outlets—on and off at user-selected times and to choose the source to be played or recorded. During programming, the VRX-9500 flashes LEDs to guide the user in the correct command sequence. The receiver also has bass, midrange, and treble controls, a moving-coil head amp, an infrasonic filter, LED power meters, digital frequency-synthesis tuning, and a multipath meter. The VRX-9500, rated at 90 watts (19½ dBW) per channel, sells for $1,000.



**With built-in microprocessor,** pink-noise generator, motor-driven sliders, and calibrated microphone, the SE-9 equalizer from Sansui will automatically adjust for your room's acoustical characteristics in 30 seconds. All sixteen of its frequency-contouring controls are dual section potentiometers; one section varies the boost or cut (±12 dB) within its audio band, while the other section produces a varying DC voltage that "tells" the CPU comparator when the slider has reached its proper position. Four memory circuits allow for storage of equalization curves, and a built-in spectrum analyzer permits visual monitoring of the equalization process. The SE-9, which also features switchable two-way dubbing and two-deck monitoring facilities, costs $700.

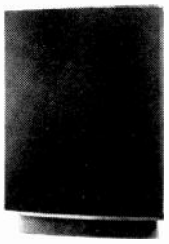
**Pioneer sets out** in a new direction with a total redesign of all its components. Integrated amps, tuners, and cassette decks are now styled with matching, neatly logical faceplates that divide the control surfaces into three separate blocks. The top-of-the-



line SX-7 receiver is rated at 60 watts (17¾ dBW) per channel and has a frequency-synthesized tuner section, a pictographic function display, and a moving-coil head amp. Pioneer's top cassette

deck, the CT-9R, includes Dolby C noise reduction (as do all five of its new decks), three heads, automatic bias/equalization/sensitivity adjustment circuitry, and a host of automated music-search functions. The SX-7 and CT-9R cost $600 and $700, respectively.

**Shunning tinsel glitter,** the Gem turntable from Sumiko is claimed to combine extremely high performance with a reasonable price. A belt-drive design, the Gem employs a four-point suspension system with spring constants precisely matched to the tonearm that provides exceptional isolation from mechanical and airborne vibration. Each platter is individually machined and balanced on its own bearing assembly and the top-mounted controls allow push-button speed change. The Gem is available with either the Grace 707II or 747 tonearm for $725 or $800, respectively.



**Quad's first new loudspeaker** in twenty-three years is a full-range electrostatic system that is said to perform as though it were an ideal point-source radiator. The ESL-63 suspends a diaphragm between two sets of concentric annular electrodes. Signals are fed to the electrodes via sequential delay lines, with the innermost electrode receiving the signals first. The resulting sound-pressure pattern in the relatively flat diaphragm reportedly duplicates the spherical pattern that would be created by a radiating point source 30 centimeters behind the plane of


# TDK brings two new standards to open reel.

Raising sound standards is nothing new to TDK. For years, TDK cassettes have set reference standards in metal and high bias. Now TDK announces two breakthroughs in open reel—GX and LX. Both are formulated to be fully compatible with your present system. You don't have to rebias to appreciate them.

TDK GX Studio Mastering tape handles the most critical demands of live music mastering beautifully. TDK's new ultra refined ferric oxide particle gives GX superior MOL, low distortion and a wide dynamic range. Equally impressive is TDK LX. Its super refined particle gives it high performance with low noise and low distortion throughout an extended frequency range. LX is ideal for both professional and audiophile use.

The refinements don't stop with the formulations. A unique calendering and binding process rivets the particles to the tape surface, making dropouts practically a thing of the past. A special graphite and carbon backcoating, found on all GX and most LX tapes, reduces friction for the smoothest possible winding. At the same time, it prevents static discharge and reduces wow and flutter.

These high standards are carried through to the newly designed 10" metal and 7" plastic reels. Each has a separately molded hub and flange to ensure circularity and high strength. If you think open reel has gone as far as it can go, listen to the finest. TDK GX and LX. They could open up a whole new standard of recording excellence.

TDK

# The Onkyo TA-W80. It will dazzle you, delight you, drive and deliver you.


The Onkyo TA-W80 Studio Deck is the most exciting stereo cassette deck available today. It integrates two cassette tape decks into a single component, with all the controls to operate them individually, simultaneously, or in sequence.

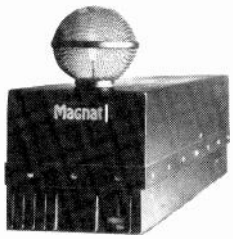
The Onkyo TA-W80 not only provides incredibly pure and exciting record/playback quality . . . it gives you a capability that even two stand-alone tape decks cannot provide.

You can now edit with improved precision . . . make quality high speed dubs in half the normal time without setting levels . . . playback two tapes simultaneously . . . or set them for uninterrupted automatic sequential play. You can even mix your own recordings . . . mixing a mic input with an external source . . . or a mic signal with the program from cassette #1.

Little wonder that The Onkyo TA-W80 was selected as "one of the year's most innovative products" in the Consumer Electronics Design Exhibition.

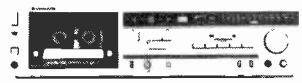
Onkyo USA Corporation, 42-07 20th Ave., Long Island City, N.Y. 11105. (212) 728-4639. ONKYO

the speaker. The speaker, known by the acronym Fred (for full-range electrostatic doublet), presents a largely resistive 8-ohm load to an amplifier, according to Quad. The system comes with polarizing units built into the base and sells for $3,300 per pair.

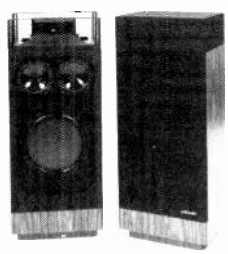



**A new ionic tweeter** differs from older designs of its type in that it is not horn-loaded and radiates omnidirectionally. Built by Magnat in Germany and sold here by Dahlquist, it is based on the work of Dr. Siegfried Klein, who invented the ionophone in the 1950s. A needle electrode is surrounded by one formed of wire mesh. When a very high-frequency, high-voltage bias (in this case, 27 MHz at 2,000 volts) is applied to the central electrode, a corona discharge ionizes the air around the point. Modulation applied to the voltage varies the temperature of the ion cloud, making the plasma expand and contract in response to the audio input. Thus, the designers claim, the plasma operates as a virtually massless diaphragm that excites the air around it, creating sound without creating mechanical resonances or materially blurring transient response. Initially, the Magnat/Dahlquist Corona-Plasma tweeter will be sold for $1,000; Dahlquist hopes that full-scale production will permit drastic price reductions, so that the tweeter can be offered in full-range systems.

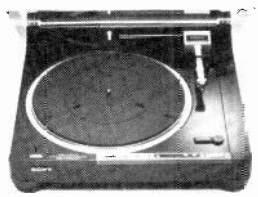
**Special circuitry** in Carver Corporation's first tuner, the AM/FM TX-11, is said to ameliorate the most common afflictions of FM reception: multipath distortion, high noise on weak stations, and front-end overload on strong ones. Carver isn't saying yet how the "asymmetrical charge-coupled FM detector" responsible for these improvements works—only that in stereo it yields an extraordinary signal-to-noise ratio of 100 dB for an 85-dBf input and boasts an exceptional stereo sensitivity rating of 16 dBf for 50-dB quieting. Other features include digital frequency-synthesis tuning for both FM and AM, stereo pilot cancellation, 60 dB of midband channel separation, and a capture ratio of ¾ dB. The prodigy is slated to sell for $550.



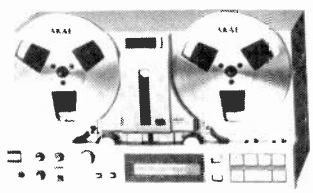
**An old "new" class** of audio componentry, dubbed a "cassetver," combines a cassette deck and receiver on one chassis. Kenwood's entry in this genre is the KRX-5, rated at 30 watts (14¾ dBW) per channel. In one package, the KRX-5 offers an AM/FM stereo tuner with LED signal-strength meter, an amplifier with full preamp-based controls and function selectors, and a metal-capable cassette deck. Kenwood is especially proud of the deck section's microprocessor-controlled transport and music-search functions, which permit repeat play of a full side, rewind search for up to fifteen program selections, fast-forward search for up to sixteen selections, and a recording-standby mode. The KRX-5 costs $500.



**Computer analysis** played a substantial part in the design of the RTA-12B, according to Polk Audio. A floor-standing system, the 12B incorporates a 1-inch dome tweeter, two 6½-inch bass/midrange drivers, and a 12-inch passive radiator. The tweeter is free-air-mounted atop the cabinet, and Polk claims that special care was taken to control high-frequency diffraction effects. It says that the new system exhibits improved bass response and more precise stereo imaging than its predecessor, the Model 12. The RTA-12B sells for $500.

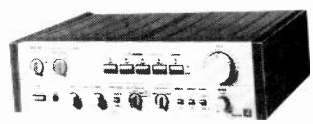


**Sony's motional-feedback** Biotracer tonearm, which automatically damps unwanted cartridge/arm resonances, is used in a tangent-tracking format in the PS-X800 turntable. The reworked Biotracer arm simplifies cartridge exchange by automatically balancing itself to zero; you then simply dial in the vertical tracking force. To reduce the need for frequent lateral correction, the arm-drive motor moves the tonearm gradually across the record, restoring tangency only when an error is detected by the servo system. The turntable itself, which employs a quartz-lock direct-drive motor and fully automatic speed and record-size selectors, costs $850.



**Akai's GX-77 open-reel deck** crams a host of features and capabilities into a compact, high-style package. The new four-track, two-channel deck handles 7-inch reels and employs six separate heads for bidirectional recording and playback. Akai claims that the automatic-reverse mechanism takes less than a half second to change tape direction. The GX-77 is capable of handling the new EE high-bias tapes and is equipped with a bias-adjustment control. It costs $775.

**Magnepan's newest flat-panel** dynamic loudspeaker, the Magneplanar SMG, is claimed to provide full-range performance similar to that of its larger progenitors in a highly efficient, compact speaker. The SMG, which sells for just $405 per pair, stands 4 feet high and is rated at a sensitivity of 85 dB SPL at 3 feet for a 1-watt input. The large radiating area of the SMG's panel is said to provide accurate and spacious stereo imaging while eliminating the boxy colorations of traditional dynamic loudspeakers.



**Pure Class A operation** with a rated output of 80 watts (19 dBW) per channel gives Denon's PMA-950 a special place among this fall's integrated amplifier introductions. The amp features two complete phono sections for fixed-coil pickups as well as a built-in moving-coil head amp. Two tape monitor loops and a separate recording output selector add to its taping flexibility. Adjustable headphone-output impedance adds to the unit's versatility. The PMA-950 costs $1,000.

**COMING NEXT MONTH:**
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| 139 Denon | 145 Soundcraftsmen |
| 140 Magnepan | 146 Sumiko |
| 141 Polk Audio | 147 U.S. Pioneer |
| 142 Quad | 148 Vector Research |

# CrossTalk

Practical answers to your audio questions by Michael Riggs

## Foiling Feedback

*When I play records at a very high level, I get acoustic feedback through my Sony PS-333 turntable. What can I do to stop my system from howling when I turn it up?—V. Permann, Tripp, S.D.*

Sometimes you can eliminate acoustic feedback by just rearranging your system. Never mount a turntable on top of, or even next to, a loudspeaker, and make sure the table or shelf it rests on is rigid and stable. If your listening room suffers from floppy floorboards, installation on a wall-mounted shelf is definitely advisable. By getting the turntable out of a peak or into a null in a low-frequency standing wave, you may greatly reduce its susceptibility to acoustic feedback. In fact, the most certain cure for feedback is to put turntable and speakers in different rooms. If none of these measures works, or if they are impractical in your home, you might try insulator feet, such as those available from Discwasher and Audio-Technica.

## Amplifier Faceoff

*My system consists of a Dual 701 turntable with a Nagatron 344DE cartridge, AR-18 loudspeakers, and an Optonica SM-3205 amplifier rated at 40 watts per channel. One of my friends has a receiver rated at only 28 watts per channel, yet his system seems to be able to play louder than mine. Does this mean that my amp is defective?—Joe Poveromo, Waterford, Conn.*

No. It may mean that your friend's speakers are more sensitive than yours. There's only about 1½ dB of difference between 28 watts (14½ dBW) and 40 watts (16 dBW). (Remember that each doubling of the power, expressed in watts, increases the perceived acoustic output of the speakers by 3 dB—1 dB generally being considered the smallest perceptible loudness increment.) If his speakers were 1½ dB more sensitive than yours, your systems would have the same maximum volume level, all other considerations (including the amplifiers' dynamic headroom, the acoustic environments, and so on) remaining the same.

Other possibilities are that your friend's speakers are lower in impedance than yours are and therefore draw relatively more power from his receiver than its 8-ohm FTC rating would indicate, or that they favor the midrange more than the ARs, which would tend to make them sound louder than the ARs even when putting out the same overall sound level. And there are questions of relative volume-control tapers, gain in the various stages of the systems, phono-pickup sensitivities, and relative distortion at whatever maximum level you chose for the comparison. If you just turned up both volume controls halfway and made an A/B comparison of the two speaker pairs, your test didn't really mean anything.

## Speaker Upgrade

*I use a pair of full-range single-driver speakers that I bought twenty-five or thirty years ago. Could I get better sound from them by adding a set of Micro-Acoustics MS-1 tweeter arrays?—Fred Robinson, Miami Beach, Fla.*

Resisting the strong temptation to suggest that just about anything would help, we'll give it a definite "maybe." The MS-1, however, was designed for use with speakers that are indeed close to full-range reproducers, lacking just a little in output and width of directivity at the high end. Your "full-range" speakers are bound to be quite directive at high frequencies and probably have little response above a few kilohertz even on axis, by today's standards. At $135 per pair, the MS-1s are attractively priced, and they might very well do you some good. But loudspeaker design has come a long way in the last twenty-five years. For $50 to $100 more, you could get a pair of system-engineered, truly full-range bookshelf speakers that would serve you better than your old reliables, however modified.

## Stopping Snaps

*I received several records for Christmas and was pleased with them when I played them at home. But when I got back to college after the holidays, I was horrified to discover that not only these new records, but also my old ones, played back with lots of shattering snaps and pops. In both places, I used my own system, which is about a year old and consists of a Technics SL-B1 turntable with a Shure M-70EJ cartridge, a Pioneer SX-580 receiver, and Avid 80a speakers. I clean my records regularly, so I don't think the problem is dirt. What can I do to get rid of the noise?—Paul M. Margel, Washington, D.C.*

The symptoms you describe, coupled with the fact that they first appeared during the winter in only one of two locations, suggest static as the source of your troubles. Raising the humidity in the room would probably help. (This is why static tends to be less of a problem during the summer.) You might also use an antistatic record mat, pistol (such as the Discwasher Zerostat), or fluid (such as Stanton's Permostat).

## Unequal Boses

*My system includes four Bose 901 Series II speakers. I would like to add a pair of Bose 901 Series IV speakers in another room. Is the Bose Series II equalizer compatible with the Series IVs?—Robert Wolpert, APO, N.Y.*

The Bose 901 Series II and Series IV speakers require somewhat different equalization, so for best results you should use them only with their companion equalizers. This and the fact that the Series IVs are quite a bit more sensitive than the Series IIs imply that you will need a second amplifier to drive the remote pair if you want to use them and the main speakers simultaneously. Otherwise, not only will you be forced to use incorrect equalization for at least one pair of speakers, but the volume levels in the two rooms will be seriously mismatched. Also, six speakers might prove too taxing a load for a single amp if all were to be played at once.

*We regret that, due to the volume of reader mail we get, we cannot give individual answers to all questions.*

# WHY SPEND $200 MORE ON A BETTER TAPE DECK WHEN ALL YOU NEED IS $2 MORE FOR A BETTER TAPE.


No matter how much you spend on a tape deck, the sound that comes out of it can only be as good as the tape you put in it. So before you invest a few hundred dollars upgrading your tape deck, invest a few extra dollars in a new Maxell XLI-S or XLII-S cassette.

They're the newest and most advanced generation of oxide formulation tapes. By engineering smaller and more uniformly shaped oxide particles, we were able to pack more of these particles onto a given area of tape.

Now this might not sound exactly earth-shattering, but it can help your tape deck live up to its specifications by improving output, signal-to-noise ratio and frequency response.

Our new XL-S cassettes also have an improved binder system, which helps keep the oxide particles exactly where they're supposed to be. On the tape's surface, not on your recording heads. As a result, you'll hear a lot more music and a lot less distortion.

There's more to our XL-S tape than just great tape. We've also redesigned our cassette shells. Our new Quin-Lok™ Clamp/Hub Assembly holds the leader firmly in place and eliminates tape deformation. Which means you'll not only hear great music, but you'll also be able to enjoy it a lot longer.

So if you'd like to get better sound out of your tape system, you don't have to put more money into it. Just put in our new tape.

**maxell**
IT'S WORTH IT.

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

# New Equipment Reports

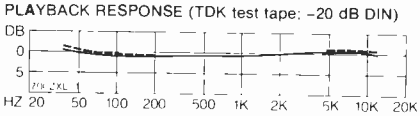
Preparation supervised by Robert Long, Peter Dobbin, Michael Riggs, and Edward J. Foster.
Laboratory data (unless otherwise noted) supplied by Diversified Science Laboratories.

PHOTOS BY ROBERT CURTIS

## 700ZXL: "Utter Class"

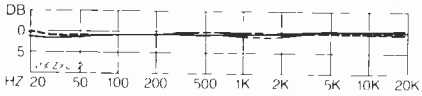
**Nakamichi 700ZXL cassette deck with optional NR-100 Dolby C noise reducer, 19½ by 10 inches (front panel of 700ZXL), 10 inches deep plus clearance for connections; NR-100, 4¾ by 1½ inches (front end), 9½ inches long plus clearance for connections. Price: 700ZXL, $3,000; NR-100, $230; optional RM-300 transport/RAMM remote control, $190; optional RM-200 transport remote control, $45. Warranty: "limited," four years parts (except heads, capstan, and motor, one year), one year labor on 700ZXL; one year parts and labor on NR-100. Manufacturer: Nakamichi Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Nakamichi U.S.A. Corp., 1101 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, Calif. 90401.**

PLAYBACK RESPONSE (TDK test tape; –20 dB DIN)



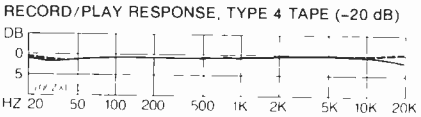

——— L ch +1½, –¼ dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz
----- R ch +2½, –0 dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 2 TAPE (–20 dB)




——— L ch +½, –¾ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
----- R ch +½, –¼ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
with Dolby B noise reduction
— — — L ch ± ¾ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
— — — R ch ± ½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 4 TAPE (–20 dB)




——— L ch +¼, –1½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
----- R ch ± ½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

NAKAMICHI'S SECOND in command, so to speak, has always been the Model 700, taking its orders (well, its design) directly from Generalissimo Model 1000. That's still true, though now there are two seconds: the 700ZXL, reviewed here, and the somewhat less expensive 700ZXE, which makes some canny elisions from the ZXL's almost encyclopedic list of features, some of which come as optional addons. We chose to test it with the Dolby C box but without the remote control.

Among the built-ins are a thorough automatic tape-matching system (which even works in playback), four tape-matching memories (with a battery so they can't forget), Nakamichi's Random Access Music Memory (RAMM), a 400-Hz test-tone generator (unnecessary for adjusting the machine to the tape but handy in setting dubbing levels to another machine), a playback PITCH (transport speed) adjustment, switchable multiplex and infrasonic filters (since the first is for FM and the second for discs, they can't be used simultaneously), and Nakamichi's triple miking (left, right, and blend or center-fill), which we continue to consider an excellent approach for the serious amateur doing live recording.

The tape-matching system does an excellent job, as the record/play response curves confirm. It addresses recording-head azimuth, tape sensitivity, bias, and recording equalization, flashing the various indicators at the upper left corner of the deck as it goes. If you enter the adjustment into one of the memory positions, the data will include the noise-reduction system you chose before making the adjustment. There's nothing particularly astonishing about any of that in this age of microprocessors, but the Nakamichi design (taken, again, from the latest 1000) actually records the salient information in coded form on the tape so that playback parameters, as well as those for recording, are adjusted automatically. With all systems go, this means never again having to worry about correct switch positions once you've put the tape through the automatic adjustment. The process is influenced by the manual choices you make in advance, however, and will even work if you choose 70-microsecond EQ with Type I tapes (for lower hiss) or 120 microseconds with Type 2 (for greater high-frequency headroom). In most decks, even those whose switches will allow such "mismatches," the lack of recording-EQ adjustment will tend to

# How to go straight without losing your balance.

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

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

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

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

An arm like this needs a great turntable to go with it. And the L-A31 measures up: wow and flutter 0.03% WRMS. Rumble −75 dB DIN B or better. Plus a non-cogging DC direct-drive motor that applies torque in a smooth, linear transfer of power. There's also front-panel controls, ±6% pitch control, strobe and tonearm lift-off and return.

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

Front-panel controls for convenience.

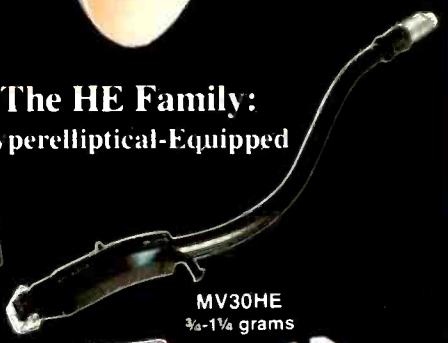
Low-mass, non-resonant headshell.

JVC

US JVC CORP.
41 Slater Drive, Elmwood Park, NJ 07407
JVC CANADA INC., Scarborough, Ont.

## The HE Family:
### Hyperelliptical-Equipped

V15 Type IV
¾-1¼ grams



MV30HE
¾-1¼ grams

V15 LT
1¼ grams

V15 Type III-HE
¾-1¼ grams

M97HE
¾-1½ grams

M97HE-AH
(with attached headshell)
¾-1½ grams

M97 LT
1¼ grams

M95HE
¾-1½ grams

M75HE Type 2
¾-1½ grams

M75HE-J Type 2
1¼-2½ grams

# When you're ready to "face" the music we have a tip for reduced distortion


Whether you are seeking to reproduce the full dynamic range in the grooves of today's new superdiscs, or simply to obtain maximum listening pleasure from treasured "oldies" in your record collection, you need a phono cartridge that will deliver optimum trackability with minimum distortion.

Because the phono cartridge is the only point of direct contact between the record and your entire stereo system, its role is critical to faithful sound re-creation. That's why upgrading your phono cartridge is the single most significant (and generally least costly) improvement you can make to your stereo system.

To that end Shure now offers the Hyperelliptical Stylus Tip configuration—first introduced on the critically acclaimed V15 Type IV—in a *full line* of cartridges with a broad range of prices.

The Hyperelliptical Stylus Tip has been called the most significant advance in decades in tip geometry. It has a narrower and more uniform elongated contact area that results in significantly reduced intermodulation and harmonic distortion.

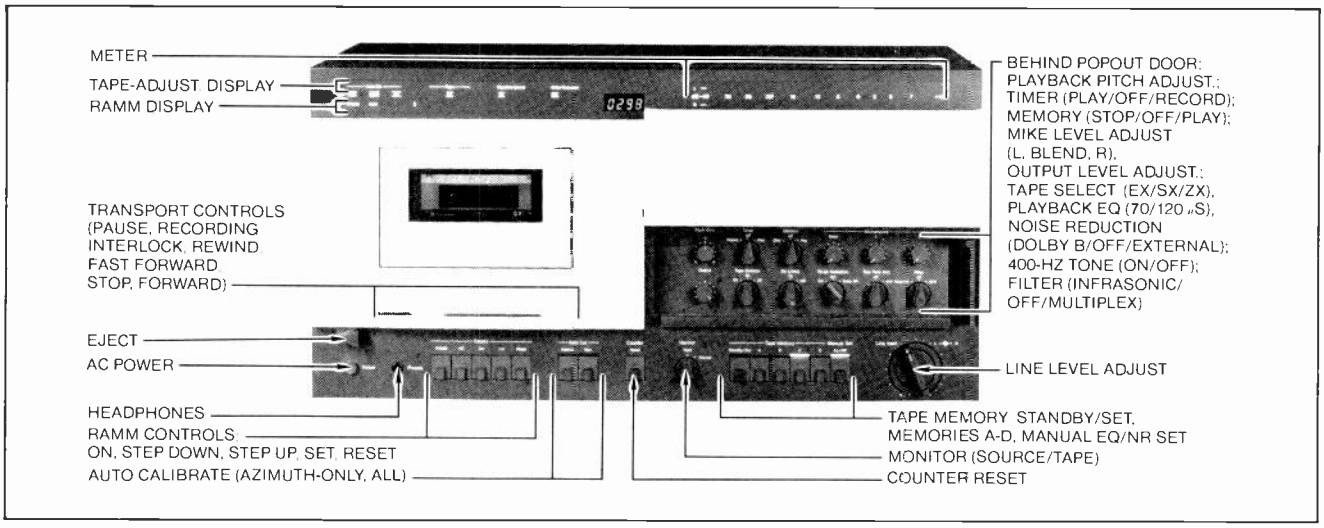
Look over the list at left to see which Shure HE cartridge best matches your tracking force requirements.

Shure has been the top-selling cartridge manufacturer for the past 23 years. For full details on this remarkable line of cartridges write for AL667.

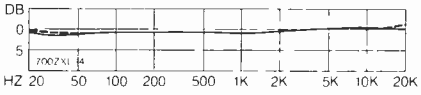
**Go with the leader—Shure.**

SHURE®

Shure Brothers Inc., 222 Hartrey Ave., Evanston, IL 60204
In Canada: A. C. Simmonds & Sons Limited
Manufacturers of high fidelity components, microphones, sound systems and related circuitry.

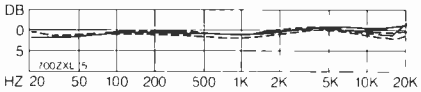



RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 1 TAPE (-20 dB)




——— L ch ± ½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
----- R ch +1¼, -½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE WITH DOLBY C (-20 dB)




with Type 2 tape
——— L ch +1½, -¾ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
----- R ch +½, -1½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
with Type 1 tape
——— L ch ± ¾ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
——— R ch +2, -1 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

INFRASONIC FILTER -3 dB at 27 Hz; ≈60 dB/oct.

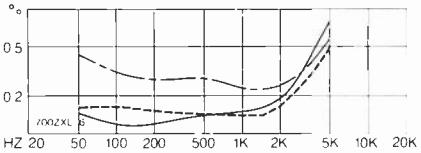
S/N RATIO (re DIN 0 dB; R/P; A-weighted)

| | Type 2 tape | Type 4 tape | Type 1 tape |
|---|---|---|---|
| without noise reduction | 55¼ dB | 53½ dB | 51½ dB |
| with Dolby B | 64½ dB | 62¾ dB | 61 dB |
| with Dolby C | 68¾ dB | 67½ dB | 65¼ dB |

METER READING FOR DIN 0 DB +7 dB

METER READING FOR 3% DISTORTION (333 Hz)
all three tapes > +10 dB

DISTORTION (third harmonic; at -10 dB DIN)




——— Type 2 tape ≤0.77%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
----- Type 4 tape ≤0.41%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
——— Type 1 tape ≤0.55%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz

ERASURE (333 Hz; re DIN 0 dB)
Type 2 tape 77 dB
Type 4 tape 69½ dB

CHANNEL SEPARATION 41½ dB

SPEED ACCURACY 0.7% fast, 105-127 VAC

compromise the results if you try to be too clever.

The recorded coding, which consists of 5-Hz pulses, also can contain selection numbering. If you choose to use the automatic RAMM, an index will go onto the tape whenever, during recording, there is an interval of more than two seconds with no input signal. The numbers advance serially with each blank and at each use of the PAUSE until the indexing capacity (15) is reached, with a numerical readout keeping you apprised of the count so that you can make appropriate notes for future selective playing. Nakamichi has even provided a way of continuing the indexing sequence where you left off on a partially recorded tape.

The index signals can also be entered manually—even during a selection, if you want—but only while you are recording, of course; retrocoding would necessarily erase a recorded tape. The manual (which is up to Nakamichi's exceptional standards) tells you to use the infrasonic filter in RAMM recording so that you pick up no pulses that could confuse the RAMM on playback. Since the infrasonic and multiplex filters can't be used together, Nakamichi says to forgo the former when you're recording from stereo FM, which is much less likely to contain infrasonics than a warped record is.

When you come to play back the indexed tapes, you can make selections in any sequence whatever—even repeating selections as often as you like—up to a maximum of thirty programmed commands. The transport will shuttle rapidly in either direction to get from the end of one selection to the beginning of the next, and the positive ID at the beginning of each makes the system very precise—a vast improvement over those depending on a tape counter reading or on the mere presence of a gap in the recording. The 700 does allow you to pick up the blanks aurally during fast-wind modes: If you press PAUSE while the tape is moving, a faint twitter of output lets you keep track of where you are.

But these details, convenient and fascinating as they are (and there's more to these systems than we have space to detail here), are almost window dressing by comparison to the superb inherent performance of the deck. Granted that the flatness of the response curves is, in part, attributable to the elaborate automatic tape matching; but the extended bass, almost without so-called head bumps, the very low distortion, and the ultrahigh-frequency performance all attest to exceptional care in such matters as head construction and electronics.

When DSL tested the deck with Nakamichi's own branded formulations (EX-II as the Type 1 ferric, SX as the Type 2 ferricobalt, and ZX as the Type 4 metal, all with benefit of the automatic adjustment), the results were staggering. Usually, we characterize response numerically by following the curves to the frequencies at which they are 3 dB below midrange response. In the 700ZXL, the curves in our graphs don't go that far down, either at the top or at the bottom and even with noise reduction! So the lab went looking for the upper cutoff frequencies. At -20 dB (that is, 20 dB below the DIN reference level of 200 nanowebers per meter), the figures for all three tapes were close to 25 kHz without noise reduction, with Dolby B, or with Dolby C. The highest figure actually was for the cheapest tape: EX-II came in at about 27 kHz in both channels without noise reduction. The metal tape, however, reached the 20-kHz region at -10 dB with all three noise-reduction options (Types 1 and 2 could do so only with Dolby C), at least in the right channel, and even squeaked by the 20-kHz mark with Dolby C at the 0-dB level. Even one year ago, such high-frequency performance would have been unthinkable in cassette equipment without relatively arcane signal processing of some sort.

If you think the Dolby C circuit falls

| WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak) | average | maximum |
|---|---|---|
| playback | ±0.06% | ±0.08% |
| record/play | ±0.06% | ±0.09% |

| SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB; 333 Hz) | |
|---|---|
| line input | 75 mV |
| mike input | 0.29 mV |
| MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping) | 2,400 mV |
| MAX. OUTPUT (from DIN 0 dB) | 1.2 V |

## A Quick Guide to Tape Types

Our tape classifications, Types 0 through 4, are based primarily on the International Electrotechnical Commission measurement standards.

**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.

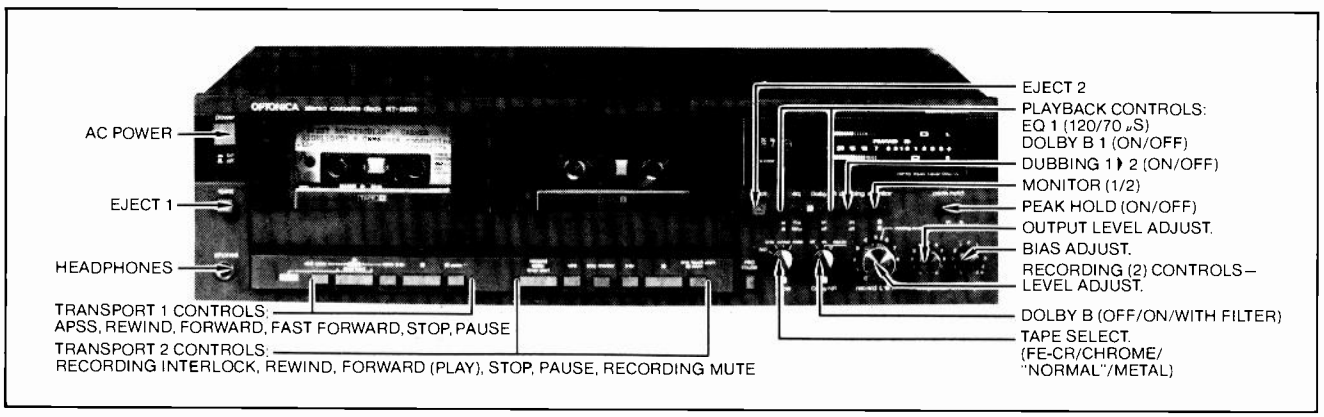
**Type 4** (IEC Type IV) are the metal-particle, or "alloy" tapes, requiring the highest bias of all and retaining the 70-microsecond EQ of Type 2.

into that category, we refer you to our article on the subject elsewhere in this issue. One deck manufacturer after another is adopting the C option, and it should become commonplace in short order. It certainly contributes to that astonishing response figure. And, of course, it markedly increases the dynamic range of the 700ZXL over that with the built-in B circuit. We tried in vain to find signal sources that would overtax it. Many Dolby B reels in our collection have astonishing hiss by modern standards; even our jazziest FM tuners were unable to do better (at least with the signals available from local stations); no room we could find for live recording was without some ambient noise that limited the range more than the Nakamichi does with Dolby C.

Not all the credit for this goes to the Dolby C, however. The deck's low distortion at high levels allows you to pour on the level when you're recording: Note that the midrange 3% distortion point was beyond the +10 maximum of Nakamichi's metering for all three tapes. The manual takes a very conservative approach to this question. Not only is the 0 dB several dB lower than that on past Nakamichis we have tested (it's usually at Dolby reference level, about 2 dB below DIN 0; here it's 7 dB below DIN), but the manual tells you to go for maxima of +5 to +8 dB, depending on the tape you're using. That still leaves some headroom in the midrange and—depending on the signal, the tape, and the noise reduction you've chosen—at higher frequencies as well. But aside from this rather surprising choice of calibration, the metering scheme is excellent: calibrated in 1-dB steps between -10 and +10, equipped with an automatically resetting peak-hold feature in that same range, and reaching down to -40.

The meter and all the other readouts are completely invisible until you turn the 700ZXL on, and even then they light only as appropriate. Many of the controls are hidden behind a latchless door; you must press it to make it pop open. In fact, one visitor pointed out a salient aspect of the design's understatement—its quiet self-confidence, if you will: The Nakamichi name and the model number appear nowhere on the front panel. (Eventually, we did locate them, in small lettering, gray on gray, on the top of the case.) Somehow, that sums up the utter *class* that this deck exudes. That its performance is exemplary is a long-forgone conclusion; we're dealing here with those heady reaches where the machine almost becomes an organism, where mere technical excellence is not enough.

***Circle 131 on Reader-Service Card***




# Dub-a-Dub-Dub, Two Transports in One Deck

**Optonica RT-6605 dual-transport cassette deck with dubbing facility, in metal case. Dimensions: 17 by 4½ inches (front panel), 11¾ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: $550. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Sharp Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Optonica Div., Sharp Electronics Corp., 10 Keystone Pl., Paramus, N.J. 07652.**

WE HARDLY BELIEVED IT when we first saw it: a cassette deck with two transports, one for recording and one for playback, and therefore with the inherent ability to clone existing tapes by way of one-deck dubbing! Separate recording and playback heads are fairly commonplace, of course, and the Optonica RT-6605 essentially carries this rationale to an extreme. But the dubbing feature is certainly what will attract a following for it. (Indeed, other manufacturers already appear to be copying the idea.)

The left-hand well—Deck 1, in Optonica's terminology—is the playback transport. It is equipped with the company's Auto Program Search System, which seeks out the blanks between recorded selections and automatically stops and begins play when it finds one. It has its own playback-EQ and Dolby switches, independent of the Deck 2 settings. Deck 1 can be used for timer playback (musical wakeup), Deck 2 for timer recording (FM time shift, for example).

The head in Deck 2 (the recording partner, of course) can be converted for playback so that you can cue up a tape to the end of the last recorded selection or the beginning of something you want to re-record. (Deck 1's head is designed for playback and therefore gives markedly



**Circle 9 on Reader-Service Card ▸**

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

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

That tape is BASF's Professional II.

Professional II is like no other tape because it's made like no other tape. While ordinary high bias tapes are made from modified particles of ferric oxide, Professional II is made of pure chromium dioxide. These perfectly shaped and uniformly sized particles provide a magnetic medium that not only delivers an absolute minimum of background noise, but outstanding high frequencies as well.

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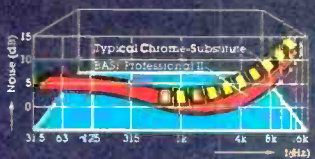
With Professional II, you'll hear all of the music and none of the tape. And isn't that what you want in a tape?




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

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

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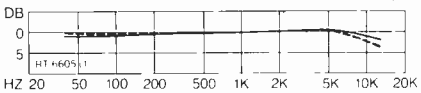
BASF

**For the best recordings you'll ever make.**

BASF Systems, Crosby Drive, Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

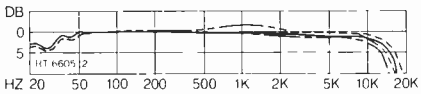

*Recording level control calibration is unique. Copy levels will be identical to original (with appropriate tapes) when "0" on knob is aligned with dubbing mark on faceplate; other calibrations deliver measured changes in level where desirable.*

PLAYBACK RESPONSE (TDK test tape; –20 dB DIN)



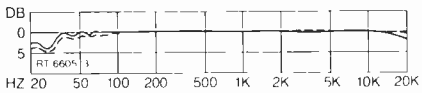

——— L ch + ½, –2 dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz
----- R ch + ¼, –4 dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 2 TAPE (–20 dB)



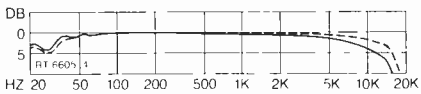

——— L ch + 0, –3 dB, 20 Hz to 13 kHz
----- R ch + 0, –3 dB, 20 Hz to 14.5 kHz
with Dolby B noise reduction
——— L ch + ¼, –3 dB, 20 Hz to 11 kHz
——— R ch + 1¾, –3 dB, 32 Hz to 12.5 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 4 TAPE (–20 dB)




——— L ch + 0, –3 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
----- R ch + 0, –3 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 1 TAPE (–20 dB)




——— L ch + 0, –3 dB, 20 Hz to 8.5 kHz
----- R ch + 0, –3 dB, 20 Hz to 13 kHz

S/N RATIO (re DIN 0 dB; R/P; A-weighted)

| | Type 2 tape | Type 4 tape | Type 1 tape |
|---|---|---|---|
| without noise reduction | 58½ dB | 57½ dB | 56 dB |
| with Dolby B | 66¼ dB | 65¾ dB | 64½ dB |

METER READING FOR DIN 0 DB + 1 dB

METER READING FOR 3% DISTORTION (333 Hz)

| | |
|---|---|
| Type 2 tape | + 3 dB |
| Type 4 tape | + 3 dB |
| Type 1 tape | + 5 dB (LED barely on) |

DISTORTION (third harmonic; at –10 dB DIN)*

| | |
|---|---|
| Type 2 tape | ≤ 0.52% |
| Type 4 tape | ≤ 0.46% |
| Type 1 tape | ≤ 0.18% |

*See text

ERASURE (333 Hz; re DIN 0 dB)

| | |
|---|---|
| Type 2 tape | 75¾ dB |
| Type 4 tape | 70 dB |

CHANNEL SEPARATION 50¼ dB

SPEED ACCURACY

| | |
|---|---|
| record/play | 0.3% fast, 105–127 VAC |
| play transport only | 0.2% fast, 105–127 VAC |

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)

| | average | maximum |
|---|---|---|
| playback | ±0.06% | ±0.09% |
| record/play | ±0.06% | ±0.09% |

SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB; 333 Hz)
line input 88 mV

MAX. OUTPUT (from DIN 0 VU) 0.87 V

better results for regular listening.) There also is a nice dubbing feature: one-touch start, which operates in the dubbing mode only and starts both transports simultaneously when you release the Deck 2 PAUSE. Otherwise, the decks' PAUSE controls are independent of each other.

Deck 2's electronic controls include not only four-position tape matching, but a bias tuning knob as well. The manual—which is well above average, particularly in view of the model's complexity—has an exceptional tape chart. It's more complete and up to date than we're used to seeing, and it includes bias *ranges* for all tapes; that is, it suggests (correctly) that a single number would not necessarily be spot-on for all samples of a given tape and that personal preference can be allowed to play a small part in good tape matching. Since you cannot monitor directly off the tape during recording, the process of finding the optimum value within the range is not easy, but the specified ranges are narrow enough for their midpoints to be an adequate approximation for most uses.

At Optonica's suggestion, Diversified Science Laboratories tested the RT-6605 with Maxell UDXL-II as the Type 2 ferricobalt (with the "chrome" setting), TDK MA as the Type 4 metal, and Maxell UD as the Type 1 ferric—all with the BIAS set at its midpoint detent. Actually, this is not the midpoint of the recommended range for MA, though metal tapes in general have the reputation of being relatively forgiving of bias setting and the excellent response certainly doesn't suggest a mismatch here. Conversely, the center of the recommended range for UD is right at the detent, though the drooping top end of the response curves could have been shored up by reducing bias a bit. Sensitivity matching, for which no adjustment is provided, is excellent in the left channel but less so in the right on the basis of the Dolby curves for all three tapes.

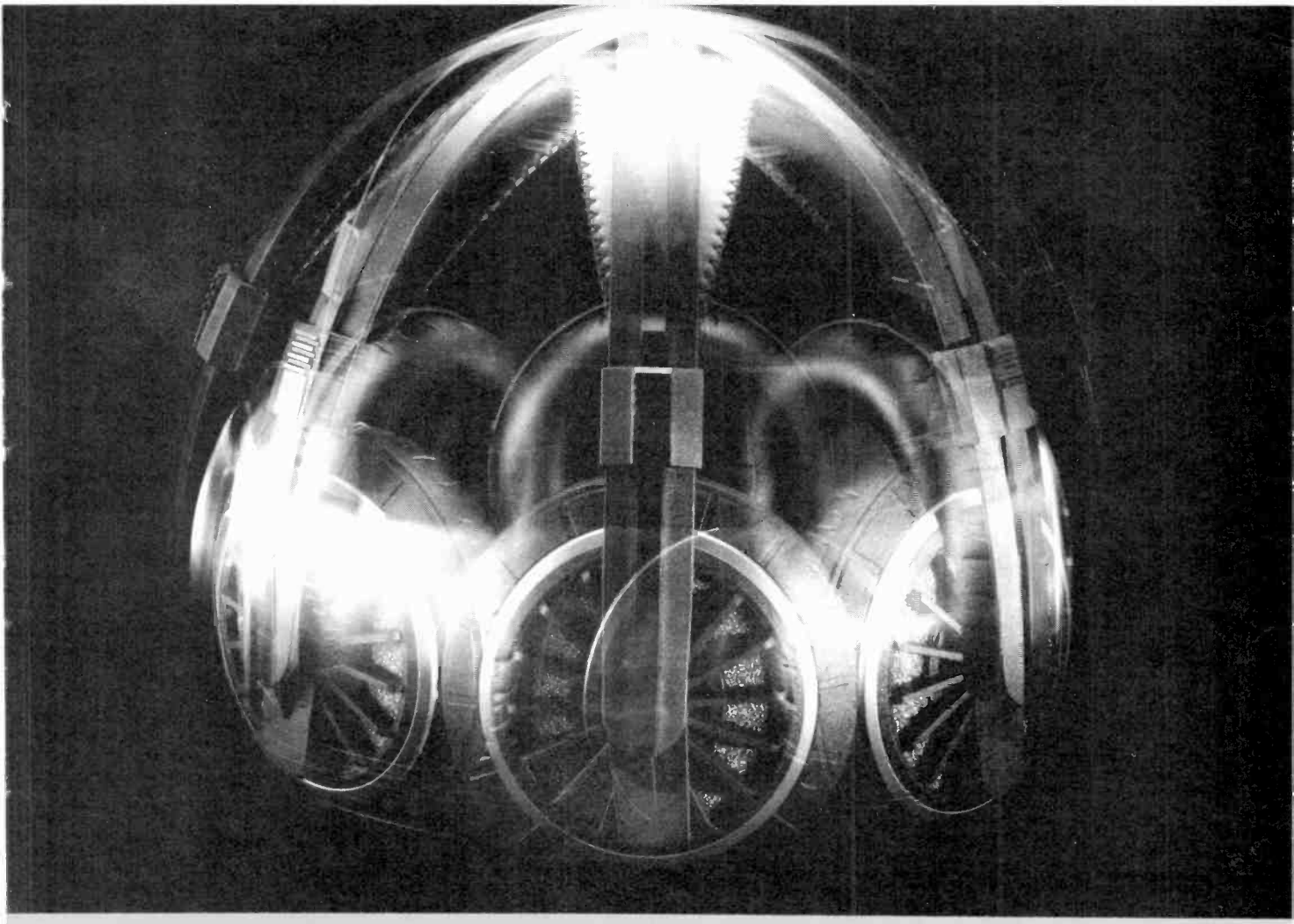
The metering extends from –20 to +8 dB, with 1-dB steps only in the immediate vicinity of the 0-dB calibration, which is 1 dB below DIN's. Since it is of the peak-reading type, the calibration seems reasonable. The PEAK HOLD is the unflappable kind that does not reset itself (unless you momentarily defeat the feature) and therefore will retain the maximum level it has encountered no matter what. This is useful for dubbing because you can begin by playing the original all the way through; even if you grab a snack meanwhile, the maximum value will be there when you return. Now comes the really interesting part. Let's say that the meter shows +5 and you're copying onto UDXL-II (for which the midrange 3% distortion point is at only +3, according to DSL's measurements). Just go to the calibrated level control (see photo above) and move the dubbing level to –2 dB—or lower, if your signal is particularly demanding in the highs. No cut and try; no guessing.

Note that, since there are two transports, we give two speed-accuracy figures. For record/play, DSL recorded a standard frequency on a tape in Deck 2, moved the tape to Deck 1, and measured the frequency. Since it turned out 0.3% fast and Deck 1 measures 0.2% fast, Deck 1 presumably goes 0.1% slow. All these figures are just about as close to ideal as you're likely to encounter in cassette equipment, which averages at least 0.5% fast, in our experience. Flutter figures are very good but not really outstanding. So are the distortion figures, though they are rather curious. Atypically, second harmonic figures approximate those shown in the data for the third harmonic, making THD noticeably higher than either alone—but, again, still respectable.

Since the dubbing feature is central to the design, which is (or was, when we began this report) unique in the industry, you can compare it adequately only with a pair of conventional decks. Frankly, at $550, it does not compare well with models that sell for the same price (and that therefore total twice as much if you need two to make dubs). But by comparison to $225 decks, it's a wonder—in both performance and features. For recordists who want a dubbing setup on a budget, it's a must-see item. In fact, even if you're not on a budget but like ingenious hardware, you should take a good look at the RT-6605.

***Circle 133 on Reader-Service Card***

*(More on page 26)*



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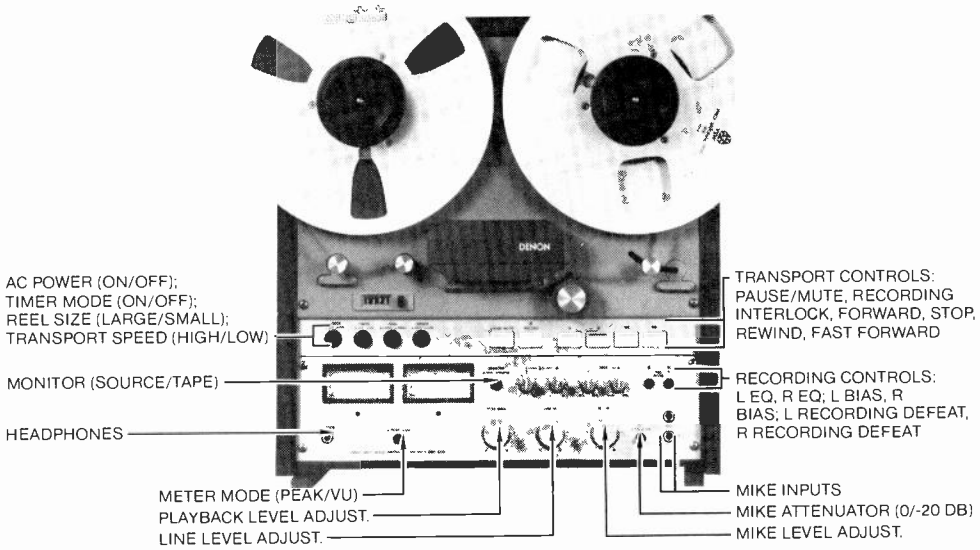
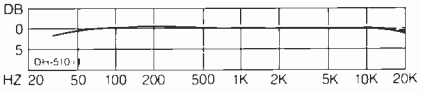



# Open-Reel Quality and Tradition

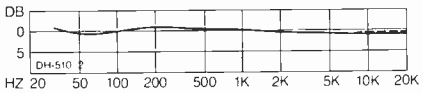
**Denon Model DH-510 two-speed (7½ and 15 ips) half-track open-reel tape deck, in wooden case with pebble-grain finish. Price: $1,350; optional RC-50 wired remote control, $85. Warranty: "limited," three years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Nippon Columbia Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Denon America, Inc., 27 Law Dr., Fairlawn, N.J. 07006.**

PLAYBACK RESPONSE AT 7½ IPS
(MRL 21T104 test tape; -10 dB re 200 nWb/m)



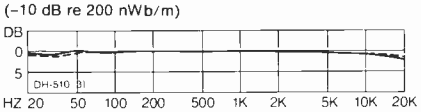

——— L ch +¾, -1½ dB, 31.5 Hz to 20 kHz
----- R ch +½, -1½ dB, 31.5 Hz to 20 kHz

PLAYBACK RESPONSE AT 15 IPS
(MRL 21J105 test tape; 0 dB re 200 nWb/m)



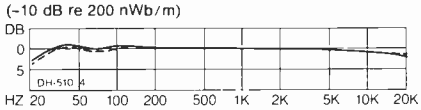

——— L ch +1¼, -1 dB, 31.5 Hz to 20 kHz
----- R ch +1¼, -¾ dB, 31.5 Hz to 20 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE AT 7½ IPS
(-10 dB re 200 nWb/m)




——— L ch + ½, -2 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz
----- R ch +¼, -1½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE AT 15 IPS
(-10 dB re 200 nWb/m)




——— L ch + 1, -3 dB, 21 Hz to 20 kHz
----- R ch + 1, -3 dB, 22 Hz to 20 kHz

IT MUST HAVE BEEN more than twenty years ago (the old-timers we've consulted seem foggy on the point) that the Denon brand name first appeared here. It was on the prestige recorder—a semi-pro open-reel model—of an importer that also peddled noticeably inferior products from other suppliers. The importer is long since gone, but the memory of the Denon has lingered, even through the lean years in which Nippon Columbia either was absent altogether from the American market or was attempting (ultimately without success) to market here a relatively unimpressive Denon line intended more for the department-store trade than for the audio salon.

Fortunately, under the present U.S. management, the Denon name is back in audio. The reputation that has been rebuilt on the well-received line of moving-coil cartridges now applies to electronics and tape equipment as well—including the DH-510 deck, which bears a lot of the flavor of its progenitor of a generation ago. It is solidly built, is fitted to handle NAB reels, runs at "high" speed (15 as well as 7½ ips), and has half-track heads and a case that permits horizontal or vertical use. No flash; just unassuming competence and excellent sound.

There are a few elements in the design that clearly set it apart from the classic semipro models, however. One is the generally excellent tape-tensioning system, which is designed to treat the tape optimally no matter what you do. Though we have no objective measurements to back up or refute that claim (conventional static tension measurements don't really help), the wind does seem particularly firm, even, and gentle. As a slightly negative by-product, if you press STOP during fast wind, the braking takes a long time to bring the tape to rest. And if you try to pull the tape out from the supply reel, it's as though you're trying to skin a cat—until the tape is around the first tensioning idler, at which point it slides forward like a hot knife in butter. The reason: The idler is part of the tension-sensing system and releases the supply-side "brake" only when it's away from its rest position. After a while you learn to hold that idler with one hand while you pull the tape with the other.

Then there's the metering. In the VU mode, it behaves in classic fashion, needing 130 milliseconds of pulse to come within 3 dB of a full-value reading. The peak mode needs only 0.35 millisecond to come within 3 dB—very fast for this type of meter. In neither mode is there significant overshoot. Since the VU scheme doesn't respond to brief transients, headroom is needed to prevent their overmodulation, and the 0-dB calibration on the main meter scale is close to the 200 nanowebers per meter that is sometimes taken as an open-reel reference level. But this is well below actual tape saturation levels. The peak mode, whose quick response requires no headroom, inserts a 10-dB pad so that the peak values (read on their own scale) are numerically the same for continuous tones but displaced 10 dB to the left to leave room for full needle travel on the loud peaks that are too brief for the VU mode to register. So if you have been peaking at +2 in the VU mode and then switch modes, the needle may travel into the same territory but will now be reading about +12 dB. And when the calibration range shifts upward by 10 dB, the top value becomes +13 and the minimum -10!

That may all sound confusing on paper, and it certainly can confuse the



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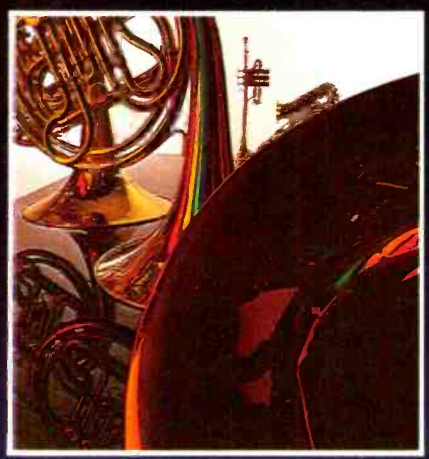

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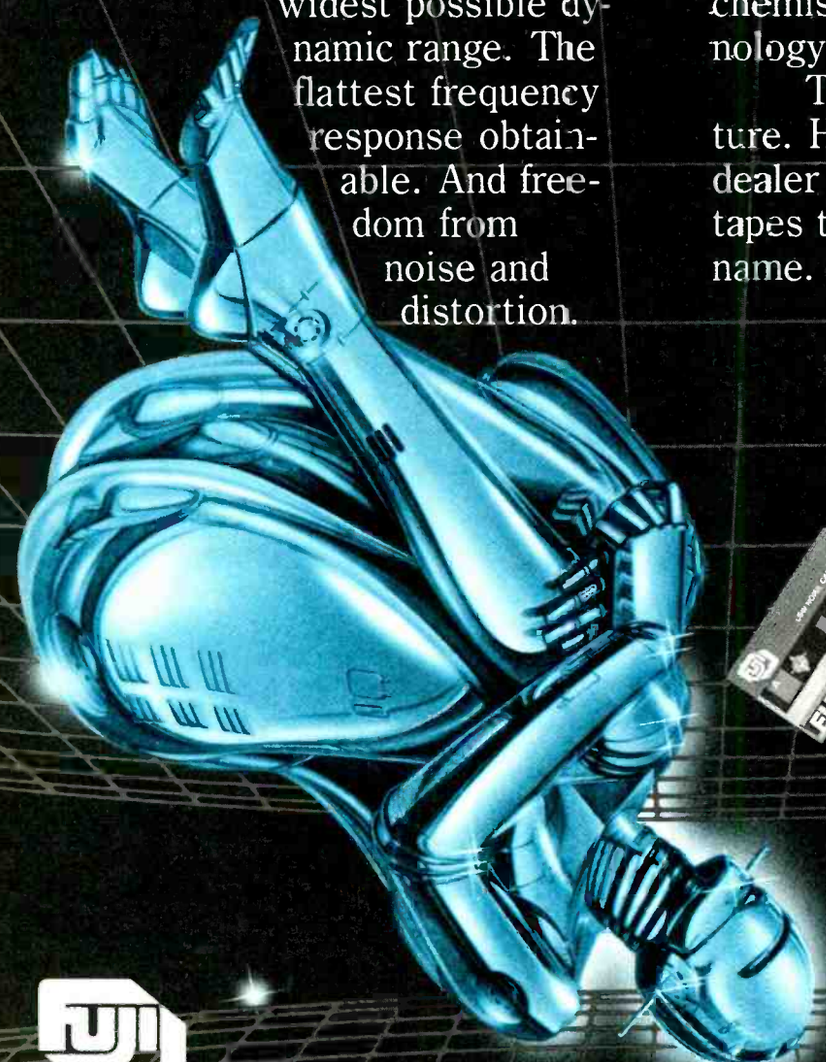

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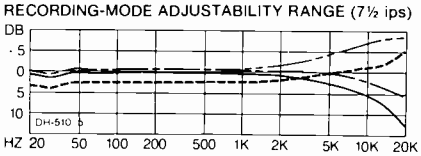
RECORDING-MODE ADJUSTABILITY RANGE (7½ ips)




with EQ set at detent (standard position)
—— maximum bias setting
----- minimum bias setting
with bias set at detent (standard position)
—— maximum EQ setting
—— minimum EQ setting

S/N RATIO (re 200 nWb/m; A-weighted)

| | 7½ ips | 15 ips |
|---|---|---|
| playback | 63 dB | 63½ dB |
| record/play | 59¼ dB | 58½ dB |

METER READING FOR 200 NWB/M + ¾ dB

METER READING FOR 3% DISTORTION (400 Hz)

| | |
|---|---|
| at 7½ ips | + 10¼ dB |
| at 15 ips | + 10¾ dB |

DISTORTION (third harmonic; 50 Hz to 10 kHz)

| | 7½ ips | 15 ips |
|---|---|---|
| -10 dB re 200 nWb/m | ≤0.27% | ≤0.20% |
| -10 dB re 400 nWb/m | ≤0.70% | ≤0.32% |
| 0 dB re 400 nWb/m | ≤1.3% | ≤0.82% |

ERASURE (400 Hz; re 200 nWb/m) 72¼ dB

CHANNEL SEPARATION 63¼ dB

SPEED ACCURACY

| | 105 VAC | 120 VAC | 127 VAC |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7½ ips | 0.15% fast | 0.19% fast | 0.21% fast |
| 15 ips | 0.41% fast | 0.45% fast | 0.46% fast |

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak; r/p)

| | average | maximum |
|---|---|---|
| at 7½ ips | ±0.055% | ±0.065% |
| at 15 ips | ±0.045% | ±0.050% |

SENSITIVITY (re 200 nWb/m at 7½ ips; 1 kHz)

| | |
|---|---|
| line input | 67 mV |
| mike input, high | 0.19 mV |
| mike input, low | 0.82 mV |

MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping)

| | |
|---|---|
| high sensitivity | 120 mV |
| low sensitivity | 440 mV |

MAX. OUTPUT (from 200 nWb/m) 0.91 V

REWIND TIME (7-in. 1,800-ft. reel) 87 sec.

unwary recordist coming cold to the deck, but experience shows that it makes sense and offers a number of useful approaches to metering. We preferred to use the peak mode but read the main (VU) scale—in effect, placing the 0 dB near 600 nanowebers per meter and keeping it as a ceiling value. (Recordists brought up on classic open-reel decks and true VU meters often take a perverse pride in pinning them on peaks—a habit that can spell havoc when they get their hands on cassette gear without comparable headroom.)

The solenoid transport controls include a button marked PAUSE/MUTE. In recording, it is a joy. When you press it with the tape moving, it acts as a recording mute; when you release it, the tape stops in the pause mode—that is, without disengaging the recording function—and can be restarted by pressing the FORWARD button. Although the drive actually disengages all the way in PAUSE, the action is unusually quick for an open-reel deck, and the feature provides some options that generally can be found only in cassette gear.

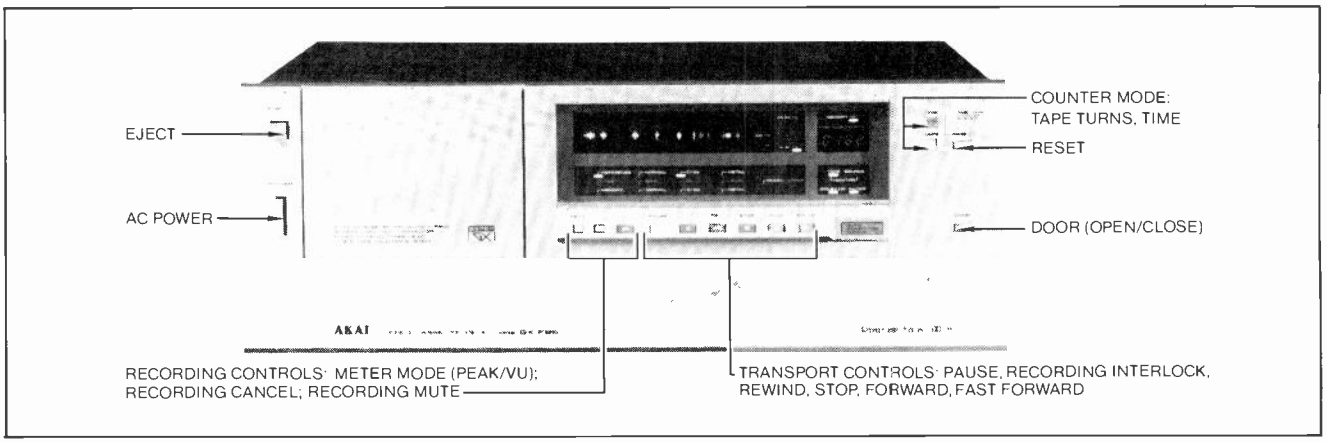
In playback, however, this feature proves disappointing, since it doesn't permit audible cueing and editing. The manual (which is poorly conceived and executed for such a product) says simply that the button does nothing in playback that the STOP doesn't do. What a wasted opportunity! Had the PAUSE been engineered so that it retracted the pinch roller only part way, you could "rock" the tape and hear your cue point, since output from the playback head is not killed and there is no tape lifter to keep the tape away from it. The manual says you can cue in the fast-wind modes by pushing the pinch roller inward until some output can be heard. Unfortunately, it would take three hands to do this while you rock the tape. In order to edit a tape, we had to jury-rig a system with a bent paper clip (to hold the pinch-roller shaft at the desired position) and electrical tape (to hold the paper clip). It worked, yet how much more elegant it would have been had Denon provided a built-in device for the purpose! The omission is not uncommon in Japanese open-reel designs that otherwise are of excellent quality, but we continue to find it altogether baffling.

There also was some quiet grumbling about the DH-510's reel-attachment system. Denon uses a smooth shaft (with no keying fins for small plastic reels) and a boss on the turntable beneath the shaft. We find the keyed shaft marginally more convenient with plastic reels and the sort of NAB-reel adapters that go with them more convenient than Denon's, which do not automatically center the NAB reels. Also, we miss the metal shim built into many adapters to compensate for the difference between standard aluminum NAB reels and the slightly thicker plastic ones. Denon's shim is a separate piece of what appears to be heavy card stock, rather than metal. Since it can be omitted with the NAB reels, it provides a way of adjusting the system for those relatively rare plastic reels that have NAB hub dimensions but are as thick as the 7-inch variety. This may be a big advantage to some users, but the apparent impermanence of the shim mats is the only touch of chintz (the manual aside) in an extravaganza of plush.

Among the plusher points, we'd mention the just-right friction clutching of the elements for the two channels in the three level controls. You don't have to wrestle with them—they can easily be adjusted with one hand—yet they aren't loose enough to create unintentional misadjustment. Then there are the separate bias and recording-EQ adjustments for each channel. The manual gives settings for each for a fairly wide variety of tapes. (As usual, the list isn't up to date and isn't prepared with the American market in mind. When will manufacturers learn to put this information on a separate sheet that is updated frequently and locally?) Diversified Science Laboratories measured the deck with Scotch 206 and with the knobs set at their center (normal) positions. We also found them a good match for the new Scotch Master XS, which is not on the Denon list. With some experience and test equipment, of course, you can adjust the deck precisely for any tape you choose.

By any standard, however, the DH-510 is a really fine deck whose priorities are performance and reliability, rather than features for features' sake. Maybe that's a way of saying that, among semi-pro decks, this one's emphasis is on the "pro" rather than the "semi," but it certainly doesn't turn its back on amateurs in need of these qualities.

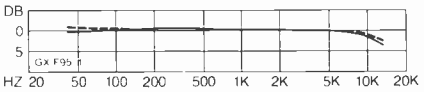
***Circle 134 on Reader-Service Card***




# Akai's Most Impressive Cassette Deck

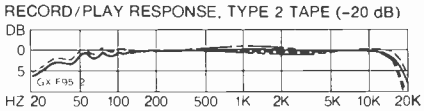
**Akai GX-F95 cassette deck, in metal case. Dimensions: 17¼ by 6 inches (front panel), 14 inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: $1,295; optional RC-21 remote control, $40; optional MP-120 AC adapter for tape-adjustment memory, $23. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Akai Electric Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S distributor: Akai America, Ltd., 800 W. Artesia Blvd., P.O. Box 6010, Compton, Calif. 90224.**

PLAYBACK RESPONSE (TDK test tape; -20 dB DIN)



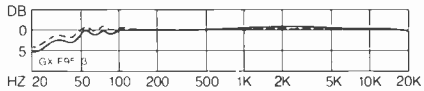

——— L ch +½, -3¾ dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz
----- R ch +1, -2¾ dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 2 TAPE (-20 dB)




——— L ch +¼, -3 dB, 29 Hz to 16.5 kHz
----- R ch +½, -3 dB, 27 Hz to 17.5 kHz
with Dolby B noise reduction
— — — L ch +1, -3 dB, 29 Hz to 15 kHz
— — — R ch +½, -3 dB, 27 Hz to 15.5 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 4 TAPE (-20 dB)



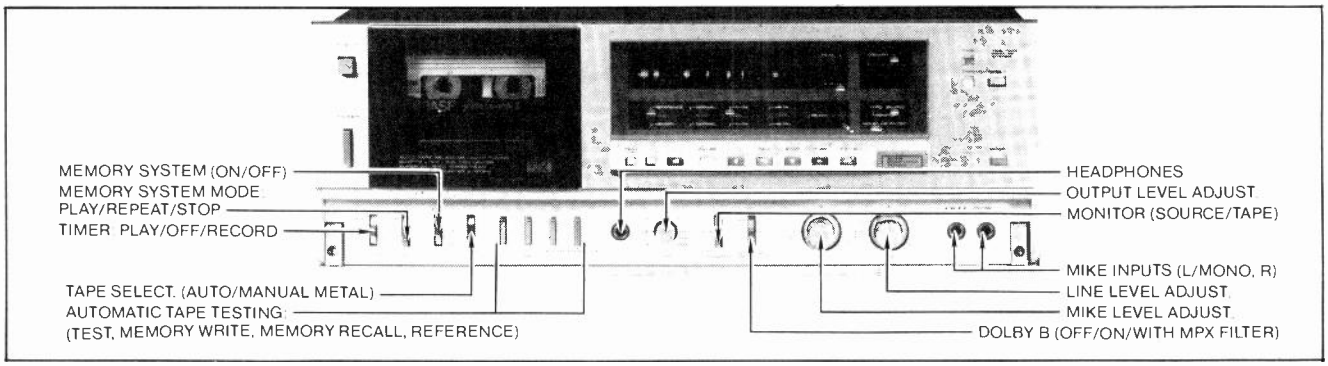

——— L ch +½, -3 dB, 29 Hz to 20 kHz
----- R ch +½, -3 dB, 26 Hz to 20 kHz

NOT SO MANY YEARS AGO, the idea of a cassette deck retailing for more than $1,000 was incredible. Even more incredible was the idea that a deck could be made to evaluate the tape on which it was recording and adjust itself for optimum results. Yet here is the Akai entry in both categories, and we find ourselves blinking not at those facts (which seem almost commonplace today), but at the excellent performance that results. The GX-F95 also has extra features—a three-mode memory-rewind systems, for example, that allows continuous repeat of all or part of a tape side as well as the more standard auto-stop and auto-play functions—but it is the solid performance to which our admiration consistently reverts.

There are two tape-choice options: AUTO and MANUAL (METAL). The former will respond to the key wells built into Type 2 ("chrome") shells (except those of very early manufacture) and those of the same type in Type 4 (metal) shells by switching to the high bias range of Type 2 tapes and to the 70-microsecond playback EQ used for all but the ferric Type 0 and Type 1 tapes; shells without the extra key well (including Type 3 ferrichromes) will get standard bias and 120-microsecond playback EQ. Yet another key well has been used to identify the Type 4 formulations of some manufacturers—but not all. Hence the need for a manual METAL setting to achieve the extra-high bias and appropriate recording EQ. The adjustment range is great enough for the automatic fine-tuning system to accommodate just about any tape except ferrichromes for recording purposes; in playback, you'll get correct playback EQ for any normally recorded tape except ferrichromes with the AUTO setting (even for metals, since they have the 70-microsecond key well), and ferrichromes will be played with correct EQ if you switch to MANUAL.

You have another choice to make when you record: whether to use the automatic tape-adjustment system or go for the REFERENCE settings that are not influenced by the adjustments. These settings are tuned to TDK SA for Type 2, Maxell UD for Type 1, and TDK MA for Type 4. Diversified Science Laboratories used these three tapes in testing but employed the automatic adjustment system, which the manual adopts as normal procedure. Since the adjustment is equipped with an optional memory (which needs a 12-volt AC adapter if it is to remember with the deck turned off), you can continue to record on other tapes of the same type (and, preferably, batch) without repeating the procedure. And since the memory will hold one set of data for each of the three basic tape types, you can go back and forth between them.

When you pick a tape for which the deck has no memorized settings, you simply press TEST; the deck does the rest. The FAST FORWARD whisks the tape beyond the leader, records a series of test tones (using flashing indicators to keep you up to date on what it's working on—bias, sensitivity, or recording EQ), and



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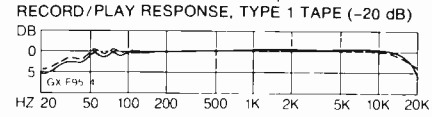
RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 1 TAPE (–20 dB)




——— L ch +½, –3 dB, 30 Hz to 18 kHz
----- R ch +1½, –3 dB, 28 Hz to 18 kHz

S/N RATIO (re DIN 0 dB; R/P; A-weighted)

| | Type 2 tape | Type 4 tape | Type 1 tape |
|---|---|---|---|
| without noise reduction | 56¾ dB | 55 dB | 53¾ dB |
| with Dolby B | 64 dB | 62¾ dB | 62 dB |

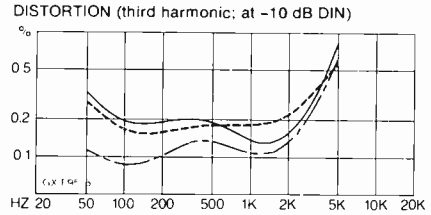
METER READING FOR DIN 0 DB

| | |
|---|---|
| peak mode | –2 dB |
| "VU" mode | +5 dB |

METER READING FOR 3% DISTORTION (333 Hz)

| | peak mode | VU mode |
|---|---|---|
| Type 2 tape | +2 dB | > +8 dB |
| Type 4 tape | +1 dB | > +8 dB |
| Type 1 tape | +1 dB | > +8 dB |

DISTORTION (third harmonic; at –10 dB DIN)




——— Type 2 tape ≤0.81%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
----- Type 4 tape ≤0.57%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
— — — Type 1 tape ≤0.62%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz

ERASURE (333 Hz; re DIN 0 dB)

| | |
|---|---|
| Type 2 tape | 72 dB |
| Type 4 tape | 69 dB |

CHANNEL SEPARATION 33¼ dB

SPEED ACCURACY
no measurable error, 105–127 VAC

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)

| | average | maximum |
|---|---|---|
| playback | +0.06% | +0.08% |
| record/play | +0.08% | +0.09% |

SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB; 333 Hz)

| | |
|---|---|
| line input | 140 mV |
| mike input | 0.46 mV |

MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping) 135 mV

MAX. OUTPUT (from DIN 0 dB) 0.69 V

rewinds to the starting point. If you've done something wrong—perhaps inserted a ferrichrome tape in spite of the manual's warning against it—the transport will just stop and flash its ERROR light in reproof.

The metering is better than average. Its upper range lights a pleasant gold, rather than the usual red; it is calibrated in 1-dB steps (the scale looks finer, but its elements light two at a time) from –3 dB to the top, at +8 dB; it offers peak or VU modes, with an automatically resetting peak-hold feature. All those things are to the good. The want of calibration below –20 dB may be missed by some recordists (we prefer a longer range), and the inclusion of a Dolby reference-level mark is confusing on a scale that has two meanings. Because the 0-dB marking is 5 dB below DIN's for the VU mode (whose slow response to transients requires some headroom) and 2 dB *above* it for the peak mode, you're left in doubt about which value-scale the Dolby mark refers to. (It's just about correct for the VU mode's calibration, as a matter of fact.) But you never have to use it in practice, and it might better have been omitted.

At first, we were rather taken aback by two mechanical elements of the design. The GX-F95 is delivered fitted with a solid aluminum cassette-well door, but there's a smoked acrylic alternative packed with it. Since we like to check what's going on inside the well while we're working, we considered the metal one just a bit of showoff flash for the delectation of friends. Evidently, Akai predicted this response and consequently threw in the see-through alternative. But the more we worked with the deck, the less we found it necessary to see into the well. The transport controls light up to tell you what the drive is doing; the deck is logic-controlled, so any failure to follow your orders (for instance, because you've reached the end of the tape) is instantly signaled by these lights. And, for straightforward recording, the real-time option on the turns counter lets you know how much tape is left more accurately than visual inspection would. (If you back up to re-record something you've messed up—a flubbed dub, so to speak—the timer continues from the reading where you stopped, adding the redo to the original timing.)

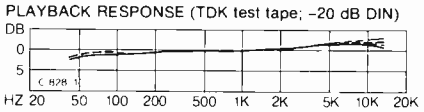
Then there's the door that hides the lower controls. It is motorized and will open or close only when the power switch is on—or should. From force of habit after experience with so many manually operated doors, we repeatedly reached for it even with the power off, and it eventually began to respond, evidently as a result of damage. If you haven't acquired our (bad?) habits, your experience with the door should be happier than ours.

But, again, the central element in our appraisal is certainly the performance. Because it is a "full three-head" deck—that is, one with direct monitoring from the tape while you're recording, even with Dolby noise reduction—we were able to make rapid source/tape comparisons, with uniformly excellent results. The GX-F95 is an excellent deck by any standard and, in our estimation, the finest cassette model we have ever received from this perennial manufacturer. And that last point is not to be taken lightly: Experience tells, and here it speaks loud and clear.

# Two-Way Convenience from Dual

**Dual C-828 bidirectional cassette deck, in metal case. Dimensions: 17¼ by 4½ inches (front panel), 13½ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: $500. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: made in Japan for Dual Gebrüder Steidinger, W. Germany; U.S. distributor: United Audio Products, Inc., 120 S. Columbus Ave., Mount Vernon, N.Y. 10553.**

PLAYBACK RESPONSE (TDK test tape; –20 dB DIN)



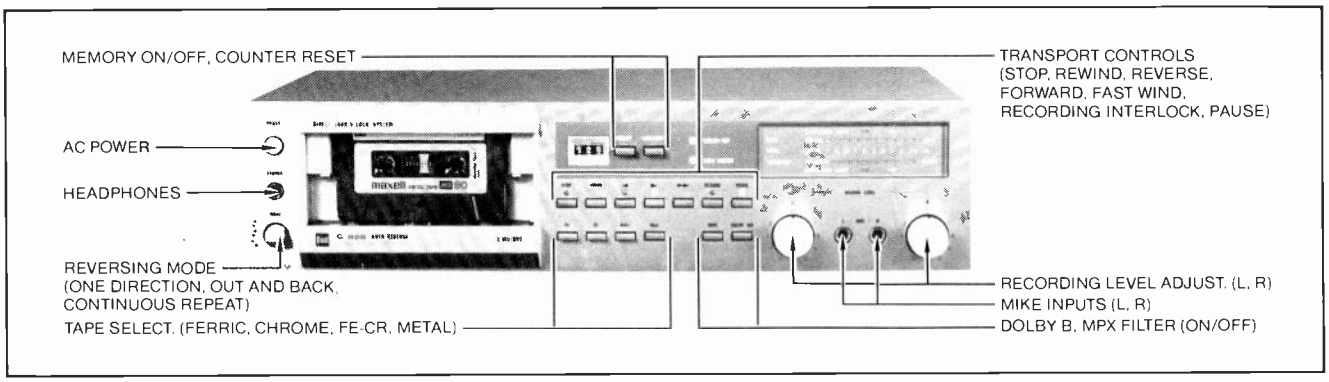

——— L ch, forward +1¼, –2½ dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz
----- R ch, forward +2, –2¼ dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz
— — — L ch, reverse +1¾, –2 dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz
— — — — R ch, reverse +2¾, –2½ dB, 40 Hz to 12 5 kHz

SIMPLE, FOOLPROOF OPERATION has been a hallmark of Dual products over the years. In particular, their controls are usually well thought out with respect to their intended functions and user needs, which means, among other things, that the company has never been prone to what we might call "gizmo madness." The new C-828 two-head cassette deck continues this design philosophy: It does not incorporate every imaginable bell and whistle, but the ones it does have make life much easier for the recordist.

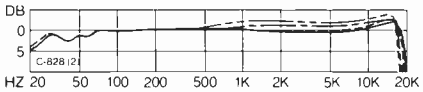
The control layout is uncluttered, with all functions clearly labeled. Tape selection is via four pushbuttons for Type 1 ferric, Type 2 chrome and chrome-equivalent, Type 3 ferrichrome, and Type 4 metal tapes, respectively. Separate pushbuttons to the right of those switches control Dolby B noise reduction and multiplex filtering, and LEDs to the left of the meters indicate whether these functions are activated.

The peak-reading LED meters themselves are unusual in that they are weighted to reflect the recording equalization curve, so that you know how much signal is going onto the tape regardless of its frequency distribution. They are calibrated from –20 to +7 dB and change from green to red above +3 dB (which, with "chrome" tapes, is equivalent to +6 dB), as final warning of incipient overload. Two pairs of red marker LEDs placed above and below the 0-dB and +3-dB marks indicate that these are the overload points for the selected tape type. The markers at 0 dB light when Type 1 or 2 tapes are chosen, while the markers at +3 dB come on for Types 3 and 4. Judging from use and from DSL's measurements (including a meter response time of 17 milliseconds—

◄ Circle 3 on Reader-Service Card

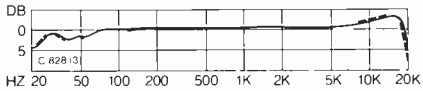



RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 2 TAPE (–20 dB)



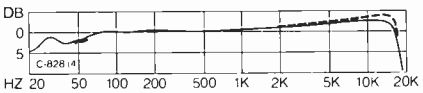

——— L ch +2, –3 dB, 25 Hz to 18 kHz
----- R ch +2½, –3 dB, 24 Hz to 17.5 kHz
with Dolby B noise reduction
— — — L ch +2¾, –3 dB, 25 Hz to 17.5 kHz
— — — R ch +3½, –3 dB, 24 Hz to 17 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 4 TAPE (–20 dB)




——— L ch ±3 dB, 24 Hz to 19 kHz
----- R ch ±3 dB, 24 Hz to 18.5 kHz

RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 1 TAPE (–20 dB)




——— L ch +2, –3 dB, 24 Hz to 17 kHz
----- R ch +3¼, –3 dB, 24 Hz to 17 kHz

S/N RATIO (re DIN 0 dB; R/P; A-weighted)

| | Type 2 tape | Type 4 tape | Type 1 tape |
|---|---|---|---|
| without noise reduction | 53¾ dB | 53 dB | 52½ dB |
| with Dolby B | 62 dB | 62 dB | 61 dB |

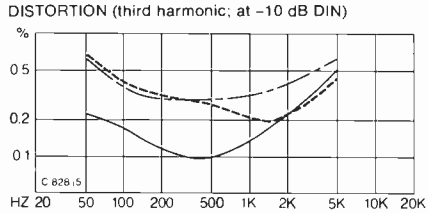
METER READING FOR DIN 0 DB

| | |
|---|---|
| Type 2 tape | –3 dB |
| Type 4 tape | 0 dB |
| Type 1 tape | –1 dB |

METER READING FOR 3% DISTORTION (333 Hz)

| | |
|---|---|
| Type 2 tape | 0 dB |
| Type 4 tape | +5 dB |
| Type 1 tape | +3 dB |

DISTORTION (third harmonic; at –10 dB DIN)




——— Type 2 tape ≤0.5%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
----- Type 4 tape ≤0.69%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
— — — Type 1 tape ≤0.64%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz

ERASURE (333 Hz; re DIN 0 dB)

| | |
|---|---|
| Type 2 tape | 72 dB |
| Type 4 tape | 68½ dB |

CHANNEL SEPARATION 37 dB

SPEED ACCURACY

| | |
|---|---|
| forward | 0.2% fast, 105–127 VAC |
| reverse | 0.3% slow, 105–127 VAC |

slightly slow for a peak-reading display), these points seem to be well chosen.

Taken as a whole, this metering system removes much of the guesswork from setting recording levels. Our only quibble is with the input level controls, which would have been easier to use in most instances had they been ganged or supplemented by a master level control, rather than fully independent.

The real fun, however, begins with the tape transport. The C-828 is an automatic-reversing deck in both the play and recording modes. In the play mode, it can be set to run continuously until you touch the STOP key. Left to its own devices, the deck leaves a gap of several seconds in the music as it winds to the end of the leader and turns around, but reversal is almost instantaneous when you initiate it manually.

The C-828 also includes Dual's "direct load and lock" system. When the power is turned on, a plastic shield that protects the heads from dirt and prying fingers swings out of the way, leaving the cassette well—which is more like a shallow alcove in this design—completely open. Thereafter, you can insert a cassette and, with the mechanism preset for play in either direction, the transport will start automatically when you remove your hand. And you can remove a tape while the deck is in any mode; a photoelectric system disengages the transport as your hand reaches the cassette.

If the deck is in PLAY when you remove the cassette, it will remember and return to PLAY immediately after you insert another. Unfortunately, this convenience does not extend to the recording mode: The deck goes to STOP when the tape is removed, and recording must be started manually every time one is inserted. This is mitigated, however, by the unusually simple operation of Dual's transport controls. Pressing the recording key automatically engages the transport and PAUSE, which is released when PLAY is pressed, reducing what normally is a three-step operation to two steps.

Combined with the automatic-reverse feature, direct load and lock permits recording and playback of long works with minimal interruption of the music. Opera fans and Bruckner buffs are sure to find this a plus, especially when recording off the air, though only manual operation will give you near seamless playback of the cassette's two sides.

The C-828's measured performance is, for the most part, very good. Distortion figures are low, as are those for wow and flutter and noise, with Dolby adding its usual 9 dB or so to the signal-to-noise ratio. Frequency response doesn't meet quite the same standard. Using the tapes suggested by Dual—TDK SA for Type 2, Maxell UDXL-I for Type 1, and Maxell MX for Type 4—DSL consistently found response slightly hot at the top end, which suggests that the machine is a bit underbiased for those formulations. In addition, Dolby tracking is not quite exact with the SA tape. (The maximum error, as shown in the graph, is approximately +2 dB at 2 kHz.) The other two tapes, however, match better in this respect, particularly the metal.

In use, we found much to praise in the deck and little to complain about. The instruction manual, printed in seven languages, is less clear than we would have liked, and we are somewhat puzzled by the inclusion of a headphone jack on two-head cassette decks that do not have an output level controls. Otherwise, everything makes eminently good sense and works without a hitch. And, most important, the recordings we made with the machine were excellent. If that's what you want—good recordings without a lot of fuss and bother—we don't see how you could go wrong with the C-828.

***Circle 117 on Reader-Service Card***

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)

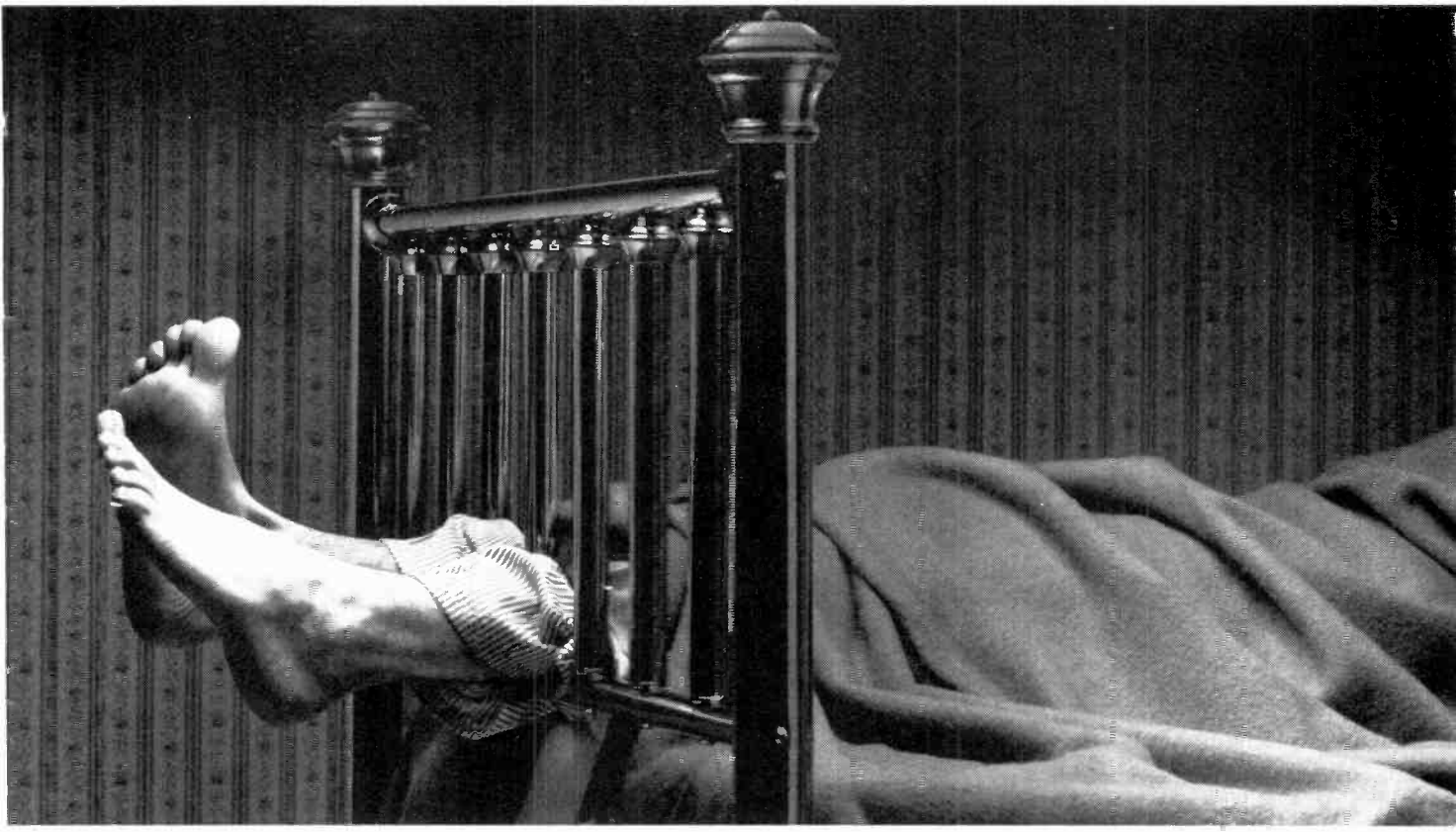
| | average | maximum |
|---|---|---|
| forward playback | ±0.06% | ±0.08% |
| reverse playback | ±0.06% | ±0.09% |
| forward record/play | ±0.06% | ±0.08% |
| reverse record/play | ±0.07% | ±0.09% |

SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB; 333 Hz)

| | |
|---|---|
| line input | 70 mV |
| mike input | 0.19 mV |

MIKE INPUT OVERLOAD (clipping) 26 mV

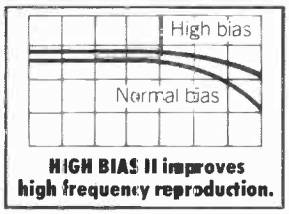
MAX. OUTPUT (from DIN 0 dB) 0.54 V



# If you think "high bias" is discrimination against tall people, you're not ready for New Memorex.

High bias tape is specially formulated to deliver remarkably improved sound reproduction, particularly in the higher frequencies.

And no high bias tape does that better than totally new Memorex HIGH BIAS II.




**HIGH BIAS II improves high frequency reproduction.**

We've developed a unique new formulation of superfine ferrite crystal oxide particles. And while that's a mouthful to say, it delivers an earful of results.

Singers ring out more clearly. Snare drums snap and cymbals shimmer with startling crispness.

Even quiet passages sound clearer. Because new Memorex HIGH BIAS II has 4 to 5 dB lower noise. Which means dramatically reduced tape hiss.

And thanks to Permapass™, our extraordinary new binding process, the music you put on the tape stays on the tape. Play after play, even after 1,000 plays.

In fact, new Memorex will always deliver true sound reproduction. Or we'll replace it. Free.

Of course, we didn't stop once we made new Memorex sound better. We also made it work better. By improving virtually every aspect of the cassette mechanism.

We even invented a unique fumble-free storage album.

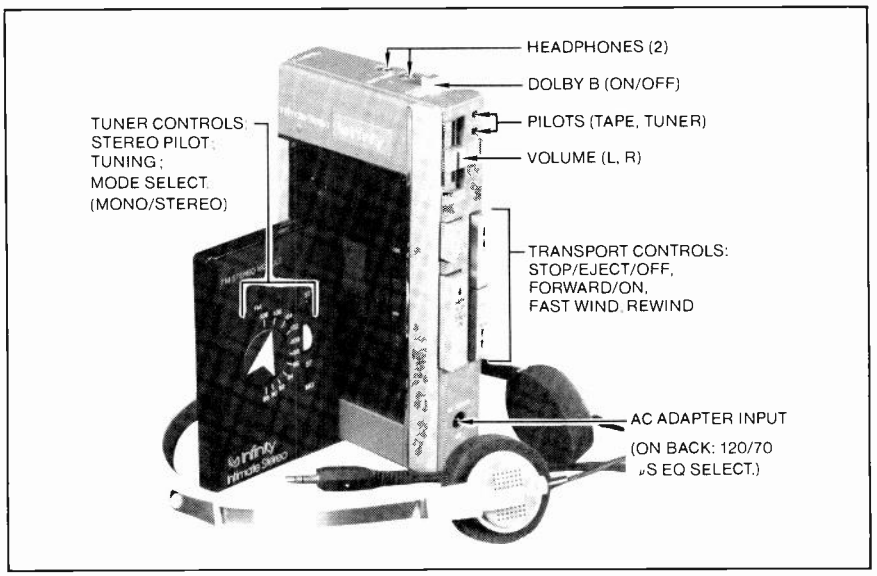
So trust your next recording to new Memorex. In HIGH BIAS II, normal bias MRX I or METAL IV.

As a discriminating tape user, you'll have a high opinion of the results.

A highly biased opinion, that is.


**NOW MORE THAN EVER WE ASK: IS IT LIVE, OR IS IT**

**MEMOREX**

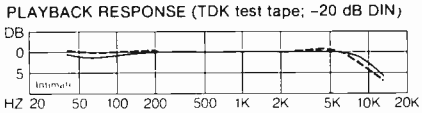



# An Audiophile's Portable from Infinity

**Infinity RS-002 Intimate portable stereo cassette player, with headset, carrying case, cassette pouch, shoulder strap, and four AA cells. Dimensions: 6¼ by 3¾ inches (front), 1⅜ inches deep; headphone cord, 4 feet long. Price: $229; optional RS-002FM FM tuner pack, $45; additional headset, $40. Warranty: "limited," ninety days parts, one year labor for player, tuner, and headset. Manufacturer: made in Japan for Infinity Systems, Inc., 7930 Deering Ave., Canoga Park, Calif. 91304.**

**Cassette/amplifier section**

PLAYBACK RESPONSE (TDK test tape; −20 dB DIN)




——— L ch +0, −6 dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz
----- R ch +½, −6¾ dB, 40 Hz to 12.5 kHz

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

| | 70 μsec EQ | 120 μsec EQ |
|---|---|---|
| no noise reduction | 63½ dB | 59½ dB |
| with Dolby B | 68¾ dB | 66¼ dB |

SPEED ACCURACY 0.3% fast at 6 VDC; 0.1% fast at 5.4 VDC; 0.1% slow at 4.4 VDC;

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak) ±0.35% average; ±0.55% max.

MAX. OUTPUT (at clipping; from DIN 0 dB; 33 ohm load) 0.95 V (−15¾ dBW, or 27 mW) for 6.0 VDC; 0.60 V (−19½ dBW, or 11 mW) for 4.2 VDC

**FM tuner**

THD + N FOR 50-DB NOISE SUPPRESSION 1.2%

ULTIMATE QUIETING (S/N ratio) 65½ dB

CAPTURE RATIO 2½ dB

ALTERNATE-CHANNEL SELECTIVITY 41¾ dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD + N)

| | stereo | mono |
|---|---|---|
| at 100 Hz | 4.4% | 5.8% |
| at 1 kHz | 1.0% | 1.8% |
| at 6 kHz | 1.9% | 2.1% |

STEREO PILOT INTERMODULATION 0.49%

IM DISTORTION (mono) 1.9%

AM SUPPRESSION 61¾ dB

TO A LARGE DEGREE, the Infinity Intimate defines the term "personal portable": a compact, battery-powered stereo cassette player, it eschews speakers in favor of ultralight, highly efficient headphones. (A guide to personal portables in all their forms appears elsewhere in this issue.) In basic form and function, the Intimate shares much with several competing models, but it is currently the only one with Dolby noise-reduction circuitry and, as such, promised to be an intriguing and appropriate test-report subject.

We tested the deck in conjunction with its optional stereo FM tuner pack, housed in a cassette shell so it will slip into the tape compartment. It is tuned via a knurled wheel accessible through a cutout on the compartment's cover; special contacts built into the well supply electrical connections (including RF signal, derived from the headphone cord, which serves as an antenna). The tuner has a stereo/mono switch and automatic high-blend circuitry to preserve some stereo separation while lowering the noise on weak broadcasts.

The Intimate player itself includes switchable tape equalization (which, unlike the Dolby circuit, affects the FM signal). Four AA cells are supplied, though you can use a 6-volt AC adapter. Also provided are a pair of headphones and two miniature stereo headphone jacks—the standard variety for the personal portable format, so your second headset (if you spring for it) need not be another Infinity. Volume in each channel is adjustable separately via sliders, and the PLAY and STOP/EJECT keys serve double duty as tuner ON and OFF controls, respectively. As an aid to locating desired musical selections on a cassette, the Intimate permits audible cue and review: If you press either fast-wind control while you're in the play mode, a twittering of output results as the tape shuttles past the playback head. A vinyl carrying case with cutouts for all controls and connections is included; a loop attached to the case allows the player to be worn on a relatively narrow belt. A shoulder strap and cassette (or FM-tuner) carrying pouch completes the package.

Much of the data from Diversified Science Laboratories attest to performance that might surprise us in some home equipment, but is quite remarkable in a portable. Tape playback response curves, for instance, are quite broad and flat. Since the Intimate does not record, DSL tested signal-to-noise ratios with virgin tape—Maxell UDXL-I and TDK SA at their proper equalization setting of 120 and 70 microseconds, respectively. Though noise figures are bound to be slightly higher with recorded cassettes, their excellence attests to the unit's careful design.

Speed accuracy was measured with a 6-volt regulated laboratory supply instead of the AA cells. So powered, speed proved very accurate even at drive voltages below the battery warning signal—a dimming of whichever pilot (TAPE or FM) is in use—which occurred at about 4.2 volts in the lab's test sample. Audio output drops very quickly as the battery nears burnout, which DSL figures should occur after about 4 to 6 hours of use as a tape player. The FM tuner uses less current and should deliver about twenty hours of battery life.

Wow and flutter figures are quite high by home-deck standards but certainly within the acceptable range. That is, you should be unaware of the flutter unless you are listening critically to sustained piano notes or other "difficult" tones. And, even then, you should find exceptional immunity to wow introduced by external movement; even strapped to a jogger, our test sample

# Dolby® C-type Noise Reduction

DOLBY B•C NR
DOLBY C NR

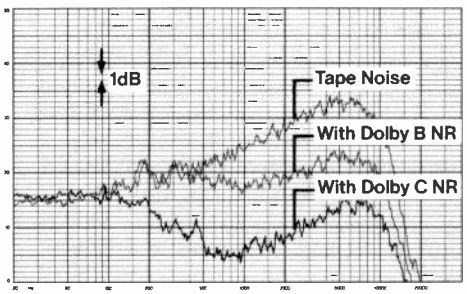



**Figure 1:** Noise from biased cassette tape (70 μs equalization), measured with a constant-bandwidth wave analyzer, and weighted (CCIR/ARM) to reflect the ear's sensitivity to noise and to noise reduction effects.

### What Dolby C-type NR is

Dolby C is a new noise reduction system developed by Dolby Laboratories for consumer tape recording. It provides 20 dB of noise reduction above about 1 kHz, compared to the standard Dolby B-type system's 10 dB of noise reduction above about 4 kHz. Like the original system, the new Dolby C-type system operates without side effects on virtually all kinds of program material. It does not replace the standard Dolby B system, but will supplement it in a number of new high-performance cassette decks appearing in 1981.

### How Dolby C-works: dual-level processing

In some respects, Dolby C-type noise reduction operates like Dolby B. When a recording is made, the middle and higher frequencies of low-level signals are selectively boosted, while loud signals are essentially untouched. On playback, the previously-boosted signals are attenuated to where they were in the original program material, thus restoring proper musical balance while simultaneously effecting noise reduction. With Dolby C, signals are boosted and attenuated more than with Dolby B. In addition, Dolby C operates down to a lower frequency to maintain subjectively uniform noise reduction across the audible range.

Dolby C-type noise reduction is based upon a new and unique dual-level processing scheme. Two sliding-band processors operate in tandem at different levels to solve the problem of achieving 20 dB of compression and expansion without introducing undesirable side effects. Dolby C also incorporates several other new developments which reduce the effects of high-frequency tape saturation and minimize encode-decode errors, so that the new system puts no special demands on the user and requires no special recorder adjustments.

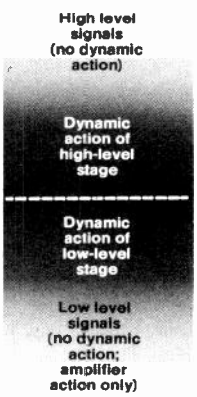



**Figure 2:** Dolby C-type noise reduction features dual-level processing, whereby two sliding-band processors operate in tandem at different levels. Like Dolby B, companding action is restricted to part of the dynamic range, above which there is essentially no action, and below which the system acts as a fixed-gain amplifier. Minimizing the system's dynamic action minimizes the possibility of side-effects on the signal being recorded.

Dolby C-type noise reduction has been designed so that recorders incorporating it can also provide the Dolby B characteristic at the push of a switch. This means that existing cassette recordings encoded with Dolby B-type noise reduction will be properly reproduced on the new models featuring Dolby C. In addition, most listeners are likely to find that Dolby C recordings are enjoyable on machines equipped only with Dolby B, or on portable and automobile players without any noise reduction circuitry.

### Availability

More than 30 product models equipped with Dolby C, including cassette decks and add-on noise reduction units, are either here or have been announced by the following companies (and many other models are being developed):

| | |
|---|---|
| Aiwa | Nakamichi |
| Dual | Onkyo |
| Hitachi | Pioneer |
| JVC | Rotel |
| Marantz | H. H. Scott |
| Mitsubishi | Sony |
| NAD | Vector Research |

### What Dolby C means to cassette recording

Combined with good tape formulations and a well-engineered cassette deck, Dolby C reduces tape noise to a level below the noise of virtually any program source available now or likely to be available in the forseeable future. In fact, even at high listening levels, tape noise is lower than the ambient noise in many listening rooms. Thus for all intents and purposes, with Dolby C-type noise reduction, tape noise in cassette recording will no longer be of any practical consequence.

For further information, including technical details and the first independent review of Dolby C, please write us at the address below.

Dolby®

Dolby Laboratories Licensing Corp.,
731 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94111,
Telephone (415) 392-0300. Telex 34409.

did maintain reasonable speed stability.

The lab found it difficult to get meaningful tuner measurements. Since the RF input impedance was unknown, there was no way to determine input levels in dBf. In real-world sensitivity tests in a variety of locations, both rural and urban, our subjective judgment put it on par with other quality shirt-pocket FM receivers. The tuner's nondefeatable AFC grabs onto a tuned station so tenaciously and operates over so broad a frequency range that DSL found measurements for alternate-channel selectivity chancy—and that for adjacent-channel selectivity unobtainable.

When DSL cranked up the RF for full quieting in the tuner (it was impossible to determine the usual 65-dBf point), the channel separation, S/N ratio, and suppression of unwanted signal components proved excellent, considering the format. Frequency response, however, is not up to home-tuner standards in the deep bass, rolling off dramatically below 63 Hz. Heard through the companion open-air headphones, and with the 120-microsecond EQ, the sound quality is quite satisfying, but you probably would not accept the loss of deep fundamentals in a system capable of reproducing them the way good speakers do (but most headphones don't). If you switch to 70 microseconds, a broad, shallow response droop is introduced into the FM response curve above 800 Hz. Though the manual suggests that you may like the resulting "tone control" effect, we thought it muffled the sound.

Despite its generally good performance on the test bench, the Intimate really defies simple numerical description. On both tape and FM, the quality of reproduction is entirely beguiling. The headphones impart an airy, spacious quality, and the inclusion of the Dolby B circuit lowers tape hiss dramatically on appropriately recorded tapes. Though one would not characterize the headset's reproduction as uncolored, its warmth and richness of tone are altogether welcome in a portable system. Just as important is comfort: The headphones weigh a hair over two ounces, including the cord, and no auditioner complained of ear or head discomfort even after extended wear. The player is fairly heavy—about 26 ounces with batteries and case—and can be a bit irksome when strapped to your belt.

Our field tests took us to a variety of locales. We found the FM tuner less susceptible to ignition noise and picket-fencing than the miniature radios we've tried under similar conditions; on crowded Manhattan streets, multipath was a problem, but no worse than with other, more expensive radios. As a stereo tape player, the Intimate is a consistent delight. (We quickly learned to carry an extra set of AA cells; you might want to invest in a nicad battery pack and recharger if you become a habitual user.)

Perhaps some of our excitement over the player's obvious charms would have been tempered if we had had a longer acquaintance with the format. We can say, however, that the Intimate performs well, sounds great, looks dandy, and in one important respect—the inclusion of Dolby B—is unique in the field of personal portables. An afternoon at the beach never sounded so good.

***Circle 132 on Reader-Service Card***

# Manufacturers' Comments

We invite rebuttal from those who produce the equipment we review. The comments printed here are culled from those responses.

***Aiwa AD-R500U cassette deck, May 1981.*** *The warranty has been changed to one year parts and labor since we submitted this model to you.*

*We question your statement that "the tape choices are relatively limited" since the AD-R500U will handle all three of the major tape groups: IEC Type I (ferric), Type II (chromium dioxide and ferricobalt), and Type IV (metal or alloy). Type III (ferrichrome) cannot be used, but we find that this group is not so popular in today's market.*

*Regarding the head rotation mechanism, our reliability test shows that it performs satisfactorily more than 10,000 times before losing its original specifications. In practice, of course, it depends on how the user operates this deck.*

*Before we shipped the test sample to you, we measured its transport speed at 0.3% fast, yet your report shows a figure six times as high. This might be the result of some damage during shipment, but since wow and flutter figures—which are easily affected by shocks—from your test results are quite similar to ours, that seems unlikely.*

*There are two other possible causes for the difference in the figures. According to the DIN standard, ten minutes of running time is required before samples are tested. This is because the temperature of the motor itself is normally higher than that of the whole deck. The speed will change after the ten-minute warmup (becoming either faster or slower, depending on the motor), and a different interval can result in different data. Another possibility is the test tape. Aiwa uses C-60 tapes. If your tape is shorter than ours, it will present a smaller load to the motor, which may make it run faster than expected.*

*Hajime Nagatsuna*
*Product Planning Manager*
*Aiwa America, Inc.*

**HF replies:** We do regret Aiwa's omission of what we call Type 0 (low-bias ferrics) from the AD-R500U's tape selector, though perhaps we are asking too much of an otherwise full-feature reversing deck at this price. A bias "tuning" control, such as Aiwa offers on some other models, would solve the problem, for example, but surely would entail a significant increase in manufacturing cost.

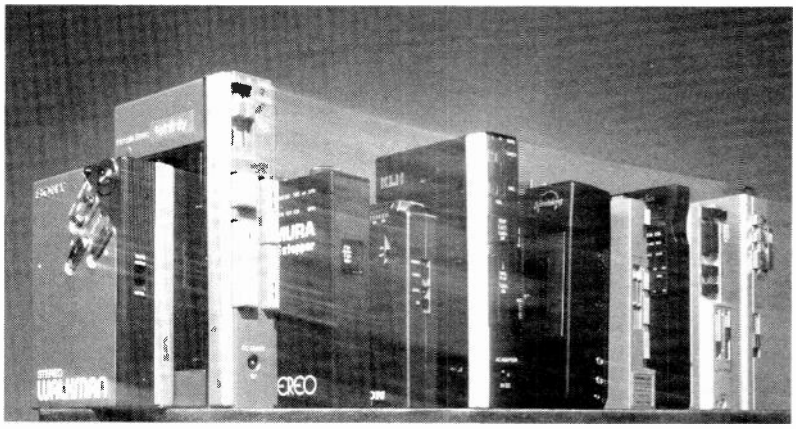
DSL allows more than the DIN minimum of ten minutes of warmup before measuring speed accuracy, and it uses a full cassette tape (presumably a C-60) for the measurement. We would point out, by the way, that a deck whose speed varies widely as a result of either warmup time or tape load is, to that extent, inferior to one whose transport speed is unaffected by such factors.

***Micro-Acoustics System II Model 630 electret phono pickup, May 1981.*** *Diversified Science Laboratories deserves praise for including, for the first time that I can recall, an evaluation of the effects of the external circuit on overall cartridge performance. Consumers who plug in a cartridge whose frequency response varies with different playback systems are forced to play a kind of Russian roulette. The reviewer performs a service when he defines the variations encountered in phono pickup performance with different playback systems—a variation not found with our cartridge.*

*Arnold Schwartz*
*President*
*Micro-Acoustics Corporation*

**HF replies:** We agree that DSL deserves praise for the diligence, intelligence, and care it brings to our measurement program. But our staff, not DSL, is responsible for the listening tests and the texts of our reports—and for the preamp-loading test Mr. Schwartz refers to.

# The Personal Portable Revolution



HF compares features and formats of these new mini marvels.
by Peter Dobbin

THE ERA OF the personal portable has arrived. Introduced little more than a year ago by Sony with the Walkman, the compact battery-powered stereo cassette player with ultralight headphones has soared in popularity. Published figures indicate that Sony sold some 500,000 Walkmans worldwide last year, and in a competitive industry, such success does not go unnoticed: The past several months have seen similar introductions by a score of manufacturers. (The companion guide lists thirty-seven different models.)

For the uninitiated, the popularity of personal portables may seem just a passing fad. Indeed, at the original press conference held to announce the Walkman (then named the Soundabout), grizzled industry veterans mumbled incredulously about the prospective market for a $200 cassette player that could be heard only through headphones. Even some top Sony executives resisted the idea. Akio Morita, chairman of Sony and chief proponent of the Walkman, is said to have responded to the fears of his staff by vowing to resign should the product prove a failure. Obviously, he is still very much in charge.

Though the emphasis with these players falls squarely on their portability, you would be dead wrong to equate their sonic quality with the raucous, aptly named "boom boxes" that haunt city streets and make an afternoon at the beach less than relaxing. Simply put, personal portables can be genuine high fidelity instruments; one model, the Infinity Intimate (reviewed elsewhere in this issue), goes so far as to include Dolby B noise-reduction circuitry.

Freeing a player from the necessity of having built-in speakers accomplishes several ends at once. First, it can be miniaturized. In fact, the newest Walkman, the WM-2, is not much bigger than a cassette tape alone. And by mating the player to headphones, the designer has much greater control over the listener's acoustic environment. Though closed-cup headphones can present a somewhat unnatural orchestra-in-your-skull effect, the lightweight, open-air headsets used with all the personal portables impart a relatively spacious airiness. What this all means is higher audio quality than was available before from a portable system.

Designing a tape transport that is capable of steady performance when strapped to a jogger is no easy task. Even small fluctuations in tape speed are heard as a wavering in pitch: wow or flutter. A prospective purchaser would be well advised to carry a piano recording for audition purposes. Load the cassette, slip on the headset, and shake or rotate the player. If you're vigorous enough, you'll probably hear some "tinniness" (a waver in your quaver, as the British might say); look for the least you can find.

The term "metal capable" is by now a buzzword in the tape recorder field but, as applied to play-only portables, can be extremely confusing. With recorders, metal capability refers to a series of modifications necessary to make full use of the increased range of metal-alloy tapes. With play-only units, it relates only to correct playback equalization: 70 microseconds. Though a metal-capable portable will indeed allow you to hear metal tapes in correct high-frequency balance, the 70-microsecond EQ also is needed for accurate reproduction of chrome, chrome-equivalent, and ferrichrome tapes. The "standard" 120-microsecond setting is used for ferrics: garden variety, low-noise, or premium.

Some personal portables are capable of recording—via the mike and/or input jacks or with built-in microphones. If you regularly use a tape recorder for business and interviews, such machines make a great deal of sense. One staff member who has been using such a model reports that the stereo recording via its built-in mikes provides valuable localization cues, clarifying those moments when speakers impinge on each other's time.

All the players can, however, be used to dub recordings via an adapter to mate the headphone output (a stereo miniature phone jack) with the line input of a standard home deck. Dubbing from a home deck onto a portable recorder of this genre does seem a bit chancy; you'll have to live with the levels that the recorder's automatic level control delivers and with the limited choice of recording bias, and thus of tape.

### FM Too

In its basic form, a personal portable offers stereo cassette playback, the

# A shopper's guide to personal portables

| Brand & Model | Price | Weight (oz.) | Dimensions (in.) | Record/ Playback | FM Tuner | AM Tuner | Special Features |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aimor ST-108 | $100 | 15.2 | 5¾ x 3½ x 1¼ | P | — | — | Ext. sound feed; tone switch; auto stop; switchable EQ |
| Aiwa CS-J1 | 260 | 13 | 6¼ x 3½ x 1¼ | R P | Built in | — | Metal-capable; ALC; detachable whip antenna; pause; line input |
| Akai PM-01 | 225 | 24 | 6¼ x 3¾ x 1½ | P | Slip in (incl.) | — | Ext. sound feed |
| Alaron Rhapsody RY-65A | 100 | 19 | 5¼ x 3¾ x 1¼ | P | — | — | Tone switch |
| Alaron Rhapsody RY-70 | 120 | 36 | 7½ x 4½ x 1½ | P | Built in | Built in | Ext. sound feed, tone switch |
| Craig Soundalong J-700 | 120 | 20 | 5½ x 4¾ x 1¾ | P | — | — | Built-in battery charger for opt. nicad battery and AC adapter; ext. sound feed |
| General Electric Stereo Escape 3-5270 | 100 | 34 | 6¼ x 4 x 1½ | P | — | — | Muting switch; cue & review |
| General Electric Stereo Great Escape 3-5271 | 130 | 39 | 7 x 4¼ x 1¾ | P | Built in | — | Muting switch; FM mono-stereo switch |
| Hitachi Perdisco TRQ-300 | 200 | 14.4 | 7 x 3¼ x 1 | R P | — | — | Metal-capable; single-key recording; built-in mono mike; 2 mike inputs |
| Infinity Intimate RS-002 | 230 | 20 | 6¼ x 3¾ x 1¾ | P | Slip in (opt.) | — | Dolby B tape decoding; switchable EQ |
| Juliette CTP-1010 | 100 | 16 | 5¼ x 3¾ x 1¼ | P | — | — | Ext. sound feed; tone switch |
| KLH Solo | 230 | 16 | 6¼ x 3¾ x 1½ | P | Slip in (incl.) | — | FM auto blend; ext. sound feed; switchable EQ |
| Koss Music Box (AM/FM Stereo Receiver) | 90 | 5 | 5¾ x 2½ x ½ | — | Built in | Built in | Local/distance switch; tone switch; DC input jack |
| Magnavox 6611 | 100 | 12 | 6 x 4 x 1½ | P | — | — | — |
| Mura Hi-Stepper (AM/FM Stereo Receiver) | 80 | 9.1 | 4¾ x 3 x 1¼ | — | Built in | Built in | Auto/manual FM stereo switching; accepts AC adapter |
| Nuvox TPS-10 | 120 | 16 | 5½ x 3½ x 1¼ | P | — | — | Switchable EQ |
| Panasonic RQ-J5 | 125 | 19 | 6¼ x 4 x 1½ | P | — | — | Cue & review; tone switch |
| Panasonic RQ-J6 | 180 | 17 | 6¼ x 4 x 1½ | R P | — | — | Two built-in mikes; cue & review; line input jacks |
| Panasonic RF-10 (AM/FM Stereo Receiver) | 125 | 3 | 5 x 3 x ¾ | — | Built in | Built in | Tone switch; AFC |
| Proton 100 (dist. by NAD) (FM Stereo Receiver) | 120 | 4.8 | 4½ x 2¾ x 1 | — | Built in | — | 3-gang front end; tone controls; local/distance switch |
| Randix SC-711 | 150 | 38 | 5¾ x 5¼ x 1½ | P | — | — | Ext. sound feed; tone control |
| Sanyo M-6060 | 160 | 23.5 | 6¼ x 4½ x 1½ | P | — | — | Switchable EQ; auto reverse; tone switch |
| Sanyo M-5550 | 190 | 25.4 | 5¼ x 3¼ x 1 | P | — | — | Program search; ext. sound feed; pitch control |
| Sanyo M-4440 | 100 | 39.6 | 6 x 3¾ x 1½ | P | — | — | Ext. sound feed; pitch control; tone switch |
| Sonora 301 (AM/FM Stereo Receiver) | 60 | 6.5 | 4½ x 3 x 1 | — | Built in | Built in | Mono/stereo switching for FM |
| Sony Walkman TPS-L2 | 200 | 13.9 | 5¼ x 3½ x 1¼ | P | — | — | Ext. sound feed |
| Sony Walkman 2 WM-2 | 180 | 9.9 | 4¼ x 3 x 1 | P | — | — | Ext. battery case for extended playing time (incl.) |
| Sony Walkman 1 WM-1 | 100 | 17 | 6¼ x 3¾ x 1½ | P | — | — | Switchable EQ; auto stop |
| Sony FM Walkman SRF-40W | 90 | 4 | 4¼ x 3 x 1 | — | Built in | — | Local/distance switch |
| Sony TCS-310 | 180 | 20 | 6¼ x 3¾ x 1½ | R P | — | — | Two built-in mikes, line/mike inputs; built-in mono speaker; switchable playback EQ |
| Soundesign Music Mate 4263 | 100 | 12 | 5 x 3¾ x 1¼ | P | — | — | — |
| Technidyne HPS-120 | 100 | 15 | 5¾ x 3¾ x 1¼ | P | — | — | Ext. sound feed; cue & review |
| Technidyne HPS-150 | 150 | 15 | 5¾ x 3¾ x 1¼ | R P | Slip in (opt.) | — | Built-in mike for mono recording (stereo recording with optional patch cords and line jacks); switchable EQ |
| Technidyne HPR-154 (FM Stereo Receiver) | 60 | 6 | 4 x 2½ x 1 | — | Built in | — | Stereo/mono switch |
| Toshiba KT-S2 | 200 | 13 | 6 x 3½ x 1¼ | P | Slip in (incl.) | Slip in (opt.) | Tone switch |
| Toshiba KT-R2 | 220 | 13 | 6¾ x 3¾ x 1½ | R P | Slip in (incl.) | Slip in (opt.) | Two built-in mikes; ext. sound feed; mike/aux inputs, ext. speaker output |
| Toshiba KT-S1 | 180 | 12 | 6 x 3½ x 1¼ | P | Slip in (incl.) | Slip in (opt.) | Switchable EQ; cue & review |

| Battery | Accessories Included | Optional Accessories |
|---|---|---|
| 3AA (incl.) | Demo tape; case, shoulder strap | -- |
| 2 AA | Case, hand strap | CM-1 stereo mike, $40; AC-450 AC adapter, $15 |
| 4 AA | Case | Additional ASE-7 headset, $30 |
| 3 AA | Case with belt loops, neck strap | Additional headset, $15 |
| 4 AA | Case with belt loops, neck strap; tape pouch | Additional headset, $15 |
| 4 AA | Case and strap; tape pouch | Z-203 AC power supply, $8.00; four nicad AA cells, $12 |
| 4 AA | Case, wrist strap, belt loop; demo tape | 5-1075 AC adapter, $9.00; 5-1848 tape pouch, $2.25; 5-1077 car adapter, $9.00 |
| 4 AA | Case, wrist strap, belt loops; demo tape | Same as 3-5270 |
| 2 AA | Case, shoulder strap; AC adapter; shorting plug; dubbing cord | |
| 4 AA | Case, strap; battery | RS-002FM stereo FM module, $45; additional RS-002H headset, $40 |
| 3 AA | Case, belt loops, shoulder strap | |
| 4 AA | Case, shoulder strap; tape pouch | |
| 4 AAA (incl.) | Sound Partner folding headset; vinyl sleeve, strap | Additional headset, $35 |
| 4 AA | Case, shoulder strap | |
| 3 AA | Case | |
| 4 AA | Case, shoulder strap | Additional DSR-20 headset, $20 |
| 4 AA | Case, shoulder strap; tape pouch | |
| 4 AA | Dubbing cord; case, shoulder strap | |
| 3 AAA | Case, shoulder strap | |
| 3 AA | Case | |
| 4 AA | Case, shoulder strap; tape pouch; battery | Extra SHP-29 headset, $40; UA-1 AC adapter, $6.00 |
| 4 AA | Case, waist and neck straps | NBP-22 nicad battery, $20; 6CV-12 AC adapter, $8.00 |
| 2 AA | Case, tape pouch | NBP-25 nicad battery, $14; 3CV-120B AC adapter, $11 |
| 4 AA | Wrist strap | 6CV-122 AC adapter, $11 |
| 3 AA | -- | |
| 2 AA (incl.) | Case, shoulder strap; tape & battery holder; demo tape | Additional MDR-3L2 headset, $50; AC-31 adapter, $15; BP-33 nicad battery, $19; DCC-127A car adapter, $30 |
| 2 AA (incl.) | EBP-500 battery case; case, strap | Additional MDR series headsets, $40–$80; AC-31 adapter, $15 |
| 4 AA (incl.) | Case, strap, demo tape | Additional MDR series headsets, $40–$80; AC-61 adapter, $35; BP-23 nicad battery, $25 |
| 3 AA | Case | Additional MDR series headsets, $40–$80 |
| 4 AA (incl.) | Case, strap; patch cord; demo tape | Additional MDR series headsets, $40–$80; AC-61 adapter, $35; BP-23 nicad battery, $25 |
| 4 AA | Case, shoulder strap, belt loops | |
| 4 AA | Shoulder strap; demo tape | Additional CSH-101 headset, $20; two SPK-130 speakers, $150; AC adapter, $9.00; CLA-155 car adapter, $8.00; SPC-102 waist carrying pack, $20; SPC-106 chest carrying pack, $20; HPC-161 patch cord, $5.00 |
| 4 AA | Case, shoulder strap; tape pouch | Same as model 120 except HCR-151 FM tuner module, $35; HPC-160 patch cord, $5.00 |
| 3 AAA | Carrying strap | Additional CSH-101 headset, $20; two SPX-130 speakers, $150; ADP-159 adapter for additional headsets, $4.00 |
| 4 AA | Case, shoulder strap; tuner case | RP-A2 AM tuner pack, $30; additional HR-10M headset, $35 |
| 4 AA | Case, shoulder strap; tuner case | Same as KT-S2 |
| 4 AA | Case, shoulder strap; tuner case | Same as KT-S2 |

necessary transport controls, one headset (most will actually accommodate two, but the purchase of the second headset is optional), and a carrying case with a shoulder strap and/or a belt loop. A common accessory harks back to the days when automobile audio electronics were so bulky that the only way to cram both FM and tape capabilities onto a single standard chassis was to build the tuner into a cassette (or eight-track cartridge) shell that could be popped into the transport for FM listening. Similar tuner/cassettes have appeared for the portables, which supply the battery power, the controls, the amplification, and even the antenna: The headphone cord serves double duty. Toshiba, Akai, KLH, and Infinity offer tuner modules either as part of the "basic" system or as options. Other players take a more traditional approach and build the tuner into the player body.

We've run some informal listening tests on the performance of these slip-in FM tuners and find their performance generally quite good in a variety of outdoor situations and locales. Picket fencing—momentary losses of reception (or, at least, stereo) due to fluctuations in signal strength and multipath—can be a problem, which the KLH Solo tackles with an automatic high-blend circuit that progressively reduces noise on weak stereo broadcasts by blending the highs.

Single-purpose FM receivers are also available. Deleting the tape function may seem a less-than-flexible option, but the consequently reduced weight and use-optimized circuitry make the approach logical. Sony, which has

## Simply put, personal portables can be genuine high fidelity instruments.

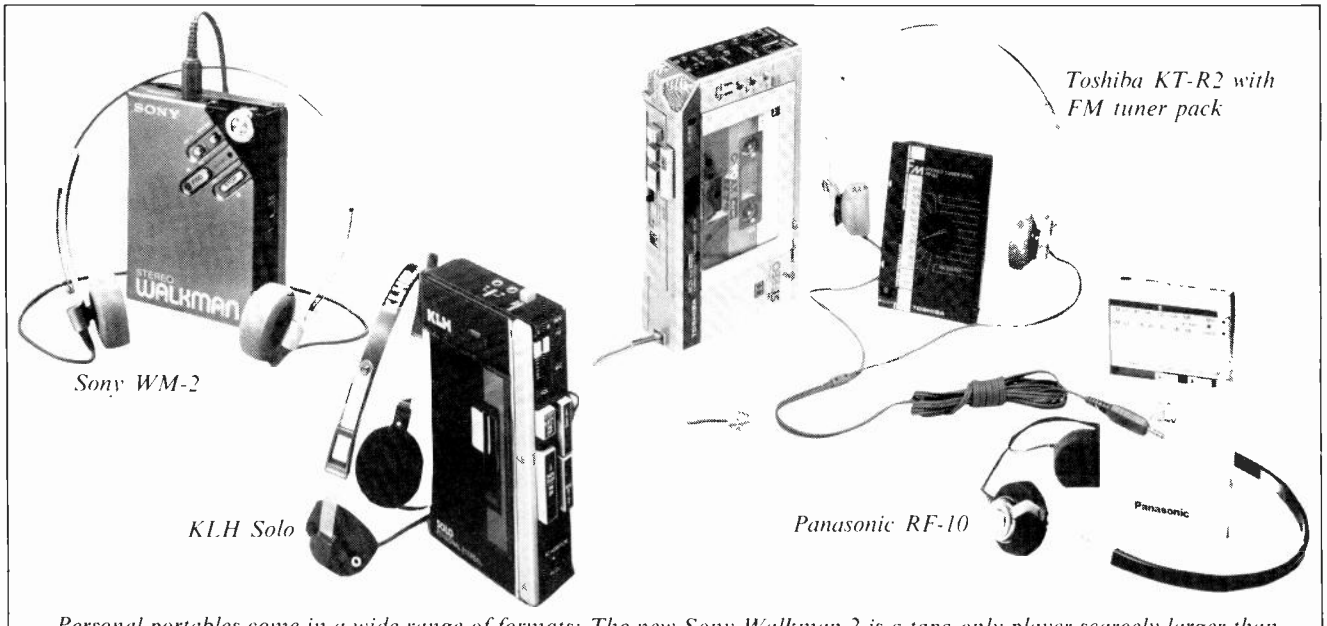
adopted it for its FM Walkman, includes an FET RF amplifier as well as a sensitivity selector for distant and local reception conditions. Panasonic's RF-10 is the wunderkind of compact, lightweight design: Just 5 inches tall and ¾ inch deep, this AM/FM receiver weighs a scant 3 ounces.

Another personal portable format employing microcassettes (instead of the standard Philips Compact Cassette) is waiting in the wings. Roughly one quarter the size of standard cassettes, the micro tapes have been used in the past mainly in hand-held dictation equipment, but recent advances in tape technology—metal-alloy formulations and vacuum-deposit coating techniques—have improved their performance so much that some companies believe they might find a place as a high fidelity medium. Olympus has suggested its Pearlcorder for that use for some years, but it and other brands were slow to offer stereo. Fisher was among the first; its PH-M20 player carries a response spec of 80 Hz to 8 kHz with metal tape—hardly up to standard-format performance but light enough (just 8 ounces) to make the tradeoff more attractive. Of course, the lack of prerecorded microcassettes makes the purchase of a microcassette recorder a necessary ancillary. Fisher's CR-M500 recorder, one of the few equipped with both Dolby B noise reduction and the HX headroom extension system, claims a frequency response of 40 Hz to 12 kHz with a noise-reduced signal-to-noise ratio of 57 dB.

Most personal portables include an extra jack for a second headphone for tandem listening, and you can get extra headsets from most of the player manufacturers. Headphone companies also offer models tailored to this use. The easy availability of converters that allow you to use the lightweight headset with your home stereo system makes the purchase of a high-spec model even more practical. The top of Audio-Technica's line of three accessory headsets, the Point 5, weighs less than 2 ounces and is rated at 25 Hz to 20 kHz. Koss makes the Sound Partner, which folds up for convenient storage in its own carrying pouch or in your pocket. And Mura has a full line of high-quality ultralight headphones: the Red Sets.

A number of other features may be important to you. Sanyo's M-6060 is the only player we know of with automatic reverse, for example, and might well prove a convenience for the runner who doesn't want to stop to flip over a cassette. Automatic stop, highly desirable in a home deck, may prove a big battery-saver if you're given to dozing with the set on. Many players also allow for audible cue and review—switching into the fast-wind modes with audible play-

*(Continued on page 85)*




*Sony WM-2*

*KLH Solo*

*Toshiba KT-R2 with FM tuner pack*

*Panasonic RF-10*

*Personal portables come in a wide range of formats: The new Sony Walkman 2 is a tape-only player scarcely larger than a cassette. Both the play-only KLH Solo and the record/play Toshiba KT-R2 will accommodate their own slip-in FM stereo tuner pack; Toshiba even makes an AM tuner module. Panasonic's RF-10 is dedicated solely to AM and stereo FM reception.*

# INTRODUCING A CASSETTE DECK WITH A MIND OF ITS OWN.

AKAI proudly announces the GX-F95. The future of recorded history. **A 21st century cassette deck for the audiophile who can't wait.**

Within seconds after popping in a cassette, this incredible computerized sound machine will have accurately determined bias, equalization, sensitivity tuning and more — automatically. For virtually any tape on the market.

You'll also find sensor light full-logic solenoid controls, and switchable 24-section/2-color bar meters with peak hold.

And the specs on the GX-F95 are equally impressive.

Frequency response with metal tape is an amazing 25-21,000 hertz. And Signal-to-Noise with metal tape is 62dB (Dolby* on improves up to 10dB, above 5000 hertz). Harmonic Distortion, less than .06%.

Add now, the 3-head performance and reliability of our exclusive Super GX Combo head, whose glass and crystal ferrite construction adds up to over 17 years of virtually wear-free performance — guaranteed.** Fantastic. **The latest addition to the longest all-metal cassette line around.**

Remarkable as the GX-F95 is, it's only one of 11 superb AKAI cassette decks — two of which offer reversing record and playback capabilities.

All metal-capable, the line includes models from $189.95 to $1,195.00, with plenty of stops in between.

So if you're in the market for a great sounding cassette deck, look no further than AKAI.

Including the brand-new GX-F95 with its computerized brain. Maybe the most intelligent thing we've ever done.

AKAI, 800 W. Artesia, Compton, CA 90224.

*TM Dolby Labs. Inc.
**Limited Warranty

The mind boggling GX-F95 is only one of 11 superb cassette decks AKAI has to offer. All metal-capable.

# A K A I

YOU NEVER HEARD IT SO GOOD

# Dolby C: Dr. Dolby's Newest Prescription

## Vitamin C for cassette decks tired of trying to cope with dynamic ranges just a little beyond their reach. by Robert Long

IT'S NOT SNAKE OIL. It's an ingenious application of the principles that brought us Dolby A noise reduction (for professional applications) and Dolby B (for amateur use and now considered obligatory in high fidelity cassette decks). Like the recent, all-consuming fad for "metal ready" decks, Dolby C's benefits should be less material at the lower reaches of the cassette-deck price scale than toward the top; unlike metal-readiness, it generally represents a very cost-effective leap forward in cassette technology, and one that gives every indication of remaining important for the predictable future.

The Dolby alphabet began about fifteen years ago with the Model A, so to speak. Unlike Ford's, it was—and is—both complex and sophisticated, even by contrast to the many compander noise-reduction systems that have appeared more recently. The compression ("encoding") during recording and exactly reciprocal expansion ("decoding") during playback are controlled by four circuits, each of which has its own area of specialization within the frequency spectrum. Roughly speaking, one controls—and is controlled by—the bass frequencies, one the midrange, one the entire treble, and one the high treble only (therefore adding its action to that of the previous section).

The A equipment is built and sold by Dolby Laboratories; B and C are licensed by the company for manufacture by others and have been restricted to consumer applications by the terms of the licensing agreement. Both consumer systems are very much simpler and, as a result, less effective than Dolby A. They are engineered to remove as much noise as possible, subjectively, while keeping costs as low as possible.

The cost/benefit approach means tailoring them to the noise perceptions of the human ear. If you remember your Fletcher-Munson curves, you know that we are most sensitive to sounds in the range around 4 kHz and that aural sensitivity rolls off gradually below 1 kHz and more precipitously somewhere above 10 kHz (depending on age, among other things). So even if noise were equal at all frequencies, it would be perceived most keenly in the treble, where it is known onomatopoetically as "hiss." This fact is exacerbated by the spectral content of music; above 1 kHz we are dealing largely with overtones, rather than fundamentals, and the content of most naturally produced sounds weakens markedly—and therefore "masks" or obscures less noise—as frequency rises. Thus the focus for a cost-effective noise-reduction system has to be in this upper

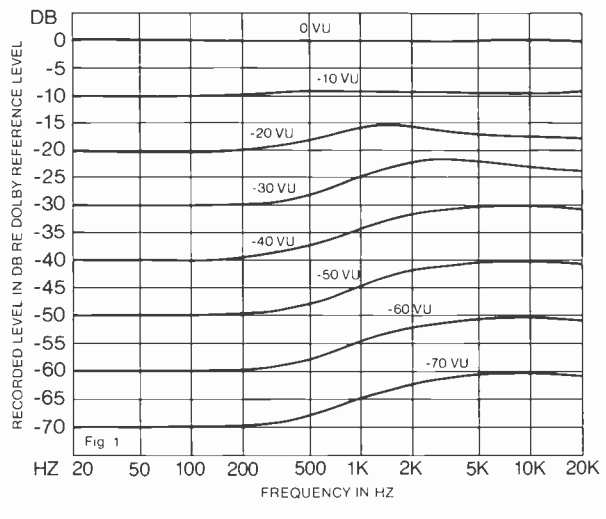



*Fig. 1: Dolby B compression. If you record frequency sweeps at various levels 10 dB apart, with your "0 VU" adjusted to Dolby reference level, the response curves of the recorded sweeps would look like this. Playback restores flatness.*

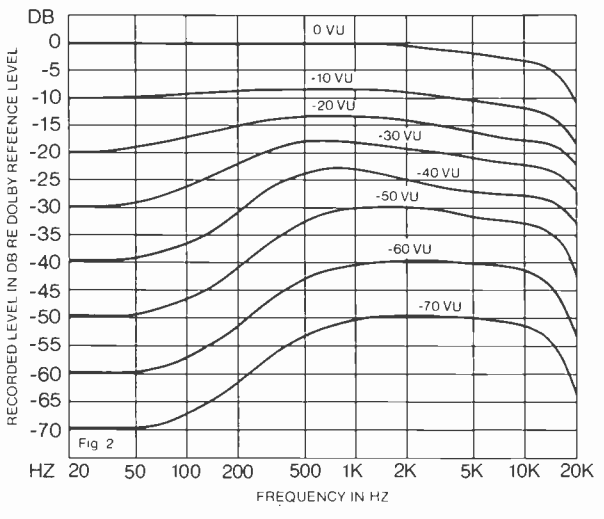



*Fig. 2: Dolby C compression. These curves represent the same conditions as those shown for Dolby B. Note, however, that compression is not only more extreme, but also more complex, and it includes "overload prevention" in the highs.*

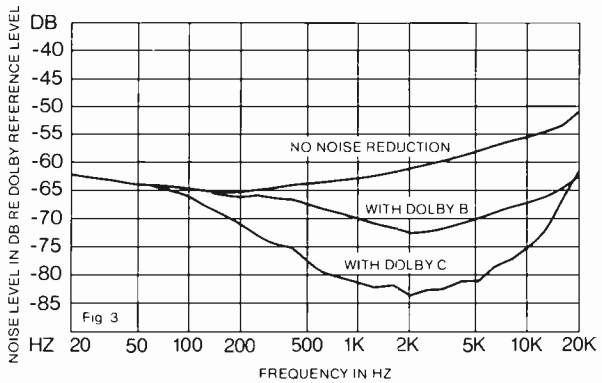



*Fig. 3: Tape noise spectra. Based on measurements made by DSL on a Nakamichi 700ZXL with SX tape, the noise "response" curves represent, respectively, no noise reduction, Dolby B, and Dolby C in playback with no input signal.*

As far as I'm concerned, the Dolby C system is functionally noise-free.

portion of the frequency range.

The Dolby B solution is shown in Fig. 1, whose curves represent response at various recording levels: at a "0 VU" equal to Dolby reference level (200 nanowebers per meter) and at 10-dB steps below that. The response itself is corrected—that is, returned to "flat"—by the playback expansion, of course; in the signal as recorded on tape, compression bends the various curves upward, away from the noise, to varying degrees and at varying frequencies. Nothing happens above the "0 VU" level, where signals are loud enough to mask noise totally in most real-life instances. Though it's not as easy to see, there also is no further change when the signal level drops below -40 VU; upward compression of the treble remains at its maximum at these ultralow levels. There's a good reason for this: Dynamic change at these levels would require compensatory change in playback, and this change could all too easily create audible fluctuations in the level of the noise inherent in the transmission medium: tape hiss, in the case of the cassette.

Since only 40 dB of the total dynamic range is subject to Dolby B's encoding compression, and since it avoids high compression ratios (which, among other things, work well only with a medium having a more stable output level than so-so cassette transports can manage), Dolby B ekes out only 10 dB of noise reduction and only in the range where the ear is most sensitive. That 10 dB was a triumph at the time it was introduced and has stood the cassette medium in good stead, but Dolby Labs has realized that a little more in the way of circuitry might yield a significant increase in noise reduction with little extra cost. The culmination of that thought was Dolby C.

Fig. 2 shows its compression characteristics. You'll note that something is going on even at the 0-VU level: Response droops from about 2 kHz and drops off rapidly above 15 kHz. The curve's shape should look familiar if you have paid careful attention to our cassette-tape reports, because it is very similar to their high-frequency tape-saturation contours.

If you now compare the Dolby C curves for lower levels with those for Dolby B, you'll see a number of differences. Dolby C compression influences lower frequencies; the compression curves continue to change to below -50 VU; and at very low levels it pushes the signal higher (and therefore pushes the noise lower in playback) in the ear's high-sensitivity range. This last consideration is the genesis of Dolby Laboratories' overall noise-reduction specs for the two systems: 10 dB for B and 20 dB for C. These figures represent the degree to which low-level signals and the noise that the recording medium has added behind them will be expanded downward—and therefore attenuated—in playback decoding. Though the figures apply only to part of the frequency range, it is the most critical part.

But so far we haven't considered the "frequency response" of the noise, which in cassette tapes as reproduced with standard equalizations, is anything but flat except at low frequencies—ignoring the influence of any hum at the line frequency and its harmonics. With good design and construction, a deck's line hum can be kept to roughly the level of tape noise at the same frequencies. At higher frequencies, the noise level rises markedly. The spectrum and level of the noise depend on the tape formulation and on the playback equalization to be used with it.

Fig. 3 shows noise spectra for a ferricobalt tape, recorded with no input signal and using the 70-microsecond playback EQ that is standard for the tapes in Types 2, 3, and 4. If the switch had been set to 120 microseconds instead, all of the curves would rise more steeply at the top end, but their overall properties still would be similar. Note how the Dolby B circuit takes a "bite" out of the noise that is—as theory predicts—the exact reciprocal of the Dolby B low-level compression curve; that is, the more the circuit boosts the signal in recording, the more it attenuates it and the noise during playback. And the same principle can be demonstrated with the Dolby C curve.

Although the B circuit removes 10 dB of noise in the range where the ear is most sensitive, you'll note that noise is not at a minimum here: It rises above about 2.5 kHz even with the circuit turned on. This also is true with the C circuit on, but the noise is very much lower, of course. You can see that the improvement when you go from B to C actually is a bit more than 10 dB in the maximum-sensitivity range. At the very top of the frequency range, however, you can see where the overload-prevention elements in the C circuit actually force it to deliver a little less noise reduction than Dolby B does. This is one reason that noise measurements tend to understate the degree of improvement you can expect to hear.

But it's really a question of what you don't hear: tape noise. Of course, you can crank up the volume control until you hear the noise, but in any test of this sort I've made, the noise you hear proves to derive from the input source, or the playback level is so high as to be unpleasant or impractical for home use, or the recording was made at an unnecessarily low level. For real-world purposes, the tape hiss isn't there. That's not the same thing as saying that Dolby C is the ultimate noise-reduction system in terms of sheer dynamic range; it isn't.

Imagine yourself in my living room with a Dolby C tape playing at levels ap-

*(Continued on page 86)*

# Dual Capstans–
# The answer or the problem?

**Nakamichi Spoken Here.**

The advantages of two capstans are obvious; the problems are not! Capturing the tape between supply and takeup capstans isolates the "active" portion from the reels. Thus, sticky cassette hubs, grabbing clutches, and surging reel motors have less effect on tape motion.

Great, but let's not miss the forest for the trees! While dual capstans do help isolate the tape from the reels, they generate problems of their own—problems that often go unrecognized. Bodies that rotate at the same rate are in resonance; thus they magnify vibration which, when it enters the tape path, increases flutter and modulation noise. The overall performance of a dual-capstan transport often is worse than that of a single-capstan drive!

Nakamichi faced this problem years ago and developed an Asymmetrical, Diffused-Resonance Transport that is unique in the industry. When you purchase a Nakamichi—any Nakamichi—you will find supply and takeup capstans of different diameters rotating at different rates. You'll find flywheels of different moments of inertia—machined from solid stock for perfect balance. This "Asymmetry" eliminates common-mode resonance. And, Nakamichi transports are fabricated from materials that have been especially selected and treated to absorb motor vibration and prevent its transference to the tape.

The piece de resistance is our unique pressure-pad lifter. In a Nakamichi transport, tension is controlled so accurately, and heads are contoured so precisely that pressure pads are not required to maintain head-to-tape contact. Since the pad creates more problems than it solves—scrape flutter, modulation noise, and tape skew—it's better off out of the way!

The proof of Nakamichi technology is in the listening. Specifications, while important, do not tell the whole story. Scrape flutter occurs at a very rapid rate; it is not included in "weighted" flutter measurements—even those made in accordance with DIN specifications. Modulation noise goes unspecified entirely! But compare the sound of a Nakamichi recorder with any other. You'll hear clarity of reproduction that is unique—music with detail! Experience Nakamichi sound today—at your Nakamichi dealer.

Nakamichi

To learn more about Nakamichi's unique technology, write directly to:
Nakamichi U.S.A. Corporation, 1101 Colorado Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90401.

SPECIAL BONUS SUPPLEMENT

CONTENTS/AUGUST 1981

# VIDEO TODAY

& TOMORROW

# 1982 Video Equipment Preview

**Exciting home video equipment was unveiled at the recent Consumer Electronics Show (for trade only), where hundreds of new products ranging from projection television sets to video disc players to ultralight portable VCRs to color cameras of both great sophistication and utter simplicity were shown for the first time. And releases announced by companies specializing in video disc and video cassette programming indicate that substantial software catalogs will be available in all formats—VHS and Beta, LaserVision, CED, and VHD—by late this year. These developments and others will be covered in our next several issues, beginning this month with an overview of new equipment, with an emphasis on VCRs. (Page A4)**

**Also In This Issue**

# A Dish on Every Roof?

## How the FCC's decision on direct satellite broadcasting will affect you.

Anyone willing to spend $6,000 to $10,000 for his own backyard dish antenna is certainly serious about video. And, judging from the amount of reader response, many of you have the money and enthusiasm to take satellite TV reception seriously. But suppose a home dish antenna cost just $100 instead of $10,000? And what if it were small enough to be mounted on the roof of your house like a standard TV antenna? A revolution in home video viewing would occur. In fact, in about five years that revolution—with ramifications that we can only guess at now—is expected to explode into reality.

The concept—known generically as direct broadcasting service, or DBS—employs high-power relay satellites capable of transmitting a signal strong enough to be picked up by a dish antenna just 2½ feet in diameter. Its chief proponent is Satellite Television Corporation, a subsidiary of Comsat. The FCC recently gave the company permission to pursue the venture, sending seismic shock waves through the broadcasting and cable distribution industry. The commission unanimously ruled that DBS is "in the public interest" in spite of intense lobbying by the major TV networks, cable operators, and trade associations to block endorsement. The FCC even went so far as to put operators of microwave communications equipment on notice that they may have to give up the frequency band (12-gigahertz) that STC proposes to use for its satellite transmissions.

The complexity of the first phase of the DBS program alone (which reportedly will cost STC $400 million to complete) is enough to invoke the full weight of Murphy's Law. A satellite must be inserted in stable, equatorial orbit. Comsat already has applied for launch reservations for two satellites (one a spare) aboard Nasa's space shuttle.

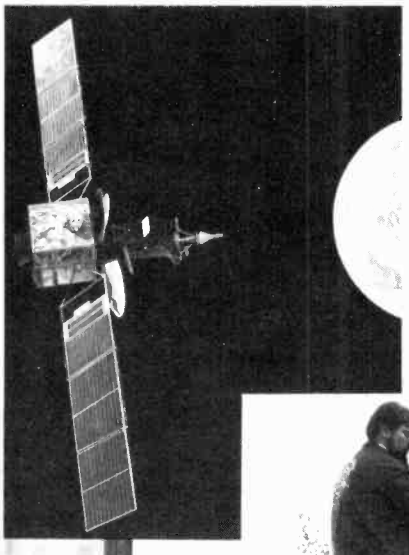
**The first satellite** will be capable of broadcasting to an area roughly corresponding to the Eastern Time zone, but long-range plans call for a total of four satellites and two spares with the capacity of covering all fifty states. Subscribers will be offered the small dish antenna for $100 to $200 and pay a monthly fee ranging from $15 to $25 for a small receiver/decoder box to be placed in the home, allowing unscrambled reception of three channels programmed to satisfy a diversity of tastes. Programs will be transmitted to the satellites from STC's broadcast center in Las Vegas, and backup transmission facilities will be built in Santa Paula, California.

STC itself is rather sanguine in assessing the impact of direct broadcasting in its first phase. The Comsat annual report states: "A significant

*(Continued on page A10)*

**Chain of Events in the Proposed Direct Satellite Broadcast Service**

Live or videotaped picture **1** is relayed from television studio via one of four high-power satellites **2** in orbit above the Earth back to small, low-cost, 2½-foot antenna dishes **3** that you can easily mount on your roof, resulting in very high quality TV images **4** Comsat's DBS service is set for 1985.



2.

4.

1.

3.

# Now you can zoom in on the "blast" when you zoom in on the brass.

Now there's a zoom-lens video camera that also zooms in on sound. It's JVC's GX-88 camera with our super-directional MZ-500 zoom microphone.

For normal shooting, just leave the microphone in its omni-directional mode. But as you zoom in on a subject, you can gradually increase the microphone's sensitivity and directivity. So as you zoom in on the trumpet player, for example, you can pick out the trumpet's "blast" from the other instruments. Just as if you were marching alongside the trumpet player.

The GX-88's lens also offers macro shooting so you can capture subjects as close as 3 centimeters with dramatic clarity and detail. And an electronic viewfinder shows you the exact image you're recording. It even plays back your tape for on-the-spot checks of shooting results. There's also light-exposure and white-balance indication. Or if you prefer, the GX-88 will set white balance, iris and backlight compensation automatically.

Enjoy sound that's as clear and exciting as your picture with JVC's GX-88 camera and MZ-500 microphone. They're at your JVC Vidstar dealer right now.

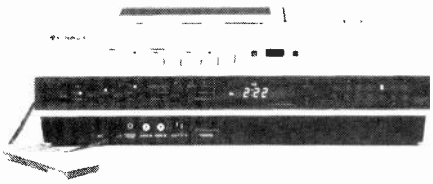
SIMULATED TV PICTURE


JVC®

US JVC CORP
41 Slater Drive, Elmwood Park, NJ 07407
JVC CANADA INC., Scarborough, Ont

# Special '82 Preview

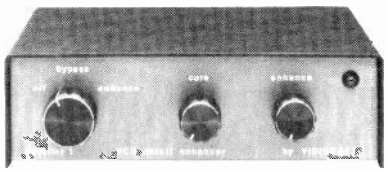
**Twice a year — in January and June — manufacturers of video equipment unveil their latest models at the industry's Consumer Electronics Show. This month and next we'll preview many of the wares shown at the Summer CES. Some caveats: Not all of the models may be immediately available, and prices may change before the equipment reaches local video stores.**



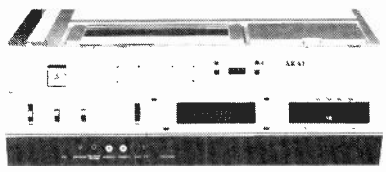
**The first video offering** from Kenwood—widely known for its audio products—is the KV-901 VHS-format VCR. Features include 2- and 6-hour recording capability along with 2-, 4-, and 6-hour playback. VueSearch is a high-speed visual monitoring system that scans the tape in both directions at up to seven times normal speed in the 2-hour mode, and up to twenty-one times normal speed in the 6-hour mode. Recording of eight events during a two-week period on one or more channels is possible. The KV-901 incorporates two pairs of video heads, a VHF/UHF fourteen-channel electronic tuner, an auto-cancel system that releases the PAUSE control if it is engaged for more than five minutes, and an automatic channel-lock to prevent accidental channel changes during recording. A ten-function remote control (TV CHANNEL ADVANCE, PLAY, RECORD, AUDIO DUB, FAST FORWARD, REWIND, FORWARD and REVERSE VIEW SEARCH, PAUSE, and STOP) is offered as an option. No price has been established.

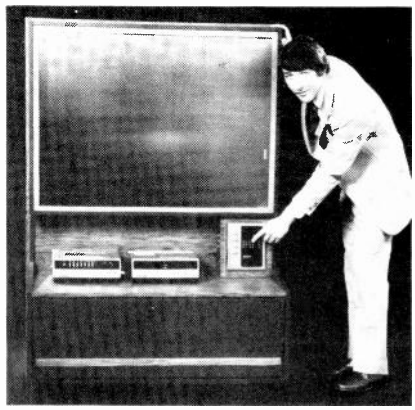
**A portable tuner** weighing less than three pounds is being marketed by Technicolor, Inc., as a companion to its quarter-inch, seven-pound VCR, which was introduced several months ago. The 5112 tuner ($150) features all-channel UHF/VHF tuning, automatic frequency control, and remote pause control.

**Improved recording,** both off the air and from a video camera, is said to be possible with the Detailer I from Vidicraft, Inc. The device is designed to make better tape copies or to improve direct viewing. A built-in distribution amplifier allows you to make up to three tape copies at once without any loss in signal level; high-frequency picture information is boosted, not only increasing detail and sharpness, but reducing the signal losses that typically degrade second-generation tapes. A CORE control keeps noise level, or snow—a common side effect of the image enhancement—to a minimum. Cost is $149.



**A VHS home VCR** featuring four heads is the latest addition to Akai's extensive video line. The VS-1 records in the 2- and 6-hour modes and offers 2-, 4-, and 6-hour playback. (Newer VCRs no longer offer the 4-hour record option, but many people have programs recorded in that mode in their video tape libraries.) Other features of the VS-1 include eight-event, fourteen-day programmability, bidirectional scan at seven times normal speed, automatic rewind, sound dubbing, memory rewind, and air-damped cassette ejection. It can also be used with a ten-function remote control. The deck will be available this fall; price has not been set.



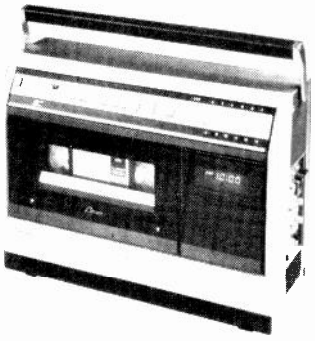


**A state-of-the-art projection television set** has been introduced by Sylvania. Called the Superscreen, the 50-inch rear-projection system is said to offer excellent image contrast under bright ambient lighting conditions. The screen is capable of resolving 330 lines of broadcast television and 410 lines of direct video input. According to Sylvania, you can see a high-quality picture from any position within an unusually wide viewing arc of 90 degrees. Features include an infrared remote control, Quick-View between any two channels, and station scan through any of twenty preprogrammed channels. The Superscreen is cable-ready, with capacity for 105 channels, each fine-tuned via a microcomputer. Its two-way stereo speaker system has two 8-inch woofers and two 3-inch tweeters and separate bass and treble controls. The chestnut-grain laminate cabinet is designed with a shelf for a VCR or video disc player. The price is $3,500.

**A wide range of functions** is offered in JVC's new HR-7300 HVS VCR. The deck records in 2- and 6-hour modes and plays back in 2, 4, or 6 hours. Included is a four-head record/playback system, shuttle search at seven times normal speed, and two-week/eight-event programmability. A quartz-lock oscillator controls motor speed. The

HR-7300 also provides an air-damped cassette holder, audio dubbing, automatic channel lock, auto rewind at tape end, PAUSE release after five minutes, and a ten-function remote control.

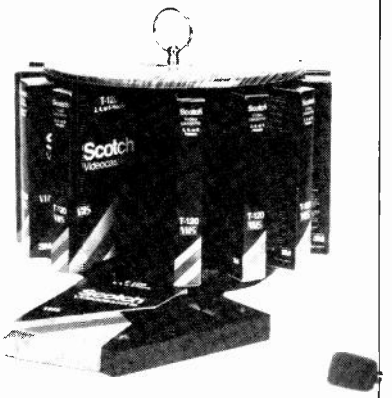
**The first portable VHS VCR** to contain a tuner/timer has been unveiled by Sharp Electronics. The VC-2250 ($1,000) has a 2-hour record/playback capability and a built-in programmable, twelve-position, electronic VHF/UHF 24-hour tuner/timer. A self-contained removable AC power pack is interchangeable with an optional rechargeable battery pack. Among other features are VISUAL SEARCH at five times normal speed (in the forward mode only), STILL FRAME, front loading, air-damped cassette system, and soft-touch solenoid controls. A built-in carrying handle and shoulder strap are provided; an optional carrying case is available.



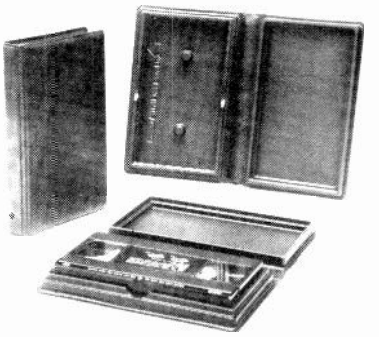
**Prevention of static buildup** on your television screen is the aim of BIB's new VE-15 liquid ($8.00). The antistatic cleaning fluid, applied with a soft cloth to the screen, retards the attraction of airborne contaminants.


**Among the many features** on Mitsubishi's HS-310U VHS VCR ($1,350) are speed-search (nine times the normal rate) and one-third and one-tenth speed slow motion in the EP (4-hour) mode. The HS-310U is a 2-, 4-, 6-hour unit with fourteen-function remote control and is programmable for eight events over a two-week period. Random direct mode selection, freeze-frame indexing, and panel lock during recording are also provided.

**Video cassette carrousels** in both the VHS ($26) and Beta ($25) formats are available from the Hagerstown Leather Goods Company. Each carrousel, which is constructed of wood-grain vinyl, holds fifteen cassettes.

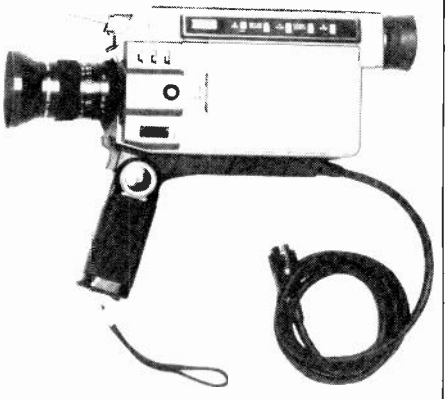



**A new name—Dynamicron**—will be used by Sony for its half-inch Beta video tapes in all world markets. Packaging of Betatapes, available in L-125, L-250, L-500, L-750, and L-830 lengths, has been redesigned. In addition, Sony has introduced a line of Dynamicron tapes called High Grade. This new formulation is claimed to improve chroma signal-to-noise ratio by 3 dB, and to better video noise, RF output, audio S/N, and audio sensitivity all by 2 dB, while reducing dropouts by 50%.



**Custom video cassette holders** are available from PPS in both VHS and Beta formats. Each holder accepts a single cassette and features special hub locks and a clear plastic pocket on the outside for indexing. Price: $3.00 each.

**Remote transport controls** have been built into Sanyo's DSC-450 color video camera. This versatile model ($1,195) has a 1½-inch electronic viewfinder, a 6:1 two-speed power zoom with auto iris control, and a telescoping unidirectional boom mike. LEDs in the viewfinder show PAUSE, RECORD, or LOW BATTERY; separate LEDs indicate exposure status. The transport control panel—with RECORD, PLAY, FORWARD SEARCH, REVERSE SEARCH, PAUSE, STOP, and STILL FRAME—is designed specifically for connection to Sanyo's VPR-4800 VCR; however, via an optional VCA-45 camera adapter, it can be used with any other VCR. The panel—located on the side of the camera near the top—allows you to have complete control over VCR operation while taping an event.



**Want More Information?**
If you'd like further information about any of the equipment or companies mentioned in the pages of VIDEO TODAY, write us at 825 7th Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

# What Makes Your TV Set Tick PART II

Subtle performance differences that greatly influence the quality of your receiver's picture.

by Edward J. Foster

*(This is the second in a series of articles describing how your TV set works and pointing out how to use this information to get the best possible picture.)*

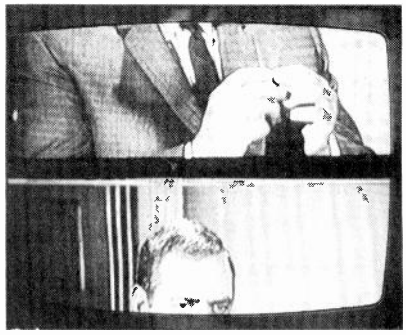
Knowing how your television set works can be of benefit to you in several ways. When you shop for a set, you can spot the subtle performance differences that separate superior from inferior models. And, if something goes wrong later, you can point the repair shop in the right direction, probably saving some money and reducing the chance that you'll be charged for something that isn't faulty. We'll describe some sources of image distortion after giving you a brief recap of the ingredients comprising a TV picture.

The picture is "painted" on the screen by a fast-moving beam of electrons that causes a phosphorescent material coated on the inside of the tube to glow wherever it is struck. A series of fine horizontal lines is created as the beam is deflected rapidly from left to right and, more slowly, from the top of the screen to the bottom. In a U.S. black-and-white set, 15,750 lines are painted each second, and it takes the beam 1/60 second to make one top-to-bottom sweep. This constitutes one "field" of 262½ lines.

Since each line is on a slight angle and lies slightly below the one above it, the beam next returns to the top of the screen, starts halfway across, and fills in the blanks. Thus, two "fields" constitute one complete "frame," and there are 30 frames per second. European TV operates on 50-Hz line current and employs 50 fields (25 frames) per second. In both cases, the frame rate is sufficiently high so that we perceive continuity of motion and for the most part are not bothered by flicker.

The strength of the electron beam is controlled (or modulated) by changing the potential on a control grid in the picture tube. The stronger the beam, the brighter (whiter) the spot is at any instant. The control-grid voltage changes very rapidly in accordance with the video information being transmitted by the station. Thus, as the beam races across the screen, its strength continually changes to create the degree of brightness needed at each spot to compose the image. The greater the bandwidth of the video channel transmitted, received, and applied to the control grid, the better the horizontal resolution becomes. Vertical resolution is determined by the number of lines that the electron beam creates in one frame and by the accuracy with which the two fields "interlace."

**At the end** of each horizontal scanning line, the electron beam quickly snaps from the right edge to the left edge of the screen. During this movement, a horizontal sync pulse transmitted by the station turns off the beam so you don't see the retrace. This pulse also synchronizes the start of each trace in the receiver with that at the transmitter. Proper synchronization is required so that the electron beam precisely



**Misadjustment or malfunction of the vertical-hold control results in a black bar.**

hits the specific point on the screen that corresponds to the video information being transmitted. Otherwise, the picture would be scrambled.

Similarly, at the end of each field, a vertical sync pulse signals the electron beam to return to the top of the screen and start the next one. Although this pulse is much longer than the horizontal one and really constitutes many horizontal lines of information, it is off the screen out of sight in a properly adjusted receiver. If you set the vertical-hold control incorrectly, the black bar you see roll through the picture is, in fact, the vertical-sync signal.

Only the start of each horizontal line and each vertical field is synchronized with the transmitter. Once the beam is in motion, it is up to the set's horizontal-drive circuitry to assure that it is hitting the correct portion of the screen at each instant during the trace. The beam should trace each line at a constant speed. If it doesn't—say, it starts slowly and then increases speed to complete

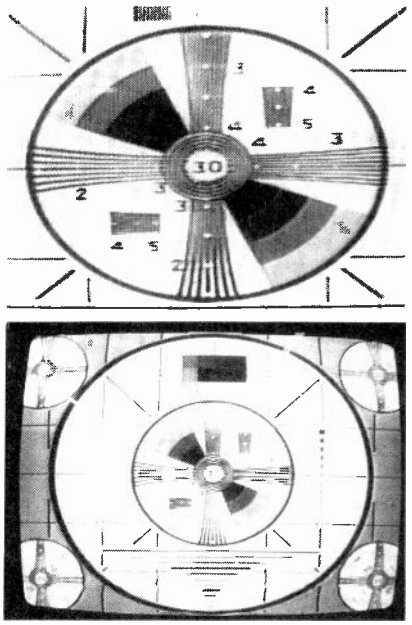
**Distorted, elongated images often are due to vertical linearity circuit problems.**

the trace in time—the picture will be distorted horizontally. In such a case, the picture would be squeezed on the left and stretched on the right.

Similarly, once the vertical sweep is started by its sync signal, the set must run on its own for the next 1/60

second and assure that the beam is placed vertically at the proper point. If vertical linearity is off, faces appear with flat heads and elongated jaws or vice versa.

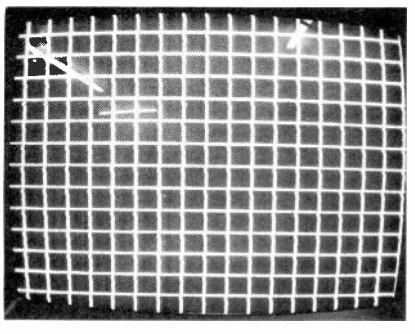
**The actual signals** that the set creates to sweep the beam are quite complex. Since the screen is relatively flat and the beam is emitted from a point in the neck of the picture tube, the *angular* rate of sweep must vary to keep the *linear* velocity across the screen constant. Sets differ in their ability to assure good hor-



**Test patterns show TV sets with poor (top) and good (bottom) linearity, which is an important consideration when buying a set.**

izontal and vertical linearity, and this is one important consideration when making a purchase. The CBS "eye" is a good quick check. If the set's linearity is off (at least over the portion of the screen occupied by the eye), the CBS logo will be elliptical or distorted, rather than round.

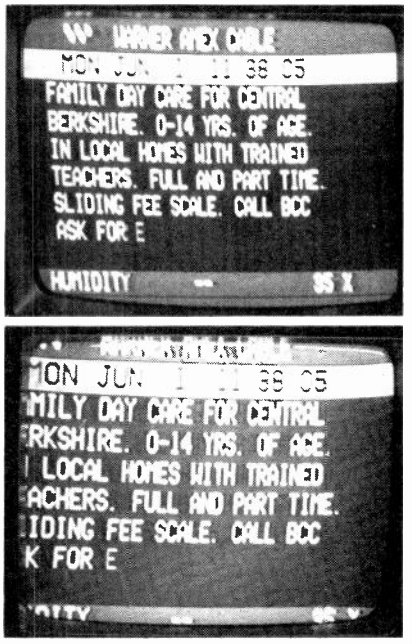
A crosshatch of horizontal and



**Crosshatch patterns reveal "pincushion distortion," or a bending of straight lines.**

vertical lines is a good check for "pincushion" distortion, another form of nonlinearity. As a "test pattern," you might try the stage set from the *Hollywood Squares* show. Some bending of the lines, especially in the corners of the screen, is virtually inevitable, but the straighter they are, the better. Uniform spacing between the lines (in both directions) indicates good horizontal and vertical linearity. Line patterns are so useful in checking picture distortion that service technicians use crosshatch generators to adjust the internal controls.

Many sets have partially unregulated power supplies. This means that some of the internal voltages will change when power-line voltage does. Since picture size is determined by the voltages applied to the picture tube, line-voltage fluctuations may cause the image to shrink and expand. In less expensive receivers, the electron beam may purposely be set to overscan the screen under nominal line-voltage condi-




**Poorly regulated line voltage causes overscan, where much of image is off-screen. Above: Zero (top) and 20% (bottom) overscan.**

tions. When the line voltage drops, the screen remains filled without a telltale black border around the edges. Excessive overscan, however, results in an annoying loss of the picture edges. A set with well-regulated internal voltages needs less overscan. The picture may be slightly smaller, but it's all there. Furthermore, with regulated supplies, the picture won't twitch and shrink momentarily when a heavy appliance (refrigerator, furnace, etc.) goes on in the house. Again, this is something to look for.

**Everything that applies** to black-and-white receivers holds true for the more complicated requirements of color TV. But an additional factor—how we perceive color—comes into play. Again, the idea is to create a workable compromise at the lowest possible cost.

Fortunately, we do not see things the way we hear them. While the ear can *analyze* sound and distinguish individual instruments in an orchestra from their overtone structure, the eye has no similar analytic ability. To artificially re-create the sound of an orchestra with electronic tones, we'd need an almost unlimited number of them. In contrast, while the eye recognizes a wide range of colors by the specific frequency or wavelength of the light, it is not necessary to generate that specific wavelength in order for the eye to perceive a particular color. In fact, you can satisfactorily reproduce a wide range of colors simply by superimposing three monochromatic (single-color) light sources: red, green, and blue. Manipulating the relative intensity of these three colors creates the same effect as if we were seeing monochromatic light of a different color (wavelength).

Color-TV systems capitalize on this ability of the eye to synthesize most colors. In fact, the first such system, which CBS developed and which became a standard in the early 1950s, made direct use of this principle. It employed high-speed synchronized color wheels at the camera and at the TV receiver. Red, blue, and green information was transmitted respectively in sequential fields. First, a red filter would be interposed between the subject and the camera so that the information picked up during that frame corresponded to only the red content in the scene. In the next two frames, green and blue information was transmitted in sequence. The optical filters were formed into a color wheel that rotated in front of the camera in synchronism with the vertical frame rate. Another color wheel, synchronized with the one at the camera, rotated in front of a black-and-white picture tube in the receiver. During the frame in which

*(Continued on page A9)*

# The Coming Revolution in TV Sound

You'll soon be hearing more lifelike sound from your TV set—perhaps even in stereo. by Robin Lanier

There's no question about it: The state of television sound is dismal. Whether it is transmitted as part of a standard broadcast or reproduced from a video disc or tape source, the sound you hear from your set is noisy and unexciting. But this doesn't have to be the case. In fact, forces already in motion will upgrade TV sound measurably within the near future. One of the most eagerly anticipated improvements is *stereo* broadcast TV sound.

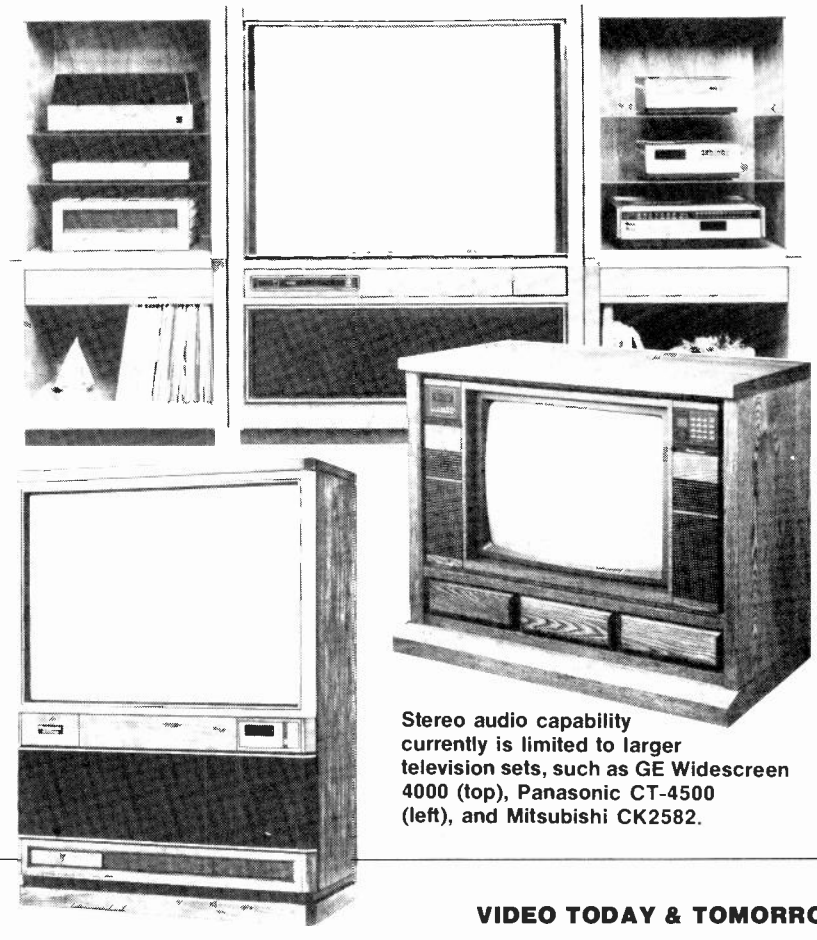
The impetus for better audio for television is much the same as it was for FM radio. AM was the only format in town until improved recording techniques led to better records, thereby necessitating better methods of reproducing them. Since the beginning, the primary source of television programming has been standard over-the-air transmissions. Broadcasters made no special attempts to transmit quality sound because no public demand existed. Now public awareness of the need for quality TV audio is emerging.

But why, specifically, has television sound traditionally been so poor? Until the advent of satellite transmissions, networks sent all TV programs to their affiliates via coaxial cable (owned by the Bell System). When the audio signal left the network station for distribution, it was of generally good quality. However, by the time it arrived at the affiliate, it had deteriorated substantially, because the cables were not capable of carrying high-quality signals. Recognizing that the signals being transmitted by the affiliates to American homes were of low quality, manufacturers of TV sets saw no need to incorporate sophisticated sound-reproduction sections in their products. And today the majority of receivers still have low-grade audio amplifiers and speakers.

Also, broadcasters compress the audio signal at the transmitter, increasing the amount of noise and squeezing the dynamic range so that it is virtually useless for carrying music. And the audio and video signals are sent through the TV receiver on the same channel, generating even more noise. This "interchannel sound" technique, originally instituted to lower the cost of the receivers, combines the audio with several noise sources from which it cannot be separated. (Now there is a technique called "split sound," whereby the audio signal passes through a separate intermediate-frequency amplifier. The development of low-cost integrated circuits makes this more elaborate and efficient electronic design increasingly cost-effective.)

Traditionally, when there has been a need for quality sound reproduction, the networks have arranged a simulcast through stereo FM stations. With a simulcast, you watch the picture on your television set and listen to the sound on your stereo audio system. This setup can be somewhat bothersome.

Why the increasing interest in better TV sound? One of the primary reasons is that the "boob tube" no



**Stereo audio capability currently is limited to larger television sets, such as GE Widescreen 4000 (top), Panasonic CT-4500 (left), and Mitsubishi CK2582.**

*The author is senior editor for* Broadcast Management/Engineering *magazine, for which he has written extensively on stereo television.*

longer is merely the end of a signal path that begins in a television studio; it is the final element in a home video system. As such, it reproduces a number of video sources—discs, tapes, satellite transmissions, network broadcasts, cable TV, home computers, etc. And while some of these sources require no increase in sound quality, some demand it.

**Recently, the potential** for quality television audio has expanded, both because of satellite transmission, which eliminates the ground cable link, and because—with a certain amount of prompting from the three commercial networks—the Bell System has developed a far better sound-transmission system. With Bell's system, called diplex transmission, two separate video and audio channels go out on one channel over Bell's coax cable and microwave relay circuits. Although the diplex system is sending only a mono audio signal now, it is designed to handle a second audio channel for stereo whenever that becomes desirable. The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) has come up with a similar audio transmission system, but goes a step further; the way it places the two signals for transmission anticipates the arrival of digital audio.

There is still one link that needs substantial refinement before high-quality sound will be a reality: better adjustment and operation of television transmitters. Progress is evident in this area, as the Electronic Industries Association (EIA) has established a committee of experts to study the technical problems involved with upgrading TV audio transmissions as well as to evaluate proposed systems to add stereo sound.

**Currently three** such systems are undergoing on-the-air and laboratory tests. One originally was developed by NHK, the Japanese national broadcasting system, and another comes from Telesonics Corporation, a Chicago research company. The third, the most elaborate of the three, is from the Zenith Radio Corporation. The EIA committee hopes to complete the tests this summer and forward its report to the Federal Communications Commission, which will make a choice. Though the FCC usually is quite slow in promulgating decisions, advocates of

*(Continued on page A10)*

**TV SET TICK** *(continued)*

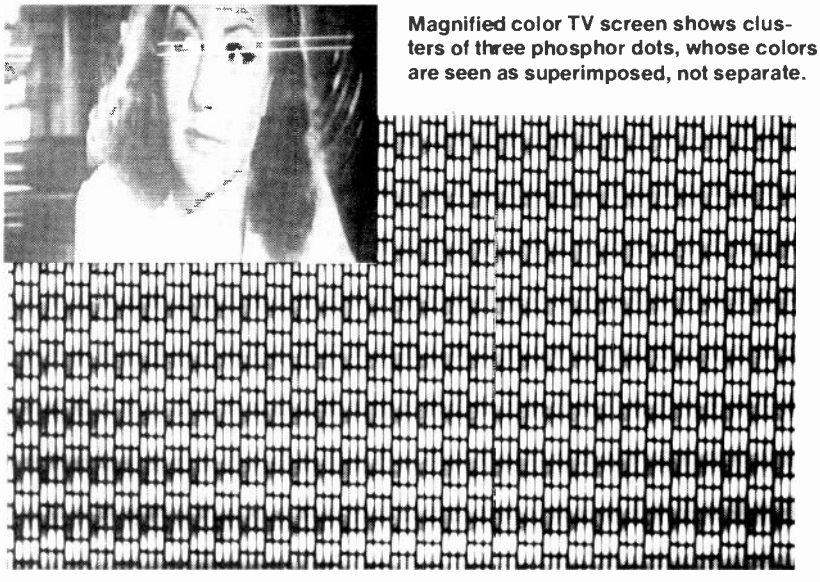
red information was being transmitted, the red sector of the wheel was in front of the tube, and the viewer saw only red information. The other two colors followed in close succession, and the eye combined the results into a single full-color image.

**The results** with the CBS system could be excellent, although it did have a few foibles. Fast-moving, bright objects could produce smeary color if the object moved a sufficient distance between fields so that the eye perceived the individual colors rather than blending them. Also, light-emitting phosphors have a certain "persistence." After the electron beam is turned off, they continue to emit light for a brief period. Thus, the red image pattern might not have decayed fully before the green image pattern appeared on the tube, etc. This tended to prevent good color saturation. The field rate had to be much greater than in conventional black and white in order to eliminate flicker and have the eye respond to the combined image. Thus, the CBS system was not compatible with black-and-white broadcasts. This was its most serious drawback, and so it never became widely accepted. Its simplicity, reliability, and excellent resolution has found it many applications in the medical, commercial, and space programs, however.

Color TV as we know it came with the 1954 NTSC (National Television System Committee) system. Of great help was the development of a picture tube capable of three-color operation. While there are exceptions, most color picture tubes have three independent electron guns within the neck of the tube. Each gun has its own heated cathode to emit electrons, its own control grid to modulate the intensity of the beam, and a means of focusing the electrons into a tiny beam that strike the phosphor at the correct point. Three different phosphors coat the inner face of the tube. One of these emits red light when struck by electrons, another blue light, and the third, green light.

The phosphors are not deposited randomly; they are in a very specific pattern. In many tubes, each tiny segment on the face actually is composed of three dots of phosphor—one for each color. (In other tubes, the three phosphors are applied as triplets of closely spaced parallel lines.) The three electron beams are focused to pass through holes in a "shadow mask" placed just behind the phosphorescent screen. Each beam must be controlled with extreme precision so that the three pass through the same hole in the mask, diverge ever so slightly, and impinge only upon their designated phosphors. Since the phosphor dots (or lines) are so tiny and close together, the eye does not see the individual colors but rather reacts to the superposition of the three light sources. By controlling the strength of each electron beam separately, the intensity of each of the "pure" colors can be changed to produce the particular combination that the eye perceives as the desired color.

We'll explore further how all this is achieved next month.



**Magnified color TV screen shows clusters of three phosphor dots, whose colors are seen as superimposed, not separate.**

**TV SOUND** *(continued)*

stereo TV sound are hoping that a system will be chosen before the end of 1982.

Improvement in television sound, whether it concerns quality per se or a new stereo technique, will clearly require a whole new generation of TV receivers with built-in stereo circuitry and with more sophisticated audio amplifiers and speakers than is the norm. Some companies already offer sets with separate speaker elements, such as woofers and tweeters. And while stereo TV transmissions may be some time off, there are a few stereo programming sources, such as video discs and music programs transmitted via cable-TV channels.

## Stereo TV in Japan

While stereo broadcast TV in the U.S. is still over the horizon, the Japanese have been living with it for some time. Bayly Neal of Sylvania Corporation, who has spent some time in Japan researching audience opinion regarding better television sound, recently told me that a baseball game in stereo, common in Japanese programming, has extra vividness. The crowd sounds are all around the viewer, and the voices of the players and the crack of the bat out in front, moving from side to side as the players move. It is a more intense experience; the Japanese like it a great deal, he reports. They have also adopted stereo for drama, for many cops-and-robbers shows, and even for interview programs.

Those of you who are interested in improving television sound—particularly in pushing for stereo—can make your support known by writing the Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20554. —R.L.

**INFOCUS** *(continued)*

market opportunity exists in areas where consumers do not have access to cable television, including less densely populated regions where cable television is not economically practical and where broadcast TV reception is relatively poor. . . . 4.6 million households receive fewer than three broadcast signals, and 1.2 million U.S. households receive no TV signals."

Nowhere in the report does Comsat hint at the possibility of mounting dish antennas on apartment buildings or the likelihood that current or prospective cable subscribers will opt instead for the simple hookup and high-quality reception DBS is said to deliver. But judging from the response of the cable industry and broadcast networks to the FCC endorsement, such possibilities are very much on *their* minds.

The cable industry is attempting to dampen enthusiasm for DBS by pointing out its skimpy initial offerings—just three channels, compared to some 200 on cable by 1985. But already the FCC decision has spurred other companies to actively pursue the DBS concept. For example, Direct Broadcasting Services Corporation says it will provide free programming to people who purchase a dish antenna and receiver. Of course, "free" in television spells commercials, which is how the company plans to generate its revenues.

It may take time for people to feel comfortable with a dish instead of rabbit ears, but both the commercial broadcast networks and the cable industry—which currently connects into 25% of American homes that have TVs—will feel the impact. For them, it will be a headache; for viewers, it will mean an affordable, high-quality program source.

—Peter Dobbin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# VideoMovies

by Tony Galluzzo

## Sony Sees the Trees and the Forest with High-Clarity Video

When will video quality equal, or even approach, that of film? Those of us who work with motion-picture film on a more than casual basis have asked this question for years. A number of people obviously have been listening, notably those who work for Sony and NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation).

Sony tells us it can now deliver 1,125 scanning lines—more than twice the picture information currently available using our NTSC standard of 525. The prototype high-definition video system (HDVS) is said to approach in color and resolution the quality one normally associates with 35-millimeter film. Francis Ford Coppola (director of *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now*) was so impressed, according to Tokyo informants, he immediately put in his order for the system and plans to begin production on a video movie before the end of the year.

Sony's HDVS maintains the standard 60 fields per second but raises the video bandwidth to an incredible 30 MHz. (The NTSC system, currently used in Japan and the U.S., requires a maximum bandwidth of 4.2 MHz.) It improves not only resolution and color, but image format as well. While today's television picture is only slightly rectangular (a ratio of 1:1.33), the HDVS is capable of expanding to 1:1.85 (regular widescreen) and even 1:2.35 (CinemaScope). With this system it may finally be possible to watch a video version of an expertly photographed feature film and actually be pleased—well, almost. Purists will probably find something to grumble about.

**Research for the system** began in 1968, when NHK conducted its first tests, and it's NHK's technology that has made a wider and more detailed video picture possible. But Sony has now put it in practical form by devising cameras, recorders, monitors, and large-screen projection equipment. It has yet to decide on the price and when to enter the marketplace.

There is some uncertainty about how HDVS will affect current and proposed hardware. A Sony technical representative recently told us that, although the company's new Profeel monitor wouldn't become obsolete, he was not quite sure it would be compatible.

At this moment, images videotaped with HDVS would probably have to be transferred to 35-millimeter film for large-scale projection in theaters. Spokesmen in Japan insist, however, that developing technology can lead to large-format video presentation in the near future.

One thing is certain: To become the TV broadcasting standard, the 1,125-line signal system will have to be approved by the Federal Communications Commission. Pending that, closed-circuit operations should be able to use the new equipment. (As we went to press, Matsushita unveiled its own high resolution system.)

## Sony's Slim and Sophisticated Portable

The lightest, smallest, and most sophisticated Betamax portable may also get the prize as the featherweight among half-inch VCRs. Sony's Betapak SL-2000, to be introduced in the fall, weighs about 9¼ pounds, with rechargeable battery. Until now, the lightest recorders using half-inch video tape tipped the scales at about 11 pounds—among them, JVC's and Hitachi's VHS-format portables.

Measuring 12 by 8½ by 3 inches, the SL-2000 incorporates such advances as the Betascan II high-speed search system and Videola, which allows you to review material in normal or slow-speed playback, forward or reverse. Sony says this accurate picture search enables you to achieve "no jump" edits between shots. Using Sony's HVC-2200 camera, you can see the image on the electronic viewfinder; then press REVIEW on the recorder, and the last two seconds of recorded tape will rewind. When you start shooting again, you're rewarded with a clean cut between shots. This works in conjunction with a new timing phase circuit to eliminate most picture noise and distortion.

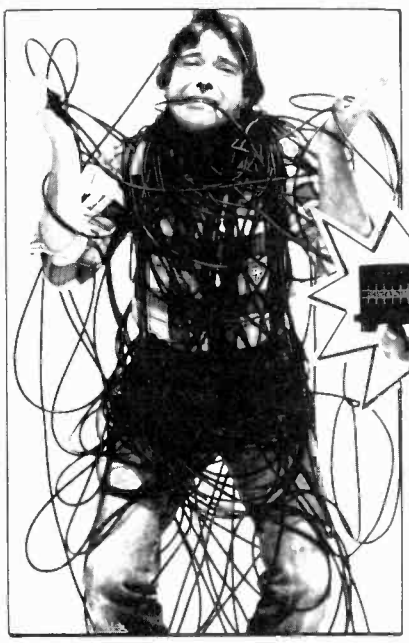
Smallest Sony in use

Sony's slimming program involves a size reduction and integration of the high-density head drum, four newly developed motors, and a new U-loading tape thread system.

A single-button indexing control automatically advances or reverses the tape to a preset position. The machine will record in Beta II and III modes and play back in all three automatically. Indicators register Beta I, II, or III playback and record, dew condensation, and tape-run direction.

The HVC-2200 can be powered by using the accessory AC-220 power adapter, a rechargeable battery pack, or a car battery adapter cord. A compatible tuner/timer, TT-2000, has the same silhouette as the recorder and is primed for two-week, four-event programming. And armchair, pushbutton fans will appreciate the remote-control unit, including RECORDING PLAYBACK, FAST FORWARD, REWIND, BETASCAN, VIDEOLA, FREEZE FRAME, and PAUSE. There is no word on prices at the moment.

Sony's Betapak SL-2000 VCR/tuner timer unit



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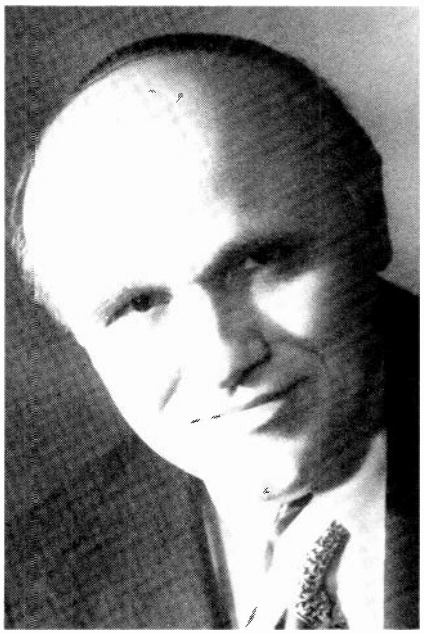
# Will the Real Colin Wilson Please Stand Up?

## Faced with an identity crisis not of his own making, a conductor finds that his work under another name is less sweet.

by John Canarina



WHITESTONE PHOTO

*Colin Wilson (alias John Canarina)*

A FEW YEARS AGO, a small California label called Aries Records launched a series of releases devoted to symphonies and other works of the British composer Havergal Brian. One, in particular, caught my attention—a recording of his Symphony No. 19 by the Wales Symphony Orchestra under Colin Wilson (LP 1611). This was most puzzling, because I had conducted the work's premiere in 1976, and that first performance was also its last.

Brian, not exactly a household name in this country, has achieved something approaching cult status in his native land, where there is even a Havergal Brian Society. This extraordinary composer, born in Staffordshire, died in Shoreham in 1972 at the age of ninety-six. He wrote no fewer than thirty-two symphonies—the last twenty-one after he was eighty! His First Symphony, called the *Gothic* (heard in America last year in a National Public Radio broadcast from London), outdoes the Mahler Eighth in the number of performers required, both instrumental and vocal; his Second calls for an orchestra with sixteen horns. These and similar extravagant requirements, plus Brian's reluctance to promote his own music, have militated against performance of his works, even in England.

In recent years, the former BBC producer Robert Simpson, himself a distinguished composer, has been largely responsible for awakening interest in Brian in Great Britain. Through his efforts, all the symphonies have been heard on the BBC, and in 1976, the centennial of Brian's birth, several received their first performances. As a guest conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in Glasgow that year, I was invited to give the premieres of Symphonies Nos. 19 and 25 (both of which utilize twelve percussion players).

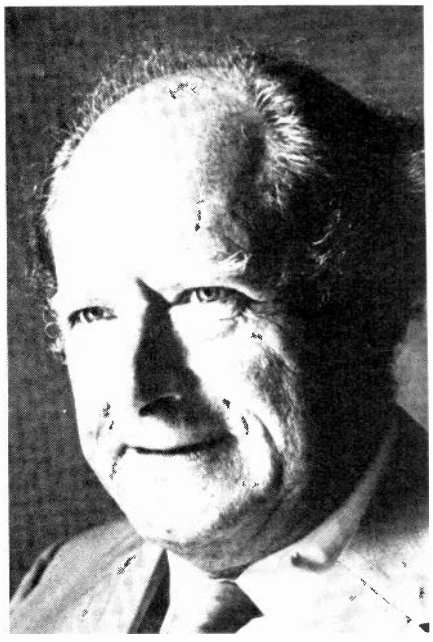
The orchestral material was prepared from the scores especially for these performances, since no parts existed. Brian's manuscript was difficult to decipher; the transcription process was quite excruciating, and many errors found their way into the parts. The scores themselves were not free of mistakes, for Brian would often neglect to write all the accidentals in unison passages, marking them in one part only. Malcolm MacDonald (not to be confused with the English critic of that name) provided invaluable assistance in the rehearsals of these performances as well as in the recording sessions for broadcast. Author of a 1972 monograph (Triad Press, London) covering all the symphonies and many other works, he is undoubtedly the world's leading authority on Brian's music. I benefited greatly from his insights into Brian's peculiar notational process and the interpretation and style appropriate to his music.

I found these works strangely compelling, and while one could detect echoes of such disparate composers as Hindemith and Sibelius, with a touch of Elgar and Vaughan Williams thrown in, a powerful and distinctive personality emerged that could be identified only as Brian. Yet neither piece has had a subsequent performance or recording; following the premieres, the performance material became the property of the BBC and has not been used since.

Thus, I was most interested to come upon the Aries series, particularly the Symphony No. 19. It takes no great knowledge of the orchestral world to realize that, while a BBC Welsh Symphony and a Welsh Philharmonia exist, there is no Wales Symphony Orchestra; nor is there a conductor—at least of any wide notoriety—named Colin Wilson. And sure enough, a comparison of the Aries record with the BBC tape reveals that this is indeed the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra conducted by one John Canarina. Setting aside my initial disappointment that Aries did not go so far as to dub me Sir Colin Wilson, I investigated further and found, with the help of information supplied by the BBC, that such conductors as Sir Charles Groves, Norman del Mar, and Edward Downes all share my Wilsonian identity. (Groves has, in fact, made legitimate commercial recordings of Brian's Eighth and Ninth Symphonies for EMI, unfortunately unavailable domestically.)

The entire project would doubtless have been too exhausting for Wilson to undertake alone, even with his several alter egos, so Aries has come up with other conductors as well. No. 28 (LP 1607) purports to be played by the Hamburg Philharmonic (which does exist, as the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester, Hamburg) under Horst Werner (who does not exist, at least as a conductor). This work, too, has been played only once, and I happen to have been present at the BBC recording session in 1973—truly a unique event in the history of music, as the New Philharmonia Orchestra played a work by a ninety-one-year-old composer under a ninety-one-year-old

*John Canarina conducts and teaches conducting at Drake University's College of Fine Arts.*



*Colin Wilson (alias Norman del Mar)*

*Colin Wilson (alias Sir Charles Groves)*

*Colin Wilson (alias Edward Downes)*

conductor, Leopold Stokowski. This is the performance to be found on Aries. Though Stokowski needed help to and from the podium, he needed none while on it and directed a performance of great power and vigor despite—according to the Brian experts present—ignoring many indicated tempo fluctuations. A thrilling account of Beethoven's *Egmont* Overture and Stokowski's inimitable version of Dvořák's *New World* Symphony completed the program.

Brian is not the only composer represented on Aries. A recent release contains Malcolm Arnold's Fourth Symphony and *Hong Kong Festival* Overture (LP 1622). Also of BBC origin, these performances supposedly display the talents of Peter Michaels conducting the Lisbon Conservatory Orchestra. As these works *have* been played more than once. Michaels could be one of several people, possibly Raymond Leppard or the composer himself. The orchestra, which would certainly be high tribute to the state of Portuguese musical education, is actually the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra of Manchester.

Most interesting is the record containing two works of Darius Milhaud, the *Protée* Symphonic Suite No. 2 and the otherwise unavailable Symphony No. 10 (LP 1623). Aries represents these performances as the work of the Versailles Radio Orchestra conducted by Pierre Fournier, certainly a well-known and respected musician—as a cellist. Aware of cellists' propensity to take up the baton, I wrote to Fournier to determine whether he had indeed conducted this recording. He graciously replied in English from Switzerland: "I am very surprised and astounded about the record of the company called Aries Records! . . . I want you to know that I have *never heard* about the Versailles Radio Orchestra, which doesn't exist, and that I limit my activity to only cello. . . . I give you my full blessing for taking strong measures against the use of falsely identified performers!"

Aries' jackets show photographs of impressive-looking equipment supposedly used in producing these records. In fact, all the recordings—which Aries routinely submitted to HIGH FIDELITY for review—have the good, serviceable sound, ambience, and limited stereo directionality that, to one familiar with the product, identify them as European radio tapes. The notes are by Emil Franzi, whose identity has not been verified.

Aries is not, of course, the first company to deal in questionable material, nor will it likely be the last. Martin Mayer's September 1980 article, "Dick Tracy and the Record Pirates," dealt with lawyer Jules Yarnell's attempts to track down and eliminate record piracy; his major concern is the bootlegging of already existing commercial recordings to produce counterfeit records and tapes. Compared to the large-scale, crime-laden operations he deals with, the products of Aries and similar outfits are small potatoes indeed. Since the dawn of the LP era, there have been innumerable examples of pseudonymously released recordings, many of operatic repertory; one of the most famous was the series featuring artists of the Patagonian Music Festival, actually broadcasts from the Metropolitan and other opera houses.

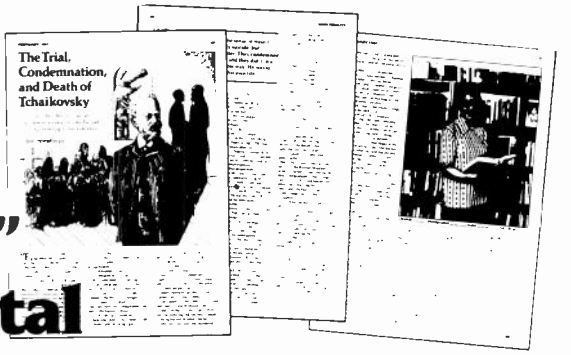
In one sense, such companies perform a substantial service in making available repertory otherwise unobtainable on records and artists in works they have not recorded commercially, yet the fact that this service is provided less than honestly taints its value. What we are really dealing with here is the equivalent of stolen goods, stolen services. Beyond the quite small fees paid by European broadcasting companies, the performers (conductors and orchestra members alike) receive no compensation for the dissemination of their work in this manner; nor, I imagine, do the publishers and composers or their estates receive royalties from these recordings.

The only performer correctly identified in Aries' Brian series is Sir Adrian Boult, who conducts the *Gothic* Symphony (LP 2601). Reportedly, Aries requested his permission. So I ask myself, am I upset merely because a recording of mine has been issued without my name attached to it? Would I have given permission for the use of my name had I been asked? Would I have demanded payment? Did Aries even know it was using my recording? Or Groves's? Or Stokowski's? It's possible the company received the tapes from its source without knowing the identities of the performers. Yet it did know that one of them was Boult.

My first inclination was to sue Aries. But then I decided that the BBC probably has more legal clout than I and could pursue the matter if it so chose. I resolved instead to devote all my energies to the formation of the Sir Colin Wilson Society.

*We notified Aries of our intention to publish an article discussing its use of BBC broadcast tapes without proper author-*

*(Continued on page 85)*




# Tchaikovsky's "Suicide" Reconsidered: A Rebuttal

*In February, we published an article by Joel Spiegelman, based on information supplied by Alexandra Orlova, which raised the possibility that Tchaikovsky's death was a suicide. We have since received a letter by three Slavic specialists that states the other side of the controversy, which we here reprint in full. Spiegelman and Orlova intend to respond in their turn.*

As scholars with considerable experience in the study of Russian culture, we are appalled at the uncritical acceptance accorded in the West to Alexandra Orlova's untenable and unsubstantiated version of Peter Tchaikovsky's death, as outlined in Joel Spiegelman's "The Trial, Condemnation, and Death of Tchaikovsky." In addition to Professor Spiegelman's piece, Mrs. Orlova has stated her theory in Russian émigré publications, most notably in the New York-based newspaper *Novyi amerikanets (The New American)*, the issues of November 5–11 and November 12–18, 1980; she has also convinced Tchaikovsky's English biographer David Brown of the validity of her theory, with the result that her version of Tchaikovsky's death now appears in the new edition of the august *Grove Dictionary*. Both her line of reasoning and her "evidence" strike us as lacking in any kind of plausibility: historical, medical, or psychological.

"The story of the composer's suicide [was] long common currency in some Russian circles," states the subheading of Spiegelman's article. Yes, *rumors* about Tchaikovsky's suicide circulated at the time of his death and have never abated. The most persistent variant was that he was caught in an amorous dalliance with one of the tsar's nephews or with some other young man and was ordered—by the tsar, by the young man's parents, or by some other party—to commit suicide. These rumors could never be traced to anyone who was close to Tchaikovsky or knew him personally. As one of the signatories of this letter, Nina Berberova, discovered when interviewing a number of his onetime associates in Paris in the 1930s in the course of her research for her biography of Tchaikovsky, the composer's friends (such as Alexander Glazunov, Sergei Rachmaninoff, the widow of Tchaikovsky's brother Anatole, and the art expert Vladimir Argutinsky-Dolgorukov, who was sharing an apartment with Modeste Tchaikovsky during the events in question) were never in doubt that he died of cholera. Suicide, on the other hand, was asserted by people who never met him but heard about it from someone they thought reliable.

A possible origin of the rumors was the combination of the tragic mood of Tchaikovsky's last finished composition, the *Pathétique*, the generally known fact of his homosexuality, and the closely averted scandal about his involvement with the son of the noted surgeon Nikolai Sklifasovsky, which occurred a few years prior to the composer's death. As remembered by several of Tchaikovsky's friends, he feared that Professor Sklifasovsky might denounce him and contemplated moving to the French Riviera.

In her piece in *Novyi amerikanets*, Mrs. Orlova states that she became suspicious about the circumstances of Tchaikovsky's death when she found in his archive at Klin a note of condolence addressed by Dr. Lev Bertenson (the physician who attended the composer at the time of his death) to his brother Modeste. The note mentioned "the dread disease that carried off your cherished brother," which to Mrs. Orlova's mind was an indication of foul play: Why should the doctor mention the disease to Modeste if the latter knew his brother died of cholera? This conspiracy-seeking mentality, which mistrusts accounts of witnesses but eagerly accepts third-hand testimony, is typical of her entire chain of reasoning. Dr. Bertenson's letter, *pace* Spiegelman, was not lost. It was copied at Klin by Nicolas Slonimsky in 1935, and it appears in his translation into English on page 364 of Herbert Weinstock's *Tchaikovsky* (A. Knopf, 1943). It is a straightforward, factual document, with nothing in the least suspicious about it.

Mrs. Orlova bases her claim that Tchaikovsky couldn't have died of cholera on the fact that his house was not quarantined during his illness and his coffin was not sealed during the funeral services. But the etiology of cholera was known at the time of his death. It was recognized that the infection was transmitted only by ingesting contaminated food or water, not by being in the presence of cholera victims. In the summer of 1892, *New Times*, the most widely read newspaper in Russia, ran a series of articles by Dr. Modeste Galanin on cholera prevention methods. This and other similar publications made the cholera quarantines and sealed coffins, customary in earlier decades, obsolete. If one reads the letters of Anton Chekhov, who worked as a medical inspector during the cholera epidemic of 1892–93, one sees no mention of these practices, which Mrs. Orlova says were mandatory.

But even apart from this, Mrs. Orlova's scenario of the death by cholera as a conspiracy is singularly lacking in logic: On the one hand Dr. Bertenson stooped to helping Modeste Tchaikovsky palm off his brother's suicide as a death from cholera, but on the other hand, he did it so ineptly that no one believed him! And this about a celebrated and respected physician, a friend and associate of Chekhov, Tchaikovsky, and numerous other notables of the day.

On the subject of public attitude toward homosexuals, Mrs. Orlova and, after her, Spiegelman are as far off the mark as they are about cholera quarantines. In his last big novel, *Resurrection*, written during the 1890s, Leo Tolstoi complained at several points about the growing toleration of homosexuality at the end of the nineteenth century. His observations are supported by instances from real life. Tchaikovsky and his friends were a part of a large homosexual community that existed in Russia at the time and that included among its members several grand dukes (uncles or cousins of the last two tsars). Spiegelman's statement that homosexuality was

*(Continued on page 85)*

# A Mountainous Legacy from the Master Miniaturist

## In a Bis release that does everyone proud, Eva Knardahl offers magnificent performances of Grieg's piano works.

by Harris Goldsmith

MICHAEL TROSSMAN

*Norway's great composer Edvard Grieg*

BIS, A SMALL INDEPENDENT SWEDISH LABEL with exacting standards, has produced a magnificent tribute to the Norwegian master Edvard Grieg—a total of fourteen discs of piano music, beautifully pressed by German Teldec and wisely made available individually.

For Norwegian pianist Eva Knardahl, this is obviously a labor of love. She has been playing the piano in public since she was six and appeared as a concerto soloist with the Oslo Philharmonic before her tenth birthday. She came to America and was, for fifteen years, tucked away as pianist with the Minneapolis Symphony (now the Minnesota Orchestra). Returning to Norway in 1968, she consolidated her rich experience as a solo and chamber musician and has, belatedly, emerged as a respected soloist in her homeland. That respect, I hasten to add, is fully earned: I only wonder how many other sterling artists may be languishing in obscurity. Not to mince words, Knardahl sounds like a major pianist: She has a solid, well-grounded stylistic sense, beautifully reliable technique, and most important, that something extra. Call it verve, charisma—or better yet, color and temperament.

It's that little igniting spark, that bit of leavening, that transforms a thoroughgoing anthology into a rapt listening experience. Quite candidly, though I have always liked Grieg, I approached this assignment with a degree of trepidation and skepticism; as my great-grandmother used to say, "Too much—too much *anything*—is no good!" But from the first notes of Vol. 1, Knardahl stresses the musical essence rather than the archival nature of the project. While I don't recommend listening to all fourteen of these discs nonstop (as an impinging deadline required of me), I must say that I will shortly be returning to some of them for *pleasure*.

Many music lovers may share my initial surprise in learning that this composer, who worked mostly in the realm of the miniature, wrote enough piano music to fill fourteen LPs. Actually, the "complete piano music" is something close to Grieg's entire output. Much of his music he composed for the piano and subsequently orchestrated; the rest he often arranged for piano after the fact. So we find here—in addition to the ten books of *Lyric Pieces*, the ballade, the sonata, and even the ever-popular piano concerto—piano solo versions of the two *Peer Gynt* Suites, string orchestra works, such as the *Elegiac Melodies* and *Holberg* Suite, and arrangements of some of the songs as purely keyboard vehicles. A large slice of the pie is taken up by his important contribution as an arranger of Norwegian folksongs and dances. And since he had the habit of periodically rearranging some of these gems and placing them in different collections, there is occasional duplication of material. Thus, "Solveig's Song" appears not only in the piano reduction of *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 2, but also as part of his Op. 52 song arrangements; similarly, two of the *Norwegian Folksongs and Dances*, Op. 17—the little "Cow Call" and the more impactful "Comic Dance"—turn up again, in more elaborate settings, as *Two Nordic Melodies*, Op. 63. (In each instance, I prefer the first version, though it is fascinating to compare them.)

This music presents the same dichotomy found in Liszt's piano arrangements; there are, in essence, two basic groups: the bravura arrangements conceived as concert vehicles and the utilitarian piano reductions designed for home use in those pre-phonograph days. Of course, there is some intriguing overlap. *From Holberg's Time*, probably meant to be a rough draft for the string orchestra suite, sounds perfectly wonderful in keyboard attire. Still, even Knardahl's superb playing cannot quite compensate for the lack of orchestral tone color in *Peer Gynt* and *Sigurd Jorsalfar*. Nor can she prevent those "stage icicle" tremolos from suggesting a player piano rather than a piano player.

The first four volumes are given over to the *Lyric Pieces*, a perfect introduction to Grieg's tonal world. For all their deceptive simplicity, these little character vignettes are permeated with temperament. Most of them are technically within the grasp of talented youngsters, but they yield unsuspected riches in the hands of a master musician. Take, for example, the floppy stress of the filigree in "Butterfly": How aptly it conveys the insect's lackadaisical drifting flight. Or consider the hobgoblin aspect of "Puck" and the other gnome pieces and the rhetorical festivities of "Wedding Day at Troldhaugen." Yet even in these miniatures, the playful is intermingled with the grotesque, the sardonic. One needn't pound the daylights out of the piano in "She Dances" like Nyiregyházi did to sense that piece's demonic aspect. Nor does one have to look hard for the psychological—almost Mahlerian—irony lurking behind "Remembrances": the waltzlike quotations of

that vignette are bent slightly out of shape, and as a result, what could so easily sound treacly and embarrassing instead sounds poignant.

Knardahl's version of the piano concerto (Vol. 12) is an absolute delight; it's a welcome change to hear the work purged of heavy Teutonic sentimentality and returned to its dewy-fresh folklore heritage. (Some of the restoration undoubtedly owes to the sound, which—although a bit low in volume—reproduces the proper concert-hall balance between soloist and orchestra and gives both a wide-open ambience.) Yet notwithstanding the work's popularity and appeal, Grieg's strongest talent is best heard in smaller-scaled pieces. The Sonata, Op. 7 (Vol. 5), for example, tends to fall into mechanical segments, a by-product of his excessive reliance upon sequences for his development. In the concerto, the same problem is offset by the variety of instrumental tone color. The one large-scaled piece that seems to work, structurally, is the Ballade, Op. 24 (Vol. 7), actually an impressive theme with variations; Grieg's parents died in the fall of 1875, a month apart, and he composed the work as a lament for them "with the blood of my heart in days of mourning and despair."

All of Grieg's folklore collections are attractive, but two in particular seize the attention: The *Slåtter*, Op. 72 (Vol. 11), and the nineteen *Norwegian Folksongs*, Op. 66 (Vol. 8), are late-period works, extremely advanced in their treatment of harmony and rhythm. His language, of course, was that of a nineteenth-century Romantic, yet he comes amazingly close in these settings to Bartók and Kodály. The *Slåtter*, when heard together, are a bit static, because they rarely change key, but the chromaticism, modality, and sheer pungency with which Grieg has captured the sound of the Hardanger fiddle in keyboard terms are stimulating. Bartók was one of this impressive collection's first admirers, incidentally, so the link between it and, say, his *Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs* is historical fact, not mere conjecture.

I was particularly happy to make the acquaintance of the *Three Piano Pieces* (Vol. 14) from 1891–98, discovered and published by Grieg's friend and colleague Julius Röntgen in 1908. The excellent and detailed Bis annotations express doubts about their quality; I heartily disagree. The ominous first piece, "White Clouds," with its feverish bravura figurations, sounds almost Mussorgskian (an influence I noticed intermittently in some of the other works as well).

Vol. 10 is noteworthy because it juxtaposes Grieg's first piano compositions, *Four Pieces*, Op. 1, with his last, *Moods*, Op. 73. But by far the best work on that

The concerto, returned to its dewy-fresh folklore heritage, is an absolute delight.

LEIF OXELGREN

*Pianist Eva Knardahl: A labor of love*

disc is Op. 34, *Two Elegiac Melodies*. The early opus consists of salon pieces, attractively graceful but of no real profile or consequence; and of Op. 73, only No. 4, "Folk Tune," and No. 7, "Mountain Tune," were singled out by Grieg as being successful. (He, in fact, dismissed the set as a "mouse.")

Since the concerto is presented, it might also have been fitting to include the cello sonata and the three violin sonatas, which also combine Grieg's superior piano writing with the sounds of other instruments. And certainly it would have been interesting to hear his pretty if naive second-piano accompaniments to some of Mozart's piano sonatas. (Ironically, certain *Mozartean* accompaniments have found their way—subconsciously, of course—into Grieg's music: The earlier version of the "Comic Dance," Op. 17, No. 18, features a trilling figuration right out of the second movement of Mozart's K. 498 Trio!) The original four-hand versions of the *Norwegian Dances*, Op. 35, *are* included (Vol. 12). Young conductor Kjell Ingebretsen, who takes the podium in the concerto, on the same disc, seems equally at home at the keyboard; these are very incisive performances, with fine balance and brilliant ensemble. Grieg never completed his own orchestration of these popular works and termed the standard Hans Sitt orchestration "too heavy." (He had hoped that a Frenchman, such as Lalo, would undertake the job.)

As already indicated, the performances are uniformly magnificent. There have been superb interpretations of some of this music by Gilels, Gieseking, De Larrocha, and Rubinstein—not to mention such classics as Godowsky's ballade (Columbia 78s) and Grainger's concerto (the IPA limited edition with Stokowski, *not* the RCA release with Grainger's piano-roll performance accompanied by the hapless Sydney Symphony). Knardahl more than holds her own, however, playing with arching line, a singing effusiveness, and all the color in the world. She feels the music very deeply but never becomes pretentious or self-serving. Bis has reproduced the sound of her Bösendorfer distinctively; on some of the discs, the contrast between tacky treble and rich, billowing bass is a bit overdone, but there is always a luminosity that enables the listener to adjust to the plangency. Quite simply, this release does everyone proud.

GRIEG: Piano Works (complete), Vols. 1–14.

Eva Knardahl and *Kjell Ingebretsen, piano; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Kjell Ingebretsen, cond.* [Robert von Bahr, prod.] Bis LP 104/17, $10.98 each (distributed by Qualiton Records, 39-28 Crescent St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Vol. 1 (LP 104): Lyric Pieces, Opp. 12, 38, 47.

Vol. 2 (LP 105): Lyric Pieces, Opp. 43, 62, 68.

Vol. 3 (LP 106): Lyric Pieces, Opp. 54, 57.

Vol. 4 (LP 107): Lyric Pieces, Opp. 65, 71.

Vol. 5 (LP 108): Sonata in E minor, Op. 7; From Holberg's Time, Op. 40.

Vol. 6 (LP 109): Norwegian Folksongs and Dances, Op. 17; Improvisations on Two Norwegian Folk Tunes, Op. 29; Six Norwegian Mountain Tunes.

Vol. 7 (LP 110): Pictures from Life in the Country, Op. 19; Ballade in the Form of Variations on a Norwegian Melody, Op. 24; Four Album Leaves, Op. 28.

Vol. 8 (LP 111): Humoresques (4), Op. 6; Norwegian Folksongs, Op. 66; Nordraak's Funeral March.

Vol. 9 (LP 112): Poetic Tone Pictures (6), Op. 3; Piano Pieces after Original Songs, Opp. 41, 52.

Vol. 10 (LP 113): Four Pieces, Op. 1; Two Elegiac Melodies, Op. 34 (arr.); Moods, Op. 73.

Vol. 11 (LP 114): Slåtter (Norwegian Peasant Dances), Op. 72.

Vol. 12 (LP 115): Concerto in A minor, Op. 16†; Norwegian Dances (4), Op. 35*.

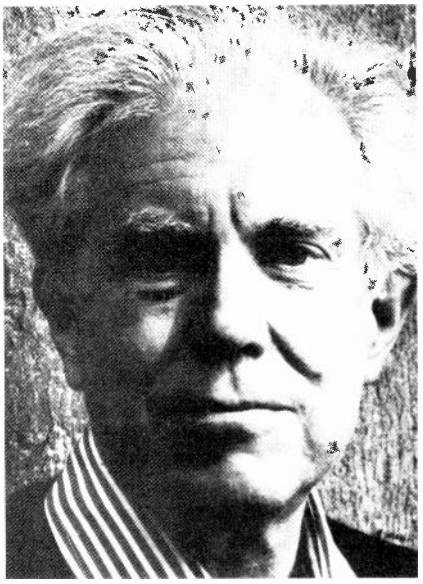
Vol. 13 (LP 116): Peer Gynt Suites Nos. 1 and 2, Opp. 46, 55 (arr.); Three Orchestral Pieces from Sigurd Jorsalfar, Op. 56 (arr.).

Vol. 14 (LP 117): Waltz-Caprices (2), Op. 37 (arr.); Olav Trygvason, Op. 50; Prayer and Temple Dance (arr.); Two Melodies, Op. 53 (arr.); Two Nordic Melodies, Op. 63 (arr.); Three Piano Pieces.

# Elliott Carter's Contributions to the American Bicentennial

## Two further manifestations of the composer's central vision in a belated but excellent release from CBS.

by David Hamilton



CBS

*Elliott Carter: Memorable sound images*

LIKE A NONESUCH DISC combining the Double Concerto and Duo for Violin and Piano (H 71314, March 1976), this disc couples two remarkably different realizations of Elliott Carter's central vision of musical diversity. *A Mirror on Which to Dwell* (completed on the last day of 1975) is a song cycle, to six poems by Elizabeth Bishop, for soprano and chamber ensemble (three winds, percussion, piano, and four strings), while *A Symphony of Three Orchestras* (finished exactly a year later) is for large symphony orchestra, divided into three physically separated ensembles.

Though the symphony is the later of the two works, its ground plan and mode of musical argument recall the general lines along which earlier Carter instrumental works were laid out. The three "sub-orchestras" are arrayed across the stage, left-center-right, and during the main part of the piece, each sets forth—and returns to—four different "movements," characterized by specific intervals, harmonies, and speeds. The entries and exits of the orchestras overlap, so that at any given moment one, two, or even three "movements" may be going on simultaneously.

CBS

*Pierre Boulez' strengths exploited*

This central section is preceded by a striking introduction, in which high squealing sounds recede to reveal a solo trumpet playing a rhapsodic cadenza, elements of which will surface again later in the piece. And when the interplay of the three orchestras has reached its maximum complexity, enormous grating chords cut it off, and the symphony collapses into reminiscent fragments and mechanically repetitive passages. In his liner notes, the composer mentions the role of Hart Crane's poetry in suggesting to him various ideas in the piece, and especially of Crane's masterpiece, *The Bridge*, which Carter has at times considered setting to music.

> Not everything is perfect in the performance of the symphony, but a lot of things are.

Not the least virtue of CBS's excellent recording is the very clear separation of the three orchestras—a separation exceptionally vivid on headphones, I discovered, and I encourage their use for some concentrated initial hearings, a great help in aurally sorting out the various materials. One soon becomes familiar with the characteristic sonorities of the three ensembles: Orchestra I, made up of brass, timpani, and strings; Orchestra II, of clarinets, percussion (mostly pitched, including the prominent use of bells), piano, and a small string group (without violas); Orchestra III, of winds, horns, percussion, and strings (without cellos). Here and there, elements of one orchestra are tacitly borrowed to reinforce points in another, but this is always done discreetly. What we grasp more strongly with each hearing is the vivid clarity of the spatial and temporal framework within which Carter has worked out his potent images of motion, flux, and tension, dramatically framed by the initial vision of birth and the final crisis and collapse.

Beyond the quality of the recording, the performance itself can hardly be overpraised. The symphony was one of six works commissioned by six major orchestras for the 1976 bicentennial celebrations, with funds from the National Endowment for the Arts. The New York Philharmonic's commission went to Carter, resulting in a piece that exploited some of the orchestra's particular strengths, as well as those of its then music director, Pierre Boulez. The recording followed hard on the heels of the first performance, and is remarkably secure and detailed in execution. The trumpet cadenza sails out with an expansive ease and lyricism that gives us additional cause to regret Gerard Schwarz's abandonment of that instrument, while the galvanic energy and leaping security of Paul Jacobs is easily recognizable in the prominent piano interjections. Not everything is perfect, but a considerable lot of things are, and one is especially grateful to Boulez for the varied dynamic profile of the performance; the most glaring fault of the other performances to date has been their failure to get much beyond a generalized mezzo forte to forte dynamic range. (So far, only two of the other orchestras in the bicentennial

# MUSICAL AMERICA

THE JOURNAL OF CLASSICAL MUSIC

AUGUST 1981

ALICIA SCHACHTER

**Constructive criticism**

Your Los Angeles music critic, Melody Peterson, obviously did not like the guitar music played by Los Romeros at the "Superweekend" at U.S.C., October 3-5, 1980 [reviewed March 1981]—neither the works of other composers, nor Celedonio Romero's own composition, *Por Soleares*, for solo guitar and orchestra. Nor did she seem to care for the way in which the guitarists played the works. That is certainly her right. However, this reader found the review rather vitriolic. Miss Peterson seemed inclined to be critical, in the worst sense of that word, about the entire program.

This was perhaps most explicity demonstrated in her mention of the conducting of Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* by Angel Romero. Dwelling on stage presence (of course, stance *is* important in conducting), rather than on musicianship (she *did* call the young man "musical"—I should hope so—he has been a professional artist for over twenty years), Miss Peterson's only advice to Mr. Romero was to "stay out of the spotlight" while he is learning to conduct. Is not a university orchestra a logical place to begin? As a novice conductor, Mr. Romero might understandably be nervous or self-conscious. It is interesting, but not essential, to hear of this fact.

Let me ask Miss Peterson to please, from now on, when reviewing a conductor, give her readers information as to overall interpretation, such as tempi, and dynamics, expression, subtlety of shading and nuance, consistency of phrasing and style. Was the conductor in command of his orchestra? Was it an exciting or pedestrian reading and performance? In other words, tell about the conductor's *ability to conduct.* That is what interests music lovers who read MUSICAL AMERICA. What we cannot hear for ourselves, and where we cannot attend in person, we depend upon critics to be our ears. Artists, too, appreciate analyses of their performances, finding them useful in perfecting their art, if reviews are objective and constructive.

By striving to maintain a high level of music criticism, MUSICAL AMERICA can strike a blow for excellence in a world in which so many other values are lacking today. So, Miss Peterson, no more "halfbaked" (your word for the Romeros' performance) reviews, if you please.

*Mary Jeanne O'Malley-Allen*
Huntsville, AL

*Melody Peterson replies: When Angel Romero accepts a fee and places himself before a paying audience, in front of professional media critics, and in the company of veteran soloists, he exposes himself to congratulation or criticism as would anyone else in that position. For the record: I noted Romero's musicality, found his* left hand *self-conscious, and described his demeanor as* stilted. *(It is Miss O'Malley-Allen who assumes he was "nervous.") Under these widely-publicized Superweekend circumstances, I found Romero out of his element as a conductor. To say more (than I did) would have only belabored the point.*

# MUSICAL AMERICA

FEATURES AUGUST 1981



DEPARTMENTS





HIGHLIGHTS OF AUGUST

| | |
|---|---|
| Saturday 1 | The Boston Symphony Orchestra under Seiji Ozawa performs Act II of *Tristan und Isolde* at Tanglewood with soloists Jessye Norman, Gwendolyn Killebrew, and Jon Vickers. |
| Tuesday 4 | John Harbison's *Mottetti de Montale* receives its world premiere at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival with soprano Janice Felty and pianist Edward Auer. |
| Thursday 13 | Sergiu Comissiona conducts the Philadelphia Orchestra in a world premiere by Andre Previn at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. |
| Sunday 23 | The Detroit Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Neville Marriner will premiere the *Rendezvous* Concerto by Martin Scot Kosins at the Meadow Brook Music Festival. |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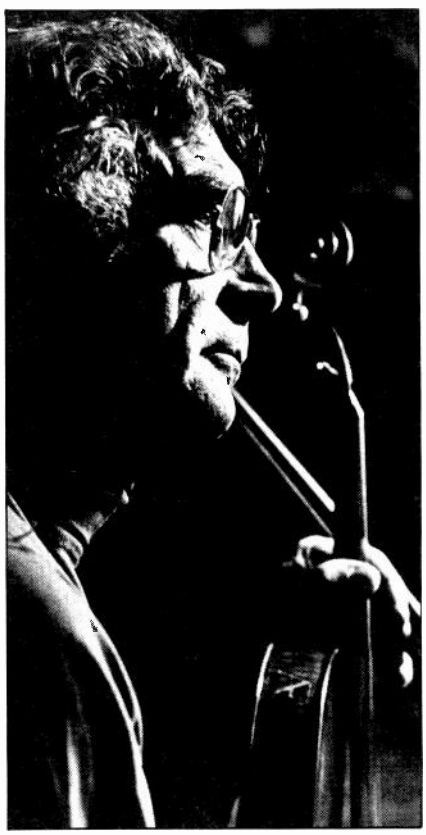
# Santa Fe Chamber Music: A Success Story

## Artistic director Alicia Schachter tells the tale

**Jack Hiemenz**



Walter Trampler

"Our posters have become collectors' items," says Alicia Schachter, artistic director of the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. True enough, If you have once seen the handsome full-color reproductions of the paintings by Georgia O'Keefe, Santa Fe's ninety-three-year-old reigning artistic eminence, you are not likely to forget the "image" of this particular summer festival. But more to the point, there's no denying that Santa Fe has grown to become a major chamber music outpost, ever since Alicia Schachter and her husband Sheldon Rich founded it in 1973. In its early years, the festival was confined to Santa Fe and the Southwest. Since then, its season has lengthened; it has gone national, with a six-concert series now being given in both Seattle and New York; and plans are now afoot to begin winter tours in 1982.

Miss Schachter, who serves the festival both as director and performer (she's a pianist) has ushered me into her luxurious livingroom on Central Park West. The room, flooded with winter light, bespeaks the dual nature of her involvement. The piano is piled high with scores, while the coffee table is strewn with telltale signs of her morning's work: an ashtray full of cigarette butts, a well-thumbed rolodex, and a huge, open scheduling book in which she's been juggling the availabilities of her players with the demands of the season's repertory. "It's like putting together a jigsaw puzzle," she admits ruefully. She speaks, as always, with a low-keyed, disarming earnestness, her heavy, worried-looking eyes sometimes gazing directly at you like a teacher watching a backward student. It is odd to find a music administrator so lacking in strenuous bonhomie or brittle sophistication; you could never imagine Alicia flourishing on the Johnny Carson show.

So what has brought about the festival's success? Obviously Miss Schachter and Mr. Rich made a good choice with Santa Fe, that festival town *par excellence*, whose population goes from 50,000 to 150,000 each summer. Obviously, Schachter and Rich have been effective managers. But also, their decision could hardly have been more timely. For the Seventies, as we all know, engendered the so-called chamber music explosion, a phenomenon brought about by a number of interrelated factors: Marlboro's development of an elite corps of chamber music players; the institutional status accorded the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; the growing realization, on the part of professional musicians, that chamber music playing offers an invaluable supplementary activity, if not a total alternative, to careers that otherwise might be given entirely to the anonymity of orchestra playing or to the feast-or-famine chanciness of solo engagements.

The fact that Alicia Schachter and Sheldon Rich live in New York, that neither is a Santa Fe native, prompts me to wonder about the jet-set circuit that now exists among chamber players, some of whom hop from festival to festival. On this season's roster of fifteen performing artists, for example, one runs across such names as James Buswell, Ani and Ida Kavafian, Daniel Phillips, Walter Trampler, and André-Michel Schub, all of them familiar faces in this nation's festival whirligig. Is there a danger that such musicians, their brains still echoing with performances at Marlboro, Mostly Mozart, or Spoleto USA, might fail to give the Santa Fe Festival a quality uniquely its own?

"Let me qualify that," she answers readily. "Nobody flies into Santa Fe and does a one-night stand. We don't, as the Chamber Music Society does, have guest artists. The minimum stay is two weeks; usually the stays are three, four, five, or six weeks. So our musicians get to know each other. They grow together musically. And bear in mind that these are top-flight musicians who have a strong commitment to chamber music; none of them wants to give a sloppy, slapped-together performance. They're all willing to rehearse as many hours as necessary."

*"Everybody is treated equally here. Though all our musicians may be having solo careers, we don't go by the star system."*

One of the Santa Fe Festival's unique qualities, she points out, is its democratic philosophy: "Everybody is treated equally here. Though all our musicians may be having solo careers, we don't go by the star system. Everybody gets paid the same fee. Musicians must be willing to play subordinate parts, as well as first fiddle. For instance, one of our regular violists, Heiichiro Ohyama, has recorded for Columbia Records and has played solo recitals for us; but when we had the Vermeer Quartet here, and they needed an additional violist to fill out a quintet, Heiichiro played the part."

Miss Schachter points out another salient feature of the festival: its stress on intimacy. "We do everything to eliminate the strict formality of old-style concerts, to break down the barriers between listener and the music. So we have open discussion rehearsals, where audience and musicians can freely converse, and where people can discover that chamber music isn't so incomprehensible."

In addition to encounters between performers and audience, the festival—in its American Composer program—strives to make modern music seem less forbidding by bringing in composers and letting *them* talk with the audience. Aaron Copland, George Rochberg, Ned Rorem, and Richard Wernick have all attended the festival in past summers. This season's guest will be John Harbison, two of whose works—a song cycle and a piano quintet—will receive their world premieres. Last season's guest, Ned Rorem, even went so far, in a piece commissioned by the festival, to salute it with a song cycle entitled *The Santa Fe Songs*, settings of poems by the Santa Fe poet Witter Bynner.

So no, Alicia Schachter does not feel that Santa Fe is just like any other festival; and she rejects my suggestion that festivals, with their overlapping contingents of chamber players, may be losing their individual distinction. "There *is* something special about festivals," she declares. "They are more concentrated. The public comes specially geared to enjoy a whole series of presentations. It's a totally different atmosphere, both mentally and physically. Festivals are usually set in beautiful places, and that's important, since those settings—and the whole festival atmosphere—give the musicians a different attitude. They feel less pressured than they do in the winter season, when they are going from city to city.

"Of course, I can only talk of Santa Fe. Though it's a very small festival, it has a high level of professional musicians. They *feel* well there. They live in houses. They stay there for extended periods, and so they get to know the Santa Fe public personally. During our first three years, we toured the

*Continued on page 34*

Christian Steiner

**James Buswell**

# Peter Shaffer

## His smash hit "Amadeus" explores grand themes

**Dorle J. Soria**

These days "Mostly Mozart" is not a slogan confined to Lincoln Center and the smaller festivals it has spawned. It is a phrase which can now describe the wider world of theater, thanks to Peter Shaffer, the remarkable and music-trained dramatist whose *Amadeus* has been playing since November 1979 at Britain's National Theatre—"the single greatest success enjoyed by this celebrated institution since its founding"—and in New York since December 1980, plus productions in places including Oslo and The Hague, Munich and Düsseldorf, Poland and Mexico, South Africa during July's festival, and Perth, Australia. Japan is to come. Not to mention, and most important, Vienna, where, in the play, Mozart lived, loved, struggled, and died, the city where later he was to be worshipped as a god.

It seemed doomed from the start—a play about Mozart by an outsider, a foreigner, an Englishman. Yet it was in Vienna that *Amadeus* had one of its greatest successes, and in the Burg Theater itself, the hallowed institution founded by Joseph II, Emperor of Austria during Mozart's time, depicted in *Amadeus* as "a dapper cheerful figure, greatly pleased with himself and the world," given to quenching Mozart's extravagant words and gestures with a cool "a little less enthusiasm, I beg you." It was Joseph II, head of the most brilliant court of the day, who established the rule that actors did not take curtain calls. It was honor enough for them to appear before the Emperor. "And this tradition," says Peter Shaffer, "continues to this day. Actors—except perhaps on opening nights—must not come out after the curtain falls. But author, stage director, and designer are allowed. It was strange and awkward to acknowledge the applause of the audience, without any member of the cast!"

*" 'Amadeus' was never deliberately conceived like an opera but, as I worked, I thought of it in operatic terms."*

Peter Shaffer has written many successful plays but, before *Amadeus*, he was perhaps best known for his award-winning, anguished *Equus*, about the blinding of horses by an English stableboy, and *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, the golden epic about the conquest of Peru. Both were staged by John Dexter, well-known at the Metropolitan Opera for such productions as *Billy Budd, Lulu*, and the trilogy *Parade*. Sir Peter Hall, the director of *Amadeus* and also of the National Theatre of Great Britain, has, like Dexter, worked in opera, at Glyndebourne and Covent Garden, and Shaffer pays tribute to his "authority" plus the "dazzling panache entirely appropriate to its Rococo age and subject" and adds: "Before rehearsals he promised me that he would present me with an opera, and that is precisely what he did . . . Indeed, the genre of *Amadeus* might best be described as 'black opera.' "

How did Peter Shaffer come to write this play, which he conceives of as an opera? How did he get involved in this conflict between Mozart and his jealous contemporary Salieri who, in his old age, claims to have poisoned Mozart many years before? We remembered that Pushkin had written a play called *Mozart and Salieri* on which Rimsky-Korsakov had composed an opera, now being revived. And we thought what a good libretto *Amadeus* would make for a "real opera"—or was the play-opera an end in itself?

We saw the play twice and were engrossed both times, as the story was told in flashback using Salieri as narrator, from 1823 when Salieri is dying to the Viennese court life of the 1780s. We found ourselves putting aside preconceptions of how Mozart looked and acted, and accepted him as brought to life on the stage, egocentric, impudent, amorous, in constant need of money but sure of himself and his music, speaking in the natural coarse language of his day, playing cat and mouse and rolling on the floor with Constanze,

childish and clowning but filled with genius. And for the villian there was the elegant, courtly Salieri, the most famous composer of his time, delicately gorging on Italian sweets and pastries, successfully conniving against Mozart but consumed by jealousy and doubts, thundering against God for giving the greatest gift not to him but "to this obscene boy."

We first saw Peter Shaffer at the Schirmer music shop downstairs in the big Brentano bookstore on Fifth Avenue. *Amadeus* had just been published in its American edition by Harper & Row and it had been arranged that the author, with leading members of the cast, would autograph copies. In the background, red-robed members of the St. Cecilia Chorus were to sing excerpts from Salieri's Mass No. 1 in D (anticipating its American premiere at Carnegie Hall) and the Credo from Mozart's "Great" Mass in C minor. We had planned to buy the play and perhaps have an introductory chat with the author. The first proved difficult, the second impossible. By the time we arrived all the hard-cover books had been sold and we just managed to get one of the few remaining paperbacks. As for seeing Shaffer, he might have been Pavarotti! Hundreds were waiting in line, each with book in hand, each eager for a word with the patient Peter Shaffer who sat, a gray-suited figure with gray hair and heavy glasses, courteously receiving each book to be signed, rewarding each admirer with a "thank you for coming." Instead we asked a clerk if he had recordings of Salieri. He shook his head. Nobody had ever asked, he said. They had had a few copies of a recording which contained a concerto by Salieri for flute, oboe, and orchestra but they were gone. "You know, wind players," he said vaguely. "Not much repertoire. They buy almost anything."

We finally did meet with and talk with Peter Shaffer who, despite the fact that he lives in New York, a city for which he feels "a strong and undiminishable passion," does a great deal of transatlantic commuting and was about to leave to introduce into the London production some of the changes and improvements he had made in *Amadeus* when it was brought to America. For example, the role of Salieri had been strengthened. As Shaffer wrote in his preface to the printed edition of the play, "Salieri seemed to me too much the observer of the calamities he should have been causing. Now, in this new version, he seems to me to stand where he properly belongs—at the wicked center of the action. This new, more active Salieri offers himself as a substitute father when Leopold Mozart dies." An entirely new scene was introduced, the visit of Salieri and his mistress to a performance of *The Magic Flute*. "It dramatizes the moment—previously only hinted at—when Salieri perceives Mozart to be himself the flute of God; and it enables me to transform the huge accusing silhouette of Leopold-as-Commendatore, seen on the backdrop, into the forgiving silhouette of Leopold-as-Sarastro, his hands extended to the world in a vast embrace of love. This transformation immeasurably clarifies the mental journey which Mozart made from *Don Giovanni* to *The Magic Flute.*"

All this helps to explain why the play *Amadeus* has very much the feeling of an opera, an opera which the writer has rewritten—as did composers from Rossini to Verdi—and about which there may one day be academic discussions concerning the authentic "critical edition." Inspired by opera, revised in the tradition of opera, *Amadeus*—with changes of casts, directors, sets, and costumes—may well be played, revived and eventually rediscovered for many years to come.

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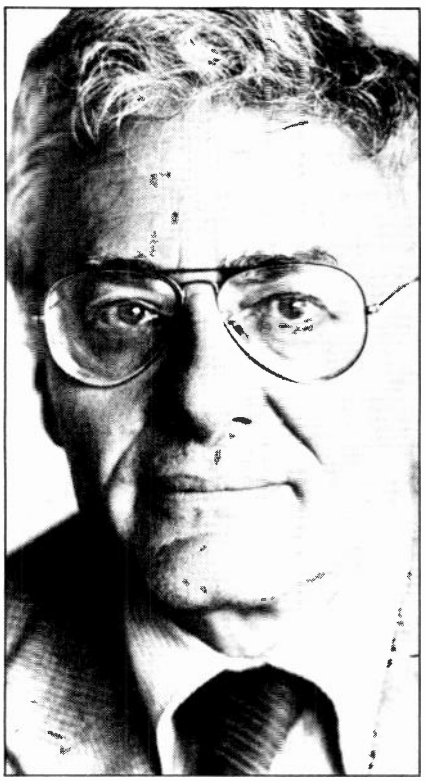


**Shaffer: *Amadeus* began as "an idle project in curiosity"**

Zoe Dominic

**Jane Seymour with Curry and McKellan in Broadway production**

Peter Shaffer says: "From the start I have used operatic techniques in my plays in a loose way. In 1958—before Mahler had become popular—I used music from the Mahler Fourth in my first play, *Five Finger Exercise.* The German tutor plays it on the gramophone in his room. In *The Private Ear* I used music from Britten's *Peter Grimes* and, in one place, from *Butterfly.* In *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* there was music throughout, a score to support and explain the action.

"*Amadeus* was never deliberately conceived like an opera but, as I worked, I thought of it in operatic terms. Take the opening when the Venticelli, the gossip-mongers, arrive. The intention is for them to set the atmosphere like an overture, to project the nervous febrile feeling of this city of scandals and whispers. Salieri's monologues, for another instance, are like big arias, tenor arias. And then there are half-buried references to Mozart operas. The high-backed wing chair in the Waldstädten Library, from where Salieri, sitting concealed, watches Mozart's and Constanze's amorous antics—that is like the chair in *Figaro* where Cherubino hides. The play has the feeling of an opera and Peter Hall gave me a production to emphasize that quality." Sir Peter has stated: "With Peter Shaffer and me all our great loves were brought together—Mozart and opera and music."

*Amadeus*, the playwright says, began "as an idle project in curiosity" when he was reading about Mozart's death and the conflicting medical reports and "the figure of Salieri began to loom very large in my mind. He wouldn't leave me. Had he really killed Mozart?" He started reading everything he could about Salieri in the few books available including those in Italian, which he went through with the aid of a dictionary. And eventually the story took on a large form. "I had a bigger and grander story," he told the *New York Times.* "It was the enormous theme of the envy of genius by mediocrity. It is also about the relevance of human goodness to art."

Peter Shaffer is a quiet, courteous, friendly man. But, when discussing things which really matter, he is highly articulate and talks with feeling and passion. When you learn something of his background and training you realize that his involvement with music is natural; his roots as a highly successful playwright are harder to find.

**Early days**

He was born May 15, 1926, in Liverpool, one of three boys. He has a twin brother Anthony, author of *Sleuth*, the successful play and film. The third brother is three years younger, a professor of biophysics at Cambridge, also an artist, a painter. His father is a businessman but his musical mother played the piano, and Peter, when he was still a child, started piano lessons. He studied until he could master early Beethoven sonatas and Mozart and Haydn sonatas reasonably well and music has continued to be part of his life. He plays piano almost daily but only for his own private enjoyment. He can, however, read scores and when he was writing *Amadeus* his friend Raymond Leppard lent him scores of various Salieri operas.

The family moved to London at the beginning of World War II and during the next few years the boys were evacuated and shifted from place to place. After studying at St. Paul's School in London, Peter received a scholarship to Trinity College, Cambridge, just in time to be conscripted, at eighteen, into the coal mines, where he worked underground and then on the surface, hauling and loading. "It was wildly boring but many young people had worse lives." Finally, back to Cambridge University on a scholarship, where he studied history and then, believing himself to be "totally unemployable," he departed for New York, where he worked in a Doubleday bookstore and in the acquisitions department of the New York Public Library. It was a dreary life. He knew nobody. He lived for much of the time in the part of town known as Hell's Kitchen. Three years later he returned to London and found a position with the music publishing firm of Boosey & Hawkes, headed at that time by the Central European musi-

cologists Dr. Erwin Stein and Dr. Ernst Roth. "Dr. Roth, who had been the friend and publisher of many great composers, from Strauss to Stravinsky, called me to him one day and said: 'Let me give you a little advice. You should not continue to stay here because the business won't stay with you. The days of music publishing are in the decline.' I was then working in the symphonic department and I was offered a chance to have a job in the band department. I couldn't see myself there and I left."

But meanwhile he had already written his first and only libretto for an opera by Joseph Horovitz—a one-act *opera buffa* based on a story of Rabelais called *The Dumb Wife*, about a wife who, once she has regained her voice, never stops singing. And in 1958, much more important, had come his play *Five Finger Exercise*, which won awards in London and New York and which relieved him from the necessity of other work. During the ensuing years he continued to write plays, all with great success, including *The Private Ear* and *The Public Eye*, a double bill, in 1962, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* in 1964, *Black Comedy*, described as "a romp designed for Britain's National Theatre" and, in 1973, *Equus*, which had over a thousand performances on Broadway.

Chris Taylor

**Shaffer with Curry and Seymour amidst choristers at Brentano's**

### Music critic

But, soon after he had had his first hit in the West End, he became for two seasons, beginning in 1961, music critic for the then well-known British weekly *Time and Tide*. He recalls: "I wrote two things a week—about a concert and an opera of my choice. The policy I practiced was to review everything I heard as if I were hearing it for the first time. I even tried to listen to *Bohème* as if it had never been done before, as if I were present on opening night. It was a good period. I remember reviewing such opera productions as Visconti's *Don Carlo* and Zeffirelli's *Cavalleria* and *Pagliacci*, and the first performance of Britten's *War Requiem* at Coventry Cathedral, and Klemperer with the Philharmonia. It was a great time to be a critic."

He added. "Most critics assume too much. They criticize without knowledge. I remember when Peter Hall did *Don Giovanni* at Glyndebourne and the critics attacked him because at the end of Act I the Don did not escape, laughing, fighting his way out, but did instead what Da Ponte indicates when Don Giovanni says 'Even if the world falls nothing will ever make me fear.' Instead of escaping he walks through the threatening group until he reaches the edge of the stage, where he makes the audience a savage bow—the bow we had seen him make to the women he had seduced and then abandoned. It was marvelous. But the critics unfairly and ignorantly attacked the end as false to the original. Of course, it was quite the opposite." He paused and we asked: "Then *Don Giovanni* is your favorite Mozart opera?" The answer was a decisive no. "I like best *Figaro* and *Così*. *Don Giovanni* and *Entführung* I like least."

Why had he decided to make New York his permanent home? "Because New York is a good city. Because it is made up of people who come from somewhere else. And I have many friends here, not like those first years when I was a nobody and knew nobody. Sometimes I commute, mentally, in my head, to London. But for me England is not London. It is the countryside—Somerset and Dorset. New York is the city of cities."

What does he do in New York when he is not writing? "I go to concerts. I see plays. I see friends. Last week I went to a Pollini recital and I saw *Parade* at the Metropolitan Opera. And I like to walk. I say walk. I do not jog—there is too much of this jogging. I live on Riverside Drive, high up over the Hudson. The wind blows there and it is like being on a ship. I do not like being on a ship but this is like being on a ship on land."

What will he write next? "I have an idea. I have three ideas, one very elaborate. One is concerned with the widows of famous people. Another would be a political play, English. But they are forming, emerging, and I wait. They have to insist on being born."

How does he write? With ease? With difficulty? He answered: "I write very quickly. I write very slowly. I write intensely."

We wanted to ask a final question. Would he object if a composer wanted to use his *Amadeus* for the libretto of a real opera? But we hesitated to ask. **MA**

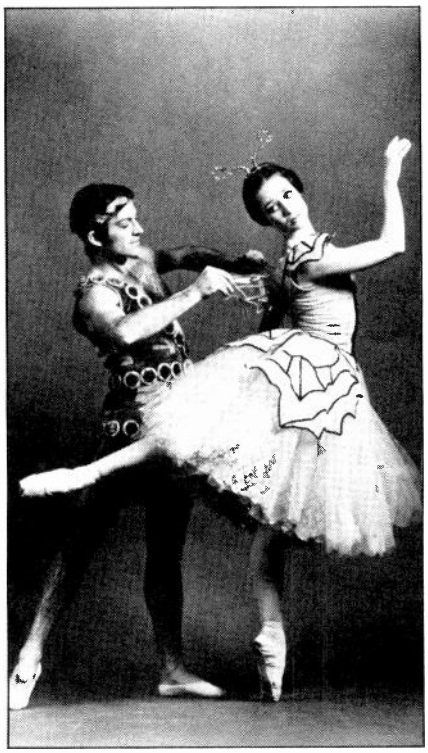
# Paul Taylor's "Arden Court"—A Happy Choice

## Houston hits home with "Le Papillon"

**Jacqueline Maskey**

Paul Taylor's new piece *Arden Court*, premiered during his company's season at the City Center (April 14-May 3), is set to a Constant Lambert arrangement of music from symphonies by the English composer William Boyce (1710-1779). It is a happy choice and not an entirely unexpected one in view of Taylor's proven affinity in *Airs* and *Aureole* (both to Handel) with the structure and character of baroque court music. There are other bits stressing the English connection: a blooming pink rose by Gene Moore is the set's constant and only decoration; the title itself suggests Shakespeare's forest. Yet these elements are allusive, supportive, suggested rather than dominant; they make an imaginary room through which Taylor's choreography rushes like an invigorating wind, stirring up dormant corners and opening windows with a bang.

*Arden Court*, after that introductory rose and some discreetly shaped utterances from a pit orchestra directed by Donald York, moves instantly into high gear with the entrance of the dancers—six men who seem projected like missiles across the diagonal of the stage in individual, virtuosic configurations. Each man—Elie Chaib, Kenneth Tosti, Thomas Evert, Daniel Ezralow, David Parsons, Christopher Gillis—is given a solo within the general hubbub of the opening section, but all is calmed with the entrance of the first woman, Carolyn Adams. She and Chaib dance a duet, the first in a series which makes up the center of *Arden Court*. The duet has a worshipful tone: Chaib—wide-shouldered and stolid as he stands in a Taylor-tilt, one leg raised high—looks like a tree about whom the adoring Adams twines like a vine. The duet ends in perfect amity: Chaib cradling Adams in his arms, gentleness and strength combined.



Geoff Winningham

**Longley and Perez in *Papillon***

The subsequent duets are shorter and no less effective: in Susan McGuire's and Evert's the motifs of the first duet seem reversed; in the one for Lila York and Tosti the worshipful tone is continued smilingly, as he, an air-borne comet, it tailed in a bourrée-like run by the tiny York. Competition rather than admiration lies at the heart of Parsons' and Ezralow's encounter: each tries to outdo the other in fleetness and complication. They exit to applause, then bounce back—like a couple of old vaudevillians—for a snappy little encore. Another bit of humor comes when the men suddenly and seriously resolve themselves into a line across the stage, hand in hand like a string of paper dolls—only one of them has somehow managed to stand on his head instead of his feet. The poor fellow is assisted out of his predicament by a solicitous colleague who indicates that a cartwheel is needed and, in a show of good manners, the others cartwheel off also. *Arden Court* ends as it began: with a show of fireworks as the men leap, dash, and roll across the stage and out of sight.

*Arden Court* is the latest in Taylor's string of hits which provides his superb dancers with an equally good repertoire. The man's range—from the curious rites in *Polaris* to the hilarious Taylor-on-Graham jokes in *Public Domain*—is tremendous. Such a peak as he has established is difficult to maintain, but Taylor has managed it for two seasons in a row now; may a third be wished upon him and us.

### "Le Papillon"

*Le Papillon* (1860), we are told, was the only ballet choreographed by the great Romantic ballerina Marie Taglioni in response to the talent of the young ballerina Emma Livry. The Jacques Offenbach score is the only one the composer wrote expressly to be produced as a ballet. The libretto, set in ancient Persia, was typically outlandish, involving a youth-seeking old witch, a girl whom the witch turns into a butterfly, her shepherd lover, and an unfortunate Shah who is at one point turned to stone and at another finds himself married to the hag.

How Ronald Hynd and Ben Stevenson (both once of the Royal Ballet) conceived the idea of mounting this for Stevenson's Houston Bal-

let is beyond my powers of conjecture, but they did and what they have produced (using an arrangement of Offenbach's score by John Lanchberry) is not a replica of Taglioni's *Papillon* but a droll and entertaining, barely full-length ballet which would have begun their recent Brooklyn Academy season (April 7-12) on a higher note than the opening triple-bill was able to establish.

Hynd is not a particularly creative choreographer—*Papillon* clangs loudly with resonances from *Coppélia, La Sylphide, Fille Mal Gardée* and half-a-dozen other classics and near-classics—but he is an excellent craftsman not only when a *pas de deux* is called for, but in maneuvering a female *corps de ballet* about in pretty patterns and charming style. The only place in *Papillon* which is lacking is the insufficiently brilliant Act II *pas de cinq.* The spot which gives dramatic trouble is that of Papillon's flaming death. Even a "reunited in eternal love" apotheosis does not soften the jolt of the heroine's hideous demise in a ballet which up to that point has been bubbling along in a froth of good cheer. I suspect that the Taglioni version had a strain of pathos and impending doom throughout, climaxing in Papillon's death, but here there is no such preparation for the incident and it seems crashingly out of key with the rest of the ballet. (An historic note, heavy with irony, is that Livry, the creator of the part, suffered fatal burns when her tutu caught fire during a performance in another ballet).

The Houston dancers gave of their best in their roles: Suzanne Longley danced and acted Papillon charmingly, with William Pizzuto a virile Shah, Dorio Perez an enthusiastic shepherd. But the hero/heroine of the occasion were Richard Munro/Janie Parker as the before/after witch. Munro, whether casting toads into his boiling cauldron or sheep's eyes at the Shah, was an adorable villainess and Miss Parker gratified one of my fondest fantasies by dancing a romantic *pas de deux* wearing full ballerina regalia, peering unbelievingly at her cavalier through an enormous pair of spectacles.

Johan Elbers

***Channels/Inserts:*** **Cunningham whirring in high gear**

### Merce Cunningham

A note on the Merce Cunningham season (City Center, March 17-28): Now in his sixties, the great dancer/choreographer seems to have shifted into a lower gear physically, but creatively he continues to whirr away in high as witness *Channels/Inserts* (David Tudor), a piece choreographed as a Charles Atlas television film and then reconsidered for the stage. Some of the resulting accommodations are obvious, as when the women of the troupe walk on stage and settle into an appreciative group, watching intently a series of male solos (all short, intense, incredibly virtuosic and, as the critic Edwin Denby remarked admiringly, "All so clear!"). The women exit en masse; a camera would have cleared its field by a simply shifting its focus. It is tantalizing, too, to guess how a camera would have explored the splendid, taxing duets constructed for Lisa Friedman and Alan Good. *Channels/Inserts* is a tough and sinewy work which covers its tracks from television to theater most convincingly and is as absorbing a dance as Cunningham has given us in recent seasons. **MA**

# Music—with a Difference—at CalArts

## Flexible structure allows individual freedom

**Charles B. Fowler**

Steve Kahn

**Dean Nick England with student Rob Miller**

Observing American conservatories and university schools of music is like visiting a series of Hilton Hotels—they tend to look and feel and act a great deal alike. One of the exceptions to this general model is the School of Music at the California Institute of the Arts, better known as CalArts. Perhaps the differences are best borne out by the remarks of two graduate students in composition whom I talked with.

Anna Rubin studied at CalArts from 1973 to '75, returning in 1979 to study with Mel Powell and Morton Subotnick, composers whom she has found to be very helpful in her own development. Randy Packer is in his second year at CalArts. This is his third music school.

### Self-made programs

"I was frustrated with my teachers and the academic environment," Randy confessed. "The other schools were more set in their ways and structured, having gone fifty or more years with little change. They were rigid and confining compared with CalArts."

Anna agreed. "This school is progressive. It offers study in a great variety of music and a diversity of arts. And I admire the faculty."

"I like the idea of independent study," Randy said. "The only requirements are a Seminar for Composers and private lessons. You create your own program. You have to have a clear vision about what you want to do. For example, I cross over and collaborate with dancers and am working on a film score. This is very common here."

"No one tells you what to do," Anna remarked. "CalArts works best for very self-motivated people. You have to be persistent. But the faculty will reinforce what you get yourself into. The problem is that informal structures like this can tyrannize some people. You sometimes don't know what is expected of you. Rules are vague, and that can be difficult, but I have no complaint about my artistic training."

Randy provided some background: "Originally, the Institute used an apprenticeship approach. Students learned by assisting their mentors. People talked and sat around. The atmosphere was too loose. Now the school has developed a curriculum and certain requirements, but without all the excessive formality of Eastern schools. The faculty are artists who are committed, successful, and active. They are very positive, and they give enormous energy."

Anna elaborated: "They are a role model rather than the kind of educator who gives one or two performances a year. With their own professional commitments there is less accessibility for the student but more return."

### Proximity of the arts

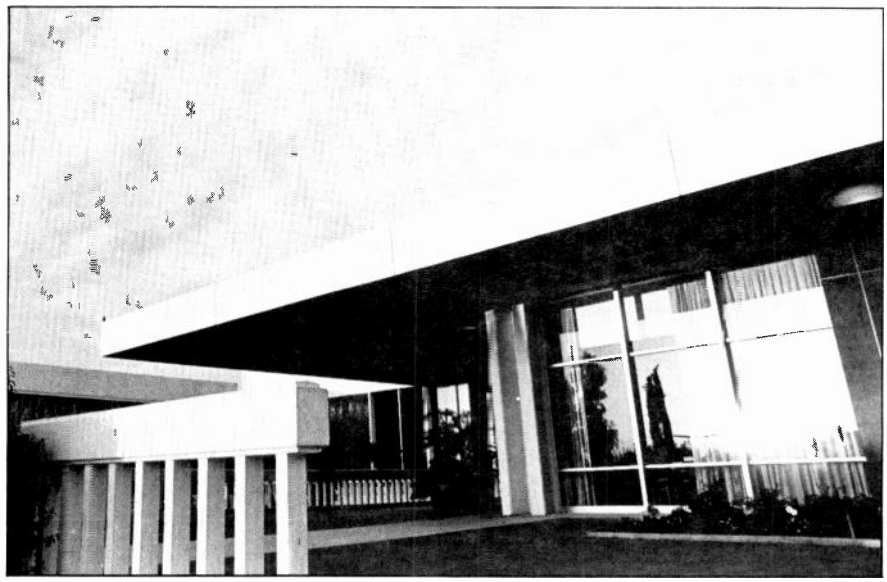
Robert Fitzpatrick, an urbane man with a warm and ready grin who is president of the Institute, says that "The School of Music is not just a music school, but one in close

proximity to the other arts." This arrangement reflects Walt Disney's philosophy. It was Disney who gave the original large bequest that got the Institute rolling. His primary interest was interrelated arts. "We don't structure the interplay," Fitzpatrick says, "but it tends to happen." The Institute, which has an enrollment of almost eight hundred students, has schools of dance, film (which since 1974 includes animation and film graphics), art and design, theater, and music, which at two-hundred students is the largest.

"From his experience with *Fantasia*, Disney was struck by the insularity of all artists," Fitzpatrick explains. "Visual artists had no understanding of music and vice versa. He conceptualized that he wanted to create an educational institution that would deal with all the arts and where the environment would encourage across-the-fields exploration."

From my observations, one of the reasons this interplay is so prevalent is the free atmosphere that encourages creative interchange among the students. The Institute is open seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. "Students use each other enormously," Fitzpatrick says. "They educate themselves." The access to the paint studios, the film equipment, and the electronic studios—even with the restrictions that are designed to safeguard the equipment—encourages experimentation in other areas. "For every barrier we've erected," Fitzpatrick says with a sly grin, "students have found their way around it. They find a partner and figure it out."

Architecture is another reason for this exchange. The main artistic/academic building houses all five



Dennis Gilbert

**CalArts building: for every barrier, there's an alternate route**

schools in a sprawling, multi-leveled, contemporary structure that deliberately mixes the art forms. Practice rooms surround a second tier that opens onto the machine shop below. The gallery—a major thoroughfare—is often used for rehearsals of the orchestra and other ensembles. The various theaters and the library serve all the arts, so that students are constantly bombarded by arts other than their own.

Then, too, the Institute is fairly isolated. Located just outside the planned community of Valencia about forty miles north of Los Angeles and situated on a hill in the Santa Clarita Valley with a spectacular view of the surrounding desert and mountains, the Institute provides few distractions. The students who live on campus—about half—literally have little to occupy their time except the arts.

### Artist mentors

The Institute makes certain that students are continually in touch with the arts and artists. "Every faculty member is a practicing artist," Fitzpatrick says. "They must maintain an active arts career. Since there is no tenure and no rank (such as instructor or assistant, associate or full professor), faculty perceive themselves as professionals rather than academicians. They can say, 'I'm a painter,' and mean it." Faculty are retained on one- to four-year contracts.

Nicholas England, dean of the School of Music who is a warm and gregarious sort, believes that "Students must be in contact with professional artists." To maximize that contact, he invites upwards of thirty visiting artists to the campus each year to spend anywhere from one day to a month in residence. "We deliberately strive for a wide variety, from composers to African drummers. And they don't just concertize but work directly with the students," England says.

The school is set up with a mentor system in which each student is

guided through an academic and artistic program most effective for him or her. Adjustments in the requirements—substitutions and additions—can be made, depending upon the student's goals. "A composer concentrating in electronic sounds may not need a background in fifteenth-century counterpoint," England says.

Mentors assess each student's progress annually. There is also a more elaborate mid-residence review, a graduation review, and a carefully defined system of academic warning, probation, dismissal, and appeal. "Students must develop their own self-will and self-direction—their own confidence to command their discipline. Some don't make it," England maintains.

**Indian Music Faculty with guest V. Shankar (center)**

### Ground rules

"There are some very simple general rules that apply to all students," England says. "No violence is tolerated and no interference with performances. Students must respect each other's work. We maintain an atmosphere where students do not compete with each other, only with their art."

Music students can choose to major in one of three areas: composition, performance, or what is called "general music," a program designed for students who seek a thorough knowledge and broad experience in music rather than professional careers as performers or composers.

Students are required to take sixteen course credits in Critical Studies—two courses per semester that include two semesters of "The Twentieth Century: Form and Conflict in Modernism." Other courses provide opportunities for students to study other arts to understand the interrelation of the fields.

Unlike most schools of music that concentrate on the European musical heritage, CalArts gives equal emphasis to contemporary music and the music of other cultures. "We project an expanded view of music that encompasses dance," England says. "The violin major is required to spend a minimum of one semester in the performance of non-European music. Students cannot get through the program without having experience in contemporary techniques. Even though they may concentrate on European classical traditions, they must have depth in today."

To provide this non-European experience, the school offers courses in Indian and African music and in Javanese and Balinese gamelan. I observed a lesson in African drumming taught by Kobla Ladzekpo, who comes from a family of composers, drummers, and dancers among the Anlo Ewe people of southeastern Ghana. I visited Nyoman Wenten's Balinese gamalan rehearsal where students majoring in tuba, composition, cello, art, dance, percussion, general music, and other areas were enthusiastically mastering, by rote, a repertoire of Balinese pieces in preparation for CalArts annual World Music Festival. A Contemporary Music Festival is also held each year and attracts some of the world's finest composers and performers (see June 1981 issue).

### Musical democracy

Lest an impression of imbalance be conveyed, I also heard the school's orchestra rehearsing Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, the Chamber Singers rehearsing Schutz's St. John Passion which will be performed with a lighting environment and projections, and the Twentieth-Century Players rehearsing Vinko Globokar's *Laboratorium*, a complicated, excruciatingly difficult piece. Daniel Shulman, conductor of the orchestra, believes that students' involvement in a broad range of musics is good for them. "It keeps their options open."

"The philosophy of the school," England says, "is pluralism, a catholic view of music that encompasses all kinds of music."

I asked England why, in this regard, there was no curriculum in pop, rock, and jazz. He explained, "We were limited by resources and had to make choices. We didn't want a token program but one that would offer the same high quality and depth as our other programs. Such a program is a priority for development within the next five years. In the meantime, students are encouraged to make their own forays into the area."

Considering where the Institute has come from and where it is now, and taking into account an impressive list of trustees determined to provide an educational program of highest distinction, I will bet on the new curriculum being added in the near future. This school is set on providing students with alternatives. **MA**

# Babbitt's "Dual"—a World Premiere

## From Washington to Paris, the trend is deversity

**Joan La Barbara**

If I had a dollar for every time I've been asked recently, "What's the newest trend in music?" I'd be a very rich woman. The answer—diversity—became evident through the activities I experienced during the first four months of 1981.

During January, at the Performance Gallery in San Francisco, a young synthesizer- and minicomputer-performance musician, Frankie Mann, did her farewell-to-San Francisco concert to a packed house of very devoted fans and friends. I had heard raves about Mann's work from Bay Area enthusiasts for several years and had, understandably, lofty expectations. I was met with a barrage of white noise . . . not an auspicious beginning.

A tape of music-box-like sounds followed. A short-haired young woman wearing sackcloth and a deadpan expression walked onstage and proceeded to squeeze a small bandoneon while Frankie sang in a whisper-soft voice. The music on tape was very Terry Riley-esque: sweet, smooth, interlocking patterns folding gently over one another. The sounds changed to airplane noises; the lyrics, "our father who art in New York," got a warm, in-crowd laugh.

Again the tape changed, this time to a mild, rocklike bit reminiscent of the Beatles. I was never quite sure how much was on tape and what was being done by the computer, and finally decided that the massive electronic display was mostly for show, with occasional processing of the voice and some live mixing of tape. Frankie's voice throughout was at such a low volume that it bordered on inaudibility and the processing was practically lost. The ending returned to the circular, tubular music and the audience applauded appreciatively. I was hoping that something had been wrong with the equipment and that this was not an example of what my friends had raved about for years.

**Krosnick: brilliant dynamics**

### Babbitt in Washington

In February at the Library of Congress in Washington, I was treated to the world premiere of Milton Babbitt's *Dual* for violoncello and piano (1980). I missed the session at which Babbitt described the work to the pre-concert audience and no program notes were provided, but from the first hearing I could discern the usual, careful attention to detail and specificity that are hallmarks of his compositional style.

At the opening, there is an extremely wide pitch range for the piano with predominantly *forte* dynamics. The cello is purposefully hidden at first, just barely audible. Joel Krosnick exhibited brilliant dynamic control and masterful double-stop technique. The work, written with more nuance and delicacy for the cello than the piano, emphasized the beauty and warmth of that instrument. The piano sounded brittle and cold, and I blamed this on the instrument itself, only to be astonished at the warmth and richness of the same piano during the Donald Frances Tovey Sonata in F major for cello and piano, Op.4 (1900) at the close of the program. When I mentioned this observation to the remarkable pianist Gilbert Kalish, he beamed and said that he concentrates on tone color in his interpretations and tries to impart his own feeling about the music and the composer's intentions as indicated in the instrumental scoring.

Although there was no break between sections in *Dual*, there was a clear midpoint at which the roles of the two instruments gradually shifted. The cello became more aggressive and the piano more withdrawn. The "duality" of the piece was clear: it had two definite parts, two character developments. It almost presented a kind of "duel" as well, with first the piano as the aggressor and instigator, and later the cello. The audience responded quite positively to the work and to the superb duo of Kalish and Krosnick.

### Women's Congress

In March I participated in the First International Congress on Women in Music, held at New York University and various performance spaces in the vicinity. Workshops and seminars were given on a wide variety of subjects: jazz and improvisation, experimental and extended techniques for voice and instruments, courses on the history of women in the musical arts throughout the ages. All was taped for later broadcast by National Public Radio, including many concerts of contemporary and historical works by women. [For review, see page 25]

### Xenakis' CEMAMu-CNET

In April I visited Iannis Xenakis' electronic and computer studio, CEMAMu-CNET, in the national telephone building on the outskirts of

*Continued on page 20*

## General News

**Beverly Sills,** general director of the New York City Opera, visited China in May under the auspices of Columbia University's Center for United States-China Arts Exchange to lecture and conduct master classes. She was joined by **Schuyler Chapin,** dean of Columbia's School of the Arts.... **Sir Michael Tippett** visits this country in September to attend the U.S. premiere of his concerto for Violin, Viola, and Cello, performed by the San Francisco Symphony under Edo de Waart; the Pittsburgh Symphony under Andre Previn will tour with the work. Tippett conducts his *A Child of Our Time* in Atlanta in November.

Chicago-born soprano **Johanna Meier,** who made her debut at the 1981 Bayreuth Festival as Isolde in July, was the first native-born American to sing the role in the festival's history.... **Andres Segovia** will serve as chairman of the jury of the first Segovia International Guitar Competition, sponsored by the Sherry Producers of Spain and the Sherry Shippers Association of Great Britain; the competition will be held this October at Leeds Castle, Kent.

Harpsichordist/pianist **Rosalyn Tureck** has established an archive in her name at the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center; the documentary recordings and related materials cover forty years of her career as a scholar, performer, and sponsor of twentieth-century music.... **Michael Zearott,** conductor/pianist, shares conducting duties on the tour of Francis Ford Coppola's presentation of *Napoleon,* the 1927 film classic by Abel Gance. Carmine Coppola, who wrote the four-hour film score, also conducts on the tour.

The Midland-Odessa Symphony commissioned a symphonic work by American composer **John David Earnest.** The piece, *"A Permian Symphony,"* will premiere on May 11 and 12 in Odessa and Midland, Texas.... Pianist **Marilyn Neeley** returned recently from two weeks at the Cairo Conservatory of Music, where she taught and performed with the conservatory orchestra.... **Philip F. Ashler** announces the formation of a professional symphony orchestra in Tallahassee, Florida, of which he is chairman of the board; **Nicholas Harsanyi** has been appointed music director.

**The former John F. Kennedy Center-Rockefeller Foundation International Competitions** for Excellence in the Performance of American Music will be shifted to Carnegie Hall in 1981 and known henceforth as the International American Music Competitions. The Carnegie Hall Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation are co-sponsors; the competitions are for pianists, vocalist, and violinists.

## Awards

The Liederkranz Foundation announced the winners of the 1981 competition for singers and pianists. Of the ten awards for voice, first prize went to **Evelyn Congiglere,** soprano; second to **Donald Collup,** lyric baritone; and third to **Brenda Rucker-Smith,** lyric soprano. First, second and third prizes for Wagnerian singers were awarded, respectively, to **Noel Espiritu Velasco,** tenor; **Leah Littlefield,** mezzo; and **Lani Norskog,** spinto soprano. The prize winning pianists were **Sook-Chung Kim,** first prize; **Gary Goodman,** second; and **Jana Dasparova,** third.

The nine winners of the 29th annual BMI Awards to Student Composers Competition were **Ronald Caltabiano,** 21; **Jeffery V. Cotton,** 24; **Donald R. Davis,** 24; **Noam Elkies,** 14; **Robert J. Elkjer,** 24; **Jerome P. Kitzke,** 26; **David Kowalski,** 25; **David A. Lang,** 24; **Ronald Lubetsky,** 21.... First place award winner of the WGN-Illinois Opera Guild "Auditions of the Air" was **Marvis Martin. John Fowler** was the second place winner.... The first, second, and third prize winners of the 1981 Washington International Competition for Pianists were, respectively, **Francisco Renno, Constance Geanakoplos,** and **Timothy Smith.**

Conductor **A. Clyde Roller** has been awarded the 1981 Alumni Achievement Award of the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester.... The annual Rome Prize Fellowships in Musical Composition for 1981/82 were awarded to **Nicholas C.C. Thorne** of Johnson State College, Vermont; and **Todd L. Brief** of Harvard University.... Architectural patron **J. Irwin Miller** is the first recipient of the MacDowell Corporate Award, created to honor corporate support of the creative arts.

Nineteen-year-old pianist **Cecile Licad** was the winner of the Leventritt Foundation Gold Medal Award. This is the first time the prize has been given in ten years.... American pianist **Eve Wolf** won the third prize in the Seventh Internatinal Vincenzo Bellini Piano Competition. Miss Wolf shared the prize with Kikuko Kurose, 28, of Japan.... **Andres Cardenes** of the U.S. won third prize in the Fourth International Sibelius Violin Competition in Helsinki.... Three Juilliard violin students won top prizes in the Seventh International Competition of Musical Performance in Viña Del Mar, Chile. The winners were: **Peter Oundjian,** 24, first prize; **Gerardo Ribeiro,** 30, second prize; and **Ira Bieler,** 29, third.

The Violin Concerto by American composer **Gregory Kosteck** of Knoxville won the $2,300 first prize in the 1980 Wieniawski Competition in Poznan, Poland.... *Scintillae,* by **Stanley A. Funicelli,** was the winning composition of the 1980 Annual Composers Competition. It received

its world premiere in January 1981 by the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Jorge Mester, conductor. . . . The American Music Center Letters of Distinction awards, given annually to those who have made significant and consistent contributions to American music, were bestowed upon the late **Samuel Barber** and to **Meet the Composer** and its director, **John Duffy.** . . . The National Opera Institute, Beverly Sills, Chairwoman, presented awards for Service to American opera to **Sherrill Milnes, Kirk Browning, J. William Fisher, New York City Opera,** and **Mary Ellis Peltz.** Trustee Awards were bestowed upon **Vivian O'Gara Weyerhaeuser, Robert Joy Collinge** (posth.), **Francis Robinson** (posth.) and **Dario Soria** (posth.)

## Competitions

**The Washington International Competition** announces an award of $1,000 for the composition of a string quartet for composers between the ages of 20 and 35. Application deadline is December 1, 1981. For more information write Winifred Hyson, 7407 Honeywell Lane, Bethesda MD 20014. . . . **The American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters** is sponsoring a competition for musical theater works, which must include book, lyrics, plot summary, and a tape of the music. Deadline for submission is November 3, 1981. For application, write to the Academy-Institute of Arts and Letters, 633 W. 155 St., New York, NY 10032.

**The City of Portsmouth International String Quartet Competition** will be held in Portsmouth, England, between March 6 and April 1, 1982. For an application form (due February 1, 1982) write: Mr. Dennis Sayer, Competition Administrator, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth PO1 2AL, England. . . . The first quadrennial **International Violin Competition of Indianapolis** will be held September 6-19, 1982. Deadline for application to the competition, which will award a $10,000 first prize, is March 31, 1982. For further information, write: International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, 320 North Meridian, Suite 511, Indianapolis, 46204.

## Appointments

**Judith Somogi** has been appointed first conductor of the Frankfurt Opera beginning in the 1982-83 season. . . . **Thomas Michalak** was named music adviser and principal guest conductor of the Kansas City Philharmonic, effective April 1, 1981 and extending through August 31, 1982. . . . **Richard Williams** has been appointed music director of the Virginia Philharmonic beginning next season.

Six pianists were selected to participate in the new Xerox/Affiliate Artists Pianists Program, which consists of four two-week residencies with major, metropolitan, and regional symphony orchestras. The artists chosen for the program's first year are **Leon Bates, Arthur Greene, Gita Karasik, Panayis Lyras, Steven Mayer,** and **Christopher O'Riley.** . . . **Donald Martino** has been appointed the Irving Fine Professor of Composition at Brandeis University as of Sept. 1980. . . . **Jacques Voois** was named music director of the Lansdowne Pa. Symphony Orchestra, following the death of conductor Henri Elkan.

**Richard Williams** has been appointed music director and conductor of the Virginia Philharmonic Orchestra. . . . **Sergiu Comissiona** has accepted the post of permanent guest conductor of Radio Philharmonic Orchestra of the Netherlands for a three-year period beginning in 1982. . . . Pianists **David Buechner, Glenn Sales,** and **Jonathan Shames** have been named 1981 Fellows of the Beethoven Foundation. . . . **The Manhattan String Quartet** has been engaged as the quartet-in-residence for the next three years at Music Mountain chamber music center. . . . **Gary Bertini** was appointed music advisor to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for a two-year period commencing June 1, 1981. . . . Metropolitan Opera bass-baritone **Andrew Foldi** has been named chairman of the Opera Department at the Cleveland Institute of Music, effective September 1, 1981. . . . **Thomson Smillie** has been appointed general director of the Kentucky Opera, beginning June 1, 1981. . . . The title of **Anthony A. Bliss** has been changed from executive director to general manager of the Metropolitan Opera.

## Obituaries

**Ivan Galamian,** violin instructor at the Juilliard School for 35 years, died on April 14 in New York at the age of 78. Galamian's students included some of today's most prominent violinists. . . . **Howard Hanson,** composer, educator, and American music advocate, died February 26 in Rochester N.Y. at 84. Dr. Hanson was director emeritus of the University of Rochester's Eastman School.

Betty Jane Nevis

Simmons, Arrau

Leonhardt, Kipnis

Calvin Simmons joined members and staff of the Oakland Symphony to wish Claudio Arrau a Happy 78th Birthday last February. . . . The morning after their separate recitals in Milwaukee, harpsichordists Gustav Leonhardt and Igor Kipnis shared a leisurely breakfast at the University Club. . . . Country music singer Loretta Lynn was among the performing artists at Ford's Theater Gala in Washington, where she enjoyed the company of fellow artists Itzhak Perlman and Luciano Pavarotti.

Perlman, Lynn, Pavarotti

# Opera Everywhere

## Indiana University's "Greek Passion" comes to NYC, L.A. Repertory stages "Ariadne"

### Los Angeles

***Los Angeles Opera Repertory Theater: "Ariadne auf Naxos"***

As attempts to establish opera in a non-opera city go, the Los Angeles Opera Repertory Theater's second season seems among the most promising yet. Last year, Johanna Dordick's company offered evenings of Britten's *Albert Herring*. This spring (following a concert version of Mozart's *Abduction* in January), Strauss' *Ariadne* and Puccini's *La Bohème* were scheduled in the Wilshire-Ebell Theater. *Ariadne*, opening on April 22, had the particular benefits of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra as accompanist, with Seattle Opera's Henry Holt conducting. Consistent with Dordick's policy of "investing in the future of young artists," the cast included a generous supply of professionals nurtured in either the companies of the North and Southwestern U.S. or Europe.

Chief among these was soprano Susan Quittmeyer, whose lustrous voice and commanding presence gave the fervent Composer his due and the Prologue its special resonance. Impressive also was soprano Marie Robinson, an appropriately statuesque Ariadne whose powerful yet intelligently-measured vocal resources provided the best moments in the more problematic Opera portion of *Ariadne*. In a production of exceptionally goodlooking people, Donna Robin offered a pert, somewhat forced Zerbinetta and a coloratura both fearless and haphazard in the demanding showpiece of the second half. Elliot Palay as Bacchus (clad in a costume that seemed to have come straight from the Jolly Green giant) provided volume pushed beyond the reasonable limits of a basically lusterless instrument.

As the Major Domo, Michael Keenan spoke John Gutman's English translation of the Hofmannsthal Prologue with wit and vinegar. Conrad Immel offered a deferential Music Master with equal clarity in a serviceable baritone. Fabrizio Melano's otherwise efficient stage direction did a disservice to Zerbinetta and the nymphs who, when placed rearstage, were all but inaudible, regardless of orchestral volume. Robert W. Zentis' sets and Terry Wuthrich's lighting tended to reflect rather than obscure the difficulties in working with a small stage and modest facilities.

MELODY PETERSON

### New York

***Indiana University: Martinů "The Greek Passion"***

The School of Music at Indiana University descended on New York *en masse* in late April, for a series of five performances (orchestral, choral, chamber, contemporary, and operatic), the centerpiece being a performance of Bohuslav Martinů's last opera, *The Greek Passion*, at the Metropolitan Opera House on April 26.

The opera, with its heavy reliance on chorus and opportunities for a variety of solo parts (though mostly male), showed the troupe to splendid advantage. The zest and accuracy of the chorus, and the precise intonation and projection of the English text (translated by Brian Large), were allied with fine-grained playing by the orchestra under the baton of Bryan Balkwill. Unfortunately, all this expertise was lavished on a work not really worthy of the effort.

Martinů was attracted to Nikos Kazantzakis' novel about a Greek village in which several of the inhabitants are chosen to play roles in the Passion Play (a Jesus, a Judas, a Mary Magdalene), and who come to play them in real life. The tale ends (of course) in the death of the Jesus figure at the hands of the Judas. Kazantzakis handles this plot in a masterly way, developing it as a portrait of Greece under Turkish rule. But when Martinů cut the story down to fit the confines of the opera theater, he was forced to eliminate most of the subtleties; and what we get is obvious and predictable. In fact, the best moments in the opera are not those in which the characters act out the Passion play in their own lives, but in the conflict between the Turks' victims and the self-satisfied villagers, who only wish to have them go away.

Martinů's writing is notably simpler in texture than his earlier works, and relies heavily on Greek Orthodox church music. This gives the opera a sanctimonious air—the


Dave Hepp

***Greek Passion:*** **was it worth the effort?**

incense rising from the orchestra pit. The piling-on of liturgical cadences and sweet-soft harmonies to suggest charity and Christ carries with it more than a whiff of what Hollywood does in similar circumstances. Indeed, the aura projected by *The Greek Passion* invokes a far stronger—because far more shameless—theatrical endeavor: Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar*, which succeeds in its task because of its complete commitment. Martinů is an exasperating composer: throughout this score he comes up with arresting musical ideas that are allowed to dissipate and vanish; he seldom works them out in the manner (to take two contrasting examples) of a Beethoven or a Richard Strauss.

The cast and the chorus were extremely well rehearsed, and if Ross Allen's stage direction was too dependent on external gesturing and posing rather than on interior revelation of character, it was good to see a stage alive with shaped and cogent movement. Daniel Brewer was very fine as the Christ-figure, Manolios, and delivered a splendid final *scena*. Rebecca Field was properly restrained yet sensual as the Mary Magdalene, and of the rest I would single out Robert Bork's clarion voice as the priest Fotis, Neil Jones's sympathetic Peter (Yannakos), and Tim Noble's carefully controlled characterization of the oily village priest, Grigoris. The excellent sets of Max Röthlisberger (who set the world premiere in Zurich in 1961) evoked a Greek village in the blaze of sunshine.

The Opera Theater of the Indiana University School of Music certainly demonstrated its qualities in this production, and incidentally showed that the Met stage can be a welcome environment for more than big-star singing. But I do wish that the company had chosen to showcase its own composer in residence, John Eaton, whose *Danton and Robespierre*, given in Indiana a few years ago, would have made a far better symbol of the strengths of this conservatory.

PATRICK J. SMITH

## New Music

*Continued from page 15*

Paris. While much has been written and said about Pierre Boulez's enormous and well-funded set-up at IRCAM in the center of Paris-Beaubourg, not much has appeared about the far smaller but workable CEMAMu situation. IRCAM is a huge building complete with many labs, recording studios, several separate computer systems, the much publicized "Espace" performing room with movable walls for changing the acoustical characteristic. CEMAMu is one small workroom/studio and an office.

Although it does not have funding to commission new works as does IRCAM, the CEMAMu facilities are open for use by composers and are also open to the public. When I visited the studio, a project was on hand to move the equipment to the Forum-Les Halles in the center of Paris for a public access workshop that would allow blind adults and children to work directly on the equipment.

The set-up consists of a Tektronix "drawing board" and metal pencil. One arranges the parameters on the x/y axis and can "draw" wave forms, envelopes, pitch, and duration directly on to the board, receive a computer printout in numbers and a graphic realization, and hear results within seconds. It also can process information from external sources, like instruments or tapes.

And so the answer to the question about new trends *is* diversity. New methods are being developed for composition, new personalities are emerging with questionable ability and technique, and more established artists and composers are perfecting their craft. It is a time of digging-in and establishing territory, while the lack-of-funding crunch is felt throughout the western world. The Eighties could be an exciting era of real work and development or of backpedalling, with artists mimicking historical works for wider approval. It all remains to be heard. **MA**

# Debuts & Reappearances

## Atlanta

***Choral Guild (Noll): Kosis "An American Requiem" [premiere]***

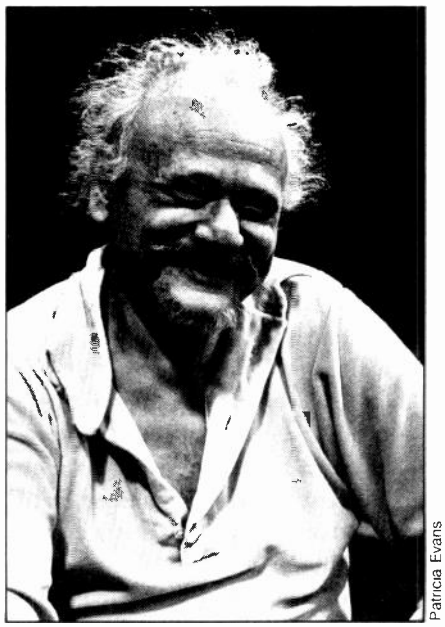
Full-fledged requiem masses do not abound from American composers, and when a significant one does appear in a highly commendable performance, it is a noteworthy musical event. Such was the case when the Choral Guild of Atlanta, expertly conducted by its director William Noll, gave the premiere performance on March 29 of *An American Requiem* by Atlanta composer David Kosis. Illinois-born Kosis eschewed a pianist's career for one in science and electronics. Now he is a flight analyst for Delta Air Lines, while music in his life takes the form of composing, working as a private student of David Diamond.

Written for large chorus, three soloists, and full orchestra, *An American Requiem* comprises seven of the nine traditional sections (Introit, Kyrie, Dies Irae, Offertory, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and Communion), set to English versions of the consecrated Latin texts. The work is basically tonal, often polytonal, but Kosis' refined compositional craftsmanship makes the frequent dissonances emerge as logical consequences of the skillfully wrought contrapuntal textures. The forty-two-year-old composer has fashioned a work of major importance in contemporary choral literature, a musical allegory that mourns the passing of the American dream from our way of life, yet offering hope for the future. At the end of the Kyrie, following the words "Lord, have mercy," the musical quote "o'er the land of the free" is placed in subtle but chilling counterpoint to the second phrase of "Taps" from a solo trumpet.

The choral writing is challenging, with heavy use of tritones and alternation between juxtaposed major-minor chords. The longest and most difficult movement, the Dies Irae, surges with wild abandon through constantly changing irregular meter, as the choral lines build to eight-part parallel motion in seconds and other stark augmented intervals. The effect is one of powerful drama. Lyrically beautiful passages occur in the Kyrie, with its plainchant flavor, and in the gently lilting Sanctus.

A large audience turned out for the first-rate performance. The solo writing for soprano, tenor, and baritone is relatively sparse, but effective against the choral background. Many of the singers were enthusiastic in their affection for the music. CBS camera crews filmed much of the final rehearsal, along with interviews of Kosis and Noll, portions of which appeared on national television.

Preceding the requiem, a chamber ensemble of the main chorus sang J.S. Bach's Cantata No. 4 (*Christ Lag in Todesbanden*), with the sopranos and altos in the adagio "*Den Tod*" blending into as sublime a sound as one might wish, floating through the vaulted expanse of St. Luke's Episcopal Church. JOHN SCHNEIDER



Patricia Evans

**Shapey: lyricism and passion**

## Chicago

***Contemporary Chamber Players: Shapey "Trilogy" [premiere]***

Ralph Shapey turned sixty on March 12, 1981. With a career as a composer that spans four decades and includes some seventy works, Shapey stands as a major figure in American music. He has fiercely pursued his own vision, impervious to the ever-changing fashions in new music; despite the difficulties presented to performer and listener alike, a significant number of his works seem destined to endure.

In 1969 Shapey withdrew his music from public performance in protest against the deteriorating ethical standards in the musical world, and in fact, in the world in general. Most performers honored his ban. Then, in 1976, Shapey reemerged with a large-scale oratorio, *Praise*; other works composed during and after the self-imposed silence have appeared in recent years.

The latest—in many respects the most impressive—is *Trilogy: Song of Songs*. Part I was commissioned in 1978 by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation for the Library of Congress, and first performed by Shapey's pioneering ensemble, the Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago in March of last year. The complete *Trilogy* was first presented by the CCP in April, 1981, as a sixtieth birthday tribute to the composer; the concert was sponsored by the Fromm Music Foundation of Harvard University. Paul Fromm, a Chicago wine merchant and an untiring promoter of contemporary music, is a long-standing advocate of Shapey's work.

The *Trilogy*, scored for soprano and bass soloists, fourteen instruments, and electronic tape, is an impassioned setting of the love of Solomon and Shulamite drawn from the

Hebrew Bible. Part I is sung by soprano; Part II by bass; in the concluding section, the two singers join together. Central to all three parts, and developed throughout the work, are a half-dozen or so basic musical ideas, including a brass chorale-like progression (reminiscent of one in *Praise*) and a turn-motive.

There is remarkable variety in the scoring. The work opens with a plaintive cello solo, and virtuosic cadenzas appear throughout the Trilogy. Shapey again shows his fondness for building up densely packed textures which underline the ecstatic climaxes in the text, and then dissolve into moments of lyrical calm. Although there is frequent, uncompromising dissonance and long stretches sound at full volume, the overriding effect is of lyricism and passion.

Although the three parts of the piece can be performed separately, the cumulative power of the complete *Trilogy* is overwhelming in a way that individual sections alone could never be. In the end, Shapey convinces us that his powerful vision could only be expressed in his own language.

As always, the CCP honored their composer/conductor with expert playing. Elsa Charlston sang Shulamite's high-lying lines with unerring pitch and compassion. Paul Kiesgen was not quite her match. As a final surprise gesture, the CCP interrupted curtain calls with "Happy Birthday" rendered in brilliant Shapey-esque harmony.

PHILLIP HUSCHER

## Cleveland

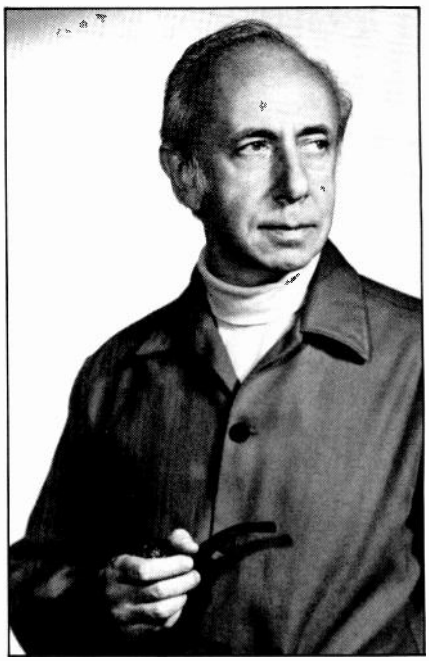
***Cleveland Orchestra: Gould "Burchfield Gallery" [premiere]***

The Cleveland Orchestra under Lorin Maazel's direction has not overburdened itself with American music, at least not in its regular subscription concerts. This season (1980-81), by way of example, only six works in the twenty-four weeks of programs were by twentieth-century Americans. Thus it was a celebration of sorts on the April 9 and 11 program when four of the six were played: three of the four were firsts in Cleveland, and of these one was a world premiere. That one was *Burchfield Gallery* by Morton Gould, commissioned for the Cleveland Orchestra by the Charles E. Burchfield Foundation of New York.

Burchfield (1893-1967) was an internationally-known Ohio-born artist who had studied for a time in Cleveland at what is now the Cleveland Institute of Art (which is, coincidentally, celebrating the hundredth anniversary of its founding). Hence the Cleveland connection. Burchfield's paintings rarely if every relinquished the ties with the painterly past, though they did contain a touch of surrealism at times, particularly in his attempts to paint sounds as well as trees, fields, lakes, etc. "My musical celebration," says Gould, "is intended to evoke what Burchfield's paintings are about, with their vibrant lights and shadows, and constant motion and dancing rhythms."

The seven movements are: *Prologue—Passacaglia*; *Spring—Ballad*; *Brookside Music—Interlude*; *Summer—Serenade*; *Autumn—Scherzo*; *Winter—Reverie*; and *The Four Seasons—Fantasy*. Long a skilled orchestrator, Gould has outdone himself in getting these visual/aural amalgams into the atmosphere, not only from the standard instruments of the orchestra but also from every gimmick the percussion section can muster, including thunder-sheets, wind machines, and the like. He skillfully limns the seasons not in a Walt Disney-ish literalness but in very effective colors which derive from the orchestra itself.

Like Burchfield, Gould holds steadfastly to the mainstream of musical tradition, making his music extremely easy to assimilate. Though this does no guarantee it a long life, neither should it *ipso facto* exclude it from the musical establishment's thinking. Indeed, its very attractiveness will be a major reason for others to give it a try, thereby garnering for



**Gould: effective coloring**

*Burchfield Gallery* sufficent exposure so that time can render a considered judgment.

FRANK HRUBY

## Los Angeles

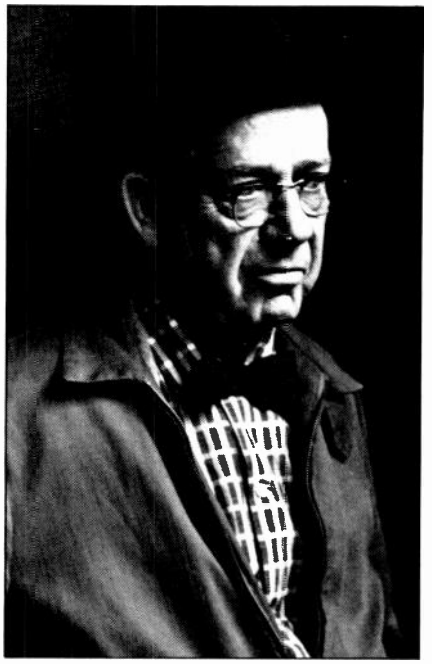
***Los Angeles Philharmonic: Sinopoli debut***

Last season the Los Angeles Philharmonic offered an ill-calculated U.S. debut of Riccardo Chailly. This season, the hoopla was about Giuseppe Sinopoli, the thirty-year-old Italian surgeon *cum* conductor who has gained recognition through performances with the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna State Opera, and a variety of festivals to which he has contributed his own avant-garde compositions. In a flurry of gyrational twists, bumps, lunges, little hops and swordlike cues, Sinopoli tackled nothing less than Mahler's Ninth as his primary vehicle in the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Prelude to all this was a more eloquent statement of Webern's Symphony, Opus 21 received with characteristic ingratitude by the Thursday night audience of April.

There is evidence (the Webern,

Courtesy of the Burchfield Center, Buffalo, NY

**Burchfield's *December Storm*: an attempt to paint sound**



**Burchfield: a touch of surrealism**

for example) that Sinopoli has intelligence and musical flair to be shared. A conducting student of Hans Swarowsky (who, as we remember, nurtured the fiery talents of Zubin Mehta), he demonstrates a considerable, visible, predilection for high drama. But where, one wondered, was the tearstained, aching sweetness so integral to the Mahler? And where, to be more precise, were the strings in general? Sinopoli, as became increasingly evident in the Mahler, preferred to draw out brass and winds at the expense of violins and cellos. The outcome was an intrusion of instrumental groups one upon the other. It produced discomfort in the opening *Andante comodo* (where the LAPO horns were unbeautiful on their own account). It also fostered a rocky *Im Tempo eines gemaechlichen Laendlers*, a too often monochromatic Rondo Burleske and, finally, an aurally warm but spiritually dispassionate Adagio. The audience, in generous clusters, hastened to the exits between movements.

The LAPO, in the meanwhile, has reverted to some of the coarse sound and careless playing that preceded Giulini's arrival on the scene. (Giulini's wife has had major surgery in Italy and, at this writing, the conductor is expected back in town this summer.) What one jotted down in concert about Sinopoli's Mahler seems too often true of the orchestra as well: "... has the motions ... has the energy ... doesn't feel the pain."

MELODY PETERSON

## Louisville

### *University of Louisville: Husa's "The Trojan Women" [premiere]*

The University of Louisville School of Music presented the world premiere of *The Trojan Women*, a one-act ballet with music by Karel Husa and choreography by Alun Jones, on March 28 and 29. The work had been commissioned as the climactic event of a year-long celebration of the school's move into handsome new facilities completed in the fall of 1980. The idea of using Euripides' play as the subject for the new ballet came from Jones, with Husa eagerly agreeing. Both men obviously revere the play, and approached the adaptation to a different art form at a white-hot pitch of inspiration.

There are a few changes in the plot. Helen's trial scene, with which Euripides brought about a change of mood and introduced a rising note of irony, is deleted. Talthybius, while present, is reduced to a one-dimensional figure, stripped of the humanity that allowed him, in Euripides, to falter in his resolution when commanded to slaughter Andromache's son. But the story of Hecuba (spelled "Hecabe" in this version) standing at the ramparts of a burning Troy while summoning courage to face untold suffering, remains untampered with. Like the play, the ballet is a protracted lament for the victims of war. It is a desolate, angry, disturbing theater piece, which mounts confidently to a moving climax.

Husa's score is a forty-five-minute tone poem that throbs with the anguish inherent in the play. The work is densely scored. Husa erects great monoliths of sound to support Jones's choreography. There are recurring rhythmic motives, percussive and angular, that depict the militancy of Talthybius and his soldiers. Hecuba's music, the score's most expressive moments, is often rhapsodic and elegiac. Much of Husa's music is deliberately descriptive. When the

child Astyanax is slain, cascading chromatic scales in the woodwinds depict blood pouring from his body. Throughout, Husa emphasizes crucial moments in the action with equally obvious, if successful, effects. In two interludes given to Hecuba as she mourns the loss of family, friends, and nation, Husa's score speaks in a more individual musical voice. In such passages, he skillfully employs Greek modes and adapts ancient Greek melodies to his purposes.

Husa and Jones worked closely together in the creation of *The Trojan Women*, with the result that Husa's music and Jones's vivid choreography unite to produce a searingly intense theatrical experience. Audiences greeted it enthusiastically. Whether Husa's score can exist independently as a concert piece, however, remains to be seen. One rather suspects the music is too consistently pictorial, too ready to serve as an aural background for movement, to strike out successfully on its own.

WILLIAM MOOTZ

**Hagegard: nurtures the secret**

### Minneapolis

***Minnesota Orchestra (Smith): Zimmermann "Missa Profana" [premiere]***

A jazz mass for chorus, orchestra, Dixieland ensemble, and sirens? Possible, one supposes, but not likely. That however, is precisely what the German composer Heinz Werner Zimmermann has composed, a large-scale, deeply-felt, and ultimately problematic work given its world premiere in late February by the Minnesota Orchestra at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis, resident conductor Henry Charles Smith on the podium.

Zimmermann is quick to point out in his extensive program notes that the word "profane" in the title of his mass, *Missa Profana*, is not to be taken as meaning irreverence. He means rather than certain instruments, a honky-tonk piano, for example, and certain idioms, such as jazz, are not normally associated with church music and fall into the "profane" (or secular) category, the Latin *profanum* meaning "outside the sanctuary."

Zimmermann overstates his case, however, in saying that the use of such instruments and idioms would be "unthinkable in a church service." Dave Brubeck's sacred oratorios, after all, have been performed in churches called Sacred Concerts of the late Duke Ellington. And obviously, Leonard Bernstein used various types of pop music in his *Mass*. Such mixing of idioms is neither as shocking nor as hip as Zimmermann apparently thinks, though few composers have followed the scheme of the traditional Latin Mass as closely as Zimmermann has, bringing in all these profanely swinging sounds.

It's a tenable idea, in other words, though Dixieland is hardly the vernacular music of today, not even in Germany. But we can score Zimmermann the point that Dixieland at least connotes vernacular, for what he is really trying to convey are "the conflicting messages of our modern world" and "the pluralism in contemporary musical consciousness." The sincerity of Zimmermann's intentions, that is, are not to be doubted. Nor can his skill in choral writing be denied, the manner in which, for example, his Credo builds in intensity over plucked basses. The lazy-sounding blues tune that works sustains interest over its sixty-seven minutes, but Zimmermann doesn't succeed in combining all these idioms into a unified whole. The banal folk tune in the Benedictus seems tacked on, arbitrary, as do many of the other elements.

Smith conducted with flair and understanding, nonetheless, and the choirs of Bethel College and Mount Olivet Church sang out wonderfully, especially in the portions of the Credo that sound so much like Carl Orff. The vocal soloists (Costanza Cuccaro, Cynthia Munzer, Jonathan Mack, and Douglas Lawrence) performed nobly.

MICHAEL ANTHONY

### New York

***Hakan Hagegard, baritone***

Despite the current spate of enthusiasm for chamber music the length and breadth of the American continent, one subspecies seems clearly to belong on the endangered list: the song recital. Many singers are lured onto recital stages still by the range and fascination of the literature, but fewer and fewer of these aspirants seem able to pass through the portals and return invested with that spirit, that elusive intimacy, without which most classical songs seem nothing more than affectation, histrionics, or horseplay. I suppose that we should be thankful that the Lied and the *mélodie* are not universally consigned to the artistic dustbin with the Pindaric ode and the wood engraving. But, sad to say, reverence for the form and diligent application to the score, such

as are commonly brought to the task of performing these works, are not enough to make them live. Therefore I am delighted to add to the shrinking list of present-day singers who possess and nurture the secret of that life the Swedish baritone Hakan Hagegard.

The thirty-six-year-old artist, though frequently heard in New York and elsewhere in this country in both opera and concert over the past several seasons, is perhaps still best known here as the Papageno in Ingmar Bergman's acclaimed film of *The Magic Flute.* His program at the 92nd Street Y was a canny blend of the familiar and the unusual. His virtues as a Lieder singer were apparent at the very outset, in Schubert's *An die Leier*, one of five songs by that composer, and persisted to the last, the tender *Wie bist du, meine Königin*, one of three by Brahms. In the former, the contrasting heroic and amorous phrases demonstrated that Hagegard's firmly centered, well-schooled, and characterful voice possesses both sufficient heft and resonance for operatic assignments and a full spectrum of colors and dynamic values, right down to the subtlest. In the refrain of *An die Leier*, as the poet declares that the strings of his lute refuse to sing of anything but love, there was no crooning, no exaggerated "covering," but a well supported *piano*, stretched delicately over even the difficult rising phrase on the words "*nur Liebe*" in the penultimate strain. Hagegard's voice is superbly knit together, top with bottom, loud with soft. In fast music it has a fine spring, so that all the notes in a rapid passage are fully sounded. Pitch is secure, and the rise and fall, tension and relaxation of the musical line are natural and convincing. Word and tone are effortlessly united, neither shirked to meet the requirements of the other—the concomitant of which is that the songs' texts are always intelligible. And throughout the evening the singer's command of the idiom grew more and more evident to audience. At the close, Hagegard uttered the emblematic "*wonnevoll*" that caps each stanza of *Wie bist du, meine Königin* in a caressing *mezzo-piano* the rapt intensity—and sheer beauty—of which had the hall hushed and totally spellbound.

In between came some novelties and near-novelties, all on medieval or pseudo-medieval texts. Stenhammar's chivalric ballad *Florez and Blanzeflor* and Rangström's *King Erik's Songs*, a cycle of five songs based on the ruminations of a mad and imprisoned Swedish monarch, were both sung in Hagegard's native tongue, and his gift for dramatic projection almost triumphed over the fact that the printed program contained neither the original texts nor the line-by-line translations, but only brief and completely inadequate paraphrases. Ravel's *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée*, three fragments of an abandoned score for a film that was to star Chaliapin, was robustly done, a welcome contrast to the rather effete (and un-Chaliapinesque) delivery it usually gets. Frank Martin's *Six Monologues from Jedermann*, on excerpts from Hofmannsthal's adaptation of the morality play, almost sounded like important music in Hagegard's hands. Though overall the stylistic embrace of the program was not very large, everything was informed by the remarkable identification of performer with material.

Thomas Schuback, a conductor at the Stockholm Royal Opera, where Hagegard is a regular, provided accomplished collaboration. If at times his piano seemed a bit reticent, one had to remember that it must be very difficult to shine in the presence of an artist as engaging as Hagegard. As I have suggested, the Y's printed leaflet was a disappointment: no foreign-language texts, line-by-line translations where least needed—Schubert, Brahms, Ravel—and none where essential, and an amateurish air in general. But the Y and supporters of its music series deserve nothing but praise for persisting in bringing to New York audiences the caliber of musicmaking that Hagegard's program represents.

ROBERT S. CLARK

## New York

### International Congress on Women in Music: *Barthelson "Lysistrata," Rogers "A Woman Alive"* [*premieres*]

Long before the establishment of McSorley's Old Ale House or the Bohemian Grove, music composition was one of the most exclusive men's clubs. The few women who managed to make a name for themselves as composers were generally regarded as curiosities, as isolated phenomena not to be taken seriously. Over the centuries, as women became integrated into the other artistic professions, male domination in the composing field remained unquestioned and unchallenged.

The last few decades, however, have finally seen some progress made toward the demolition of this most persistent of sex barriers. Perhaps it is due to the ascendance of feminism, perhaps it is an idea whose time has come, if much too tardily, but lately there has been a great increase in public awareness of the contributions made by women composers.

Thus the time was ripe for the holding of the First International Congress on Women in Music hosted by the music department of New York University from March 26 to 29. Attended by women composers, performers, and musicologists from the United States and abroad, it consisted of concerts, seminars, workshops, and panel discussions on a fascinating variety of topics relating to women and music. Among them were women in Jewish music, women musicians of the Renaissance, women rag composers, women benefactors of the musical arts, characterization of women in opera—to name but a few.

Anytime there is a "first" of something, however, particularly such an ambitious project as this one, a few mishaps are bound to occur. The two concerts I attended at the auditorium on West Fourth Street on March 27 and 28 serve as examples. The first, a double bill of one-act

chamber operas on feminist themes—*Lysistrata* by Joyce Barthelson and *A Woman Alive: Conversation Against Death* by Patsy Rogers—was ill-suited to the acoustics and dimensions of the hall; while the second, a program of orchestral music by women composers, seemed to have been hastily prepared.

The Barthelson opera is based on the Aristophanes comedy in which a group of Grecian wives deny their husbands sexual relations until the latter forswear waging war. The men at first are incredulous but once they realize their spouses mean business they quickly give in. The score, actually more a cantata than an opera, is in an agreeable conservative vein, and the vocal writing offers rewards to large and small roles alike. Perhaps the most memorable passage is the soothing intermezzo for the oboe and piano accompaniment with its rhythmic displacements typical of Near Eastern folk music. Unfortunately *Lysistrata* takes too much time getting off the ground: the first third of the opera, in which the wives air their marital complaints, coasts along nondescriptly. Moreover, Barthelson has trouble shaping her ensembles, which often end abruptly before they have a chance to develop.

The semistaged performance seemed apt enough, and the updated costuming of the women in cocktail dresses and the men in business suits added a touch of irony. The casting in the major roles paralleled the outcome of the story, with the vibrant soprano of Miriam Voutsis easily subduing the smooth lyric tenor of Thomas M. Tomasievicz as the husband, Theodosius.

The Rogers opera is a dignified effort which doesn't quite ignite, perhaps because its only character, an old lady about to die, never seems quite nervy or theatrical enough for operatic treatment. According to the program notes, "her conversation is addressed to the figure of Death who appears to her as various men: her husband, her father, the dentist, a moving man." Although Eve Merriam's libretto tells us a lot about this lady as she recites her life's story, she remains something of a mystery. We don't know why she is dying—she appears in good health—so her imminent demise is scarcely believable. Even though she is talking to herself (as perceived by the audience), her discourse is too lucid for an operatic-style mad scene. Although she is homeless, her condition seems preferable to the destitution of a real bag lady. Still, if the composer has had less than a complete character to work with, the musical profile is still remarkably rich and informative. The haunting lullaby of the brief prelude, worthy of Aaron Copland at his best, immediately suggests the lady's maternal nature. Later on she chatters nervously, at other times she lapses into eerie calm, and once she breaks into a musical hall ditty.

Soprano Joyce McLean made a brave effort to bring her role sympathetically to life, and it was not her fault that almost none of the text was intelligible. Even though an instrumental ensemble led by the composer played as softly as possible, it was placed too close to the audience for proper balance with the singer.

By far the most satisfactory offering on the orchestral concert was the Music for Horn and Chamber Orchestra (1979) by Ruth Schonthal, a six-movement suite combining the harmonic style of Strauss and Mahler with the cryptic brevity of Webern. The *Music on Open Strings* (1973–76) by Gloria Coates is an ingenious experiment which manages to overcome its limitations only in the scordatura movement. The rest of the program dated from earlier times: the Violin Concerto in A by the late-eighteenth-century Venetian Maddelena Lombardini-Sirmen and *The Chambered Nautilus* (1907) by the American Amy Beach. The latter work, a heavily perfumed affair greatly indebted to the last act of *Parsifal*, might be easier to like if it boasted more imaginative orchestration and curbed its excessive use of throbbing triplet chords.

Despite conscientious work from some of the soloists, the performances with Rachel Worby leading the New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra were functional rather than inspired. ANDREW DERHEN

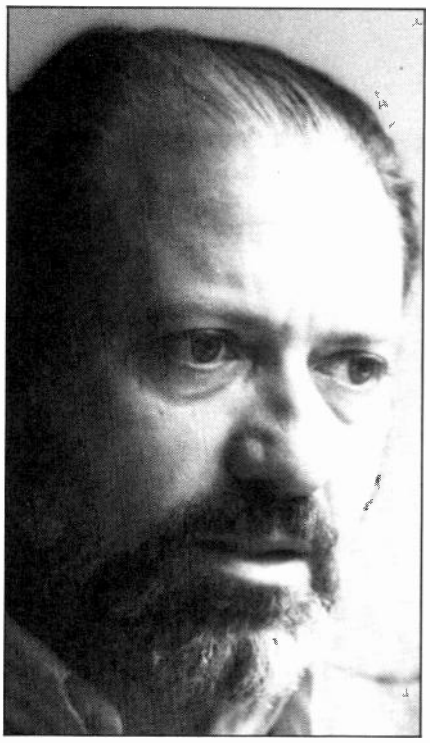
**New York**

***Oratorio Society: Handel "Joshua"***

*Joshua* is not Handel's strongest oratorio, nor was the Carnegie Hall performance of it by the Oratorio Society of New York on March 30 a particularly good one. Nonetheless, there was a great deal of pleasure to be had in recognizing in this relatively unfamiliar work the same masterly handling of large forces that the composer displays to better advantage in his more familiar compositions in the genre. Given a group of soloists on the whole barely equal to their tasks, and a tedious libretto, by Thomas Morrell, almost totally lacking in dramatic effect, it was surprising how much satisfaction the evening held for devotees of large-scale choral music.

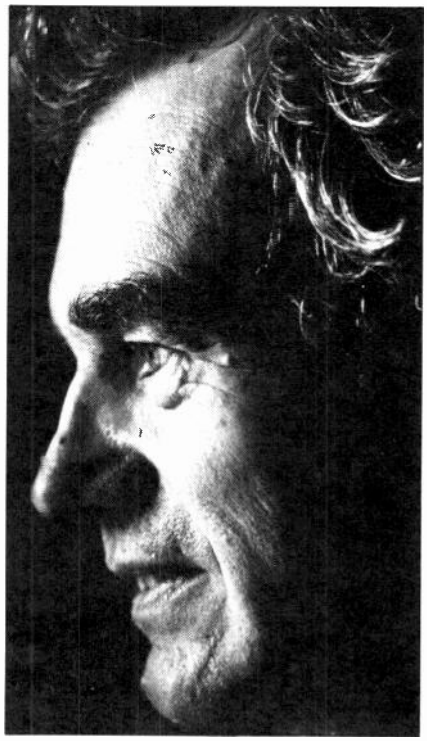
*Joshua*, a work of Handel's maturity, contains two celebrated numbers, the chorus "See, the conqu'ring hero comes," and the soprano aria "Oh! had I Jubal's lyre." But scattered amongst the generally routine recitatives, choruses, and solos of much of the rest of the piece are enough other passages of power and beauty to carry the listener through three acts of dramatic stagnation without his totally realizing how little real movement there has been. The chorus with solo "Almighty ruler of the skies"; the air "Shall I in Mamre's fertile plain"; and most magical of all, the conclusion of Act II in which the sun and moon are stayed in their course, are, together with some vivid orchestral passages, compensation enough for the compleat Handelian.

One can only speculate what



Weisberg: zesty direction

Maximilien: forged through fluff



Moev: a tentative piece

the total impact of the work might have been had the level of performance been higher. It was clear from the beginning—the orchestral introduction—that the incisiveness and clarity of line so vital to this style were not to be. Conductor Lyndon Woodside held his forces reasonably together, but did little else to diminish the weaknesses of the score by reinforcing its strengths. The general principle seemed to be to keep things moving, which sacrificed along the way all those individual moments of heightened emotion which would have breathed life into the whole. Two soloists, tenor David Britton (Joshua) and soprano Ellen Irene Goff (Achsah), sang agilely and accurately, but with insufficient vocal power. Bass Jan Opalach (Caleb) projected more of whatever drama there was to project. The major disappointment of the evening was mezzo Glenda Maurice. It was difficult to equate Miss Maurice's Othniel, tentative, insecure, poorly projected, lacking diction, with the critical praise lavished upon her New York recital debut last February. ARTHUR SATZ

## New York

***Orchestra of the 20th Century: Moev Concerto for Piano, Orchestra and Percussion* [*U.S. premiere*]**

The Carnegie Hall concert of the Orchestra of the 20th Century on April 20 promised more on paper than it delivered in performance. This was no fault of the orchestra's, for under Arthur Weisberg's knowledgeable and zesty direction it is a superior group, obviously well rehearsed and alert to the demands of the music played. It is a pity we cannot hear it more often, for twentieth-century music (and, let it be noted, we are four-fifths through that century!) needs just such advocates.

It was good to hear Jacob Druckman's 1972 *Windows* once again. It was the first of his explorations of sounds and timbres for large orchestra, and it remains striking, if more diffused and dependent on earlier models (Ravel's *La Valse*, for instance) than Druckman's later exercises in the genre. But given the colorful performance, its merits were well to the fore.

The U.S. premiere of Robert Moev's Concerto for Piano, Orchestra, and Percussion, which won the Stockhausen International Composition Prize in 1978, proved to be a rather tentative and incoherent work, despite the stringent mathematical program on which it was based. The piano part, well played by Wanda Maximilien, seemed more filigree and fluff in its repetitions of phrase and in its cadenza of trills than substantial musicmaking, and the intermittent amplification of piano, harp (which I never heard), and percussion never seemed to make any structural or emotional sense except at the very end, when all Hell was let loose in the loudest noise this side of a rock band.

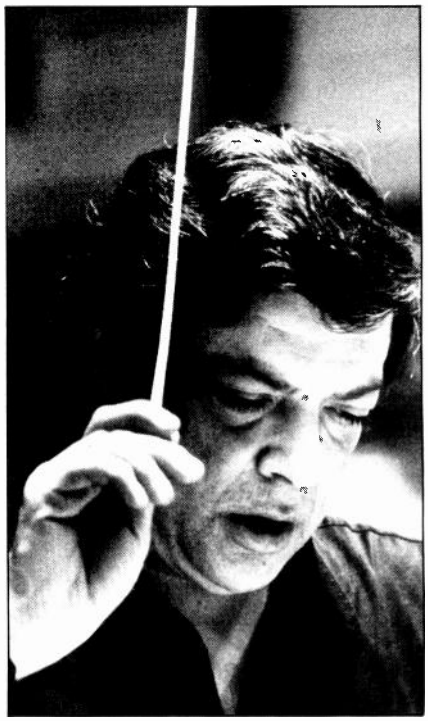
Schoenberg's monodrama *Erwartung* goes back to the beginning of the century (1909), but the power of its portrait of a woman on the edge of breakdown over the loss of her beloved still registers with force and musical power. But it demands a singer with a commensurate expressive range and a voice to keep the bal-

ance with the roiling orchestra. Unfortunately, Susan Davenny Wyner's soprano is unequal to the demands of the score: she hasn't the lungs to ride over the orchestra (particularly an onstage one), nor does she have the shadings of color and dramatic anguish to project the hallucinations and distortions of Marie von Pappenheim's expressionistic text. Thus, the central role receded into the distance, behind the orchestra, and the singer struck one as less a distraught heroine than an American debutante stood up at the Junior Prom.

PATRICK J. SMITH

Phonogram International

**Holliger: transcended technique**



Maria Austria

**Maderna: an eloquent composer**

### Pasadena

***Pasadena Chamber orchestra (Duerr): Lesemann "Seven Pieces" [premiere]***

Something old, something new, and something infrequently performed. Robert Kenneth Duerr made the promise on behalf of his Pasadena Chamber Orchestra three years ago. The twenty-six-year-old conductor kept it yet again on March 10 with a program of Tchaikovsky, Britten, and Frederick Lesemann in Caltech's Ramo Auditorium. As usual, the quality of this still-fledgling orchestra varied considerably over the evening. What remains consistent, however, is the group's sense of adventure, its visible effort to pull together for the common musical good.

The world premiere of Lesemann's Seven Pieces for String Orchestra and Electronic Tape, for example, was convincing and interesting despite imbalance (the tape was too loud) and imperfection (the strings seemed raw at the beginning, smoother as the work progressed). In itself, the fifteen-minute work, subtly laced with references to the chorale *Es ist genug*, provided a variety of pairings in a colorful yet unextraordinary way.

In the recitative, the PCO accompanied a metallic-voiced tape. In the Air, lyrical strings were supported by an overzealous, arpeggiated electronic accompaniment. In the "Night Music" portion, tape provided a windy enclosure (the composer defines it as a "sonic environment") for ruminative strings. The most effective interplay, however, occurred in a boldly braided Scherzo and, again, in the final Canzona, its pulsing electronic bass line providing a strong, ostinato spine for emphatic strings. Digital computer and Moog synthesizer were the principal means of producing electronic sound, Lesemann assisted by a number of technicians at the University of Southern Californa.

In Britten's *Les Illuminations*, texts by Rimbaud Duerr, the PCO, and tenor Michael Sells superbly confronted the "Fanfare," coursed lovingly through the arching "Antiquity," rollicked with "Royalty" and on, finally, to a subdued "Departure." Obvious affection and good taste likewise prevailed in Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings.

MELODY PETERSON

### San Francisco

***San Francisco Symphony: Maderna Oboe Concerto No. 3 [U.S. premiere]***

There is a certain irony in the fact that the supplest, most lyrical serial music has been written not by the Germans who invented it but by the Italians who, after the war, adopted the technique and made it very much their own. Luigi Dallapiccola, Luciano Berio, Luigi Nono, and Bruno Maderna are the foremost representatives of this school, which has done so much to make the austere language of the twentieth-century both humanistic and accessible.

Maderna's untimely death at fifty-three in 1973 robbed the world

of one of its most eloquent composers and important conductors; Maderna's efforts on behalf of contemporary music were protean, and perhaps it is fitting that he died in Darmstadt, for a time the center of the musical universe. A child prodigy who developed into a mature musician, Maderna wrote relatively few works, but each is distinguished by craftsmanship and ease of expression.

Maderna produced three oboe concertos—in 1962, 1967, and 1973—and it was the last of these that received its American premiere by Heinz Holliger, the renowned Swiss oboist, and the San Francisco Symphony under Edo de Waart on April 1. The concerto was Maderna's final composition, written largely in the hospital (although the composer was able to conduct the first performance at the 1973 Holland Festival with soloist Hans de Vries), and it is impossible not to hear in it what John Adams has called its "poignancy and quiet resignation."

Like any self-respecting piece from Darmstadt, the Third Oboe Concerto employs by-now familiar modern performance devices (at one point, the soloist removes the oboe's mouthpiece and blows through it) but they never call undue attention to themselves or become wearisome. Further, the music's chance elements ensure that no two readings will be quite the same. Holliger was completely at home with the work's stylistic and technical demands—indeed, he transcended them—and played it exquisitely, getting sensitive support from de Waart and his musicians.

Earlier in the program, Holliger played Bach's Concerto in A major, BWV 1055, realized on the oboe d'amore as per Tovey's suggestion. After intermission came an eloquent performance of the Bruckner Symphony No. 4, the Romantic.

MICHAEL WALSH

# NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

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## CONCERT GUITAR

**John Johns and Jeff Ray:** Works by Johnson, Dowland, Sor, and Granados. Johns also performs works of J.S. Bach, Mendelssohn, and Smith Brindle.

**Carlos Barbosa-Lima:** Works by Ponce, Mignone, Santorsola, Ginastera, Villa-Lobos.

**Sharon Isbin:** Works by Brouwer, Granados, Paganini, Britten, J.S. Bach, Macombie, and Albeniz.

**David Perry:** Guitarist/lutist/tenor, Bagatelles by Walton; "Letters from Composers" by Argento; and works by Dowland including "A shepherd in a shade," "I saw my Lady weep" "Fantasy," "Sorrow, stay."

**Leo Brouwer:** Works by Henze, Sor, Weinzweig, Barrois-Mangore, and Scott Joplin.

## INTERNATIONAL CONCERT HALL

**Tadeusz Strugala conducts the Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra:** Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 (Lidia Grychtolowna, piano); and Bruckner's Symphony No. 2. (Taped Aug. 29, 1980, "Ascona Festival.")

**Nicholas Harsanyi conducts the Piedmont Chamber Orchestra:** Works by Mozart; Ludwig Spohr, Walter Ross, Johannes Brahms, and Lyric Fantasies for Viola & Strings (Sally Peck, viola) by Norman Dello Joic (Taped March 7, 1978).

**Cristobal Halffter conducts the Sudwestfunk Symphony Orchestra:** Premiere performances of "Landler-Topographien" by Walter Zimmermann, "Gestalt für Orchester" by Peter Michael Hamel, and Composit on for Trombone, Baritone & Orchestra by Jorg Herchet (Armin Rosin, trombone; Gerhard Faulstich, baritone). **Uwe Gronostay conducts the RIAS Chamber Choir:** Premieres of "Nox et tenebrae et nubila" by Roland Willmann and "Tagnachtlied" by Wolfgang Steffen; Lamentatio Jeremiae Prophetae, opus 93 by Ernst Krenek. (Halffter concert taped Oct. 17, 1980. Gronostay concert taped Sept. 19, 1980.)

**Karl Böhm conducts the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra:** Mozart Symphonies No. 39, 40, and 41. (Taped Sept. 13, 1980.)

**Jorge Mester conducts the American Symphony Orchestra:** "Flivver Ten Million" by Frederick Converse; Richard Felciano's "Galactic Rounds"; works by Aaron Copland and Walter Piston and Piano Concerto by Erik Lundborg (Ursula Oppens, piano). (Taped Nov. 24, 1980.)

## THE NEW YORK CITY OPERA

**"Les Contes D'Hoffmann" by Offenbach:** David Effron, conductor. Riccardo Calleo portrays Hoffman, with Justino Diaz, Barbara Carter, Joanna Simon, and Carol Vaness. (Taped Nov., 1980.)

**"The Love For Three Oranges"** by Prokofiev: Christopher Keene, conductor is heard as the Prince, David Hall as Truffaldino, and Carol Gutknecht as the Princess. (Taped March-April, 1981.)

**"Anna Bolena"** by Donezetti: Charles Wendelken-Wilson, conductor. Olivia Stapp, Samuel Ramey and Jane Seymour in the leading roles. (Taped Nov., 1980.)

**"Madama Butterfly"** by Puccini—David Effron, conductor. Patricia Craig as Cio-Cio San, Riccardo Calleo as Pinkerton and Andrew Smith as Sharpless. (Tape March-April, 1981.)

**"The Makropoulos Affair"** by Janáček: John Mauceri, conductor. Maralin Niska is heard as Emilia Marty. (Taped March-April, 1981.)

## SAINT LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

**Leonard Slatkin, conductor:** Works by Glinka, Mahler, and the world premiere of Violin Concerto by John Williams (Mark Peskanov, violin). Taped Jan. 29, 1981.)

**Leonard Slatkin, conductor:** Works by Geralc Finzi; Shostakovich, and Dvořak's Concerto in A minor for Violin, (Jaime Laredo, violin). (Taped March 26, 1981).

**Erich Leinsdorf, conductor:** Mozart Symphony No. 40 and selections from "The Magic Flute," selections from Wagner's "Die Meistersinger," and "Götterdämmerung" by Wagner. (Taped Feb. 19, 1981.)

**Leonard Slatkin, conductor:** Wagner's Overture to "Rienzi"; Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 27, (Alicia de Larrocha, piano); and Bartók's "Miraculous Mandarin." The St. Louis Symphony Chorus is directed by Thomas Peck. (Taped April 23, 1981.)

**Leonard Slatkin, conductor:** Works by Berlioz, Tchaikovsky, and the world premiere of David Amram's Violin Concerto (Charles Castleman, violin). (Taped May 2, 1981.)

## SAINT PAUL SUNDAY MORNING

**Members of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra with the Dale Warland Singers:** All-J.S. Bach program including Suite No. 3 in D Major, Brandenburg Concerto No. 4, and "Christ lag in Todesbanden," Cantata No. 4.

**Members of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra with Dennis Russell Davies, piano; and Charles Holland, tenor:** Works by Percy Grainger, Virgil Thomson, Bartók, Vaughn Williams, and traditional Negro Spirituals.

**Members of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra:** Works by Handel, Vivaldi, J.S. Bach, Elliot Carter, and Mozart.

**The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra Quintet:** Variations on a Folksong by Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck; Seventeen Variations by Jean Demase; Serenade by Brugk; and works by Tchaikovsky and Barber.

**Pinchas Zukerman, violin & Marc Neikrug, piano.** Various violin sonatas.

# Memphis State University: New Music Festival No. 8

## Michael Colgrass is guest, and diversity is the name of the game

**Elliott Schwartz**

Memphis State University presented its eighth annual New Music Festival, February 11-15, with Michael Colgrass as the featured guest composer. The festival included eight very busy concerts packed into the five-day period: perhaps more music than even the most dedicated new music devotee might want to hear in a concentrated time slot, but ample testimony, nevertheless, to the great variety—and sheer quantity—of music being created by regional university-based composers throughout the United States.

The pieces played at Memphis were anything but parochial in either origin and outlook. Composers from locales as widely separated as Seattle, New York City, and Los Angeles were represented on the programs. Although a number of works by Memphis State composers were performed, there was hardly what one might term a pro-Tennessee bias. On the contrary, if any strong regional pattern emerged, it was an unexpected "Illinois-Texas connection." A surprising number of the guest composers had studied at, or taught at, a major institution in one or both of those two states: the University of Illinois, Southern Illinois, Northwestern, North Texas State, Rice, the University of Houston, and Southern Methodist University, to name just a few. In view of this, a visitor might be pleasantly surprised at the wide range of musical styles—improvisational games for performers, experiments in spatial placement of forces (including the audience area), delicately articulated shapes, broad washes of "texture," varying degrees of tight pitch control, parodies of other works and other styles (including jazz and rock).

*Composer Elliott Schwartz is chairman of the music department of Bowdoin College.*

### Established composers . . .

A number of composers featured at Memphis have already established secure reputations and fairly broad exposure on the university-festival circuit in the past, and they were represented at Memphis by strong pieces that typified their styles. Ursula Mamlok was present to hear her chamber work *When Summer Sang*, a finely wrought setting of great delicacy and nuance. Morgan Powell's *Darkness II* for brass and percussion used a very different language, but with an equally sure hand: vivid rumblings and outbursts of sonority, laughter and blurred gestures mingling in a surreal context. Houston composer Michael Horvit produced a miniature gem in his percussion quartet *Interplay*; everything about it—its proportions, angular shapes, and subtle shifting of expressive states—succeeds admirably.

Ulf Grahn, known not only as a composer but as a champion of new music in the Washington, D.C. area, explored spatial and antiphonal placement of a chamber ensemble in his highly effective *Soundscape II*; its self-limited pitch material literally "travels" about in fascinating juxtapositions and collisions. Two of the strongest pieces were unabashedly neo-classic in their esthetic, although quite contrasted in mood and surface texture: Annette Le Siege uses block-like percussive sonorities and shapes in her Piano Sonata, often reminiscent of Ruggles, Rudhyar, or early Copland, while David Russell Williams evokes the neo-tonal world of Poulenc or Shostakovich, alternately brittle and lyric, in his Concerto for Piano-Four-Hands and Orchestra.

### . . . and fresh faces

Some of the most interesting composers at Memphis were, on the other hand, less well known—younger figures fresh out of graduate school, or perhaps still graduate assistants, just beginning to make a reputation within their profession. I was most impressed by four such pieces. *Three Songs* by Philip Carlsen (Brooklyn College, CUNY) runs an expressive and stylistic range from tight post-Webernian pitch whispers to gruff jazz parody, and always convincingly. The Sonata for Viola and Piano of David Liptak (University of Illinois) is more consistent stylistically, and uses its biting, angular gestures to sustain dramatic interest. Braxton Blake's Cantata for soprano and chamber orchestra reveals a sensitive ear for delicate timbres (often overwhelmed by larger, vivid contrasts) and a fine sense of melodic shape; a different work for soprano, *De Profundis* by Hayes Biggs (Southern Methodist University), attempted to expand the dramatic canvas by including the listeners (a number of whom were given prerecorded cassettes to operate during specified passages) and utilizing the total space of the *entire* hall.

### The Colgrass presence

This eclectic mix of stylistic attitudes must have pleased guest composer Michael Colgrass, whose own work abounds in a cheerful fusion of many influences, styles, and processes—often linked together by nothing more elaborate than his remarkable energy, his buoyant approach to living, and a disdain for traditional stylistic categories that has become a stylistic trademark of its own. A number of Colgrass works were performed during the five days. In *Variations for Four Drums and Viola* and his ensemble *Percussion Music*, he explores aspects of "imitation"—melodic shapes translated into percussive (less strictly pitched) ones and back again—and ways in which simple rhythms may overlap to create complex resultant patterns. *Light Spirit*, for flute, viola, guitar, and two percussionists, retained these concerns, but now in the context of sustained ensemble sonorities and a tonal language that darts from one style to another with great ease.

That same ease characterizes Colgrass as a lecturer. He offered a number of public workshops and seminars during his Memphis residency, and a casual visitor might have been surprised to note that very few of these dealt overtly with the subject of music. At one session, Colgrass discussed physical training for "performers" (whether actors or musicians), and had volunteers exploring somersaults and shoulder rolls; at a different workshop, he explored the psychology of neurolinguistic mental processes, and ways in which we might all (as musicians or simply as human beings) tap a wider range of these processes within us.

Clearly, Colgrass has an all-embracing view of his work as a creative artist, a powerful yea-saying strain that is really quite captivating in its blend of Whitmanesque fervor and genial humor. His quasi-improvisatory "cantata" *The Earth's a Baked Apple* sums up his attitude, and his multi-faceted style, in its exhuberant text and its musical fusion of jazz, atonality, and lyric bel canto technique. Colgrass conducted an ensemble of Memphis State students and faculty in a rousing performance of this piece that was surely one of the highlights of the festival.

### Freund: omnipresent

One other figure very much in evidence at the Memphis festival was Donald Freund, who is MSU's resident composer and has been one of the strong organizing forces behind this festival for the last few years. Freund's energy apparently knows no bounds; during the five days of concerts he was seen conducting, rehearsing, hosting receptions, and doing an outstanding job as chamber-ensemble pianist. He was also represented as composer by a number of works—some absolutely outrageous in their use of collage/quotation (the marriage of punk rock and Beethoven in *Killing Time* for amplified saxophone, piano and tape, or the gentler Beethoven fixations of *Pastoral Symphony*), and others simply solid, pantonal structures of strong profile.

As a composer, Freund is a good cut above the average, and has a terrific future ahead of him. As an organizer and administrator, he's no less talented. And his work was undoubtedly made easier by the presence of some highly capable performing artists at Memphis: violist Judith Nelson, percussionist-conductor Frank Shaffer, violinist-conductor Max Huls, and soprano Christine Schadeburg (a former Memphis artist now visiting from Dallas, where she sings with the Voices of Change new-music ensemble). They are all to be commended for an outstanding series of programs. **MA**

# ASUC Conference—Diversity & Problems

## Should composers forge a common language? Some think so

**James Chute**

The sixteenth annual national conference of the American Society of University Composers was a celebration of musical diversity—an exercise in individuality that reflected the explosion of new American music into a seemingly limitless number of different directions.

"There is no avant garde because there is no main garde," composer Leo Kraft of Queens College, City University of New York, told several hundred of his colleagues assembled at the College-Conservatory of Music of the University of Cincinnati April 9 for the opening of the four-day festival/conference. "It's hard to see who is ahead of the times because we can't even agree on what the times are."

The sixty-eight works performed in eleven concerts and the numerous demonstrations and lectures displayed a remarkably broad stylistic range. In his *Siberian News Release*, Texas Tech's Ron Pellegrino attempted to make music by amplifying the sound of his lips puckering against the cheek of an attractive conference participant. Arizona State University's Glenn Hackbarth incorporated jazz into an often dissonant musical vocabulary in his *Metropolis*. Bluegrass and a traditional hymn tune were effectively combined with strikingly experimental techniques in Gerald Plain's 1975 work, *and left ol' Joe a bone, AMAZING!* While Martin Bresnick of Yale—in his *Wir Weben, Wir Weben*—found fresh and innovative ways of incorporating contrapuntal techniques into an untraditional framework, other composers insisted on retrenching and producing the learned harmony and counterpoint that is more associated with the academic composers of a previous generation.

**Oliveros: specific recommendations**

### A hot issue—unresolved

"This organization represents all composers," declared conference co-chairman and CCM faculty member Norman Dinerstein. One of the convention's most heated issues was whether to take "university" out of the organization's name. Of the more than eight hundred members, roughly ten percent are not affiliated with a university. (The issue remains undecided.) "We're not uptown and we're not downtown," added Dinerstein. "We don't have an axe to grind; we are open to any point of view."

Diversity, however, can create its own problems. Several composers argued forcefully that the time has come for American composers to forge a shared musical language, a language that would reestablish contact with a body of people that some composers had come to view as an adversary—the public. Clifford Taylor of Temple University suggested in a presentation on "Overcoming the Insulating Effect of Contemporary Musical Sophistication, Iconoclasm, and Innovation" that a common language could be based on the "ideas of the present" without abandoning the traditions of the past. "Our competitors are the great masters of the past, not each other," he insisted. "We must nurture our world with the same meaning by which they nurtured theirs in the aesthetic realm if we ever want to have a relevant place in our society."

### Insularity

Implied in Taylor's presentation and echoed by several other conference participants was a view of the insularity of academic composers in general—and the ASUC in particular. "This organization has never reached out to the public at all," said Taylor later. "Actually, it's been just the opposite; they've tried to reach in and solidify that condition of insularity because then we can do the kind of exploratory things that we want and have at least some kind of an audience, even if it is only other composers."

M. William Karlins of Northwestern University raised a similar point in a panel dealing with "Composer and Audience." Karlins argued against music that could only be justified through analysis rather than through its communicative value. He dared to ask, "Why compose if no one listens?"

Pauline Oliveros of the University of California, San Diego, asked essentially the same question in her

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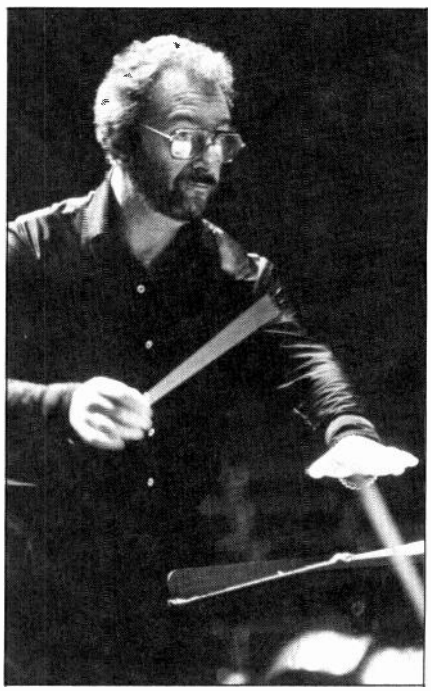
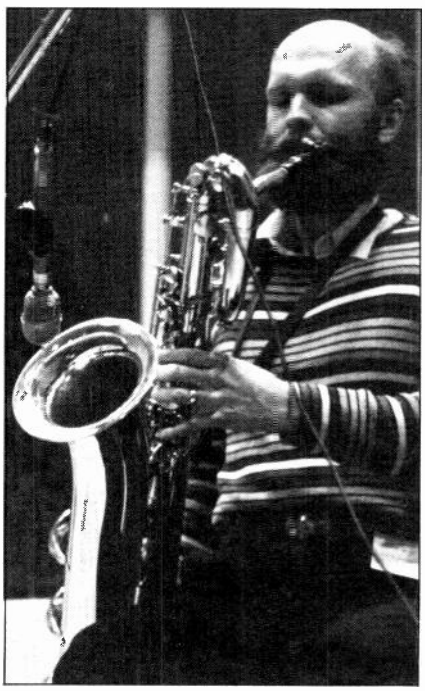
*James Chute is music critic of the* Cincinnati Post.

"tone-setting" speech that opened the conference. She also brought up a number of other basic issues, including the composer's relationship to the institution which he or she serves. "If you answered the questions that I asked in the talk, it would invariably lead to the conclusion that many composers have been ignoring their audience," she said after the conference. "On the one hand, you can have a highly specialized group of professionals addressing professional problems, which is right and proper. But it has to be balanced by community activities—how to relate to people of all ages, of all walks of life. I think the prevailing attitude among many composers has been an interest in getting a work performed. But you have to go beyond that question—so you get a performance, what does that mean in terms of the larger issues?"



Samuel: a sure hand



Mott: a remarkable work

Sandy Underwood

### Geographic balance

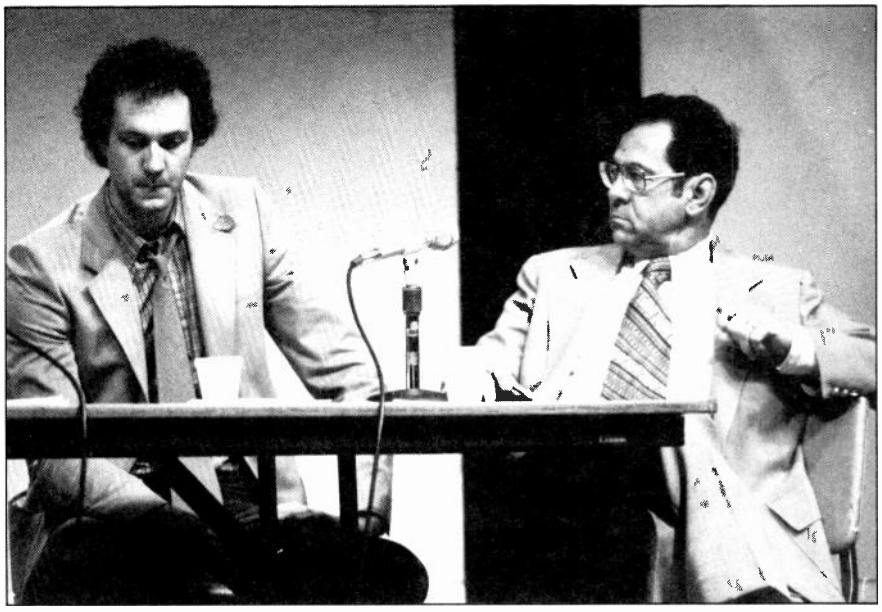
In this conference, performance was the larger issue. Dinerstein and co-chairman Jonathan D. Kramer headed a committee of CCM faculty members that reviewed more than 1,100 scores. The committee attempted to attain a stylistic and geographic balance and a mixture of well-known and infrequently performed composers. Many of the works had been performed before; some were more than a decade old. Contrary to the practice followed at other ASUC conferences, the performances generally utilized only the resources of the College-Conservatory of Music: two orchestras, three choruses, opera ensemble, symphonic band, wind ensemble, and several of CCM's artists in residence including violist Donald McInnes and The Percussion Group. (Noticeably absent was the LaSalle Quartet, which has been in residence at CCM for more than quarter of a century.)

Among the most impressive works were several performed by CCM's excellent Philharmonia Orchestra under the direction of Gerhard Samuel, a composer whose work *Requiem for Survivors* will be performed by the New York Philharmonic in its 1981–1982 season. Samuel has a sure and sympathetic hand for large-scale contemporary works, and his rendering of Plain's *and left ol' Joe a bone, AMAZING!* helped push the Eastman composer's work to the front of a very crowded and competent field. Samuel was also successful in capturing the spirit and intensity of Bresnick's *Wir Weben, Wir Weben.*

Several other notable scores were not afforded as sympathetic treatment by the Cincinnati Wind Ensemble. Hackbarth's *Metropolis* proved problematical to the ensemble, as did Sydney Hodkinson's *Bach Variations: Nine Etudes for Winds and Percussion*, a work marked with a sense of primal urgency. Overall, however, the performances were of an impressively high quality. And many compositions—Paul Alan Levi's *Five Progressions for Three Instruments*, for example—benefited enormously from fine performances.

### Experimental works

Remarkable among the more experimental works was David Mott's sensitive, even delicate explorations of saxophone timbre and Mark Saya's *Murphy Sonata*, a work for solo percussionist that borders on performance art (one of its more bizarre gestures requires the performer to dump forty ping pong balls on his instrument.) Allen Otte provided Saya's work with a near definitive



**Denny Griffith (Ohio Arts Council) and composer Donald Martino**

performance in a fine concert by The Percussion Group. In general, however, the experimental works were among the weakest of the conference. *Homage to Jimi* for electric guitar and percussion, by CCM's Henry Gwiazda, suffered from a lack of content and continuity, a problem not evident in his more conventional chamber work *Buckdancer's Choice*, the piece that won the ASUC-SESAC student composition prize.

More disappointing was the "Electronic and Multimedia" concert at Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center. Pellegrino's *Siberian News Release* was the low point in a concert that also featured Richard Lerman's *Incident at Three-Mile Island—Perhaps an Elegy for Karen Silkwood.* Lerman's work, in which suspended tuning forks are analogous to the control rods in a nuclear reactor and are "played" by two actors dressed in anti-radiation garb—was more effective as theater than as music.

Out of the eleven major performances, no single work towered above the others although Plain's *and left ol' Joe* . . . stood out as a convincing case of a composer using traditional and well-known material in an original and innovative fashion. Plain's work was one of the few heard during the conference that fulfilled what Oliveros had set as an ideal for new American music: a balance between what she described as the settler and the explorer archetypes as well as between the viewpoints she described as global and focal.

Oliveros was not content merely to generalize. She made eight specific recommendations for serious consideration by the ASUC: 1) establish criteria for rating critics; 2) hold workshops for performer evaluation: 3) hold workshops in audience cultivation: 4) explore what universities should be doing for composers according to the university's own mandates; 5) scrutinize music department practices in evaluation of composers for fairness; 6) identify and rate various outlets for new music; 7) identify and analyze the qualities and processes of the so-called master teacher; 8) establish contact with the National Music Teachers Association for the purpose of encouraging children to compose.

Oliveros wanted her talk to have a "uniting effect." She said she would be disappointed if she did not have some impact on the ASUC. Impact, however, may take time. The *ASUC Journal*, which publishes the proceedings of the conventions, has not yet published its report from the 1980 convention. **MA**

## Santa Fe

*Continued from page 5*

state and brought music to places that had never had concerts—Indian reservations, small colleges, Abiquin, Chimayo. Those concerts were given free, and we've had to stop them now that we're performing more in Santa Fe. But we're hoping that people from those areas will now come to Santa Fe to hear us—to the unique community of music that has developed here."

For Alicia Schachter, the festival's success is the culmination of a life that she herself describes as "an odyssey"—one that has taken her from Romania, her birthplace, to Argentina to Austria to London and, ultimately, to this country. That odyssey might have started sooner—at the outbreak of World War II—had not Romania's borders been sealed. Her father, a scientist specializing in the manufacture of insulating material, had wanted to emigrate. Instead, he and his family were stuck in Bucharest. "It's just a fluke that we survived," Miss Schachter recalls. "Outside of Bucharest, in the provinces, Jews were being exterminated. But in Bucharest, the capital city, things were different. The Jews were protected by the Prime Minister, Jan Antonescu, whose best friend was Jewish. Antonescu just kept postponing the final solution."

At the end of the war, the Nazis left and the Communists came in. There was no longer the threat of imminent doom, but for leaders in private industries, such as Alicia Schachter's father, the new regime created an atmosphere that was anything but friendly. And so the Schachters moved to Argentina in 1948. "Compared to Romania," she recalls, "Argentina was paradise." She remembers the Argentinian intelligentsia as being heavily Jewish. And Jewish musicians? Many of the celebrity musicians, like Rudolf Serkin, had left Europe before the war; but by and large, they had gone to

Pianist Andre-Michel Schub

Konn Dunoan

Violinist Ani Kavafian

Christian Steiner

Violinist Ida Kavafian

Switzerland, and from there had emigrated to the United States. Being internationally celebrated, they had had the right connections. Even so, there were some famous musicians who, for one reason or another, had moved to Argentina—such as the great conductor Erich Kleiber, whose son Carlos is now back in Germany having a major career. Or the conductor Michael Gielen, who today serves as music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra.

Then there was Leon Spierer, the violinist. Today Spierer's life might be said to have come full circle—he is concertmaster for the Berlin Philharmonic—but back in the late 1940s, Spierer was one of the musicians attending Buenos Aires' leading music school, the Collegium Musicum. It was at the Collegium, in the company of musicians like Spierer, that Alicia Schachter became heavily involved in chamber music (all the while receiving private instruction in solo piano). That involvement in chamber music deepened when she began spending time at Bariloche, a music camp in the south. "An Austrian lady organized it," she remembers fondly. "It was located in the mountains, and there some eighteen of us musicians lived in tents and cabins by a lake, travelled the south and gave chamber music concerts."

### Marlboro

In 1954 she went to Vienna to study piano with Bruno Seidlhofer, and during the following summers she worked with Pablo Casals in chamber music master classes in Zermatt, a resort town in Switzerland. Zermatt was a pivotal point in her career, for it was there that she met Mieczyslaw Horszowski, who suggested that she come to the United States. Horszowski wrote a letter of recommendation to Rudolf Serkin; as a result Alicia Schachter came to Marlboro in 1957, found it " a wonderful expe-rience," and then took up residence in New York, studying under Leonard Schure.

Then came the successes and uncertainties that are the lot of so many concert pianists. Winning the 1958 Concerto Competition in Aspen. A Rockefeller Grant enabling her to go on a recital tour of Europe. Appearances with such orchestras as the BBC and Berlin Philharmonic. Marriage to Sheldon Rich, an educational film-maker. Living for two years in Vienna, two in London. Returning to the States in 1964.

Then another pivotal move—this time to Santa Fe. "Sheldon and I often spent time apart in pursuing our careers, but now we had a daughter, so we decided to take summers off and be together. In 1972, we picked Santa Fe, with the idea of being with some musician friends, performing chamber music, and just having fun.

"Once there, though, we discovered just how beautiful—and how special—Santa Fe was. Back in the early 1970s, Santa Fe was extremely important to the music world because of the Santa Fe Opera. But there was nothing else in the way of music. So I started broaching the idea of a chamber music festival to various people, including our friend Richard Gaddes, the opera's artistic director. They all loved the idea. The town was ready for it. It was a matter of being in the right place at the right time. We had our first festival the following summer. Everybody was very cooperative. The local college let us put on recitals there. The opera allowed their singers and players to perform with us."

The festival—its growth over the years, and the demands it has made on Alicia Schachter's time and energies—has prevented her from single-mindedly pursuring a solo career. To a significant extent, though, the chamber music career has extended her odyssey and provided a logical extension to her earlier career; for the festival's tours to other towns and other states parallel those years when she and other students were travelling around Argentina in trucks. Perhaps the quality of music making runs higher now than in those early years; but the presiding spirit has remained the same—to make music and give joy, no matter where one has been blown by the winds of history. **MA**

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*Portions of this article appeared in the* Jewish Daily Forward, *and are reprinted here by permission.*

# Husa & Schafer: Two Composers Visit the Midwest

## Contrasting styles: each makes its mark

**Harry Haskell**

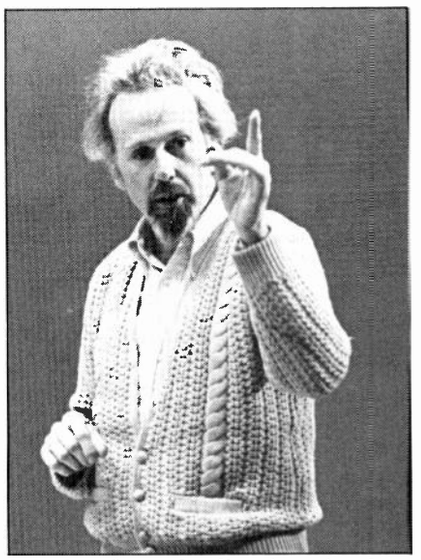
Two composers of more contrasting backgrounds and stylistic orientations than Karel Husa and R. Murray Schafer would be hard to imagine. The Czech-born Husa's roots lie in the central European soil that nurtured Dvořák, Janáček, Bartók and Schoenberg, while Schafer, a Canadian, shed his youthful neoclassicism to pursue an increasingly experimental course.

Schafer spent a week last January at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory, where he delivered a pair of lectures and supervised a concert of his music. In early March, the University of Kansas in Lawrence celebrated Husa's sixtieth birthday at its annual four-day Symposium of Contemporary Music.

The juxtaposition revealed surprising similarities as well as obvious differences between the two composers. Both are descendants, however distantly related, of Berlioz, by virtue of their skillful manipulation of colors and sonorities. Moreover, in recent works such as *Apotheosis of This Earth*, which Husa calls an environmental manifesto, the 1969 Pulitzer laureate has struck a vein of social activism that Schafer has been mining for years.

Yet it was equally evident that Husa's intricately organized music bears little resemblance to the products of Schafer's free-wheeling and unorthodox imagination. The tidiness and clarity of Husa's works give them an almost classical quality. Schafer's idiom, on the other hand, springs from a post-Cagean aesthetic that incorporates chance elements and "extra-musical" sounds.

*Harry Haskell is music editor of the* Kansas City Star *and the* Kansas City Times.



**Schafer: free-wheeling imagination**

**Husa: intricately organized music**

### Schafer: the big statement

Schafer devoted an entire lecture to a discussion of his *Apocalypsis*, first produced last year in London, Ontario. The two-hour work, he explained, was modeled on a medieval church pageant. It involved some five hundred singers, instrumentalists, and actors, who competed for the audience's attention from several positions around a large civic auditorium. Schafer played excerpts from the score on tape, followed later in the week by a live performance of the section titled *Psalm*. Judging from the graphically apocalyptic music, it must have been quite a show.

Certainly, nobody can accuse Schafer of shying away from big statements. Further evidence of his theatrical flair was given in two segments from his evening-length *Patria*, performed by UMKC students. *Requiems for the Party Girl* was a neurotic mad scene for soprano and chamber ensemble such as only our angst-ridden century could produce. *La Testa d'Adriana*, in which a bodiless woman's head sang, screamed, and shrieked nonsensically to a macabre accordion accompaniment, took a page from the Theater of the Absurd.

It was surprising to encounter, on the same program, two conservative and relatively tame pieces that Schafer penned in 1958. A graceful and straightforward Sonatina for flute and harpsichord, and a group of very accessible soprano songs called *Kinderlieder*, gave little hint of the avant-garde shockers to come. But then, predictability is hardly what one expects from a composer and acoustical investigator who views the world as a "macrocosmic musical composition."

### Husa: away from Bartók

Husa has, in his own way, traveled equally far from the music he wrote in the 1950s. Bartók naturally exerted a strong influence on the young Czech, as a performance of his

*Continued on page 40*

# The Eastman Philharmonia Goes to Heidelberg

## Student orchestra is again in residence at famous medieval castle

**David Patrick Stearns**

**Effron conducting the orchestra: an American import**

Considering West Germany's natural musical resources and the economic realities of the orchestra business, the fact that the Heidelberg Castle Festival imports an American orchestra for a six-week residency seems as logical as Switzerland importing a Rocky Mountain.

Thus it is not surprising that the Eastman Philharmonia, the senior orchestra of Rochester's Eastman School of Music, is apparently the first American orchestra to make extended annual visits to a particular European music festival. The initial residency was unanimously proclaimed successful at last year's Heidelberg Festival, and the orchestra is now in its second summer there.

Founded in 1974, the Heidelberg Castle Festival is held in the courtyard and large, open-air "English Tower" of the legendary medieval castle. This year's festival, held July 25 to August 30, consists of two orchestral concerts, five performances of Haydn's *The World on the Moon*, four performances of Nicolai's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and seven performances of Romberg's *The Student Prince*—an annual favorite due to the operetta's local subject matter. Also, the enterprising students will no doubt take to the streets of this city of 121,000 (which attracts three million tourists annually) with their chamber music repertoire. A local ordinance prohibiting such activities was abolished last summer specifically for their benefit.

### A gentleman's agreement

Although neither festival nor Eastman School officials are saying anything definite about future years, Philharmonia conductor David Effron was made music director of the festival this year, and Helmut Hein, the American-educated managing director at Heidelberg, says he is entirely open to the idea of hiring singers from the Eastman Opera Theater. Also, the two organizations have what Hein calls a mutually exclusive "gentleman's agreement"—the Philharmonia will not perform in nearby areas except with the consent of the festival, and the festival will not feature any other orchestras without the consent of the school.

This unprecedented—if curious—arrangement came about when Hein decided that the pickup orchestra used in past festivals simply was not of high enough quality. With other professional ensembles booked up a year or two in advance and with the Heidelberg orchestra on vacation during the festival weeks, the festival's cultural adviser Peter Stoltzenberg flew to the U.S. in early winter of 1980 to find a student orchestra—

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*Mr. Stearns is music critic of the* Rochester Times-Union.

Named "the star of the festival" by a local critic

Effron: gives something extra

which, considering his $300,000 budget for the summer, was considerably more realistic than bringing in the Chicago Symphony. The festival pays for transportation to and from Germany as well as living accommodations in a dormitory-like setting for the forty-three instrumentalists, plus a $1,000 salary for six weeks in Heidelberg.

### A Hanson legacy

Festival officials decided on a chamber-sized version of Eastman Philharmonia, which already had a considerable reputation among student orchestras. Established in 1958 by the late composer and Eastman School director Howard Hanson, the Eastman Philharmonia has performed in a number of different countries, including the Soviet Union, in a forty-nine-date European tour in 1962. Hanson also used the orchestra combined with key Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra members (collectively known as the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra) in many recordings of contemporary music for the Mercury label.

Conductor David Effron, former director of the Central City Opera and longtime conductor at the New York City Opera (he conducted the 1980 production of *Tales of Hoffmann*) took over the orchestra in 1978, and the following year brought the ensemble to Alice Tully Hall with a challenging program of Lutoslawski and Schwantner. According to the *New York Times*, the Philharmonia played "with what seemed ridiculous ease." Selections from that program were recorded by Mercury Golden Imports and will be released this year.

So far, the arrangement between Eastman and Heidelberg appears to be a honeymoon. "You have to pinch yourself in the ear to remember that they're youngsters," Hein said. "Effron gives them something extra that makes them play as though they're on the edge of their chairs and enjoying it." And Heidelberg's soprano, Sylvia Geszty, says Effron is an expressive switch from the more square-cut German conductors. "When I sang," she said, "I felt as if the orchestra was breathing with me."

Eastman associate director Jon Engberg says the festival not only provides the students with experience working in a professional situation in an unfamiliar culture, but "certainly will be helpful in having the Eastman School's name firmly planted in Germany." And Effron has no complaints about the acoustics. Though performances are outdoors, the stone walls around the courtyard provide more reverberation than most outdoor settings. On rainy nights, the musicians move indoors to the "Kings Hall" and infrared heaters will be installed this year to ease the nighttime chill.

### The critics speak

Most happy, it seems, are the audiences and critics. Last summer, an opera performance was interrupted by a ten-minute ovation following the overture. One critic proclaimed that the orchestra was "the real star of the festival" and another described the Philharmonia as "young, enthusiastic, and perfect." More specifically, a critic for the *Rhein-Neckar Zeitung* wrote that the orchestra has "the precision of the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, the talent of the Young German Philharmonic, and some of the temperament of I Musici."

For the time being, there are no plans for expanding the festival "because we have problems getting the castle for a longer period," Hein said. However, performances in the English Tower, which is actually a large, stone platform overlooking the Neckar River, are new this year. However, Hein does hope to have "better-known singers" in the future, and this season engaged Cathy Berberian for a program ranging from Monteverdi to The Beatles. **MA**

# An Opera House At Last

## The old Music Hall returns to grandeur

**Quaintance Eaton**

William Owens

**The Grand Lobby modeled after the Paris Opéra Comique**

Since the unfortunate (and probably unnecessary) razing in 1958 of the Boston Opera House on Huntington Avenue—the one built by Eben D. Jordan for a company he sponsored from 1909–1914—Boston has had no proper auditorium for grand opera or large spectacles of any kind. The Metropolitan Opera visited the Metropolitan Theater, later named Music Hall, and the huge barn, Hynes Auditorium, in Prudential Center. Sarah Caldwell has moved from one unsatisfactory venue to another. And large ballet troupes and musical comedies have reversed the old order by banning Boston.

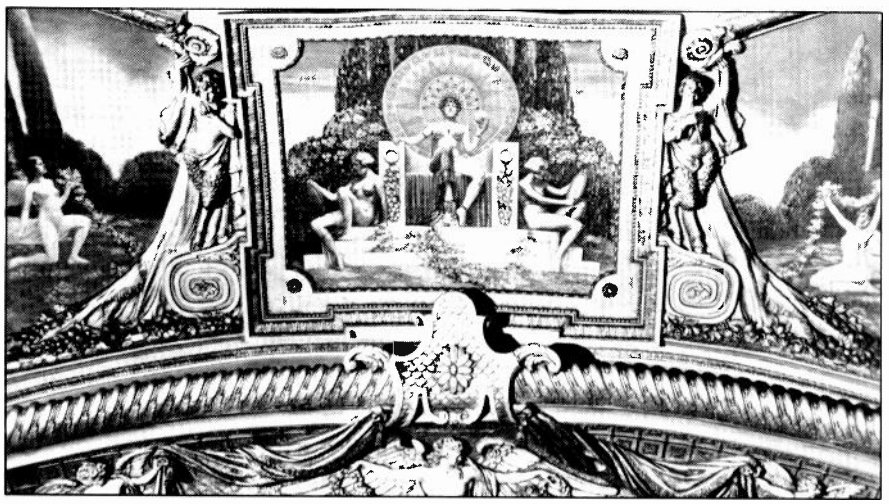
But now there is a new home for all these activities—indeed, a palace. That same old Music Hall, one of the grandest of the superb temples of the film art, built in 1925, has been resurrected from shameful neglect and potential destruction to a new life under the title of Metropolitan Center. The project is blessed by Boston's best Brahmins, as well as just plain citizens. For five years, devoted partisans under the leadership of Henry Sears Lodge, a notable Proper Bostonian and son of Henry Cabot Lodge, former Ambassador to the United Nations, have labored with the doggedness of New England and the panache of Boston at its most daring, to raise the $3.2 million necessary to reopen the fabled structure. It fronts on Tremont Street, in the heart of what used to be Boston's White Way—more recently degraded to near honky-tonk desolation. Metropolitan Center is bound to be a shot in the arm to the whole neighborhood.

David Crockett, who initiated the project at the behest of the Boston Redevelopment Authority in 1974 and is now the Center's board chairman, Henry Lodge, president, and their many cohorts proudly witnessed the climax of their efforts in "Premiere," the opening to a public of 1,400 last December 5. The theater, when completely restored, will seat 4,200, one of the largest in the country.

### Marble and gilt

Those 1,400, who paid $100 or $250 for a ticket, were treated to a banquet in the nearby Park Plaza Hotel, preceded by an uproarious cocktail hour displaying an astonishing *brio*—Boston nabobs and citizens can be noisy when convivially congregated under a low ceiling. Then a fleet of [illegible] conveyed the happy throng to [illegible] theater, where they were swept [illegible] the block-long lobby (mod[illegible] the Paris Opéra—Comiqu[illegible]ly a chance to admire the marble pillars and

*Quaintance Eaton's book on the old Boston Opera Company is being reprinted by Da Capo Press; she is currently at work on a biography of Joan Sutherland.*



Gilded murals recall a lavish past

gilded plaster, the enormous chandeliers, the restored murals of Philo Kellog. They took their places in seats newly upholstered in salmon-colored velvet (from the bottoms of which 214 pounds of bubble gum had been forcibly removed—reminders of the sordid years as a rock concert joint, when soft-drink machines obscured the marble and a false ceiling masked the original glory).

The somewhat dazed audience heard a variety-type program with Dick Cavett as master of ceremonies. His best line was to the effect that Cabots are at last speaking to Lodges, referring to the fact that Mary Louise Cabot is a vice president to Lodge's presidency, but mistaking the original Bossidy rhyme, which referred to Lowells.*

**The extra $2 million**

Ballet numbers by Mikhail Baryshnikov and Gelsey Kirkland and members of the Boston Ballet came off very well, but Anna Moffo was not in best voice, and Melba Moore made sounds more like a steam whistle than a voice, owing to a slip-up in the amplification system which was used throughout. Not so incidentally, no amplification was used during the Metropolitan Opera visit, which occured Jun[illegible] Full air conditioning is also in the works, for an August experience last year with *Man of La Mancha* proved that the system was not up to complete efficiency.

Now the Center's activists are raising the extra $2 million needed to gild the last cherub, reupholster the last seat, put on the last coat of paint and polish. The old stage was so shallow that "catchers" had to be stationed in the wings to prevent leaping dancers from crashing into a wall. The new stage, sixty feet deep, was only half finished at the premiere, but receptive nevertheless to the patrons who gathered for a champagne reception after the program, and smooth enough for the Boston Ballet's *Nutcracker*, which moved in on December 11. This company will return several times during the year, a large chunk of the three-hundred-day booking already signed. The Netherlands Dance Theatre and the Royal Ballet arrived in August, with the New York City Ballet and the American Ballet on the docket for the fall. The Joffrey and the Royal Danish Ballet will appear in the spring of '82. There has also been a four-show series comprising *Sweeney Todd, Oklahoma, Peter Pan*, and *My Fair Lady*. There seem to be a few dates open, so better rush if you want to perform in the newest *grand salon*, or even witness a performance under the ninety-foot-high ceiling of what one observer called "Versailles in Boston." **MA**

*And this is good old B
The home of the be[illegible]od.
Where Lowells ta[illegible]ots
And Cabots talk only to God.

## Husa and Schafer

*Continued from page 36*

1951 *Evocations of Slovakia*, for clarinet, viola, and cello, made clear. Lest anyone overlook the connection, KU took note of the Bartók centenary by programming his First Piano Concerto, *Mikrokosmos* and the cello version of the Violin Rhapsody No. 1.

Soon, however, Husa cast his net wider. His spare, Webernian *Poem* for viola and piano dates from 1954, the year he settled in the United States and joined the Cornell University faculty. By his own account, Husa didn't hit his stylistic stride until about a dozen years ago. It must have given his fellow composers in the audience pause to hear him refer to *Music for Prague 1968* as his first mature work. Luckily, Husa's earlier music is readily available, and the rest of us can draw our own conclusions.

The KU concerts included two of Husa's virtuosic and brilliantly orchestrated band pieces, *Al Fresco* and the Concerto for Percussion and Winds. The clean-textured Divertimento for brass quintet and the prismatic *Three Dance Sketches* brought the brief survey up to 1980. The unifying factor in this diverse body of work is an acute feel for instrumental timbres, balances, and formal proportions. It distinguishes Husa as one of our most resourceful and imaginative composers.

As usual, the music on the eight symposium programs ran the gamut of contemporary styles, from Barber to Steve Reich, with an emphasis on lesser-known composers. Two of the most impressive works were by KU professors: a colorfully propulsive Introduction and Toccata for band by James Barnes, and Charles Hoag's Ligeti-like *Trombonehenge* for thirty trombones. UMKC professor Raymond Luedeke's *Fancies and Interludes III* blended horn and percussion in a subtly hued tonal mosaic, while Mary Mageau's bold *Statement and Variations* was a worthy addition to the violist's slim solo repertoire. **MA**

round robin have played the symphony; we are still waiting to hear from Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles.) Once again, we are strongly reminded of Boulez' special contribution to our musical life, of which this recording is a particularly fine monument.

In *A Mirror on Which to Dwell*, Carter returned to vocal music for the first time since 1947—that is, for the first time since the stylistic developments that shaped his mature style. That mature style was so completely conceived in instrumental terms that one wondered how he would make it accommodate the demands of words—their declamatory pace, their rhythms and accents—and at what levels he would approach the perennial problem of relating words and music. The vocal line of *A Mirror* makes a delicate and convincing accommodation between the demands of verbal rhythm and those of a Carter musical

One wondered how Carter would make his mature style accommodate the demands of words.

CHRISTIAN STEINER

*Susan Davenny Wyner: Indelibly lovely*

line (which, in order to maintain its identity of tempo against the often conflicting tempos of layered simultaneous lines, has more often than not consisted of notes of equal duration).

And the expressive strategies turn out to be varied. The poems selected for the cycle deal in several orders of subject matter: metaphysical ("Anaphora," "Insomnia"), natural-descriptive ("Sandpiper," "View of the Capitol from the Library of Congress"), and personal ("Argument," "O Breath"). Sometimes we find straightforward depiction: The cheeping, scurrying oboe clearly *is* the sandpiper, and we can hear the fragmented sounds of the Air Force Band—a very Carterian Air Force Band, to be sure—in "View of the Capitol." The unwinding of day, from morning's brilliance to weary evening, in "Anaphora," is mirrored by a relaxation of rhythmic intensity and complexity. In "O Breath," onomatopoetic melismas give the voice an opportunity to participate in rhythmic activity moving faster than an appropriate speed of word declamation.

Not only is this music less dense texturally than the symphony, or even Carter's string quartets, but it also is less dense in the time dimension, its contrasts composed out more gradually to match the speed at which the words can deliver their meanings. (In his next vocal work, *Syringa*—of which a recording is on the way—Carter stepped up the complexity of sound and meaning, with two singers simultaneously delivering two texts in two languages.) Perhaps the most memorable sound image of all, in *A Mirror*, is the exquisitely detailed stillness of "Insomnia," accompanied only by piccolo, marimba, violin, and viola—but each of the six poems has its distinctive choice of instruments and color.

*A Mirror* was also a bicentennial commission, from Speculum Musicae, the New York new-music ensemble that over the years has given many memorable performances of Carter's music; here it does so once again. Susan Davenny Wyner, who sang the initial performances, makes the lines memorable with her radiant tone, natural diction, and great musical security—an indelibly lovely rendition. CBS is greatly remiss in not finding room on the liner to name the members of the ensemble: Paul Dunkel, flute; Steve Taylor, oboe (and sandpiper extraordinaire); Virgil Blackwell, clarinet; Joe Passaro, percussion; Ursula Oppens, piano; Rolf Schulte, violin; John Graham, viola; Fred Sherry, cello; Donald Palma, bass.

The record *does* include notes by the composer and the complete texts of the Bishop poems, and constitutes one of the most important recordings of contemporary American music in some time. Since both pieces were recorded in 1977, it is a pity that we should have had to wait so long for their release.

CARTER: A Symphony of Three Orchestras*; A Mirror on Which to Dwell†.

Susan Davenny Wyner, soprano†; New York Philharmonic, Pierre Boulez, cond.*; Speculum Musicae, Richard Fitz, cond.†. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS M 35171. Tape: MT 35171 (cassette). [Price at dealer's discretion.]

# CLASSICAL
# Record Reviews

*Reviewed by:*

*John Canarina* — *Allan Kozinn*
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*Indomitable and cantankerous British composer Havergal Brian—See page 58.*

ALBRIGHT: Piano Rags—See Recitals and Miscellany: The Great American Piano Bench.

BACH: Goldberg Variations, S. 988.

John Gibbons, harpsichord. [Ralph Dopmeyer, prod.] TITANIC TI 30/1, $18 (two discs, manual sequence) (Titanic Records, 43 Rice St., Cambridge, Mass. 02140). A Tape: AAG AX 01, $24.95 (cassette) (AAG Music, 200 Varick St., New York, N.Y. 10014).

Trevor Pinnock, harpsichord. [Heinz Wildhagen and Andreas Holschneider, prod.] ARCHIV 2533 425, $9.98. Tape: 3310 425, $9.98 (cassette).

BACH: Goldberg Variations, S. 988.
BEETHOVEN: Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli, Op. 120.

Daniel Varsano, piano. [Georges Kadar, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS M2X 36925 (two discs, manual sequence). [Price at dealer's discretion.]

SATIE: Piano Works.

Daniel Varsano, piano. [Georges Kadar, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS M 36694. [Price at dealer's discretion.]

Six Gnossiennes: Nos. 1-5. Three Gymnopédies. Three Sarabandes: Nos. 1, 3. Nocturne No. 1. Les Trois valses distinguées du précieux dégoûte. Avant-dernières pensées. Embryons desséchés. Sonatine bureaucratique.

John Gibbons, a central figure in Boston's thriving early-music community, offers a striking reminder of just what a monument Bach left us in the *Goldberg* Variations—an excellent reading with all repeats intact. The virtue, of course, lies not simply in observing the repeats, but in making the listener want to hear them. For the most part, Gibbons does this, through the force and fascination of his playing. There's no fancy registration or embellishment; even in the repeats, ornamentation is added only occasionally and always discreetly. But tempos are bright and rhythms supple, with a pervasive use of agogic accentuation that reflects his work with Gustav Leonhardt. Such flexibility can be fully convincing only if rhythmic command is total and technique secure, and in Gibbons' hands, the music breathes with utter naturalness. If the left-hand scales and figurations lack some of the fluency and sparkle of their right-hand counterparts, the discrepancy remains slight. Titanic has cut the discs at a high level, and the sound is rather insistent.

The repeats run the work to about eighty minutes—four sides in Titanic's spacious layout. Archiv's solid hour of music squeezed (with no apparent discomfort) onto a single disc, cut at a slightly lower level, thus becomes a bargain, which Trevor Pinnock's playing only enhances. Since he skips close to half the repeats, including those in the Aria, he can, and does, risk some slower tempos without trying the listener's patience, thereby lending greater variety. He also uses agogic accents, though more sparingly than Gibbons, and overdots in Vars. 16 and (unlike Gibbons) 26. In the Quodlibet (Var. 30), he resorts fleetingly to unequal notes, adding a welcome touch of flippancy to a surprisingly heavy treatment of this marvelous capstone—which, however, scarcely detracts from a wonderful performance. Archiv provides a plusher, more grateful acoustic for his 1646 Ruckers harpsichord than does Titanic for Gibbons' 1974 Hubbard copy ("after Ruckers-Taskin").

If you care deeply for the *Goldberg*s, you'll want both of these fine performances; if you don't, either one should solve your problem. Pinnock's, demanding less commitment of both capital and concentration, is the more obvious choice. But the playing of both harpsichordists is such as to make us all as insatiable as Goldberg's insomniac (if you believe the story) Count Keyserlingk; I'd rather have the repeats.

In contrast to these sensitive, thoughtful Bach interpreters, twenty-seven-year-old French pianist Daniel Varsano falls back on mindless gimmicks. He consistently breaks down three-part counterpoint, turning one of the upper lines into a mere hushed accompaniment and singing out—or banging away—with the other. Doesn't he trust Bach's writing? Or does he think it's "poetic" to follow a loud lead melody with its barely audible echo—an imitation of nature, and all that? If so, even his poetry falls apart in the alternative treatment of the repeats, where the echo comes first, like the tail wagging the canonic dog. This device, though employed in only (?) seven variations, becomes the more irritating for its heavy-handed execution; so many of the emphasized phrases begin with resounding thuds. In the other numbers, repeats are either omitted or varied through dynamic contrast and ornamentation, all certainly more defen-

**B** *Budget*
**H** *Historical*
**R** *Reissue*
**A** *Audiophile (digital, direct-to-disc, etc.)*

sible than dismantling the counterpoint. But throughout this work, which cries out for spontaneity, Varsano's interpretation reeks of cold calculation.

At that, it's better than his New York performance, which heralded the Bach/Beethoven release. Accuracy and stamina count for less in the studio; here, at least, most of the notes are "right" (leaving aside questionable ornaments), though rhythms are not always firmly controlled. Here, the dynamic range runs from piano to forte; live, it went from cutely quiet to clangorous, with little between. And among other grotesqueries, the concert performance featured three lopsided variations, with but one of the repeats observed; even in the French Overture (Var. 16), a weighty "adagio," with repeat, was followed by a single zip through the "allegro." (Varsano further betrayed his incomprehension of form in his recital notes, describing "a majestic French overture *followed by* a 'fugato dansant' [my emphasis].")

I make a federal case of Varsano's *Goldbergs* only because he comes to us trailing raves that inexplicably proclaim his mastery of the score, and he has made it his calling card. It's too bad, because his abilities could clearly sustain more modest claims. Not that his Beethoven, in this odd coupling, is any better. If it avoids some of the willful mannerism of the Bach, it also lacks the personality, the compelling point of view, and the intense concentration necessary to hold this sprawling set of variations together. He hits (I use the word advisedly) most of the notes, once again playing the dynamic contrasts to the hilt and changing a few markings along the way. And here he does go on record with some of those lopsided variations, obviously premeditated.

Where Varsano really shines is in the Satie, recorded a year earlier. The enthusiasm *it* generated in Europe (including a Grand Prix du Disque) is more understandable—if less useful in building an instant career. His temperament seems ideally suited to these dry, sardonic miniatures, and even when his intuition leads him beyond the printed page, as with the rhythmic sophistications he adds to the First *Gnossienne*, he remains on sure footing. These are enchanting performances of thoroughly delightful, unpretentious music. But how on earth did this humble if exquisite achievement lead to the next step, that monster variations album? Varsano may one day find the key to those works as well, but he's not yet master of all he surveys. **J.R.O.**

BOLCOM: Three Ghost Rags—See Recitals and Miscellany: The Great American Piano Bench.

# Critics' Choice

## The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

BRAHMS: *Orchestral Works and Concertos.* Furtwängler. EMI ELECTROLA 1C 149-53420/6M (7), April.

BYRD: *Motets (10).* Byrd Choir. Turner. PHILIPS 9502 030, May.

CELIBIDACHE: *Der Taschengarten.* Stuttgart Radio, Celibidache. INTERCORD INT 160.832, May.

CLEMENTI: *Piano Sonatas (3).* Horowitz. RCA ARM 1-3689, May.

DEBUSSY: *Preludes, Book I.* Arrau. PHILIPS 9500 676, June.

DELIUS: *The Magic Fountain.* Pring, Mitchinson; BBC Concert Orchestra, Del Mar. ARABESQUE 8121-2L (2), July.

FREDERICK THE GREAT: *Symphonies (4).* Munich Pro Arte, Redel. PHILIPS 9502 057, July.

GOLDMARK: *Die Königin von Saba.* Takács, Jerusalem, Fischer. HUNGAROTON SLPX 12179/82 (4), April.

GOUNOD: *Mireille.* Freni, Vanzo, Van Dam, Plasson. ANGEL SZCX 3905 (3), June.

HAYDN: *Salomon Symphonies, Vol. 1.* Royal Philharmonic, Beecham. ARABESQUE 8024-3 (3), June.

JANÁČEK: *From the House of the Dead.* Zahradníček, Zítek; Vienna Philharmonic, Mackerras. LONDON LDR 10036 (2), July.

MAHLER: *Symphony No. 6.* Chicago Symphony, Abbado. DG 2707 117 (2), April.

MOZART: *La Finta giardiniera.* Conwell, Moser; Salzburg Mozarteum, Hager. DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2740 234 (4), July.

MOZART: *Sinfonia concertante, K. 297b; Idomeneo Ballet Music.* Orpheus. NONESUCH D 79009, July.

MUSGRAVE: *A Christmas Carol.* Virginia Opera, Mark. MMG 302 (3), May.

POULENC: *Songs (complete).* Ameling, Gedda, Sénéchal, Souzay, Parker, Baldwin. EMI FRANCE 2C 165-16231/5 (5), May.

RAVEL: *Orchestral and Vocal Works.* Denize; Philharmonique de Lille, Casadesus. HARMONIA MUNDI FRANCE HM 10.064, July.

STRAVINSKY: *Le Sacre du printemps (arr.).* Atamian. RCA ARC 1-3636, April.

VERDI: *Un Ballo in maschera.* Milanov, Bjoerling, Panizza. MET 8 (3), June.

DENNIS BRAIN: *Unreleased Performances.* ARABESQUE 8071, May.

LE CHANSONNIER CORDIFORME. Consort of Musicke, Rooley. OISEAU-LYRE D 186D4 (4), July.

THE MANNHEIM SCHOOL. Camerata Bern, Füri. ARCHIV 2723 068 (3), June.

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

MAURIZIO POLLINI: *Piano Music of the Twentieth Century.* DG 2740 229 (5), March.

RÓZSA, WAXMAN, WEBB: *Film Music.* ENTR'ACTE ERM 6002, March.

BRIAN: Symphonies: No. 10*; No. 21†.

Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra, James Loughran* and Eric Pinkett†, cond. [Robert Simpson, prod.] UNICORN UNS 265, $10.98 (distributed by Euroclass Record Distributors, Ltd., 155 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10013).

Released in Great Britain in 1973, this was the first commercial recording of any music by Havergal Brian, who is unrepresented in SCHWANN to this day. In certain ways, he had much in common with the American Carl Ruggles: Both were born in 1876; Ruggles lived to be ninety-five, Brian ninety-six; each was known for a personal indomitability and cantankerousness that found expression in his music. Unlike Ruggles, however, Brian was extremely prolific. Among twentieth-century symphony composers, only Nikolai Miaskovsky and Alan Hovhaness rival his output. His twenty-one symphonies composed after the age of eighty, an unparalleled case in the history of music, are all the more amazing since most of his total of thirty-two remained unperformed during his lifetime.

Brian's music is not easy to come to grips with, but these symphonies are as good a starting point as any for the uninitiated—which includes most Americans. No. 10 is a very direct, one-movement work, one of several he wrote in that form, containing some of his stylistic hallmarks: craggy themes, a massive percussion section used discreetly, and grotesque passages for unison bassoons. No. 21, in four movements, is less immediately accessible; it rambles a bit but still shows great originality with many unexpected turns along the way. As the sympathetic annotator Robert Simpson puts it, "while as always he is sparing of transitions, he is positively extravagant in the use of parentheses."

Leaving aside the question of greatness, a *good* composer is one who, among other things, develops a recognizably personal style. One need hear only a few measures by Sibelius, for example, to identify the composer; whether or not one likes him is beside the point. So it is with Brian: He has something to say and a uniquely personal way of expressing it.

The Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra, the British equivalent of an American youth orchestra, needs no apologies; its playing is first-rate. Conductors Loughran and Pinkett both prove highly sensitive to this unusual composer's demands. It is a pleasure to welcome a legitimate Brian recording to the American market. J.C.

*For more on Brian, see "Will the Real Colin Wilson Please Stand Up?"*—Ed.

## It's a pleasure to welcome a legitimate Brian recording.

CARTER: A Symphony of Three Orchestras; A Mirror on Which to Dwell. For a review, see page 52.

CHOPIN: Piano Works. For a review, see page 66.

CHOPIN: Sonata for Cello and Piano, in G minor, Op. 65; Introduction and Polonaise, Op. 3. SCHUMANN: Adagio and Allegro, Op. 70.

Mstislav Rostropovich, cello; Martha Argerich, piano. [Cord Garben, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 201, $9.98. Tape: 3301 201, $9.98 (cassette).

Great soloists have—or should have—great personalities. While many of today's instant stars have great technique and great publicity agents, the *real* artists continue to have their own unique way of turning a phrase, their own unique kind of nuance, their own dominating impact. Put one of these dynamos along with a skilled accompanist of lesser personal magnitude (and lesser fee), and you have a very agreeable concert; put two or more dynamos together, and their interaction can be either a triumph or a traumatic experience.

A generation gap may be either beneficial or insurmountable: When Rostropovich and Horowitz collided in the slow movement of Rachmaninoff's G minor Cello Sonata (CBS M2X 34256, "The Concert of the Century"), the cellist, in spite of his seemingly similar, extravagantly Slavic spirit, couldn't jibe with the pianist's even more extravagant—and more subtle—rubatos. (For all that, this six-and-a-half-minute excerpt provided the concert's one moment of substance.) And when Argerich joined forces previously with Rostropovich, they brought forth an admirable Schumann piano concerto and a disappointing, neutral Chopin F minor (DG 2531 042). One cannot always predict these things.

Which is precisely what makes them so exciting when they work. Rostropovich the cellist has, to say the least, greater stature than Rostropovich the conductor. On this jewel of a record, he is heard at his sublime best, and so is his equally flammable partner. It's a highly volatile alliance, both artists lunging at accents and impetuously dodging in and out of dominance. Phrase after phrase is

illuminated by magnetic personality and revealed with a kind of prismatic nuance and airborne spontaneity one hears on records all too rarely these days.

The two Chopin pieces represent opposite sides of that master's creativity. The Introduction and Polonaise, Op. 3, is the work of a nineteen-year-old, eager to make his mark in the fashionable Parisian society of the early nineteenth century; he composed the piece for Prince Radziwill, an amateur cellist, and his daughter, Princess Wanda, and described it as "nothing more than a glittering trifle for the salon, for the ladies." On the other hand, the sonata, written in 1845–46, is a brooding, deeply felt expression of a tortured, mature genius in his midthirties; moreover, it was designed for a *real* cellist, the celebrated virtuoso Auguste Franchomme.

The stormy Rostropovich/Argerich approach tends to elevate the charming Op. 3 to something approaching the profound Op. 65. In the Introduction, navigated rather briskly, the usual graceful repose is replaced by a swirling, surging energy; and their treatment of the Polonaise is almost Beethovenian. Though Chopin's deliberately conservative cello writing has often been gingered up (by Feuermann, Rose, and others) to provide a counterpoise for the more ornate piano part, the present edition appears to use the unadorned original, proving that it *can* "sound" as written.

The sonata's first movement is all the more imposing for the observance of the exposition repeat. Even though Chopin makes more demands on the stringed instrument in this work, the balance can still be problematical; in many performances—even fine ones—the cello tends to sound obbligatolike against a keyboard utterance so masterfully set forth. (Chopin, after all, rarely wrote for anything but his own instrument.) Without in any way slighting the work's reposeful elements (the Nocturne slow movement is tenderness personified), Rostropovich and Argerich again intensify and dramatize, ingeniously intermingling thrust, slashing angularity, and the utmost in elegant curvaceousness. Here, too, familiar phrases are played with a new, unfamiliar stress and freshness. One such instance stands out: Near the end of the sonata's last movement, I invariably think, irreverently, of "Tea for Two." Not this time. Argerich's stormy, hot-blooded agitation and ascetic sleight of hand erase that trivial thought.

Schumann's Adagio and Allegro, Op. 70, can be played on either cello or horn. In general, the Adagio sounds more eloquent on the stringed instrument than does the companion piece, which needs the penetrating audacity of the originally intended brass instrument. But this marvelously flexible, mercurial treatment makes me want to rescind that verdict.

To borrow a phrase from elsewhere in the Polygram family, this is a "Golden Import." Don't miss it. **H.G.**

COPLAND: Four Piano Blues—See Recitals and Miscellany: The Great American Piano Bench.

GRIEG: Piano Works. For a review, see page 50.

HAYDN: Il Ritorno di Tobia.

| | |
|---|---|
| Raffaelle | Barbara Hendricks (s) |
| Sara | Linda Zoghby (s) |
| Anna | Della Jones (ms) |
| Tobia | Philip Langridge (t) |
| Tobit | Benjamin Luxon (b) |

Brighton Festival Chorus, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. [James Mallinson, prod.] LONDON OSA 1445, $39.92 (four discs, automatic sequence). Tape: OSA5 1445, $39.92 (four cassettes).

Most of us know and love Haydn's oratorios *The Creation* and its sister, *The Seasons*. They are veritable folk ora-

torios (as *The Magic Flute* is a folk opera), accessible to lovers of music of every degree of sophistication yet created with the consun mate skill of a great classical composer in his old age, backed by a lifetime of experience and wisdom. They sounded the death knell of the Viennese tradition of Italian oratorio, and in all the Austrian lands and in Germany, choral societies were founded so that many people could sing these great favorites.

About a quarter of a century earlier, however, Haydn had tried his hand at an oratorio, *Il Ritorno di Tobia*. Though already a seasoned composer of considerable international reputation, he was evidently hampered by the old stereotyped model of the traditional Italian genre, which by then was sharing the fate of its cousin, the opera seria. The endless chains of recitative cum arias, only two or three times relieved by a choral piece, did not suit him, nor did the slow-moving action, for he was used to the much more advanced neo-Neapolitan opera.

The first recording of *The Return of Tobias* (Hungaroton SLPX 11660/3, June 1975) was interesting as a representation of Haydn's earliest essay in the genre. But London has now missed the chance to offer an *enjoyable* presentation; like the first, this is a musicological recording, so to speak, inasmuch as it consists of not only the first version, but additions from the second, with none of the latter's cuts. The result is an almost unconscionably long work that, frankly, gets boring after the third of the eight sides. Yet there are many beauties in this vast score. It is worked with exquisite care; the orchestral parts of the accompanied recitatives brim with inventive turns, the aria accompaniments are of needlepoint delicacy, and all the choruses are superb. But the longueurs are disconcerting, and along with a few fine arias, there are many of contemporaneous formula music. The recitatives require reams of pages in the score, and the arias are spun out beyond endurance, their opening sections returning not simply once, in da capo fashion, but so often that they give the impression of rondos. Furthermore, Haydn felt constrained to follow the already antiquated custom of inserting long coloratura passages, which are so obviously perfunctory that it hurts. Then there are, as in a concerto, fermatas on six-four chords inviting cadenzas, which are here duly carried out, with dismal results. Because of the many repetitions, they return again and again, usually presenting blasts on high notes that one begins to dread whenever the slowdown for the fermata begins. Haydn must have been aware of all this, for ten years later he reworked the score, indicating many sizable cuts and adding two fine choruses that contribute considerable life.

At the risk of ruining the discs, I performed an experiment by attempting to carry out Haydn's abbreviations, plainly indicated in the revised score. After much scratching, I reconstructed the revised version, and lo and behold, the whole thing came to life; even some of the weaker arias sounded much better, and the good ones really shone. London lost a great opportunity, because this work could be salvaged for a genuine listening experience; the scholars can always turn to the superbly edited score, on which the late Ernst Fritz Schmid did a phenomenal job. The original manuscript of the entire first half of the oratorio being lost, he had to piece it together from the innumerable copies and "arrangements"—which seldom agree with one another—dispersed in half a hundred libraries. (Whether for this reason or not, on the whole, the second part seems decidedly better.) A competent editor and record manufacturer could carry out Haydn's abbreviations, cutting many of the recitatives altogether, as well as the weak arias, but retaining all the choral numbers; the watery libretto could easily be rearranged, and—on two discs instead of four—we would obtain a thoroughly enjoyable work.

The performance is good, though contrary to his usual excellent handling of singers, Antal Dorati occasionally drives them a bit. In the coloratura noodlings and in the recitatives, the singer must be given his head—the poor thing must draw a breath wherever he can—and it is the conductor who follows. Perhaps, like the reviewer, the conductor was a little impatient, wanting to get to the meatier parts. But the orchestra is disciplined, well balanced, virtuosic, and always on top of its task. The singing is well above average. Barbara Hendricks and Benjamin Luxon are outstanding and solidly on pitch, a faculty that at times deserts the other ladies, and Philip Langridge struggles a little, some of his falsettos being unworthy of him. The chorus is very good but could have been somewhat better recorded; the fugues are dense, though otherwise the sound is fine. There are occasional small departures from the score, which is surprising, since the 1960 edition is the only one available. H. C. Robbins Landon provides excellent notes. **P.H.L.**

## HAYDN: Symphonies (4).

Collegium Aureum, Franzjosef Maier, dir. [Thomas Gallia, Paul Dery*, and M. Werner†, prod.] PRO ARTE PAL 1001*/5†, $9.98 each. Tape: PAC 1001*/5†, $9.98 each (cassettes).

Symphonies: No. 82, in C (*The Bear*)*; No. 83, in G minor (*The Hen*)*; No. 94, in G (*Surprise*)†; No. 103, in E flat (*Drum Roll*)†.

MOZART: Symphony No. 41, in C, K. 551 (*Jupiter*); Rondo for Violin and Orchestra, in C, K. 373*.

Collegium Aureum, Franzjosef Maier, violin* and dir. PRO ARTE PAL 1009, $9.98. Tape: PAC 1009, $9.98 (cassette).

Spot the difference. The problem with the Collegium Aureum's accomplished recordings of classical symphonies—performed, as the sleeves all proclaim in capital letters, "on original instruments"—is that they are too often indistinguishable from recordings on modern instruments. This has certain advantages. For any of your friends who think, in company with a distinguished reviewer in a recent issue of *Gramophone*, that the sound of period strings is about as attractive as period dentistry, the Collegium Aureum may well be an aid to painless surgery. It really is difficult, in the middle of Haydn's wonderfully inventive and splendidly scored Symphony No. 82, recorded by this group as long ago as 1975, to be disturbed by any eccentricities of articulation, timbre, or tuning. Everything is as smooth as ice, and the only period color is provided by the solo contributions of the wind instruments. So, too, in the Symphony No. 83, though here the clucking oboes and woody solo flute attract more notice.

The essential element in Collegium Aureum's success, however, is the warm, rich string sound. It was no surprise to find, on a live acquaintance with the ensemble, that the violinists used chin rests and the cellists used spikes, for the edge, the incisiveness that comes from doing without those modern aids is quite absent from their performances. It is true that in the other pair of Haydn symphonies, Nos. 94 and 103 (recorded in 1980), the strings have acquired more bite; but there is still the heavy vibrato and the cushioning acoustic to prevent their sound from really attaining a penetrating balance either with the winds or with the good, crisp timpani playing in both symphonies.

The most successful Collegium Aureum classical recording I have encountered is the coupling of Mozart's Symphony No. 39 with the *Prague*, which Pro Arte has not yet made available here; in the E flat Symphony the sound is distinctive and the wind-string balance successful. The *Jupiter* is markedly more conventional: The strings sound so sweet that the occasional squawk from the oboe comes as a rude disturbance. The acoustic is too ample (the quiet fugato in the finale starts within the echo of a tutti chord), and the bland interpretation neither benefits from the absence of a conductor nor has anything special to say. The game is really given away by the filler on this disc, the solo rondo that features the group's leader, Franzjosef Maier: He plays with an ingratiating lushness of tone and a heavy vibrato that are copied all too faithfully by his colleagues. The result is sickly. Spot the difference, indeed. (A brief comparison of this new Pro Arte pressing with an original German Harmonia Mundi disc shows the American version to be altogether brighter and better defined.) N.K.

**Correction:** The Arabesque recording of Haydn piano trios reviewed last month, 8123-2, is *not* digital; the two discs list for $13.96, the cassettes for $15.96.

JOHNSON: Stride Pieces—See Recitals and Miscellany: The Great American Piano Bench.

JOPLIN: Collaborative Rags—See Recitals and Miscellany: The Great American Piano Bench.

PUNTO: Concertos for Horn and Orchestra (4).

Barry Tuckwell, horn; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. [John Fraser, prod.] ANGEL SZ 37781, $9.98.

Concertos: No. 5, in F; No. 6, in E flat; No. 10, in F; No. 11, in E.

If ever a musician was fated to demonstrate the evanescence of fame, it was the Paganini of the horn, a man unknown to most music lovers today by either his Italianized name, Giovanni Punto, or its Czech original, Jan Václav Stich (in German, Johann Wenzel Stich). Yet in his time (1746–1803), he was the greatest of all (natural) horn players, admired by—among many others—Mozart and Beethoven, each of whom wrote parts specifically for him. And on his death, he was given national and international honors exceptional for any celebrity, let alone a musical one.

Even a Hollywood film biography could hardly do justice to his fabulous life. He was one of the predecessors of Mozart and Beethoven as a "musician-libber," defying the liveried-servant caste role that had been long accepted in the world of music. At age twenty he defected from the service of the Count of Thun, escaping over the border just ahead of pursuing soldiers, who had been ordered by the vengeful count to ruin him permanently as a horn player by breaking all his front teeth! But he was lucky enough to escape scot-free—and to become, in his newly Italianized persona, the most influential of all the (mostly Czech) contributors to the development of the natural horn, its hand-stopping technique (invented by his teacher, Anton Joseph Hampel), and the exploitation of its potentials as both a solo and orchestral instrument.

The fascinating Punto/Stich story is tantalizingly outlined in Barry Tuckwell's jacket notes for this release; it is presented in greater detail, along with its whole historical background, in an invaluable book—Horace Fitzpatrick's *The Horn and Horn-Playing and the Austro-Bohemian Tradition from 1680 to 1830*, Oxford University Press, 1970—that will richly delight as well as inform every horn aficionado.

Like Paganini, Punto was not only a supreme virtuoso, but a prolific composer—predictably, one expertly idiomatic in writing for his own instrument but one of considerable overall stature as well. His works include fourteen concertos and many chamber works—a few of which have been presented in some isolated Czech and other European recordings, I believe. But the only previous American example I've encountered was his Quartet for Horn and Strings, Op. 18, No. 1, included in a 1976 Sonar quad-reel "Bohemian Horn" program.

The current release, presumably the first all-Punto program, is an unalloyed delight, and not only for its first-rate recording of our present-day Punto, playing superbly on a modern instrument. (As Mozart said of Punto himself, Tuckwell "blows magnifique!") The music itself, in the orthodox late-eighteenth-century idiom, turns out to be surprisingly effective: invigoratingly buoyant, of course, but also admirably inventive, and it often testifies to a more surprising, quite irrepressible sense of humor.

For every horn specialist, this is a record to be treasured. It's the next-best substitute for a time-machine recording of the Punto/Beethoven performance, April 18, 1800, of the latter's Op. 17 Horn Sonata, or the projected Parisian performance (that never did come off) of Mozart's K. 297b Sinfonia concertante, written for the quartet of Mannheim wind soloists: flutist Wendling, oboist Ramm, bassoonist Ritter—and hornist Punto. **R.D.D.**

## ROSSINI: L'Italiana in Algeri.

CAST:

| | |
|---|---|
| Elvira | Kathleen Battle (s) |
| Zulma | Clara Foti (s) |
| Isabella | Marilyn Horne (ms) |
| Lindoro | Ernesto Palacio (t) |
| Taddeo | Domenico Trimarchi (bs-b) |
| Mustafà | Samuel Ramey (bs) |
| Haly | Nicola Zaccaria (bs) |

Chorus of Prague, I Solisti Veneti, Claudio Scimone, cond. RCA RED SEAL ARL 3-3855, $29.94 (three discs, automatic sequence). Tape: ARK 3-3855, $29.94 (three cassettes).

COMPARISONS:

| | |
|---|---|
| Simionato, Valletti, Giulini | Sera. IB 6119 |
| Berganza, Alva, Varviso | Lon. OSA 1375 |
| Valentini-Terrani, Benelli, Bertini | Acanta JB 22 308 |

Four recordings hardly seems overabundant for *L'Italiana*, a work so shrewd and captivating that it's hard to believe Rossini wrote it when he was twenty. While the first two recordings—those conducted by Carlo Maria Giulini (now available on Seraphim) and Silvio Varviso (London)—remain by a good margin the best and complement each other nicely, the two newer versions contain some interesting performances. (Discographic note: The Dresden recording under Gary Bertini, which I reviewed in January 1979 on the West German Acanta label, will be issued this fall by both Musical Heritage Society and its retail label, Musicmasters.)

It's fascinating how the opera can change in response to different casting decisions with regard to the three lower-voiced male roles. The Erato/RCA set, for example, casts Bey Mustafà as a legitimate singing role rather than the traditional comic bass in the Fernando Corena mold. Although Corena is still my favorite recorded Mustafà—when it comes to that particular mold, there's nothing better than the genuine article—Ramey's straight approach encourages us to take the bey seriously, which is a good idea: No matter how grotesquely he may behave, *he* thinks he's behaving perfectly logically—and we should have some sense that he is a genuinely dan-

gerous man in order to appreciate the risks Isabella and Lindoro run in trying to hoodwink him. Ramey has as much trouble with the coloratura as anyone, but you can't have everything.

Otherwise there's not much initiative on the male side of this *L'Italiana*. Isabella's doddering traveling companion, Taddeo, can be wonderfully cast as a straight baritone role (cf. London's Rolando Panerai) or as the comic lead (this past season at the Met, the veteran Sesto Bruscantini more or less made the opera revolve around him). Unfortunately, Domenico Trimarchi settles for tiresome clichés. Good old Nicola Zaccaria is as good as any Haly on records except perhaps Acanta's Alfredo Mariotti; it's just that I can't forget the delightful work Allan Monk did in the Met revival: Casting a fine singing baritone turned out to be a sensational idea.

In the title role, Marilyn Horne turns in an efficient account, though much of this music is heavier going for her than it used to be. Many listeners will enjoy her performance more than I do; for me, her broad, brassily farcical manner robs the role of most of its human interest. Seraphim's Giulietta Simionato sang the music less fluently but with incomparable dignity and wit; the young Teresa Berganza (London) and Lucia Valentini-Terrani (Acanta) in fact sang it better than Horne.

Horne also gets less than heroic support from her Lindoro. Ernesto Palacio has a pleasant little voice, tastefully handled, but he musters nothing like the vocal strength and professional assurance of Luigi Alva (heard in his prime in the London recording), not to mention the special flair of Cesare Valletti (Seraphim).

Claudio Scimone conducts a solid performance; he certainly sounds more at home in the *ottocento* than in the baroque. The Compleat Collector will need this set for its sixth-side appendix: four alternative numbers written for later performances of the opera. Other collectors will derive pleasure from this version too, but for more general listening purposes the discographic pecking order hasn't changed: For relative completeness, excellent stereo sound, lively conducting, and uniformly strong casting, London's is the recording to beat, and it has the bonus of producer Erik Smith's extensive annotations; for its heroine and hero and its special flavor, the 1954 Giulini recording remains an invaluable supplement—all the more so at the Seraphim price. **K.F.**

> RZEWSKI: Four North American Ballads; Four Pieces—See Recitals and Miscellany: The Great American Piano Bench.

> SATIE: Piano Works — See Bach: Goldberg Variations, S. 988.
> SCHONTHAL: Totengesänge —See Weill: Frauentanz, Op. 10.
> SCHUMANN: Adagio and Allegro, Op. 70—See Chopin: Sonata for Cello and Piano, Op. 65.

WAGNER: Parsifal.

CAST:

| | |
|---|---|
| Flower Maidens | Barbara Hendricks (s), Janet Perry (s), Doris Soffel (s), Inga Nielsen (s), Audrey Michael (s), Rohangiz Yachmi (s) |
| Kundry | Dunja Vejzovic (ms) |
| A Voice | Hanna Schwarz (a) |
| Squires | Marjon Lambriks (s), Anne Gjevang (s), Heiner Hopfner (t), Georg Tichy (t) |
| Parsifal | Peter Hofmann (t) |
| Knights | Claes H. Ahnsjö (t), Kurt Rydl (bs) |
| Amfortas | José van Dam (b) |
| Klingsor | Sigmund Nimsgern (b) |
| Gurnemanz | Kurt Moll (bs) |
| Titurel | Victor von Halem (bs) |

A Deutsche Oper Berlin Chorus, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, cond. [Günther Breest and Michel Glotz, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2741 002, $54.90 (digital recording; five discs, manual sequence). Tape: 3382 002, $54.90 (five cassettes).

COMPARISONS:

| | |
|---|---|
| Knappertsbusch (1951) | Rich. RS 65001 |
| Knappertsbusch (1962) | Phi. 6747 250 |
| Solti/Vienna St. Op. | Lon. OSA 1510 |

Admirable features of this, the fifth complete recording of Wagner's *Parsifal* in the last three decades, are not difficult to find. The orchestral playing is almost unfailingly accurate and tonally beautiful. The high string tremolos so characteristic of Wagner's "*Parsifal* sound" shimmer and palpitate; the low brass chords are rich and impeccably balanced; the wind solos are expertly played (although the tone of the Berlin Philharmonic's oboes is not of the sort favored by Anglo-Saxon ears). The choral work is also impressive: both the ensemble of flower maidens in Act II and the elaborately divided and layered groups of the two Grail scenes. Especially at the lower end of the range, the soloists stand up well, in vocal terms, to past competition: Kurt Moll, José van Dam, Sigmund Nimsgern, and Victor von Halem all command the music of their roles, while Peter Hofmann and Dunja Vejzovic, though less secure, make respectable showings.

And yet, by the time the third act draws to a close, this listener, at least, is not convinced that a performance of *Parsifal* has really taken place. Not, at any rate, a performance of that exotically perfumed music-drama of sacred and profane love (the two, characteristic-

ally, hardly to be distinguished at times) which for nearly a century has been a central bone of contention in the controversy over Wagner. Herbert von Karajan has successfully eviscerated *Parsifal* of its sensual overtones, its tumescent ecstasies, its very essence, and gives us instead a pallid morality play, populated by symbols without passions, characters without development, actions without urgency.

Here and there, one is touched and involved. The still, gray, pastoral landscapes at the beginning of the first and third acts have an appropriate reserve—but they lead to no eloquent contrasts. In Act III, the orchestral passage depicting Kundry's reawakening is more vividly shaped than ever before in my memory, but later the Good Friday music is matter-of-fact, without repose or spaciousness. The climactic actions don't build or accumulate tension: In his first lament, the eloquent Amfortas gets no help from the orchestra in maintaining continuity between his rising cries of *"Erbarmen! Erbarmen! Du Allerbarmer!"*

Nevertheless, this first lament of Amfortas is one of the more vibrant moments in the performance; its counterpart in the last act comes to life only after the intervention of the chorus, demanding the uncovering of the Grail, for even Van Dam's masterful soft singing is not enough to paper over the tensionless playing between his phrases. And his final outburst, of towering urgency, has its hard-won eloquence dissipated by the shaky, immature sound of Parsifal's blessing, *"Nur eine Waffe taugt."*

For this Parsifal, attractively tentative and youthful in his first appearance, never grows up; by the end, he sounds the same callow youth, trying hard to cope with ever more difficult music. And this Kundry, in the magic garden, remains as unglamorous of sound as in her rags of the first act, while in some trickier phrases (e.g., *"Mein volles Liebes Umfangen"*) her intonation is not always reliable. (In his Vienna performances of *Parsifal* in the early 1960s, Karajan used two singers for this problematic role: the great singing actress Elisabeth Höngen as Kundry the servant of the Grail, and the young Christa Ludwig as Kundry the mistress of Klingsor's garden. The dutiful and well-schooled Vejzovic is in neither class.)

Not even Gurnemanz, sung with much warmth and firmness by Moll, is untouched by the revisionism; given to confidential whisperings (always securely pitched, I note with admiration), he has become avuncular rather than patriarchal. Nimsgern sings Klingsor's music strongly, without much menace or character. The smaller parts are neatly if not vividly taken. DG's sound is warmer and more convincing spatially than that of Karajan's *Zauberflöte*, though I still detect a certain hardness in the string tone, and some of the more complex climaxes (e.g., the end of the opening chorus in the second Grail scene) lack clarity and transparency.

I'm not certain why anyone should want a performance of *Parsifal* that eschews its essence; after all, anyone repelled by that essence—and many have been—will probably prefer to do without the piece altogether. At any rate, this version is more proficiently executed than Pierre Boulez' 1970 Bayreuth version (DG 2713 004), an earlier iconoclastic effort. At the time of the Solti recording, I surveyed the *Parsifal* recording situation pretty thoroughly (August 1973), to which review you are referred for details. My preferences are still the same: either or both of the Knappertsbusch recordings (the 1951 mono set more strongly cast, the 1962 stereo one somewhat more tautly conducted and better recorded). These live-performance sets both share the unique acoustic of the Bayreuth Festspielhaus, for which Wagner specifically composed—and orchestrated—his opera, and that is something that the proficient engineers of the Solti and Karajan recordings have not been able to match. **D.H.**

WEILL: Frauentanz, Op. 10.* ZAIMONT: Two Songs for Soprano and Harp.† SCHONTHAL: Totengesänge.‡

Edith Gordon Ainsberg* and Berenice Bramson†‡, sopranos; Sara Cutler, harp†; Ruth Schonthal, piano‡; Bronx Arts Ensemble*. [Marnie Hall, prod.] LEONARDA LPI 106. $8.98 (Leonarda Productions, Inc., P.O. Box 124, Radio City Station, New York, N.Y. 10019).

Kurt Weill is the best known of these composers—not because he was male, I hasten to add, but because of his musical invention and originality. Still, *Frauentanz*, his first published composition, shows only glimmerings of his later achievements; the songs, on seven poems from the Middle Ages, are terse and tense yet lack the character that would surface in his later works. Scored for voice, flute, clarinet, bassoon, viola, and horn, the cycle predates *Threepenny Opera* by four years. Its most intriguing features are its instrumental colors; its treatment of texts is pedestrian.

The two newer works here, both by women, fit well with the Weill in that they sit firmly in the lyrical tradition of the Lied. With her *Totengesänge*, in fact, Ruth Schonthal might be trying to share the older composer's chair; these are second- and third-generation derivations from Mahler, Strauss, and Wagner, full of craft and effect but ultimately annoying in their reliance upon well-used devices. Schonthal wrote the eight poems herself, and thus her special sensitivity to

*Composer Zaimont: clever treatments*

verbal subtleties is not surprising, yet the rather lengthy (twenty-four-minute) cycle ends up paying tribute to her mentors, not to her own muses.

Judith Lang Zaimont's Two Songs for Soprano and Harp, also far from the avant-garde, carry more impact. Both are very clever, professional treatments of interesting texts—Adrienne Rich's *At Dusk in Summer* and Thomas Hardy's *The Ruined Maid*. Neither song goes on a note longer than it should, and though Zaimont turns a bit cute every now and then, her work has both quality and personality.

All of these cycles are adequately performed. The multitalented Schonthal plays the piano lines to her own songs especially well. One could wish that there were a more echt Berlin feeling in the Weill set, but Edith Gordon Ainsberg and the Bronx Arts Ensemble do the music justice. Though Berenice Bramson's soprano is appropriate to the melodic lines of the other works, her diction leaves a lot to be deciphered. **K.M.**

## Recitals and Miscellany

### THE GREAT AMERICAN PIANO BENCH.

Max Morath, piano and prod. VANGUARD VSD 79429, $7.98.

ARNDT: Marionette. AUFDERHEIDE (arr. Morath): Pelham Waltzes. EUROPE-DABNEY: Castles' Half and Half. FARWELL: Wa-Wan Choral. JOPLIN: Solace; Bethena. MACDOWELL: To a Wild Rose. NEVIN (arr. Spross): Ein Liedchen. O'HARA: The Perfect Melody. RUIFROK: Minuet, Op. 4, No. 1; Song Without Words, Op. 5, No. 2.

### JOHNSON: Stride Pieces.* JOPLIN: Collaborative Rags.†

**R** William Albright* and William Bolcom†, piano. MUSICMASTERS MM 20002, $8.98. Tape: MM 40002, $8.98 (cassette). [From MUSICAL HERITAGE MHS 4022, 1979.]

JOHNSON: Mule-Walk Stomp; Eccentricity; Modernistic; Snowy Morning Blues; Carolina Shout. JOPLIN-MARSHALL: Swipesy Cake Walk; Lily Queen. JOPLIN-HAYDEN: Sunflower Slow Drag; Something Doing; Felicity Rag.

### ALBRIGHT: Piano Rags.

William Albright, piano. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4253, $7.75 ($4.95 to members). Tape: MHC 6253, $7.75 ($4.95 to members) (cassette). (Add $1.60 for shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls, N.J. 07724.)

Grand Sonata in Rag; Dream Rags; On the Lamb; Burnt Fingers; Sleight of Hand; Onion Skin Rag; Queen of Sheba Slow Drag and Stomp.

### BOLCOM: Three Ghost Rags. COPLAND: Four Piano Blues. RZEWSKI: Four North American Ballads.

**A** Paul Jacobs, piano. [Andrew Kazdin, prod.] NONESUCH D 79006, $11.98 (digital recording).

### RZEWSKI: Four Pieces; Four North American Ballads: No. 3, Which Side Are You On?

**A** Frederic Rzewski, piano. [Seymour Solomon, prod.] VANGUARD VA 25001, $12.98 (digital recording). Tape: CVA 25001, $12.98 (cassette).

These five very different LPs provide a survey, if by no means an exhaustive one, of the progress of a particular stream of American piano writing through the last hundred years. The stream runs between European-influenced "serious" music and our own indigenous popular forms—blues, rags, jazz, and folksongs—gathering material from both banks along its course.

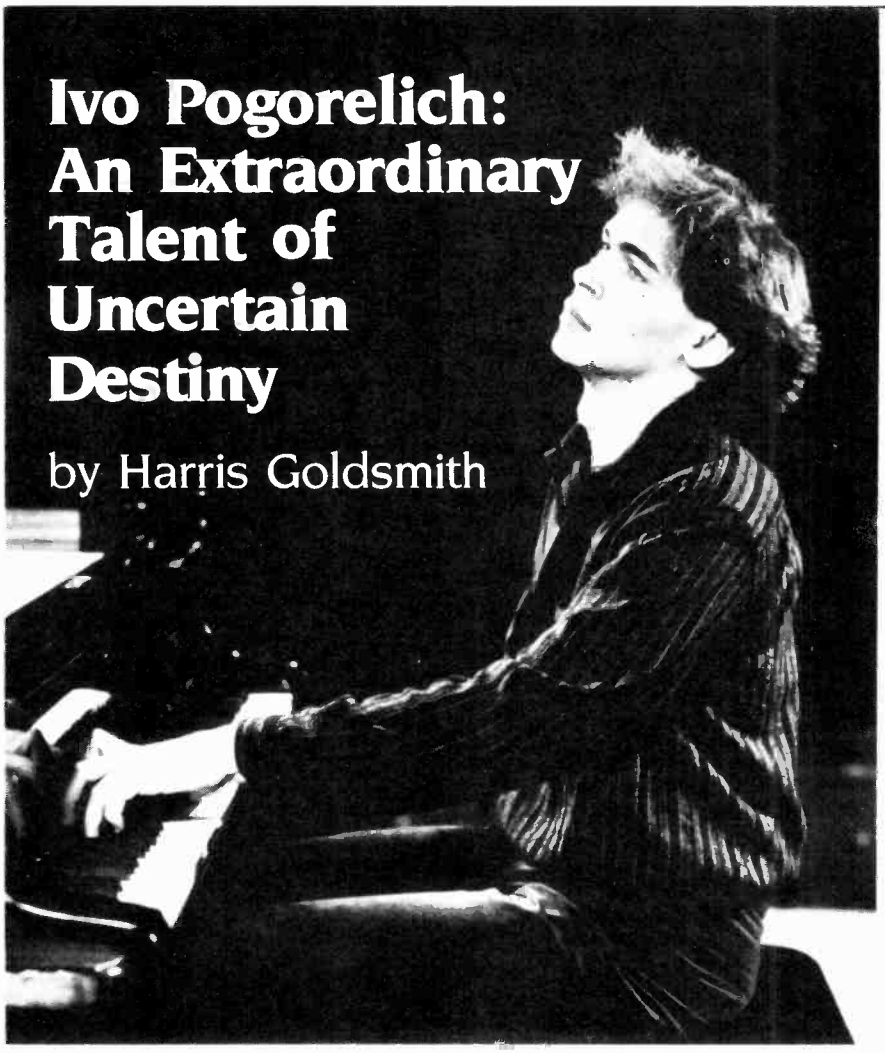
To begin chronologically, Max Morath weighs in (somewhat lightly) with a varied set of frilly curiosities that only pianists who have riffled through the sheet music in grandma's piano bench will know. It includes some blatant picture painting (Felix Arndt's *Marionette*); a touch of Indian imagery (Arthur Farwell's *Wa-Wan Choral*, supposedly a transcription of an Omaha tribal chant); a few spirited dance tunes (May Aufderheide's *Pelham Waltzes*); and plenty of sentimental filler (Edward MacDowell's *To a Wild Rose*, probably the best known piece here).

A pianist can approach this music in two ways: He can either load his interpretations with sensitivity and finesse, to compensate for compositional shortcomings in those areas, or play the works as written, reveling in the camp. Nine-

*(Continued on page 67)*

# Ivo Pogorelich: An Extraordinary Talent of Uncertain Destiny

by Harris Goldsmith



NEUMEISTER

*Pogorelich: Bounced from the Chopin Competition finals only to win a career*

A YOUNG HOPEFUL CAN WIN a prestigious competition by pleasing the authorities casting the ballots; or he can win a career by audaciously creating some sort of *scandale* and capturing the interest of journalists and press agents. Youri Egorov's successful debacle at the Van Cliburn a few years ago seems to have won that Soviet émigré a lasting place in international concert life. And now we have another winning "loser," twenty-two-year-old Yugoslavian pianist Ivo Pogorelich, bounced from the finals of the 1980 Warsaw Chopin Competition and now rebounding by way of a Carnegie Hall recital and a DG (not Concours) recording contract.

From the first, penetratingly incisive, chords of Chopin's great solitary Prelude in C sharp minor, Op. 45, it is evident that this is no ordinary talent. One is made slightly uncomfortable—yet riveted—by the larger-than-life dynamics and the acute, raw-nerve perception of what every inner voice is doing. The C sharp minor Scherzo, Op. 39, is in some ways colossal: Pogorelich favors a jolting clarity in the octave passages, which he renders with almost no pedal and all kinds of resourceful voicing. The chorale episodes are stretched almost to the breaking point, and the answering cascades come as if from another planet. Sentences are clipped off and painstakingly isolated from one another, runs inserted almost parenthetically, with a degree of insolent capriciousness (feathery light yet steely-fingered—again, with little or no pedal). A hugely protracted buildup from *pppp* to *ffff* unleashes a demonic, whirlwind coda.

The E flat Nocturne, Op. 55, No. 2, is constantly in transit in this restless, acute interpretation. One misses the cushioned repose and splendor of, for example, Arthur Rubinstein's approach to this piece but is constantly fascinated by the inner filigree, which expands, contracts, and impinges upon one's sensibility. There is something to be said for an interpretation of the nocturnes (particularly the late ones) that emphasizes the grotesque, frightening aspects of the writing rather than its lulling serenity. Pogorelich's F major Etude, Op. 10, No. 8, is a little like Horowitz' Carnegie Hall version in its expansiveness and affectionate lingering over the middle section's left-hand melody, and the A flat, Op. 10, No. 10, is simply amazing in its mercurial, detailed clarity (such balancing of the rotary right-hand figurations!). The "double third" Etude, Op. 25, No. 6, moves at a deliberate tempo, with somewhat angular sound and inflections.

Pogorelich plays the B flat minor Sonata with constant emphasis on pianistic detail, alternating jagged, slashing chords with ethereal deliberation. He eschews the repeat in the first movement (a practice once, but no longer, commonplace) and sounds highly intelligent even in his most willful moments of exaggeration. The trio sections of the Scherzo and Funeral March may seem too static, yet the outer sections of those movements are rhythmically quite conservative. And nowhere does he bang out the pianissimo or tread lightly on the fortissimo, as claimed in a *New York Times* article of October 21, 1980. (For antics of *that* sort, one must turn to Abbey Simon's edition of the sonata. Turnabout TV-S 34272—a clear case of Rachmaninoff-envy.)

Which brings me to the crux of the matter: I agree with the dissenting judges that Pogorelich is a phenomenon and am inclined to agree that he shouldn't have been eliminated from the finals. His pianism is marvelous, his personality decisive, and his perception highly intelligent. For all that, his playing here is more acrobatic than artistic; one is initially fascinated but ultimately distracted and annoyed by the willful, hard-edged extremes. Especially in the larger structures, these extremes and the detail for detail's sake leave a gaping hole in the middle—the interpretive equivalent of those gimmicky, overproduced aural spectaculars. Still, he is just twenty-two, and one can only rejoice when an instrumentalist of such potential arrives on the scene. With his brilliance and power, Pogorelich can have the world at his feet. It is to be hoped that he will use his influence wisely to uplift, not rashly to devastate; he could go either way.

## CHOPIN: Piano Works.

Ivo Pogorelich, piano. [Wolfgang Mitlehner and Hanno Rinke, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 346, $9.98. Tape: 3301 346, $9.98 (cassette).

Sonata No. 2, in B flat minor, Op. 35; Prelude in C sharp minor, Op. 45; Scherzo No. 3, in C sharp minor, Op. 39; Nocturne in E flat, Op. 55, No. 2; Etudes: in F, Op. 10, No. 8; in A flat, Op. 10, No. 10; in G sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 6.

## Charming as these works are, they won't stir major revivals of Ruifrok and Nevin.

ties-ish front-parlor atmosphere they evoke. Morath takes the latter—probably the wiser and more authentic—path. But charming as these vignettes are, they're not likely to stir any large-scale revivals of music by MacDowell and Farwell, much less Henri Ruifrok and Ethelbert Nevin.

Long a champion of old-time Americana, Morath made his name as an exponent of Scott Joplin—the king of ragtime composers, whose work *has* stood close historical examination. For good measure, Morath includes a pair of comparatively mellow Joplin works, *Solace* and the *Bethena* concert waltz. In his notes, he cites these as two of Joplin's finest scores "in forms other than ragtime," a phrase worth pondering: Is ragtime, after all, a *form* or a *style*? Strict formal definitions are hard to come by, although one common structural model suggests that an ABBACDD form, in duple meter, was the standard rag. Most definitions, however, place greater emphasis on the characteristic use of syncopation and blue notes than on specific symmetry, and those elements are abundant in *Solace* and *Bethena*, even if the latter is in triple time. Whether or not they should be called rags, there is no doubt that they hail from a time and place in which ragtime was the vernacular.

Joplin and ragtime enthusiasts will find more sustenance on the Musicmasters disc, also available by mail order from Musical Heritage Society. On one side, William Bolcom plays five "collaborative" rags, products of Joplin's association with two younger pianist/composers during his stay in Sedalia, Missouri, between 1896 and 1900. Arthur Marshall and Scott Hayden were only fifteen when they met Joplin, who was twenty-eight and still a few years away from the fame and fortune he would earn with the *Maple Leaf Rag* of 1899. Bolcom, in his notes, goes so far as to suggest which strains of each rag were written by Joplin and which by a collaborator. I can't verify or dispute these assertions; there are no glaring stylistic inconsistencies within the works, however, and in fact they all sound rather uniform and very much in the familiar Joplin mold.

On the reverse, William Albright plays five faster, hotter, and far more intriguing works by James P. Johnson. Johnson was a master of the "stride" idiom, so named for its walking bass line, and these examples date from 1914–29, just after ragtime went out of vogue. Some—the *Carolina Shout* and *Modernistic*—are well known to early-jazz buffs, and their smooth bass lines and rollickingly fluid right-hand figures make Joplin's steady syncopation sound genteel by comparison. If ragtime was southern "sporting house" music refined and elevated, stride was the more unashamedly audacious and more thrilling music of the big city. The recent successful Broadway musical *Ain't Misbehavin'* and some timely reissues of old Fats Waller recordings put a spotlight on the stride era; Albright's renditions confirm that there's gold there worth mining.

Both Bolcom and Albright bring an obvious enthusiasm to their performances, along with the fleetness of fingers and elasticity of spirit necessary to bring off these early jazz classics. As well they might; for besides performing and recording this music, during the period 1967–70 they composed a goodly number of rags as a kind of humorous adjunct to their more serious composing chores. Musical Heritage offers a 1973 recording of Albright rags, and some are as ambitious as they are entertaining. Best of all is the set of three *Dream Rags* (1970), with a lengthy centerpiece, the "Nightmare Fantasy Rag—A Night On Rag Mountain," that is a tongue-in-cheek delight—the nightmare evidently relating to a collaboration between Joplin and Liszt. There are some fairly unadorned rags and one or two energetic stride stomps; but what Albright does most often is use the rhythmic traits and melodic contours of ragtime as a framework, fleshing out each piece with music that transcends the harmonic language of pure ragtime.

Bolcom's *Three Ghost Rags* (1970–71), which turn up on Paul Jacobs' digital "Blues, Ballads, and Rags," are of a similar mold. Bolcom fills out the ragtime skeleton with everything from hazy French sonorities, in "Dream Shadows," to tone rows and clusters, in "Poltergeist." The opening number, "Graceful Ghost," is pure elegance, and Jacobs plays the set magically. He gets a bit less out of Aaron Copland's *Four Piano Blues*, composed between 1926 and 1948 in a variety of jazzy idioms more Coplandesque than bluesy. Not that the performance is bad; it's perfectly serviceable. But Jacobs doesn't make nearly as much of these brief glimpses as Leo Smit does in his complete Copland set (CBS M2 35901).

The heart of the Jacobs disc, however, is a work dedicated to him, *Four North American Ballads* (1978–79), by Frederic Rzewski, a fairly prolific key-

board composer now living in Europe. Rzewski's best-known work is the magnificent set of variations on *The People United Will Never Be Defeated!* (1975), available in a stunning recording by Ursula Oppens (Vanguard VSD 71248). Like that piece and some of Rzewski's others, the variations here are based on songs with political implications: "Dreadful Memories" was a rallying song during the coal-mine strikes of 1931, as was "Which Side Are You On?"; "Down by the Riverside," a once innocuous folksong, has turned up with revised lyrics at protests against the Vietnam war and nuclear power in recent decades; and "Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues" is about working conditions in textile plants.

This last, the most powerful piece in the set, begins with a rumbling bass figure that represents the din of machinery and grows into a thundering mass of sound before being pulled back and kept as an ostinato under the barely audible melody. Eventually, the din gives way to some bluesy variations that end with a figure similar to the rumbling opening, this time at the top of the keyboard. The other variations, a little more conventional, straddle the line between avant-garde jazz and mainstream contemporary keyboard writing—or rather, render that line an anachronistic figment of the imaginations of record companies, cataloguers, snobs, and others who like neat categories. Jacobs gives the set a dazzlingly powerful performance.

Much of Rzewski's music sounds improvisatory, and indeed, some of it is. Just how much leeway he allows becomes apparent when you compare his own recording of "Which Side Are You On?" with Jacobs': Jacobs plays it in 6:06, Rzewski takes 16:24, using this more expansive performance to fill out a digital recording of his *Four Pieces* (1977). Like the *Ballads*, this set takes in all sorts of elements: purely tonal melodies, thunderously undulating clusters, bouncy jazzlike riffs, strictly rhythmic sections and others that are rhythmically and tonally amorphous. Through it all, the freshness and urgency make Rzewski's music compelling, whether in his own performances or in the equally capable hands of Jacobs or Oppens.

All but the Jacobs and Rzewski discs are analog recordings, but strangely, it sounds the other way around. While all the analog recordings are perfectly clear and vividly spacious, the digitals leave much to be desired. At best, they measure up to the analogs; but at worst, the sound is cramped and soft around the edges. This is a shame, since the music on the digital discs demands a crisp and bright sound; in any case, those works and performances are not to be missed. **A.K.**

# The Tape Deck

Critiques of new open-reel and cassette releases by R. D. Darrell

## Things to Come

Tape's imminent full digitalism—that is, digital processing and playback as well as recording—is arrestingly foreshadowed by the first DBX-encoded superchrome musicassettes. Many of the new technology's potentials remain to be exploited, of course, but the primary appeals, the complete elimination of surface noise and consequent expansion of dynamic range, are persuasively anticipated. And the immeasurable musical benefits that result from silencing the steady susurrus of moving-tape noise (of which high-frequency hiss is merely one element) can be appreciated only by those who have already heard what DBX encoding/decoding does to disc reproduction. No verbal description (including my own frequent attempts) is adequate!

DBX comes to cassettes in twelve debut releases; eight are from digital masters, and all are duplicated in "real time" (i.e., 1:1 speed ratio) on superchrome tape with 70-microsecond equalization by In Sync Labs (and blessedly accompanied by some musical as well as technical notes). The price ($20 each) is unconscionable, even for these days. In addition, one must have an automatic Type II playback decoder, like the $109 list-priced DBX Model 21 I've been using for encoded discs. But if the cost of velvety silence and more realistic dynamics comes high, no truly passionate audiophile is likely to complain that he doesn't get his money's worth.

DBX's miracles are grippingly demonstrated in "Beyond the Sound Barrier" (Varèse Sarabande EC 7001), a sampler of warhorses (by Gould, Glière, Rózsa, John Williams) conducted by Morton Gould, plus excerpts from more pretentious divertissements conducted by Lee Holdridge (his own *Lazarus* Suite and the Hawaiian extravaganza *Boy with Goldfish*, composed by the Tanner/Siu/Elliott troika). The London Symphony plays routinely; the musical gamut ranges from *X* to *Z*; but the sheer sound—and the silence from which it bursts forth—is stupendous! There's more of the same in the famed Crystal Clear recordings of the late Virgil Fox's uninhibited Bach and Jongen toccatas on an ugly-toned modern organ ("The Fox Touch," Vol. 1, Ultragroove EC 7002) and in Charles Gerhardt's performance with the National Philharmonic of a suite from Williams' score for *The Empire Strikes Back* (Chalfont EC 7006).

Eden's inevitable snake must be obvious: No technological miracle can add a cubit to the aesthetic stature of the music and musicianship involved. But there's greater substance and satisfaction in the workmanlike Rozsnyai/Philharmonia Hungarica performances of such favorites as the Chabrier *España*, Dukas *Sorcerer's Apprentice*, and Debussy "*Fêtes*" and *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (M&K Realtime EC 7012). And best of all are Arthur Fiedler's final triumphs (and only digital recordings) with the Boston Pops for Crystal Clear: the Capriccios of Rimsky-Korsakov (*Espagnol*) and Tchaikovsky (*Italien*) (Ultragroove EC 7011).

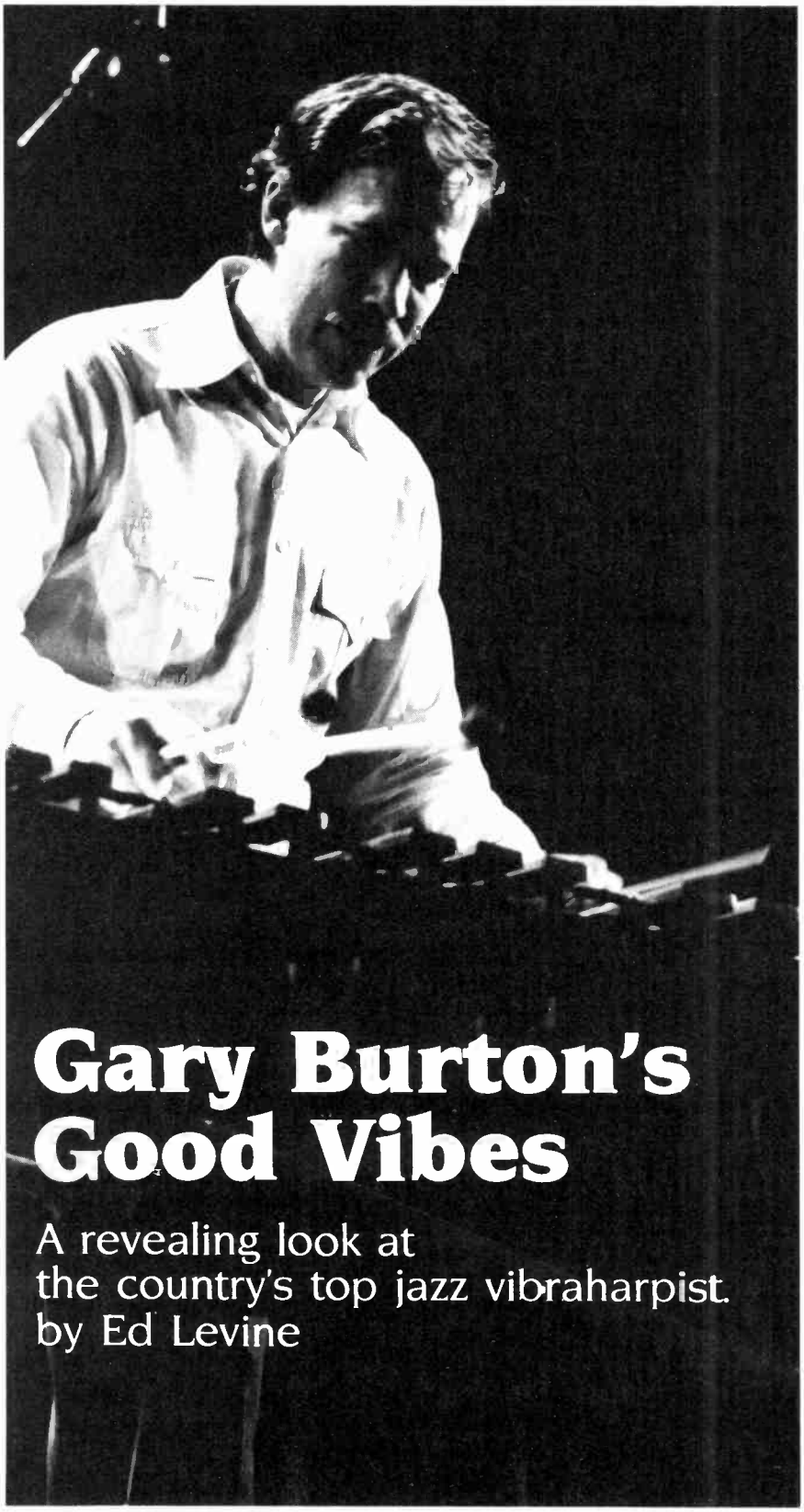
Incidentally, I have compared the Rozsnyai DBX cassette with the DBX disc and the Fiedler DBX cassette with the earlier non-DBX direct-to-disc version and find them sonically identical. So I run little risk in commending three other programs I've heard only in non-DBX editions: Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, performed by Loris Tjeknavorian and the London Symphony (Chalfont EC 7009); Rachmaninoff's Second Piano Concerto and *Paganini* Rhapsody, with Jean-Philippe Collard and Michel Plasson; and Liszt organ music by Lionel Rogg (Connoisseur Society analog EC 7004 and 7005, respectively).

**RCA's new audiophile series** of digitally recorded chromium cassettes has encountered more delays than did the disc equivalents. But the one example I have received is notable both in its own right and as a harbinger of things to come. I'm delighted that the premium-priced cassettes ($15.98 each) are packaged in Prestige Boxes (8¾ by 4 inches, for singles as well as doubles) with full musical and technical notes. And although this particular program offers an odd combination of analog and digital originals, it speaks well for both the excellence of the Soundstream technology and the chromium-tape processing. The mélange incorporates the acclaimed 1978 analog recording of the Mahler Tenth Symphony Adagio by James Levine and the Philadelphians into their new digital recording of the work's remaining four movements in Deryck Cooke's revised "completion" (RCA Red Seal CTK 2-3726, two cassettes, $27.98). Levine has already established his Mahlerian credentials in earlier releases of six symphonies. The present recording, hybrid or no, is a worthy addition, especially for its searching digital illumination of scoring details.

**Old-fogy open-reel aficionados,** whose cause had begun to seem hopeless until Barclay-Crocker came to their rescue, may well be having the last laugh today. For, feeling no need at all for DBX, chromium rather than ferric tape, or even digital technology, they complacently rejoice in analog sound and Dolby-silenced surfaces at their best. Among the current Philips reels proffered by Barclay-Crocker (11 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10004; $10.95 each) are three programs that I've praised in recent cassette editions but that now reveal added breadth, weight, and power: Colin Davis and the Boston Symphony in Sibelius' Second Symphony (G 9500 141); Alfred Brendel with Bernard Haitink and the London Philharmonic in Beethoven's Second Piano Concerto and *Choral Fantasy* (G 9500 471); and Haitink and the Concertgebouw in Brahms's First Serenade (G 9500 322).

Several others I haven't heard in their cassette editions (or haven't previously commented on) are led by Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* songs (G 9500 316) with superb contributions by Haitink's Concertgebouw and soprano Jessye Norman but with drier, more vehement singing by bass John Shirley-Quirk. Haitink's Tchaikovsky Fourth (G 9500 622) may be too restrained a reading for emotional thrill-seekers, but for sonic authenticity it provides aural thrills aplenty. Davis' Dvořák *New World* (G 9500 511, also with the Concertgebouw, is no less impressively played and recorded, yet here the interpretation is too cerebrally contrived for the music's essential spontaneity, folkish humor, and poignant nostalgia. **HF**

# BACKBEAT®



# Gary Burton's Good Vibes

## A revealing look at the country's top jazz vibraharpist.

by Ed Levine

*Burton: "I have no desire to play the instrument upside down or with milk bottles."*

"I DON'T FEEL THE NEED these days to prove to audiences I'm doing the latest thing. I just figure if I keep playing what I like, it will keep growing and evolving and getting better. Maybe I'm entering musical middle age." Jazz vibraharpist Gary Burton is sitting in the living room of the spacious colonial home he and his wife and two small children have just moved into in Stonington, Connecticut. If that sleepy seaport town doesn't seem like a typical home base for a very active, successful jazz musician, not very much in his career does seem typical.

For starters, Burton is among a select handful of well established jazz artists who play the vibraharp, or vibes. (The instrument is similar to the xylophone, except it has metal alloy bars instead of wooden ones. A vibra*phone* has steel bars.) It was first used in a jazz context in 1931 by Lionel Hampton on a session with Louis Armstrong and the Les Hite Orchestra. Hampton and Red Norvo, the two major pre-bebop vibists, normally use two hard mallets and a heavily percussive attack. Milt Jackson, the pre-eminent bebop vibist, also uses two mallets to achieve his famed linear, hornlike approach. Burton, however, uses four to six soft mallets and approaches the instrument as one would a keyboard. As a result, many believe that he has revolutionized the art of jazz vibes playing over the last twenty years. He has won two Grammys, in 1971 for best solo performance with "Alone at Last" on Atlantic, and in 1979 for best small-group performance with "Duet," the second of three ECM albums he has made with pianist Chick Corea. *Down Beat* magazine has named him Jazzman of the Year, and he has won that publication's readers' poll for vibes for thirteen years running. Perhaps even more important, his band has been a proving ground for such diverse players as guitarists Pat Metheny and Larry Coryell, drummer Bob Moses, and bassist Eberhard Weber.

Burton grew up in various small towns in Indiana and started playing vibes at age six. "My parents insisted that all of their children take up instruments," he remembers, "so they started taking me around to various recitals. We went to a marimba recital [the marimba is like the xylophone except the wooden bars are hollow and usually pitched an octave lower] by this elderly lady, Evelyn Tucker, and I thought the instrument was interesting because it was so big and had mallets. But when my mother took me for my first lesson with Evelyn, I wouldn't get out of my chair. Evelyn told my mother that I was probably too young, but when we got home I started bugging my mother to take me back for more."

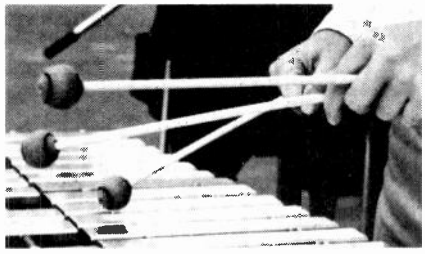
He quickly recovered from his rather slow start by picking songs off the radio and practicing light classical pieces. Popular piano sheet music started him improvising: "I couldn't play directly from the piano music, simply because you don't have as many mallets as you do fingers. So whenever I came to a passage that wasn't playable on the vibes, I'd make something up."

Unlike many jazz greats, Burton had few available sources to draw from during his formative years. "You simply couldn't get most jazz records where I lived. The first records I did hear were either Dixieland or piano music by people like Erroll Garner. I would read about vibes players like Red Norvo, Lionel Hampton, and Milt Jackson in *Down Beat,* but Hampton and Norvo weren't making many widely distributed records in the early Fifties, and Jackson's records simply didn't make it to Anderson, Indiana."

By his junior year in high school Burton had begun to consider music as a career seriously. "I went to the very first summer jazz band camp, at Bloomington [Indiana] in 1959. Before that I thought playing was fun, and I always pictured myself playing weekends to make some money, but I intended to be something serious—like a doctor, lawyer, or an engineer. Drummer Shelley Manne was one of the teachers, and he said to us the first day, 'By the end of this week you will know either that you don't want to play music this much and want it to be a hobby or you'll want to play music so much that you can't do anything else.' After the week was over, I knew."

He had planned on attending Berklee School of Music in Boston immediately after graduating from high school in 1960. But a quick detour took him to Nashville instead. "Boots Randolph, the 'yakkety sax' man, was from Evansville, and he was always going to Nashville to play sessions. One day he called and said there was a guitarist there, Hank Garland, who was looking for a vibes player.

"I intended to be something serious—like a doctor, lawyer, or engineer."



*Multi-mallet magic*

I went down and jammed with Garland one night, and I ended up moving down there for the summer." That detour turned out to be the first real break of his career. In addition to playing on the first country/jazz fusion record, "Jazz from a New Direction" (still available on CBS), Burton was signed to his first recording contract by guitarist Chet Atkins, who was working as an a&r man for RCA that summer.

### With Shearing and Getz

But though he flourished in country music's capital, he was anxious to get back to his original game plan. "That one sojourn to Nashville was more of an aberration than anything else," he says. Under the terms of his RCA contract, Burton could go to Berklee as long as he wanted, provided he came down to New York once a year to record. He stayed at Berklee for two years (and later went back to teach) before moving to New York permanently in 1963 to try his luck as a professional musician. His first gig—in George Shearing's band—came quickly. "I didn't expect to get very much out of playing with George, because I knew I was going to have to play his hits, like *September in the Rain, Lullaby of Birdland,* and *Folks Who Live on the Hill.* It wasn't going to be a heavy, hip jazz thing, and there wasn't going to be much freedom to solo. But it turned out to be just what I needed. I got the experience of playing with seasoned pros like bassist Gene Cherico and drummer Vernel Fournier night after night, and I learned to discipline myself in my solos. Like any other young player, I didn't have much sense of how to package the notes in my solos, and they would tend to go on forever. With George you only got one or two choruses that lasted a minute or two, so I had to learn how to solo straightforwardly and concisely."

His next—and last—apprenticeship came a year later with Stan Getz. Things apparently got off to a rocky start. "A friend of mine, pianist Lou Levy, had recommended me to Stan, so I sat in with his band one night. It turned out to be one of the worst nights I've ever had. I couldn't stay out of the guitarist's way, I didn't feel comfortable comping [providing chords for the solos], nothing went right. So I thought that was that." Apparently not. "Two weeks later," he continues "Chuck Israels [Getz's bassist at the time] called and said that they still hadn't found anybody who sounded right and that the guitarist, Jimmy Raney, had just left the band." Israels wanted to know if Burton could go on the road with the group.

He did, but things were still not right. "For the first couple of weeks, it sounded terrible," says Gary. "No matter what I tried, I drove Stan up the wall, and after awhile he started sitting out half the set and getting drunk. Finally, in the third week of the tour, it actually started to sound pretty good, and I eventually stayed with Stan for three years. It was a great experience, both musically and from a business standpoint. Stan was very popular at the time—it was right after all his hit bossa nova records like *The Girl from Ipanema*—so we were playing big concerts, clubs, the best jazz festivals, TV shows, movies, everything. Musically it was great to work with Roy Haynes, who I think is the best drummer in jazz, and Steve Swallow, who is my favorite bass player. It was hard to leave, but in 1967 I just felt it was time to go off on my own."

Burton's first gig as a leader came at the legendary Lenny's on the Turnpike, in Boston. His band—which included a very young Larry Coryell on guitar, bassist Eddie Gomez, and drummer Joe Hunt—challenged a number of jazz orthodoxies at the time. "I had always gone to work in a suit and tie, like all jazz players did back then," says Gary, "and I had been playing for people who were in their forties, because that's how old jazz audiences were in the early Sixties. So we wore casual clothes on our club dates and grew our hair long. We didn't do it to be wildly successful or terribly current. It was just a desire to reach our own age group."

That they did, but not solely because of their dress code. Their music incorporated elements of Sixties rock, folk, country, and even classical. Gary says the Beatles were an inspiration: "Their music seemed to give me a direction. What they were doing was mixing different kinds of music using basically sound musicianship. We used bits of country, folk, and rock, and because we had a guitar player, the younger audiences identified with what we were doing. The funny thing was, we were still basically playing jazz tunes and improvising off them."

The Burton Group's first LP, 1967's

"Duster," bears out his description. On it, rock and country riffs are seamlessly incorporated into a jazzy, improvisational framework. Coryell sounds more under control than usual, and Swallow and drummer Haynes form a tight, kinetic rhythm section to back Burton's shimmering, dancing improvisations. By this time he was using up to six mallets, enabling him to comp and solo in his unique, pianistic way. As it happened, coercing new and more varied textures and colors out of the instrument became both a blessing and a curse. "At first people don't want you to play differently," he says. "Everyone wanted me to sound like Milt Jackson. People would say playing with four mallets was gimmicky, that it didn't sound natural and was just a technical exercise. Worst of all, they'd say it didn't swing.

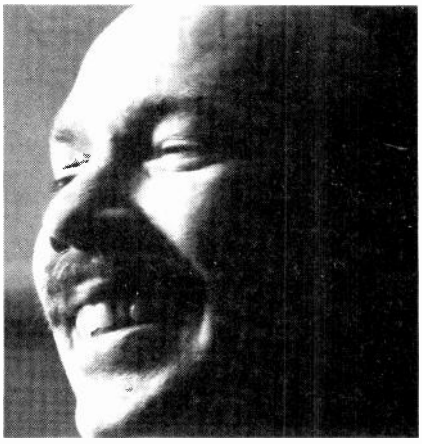
"Now I like the way Milt Jackson plays, but I can't play the way he does. I've tried. When you play conventionally, you get accepted more readily by the critics and other players, but there is a limit to how far you can go. If you are original, you get a lot of grief in the beginning. But once you get established, you get recognized as having something special."

In 1969, Burton left RCA for Atlantic. One of the recordings to emerge from his three-year affiliation with that label was 1970's "Paris Encounter," a delightful, swinging session with the brilliant French Swing violinist Stéphane Grappelli. According to Burton, the collaboration came about as a result of an offhand remark Grappelli made to Newport Jazz Festival impresario George Wein. "Stéphane was sitting in the audience with George while I was onstage," he remembers, "and he said to George, 'How come I never get to play with any young musicians at your festivals—like Gary Burton?' George came backstage and asked me if I was interested, and I said I didn't think so because I barely knew who Stéphane was."

But Nesuhi Ertegun, the president of Atlantic, knew Grappelli's work well and thought it was a great idea. "So when I was in Paris next on tour," Gary continues, "I went into the studio with Stéphane and my rhythm section at the time [bassist Swallow and drummer Bill Goodwin]. It turned out to be amazingly easy for Stéphane and me to play together. He was unbelievable. The album was half older things that he brought in, like *Daphne* and *Here's that Rainy Day Feeling Again*, and half more difficult tunes out of my book by people like Mike Gibbs, Carla Bley, and Steve Swallow. Even young players have trouble with those tunes at first, but Stéphane just sailed right through them."

His next LP, the Grammy-winning "Alone at Last," was an equally by-

## "Now I like the way Milt Jackson plays, but I can't play the way he does. I've tried."



P. CUNNINGHAM © 1981

*Burton: comfortable with his style*

chance affair. Gary had been scheduled to play at the Montreux (Switzerland) Jazz Festival with the University of Illinois Jazz Band. When the group canceled at the last minute, the festival people offered to put together a rhythm section to back him. "But I wasn't going to play with a pickup rhythm section at a big festival like Montreux," says Gary, "so I told them I wanted to do the gig solo." Apparently they weren't wild about the idea, and neither was Atlantic. But Burton insisted. "I went ahead and did it, the audience responded well, and eventually Atlantic put it out and it won a Grammy."

### Hooking up with ECM

Probably the label Burton is most strongly identified with is ECM, the brainchild of the brilliant and controversial German producer Manfred Eicher. Burton met Eicher in the fall of 1972 after a concert in Berlin in which he and Corea had played an impromptu duet. "Manfred already knew Chick," remembers Gary, "through some avant-garde records he had made for the label [the critically acclaimed 'ARC' and 'Circle Concerts']. He told us that the duet was wonderful, that we must record together. Nothing happened then—we went back to the States. But Manfred kept bugging us. I got a steady stream of letters from this guy in Germany with this little company that I'd barely heard of." A few months later Burton and Corea were asked to do a duet concert in Europe and Eicher suggested they record it. Burton was in the process of negotiating a new contract with Atlantic anyway, so he finally agreed. The record, "Crystal Silence," came out in 1973, and he has since recorded nine additional albums for ECM. Among them are "Matchbook" (1975), with guitarist Ralph Towner, and two other albums with Corea, including "Duet."

Burton was really the first American musician to throw in his lot entirely with Eicher—others on the roster, like Keith Jarrett and Corea, maintain American label affiliations. It is clear from listening to Gary's ECM projects that, in Eicher and engineer Martin Weiland, he has found a most simpatico creative context. "When I did the first duet album with Chick," he remembers, "I got a feel of how great it was to work with Manfred, how smoothly the sessions went, what a nice personal feeling there was, how he got involved in the music in such an intelligent way. A lot of other musicians must feel the same way, because ECM has clearly established itself as a trendsetter. It has shown that a small jazz label can be a success in the record business. It also has introduced European jazz players to American audiences to the extent that nowadays you can hear the influence of such Europeans as Jan Garbarek and Eberhard Weber in the playing of some young American performers."

Burton divides his time between recording and touring both with Corea and with his group. Though he recently cut down his annual number of live appearances, the fact that he now does about one hundred (he used to do twice that) does not exactly confirm his statement that he is "entering musical middle age." His new quartet—saxophonist Jim Odgren, bassist Swallow, and young drummer Mike Hyman—just released its first album, "Easy as Pie," and Burton's playing sounds as lucid and lyrical as ever. There is a relaxed, nonfrenetic feel to the LP that is enhanced by the wonderfully emotional playing of Odgren and Hyman. When I suggest that the music has a conservative, almost bebop flavor, Gary says that is partly a reflection of the new tastes of his college-age audiences. "The music does have an older, almost mainstream quality. We play more of that now because there seems to be much stronger interest in it. For example, Ellington's *Isfahan*—which is on the record—is a real favorite when we do it in concert. A few years ago I think audiences would've seen it as corny. Now they see it as a classic."

Maybe what he means by entering musical middle age is finding an inner balance: "As a vibes player, I don't suppose I'm going to break through any new areas technically speaking. I have no desire to play the instrument upside down or to try to play it with milk bottles. I'm totally comfortable with the way I play it now." **HF**

# Audiophile Cassettes: Does the Medium Match the Music?

## Premium-quality tape and slower duplicating speeds are among the ingredients in the latest rage in audiophilia. by Crispin Cioe

WITH LIST PRICES ranging from $9 to $17, the first wave of audiophile cassettes has hit the marketplace. The new cassettes are noticeably superior to their regular counterparts and feature a relatively impressive dynamic range, less background noise and tape hiss, and extended frequency response. Their manufacturers achieve these noble ends by slowing down the duplication process, using either chromium dioxide or metal tape, and duping from the original master tape or a direct digital copy thereof.

This month I listened to cassettes received from Inner City, Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab, CBS Mastersound, and Audible Images. My home system includes a moderately priced Aiwa M-250 tape deck, and I also used HIGH FIDELITY's impressive new listening room, which has B&W Model 801 speakers, a Nakamichi 582 tape deck, a Holman preamp, and the Apt 1 power amp. Listening on top-of-the-line equipment does, of course, make a difference. But, as with any recordings, the original program and production values have a great deal to do with how these cassettes stack up.

Essentially, chromium dioxide, or "chrome," used as magnetic coating for tape stock (as opposed to the more common iron oxide compound) significantly increases frequency response and headroom and improves the signal-to-noise (S/N) ratio. The price paid for chrome's greater magnetic properties and consequent increased sensitivity in the high-frequency range is significant: Chromium dioxide tape stock costs up to six times more than standard tape. Inner City and Mobile Fidelity both use BASF Pro II $CrO_2$, and CBS Mastersound buys its chromium dioxide tape directly from Du Pont, the tape's inventor-manufacturer. Audible Images uses Fuji metal tape, which has superb S/N ratio specs. According to Audible Images' president, Thomas Boyd, "Tests we ran indicated about 3 dB more dynamic range than chromium dioxide tape." Metal tape, which costs even more than chrome, is probably most appropriate for classical and jazz programs, because it can accommodate very demanding high-frequency percussive sounds without saturating. Audible Images' cassettes come in two versions: "Standard" and "Nakamichi," since Nakamichi equalization differs slightly from the industry standard in its approach to high-frequency boost. CBS, MFSL, Inner City, and Audible Images all use premium quality, extra-flat shells to ensure proper alignment with the deck's tape heads; cheaper shells risk improper azimuth alignment, which may cause inadequate frequency response.

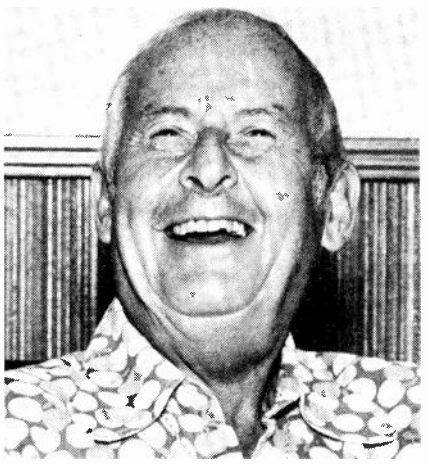
All manufacturers pay close attention to the duplication process. Nonaudiophile cassettes are generally duplicated at very high speeds, sometimes as much as sixty-four times as fast as normal play, and use a source that is a third- or even a fourth-generation copy itself. All of this greatly increases the probability of hiss, noise, and generally reduced fidelity. Mobile Fidelity says that it duplicates from original stereo master tapes, and that it does so in a "real time" (playing speed) ratio (1:1). CBS claims to work either from the original master or a digital copy thereof and duplicates at a 16:1 speed ratio. Inner City also says it works from the original master and duplicates at 8:1. Audible Images duplicates in real time from digital masters, stating that its own tests showed virtually no signal loss on the masters after running off a hundred complete dupes. The advantage in working from digital, vs. analog, masters is that the latter are generally thought to lose some of their high-frequency content after frequent play. But some recording engineers will argue that, with proper care and handling, such loss is negligible.

Audiophile or nonaudiophile, the bottom line on a product's worth is intimately tied to the musical program itself. Extremely layered productions, where multitracking is the crux of the sound, are always more susceptible to cluttered midranges or muddy low ends. And if the original master mix has leakage or crosstalk problems, the blurred edges will be all the more apparent in the audiophile incarnation, even if chromium dioxide is boosting the highs. In other words, a great deal of information crammed into certain frequencies will not necessarily become clearer in this format, partly because there is a limit to how much information a cassette can reproduce clearly, compared to a record. On the other hand, more pared-down spacious productions can sound quite alive and vibrant—indeed, some are awe-inspiring.

These tapes are made to be played back on optimally maintained equipment. If, for instance, you haven't cleaned your tape heads in months, high frequencies will be immediately lost, no matter how fine the quality of the program. Also, all are Dolby-encoded. The majority of car stereo systems do not have Dolby circuitry, and none of the personal portables do, with the exception of Infinity's Intimate (see page 36). But Dolby circuitry or no, a Dolby tape will generally sound good in a car environment. Such is not the case with the personal portables, simply because of the very close listening situation.

**Jan and Dean**
Audible Images AI 103, $17
(postage included)
822 Stendhal Lane
Cupertino, Calif. 95014

With songs like *Little Old Lady from Pasadena, Surf City*, and a number of other Beach Boys covers, the idea here is to recapture the funky, good-natured



TOM COPI

*Grappelli: musical finesse comes through*

flavor of the '60s originals on today's state-of-the-art equipment. Recorded in Nashville just last year, "Jan and Dean" uses all the original instrumentation, with even the solo guitar lines left intact. The music's pared-down simplicity is well served by metal tape, the individual instruments sound transparently clean and finely carved, and Jan and Dean's voices still have the same nasal edge that, for a few summers at least, was the biggest wave in pop music.

**John Klemmer: Touch**
Mobile Fidelity Sound Lab
C 006, $17

Undoubtedly the best-sounding audiophile cassette I've heard to date, this one's success has everything to do with straight-ahead production values. Recorded live in the studio with a small band, there is none of the muffled midrange that, in a blindfold test, usually cries out "cassette!" immediately. Klemmer concentrates on simple melodies and tonal textures rather than on the hard-bop approach he sometimes uses on albums. The occasional studio reverb trick pops up to further embellish his lush tenor sax sound, and the tape's totally accurate representation of the music makes it a true standard-bearer.

**Meat Loaf: Bat out of Hell**
CBS Mastersound HET 44974, $14.98

There's an awful lot of midrange information on this rock epic, and an A/B comparison with the similarly-priced, half-speed remastered disc finds the cassette lacking in definition and clarity. This is rock music with a very wide dynamic range; on songs like *Bat out of Hell* and *You Took the Words Right out of My Mouth* the cassette's signal-to-noise ratio doesn't compare favorably with the remastered disc's, diluting some of the dramatic impact. All the vocals come off well, though, and while guitars sometimes sound a mite fuzzy and ill defined, Jim Steinman's grandiloquent piano never loses its punch.

**Pink Floyd:**
**The Dark Side of the Moon**
MFSL C 017, $17

Pink Floyd's high-tech psychedelia has always been immaculately produced, no matter how glum the band's messages might be. The excellent engineering on the original pays off here: Stinging guitar solos retain their edge at higher volumes without peaking or distorting, dreamy vocals (especially on the familiar *Time*) have amazing clarity and resonance given the heavy instrumentation, and the panning on tunes like *Money* is clever and artful.

**Django Reinhardt & Stéphane Grappelli: The Quintet of the Hot Club of France (1936-37)**
Inner City TIC 1104, $12.98
(extended play)

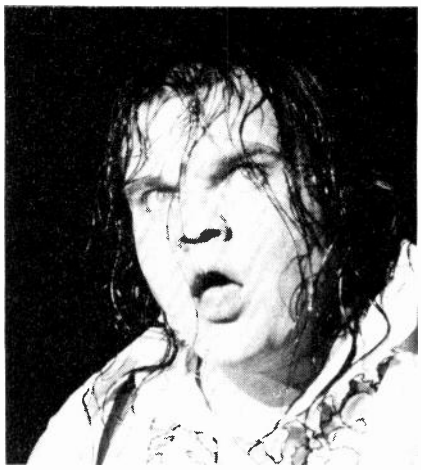
This cassette is drawn from a series of jazz string quintet recordings that are treasured landmarks. Given the antique vintage of the original masters, the ringing, singing tones are a tribute to the audiophile cassette technology. Django Reinhardt's unique vibrato and passionate attack are well represented, and Stéphane Grappelli's high notes slip and slide between registers with incredible finesse. Swing chestnuts like *Rose Room, Body and Soul,* and *Exactly like You* bring out the instrumental prowess of these two genuises.

**Joe Sample, Ray Brown, Shelly Manne: The Three**
Inner City 6007, $8.98

Recorded in Japan, this collection of standards from three jazz masters has an unpretentiously swinging and relaxed atmosphere. Ray Brown's singing bass rides fairly high in the mix and sounds true down to its bottom. Shelly Manne's cymbal work is clear and his grooves assured, and Joe Sample's solid mainstream piano style and delicate pedaling make for a refreshing change from his funky Crusader role. Tape hiss is definitely apparent, though not enough to distract from Brown's marvelous solo on *'Round About Midnight.*

**Supertramp: Crime of the Century**
MFSL C 005, $17

Supertramp's airtight productions are pacesetters in the pop/rock field, so it's



EBET ROBERTS

*Meat Loaf: cassette lacks definition*

no surprise that the group's sound transfers to cassette so effectively. There is almost no audible noise here, and the bass's sound is one of the best I've heard on cassette. Special effects—like the children's voices on *School*—are tastefully applied and well placed in the mix, and all the instruments occupy their own spaces with room to breathe. Nothing is lost to technology, so songs like *Bloody Well Right* and *Crime of the Century* convey their jabbing ironies with the same glossy pop feeling as on record.

**Steely Dan: Aja**
MFSL C 033, $17

In a direct A/B comparison with the classic original disc, "Aja" on audiophile cassette stands up fairly well. Vocals are crisp and well defined, the electric pianos and horns sound admirably discrete in the same frequency ranges, and stereo imaging is good. A major drawback is an overall compression, especially in the bass, which is very apparent when listening on top-end equipment. This was one of the decade's most beautifully layered productions, and, while the cassette blurs the lines a bit on the original's separations, songs like *Aja, Peg,* and *Josie* still retain their sophisticated dynamics and instrumental sheen.

**Sadao Watanabe: Autumn Blow**
Inner City TIC 6064, $8.98

Reed player Sadao Watanabe, who has a lovely melodic gift, used such top L.A. and N.Y. studio musicians as Lee Ritenour, Patrice Rushen, and Anthony Jackson for this live date in Japan. Unfortunately, the bass occasionally gets lost (probably somewhere in Tokyo's Kohseinenken Hall), but the flute and guitar exchanges on this pop/jazz set are beautiful throughout. Tape hiss is much lower here than on some other Inner City releases.

# Records

EBET ROBERTS

*Petty: "a new world boy on the old Kings Road"*

## The Pleasure of Petty's Pain

### Tom Petty's fourth LP is a celebration of disillusionment.

by Mitchell Cohen

**Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers: Hard Promises**
Tom Petty & Jimmy Iovine, producers. Backstreet BSR 5160

THE SOUND is coiled and tense on Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers' fourth album. The message is that trust goes unrewarded; that dreams, whether fulfilled or not, are dangerous things. There are fleeting moments of romantic elation, but underlying them is an awareness of love's unpredictability. Breaking up an affair, a woman laughs and says, "Don't think about it, you can go crazy/Anything can happen, anything can end."

Those lines, from one of the LP's standout tracks, *A Woman in Love (It's Not Me)*, pretty much sum up the Petty philosophy on "Hard Promises." His musical attitude has undergone some significant changes in the past few years. Call it maturation, or call it disillusionment. On *When the Time Comes* from 1978's "You're Gonna Get It," he could cockily assert that the girl he wanted would someday be his; on *Letting You Go* from the new album, the theme is somewhat revised to, "I always knew one day you'd come around/Now I wonder if dreams are just dreams." As was the case with post-"Born to Run" Bruce Springsteen, this rocker's waning optimism has toughened up his work.

Petty's '79 burst of defiance, "Damn the Torpedoes," was his commercial breakthrough. But "Hard Promises" doesn't display any overt attempt to duplicate that album's formula. In some ways, "Promises" falls short of its predecessor—the quartet of songs that opened "Torpedoes" *(Refugee, Here Comes My Girl, Even the Losers*, and *Shadow of a Doubt)* were a sustained peak that would be difficult to top—but its own achievement is considerable. The laconic sexiness of Petty's vocal drawl and the rigorousness of the Heartbreakers' playing are as appealing as ever. At times (such as on the taut and ambiguous narrative *Something Big*) their interplay is reminiscent of such singer-band combinations as Dylan and the Band.

Once in a while, atmosphere overwhelms all else, as on the meant-to-be-menacing *The Criminal Kind* and on the bluesy, late-60's-sounding *Nightwatchman. Kings Road*, a Chuck Berry-styled rocker, is spirited in almost exactly the same way as *Century City* from "Torpedoes," transposed from Los Angeles to London. And one wishes that Petty had a semblance of a sense of humor. These lapses aside, "Hard Promises" is a passionate kind of mainstream rock, more ruled by the heart than by the mind.

*The Waiting*, the opening track, takes California folk/rock right up to the minute and is a perfect example of Petty's (to steal a Dylan title) mixed-up confusion. For the moment, love feels like heaven; at the same time, he's warning, "Don't let this go too far/ Don't let it get to you." Even the most crackling rock track on the LP, the straightforward *A Thing About You*, contains the following, and typical, admonition: "You gotta be careful what you dream."

Petty's bruised melancholia is at its most moving on two ballads, *Insider* and *You Can Still Change Your Mind*. On the former he shares vocals with Stevie Nicks, though the tune's plaintive, melodic lilt owes so much to the songs of Felice and Boudleaux Bryant that Phil Everly would have been a more suitable partner. *You Can Still* serves as the LP's coda, circling back to the disc's starting point with the lyric, "Everybody's waiting on somethin' that hasn't come yet."

Petty is playing the displaced soul on "Hard Promises," battered and embittered by romance, out of his element as "a new world boy on the old Kings Road." He's "the broken-hearted fool" on one cut *(Insider)*, and "your bleedin' heart, your cryin' fool" on another *(The Waiting)*. There's probably a limit to how far he can take this character, and it may not be true that "there's no one as honest as those in pain" *(Letting You Go)*, but the honesty of "Hard Promises" is undeniable. Its emotional uncertainty is matched by an artistic confidence that

makes the album another hard-won victory for Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

**Grace Jones: Nightclubbing**
Chris Blackwell & Alex Sadkin, producers. Island ILPS 9624
BY CRISPIN CIOE

Grace Jones emerged during the disco era as a fashion personality turned singer, an ersatz r&b-style Edith Piaf whose very modern persona projected every conceivable mode of pleasure and pain that the international art/fashion/party demimonde ever concocted. What she lacked in vocal range and depth she sought to compensate for with image and careful production. That approach has won her a loyal, if specialized, coterie of fans, which in turn has enabled her to continue carving out her own little niche in pop music.

"Nightclubbing" is Jones's most fully realized and musically satisfying LP to date, a polished little gem of various cosmopolitan and third-world influences. At the heart of its sound is the renowned Jamaican drums/bass duo of Sly Dunbar and Robbie Shakespeare. With the help of longtime cohorts Mao Chung on guitar, keyboardist Wally Badarou, and percussionist Uzziah "Sticky" Thompson, Dunbar/Shakespeare delicately combine elements of reggae, funk, and pop electronics to create a sound that is at once icily distant and seethingly danceable.

Additionally, an eclectic song selection and some unusual instrumentation add an urbane breadth to the proceedings. *I've Seen That Face Before (Libertango)* features Jack Emblow's atmospherically Parisian accordion while the pulsing reggae arrangement of Bill Wither's *Use Me* brings a compulsive new meaning to the song. Synthesizers are used imaginatively and with great control throughout, and the overall audio spectrum captured here is quite impressive, especially in the higher frequencies.

Pitted against such musical sophistication, Jones's deadpan delivery creates an irony with a logic of its own. She is still no diva, but, with the help of some coolly superb production, she has learned how to put her songs across convincingly.

**The Manhattan Transfer: Mecca for Moderns**
Jay Graydon, producer
Atlantic SD 16036
BY CRISPIN CIOE

Before last year's hit single *Twilight Zone*, Manhattan Transfer's only problem commercially was that it was uncategorizable. Formed in 1972 with a singular dedication to four-part harmony, this exhilarating vocal quartet's albums have consistently showcased a panorama of pop song styles, tied together by a basically modern pop approach. Though "Mecca for Moderns" continues that overview (and features some exceptionally clean and focused production in the process), it sounds utterly contemporary and, well, "with it." The times have finally caught up with this group; by dint of sheer perseverence, it may well be on its way to superstardom.

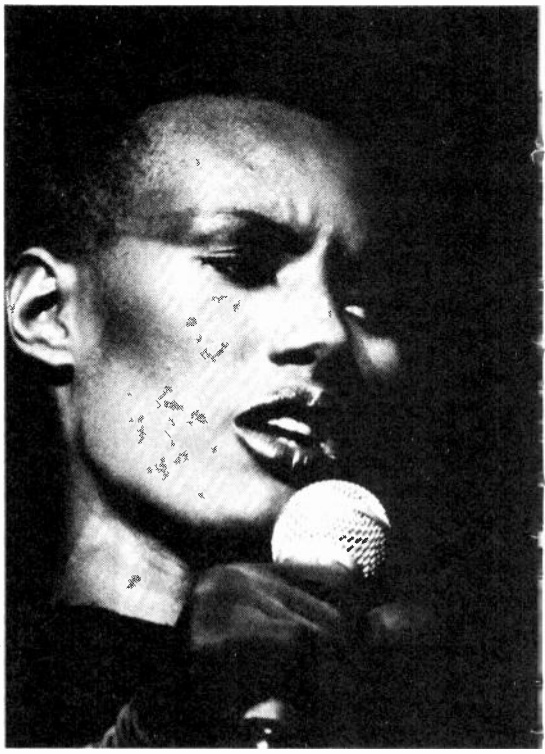
Both scat and vocal interpretations of instrumental solos, long a passion of MT, are given full play here. A faithful-to-Basie version of Freddie Green's *Until I Met You (Corner Pocket)* is followed by a charging rendition of Charlie Parker's *(The Word of) Confirmation* (with lyrics by the late Eddie Jefferson) that confirms this quartet's legitimate claim to the throne of Lambert, Hendricks & Ross, the last great jazz vocal combo. There is also some convincing and tasteful pop/jazz fusion here: On *Kafka* the group mixes the styles of '60s influences like the Swingle Singers with such modernists as Flora Purim, and Jay Graydon's *On the Boulevard* abounds with Steely Dan references.

Also included in this clever pastiche of tunes is a cutesy-but-credible copy of the Ad Libs' '60s hit *Boy from New York City* and *(Wanted) Dead or Alive*, a funny commentary on contemporary politics seen from a decidedly Caribbean perspective. Throughout "Mecca for Moderns," MT weaves its own threads of continuity and good-natured virtuosity. Combining a dedication to personal tastes with a viable career in the music business is never an easy row to hoe, but after nine years, it looks like this group has succeeded on its own, very fertile turf.

**Split Enz: Waiata**
David Tickle, producer
A&M SP 4848
BY STEVEN X. REA

Tim and Neil Finn, Split Enz' songwriting brothers, must have experienced a load of unhappy, unsuccessful romances in their younger days. Their fervent, bouncy pop songs are replete with allusions to twisted love affairs, broken hearts and broken promises, sexual frustration, lust, and unrequited love. But despite all the woe-is-me sentiment, there's nothing somber or sulky about their music. It shimmers with a modern, high-tech glow, and as often as not the lyrics poke fun at the brothers' own despair.

"Waiata" is a Maori word meaning



LINDA MATLOW

*Jones: an irony all her own*

to dance, sing, and stomp in celebration, and this New Zealand quintet lives up to its album's title with a splashy batch of deft pop rockers similar in spirit and style to last year's "True Colours." Vocalist Tim Finn delivers the more hectic, frenzied songs, shaded with slight avant-garde strokes: *Hard Act to Follow* storms headlong into Eddy Rayner's babbling synthesizers; *I Don't Wanna Dance* is spiked with Neil Finn's slithery guitar; *Walking Through the Ruins* is strewn with the apocalyptic visions of a bombed-out love affair.

Neil Finn penned the band's first international hit, *I Got You*, and his songs are more in the commercial tradition. *One Step Ahead*, the first single from "Waiata," is a spooky, Beatles-esque number that marches to the slow beat of Nigel Griggs's bass. *History Never Repeats* is another pessimistic excursion down love's winding lane; while *Iris* ("Ooh, ooh Iris/I feel desirous") is a snoozy, lush ditty that veers dangerously close to Eric Carmen-land.

*Iris*, a pair of Rayner instrumentals (*Wail* and *Albert of India*), and a track called *Ships* do not represent Split Enz at its finest. Their inclusion makes "Waiata" a less than perfect effort, while their omission would have made it the shortest long-player since "The Dave Clark Five's Greatest Hits." The trouble with these colorful, talented folks from down under is that they occasionally get so caught up in their clever, "wacky" presentations (on stage they wear multicolored, psychedelic suits; their records

are gimmicky, "laser-etched" packages) that their tunes become arty afterthoughts. But that's more the exception than the rule. When the material is up to snuff, Split Enz delivers head-spinning, witty, impetuous pop.

**Squeeze: East Side Story**
Roger Bechirian & Elvis Costello, producers. A&M SP 4854
BY STEVEN X. REA

"East Side Story" is like a bolt from the blue. Song after song on the fourth LP by this British quintet boggles the mind, delights the ears, sends shivers up and down the spine, gives rise to goose bumps. As good as last year's bubbly "Argybargy" was, this time songwriters Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook have outdone themselves. Ably assisted by producers Roger Bechirian and Elvis Costello (and Dave Edmunds on *In Quintessence*), Squeeze delivers a dizzying collection of smart, sharp, poignant musical pictures, making "East Side Story" easily the best pop album to emerge out of the post-punk scene.

Where the group's previous outings sped by in a manic, frantic rush, rife with cocky rhyming couplets, crashing guitars, and pulsating rhythms, this one takes its cool, quiet time achieving its goals. One gets the feeling that Costello had something to do with this. The pages he tore from the Tamla/Motown book, the George Jones book, and the Beatles book have been handed over to Messrs Difford, Tilbrook, et al. Tilbrook's marvelous Beatle-whine is used to the hilt, often in tandem with Difford's throaty vocals. An added surprise is newcomer Paul Carrack, the former keyboard player for Ace, whose harmonies lend a new resonance to the Squeeze sound. He also sings the lead vocal on *Tempted*, a bluesy, Booker T.-meets-early-Jackie Lomax soul shouter that boasts a few gruff murmurs from Costello.

Squeeze's use of Beatle riffs has never been more blatant or more buoyant than on "East Side Story." *There's No Tomorrow* basks in a psychedelic glow right out of *Here Comes the Sun* and fades in "Revolver"-style sound effects. *Is That Love* is early Fab Four—harmonies, guitar break, and all. *Someone Else's Bell* recalls George Harrison's *Savoy Truffle*, while *Woman's World* and *Vanity Fair* strike at the heart of English middle-class life as touchingly and as vividly as *Eleanor Rigby*.

But the boys are anything but Beatle mimics. Their lyrics are keen, precise, funny, and sad. Their songs are about lovers, drunks, deadbeats, and lonely working girls. *F-Hole* is an ominous social commentary that surges with dirge-

*(Continued on page 79)*

# Who Wrote Those Liner Notes, Anyway?

## Two important jazz releases get short shrift from their manufacturer.

**Zoot Sims Featuring Buddy Rich**
51 West/CBS Q 16079
BY JOHN S. WILSON

The front of the album cover says "Zoot Sims Featuring Buddy Rich." The back of the album cover says "Zoot Sims Featuring Buddy Rich" and lists the eight selections on the record. And that's it. Actually, Zoot and Buddy play together on only three of the eight tunes. Of the remaining five, one is an unaccompanied solo by an unnamed guitarist who also duets with Zoot—in fact shares the record with him—on the remaining four tracks. After calling CBS, which distributes 51 West, I was finally able to confirm that the guitarist was Bucky Pizzarelli. As if to add insult to injury, the uncredited bassist who plays on several of the tracks (Milt Hinton) is not the bassist pictured on the album's cover.

CBS has tossed this record out into the world with so little consideration for the musicians and prospective buyers that one wonders why the company ever bothered in the first place.

It's a shame because it's a delightful album. Zoot and Buddy sing on *Gee Baby, Aint' I Good to You*—Zoot with sincerity, Buddy with polished hipness. They both swing exuberantly through *Somebody Loves Me* and *Honeysuckle Rose*, with Bucky adding a lively chorded solo on the latter. Bucky plays his now classic unaccompanied version of *Send in the Clowns*. And Zoot and Bucky flow warmly and responsively through four duets. It's a charmer from beginning to end. Why try to hide it?

TOM COPI

*Sims: deserves better packaging*

**One Night Stand:**
**A Keyboard Event**
Jay Chattaway, producer
Columbia KC2 37100 (two discs)
BY DON HECKMAN

It takes a good ten minutes of sorting through the chaotic, ego-tripping program notes before one can ascertain just exactly what this recording is all about. Despite its title, the two-disc set chronicles two keyboard-heavy concerts, one at New York's Carnegie Hall, the other at Los Angeles' Dorothy Chandler Pavilion. Apparently, all the performers played at both, though it isn't clear from the liner notes who played what and where. Who plays which organ on *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*? What is the placement for the six piano soloists on *Hexagon*? Who plays which piano on *Pentagonal*?

Oddly enough, there's plenty of room for gratitudes, congratulations, a grammatically bizarre description of the trials and tribulations of the jazz improviser, and a rambling discourse about how jazz is finally acceptable in all the big classical rooms. (That will come as good news to Benny Goodman.) Also, the tracks are sequenced out of order, so whatever natural momentum took place either night has been lost. In short, what we have here is one of the most ineptly prepared and packaged recordings I've ever received from a major label.

Too bad, because the music deserves better treatment. The album opens with a brief appearance by the ninety-eight-year-old Eubie Blake, playing *Charleston Rag*. Happily, Blake still deserves to be on stage because he's a gutsy, ragtime pianist, and not just because he's ninety-eight. Ramsey Lewis' two pieces, *After the Rain* and *Pentagonal*, are surprisingly far-ranging, suggesting much more depth than is usually evident on Lewis' commercially-oriented recordings. Kenny Barron's duet with Bobby Hutcherson on *Sunshower* is a bit too bangy for my tastes (Barron seems to have lost his light, bebop touch on this one), but matters are redeemed with the swinging, aptly titled *Calypso*. Check out Hutcherson's humorous marimba accompaniment.

Earl Klugh and Noel Pointer (with Ron Carter, the only major performers here not on the Columbia-Epic roster) are at their best on *Mirabella* and *The Princess*, although pianist Rodney Franklin is the featured performer. *Mirabella* has the taste and feel of a Chuck Mangione Latin jazz piece, but Klugh's driving, plucked figures give it more intensity than that might imply. Ironically, it is Franklin's piano that is too ponderous for the filigreelike patterns of the music. His brief, melodic love melody, *The Princess*, is better, its yearning line just right for the sometimes-fruity arpeggios of its composer.

*When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, a high-energy, uptempo romp through the traditional ballad, was obviously aimed at the returning prisoners from Iran. It showcases Charles Earland and George Duke in a battle between opposing Hammond B-3 organs. Trapped in the middle of a performance that makes up in power and fury for what it lacks in subtlety and finesse is drummer Buddy Williams. Pianist/composer Bob James is allocated three tracks: *Winding River* with Ron Carter, and *Memory of Minnie* (Riperton) and *Doom* with Carter and flutist Hubert Laws. *River* reveals a surprisingly lyrical James, then moves into a bright, almost Copland-esque mood. It is one of his finest recorded improvisations. Carter's solid bass work is a welcome sound in these days of bass as guitar, as synthesizer, as white noise, and God knows what else. Laws is as coolly effective as ever—too cool for my tastes; his sound is nothing you would want to curl up with on a cold winter's night.

*A Common Cause*, a duet between Sir Roland Hanna and alto saxophonist Arthur Blythe, is the highlight of the album—a dramatic example of the sheer, nonstop creative energy that can be generated by two world-class jazzmen creating sparks as they rub against each other. *D.C.H.*, with Duke, Stanley Clarke, and Herbie Hancock covering a variety of electric sound producers, is the obligatory bow in the direction of jazz/funk. And finally, the concert closes (don't ask where) with *Hexagon*, a massive piano performance by James, Hancock, Hanna, Duke, Lewis, and Franklin, accompanied by Carter and Williams. Chattaway's composed sections are little better than jazz kitsch, but the main attraction here is the triggering and interplay of ideas.

Given what it is, "One Night Stand" is a successful recording. All-star jazz bands, like all-star baseball teams, don't always deliver, but the ensembles on this program—for the most part—do. If only the packaging had been on a par with the product. Oh well, too many corporate hands.

(Continued from page 77)
like intensity behind Gilson Lavis' drumming; *Mumbo Jumbo* is a spirited, nonsensical flight of frivolity; *Piccadilly* is a wry story of fumbling teenagers on their first date; an American country-style ballad, *Labelled with Love*, is a scary, heartrending sketch of a woman who is left with just her memories and her Scotch. It's simply hard to imagine that this band could get any better than it already is on this fourteen-track album.

**Jim Steinman: Bad for Good**
Todd Rundgren & Jim Steinman, producers. Cleveland International/ Epic FE 36531
BY MITCHELL COHEN

Jim Steinman's "Bad for Good" is an hour-long outpouring of raging hormones and aggressive excess. It comes complete with an extra single that contains an instrumental "prologue," *The Storm*, performed by the New York Philharmonic at Lincoln Center, and an "epilogue" that purports to celebrate rock & roll dreams. Since *The Storm* doesn't feature Steinman's lyrics or Steinman's voice, it is the least objectionable part of the record.

The standard Steinman technique is to write a bombastic melody, take the timeless rock themes that have served well the generation from Chuck Berry to Bob Seger (automotive escape, frenzied lust, contributing to the delinquency of a minor), and turn them into interminable arias. Meat Loaf's "Bat out of Hell" consisted entirely of Steinman songs and was awful in its own way, but its awe-inspiring audacity, combined with Loaf's beefy grotesqueness, lent an operatic distance to the project. However sincere Steinman was, Meat Loaf gave off reverberations of parody.

Singing his own material, Steinman takes self-indulgence into the stratosphere, entering the pantheon of rock-obnoxiousness. He flails away at his librettos, which are little more than minimally revised clichés matched to tales of teen sleaze and double entendre. Musically, his impressive band (especially producer Todd Rundgren's guitar on *Stark Raving Love* and Roy Bittan's piano on *Lost Boys and Golden Girls*) can whip up a dramatic storm. But when Steinman rips off *Paradise by the Dashboard Light* (from "Bat out of Hell") on the boy-girl duet *Dance in My Pants*, or goes berserk on *Out of the Frying Pan (and into the Fire)* and the title cut, or—worst of all—recites (as on *Left in the Dark*), it's a lost cause.

Among the two twelve-inch and two seven-inch sides of Steinman lunacy, the nadir is probably *Love and Death and an American Guitar*. On this (intentionally?) ridiculous spoken-word piece, Steinman beats a guitar—Telecaster or Stratocaster—to a bloody pulp (on the body of a varsity cheerleader, among other things), and is about to slam it down on his parents' bed with them still in it. He shouts at his father, "You've got a hell of a lot to learn about rock and roll!" Steinman, heed thyself. As rock & roll, "Bad for Good" is good for nothing.

**The Tubes:**
**The Completion Backward Principle**
David Foster, producer
Capitol SOO 12151
BY SAM SUTHERLAND

"This is it, America. Say hello to a whole new way of listening. Listen to what you've been waiting for. You asked for something new and we heard you loud and clear. Because when you talk, Tubes listen."

So say the venerable Bay Area satirical rockers in their arch parody of corporate advertising that serves as the liner note on their first album for Capitol. "The Completion Backward Principle" could become a collector's dream if only for its double-talking cover art, which expands upon that capitalist simile to project rock group as conglomerate.

Like its predecessor, the underrated "Total Control," the new album achieves the Tubes' midcareer goal of delivering barbs in a fully integrated musical style. As produced here by David Foster, their aggregate musical framework preserves the disco undercurrents that made "Total Control" a bubbling, hypnotic exercise in danceable rock. Enriched by Michael Cotten's synthesizers and spiked by the twin guitars of Bill Spooner and Roger Steen, the Tubes' current output aspires to the sleek rock momentum that characterized middle-period Steely Dan ("Pretzel Logic," "The Royal Scam") and likewise sustains an often jaundiced worldview.

The problem for most rock fans, however, remains that very wisecracking mien. Listeners in search of emotional release will be frustrated by the Tubes' relentlessly brainy distance from their subjects. On the other hand those surfeited by pop's romantic overkill might be revived by this album's topical spice.

First there's the backfired pickup of *Talk to Ya Later*, in which a reluctant date turns out to be impossible to discard ("Then we went to my place, and she never did leave . . ."). As for sexual metaphors, try raw fish (*Sushi Girl*), home carpentry (*Power Tools*), and even horror movies (the sly *Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman*, in which the heartbroken singer discovers that "all she did to get her kicks/Was step on all the men . . .").

Less successful are forays into more

## BACKBEAT Records

straightforward balladry on *Don't Want to Wait Anymore* and *Amnesia*. And on *Mr. Hate*, the Tubes attempt a slice of social commentary that oscillates uneasily between first-person rage and farcical overstatement. That track winds up a flawed remake of Steely Dan's *Don't Take Me Alive*, which offered a similar vignette of a young psychopath on the verge of mayhem.

**Joe Walsh:**
**There Goes the Neighborhood**
Joe Walsh, producer
Elektra/Asylum 5E 523
BY CRISPIN CIOE

Joe Walsh's persona is so self-effacing, likeable, and intelligent that's it's easy to forget he's a real giant of rock guitar playing. Even the cover photo on "There Goes the Neighborhood" underscores the wacky self-examination that has always been central to his image: Sitting atop an old Army tank, dressed in camouflage fatigues, he has just finished levelling a mound of objects from his past, including a gold record, surfboards, studio consoles, etc.

Fittingly, the album's first track is titled *Things* and includes his patented, deliberately thumping guitar cadences, over which he lays out a long series of homespun homilies that describe his own enlightened confusion. *Down on the Farm* features David Lindley's downhome fiddle-sawing, while Walsh plucks the jawbone and sings about some "animals" who decide to "throw a big wingding . . . play some rock and roll."

There are some dark moments too, but, as is the case throughout the LP, Walsh's controlled guitar virtuosity serves as a leavening factor. Rather than going for flash, his arrangements and melodies seem to flow naturally from the virtual cornucopia of rhythm parts and fills that have become his trademark. On *Rivers (of the Hidden Funk)*, written with fellow Eagle Don Felder, the singer chides himself for the "cloudy sky" he sees, knowing that "it's so useless, blaming yourself." Plaintively chiming twelve-string guitars, George Perry's expressively funky bass, and Walsh's blazing lead on the out-chorus create a somber mood that marvelously supports the song's intent; never is it emphasized that a "guitar star" is at work here.

On previous solo outings Walsh worked with producer Bill Szymczyk, and it's true that his first self-produced effort lacks the crackling, ultradefined clarity that graces Szymczyk's work. Yet Walsh's understanding of his own craft and emotional drift more than compensates; rarely does a mainstream rock guitar player this good also put together such a coherent and interesting record.

# Jazz

TOM COPI

*Burrell: keeps close to the classics*

**Kenny Burrell: Heritage**
Jeffrey Weber, producer
AudioSource ASD 1
(AudioSource, 1185 Chess Drive, Foster City, Calif. 94404)
BY JOHN S. WILSON

This is a digitally-recorded program of classic jazz compositions, ranging from early material (*St. Louis Blues, When the Saints Go Marching In*, and *Struttin' with Some Barb-B-Que*) through bebop (*Night in Tunisia*) to John Coltrane's *Naima* and Thad Jones's *A Child Is Born*. It is played by various personnel, and all the performances are led by Kenny Burrell, who has presumably arranged the material as well. (Only *The Saints* is explicity attributed to him.) To top it off, "Heritage" is a beautifully balanced recording.

With two exceptions, Burrell's arrangements are close to the classic renditions of these tunes. They are not copies, however, and they gain color from the individual styles of Oscar Brashear, Snooky Young, Patrice Rushen, Pete Jolly, Marshall Royal, Jerome Richardson, Don Menza, and Burrell. The exceptions–*The Saints* and *Struttin' with Some Barb-B-Que*–are tunes that are most apt to follow hidebound formulas. But Burrell has turned the former into a charming waltz, completely removing it from its usual hackneyed beer-shouting context, and *Struttin'* is more Swing than Dixieland, even though Young makes good use of some of Louis Armstrong's phrasing.

**Doc Evans and his Jazz Band: Jazz Heritage, Vol. 1; Blues in Dixieland, Vol. 2; Command Performance, Vol. 3**
John Lucas, producer
Jazzology J 85, J 86, J 87
(Jazzology Records, 3008 Wadsworth Mill Place, Atlanta, Ga. 30032)
BY JOHN S. WILSON

Doc Evans was one of the most distinctive cornetists to ride the crest of the traditional jazz revival that followed World War II. He had absorbed Louis Armstrong and Bix Beiderbecke but retained his own fresh, singingly melodic persona. His bright, glowing tone was colored by hints of darkness, a combination that occasionally suggested Bobby Hackett and Muggsy Spanier.

Evans spent most of his career in the northern Midwest, and never benefitted from the promotional push of a major record company. Still, he was recorded extensively by smaller companies, two of which are represented on these three discs. These sessions, played by slightly different groups, were produced by John ("Jax") Lucas for the Art Floral and Joco labels in 1949 and 1950. Vol. 1, "Jazz Heritage," focuses on traditional Dixieland material and includes four rousing ragtime piano solos by Mel Grant; Vol. 2, "Blues in Dixieland," contains some blues that get up and swing (*Weary Blues* practically goes into orbit); and Vol. 3, "Command Performance," includes some of his most-requested tunes.

The second and third volumes are the most interesting, both in terms of material and performances, with Doc's personality coming through strongest on the second. Trombonist Al Jenkins adds spice to both discs, with his Teagarden tone and exuberant attack and phrasing. Vol. 3 contains such unlikely pieces as *Missouri Waltz*, which kicks up a storm, *Play That Barbershop Chord*, and *Pack Up Your Troubles*. The very variety is indicative of the imagination that Doc brought to a usually narrow field.

**Marian McPartland-Teddi King: Marian Remembers Teddi**
Halcyon HAL 118 (two discs)
Halcyon Records, Box 256, Merrick, N.Y. 11566
BY JOHN S. WILSON

In November, 1973, Teddi King and the Marian McPartland Trio gave a concert at Lincoln Center in New York to promote Alec Wilder's book, *American Popular Song*. The program was made up of songs that Wilder had singled out in his book, so the result is a two-disc set of very high quality material. It's all familiar–from *Always* and *Sometimes I'm Happy* to *Fools Rush In* and *There Will*

*(Continued on page 84)*

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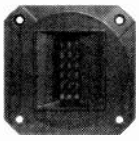

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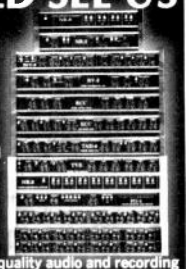

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## BACKBEAT Records

*(Continued from page 81)*

*Never Be Another You*. The only slight surprise is *You Turned the Tables on Me*, a catchy passing fancy of the Swing era that is rarely heard these days but, in light of King's performance, deserves to be. The only song not discussed in Wilder's book is his own *While We're Young*, which fits Miss King like a vocal glove.

This is almost entirely King's record. Except for an occasional brief solo, McPartland stays in an accompanist's role, meshing beautifully with Teddi's sensitive singing. The warmth, perception, and lovely shading of King's interpretations are particularly apparent on *By Myself, Prelude to a Kiss, When the Sun Comes Out*, and *Little Girl Blue*, a song that has been torn and clawed at by too many inept singers. King puts it back on the pedestal where it belongs with her understanding, firm vocal control, exquisite diction, and absolutely gorgeous, melting tone.

**Billy Taylor Quartet**
**Featuring Joe Kennedy**
Carl E. Jefferson, producer
Concord Jazz CJ 145
BY JOHN S. WILSON

It is surprising that as polished and skillful a violinist as Joe Kennedy is not heard more frequently on disc, particularly in light of the jazz world's recent interest in the instrument. Kennedy has certainly been around long enough: Back in 1948 he led the Four Strings, which gave Ahmad Jamal one of his first chances to be heard. Benny Carter is his cousin and one of his greatest admirers. But Kennedy has seemed content to keep up his jazz with occasional recordings and local gigs; the bulk of his musical energies go into being supervisor of music for the public schools of Richmond, Va. and a member of the Richmond Symphony Orchestra.

This disc finds him in fine form, his tone rich and full with a very live, resilient quality. He gives a sensuous reading to a warm mood piece called *Antoinette*, projecting such strong yet subtle intensity that you can almost feel the texture of the sound. In this sense he draws on the Eddie South school; but he also exhibits Stuff Smith's guttier, dirtier qualities in his slashing entrances, sliding swagger, and swinging drive.

The disc is made up entirely of Billy Taylor compositions that emphasize Taylor's talent as a melodist. Kennedy's challenging voice seems to give the pianist a firmer context than his own trio does; this is clearest on *All Alone*, where Taylor's bouncing, bubbling solo builds and broadens to take on some Earl Hines characteristics.

## PORTABLES

*(Continued from page 42)*

back—which greatly simplifies finding a desired musical selection.

One safety feature that we found vital is the external sound feed. Though the headsets are all of the open-air type and therefore impose a minimum of acoustic isolation, the playback level necessary on crowded, noisy city streets isolates you from normal conversation and important audible warnings (the honking of a horn at an intersection). Simply tapping a button that allows ambient sounds to be fed to the headphones via a built-in microphone or a mute that momentarily lowers the volume is a fast way to get back in touch with things.

One final note before you start budgeting for a personal portable from our chart. The suggested retail prices of many players shown there are quite high, but the competitiveness of the market has resulted in huge discounts on some models. Don't assume, however, that all players will supply equal virtuosity, regardless of price. A tape transport can prove sensitive and finicky even in a home deck; a portable player, subjected to the bumps and jars that outdoor use entails, stands an even greater chance for failure. Purchasing a well-known brand is not in itself a guarantee of immunity to breakdown, but the availability of service and the generous warranties offered by the major consumer manufacturers weigh heavily on their side. **HF**

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## COLIN WILSON

*(Continued from page 48)*

*ization and invited the company to make a statement. We received the following response.*

We received your letter stating your intention of doing an article on Aries Records. Our first question is what is the purpose of such an article? It reminds us of Don Quixote tilting at windmills. What qualifies HIGH FIDELITY to issue statements on the legality of what another company does? We would certainly never presume to question any phase of the operation of your publication. It would appear to us that you were treading on thin moral and legal ice.

The music of Havergal Brian has been a pet project of ours for some time. Even his own country has chosen to reject him. If it were not for our efforts, the great music of this composer would have faded into obscurity. Is this the purpose of your article?

We are confident of the legal position of our label. But we can't help but be reminded of some time back when we were accused of using the sound of a tiger roaring on one of our sound-effects LPs that was supposed to belong to someone else. The whole idea was ridiculous and never even got to court. But when it was all over we had spent $7,000 on attorney's fees. Could this be the purpose of the article? If excessive legal fees forced us to withdraw our product from the market (and thus deny music lovers access to the music of Brian and other new composers), would you have served any purpose?

As we said before, we question the wisdom and motive of such an article. Even though most of your article would be in error, the innuendos alone could only do harm to a small label like ours, leaving the field open to the so-called major labels. We realize they advertise quite a bit in your magazine. Perhaps that explains your motive. **HF**

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## "TCHAIKOVSKY SUICIDE"

*(Continued from page 49)*

"then considered a disgrace, an infamy, a crime against God and man worthy of prison or exile" is simply uninformed.

A look at the record shows many homosexuals occupying prominent positions in the Russia of Tchaikovsky's time. The famed explorer Nikolai Przhevalsky, a national hero at the time of his death in 1888, was accompanied on his expeditions by young male lover-companions, whom the government made commissioned officers in the army at his request. (See Przhevalsky's biography, *A Dream of Lhasa*, by Donald Rayfield, Ohio University Press, 1977.) Anna Yevreinova, the publisher of the prestigious journal *Northern Herald* and one of the first Russian women jurists, lived in an open lesbian relationship with another woman. The journalist and publisher Prince Vladimir Meshchersky, whose homosexuality was universally known, was nonetheless regularly received at the courts of Alexander III and Nicholas II.

In 1887, Meshchersky was caught *in flagrante* with a soldier of the imperial palace guard, which made him liable to prosecution. But Tsar Alexander III ordered that the charges be dismissed. (See *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, Vol. X, 1962.) When Oscar Wilde was convicted for homosexuality in England in 1895, much of the Russian press (including the ultraconservative journalist Vasily Rozanov, who made defending the rights of homosexuals his specialty) regarded his trial as an instance of hypocritical persecution of a brilliant writer.

So, even though Tchaikovsky indeed feared the exposure of his homosexuality for much of his life, he had less cause to fear the consequences in the early 1890s than before. Furthermore, at the end of his life, he associated with Sergei Diaghilev and other younger homosexuals who later were to form the World of Art group. Unlike the generation to which Tchaikovsky belonged, these younger men felt no qualms about their homosexuality. Had any of them been aware of his being forced into suicide due to the sexual orientation they all shared, surely someone in the World of Art group would have taken advantage of the relaxation of censorship after the 1905 revolution to draw public attention to such an outrage inflicted on the composer they all venerated.

Since Mrs. Orlova's information about cholera practices and the plight of homosexuals in prerevolutionary Russia is so demonstrably wrong, what is left of her sensational revelation? Why, the long-familiar piece of fourth-hand gossip, as always impossible to trace to any person who was anywhere near Tchaikovsky in his last days. We are asked to believe that Tchaikovsky poisoned himself, because in 1966 a man told Mrs. Orlova he heard this in 1913 from a woman who heard it from her husband, who died in 1902. We are asked to believe that Tchaikovsky was ordered to poison himself by a group of fellow alumni from his law school days, a situation about as likely in the Russia of his time as it would be in today's America.

Never mind that no such custom ever existed in Russian history. Why would Tchaikovsky have submitted to the judgment of his onetime fellow students with whom he had not associated for years? The courts of honor, which were indeed current among various professional groups at the time, were forums for expression of opinion and no more. The only sanction such a court could have imposed would have been an expulsion from the alumni association, hardly a cause for suicide. Even if Tchaikovsky were to be threatened with a major scandal, he could easily have gone to live abroad, and authorities would surely have allowed him to depart in view of his international celebrity.

Mrs. Orlova's "revelations" are a web of fantasy, hearsay, and factual misinformation. They belong in the same class of phenomena as the innumerable speculations about who killed John F. Kennedy. Spiegelman calls the conspiracy to conceal Tchaikovsky's suicide as postulated by Mrs. Orlova "one of the greatest scandals in the history of music." We think that the real scandal is the ease with which this flimsy and unprovable construct has come to be accepted as fact by serious scholars and musicologists.

**Nina Berberova**
*Princeton University*
**Malcolm Brown**
*Indiana University*
**Simon Karlinsky**
*University of California, Berkeley*

## ADVERTISING INDEX



## DOLBY C

*(Continued from page 45)*

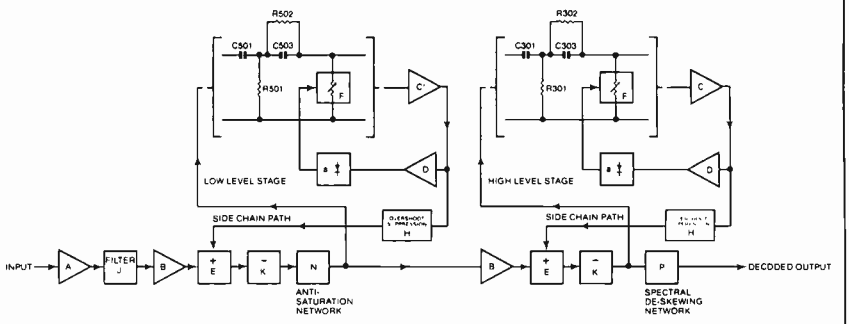


*Fig. 4: Dolby C decoder block schematic. Dolby Laboratories' diagram shows two side chains (for low-level signals, left, and high levels, right) to control playback signal, plus antisaturation network (N) and spectral deskewing network (P) that have no counterparts in the more familiar Dolby B.*

proaching those you might hear in the legendary thirteenth-row concert hall seat that some audio writers are so fond of. It's exciting and vivid: perhaps a bit too vivid for your taste, or perhaps not vivid enough, depending on your own listening habits. If I've found a superb signal to record on that tape, you'll be aware of no noise whatever, even in the pauses between musical numbers. But—assuming that the system I'm using is as noise-free as we have a right to expect in quality modern equipment and that the room is quiet—if I try recording with no input (that is, recording silence) and switch the tape monitor from TAPE to SOURCE, you'll be able to hear the difference. The hiss is very faint, but it's there. If you repeat the experiment with one of the 2:1:2 broadband compander systems (DBX, for example), you should be able to hear no hiss whatever under no-signal conditions. But assuming that nobody wants to sit around listening to nothing, the Dolby C system is, as far as I'm concerned, functionally noise-free.

Like the broadband compander systems, Dolby C does put a greater premium on the quality of the tape and the recorder with which you use it than Dolby B does—a fact we pointed out in our review of the NAD Dolby C deck in the June issue. The higher the expansion rate on playback, the greater the exaggeration of any dropout or other level anomaly and of any departure from flat response. So Dolby C recorders costing less than, say, $300—which are already beginning to appear—may be looked at askance by the knowledgeable. To my mind, Dolby C would best be reserved as an audiophile option; any attempt to treat it as an across-the-board elixir does smack of snake-oil salesmanship.

Unfortunately, Dolby Labs itself may not be above reproach in this respect. In past pronouncements it hasn't always made a clear distinction between what it considered responsible engineering and what it would be willing to countenance as a practical expedient. Take, for example, the idea that Dolby B tapes or FM broadcasts sound "acceptable" when the treble control is turned down in lieu of decoding. In music of limited dynamic range or where (as in background music) nobody is really listening, there is some truth to the concept; when you listen closely to quality programming of wide dynamic range, however, the fluctuating brightness of the signal can be clearly audible. For the audiophile or the musically perceptive—HIGH FIDELITY's audience, in fact—the latter condition is the norm, and the expedient therefore is unacceptable.

Now Dolby Laboratories is hinting that Dolby C tapes can successfully be played with Dolby B decoding. With signals of high enough inherent quality and with program matter of sufficient interest to warrant use of Dolby C, I simply cannot accept this premise. The degree of success is insufficient. If you care so little about replication quality, why bother with Dolby C in the first place?

When you do care—and when you have first-class signals to work with—Dolby C really does a job. And, unlike most "advanced" noise-reduction systems it costs very little for a manufacturer to add to a Dolby B deck. Since Dolby B will remain standard in all quality decks for the predictable future, the Dolby C option appears to be a shoo-in as *the* quality feature to look for in cassette decks over the next year or two. By then, I expect it will be so commonplace that an over-$500 deck without it will make news. **HF**

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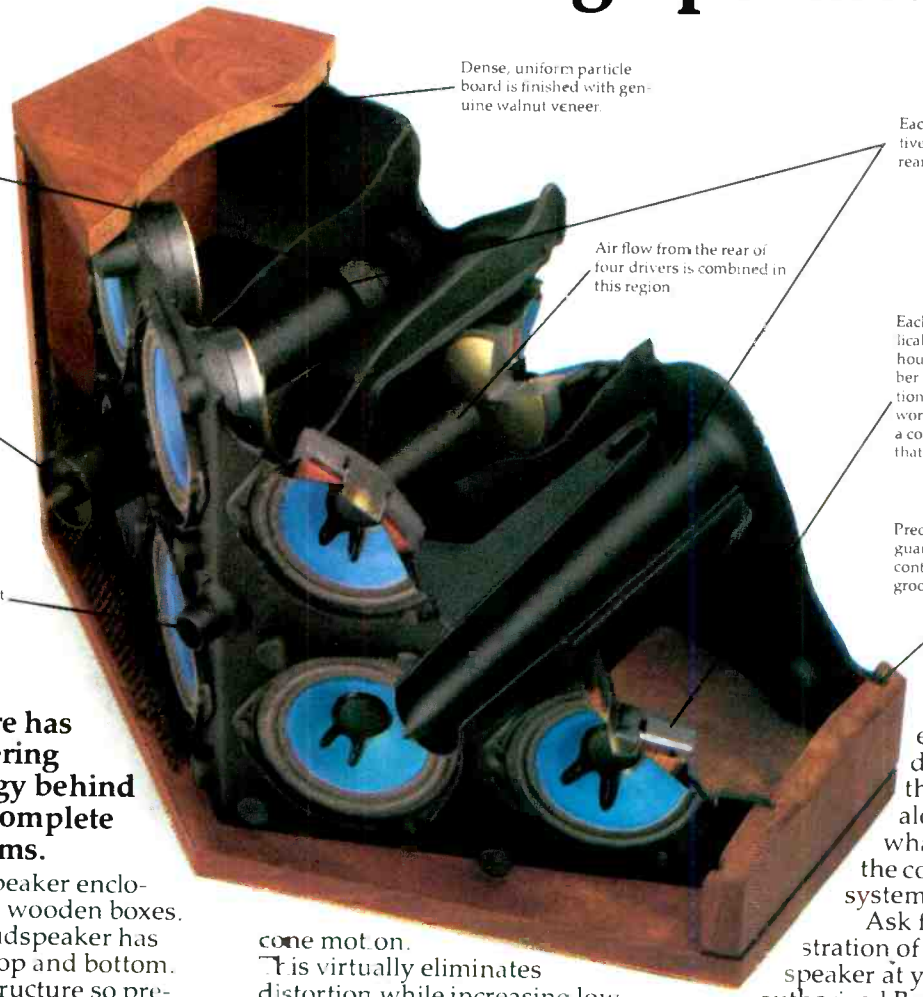


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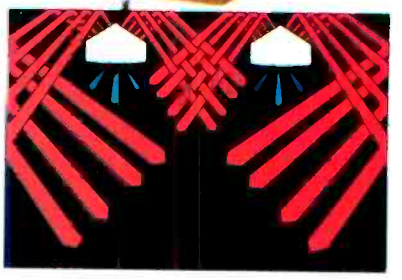

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