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THE MAGAZINE OF AUDIO, VIDEO, CLASSICAL MUSIC, AND POPULAR MUSIC

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**Interviewed – Randy Newman ■ Reviewed – Video Disc Games**

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**BASICALLY SPEAKING:**  
What Makes a Tuner Tick?  
(See Page 20)

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# About This Issue

Inside the pages of April's HIGH FIDELITY

A YEAR OR TWO AGO, AUDIO SEEMED CAUGHT in a holding pattern. Even though the comparative spec wars raged on among manufacturers, new models were essentially variations on a theme. Looking elsewhere for excitement, people found plenty of activity in home computers, video games, and video cassette recorders.

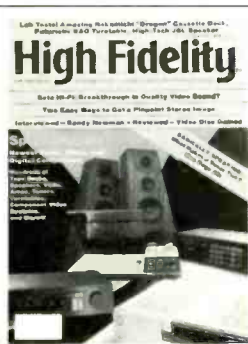
As it turns out, audio was merely resting—as if preparing for the rebirth that we witnessed first-hand at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show. Digital Compact Disc players (see our hands-on evaluation in December 1982) were in abundance, as were high-quality car stereo systems and component audio-video systems. Among the most exciting introductions was that of the Beta Hi-Fi, the first true high fidelity sound recording technique for VCRs. Indeed, as the gaps separating audio, video, and even computers continue to disappear, manufacturers tell us that high-quality video-tape and digital-audio software will grow from a trickle to a torrent later this year. HF's editors were at CES in full force and report their findings in a special twelve-page article.

In our regular columns, "Retsoff's Remedies" describes how to determine whether or not your stereo system is in phase and "Basically Speaking" explains FM broadcasting and reception. In "Environments," you'll discover how one of your fellow readers handcrafted his own audio equipment cabinet, and in "Sound Views," world-renowned audio designer Dr. Matti Otala raises the possibility of rating audio products on subjective performance criteria.

For those audio hobbyists who have become videophiles as well, our VIDEO TODAY & TOMORROW section reviews two interactive LaserDiscs: *Murder, Anyone?* and *The Master Cooking Course*. Consulting technical editor Edward J. Foster tackles the first, which is based on the board game Clue. His wife, Sandra, flutes a mushroom with the help of the second, which also contains several mouth-watering recipes. Though this kind of nonlinear programming is currently available only on LaserDisc, RCA promises interactive CED hard- and software later this year.

Our classical music coverage ranges widely, with features on Schubert's songs, Mozart's piano concertos, and a new Canadian record label. And BACKBEAT reviewer Sam Sutherland corners Randy Newman for some candid comments about his career and today's pop recording scene.

The May issue will feature a special twelve-page section on high-performance car stereo. "Autophile" columnist Gary Stock outlines the latest models and gives time-proven tips on how to protect your car's system from theft. In addition, HF's technical staff launches the first in a series of lab/road tests on car stereo equipment. Other highlights include a test report of Mitsubishi's digital Compact Disc player, a hands-on evaluation of Kloss's Model One-A video projection monitor, an interview with jazz great Sonny Rollins, and the first installment in a three-part Wagner discography. —W.T.



Cover design: Robert Maddocks  
Cover photo: Steve Sint

ON THE COVER (clockwise from foreground): Akai AA-R42 receiver, Yamaha C-70 preamp, B&O 8002 turntable, JBL L-250 loudspeakers, Nakamichi Dragon cassette deck.

audio-talk from  
audio-technica®

Number 2 in a series

## The Simplest Stylus

The cost of a phono cartridge usually varies with the complexity of its stylus design. The more elaborate stylus shapes have audible benefits in terms of high frequency response, improved high frequency tracing, and — in the case of Linear Contact types — extended record and stylus life.

### The Spherical Tip

The simplest stylus shape is the Uni-Radial or spherical tip, formed much like the end of a ballpoint pen. Its tip size is determined by the width of the groove, with a typical radius of 0.7 mils so that it normally touches the center of the record groove walls.

### Some Tracing Problems



Spherical tip too large to trace highest frequencies

But a spherical stylus large enough to track at the mid-point of the groove wall is too large to precisely trace the very highest frequencies, especially at the crowded center of the record. Increased distortion and reduced high frequency response results. In addition, spherical tips often exhibit "pinch effect" distortion as they move up and down in an attempt to stay in a groove that is momentarily too narrow. This unwanted vertical motion is almost pure distortion, and results in a "shattering" of high-energy, high frequency sounds like cymbals and horns.



### The Design Limit

Simply reducing the radius of a spherical stylus to fit the smallest groove modulation can result in a radius much too small to ride at the center of the groove wall. Instead, the small stylus is often very near the bottom of the groove, picking up noise and wear from accumulated debris and dirt. Its small radius also increases the pressure on the groove wall for a given tracking force, thus accelerating both record and stylus wear.

### Another Answer

While the faults of a spherical stylus tip may be masked by other problems in low-priced record players, they become quite evident in even a modest component system. And the easiest solution to most of the side-effects of a spherical stylus is the *elliptical* stylus, to be discussed in my next column.



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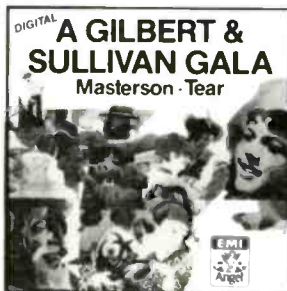
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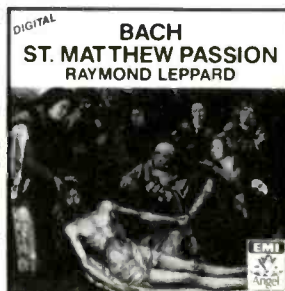
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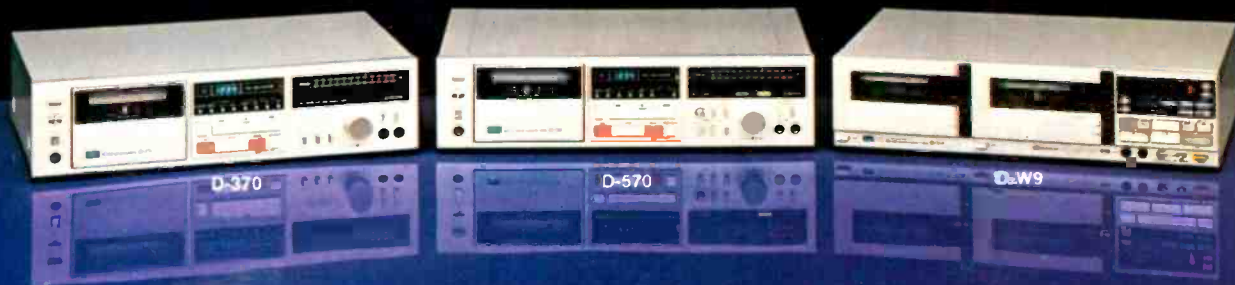
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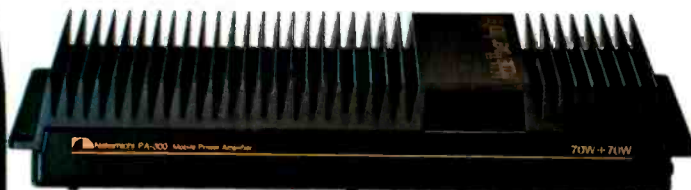
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Practical answers to your audio questions by Robert Long

## D. Gauss &amp; Co.

*For years, I've read that frequent demagnetization of audio tape-deck heads is a must. Now "Retsoff's Remedies" [December 1982] says, "demagnetization [is] a risky business" and "do it only when it's absolutely necessary." With such conflicting opinions, I'm at a loss to know when to demagnetize, or even how to tell when it's needed.—C. Stanley Mahan, Vista, Calif.*

Demagnetization—or degaussing, as it's often called—doesn't seem nearly as important now as it did a generation ago. There are a number of reasons, the main one being the advent of self-degaussing erase and recording heads, which are more or less taken for granted these days. And degaussing recommendations have changed accordingly.

If the owner's manual for your deck gives no clear-cut recommendation about degaussing, you'll have to watch for signs that it's needed. Head magnetization increases noise and distortion in the recordings you make on the deck, and it does so progressively: if your most recent tapes seem worse in these respects than older ones made under similar conditions, this may be the cause. And magnetization of any permeable element in the tape path can erase highs from existing tapes (often adding noise at the same time). But don't expect either of these ills: Today's decks may live a full life without ever falling prey to them. If you must demagnetize, follow Retsoff's procedure carefully.

## Pitch-Men?

*What is the reason for pitch controls on turntables?—Charles Rudolph, Detroit, Mich.*

Often they serve merely as an eye-catching "professional" touch. When even professional turntables used rim-drive, a speed adjustment was a must. A radio station, for example, can't tolerate a 61-minute playback time on a one-hour show—an error of less than 2%. So the ability to compensate for even very minor wear in the drive train was critical. With direct drive motors and electronic speed stabilization, this need has essentially vanished. But pitch adjustment does perform one useful (if esoteric) function in the home: You can tune a recording to an "untunable" instrument (piano,

organ, etc.) in order to play along with the record. The historically minded will tell you that some LPs were recorded off-speed, probably citing a release of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony that was squeezed onto a single disc (par is three LP sides) by dint of transposing it from D minor to E flat minor, thereby cutting playing time (at normal speed) by some 6%. Such records are, however, very rare, and few pitch controls are calibrated in a way that makes correction easy, even if you know how far off-speed the recording is.

## Room at the Top

*Aside from the special tape-matching and meter-equalization circuitry built into the Bang & Olufsen Beocord 9000 cassette deck, is there any method presently available for making full use of a given tape's potential headroom?—J.M. Kornbluh, São Paulo, Brazil.*

A number of companies are moving in that direction with their top models, but none has done as thoroughgoing a job of it as B&O. You can make a stab at making the best use of the available headroom with any tape we have tested used in any deck we have tested, if you know something about the spectral distribution of energy in the signals you plan to record.

First, mentally compare the signal's "response" with the tape's overload curve to see in what frequency band overload is most likely to occur (which will be a guess, at best, unless you have special laboratory test gear). Next, on the basis of the foregoing assumption, decide how much midrange headroom you must allow to keep signals in the "problem" band below the overload level. Subtract this figure (in dB) from the midrange headroom figure for the tape (shown with respect to DIN 0 dB in our reports). You will then have to "translate" this calculated maximum level relative to DIN 0 dB to your deck's meter calibration, using the data in our report on your deck. For example, if your maximum is +2 DIN and your meters read +4 at DIN 0 dB with the general type of tape you're using, you should limit the recording level to +6 on the meters.

Does all that sound excessively complex? Well, it is: that's what makes the Beocord 9000 such a wonder.

*We regret that the volume of reader mail is too great for us to answer all questions individually.*

## ANTICIPATION



You've already waited 20 years for the technology. Please wait a few more weeks until your dealer receives his next shipment of CARVER TX-11 FM Tuners. Response to the TX-11 has been so overwhelming we are working around the clock to keep pace with demand.

Here is what the reviewers say about the CARVER TX-11:

"It is by a wide margin the best tuner we have tested to date. What distinguishes the TX-11 is its ability to pull clean noise-free sound out of weak or multipath ridden signals that would have you lunging for the mono switch on any other tuner we know of."

HIGH FIDELITY (January, 1983)

"Breakthrough in FM tuner performance. Carver TX-11."

"The significance of its design can only be fully appreciated by setting up the unit, tuning to the weakest, most unacceptable stereo signals you can find, then pushing those two magic buttons."

"Separation was still there; only the background noise had been diminished, and with it, much of the sibilance and hissy edginess so characteristic of multipath interference."

"A tuner which long-suffering fringe area residents and those plagued by multipath distortion and interference have probably been praying for..."

Leonard Feldman

AUDIO (December, 1982)

"...enjoy the music and forget about noise and distortion." "Under conditions of weak signal stereo reception the effectiveness is almost magical."

OVATION (December, 1982)

"A major advance..." "Its noise reduction for stereo reception ranged from appreciable to tremendous." "It makes the majority of stereo signals sound virtually as quiet as mono signals, yet it does not dilute the stereo effect."

Julian D. Hirsch

STEREO REVIEW (December, 1982)

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# Letters

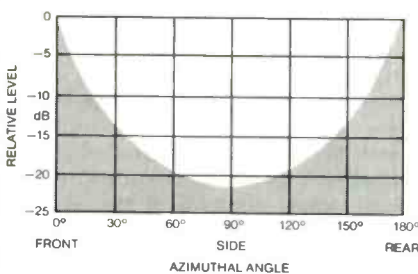
## Ambience Speaker Placement

Peter Mitchell's article on ambience-enhancement systems ["Sonic Ambience—The Missing Ingredient," October 1982] says that the optimum positions for ambience speakers are from 90 to 120 degrees away from the front speakers on either side but that they will be effective over a range of angles from about 30 to 150 degrees. I would be very happy if you would supply a diagram and explanation of how these angles are arrived at, because I have no idea what they mean. Nor do I understand Fig. 4, so I would appreciate your clarifying that, as well.

**Dale Dixon**  
Duluth, Minn.

**Michael Riggs replies:** *Imagine yourself sitting at the center of a compass, with 0 degrees directly in front of you, 180 degrees directly behind you, and 90 degrees straight out to either side. Your main speakers are along the wall in front of you. This means that if your ambience speakers are optimally placed, they will be along the side walls, in line with your central listening position or pulled back slightly behind you. However, you will be able to get reasonable results by placing the ambience speakers anywhere along a pair of arcs sweeping out from points not far from the front speakers (at about 30 degrees) to points*

*almost directly behind you (at about 150 degrees).*



*Fig. 4 shows how much softer the sound from the ambience speakers can be than that from the main speakers without being masked and therefore inaudible. As you can see, the audibility threshold is lowest at 90 degrees, which is why the best locations for ambience speakers are at the sides of the room. If you were to put ambience speakers directly behind you, their contribution would be inaudible until they were playing as loud as the front speakers, which can cause an undesirable tendency for some sounds to be perceived as originating at the back of the room, instead of at the front, where they belong.*

## Closer to Bland

While Linda Ronstadt's "Get Closer" may allow her to strut her post-*Penzance* voice, Steven X. Rea's review [January] seems too enthusiastic.

His use of such overkill adjectives as "incredible" suggests that this might be the dare-to-be-different album from Ronstadt some of us would like to see. It is, unfortunately, just as bland as her past, highly polished productions.

**David Foster**  
Onida, S.D.

## As Is Well-Known

Do you remember that quaint phrase—"as is well-known"—which the Soviets used to employ when they were going to present as straight fact some especially preposterous bit of fiction? Now that the Soviets have abandoned the device, how delightful to find Irving Lowens resurrecting it as legitimation for the fantasy scholarship he puts forth in his review of New World's Charles T. Griffes album [September 1982].

"As is well-known," writes Mr. Lowens—considerably exercised that my liner notes omit the poetic epigraphs Griffes tacked onto his piano compositions—"As is well-known, Griffes was fanatical and just about indefatigable in his search for appropriate epigraphs and would leave his compositions nameless until he found just the right one. Surely, if Griffes himself felt so strongly about this matter, a commentator could at least let the listener know exactly what the composer selected."

During the years I researched my biography of Griffes, I interviewed those of his friends familiar with the genesis of the piano works, and there was complete unanimity on one point: Griffes not only was not "fanatical" about providing the epigraphs for his compositions, he was not even very conscientious about it. He wanted

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his friends to do it! In particular, Leslie Hodgson, the Canadian pianist who championed his music, was asked to take on the job.

Griffes' publisher, G. Schirmer, Inc., aiming the sales of his sheet music at the home market, had suggested that prefixing bits of verse, as well as selecting catchy poetic titles, might increase the commercial attractiveness of these pieces by an unknown American. Griffes agreed but was so little interested in the chore that he preferred to wish it upon others. For one thing, Griffes did not read much poetry except in quest of texts for his songs. For another, he was located in Tarrytown, while Hodgson and his other friends lived in New York, where libraries might yield something useful. There exists a note by Hodgson, dated May 25, 1915, in which he writes Griffes that he tried at Columbia Library to find poems for a couple of the pieces, but no luck: "I fancy it will be only the merest chance if something really appropriate does turn up for either one. I'll keep an eye open for possibilities."

Griffes' own diaries show that, far from "indefatigable" about the epigraphs, he left them till the last possible moment. For example, it was on his way to deliver Op. 5 for publication that he stopped at the library to find what he needed. Same story with Op. 6, except this time he called upon Hodgson, whereupon the two men spent an hour at the library and came up with whatever they thought might do the trick. Then off to the publishers. By Griffes and by Hodgson, incidentally, pieces from both Op. 5 and Op. 6, were given concert performance before being decorated with epigraphs. Not "nameless," as Mr. Lowens would have it, these unepigraphed compositions were played under their permanent titles.

Apart from Mr. Lowens' stumbling foray into the realm of biography, the other points he makes—and with some of them I agree—are misdirected to me, since I was not producer of the New World recording. Certainly Griffes' juvenilia, imitative pieces composed when he was fourteen to sixteen years old, were, as stated in my liner notes, correctly omitted. But Mr. Lowens is dead right that the much later Rhapsody (1912-14) should have been included. All three consultants for the album, Prof. Donna Anderson, Prof. David Reed, and I, as well as the performing artist, Denver Oldham, were in agreement on that. New World decided otherwise. I am informed that Mr. Oldham will be playing the Rhapsody, a stunning showpiece, in forthcoming recitals, which should give some listeners an opportunity to become acquainted with it.

**Edward Maisel**  
New York, N.Y.

**Mr. Lowens replies:** *I'm grateful to Mr. Maisel for his interesting information about Charles T. Griffes' attitudes toward epigraphs. Though I still feel that citing them in the liner notes would have been a greater service to listeners than the lengthy essay on player-pianos and some of the pictorial materials, those matters were really the responsibility of the producer, as Mr. Maisel correctly points out. Meanwhile, I look forward eagerly to the appearance of the revised edition of his biography of Griffes, which is long overdue.*

*Letters should be addressed to The Editor, HIGH FIDELITY, 825 7th Ave., New York N.Y. 10019. All letters are subject to editing for brevity and clarity.*

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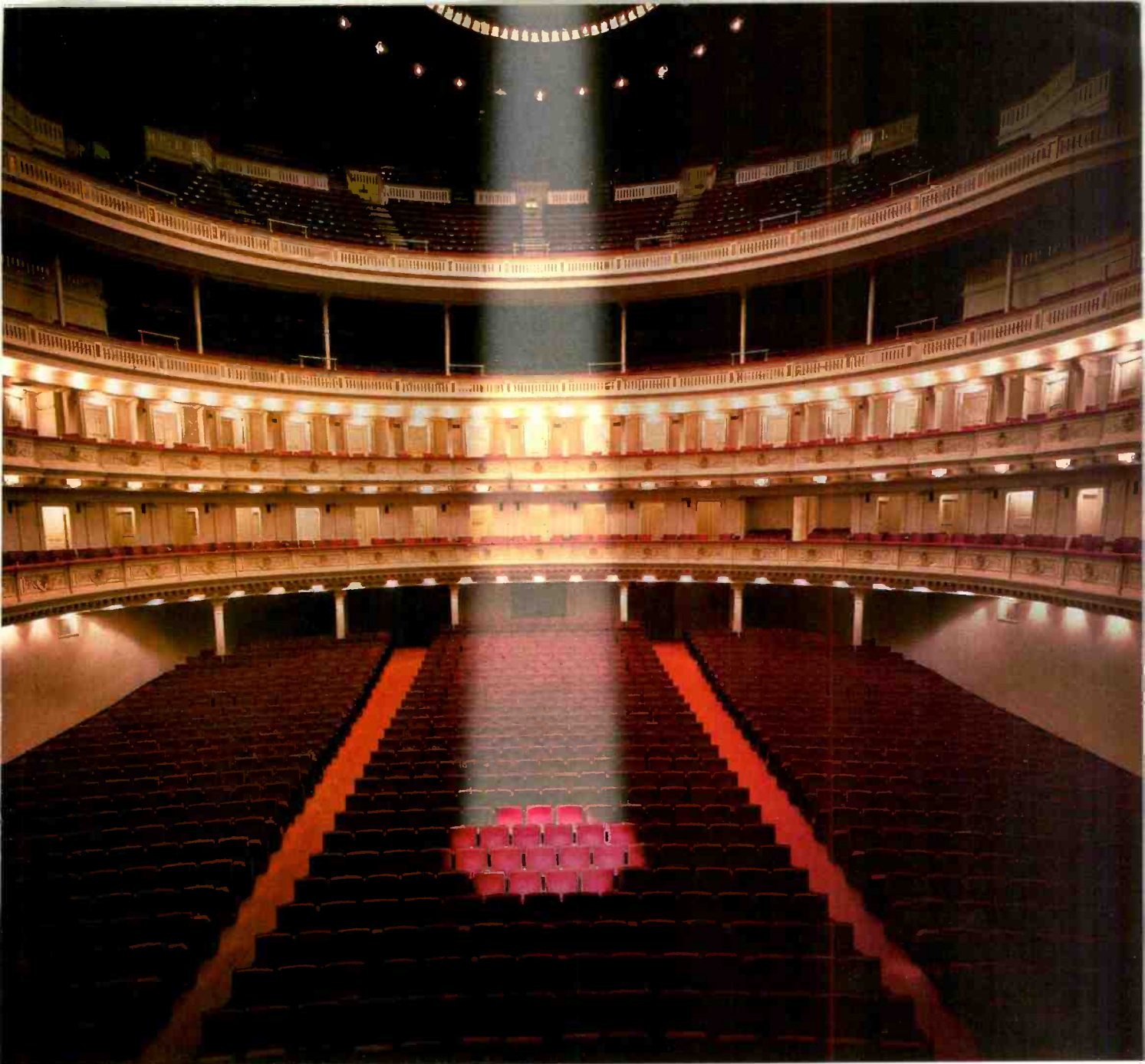
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# Sound Views

Opinion and comment on the changing audio scene by Robert Long

## A Talk with Dr. TIM

IF AUDIO HAS A CURRENT "guru," it may well be Dr. Matti Otala, the Finnish engineer and professor who broke new ground in his investigations of dynamic distortion modes—most notably transient intermodulation, or TIM—and their audibility. In conversation, one tends to hang on his words, both because his comments on audio are filled with insight and because he speaks so quietly that you fear missing something. But despite his credentials, he never waxes oracular; behind his native reserve, he seems to guard a genuine interest in and respect for whomever he is talking to, a trait not often encountered in the cultish world of high-end audio.

I had the opportunity to spend some time with Otala at the recent Consumer Electronics Show, where he was playing host to the new preamps and power amps he designed for the Citation division of Harman Kardon. It was, perhaps, the only conversation of that day in which I found myself discussing audio alone—as opposed to audio products or audio merchandising. The change was refreshing; even more so was the absence of the sort of arcane opinion that can attend a pure-audio discussion. (You know the sort of thing: "I tried platinum wire, but while it made the oboes sound wonderful, the trombones came out a little dull.")

We talked first of standards. Otala feels strongly that Europe's IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission) standards, which are well-established in many parts of the world, should be accepted everywhere. That way, nominally identical specifications would also become identical in measurement practice and in meaning. He regrets those points on which the EIA/IHF (the Institute of High Fidelity having been absorbed into the Electronic Industries Association) standards in this country and those of its Japanese counterpart, the EIAJ, depart from the practices of the IEC.

Typically thorough, Otala has taken the time to study the American standards, and his comments were both specific and pointed. His concern, in fact, has translated into action, and he has undertaken to urge revision of the EIA standards. (He is not alone in reaching out for international conformity, and progress is accelerating on IEC/EIA accords.)

Otala also mentioned the IEC's grow-



## Dr. Matti Otala: Can we rate audio products on their subjective performance?

ing interest in the development of objective testing methods by which subjective phenomena could be measured. Traditionally, of course, such matters have been left to individual researchers (usually working in either an academic or an industrial lab), whose activities have remained only loosely coordinated for that reason. Specific effects have sometimes received exhaustive clinical attention—particularly if a commercial product were at stake—but ignorance or duplication of previous or ongoing work was and is all too possible.

A commercial product is, in fact, at the back of the IEC tests Otala described. For years, he explained, it has been understood that certain forms of distortion in hearing aids actually contribute to intelligibility. Current IEC tests seek to determine optimum distortion for this purpose so that hearing aids can be designed accordingly. But this, as he sees it, is only the beginning of a program that may unlock some of the mysteries of sound perception—the least charted of all audio waters. Ultimately, it might be possible to rate audio products on their ability to achieve stated perceptual results (say, zero audible distortion for greater than 99% of adults when listening to

music of *any* description), rather than on electrical or acoustical behavior for which only the vaguest of perceptual correlations is understood. But Otala sees this as very far in the future; the important thing to him is that, finally, the work has begun.

These ruminations also produced, by way of a footnote, the statement that research—including his own on transient distortion phenomena—has shown that subjects who have suffered hearing damage may be much more sensitive to certain types of distortion than those with unimpaired hearing. Otala suggested that this might be another, albeit unexpected, example of the way that people compensate for the loss of one sense by the honing of another. Inevitably, this subject led us to talk of Thomas Edison, who was legendary among his associates because though his hearing had been badly damaged as a boy, he had an uncanny ability to spot various forms of distortion in the recordings that his company made on cylinders and discs.

A famous photograph made in Glenmont, Edison's home in West Orange, N.J., shows him straining forward, with his hand steadying his ear next to an upright Edison Diamond Disc Phonograph. Today's "golden ears" would be ashamed of being caught in such a characteristically hard-of-hearing pose. Yet both Edison's contemporaries and today's researchers who have heard copies of records that he rejected—and every recording that the company issued had to pass this personal test—agree that he had a very fine ear for phonographic sound. The issued recordings were consistently possessed of cleaner sonics (surface noise of the gritty Diamond Discs aside) than any competitor's.

Much has also been made of Edison's live-versus-recorded concert in Carnegie Hall and the alleged inability of the audience to hear any difference between his artists and their recordings. Perceptual faculties doubtless are subject to change, conditioned by the way we use them. Otala, for example, has shown that sensitivity in recognizing aural phenomena can be enhanced by learning. And our hearing modes appear, at least in part, to also be conditioned by our cultural background.

Matti Otala is unquestionably among the leaders in today's audio culture. Whether or not that means that he will help to shape tomorrow's hearing modes (teaching our ears, if you will, to listen in new ways), it's certain that the zesty curiosity with which he pursues his calling will not leave the future of audio untouched. **HF**



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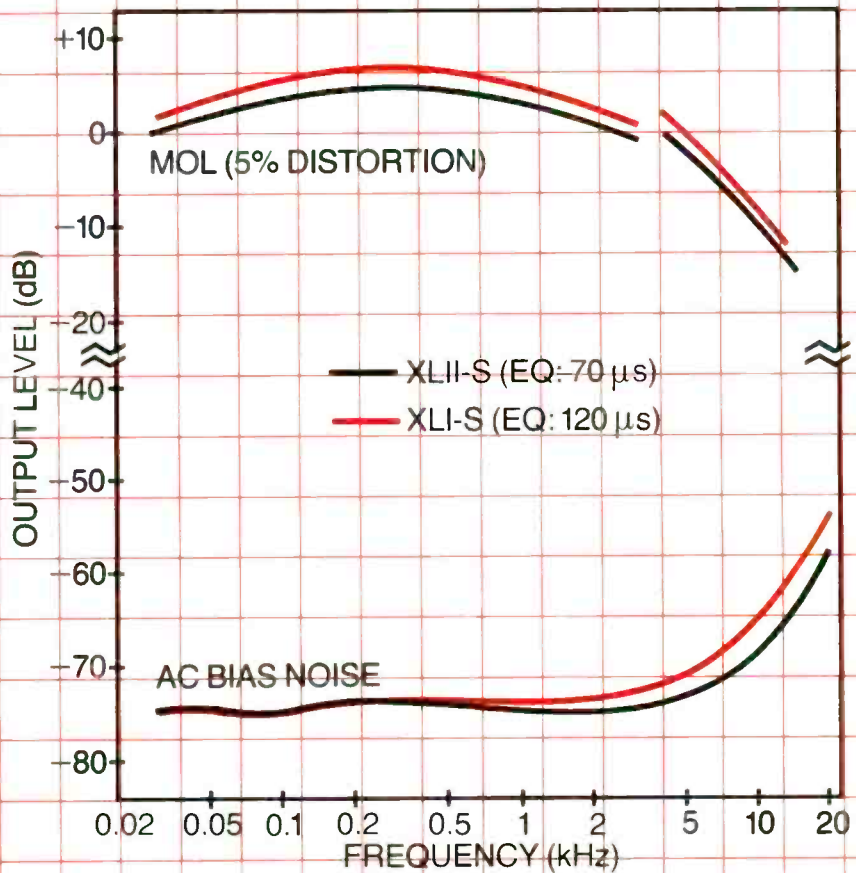
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# Retsoff's Remedies

Simple solutions to common stereo system problems by Alexander N. Retsoff

## Staying in Phase

A WELL-KNOWN SPEAKER designer recently confided to me his suspicion that many people who buy his speakers are probably not listening to stereo. When I asked if he was referring to the problem of placement, he quickly replied, "It's even more basic than that. Though I spell out the procedure for hooking the speakers to the receiver, a lot of my customers never read the owner's manual and wind up with an incorrectly phased system. They get so used to that sound, that they never know the real pleasure of stereo reproduction."

It's true. Connecting speakers to an amplifier properly is a simple procedure, but it's remarkable how many people do it incorrectly. Here's all it takes: The voltages from the positive (red) terminals on the amplifier must end up at the positive (red) terminals on the speakers; likewise, the negative terminals on each channel must be properly connected (black to black).

If you use special speaker wire (the heavy, thick kind, not the narrow gauge junk that dealers often pass off as speaker wire) coded with red and black insulators, there's very little chance for confusion. Most people, however, opt for the altogether satisfactory alternative of 18-gauge zip cord (or lamp wire). This variety of two-conductor cable has no color coding, so the trick is to examine it under strong light to find the cable that has a ridge along its plastic insulation. Once you've spotted that ridge, take a red pen and mark it at both ends. Make sure your markings do not get removed when you strip the tips of the wires.

There is a simple test to check the phasing of your speakers without disassembling your whole system. But before I describe it you should understand why maintaining correct phase is so important. We perceive the stereo illusion by differences in the strength and relative timing of the left- and right-channel sound waves. Suppose one loudspeaker is connected out of phase—that is, that the leads to it are reversed (red to black). If identical signals are fed to both speakers—a situation that should create a solid center-stage image—the sound waves coming from one will be 180 degrees out of phase with those from the other. Because phase and timing are related, the sounds reaching your ears from the two speakers will differ in relative arriv-

al time: For example, a phase error of 180 degrees (one half of a full cycle) translates into a 2½-millisecond discrepancy at 200 Hz and a 1½-millisecond difference at 300 Hz. So even though the sound waves from the two speakers reach your ears at the same *absolute* time, their *relative* timing seems to change with frequency.

The brain, thoroughly confused by the differences in arrival times, cannot locate the sound, which takes on what has been called "a diffuse and directionless quality." That's a very apt description of what to listen for in an out-of-phase system.

Play a mono record, or switch your system to the mono mode using any music source. Stand equidistant from the two speakers and close your eyes. You should perceive the sound as coming from directly in front of you. If you can't locate the sound—if it seems to be surrounding

## Sound from out-of-phase speakers is diffuse and directionless.

you—your system is out of phase.

Turn it off, and reverse *one* set of speaker connections, switching the wires either at the speaker or at the amplifier. (Don't do it at both places or you will cancel out your efforts altogether.) It should make no difference which speaker gets your attention (purists might disagree, but we'll get to that in a moment): Just don't reverse the connections to both speakers, or they'll still be out of phase with each other. Now, fire up the system and try again. The image should be solidly placed in the center.

You can also use bass response to test phasing. When left and right loudspeakers are wired out of phase with each other, the same signal fed to both causes one cone to move out while the other moves back. The two fight each other: One is compressing the air in the room while the other is rarifying it. As a result, the net sound level diminishes—something you can perceive only at low frequencies.

Reverse one set of connections as described above, and use a mono source with plenty of bass content. The test will be more sensitive if you place the speakers close to each other to minimize the time it

takes the sound to travel between them and thus raise the maximum frequency at which cancellation occurs. Listen carefully, and if the bass gets louder with the speaker leads reversed, you have cured the problem.

Aside from the loudspeaker connections, the only other point at which the phase between the left and right channels can be upset is at the phono cartridge. But if you are careful to match the color dots on the cartridge to the color of each lead in the headshell, that part of your system should be in phase as well.

The above tests assure that the *relative* phase between the two channels is correct. Some "golden ears" contend that *absolute* phase is also important, although there is a good deal of debate on the subject. Absolute phase refers to the motion of the speaker cone with respect to the original sound field in the recording studio or concert hall. Suppose a certain instrument creates a compression wave at the instant the sound starts. If absolute phasing is correct, the speaker cone will also move forward, compressing the air in your listening room.

The case against worrying about absolute phase is easy to make. Whether the cone moves outward or inward depends upon the phase of the entire recording chain—from microphone through tape recorder, mixdown console, and so on. Considering the number of steps involved, there is no assurance that absolute phase will have been preserved on the recording you buy. Unless you can sense a definitive change in response from record to record, the importance of maintaining absolute phase is negligible.

If incorrect absolute phase is at all discernible, it will be so on the transients—the startup of the sound. If you wish to experiment with whether you can detect it, try the following. First, be sure the left and right channels are in correct relative phase by following the procedures outlined earlier. Listen to a record, and then reverse the leads at *both* loudspeakers and listen again. The relative phase between the two channels will not have changed, but the absolute phase will have. If the sound seems more "life-like," you have probably achieved absolute phase. Of course, it will differ from recording to recording, so if you get hooked on the importance of absolute phase, you can wire in a switch that flips the phase of both speakers simultaneously. To avoid the hassle of having to conduct phase tests every time you put on an LP, you'd then have to mark each recording with the phase setting you like better.

HF



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Each recording will first undergo a painstaking restoration process—to eliminate surface noise and preserve the original brilliance of the music.

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AB CALLOWAY



LOUIS ARMSTRONG



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# Basically Speaking

Audio concepts and terms explained by Michael Riggs

## Magic in the Air

RADIO IS ABOUT as close to magic as we come in everyday life (except maybe for television). And I won't lie to you: It's not necessarily the easiest thing in the world to explain or understand. But since a lot of your listening probably is or will be from FM, it's worth making the effort, if only to help you decide better what you do and don't need from a tuner or receiver.

"FM" stands for "frequency modulation," which is the only broadcasting technique now in general use that is routinely capable of high fidelity performance. But lets start with AM, or amplitude modulation, whose operating principles are more intuitive. An AM signal begins with a radio wave of an assigned constant frequency between 540 and 1,600 kHz (0.540 and 1.600 MHz). This is the carrier frequency, and so long as its amplitude is steady and unchanging (i.e., so long as it is unmodulated), it will produce no sound from your receiver.

To make sound, the carrier must be modulated by the desired audio signal. In AM, this is achieved by varying the amplitude of the carrier according to the amplitude of the audio: The louder the sound being transmitted, the wider the swings in the carrier level; the higher the frequency of the sound, the more rapid the fluctuations in the carrier level. The detector in an AM tuner simply ignores the very high frequency swings that comprise the carrier wave itself and responds only to the much lower frequency variation of the carrier's envelope, thereby stripping off the audio signal. In effect, the audio is just piggybacked onto the radio frequency (RF) carrier at the transmitter and plucked off at the receiver.

The advantages of AM are that it is relatively inexpensive and that because the carrier is at a fairly low radio frequency, it has enormous range. AM's drawbacks are formidable, however. The main one is that RF noise from power lines and electrical storms causes annoying static. But there is also a serious frequency-response problem. AM channels are separated by only 10 kHz in the U.S., which causes whistles or "birdies" to be produced at that frequency when transmissions on adjacent channels are received together. That makes a cutoff frequency below 10 kHz (or, in many cases, 5 kHz) almost a necessity.

FM is more costly than AM, and it operates at much higher frequencies (between 88.1 and 107.9 MHz), which signif-

icantly reduces its range compared to AM for a given transmitter power. But from the standpoint of fidelity, it holds all the cards: Noise is lower, frequency response extends all the way to 15 kHz, and immunity to electrical interference is inherently high. All of this follows from the fundamentally different way that FM puts audio onto a radio wave.

The FM band is split up into channels spaced 200 kHz apart. The nominal carrier frequency (the one you see on your tuner's dial or display) is at the center of the channel. For example, a station with an assigned center frequency of 88.3 MHz occupies a channel extending from 88.2 to 88.4 MHz; the next allowable center frequency is 88.5 MHz, which defines an adjacent channel

## FM is the only high fidelity broadcast method in general use.

between 88.4 and 88.6 MHz; and so on. FM's basic distinguishing feature is that the amplitude of the carrier is unimportant except insofar as it determines a station's range. The carrier is therefore broadcast at a constant level.

It is not, however, broadcast at a constant frequency. Whereas in AM the audio modulates the amplitude of the carrier, in FM, it modulates the frequency: The louder the sound being transmitted, the greater the deviation, up to a maximum of  $\pm 75$  kHz around the channel's assigned center frequency. The frequency of the audio signal therefore translates into the rate of change of the carrier wave's frequency. Clearly, this is a more sophisticated broadcasting scheme than amplitude modulation, over which it has a number of advantages, the most important being lower noise and immunity to interference.

FM also benefits from an essentially unrestricted audio bandwidth. In fact, the only reason for the standard 15-kHz upper limit is stereo, which is encoded in a way that makes its own special demands. What I have described so far is the way a monophonic signal or the monophonic "baseband" of a stereo signal is broadcast. For

stereo transmissions, the left- and right-channel signals ("L" and "R") must be matrixed to obtain sum (L+R) and difference (L-R) signals. The L+R, which is simply mono, is broadcast on the baseband, so that compatibility is maintained with non-stereo radios.

The difference signal is amplitude-modulated onto a 38-kHz subcarrier. This generates a lower sideband extending from 23 (38-15) to 38 kHz and an upper sideband from 38 to 53 (38+15) kHz. The subcarrier is then removed ("suppressed"), leaving the two sidebands frequency-modulated on the main carrier. And a pilot tone at half the subcarrier frequency (19 kHz) is broadcast to trigger the stereo demodulators in stereo tuners. It is to avoid interference between the mono baseband, the pilot tone, and the stereo sidebands that the frequency response of FM broadcasts is limited to 15 kHz. The fact that the response of the human ear is typically quoted as extending from 20 Hz to 20 kHz might give you some pause here, but in fact, there's no reason to worry: The difference is inaudible on music and therefore represents no compromise in fidelity.

There are, however, a couple of real drawbacks to stereo FM. One is that in a frequency-modulation system, noise increases with frequency at a rate of 6 dB per octave. The high-frequency preemphasis applied to the audio signal before it is broadcast partially compensates for this effect, but it cannot correct the disproportionate noise contribution of the stereo difference signal, which is carried in the range between 23 and 53 kHz. When a tuner decodes a stereo signal, it simply dumps the extra noise from up there down into the audio range. For this reason, a tuner's stereo signal-to-noise ratio is always worse than its mono S/N.

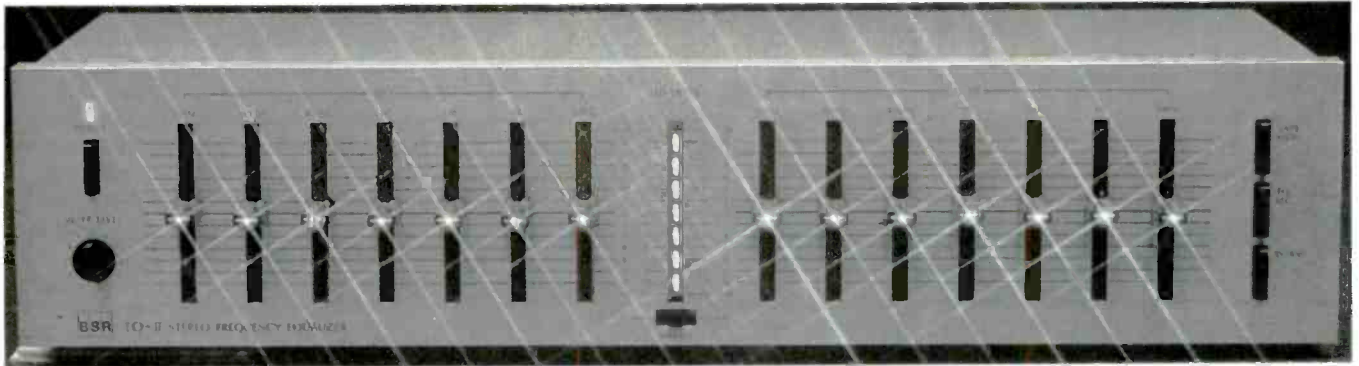
The other big disadvantage of stereo FM is intimately related to the first: Because of the noise penalty, it takes more signal to get a given amount of quieting in stereo than in mono. Mono sensitivity is therefore always better than stereo sensitivity, which is the equivalent of saying that mono has more range than stereo. Almost all tuners are designed so that when the signal becomes too weak to sustain adequately quiet stereo, they switch into mono, discarding the noise-burdened stereo information above the baseband. Some tuners also include a blend option that enables you to trade some separation at high frequencies for lower noise, so that you can get listenable stereo on stations that would otherwise



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# Sound Detonator

**Make your stereo system's sound explode with life, improving the sound quality by 30 to 50%, with this limited \$79 close-out from BSR.**



It's like night and day. Crashing cymbals, the depth of a string bass, more trumpets or more voice. Now they'll all come bursting forth from your stereo system at your command.

You'll make your music so vibrant that it will virtually knock your socks off when you use this professional quality stereo Sound Detonator equalizer.

It has a frequency response from 5hz to 100,000hz  $\pm$ 1db. And, it's made and backed by a 2 year limited warranty by BSR, the ADC equalizer people. Our \$79 close-out price is just a fraction of its true retail value.

## CAN YOUR STEREO SOUND BETTER?

Incredibly better. Equalizers are very different from conventional bass and treble controls.

Bass controls turn up the entire low end as well as the low mid-range making the sound muddy and heavy. With an equalizer, you simply pick the exact frequencies you want to enhance.

You can boost the low bass at 60hz, and/or 150hz, and the mid-bass at 400 hz to animate specific areas of the musical spectrum.

And, best of all when you boost the part of the bass you like, you don't disturb the mid-range frequencies and make you favorite singer sound like he has a sore throat.

The high frequencies really determine the clarity and brilliance of your music. You can boost the high mid-range at 2400hz, or the high end at 6000hz and 15,000hz. So, you can bring crashing cymbals to life at 15,000hz while at the same time you cut tape hiss or annoying record scratches at 6000hz.

You can also boost or cut specific midrange frequency areas to add or subtract vocal, trumpets, guitars or whatever instrument ranges you prefer.

## THERE'S MORE

You can push a button and transfer all the equalization power to the input of your tape deck. So, if you have a cassette deck in your car, or a personal stereo that you wear, now you can pre-equalize your cassettes as you record them with no cables to switch.

Now you can get all the dramatically

enhanced sound wherever you are. This is an especially great feature for bass starved portables and high-end starved car stereos to make them come alive.

## EASY HOOK UP

Use your tape monitor circuit, but don't lose it. Just plug the equalizer into the tape 'in' and 'out' jacks on your receiver. We even supply the cables.

As you listen to your records, FM stereo or 'aux', any time you push the tape monitor switch on your receiver you'll hear your music jump to life.

For your tape deck, simply plug it into the tape 'in' and 'out' jacks on the equalizer exactly as it was plugged into your receiver.

The output from your receiver is always fed direct to your tape deck for recording and with the touch of a button, you can choose to send equalized or nonequalized signal to your recorder.

When you want to listen to your tape deck, just press tape monitor on the equalizer and your tape deck will work exactly as it did before. Except, that now you can choose to listen to it with or without enhancing equalization.

You won't be listening to any distortion or hum. The Sound Detonator has a 95db signal to noise ratio and total harmonic distortion of only 0.018%.

Once you've set your equalizer controls, switch it in and out of the system. Then you'll hear such an explosive improvement in sound you'll think you've just added thousands of dollars of new speakers and equipment.

No one would believe that a \$159 component let alone one at our \$79 close-out price could do so much.

## WHY A CLOSE-OUT

BSR is a very large company. Somebody decided to market equalizers under both their ADC subsidiary and the BSR names. Well, we never thought it was a very practical idea. And, now they seem to agree.

From now on you'll only see ADC equalizers. But, because they didn't know what to do with these that were labeled BSR, we got them for a song.

So, you can go to any HiFi store and buy an ADC equalizer made by the parent company BSR, or you can get

this super BSR equalizer while our limited supply lasts for only \$79.

Oh yes, if you want to know more about BSR, they also own DBX, the noise reduction company and if you're familiar with the X10 remote control system for your home, that's BSR too.

## THE FINAL FACTS

There are 14 slide controls each with a bright LED to clearly show its position. Each control will add or subtract up to 12db. (That's a 24db range!)

There are separate sound detonation slide controls for each channel at 60hz, 150hz, 400hz, 1000hz, 2400hz, 6000hz, and 15,000hz.

There's an LED VU meter to show the relative channel output levels of the left, right and average of both. Plus there's a meter level control. It's 16-9/16" wide, 7-1/2" deep, and 3-9/16" tall.

## PUT LIFE INTO YOUR MUSIC

### RISK FREE

Prepare for a shock the first time you switch in this equalizer. Instruments you never knew were in your music will emerge and bring a lifelike sound that will envelop you and revolutionize your concept of your home stereo.

Hook this BSR into your system and really give it a workout. If you aren't 100% satisfied for any reason, simply return it to DAK within 30 days in its original box for a courteous refund.

To order your Sound Detonator BSR EQ-2 Stereo Frequency Equalizer risk free with your credit card, simply call the DAK toll free hotline, or send your check for only \$79 plus \$6 for postage and handling. Order Number 9420. CA residents please add 6% sales tax.

Wake up the sound in your stereo. Your sound will explode with life as you detonate each frequency band with new musical life.



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Add'l postage: \$3 per year outside U.S., its poss.

## AUDIO Basically Speaking

force you to revert to straight mono.

A tuner's sensitivity is determined by its front end, which accepts incoming RF signals from the antenna terminals, amplifies them, and tunes them so that the center frequency of the desired channel is translated down to an intermediate frequency (IF) of 10.7 MHz. Succeeding stages are designed to handle a single FM channel centered on that frequency. To prevent interference from other stations, the so-called IF strip that follows the front end includes a series of filters that roll off sharply below 10.6 MHz and above 10.8 MHz, allowing only the desired channel to pass. The effectiveness of a tuner in rejecting signals outside the tuned band is indicated by its selectivity rating.

Actually, there are two selectivity specifications: alternate-channel and adjacent-channel. The former shows rejection of signals two channels, or 400 kHz, away from the desired signal, while the latter tells the story on the channels next door, 200 kHz away. It is difficult to get adjacent channel selectivity of more than a few dB without making the IF passband so narrow as to create relatively high distortion. Fortunately, the FCC allocates channel assignments in such a way as to minimize the likelihood of anyone receiving two stations on the same or adjacent channels. And in most cases, an easily achieved 40 dB or so of adjacent-channel selectivity is all that's necessary to prevent interference from stations further away on the dial.

Emerging from the IF stage, the signal passes through a limiter, which effectively chops off the carrier at the top and bottom (gives it a haircut, so to speak). This is done to remove as much of the noise riding on the wave as possible before it reaches the detector. (Although FM detectors are theoretically immune to this sort of AM noise, most are in fact at least a little sensitive to it.)

The detector's function is to convert the information modulated onto the carrier back into audio. Thus, the output of the detector will consist of a mono baseband extending from 0 Hz (DC) to 15 kHz, plus, if the broadcast is in stereo, a 19-kHz pilot and the two AM difference-signal sidebands from 23 to 53 kHz.

If a pilot tone is present, it will activate the tuner's stereo demodulator, which will use the 19-kHz signal to regenerate the suppressed 38-kHz stereo subcarrier. It, in turn, is used to demodulate the sidebands into an L-R signal in the audio band. By adding and subtracting the L+R mono signal and the L-R difference signal, the demodulator restores the original left- and right-channel signals, which are then filtered to remove artifacts above 15 kHz (such as the pilot tone and stereo subcarrier), deemphasized to restore flat response, and passed out through the tuner's audio circuits to your system's preamp. **HF**

# Polk SDA-1

"Polk" reinvents "the loudspeaker"

High Fidelity

**POLK**  
Reference  
Quality Automotive  
Loudspeakers are coming!



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# 6

Sixth in a series of how Delco Electronics and Bose technology contribute to your enjoyment of driving.

## Deceptive... isn't it.

The control panel of this *Electronically Tuned Receiver (ETR)* is simple—and deceptive. Simple so that the receiver is easy to operate. Deceptive because a very sophisticated technology lies behind it. A technology that produces high fidelity reception from the Delco-GM/Bose Music System under conditions that are even difficult for ordinary radio reception.

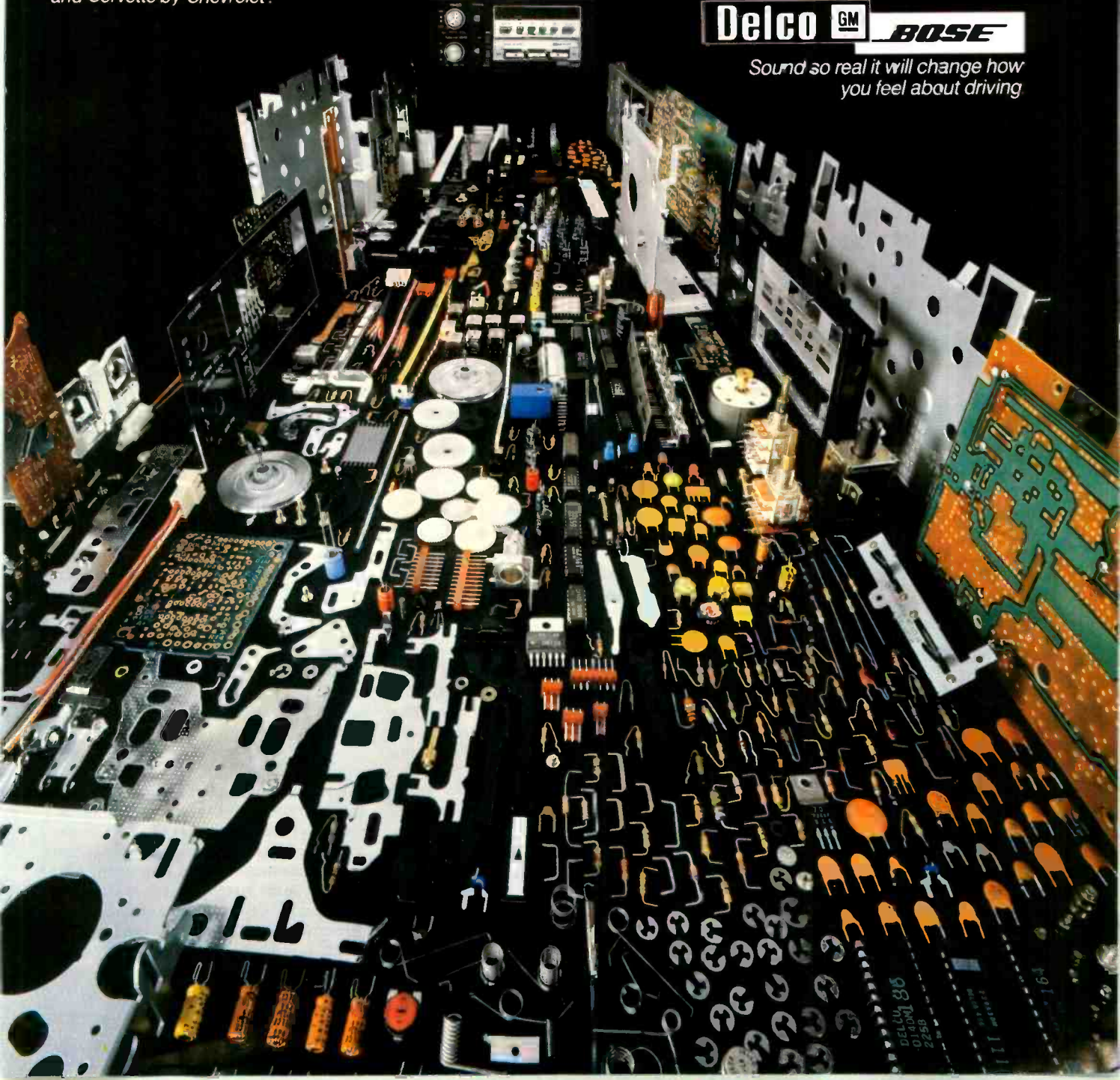
The key to this technology is Delco Electronic's own custom integrated circuits. These circuits respond automatically to changing reception conditions and program requirements. So you can enjoy music and driving more.

When you visit your GM dealer\* you will understand why Len Feldman wrote in *Popular Science*: "It's as good as or better than the best home systems I've heard."

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**Delco** **GM** **BOSE**

Sound so real it will change how you feel about driving



# New Equipment Reports

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



## B&O's Well-Made Match

B&O Beogram 8002 automatic single-play linear-tracking turntable and B&O MMC-1 fixed-coil phono pickup with sapphire-tube cantilever and multiradial diamond stylus. Dimensions: 19 1/4 by 14 3/4 inches (top), 3 1/4 inches high with cover closed; additional 12 1/2 inches vertical clearance required with cover open. Price: Beogram 8002 turntable, \$695; MMC-1 cartridge, \$445. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Bang & Olufsen, Denmark; U.S. distributor: Bang & Olufsen of America, Inc., 1150 Feehanville Dr., Mt. Prospect, Ill. 60056.

### B&O Beogram 8002 turntable

#### SPEED ACCURACY

at 33 rpm 0.1% fast, 105-127 VAC  
at 45 rpm 0.07% fast, 105-127 VAC

#### SPEED ADJUSTMENT RANGE

at 33 rpm +3.2% to -2.8%  
at 45 rpm +3.3% to -3.0%

WOW & FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak)  
±0.04% average; ±0.05% maximum

TOTAL AUDIBLE RUMBLE (ARLL) -65 dB\*

EFFECTIVE TONEARM MASS 11.4 grams

#### STYLUS-GAUGE ACCURACY

set for 0.5 gram 0.5 gram  
set for 1.0 gram 1.0 gram  
set for 1.5 grams 1.4 grams  
set for 2.0 grams 1.9 grams

TOTAL LEAD CAPACITANCE 250 pF

B&O PRODUCTS HAVE LONG embodied both a certain style and a particular point of view about how high fidelity components should work. It is therefore no surprise to find that the Danish company's latest top-of-the-line turntable, the Beogram 8002, is basically a refined version of its previous Model 8000 (test report, September 1981). The main difference, in fact, is in the tonearm, which has been redesigned around the characteristics of B&O's new line of five ultra-light-weight moving-iron cartridges (of which more later).

B&O's engineers have also cleverly redesigned the platter so that a thin layer of air is trapped between it and the record, to damp vinyl resonances and eliminate platter ringing. This seems to work remarkably well, even compared to some of the exotic compliant platter mats available nowadays for that purpose. Strips of Nextel almost flush with the platter surface help bleed off static charges from the record. The remaining important difference between the 8000 and the 8002 is that you can program the new model's repeat feature for as many as nine consecutive replays simply by pressing PLAY the number of times you want to hear the side.

Like the 8000, the new turntable has

two tangentially tracking arms. One carries the cartridge, which plugs directly into it; the other houses an optical sensor that enables a microprocessor in the 8002's control circuitry to determine where to set down the stylus. If the sensor arm detects a 12-inch disc on the platter, the turntable will set itself automatically to 33 rpm; for a 7-inch record, it will go to 45 rpm. You can, however, override the turntable's decision with the manual controls on the lower right-hand side of the base. If the sensor sees no record on the platter, the arms will return to rest without setting down. A small, soft brush mounted immediately to the left of their resting place (under a flip-up top plate) cleans the stylus before and after each play cycle.

A servo system maintains the arm's tangency to the groove (within ±0.04 degrees, according to B&O). Operation is essentially foolproof. A tap on one of the cueing controls during play lifts the arm and shuttles it where you direct at either of two speeds, determined by the firmness of your pressure on the button; a tap on PLAY settles the stylus back down into the groove. TURN spins the platter without calling forth the tonearm, for record cleaning. A press on PAUSE lifts the arm, and a second press



ADVENT

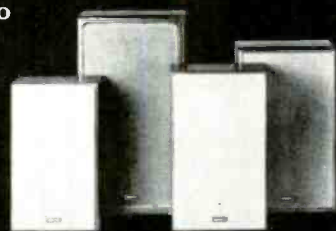
## The one thing we never change.

During the last fifteen years, we've made a lot of improvements on our Advent speakers. 137 to be exact. We've redesigned woofers and tweeters. Crossover networks and phase plates. Cabinets and mounting hardware. Even screws. But there's one thing we haven't changed. That's the value. The ability of an Advent speaker to out-perform many speakers that cost more. How? By making changes that sound good not just look good. While other speaker companies have spent their time adding all manner of dials, knobs and wild grilles, we've quietly gone about the business of perfecting the two-way speaker.

For example, our newest change is the Advent "Direct Report" tweeter. It is a parabolic rather than hemispheric design. And the special phase plate for the tweeter has been tapered to improve dispersion. Stereo Review liked it as much as we did. They said, "We cannot recall ever having measured a front-radiating dome tweeter whose dispersion equaled that of the new Advent design."

We think you'll agree with Stereo Review. The new tweeter is indeed exceptional. The change substantially improved the sound quality. But it hasn't substantially changed the price. You see, value has always been a part of the Advent legend. And that's something we haven't changed... never will.

For the location of the Advent dealer nearest you, call toll free 800-323-1566. (In Illinois call 800-942-0502.)



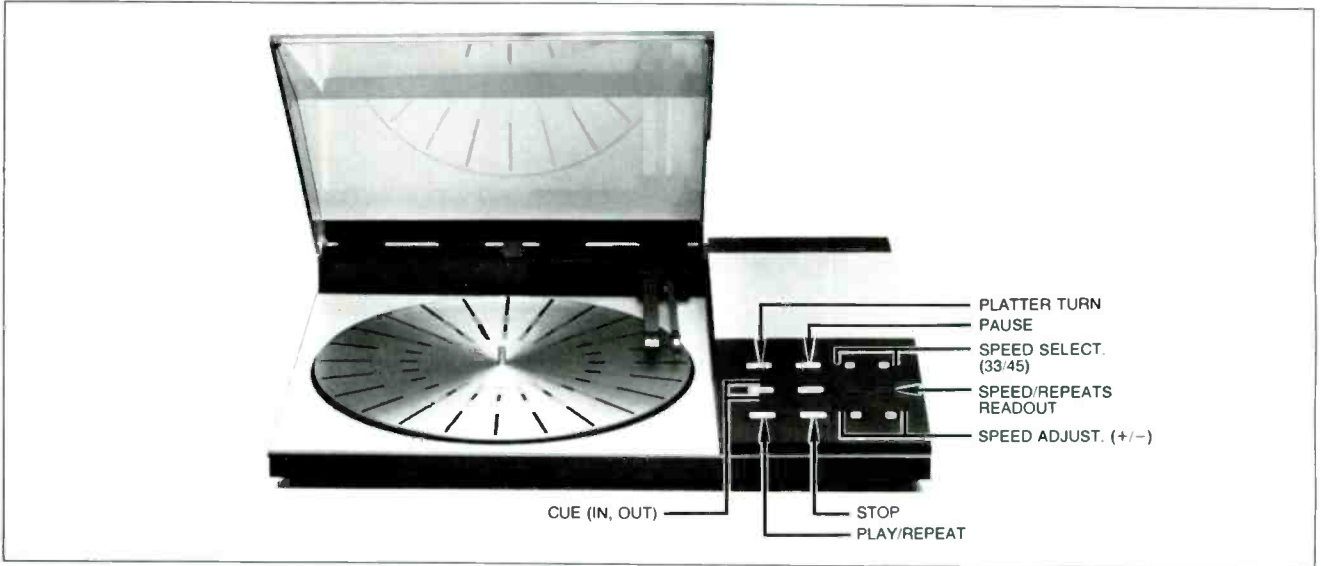
ADVENT

# ADVENT

The legend continues.

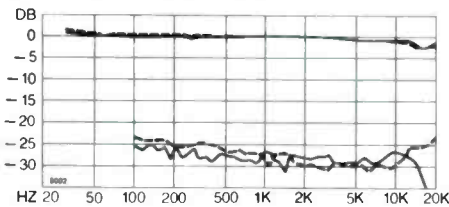
ADVENT





**B&O MMC-1 cartridge**

**FREQUENCY RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION**  
(test record: JVC TRS-1007 Mk. II)



Frequency response  
 — L ch +1, -2½ dB, 30 Hz to 20 kHz  
 - - - R ch +1½, -2½ dB, 30 Hz to 20 kHz  
 Channel separation  
 ≡ 25 dB, 400 Hz to 16 kHz  
 ≡ 20 dB, 100 Hz to 20 kHz

SENSITIVITY (1 kHz) 0.90 mV/cm/sec

CHANNEL BALANCE (1 kHz) ±0 dB

VERTICAL TRACKING ANGLE 25°

MAX. TRACKING LEVEL (re RIAA 0 VU; 1.0 gram)  
 lateral ≡ +15 dB  
 vertical ≡ +12 dB

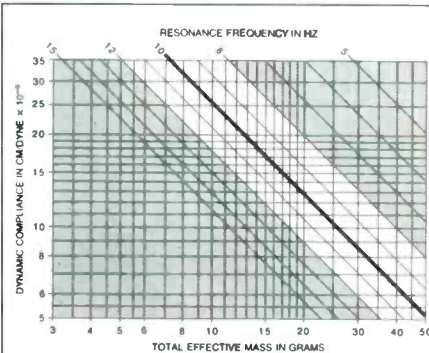
sends it back to rest and shuts off the platter. But the liftoff position is retained in memory, so that you can recue the arm exactly just by pressing PLAY.

The 8002 uses neither belt- nor direct-drive. Instead, coils beneath the platter rim induce eddy currents that cause it to move. Correct speed is maintained by a quartz-locked servo system, although you can deliberately introduce alterations by means of a pair of buttons below the digital speed display on the control panel.

Before starting design on the new pickups for which the 8002 is intended, B&O set out to determine whether any particular transduction system has an innate sonic advantage over the others. To do this, the company conducted a series of rigorously controlled listening tests with high-quality moving-iron, moving-magnet, and moving-coil cartridges. As we would have expected, the results indicated that none is

inherently superior to the others: Superlative sound can be obtained from any of them.

B&O's engineers elected to use the moving-iron principle, which has enabled them to combine high performance, high output, and low sensitivity to capacitive loading in an extraordinarily small, lightweight package. The low mass of these pickups has in turn enabled the B&O design team to increase the effective mass of the 8002's tonearm (for greater stiffness) without moving the arm/cartridge resonance frequency down into the record-warp range. To install one of these pickups in a standard tonearm, you must use a supplied mounting adapter, which adds 1.7 grams to its weight. Even then, it is often necessary to use the supplied accessory weights to balance the arm. (If you do use the weights, remember that they count as part of the arm's effective mass.)



**Tonearm/Cartridge Matching Graph**

By means of this nomograph, you can quickly and easily determine the compatibility of any cartridge and tonearm we have tested. Ideally, the arm/cartridge resonance frequency (indicated by the diagonal lines) should fall at 10 Hz, but anywhere between 8 and 12 Hz will assure good warp tracking and accurate bass response. (It is usually okay to let the

resonance rise as high as 15 Hz, although we don't normally recommend this.)

Begin by looking up the weight and dynamic compliance shown in the cartridge report and the effective mass listed in the turntable or tonearm report. Add the weight of the cartridge to the effective mass of the tonearm to get the total effective mass. Then find the point on the graph where the vertical line for the total effective mass intersects the horizontal line for the cartridge's dynamic compliance. For a good match, this point should fall in the white region, between the 8- and 12-Hz diagonal lines.

When necessary, you can back-figure compliances and effective masses for cartridges and tonearms tested before we began reporting these figures directly (in January 1983). For cartridges, look up the vertical resonance frequency (measured in the SME 3009 Series II Improved tonearm) and the cartridge's weight. Add 15 grams (the SME's effective mass) to the cartridge weight to get the total effective mass. Then find the

intersection of the vertical line representing that mass with the diagonal line representing the measured resonance frequency. Now you can read off the compliance from the horizontal line passing through the point of intersection.

For tonearms, look up the vertical resonance frequency as measured with the Shure V-15 Type III cartridge. Find the intersection of the diagonal line for that frequency with the horizontal line representing the Shure's dynamic compliance of  $22.5 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/dyne. Reading down the vertical line on which the point of intersection lies will give you the total effective mass of the arm with the Shure V-15 Type III mounted in it. Then subtract 6.3 grams (the weight of the V-15 Type III) to get the tonearm's effective mass.

Because of differences in measurement techniques, manufacturers' specifications for compliance and effective mass often differ from our findings and may therefore yield inconsistent results if used with this graph.



**SCREWDRI  
SOUND  
BREAKTHROUGH**



Here's the super horn tweeter that BSR left out. We'll send it along with your speaker. It fits right in where the 3" tweeter is now.

# Thunder Lizard Mistake

*If you're willing to spend 5 minutes with a screwdriver, you can cash in on BSR's mistake and experience precise thundering bass and breathtakingly clear highs.*

It was a mistake. Somebody goofed and put the wrong tweeter in this top of the line BSR 15" 3 way speaker system. The 3" tweeter they put in is normally used only in BSR's smaller 10" and 12" systems.

But don't worry. If you've got a screwdriver and 5 minutes you can turn these Thunder Lizards back into BSR's awesome top of the line 15" speaker systems, with thundering earthshaking bass and breathtakingly brilliant crystal clear highs.

## THUNDER LIZARDS

BSR built 3500 of these speakers. Their salesman referred to them as Thunder Lizards because the 15" acoustic suspension bass driver is so powerfully dramatic that it can literally recreate the power of an earthquake or explosion in your living room.

Unfortunately, without the brilliant and powerful exponential horn tweeter, the bass simply overwhelms the high end and so the name Thunder Lizard was born.

## YOU WIN

Because the speaker systems are factory sealed, BSR didn't want to open them and install the correct tweeter. Plus to a company the size of BSR, 3500 speakers just aren't enough to worry about.

So because of BSR's mistake, you can save a fortune. DAK bought all 3500 of the speakers. Plus, BSR sold us the exponential horn tweeters that were supposed to be put in originally.

So, here's the deal. We'll ship you the factory sealed BSR 15" 3 way speaker system with the wrong tweeter, and we'll ship

the exponential horn tweeter separately.

All you do is unscrew 4 screws and pop out the 3" tweeter. Then, just pop in the exponential horn in the same hole. There's no soldering because push-on lugs are used, and even the screws fit exactly. You even get to keep the 3" tweeter.

## WHAT SOUND

The kaleidoscopic panorama of sound from this speaker is nothing short of incredible. You're in for an earthshaking, bone jarring musical experience.

The exponential horn tweeter gives you startlingly dramatic highs to 20,000hz. A brilliance control lets you decide just how powerful you want the highs to be.

The midrange is velvet smooth. It's reproduced by a special 4" ferro-fluid cooled midrange driver. A presence control lets you contour the midrange to your taste.

Finally, the bass all the way down to 20hz is reproduced with thundering accuracy by the pride of the BSR line, a 15" acoustic suspension bass driver.

The beautifully crafted wood-grain appearance cabinet is 29" tall, 18" wide and 10-1/2" deep. And, it comes with a beautiful removable cloth speaker grill.

BSR backs this system with a 2 year limited warranty, and speaking of protection, the tweeter is fuse protected. The system can handle 180 watts peak, 90 watts continuous and requires 15 watts.

## THUNDER LIZARDS NO MORE RISK FREE

Soft listening will give you a fullness and

realism of sound not possible with conventional 10" and 12" speaker systems.

And wait till you (and your neighbors) hear the thundering realism of high volume listening with these incredibly pure audiophile speaker systems.

Normally only the most sophisticated audiophile can afford the ultimate, a 15" 3 way speaker system. But now due to BSR's error, everyone can experience the incredible realism of a truly great speaker.

If for any reason you're not 100% overwhelmed by these speaker systems, simply return them to DAK in their original boxes within 30 days for a refund.

To order your BSR top of the line 15" 3 way loudspeaker system with the exponential horn tweeter risk free with your credit card, call toll free, or send a check not for the suggested retail price of \$199 each, but for only \$119 each, plus \$12.50 each for postage and handling. Order No. 9614. CA res add 6% sales tax.

Now, if you'll spend just 5 minutes with a screwdriver you'll experience dramatic earthshaking musical sound that's so startlingly alive, it'll send shivers through your body for years to come.



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INDUSTRIES INCORPORATED

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If busy, after hours, on weekends or in CA  
CALL TOLL-FREE . . . 1-800-228-1234  
10845 Vanowen St., N. Hollywood CA 91605

# AUDIO New Equipment Reports

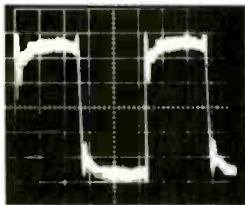
DYNAMIC COMPLIANCE (vertical)  
 $12 \times 10^{-6}$  cm/dyne

RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE TONEARM MASS  
 (when used with mounting adapter\*)  
 optimum 17.8 grams  
 acceptable 11.6 to 30 grams

WEIGHT  
 normal 1.6 grams  
 with mounting adapter 3.3 grams

SQUARE-WAVE  
 RESPONSE

\*See text



Use and measurement both confirm the high level of performance that can be obtained from the Beogram 8002/MMC-1 combination. This is partly the result of the integrated design. For example, the vertical arm/cartridge resonance falls at 12.7 Hz, which though a shade higher than we consider ideal, is well out of warp territory, for surefooted tracking of even the most convoluted discs. Another important contributor is the turntable's carefully balanced leaf-spring suspension, which effectively isolates the arm and platter from the base. As a result, the 8002 exhibits exceptional immunity to acoustic feedback and mechanical shock.

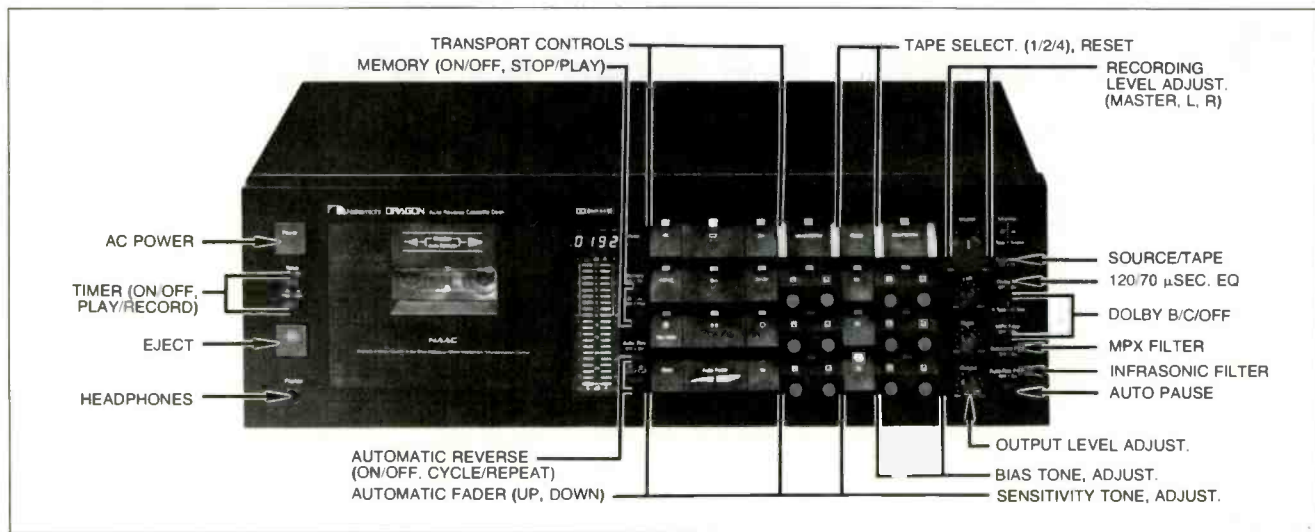
Diversified Science Laboratories recorded very low flutter and rumble figures. (The latter did jump periodically by about 7 dB—perhaps as a result of the arm's servo motor activating to correct tangency errors—but this has not been audible in our listening trials.) The precision of the MMC-1's manufacture is evident in its perfect channel balance and stylus rake angle alignment—both rare in our experience. Its tracking ability, though not the very best DSL has measured, is excellent, and its distortion is low by cartridge standards. Sepa-

ration is wide and unusually uniform with frequency, perhaps partly because of B&O's approach to controlling high-frequency resonances. Keeping these resonances properly placed and low in amplitude is one of the key elements in the design of B&O's new pickups and is almost certainly responsible for the MMC-1's extended, peak-free frequency response.

In the listening room, this translates into some of the most enjoyable sounds we've heard, fully befitting the MMC-1's top-of-the-line status. Tonal balance is smooth and neutral, with no trace of strain or stridency. But this is not at the expense of clarity: Every detail comes through in perfect focus. And imaging is rock solid, even on demanding passages that cause some less distinguished pickups to sound congested or unstable.

Each of these components—the Beogram 8002 turntable and the MMC-1 cartridge—is an excellent and satisfying performer in its own right. Together, they are superb, combining fine sound with exceptional ease of set-up and use. We consider it another job well done by Bang & Olufsen.

Circle 104 on Reader-Service Card



## Auto-Azimuth— Nakamichi Scores Another First

Nakamichi Dragon cassette deck, with automatic-reverse bidirectional playback, Dolby B and C noise reduction, and automatic playback-head azimuth adjustment. Dimensions: 18¾ by 5½ inches (front panel), 11¾ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Price: \$1,850. Warranty: "limited," one year parts and labor. Manufacturer: Nakamichi Corp., Japan; U.S. distributor: Nakamichi U.S.A. Corp., 1101 Colorado Ave., Santa Monica, Calif. 90401.

THE CASSETTE IS BY NOW well established as a high fidelity recording medium—thanks in significant measure to the enterprising spirit of the engineers at Nakamichi. But one difficult obstacle remains: the problem of assuring "correct" azimuth. Though the test tapes we have used over the years have always been from highly reputable sources (first Teac, then TDK, and now BASF), they do not yield identical results as regards head azimuth (the head gap's perpendicularity to the tape path). Exact perpendicularity is difficult enough to maintain as the thin, floppy ribbon of tape weaves, or "skews," along its course past the guides and heads, but the task is impossible if there is no unequivocal standard to conform to. And whatever azimuth disparity there is

between recording head and playback head expresses itself as a high-frequency rolloff in playback: The greater the disagreement, the worse the treble loss.

This really is no problem at all if you record all your own tapes and use only a two-head machine that you intend never to replace. Since the recording and playback gaps are the same, azimuth disagreement between them is impossible. The trouble starts when you want to play commercial prerecorded cassettes or tapes recorded on another machine, or when you have a three-head deck with separate recording and playback heads. All of these situations present opportunities for azimuth misalignment in playback.

When Nakamichi introduced the first



# JENSEN®

AUDIO + VIDEO™ COMPONENTS

We call it Audio + Video™. And it is home entertainment so extraordinary, so amazing, it will send shivers up your spine.

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It begins with the heart of the system, the AVS-1500™ receiver. This single component combines a 133 channel, cable-ready video tuner. An AM/FM tuner. And a high power integrated amplifier. The AVS-1500 lets you do some truly amazing things. For example, with the press of a single button, you can control the audio and video elements of a

stereo simulcast. And you can do it from across the room. Because the audio and video functions can be operated by wireless remote control.

Jensen Audio + Video also brings high fidelity sound to your favorite television programs and movies. Imagine

the sound track from JAWS® with the same impact in your living room that it had in the theater.

Then there is the high resolution 25" video monitor. The color and clarity of its picture will make movies seem so real, you can almost smell the popcorn.

Since Jensen Audio + Video is a component system, you needn't buy it all at once. Start with the receiver and specially engineered video speakers. Use them with your current audio components and color television. Add the video monitor next. Or perhaps the stereo video recorder. Whatever suits your needs and your budget.

To really

understand what

we mean by "goose bumps," you'll have to visit your Jensen Audio + Video retailer for a demonstration. See it. Feel it. Experience it.

For the location of

the retailer nearest you, call us toll free at (800) 323-0707. In Illinois, call (312) 671-5680.

Audio + Video and AVS are trademarks of Jensen Sound Laboratories.

JAWS is a trademark of and licensed by Universal City Studios, Inc.



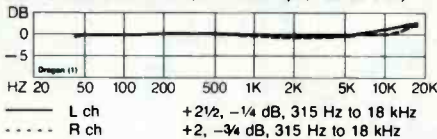
# Jensen introduces goose bumps.



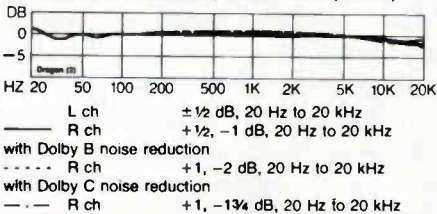
# AUDIO New Equipment Reports

(Data shown are for the forward direction of tape travel; reverse-direction data do not differ significantly.)

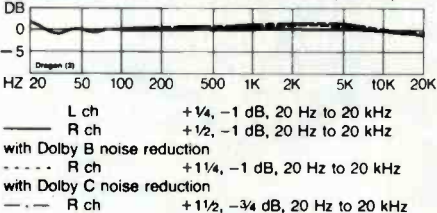
## PLAYBACK RESPONSE (BASF test tape; -20 dB DIN)



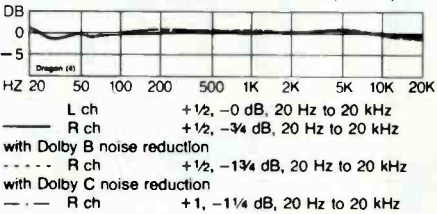
## RECORD/PLAY RESPONSE, TYPE 2 TAPE (-20 dB)



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



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



S/N RATIO (re DIN 0 dB; R/P; CCIR/ARM-weighted)	Type 2 tape		Type 4 tape	Type 1 tape
	without noise reduction	with Dolby B	with Dolby B	with Dolby C
	55½ dB	65½ dB	54½ dB	64½ dB
		74¾ dB	73¾ dB	71½ dB

INDICATOR READINGS FOR DIN 0 DB (315 Hz)	
Type 2 tape	+4 dB (with 1.8% THD)
Type 4 tape	+4 dB (with 0.81% THD)
Type 1 tape	+4 dB (with 0.70% THD)

INDICATOR READINGS FOR 3% DISTORTION (315 Hz)	
Type 2 tape	+6 dB (for +1½ dB DIN)
Type 4 tape	>+10 dB (for +5½ dB DIN)
Type 1 tape	+8½ dB (for +3¾ dB DIN)

DISTORTION (third harmonic; at -10 dB DIN)	
Type 2 tape	≤ 0.85%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
Type 4 tape	≤ 0.39%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz
Type 1 tape	≤ 0.55%, 50 Hz to 5 kHz

ERASURE (100 Hz) ≥ 68½ dB

CHANNEL SEPARATION (315 Hz) 41 dB

## INDICATOR "BALLISTICS"

Response time	21 msec
Decay time	=720 msec
Overshoot	0 dB

SPEED ACCURACY 0.3% fast, 105-127 VAC

FLUTTER (ANSI/IEEE weighted peak; R/P) ±0.023%

SENSITIVITY (re DIN 0 dB; 315 Hz) 87 mV

MAX. OUTPUT (from DIN 0 dB) 1.2 V

three-head cassette deck, the original Model 1000, it included a system that enabled the user to align the azimuth of the recording head to that of the playback head, so that every cassette made on the machine would play back on it with the highest possible accuracy. (The current version of that model, the 1000ZXL, performs this task automatically before you start recording.) But alignment of the recording head does nothing to eliminate the disparities that can occur when you try to play a cassette that wasn't recorded on that particular deck.

Herein lies the Dragon's breakthrough: Instead of aligning its recording head to match the playback head's azimuth, it adjusts the playback head to match the azimuth of whatever tape is being played. Its right-channel playback gaps (of which there are two—one for the forward and one for the reverse direction) are split, so that the inner and outer edges of the track are read separately. The Dragon compares the signals coming from the two sections of the gap and automatically adjusts the playback head's azimuth until their phases exactly match. (The direction indicator in use—forward or reverse—flashes until any "perceived" error is corrected.) So the azimuth of any tape, no matter what its origin, can be matched by the adjustment process as long as the error falls within the Dragon's adjustment range (±12 minutes of arc, or one-fifth of a degree). Its inventors call this feature NAAC, for Nakamichi Auto Azimuth Correction, and its range is broad enough to encompass azimuth disparities that, left uncorrected, would produce serious high-frequency rolloff, with response theoretically down by about 3 dB at 10 kHz and 10 dB at 17 kHz. We found many tapes in our collection that required azimuth adjustment away from the playback head's median position, but none whose azimuth was beyond NAAC's range.

The Dragon's closed-loop dual-capstan drive follows the design of Nakamichi's ZX-9, except that in Dragon, each capstan is individually driven by its own motor. Furthermore, its direct-drive capstans must be used in two directions, whereas all previous Nakamichis have been unidirectional. The use of different capstan diameters (and, therefore, rotation speeds), to prevent cumulative resonances in the two drive systems, complicates the issue. Nakamichi solves the problem with a quartz-lock system that keeps the takeup capstan running 0.2% faster than the supply capstan (for optimum tape tension and head contact) no matter which direction is in use.

There are three heads: erase, recording (for the forward direction only), and playback (a four-track design, with a bifurcated right-channel gap for each direction). Superficially, this is not too different from the head arrangement in some other decks we have tested with bidirectional playback; actually, the automatic azimuth adjustment, added to the inherently flat, wide-

band response that is a Nakamichi hallmark, makes the Dragon the first automatic-reverse model we have tested for which no performance apology need be made. Normally, some tradeoff is required to get auto-reverse convenience—though, in fairness, most reversing decks we've tested sell for less than half of this one's price.

The Dragon, however, is simply a superb machine. With Nakamichi's tapes (SX Type 2 ferricobalt, ZX Type 4 metal, and EX-II Type 1 ferric), response is extremely flat and extended, noise is very low, headroom is very high, and flutter is the lowest Diversified Science Laboratories has ever measured. Erasure (thanks to Nakamichi's dual-gap erase head, no doubt) is also exceptional: almost 70 dB with metal tape and more than 80 dB with the ferricobalt. Where the lab measured behavior in the reverse direction, the figures invariably were in the same ballpark as those shown here, which represent the forward direction. Such consistency of behavior, which Nakamichi says was a design goal, is frequently lacking in bidirectional decks.

The metering is calibrated from -40 to +10 dB with respect to the conservatively placed zero indication, 4 dB below DIN 0 dB, with steps of 1 to 2 dB between the 0-dB and +7-dB marks. When you use the meters to "fine-tune" the deck for the tape you're using, the 0-dB indication becomes the calibration point and the scale "stretches" to show finer gradations than it does with input signals. The 15-kHz bias-adjustment test tone (which would create compression at 0 dB) is recorded at -20 dB, with the metering sensitivity increased accordingly, so that the calibration point remains the same.

There are six small knobs for adjusting sensitivity (Dolby tracking): one for the left channel and one for the right for each of the three tape types. Six more identical knobs, similarly disposed, provide for bias calibration. Adjustments are made by selecting the appropriate test oscillator (for sensitivity or bias) and recording its tone with the noise reduction off, monitoring from the tape. The manual (excellent by ordinary standards, though perhaps a little shy of the "superb" rating we usually give Nakamichi's efforts) suggests checking sensitivity first, then bias. (Pushing one selector button cancels the other.) We'd also urge that you go back and forth between the two a couple of times, particularly if your new tape is significantly different from that for which the deck was set previously, since each adjustment can influence the other. In any event, the process is quite simple.

There are no reference settings to fall back on when in doubt, though the uncalibrated midpoints of the knobs' rotations will give you at least an approximation of the settings for the Nakamichi tapes. Standardizing on a particular formulation for each tape type (always a good idea so you





# The \$7 Push Button Phone

**Plug in and start pushing. Now you can have highly automated phones with no monthly service charges for just \$7 each. But, there's a catch.**

Send back your dumb phones. Now instead of paying monthly service charges you can have push button dialing, last number redial, mute, and ringer off.

You can forget big clunky phones. You can also forget dials. This phone works perfectly whether you now have rotary or push button phones.

Now for just \$7 you'll have the latest technology at a price that'll let you have a phone in every room in your home. But, don't forget there's a catch.

## NOTHING TO INSTALL

Simply plug this phone into any standard modular phone jack and start talking. If you don't already have jacks, call your phone company.

They may even put them in free for

quality speaker instead of the old diaphragm 'thing' that's been in phones for 20 years. Even the electronic ring is new.

But, the nicest part of all are the push buttons. Once you've started using buttons you'll hate dialing the old way.

With this phone you can push the buttons as fast as you want. Then the phone sends out pulses on your line that work with virtually any phone system.

So this phone works anywhere. You can unplug it and move it from room to room or house to house in seconds.

The phone automatically hangs up when you set it down or you can push its 'hang up' button. It comes complete with an 8 foot cord, coiled at the phone end, and a limited warranty.

We challenge you to compare the frequency response, dynamic range and signal to noise ratio of our new Gold Label MLX to Maxell UDXL or TDK SA. If they win, we'll not only give you back your money, we'll give you a free gift for your trouble. And, DAK's come with a deluxe hard plastic box, index insert card and a limited 1 year warranty.

## WHY, YOU MAY BE ASKING?

You're very valuable to us in the form of future business. Over 150,000 customers have responded to bonuses like this. We find most of you keep buying once you've tried our cassettes and our prices; and that's a gamble worth taking.

## NOT A BAD CATCH

DAK manufactures a cassette with no problems and great sound. We've been hot on the heels of the frequency responses of Maxell and TDK. The tape we made last year had a great frequency response up to 14,000hz.

Now our new Gold Label MLX is second to none. We have a frequency response to 19,500hz and we'll go head to head against any tape on the market.

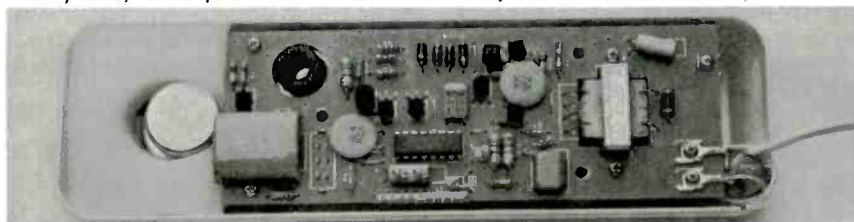
## TRY NEW DAK MLX90 CASSETTES

### RISK FREE

To get the automated phone for just \$7, try 10 MLX high energy cassettes. If you aren't 100% satisfied, return only 9 of the 10 cassettes and the phone in its original box within 30 days for a refund. The 10th cassette is a gift for your time.

To order your 10 Gold Label DAK MLX 90 minute cassettes and get the automated phone for only \$7 with your credit card, call the DAK toll free hot line or send your check for only \$24.90 for the tapes, plus \$7 for the phone and \$3 for postage and handling for each group. Order No. 9416. CA res add 6%.

An automated Phone for \$7 and DAK's new improved MLX. Time to stock up.



It's built more like a HiFi than a telephone. Modern electronics have finally come to phones.

you. Due to the recent Supreme Court ruling, soon they'll probably be selling you your own phones anyway. And, at worst, there's just a small one time fee.

## LAST NUMBER REDIAL PLUS

It's really neat. If you call a number and it's busy this phone will automatically redial the number for you each time you touch 'redial'. There's no need to keep dialing over and over again.

When you need to speak privately to someone with you, you don't have to cover the mouth piece. Just press the mute button and the person on the line will be cut off for privacy.

When you want to take a nap, just switch the ring off and the phone won't ring. There's never a need to take your phone off the hook again.

The quality is great. A high quality condenser microphone lets the person you talk to hear you loud and clear.

And you hear them through a high

## THE CATCH

Frankly we are losing our shirts on the automated phone, but we're looking for audiophiles who use audio cassettes.

If you buy top name TDK and Maxell cassettes, you probably pay \$3.50 to \$4.50 each for a 90 minute cassette.

We want you to try DAK's new Gold Label MLX ultra high energy, normal bias cassettes. Not at \$4.50 or even at \$3.50 each, but at a factory direct price of just \$2.49 for a 90 minute cassette.



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## A Quick Guide to Tape Types

Our tape classifications, Type 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.

know exactly what to expect from your tape/deck combination) should help to minimize the need for tweaking—or the degree of tweaking needed—before you begin to record. But since the optimization scheme enables the Dragon to accommodate a wide variety of formulations, you need feel no compunction about trying any good tape of the recommended types (1, 2, or 4).

Playback equalization (and a reciprocal part of the recording equalization) is controlled by a separate switch that is not influenced by the tape-type selectors, so you can also use Type 3 ferrichromes. (Set the tape selector to "EX" for Type 1 bias and the EQ to 70 microseconds.) This totally manual bias and EQ selection also forestalls the difficulties that can occur when an oddball cassette is inserted into a deck that uses the standard shell keyways to determine the tape type—and hence the bias and EQ.

The flexibility is welcome, but the EQ switch that makes it possible is less so. It is one of fourteen small, black, short-throw pushbuttons on the front panel, the seven at the right end being particularly important. Most decks use equally small pushbuttons, some in even greater profusion; but most such decks have illuminating indicators (or buttons) to show which functions are engaged, or they at least contrive to make the "in" and "out" positions more readily distinguishable. As a result, the Dragon requires somewhat more care than usual in routinizing your recording practices. Even once we became reasonably familiar with the deck, we found it easy to miss incorrect settings of the EQ or noise reduction buttons until a recording was already in progress.

That the Dragon is worth a little extra care in use—as well as its hefty price tag—is beyond question: Nakamichi has again set a pace that others will find hard to

match. The automatic azimuth adjustment is an important advance in cassette technology for recordists who want the best the medium has to offer. As usual, there is back-panel provision for a remote control and a DC power-supply connection for Nakamichi's BlackBox accessories. And there are the usual conveniences of an auto-reverse deck (unidirectional/bidirectional/repeat operation, timer modes, and memory modes), plus a little bit of extra smarts: After forty seconds of silent tape, the deck will automatically fast forward to the end of the tape, reverse, fast wind till it finds music again, back up slightly to the start of the selection, and then return to play mode at just the right point.

Going further beyond the conventional, Nakamichi has also included an excellent cueing mode that provides reduced output at two relatively slow speeds of fast wind in either direction, so you can find your place on the tape by ear, and an automatic recording pause, which activates if the deck has been recording for thirty seconds with no input signal. But nicest of all the "extras," perhaps, is the automatic fader, which in six or two seconds (depending on your touch) will bring the recording signal up to the levels you have preset (on the master, left, and right rotary controls) or fade out to silence at the end of your recording.

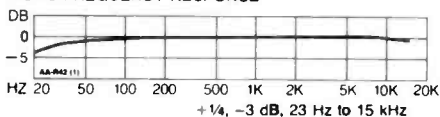
All considered, the Dragon's features are very well chosen and integrated for the user who wants top quality together with convenience where it counts without a lot of fussy little afterthoughts. Moreover, this is achieved without compromising the deck's basic performance, which is outstanding by any standard, even without benefit of its unique NAAC azimuth-correction system. But it is that final touch that gives the Dragon its fire and Nakamichi another feather in its cap.

## Akai's Show-and-Tell Receiver

Akai AA-R42 AM/FM receiver. Dimensions: 17¼ by 4 inches (front panel), 12¼ inches deep plus clearance for connections. AC convenience outlets: one switched (100 watts max.), one unswitched (200 watts max.). Price: \$450. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Akai Electric Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Akai America, Ltd., 800 W. Artesia Blvd., Compton, Calif. 90224.

### FM tuner section

#### MONO FREQUENCY RESPONSE

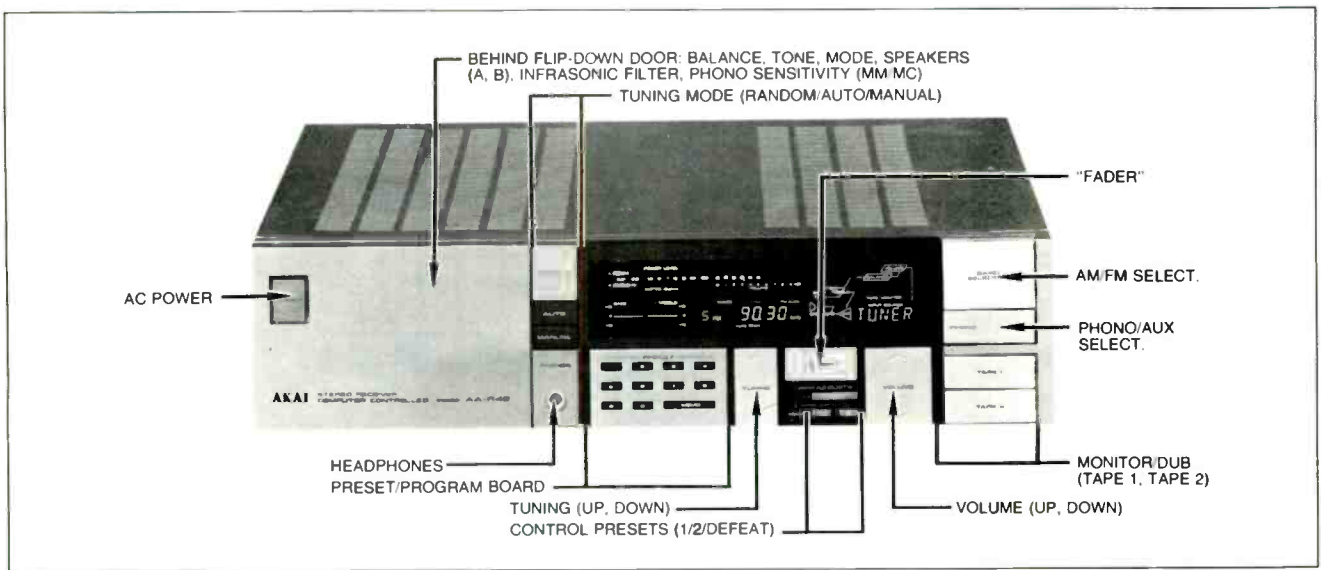


IF EVER THERE WAS a product of its times, the Akai AA-R42 is it. Microprocessors are understandably popular with equipment designers these days: Not only do they create functions that would be out of reach with conventional circuitry, but they often accomplish everyday tasks at lower manufacturing costs than might be possible with traditional approaches. This AM/FM receiver, like many others, derives a space-age "feel" from its application of microprocessors to such controls as TUNING, VOLUME, TREBLE, and BASS—all rocker-arm increase/decrease steppers, rather than the time-honored rotary controls. And its elaborate readout panel seizes the opportunity provided by the microprocessor technology to indicate the status of the functions governed by those controls.

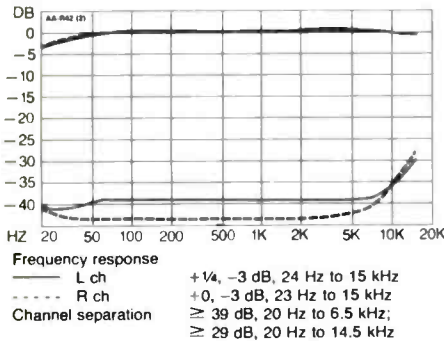
Across the upper left of this display,

there are an output ("power") meter and a volume-setting display. Whenever you manipulate the balance control, the volume scale is temporarily replaced by a balance scale; about five seconds after you remove your hand from the control, the display reverts to volume indication. Beneath these elements are a display that shows graphically any boost or cut you may have introduced with the TREBLE or BASS and a tuning indicator (frequency, band, tuning mode, stereo or mono mode, and memory number if one has been selected). Most of the right end of the panel is occupied by a sort of folded block schematic of the receiver, revealing such matters as which speaker taps are presently live, whether the infrasonic filter is in the circuit, which tape selectors are engaged, and what special features ("acoustic" or "fader") are in use.

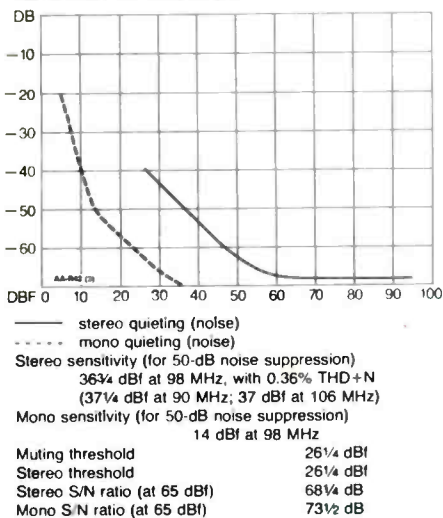




STEREO RESPONSE & CHANNEL SEPARATION



FM SENSITIVITY & QUIETING



And, finally, in the lower right corner is a section that shows which source has been selected and, if it's phono, whether the fixed-coil (MM) or moving-coil (MC) gain has been chosen. Few, if any, other home components have ever displayed so much information electronically.

Keep in mind, however, that this is not a super-receiver hell-bent on knocking your socks off with the sheer virtuosity of its technology. At a rated power of 60 watts per channel and a price of \$450, its luxury is less than ultimate; the emphasis is squarely on providing a host of features, together with good performance, at a modest price. Microprocessors help to achieve that aim, but—unlike typical mechanical knobs and switches—they require auxiliary devices to tell you what they're up to. Akai has raised this necessity to the status of an embellishment.

The tuning scheme has three modes: AUTOMATIC (which seeks out the next receivable station), MANUAL (for stepping by 100 kHz on the FM band—one-half channel, in U.S. broadcast terms—or a full 10-kHz channel on AM per tap of the tuning control), and RANDOM (for numerically punching up the desired frequency on the program board). The RANDOM mode uses the same program board as the station memory presets, which accommodate ten stations on each band—one FM and one AM for each of the ten digit buttons.

Another memory, with two storage positions, is called the "acoustic" by Akai. It stores BASS and TREBLE settings so that you can easily return to, say, a preferred loudness compensation (which requires use of the tone controls, since no LOUDNESS as such is provided) or speaker "sweetening." A defeat button restores flat response without recourse to the tone controls themselves. Since we think that loudness compensation, for all its theoretical underpinnings, is largely a matter of taste, this approach strikes us as very sane. The degree of compensation doesn't vary automatically according to volume setting, of course, but an unalterable indexing of compensation to volume can't suit the needs of all listeners equally well, anyway, given the usual differences in speaker sensitivity, room size, and so on. So we'd count the substitution of the acoustic memory for a conventional loudness switch an improvement—even if the memory couldn't be used for other purposes as well.

The other unusual control is the so-called fader, which takes the place of the familiar "mute" (itself a misnomer, since it normally reduces output by 20 dB rather than silencing it altogether). Press the fader once, and it kills the output; press it again, and the volume fades elegantly back up to the previously set level.

The tone controls shelve at very nearly the specified  $\pm 10$  dB—the bass below

CONVERSION TABLE FOR POWER OUTPUT

WATTS	dBW	WATTS	dBW	WATTS	dBW
1.00	0	10.0	10	100	20
1.25	1	12.5	11	125	21
1.6	2	16	12	160	22
2.0	3	20	13	200	23
2.5	4	25	14	250	24
3.2	5	32	15	320	25
4.0	6	40	16	400	26
5.0	7	50	17	500	27
6.3	8	63	18	630	28
8.0	9	80	19	800	29

About the dB . . .

We currently are expressing power in terms of dBW—meaning power in dB with a reference (0 dBW) of 1 watt. The conversion table will enable you to use the advantages of dBW in comparing these products to others for which you have no dBW figures.

# AUDIO New Equipment Reports

CAPTURE RATIO	1½ dB
SELECTIVITY (alternate-channel)	55½ dB
HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD+N)	
	stereo mono
at 100 Hz	0.35% 0.86%
at 1 kHz	0.75% 0.048%
at 6 kHz	0.25% 0.11%
STEREO PILOT INTERMODULATION	0.75%
IM DISTORTION (mono)	0.038%
PILOT (19 kHz) SUPPRESSION	70 dB
SUBCARRIER (38 kHz) SUPPR.	88¼ dB

## Amplifier section

RATED POWER 17¼ dBW (60 watts)/channel

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING (both channels driven)  
 8-ohm load 19¼ dBW (84 watts)/channel  
 4-ohm load 20¼ dBW (106 watts)/channel  
 16-ohm load 17¼ dBW (53 watts)/channel

DYNAMIC HEADROOM (re rated power, 8-ohm load)  
 +13¼ dB

HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD: 20 Hz to 20 kHz)  
 at 17¼ dBW (60 watts) ≤ 0.034%  
 at 0 dBW (1 watt) ≤ 0.012%

FREQUENCY RESPONSE  
 +0, -¼ dB, <10Hz to 26.6 kHz;  
 +0, -3 dB, <10 Hz to 82.6 kHz

RIAA EQUALIZATION  
 fixed-coil phono +¾, -<¼ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz;  
 -¼ dB at 5 Hz  
 moving-coil phono ±½ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz;  
 -7¼ dB at 5 Hz

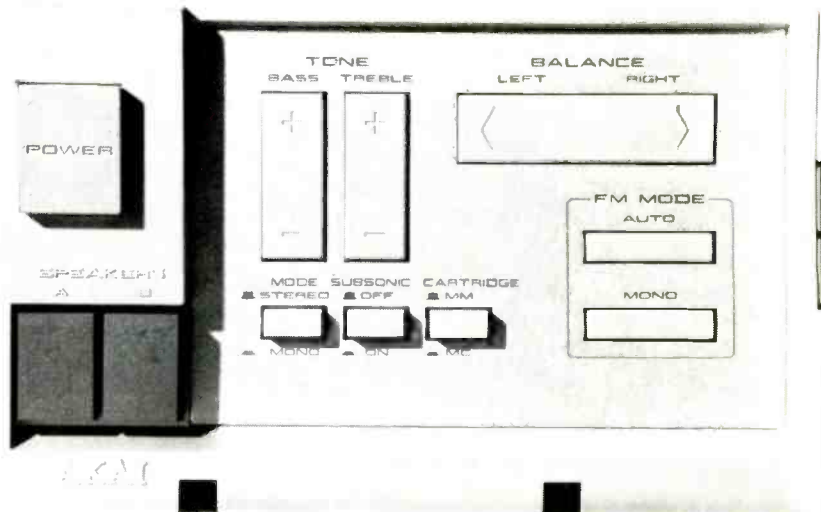
INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW; A-weighting)  
 sensitivity S/N ratio  
 aux input 18.5 mV 84¼ dB  
 fixed-coil phono 0.30 mV 77¼ dB  
 moving-coil phono 30 µV 71 dB

PHONO OVERLOAD (1-kHz clipping)  
 fixed-coil phono 69 mV  
 moving-coil phono 6.9 mV

PHONO IMPEDANCE  
 fixed-coil phono 47.3k ohms; 390 pF  
 moving-coil phono 100 ohms

DAMPING FACTOR (at 50 Hz) 45

INFRASONIC FILTER -3 dB at 16 Hz; 6 dB/octave



*Seldom-used controls on the AA-R42, such as the speaker switches, tone controls, mode switches (FM tuning and mono/stereo), infrasonic filter switch, phono-input selector (fixed-coil or moving-coil), and balance control, are normally concealed behind a flip-down panel.*

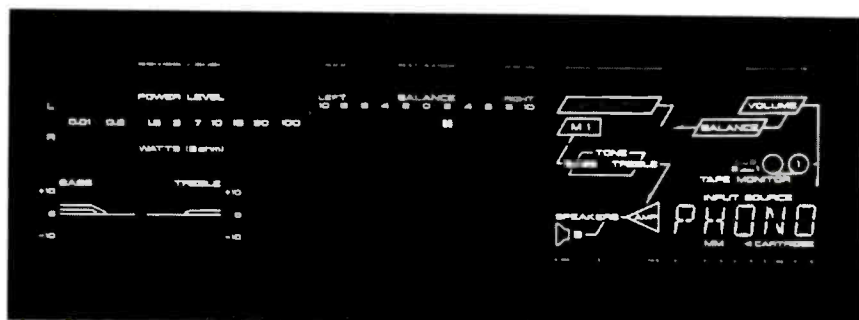
about 100 Hz, the treble at progressively higher frequencies as the boost or cut is increased. In each case, the 10-dB swing between "flat" and the extreme settings is divided into five steps, for increments of about 2 dB in the shelving portions of the curves—a sensible compromise between overly coarse adjustments and gradations so fine as to produce barely discernable differences. The stepping of the volume is extremely regular and predictable, compared to that of detented rotary controls, at very nearly 2 dB per increment throughout its operating range.

The infrasonic filter is truly that, impinging hardly at all on the audible range above 20 Hz. It is not very steep, however, so it may deal with some record-warp or acoustic-feedback problems less effectively than a sharper filter. (The additional fixed rolloff built into the moving-coil circuit should work to boost the infrasonic filter's efficacy when MC pickups are used.) Our only other concerns with the AA-R42's preamp section are its fixed-coil phono-input capacitance, which is rather high for many contemporary pickups, and its phono overload point, which is somewhat low by

current standards (though not enough so as to cause difficulty under normal conditions).

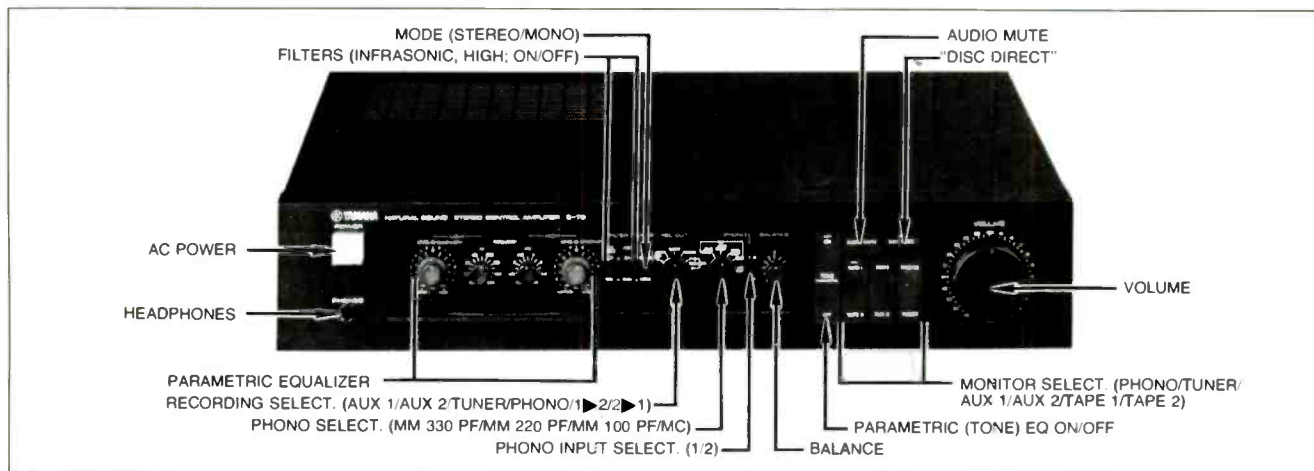
Little need be said about the amplifier section beyond the fact that it is powerful (the dynamic-headroom figure indicates an ability to deliver the equivalent of as much as 90 watts into 8 ohms on musical signals) and without discernable glitches of any sort. The tuner section, perhaps, deserves a little warmer welcome still, though tuners are quite similar these days in most major performance characteristics, and an easily audible difference is so rare as to cause wonderment. Suffice it to say that in all conventional respects this is a thoroughly respectable receiver.

What sets it apart, then, are the ancillaries: the "feel" and the features. The feel may not be to your liking—some people still seem to resist even so commonplace an attribute as digital tuning—but in that case, we should warn you that microprocessor controls are far more than a fad. The AA-R42's many features generally strike us as useful. *How* useful will depend on the user, but there are so many that most prospective buyers should find several with appeal.



*Akai's comprehensive status display includes an elaborate graphical representation of what features are engaged and in some cases their settings, as well. The volume indicator converts to a balance display (as shown here) when the BALANCE is used.*





## Perfectionist Preamp from Yamaha

Yamaha C-70 preamplifier. Dimensions: 17¼ by 3¼ inches (front), 13¼ inches deep plus clearance for controls and connections. Accessory AC outlets: two switched (500 watts max. total); one unswitched (500 watts max.). Price: \$780; optional rack-mount adapters, \$30 per pair. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Nippon Gakki Co., Ltd., Japan; U.S. distributor: Yamaha Electronics Corp. U.S.A., 6660 Drangethorpe Ave., Buena Park, Calif. 90620.

OUTPUT AT CLIPPING	19 volts
HARMONIC DISTORTION (THD; 20 Hz to 20 kHz) aux or phono inputs	<0.01%
FREQUENCY RESPONSE	+0, -¼ dB, <10 Hz to 105 kHz
RIAA EQUALIZATION	
fixed-coil phono	±¼ dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz; -2¾ dB at 5 Hz
moving-coil phono	+<¼, -0 dB, 20 Hz to 20 kHz; -5 dB at 5 Hz
INPUT CHARACTERISTICS (re 0 dBW; A-weighting)	
aux input	sensitivity 52 mV S/N ratio 102¼ dB
fixed-coil phono	0.86 mV 79¼ dB
moving-coil phono	34 µV 84¼ dB
PHONO OVERLOAD (1-kHz clipping)	
fixed-coil phono	320 mV
moving-coil phono	13 mV
PHONO IMPEDANCE	
fixed-coil phono	45.2k ohms; 130 pF 45.2k ohms; 250 pF 45.2k ohms; 360 pF
moving-coil phono	100 ohms 100 ohms
HIGH FILTER	-3 dB at 10 kHz; 12 dB/octave
INFRASONIC FILTER	-3 dB at 15 Hz; 12 dB/octave

JUST OVER THREE YEARS ago (March 1980), we expressed our delight in the Yamaha C-6 with the heading "'Best-Ever' Tone Controls in a Great Preamp." Now the company has taken most of the features we so admired in the earlier model and combined them with several new ones to create a preamp for today's perfectionists. The additions range from unusual to downright unique. For example, the C-70 uses solenoid/relay switching with gold contact surfaces to minimize noise and keep the actual signal switches in the circuits to which they pertain. (Conventional mechanical switching requires that all signals be routed to the front panel and back again.) There are both inverting and noninverting outputs, so that absolute phase can be maintained with any power amp—a subject of considerable interest among some audiophiles, though its importance remains a matter for debate. (See "Retsoff's Remedies" in this issue.) And the handling of phono signals is considerably more advanced than it was in the C-6.

There are four sets of gold input jacks on the back panel. The first two are marked Phono 1 and Phono 2, respectively, and are selected by a switch on the front panel; the other two are collectively labeled direct phono—MM (fixed-coil) and MC (moving-coil), respectively. Yamaha says the direct phono inputs are intended to "ensure the shortest possible signal path with the minimum number of switch contacts [between] the cartridge and the amplifier." To this end, the equalizer/tone-control circuitry and defeat switch, the high filter, the mode switch, and the input selector are all bypassed by signals arriving via these jacks when you push DISC DIRECT just above the selector group. You can use MM and MC simultaneously (assuming you have two turntables and one pickup of each type), selecting the one you want to hear at the

phono loading control next to the Phono 1/2 switch. Yamaha provides jack caps to cover the two pair that are not in use—at once keeping out dust and preventing incorrect connections.

The phono loading control provides three different capacitance options, in parallel with the standard 47,000-ohm resistance, for use with fixed-coil or high-output moving-coil pickups. (The latter, however, are insensitive to loading and will therefore work equally well with any of those settings.) As Diversified Science Laboratories' data show, the resistive loading is a hair lower than nominal (negligibly so), and the listed capacitances evidently are those of the shunt capacitors alone: Actual values measure 130, 250, and 360 picofarads, rather than the 100, 220, and 330 picofarads of the switch markings. This gives a good range of choices. In addition, there's the usual 100-ohm input for a moving-coil pickup and a rather mysterious mutant for which the manual suggests no particular use: a 100-ohm loading without the added gain built into the moving-coil position. A pickup requiring this last configuration hasn't yet come our way.

As you can see in the illustration, the loading switch and Phono 1/2 selector are among the controls that are found behind a flip-down door (which, incidentally, provides a control identification when you look down on it in the open position—a nice touch). There is also a recording selector, whose options include dubbing in either direction between the two decks for which there are connections.

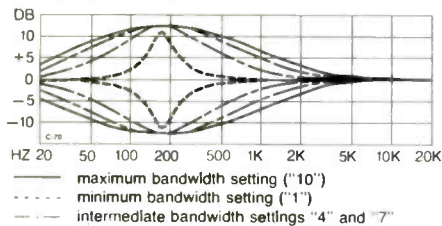
But the most impressive of these concealable features are the parametric tone controls. One covers the low end of the spectrum, the other the treble. Each has a concentric control with elements for the bandwidth affected and the degree of boost or cut (the latter with a center detent at the

**Report Policy:** Equipment reports are based on laboratory measurements and controlled listening tests. Unless otherwise noted, test data and measurements are obtained by Diversified Science Laboratories. The choice of equipment to be tested rests with the editors of HIGH FIDELITY. Samples normally are supplied on loan from the manufacturer. Manufacturers are not permitted to read

reports in advance of publication, and no report or portion thereof may be reproduced for any purpose or in any form without written permission of the publisher. All reports should be construed as applying to the specific samples tested. HIGH FIDELITY and Diversified Science Laboratories assume no responsibility for product performance or quality.

## AUDIO New Equipment Reports

Tone-Control Characteristics (Treble control set "flat"; bass at its mid-frequency, approx. 160 Hz, with its level control at max. and min.)



"flat" position). A separate knob dials the center frequency of the band in which the other two will operate: anywhere between 800 Hz and 20 kHz in the treble and 31.5 and 800 Hz in the bass. DSL's measurements show that the center-frequency knob is quite accurately calibrated as such things go—as are the boost/cut dials, which have a range of  $\pm 12$  dB. (The bandwidth controls are calibrated in arbitrary numbers.)

This three-way adjustability in each band gives the C-70's equalizer section a flexibility undreamed of in conventional tone controls. We also find it more useful than the multislider (though usually fairly simple) graphic equalizers built into some equipment by way of super tone controls, though the comparison is potentially unfair because of the usually significantly higher cost of a parametric design such as Yamaha's. We don't find this incarnation as easy to use as that in the C-6, however. The controls are all rotary, are smaller, and are recessed, making them both harder to get at and less clearly differentiated graphically. (The C-6 used a beautifully judged combination of one slider, one medium-size knob, and one small knob in each of the two bands; the C-70's knobs are easier to con-

fuse.)

Because of its unusually low turnover frequency (15 Hz), the infrasonic filter has very little effect ( $-1\frac{1}{2}$  dB) at 20 Hz, but its fairly steep slope (12 dB per octave) makes it effective where it should be. The high filter also has a 12-dB-per-octave slope and an extreme turnover frequency—10 kHz in this case, which just takes the edge off some very-high-frequency effects. Evidently Yamaha doesn't expect this preamp to be used with any sources that rate less than good.

Frequency response through the direct-phonograph inputs measures extremely flat. It's also very flat through the high-level circuitry: Although we don't bother to show it among our data (the fact that it's only  $\frac{1}{4}$  dB down at 105 kHz tells the story), response does not drop by 3 dB until 422 kHz. Signal-to-noise ratio is also exceptional (thanks in part, apparently, to what Yamaha calls its Varigain volume-control design). As you might expect in a preamp of this quality, harmonic distortion is virtually unmeasurable, while the overload ceiling is more than generous.

What more can we say? Obviously, this is another superlative preamp from Yamaha.

## Stepping Up with Audio Interface

Audio Interface CST-40 moving-coil step-up transformer assembly kit, available in 40-ohm and 3-ohm (nominal pickup output impedance) versions. Dimensions: 3 by 2 inches (front), 4½ inches deep plus clearance for connections. Price \$220. Warranty: "limited," two years parts and labor. Manufacturer: Audio Interface, Inc., P.O. Box 7369, Van Nuys, Calif. 91409.

**FREQUENCY RESPONSE** (loaded with 47k ohms, 390 pF\*)

40-ohm version	+0, $-1\frac{1}{4}$ dB, 24 Hz to 27.4 kHz;
	+0, $-3$ dB, <10 Hz to 73.3 kHz
3-ohm version	+0, $-1\frac{1}{4}$ dB, 30 Hz to 24.9 kHz;
	+0, $-3$ dB, <10 Hz to 64.9 kHz

**VOLTAGE GAIN** (with rated source termination)

40-ohm version	19 dB
3-ohm version	30¼ dB

**DISTORTION (THD; for RIAA-corrected output of 100 mV)\***

	40-ohm	3-ohm
at 20 Hz	0.139%	0.094%
at 40 Hz	0.044%	0.025%
at 100 Hz	0.021%	0.013%

\*See text.



MOVING-COIL PICKUPS have traditionally been considered the Rolls-Royces of phono cartridges, not only because of the hand work that usually goes into their manufacture, but because they typically cost so much more than the far more familiar fixed-coil (moving-magnet, moving iron, and so forth) units. In most cases, part of the added expense is attributable to the head amp or step-up transformer that normally must be interposed between a low-output moving-coil pickup and a regular phono-preamp input. (Many current MC cartridges are designed for relatively high output to solve this problem, but that's another story.) And thereby hangs the present tale: whether to use a head amp or a transformer, and why.

The basic argument in favor of the transformer is simple. Every time an engineer adds an active stage to an electronic system, he is adding distortion and thermal

noise, which are the unavoidable by-products of transistors and other active-circuit ingredients. So wherever a passive circuit (such as a transformer) can be substituted for an active one (such as a head amp), it could result in a potential advantage in the fight against noise and distortion.

A potential advantage. Unless the transformer is designed and built with care, the potential may not be realized: Imperfect transformers can generate considerable distortion, and inadequate shielding can introduce noise. And care has not always been abundant in the production of step-up transformers for moving-coil pickups. As a result, they have earned a reputation as the low-cost alternative to head amps—not the high-performance alternative.

Audio Interface, intent on making step-up transformers for this purpose as near perfect as possible, has used premium parts in its CST-40—or, rather, its CST-





40s, since two versions are available. To keep the price as low as possible, however, the transformer assemblies are available as kits, though the construction is so simple that the process seems hardly more demanding than that of putting together a toy on Christmas Eve. First you mount the connectors (all gold-plated) on the chassis' back panel and the few parts needed for impedance matching on the glass-epoxy circuit board. Then you clamp the circuit card and the two transformers (which are made for Audio Interface by Jensen Transformers) to the bottom of the chassis. Wire the various elements together (carefully, since the twisting and dressing of wire pairs can be critical to achieving low noise), bolt on the top half of the chassis, and you're done.

The "standard" version of the CST-40, in the sense that it will match most moving-coil pickups that need a step-up device, is called the 40-ohm model by Audio Interface. Its input impedance is rated at 420 ohms (at 1 kHz) and its gain at 20 dB, and it is intended for use with pickups with rated output impedances between 11 and 50 ohms. The low-impedance (nominally, 3-ohm), high-gain version is rated at 31 ohms input impedance with 31 dB of gain, for pickups with output impedances between 1.5 and 10 ohms. This choice—which should be made with care on the basis of your pickup's impedance rating—is one of the CST-40's advantages over typical head amps. Those built into preamps and receivers almost never offer any sort of adjustment. Typically, their gain is preset at 20 dB—a good compromise, but less than ideal for some very-low-output cartridges. (A head amp's input impedance is not critical, provided that it's not too low relative to the pickup's output impedance.)

In measuring the performance of the CST-40 (both versions), Diversified Science Laboratories paid particular attention to capacitive loading—a factor that is sometimes virtually overlooked by the designers of step-up transformers. To measure frequency response, a standard resistive load of 47,000 ohms (specified by Audio Interface) was shunted by capacitances of 120, 220, and 390 picofarads. The worst-case results (with the highest capaci-

ance) are shown in the data. Since tonearm wiring and preamp input capacitance seldom add to more than 390 picofarads, bandwidth should be more than adequate in any likely system. In fact, the data for lower capacitance values indicate that the CST-40 is not extremely sensitive to this variable, suggesting good bandwidth well beyond the limits of DSL's test.

Total harmonic distortion (THD) is below our 0.01% reporting threshold—and mostly far below it—through most of the frequency range. Only in the deep bass does THD (with the third harmonic predominating) begin to creep up. Data are shown for three frequencies at the output level necessary for a post-RIAA level of 100 millivolts—in the range where many phono preamps, to which this signal would have to be fed, begin showing signs of overload. Distortion is somewhat higher in the 40-ohm model than in the 3-ohm one and rises sharply at the very bottom of the audio band, where the frequency response of the transformers is beginning to roll off. Even at 40 Hz, however, distortion is quite low. DSL also made measurements at output levels of 50 millivolts (where THD is a bit lower) and at 200 millivolts (where THD is a bit higher and preamp overload even more likely). So at the voltages and frequencies that a preamp would normally have to deal with, distortion is at least acceptably low and generally negligibly low.

We tried comparing the CST-40 to a high-quality head amp with the usual 100-ohm input and 20 dB of gain. With the cartridges available to us, we could discern no material difference between the two—which, considering the quality of the head amp, speaks well for the transformers. We suspect, however, that some pickups with unusually low impedance and output—the sort for which the 3-ohm version of the CST-40 is designed—might actually have demonstrated an audible advantage in the transformer. There will also be a practical one in some installations: Its small size and freedom from controls or power-supply cord make it easy to tuck behind a turntable (or even inside the bases of some models) to shorten leads, reduce the possibility of hum pickup, and minimize clutter.

*Circle 103 on Reader-Service Card*

## Beauty and Bravura from JBL

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE NOT to be impressed by JBL's new flagship loudspeaker—even before you hear it. One reason is that unlike most other audio products, the L-250 makes a strong visual statement. Styled as a truncated, asymmetrical pyramid, it stands almost four-and-a-half feet tall, and even with the grille cloth on, the tweeter remains exposed, looking like a large, golden eye. The impeccably crafted cabinet is available

in several handsome wood finishes, and the grille comes in a variety of colors.

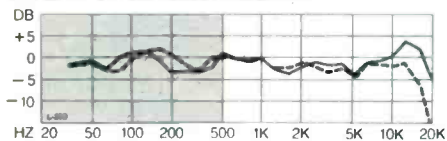
But there's more to the L-250's appearance than meets the eye: Form definitely follows function. For example, the virtual absence of parallel surfaces helps prevent resonance build-ups within the cabinet. The front baffle slopes backward slightly, to align the drivers' acoustical centers for minimum phase error, and tapers





JBL L-250 floor-standing loudspeaker, in wood cabinet with choice of five wood veneers. Dimensions: 22½ by 52¼ inches (front), 14½ inches deep. Price \$1,500 to \$2,000, depending on finish. Warranty: "limited," five years parts and labor. Manufacturer: James B. Lansing Sound, Inc., 8500 Balboa Blvd., Northridge, Calif. 91329.

#### ROOM RESPONSE CHARACTERISTICS



— boundary-dependent region  
 — on-axis response\*  
 - - - - off-axis (30°) response\*

SENSITIVITY (at 1 meter; 2.8-volt pink noise, 250 Hz to 6 kHz) 88¼ dB

AVERAGE IMPEDANCE (250 Hz to 6 kHz) 9.6 ohms

\*See text

from bottom to top, to minimize the baffle area around each driver. JBL also rounds the cabinet edges, for minimum diffraction, and builds the speakers in mirror-image pairs, to promote accurate stereo imaging.

Each L-250 has four drivers configured in a near-vertical array: a 14-inch woofer near the bottom of the cabinet, an 8-inch lower-midrange driver, a 5-inch upper-midrange driver, and a 1-inch soft-dome tweeter at the top. All have cast frames (a JBL hallmark), and the two low-range drivers use JBL SFG (Symmetrical Field Geometry) magnet structures to keep distortion low at high drive levels. The woofer's output at very low frequencies is extended by a rear-firing port; the other drivers are isolated by their own subchambers to prevent undesirable acoustic interactions.

Crossovers are achieved with relatively gentle 6-dB-per-octave networks for low phase error and the smoothest possible transitions between drivers. JBL says that it selected the actual crossover points (400 Hz, 1.5 kHz, and 5 kHz) to assure low distortion, high power-handling capability, wide dispersion at all frequencies, and smooth frequency response both on and off axis. The company has also taken the unusual step of adding high-quality polypropylene or polystyrene bypass capacitors in parallel with the large electrolytics in the crossover circuits. The aim, according to JBL, is to improve the filter characteristics.

Amplifier connections are made to a pair of color-coded binding posts near the bottom of a large recess in the back panel. The remainder of the inset is occupied by three-position attenuators for each of the two midrange drivers and a four-position one for the tweeter. To assure unimpeded current transfer, JBL has elected to use screw-down bus bars instead of switches or potentiometers to select the degree of attenuation. This tends to discourage frequent readjustment, since changing the setting on one driver requires the removal and replacement of as many as six screws.

Our samples were delivered with the lower-midrange attenuator down one notch (nominally  $-1\frac{1}{2}$  dB), the upper-midrange down one notch ( $-1$  dB), and the tweeter down two notches ( $-2\frac{1}{2}$  dB). Diversified Science Laboratories ran response curves with the attenuators set as delivered and at their nominally flat positions. The former settings yielded smoother curves, so they were used for all further lab and listening tests. Per the manufacturer's recommendations, the L-250s were placed several feet from any walls with their grilles removed.

The speaker's sensitivity is moderately high, and as one would expect from the

design, its power-handling ability is excellent. On 300-Hz tone bursts, the L-250 accepted the full output of DSL's amplifier—65 volts peak, equivalent to 27¼ dBW (530 watts) into 8 ohms. And total harmonic distortion (THD) is exceptionally low for a loudspeaker, even at very high levels. At a sound pressure level (SPL) of 100 dB, THD averages less than 1% over DSL's full test range (30 Hz to 10 kHz) and never rises above 5% at any frequency. At a much more moderate 85 dB SPL, distortion never makes it even to 1¼% and averages only about ¼%.

Impedance varies smoothly with frequency, reaching a maximum of 21.5 ohms at 20 Hz and a minimum of 6.1 ohms at approximately 110 Hz. Given that, and the very safe average impedance of 9.6 ohms, we would have no compunction about driving a pair of L-250s in parallel with another set of speakers with any decent amplifier or receiver.

Response is within  $\pm 4$  dB from approximately 30 Hz to 20 kHz on axis and to 16 kHz off axis. These figures do not adequately reflect, however, the overall smoothness of the curves. For example, from 30 Hz to 10 kHz, response is within approximately  $\pm 2\frac{1}{2}$  dB on axis and  $\pm 3\frac{1}{2}$  dB off. And the bass extension is clearly extraordinary—especially in light of the absence of any reinforcement from nearby walls.

This particular aspect of the JBL's performance has been driven home to us again and again during our listening tests: Its low-end reach, impact, and clarity are simply stunning. Overall, the sound is very smooth, with an occasional twinge of brightness on instruments such as triangles. The L-250 somehow manages to shelter comfortably under one roof a gutsy, up-front quality and a sensitive delicacy of reproduction seldom found together in such full flower in a single loudspeaker. It seems at home with any sort of material, able to maintain its clarity and composure at any volume—from the very soft to the very loud—in almost any frequency range.

Imaging is generally excellent, with good precision and lateral spread and a nice sense of depth and openness. There is some tendency to vertical stratification according to frequency, which occasionally causes high-pitched sounds to be localized somewhat above lower-frequency sounds. But this is fairly common among speakers having multiple drivers vertically distributed on a tall baffle and is rarely intrusive.

The evidence all points to JBL's engineering team having succeeded admirably in achieving its design goals. The result is not a speaker everyone will think beautiful, nor one many can afford. But the L-250 is a very fine reproducer of music, which for some is all that matters.

## SPECIAL REPORT

# Spring New Product Guide

From laser audio players to the latest in loudspeakers and video components, HF's editors survey the scene at the Winter Consumer Electronics Show.

IT SOMETIMES SEEMS unfortunate that audio equipment should be subsumed under "consumer electronics": Microwave ovens, telephones, solar calculators, and video games seem altogether more comfortable nestled under that descriptive blanket. Wandering down the aisles of the Las Vegas Convention Center during the recent Winter Consumer Electronics Show, one might have thought that audio manufacturers had come to the same conclusion and were avoiding the show's plebeian atmosphere. ("So, Harvey, I'll take 10,000 receivers if you take 20% off the price sheet.") For aside from a handful of mainstream audio companies (Pioneer, for instance, had a booth that rivaled many homes in square footage, and the congenial Messrs Koss kept their traditional post), the main floor of the semiannual show was dominated by this year's glamour products—video games and home computers.

The reality is that the Consumer Electronics Show has always been an accurate barometer of consumer buying patterns, and audio equipment has suffered greatly this past year. The expense of exhibiting alone kept many audio companies off the show floor and tucked away in a variety of hotel suites throughout Las Vegas. Though we are not so naive as to believe that com-

puter-related hardware and software will recede from the public consciousness and purse, we are reminded of a situation several years ago when those same aisles resounded with shouts of "rubber duckie" and "that's a big 10-4" as CB radio enjoyed its moment in the sun.

This past CES will, however, be remembered as the true inauguration of the digital audio age. Just about every Japanese manufacturer was either displaying its own Compact Disc player or explaining to any and all that it would soon have one ready to sell. Only Sony announced a firm market introduction date for its CD player, and its first players should be arriving right now at fifty hand-picked dealers nationwide. On the European front, Polygram (the Philips-owned record conglomerate) attracted lots of attention with its main-floor display of CD titles. And Philips' subsidiary Magnavox surprised everyone with four CD player models and its marketing plans for them. But more about that later.

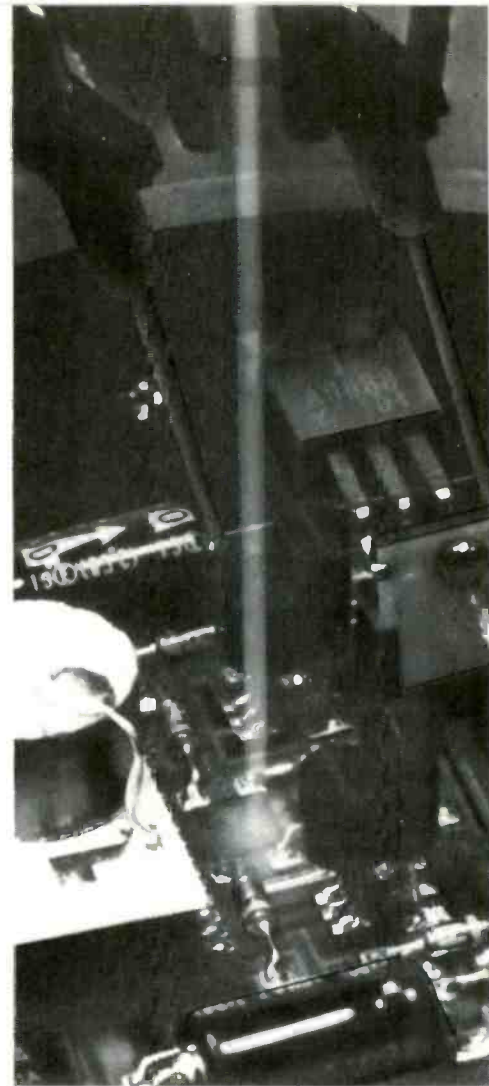
For those of us accustomed to being blitzed by video hardware introductions at past shows, this CES was notably short on new gear. The big news was Beta Hi-Fi, Sony's frequency-modulation (FM) technique for extracting heretofore unobtainable audio performance from a VCR. At a

heavily attended press conference, we learned that the original nine Beta VCR licensees (Marantz, NEC, Toshiba, Sanyo, Teknika, Sears, Sony, Aiwa, and Zenith) are being joined by Nakamichi and Pioneer.

As you will see in our detailed coverage that follows, the bulk of the exciting new audio gear came in the form of electronics and speakers, chiefly from small American audio companies. Though not immune to the exigencies of a poor economy, their low overhead, limited distribution, and well-heeled customer base help them maintain a more secure position than most of the mass-market manufacturers.

In the following pages, Peter Dobbin covers audio electronics (amps, preamps, tuners, and receivers), signal processors, digital audio equipment, and loudspeakers; Michael Riggs tackles recording-playing equipment; and Robert Long turns his attention to tape recorders, blank tape, and tape accessories. William Tynan covers video hardware, and Susan Elliott software.

Above: A laser beam trims a resistor as a computer monitors changing electrical values in a Citation XX amplifier.





## Digital

THE WAIT IS OVER: Digital audio disc (DAD) players are now available. And, if you're lucky enough to live near one of the fifty dealers Sony has picked to carry its initial U.S. allotment of CDP-101s, you can buy one right now. (See our coverage of this model in December 1982.) At a meeting with Sony executives at the CES, we learned that the initial rollout will be accompanied by about fifty CBS/Sony CD titles priced at \$17 each.

As codeveloper of the Compact Disc system with Sony, Philips will be introducing four separate Magnavox CD players (differing only in cosmetics) this summer in selected department stores—Magnavox's traditional distribution outlets. Audiophiles may find this an odd marketing strategy, but the convenience and ease of the CD format makes it quite appropriate for the mass market. Magnavox is probably also betting that this kind of exposure will go a long way toward educating the general consumer about the radical new audio format. At an estimated price of \$1,000, the players will no doubt elicit more "oohs" and "aahs" than purchases.

Though just about every Japanese manufacturer was demonstrating its own CD player, all were somewhat vague about their marketing plans. A statement from Yamaha sums up the general attitude: "Introduction will take place during the second half of '83 to correspond with the availability of American disc software. The delay is due to the lack of commitment by record manufacturers to enter the DAD player software market."

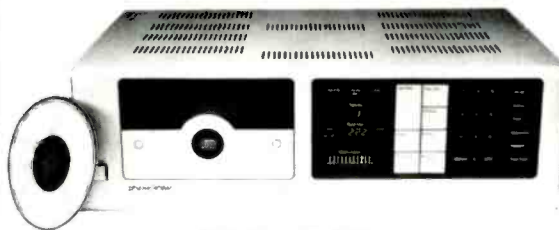
This admittedly places CDs availability in a kind of chicken-or-egg limbo, but the software situation is hardly as bleak as Yamaha paints it. CBS has said it will import CBS/Sony CDs from Japan (see sidebar), and Polygram plans to support the Magnavox player's rollout with titles from its 200-disc European library (see listing in the January HF). Denon also announced that it will back the introduction of its player this spring with about ten CDs a month from its 600-title Japanese digital library (see sidebar). Even RCA will dip its toes in the digital waters with twenty custom pressings of its titles. Smaller labels, such as Nautilus, Vanguard, Telarc, and Real-Time, are also busy arranging to have their catalogs remastered onto Compact Discs. We're still waiting for the largest American label, Warner, to announce its plans, but rumor has it that the Japan-based Pioneer/



Alwa CD player



Sharp digital cassette deck



Phase Linear CD player



Mitsubishi CD player

### Digital Audio: Limited Availability

Though there was an abundance of CD players at the show, only Sony and Magnavox announced marketing plans; Sony's player is available now in a limited number of audio specialty stores and Magnavox's units will appear in department stores this summer. Sharp's prototype digital Compact Cassette deck may spark renewed interest in the practicality of 1/8-inch digital recording.

### Latest Additions to the Compact Disc Catalog

#### CBS/SONY

##### Classical

**Beethoven: Symphony No. 5. Schubert: Symphony No. 8.** Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Maazel.  
**Beethoven: Wellington's Victory. Tchaikovsky: 1812 Overture.** Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Maazel.  
**Holst: The Planets.** Orchestre National de France, Maazel.  
**Prokofiev: Symphony No. 5.** Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, Bernstein.  
**Shostakovich: Symphony No. 5.** New York Philharmonic, Bernstein.  
**Strauss, R.: Also sprach Zarathustra.** New York Philharmonic, Mehta.  
**Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5.** Cleveland Orchestra, Maazel.  
*Isaac Stern: Sixtieth Anniversary Celebration.* New York Philharmonic, Mehta.

##### Popular/Jazz

**Miles Davis: The Man with the Horn.**  
**Earth, Wind & Fire: Raise.**  
**Michael Jackson: Off the Wall.**  
**Billy Joel: The Nylon Curtain.**

*Santana: Shango.*

**Bruce Springsteen: Born to Run.**

**Barbra Streisand: Guilty.**

**Weather Report: Night Passage.**

#### DENON

##### Classical

**Bach: Organ Works.** Hans Otto (Silbermann organ).  
**Beethoven: Symphony No. 3.** Berlin State Orchestra, Suitner.  
**Beethoven: Symphony No. 5.** Berlin State Orchestra, Suitner.  
**Dvořák: Symphony No. 9.** Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Neumann.  
**Mozart: String Quartets Nos. 15, 17.** Smetana Quartet.  
**Mozart: String Quartets, K. 515, 516.** Suk; Smetana Quartet.  
**Vivaldi: Four Seasons.** Larsen; Lucerne Festival Strings, Baumgartner.  
*Jean-Jacques Kantorow: Gypsy Melodies.* New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, Inoue.

##### Popular/Jazz

**Duet/Archie Shepp: Dollar Brand.**  
**Max Roach Quartet: Live in Tokyo.**

# SPECIAL REPORT

Warner joint venture will soon start to export CDs to these shores.

Other digital developments include the introduction of PCM (pulse code modulation) processors by a number of Japanese companies. Sony's PCM-701ES is a stay-at-home version of its PCM-F1 for about half the price (approximately \$1,000). Sharp's RX-3 processor is slated to come in at less than \$1,000, and Nakamichi and Teac promise to introduce a PCM processor shortly.

Since PCM processors all demand a companion VCR as a data storage device, there has been much work over the past two years in designing a fixed-head Compact Cassette recorder capable of handling digital audio. Early prototypes all sacrificed playing time or audio bandwidth to accommodate the staggering data storage requirements of PCM recording. Because of these limitations and the lack of a single standardized approach, we saw only one new prototype this year. But what a beauty it is: Sharp's CX-3 is designed to overcome earlier attempts' shortcomings. It preserves normal tape speed (1 7/8 in/sec) and playing time, while holding to the EIAJ standard sampling rate of 44.1 kHz. It accomplishes this with an eighteen-track recording head (sixteen for recording plus one control and one "spare"), each track capable of recording 70.6 kilobits of digital data per inch on chromium-dioxide tape. (Computer ma-

vens might note that this implies the ability to store an incredible 700 megabytes of data on *one side* of a C-90 cassette.) And the multilayer head records on only one half of the total tape width; thus, as in analog cassette recorders, a C-90 tape will yield ninety minutes of recording and playback time.—P.D.

## Electronics

WALKING THROUGH THE corridors of the Riviera Hotel, which housed most of the audio exhibits at the CES, one couldn't help but be impressed with the enthusiasm of the small American companies and the innovative thinking reflected by their new products. Florida-based Acoustat displayed its Trans-Nova preamp (\$850), which uses FETs throughout and has enough gain to accommodate moving-coil cartridges without a separate head amp. Carver has a new preamp, styled to match its highly regarded TX-11 tuner. Dubbed the C-2, the \$350

unit has two tape inputs, provision for two-way dubbing, an external-processor loop, and a moving-coil input. And Nova Electro-Acoustics' \$1,600 CPA-100 preamp lets you correct for inverted-phase recordings by providing an absolute phase (polarity) switch.

The David Hafler Company continues its everyman approach with the DH-100 preamp, a scaled-down version of the earlier DH-110 and a replacement for its first product, the venerable DH-101. Offered as a kit (\$150) or prewired (\$225), the DH-100 is billed as a "total scratch-build kit," which we take to mean that every component must be soldered into the unit's printed circuit board. We were also much taken with the DC-301 preamp from recently reborn Fosgate Research. It has a phono section with adjustable loading, two tape-monitor loops, and DNR noise reduction.

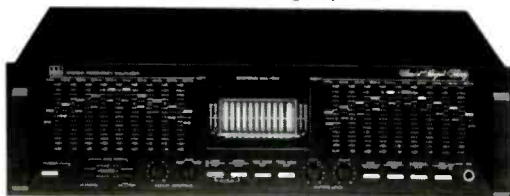
Harman-Kardon's high-end Citation division commissioned Dr. Matti Otala (see "Sound Views," pg. 12) to design the XXP (\$3,500) and X-II (\$2,500), two no-compromise preamps. Per Dr. Otala's long-standing insistence on the importance of wide open-loop bandwidth and low negative feedback, the XXP has a rated frequency response of DC to 300 kHz with just 20 dB of negative feedback. Its phono equalization network, which Citation calls a Dual-RIAA circuit, uses both passive and active stages. The XXP's lower-cost sib-

### Developments in Separates

Manufacturers seem to be holding off their major receiver and integrated amp introductions for the Summer CES. Most of the new electronics at this show were high-end preamps and amps. In signal processors, DBX displayed two new products, and Pioneer and Sansui showed multifunction effects boxes.



DBX 4BX dynamic range expander



ADC Sound Shaper Thirty equalizer/analyzer



Perreux 2150B power amp



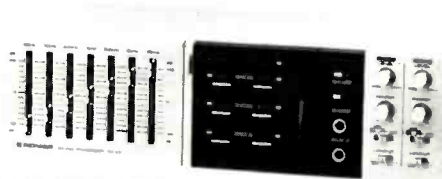
Citation XXP preamp



Adcom GFT-1A tuner



Carver C-2 preamp



Pioneer CA-X7 effects box



Sherwood S-2680CP receiver



ling, the X-11, throws in some additional nonpurist features, such as tone controls and two tape-monitor loops.

Audiophiles convinced that tubes offer more than a comforting glow might want to investigate the latest efforts from Audible Illusions, a company that once offered tube gear in kit form. Its latest preamp, the \$450 Modulus 1, is available only in a factory-built version, as is the Uranus 2 dual-mono tube preamp (\$1,000), a heavily modified version of its predecessor. And Counterpoint, a company that has consistently impressed us with their philosophy that an audio product should look as good as it sounds, introduced the SA-5 (\$1,600) and SA-3 (\$800) preamps and the SA-2 (\$900) head amp.

There was an abundance of intriguing new power-amp designs this year. Audire's new \$6,000 Monarch, for instance, is shaped like a portable electric radiator. A mono Class A amp, it weighs 150 pounds, is mounted on casters, and stands 42 inches high. The Monarch is rated at 100 watts (20 dBW) into 8 ohms, but its designers also specify its output into lower-impedance loads—all the way down to 1 ohm (720 watts, or 28½ dBW). A tad more conservative in shape and price is Audire's Otez amp (\$2,750), a stereo Class AB design rated at 250 watts (24 dBW) into 8 ohms.

Revox's 100-watt (20 dBW) B-740 is said to be identical in design to the Studer A-68 professional amplifier, using all discrete components instead of ICs. Hafler has modified its popular DH-200 amp and come up with the DH-220 (\$349 kit, \$449 pre-wired), which offers 15% more power than its 100-watt (20 dBW) predecessor. Soundcraftsmen's new XA-2200 (\$400) bears the faceplate legend, "Digital Switchmode MOSFET." Though the company is being guarded about precisely what that means, it's quite clear that the compact amp, rated at 200 watts (23 dBW) per side, is a high-efficiency design.

Other notable introductions include Citation's \$3,500 X-1, rated at 150 watts (21¼ dBW) per side with an instantaneous current capability of 100 amps. Perreaux, a New Zealand company, comes to these shores with the 200-watt (23-dBW) Model 2150B and the 100-watt (20-dBW) Model 1150B, priced at \$1,480 and \$990, respectively. PS Audio's latest, the Two-C (\$400), is rated at 55 watts (17½ dBW) per side and uses an outboard power supply. And Bob Carver is offering an amplifier styled to complement the new C-2 preamp and TX-11 tuner. Dubbed the M-200T, this high-efficiency power amp is rated at 120 watts (20¼ dBW).

With lots of integrated amps sitting unsold on dealers' shelves, it's not surprising that manufacturers were hesitant to introduce many new ones at the CES. Yamaha is replacing its Model A-560 with the A-500, which offers 70 watts (18½ dBW) of output for \$300. (The older unit

cost the same, but was rated at 55 watts.) The A-500 has a continuously adjustable loudness control and independent record-out and source-in selectors. Pioneer's four new Progression IV integrated amplifiers range in power output and price from 65 watts (18 dBW) at \$280 to 20 watts (13 dBW) at \$110. All measure less than 4 inches high and 9 inches deep. Sansui, too, takes a slim-line approach with its new AD-101 (\$199), which uses Super Feedforward circuitry and is rated at 30 watts (14¼ dBW) per side.

In tuners, Pioneer showed its new F-X9 Progression IV frequency-synthesis model (\$250), which comes equipped with a programmable timer for unattended system switching. Still a few months away from market introduction is the company's first tuner to incorporate its digital direct decoder. (See "Spring Stereo Component Preview," March.) Hafler's first tuner, the frequency-synthesis DH-330, is available as a kit (\$300) or prewired (\$400) and is styled to complement the DH-110 preamp. Sherwood's TD-2010CP (\$200) and Yamaha's T-500 (\$230) are both beautifully styled units with oversized station preset buttons. And finally, Adcom is replacing its GFT-1 with the GFT-1A (\$375) for improved performance.

Receiver introductions were also few and far between. In fact, Sherwood was the only company to show a full new line—four frequency-synthesis models ranging in price from \$220 to \$480. The top model, the S-2680CP, boasts an output of 70 watts (18½ dBW), sixteen station presets (eight for AM and eight for FM), and two-way dubbing capability. Harman Kardon's single new receiver, the hk-380i (\$300), has an analog tuning scale and is rated at 30 watts (14¼ dBW).

Denon has retired the DRA-600 in favor of the DRA-700 (\$550), a 60-watt (17¼-dBW) receiver with the company's low-negative-feedback circuitry. The economical DRA-300 (\$300) also joins the line and is rated at 30 watts (14¼ dBW) per side. The people at Scott told us that they are working on five new receiver models that will be ready for shipment in May. Also in the works from Boothroyd Stuart is a modular system whose "building blocks" enable you to construct anything from a simple integrated amp to a multi-input, full-function receiver.

If you're shopping for a graphic equalizer and would like to do some live recording, you might be interested in two multi-function devices from Pioneer and Sansui. Pioneer's CA-X7 (\$250) has a seven-band graphic equalizer, a variable echo control, and two microphone inputs with level controls and pan pots. Sansui's RG-707 (\$260) is similar but adds separate five-band equalizers for each mike input and does not have pan pots. ADC has a new line of four graphic equalizers, ranging in price from \$130 to \$400. The top-of-the-line Sound Shaper,

which comes with a calibrated microphone, is a dual-channel, ten-band design with a built-in spectrum analyzer and pink-noise generator. AudioSource's second equalizer introduction is a dual-channel, five-band model retailing for \$100.

DBX's Model 4BX is a three-band dynamic range expander with a new feature the company calls impact restoration. The circuit is said to increase the punch and immediacy of musical attacks by restoring the transient peaks that are clipped or muted during recording or broadcasting. The \$1,000 unit comes with a wireless remote control with which the listener can adjust volume, degree of expansion, and impact restoration level. And finally, Fosgate Research is offering an ambience-recovery system based on the Tate SQ chip. —P.D.

## Tape and Tape Equipment

IT MAY BE SYMPTOMATIC of our times that, with scores of new recorders to dally over this year, we saw only one open-reel deck—and it's an updated version of a model that has been on the market for some time. The Revox B-77 Mk. II has a built-in editing block, motor-assisted cueing, enhanced transport logic and a variable speed control (available as an option in the past), which changes pitch by as much as a full tone in either direction. Revox also offers an optional (\$150) variable speed control in its B-710 cassette deck. (If you already own one, the company will retrofit it for you.) Its total adjustment range is listed as ±25%—a major third up to a perfect fourth down.

The Nakamichi Dragon, reviewed in this issue (see pg. 28), remains one of the most impressive new cassette entries, particularly because of its automatic adjustment system for playback-head azimuth. It is also the company's first bidirectional deck. Teac's superdeck entry is a whole collection: the three-model Z Series, designed to outpace and replace the company's C-Series "professional" decks. Each of the new models has Dolby B, Dolby C, and DBX noise reduction built in; a rugged die-cast chassis; separate adjustments (for bias, recording level, and recording EQ) for each of three types of tape and for each channel; Teac's CPS random-access feature; and real-time tape counting. Tape matching in the top model, the Z-7000 (\$1,800), is automatic; in the Z-6000 and Z-5000, it can be adjusted manually via oscillator switches and set-screw adjustments.

## SPECIAL REPORT

Yamaha has addressed the "advanced" recordist with two monitor-head cassette decks, both incorporating Dolby B and DBX. Among the features of the K-2000 and K-1000 is what Yamaha calls Linear EM Transduction, a recording-amp design said to reduce intermodulation between audio and bias frequencies. The K-2000 (\$795, in black only) has Yamaha's Orbit automatic bias adjustment system; bias adjustment is manual in the K-1000 (\$595 in black or silver).

A new addition from Harman-Kardon is the \$330 CD-101, the lowest-priced model in the line with Dolby C. (All of the company's decks are designed around its ultrawideband-response concept.) The models in Denon's latest DR-M Series all have Dolby B and C and enhanced "user-friendliness." Prices range from \$400 for the DR-M2 to \$600 for the DR-M4. (We reported on the DR-M3 in the February issue.)

Among Hitachi's three new decks is the modestly priced (\$230) bidirectional D-RV7 with the company's DRPS random-access programming and Dolby B and C. The D-E7 (\$370) is unidirectional and has separate recording and playback heads and Dolby B and C. Pioneer's Progression IV series includes two cassette-deck introductions: the \$380 bidirectional CT-X9 and the

\$190 CT-X6.

Sansui's new dual-transport D-W9 (\$450) can record in either transport, making it possible to segue from one cassette to the other while recording material too long for a single cassette side. The transports can be programmed to switch sequentially at the ends of the sides, recording any length of program if the recorded cassettes are replaced with fresh ones at appropriate intervals. The usual dubbing function is available as well, and Dolby C is included. Other new models in the Sansui line range from the \$680 D-970B, with random-access and Dolby C, to the \$190 D-55M.

Among Sherwood's many introductions this year are two cassette models, the \$230 S-250CP with Dolby C and the \$200 S-150CP without it. Most very-low-price models don't have Dolby C, though Scott's budget 639 DM, scheduled for May delivery, has both B and C. Nikko has incorporated both in the ND-800C (\$380) and in its new top model, the ND-1000C (\$580), which can automatically adjust bias, recording sensitivity, and recording EQ for whatever tape you are using. A third introduction, the \$240 ND-620, is expected soon.

Sanyo has a number of moderately priced new models, including the \$190 bi-

directional RDR-60. It has also added a two-transport deck, the \$220 RDW-310, which enables dubbing at 2½ times normal transport speed. Fisher has two new models, both with Dolby C: the CR-356 (\$250) and CR-127 (\$200).

There are myriad decks conceived as part of a one-brand system or built into other table-top or portable equipment. By far the most impressive thing I saw in this genre was the Beocenter 7700—a \$2,000 remote-controllable integrated music system for FM, LPs, and cassettes. It will do almost everything except walk the dog.

There is also a virtual continuum of models ranging from P-Compo portable systems (essentially microcomponents with a handle) down to the shirt-pocket miniatures, with various boom boxes and what-nots along the way. Sanyo and Sharp both have dual-transport models that let you dub wherever your dry cells will take you. And Sony—never at a loss for interesting new wrinkles—has developed what it calls the Music Shuttle. In the car, it is an AM/FM/cassette receiver, but the cassette deck slides out for Walkman-like use when you decide to continue on foot. And Hitachi has introduced a bidirectional personal cassette player: the CP/7EX, at \$120.

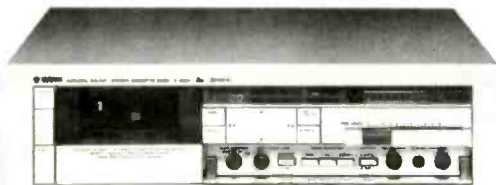
Perhaps most significant for future

### Tape Hardware: More for Less

New cassette decks this season include more features and capabilities for the dollar. Harman Kardon uses Dolby C in its least expensive deck, Yamaha continues with DBX, Sansui packs in two transports, and Sanyo offers bidirectional playback. In personal portables, Aiwa says its microcassette player is the smallest available. And in accessories, Koss bows low-cost headphones and Discwasher a nonelectronic head demagnetizer.



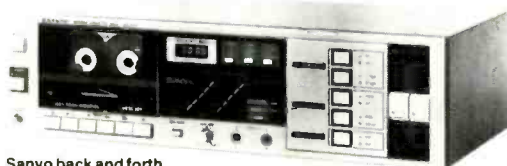
Dolby C for Harman Kardon



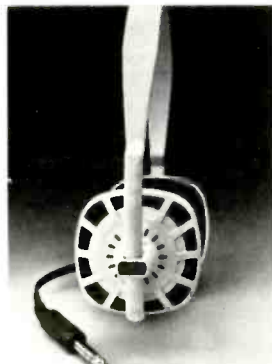
DBX for Yamaha



Two transports for Sansui



Sanyo back and forth



Low-cost Koss



Discwasher's D'Mag



The littlest Aiwa





**Tape: Fast Forward**

The biggest development in audio tape is Matsushita's dual-layer vapor-deposited Angrom-Du formulation. BASF debuts its first 120-minute metal tape and Loran a new Type 1 tape. In video, TDK and Fuji have higher High Grades.

Matsushita Angrom-Du

TDK Extra High Grade

BASF's 2-hour metal

Fuji Super High Grade

Loran's New Type 1

portables is the development by four companies (Hitachi, Rohm, Signetics, and Toko) of Dolby B integrated circuits that need only a 3-volt nominal power supply. Infinity waited for the arrival of the 6-volt chip, requiring only four AA cells, before becoming the first company to incorporate Dolby B in a personal portable. Before that, Dolby chips required 12-volt power supplies, which translated into eight AA cells—far too weighty for a personal model. Now, only two AA cells (or, for longer battery life, multiples thereof) will be required. Some of these models retain the 6-volt chips with a voltage doubler, but several companies have already filed approval prototypes with Dolby Laboratories using the Rohm true 3-volt chip.

In blank cassette tape, the biggest news may be the appearance of Matsushita's Angrom-Du in Japan this spring. Angrom—a tape in which the magnetic coating is applied by a vapor-deposition process, rather than coated onto the backing from a slurry—has been on the market for several years in microcassettes, where its extra bandwidth is particularly desirable. Angrom-Du is a dual-layer version formulated to be compatible with Type 2 (chrome) tape settings in recorders. In addition to the extended bandwidth, Matsushita claims extra dynamic range—as much as 110 dB with DBX noise reduction. U.S. availability and price have yet to be announced.

As we mentioned last month, Memorex tape no longer is made by Memorex. Following Tandy's purchase of the tape division, its name has been changed to Memtek Products—though the tape's brand name remains the same. New in the product line are three grades of microcassettes: metal, MRX ferric, and MMC ferric, the last primarily for dictation. In the Compact Cassette line, the DB Series has been added as a modestly priced cousin to the premium MRX ferric series.

BASF is the first to offer a Type 4 (metal) C-120. The company says it took two years to solve the problems that have led deck manufacturers to look askance at C-120s. The properties of the base film, the magnetic coating, and the shell all had to be adjusted to achieve this "two-hour true high fidelity cassette." Price of the C-120 is listed as \$14—just about the price of the first metal C-90s on the market.

Nakamichi has added a second Type 2 tape, a dual-layer ferricobalt called SX-II. The 3M Company has reintroduced the Scotch Master cassette line as XS-I, XS-II, and XSM-IV (respectively, ferric, ferricobalt, and metal). Sony's newest Type 2 tape is UCX, developed from the magnetic particle used in UCX-S tape, introduced last year.

Loran has added High Bias II and Normal Bias I, both new formulations. And there's a new Type 1 tape in the Denon line: DX-4. Other Denon tapes are said to benefit

from improvements in formulation or shell design. Meanwhile, Teac has entered the blank tape market with a premium Type 1 (normal) and a Type 2 (chrome). Both are available only in C-60 length because of the internal construction of the cassettes: Instead of the usual hub-and-slipsheet design, tiny aluminum reels are used for ultraprecise tape handling.

In video tapes, Super HG ultraperformance formulations are the big news. Fuji has followed up its VHS introduction with Beta Super HG. TDK has announced its version (called Extra High Grade) in both VHS (including the new compact TC-20 format) and Beta. The 3M Company calls its version HGX-Plus, which will be offered in both formats. Also new in the regular Scotch line is a T-160 length (eight hours at EP speed) for VHS.

Memtek has revised its whole Memorex VHS line with three grades: High Grade, Pro Series, and standard, in descending order of performance and price. Meanwhile, BASF is among the manufacturers offering the TC-20 format—with a Chromdioxid Super magnetic coating.

Discwasher is selling the \$20 D'Mag, an audio cassette-deck degausser built into a cassette shell. (Incidentally, Discwasher is among the many familiar audio brands you're likely to encounter in your local computer store, as accessory companies broaden their sights.) Koss has moved into head cleaners for video decks with what it calls the Clean'n Toss line. And Allsop continues to broaden its line of tape-head and disc cleaners.

Among many new high-performance interconnect devices from Monster Cable are three signal cables. Interlink III, with oxygen-free conductor wire, sells for \$30 per 1/2-meter pair; Interlink High Resolution, with a balanced pair of Litz-wire conductors surrounded by a copper-braid shield, for \$50 per meter pair; and Interlink Reference, which uses a three-wire multi-gauge network for each conductor to preserve "signal coherency," for \$80 per meter pair.

Among the new microphones are the Audio-Technica AT-9200 unidirectional electret condenser, which sells for \$30 including a slip-on desk stand. Shure's latest unidirectional dynamic mike is the \$48 SP-19, available in both high- and low-impedance models.

The Russound/FMP line of switching accessories continues to grow, with new versions of the TMS-3 and TMS-5 recorder switching boxes, a new patch bay design (the FP-24R, at \$180), and a variety of units appropriate for rack-mount and high-level distribution systems.

And, finally, Koss has added a new lightweight headphone, the \$20 K-20. But most companies are concentrating on the ultralight designs popularized by personal portables. Pioneer alone has four introductions in this area.—R.L.

# SPECIAL REPORT

## Speakers

THOUGH SOME PEOPLE PERSIST in comparing loudspeakers by the size (or number) of their drivers, we've often said that such yardsticks are meaningless indicators of sound quality. Can you predict the low-frequency output of a system on the basis of its woofer's diameter or magnet weight? Of course not. We've heard some pretty miserable-sounding loudspeakers that should've sounded great if those were important factors. So rather than detail those "specifications" here, we will be providing such information as sensitivity (efficiency), cabinet size, and price—all of which should prove far more useful in determining whether a speaker will complement your system and listening room. And though it hardly needs restating, the ultimate criterion is the sound.

As in years past, new speaker introductions can be divided into two groups: those from the seasoned veterans in the industry, and those from eager young newcomers out to make their mark. In the former camp, AR is offering three new two-way bookshelf speakers, all spec'd at 88 dB

sensitivity and ranging in price from \$90 to \$120. All of these speakers, which replace the older "S" series, have ferrofluid-cooled tweeters for high power handling, and the top-of-the-line 28B has a new, lower-distortion woofer, as well. Cosmetics have been modified, too: The front panels of the 8B (a brand new model), 18B, and 28B are beveled for a more finished appearance. Advent's new top-of-the-line Model 6003 (\$380) is a very handsome floor-standing design. Said to be "the best speaker Advent has ever built," the 6003 is the company's first three-way unit and has a rated sensitivity of 89 dB.

Yamaha has pulled out all the stops with the NS-2000 (\$1,500), a no-compromise three-way system with driver cones fabricated of exotic materials. The net effect, says the company, is a speaker capable of "tonal purity, freedom from distortion, and uniform dispersion." A more modestly priced addition to the Yamaha line is the \$275 NS-W1 powered subwoofer. A two-position crossover switch and an output level control permit the NS-W1 to be used with most other speaker systems.

Boston Acoustics gave us a sneak peek at its new top-of-the-line model, the A-400. A relatively shallow floor-standing design, it has two woofers, a midrange driver, and a tweeter. The dual-woofer approach was chosen, says Boston Acoustics, for increased power-handling capacity and the flexibility it afforded the designer in driver placement. Though no price was announced for the A-400, the introduction

date is set for sometime in the spring.

Acoustat, well-known for its full-range electrostatic loudspeakers, demonstrated its first hybrid system, the Model Two/MH (\$1,200 per pair), which mates a dynamic woofer to a six-foot-high electrostatic panel. Celestion has two new additions to its Ditton line, the Model 110 Mk. II (\$200) and the Model 250 (\$350), with sensitivity ratings of 87½ dB and 86 dB, respectively. ESS returns with a full line of loudspeakers for '83—four models equipped with the Heil driver (\$209 to \$650) and three with more conventional designs (\$150 to \$260). Sonab, a Swedish company, has reentered the U.S. market with an interesting-looking seven-sided speaker. Designed for floor placement close to a wall, the OA-51 (\$900 per pair) is used in conjunction with a wall-mounted acoustic panel that is said to reduce undesirable boundary interactions. Another Swedish company, Jamo, is bringing six new models to these shores. Jamo's CBR speakers range in price from \$160 to \$600 with sensitivity ratings that range from 93 to 96 dB.

H.H. Scott adds two floor-standing speakers (\$350 and \$300) and four bookshelf models (\$100 to \$250), and Sherwood offers three new bookshelf models (\$120 to \$250). One of the most handsome and economical three-piece (satellites-plus-subwoofer) systems we saw comes from Aparature. Its Trident system (\$550) uses ribbon tweeters in the satellites and separate woofers for each channel in the bass enclosure.



Boston Acoustics A-400



Celestion Ditton 110



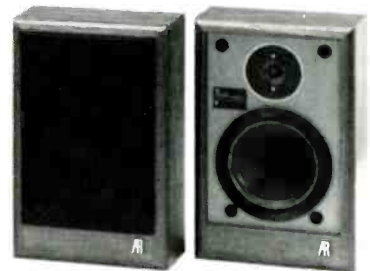
Advent 6003



Snell Type J

### Basic Boxes

Though cosmetic finishing touches differ, most of this year's new loudspeakers continue the popular bookshelf or floorstanding approaches. Improvements have been made in driver design and overall acoustic performance. Notable entries include Boston Acoustics' three-way, four-driver A-400; Advent's first three-way; a handsomely finished bookshelf model from Snell; a low-cost Celestion; and AR's smallest bookshelf speaker.

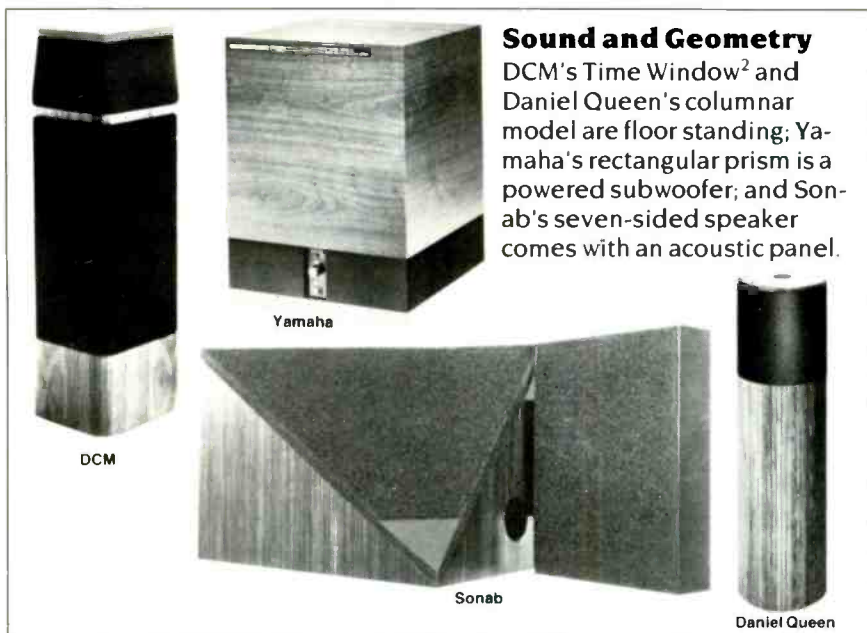


AR 8B



## Sound and Geometry

DCM's Time Window<sup>2</sup> and Daniel Queen's columnar model are floor standing; Yamaha's rectangular prism is a powered subwoofer; and Sonab's seven-sided speaker comes with an acoustic panel.



instead of the more common single-channel approach. All three elements are nicely finished in Hawaiian koa wood. Aparture also offers its ribbon tweeters separately (\$60) as self-contained add-ons for existing loudspeakers. Snell Acoustics has entered the compact bookshelf-speaker market with two new designs, the Type J (\$550 per pair) and the Type K (\$400 per pair).

DCM's venerable Time Window has a big brother this year called, interestingly enough, the Time Window<sup>2</sup> ("squared"). At \$1,000, the complex, six-driver, three-way design employs passive delay lines, comb filters, and controls for adjusting the mix of direct and reflected sound reaching the listener. Each model in Cerwin-Vega's new High End line will come equipped with a low-bass equalizer. Though details are still sketchy, Cerwin-Vega's new series should consist of one bookshelf and two floor-standing models and one three-piece system. And finally, Daniel Queen, the well-known acoustical engineer, claims to have spent 3,000 hours of computer time testing acoustic radiation patterns in typical listening environments to develop his first loudspeaker. The result is a tall columnar unit said to distribute a uniform spherical wavefront. Priced at \$2,750 per pair, the speaker is named after its designer. —P.D.

standing. And there was some mouth-watering new gear at the show to prove it. Perhaps the most beautiful item we saw is the Oracle Alexandria turntable (\$900, including Prelude tonearm). Trans Audio says it used computer-aided design techniques to engineer most of the Oracle Delphi's performance into the more conventional-looking, lower-priced Alexandria. The Delphi continues in the line, but no longer at the top, having ceded that position to the limited-edition Premier turntable (\$3,000 with Finale tonearm).

Sota also has a new top-of-the-line unit: the Deluxe Star version of its Sapphire turntable. It retains all the features of the regular Sapphire, while adding a variable vacuum record-hold-down system and an all-wood base in oak (\$1,200) or koa (\$1,300). The company says that there will also be an upgrade kit, selling for about \$300, to add the vacuum clamp to standard Sapphires.

V.P.I., a company long noted for its accessories—the HW-2 turntable-isolation platform and HW-16 record-cleaning machine, especially—has introduced a turntable. The HW-19 (\$665) is said to be a "back-to-basics" model engineered for high rigidity, low noise, and exceptional immunity to acoustic and mechanical feedback. The mounting board bolts securely to a steel subchassis and is large enough to accept virtually any standard-size arm.

Perfect rigidity was not exactly what the Czechoslovakian designer of NAD's 5120 semiautomatic turntable (\$250) had in mind. The tonearm on this starkly handsome unit is a flat, low-mass phenolic strip that is claimed to have none of the tube resonances of conventional metal tonearms. Because of its unusual construction, the arm is extremely stiff laterally but flexible vertically, so that there is a single, well-damped vertical resonance well below the

audible range—a novel solution to an all-too-familiar problem. The customary arm/cartridge resonance is tended to by a viscous damping system coupled to the arm's spring-suspended counterweight. Isolation is provided by a floating subchassis on a high-compliance, three-point suspension.

For those on a budget, Sanyo has a new belt-driven semiautomatic turntable, the \$100 TP-B2, with a straight tonearm and a detachable headshell. Scott's PS-88 (\$225), on the other hand, is fully automatic and has a direct-drive motor. And Pioneer has two new "stackables"—the PL-X5 (\$165) and PL-X9 (\$330) Progression IV turntables—with glide-out platters for front-loading operation. The PL-X9 is also programmable and comes with a pre-mounted high-output moving-coil cartridge.

B&O has four new turntables in addition to the 8002 reviewed in this issue, all designed for the new MMC series of low-mass plug-in cartridges. Three are pivoted-arm units: the Beogram 2404 (a revision of the earlier 3404, priced at \$330), the Beogram 1800 (\$250), and the Beogram RX (\$195). The RX resembles the linear-tracking TX (a somewhat less elaborate version of the 8002, selling for \$495) in being intended primarily for use in systems not consisting entirely of B&O equipment. All of these turntables are fully automatic belt-driven units and incorporate B&O's "pendulum-suspended subchassis" system for high acoustic and mechanical isolation.

B&O is hardly alone with new linear-tracking turntables. Phase Linear, for example, has an improved version of its Model 8000 turntable, dubbed the 8000A, for \$650. The main action, however, is at the low end of the price scale, with three new entries in the less-than-\$200 range: the Sharp RP-113, the ADC L-301, and the Parasound LTD-900. Both the ADC and the Parasound are designed for use with P-Mount plug-in cartridges. Hitachi's HT-L55 (\$240) is scarcely wider than an LP jacket. It has a quartz-locked direct-drive motor and a continuous-repeat feature. And Technics, which has done more than anyone else to popularize linear-tracking tonearms, has two new models: the SL-7MD (\$300) and the SL-V5 (\$220). The former is essentially an SL-7 without cartridge; the latter is a three-inch-thick vertical-standing version of the SL-5 model we reviewed last month. Naturally, both are designed to accept P-Mount cartridges.

Although linear-tracking tonearms are now commonplace even on inexpensive turntables, they're few and far between on the separates market. One of the only two we know of, the Souther Linear Arm, has been upgraded, now carrying the SLA-3 designation and a \$700 price tag. Like the original, it is a precision mechanical design with no motors or servos: An ultralow-mass cartridge carriage is pulled inward along a quartz rail by the force of the spiral record

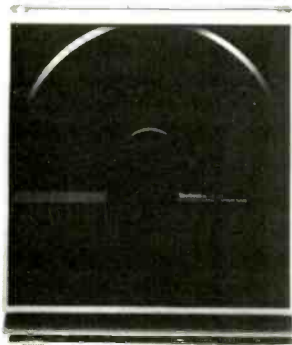
## Record-Playing Equipment

THE OLD-FASHIONED PHONOGRAPH record has life in it yet, Compact Disc notwith-

# SPECIAL REPORT

## Record-Playing Gear: New Formats

Technics opts for a vertical format in its tangential tracker, and Pioneer's programmable unit is "stackable." Both B&O and NAD are offering high-performance units at budget prices. Hitachi's "clamshell" player will accept Signet's first P-mount pickup, and Yamaha brings moving-coil technology down to fixed-coil prices.



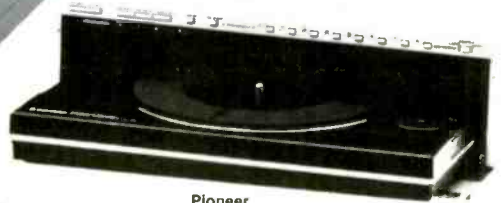
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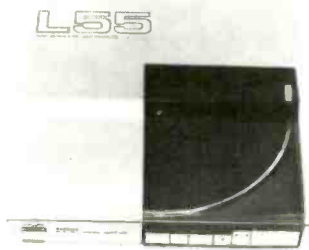
NAD



Bang & Olufsen



Pioneer



Hitachi



Signet



Yamaha

groove against the stylus.

Working a slightly more traditional vein, Trans Audio has brought out two pivoted tonearms—primarily for its own Oracle turntables, but available separately for use with others, as well. The \$400 Prelude and the \$900 Finale are basically the same design. As near as we can tell, the premium model is more elaborately fitted and finished and perhaps higher in mass. Both have arm tubes of a special construction that is said to combine high rigidity and excellent internal damping. Arm height (and thereby, stylus rake angle and VTA) is continuously adjustable, even during play, by means of a dial atop the arm pillar. Interestingly, an arm very, very similar to the Finale, made by the people who designed the Oracle arms, is available from a company called The Mod Squad (because its main business is modifying equipment for higher performance). Called the Triplanar, it is more of a handcrafted item than the Finale and, at \$1,800, sells for twice as much.

Syrinx has two new arms: a simplified and improved version of the earlier PU-2, called the PU-3 (\$800), and a relatively low-price model called the LE-1 (\$245). Both have tapered arm tubes to prevent resonance build-up. Systemdek's Profile II tonearm (\$170) is said to have solved the

problem of maintaining high rigidity in a detachable-headshell design. Finally, Mission has two new arms: the \$400 774SM ("SM" for "super magic") and the \$150 774LC ("LC" for "low cost").

Mission has also introduced its first fixed-coil pickup—the \$50 773MM moving-magnet cartridge. And B&O has five new pickups designed to mate with the arms on its new turntables. All are very lightweight moving-iron models, with prices ranging from \$60 for the MMC-5 to \$445 for the MMC-1 reviewed in this issue.

Signet's TK-10ML moving-magnet cartridge has what the company calls a MicroLine stylus, whose contour is said to be markedly different from that of any previous stylus. According to Signet, this shape improves both groove scanning and wear characteristics. The company has also entered the P-Mount market with four moving-magnet pickups: The top-of-the-line TK-8LCp has a line-contact stylus, while the rest have elliptical styli. Boston Acoustics showed the only other new P-Mount cartridge that we saw, a version of its established MC-1E moving-coil pickup for \$150.

There is no shortage of new standard-mount moving-coils. Perhaps the most exotic of these is the \$1,400 Goldbug Brier, handmade by Japan's only woman pipemaker, Yoshiko Sugano. Striking out in a

new direction, Monster Cable introduced a \$475 moving-coil cartridge, the Alpha-1, with a line-contact stylus and a "magnetic feedback control circuit" that is said to increase transparency while reducing harshness. And Goldring has introduced its first moving-coil cartridge—the high-output Electro II, which uses a Van den Hul stylus.

Both of Yamaha's new moving-coils—the \$85 MC-11 and the \$210 MC-4—use tapered cantilevers and the company's Cross Matrix Coil System, which enables independent adjustment of vertical and horizontal compliance. Supex's \$500 SDX-2000 high-output moving-coil cartridge uses a boron-tube cantilever and a Vital line-contact stylus.

Shure has no new cartridges, as such, but it does have some upgrades: adapter hardware for mounting its P-Mount cartridges in conventional arms and improved stylus assemblies for the M-95ED and M-95HE. The new assemblies include Shure's Side-Guard stylus-protection system and destaticizer brushes. Pickups incorporating these modifications are dubbed the M-95ED/D and the M-95HE/D, respectively.

Finally, to maintain whatever stylus you buy, you might want to consider Audio-Technica's AT-6016 TechniClean



stylus-cleaning kit, with fluid, applicator, and inspection mirror.—M.R.

## Video Hardware

WITH THE INTRODUCTION of the home video cassette recorder just seven years ago, the stereotype of the passive "boob-tube" watcher has slowly but surely given way to the reality of the active, sophisticated hobbyist. As consumers have become more interested in live and off-air taping, an increasing number of manufacturers have entered the hardware arena with feature-laden VCRs, cameras, receivers, monitors, and add-ons. Nowadays, a brand-new, no-frills "TV set" is a rare commodity; in its place, you're apt to find a monitor/receiver. Three years ago, component video systems for the home were just at the drawing-board stage; now there are at least a dozen, all priced and configured with a hard eye on quality.

Interestingly enough, the demand for a higher-resolution picture seems less pressing than that for better-quality sound. The reproduction of color video images is a tangle of shortcuts to begin with, all predicated on the forgiveness of the human optical system. (High-resolution video, in fact, means more detail in the image, not better color.) But audio is a different story: The ear is quite sensitive to noise and can detect frequency response irregularities of less than 1 dB. We all put up with poor television sound when we had no recourse but to listen to it through a typical set's three-inch

speaker. But it has become far more difficult to tolerate now that it can be routed through full-range stereo speakers.

For those of us who have gleaned some recompense from FM simulcasts of classical-music programming and CX-encoded videodiscs, the news of Sony's Beta Hi-Fi system is welcome indeed. Understanding the quantum leap it represents entails a quick review of what makes standard television sound poor. Frequency response barely reaches 12 kHz on the best VCRs, and signal-to-noise ratios may approach 50 dB only on those few models with noise reduction. The primary limiting factor has been the slow speed at which the tape travels past the fixed audio recording head. The video head, on the other hand, is mounted on a drum that rotates at 1,800 rpm, so the relative head-to-tape speed is very fast. This permits recording the broad frequency bandwidth required for video signals on a tape whose actual linear speed is very slow.

With Beta Hi-Fi, a stereo (or mono) audio signal is frequency modulated, integrated into the video signal, and recorded via the rotating video head. (A stationary audio head is included as well, providing full compatibility for all tapes recorded in the Beta format.) The result, according to Sony, is dynamic range of about 80 dB, frequency response flat from 20 Hz to 20 kHz, minimal wow and flutter, and less than 0.3% distortion. In other words, you may eventually find yourself using your Beta Hi-Fi deck as an audio-only recorder. Sony's first Beta Hi-Fi deck, the SL-5200, should be available by the summer and is slated to cost about \$1,500. Other Beta Hi-Fi licensees have remained vague about their marketing plans.

What impact Beta Hi-Fi will have on the overall competition between the Beta and VHS video tape formats is unclear. VHS has built up an approximate 2:1 market penetration advantage on the basis of its longer recording time. At the moment,

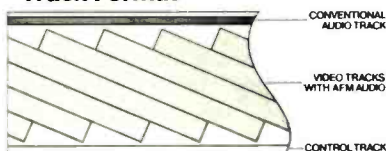
however, VHS is stuck in the Middle Ages of television sound: It must rely on noise reduction instead of an inherently better recording system. It would seem that Beta has swooped securely to the front among audio-conscious videophiles.

Meanwhile, the integration of audio and video in home entertainment systems continues. The high-tech approach, as reflected by component audio-video systems, is in many cases being tempered by offering furniture-type cabinet enclosures. For example, Magnavox's RC-7320 25-inch monitor comes with two matching wood-finish speakers (\$1,550 total), while Jensen is copromoting its Audio+Video Component line with custom furniture makers. Among the projection television manufacturers now seeking to be "audio ready" is NEC, whose new PJ-4000EN 40-inch set includes a 10-watt stereo amp and two-way speakers, along with a spatial-expander circuit and external loudspeaker outputs.

Increasingly, traditional TV sets are giving way to component video monitors. Sharp's 25H700, for example, comes with three sets of audio and video inputs. A color-coded screen display indicates time and channel. Two external speakers, which can be mounted on top or to the sides of the set, are included.

Proton, a company that entered the video market last year, has introduced the Model 619 receiver/monitor (\$790). The video section comprises a 19-inch monitor with horizontal resolution rated at 350 lines, low (6%) picture overscan, a high-performance comb filter, and full-function wireless remote control. Other features include an 127-channel tuner, separate bass and treble controls, and video and audio inputs. Two new 19-inch Trinitron sets from Sony (KV-1952RS and KV-1953RS, both \$770) feature 107-channel cable-ready tuning and wireless remote control. And new from Kloss is the T-1 (\$219), a 105-channel, cable-ready tuner that can be used with component TV monitors, such as

### Beta Hi-Fi Track Format



### TV Sound: A Giant Leap Forward

Beta Hi-Fi promises to bring high fidelity stereo sound to video cassette recorders. The technique involves recording a frequency-modulated (FM) audio track along with the video signal by means of the rotating video head. Beta Hi-Fi decks retain a standard stationary audio head to ensure compatibility with older prerecorded tapes. Sony and NEC say they will have units available this summer.



Sony



NEC

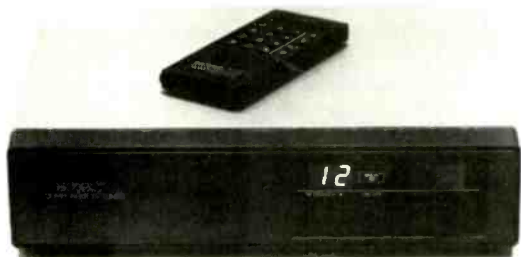


Sharp Compact-VHS system



### Video: New Directions

Clockwise from top left: Sharp joins the Compact-VHS camp with a camera and downsize VCR; Sanyo breaks the \$400 price barrier with its tabletop Beta deck; Jensen emphasizes the aesthetics of audio-video systems; Panasonic introduces a four-head portable; and Kloss offers a component TV tuner with remote control.



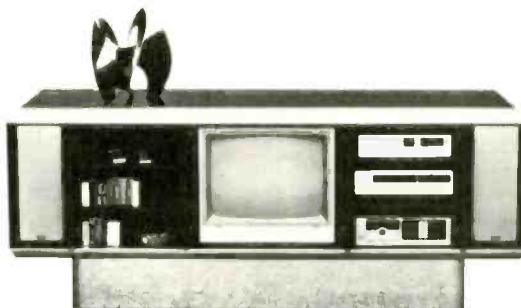
Kloss component video tuner



Sanyo's price breaker



Panasonic four-head portable



Jensen entertainment center

Kloss's new Novabeam One-A projection system. The T-1 provides full-function wireless remote control and a stereo multiplex output.

Beta Hi-Fi may have attracted the most attention at the show, but the remainder of this season's new VCRs are hardly uninteresting. Panasonic's PV-6500 portable VHS deck, for instance, combines stereo capability and Dolby with a new four-head design said to offer virtually noise-free still-frame viewing. Quasar, like Panasonic a subsidiary of Matsushita, is offering a similar four-head, stereo portable—the VP-5435UQ. In the JVC-developed Compact-VHS camp, there's only one new addition: Sharp's VC-220, a 5.7-pound portable VCR. A compact color camera, the QC-70, completes the system.

In the "standard" Beta format, Sony's SL-5101 is the company's first cable-ready home deck. And Sanyo continues its attempts to conquer price barriers with two

new table-top models. The front-loading, 6300 offers a thirteen-function wireless remote control and cable-ready tuning for \$600. And at less than \$400, the Model 3900 is Sanyo's least expensive deck.

The Sony high-technology juggernaut rolls into video cameras with the first public display of the prototype BetaMovie system. Combining camera and VCR on a single chassis, the hand-held device looks like a typical 8mm movie camera. Weighing in at 5½ pounds (including rechargeable battery), BetaMovie records on standard cassettes in the Beta II speed. Since the system uses the same cassettes as home decks do, you're free to pop an afternoon's shooting into your tabletop VCR to see the fruits of your videotaping. (Maximum recording time is 3½ hours.) We wonder, however, whether Sony will hold off introducing the system—scheduled to appear in stores sometime this year—until their tireless engineers can incorporate Beta Hi-Fi into

the mix. So equipped, the BetaMovie system would be truly phenomenal.

In more standard camera fare, NEC adds automatic focusing to its solid-state color camera. The TC-101 uses a charge-coupled-device (CCD) image sensor in place of a pickup tube. Hitachi has also broadened its camera offerings with a third solid-state model, the VK-C3000, and a more traditional unit, the Model VK-C870, which uses a ½-inch Saticon tube.

In video accessories, there's a raft of new goodies to choose from. Berkey Marketing has a line of video lights (dubbed Omega-reflecta)—four fan-cooled models and two portables with rechargeable battery packs. Berkey will also be distributing the Slik line of video camera tripods. Ambico has an inexpensive tele-cine adapter (\$50), plus a couple of battery belts and a special-effects generator (\$610) for the creative amateur videographer. Canon is one of the few companies to offer an editing console



for use with consumer decks—specifically, Canon's own VHS recorders. Add the VE-10A to a two deck setup, and you can assemble and insert video images and audio tracks.

Finally, for audiophiles frustrated with the quality of television sound, there's Audio Control's Video/Audio Detailer (\$150). Though its name might lead some to assume there is some video-enhancement circuitry contained within, the unit is designed to act solely on audio signals via five bands of equalization, dynamic noise filtration, and stereo-synthesizing circuits. And if you're one of the lucky few to have his own backyard satellite dish antenna, Channel Master's Model 6140 multimode stereo processor (\$260) will enable you to decode audio subcarrier signals for stereo reproduction.—W.T.

## Video Software

ABOUT A THIRD of the video cassette and disc manufacturers that came to the CES displayed their wares at the convention center. The rest of them—no small number—were tucked away in the adjacent Hilton Hotel. A quick jog up and down that hotel's aisles revealed that there is indeed one aspect of the home video industry that has not lost momentum—X-rated cassettes. And with Pioneer Video pressing such adult features as *Last Tango in Paris* and a "soft-X" version of *Insatiable*, it looks like America will soon be able to view its favorite porn stars in living LaserVision.

But the big news in video hard and software is, of course, Beta Hi-Fi. Warner and Paramount Home Video are the first to offer movies in the Beta stereo format, Warner with *The Road Warrior* and Paramount with *An Officer and a Gentleman*. Their respective list prices—\$69.95 and \$29.95 (\$39.95 in VHS)—reflect the industry's continued inability to reach a consensus on precisely how to market videocassettes, with sales vs. rental still a thorny issue. Embassy Home Entertainment also seems to subscribe to the "low-pricing moves inventory" theory, having announced its intention to sell *Blade Runner* for \$39.95 in both formats. But many companies are waiting for high-speed duplication (slated for availability in 1985) to bring the price of their cassettes down.

Additional Beta Hi-Fi offerings have been announced by Embassy (*Jazz America at Lincoln Center* and Rod Stewart, among others) Thorn EMI (Queen, Paul McCartney), MGM/UA (*The Compleat Beatles*,



Luciano Pavarotti in *Yes, Giorgio*, one of MGM/UA's recent video cassettes.

*Fame*) Walt Disney (*Mary Poppins*), Paramount (*Apocalypse Now*, *Aerobicise*), Pacific Arts Video (*Elephant Parts*), Warner (*Chariots of Fire*, Fleetwood Mac), Wizard Video (*Pippin*, *Tom Jones*), Vestron Video (*Rust Never Sleeps*, *The Changeling*), and Chrysalis Records (*Tony Basil—Word of Mouth*, *The Best of Blondie*). Sony has also joined the stereo software ranks with its rock and pop Video 45s (\$16 in Beta Hi-Fi, \$20 in VHS). The initial release includes cassettes by Michael Nesmith (of *Elephant Parts*) and Duran Duran.

In discs, Embassy has announced its first CED titles, thus becoming a "full-line" home-video software company (CED and laser in disc, Beta and VHS in cassette). CBS/Fox has added fifty-one CED and ten laser titles, and Vestron Video will make its newest release, *Young Doctors in Love*, available simultaneously on cassette and laser and CED disc. Though laser player and disc sales are still clearly behind those of CED, more and more studios appear to be adding optical titles. There are roughly 300 currently available, as opposed to the CED catalog of 400. And the capability gap between the two formats will shrink further later this year when RCA rolls out its first interactive random access CED player. (The company is vague about its programming and pricing plans, but we'll keep you posted.)

While the bulk of cassette and disc releases from the major studios (CBS/Fox, RCA-Columbia Pictures, MGM/UA, Paramount, Warner, Walt Disney, MCA, among others) are "blockbuster" feature films, some of the smaller video companies are creating interesting, made-for-the-medium programming. Star Video in New York City has produced *The Winning Job Interview* featuring career development expert John C. Crystal, widely quoted in *What Color Is Your Parachute?* Also available from Star are golf tips from Sam Snead, tennis with Bjorn Borg, and lessons in

bridge, French cuisine, and of all things, dog training, from other assorted pedagogues. MasterVision, whose fifty-title catalog covers everything from *Ballerina Lynn Seymour* to *Black Belt Karate*, will be releasing video cassettes in basic Spanish, Italian, and German this spring. And Candle Productions offers an intriguing twist in passivity with *Candle Video Fish*, one hour's worth of fish swimming about in a tank.

For those interested in more active viewing, Monterey Home Video has introduced *X-ercise* ("the erotic way to physical fitness"), an R-rated aerobics tape. Media Home Entertainment announced that its first original production would also be an exercise in aerobics, called *Muscle Motion*. Unlike Monterey's women instructors, Media has chosen the Chippendales, an all-male revue cabaret for women only. *Jane Fonda's Workout*, still the No. 1 selling videocassette, obviously started something. Karl Video, that cassette's manufacturer, has just released *Every Day with Richard Simmons* and has tentative plans for a Fonda sequel.

Moving into safer ratings, Walt Disney brings its home video catalog to fifty with the help of the Muppets (*Muppet Musicians of Bremen*, *Hey Cinderella*, and *Frog Prince*), Bil Burrud of *Animal World (The Amazing Apes, Predators of the Sea, among others)*, J. Thaddeus Toad (*The Wind in the Willows*), Goofy (*Motor Mania*), and Donald Duck (*Trailer Horn*). And though MCA didn't make the trek to Las Vegas, the company has added a musical production of *Alice in Wonderland* to its "Just for Kids" catalog. Finally, following the success of *The Compleat Beatles*, MGM/UA plans to add *The Girl Groups* to its pop music offerings, and, for the other side of the fence, *Yes, Giorgio* with Luciano Pavarotti. And Electric Video, Inc., showed *La Sylphide* by the Paris Opera Ballet.—S.E.

# Environments

Bringing technology home by Christine Begole

## Building It Yourself

I'M ALWAYS DELIGHTED to hear from readers. Recently, I received a letter of particular interest from one Larry Hall of Cogan Station, Pennsylvania. To quote his correspondence: "I read with interest your article on cabinets and furniture for housing electronic equipment ["Blending the Practical with the Aesthetic," November 1982] and identified with your recollection of undergraduate days and the pine boards and cinder-block supports that comprised our makeshift audio cabinets. In the ten-odd years since graduate school, however, my wife has refined my taste toward more decor-compatible furnishings. With that in mind, I decided to build a cabinet for my audio components from scratch. The result was better than I had imagined possible, and it prompted me to write to you."

Mr. Hall was quick to add, however, that he is in no way an expert woodworker. "With the assistance of several friends who helped select the wood, the guidance of a qualified instructor at a woodworking course taught at our local community college, and the naiveté of a first-time carpenter, I started my project. Approximately one hundred hours later I had completed the cabinet. This should give encouragement to anyone with two left hands; if you can learn the basic skills at a continuing education class, don't hesitate to build your own cabinet. Besides saving a tidy sum, you'll be rewarded with a goodly measure of self-satisfaction."

The total cost of this handmade cabinet was \$250, including the \$45 fee for the woodworking course. It was built from 3/4-inch thick black cherry, a wood native to the mountainous area in North-Central Pennsylvania where Mr. Hall lives.

The top section of the cabinet houses cool-running components—a reel-to-reel deck, a tuner, a preamp, an equalizer, and a cassette recorder—mounted on a baffle. The compartment is backed by 3/8-inch peg-board for good ventilation. The bottom section consists of a large drawer that houses the turntable and a compartment below for the power amp. The top section is covered by glass-paneled doors.

That such an aesthetically pleasing piece of cabinetry could be built by a novice is impressive in itself. What intrigued me most about this piece, however, were the design points that make it an *audio* cabinet.

Take, for instance, the location of each component. Highest is the open-reel deck, mounted at shoulder height to provide easy access for tape threading and editing. The tuner is mounted just below eye level. Below it are the preamp and equalizer, the most frequently used components and appropriately situated in the most accessible spot in the cabinet. The cassette deck is placed just above the turntable, making tape dubs from records easier.

Mounting the turntable in a drawer is a space-saving measure. When closed, the drawer provides a dust-free environment, eliminating the need for a space-wasting dustcover. Finally, the least fussed-with and weightiest component—the power amp—resides undisturbed at the very bottom of the cabinet. Heat build-up problems are solved with a whisper fan mounted behind the power amp. Inside the cabinet, AC power cords are neatly isolated along the left wall, while all low- and line-level connecting cables are anchored to the right.

Though Mr. Hall chose cherry, many of us might want to consider using a softer less expensive wood-like pine. On that subject, he comments, "Pine is often available at local lumberyards in widths that do not

require 'gluing-up,' a technique where two or more small boards are joined at their edges to produce one wide board. However, pine also has the disadvantage of being easily dented and scratched. This should be taken into account if frequent moves, children, or pets threaten to damage the cabinet's exterior."

Interestingly enough, Mr. Hall reports that the most demanding task in the whole cabinet-making process is applying the finish. He used cherry stain to enhance the natural tone of the wood and finished it with two coats of satin polyurethane varnish. "Each coat was sanded, the final coat was rubbed with 0000 grade steel wool, and that was followed by a coat of paste wax."

As Larry Hall puts it, he now owns the cabinet that he had built in his mind thousands of times. Without a doubt, that is the biggest satisfaction of all. With inspiration like this, I'm tempted to find a woodworking course and get started immediately. **HF**

P.S. Are there any other clever solutions to high fidelity storage problems out there? Please write to tell me about it at the following address: Christine Begole, "Environments," HIGH FIDELITY, 825 Seventh Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10019.



Larry Hall's hand-crafted audio cabinet stands 72 inches high and is made from 3/4-inch-thick black cherry wood. The power amp is mounted in the bottom of the cabinet, behind the solid wooden doors. His vintage Empire turntable is normally concealed in a slide-out drawer.

PHOTOS BY BILL NIETZ



## HANDS-ON REPORTS

# Laser Games and Gourmet Fare

Our reviewer gets a criminal and some just desserts with "Murder, Anyone?" and "The Master Cooking Course—" two interactive LaserDiscs.

These Hands-On Reports were conducted under the supervision of Edward J. Foster, Consulting Technical Editor of HIGH FIDELITY and Director of Diversified Science Laboratories.

THOUGH RCA HAS RECENTLY stated that its next generation of CED videodisc players will have interactive capabilities, the LaserDisc camp has been offering it for several years. In fact, the optical format's ability to interact nonlinearly with the user via its still-frame, single-frame stepping, and search-frame features always seemed its ace-in-the-hole. Unfortunately, those special capabilities are operative only in the standard-play (30-minute) mode, and the rush to get movies pressed on LaserDisc (in the 60-minute mode) drew attention away from interactive programming. I, for one, am delighted that the situation seems to be changing. Now that a large movie library has been established and a considerable number of players have been sold, independent labels as well as the original interactive house, Optical Programming Associates (OPA), again seem willing to exploit the medium's full potential.

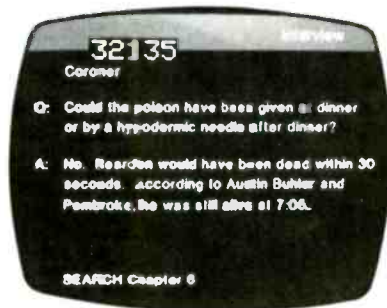
HF's first interactive-disc evaluations (*The First National Kidisc*, September 1981, and *How to Watch Pro Football*, May 1981, reviewed by Myron Berger) drew enthusiastic comments. My reactions to the latest offerings—*Murder, Anyone?* from Vidmax and *The Master Cooking Course* from OPA—are equally positive. The former is a takeoff on the popular board game Clue. It has a cast of eleven characters and mixes movie footage with still-frame

graphics. Only one thing is known for certain as it begins—that wealthy financier Derrick Reardon will be murdered and that nine people have a motive for doing him in. Your task is to determine the murderer(s), the motive, and the method used to commit the crime. The game is recommended for ages twelve to adult; as many as six people or teams can participate.

The structure of *Murder, Anyone?* is quite ingenious. Toward the conclusion of the opening movie footage, a screen message alerts you to tap FRAME on the remote control. In this mode—with frame numbers displayed on the screen—the LaserDisc machine obeys stop commands embedded in the disc. (There are four such breaks in all; you're directed to tap FRAME just prior to each so the machine will automatically pause at it.) The first time the action halts is at frame 2700, where you are instructed to single-step through a number of frames that introduce the cast of characters and explain the game rules with easy-to-read text. As with the three subsequent breaks in the program, you must make a choice at this point. With four breaks and different alternatives at each, there are sixteen games on *Murder, Anyone?*

At frame 2700, you are instructed to choose a path, which, in turn, determines which audio channel you'll be using. (Be sure to jot down the path number you pick—it becomes important later on.) You're then told to tap SEARCH, CHAPTER 2, and SEARCH again on the remote control. The action picks up with the arrival of Stew

## Murder, Anyone?



*Murder, Anyone?* (\$30 from Vidmax) is a LaserDisc version of the popular board game Clue. Mixing movie footage with still-frame graphics, the game asks you to determine the murderer, the motive, and the method used to commit the crime. You can choose to "interview" suspects by searching for specific frames. A final frame search—based on a number you determine from coded choices—tells you whether you have correctly solved the crime.

Cavanaugh, "private dick" of the Mickey Spillane genre. Though all players will see the same scene, the information conveyed will be different, depending on the choice of soundtrack. At the second decision point, you are directed to one of two different chapters depending on the path you initially chose. At the third and fourth decision points, you search for one of four different chapters.

So far, the "interactive" aspect of the game has only involved following instructions to make procedural choices. Now the fun really begins. After each player has run through the movie scenes, the participants take turns guessing the identity of the murderer, the motive, and the method. Clues are contained in a series of frames called an "investigation file directory;" each player has his own file to consult depending on his path. (That's why it's important to note the path number you select at the game's outset.) Once you've reviewed the clues (or called up a special "desperation" frame if you need more help), you make your accusation.

This last part of the game is a bit complex, and paper and pencil are mandatory. A player must summon up an accusation sequence consisting of three different frames: one to choose the murderer, one the motive, and the last for the method. Each frame has five choices coded with a number. You must write down the numbers in a special sequence—murderer in the hundreds column, motive in the tens, and method in the units column. The result must then be added to your original path number, and that sum must be added to a preprogrammed figure (29,000, to be exact). Though the procedure sounds complicated, the game is really not very difficult, particularly with the screen displays prompting you along the way. Your final number is the key to the game: By punching up that frame number, you will find out whether your deductions are correct. If so, the screen proclaims "Correct!—You Win." If not, you get an "Incorrect—Lose a Turn" message, and the next player tests his skill.

Although I'm far from being an avid game player, I found *Murder, Anyone?* lots of fun. The acting is quite decent and the video quality excellent. (The audio is a bit noisy, however.) I was also intrigued by the overleaving and overdubbing of soundtracks to create the various options. *Murder, Anyone?* is an interesting alternative to board games and a decidedly more cerebral pastime than shoot 'em up video games.

The second disc, *The Master Cooking Course*, uses its interactive capabilities to instruct. Because its milieu is far from my area of expertise, I called on my wife to test out its menus and procedures.

EDWARD J. FOSTER

THE RECIPES AND TECHNIQUES described by Craig Claiborne and consummately executed by Chef Pierre Franey include every-

## The Master Cooking Course



Menu 1		Chapter
Mousse de Poisson (Fish Mousse)		2
Sauce Bonne Femme (Bonne Femme Sauce)		3
Poulet Portugaise (Chicken Portuguese Style)		4
Riz au Beurre (Buttered Rice)		5
Salade Vinaigrette (Salad with Vinaigrette)		6
Meringues Glacées (Meringues with Ice Cream)		



DEX	SIDE FRAME	
<b>DESSERT(S)</b>		
Berry Ice with Cassis	II	9,555
Chocolate Mousse	II	20,894
French Apple Tart	II	33,574
Meringues Glacées	I	28,213
ROUGH Pastry	II	33,649

The era of the electronic cookbook arrives with *The Master Cooking Course* (\$30 from Optical Programming Associates). The LaserDisc player's controls let you proceed at your own pace as Craig Claiborne and Pierre Franey demonstrate the preparation of four complete meals—twenty-one recipes in all. An index on each side leads you to the correct frame for specific recipes and a glossary provides definitions of basic terms. You can select either of two sound tracks: Channel 1 provides step-by-step instructions and Channel 2 commentary and recipe variations.

thing from cutting up a chicken and dicing a clove of garlic to fluting a mushroom and whisking a mousse. *The Master Cooking Course* contains four menus, each for a four-course *haute cuisine* meal. The lessons are well thought out and interspersed with anecdotes and demonstrations of proper technique.

Since I just completed a class in Japanese cooking, a few comparisons between live and recorded courses quickly come to mind. In a live situation, the student can ask specific questions and depend on the instructor to correct any faults as he practices. In a recorded course, you're pretty much on your own. This has its advantages, however, the main one being that you can set your own pace: Any procedures that a rank beginner finds difficult to follow (this is, after all, a master cooking course) can be mastered with judicious use of slow motion, freeze frame, and so forth. For example, my past attempts to flute a mushroom have always resulted in chopped mushrooms. But the disc enabled me to finally get the knack of it by slowing down, stopping, repeating, and even reversing the chef's demonstration any number of times. (The trick turns out to be in the way you hold the knife.) In class, you see it performed only once. And you don't necessarily get the front-row seat that the disc guarantees. Also, this particular disc demonstrates even the most elemental techniques; if you're already familiar with them, you can simply fast-forward to the next step.

Once you've mastered the basics, you can go back to the beginning and, using the second audio track, find further applications for the "tricks" you learned on the first. For example, with the *Escalopes de Veau Viennoise* (breaded veal scallopini Vienna style) recipe you can substitute fish or chicken and add green herbs or lemon to create another sauce.

The menus that are presented are quite interesting. Main courses include *Steak Au Poivre* (steak with crushed peppercorns), *Poulet Portugaise* (chicken Portuguese style), and *Saumon Poché avec Sauce Hollandaise* (poached salmon with hollandaise sauce). There are various salads, vegetables, and scrumptious desserts, as well.

Each side of the disc also contains its own recipe index, glossary of cooking terms, and techniques, all accessed by selecting the proper frame number. An index to both sides appears on Side 1's Chapter 15 and Side 2's Chapter 36.

My main problem with *The Master Cooking Course* was one of logistics: The LaserDisc player and TV set aren't in my kitchen. And since a recipe booklet isn't included, I had to copy the recipes and run back and forth between kitchen and living room. All I have to do now is convince the receptacle of my *haute cuisine* lessons to run a cable from the disc player to the set in the kitchen. Perhaps the *meringues glacées* will do it. . . .

SANDRA C. FOSTER



# HOW A SMALL AMERICAN COMPANY GOT TO BE THE BIGGEST NAME IN PROJECTION TELEVISION.

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The Novatron Tube.

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The Model One.

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The Model Two.



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Circle 36 on Reader-Service Card

# Interpreting Schubert's Songs— Further Explorations

EMI's historical compilation—though limited, like any anthology—proves enormously stimulating.  
Reviewed by David Hamilton

ANTHOLOGIES ARE HARD to compile and easy to criticize. There's never enough room for everything that merits inclusion, so casual carpers can always discover easy targets. If the purpose and the defining parameters of an anthology are misconstrued, its contents may be judged from erroneous premises. On the other hand, purpose or parameters may be ill-defined in the compiler's own mind, or his selections may be unrepresentative of whatever he intends to exemplify.

A common confusion, on both sides, may arise between history and aesthetic pleasure. It wasn't really fair, for example, to complain of Michael Scott's *The Record of Singing* that some of the selections were not enjoyable. That was an expressly historical anthology, designed to demonstrate the styles and techniques of singing in vogue at various times and places, rather than a compilation based on aesthetic criteria alone. On the other hand, Scott could be—and was—legitimately criticized for choosing selections not fairly representative of the singers and styles they were supposed to exemplify.

EMI's new Schubert anthology is another essentially historical compilation. Its editor and transfer engineer Keith Hardwick spells out his basic premise in his introduction: "How were Schubert Lieder sung before the Fischer-Dieskau/Schwarzkopf/Ludwig/Baker era?" As I suggested last year (HF, March 1982), a sample of the recorded history of Schubert singing gives evidence of changing styles and emphases; a survey in sound of that history is amply justified.

Hardwick limits himself chronologically to the era of the 78-rpm record, roughly the first half of the present century (though in fact his final selections were initially recorded on tape and only subsequently transferred to 78 matrices). A more seriously limiting parameter is the decision to use only "those singers who recorded for the companies which later merged to form EMI." Historically, this is somewhat crippling. Hardwick concedes four significant



Lotte Lehmann: heard in fine voice, but not in performances that made her reputation.

omissions: Ernestine Schumann-Heink, who recorded only in America, and three singers who worked principally for Deutsche Grammophon, the contralto Lula Mysz-Gmeiner and the baritones Heinrich Rehkemper and Heinrich Schlusnus. According to Fischer-Dieskau, Mysz-Gmeiner's "only recordings are of lightweight Schubert songs, to which her dark-timbred voice does not really do justice"; still, she was an important singer and teacher who has never yet, to my knowledge, been represented on LP. Schlusnus and Rehkemper are more accessible, on various DG and Preiser reissues. However, a number of other rather central singers of Lieder are also missing: I think of Bohnen, Jadlowker, Manowarda, Klose, Domgraf-Fassbaender, Schmitt-Walter. (Since all pre-1932 recordings were in the public domain in

Britain at the time of this set's compilation, there was no legal barrier to the inclusion of most of these people.)

This restriction also distorts the representation of some singers who are included. Lotte Lehmann is heard only in three of her 1927 Odeons, accompanied by an "orchestra" (of tea-shoppe proportions and stylistic orientation) rather than the more appropriate Ernő Balogh and Paul Ulanowsky of her later Victors and Columbias. Her voice is in fine condition, her delivery characteristically vivid and spontaneous—but the style is rather broad, the dynamic range monotonous, and the funereal tempo of "Geheimes" miles from Schubert's "Somewhat fast." In fact, Lehmann didn't start giving song recitals until after these records were made, and her enormous reputation as a Lieder interpreter was based on quite dif-



ferent performances, none of which are present here. Similarly, I'm grateful for the unpublished postwar Patzaks (especially the intense, atmospheric "*Ihr Bild*"), but would like them balanced by his prewar work. Leo Slezak's electrical DGs are more convincing examples of his work with songs than the earlier Gramophone titles included here.

Within Hardwick's parameters, I miss some singers who recorded Schubert for EMI companies: Maartje Offers, Paul Sandoz, Marko Rothmüller, Lea Piltti, and Ivar Andrésen are some of the names I note in the columns of WERM, and there is one unconscionable omission. Marian Anderson's earliest Schubert records, with the pianist Kosti Vehanen, were made in Paris for EMI, and are far superior to the American remakes with Franz Rupp; among them is a superbly concentrated, subtly colored performance of "*Der Tod und das Mädchen*," one of the best ever recorded and immeasurably superior to the woozy, flat, and shapeless Olszewska version included here.

**Enough for the moment** about what this set is not. Its sixteen sides contain 128 performances, by sixty-four singers, of ninety-three songs. The first track is "*Ave Maria*"—or more accurately, one stanza thereof—recorded on October 11, 1898, by alto Edith Clegg and an anonymous pianist; according to Hardwick, it's the first Schubert song recorded in Europe, though beaten for worldwide honors by Ferruccio Gianini's slightly earlier New York recording of the "*Serenade*" (he's not here, but his daughter Dusolina is, singing "*Gretchen am Spinnrade*" in a monotonously operatic style). Clegg sings very smoothly, with clean and clear mordents, in a slightly puffy German, and the limitations of the seven-inch original force the accompanist to improvise a concise beginning and end.

Such peculiarities beset many of the earliest tracks. Paul Knüpfer's accompanist forgoes the introduction and interludes of "*Ungeduld*," simply vamping until the singer begins the next stanza. Franz Naval revises the final phrase of "*Der Neugierige*" to give himself a high note, and Susan Strong elevates the final cadence of "*Die junge Nonne*." The announcements of the early discs are retained. Surprisingly few of the acoustic performances are accompanied by orchestra—that was apparently more of an American aberration.

Aside from such oddities, one soon notices that standards of intonation were erratic. Marie Goetze, in "*Litanei*," flats quite a lot, and also stumbles over her words; in the "*Ständchen*" with female chorus, D. 921 (not D. 920 as listed, which is the version with male chorus), everybody's intonation is pretty horrible, though the motion and feeling of the performance (a complete one, on two 78 sides, with orchestral accompaniment) are well judged.

Naval, Slezak, and Elise Elizza, three Viennese favorites, all exhibit intonational failings, and the list does not end there. But other performances are rock-solid: baritone David Bispham's sentimental but elegant English version of "*Hark, hark! the lark*," Edyth Walker's authoritatively declaimed "*Die Allmacht*," Gustav Walter's famous "*Am Meer*"—here dubbed in D major, more convincing than the E flat used in *The Record of Singing*.

That brings up the matter of pitch, a much more vexed question than with operatic arias, for songs with piano are much easier to transpose than arias with orchestra; almost anything is possible, though some piano parts become unreasonably awkward in certain keys ("*Das Wandern*" is much easier to finger in A, a semitone down, than in A flat). The fairest way to put this is to say that well over a hundred of these tracks seem to me pitched correctly, or at least

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## The technical challenges have been well met.

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plausibly; that's a considerable achievement. Ernst Wachter's 1902 "*Wanderer*" (D. 493, not D. 489 as listed) is evidently one of those infuriating recordings made on a wandering turntable; it starts out below C sharp minor and rises as it progresses. Most of the problematic dubbings fall in the cracks between keys: Plunket-Greene's "*Abschied*" (in which Scott detects "great charm" and "wonderful swagger"—it sounds to me a gabbled mess). Demuth's cohesive "*Die Forelle*," Hesch's deadpan "*Kreuzzug*," Henschel's self-accompanied "*Das Wandern*," Oegin's plummy and boring "*Lied im Grünen*," Duhan's "*Pause*," and both the Chaliapin tracks. Of the two Gerhardt/Nikisch songs, with adjacent matrix numbers, "*An die Musik*" sounds a fraction flatter than "*Du bist die Ruh*," which of course can't be right. Some of these (e.g., Demuth, Oegin) I find more convincing slowed down to the next real key, but others are better inched up: The Chaliapin "*Tod und das Mädchen*" must be correct in D minor; it's a song that nobody ever transposes, apparently.

That technical challenge has been generally well met, and so, I think, has the job of transferring. A few of the late items (Schlotz, Seefried, Hotter) I could compare with original 78s in my own collection, played through the OWL I restoration unit: only in the case of Hotter's LX 1261 did there seem to be a slight loss, in Hardwick's dubbing, of a certain warmth and breadth in the tone. Some of the early originals are

rather noisy (notably the Bispham), but they are also very rare, and one must be grateful that they survive in any condition.

With the advent of electrical recordings (which sets in firmly on Side 6, though there are electrical tracks before that, as all of a singer's selections are grouped together regardless of recording date), these problems diminish. Surprisingly, we are not finished with orchestral accompaniments—not only Lehmann's palm-court gypsies, but bizarrely imaginative orchestrations with Meta Seinemeyer's richly sung "*Gretchen*" and "*So lasst mich scheinen*" (perhaps by the conductor, Frieder Weissmann?), and the handiwork of no less than Hector Berlioz in two French recordings of "*Erlkönig*." Of these, only the Panzéra is ascribed to Berlioz (it is, in fact, transposed down from G minor to F minor, which must entail some redistribution of the string layout), but the curious "ventriloquial" version in which Georges Thill (as narrator and Erlking) is joined by the sonorous baritone Henri Etcheverry (as the father) and an excellent boy soprano, Claude Pascal, also uses the Berlioz orchestration (and in the original key). Both are impressively steady performances, the juxtaposition demonstrating that it is not the orchestration, but the overpopulation of the Thill version, that breaks the bounds of the song medium.

As the inclusion of such curiosities suggests, Hardwick has not restricted himself to recordings in German. Performances in translation are not really comparable to those in the original; each language had its own tradition, related as much (or more) to its native song literature as to the German tradition. Chaliapin's powerful declamation of "*Der Doppelgänger*" may have more to do with Mussorgsky than with Schubert—it's worth hearing anyway. Today, such local traditions have pretty well vanished, and everyone listens to Schubert in German; I'm not convinced that this is necessarily all gain.

**In my earlier Schubert review**, I focused on the relationship between singer and accompanist as the nexus of a fundamental secular change in interpretation, and there's ample evidence in this set to demonstrate all the stages of this process. It's by no means a simple steady change, for even among the earliest recordings we find performances concerned with good ensemble as well as those, such as Wachter's "*Wanderer*," in which the pianist abjectly (and literally, in time) follows behind his master. There is even one striking case of a dominant pianist—not surprising when the pianist is Artur Schnabel, "accompanying" his wife Therese Behr in "*Der Musensohn*." The Behr/Schnabel recordings have a poor reputation; the mezzo, a noted Lieder interpreter, was about fifty-five when she made them, her voice little more than a thread. But her musicianship and diction are still

vivid, and the piano-playing is incomparably imaginative. I can't imagine a good transfer of the entire series failing to find a respectable market. (Rococo 5370, from noisy copies with an extreme top cut, was at best only a stopgap.)

Surprisingly, one of the most abject accompanists is the great conductor Arthur Nikisch, who begins "An die Musik" at a reasonable and shapely tempo and then, when Elena Gerhardt enters and decides she wants to go her own way, contents himself with fitting his nominally steady repeated chords to the singer's remarkably free declamation. Between the verses, Nikisch again gives us a coherent shape before retiring into servitude for the second stanza!

This is a prime example of the view that even some celebrated musicians once had of the internal relationships of a song; Nikisch, as the senior partner and Gerhardt's sponsor, could certainly have asserted himself if he wanted to do the song another way. (Gerhardt never changed; you can hear her do the same thing in 1931 to Coenraad V. Bos in "Gesang Weylas," in the Wolf Society set.)

There are so many angles from which to study these recordings, and I can only suggest a few in the confines of these pages. Hardwick does not shun duplicate interpretations of the same song—five of "Erlkönig," three each of many others—and the comparisons are often interesting, and sur-

prising. Among three imposing performances of "Gruppe aus dem Tartarus," that astounding chromatic setting of Schiller's chilling poem, the greatest turns out to be the earliest, by a long-forgotten contralto named Otilie Metzger, owner of a stupendous earth-mother voice, impeccable diction and musicianship, and enormous personal authority. (Her "An die Musik" is, in its quieter way, just as compelling—and far more musical than Gerhardt's.) It is chilling to read that her life ended thirty-three years later in Auschwitz, a place as horrible as Schiller's Tartarus but mercifully not eternal. Next to Metzger, even Alexander Kipnis (a rare late-acoustical recording) sounds (Continued on page 90)

## The Songs

### Die schöne Müllerin, D. 795.

No. 1. *Das Wandern*. George Henschel, b and piano: 1914.

No. 2. *Wohin?* Frieda Hempel, s; 1923.

No. 3. *Halt!* Aksel Schütz, t; Gerald Moore: 1945.

No. 5. *Am Feierabend*. Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, b; Moore: 1951.

No. 6. *Der Neugierige*. Franz Naval, t; 1902.

No. 7. *Ungehduld*. Paul Knüpfer, bs; 1901. Hempel, s; 1922.

No. 12. *Pause*. Hans Duhan, b; Ferdinand Foll: 1928.

No. 15. *Eifersucht und Stolz*. Schütz, t; Moore: 1945.

No. 18. *Trockne Blumen*. Fischer-Dieskau, b; Moore: 1951.

No. 19. *Der Müller und der Bach*. Elise Elizza, s; 1911.

### Schwanengesang, D. 957.

No. 1. *Liebesbotschaft*. Leo Slezak, t; 1909. Ria Ginster, s; Moore: 1935.

No. 2. *Kriegers Ahnung*. Herbert Janssen, b; Moore: 1937.

No. 3. *Frühlingssehnsucht*. Karl Erb, t; Moore: 1937.

No. 4. *Ständchen*. Slezak, t; orch.: 1907.

No. 5. *Aufenthalt*. Duhan, b; Foll: 1928. (In Russian) Leo Sibirjakov, bs; 1912.

No. 7. *Abschied*. Harry Plunket-Greene, b; 1904.

No. 8. *Der Atlas*. (In French) Charles Panzéra, b; 1930.

No. 9. *Ihr Bild*. Duhan, b; Foll: 1928. Julius Patzak, t; Hermann von Nordberg: 1947.

No. 10. *Das Fischermädchen*. Fischer-Dieskau, b; Moore: 1951.

No. 12. *Am Meer*. Gustav Walter, t; 1904. Friedrich Schorr, b; Robert Jäger: 1929.

No. 13. *Der Doppelgänger*. (In Russian) Feodor Chaliapin, bs; orch.: Eugene Goossens, cond.: 1928. (In French) Panzéra, b; orch.: Piero Coppola, cond.: 1934.

No. 14. *Die Taubenpost*. Gerhard Hüsch, b; Moore: 1937.

### Winterreise, D. 911.

No. 5. *Der Lindenbaum*. Julia Culp, a; Fritz Lindemann: 1926. (In French) Vanni-Marcoux, bs-b; Coppola: 1931.

No. 8. *Rückblick*. Richard Tauber, t; Mischa Spoliansky: 1927.

No. 11. *Frühlingstraum*. Tauber, t; Spoliansky: 1927.

No. 21. *Das Wirtshaus*. Janssen, b; Moore: 1938.

No. 22. *Mit!* Tauber, t; Spoliansky: 1927.

No. 24. *Der Leiermann*. Henschel, b and piano: 1928. (In English) Plunket-Greene, b; 1934. (In Russian) Sibirjakov, bs; 1910.

*Die Allmacht*, D. 852. Edyth Walker, ms; 1910. Kirsten Flagstad, s; Moore: 1952.

*Am Bach im Frühling*, D. 361. Hans Hotter, b; Moore: 1949.

*Am See*, D. 746. Erb, t; Bruno Seidler-Winkler: 1937.

*An die Geliebte*, D. 303. Elisabeth Schumann, s; Leo Rosenek: 1938.

*An die Laute*, D. 905. Erb, t; Seidler-Winkler: 1937.

*An die Leier*, D. 737. Flora Nielsen, s; Moore: 1949. (In English) Pauline Cramer, s; 1909.

*An die Musik*, D. 547. Elena Gerhardt, ms; Arthur Nikisch: 1911. Otilie Metzger, a; 1910. Ursula van Diemen, s; 1926.

*An die Nachtigall*, D. 497. Schumann, s; George Reeves: 1933.

*Auf dem Wasser zu singen*, D. 774. Lotte Lehmann, s; orch.: Manfred Gurlitt, cond.: 1927. Frida Leider, s; Michael Raucheisen: 1943. Irmgard Seefried, s; Moore: 1948.

*Auf der Bruck*, D. 853. Peter Pears, t; Benjamin Britten: 1950.

*Auflösung*, D. 807. Ginster, s; Moore: 1935.

*Aus Heliopolis I (Im kalten rauhen Norden)*, D. 753. Endre von Koreh, bs; Nordberg: 1949.

*Ave Maria*, D. 839. Edith Clegg, a; 1898.

*Du bist die Ruh*, D. 776. Lilli Lehmann, s; 1907. Gerhardt, ms; Nikisch: 1911. John McCormack, t; 1924.

*Ellens Gesang II (Jäger, ruhe von der Jagd)*, D. 838. Gerhardt, ms; Moore: 1939.

*Erlkönig*, D. 328. Lilli Lehmann, s; 1906. Alexander Kipnis, bs; Moore: 1936. Marta Fuchs, s; Raucheisen: 1939. (In French; orch. Berlioz) Panzéra, b; Coppola, cond.: 1934. (In French; orch. Berlioz) Claude Pascal, boy s; Georges Thill, t; Henri Echeverry, b; 1930.

*Die Forelle*, D. 550. Leopold Demuth, b; 1902. Lotte Schöne, s; 1927. (In French) Vanni-Marcoux, bs-b; Coppola: 1928.

*Frühlingsglaube*, D. 686. Heinrich Hensel, t; 1910. Flagstad, s; Moore: 1952.

*Ganymed*, D. 544. Janssen, b; Moore: 1938.

*Geheimes*, D. 719. Lotte Lehmann, s; orch.: Gurlitt, cond.: 1927.

*Gretchen am Spinnrade*, D. 118. Meta Seinemeyer, s; orch.: Frieder Weissmann, cond.: 1928. Dusolina Giannini, s; Raucheisen: 1929.

*Gruppe aus dem Tartarus*, D. 583. Metzger, a; 1910. Kipnis, bs; c. 1924. Hotter, b; Moore: 1949.

*Heidenröslein*, D. 257. Minnie Nast, s; 1902. Seefried, s; Nordberg: 1947.

*Das Heimweh*, D. 456. Schumann, s; Rosenek: 1938.

*Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*, D. 965. Schöne, s; Berlin State Opera Orch., Leo Blech, cond.: 1929. Margaret Ritchie, s; Reginald Kell, clarinet: Moore: 1947.

*Horch, horch! die Lerch*, D. 889. (In English) David Bispham, b; 1902.

*Im Abendrot*, D. 799. Aaltje Noordewier-Reddingius, s; Anthon van der Horst, organ; c. 1929.

*Im Frühling*, D. 882. Pears, t; Britten: 1950.

*Die junge Nonne*, D. 828. Susan Strong, s; orch.: 1907. Susan Metcalfe-Casals, ms; Moore: 1937.

*Der Jüngling an der Quelle*, D. 300. Schumann, s; Elizabeth Coleman: 1936.

*Der Kreuzzug*, D. 932. Wilhelm Hesch, bs; 1905.

*Lachen und Weinen*, D. 777. (In French) Vanni-Marcoux, bs-b; Coppola: 1928.

*Die Liebe (Klärchens Lied)*, D. 210. Lilli Lehmann, s; 1907.

*Die Liebe hat gelogen*, D. 751. McCormack, t; Edwin Schneider: 1927.

*Liebhaber in allen Gestalten*, D. 558. Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, s; Moore: 1948.

*Lied eines Schiffers*, D. 360. Hüsch, b; Hans Udo Müller: 1939.

*Das Lied im Grünen*, D. 917. Sigrid Onegin, a; Clemens Schmalstich: 1930. Patzak, t; Nordberg: 1947.

*Litanei*, D. 343. Marie Goetze, ms; 1901.

*Mennon*, D. 541. (In English) Harold Williams, b; Herbert Dawson: 1932.

*Meeresstille*, D. 216. Hotter, b; Moore: 1949.

*Mignon I (Heiss mich nicht reden)*, D. 877. No. 2. Metcalfe-Casals, ms; Moore: 1937.

*Mignon II (So lasst mich scheinen)*, D. 877. No. 3. Seinemeyer, s; orch.: Weissman, cond.: 1928.

*Der Musesohn*, D. 764. Therese Behr-Schnabel, ms; Artur Schnabel: 1932.

*Nachtstück*, D. 672. Metcalfe-Casals, ms; Moore: 1937.

*Nacht und Träume*, D. 827. Fischer-Dieskau, b; Moore: 1951.

*Nachviolen*, D. 752. Schumann, s; Rosenek: 1938.

*Prometheus*, D. 674. Isernhard Sonnerstedt, b; Moore: 1949.

*Rastlose Liebe*, D. 138. Walker, ms; 1902.

*Rosamunde*, D. 797: *Romanze (Der Vollmond strahlt)*. Janssen, b; Moore: 1938.

*Schäfers Klagedied*, D. 121. Schütz, t; Moore: 1949.

*Der Schmettlerling*, D. 633. Schumann, s; Reeves: 1937.

*Sei mir gegrüsst*, D. 741. Friedrich Broderon, b; Felix Günther: 1921. Lotte Lehmann, s; orch.: Gurlitt, cond.: 1927.

*Seligkeit*, D. 433. Schwarzkopf, s; Karl Hudez: 1946.

*Ständchen (Zögernd leise)*, D. 921. Goetze, ms; Berlin Court Opera Chorus and Orch.: Seidler-Winkler: 1908.

*Suleika II (Ach, um deinen feuchten Schwingen)*, D. 717. Gerhardt, ms; Coenraad V. Bos: 1929.

*Der Tod und das Mädchen*, D. 531. Culp, a; Lindemann: 1926. Maria Olszewska, a; Reeves: 1929. (In Russian) Chaliapin, bs; orch.: Goossens, cond.: 1928.

*Verklärung*, D. 59. Noordewier-Reddingius, s; Van der Horst, organ; c. 1929.

*Die Vögel*, D. 691. Schwarzkopf, s; Moore: 1948.

*Der Wanderer*, D. 493. Ernst Wachter, bs; 1902. (In Russian) Sibirjakov, bs; 1906.

*Der Wanderer an den Mond*, D. 870. Erb, t; Seidler-Winkler: 1937.

*Wandrer's Nachtlied I (Der du von dem Himmel bist)*, D. 224. Hotter, b; Moore: 1949.

*Wandrer's Nachtlied II (Über allen Gipfeln)*, D. 768. Hotter, b; Moore: 1949. Flagstad, s; Moore: 1952.

*Widerschein*, D. 949. Hüsch, b; Müller: 1939.

*Wiegenlied (Schlafe, schlafe)*, D. 498. Ginster, s; Moore: 1933.

*Wiegenlied (Wie sich der Äuglein)*, D. 867. Ginster, s; Moore: 1933.

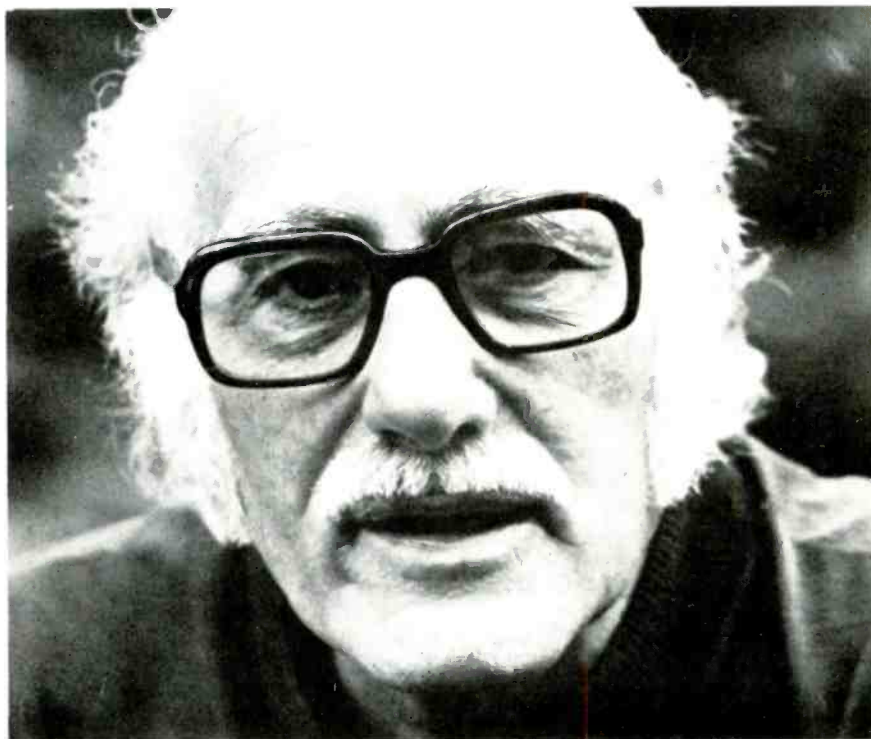
*Piano accompaniment unless otherwise noted.*



# Good Neighbors to the North

A new recording project bodes well to put Canadian music on the map—perhaps even for Americans.

Reviewed by Robert Markow



John Weinzweig, at seventy: introduced twentieth-century musical styles into Canada

THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA share a border of some 4,000 miles, yet in the field of classical composition, an enormous gulf separates the two countries. Not that Canadian music is that much different; it isn't. But the lack of cultural exchange with regard to this art form is little short of incredible. Most American musicians would be hard-pressed to name even five prominent Canadian composers. In a recent study I conducted of the repertory performed by twenty-seven major American

*Transplanted American Robert Markow, formerly a horn player in the Montreal Symphony, is now the orchestra's English-language program annotator and a lecturer in music history and appreciation at McGill University.*

*A seventh Centrediscs release has appeared since this review was written: the Purcell String Quartet playing Harry Somers' Quartet No. 3 and Barbara Pentland's Quartet No. 4, WRC 1-2429.*

orchestras last season, not a single Canadian work appeared in the subscription programs. Across the border to the North, the situation is much the same. The name William Schuman means nothing to most Canadians, and one leading critic admitted in print that he had been unaware that Samuel Barber (shortly before he died) was one of America's senior composers until he happened to glance at the program notes for the concert he was reviewing.

Both the American Music Center and the Canadian Music Centre are working hard to promote and disseminate, at home and abroad, music of their respective countries. In Canada, the Centre (headquarters in Toronto, branches in Calgary, Montreal, and Vancouver) provides a wide variety of services to this end, including a free lending-library of scores, listening facilities for tapes and records, distribution of recordings of Canadian music, rental of orchestral parts, and access to research materials. The

Centre's most recent undertaking of note is the establishment of a new recording label, eponymously named "Centrediscs."

The venture's first six productions, released over a period of fifteen months—from July 1981 (the Canadian Electronic Ensemble disc) through October 1982 ("Folia")—evidence a highly auspicious beginning. To begin with nonmusical matters, the colorful, eye-catching jackets (all but the first by Parson Associates of Stratford, Ontario) have been tastefully and imaginatively designed, and in most respects the album layouts are models of their kind: Each contains program annotations, performer and composer biographies, photos, production data, and timings (though not always precise). The Canadian mania for presenting everything in both English and French precludes extensive essays, but the information provided is generally adequate. Technically, the discs are first-rate. Four have been digitally produced, and except for the rare pop, tick, or swish, surfaces are among the quietest I have ever encountered. The sense of "presence" is so vivid in some of the works (Weinzweig's *Contrasts*, for example) that one can easily imagine live artists playing in one's living room.

Each album has been conceived around a theme—either stylistic or performance-oriented. These include electronic music, a Romantic ballet score, woodwind quintet music, avant-garde solo piano pieces, a cappella choral music, and works of John Weinzweig. With one exception (Somers' *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports*), all works here receive their recording premieres.

**If I had to single out** just one of these discs for overall excellence, it would be "Spectra." From evocative cover art to impeccable performances of wonderful music and top-rate technical production, this album represents everything one could ask for in a recording. Each of its three works qualifies as a minor masterpiece.

Clifford Ford unifies the five sections of his twenty-one-minute *Mass* (1976) with short rhythmic and melodic motives, much in the manner of Dufay, Josquin, and other Renaissance masters. Further characteris-

tics of Renaissance style show up in the predominantly stepwise melodic motion and in some of the cadential formulas. In his liner notes, Ford states: "My musical remembrances as a boy soprano in a Toronto church choir were of the great choral works of the Renaissance and Tudor England, and . . . this . . . was the single most important influence on me when I approached the Mass." His setting, despite its many historical throwbacks, nevertheless has a piquant contemporary flavor and reveals a stimulating, refreshing originality grounded not in eccentricity, but in solid values evolving from a rich musical past.

Ford, incidentally, has just written the first monograph on the history of music in Canada from its beginnings to the present day: *Canada's Music: An Historical Survey* (GLC Publishers, Agincourt, Ont.).

The other works in "Spectra" are scarcely less impressive. Oskar Morawetz' *Who Has Allowed Us to Suffer?* (1970), a four-voice setting of lines from Anne Frank's *Diary*, is dedicated to Anne's father, Otto. The composer has accomplished what many musical laymen would scarcely have believed possible, writing a sincerely moving, indeed, poignantly beautiful work in atonal style. Connoisseurs of twentieth-century choral music, on the other hand, may hear strong reminiscences of Schoenberg's *Dreimal tausend Jahre*.

I have just one small quibble with this disc. Barely six seconds of silence separate Frank's anguished thoughts on one of the darkest pages of history from a drinking song riddled with whoops, hollers, and other ribald vocal effects, the first *Newfoundland* setting. Once past this unsettling experience, though, Somers' music becomes a joy to hear. The songs, composed in 1968-69 to texts from a 1965 collection of the same title by Kenneth Peacock, alternate earthy, outdoorsy vigor and vitality with soothing, more peaceful moods. Each is a gem in its way, but the fourth, "She's like the swallow," is the most memorable in its

haunting, melancholic beauty.

The performances by the Elmer Iseler Singers are nothing short of sensational. A dictionary of superlatives would scarcely do justice to this superb ensemble of twenty-three singers, which Iseler organized in 1979 from the defunct Festival Singers of Canada. Clarity of line, textual expression, rhythmic accuracy, balance, and a deeply felt sense of musicianship all converge in one of the best small choral groups I know.

Michael Schulman's liner notes are useful and informative, the cover art is strikingly imaginative, surfaces are remarkably silent, and all texts are printed (though the Latin of Ford's Mass and the French of one Somers song are not translated). All in all, an outstanding job.

Michael Conway Baker's 1978-79 ballet score based on the Henry James novel *Washington Square* is not great music, yet its captivating tunes, pulsating rhythms, and the nostalgic atmosphere created through its unabashed Romantic style combine to such effect that I find myself returning to this recording again and again just for the sheer pleasure of it.

Baker is one of a handful of transplanted Americans presently working permanently in Canada. (Others include Michael Colgrass, Michael Horwood, Richard Johnston, and James Montgomery.) Now in his early forties, he considers this his most important and favorite work to date: "This score encompasses practically everything I have to say, musically, up to this point in my career." Nevertheless, one cannot help noticing that he has borrowed directly and heavily from a large number of twentieth-century composers—Prokofiev, Ravel, Honegger, Hindemith, Bernstein, Copland, Delius, Vaughan Williams, and even venturing into the film world, Michel Legrand (*The Go-Between*) and John Williams (*Star Wars*). Baker can thus hardly lay claim to an original voice, but his music does fill its intended function; it is nothing if not dance-



Oskar Morawetz: a sincerely moving work

able, and were it not specifically written for the National Ballet of Canada, someone would surely have choreographed it.

From the complete score, thirteen episodes comprising about fifty-three minutes of music have been excerpted. The music follows the story line, of course, but as with many musical narratives, some of the themes crop up just a little too often for comfort. Baker is at his strongest in conjuring a general aura of nostalgia and in his treatment of the mood pieces ("The Party," "The Square," "The House at Night/Waiting and Reflection/Catherine's Anguish").

The London Symphony Orchestra (London, England, not Ontario!) responds well to conductor George Crum, who has been music director of the National Ballet since its founding in 1951. The album notes include a detailed analysis of the story and music to help the listener visualize an actual staging. Recommended especially to balletomanes, literary buffs, and those with an incurable weakness for latter-day musical Romanticism.

One other album is devoted to the music of a single composer, John Weinzweig. One of Canada's most prominent and respected composers, he occupies a position somewhat analogous to Copland's or Schuman's in America. His seventieth birthday, in March 1983, was an important event, particularly in view of the fact that many of the country's finest composers have studied with him. More than any other figure, Weinzweig has been responsible for the introduction into Canada of twentieth-century musical styles, including serial

**ELMER ISELER SINGERS: Spectra.**

Elmer Iseler Singers, Elmer Iseler, cond. [Anton Kwiatkowski, prod.] CENTREDISCS CMC 0281, \$12 Canadian (digital recording) (add \$2.25 Canadian for shipping; Canadian Music Centre, 1263 Bay St., Toronto M5R 2C1, Ont., Canada).

FORD, C.: Mass. MORAWETZ: Who Has Allowed Us to Suffer? SOMERS: Songs of the Newfoundland Outports (5).

**BAKER: Washington Square** (excerpts).

London Symphony Orchestra, George Crum, cond. [James Burnett, prod.] CENTREDISCS CMC 0682, \$12 Canadian.

**WEINZWEIG: Private Collection\*;** **Contrasts†.**

Mary Lou Fallis, soprano\*; Monica Gaylord, piano\*; Philip Candelaria, guitar†. [Srul Irving Glick, prod.] CENTREDISCS CMC 0582,

\$12 Canadian (digital recording).

**GRIMES, et al.: Chaconne à son goût.\***

**GRIMES: All Wounds.†**

Canadian Electronic Ensemble\*†; Billie Bridgman, soprano†; Karen Kieser, piano†. CENTREDISCS CMC 1, \$12 Canadian.

**ANTONIN KUBALEK: Sonics.**

Antonin Kubalek, piano. [David Jaeger, prod.] CENTREDISCS CMC 0382, \$12 Canadian (digital recording).

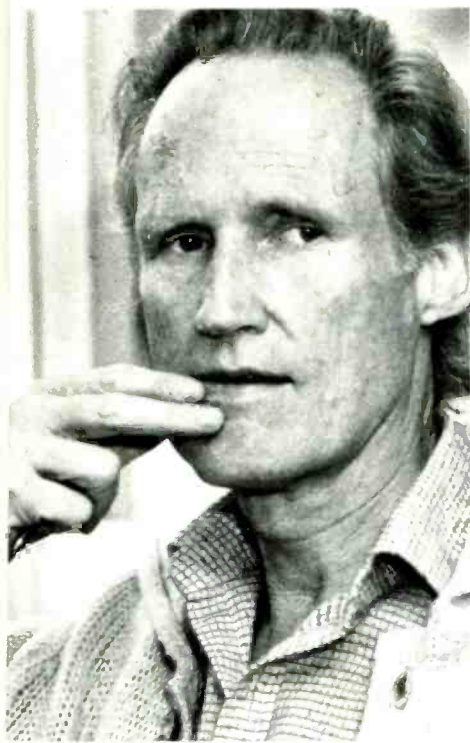
ANHALT: La Tourangelle: La Fuite. BUCZYNSKI: Monogram. DOLIN: Queekhoven and A.J.

**YORK WINDS: Folia.**

York Winds. [David Jaeger, prod.] CENTREDISCS CMC 0482, \$12 Canadian (digital recording).

AITKEN: Folia. CHERNEY: Wind Quintet. HAMBRAEUS: Jeu de cinq. SHERMAN: Quintessant.





ALLEN PHOTOS

Harry Somers: each song a gem in its way

music, of which he was the country's first practitioner. Much of his output has been in the realm of chamber music or concertos, where he can concentrate on the capabilities of a small number of performers or even a single player.

*Private Collection*, which furnishes the album title, consists of nine songs for soprano and piano, composed mostly in 1975. "They are about anything: an experience, an observation, or a fleeting impression," say the liner notes. Hence such capricious titles as "I Heard," "Says What?," "Hello Rico," "My Dear, Etcetera," etc. Mary Lou Fallis brings considerable understanding and sensitivity to these little songs, some of them quite cute, others quirky or snappy, a few reflective. Texts are not printed, but Fallis' perfect enunciation and the annotations would make them superfluous.

The flip side contains *Contrasts* (1976), in which the rich, sensuous sounds of Philip Candelaria's guitar are well suited to the idiomatic writing Weinzwieg has conceived. The music is not relaxing, but neither is it inaccessible: except for those whose musical tastes end with Brahms and Mahler, this six-movement set contrasting slow and fast tempos will prove one of the outstanding works for solo guitar. The individual movements take on the character of extended cadenzas. Before writing *Contrasts*, Weinzwieg made a careful study of the instrument, its capabilities and sonic possibilities. The result is a series of masterfully crafted pieces, each unified by melodic or rhythmic cells and presenting a kaleidoscopic variety of contrasts—of ar-

tification, dynamics, tone color, texture, and note lengths. Candelaria's performance is totally committed, even distinguished.

Electronic music is not a medium I usually respond to with much sympathy, but David Grimes's *All Wounds* (1979) is an exception. As a companion piece to *Chaconne à son goût* (pun intended) on the Canadian Electronic Ensemble recording, it combines piano, soprano, and electronic ensemble in a personal expression of loss and sorrow. Passages of intense lyricism are interspersed with static chordal textures. The total effect is of some kind of quasi-religious experience, resulting in catharsis and deep inner peace. Sensations of timelessness, weightlessness, and utter solitude are also evoked, further intensifying the experience.

"Sonic," an album of music for solo piano, contains three works that exploit the instrument's wide variety of tone colors and manners of articulation, though without resorting to exotic effects or "prepared" piano à la Cage. Walter Buczynski's *Monogram* (1978), with its faint echoes of Messiaen, Barber, and Scriabin, is the strongest item here. The composer explains that it was written for a friend who "didn't understand anything I had written. I therefore tried to write something he could understand and appreciate." Well, I'm not convinced this music is all that easy to understand, but a fair degree of concentration will reveal the workings of a fertile imagination in the deployment of pianistic sonorities and textures.

Pianist Antonin Kubalek, who fled his native Czechoslovakia after the 1968 Soviet invasion, delivers brilliant performances. His admirable dexterity and clarity of articulation are definite advantages in music such as Samuel Dolin's *Queekhoven and A.J.* (1975), a work replete with skittery figurations, rapidly repeated notes, multi-layered textures, and rhythmic counterpoint. One wishes, though, that Kubalek could provide a stronger fortissimo and a greater sense of power at climaxes. Surfaces are again blissfully silent, and the piano sound is reproduced with lifelike fidelity.

"Folia," the latest of the Centrediscs productions, contains four works for woodwind quintet. The music here is generally less satisfying than on the five earlier issues, but Brian Cherney's Quintet (1965) should be singled out for its sophisticated treatment of rhythmic ideas, its taut style, textural clarity, and idiomatic instrumental writing; transcription for any other ensemble would be inconceivable. The effectiveness of this kind of music depends heavily on an accurate performance. The York Winds meticulously observe the score's countless details of dynamics, rhythm, and articulation and play with flawless intonation.

**In conclusion**, it might be useful to consid-

er just how Centrediscs fits into the total picture of Canadian record production. Canada's classical record industry is not a very healthy one. The homegrown product is produced by fewer than a dozen small, mostly independent companies that have issued anywhere from five to twenty-five records each. The sole exception is the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's large repertory of discs, numbering several hundred items of mostly Canadian music played by Canadian artists. However, active production of classical records by the CBC appears to have slackened. In a study published in the December 1981 issue of *MusicCanada*, Earl Rosen writes that: "Classical records in Canada have fallen well behind the development of other sectors of the record industry in Canada. The primary reason for this is that the agencies and organizations concerned with classical music have not treated classical records as anything more than a sideline.

"Since the record companies, needing to operate on a profit, are unlikely to make significant changes in their policy toward Canadian classical records, the onus is on the music organizations concerned to bring about any change.

"Any program established must be developed with very clear goals and very specific and obtainable targets."

The goal of Centrediscs is evident: It sees itself as part of a music organization willing to take on the "onus . . . to bring about . . . change" by recording a representative sample of the best contemporary Canadian music with highly qualified performers and state-of-the-art technology. By insuring that all aspects of the production are of the highest possible quality, Centrediscs should be able to convince a sizable percentage of the record-buying public that Canada can stand as an equal of any other country in the quality of its musical offerings.

Although there are a few Canadian compositions on American labels such as CRI, Louisville, and Citadel, a full-fledged advertising campaign is needed to expose the potential American market to the musical riches of Canada. Unfortunately, Centrediscs does not have the resources for this kind of advertising, but with the support of several arts councils and foundations, including the Canada Council and the CBC, the label is at least assured of some degree of financial stability.

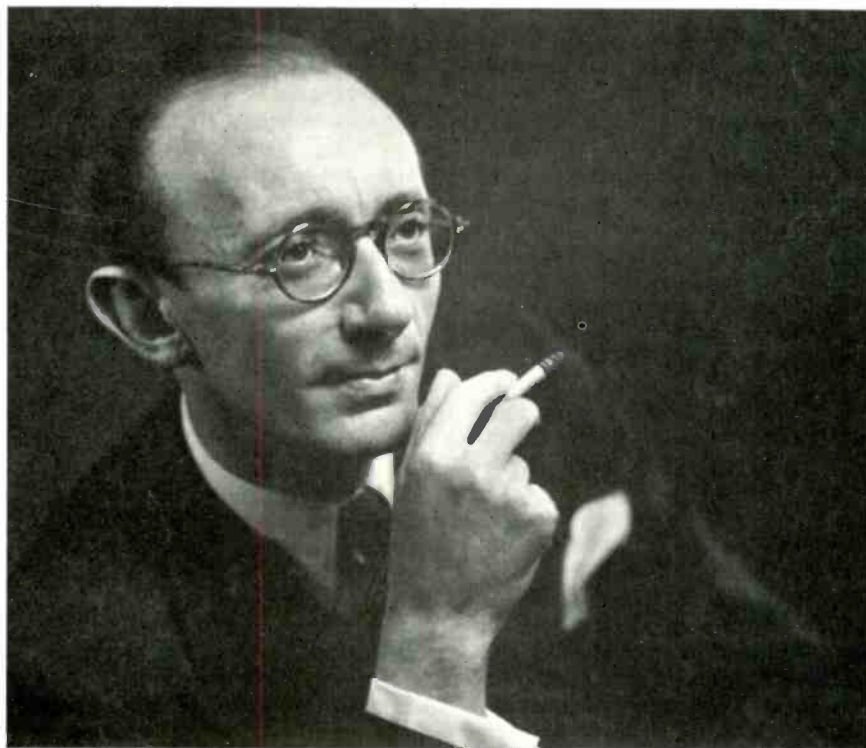
In addition to the six albums already available, six more should be ready shortly, with plans for an additional six in the not too distant future. A catalog of eighteen records may seem very modest in terms of giants like CBS or Angel, yet this figure may well put Centrediscs in the forefront of the classical recording field in Canada. Judging by the quality of what is already on the market, success seems assured, and we can only wish this young venture the very best of luck.

**HF**

# Mozart Piano Concertos: State of the Performance Art

As the latest releases show, a basic sense of period style has become almost routine in this rarefied genre.

Reviewed by Harris Goldsmith



Clifford Curzon: It was for just such a release that the phonograph was invented.

FOR A VIVID DEMONSTRATION of how far we've come in Mozart concerto performance practice, listen to the interpretations of K. 466 by Bruno Walter and the Vienna Philharmonic (reissued on Turnabout THS 65036) and by Mitja Nikisch with the Berlin Philharmonic (on Telefunken 78s): Walter, incredible as it may seem now, was highly regarded as a Mozart "specialist," and Nikisch, son of the great conductor Arthur Nikisch, was by all evidence well regarded during his lifetime (1899–1936). Both versions are full of purple prose and bereft of anything we nowadays consider appropriate: the balefully sentimental Reinecke cadenzas and myriad tempo changes are only for starters. If pioneers such as Artur Schnabel, Edwin Fischer, and Ernő Dohnányi reminded us that Mozart composed more than one concerto, and Rudolf Serkin, Robert Casadesus, Walter Gieseking, Clara Haskil, and Lili Kraus brought

Mozart concerto interpretation into the twentieth century, it remained for a still younger generation (e.g., Peter Serkin, Murray Perahia, Alfred Brendel) to lead the way back to the eighteenth.

For all today's fashionable disparagement of the present and glorification of the past, there can be little doubt that, in this rarefied genre at least, we've gained much more than we've lost. It is really quite gratifying to discover at least the rudiments of good style in even the most commonplace of these newest performances, and as recording techniques have improved, so too have the perceptions and attitudes of the various producers, who usually take care now to see that the relevant comments of the woodwinds can be heard. (The bassoon, however, remains quite often the victim of underrecording and/or conductorial discrimination.)

Generally speaking, the gains have

been: 1) a more appropriate sense of the proper sonority—this, ironically, partly the result of economic considerations, such as the current unfeasibility of using an overly large complement of strings; 2) far greater sagacity in the interpolation of cadenzas, *Eingänge*, and embellishments of stark melodic passage-work; 3) more astute interpretation of appoggiaturas (played long, and on—rather than before—the beat) and trills (now frequently started on the upper auxiliary rather than the main note). As for the losses, there is, of course, always a danger that "correctness" will supplant humor and passion. Yet artistry knows no time or place, and the truly great interpreter—with or without stylistic know-how, by one set of values or another—will, through dint of genius, rise to the top. And so, on to the recordings.

Let's begin with some elder statesmen: Rudolf Serkin, Wilhelm Kempff, and the late Clifford Curzon. Pride of place goes to the last for his coupling of K. 466 and K. 595, two of the greatest Mozart concertos, in two of the most elevated interpretations I have ever heard.

Curzon reportedly did not care for K. 466 as much as he did for K. 491, in C minor. And in truth, it took me a few moments to adjust to the slightly detached, understated, cool sophistication of this performance. Adjust I certainly did, however, and before long I found myself utterly transported by the purity and commitment, not to mention the impeccable balances and beautiful singing tone, of these performers. Curzon, moreover, is far more adventurous than his chronological peers in filling out Mozart's patterns. (But appropriately, he remains somewhat unpredictable, leaving bare a passage in the Larghetto of K. 595 after having embroidered the similar first episode of K. 466's Rontance.) And understated though the performance is, a true passion simmers just below the decorous surface; note, for instance, the ardent attention Benjamin Britten draws to the violas and cellos in some of the vamping accompaniment figures in both concertos. Curzon plays both of Beethoven's cadenzas in K.

HIGH FIDELITY ARCHIVES



466. investing them with improvisatory fleetness and fanciful stresses in place of the usual *Sturm und Drang*.

Sir Clifford had something of a fixation on K. 595, which, apparently, he loved above all other Mozart concertos. I've learned from reliable sources that he recorded it more than once but never deemed the performances worthy of publication. In fact, he had hoped to try yet again with Bernard Haitink at the helm—a project foiled by the pianist's death last September. Perhaps in heaven (where he now undoubtedly resides), better performances than this one exist, though I seriously doubt it. For years, I've lamented the unavailability of such bygone performances as Horszowski/Casals (Columbia) and Haskil/Fricsay (Heliodor); here, finally, is a recording of Mozart's last, and arguably greatest, concerto ("arguably," because its elusive qualities prove extremely perishable in prosaic—and worse—performances) that does fullest justice to its sublime content. While I still would welcome the others back (we can never have too many good interpretations of such works), you'll never hear me complaining so long as this version is available. London frames both sides of this irresistible disc with spacious, airy, fine-grained sound. It was for such a release that the phonograph was invented!

Kempff first drew my attention with a distinguished interpretation of K. 466 with Paul van Kempen and the Dresden Philharmonic in a wartime Polydor recording transferred to LP by American Decca in the early 1950s. And slightly later, Kempff again delighted in a consummately played

coupling of K. 271 and K. 450 with Karl Münchinger and the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra strings and Suisse Romande winds on London. (All three of these performances should be resurrected; the London recording even *sounds* remarkably good, with clean orchestral timbres and rich, sonorous piano tone.)

Age, however, has somewhat diminished Kempff's fancifulness (as witness a very steady and reliable but slightly four-square coupling of K. 488 and K. 491, DG Privilege 2535 204), and it becomes my sad duty to report that most of the old magic is completely gone in the new performances of K. 467 and K. 482. It's a matter not so much of declining technique—although that is certainly detectable at times in this (one suspects) carefully edited release—but of less distinctive nuance and poetry. While it is certainly good to have the bare bones of Kempff interpretations available in two of the greatest concertos, neither of which he has recorded before, one ruefully tries to reconstruct from these virtual skeletons what might have emerged a quarter-century before. Most of the playing is loud, neutral in color, and not particularly sensitive. Bernhard Klee's orchestra, however, is appropriate for the works at hand: A large body of players gives the beginning of K. 482 a suitable *Zauberflöte* Overture weightiness, yet the pungent woodwind remarks and the incisive timpani strokes can be heard with unupholstered force and clarity. Cadenzas, since Mozart provided none in either work, are Kempff's own—slightly bizarre by modern (non-Schnittke!) standards but more fitting than those by Fischer

or Schnabel. Kempff does minimal filling out, retaining—like Serkin though unlike Curzon—his old ways.

For a representative demonstration of Serkin's Mozartian prowess, one should revert to a three-disc Odyssey reissue, Y3 34642. After years of not liking this distinguished Beethoven/Brahms/Schubert interpreter in Mozart, I was astonished to rediscover those older performances, with their fleetness and fancy, and even some color and nuance despite the prevailing (and characteristic) lean, wiry tone. K. 414, K. 467, and K. 488, all with Alexander Schneider conducting, are particularly persuasive, K. 453 and K. 503, with George Szell, less so. But returning to the slightly more recent Serkin/Szell collaborations in K. 459 and K. 466 (CBS MS 6534), I once again found them stiff and lifeless.

The DG disc is the first of a projected complete series (to add to Kraus, Anda, Perahia, Ashkenazy, Brendel, presumably Pires, and—though best forgotten—Barerboim). The new D minor (Serkin's *fourth*) is a bit less denatured than its immediate over-Szell-ous predecessor, but also less well played. Serkin's less admirable qualities are abundantly present—four-square rhythms mauled with a kind of studied "sentiment" (e.g., willful stresses, left hand slightly ahead of right) and a reluctance to fill out cadential fermatas, as in the finale of K. 466. He uses Beethoven's cadenzas, and to good effect. His playing, in fairness, is still sufficiently representative to please those who admire him in this music, yet even by comparison with his older Schneider-led performance, this K.

## MOZART: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra.

No. 20, in D minor, K. 466; No. 27, in B flat, K. 595: Clifford Curzon, piano; English Chamber Orchestra, Benjamin Britten, cond. [Ray Minshull, prod.] LONDON CS 7251, \$10.98. Tape: CS5 7251, \$10.98 (cassette).

No. 21, in C, K. 467; No. 22, in E flat, K. 482: Wilhelm Kempff, piano; Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bernhard Klee, cond. [Rudolf Werner, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2531 372, \$10.98. Tape: 3301 372, \$10.98 (cassette).

No. 12, in A, K. 414; No. 20: Rudolf Serkin, piano; London Symphony Orchestra, Claudio Abbado, cond. [Rainer Brock, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2532 053, \$12.98 (digital recording). Tape: 3302 053, \$12.98 (cassette).

No. 11, in F, K. 413; No. 12: Tedd Joselson, piano and cond.; Norwegian Chamber Orchestra. [Frank Hedman, prod.] TURNABOUT TV 34780, \$5.98. Tape: CT 4780, \$5.98 (cassette).

No. 17, in G, K. 453; No. 23, in A, K. 488: Richard Goode, piano; Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. [Max Wilcox and Judith Sherman, prod.] NONESUCH 79042-1, \$11.98 (digital recording). Tape: 79042-4, \$11.98 (cassette).

No. 17; No. 18, in B flat, K. 456: Emanuel Ax, piano; St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Pinchas Zukerman, cond. [Jay David Saks, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARC 1-4522, \$12.98 (digital record-

ing). Tape: ARE 1-4522, \$12.98 (cassette).

No. 5, in D, K. 175\*; No. 17†; No. 18†; No. 25, in C, K. 503\*: Murray Perahia, piano and cond.; English Chamber Orchestra. [Roy Emerson, prod.] CBS MASTERWORKS IM 36686†, 37267\* (digital recordings). Tape: IMT 36686† (cassette). [Prices at dealer's option.]

No. 17\*; No. 19, in F, K. 459†; No. 21\*; No. 23†; No. 24, in C minor, K. 491†; No. 27†: Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano and cond.; Philharmonia Orchestra. [Christopher Raeburn, prod.] LONDON CS 7104\*, 7174†, \$10.98 each; LDR 71007‡, \$12.98 (digital recording). Tape: CS5 7104\*, 7174†, \$10.98 each (cassettes); LDR5 71007‡, \$12.98 (cassette).

No. 15, in B flat, K. 450; No. 21: Alfred Brendel, piano; Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Neville Marriner, cond. PHILIPS 6514 148, \$12.98 (digital recording). Tape: 7337 148, \$12.98 (cassette).

No. 12\*; No. 13, in C, K. 415†; No. 19\*; No. 20†; No. 26, in D, K. 537 (Coronation)†; No. 27†: Maria João Pires, piano; Lausanne Chamber Orchestra, Armin Jordan, cond.\*‡; Gulbenkian Foundation Chamber Orchestra (Lisbon), Theodor Guschlbauer, cond.†. MUSICAL HERITAGE SOCIETY MHS 4442\*, \$7.75 (\$4.95 to members); MHS 824597/8†‡, \$15.50 (\$9.90 to members) (two discs, manual sequence). Tape: MHC 226597/8†‡, \$15.50 (\$9.90 to members) (two cassettes). (Add \$1.95 for shipping; Musical Heritage Society, 14 Park Rd., Tinton Falls,

N.J. 07724.)

No. 12; No. 18: Lili Kraus, piano; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Pierre Monteux, cond. RCA FRANCE GM 43276, \$7.98 (mono) [from RCA VICTOR LM 1783, 1953] (distributed by Harmonia Mundi U.S.A., 2351 Westwood Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90064).

MOZART: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 21\*; Sinfonia concertante for Violin, Viola, and Orchestra, in E flat, K. 364†.

Staffan Scheja, piano\*; Bernt Lysell, violin†; Nils-Erik Sparf, viola†; Stockholm Sinfonietta, Jan-Olav Wedin, cond. [Robert von Bahr, prod.] BIS LP 205, \$10.98 (distributed by Qualiton Records).

MOZART: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 23. HAYDN: Concerto for Keyboard and Orchestra, in D.

Steven Lubin, fortepiano; Mozartean Players, Ransom Wilson, cond. [Marc J. Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz, prod.] ARABESQUE 6510, \$7.98 (digital recording). Tape: 7510, \$7.98 (cassette).

MOZART: Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 22; Rondo, in D, K. 382.

Vladimir Ashkenazy, piano and cond.; Philharmonia Orchestra. [Christopher Raeburn, prod.] LONDON CS 7211, \$10.98. Tape: CS5 7211, \$10.98 (cassette).

414 is decidedly cautious in spirit. DG's digital sound is good, if not notably better than that of the older Szell and Schneider versions. This series will certainly prove useful when it finally begins to deliver some of the concertos previously unrecorded by Serkin.

**Turning to the younger players**, let me offer kind words for Tedd Joselson's interpretations of two of Mozart's earlier works, K. 413 and K. 414, with the Norwegian Chamber Orchestra. Joselson has devoted his previous efforts to Romantic music, and although he did take an unusually sweet-toned lyrical approach to some of those pieces, he turns out to be a more than stylish Mozartean. To be sure, he lacks the sheer sophistication and lapidarian pianistic skills of a Curzon or a Perahia (his ornaments and scale passages are a trifle uneven, and sometimes, in his enthusiasm, he tends to rush), yet he imparts a joyous, singing, communicative quality, admirably seconded by the uncommonly pure string tone of the Norwegian ensemble. This coupling affords much pleasure, and the Turnabout sound is bright and cheery.

Staffan Scheja's K. 467, too, makes a particularly attractive proposition for the incipient Mozart lover, coupled as it is with the wondrous K. 364 *Sinfonia concertante*. Though neither performance is quite the last word—each a mite deliberate and overinflected—both present the essential miracles with uncluttered honesty. Bis provides audiophile treatment (with direct metal mastering), further enhancing this worthy release.

Far more arresting than either of these, however, is the account of K. 488 by Steven Lubin and an ensemble of twenty players using period instruments. While as a rule, I'm no champion of such "authentic" presentations—and certainly not when they claim to represent the only viable approach—this performance is a revelation. Even more pertinent than the engaging rhythmic vitality and interpretive directness are the clarity and penetration of the pungent woodwinds. Lubin, moreover, shows stylistic awareness and—alone of the three performers here represented in K. 488—ornaments the large skips at the end of the slow movement. He also brings to the fore the siciliana characteristics of that Adagio (here, as in some printed editions, labeled "Andante"). Significantly, Lubin is partnered by a conductor, and it is probably this fact as much as the acerbic edge of the period instruments that gives the articulation such biting asperity. In truth, some of Lubin's pianism—for all its immensely likable verve—is a bit crude and unsubtle. More sophisticated players, even of the fortepiano, would undoubtedly achieve greater coloristic variety and at least a semblance of legato (which Lubin avoids like the plague).

The overside Haydn is all right, but

unfortunately, I last heard the work in Fischer's incomparably lucid wartime HMV recording in Discocorp's LP transfer (074).

Richard Goode's coupling of K. 488 and K. 453 finds him on the horns of a dilemma: His readings, featuring the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, probably no larger than Lubin's group, and no "conductor" (Orpheus appoints one of its players "leader" and works out all interpretive decisions by consensus in committee), are presented in the spirit of chamber music. Yet since all of these fine musicians are evidently more comfortable in Romantic music, there is little attempt at authenticity. The problem is that Mozart concertos, notwithstanding all the dialogue between the various instruments and soloist, are *not* chamber music; they need a simplified contrast between solo and tutti for their fullest effect. These performances, tasteful as they

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## Lubin's performance on fortepiano is a revelation.

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are, give voice to too many personal statements and simply refuse to coalesce into coherent entities. Nor is there any greater clarity than is obtained in many "big orchestra" interpretations.

Goode's pronounced penchant for molded phrases and Romantic nuance is unsettling in this context. (Note, for instance, the flawed symmetry that results from his ritards in the second theme of K. 488's first movement.) His rounded, cushioned sound—a perfect vehicle for Brahms and a hallmark of the seasoned chamber player—tends to blend with and submerge into the orchestral textures. And his approach to K. 488's slow movement is too static. While the "Adagio" heading is probably the correct one, Goode's treatment—unlike Ashkenazy's, otherwise similar—sometimes loses the necessary siciliana spring. Then, too, Goode may be the victim of misguided purism: Apparently using the Dover reprint of the Breitkopf and Härtel complete score, he follows literally the inauthentic legato markings for certain accompanimental figures. (In the K. 488 Adagio, the left-hand piano triplets, which should certainly duplicate the clarinet's interjections, here become faceless, unobtrusive accompaniment.)

The new RCA coupling of K. 453 and K. 456 demonstrates even more extremely what well-meaning Romantic musicians can inflict on works of stringent classical properties. On his own, Emanuel Ax has been growing of late, and this recording—like his recent Schumann solo disc (RCA ARC 1-4275)—shows a decided growth in

communicativeness, in nuance, and in general freedom of expression. But he is unmercifully hobbled by Pinchas Zukerman's tendency to "interpret" Mozart in the crassest terms imaginable: Not only do we get Papageno, Don Giovanni, Figaro, and the like, but also Hansel and Gretel, the Gingerbread Witch, and the tooth fairy—personages suggested by the superstar's stock-in-trade devices—ungainly swells on held notes, obvious and ostentatious exaggeration of phrasing, and all sorts of under-scoring ritards and hesitations. These performances were recorded in January 1982; since then I have heard Zukerman give two excellent accompaniments for K. 453—at New York's Mostly Mozart Festival and in a broadcast with his own St. Paul players. Significantly, as he learns the score better, he finds less reason to "do" so much with it. RCA's digital reproduction is full of life, but the music itself is sapped of vital juices and candied in unwholesome syrup.

Turning immediately to Perahia's coupling of these works, one finds the perfect antidote. Here there is no attempt—beyond an implied one—to link this instrumental music to Mozart's operas. One can only rejoice in Perahia's abstract concision, economical yet never rigid tempos, and absolute seriousness and musical probity. In a way, one is reminded of the Casadesu/Szell approach—albeit stripped of its brutal clipped vehemence and harsh rigidity. This disc is one of the high spots of Perahia's series thus far. (Other gems are K. 271/467, M 34562; K. 413, M 35134; and K. 482, M 35869.)

Less appealing (and I say this despite its having won the HF/International Record Critics Award) is Perahia's disc containing K. 175 and K. 503. The early work, elegantly performed, is rather distantly balanced, giving the piano a certain garish brilliance and making the strings shimmer with a chromium unreality. The performance of the great K. 503, while impeccable in its essentials, is somehow just too neutral and "objective" to make the imperial effect this austere and imposing work needs. Perahia is correct in considering K. 503 a relatively impersonal concerto (if I read his performance aright), but to make its effect such an approach needs the spur of an orchestral Kapellmeister, not Perahia's benevolent though thoroughly competent conductorial approach. If he doesn't abdicate his authority, he doesn't really *impose* it either. The K. 503 recordings by Fleisher/Szell (CBS D3M 33261) and Gieseking/Rosbaud (Angel, deleted) remain outstanding; only slightly less so are those of Gulda/Abbado (DG 2530 642) and De Larrocha/Solti (London CS 7109). CBS's sound here, while more satisfactory than in K. 175, is nonetheless more artificial than in some of the analog discs in the series—or for that matter, the digitally recorded K. 453/456.

Vladimir Ashkenazy recorded several  
(Continued on page 89)



Reviews



Carlo Maria Giulini: His work in Los Angeles starts to reap rewards—See page 68.

**BACH: Concertos for Violin and Strings: in A minor, S. 1041; in E, S. 1042. Concerto for Two Violins and Strings, in D minor, S. 1043.\***

Jaap Schröder and \*Christopher Hirons, violins: Academy of Ancient Music, Christopher Hogwood, dir. [Peter Wadland, prod.] OISEAU-LYRE DSDL 702, \$12.98 (digital recording). Tape: KDSDC 702, \$12.98 (cassette).

COMPARISONS:

Melkus/Capella Academica Arc. 2533 075  
Harnoncourt/Concentus Mus. Tel. 6.41227

Easy as it is to like, with sprightly tempos and virtuosic playing to match, this recording has a serious drawback: Jaap Schröder's violin, a 1665 Steiner, sounds wirier and more acrid—at least as recorded here—than Alice Harnoncourt's, presumably the 1658 Stainer Telefunken lists first (though a decade later, in Vivaldi's Op. 8, she plays a 1665 Stainer). Odd, because Oiseau-Lyre's "Jakob Steiner" and Telefunken's "Jacobus Stainer" are one and the same maker. Odder still, because Schröder is far the more accomplished player. Yet on this occasion, Harnoncourt coaxes a sweeter, more robust tone from her instrument.

None of which should be construed as warm recommendation for the 1967 Telefunken recording, ultimately defeated by its lack of virtuosity; repeatedly, the verve and sparkle of tutti passages dissipate in labored

solos—and this despite relatively relaxed tempos. The worthier period-instrument rival to the new Oiseau-Lyre is the 1971 Archiv. Strings are deployed identically in both: six violins, two violas, two cellos, and double bass. (Oiseau-Lyre does not indicate, however, whether soloist Christopher Hirons is replaced among the second violins in the D minor.) The Ancient Music Academy uses baroque pitch, and director Christopher Hogwood shifts from harpsichord continuo to organ in the concerto grosso. Violinist-conductor Eduard Melkus, at higher pitch, achieves a more modern sound, with stronger vibrato. Hogwood is generally brisker in the outer movements. Melkus in the inner, and both are faster almost everywhere than the Harnoncourts. Here, moreover, the fiddlers are equal to the stiffer challenges: note especially the articulation of sixteenth-note scales in both versions of the A minor finale. Melkus achieves dramatic effects through control of dynamics but seems less secure in maintaining tempo. Though I wouldn't willingly part with either recording (forced to choose, I'd probably keep Schröder/Hogwood), there's considerable room for further explorations of "authenticity" in this repertory. (Goebel/Musica Antiqua and Standage/Pinnock please apply.)

None of these recordings—least of all

Reviewed by:

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|--------------------|--------------------|
| John Canarina      | Nicholas Kenyon    |
| Scott Cantrell     | Allan Kozinn       |
| Kenneth Cooper     | Paul Henry Lang    |
| R. D. Darrell      | Irving Lowens      |
| Peter G. Davis     | Karen Monson       |
| Kenneth Furie      | Robert P. Morgan   |
| Harris Goldsmith   | James R. Oestreich |
| Matthew Gurewitsch | Conrad L. Osborne  |
| David Hamilton     | Andrew Porter      |
| Dale S. Harris     | Patrick J. Smith   |
| R. Derrick Henry   | Paul A. Snook      |
| Joseph Horowitz    | Susan T. Sommer    |

the Schröder/Hogwood—will likely convert listeners still leery of period instruments. They will do better, for now, to stick to the "standard" accounts by David Oistrakh (DG Privilege 2535 176, with son Igor and conductor Eugene Goossens in the D minor) or their own favorites. J.R.O.

**BAKER: Washington Square (excerpts)**—See page 64.

**BEETHOVEN: Fidelio (without dialogue, in Hungarian).**

CAST:

- |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Leonore         | Anna Báthy (s)        |
| Marzelline      | Mária Mátyás (s)      |
| Don Florestan   | Endre Rösler (t)      |
| Jaquino         | Gyula Angyal Nagy (t) |
| First Prisoner  | László Külkey (t)     |
| Don Pizarro     | Oszkár Maleczky (b)   |
| Rocco           | Mihály Székely (bs)   |
| Don Fernando    | István Koszó (bs)     |
| Second Prisoner | Jenő Vermes (bs)      |

Hungarian State Opera Chorus and Orchestra. Otto Klemperer, cond. HUNGAROTON LPX 12428/9, \$19.96 (mono; two discs, manual sequence) [recorded in performance, November 8, 1948].

Since few collectors share my feeling that Klemperer's 1962 EMI studio recording is a galumphing bore, many listeners may not share my enthusiasm for this *Fidelio*, Hungaroton's third release from a long-neglected cache of Hungarian Radio transcription discs made during the conductor's extensive Budapest appearances in the years 1948–50. Already issued are a Bach coupling (*Magnificat* and Fifth *Brandenburg*) and excerpts from *Die Meistersinger*. In the offing are more Bach (B minor Mass and Second Suite) and Wagner (*Lohengrin* excerpts), plus Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Entführung* (excerpts?), Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* (excerpts?), and the Mozart Symphony No. 39 and Schubert *Unfinished*.

The *Fidelio* is quick, indeed break-neck in the opening scene (which I think there are better ways to solve). More to the point, it's alive and forward-moving. The orchestra has its problems, and the singers are often extended to the limit, and the sound is cramped in the big ensembles, and

## Critics' Choice

The most noteworthy releases reviewed recently

**BACH: Goldberg Variations.** Gould. CBS IM 37779, Jan.

**BERNSTEIN: Dybbuk Suites Nos. 1-2.** New York Philharmonic, Bernstein. DG 2531 348, Jan.

**BRAHMS: Paganini Variations. PROKOFIEV: Piano Sonata No. 6.** Faerman. DG CONCORDS 2535 013, March.

**BRAHMS: String Sextet No. 1.** Les Musiciens. HARMONIA MUNDI FRANCE 1073, Jan.

**FAURÉ: Pénélope.** Norman, Vanzo, Dutoit. ERATO STU 71386 (3), Dec.

**FRANCK: Symphony in D minor.** Liège Philharmonic, Bartholomé. RICERCAR RIC 009, Feb.

**GRANADOS: Danzas españolas (12).** De Larrocha. LONDON CS 7209, Feb.

**HANDEL: Messiah (excerpts).** U. of Michigan Early Music Ensemble and Ars Musica. Parmentier. SCHOOL OF MUSIC SM 0017, Feb.

**JANÁČEK: Cunning Little Vixen.** Popp, Jedlička, Mackerras. LONDON LDR 72010 (2), Nov.

**MAHLER: Das Lied von der Erde.** Norman, Vickers, C. Davis. PHILIPS 6514 112, Jan.

**MAHLER: Symphony No. 7.** Chicago Symphony, Levine. RCA RED SEAL ATC 2-4245 (2), March.

**MONTEVERDI: Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda.** Kwella, Rogers, Thomas. Cologne Musica Antiqua. ARCHIV 2533 460, Jan.

**POWER: Masses and Motets.** Hilliard Ensemble, Hillier. EMI ELECTROLA REFLEXE IC 069-46402, March.

**PROKOFIEV: Romeo and Juliet Suites (2).** Philadelphia, Muti. ANGEL DS 37776, Feb.

**RACHMANINOFF: Symphony No. 2.** Concertgebouw, Ashkenazy. LONDON LDR 71063, March.

**SCHUBERT: Piano Sonata, D. 960.** Richter. EURODISC 86 222, Feb.

**SHOSTAKOVICH: Symphony No. 10.** Berlin Philharmonic, Karajan. DG 2532 030, Nov.

**TCHAIKOVSKY: Piano Concerto No. 2.** Cherkassky, Susskind. VOX CUM LAUDE VCL 9011, Jan.

**VERDI: Aida.** Ricciarelli, Domingo, Abbado. DG 2741 014 (3), Feb.

**WAGNER: Tristan und Isolde.** Price, Kollo, Kleiber. DG 2741 006 (5), Feb.

**BERLIN PHILHARMONIC: 100 YEARS.** EMI ELECTROLA IC 137-54095/9 (5), Dec.

**BERLIN PHILHARMONIC: 100 YEARS, VOL. 2.** Furtwängler. DG 2740 260 (6), Dec.

**JÓZSEF GREGOR: Great Buffo Scenes.** Savaria Symphony, Pál. HUNGAROTON SPLX 12359, March.

**OFRA HARNOY: Arioso.** DISCOPAEDIA MBS 2013, March.

**EGON PETRI IN RECITAL.** DELL'ARTE DA 9009, March.

**HEINRICH STROBEL: Verehrter Meister, lieber Freund.** Southwest German Radio. SCHWANN/DG 0629 027/31 (5), Oct.

the language is wrong. All the same, I find it all exciting, with an overall sense of commitment that distinguishes even the less glamorous vocalism.

Two performances are of considerable interest: Endre Rösler is a powerful and eloquent Florestan, Mihály Székely an occasionally sloppy but generally strong-voiced Rocco who scales his voice down beautifully for the dungeon duet with Leonore. I also much enjoyed Oszkár Maleczky's Schoeffler-esque Pizarro—not the smoothest-toned, but truly *sung*, and with tremendous authority. Anna Báthy's Leonore is likewise not terribly seductive in sound but full-toned and expressively potent. Except for a wobbly Don Fernando, the smaller roles are adequately filled.

Especially since Klemperer directed as well as conducted his Budapest *Fidelio* performances, I'd be curious to hear the spoken dialogue, which Hungaroton has nearly all omitted. Of course once heard it might not be regretted, and its inclusion would probably have forced the Act I finale, now neatly contained on Side 2, to spill over onto Side 3. With the reservation noted above, the sound is perfectly listenable, and there are notes in five languages, with texts in Hungarian and German.

Not for all tastes, no doubt, but well worth a listen. K.F.

**BRAHMS: Symphony No. 1, in C minor, Op. 68.**

Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, Carlo Maria Giulini, cond. [Günther Breest and Hans Weber, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2532 056, \$12.98 (digital recording). Tape: 3302 056, \$12.98 (cassette).

The Giulini/Los Angeles partnership is finally starting to reap rewards, and this Brahms First (Giulini's second recording of the work; his c. 1961 Philharmonia version is now available on Angel RL 32095) represents both the conductor's and the orches-

tra's best.

A word of warning for those who might be disturbed by an approach that borrows from several great—and, one would have thought, incompatible—conductors of the past: There is something here of Klemperer's monumentalism in the exceedingly deliberate and stately tempos; of Toscanini's (and Cantelli's) lucidity and refinement of sonority and constant prismatic cantabile; and of Furtwängler's penchant for rhetorical emphasis in the first-movement introduction—the drawing-back at the end of the 9/8 measure, the hairbreadth delay at cue A, and the broadening and underscoring of the timpani entry four bars later. (Of course, one can't ascribe most traits to a single maestro. Toscanini's May 6, 1940, broadcast of this work—his greatest—rivals this performance for heavy-treading breadth; and his 1952 Philharmonia account, Cetra LO 51, surprisingly espouses some of the rhetorical details mentioned above. Still, there is enough truth to the observation to make it useful.)

Perhaps the clarity and impact of DG's recording help, but for whatever reason, one can see what Giulini is seeking here far more readily than in the older version. Particularly noteworthy are the compactness and prominence of the timpani and the touch of rasping astringency to the brass. And for the first time, observance of the first-movement exposition repeat seems sensible rather than merely arbitrary or professorial. All the tempo relationships mesh convincingly, and in the finale rhythmic control remains secure even at the *ff* statement of the C major tune at cue D.

As in Giulini's recent recording of Schumann's *Rhenish* Symphony and *Manfred* (DG 2532 040), the Los Angeles Philharmonic shows a newfound incisiveness and "maturity"—with a weight and cohesion now fully comparable to that Giulini previously obtained from the Philhar-

monia and Chicago Symphony.

One tiny quibble: I sorely miss the extra timpani Toscanini (and others) used to add to reinforce the climax at bars 407–15 of the finale. This emendation made—and still makes—good dramatic sense. Since even today conductors are not above "tampering" with the sacrosanct original text (note the altered horn parts in the finale, bars 269–70, which Giulini, like virtually all modern interpreters, embraces), perhaps they will eventually be emboldened to revert to that other "heresy." H.G.

**COPLAND: Appalachian Spring: Suite. Rodeo: Four Dance Episodes. Fanfare for the Common Man.**

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Louis Lane, cond. [Robert Woods, prod.] TELARC DG 10078, \$17.95 (digital recording).

**COPLAND: Orchestral Works.**

Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, cond. [James Mallinson, cond.] LONDON LDR 71047, \$12.98 (digital recording). Tape: LDR5 71047, \$12.98 (cassette).

Rodeo: Four Dance Episodes. Fanfare for the Common Man. El Salón México. Dance Symphony.

For many years associate conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell, Louis Lane made a number of excellent records with that august ensemble during the 1960s and early '70s. This is his first disc with the Atlanta Symphony, of which he has been coconductor with Robert Shaw since 1977, and it is a pleasure to welcome him back to the microphones. Though none of these Copland favorites lacks satisfactory recordings, Lane's winningly exuberant performances are among the very best available.

Lane takes the slow sections of *Appalachian Spring* a little more briskly than do Bernstein (CBS MY 37257) and Copland himself (RCA LSC 2401 and CBS M 30649), yet he captures the sensitive atmo-



sphere of those passages and delivers the lively, rhythmic portions with great verve and precision. Lane, of course, performs the familiar concert suite. While it has become fashionable to prefer the scoring for chamber ensemble, in line with the current mania for "original versions," I, for one, prefer the orchestral version, with its greater dynamic range and coloristic spectrum.

Lane is especially impressive in the episodes from *Rodeo*. The exhilarating exuberance of the outer sections is exciting, the nostalgia of the Nocturne and Waltz tenderly expressive.

This is the first Atlanta Symphony recording I've heard, and the first time I've heard the orchestra at all since the late '60s. On this evidence, Atlanta can truly take pride in a wonderful orchestra. As for Lane, he has long been recognized as one of America's most gifted conductors and certainly deserves to be music director of a major orchestra.

The champion music director—numerically at least—is undoubtedly Antal Dorati, who has held that post with four major American orchestras. With the first, Dallas, he made the pioneering recording of the *Rodeo* "Dance Episodes" in the late 1940s (RCA, long deleted). Now, with the last (?), Detroit, he offers his third recording of the work, making him—numerically at least—the champion *Rodeo* conductor on records. (The second recording, with the Minneapolis for Mercury, is also unavailable.)

This is certainly the least successful of the three. Despite Dorati's balletic background, there is too little of the dance in this performance. The lively "Buckaroo Holiday" and "Hoedown," slower here than in Lane's reading, smack too much of the concert hall and are frankly a mite stodgy and heavy. *El Salón México*, on the other hand, is quite spirited, but lacks the incisiveness others have brought to it.

The special feature of Dorati's record is the inclusion of one of Copland's earliest, most ingenious and engaging works, the 1930 *Dance Symphony*, taken from music for the even earlier fantastic ballet *Grohg*. It's also one of Copland's most rhythmically intricate scores—albeit child's play for orchestras reared on *The Rite of Spring*. Dorati and the Detroit Symphony are at their best in this vital and alert reading, yet the versions by Copland (CBS MS 7223), Morton Gould (RCA AGL 1-4213), and Akeo Watanabe (CRI SD 129) offer couplings of greater interest to those who already have *Rodeo* and *El Salón*.

Both recordings include the familiar *Fanfare for the Common Man*. Dorati is again a little more deliberate; Lane's percussion has greater impact, with an absolutely smashing tam-tam.

During the 1950s and early '60s the Detroit Symphony made many outstanding recordings under the late Paul Paray; then it drifted into phonographic obscurity until

Dorati revived it a few years ago. This collaboration, too, has produced some excellent and interesting releases. The Copland disc, not one of its best, may be one of its last, for Dorati is no longer Detroit's music director. Let's hope the orchestra doesn't drop out of sight again. J.C.

**GRIMES, et al.:** *Chaconne à son goût; All Wounds*—See page 64.

**HAYDN:** *Concerto for Keyboard and Orchestra, in D*—See page 56.

### **HILDEGARD OF BINGEN: Sequences and Hymns.**

Gothic Voices, Christopher Page, dir.; Doreen Muskett, symphony (hurdy-gurdy); Robert White, drones. (Martin Compton, prod.) HYPERION A 66039, \$13.98 (digital recording) (distributed by Harmonia Mundi U.S.A., 2351 Westwood Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90064).

## On the evidence of this disc, perhaps Hildegard should become a household name.

Columba aspexit per cancellos; Ave generosa; O ignis Spiritus Paracliti; O Jerusalem aurea civitas; O Euchari, columba; O viridissima virga; O presul vere civitatis; O ecclesia oculi tua.

Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) is hardly a household name. On the evidence of this disc, maybe she should be. She was one of the most remarkable and fascinating creative personalities of the entire medieval period and one of the first women whose music has been preserved in any quantity. As the tenth child of noble parents, she was promised to the Church in a curious form of tithing and entrusted at age eight to the care of nuns at the small Benedictine monastery of Disibodenberg, where she herself became abbess in 1136. She founded a monastery on the Rupertsberg, near Bingen, sometime between 1147 and 1150 and remained there the rest of her long life.

A mystic, Hildegard had visions in childhood that gradually intensified, finally compelling her to set them down in a trilogy of books compiled over a span of nearly three decades. So renowned were her prophecies that her advice was sought by popes, emperors, kings, archbishops, and all manner of lesser mortals. Between 1160–70 she undertook four missions through Germany for Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. She also found time to write medical and scientific treatises, the first morality play, and large quantities of poetry and music.

Her lyric poetry, penned largely during the 1140s, was collected early in the next decade under the title *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*. According to Ian D. Bent in the *New Grove Dictionary*, it "is laden with brilliant imagery and shares the apocalyptic language of the visionary writings." Hildegard set it to monophonic music of her own devising. The melodies, which reflect her strong personality, tend to be built upon a few formulas and figurations that are recast, shuffled, extended, and developed into compositions of considerable length and complexity. Their character is spontaneous, even improvisatory, and—like the poetry—full of controlled fervor. Wider in range and with larger intervals than are customary in Gregorian chant, the melodies are hauntingly beautiful.

So is the singing of the Gothic Voices. A significant recent development in chant performance is its extension to professional rather than ecclesiastical musicians. No group of monks or nuns I know of can achieve the vocal agility or sensuousness of tone produced by these five women and three men. Then, too, their general approach (and that of most professional organizations) is far less laid-back than that found in monastic circles. Their pacing is brisker and more dramatically shaped, with a larger dynamic scale. Most of these eight hymns and sequences are performed responsorially, with alternation between soloist and chorus from verse to verse. As was the medieval liturgical practice, men and women never sing together. Nor in this recording do they sing antiphonally. Two of the pieces receive unaccompanied solo renditions from contralto Margaret Philpot—a musician to watch; her deep, throaty voice and poised, impassioned manner are very moving. Half of the chants are sung unaccompanied, the other half with an instrumental drone that is historically dubious and ultimately distracting.

Many scholars contend that, in the Middle Ages and beyond, hymns and sequences were often performed in a highly metrical fashion reflecting the poetic structure. The Gothic Singers eschew such practice here—probably rightly, for music as rhapsodic as Hildegard's. Instead they apply a free rhythmic style known as *equalist*. Each note receives approximately the same time value, with lengthenings at phrase endings—in essence, the method made famous by the monks at Solesmes. On paper it appears dull and dogmatic, but if executed with flexibility and a sense of large-scale line, as here, equalist theories prove vital and persuasive. The Gothic Voices go beyond the Solesmes tradition in one respect, interpreting the squiggly "quilismas" as turnlike ornaments rather than as slightly extended notes.

Still, save for those initially startling drones, there is relatively little here that will strike chant connoisseurs as unusual.

## CLASSICAL Reviews

And so, while I highly recommend this new recording for both melodic content and exquisite musicality, I direct the intrepid explorer to various path-breaking albums by R. John Blackley and his Schola Antiqua (*Vanguard and Nonesuch*), another by the Pro Cantione Antiqua of London under Edgar Fleet (*Peters International PLE 115*), and a mesmeric solo disc by Igor Reznikoff (*Harmonia Mundi France HM 1044*). On these you will hear Western chant performed as you have never heard it before.

R.D.H.

### JANÁČEK: *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček.*

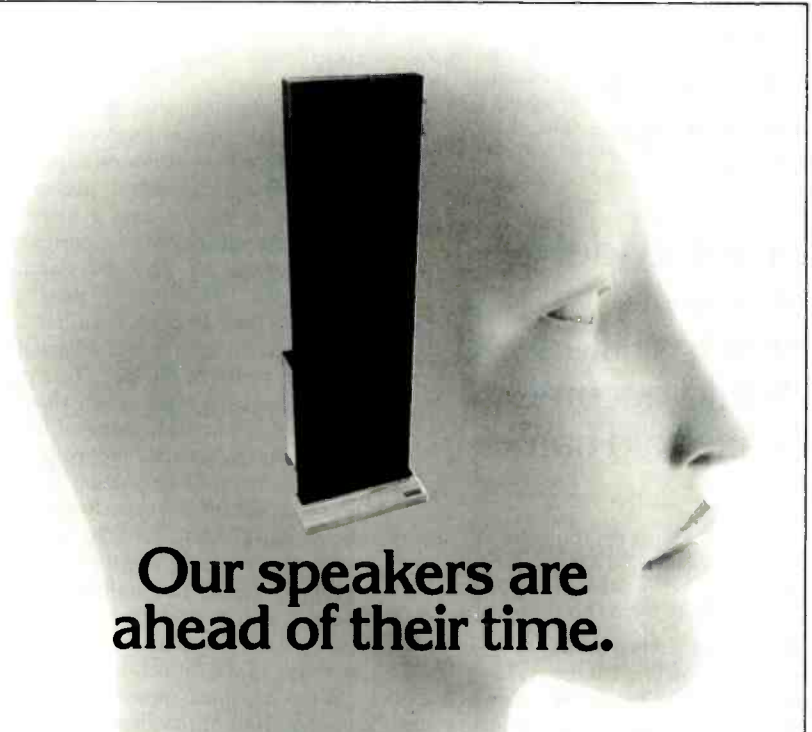
CAST:  
Málinka/Etherea/Kunka      Jana Jonášová (s)  
Apprentice Waiter/Prodigy/Student  
Kedruta      Jiřina Marková (s)  
Mr. Brouček      Libuše Márová (a)  
Mazal/Azurean/Petrík      Vilém Přibyl (t)  
Rainbowglory/Voice/Vojta/Poet/Harper/  
Composer/Second Taborite      Miroslav Švejda (t)  
Second Poet/Miroslav      Vladimír Krejčík (t)  
Cloudy/Second Voice/Vacek      Jiří Olejníček (t)  
Jaroslav Souček (b)  
Svatopluk Čech's Apparition      René Tuček (b)  
Sexton/Lunigrove/Domšik  
Bohuslav Maršík (bs-b)  
Würfl/Wonderglitter/Town Councillor

Richard Novák (bs)  
Karel Hanuš (bs)  
Czech Philharmonic Chorus and Orchestra,  
František Jílek, cond. [Eduard Herzog, prod.]  
SUPRAPHON 1116 3291/3. \$29.94 (three discs,  
manual sequence).

It took Janáček almost ten years to hammer out *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček*, a painful process during which he called upon the services of no fewer than nine librettists. That decade, from 1907 to 1917, must have been especially bleak for Janáček. He was approaching his sixties, his greatest score to date—*Jenufa*—had achieved only modest local acclaim in Brno, he had no future prospects beyond life as a provincial music teacher, and his marriage was on the rocks. A lesser man would have given up. Janáček not only persevered, but went on to compose the masterpieces of his old age, the works that would eventually make him world famous. Even if *Brouček* did not turn out to be a successful piece, the experience proved salutary for the composer's development, because with this opera he finally consolidated his style and found his true voice.

For that reason alone, *Brouček* will be of special interest to Janáček aficionados. Based on a satirical novel by Svatopluk Čech (1846–1908), it deals with the adventures of a smug vulgarian who typifies the worst qualities of the Czech middle class. In Part One, Brouček stumbles home from an inn, drunk as usual, and imagines what a wonderful thing it would be to lead a care-free life on the moon. Sure enough, this liquor-inspired dream actually levitates him into a lunar society populated by airily poetical and overrefined vegetarians who are thoroughly disgusted by this earthling's gross habits. After a brief return to reality, Brouček projects himself back in time to fifteenth-century Prague and the Hussite wars. Just as he is about to be executed for cowardly conduct in battle, the relieved Brouček wakes up back at the inn, bragging about the way he thrashed the invading armies and liberated Prague.

The troubles this libretto gave Janáček are hardly disguised in the opera's final form. The piece never quite strikes a convincing balance between broad farce, biting satire, and epic melodrama, and finally ends up by merely confusing the audience. Nor are the characters ever given a chance to register as fully drawn personalities, despite the ploy of triple-casting several related roles with the same singers. Even Brouček sometimes emerges more sympathetically than Janáček perhaps intended, especially when the bewildered man confronts the phony lunar aesthetes. (This attempt to lampoon arty trends of the day along with Brouček's bourgeois attitudes only succeeds in smudging the whole satirical point.) For all its foggy focus, the action of the opera bubbles along merrily, and who knows what inspired stage direction could make of it all.



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Besides that, the music is never less than captivating. The earthy peasant scenes in the inn, the luminous lyricism of the moon episode, and the hard-edged patriotic fervor of the Hussite battles create a musical atmosphere of dazzling variety. Here for the first time, Janáček completely masters his technique of shifting mosaics, transforming and combining themes with cunning sleight-of-hand as he binds the entire score into a coherent unity. It seems high time for a major company in this country to test the opera on stage. What sometimes looks problematical on the printed page of a Janáček opera often turns out to be an unexpected stroke of genius.

This is Supraphon's second recording of *Brouček*—in general, a great improvement over the first. Although that 1962 version is conducted by the estimable Václav Neumann, the Prague National Theater Orchestra plays scrappily for him and the recorded sound is unpleasantly tubby. František Jílek gets much more mellifluous results from the Czech Philharmonic, and Supraphon's engineers this time provide a warmly resonant acoustic. Both casts are respectable enough, and there is little to choose between them, although Bohumír Vích, Neumann's *Brouček*, turns in a more incisively characterful performance than does Vilém Přibyl for Jílek. Přibyl, who usually sings the lyric tenor repertory, seems a bit out of his element here, but he does bring an unexpected and not entirely inappropriate touch of melancholia to the scamp's various dilemmas. I also treasure a cameo appearance in the 1962 recording by the great Beno Blachut (who used to sing *Brouček*, but never on records) as the Apparition of Svatopluk Čech. The new performance includes several large chunks of Part Two never recorded before—sections not even printed in the libretto that accompanies the discs. Perhaps one day Supraphon will further favor us with the original epilogue to the moon adventure, a lengthy scene that Janáček deleted after he decided to extend the opera to include *Brouček's* trip back in time to the Hussite wars. P.G.D.

#### KALOMIRIS: *Symphony No. 1 (Levendia)*.

Bulgarian National Chorus, Sofia State Philharmonic Orchestra. Byron Fidetzis, cond. [Nikos Christodoulou, prod.] CONCERT ATHENS 0181. \$13.98 (distributed by International Book and Record Distributors, 40-11 24th St., Long Island City, N.Y. 11101).

Manolis Kalomiris (1883–1962), unknown on this side of the Atlantic, was a seminal figure in the development of twentieth-century Greek concert music. His background is rather unusual. After preliminary studies in Athens and Constantinople, he entered the Vienna Conservatory at age eighteen and spent five years there under the tutelage of Bauch, Sturm, Grädener, and Mandyzewski. In 1906, he accepted a position at

the Kharkov Conservatory. He returned to his native land in 1910, taught at the Athens Conservatory until 1919, then founded the Hellenic Conservatory and, seven years later, the National Conservatory. For most of the period 1936–57, he served as president of the Union of Greek Composers.

Kalomiris was a prolific composer (the first all-Kalomiris concert took place in June 1908 at the Athens Conservatory) of opera, orchestral music, vocal works with orchestra, chamber music, songs, and piano pieces; among his more than 200 compositions is *The Master Builder* (1915), to a libretto by Nikos Kazantzakis, the first

opera by a Greek composer on a native subject. He was strongly influenced by Greek folksong, and almost all his work is tinged with the folklore and spirit of late-Byzantine and post-Byzantine Hellenism. But he was also something of a cultural sponge, absorbing a certain Teutonism from his years in Vienna and a flair for lavish color and dramatic gesture from the music of the Russian nationalists that he heard in Kharkov. To the best of my knowledge, the *Levendia* Symphony is the first of his large works to be recorded and made available outside his native land.

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translate into English; a rough equivalent might be "heroism" or "bravery" or "valor," but it really connotes a positive attitude toward life in all its manifestations. The symphony, first performed in 1920 and twice revised, in 1937 and 1952, is flamboyant and epic in scale, its four movements representing various aspects of the Greek temperament. Kalomiris, using a lush, chromatic, polyphonic texture and propulsive rhythms, is attracted by the grand gesture, and his music alternates between a scream and a whisper. Frequently melodramatic, it sometimes calls to mind the movie music of such composers as Bernard Herrmann and Erich Korngold.

This is a fascinating, if not wholly successful, work. It makes a vivid first impression, primarily because of its violence and impressive, folk-influenced melodic lines, yet weaknesses become apparent upon repeated hearings. The first three movements are quite strong and promise great things, but the finale, a choral setting of a Byzantine hymn to the Virgin Mary in heroic mood, proves a considerable letdown. Matters are not helped particularly by either the Bulgarian National Chorus, which caterwauls its way through the movement, or the recording engineers, who do pretty well by the Sofia State Philharmonic in the purely instrumental portions of the work but fall flat on their faces when the voices enter.

The disc can be recommended to those

who are a little tired of repertory masterpieces and want to expand their musical horizons and those who are curious about contemporary musical culture in the land of the Hellenes and want to learn something about its origins. And it's tailor-made for those who like to play "Guess the Composer" with their sophisticated friends. I.L.

**MOZART: Concertos for Piano and Orchestra (16); Sinfonia concertante, K. 364; Rondo, K. 382—See page 56.**

**SCHUBERT: Songs (93)—See page 61.**

**SHOSTAKOVICH: Unpublished Works.**

Various performers, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, cond. VOX CUM LAUDE VCL 9035, \$8.98. Tape: VCS 9035, \$8.98 (cassette).

Two Fables by Krylov, Op. 4: No. 1, The Dragonfly and the Ant (Galina Borisova, mezzo-soprano; U.S.S.R. Symphony Orchestra); No. 2, The Ass and the Nightingale (Moscow Conservatory Chamber Chorus, Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra). Tahiti Trot (arr. of Youmans' "Tea for Two"). Op. 16 (Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra). Two Pieces by Domenico Scarlatti, Op. 17 (U.S.S.R. Wind Ensemble). Overture to Dressel's "Armer Columbus," Op. 23 (Leningrad Philharmonic). The Tale of the Priest and His Hired Man Balda, Op. 36: Suite (arr. Rozhdestvensky; U.S.S.R. Symphony). Miscellaneous arrangements—RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:

I waited for you in the grotto, Op. 40, No. 4 (Alla Ablaberdyyeva, soprano; U.S.S.R. Symphony). J. STRAUSS II: Excursion Train Polka, Op. 281 (Moscow Philharmonic). BEETHOVEN: Es war einmal ein König (Song of the Flea), Op. 75, No. 3 (Yevgeny Nesterenko, bass; instrumental ensemble).

An unremitting and unalloyed delight—or only lightly alloyed by the absence of printed texts for the vocal works. Recorded in 1979 under the incisive and affectionate direction of Gennady Rozhdestvensky (and accompanied by his notes), these tempting tidbits straddling Shostakovich's career—though weighted toward the early years—find him mostly in a relaxed, exuberant mood, as witness the hilarious yet elegant "Tea for Two" arrangement, produced on a dare in some forty-five minutes.

There's something most individual and appealing about the confident and healthy wit displayed here—an outrageous sense of fun that coexists with enormous warmth and openness. We've heard impudence of this sort from Stravinsky and Prokofiev, but not usually with this degree of personal commitment, for which Weill seems perhaps the closest point of reference. In some ways, we get a fuller image of Shostakovich's personality, or at any rate of one compartment of it, from the little suite Rozhdestvensky arranged from the 1933 score for a never-completed animated-film version of Pushkin's *Tale of the*

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K.F.

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Contrasts—See page 64.**

**ZEMLINSKY: Lyrische Symphonie, Op. 18.**

Elisabeth Söderström, soprano; Dale Duesing, baritone; Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bernhard Klee, cond. [Walter Schales, prod.] SCHWANN VMS 1602, \$11.98 (distributed by German News Co., 220 E. 86th St., New York, N.Y. 10028).

Julia Varady, soprano; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Lorin Maazel, cond. [Wolfgang Stengel and Günther Breest, prod.] DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON 2532 021, \$12.98 (digital recording).

COMPARISON:

Dorow, Nimsgern, Ferro Cetra ITL 70048

For some background on Zemlinsky, a surprisingly shadowy figure for someone whose name was so prominent in European musical circles in the first several decades of this century, readers are directed to David Hamilton's June 1980 review of the LaSalle Quartet's DG recording of the Second String Quartet. The point most pertinent to our immediate discussion is the existence of strong personal and professional relationships between Zemlinsky (1871-1942) and dominant musical personalities of three successive generations: Mahler (1860-1911), his onetime brother-in-law Schoenberg (1874-1951), and Berg (1885-1935). All three turn up in the *Lyric Symphony*, an attractive setting of seven poems by the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore which has lately been taken up by a number of orchestras in search of acceptably "mainstream" repertory.

One characteristic that can be gleaned from reviews of Zemlinsky revivals is a will to like the music. On my first encounter with it, I'm inclined not to dismiss this. By golly, there is something immediately ingratiating in the musical personality behind the *Lyric Symphony*, a sort of honesty or maybe just plain niceness that makes you want to like the music even when the attention begins to wander, which for me happens unmistakably in the third and fourth movements.

Although the opening timpani-roll crescendo may prepare you for the *H.M.S. Pinafore* Overture, what it in fact leads into is a rousing orchestral tutti that crashes and broods in full Romantic splendor for several minutes before subsiding to allow the morose baritone ("serious, dark, and very measured" is his instruction) to announce: "I am restless. I am athirst for faraway things." No kidding, you're going to love

this.

The musical profile of this first song is strong enough that you probably won't mind terribly that it's not easy to tell what exactly has got the singer so down. His poetic evocations of immensities of distance and time and of a yearning to wander may well put you in mind of the final parting ("Er stieg vom Pferd . . .") of Mahler's *Das Lied*, whose structural kinship to the *Lyric Symphony* is too obvious to require underlining. But Zemlinsky's would-be wanderer is a good deal more fidgety than Mahler's, and the peace he craves seems to have more to do with the here and now. If we were to listen with Zerbinetta's

ears to the vague allusions "Thy breath comes to me whispering an impossible hope./Thy tongue is known to my heart as its very own./O Far-to-seek, O the keen call of thy flute!," we might guess that what he really wants is a little female companionship.

And what the sequence of poems gives us is essentially the progress of a relationship, from vaguest yearnings through consummation and on through the waning of passion and a reasonably tranquil parting, wherein the stormy opening music is recapitulated as the baritone seems to find the peace he has been searching for. The catch is that the alternating movements for bari-

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tone and soprano, which are all musically joined, never address each other directly. Each stage of this imaginary relationship issues from a new and unrelated identity.

In the first soprano movement, for example, an obviously young maiden sings to her disapproving mother about the passing in front of their house of a procession including the object of her infatuation, a young prince. The poem sounds almost like the sort of *Wunderhorn* poem Mahler might have set, though the lively setting, especially as regards the ecstatic orchestral postlude, is more reminiscent of the Schoenberg of *Gurre-Lieder*, whose first part, both in its orchestral language and in the structure of musically continuous alternating songs for Waldemar and Tove, might be taken as a more direct influence than *Das Lied*.

There are important differences, though, and not just in the kinds of relationships presented: Where the white-hot passion of Tove and King Waldemar is abruptly and brutally terminated by the jealous Queen's vengeance, Zemlinsky's "lovers" trace the perhaps more familiar curve of a passion that naturally waxes and wanes. More significantly, I think, Schoenberg's lovers have precise identities, with precise histories, relationships, and hopes, while Zemlinsky's seven personae are mostly cloudy poetic constructs. Zemlinsky undoubtedly found Tagores's fog stimulating and evocative, and you may too. When I

hear a poem (the baritone's second) that begins, "You are the evening cloud floating in the sky of my dreams," I have the queasy sensation of having stumbled into Rod McKuen Land.

And I can't help feeling, going from the second movement to the third, that Zemlinsky stumbled too. The precise situation and personalities of the second movement seem to have freed his imagination most fully, and by the time the music has resolved into the haze of the baritone's third-movement adagio, he seems lost, reaching for gestures to illustrate an atmosphere. Again in the answering fourth movement for soprano ("Speak to me, my love!"), he seems just to be laboring too hard. It's not until the explosive onset of the introduction to the fifth movement, in which the baritone is already asking for his freedom, that Zemlinsky seems back on track. The final songs, in which the disengagement is worked out, proceed with almost the confidence of the earlier ones.

For me, at least, the result is a curious structure whereby the center of the piece—the movements in which each singer actually deals hopefully with a real and present person, which is to say the portion of the piece where our normal expectations would cue us for some kind of emotional nut—Zemlinsky kind of goes dead. (Let me add that the DG annotator, Horst Weber, divines a different structural logic, based on

the distinction between the experience and the dream of love. I think he's kidding himself about the nature of the dream experience, but his version may help you through.)

Berg must have found something more in the third movement, if only the so-called quotation—would we recognize it if he didn't signal it?—in his *Lyric Suite*. Which brings us to the matter of Zemlinsky's vocal writing, which pays its respects to both Mahler and the Schoenberg of *Gurre-Lieder* but seems to be working for an anti-tonal, self-consciously "modern" quality closer to the later Schoenberg or to his younger friend Berg. (Coincidence of dates: *Wozzeck*, although not premiered until 1925, was written in 1917-21. The *Lyric Symphony* dates from 1922-23.)

But again, he seems to be working too hard, and without quite understanding what he's working for. I just don't hear in these settings the kind of vocal expressivity—an expansion but at the same time an outgrowth of earlier models—that Berg worked for. The baritone songs especially make severe vocal demands, driving the singer repeatedly and sustainedly up into the area of the break, that don't seem to express any real human need and certainly don't offer the performer much in the way of recompense for his labors. (This wouldn't seem to bode terribly well for Zemlinsky's operas.)

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Your choice is probably best made on the basis of the soloists, but even here the lines aren't drawn neatly. The most appealing of them is DG's Julia Varady, whose fresh soprano and emotional openness prove a good match for that underlying likability of Zemlinsky that I spoke of earlier. Schwann's Elisabeth Söderström is a more artful singer, in both the positive and the negative senses, and a certain measure of art is necessary for her to encompass the music's upper and lower reaches.

She manages it nicely, and her partner, Dale Duesing, a baritone best-known for

such relatively high, light roles as Papageno and Harlekin, does an impressive job with Zemlinsky's mean tessitura. He actually *sings* it all. While a weightier voice would seem to be what's wanted, Fischer-Dieskau's isn't it. That said, he gets through the music almost whole, something one mightn't have thought possible, and his bottomless bag of Lieder-singer's tricks isn't entirely unwelcome here. In terms of vocal suitability, Cetra's Siegmund Nimsgern would seem almost exactly right, and in the later songs his voice does take hold rather nicely; earlier on, it tends to wobble under pressure.

Should you incline to the Cetra version for Nimsgern, you'll get a good enough account of the soprano songs by Dorothy Dorow, though not as winning as Varady's or as personal as Söderström's. What you won't get, apart from a more robust orchestral account, is printed texts, and Cetra's liner note (translated into English), although moderately informative about the composer, has almost nothing to say about the piece.

Schwann's trilingual note isn't that much more helpful; DG at least gives us something meaty enough to disagree with. Both include texts and translations, though Schwann rather unhelpfully has the German and English on opposite sides of its text insert. The English version, incidentally, is the same, for the simple reason that it's

Tagore's own translation of his Bengali originals, of which the German translation set by Zemlinsky appears to be a fairly literal rendering. The translator isn't identified in either the recordings or the score. The composer himself? (The copyright notice credits Universal Edition, publisher of the score.)

K.F.

## Recitals and Miscellany

### CALLIOPE: A Renaissance Revel.

Calliope (Lucy Bardo, Lawrence Benz, Allan Dean, Ben Harms). [Judith Sherman, prod.] Nonesuch 79039-1. \$11.98 (digital recording). Tape: 79039-4 \$11.98 (cassette).

ATTAINGNANT (pub.): La Brosse: Three Galliardes; Pavane; Au pres de vous: Two Bransles gay. F. DE LA TORRE: La Spagna. GERVAISE: Bransle simple. GUGLIELMO EBREO DA PESARO: La Spagna. HENRY VIII: Taunder naken. ISAAC: La Spagna. PRAETORIUS: Terpsichore: Galliardes (2): Galliarde diminutions; Three Voltas; Ballet des anglois; Bransle de la royne. TRAD.: L'Homme armé.

There is more to revelry than a few sackbuts and vielles. Calliope's anthology of galliardes, voltas, bransles, and pavaens promises sheer delight but is in fact a bore. To give due credit, the ensemble has

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acquired admirable facility with whole families of antique instruments, and blends their zesty timbres with delicacy and finesse. Pipes frolic stratospherically over a void grounded only by a dull tabor. The bass viol parts grudgingly yet loftily with its captive resonance. The krummhorns buzz, the recorders carouse, the drum booms from the tympan and clacks from the rim. And many of the tunes, including the ubiquitous "La Spagna" and "L'Homme armé," are in themselves most beguiling. But the dynamic level remains as good as constant within each selection (in one exceptional, quite narrow crescendo, the climax shatters glass), the mixed meters hobble, and the hypnotic, mindless merriment (at times tempered with hypnotic, mindless solemnity) loses what bloom it has long before the needle has tracked its weary way to the welcome grooves of silence that encircle the label. **M.G.**

**HOROWITZ ON TOUR, 1979-80.**

Vladimir Horowitz, piano. [John Pfeiffer, prod.] RCA RED SEAL ARL 1-4322. \$9.98. Tape: ARK 1-4322. \$9.98 (cassette). [Recorded in performance, 1979-80.]

CHOPIN: Barcarolle in F sharp, Op. 60; Etudes: in G flat, Op. 10, No. 5; in C sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 7. CLEMENTI: Sonata in C, Op. 33, No. 3. RACHMANINOFF: Moment musical, Op. 16, No. 2; Polka de W.R.; Prelude in G, Op. 32, No. 5.

This is another mixed bag culled from Horowitz concerts of relatively recent vintage. The great rhetorical flourish is heard full force in the Clementi, a work that engagingly suggests Beethoven's extroverted C major Sonata, Op. 2, No. 3, in certain of its ingredients (e.g., rising chords over an ostinato trill, as in the Beethoven finale) but that, on the whole, looks forward to Berlioz in its garish theatricality. An entirely different Horowitz—the debonair charmer—comes to the fore in the Chopin "black-key" study (much more lovable here than in the spiky, straitlaced performance recently reissued in the CBS Chopin anthology, M3 36935) and Rachmaninoff's *Polka de W.R.* (in which the audience can be heard chuckling with delight at the end). The swirling filigree of the Rachmaninoff *Moment musical*, the lapidarian melodic shaping of his G major Prelude, and the molded rumination of Chopin's C sharp minor Etude are all similarly beguiling. The only disappointment here—a considerable one—is the Chopin Barcarolle, which sounds wan and fitful. Horowitz exceeds even his earlier recording of the work in his arbitrary teasing of inner lines and contrivance of phrasing—spreading this voice for emphasis, mauling that phrase for dramatic "effect." This is Horowitz at his most perplexing.

In general, the sound is lustrous and brilliant, but even it becomes hard and

bloodless in the Barcarolle.

**H.G.**

**NINA LELCHUK: Piano Recital.**

Nina Lelchuk, piano. [Robert Woods, prod.] TELARC DG 10075. \$17.95 (digital recording).

SCHUMANN: Fantasy in C, Op. 17. LISZT: Rhapsodie espagnole. SCHUBERT-LISZT: Der Müller und der Bach; Aufenthalt. SCHUMANN-LISZT: Widmung.

Nina Lelchuk, yet another of the growing horde of Soviet emigré musicians now living in the West, is obviously a superior pianist. Equally obviously, she is oriented toward the Moscow Conservatory ideals of color and song, and pianism for its own sake. She appears at her best in the Liszt *Spanish Rhapsody*, more lyrical and delicately nuanced here than in Lazar Berman's belting approach, and in the song transcriptions, with *Der Müller und der Bach* particularly affecting. Less noteworthy is her reading of the monumental Schumann fantasia; for all its shifting emphases of texture and color, it seems a bit provincial in its attention to passing detail at the expense of note-to-note, phrase-to-phrase, section-to-section structural unity. And her tone—lustrously reproduced and quite beautiful elsewhere—becomes rather tacky in the climaxes of this demanding masterpiece. Still, in more intimate and carefully chosen repertory, Lelchuk appears to be an earnest and appealing interpreter. **H.G.**

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# The Tape Deck

Critiques of new cassette and open-reel releases by R.D. Darrell

## Nota bene

It has been a long, seemingly hopeless battle—that of tape collectors to achieve equality with discophiles, especially to win recognition as literates able and eager to make use of the same musical annotations that accompany discs. But at last the major American record companies' obstinacy seems to be cracking: First RCA went half-way, providing notes for its digital/chromium musicassettes; now CBS goes whole hog, with notes for all cassettes. And since the major import lines, led by Polygram (DG, Philips, London, and subsidiary labels), have always supplied notes (except for budget series), as do nearly all the American independents, the only important holdouts remain Angel and Nonesuch. Surely they too will soon realize that the new era of full disc/tape parity—in annotation as well as technology and sales—in annotation as well as technology and sales—has finally dawned. [But stop the presses: Nonesuch has belatedly announced that it, too, will provide notes and grant parity.]

The CBS reformation, which extends to the use of chromium-dioxide tape for all its cassettes, is part of a general upgrading in the processing and packaging of both records and tapes. And the first music-cassette exemplars I've seen and heard make a most favorable impression—quite apart from the enhanced significance given one release by the tragic early death of extraordinary Canadian pianist Glenn Gould. His new account of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* (CBS Masterworks digital/chrome IMT 37779, price at dealer's option) needs no circumstantial poignancy to intensify its unique appeal. Still highly idiosyncratic, this reading is far better integrated and more eloquently persuasive than Gould's earlier version—his 1955 debut recording. Sony digitalism and a notably light-, bright-, and even-toned Yamaha instrument achieve ideal sonic transparency, while Gould's matured and refined treatment is both profoundly moving and electrically invigorating—even to a purist long convinced that no piano performance of this quintessential harpsichord music ever could be wholly satisfying. I was wrong.

Another CBS Masterwork (Soundstream-digital/chrome IMT 37786) suggests that I've been wrong, too, in assuming that no ad hoc group of individual virtuosos can compete with chamber specialists who have played together for years. To be sure, the recording debut of the new Rampal/Stern/Rostropovich trio lacks the smooth melding of tone and personality of

long-established threesomes. But probably because the exuberant cellist galvanizes the usually more restrained flutist and violinist into zestful performances, this vividly recorded all-star Haydn—four *London Trios* and two of the Op. 100 *Divertimentos*—is consistently great fun.

**Reliving the near past.** RCA's bargain-price Victrola cassette revivals (\$3.98 each) also revive memories of early "Tape Deck" years spent chronicling the exciting tape activities of the mid and late '50s and early '60s. For many of these fifty reissues first appeared then in open-reel and early cartridge formats. The present recyclings lack notes and their Dolby B noise reduction varies from only fair to pretty good, but young audiophiles will be agreeably shocked to learn how satisfactory—often even thrilling—the early-stereo sonics remain today.

Of those I've been able to hear so far, five by the incomparable Fritz Reiner are true technological as well as artistic masterpieces: his swan-song Haydn *Symphonies Nos. 95 and 101* (ALK 1-4492), virile Dvořák *New World* (4463), glowing Brahms *Third* (4462), taut Tchaikovsky *Pathétique* (4464), and somber Debussy *La Mer* and impetuous Strauss *Don Juan* (4477). He also provides superb orchestral support for pianist Byron Janis in Strauss's *Burleske* and Rachmaninoff's *First Concerto* (4495).

More than a dozen reissues bring back the great days of Charles Munch with the Boston Symphony: most notably his first (1955) complete Ravel *Daphnis et Chloé* (ALK 1-4456) and his Berlioz overtures (4474), Dukas/Ravel/Saint-Saëns program (4469), Debussy *Images* (4468), and Mendelssohn *Reformation and Italian Symphonies* (4465). Of more limited appeal, except for the Bostonians' matchless playing, are Munch's Bach (ALK 1-4488/9), Brahms (4459, 4470), Schubert (4507), Schumann (4480), Strauss and Tchaikovsky (4490), and Wagner (4497) programs, as well as his skillfully tailored accompaniments for Gary Graffmann's Brahms (ALK 1-4506), Henryk Szeryng's Tchaikovsky (4493), and David Oistrakh's Chausson and Saint-Saëns (4498).

Many connoisseurs may prize most of all the five Toscanini programs in their original, undoctored, monophony. But for me, only the Respighi Roman tone poems (ALK 1-4501) and Mussorgsky-Ravel/Franck coupling (4502) fully represent the Maestro's greatness. Even his putatively definitive Rossini overtures (4500) and

Beethoven symphonies (4503, 4504) remain severely handicapped by their original sonic harshness and acoustical aridity.

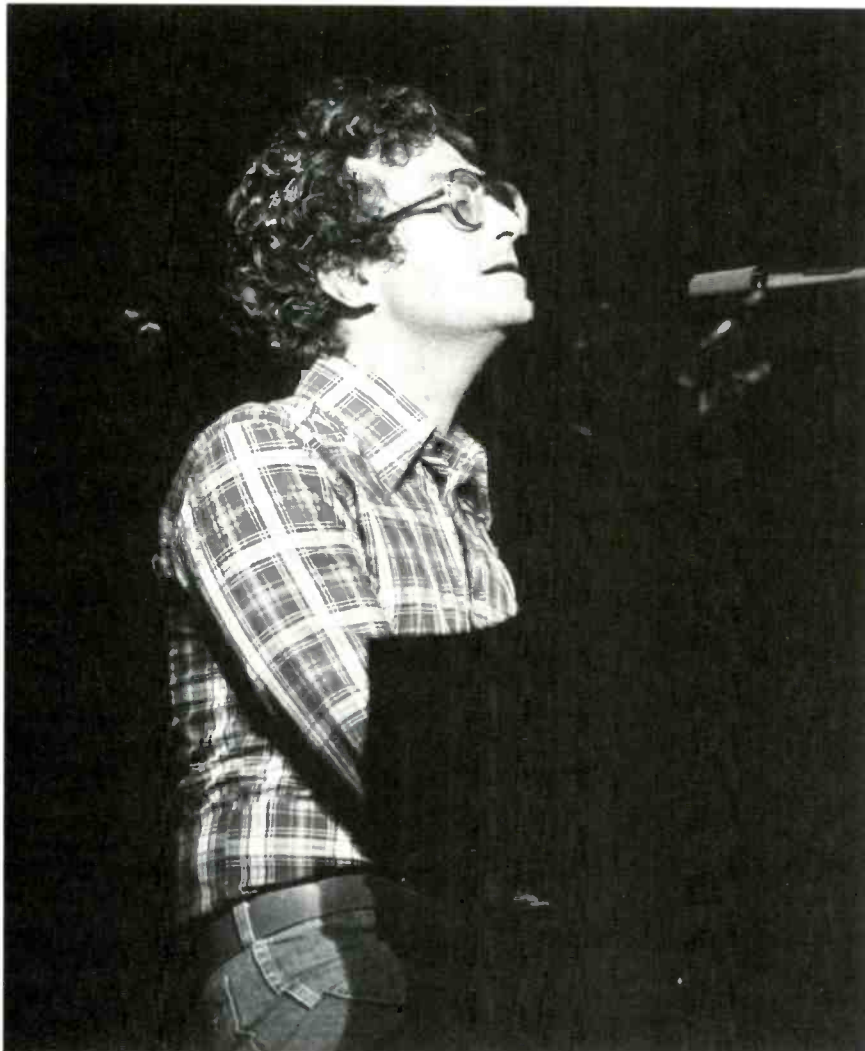
**Vanguard reissues.** More Victrolas later, Vanguard, meanwhile, has recycled some seventy programs (Everyman Classics, Bach Guild, etc.) in inexpensive (\$5.98 each) premium-quality ferric tapings. Cassette shells are fitted with screws rather than welded, notes are supplied, and Dolby B silencing is consistently excellent. I've heard only representative samplings, topped by the welcome return to tape of Alfred Brendel's delectable Mozart variations/sonata/fantasy program (C 10043) and first tapings of his Liszt *Hungarian Rhapsodies* and *Csárdás obstiné* (C 10035) and Chopin polonaises (C 10058). There once were open-reel editions of Felix Prohaska's Mozart *Jupiter Symphony* and three overtures, a c. 1970 sonic milestone (CSRV 167), and Vladimir Golschmann's Tchaikovsky *Pathétique* (CSRV 112), but I think both Mischa Elman's 1961 Kreisler "Favorites" (CSRV 367) and Maurice Abravanel's 1975 Mahler *First* (CSRV 320) are new to tape. So are the new anthology of riotous earlier skits in "Addicted to P.D.Q. Bach and Prof. Peter Schickele" (CSRV 375) and café-pianist Max Morath's "Best of Scott Joplin and Other Rag Classics" (CVSD 39/40, "Twofer," \$9.98).

**Rehearing the distant past.** More and more current recordings juxtapose modern technologies with period instruments and stylistic traditions. One of the earliest antiquarian exponents—Concentus Musicus director Nikolaus Harnoncourt—maintains his preeminence with three outstanding Telefunken programs. His new Bach *Brandenburgs* (digital/chrome 24.35620, \$25.96) surpass not only his 1965 version, but—in sheer exhilaration as well as gleaming lucidity—just about every other I've encountered. He does well too, aided by soprano Rachel Yakar, other soloists, and the Vienna State Opera Chorus, with the Beyer revision of the always problematical Mozart Requiem (digital/chrome 4.42756, \$12.98). And many Handelians will give top ranking to his robustly virile analog set of the Op. 3 *Concerti grossi*; the lack of a cassette edition is offset by Barclay-Crocker's flawless double-play open reel (O 635545, \$18.95). Barclay-Crocker similarly provides the first American taping—another magnificent double-play open reel (Oiseau Lyre/B-C O D 244D2, \$18.95)—of the Hogwood/Ancient Music Academy's inexhaustibly rewarding Vivaldi Op. 3, *L'Estro armonico*. **HF**

# BACKBEAT<sup>®</sup>

## Randy Newman's Coming-Out Party

Called a recluse and a bigot by some, Newman has more to say than most "confessional" singer/songwriters.  
by Sam Sutherland



*"I can't sing. The interest of my stuff is generally in the accompaniment."*

THE FIRST TO ADMIT that he "disappears" from the public eye between his somewhat erratic album releases, Randy Newman is still justified in challenging the assumption that he is a willful recluse. Indeed, over the course of his periodic flurries of interviews, he has submitted to the press' probings with an affable candor seldom found in his higher-profile pop peers. In the process, he has offered more clues to the sources of his work than even the most "sensitive" of singer-songwriters.

While he has often been lumped in with the members of that late '60s vogue, Newman actually predates the trend by years and has seldom, if ever, operated by its unwritten bylaws. Instead, as pianist, singer, arranger, and writer, he has remained an iconoclast who prefers social miniatures, extended jokes, and unsentimental portraiture to the more typical commodities of romance and self-analysis. His songs have revealed the perspectives of a repertory of characters spanning the monstrous and the mundane. His settings have been equally varied in time and place, reflecting a fascination with American society, both historical and contemporary.

As a songwriter and a composer who has scored both film and TV projects, Newman operates at a considerable distance from the pop rank and file. The nephew of a Hollywood film-scoring dynasty (Alfred, Lionel, and Emil Newman) and a graduate of prerock, assembly-line pop songwriting (at Metric Music), his penchant for evocative orchestrations has added to his credibility as a purveyor of art songs, not just disposable pop.

His spare but seductive piano style has counterbalanced his classicism, mixing the

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purely American idioms of, most notably, stride and ragtime. As a singer, he has seemed shaped more by his brief and very early tenure in New Orleans than by a lifetime in Los Angeles. His sleepy drawl is the perfect vehicle for the southerners who frequently dot his work.

Add a melodic style that has mirrored his sense of American popular song traditions, and it becomes easy to understand why some followers have been uncomfortable with the more straightforward pop and rock elements that have surfaced since "Little Criminals," the 1977 album that spawned his notorious single hit, *Short People*. That LP's successor, "Born Again" (1980), pointed even more openly to contemporary rock trends, while still taking enough topical risks to offend some listeners.

His newest disc, "Trouble in Paradise" (see BACKBEAT, March), is an album at once livelier and darker than much of his previous work. Rich in farcical situations, laced with ugly and uncomfortably accurate characterizations from the downside of the soul, it is Newman's most shrewdly commercial work as an arranger, paced by vivid flashes of rock power and performed in league with an impressive army of pop and rock celebrities including Paul Simon, Linda Ronstadt, Bob Seger, Rickie Lee Jones, Don Henley, and members of Toto and Fleetwood Mac.

A few days before the album's release Newman is once again obliging reporters from a spare office in his manager's Beverly Hills suite. Although only two days away from a solo concert tour slated to begin in Europe, he shows few signs of pressure, and our conversation moves easily from his work to his home life (with wife Roswitha and sons Eric, Amos, and John) and on to the world at large.

**Backbeat:** The new album represents something of a culmination of your recent studio work. You've moved away from the solo piano settings and larger, orchestral frameworks you once favored.

**Newman:** True.

**Backbeat:** Given the more conventional rock instrumentation you're using, are you relying more on the players? I still get the sense that you're more of a formal arranger than most modern pop and rock recording artists.

**Newman:** Sort of, yeah. I'm not one to allow people freedom to just groove. I don't like to hear a guy take off and do his own thing on my record. . . . So I work like an arranger, always. But some of the players, like the guys from Toto, can recognize what's there and take it from my piano part. [Keyboard player David] Paich did a lot of his own stuff on *The Blues*, for example. They were so good and so fast on this last recording—I can't tell you how much was a case of my saying "play this and play that."

**Backbeat:** The shift toward more of a pop context seems especially apparent in light of your score for *Ragtime*, since it really offered you a chance to flex your orchestral arranging skills. Is this divergence that conscious?

**Newman:** You have to serve the songs, and the songs have been more rock-oriented recently. Also, I sound better to me: I think my voice is a weak voice, but it's sort of a rock & roll voice.

**Backbeat:** The strings on this album's *Real Emotional Girl* or *Same Girl* would have been more prominent on your earlier records.

**Newman:** Yes. They're hidden now—almost as if they were an embarrassment. It's a different kind of mix.

**Backbeat:** Both of those are quiet ballads and seem to serve as emotional release valves for the rest of the album. Did the use of strings on those songs have anything to do with their content?

**Newman:** It had to do with that, yes. But I also put a synthesizer on the tracks to cool them off. The emotionalism of straight strings has to be muted. I once wrote a song called *Old Man* [from "Sail Away"], and I

did too florid a version. I got carried away. It's the coldest song imaginable, and yet the strings warm it up so much.

I'll use strings again. But now I use synthesizers too—I've gotten better with them.

**Backbeat:** Still, the use of orchestral charts and reeds, brass, and strings made you stand out more—particularly to the critics. Do you think it may have made it easier for the public to get a handle on you?

**Newman:** Sure [laughing]—easier for the twelve people, critics, pseudo-intellectuals, and homosexuals that were interested.

**Backbeat:** In that sense, your recent records strike me as a guerrilla action for those who may not have heard your early work. Also, the increasingly prominent use of contemporary rock and pop suggests that you enjoy commenting on the nature of the beast as well.

**Newman:** Sort of, but I never liked writing songs about the road, or about rock & roll. You know, there are people who, once they achieve success, that's all they know anymore and all they write about, over and over and over. McCartney has done a lot of that—"Band on the Run," this kind of

## Written and Recorded Works

BY HIS OWN ESTIMATES, Randy Newman has written over 150 songs since landing his first staff writing job at Metric Music, publishing arm for the record company run by friend Lenny Waronker's father. Quantity alone would seem to give the lie to Newman's frequent complaints about recurring writer's block, but album release dates do reveal often lengthy gaps.

Most of his earliest songs, for Liberty records acts like Gene McDaniels, the Fleetwoods, and other early '60s vocalists, have long since been forgotten by all but the most dedicated admirers. Newman himself would probably prefer that critics and pop historians never discover his 1963 debut single, coproduced by Pat Boone and Jimmie Haskell for Dot. But one side of it, *Golden Gridiron Boy*, clearly revealed the songwriter's now-familiar penchant for depicting lovers born to lose. In describing the title character, Newman observed, "All the girls run after him, and my girl's in front of 'em all."

In the late '60s, when he began recording solo works in earnest, he was also developing a formidable reputation as a songwriter. His works were recorded by such artists as Judy Collins, Barbra Streisand, Alan Price, Blood, Sweat & Tears, and Three Dog Night, the last of whom delivered his first smash hit with a glitzy version of *Mama Told Me Not to Come*.

Still, Newman is easily his own best interpreter. The consistency of his work is at least partially attributable to his continuing partnership with producers Lenny Waronker and Russ Titelman. The former has been with him from the outset, the latter joined during the production of "Live."

With the exception of his soundtracks for *Ragtime* and the TV series *Peyton Place*

(which found itself onto the long-since-deleted "Randy Newman Orchestra" LP) his album output has appeared entirely under the Warner Bros. aegis, starting on the Reprise label and then switching to Warner itself when Reprise was folded into the parent company.

### Reprise

RS 6286	Randy Newman Creates Something New Under the Sun	(1968)
RS 6373	Twelve Songs	(1970)
RS 6459	Randy Newman/Live	(1971)
MS 2064	Sail Away	(1972)
MS 2193	Good Old Boys	(1974)

### Warner Bros.

BS 2554	Performance—Original Soundtrack	(1970)
	Here Newman is one of various artists featured in the Nicholas Roeg film starring Mick Jagger. He conducts much of the music and sings <i>Gone Dead Train</i> .	
BSK 3079	Little Criminals	(1977)
HS 3346	Born Again	(1980)
23755	Trouble in Paradise	(1983)

### Elektra

SE-565	Ragtime—Original Soundtrack	(1981)
	In addition to the music from the film, the album includes one Newman vocal, <i>Change Your Ways</i> .	

Admirers may also want to check out Harry Nilsson's 1970 RCA album, "Nilsson Sings Newman" (LSP-4289 or APL1-0203), which is devoted entirely to Newman's songs and features the songwriter on keyboards.

—S.S.

band, and that kind of band.

I don't want to do that. I did it on my last record ["Born Again"], but not this one.

**Backbeat:** On "Born Again," you were commenting on your newly found celebrity status.

**Newman:** That's right. Unfortunately, I wasn't as big a celebrity as I thought [laughs]. You know, it almost presupposed people would know who the hell I was. I forgot. I must've had delusions of grandeur on that one [more laughs].

**Backbeat:** On the new songs, I hear more in the way of musical references than topical ones. There are instrumental and vocal asides that point to specific styles or artists, like that snippet of Abba harmonies on *Christmas in Capetown* or the ersatz Beach Boys backdrop to *I Love L.A.*

**Newman:** I genuinely love the Beach Boys, though. There's no prevarication there like there was with ELO [*The Story of a Rock and Roll Band* from "Born Again"] or Springsteen [*My Life Is Good* on "Trouble in Paradise"].

**Backbeat:** You used to admit to listening to very little rock or pop, preferring classical music or, for that matter, reading. In light of the way your recent music sounds, are you listening more to contemporary things?

**Newman:** Since I got a cassette player, yeah. I never used to listen to the radio, but now I listen to cassettes I really like—Hall and Oates, Rod Stewart, Soft Cell, Rick James's "Street Songs." So I do listen more now.

I was telling a guy today that when I was writing *Davy the Fat Boy* or some other song in 1968, I didn't know the Rolling Stones existed. I mean, I did know but, boy, I was paying no attention to what was going on. I'm better off if I do.

**Backbeat:** On the new album, you even take an impressive stab at electronic rock. *Mikey's* so-called "techno-pop," and its narrator admits his own discomfort with that "ugly music playing all the time."

**Newman:** I don't feel that way about it, though. I like it. But the guy in the song does feel that way—an old North Beach neighborhood type who doesn't like the turn the world has taken, which is a function of his age. I feel that way about other things, but not about music. I can't afford to.

**Backbeat:** The arrangement on *Mikey's* is too well done to have come from a superficial, negative attitude anyway.

**Newman:** It was fun to do. That kind of music is a little cold, but I like it better than staple heavy metal. You know, the meandering, whining heavy metal.

You always hear about what's going to be the new trend, and there never is one. But this is one [electronic pop], sort of. I just hope it isn't all English. Christ! Then it will infect the rest of the Western world.

**Backbeat:** This disparity between how you

feel and how the singer in *Mikey's* feels is itself a minor example of a bigger issue for you. In the past you've been unhappy when people misinterpreted you—took you literally, when you're really more a dramatist inventing whole characters.

**Newman:** Pretty much. In *My Life Is Good*, though, the character has my name. I just don't act that bad. But I do live in a neighborhood where people send their kids to private schools.

**Backbeat:** Sure, but you're not a complete Babbitt like that character.

**Newman:** [Giggling] yes, he's a real bully. I like doing that. The trouble I run into with it is that people who interview me think I'm hiding behind the character, somehow.

And yet, when you actually meet the

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## Somehow, people who interview me think I hide behind my characters.

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confessional-type songwriter who sings about himself all the time, he's not like what he writes. I mean, I wouldn't be surprised if Dan Fogelberg was some kind of Nazi. I'm not saying he is, but you can't know he's a decent, sensitive, mellow fella just on the basis of what he writes. I guarantee it. I've met too many of those guys, and some of them are barracudas. You can tell more about what I'm like from my stuff than you can from a lot of those guys who just say "me, me, me" all the time.

**Backbeat:** Maybe the misunderstandings stem from the success you've had in keeping your music separate from your private life.

**Newman:** I handle my career badly, that's all [laughs].

**Backbeat:** Maybe, but at least you don't insist on baring every little detail or exposing peccadilloes constantly.

**Newman:** Nobody would be able to stay awake if I did. It's true, though—I do disappear. I'll do this sort of flurry of activity, get scared about the future and do *Time* magazine and *Rolling Stone*, and then I won't do anything for three or four years. I don't know where the time goes. But there's no contrivance to my absences, and I'm certainly not a difficult person to talk to, I don't think.

**Backbeat:** But doesn't part of your needing that distance have to do with your orientation toward people in general? You remarked to me five years ago that you hate heroes and think glamour is bullshit. I noticed where you recently expressed your admiration for John Updike, and like him,

you seem much more concerned with the life-sized, unvarnished realism of how people live everyday lives than with spectacular, melodramatic characters or topics.

**Newman:** Updike's got a really good eye, a great eye, and he's still getting better. I'm getting worried about getting worse all the time. I keep looking real close—maybe this is a business for young people.

But I don't think I'm getting worse. I may not be writing any better than I was when I did "Sail Away" [1972] but I don't think I'm worse.

The fact that Updike wrote his best book [*Rabbit Is Rich*] at fifty is really encouraging to me. I heard one of those authors—it was probably Updike, in fact—say that when a writer gets to be a certain age, he takes a look and sees that the bag is unpacked. He's taken out most of the stuff that's in there.

I'm the same. I've crystallized whatever I'm going to be as a writer, and it's the same sort of fellas I write about in all of my work—*Davy the Fat Boy*, *Redneck*, *Yellow Man*. *Christmas in Capetown* is a little different maybe—thank God—but generally this may be what I'm going to do forever.

It's all right, though. Updike is Updike now, and Neil Young is Neil Young, at least on every other album. I'm who I'm going to be.

**Backbeat:** In line with that, some critics have suggested your melodic style is also somewhat circumscribed. You yourself have been pretty frank in seeing close similarities between different songs. Do you see any reason why your melodies would be narrow?

**Newman:** [Giggling] well, I can't sing. The interest of my stuff is generally in the accompaniment. What always has interested me is the orchestra, rather than the tune for the voice. When I write for somebody else, though, my melodies tend to be less defined. When I wrote *I'll Be Home* for Mary Hopkin, I wrote a sort of tune. And for the movie [*Ragtime*] that thing with Jennifer Warnes [*One More Hour*—that's a tune.

**Backbeat:** That brings up another question. On the last album, and even more so on this one, there's extensive use of recitation. There are places—and even one whole song [*My Life Is Good*—where you drop out of the melody altogether and talk. It lends the feeling of an overheard conversation; you seem to be acting more than singing.

**Newman:** Trying to, anyway. But there is more of that. It felt good to me. Also, there's more than one person in a lot of these songs. There's Mikey and the guy Mikey is talking to, the singer. Mikey is more the solid, quiet bartender type, a friend of this emotional guy who's a little dumber. At least that's how I see it. And the *Christmas in Capetown* guy is talking to  
(Continued on page 91)



## Reviews



Charles: one of the bluest voices we'll ever know

## Ray Charles Reconnects with His Soul

Reviewed by John Milward

**Ray Charles:**  
**Wish You Were Here Tonight**  
Ray Charles, producer  
Columbia FC 38293

Two decades after cutting his famous country album with its monumental, three-million-selling single *I Can't Stop Loving You*, Ray Charles has returned to country & western for his Columbia debut. The result, "Wish You Were Here Tonight," is his best album in years.

When Charles signed up in the late '70s with Atlantic records, the home of his great r&b recordings, hopes were high that the realignment would stem his ever-accumulating catalog of m.o.r. pop-soul. But though occasional sparks of the old genius did fly, Broadway schmaltz and Beatles hits continued to clog the man and his soul. By

striking back to the Grand Ole Opry, Charles not only solidifies his repertoire, but also rediscovers part of his soul.

He sings this music in the spirit of Willie Nelson's *Night Life*. This is crying country, music that occupies a space between country & western and the blues. Ballads predominate, and it is here where Charles really shines. It's not that the uptempo tunes are bad, but as the singer admits on the best of them, this aging soul man is looking for a woman who can do it in *3/4 Time*. Also, there's something altogether bizarre about hearing banjos next to one of the bluest voices we'll ever know.

That voice is at the heart of this album's matter. *I Wish You Were Here Tonight* burns with it: The story is familiar—lonely on the road—but when the Right Reverend Ray soars at the chorus, he

is singing of a love that lives in his imagination, not in reality. Reality is Ray Charles clipping his vocal on the title line to let his piano finish out the singular blues. When he gets this good, he's nothing less than thrilling. Even a contemporary country butterfly like *Let Your Love Flow* flies like a kite in these capable hands.

You can almost hear the tunes in their titles: *Ain't Your Memory Got No Pride at All*, with its gospel chorus; *Born to Love Me*, which inevitably makes you think of *Born to Lose*, even though they're not all that alike. Charles' self-production is flawless (banjos notwithstanding), with spare instrumentation and extensive yet tasteful background singing keeping our attention where it belongs. The familiar vocal flourishes come fast and steady, as befits a jazz-r&b singer who has influenced innumerable rockers, and they ring so true that it takes you a minute to believe your ears. This is no legend, this is a man reconnecting with his soul. This is a cat watching his baby slowly pack her bags. *You've Got*, sings Ray Charles, *the Longest Leaving Act in Town*.

### Heaven 17

British Electric Foundation, producer  
Arista AL 6606

Leave it to British art students to start a band of funk music that doesn't use a real drummer. It's like the white man's comic revenge—the rhythm is in the box, not the body. But synthesized sounds don't necessarily make for soul, which sets up a neat irony: by squeezing the warmth out of the rhythm, the soul of the synth bands is unequivocally tied to their compositions. Human League's *Don't You Want Me*, the flagship song of the genre, worked because the bombastic electronic rhythms were matched by a dramatic lyric. Heaven 17 is even more overtly theatrical, but at its best sounds like what might happen if New York's Kid Creole and the Coconuts went to England and suddenly decided to enroll in art school.

*Penthouse and Pavement* captures the essential silliness of this band, whose American debut is culled from two years of English singles and albums. The song seems to be about a guy who works all day, goes out all night, and is in some kind of trouble. (I guess one can't expect specifics from a nonsensically named band produced by the British Electric Foundation.) Glenn Gregory has a Gang-of-4 kind of voice, which is to say he doesn't sing as much as declare. But Josie James's bouncy female counterpoint creates an effective sense of

tension against the inflexible rhythms. *Who Will Stop the Rain* achieves the same push-pull atmosphere, using a rhythmic hook for background voices; while *Let Me Go* builds a richly layered production around its ominously brittle beat.

Otherwise, this record wears thin quickly. *Play to Win* is a pure rhythm track that aims at ska and is perfectly dreadful. And when the lyrics become as bald-faced as those of *I'm Your Money*, you might as well unplug the rhythm machine. Consequently, the last song, *We're Going to Live for a Very Long Time*, sounds something like a threat. Heaven 17 is ready for this criticism, of course—the album's other standout track, *(We Don't Need This) Fascist Groove Thang*, is the band's own best put down.

JOHN MILWARD

**Chris Hillman: Morning Sky**

Jim Dickson, producer  
Sugar Hill SH 3729  
(P.O. Box 4040, Duke Station,  
Durham, N.C. 27706)

On "Morning Sky," the original bassist in the Byrds proves that you *can* go home again. As singer and mandolinist in his bluegrass ensemble, the Hillmen, Chris Hillman's initial musical turf was the relaxed folk/bluegrass community that co-existed with surf music in Southern California.

Although he revisited that genre both with the Byrds (the classic "Sweetheart of the Rodeo") and later as cofounder of the Flying Burrito Bros., his recent work has been devoted to more pointedly electric fare. Few of his solo experiments have mustered the charm of "Morning Sky," which suggests a relaxed truce between acoustic playing and country/pop songwriting. The material includes seemingly over-exposed chestnuts from Bob Dylan, Kris Kristofferson, Danny O'Keefe, and even the Grateful Dead, that wind up sounding warm and engaging.

The key to such transubstantiation may be Hillman's characteristically low-keyed delivery. Long underrated as a singer, he brings his straightforward, country-tinged tenor to satisfying heights, aided in the process by Herb Pedersen's high harmonies and almost offhand delivery. The instrumental work is also breezy, but hardly slapdash: In addition to Pedersen's rhythm guitar and banjo, Hillman has tapped such old partners as Bernie Leadon, Byron Berline, Al Perkins, and Kenny Wertz. For those who remember the earliest country/rock as sweet rather than cynical, this reunion of sorts should prove heartening indeed.

One final note: "Morning Sky" is *not* a weird lapse for the New York City-based Sugar Hill disco label, but rather one of many recent bluegrass releases from a Durham, N.C., label with the same name.

SAM SUTHERLAND

**The Jimmy Johnson Band: North/South**

Steve Tomashofsky & the Jimmy Johnson Band, producers  
Delmark DS 647  
(4243 N. Lincoln, Chicago, Ill. 60618)

Although in his early fifties, guitarist, vocalist, and songwriter Jimmy Johnson was viewed as a "new" voice in blues when he delivered his first album, "Johnson's Whacks," two years ago. For far from serving up rote, reheated Chicago blues, he and his quartet deliver lively, modern music that observes all of the idiom's unwritten rules yet also includes some fresh revisions.

A good example of the latter aspect is the reworked relationship between guitar and keyboards. Both instruments are workhorses of the blues, yet it's still a revelation to hear Carl Snyder use the unexotic timbre of a Fender Rhodes keyboard with a dollop of Latin syncopation to steal the front line handily. Johnson's role is hardly diminished by this, for his own fills and solos have a hot, fluid logic. The rhythm section of Larry Exum (bass) and Ike Davis (drums) also functions with classic poise, yet inserts enough twists and unexpected accents to reveal a much wider frame of reference.

Technique alone can't carry an album, though, and Johnson's success stems mostly from the fervor of his singing and the sharp eye of his songwriting. Excelling at the sort of pithy similes and street-level images that are essential to urban blues, he wrote all of the songs on "North/South"; it's a testament to their quality that several sound far older. Production is also impressive, the clean mix and razor-sharp sonics creating an appropriate context for a thoroughly modern blues band at work.

SAM SUTHERLAND

**The Philip Lynott Album**

Philip Lynott & Kit Woolven, producers  
Warner Bros. 23745-1

Never mind that bassist/singer/songwriter Phil Lynott is best-known for serving up wild heavy metal rave-ups and all-out rockers as frontman of Thin Lizzy. Deep down inside, he's a sentimental old fool. Even on his Lizzy discs, he would sneak in a pretty, earnest little ballad every now and then, letting his mushy Gaelic heart shine through.

"The Philip Lynott Album," his second solo LP, is all mush. The mood is so low-key that the tracks blend together into one long, indistinguishable sonic blur. Though Lynott has surrounded himself with some notable names and talents—the omnipresent guitar wiz Mark Knopfler, Ultravox and Visage frontman Midge Ure, Huey Lewis, and others—the songs, with one or two exceptions, are so subdued that they just kind of snooze on by. Tracks like *Gino*,



*Musical Youth: child prodigies*

the glossy *Little Bit of Water*, and an over-wrought ode to childhood titled *Growing Up*, are distinguished only by Lynott's great growl of a voice and a few fancy, frilly embellishments.

The best song here is *Old Town*, a stirring Springsteen-like anthem in which the sprightly Beatle-style classical arrangements (filled out by piano, strings, and French horn) cut a striking contrast to Lynott's plaintive cries: "This old boy is cracking up." The album's opener, *Fatalistic Attitude*, documents the demise of a young suicide victim. It features a recording of a help-line radio talk show, with snaking synthesizer rhythms pulsing underneath. *Cathleen*, a loving little ditty dedicated to Lynott's daughter, sports the winsome, cornball line: "And if you hear I was kissing another/Don't be jealous, it's only your mother."

Though the tunes are hardly worth waxing ecstatic over, Lynott's voice is as terrific as ever. On *The Man's a Fool*, he is pure Springsteen. (Remember, Lynott's wailing roar was down on vinyl before the Boss recorded his first album). On the drippy *Growing Up* he sounds like a wide-eyed John Sebastian. And on *Ode to Liberty (The Protest Song)*, he lays back with a bluesy soliloquy, letting Knopfler's loping guitar do the real singing.

Neither offensive nor inspiring, "The Philip Lynott Album" is tasteful, restrained, and ultimately meaningless.

STEVEN X. REA

**Musical Youth: The Youth of Today**

Peter Collins, producer  
MCA 5389

In one breath, Musical Youth sings about



how the "young generation come fe mash up de nation," in the next, it switches to a nursery rhyme about an old granny with a slipped disk, all set to an absolutely ingratiating reggae melody. The charm of this very young band—one of the lead singers is all of eleven years old—is the way it adapts the elements of reggae to a bubbly teen sound that follows in the tradition of such groups as the Jackson 5, Frankie Lymon & the Teenagers, and the Rocky Fellers. Its music wins you over with the prepubescent voice of Kelvin Grant, the message of youthful pride, the delightful use of reggae patois and nonsense syllables ("slong bong biddley bong"), and the ease with which the playing captures all of the lilt and some of the fire of Jamaican music.

There's a definite novelty aspect to Musical Youth that comes out most noticeably in songs such as its giant British hit, *Pass the Dutchie*. It's reggae stripped of almost everything except sheer spunk. Whatever people find threatening about reggae—the dreadlocks, the simmering racial anger and religious imagery, the reference to ganga (*Dutchie's* original lyrics were about a dope-smoking ritual and have now been made wholly innocent), the dub techniques that stretch songs out hypnotically—is missing from Musical Youth. Even when its members sing about Armageddon (*Young Generation*), or the perils of delinquent behavior (*Blind Boy*), they sound cheerful. Above all, the group communicates the joy of making music; you could practically skip rope to most of these songs, and that musical zip is a big part of what makes "The Youth of Today" such an entertaining debut.

Some of the songs have messages: *Children of Zion* cautions people not to "fuss and fight," and *Mirror Mirror* is about disillusion and "confusion in the city." But they can hardly be called didactic; indeed, most of the album is marked by musical and lyrical cockiness ("de London girls dem a mad over me"), and by an unerring knack for creating a pop mood (*Heartbreaker*, *School Girl*). Musical Youth praises its own musical prowess, throws in breezy raps and gimmicky production tricks, and for all it has to say about the problems of the world and the burdens of its generation, it is ingenuous enough to equate "judgment time" with the rising price of drums and bicycles. This is an album filled with "sweet music to nice up the hall," and it's terrific fun.

MITCHELL COHEN

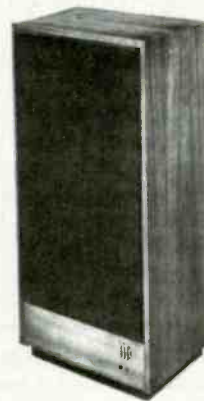
**The Nitecaps: Go to the Line**  
Clive Langer & Alan Winstanley,  
producers. Sire 23756-1

The key to the snappy urban rock-soul of the Nitecaps is that they've taken their lessons both from golden-era r&b and from bracing Mersey-beat pop. It's a stylistic crossbreeding that relies as much on John

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Xavier's hummable melodies as on his gritty yelp of a voice, as much on simple sing-along choruses as on the ever-valuable Uptown Horns, who support the four-piece band on sax and trumpet. Reminiscent of the white soul bands of the mid-'60s (the species was called "blue-eyed soul" when applied to such outfits as the Rascals and Mitch Ryder & the Detroit Wheels), the Nitecaps are probably most fully appreciated in person: Their brand of music belongs in a place with cold beer on tap. But as scrunched-in as it sounds at times, "Go to the Line" has more than enough moxie to make it as sharp as a crease in sharkskin trousers.

Xavier, a young veteran of the New York City scene, has a clear idea of what he's after and good taste in his choice of models to emulate. On much of this album, his songs achieve the requisite vigor and precision. The cross-section concept comes together rousing on *Same Situation*, on the assertive *Can't Let One More Day Go By*, and especially on the title track, a song with a racing tempo and a bitter lyric about a narcissistic woman and a man who would do anything for her. The strolling ballad *Somebody Cares* features some stinging Steve Cropper-like guitar, and the cover version of *Give Me One More Chance* is a real raver with Xavier jumping in throat first. Indeed, all of these prove that the Nitecaps have the goods.

Since he's more of a shouter—bordering occasionally on overexertion—than a singer, it isn't a critical flaw that Xavier's words don't always come up to the level of the tunes, arrangements, and musicianship; relative to their musical context, the lyrics of *Black Tears* and *The New Me* sound like paragraphs copied out of a soul music textbook. He's better at boy-wants/doesn't want/can't approach-girl numbers such as *Little Too Long* ("I bit my tongue for so long/And it's still got the toothmarks") than at impressionistic scene-setting: *Hot Pavement*, which boasts an imaginative Latin-soul flavor, doesn't say anything new about hot nights in the city.

The medley that ends "Go to the Line" is only halfway successful. Its speeded-up version of the Zombies' *Is This the Dream?* is splendid, but *Good Times* (called *Gonna Have a Good Time* on the original Easybeats LP), gets a trite, unswinging workout that emphasizes "rock and roll music gonna play all night" clichés with showboat musical gestures. Thankfully, such lapses are atypical of the Nitecaps, a sock-'em-out combo that gets down to basics.

MITCHELL COHEN

**Ric Ocasek: Beatitude**

Ric Ocasek, producer  
Geffen GHS 2022

Ric Ocasek is the mildly experimental pop spark plug of the Cars, so it's hardly surprising that his solo debut sounds familiar.



EBET ROBERTSON

Ocasek: a pretty good Cars album

But there's a difference: Whereas the Cars' last album, "Shake It Up," concentrated on traditional pop-rock terrain, "Beatitude" follows the more skeletal approach of the band's "Panorama", and in the process, trims a bit of the pop-gloss off the lyrics. That can be effective: With its rumbling bass beat and sympathetic scenario, *Jimmy Jimmy* sounds like the best teen rock song since Cheap Trick's *Surrender*.

Ocasek's pop appeal has always owed much to his avant instincts and his dramatic flair for utilizing rhythm guitars. But while a jewel like *Just What I Needed* grabbed you by the throat, the similarly endowed *Something to Grab For* submerges the guitar hook into the general propulsion of the rhythm, thus digging deeper. Stripped clean, his lyrics of love are as straightforward as "when you gonna give me something to grab for." Ocasek is a born borrower with a sharp ear for the commercial possibilities of unpopularized sources. *I Can't Wait* wraps its arrangement around the song's pulse to achieve an art-rock airiness reminiscent of Roxy Music's "Avalon"; *Connect Up to Me* adds a twist of hard-rock Bowie to its spacious beat. And he writes in the same bebopping burst-of-words fashion as Jules Shears of the Polar Bears, who sings along on *Prove*.

*Beatitude* was a journal of Beat Generation writers, and Ocasek's head is clear-

ly with Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and Jack Kerouac. *Time Bomb* doesn't even hide its debt to Ginsberg's *Howl*, with its repeated reminder that the Beats were afraid of the bomb, too.

Although Ocasek has engaged a cross-section of New England new wavers to fill out his tracks, "Beatitude" still sounds like a Cars album—a pretty good one, too.

JOHN MILWARD

**Polyrock: Above the Fruited Plain**

Billy Robertson, producer  
PVC 6901 (EP)  
[Jem Records, P.O. Box 362,  
South Plainfield, N.J. 07080]

In their attempts to link avant-garde electronics with dance-beat pop, Polyrock's two Philip-Glass-produced RCA albums keeled too far over to the former side, getting bogged down in mechanized synthesizer busy-ness. But this new five-song EP, produced by lead singer-guitarist Billy Robertson, doesn't have that problem. Yes, there are repetitive droning rhythms and thick electronics, but they're wrapped around splashy keyboards, Robertson's clanging guitars, and melodies of a decidedly pop bent. And with Joey Yannecc's snapping drums and percussion providing an everpresent, keenly insistent backbeat, the result is both vibrant and vigorous.

From the opening pulsing chords of *Working on My Love* to the final notes of the mantra-like *Indian Song*, the music on "Above the Fruited Plain" aims as much for the feet as it does for the head. *Working on My Love* throbs along to a semisamba rhythm, the cracks and slaps of Yannecc's drumming meshing with Lenny Aaron's marimbas and Polyrock's three keyboards—played by Aaron, Cathy Oblasney, and Curt Cosentino. Indeed, it's those densely packed keyboard synthesizers that infuse the songs with such rich, rolling musical textures. In the midst of all this, Robertson offers up some lean, intricate guitar parts as his scraggly voice yelps out a minimalist variation on pop song lyrics.

On *Call of the Wild* Oblasney's high, chirpy wail soars above the characteristic big beat, keyboards, and Robertson's sharp, angular guitar. Polyrock plays within limited dance-trance parameters, but its tight, honed-down style is hardly formulaic. This assertive music radiates energy and color and plain old fun. For a group associated with "new music" types like Glass, Polyrock manages to avoid any arty pretensions. And that's quite a trick.

STEVEN X. REA

**Rank and File: Sundown**

David Kahne, producer  
Slash SR 114

Some may find the prospect of a back-to-basics country & western band with punk-rock credentials disconcerting, others will





Ron Rescigno and Billy Robertson of Polyrock: avoiding arty pretensions

no doubt be put off by the intimidating barbed wire on the cover of Rank and File's new album. But this band plays its country so straight you can see sawdust flying off the guitar strings and it adds a flinty edge that's as 1983 as 11.2% unemployment. Clues as to what this crew is up to come on the title song and on the track that bears the band's name. *Sundown* echoes and evokes the records made by such '50s honky-tonk-in' predecessors as Johnny Cash, and *Rank and File* is a working-man's complaint played and sung with the tension of a clenched fist. When this worker punches the time clock, it stays punched.

The group sticks to a spare, unfettered guitar-bass-drums combination (with only occasional harmonica for variation), trying to capture a *Last Picture Show* simplicity. But as faithful as singer-writers Tony and Chip Kinman attempt to remain to their sources (Cash, Haggard, the Everlies, Lefty Frizzel, Ernest Tubb), nearly all of their original songs come at country from a modern angle. *Amanda Ruth* leads off the album with a visit to a reggae club; *I Went Walking* explicitly describes the Kinmans' disillusionment with the trendy punk scene (both were members of the California band the Dils, known for such songs as *I Hate the Rich*); and *Coyote*, the riveting closer, expresses an illegal alien's feelings of manipulation and displacement.

Purist musical goals don't keep Rank and File from exploring a variety of moods. Contrasting with Tony Kinman's down-in-the-soil timbre (perfect for such ominous numbers as *The Conductor Wore Black*) is Chip's more airy, plaintive voice, used to good effect on (*Glad I'm Not in Love*). At times when the brothers duet—*I Don't Go Out Much Anymore*, *Lucky Day*—the sound is no more "authentic" country than when Lennon and McCartney sang *I Don't Want to Spoil the Party* or *Baby's in Black*. The Kinmans are by no means the first to adopt a twang to suit their own purposes.

But unlike many of the musicians who have committed sins of blandness in the name of "country-rock" (or "pop-country"), Rank and File doesn't come across as confusedly halfhearted. "Sundown" hits its share of bumps, when the band just can't capture the Nashville (or Memphis or Bakersfield) atmosphere the songs strive for. But it stays on its own stretch of country road—a road that isn't taken nearly enough or with this much vitality.

MITCHELL COHEN

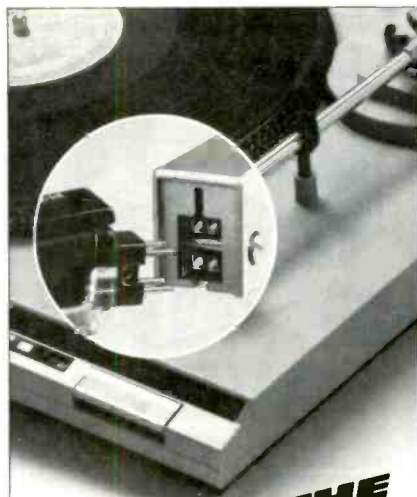
## Jazz

**Billy Butterfield  
with Ted Easton's Jazz Band**  
Ted Easton, producer  
Circle CLP 37 (3008 Wadsworth Mill Pl.  
Atlanta, Ga. 30032)

Aside from a brief period with the World's Greatest Jazz Band in the late '60s/early '70s, trumpeter Billy Butterfield has been hard to find since his big band days in the '30s and '40s. First he buried himself in the New York studios, then he moved to Virginia where he played locally, and now—since the 1960s—he lives and plays primarily in Florida.

But he has gotten around a bit, as this record demonstrates. Made in Holland in 1975 with Ted Easton's Jazz Band, it shows Butterfield playing brilliantly, sustaining the performance standard of his peak moments with Bob Crosby, Artie Shaw, and Benny Goodman. Five members of Easton's very able Dutch band match his proficiency, both in their excellent support and occasional solos.

Billy is in rare form: big, bright, and brassy on the uptempo pieces, sharp and crackling when he puts in a mute, and gor-



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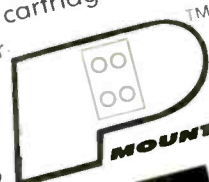


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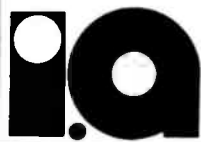
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geously smooth and mellow when he turns to a ballad (*She's Funny That Way*) or rethinks his classic treatment of *Star Dust* on flugelhorn.

Even on the slower numbers, he is full of a charging vitality. That quality sets the tone for *How Come You Do Me like You Do*, a large-ensemble selection that includes Bob Wilber and Bud Freeman. Wilber, in a very Bechet mood, responds immediately to Butterfield's energy with a broad, sweeping, full-toned attack. Freeman, however, sustains a rather morose mumble until finally bubbling to life in the second chorus. *How Come* is, in fact, an overlong jam session, but the solos are fine and Easton's trumpeter, Bob Wulffers, shows his mettle in a series of muttered, muted exchanges with Butterfield.

JOHN S. WILSON

**Marty Grosz and His Blue Angels:  
 I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music**

Jerry Valburn, executive producer  
 Aviva 6004  
 (P.O. Box 156, Hicksville, N.Y. 11802)

Marty Grosz is a guitarist and singer who, to the extent that he is known at all, is identified as a follower of Fats Waller. He knows the entire repertory—better, probably, than Fats did—and he imbues whatever playing situation he is in with the spirit of Waller's small groups, using his guitar as a rhythmic centerpiece.

But Grosz is more than a Waller wallower. Possibly more than any musician performing today, he represents the essence of 52nd Street in its heyday as Swing Alley. His playing is intensely rhythmic—joyous even—without being overbearing. He knows an incredible number of great but forgotten songs from the '20s and '30s, and he has an endless collection of riffs, breaks, and odd decorations that were part of that era.

"I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music" is not another Waller run, but pure 52nd Street. It features such familiar figures as pianist Dick Wellstood and trumpeter Jimmy Maxwell, along with seasoned but less celebrated performers: Leroy Parkins on saxophones and clarinet, Dick Meldonian on tenor sax, Bobby Pring on trombone, Fred Stoll on drums, and either Pete Comp or Jack Six on bass. Playing relaxed, warm arrangements by Grosz, the octet has a delightfully low-keyed sense of swing that carries solos and ensembles with an easy grace.

Grosz creates two particularly brilliant performances. *Junk Man*, a '30s song associated with Jack Teagarden and Mildred Bailey, becomes a challenge to their classic recordings. Grosz sings with gut intensity as Parkins plays a provocatively dark, feathery tenor sax solo and Maxwell creates an intriguing structure out of his growling breaks. A relatively little-known Waller song, *Lonesome Me*, is full of attractive

turns and lifts. It is a superb vehicle for Grosz's laidback, deliberately stated singing and Parkins' clarinet.

Grosz's chorded use of acoustic guitar constantly gives the group fresh colors, and Pring's trombone brings in lovely reflections of the Jack Jenney-Teagarden era. And throughout, Stoll's positive, steady drumming keeps everything moving easily and fluidly. This is a record that adds to the past instead of simply copying it.

JOHN S. WILSON

**The New Black Eagle Jazz  
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In October of 1981, this splendid aggregation of moonlighters celebrated its tenth anniversary by giving a concert in Boston's Symphony Hall with several friends as guests. This album, which contains some of what was played then, is the first the band has made since the departure of Stan McDonald, the clarinetist and soprano saxophonist who seemed an essential element to the Black Eagle. He was a gloriously full-bodied Bechet stylist. Yet his replacement, Brian Ogilvie, is almost the opposite—a clarinetist with a relatively thin but intense tone and a boiling sense of excitement. But though the group's sound is different, the end result is equally effective. The ensemble passages in particular have a fascinating new twist because the lead is often shared equally by Ogilvie and Tony Pringle's cornet.

The regular Black Eagle plays only three selections. The remaining five are showcases for its guests, primarily clarinetist and pianist Butch Thompson. On clarinet he brings the Bechet legacy back to the band and contributes a George Lewis sound on *Old Rugged Cross*. Moving to piano, Thompson does his Jelly Roll Morton bit on *Grandpa's Spells*, which, aside from his performance, never gets as close to the Red Hot Peppers as the Black Eagle usually does.

There are brief guest spots by Terry Waldo on piano and Don Kenney on bass. Quite oddly, legendary '50s jazz violinist Dick Wetmore is listed in the notes, and even appears in a photo with the band, but he does not play on the record. Despite this (Continued on page 92)





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## MOZART PIANO CONCERTOS

(Continued from page 66)

of the concertos with conductors about fifteen years ago; now he is doing them all, directing from the keyboard. The first two discs in this series are the most attractive: K. 459 is bracingly played, at normal tempo and with lustrous piano tone and opulent wind clarity. Those accustomed to Peter Serkin's revelatory speed in the first movement (RCA ARL 1-2244) may find this a shade tepid, yet there is plenty of élan and elegance. The overside K. 491 is understated—melancholy rather than impassioned (cf. an unforgettably charged wartime broadcast by Schnabel and Alfred Wallenstein on an underground disc)—but it has undeniable cultivation and a somewhat darker, richer orchestral color than Perahia's version (one of the first recordings in his series, M 34219). Ashkenazy's K. 453 is limpid and appealing, save for a few excessive ritards (though none so bothersome as Zukerman's), and his K. 467, despite the stately maestoso first-movement tempo that has lately been found suspect, is clean and uncluttered. These are both agreeable readings if less distinctive than Perahia's or Radu Lupu's (in K. 467, London CS 6894).

In K. 482, however, Ashkenazy begins to disappoint: While the orchestra has the requisite weight and sonority, a certain mushiness obscures detail, and the all-important flute and bassoon contributions are lost. Moreover, the playing tends to lack clarity and character.

With the digitally recorded K. 488 and K. 595, Ashkenazy gets pretty much back on the track. His large-scale A major is sturdy rather than serene, lacking the special qualities of the old Serkin recording, and his B flat begins rather too bluntly, never entering the exalted company of Curzon/Britten, Haskil/Fricsay, Horszowski/Casals—or even Gulda/Abbado (DG 2530 642). De Larrocha/Solti (London CS 7109), and Serkin/Schneider. Be it said for Ashkenazy that he is a superlative instrumentalist, an attentive conductor, and a self-effacing interpreter, if not an unfailingly visionary one.

Brendel brings greater profile and astringency to his Mozart, and the present digitally recorded installment of his series presents K. 467 with its first movement played in the taut alla breve manner that I like very much. Both here and in K. 450, these thoroughbred readings are right on the money, yet the taut insistency, the spiky detail, and the ultimately prickly, unlovely sound all become increasingly wearying. In general feeling, if not in detail, Brendel and Neville Marriner carry the old Casadesu/Szell mantle. All of that notwithstanding, however, this is a most distinguished series. Philips' sound is etched in acid—apparently just what Brendel wants.

Portuguese virtuoso Maria João Pires  
(Continued on page 90)

## MOZART PIANO CONCERTOS

(Continued from page 89)

seems to have recorded all the concertos for Erato several years ago, performances the Musical Heritage Society has lately been releasing. (There are also couplings of K. 271 and K. 453, MHS 4345, and K. 467 and three rondos, MHS 3737.) She performs honestly and efficiently, without frills or excessive ego display, and on a very high journeyman level. At her best, she has refinement and point. She gives the *Coronation Concerto*, K. 537, a big, healthy reading, and her K. 459 is almost as limpid as Ashkenazy's. In the "little" C major Concerto, K. 415, Theodor Guschlbauer favors the "big" version with the extra drum, trumpet, and bassoon parts. Pires' playing there is almost as captivating as Haskil's (of the drumless, trumpetless version, DG Privilege 2535 115). In K. 414, K. 466, and K. 595, though, Pires' honorable music-making lacks enlivening grace, cohesion, and imagination: in K. 595, especially, everything begins to sound plodding and italicized. The prosaic qualities are seconded by a lusty but inadroitly balanced recording. (Wind figurations are blotted out in the K. 595 finale; the sound in the other concertos is full-blooded and excellent.) And interestingly, Pires' K. 595 is the only one of the new recordings to use the old version of the first-movement introduction, omitting the rediscovered bars. Yet these performances, like the more costly Ashkenazy editions, always let the music speak for itself without any essential misrepresentation. There is a place in the world for such readings—even if not necessarily on the shelves of connoisseurs.

Throughout this survey, I have mentioned favorite bygone versions of these works and pleaded for their reissue. One favorite coupling, happily just reissued, offers the Kraus/Monteux versions of K. 414 and K. 456 recorded by RCA in 1953. Kraus, a Schnabel pupil (who also studied with Bartók), has many of her master's foibles—and strengths: She outlines phrases with a sense of bustling urgency, a trait C.G. Burke, reviewing the original issue, found bothersome in K. 456's first movement. While this *can* become irritating, especially since Kraus lacks the cushioned tonal gradations Schnabel invariably obtained (her earlier recording of K. 456, with Walter Goehr and the London Philharmonic, is appreciably more subtle, if no less high-spirited), the drive and ardor, not to mention the profiling, of her readings furnish a refreshing corrective to today's aloof "stylization." Even if neither performance has the clarity and subtlety of today's best, both give a welcome reminder that Mozart can beneficially be played with a Beethovenian slant. Pierre Monteux's wonderfully earthy support furthers Haskil's message, and the French transfer gives the thirty-year-old production a new lease on life. **HF**

## SCHUBERT'S SONGS

(Continued from page 58)

fussy, and Hans Hotter's unpublished 1949 version is more simply musical than awe-inspiring.

At least one important singer, I feel, is short-changed by the selection here—Elisabeth Schumann. I appreciate Hardwick's preference, when he gets to the Schubert specialists who recorded widely, for unfamiliar songs, since so many of the earlier singers recorded only the standard chestnuts. He has ended up with an odd Schumann group: a hasty "Nachtviolen" and tentative "An die Geliebte" (they shared a 78 side), an uncertain "Heimweh" (neither Leo Rosenek nor the singer really sets the rhythmic shape), "Der Jüngling an der Quelle" and "An die Nachtigall" (probably the best of the lot), and a monotonous "Schmetterling." I rushed for the shelf and pulled out the two Angel/COLH discs of Schumann singing Schubert, to confirm my memory of—to name a few—"Gretchen," "Das Lied im Grünen," "Nacht und Träume," "Der Einsame." Later, one comes to a bumpy Frida Leider performance of "Auf dem Wasser zu singen," a song that, according to Leider's memoirs, "has never since been so beautifully interpreted as by Elisabeth Schumann"—lines written years after Leider's own recording and still true.

If there are disappointments, there are also discoveries. I had never before heard the recordings of Susan Metcalfe-Casals (briefly the cellist's wife at the time of the First World War), an American mezzo who only recorded privately when she was nearly sixty; she binds words and tone with real security, making a very touching thing of Mignon's "Heiss mich nicht reden"; only in "Nachtstück" does her age show, when she picks at the notes in the final section. A Canadian soprano named Flora Nielsen made some song records for EMI after the Second World War, and in "An die Leier" she shows some of the same virtues, though the voice hasn't quite enough expansion for the final section. I'm less enthusiastic about the previously unknown Pauline Cramer in the same song (singing in English, though not in the translation given here), and the organ-accompanied discs of the Dutch soprano Aaltje Noordewier-Reddingius (her name long a striking sight to perusers of WERM) have more to do with religion than with music. An impressive Swedish baritone named Bernhard Sonnerstedt makes a fine effect in a 1949 *Prometheus*, but the reason he was little heard from thereafter becomes clear on the next (and final) side: Whatever plans Walter Legge might have had for Sonnerstedt were doubtless quietly put aside with the arrival of Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, who would become—partly on the basis of the recordings sampled here—the central figure in Schubert singing after 1950. Particularly welcome is Fischer-Dieskau's first recording of

"Nacht und Träume," ravishingly gentle, broadly phrased, and long unavailable.

The set should end with Fischer-Dieskau, since he represents the future. Instead, it ends with Kirsten Flagstad, who wasn't ever really a Lieder singer. In "Die Allmacht" she makes an expectably imposing effect (though this being 1952, also some edgy sounds), but "Frühlingsglaube" is just a tepid bath, and a previously unpublished "Wandrer's Nachtlid II" falls far below the grave solemnity of Hotter's 1949 recording (included here along with its companion piece). Since Flagstad's presence in such a collection rests more on voice than art, it would have been more interesting to hear some of her 1937 London recordings of Schubert ("Im Abendrot," "Lachen und Weinen," and "Die Forelle"), made at a time when the voice was in pristine condition.

Have I omitted anyone important? Many—for example, Lilli Lehmann, still authoritative at fifty-eight; Sir George Henschel, accompanying himself at age seventy-eight (!) in a dry and touching "Leiermann"; Friedrich Brodersen (mislabelled a tenor) in a pleasantly elastic and spontaneous "Sei mir gegrüsst"; Karl Erb's weird tone and exemplary musicianship; the bracing freshness and impeccable musicianship of Ria Ginster (not enough of her!); the honeyed voice and occasional blandness of Herbert Janssen; some of my favorite Gerhard Hüsch tracks; Pears and Britten, another remarkable partnership; Irmgard Seefried's "Auf dem Wasser zu singen," which is comparable to Schumann's.

That's perhaps enough to suggest that even the nonhistorical listener, in search of mere aesthetic pleasure, will probably find much to delight in. In fact, one of the pleasures of such a set is making up one's own mind about performances and singers; this is not a certified canon of greatness, but a perusal of history, a gallery within which we may search for what matches our taste. Hardwick admires the Russian bass Leo Sibirjakov enough to include three examples; I can hear little but an imposing sound, no real illumination or communication.

The accompanying booklet includes original texts and English translations for all the songs (though not the translated texts in French and Russian used in some of the recordings), as well as recording data (matrix numbers, but not takes, for some reason), biographical notes by Leo Riemens, and cross-indexes, by performer and song title. As you can tell, I've found this set enormously stimulating, and I hope there will be many more like it. Perhaps DG will help out by preparing a complementary Schubert package from its archives? **HF**

### SCHUBERT: Songs (93).

Various singers and accompanists. [Keith Hardwick, prod.] EMI RLS 766, \$55.84 (mono; eight discs) [from various EMI/HMV originals, 1898–1952] (distributed by International Book and Record Distributors).



**NEWMAN COMES OUT**

(Continued from page 80)

another surfer in this bar. With *My Life Is Good*, my wife and I are abusing this schoolteacher.

It may be that I see more than is there, but I definitely see more than one person in these. That's sort of new for me. I wonder why more people don't do that.

**Backbeat:** You're right that few do. The most conspicuous exception I think of is Steely Dan, which often had these conspiratorial, second-person conversations going on, much in the same vein that you describe.

**Newman:** Yeah, and they're also willing to write characters that are dumber than they are. My people generally aren't as intelligent as the audience. I like that. I've done that for fifteen years, although I just recently thought of how to explain it.

**Backbeat:** But they're never so totally stupid that the listener can easily ignore underlying connections. What often makes your songs effective is not that the characters are foreign, but that underneath their idiosyncracies their attitudes, however ugly, can strike a nerve. You've used that device particularly well here when dealing with racism: When I first heard *Mikey's*, what stung me most was the mean-spirited bigotry. I've noticed that these days our '60s ideals often seem undercut by racial tension, by a sense of encroachment people would never have felt, or admitted to, ten or twelve years ago.

**Newman:** That's right. Shocking, isn't it? It's much meaner now. Racism is really there. In this state, I've heard things from nice, liberal types—about Chicanos, for instance—that I never expected to hear. You know, people who love blacks, who love everybody, but they don't like *some* great category of the population.

It's partly the times. In the past, people were always saying that this was the end of the world, that things were getting worse and worse. But I never believed it until five or six years ago. Money's tight, and people are tight about their lives.

You know, I'm beginning to think that in the '60s, the interest in the racial problems of this country was unusual. I even thought that at the time. They're never really going to get a shot here. They sort of got one in the South, where things are a little better. But I think the poor are going to stay poor.

That has always been the problem that engaged me most, more than the war or pollution. Every town you go to, you see bad housing and you know who lives there—not white people. It's bad. This country isn't supposed to be like that.

It's sort of naive and simplistic to think that way, I suppose.

**Backbeat:** Certainly the concern has been one of your recurring motifs. Speaking of which, what about conceptual works? "Good Old Boys" was conceived as a

whole, and you've said the new album is loosely conceptual. At what point did you devise the theme that's hinted at in the LP's title?

**Newman:** About halfway through. I'd written *L.A.* and part of *Capetown*, and I saw that the [tropical] weather attracted me. Then I did *Mikey's* and *Miami*. I'm good at that. I can write well to assignments.

**Backbeat:** You've said that you enjoyed that element of *Ragtime*, even though it was pretty harrowing. Do you think you'll try more film projects?

**Newman:** I'll do more. I've been offered more film work, and I may do some around May, depending on when I'm finished touring. I'll never make it my main work, though I love an orchestra—I'd do a bad picture if I could have a big orchestra.



*Newman: "I had delusions of grandeur."*

**Backbeat:** Finally, what about your rumored musical version of *Faust*?

**Newman:** I did it. I did a first draft, *Faust* being a kid who goes to Notre Dame and the Devil and God make a bet. It's got angels in it.

It's a trashing of the great legend, and I've got two or three songs so far: God sings something, and the Devil sings something. We'll see. I enjoyed doing it and I think the dialogue is all right—I know how people talk. But when I had to write a little chunk of descriptive prose. I had to get out all those *Strunk & White Elements of Style* books. My brain wouldn't work—I got tumbled up in just simple declarative sentences [laughs]. I was shocked at my lack of facility, because song lyrics are the most natural thing to me. They come out seemingly without my intervention.

But it was fun. I haven't looked at the play in nine months. If I go back and it's a tremendous embarrassment, well, that's that. But I always liked things about heaven, even that bad Jack Benny movie *The Horn Blows at Midnight*, where he played 294th violin in the orchestra. I like all those things. Maybe that's why I'm up a tree with this one.

HF

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New Black Eagle Jazz Band: a splendid aggregation of moonlighters

BACKBEAT REVIEWS

(Continued from page 86)

disappointment, the band and its guests prod each other into some brilliant performances, making this a wonderfully loose and exhilarating recording.

JOHN S. WILSON

**Leon Oakley and His Flaming Deuces**  
GHB 153 (3008 Wadsworth Mill Pl., Atlanta, Ga. 30032)

Leon Oakley is one of a fine line of cornetists who have played with Turk Murphy's San Francisco band. This disc, recorded at a Friday night jam session in a club in Berkeley, contains what Philip Elwood of the *San Francisco Examiner* likes to call "saloon music." By that he means music created by an enthusiastic interchange among admiring colleagues.

Those colleagues are Oakley, the Flaming Deuces, and Dick Hadlock, a jazz writer of thirty years who has the guts to walk over to the other side and pick up the soprano or alto saxophone. Hadlock's soprano has a fascinating individuality, stemming from what might be described as a slim (not fat but not thin) tone suggestive of Sidney Bechet's. Oakley's main source is Louis Armstrong, along with an occasional glance at Wild Bill Davison.

Oakley has chosen an interesting mixture of adventurous and well-worn traditional material. Duke Ellington's *Solid Old Man*, despite being subtitled *Solid Rock*, yields a fine jazz expression from the ensemble. A tune Henry Allen recorded in 1930, *Roamin'*, leads Oakley into a marvelously growling and crying solo, while on *Flatfoot*, taken from a 1926 New Orleans Bootblacks record, his cornet is consistently bright and punching. There are some problems with microphone placement—a consequence of the casual recording situation—resulting in Ray Skjellbred's piano occasionally dropping out altogether. But this seems a reasonable price to pay to hear

the creative juices flow unencumbered from musicians the caliber of Oakley and Hadlock.

JOHN S. WILSON

**Art Tatum: Get Happy!**

Dave Hubert & Associates, producers  
Jazz Man JAZ 5030 (First American Records, Inc., 73 Marion St., Seattle, Wash. 98104)

Even before his death in 1956, pianist Art Tatum was a jazz legend. This was a mixed blessing for his recording career. In his marathon sessions for Norman Granz in the early '50s, for instance, he would grind out tune after tune to the point where the runs, the tempo changes, the trickery and frippery all began to sound the same. His playing lacked the "sound of surprise"—Whitney Balliett's very definition of jazz.

"Get Happy!" is not just another Tatum record. These sides were cut in 1938 and '39 for Standard Transcriptions, one of the services that provided music to radio stations. Of the sixteen tunes here, only *Star Dust* had been recorded previously by Tatum. Two others—*Get Happy* and *Begin the Beguine*—received their first commercial recording by him a year later. Indeed, the entire program is made up of tunes that later became standard to his repertory: *Happy Feet*, *The Man I Love*, *I Can't Get Started*, *Humoresque*, *Lullaby in Rhythm*.

Being the early, fresh years of Tatum's career, there is a fire running through these sessions that sets them apart from most of his recorded solos. His performances are polished, his stylistic stigmata completely a function of his broader creative concept. *Royal Garden Blues*, an old Dixieland warhorse, comes out totally Tatum. *Ain't Misbehavin'* has a gorgeous hammock swing that not even Fats Waller achieved. *Humoresque* is both a trick and a treat. And for those who thought that Tatum was too wrapped up in runs to swing overtly—everything on "Get Happy" moves openly and joyously.

JOHN S. WILSON



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